



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

1 Centre Street, 19th floor, New York, NY 10007  
(212) 669-8300 p (212) 669-4306 f  
431 West 125th Street, New York, NY 10027  
(212) 531-1609 p (212) 531-4615 f  
[www.manhattanbp.nyc.gov](http://www.manhattanbp.nyc.gov)

**Gale A. Brewer, Borough President**

February 22, 2021

Olga Abinader  
Director, Environmental Assessment and Review Division  
New York City Department of City Planning  
120 Broadway, 31<sup>st</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10271

Re: New York Blood Center – Center East, CEQR # 21DCP080M

Dear Ms. Abinader,

I write in regard to my concerns about the proposed development at the New York Blood Center – Center East project. I submitted comments on the Draft Scope of Work to the Department of City Planning on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020. Since then, additional information has been brought to my attention, which suggests that the disclosure from the Applicant, the New York Blood Center, was incomplete.

I was alerted that during a presentation given to Friends of the Upper East Side on January 15, 2021, the Applicant revealed that their proposed new building for the Blood Center would include biosafety level 3 (BSL-3) laboratories. This fact was omitted during the environmental scoping process. BSL-3 laboratories are considered high-containment research laboratories that are intended for the study of highly infectious pathogens, including indigenous or exotic microbes and diseases with high potential for respiratory transmission. I was alarmed to find that in a 2016 memo, the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) noted significant risks associated with such facilities, including the potential for an accidental outbreak, which could be severe given New York City's population density. Furthermore, the fact that the proposed facility is in a residential neighborhood raises serious questions about the adequacy of safeguards and the potential impact of such a laboratory.

Neither the Hazardous Materials nor the Air Quality sections mention these issues. I am seriously concerned about this omission in the Draft Scope of Work. The proposal must be thoroughly evaluated as part of the environmental review process.

It is disturbing that in addition to not being shared with the public, this information appears to have not been disclosed to DCP. Meaningful engagement in the planning process with the community is not possible if the Draft Scope of Work is incomplete. I request that DCP consider this new information and, if necessary, require the Applicant to provide for a more extensive

Environmental Assessment and Draft Scope of Work that accurately captures the full impact of the proposal.

Attached to this letter is the memo referenced above released by DOHMH in 2016. I look forward to working with you to ensure that the environmental disclosure process for this application is fully transparent in order to address the wide range of concerns from the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gale A. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Gale A. Brewer  
Manhattan Borough President

Enclosure