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January 14, 1972

Rabbi Norman Lamm  
The Jewish Center  
131 West 86 Street  
New York, N.Y. 10024

Dear Rabbi Lamm:

As requested by your letter of December 2, 1971, I reviewed the master plan for New York City, published in 1969. Volume 4 of that plan deals with Manhattan, and pages 96 through 104 of Volume 4 deal with the West Side/Lincoln Square/Upper West Side area, that comprehended by Manhattan Community Planning District 7. That portion of the plan was republished and available at the hearing I discuss below, and I enclose a copy. The 1969 plan, except for a few changes that do not appear to be significant, is the one in effect.

Community Planning District 7 extends from 59th St. to 110th St., from Central Park West to the Hudson River. In our particular area, you are familiar with the Urban Renewal activities from 87th St. to 97th St. There is no public housing planned south of 87th St. and north of 72nd St., with the possibility of a few exceptions that do not seem to be significant.

With respect to the Urban Renewal Project between 87th and 97th St., the 1969 plan proposed for 2,500 low income units, 5,421 middle income units and 151 luxury units. In addition, 485 brownstones were slated for renovation.

Within the past several months, a modification to this proposal has been seriously discussed, resulting in various proposals to the applicable city agency. I am not familiar with the details of the proposals. From the opposition that was expressed by a number of speakers at the hearing I attended, I

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gather that no substantial changes are intended to the allocations established by the 1969 plan.

On January 10, 1972, at Brandeis High School a public hearing was held with respect to the plan for Community Planning District 7. I attended that meeting between approximately 9:30 and 11:00 and heard a number of different speakers. Most of the speakers who addressed themselves to housing expressed concern that the area between 72nd St. and 96th St. was witnessing a substantial shift from low income groupings to relatively high income groupings.

Based on my study of the plan for Community Planning District 7 and from the witnesses who spoke at the hearing, it seems to me that there is little danger of anything happening in our neighborhood which would foreshadow a shift such as is feared in Forest Hills. Rather, we should have a much different concern. Unless public housing is proposed for our neighborhood, creating apartments for middle income families with young children, I fear that there will be an erosion of the population base upon which the Jewish Center must draw for membership in the years to come. On a number of occasions, Chairman Elliott of the City Planning Commission expressed concern as to the absence of any funds or plans to create such housing, and numbers of speakers echoed that concern. The neighborhood seems to be experiencing wide scale renovations of brownstones to create, for the most part, small apartments at high prices. If the trend continues, there may well be a diminishing supply of apartments available for families that could potentially become members of the Jewish Center.

If anything can be done by our membership in connection with the problem of housing, efforts should be directed toward alleviating this area of concern. The fear of a "Forest Hills" development in our area does not appear to be real.

Very truly yours,



Alvin K. Hellerstein

AKH:vf

cc: Mrs. Max Stern  
William Feinberg, Esq.