



December 16, 2014

Dear City Council Members:

I am writing to ask for your support for two important items on the agenda that both support our City's effort to comprehensively protect Hoboken from flooding and help to support our transportation system.

Flood pump:

As the attached photo shows, the western side of our City flooded just last week, and has flooded significantly several times since Sandy. Funding for the flood pump on the agenda will help the entire western side of our City during major rain events as well as in the event of another storm surge.

The City has secured a low interest loan from the State that offers interest rates below 1 percent, and we have been advised by the DEP that it will include 19 percent principal forgiveness on the total \$11.9 million loan as part of a Sandy funding opportunity.

The State has authorized NHSA to go to bid, but the funding bond must be approved in order to move forward.

The portion of the loan related to the City Hall green infrastructure project offers 50 percent loan forgiveness. (This portion of the project is estimated at about \$220,000 of the total \$11.9 million loan). The City Hall green infrastructure pilot project is important to demonstrate to property owners and developers what can be done with existing buildings to reduce stormwater run-off and flooding in our city.

Last month, we held a community meeting with residents of Maxwell Place to address their questions and concerns. We provided a Q&A and also revised the interlocal agreement with NHSA for the project to include air quality monitoring. The Q&A can be found on the NHSA website at www.nhudsonsa.com/Public/H-5_WWPS/FAQs.pdf.

This pump is a crucial component of the comprehensive Resist, Delay, Store and Discharge Strategy to protect our entire City from flooding. In fact, the Resist strategy that will protect our waterfront from future storm surges will need the flood pump as a protective measure. The pump will also help alleviate flooding during increasingly prevalent flash flood events.

Mayor Turner and I have met with DEP Commissioner Martin and will meet with him again at 5:00pm today to advocate for the State to move ahead as expeditiously as possible with the Resist

strategy to protect North and South Hoboken with the \$230 million grant awarded from the HUD Rebuild by Design competition.

Hoboken Yard Redevelopment Plan:

Hoboken has a long history of community activism helping to transform proposed projects for the better, with our waterfront being the prime example. This project has similarly been transformed by City Council and community input. The original proposal supported by both NJ Transit and the past Administration was for 9.2 million square feet. This included a seventy story commercial tower, and would have added approximately 7,300 new residents to our community with several 40-story residential towers.

Hoboken residents, some of whom are now City Council members, along with several of my Council colleagues at the time, raised their voices, and that project, which was on track to become a reality, was stopped and has been completely transformed.

The original plan was not only supported by both NJ Transit and the previous Administration, but both took the position that NJ Transit had the legal right to build it even if Hoboken objected. In 2008, as a City Councilwoman, I, together with Councilwoman Mason, Councilman Russo, Councilwoman Castellano, and Councilman Cunningham, forcefully disagreed with this conclusion. In response, legislation was crafted in Trenton in 2009 to remove any ambiguity and permit NJ Transit to move forward with their own plans. Together, local officials successfully lobbied against this legislation. We then worked hard to create a completely new plan that would benefit the City of Hoboken rather than just represent the interests of NJ Transit and their developer.

The new proposed redevelopment plan will revitalize our transit hub, bring jobs to Hoboken, add affordable housing, and provide funding for open space. It is also an important part of the flood mitigation plan that has received \$230 million of federal funding. All of this will be accomplished while limiting residential development to approximately 950 new residents, a scale consistent with that area of Hoboken.

Thank you to the City Council development subcommittee and the Council as a whole for working with my Administration on this redevelopment plan. Your leadership has and will continue to enable the City to shape this project in the best interests of Hoboken residents. Here are some of the reasons why I believe that it is important to move forward tonight with this plan:

1. This project offers the opportunity to transform our transit hub. Given the fact that 56 percent of our residents take public transportation to work every day, more than any place in the nation, I hope that you will seriously consider the needs of our residents who commute on a daily basis.
2. This plan offers the opportunity to bring jobs and create new jobs in Hoboken. Providing residents with more opportunities to work near where they live is one way to make our city less reliant on cars in the long-term. In addition, research shows that commercial development has much less of a financial impact on City resources because it does not expand the need for police, fire, and schools, as residential development does (For this very reason, I appreciate that the subcommittee stood strong and did not expand residential development despite pressure from the developer to do so).
3. This plan offers the opportunity to require the developer to be a part of the flood protection system to comprehensively protect our City from flooding. It would require the separation of the

stormwater and sanitary system, installation of pumps, and green roofs, rain gardens, and other flood mitigation strategies.

4. Through the redevelopment agreement process, an analysis will determine a fair contribution to the open space trust fund. This funding could go towards funding a larger park in southwest Hoboken, the neighborhood that could be most impacted by this development. The plan would also require at least 4.5 total acres of street level public space and would create pedestrian plazas at Hudson Place and Warrington Plaza with a safe pedestrian zone, connections to various modes of transit, bicycle lanes and bicycle storage and shower facilities.

5. The plan would create indoor public space that could be designated as performing arts space, accelerator space to support startup businesses, 3 bedroom units for our growing families, and at least 10% of units for affordable housing.

As members of the Council subcommittee know, the City has to have an economically feasible plan that will stand the test of a legal challenge. While I respect the voices of our citizen activists, we as elected officials have an obligation to look at all the factors and understand that a plan that is not economically feasible will put the City at risk in any possible legal or legislative challenge. I want to thank you for funding our careful economic analysis performed by an experienced NYC firm to ensure a fair agreement for the City of Hoboken.

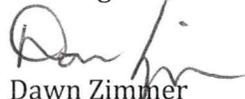
The next step in the process, if the City Council passes the plan and if NJ Transit is interested in moving this forward, would be to enter into an interim cost agreement. Under this agreement, NJ Transit and/or their designated developer would be responsible for the costs of conducting future analysis needed to finalize the plan. Most importantly, NJ Transit and/or their designated developer would be required to fund a traffic study and traffic modeling analysis, to be conducted by a firm of the City's choosing. This modeling would include an analysis of the traffic impact and the proposed changes such as the two-way service road connected to Marin Boulevard.

Adjustments to the plan could be made based on the results of the analysis. This study can only be conducted once we know what the City Council will approve as a level of development. As you know, the plan proposed by NJ Transit has ranged from over 9 million square feet to 5 million square feet to 3.5 million square feet to 3 million square feet, with more than 40 percent residential and all of the residential located by the PATH. The City Council has settled on a very different approach, with the commercial located near the PATH and a much lower level of density, in particular for the residential development. Once the plan is passed, then it will be time to conduct this important and thorough traffic analysis.

Given that the City of Hoboken has spent close to \$300,000 on the legal, planning, and financial analysis for the plan, I hope you agree that it is now time for NJ Transit and/or their designated developer to fund the traffic study, which can only happen once a plan is passed and we have entered into an interim cost agreement.

Please feel free to call me if you would like to discuss this further or if you have any questions in advance of the Council meeting tonight.

Best regards,



Dawn Zimmer



Flooding at Madison St. & 9th St. on December 9, 2014.