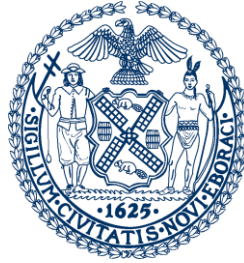


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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
C 210351 ZMM - New York Blood Center
July 29, 2021**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Blood Center's expansion plans have been opposed by every local elected official as well as thousands of residents in the community for more than a decade. The environmental impacts of this proposed development cannot be mitigated, from shadows on the park and the Julia Richman Education Complex to the creation of new loopholes and the fact that the proposal would include the displacement of thousands of people from 500 apartments. Regarding the stated need for proximity to the hospital corridor, the Blood Center's exclusion from existing new joint projects in the neighborhood, the existence of alternative local sites they will not consider, the 18 other Blood Center locations in New York and New Jersey, and their possible headquarters on Long Island seem to undermine that need. Taking a serious look at finances, we found that the New York Blood Center made \$269 million selling blood that was donated, spent \$75 million buying up blood centers in 5 other states, have \$3 million in offshore accounts, and if that isn't enough, spent more buying real estate (\$27 million) than conducting research (\$14 million), which only accounts for less than 5% of their program services budget.

TESTIMONY

Thank you to Chair Lago and to the members and staff of the City Planning Commission for holding this public hearing.

Opposition from Every Elected Official and More than 1,000 Members of the Community

Thank you as well to everybody who has made possible the huge amount of community engagement that we have seen around this proposal leading up to this hearing. Community Board 8 Manhattan has held countless hearings on this topic over nearly half my life. Neighbors have come out time and time again by the hundreds to make their voices heard. Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer held her hearing and has been at every single meeting herself. And I would like to give a special thank you to Senator Liz Krueger who has been fighting this fight since before I was elected; she continues to fight by my side, on the side of the community every day, and she's not going anywhere. The New York Blood Center has been seeking to build a tall tower for as long as I can remember, for my entire career in politics, back to when I first started in 2006 on Community Board 8, and again in 2016. At every stage, their aggressive proposals have been rejected by elected officials and the local community.



BENJAMIN J. KALLOS
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DISTRICT 5, MANHATTAN

Proposed Project Builds Less Space for Blood Center than Could be Built as of Right, which Community Would Support

The New York Blood Center is a welcome member of the community that has been on East 67th Street for some 50 years. I as an elected official and the community as a whole support their expansion from with is essentially a 3-story building with a basement to more than double their size to 7 stories as they are legally entitled to do as of right. In fact, the current proposed rezoning would not offer the New York Blood Center more than they can build as of right, in fact, it offers even less. What the community objects to along with Community Board 8, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, State Senator Liz Krueger, Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright is the conversion of half a residential block to commercial and the proposed 260-foot tower above what could be built as of right for no more than using zoning to print money for an institution though worthy doesn't need it.

Blood Center has Poor History on Worker's and Animal Rights Having Left Monkeys to Die

Each time the Blood Center has proposed expanding, they never cared about working conditions for their construction workers. As union-side labor lawyer and now elected official, I have always expressed how important it is to protect workers. I am grateful that the New York Blood center has expressed interest in a project labor agreement. But make no mistake, but for my advocacy it was never the case before and wouldn't be the case now.

That being said, agreeing to treat a portion of workers properly on a portion of a project doesn't make an otherwise rotten deal somehow palatable. The New York Blood Center and Longfellow, their development partner, have still failed to answer important questions relating to racial diversity of their boards of directors, their executives, or even their highest compensated workers in the planned commercial tower.

This comes from an institution, the New York Blood Center that [caused an international incident that literally abandoned monkeys they gave hepatitis to die.](#)



Environmental Impacts

The Blood Center’s Commercial Tower Would Block the Sunshine from St. Catherine’s Park

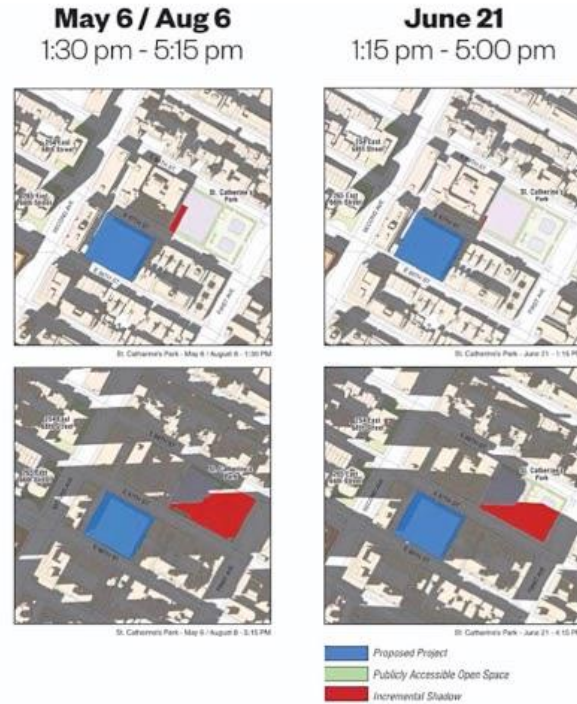
Community Board 8, which includes the Upper East Side and Roosevelt Island, [ranks in the bottom third of community districts with parks within a 5-minute walk](#) according to New Yorkers for Parks. In fact, St. Catherine’s Park is the only park in the area of the Blood Center. 24 Sycamores, wedged between a ConEd plant and the FDR Drive is half a kilometer away, John Jay is three-quarters of a kilometer away, and Central Park is one kilometer away. Suffice to say, it is not a quick walk for a family with playground age kids, unless you are making it into a day trip, and my family has done it, because kids get tired of the same playground.

As a new father, I have found that playgrounds are a part of life, now more so than during the pandemic, particularly with a daughter too young for a vaccine. Neighborhood playgrounds have been a needed refuge throughout this pandemic, albeit stressful and crowded.

It is odd that the Blood Center, an organization at the forefront of convalescent plasma therapy during this pandemic, would not value the importance of public spaces that offer more safety from the spread of the disease.

I was shocked when I saw a shadow study that would leave St. Catherine’s Park completely in the shadows for much of the day, starting at 1:30PM in May before Memorial Day continuing through August and the summer. As a parent you’re lucky if you are out of the house in the morning, even with an early riser. One o’clock through sunset which tonight is at 8:14PM, that’s more than 7 hours of a park that no children would want to play in because it is too dark. To hear the Blood Center try to spin the environmental impact from the shadows of the proposed 334-foot-tall commercial office as a “positive”: a relief from a hot summer sun that somehow the existing trees couldn’t accommodate, shows just how much the Blood Center cares about their neighbors or their children.

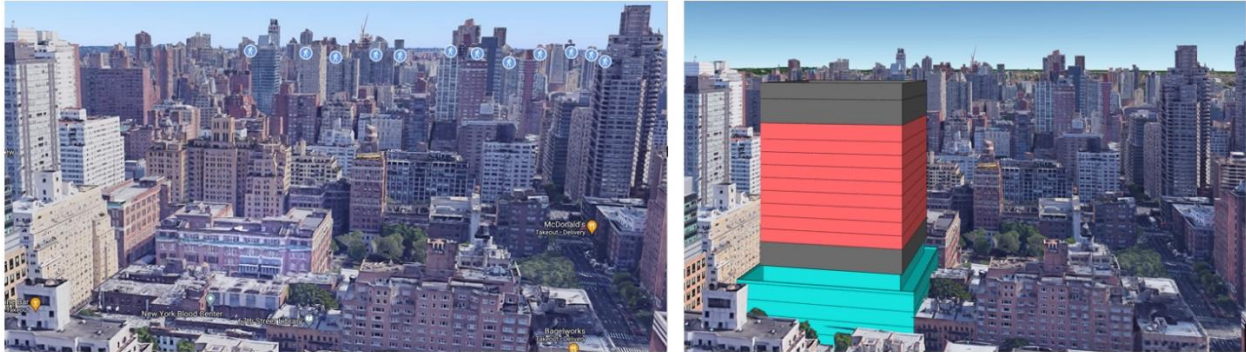
The Blood Center has failed to demonstrate how they plan to mitigate the loss of sunlight from the neighborhoods only park and for that reason alone should be rejected.



Shadow Study of Blood Center on St. Catherine's Park



The Blood Center Proposal Will Have Long Term and Negative Impacts on Julia Richman Education Complex that Cannot be Mitigated



Julia Richman Education Complex is literally across the street, I suppose that's why it has been the unwilling target of multiple land-swap proposals, but the Blood Center's Commercial Office Tower will still have negative impacts on the school and its students in particular.

Among the schools is a bright shining star, Ella Baker, one of the most diverse elementary schools in the city of New York serving children from multiple boroughs including children on the autism spectrum. Nearly a third of its students qualify for free and reduced school lunch, one fifth are students with disabilities, and 63% are students of color. Altogether, the six schools located at the Julia Richman Education Complex serve students from all five boroughs and from 50 of 51 City Council districts.

The Blood Center's proposed Commercial Office Tower would disrupt learning for years while ultimately leaving the school, the classrooms, and outdoor play space in an almost perpetual shadow. The loss of light will have a permanent impact on the learning environment at the Julia Richman Education Complex. The science of effective learning spaces has shown that natural light in classrooms ["boosts mood, alertness, concentration and energy levels" and improves test scores.](#)

The noise from construction would also impact students during the demolition and build phases of the project. A [peer-reviewed study](#) in the Journal of the Acoustical Society of America confirmed what might be common sense: "External noise was found to have a significant negative impact upon performance." How much construction noise will be audible in the classroom or outdoors during classroom and construction hours?

To this day, we remain to learn what measures can possibly be taken to mitigate the impacts on our students and learning in the immediate vicinity.



Tall Towers Are Already Illegal in Residential Districts Across the Street from Parks and the City Should Not Create a Loophole

Building tall towers across the street from parks is currently illegal. The Zoning code forbids the building of tall towers called “height factor towers” in residential districts within 100 feet or across the street from a public park over 1 acre, at 23-65(c). The Blood Center is seeking to create a new loophole by converting their site from being residential to commercial where no such law was ever speculated let alone created. Allowing the Blood Center to build a Commercial Office Tower across the street from a park will only be the start of this new loophole with a tall tower coming to a park near every New Yorker sooner than later. The City Planning Commission must not create this new loophole for tall towers to be built across the street from parks in residential neighborhoods.

Rezoning from Residential to Commercial Runs Counter to City’s Needs When Commercial Spaces Remain Vacant

This Mayor’s top planning priority from day one of his administration has been to end the tale of two cities, by building and preserving enough affordable housing to help New York out of our housing crisis. Doing so on the East Side presents unique, but not unsurmountable challenges. The Mayor has also prioritized expanding the life sciences industry, which I have wholeheartedly supported and worked in partnership with his administration to achieve. Of these two priorities, building more affordable housing in already dense residential neighborhoods on the East Side may require zoning creativity, while in fact there are numerous appropriate sites for expanding life sciences.

This project uses a residential zoning block to make a profit for a commercial developer, while not even attempting to meet the administration’s housing goals. Were this zoning lot upzoned as residential, it would trigger Mandatory Inclusionary Housing, and would at least create affordable housing in 20% of its residential units. Rezoning residential parcels to commercial is bringing our City in the opposite direction, particularly following a pandemic that has left countless commercial spaces vacant and will permanently shift some amount of business activity away from those spaces.

One-fifth of office space in Manhattan is currently vacant [according to a report](#). Commercial space is at its highest rate of availability ever, since it was first measured in the 1970s. Much of that vacant commercial space is in fact in Midtown and Midtown East, conveniently close and only blocks away from the Blood Center’s ostensible research partners and could provide viable space for the Blood Center and Longfellow’s planned tenants.



BENJAMIN J. KALLOS
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL MEMBER
DISTRICT 5, MANHATTAN

Rezoning Two Residential Buildings to Commercial is Bad Planning and a Thinly Veiled Spot Zoning

While the initial filings proposed rezoning only the midblock on 67th Street between First and Second Avenues mysteriously the rezoning now applies to the Blood Center and two buildings that are not even applicants but even oppose the rezoning at 301 East 66th Street and 265 East 66th Street.

301 East 66th Street is a 16-story cooperative with 199 units built in 1956 along 2nd Avenue spanning the whole block to 67th Street. This cooperative was not consulted prior to being included in this rezoning, are not even applicants, but oppose this proposal down to the resident. I know this, because I visited the building virtually for “Ben in Your Building” and boy did I hear it. The building is wholly in a C1-9 which is zoned for 2 FAR for commercial retail and services and 10 FAR for residential housing. Given the sheer number of apartments in this cooperative, strong presence of commercial tenants including day care, beauty salons, and restaurants we all love, it is unlikely that rezoning this building to commercial will ever amount to actual construction of another office tower on the block. This is nothing more than a thin veil to protect against allegations of a spot zoning, which make no mistake about it, this would be.

265 East 66th Street is a luxury rental building with 301 units built in 1979 by Solow Management Company that even won architectural awards. Apartments in this building are currently renting for \$3,400 for a studio and \$8,000 for a 2-bedroom. If the rezoning were approved, as a market rate rental, the owner of this property could very well refuse to renew all leases and convert it to commercial office tower. While these apartments are a far cry from affordable, a loss of 301 units of housing along with having that many families displaced from the neighborhood would be a tragedy and against any notion of a sensible city plan.

There are three residential sites subject to this rezoning, only one wants to convert to a commercial tower, and for the other two losing 500 units of housing would be bad for the city. The City Planning Commission must not vote to evict thousands of residents and remove 500 units of residential housing and therefore must vote this rezoning down.



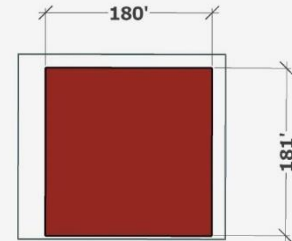
A Floor Plate Similar to the Freedom Tower is Simply Inappropriate for a Residential Neighborhood

As you know, the current Blood Center building is located on a through lot in the mid-block on 66th and 67th St., zoned R8B for residential use with a height limit of 75 feet. This proposal would rezone half of the block to allow the construction of a 16-story, 334-foot-tall building with a floor plate nearly the size of the Freedom Tower.

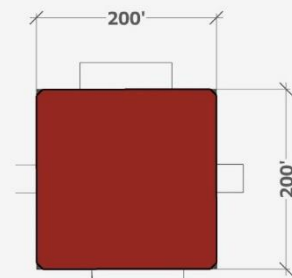
As with any zoning change, we must carefully study the impact on our climate and on the surrounding neighborhood. With a proposal of this magnitude on a mid-block, we must ask if there are mitigation measures that can sufficiently address the project's impacts. There is simply no undoing the precedent that siting a commercial building of this size in a residential mid-block would set.

While the Freedom Tower is appropriate in a commercial district as part of perhaps the largest open plaza in New York City commemorating the greatest acts of terror and loss of human life in our city's history having buildings with the same footprint crammed into residential side streets would be bad for the city. The City Planning must not set a precedence by grant this rezoning to allow construction of massive commercial office towers on small residential side streets.

Floor Plate at 280 Feet



Proposed Blood Center / Longfellow Commercial Tower



Freedom Tower



BENJAMIN J. KALLOS
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL MEMBER
DISTRICT 5, MANHATTAN

Location, Location, Location

The Blood Center Does Not Have Relationships or Has Willfully Refused to Join Partnerships with Nearby Medical Institutions for Which Geographic Proximity is Demanded

It must be said, however, that the Blood Center either does not have relationships with nearby medical institutions or has willfully chosen to stay out of joint ventures.

In 2014, I was there to [cut the ribbon on the Belfer Research Building](#) with Senator Chuck Schumer and Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney. The 480,000-square foot building is literally a block away and houses Weill Cornell research hubs, Cornell University, the Tri-I TDI, and even a competing university, CUNY's Hunter College. Speaking of which, I was there for the opening of the Tri-Institutional Therapeutics Discovery Institute (Tri-I TDI), which features a partnership between Memorial Sloan Kettering, The Rockefeller University, Weill Cornell Medicine, and Takeda Pharmaceuticals. It seems strange that if Blood Center was such a valuable partner that they wouldn't be included in either the Belfer Research Building or the Tri-I TDI.

In 2006, Memorial Sloan Kettering built a 16-story tower with 240,000 square feet of floor area literally across the street from the Blood Center at 300 East 66th Street, and they did it completely as of right.

Why would Blood Center partner with a firm out of Boston to build a commercial office tower above their building when nearby institutions seem not only willing but able to build new buildings all around them entirely devoted to the mission of non-profit research and treatment of residents in need?

If this is to be a partnership with surrounding institutions, the Blood Center should withdraw this application and file a new application with the partner institutions as applicants. Without proof of partnerships with any institution for which geographic proximity is sought the City Planning Commission should vote this proposal down.



BENJAMIN J. KALLOS
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL MEMBER
DISTRICT 5, MANHATTAN

The Proposed Site Is Not the Only Location to Build in the Immediate Vicinity Let Alone the Borough of Manhattan

When the Blood Center first came to me with this iteration of their proposal, I sought to work with them to find a location, right in our neighborhood, that would be more suitable for this development. The most conspicuous option would be the literal hole in the ground at 74th Street, next to Memorial Sloan Kettering's new cancer center. This site is located close to the Blood Center's research partners, and permission for a large-scale build was already granted to Hunter CUNY as part of a ULURP in 2012 but has since sat empty. Instead of changing the zoning on yet another site, the Blood Center could take over the 74th Street site, which is sitting there ready.

Other nearby options include the site of Sotheby's Auction House at 1334 York Avenue, which has been put up for sale on [multiple occasions](#) (as recently as 2019), and at which site a commercial tower could be built without a rezoning since it is already zoned C5-2 with 10 FAR, and better yet it would not cast shadow on a park or school. I suggested both locations as well as others in close proximity to the Blood Center's research partners but have been told from the beginning that the applicant is only interested in pursuing the currently proposed mid-block site.

If none of the sites in our neighborhood appeal to the applicant, there is also an opportunity to bring these life science jobs to East Harlem at a City-owned vacant lot on East 126th Street, adjacent to the Proton Center. The City has already solicited interest from developers to site a life sciences building at this location.

The applicant has made much of the Blood Center's need to be located close to its research partners, which is just one reason why we have sought to work with them on solutions that would keep them in the neighborhood.

There is undoubtedly a benefit to the proximity of the Blood Center, but other sites that are merely blocks away are equally appropriate. The proposed tower on the proposed site is a preference, not a necessity.



The Blood Center has 14 other locations in New York, 4 in New Jersey, and a location on Long Island labeled by Google as their Real Headquarters

The Blood Center's own website provides 18 locations spanning New York City, New York State, and even New Jersey. However, a Google Maps search for the Blood Center, identifies one additional location, omitted from the list on its own website, 1200 Prospect Avenue, Westbury, on Long Island. This location on Long Island is identified by Google Maps as the Blood Center's real headquarters. As the City Planning Commission considers the proposal for the Blood Center's East 67th Street location it must consider the precedence for doing the same at every other location in New York City. Why not add their 2-story location on Staten Island to this proposal and build a 334-foot tower there as one of the tallest buildings on the island? City Planning must not fall for the Blood Centers claims that there is simply no where else to build, quite frankly they've found 18 other places, they just aren't as valuable for them to rezone for air rights and sell. For this reason, the City Planning Commission should vote down the Blood Center's proposed Commercial Office Tower.

Blood Center Locations in New York:

1. [Bohemia Donor Center](#) 3125 Veterans Memorial Highway, RONKONKOMA, NY 11779
2. [Brooklyn Pop-Up](#) 309 Atlantic Avenue, BROOKLYN, NY 11201
3. [East Fishkill Donor Center](#) 2070 Route 52 Building 200, HOPEWELL JUNCTION, NY 12533
4. [Elmsford Donor Center](#) 525 Executive Blvd., ELMSFORD, NY 10523
5. [Grand Central Donor Center](#), Chanin Building, 115 East 41st Street, NEW YORK, NY 10017
6. [Kingston Donor Center](#), 51 Albany Avenue, KINGSTON, NY 12401
7. [Lake Success Donor Center](#), 2500 Marcus Avenue, LAKE SUCCESS, NY 11042
8. [Massapequa Donor Center](#), 1050 Sunrise Highway, MASSAPEQUA, NY 11758
9. [Melville Donor Center](#), 905 Walt Whitman Rd (Rte. 110), MELVILLE, NY 11747
10. [Port Authority Midtown Donor Center](#), 625 8th Avenue @ W 41st Street, South Wing, NEW YORK, NY 10018
11. [Port Jefferson Station Donor Center](#), 1010 Route 112, PORT JEFFERSON STATION, NY 11776
12. [Rockland Donor Center](#), 25 Smith Street, NANUET, NY 10954
13. [Rockville Centre Donor Center](#), 290 Sunrise Highway, ROCKVILLE CENTRE, NY 11570
14. [Staten Island Donor Center](#), 2791 Richmond Avenue, STATEN ISLAND, NY 10314
15. [Upper East Side Donor Center](#), 310 East 67th Street, NEW YORK, NY 10065

New Jersey Locations

16. [Howell Donor Center](#) 4068 Route 9 South, HOWELL, NJ 07731
17. [New Brunswick Donor Center](#) 167 New Street, NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ 08901
18. [Paramus Donor Center](#) 791 Route 17 South, PARAMUS, NJ 07652
19. [Scotch Plains Donor Center](#) 2279 South Avenue, SCOTCH PLAINS, NJ 07076

Omitted from this list of locations is what Google identifies as a corporate office at:

20. 1200 Prospect Avenue, Westbury, NY 11590



BENJAMIN J. KALLOS

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL MEMBER
DISTRICT 5, MANHATTAN

The Upper East Side Has Added Multiple City Blocks Devoted to Bio-Medical Research and Employment Over the Past 8 Years

I have been proud to work with this administration and The Rockefeller University to expand life sciences research and business right here on the East Side. In 2015, I supported The Rockefeller University's ULURP application, and we forged a public-private partnership enabling Rockefeller to build a new \$500 million, 160,000 square foot campus including laboratories, offices, conference rooms, and common areas. Rather than build a 300-foot building that would tower over the East River, Rockefeller chose to maintain a low profile and fit their building into the surrounding context. The project had a positive impact on the nearby park, as the University invested \$15 million in the East River Esplanade from 63rd Street to 68th Street and committed to maintaining the stretch of parkland in perpetuity.

Earlier this year, we made another major breakthrough in the expansion of life sciences, again partnering with Rockefeller. Since 2014, I had been meeting with them about our mutual desire to bring a biotech incubator hub to the East Side, and in January they won a \$9 million grant from the City to get them on the path to building the planned 26,000-square-foot facility. These projects will help advance research and bring jobs to the East Side for years to come, and they are an example of what we can achieve when we work together and when an applicant is willing to really take the public's feedback to heart.

Zoning Change Primarily Serve to Print Money for Applicant

The Zoning code exists to foster a predictable and planned City. This process, ULURP, and less extreme measures such as variances sought at the Board of Standards and Appeals, exist for when we need to update or change that plan, or when the need is so great, that it is in the City's interest to grant an exemption. It is not in the City's interest to grant zoning changes for the primary purpose of printing money for the applicant, or *zoning for dollars*, even when the application involves a non-profit institution whose mission the City supports.



Money, Money, Money

The Blood Center Made \$269 Million Selling Blood that Was Donated

Sources of annual funds included more than \$12 million in government grants. The Blood Center even made \$268.7 million in revenue selling blood that was donated to them and despite being “not for profit” they are indeed earning millions in blood money.

The Blood Center’s Own Actions Demonstrate No Need for Local Expansion \$75 Million in Spending on Acquiring Blood Centers Spanning 5 States

The Blood Center’s primary argument for this rezoning is essentially “location, location, location,” and the need to build on their existing location and nowhere else. Rather than going all in on this location, which would be the logical choice given the stated importance, they have actually been doing the opposite, undermining their current argument. The past 5 years of tax filings tell a story of the New York Blood Center expanding nationwide gobbling up blood centers all over country from Kansas to Minnesota. How’s that for geographic proximity?

Form 990 - Schedule R - Part V					
Purchase of assets from related organization(s) - Transaction Type (h)					
Tax Year	Community Blood Center of Greater Kansas	Innovative Blood Resources	Rhode Island Blood Center	Blood Bank of Delmarva	Purchase Totals
2015	\$ 8,385,384.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$ 8,385,384.00
2016	\$ 10,800,055.00	\$ 2,768,866.00	N/A	N/A	\$ 13,568,921.00
2017	\$ 11,908,158.00	\$ 3,127,037.00	\$ 4,034,992.00	N/A	\$ 19,070,187.00
2018	N/A	\$ 9,386,040.00	\$ 17,411,267.00	\$ 270,022.00	\$ 27,067,329.00
2019	N/A	\$ 4,948,084.00	\$ 1,377,107.00	\$ 819,723.00	\$ 7,144,914.00
Totals	\$ 31,093,597.00	\$ 20,230,027.00	\$ 22,823,366.00	\$ 1,089,745.00	\$ 75,236,735.00



Recent Acquisitions:

\$31 million - Kansas - Community Blood Center of Greater Kansas

In 2015, while proposing a land swap with the city, the New York Blood Center purchased the Community Blood Center of Greater Kansas in an all-cash transaction for 31 million dollars. Kansas is a big state, 82,000 square miles big, and 1,200 miles away.

\$20.2 million - Minnesota and Nebraska - Innovative Blood Resources

In 2016, the New York Blood Center purchased Innovation Blood Resources for at least 20 million dollars in another all-cash transaction. Don't let the name fool you: it's operating Minnesota-based Memorial Blood Centers and Nebraska Community Blood Bank. Minnesota is bigger than Kansas with 86,000 square miles, and about 1,200 miles away. Nebraska is about the same size as Kansas with 77,000 square miles and 1,300 miles away.

\$22.8 million - Rhode Island - Rhode Island Blood Center

In 2017, the New York Blood Center purchased the Rhode Island Blood Center for at least 22.8 million dollars, all cash, no surprise. Rhode Island is small and only 180 miles away, but still farther than Sotheby's, East 74th Street, or East Harlem's Proton Center.

\$1 million - Delaware - Blood Bank of Delmarva

In 2018, the New York Blood Center purchased Blood Bank of Delmarva in a steal of a million dollars, again all cash, with more likely to be paid. This blood bank serves Delaware and is only 130 miles away.

In total, the New York Blood Center has spent more than 75 million dollars in all cash transactions to purchase blood centers in 5 states with no signs of slowing down. New York Blood Center made a choice to spend 75 million dollars buying up the country. That choice is clear, and it was not a choice to build here in New York to be geographically close to other institutions. Actions speak louder than words.



The Blood Center Has \$3 Million in Offshore Accounts in Central America and the Caribbean

According to the institution's 2020 IRS 990 filing, the Blood Center took in \$483.5 million in revenue the prior fiscal year, with \$688,852 left after expenses. Its net assets total \$424.3 million including \$3 million in investments held in offshore accounts located in Central America and the Caribbean. The notion that a supposedly New York City based nonprofit would not invest here in the banking capital of the world, let alone have offshore accounts is disturbing to say the least, and merits investigation given the recent Panama Papers scandal.

The Blood Center Spending More on Real Estate than Research with 27 Million Dollars Spent on Real Estate Over 14 Million Dollars Spent on Research Accounting for a Less than 5% on Program Services

While the Blood Center represents itself as a research institution on par with Rockefeller University, Weill Cornell Medical Center, and others in the vicinity only a small portion of the Blood Center's spending goes towards research with almost none for education. The Blood Center spent more on real estate transactions acquiring other locations at 27 million dollars than the 14 million dollars spent on research, less than a paltry 5% of program service expenses, according to 2019 filings.

In the recent five years the New York Blood Center has spent \$75 million purchasing blood centers and blood banks all over the country.

The Blood Center Spent Millions on Executive Compensation and Lobbying

This is not a struggling institution. Its president's base salary starts at over \$1 million, though he was awarded \$600,000 in bonus compensation in the year preceding the 2020 filing, and all in including benefits, his compensation amounted to \$1,822,254 in one year. The institution listed 18 additional employees whose compensation ranged from \$200,000 to over \$800,000.

They've even paid out millions to lobby for this project. \$597,500 to Kasirer LLC alone, \$150,000 in 2020, \$175,000 in 2019, \$122,500 in 2018, \$75,000 in 2016, and \$75,000 in 2021 on track for another \$175,000.

The City should not be in the business of transferring wealth in the form of zoning rights to this institution and its commercial development partner Longfellow.



History

It feels like we've been fighting the expansion of the Blood Center for almost half my life, in fact, since I was in my twenties, now I am forty and it never seems to stop no matter how many times the community says no.

Blood Center Rejected in 2006

In 2006, when I was first appointed to Community Board 8, the Blood Center proposed a land-swap with the Julia Richman Education Complex (JREC) as covered in the [New York Times](#). It took two years of fighting, but in [2008 the Community Board finally voted to oppose the plan](#), which was ultimately withdrawn.

Blood Center Rejected in 2016

In December 2016, the Principals at Julia Richman Education Complex (JREC) shared that Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen had advised them that the city had made a "done deal" with the Blood Center for a land swap and relocation of their schools at a meeting with Borough President Gale Brewer, Senator Liz Krueger, Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright, and me. At that meeting I pledged to kill the project in the City Council using member deference and advised the Speaker and Mayor of my intention to do so. Senator Liz Krueger advocated with City Hall who said they did not and would not support the land-swap. We thought it was done for good.

Blood Center Rejected in 2018 & 2019

In August 2018 and July 2019, the Blood Center met with Borough President Gale Brewer, Senator Liz Krueger, Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright, and me, where we rejected the project. In September of 2020, the Blood Center shared their proposal for a commercial tower, which was met with no support from Borough President Brewer, Senator Liz Krueger, Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright, or me. Despite the lack of support the Blood Center decided to move forward anyway with an environmental assessment study and a shadow study shared with elected officials and in October and the community in early November of 2020.

Blood Center Ignores Community to Move Forward During Pandemic

Community Board 8 has held an initial three meetings before the Uniform Land Use Procedure (ULURP) even started. These took place on November 17, 2020, December 8, 2020, and January 26, 2021. Once the ULURP clock started in April, Community Board 8 held three additional meetings on April 27, 2021, May 13, 2021, and May 18, 2021, and May 25, 2021. At every meeting, hundreds of attendees spoke out against the project, and board members voted nearly unanimously in opposing the project.

City Planning Must Oppose the Blood Center Project

Today, I join every single elected official and hundreds of members of the community in asking the City Planning Commission to oppose this plan and ask the Blood Center to come back with an "as-of-right" project.



BENJAMIN J. KALLOS

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL MEMBER
DISTRICT 5, MANHATTAN

If this proposal should find its way to the Council, let me share a quote for inspiration from Gandalf the Grey in the Fellowship of the Rings, Book II, Chapter 5, as he confronted the orcs and the Balrog at the Bridge of Kazad-dum: “You cannot pass. I am a servant of the Secret Fire, wielder of the flame of Anor. You cannot pass. The dark fire will not avail you, flame of Udûn. Go back to the Shadow! You cannot pass.”