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To: New York City Council Members and Interested Parties

From: The Five Independent Chapters of the AIA of NYC

Date: October 5, 2015

Re: Response to Hearing on Intro. 775 and Improving the Landmarks Process

The five chapters of the American Institute of Architects in New York City remain committed to the reform of the Landmarks process so that it provides clear timelines while ensuring that every proposed property or historic district is evaluated on its merits. The outcome of potential designations should be based on the site or district's worthiness rather than time constraints.

**AIA New York, AIA Bronx, AIA Brooklyn, AIA Queens, and AIA Staten Island support Chair Meenakshi Srinivasan's testimony calling for designation periods that would last one year for calendared properties and three years for proposed historic districts. We believe this will give the Landmarks Preservation Commission the time it needs to thoughtfully consider the large majority of the items that reach its calendar. We also agree with the Chair's proposal to give LPC more flexibility to schedule its hearings during the one or three year period.**

While we disagree with the proposed moratorium as an attempt to prevent endless recalendaring, if the bill is to include a moratorium, there must be absolute certainty that LPC has had the time needed to consider all calendared properties and districts. To that end, **we propose adding language that would allow LPC, by vote, to have one opportunity to extend the deadline for calendared historic districts or properties by one year. Similarly, the bill should provide LPC the ability to look back at properties if previously unknown information is made available.**

Finally, at the end of each timeline, **LPC should be required to vote on whether or not to designate the property or district, or to extend the timeline.** This would further the bill's goal of providing all stakeholders a clear understanding of the status of a property or proposed historic district.

We believe that the LPC process can be improved but does not agree with sacrificing LPC's ability to carefully consider items for expeditiousness. These changes to the bill would create legislation that provides clear timelines, allows LPC to evaluate each item on its merits, and ensures that owners, advocates, and community members have a clear sense of where each item stands.

*AIA New York, AIA Bronx, AIA Brooklyn, AIA Queens, and AIA Staten Island together represent over 5,900 registered architects and associated design and construction professionals. Our organizations are comprised of a diverse coalition that includes small and large practitioners, interior designers, architects, planners, real estate developers, and others. Our mission, as it relates to legislation, is to advocate for laws that allow New York City to remain the premier global city for architecture and an exemplar of progressive urbanism, while ensuring the economic welfare of our professional class.*



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