

The Brian Stack Box Part II Choosing Union City over Hoboken, Again

Do you remember last summer when Mayor Bhalla announced and celebrated the project he negotiated and the City Council approved on the City's Western Edge that for the first time included funding for a community pool, the building of 17 affordable units for homeless veterans and resiliency improvements? Located next to the viaduct between Jefferson and Madison where this property currently exists:



The headlines and related stories were:

- [Deal to Build 357 Units, Hotel, and Public Pool Moves Forward in Hoboken | Jersey Digs](#)
- [Hoboken OKs new Western Edge plan that includes \\$3M for pool, affordable units, & flood mitigation - Hudson County View](#)
- [After Floating \\$3 Million for Community Pool, Western Edge Development Plan Passes City Council | TAPinto](#)

Mayor Bhalla's specific statement in these articles was:

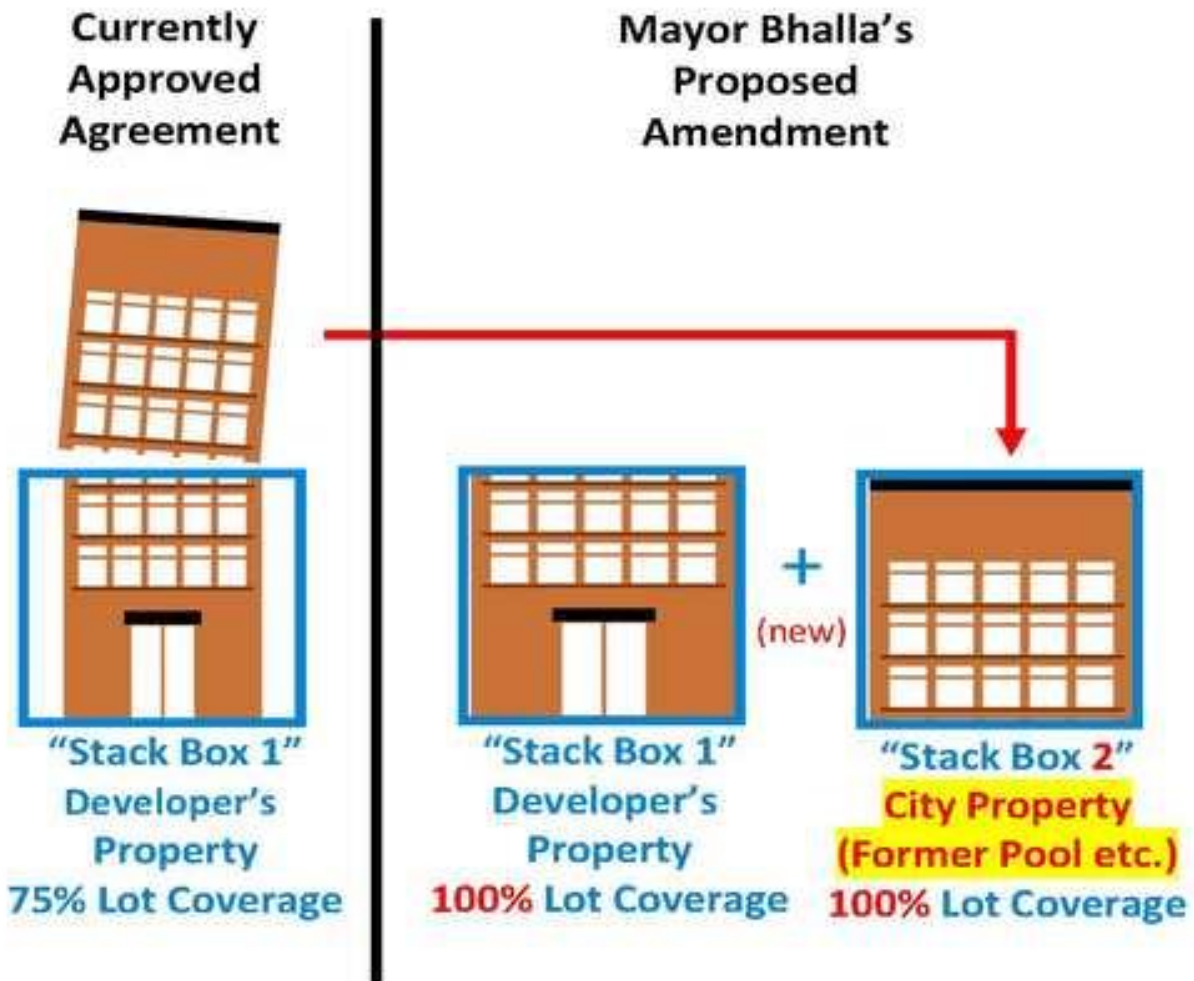
“I’m extremely pleased **we have adopted a redevelopment agreement that provides for robust community givebacks**, especially funding that will be allocated for a new community pool,” said Hoboken Mayor Ravi Bhalla. “The combination of this much needed public amenity, along with 37 units of affordable housing, open space, and critical flood mitigation will add substantial quality of life benefits to our mile square.” But **all of these community benefits are at risk now** because it was recently brought to Mayor Bhalla’s attention that the project doesn’t fit in the State Senator / Union City Mayor “Stack Box” (higher than the palisades).

“Stack Box”



So although there is a signed and celebrated development contract between the City of Hoboken and the property owner, our mayor is now backpedaling his support for the project. And by backpedaling I mean putting out misleading statements about having an agreement for a shorter project and twice publicly threatening the developer to reduce the height or else the mayor will “rescind the agreement” .

But I am writing about this today, because [up for a Council vote tonight](#) is an amendment by Mayor Bhalla that proposes to offer the developer a city property – specifically the block adjacent to the NW Park that has been earmarked for a pool, municipal garage and community center – to move their residential density (and build a new residential tower instead) if the developer reduces the height of their currently proposed building to fit in the 'Stack Box'.



In a nutshell: Mayor Bhalla is offering the property owner the following in exchange for the property owner lowering the height of the building to fit in the “Stack Box” (and subject to City Council approval):

- Letting the developer use the “North Flap” that we paid \$5M for in their redevelopment project; reminder this lot was earmarked for a pool, community center and parking garage
- Increasing street level building lot coverage from 75% to 100% (so wider and with no open space)

- Allowing the property owner to build on the Hoboken owned “Right of Way” on Monroe Street at the back of their building instead of using for open space
- Reducing minimum open space requirement from 40,000 sf to 5,000 sf.

Additionally, to accommodate the owner of the 930 Monroe site (the monolithic project I referenced earlier this week and introduced the term Stack Box), the amendment also provides for the green circuit that the property owner is responsible to build on their own property, to be built offsite instead on another City Owned property - aka the street.

Although the administration added language at the last minute (as I write this) to say that a community center must be accommodated in **Stack Box 2, these are just words on a paper**. And the math will not work. It doesn't even work just moving the high floor, high rent residential units off the top of a building and covert into lower floor, lower rents with the costs of building a new building (mechanicals, elevators, etc.) without adding more units and giving the property owner the City's property for free. Adding into this mix a community center that will cost tens of millions of dollars to build only means the property would have to go even higher to cover these additional costs. And then we are **back to square one where the new building on the City property built to make the math work, doesn't fit in Stack Box 2**.

I can honestly say, I am flummoxed and have never seen anything this recklessly anti-Hoboken before. Mayor Bhalla is giving away the prospect of a pool and community center, municipal parking and even part of the street to accommodate Senator Stack's interest in protecting the views of Union City residents just up the cliff (the Yardley is due west of this site). This is not an assumption, it is fact as we have discussed many times in multiple meetings. And Senator / Mayor Stack is using Union City taxpayer dollars to legally oppose this application that is currently before the planning board. Taxpayer dollars that are heavily subsidized by the \$15M annual transition financing Stack uses his legislative authority to get for Union City residents. You can't make it up...

Whether you want to see the building shorter or not...**This. Is. Unacceptable. Period.** If you agree, please let your council representatives and the mayor know.

Back to good news...

NORTH WATERFRONT BIKE LANE – UNDER CONSTRUCTION!

Hudson County restarted their milling and paving and upgrade project for 12th street between Hudson and N. Sinatra and N. Sinatra between 12th and 14th. I am thrilled that the project will include new ADA ramps, a raised cross walk by Pier 13, and.... **a new north bound bike lane along the east side of Sinatra drive!** A shout out to Chris Adair of Bike Hoboken who raised this idea on Twitter. This tweet prompted me to reach out to the County and Hoboken HPU director Ryan Sharp and see if we could

quickly accommodate something in the County's roadwork plan. And with some gentle nudging the County agreed! The project should only take another week or so to complete! A huge thank you to all involved at the county for making this happen so Hoboken residents and visitors can enjoy this new waterfront bike lane this summer!

SPEAKING OF NORTHERN WATERFRONT AREA AROUND PIER 13

I have heard from many of you about the chaos seemingly emanating from and around Pier 13, mainly on the weekend including garbage, noise, traffic, public urination etc., and drunk and disorderly people. Mayor Bhalla and I met with neighbors of one of the area building to discuss this in more detail about a month ago. Since then Environmental Services Director Jen Gonzalez and I reached out to and met with a representative at Applied who has revised their operations so they are cleaning earlier on the weekends. The Applied representatives also spoke with Pier 13 manager about ensuring garbage is taken care of as quickly as possible. I also spoke with our new Police Chief (interim) Lobue and he offered to revisit the police staffing at the waterfront on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings from about 10pm to midnight around the time Pier 13 closes which seems to be the witching hour. I know it is already cleaner. And with the new elevated crosswalk it should be a little safer. Just know we are working to do more to ensure the quality of life for residents and visitors is maintained in this area.

Finally - a quick reminder that Hudson Street will be closed beginning tomorrow through the end of the summer for the Northern Phase One of the Rebuild By Design Project. So please plan accordingly to avoid this area. As always, please forward to anyone you think may be interested in receiving this. Feel free to email me at councilwomanfisher2@gmail.com or call me at 201-208-1674 to discuss what you have read or anything else that is important to you.



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