



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian Kavanagh

## Joint Statement from NYC School Construction Authority, NYU, and Morton Williams Supermarkets

BRIAN KAVANAGH December 22, 2023



Today, the New York City School Construction Authority (“SCA”), New York University (“NYU”) and Morton Williams Supermarkets (“Morton Williams”) announced an agreement that will preserve the Morton Williams supermarket operating at its current location (the southeast corner of Bleecker St. and LaGuardia Pl.) through 2036, while also retaining the SCA's option for a new school in the future.

"I am thrilled with the conscientious work from our team at City Hall and SCA and for the good will from our partners at NYU and Morton Williams, which contributed to an outcome that will preserve this supermarket in the West Village, good union jobs and the possibility of a future school for New Yorkers," said **Mayor Eric Adams**.

"We are especially grateful to members of the community who advocated for continuation of their primary supermarket," said **Morton Williams co-owner Avi Kaner**. "We have proudly served Greenwich Village and NYU for the past 22 years including through 9/11 and Covid, always open 24/7 to meet every need. Thank you to NYU and the SCA for working diligently to develop a thoughtful solution."

"When we signed the lease with Morton Williams, NYU's aim was to have a supermarket at Bleecker and LaGuardia for many years," said **Kyle Kimball, NYU's Vice President of Government and Community Engagement**. "This agreement not only allows Morton Williams to remain at its current location but will facilitate their ability to continue making investments in the store that will benefit its customers and ensure uninterrupted access to the store for many years to come. Additionally, it will allow the SCA and the City of New York to continue consideration of the site for a future school. In this agreement, we sought to balance the desire for the supermarket to remain with the potential future public policy needs of the City and the community. We're very glad about this outcome, and we thank everybody for working together to achieve it."

"This agreement preserves an important asset in the community while still providing the SCA with the option to build a school at the site in the future," said **SCA President and CEO Nina Kubota**. "I'd like to thank Mayor Adams and his team along with NYU for helping to broker a

deal that will allow us to continue our focus on expanding and enhancing school infrastructure to meet the needs of New York City's future generations of school children. This is truly a victory for all parties involved."

"This agreement saves the jobs of 60 essential workers and members of Local 338 RWDSU/UFCW, who have proudly served Lower Manhattan for over 20 years," said **John R. Durso, President, Local 338 RWDSU/UFCW**. "I would like to thank the Mayor, SCA, and NYU for listening to the demands of the community and finding a solution that allows our members to continue their work ensuring local residents have access to fresh food and other necessities. This process has shown how much our members, and their work is valued by the immediate community and the City of New York, and we're pleased that they will have the opportunity to continue serving them."

"UFCW Local 342 has stood behind the essential Local 342 members serving the community at the Morton Williams Supermarket on Bleecker Street as they were facing the store closing," said **UFCW Local 342 Secretary Treasurer Debra Dunn**. "We are proud to stand with Local 338 as

well as the community in the fight to ensure union workers have a voice. Morton Williams will not close!!"

"It is good news today and I am happy to announce that working with the City, NYU and my fellow elected officials that we have been able to preserve the Morton Williams grocery store at its current location for the next 13 years," said **Congressmember Jerrold Nadler**.

"Additionally, at the same time we are preserving the option to construct a new school at the site in the future should the need arise."

"I'm thankful to all of the partners that heeded the community's concerns and agreed to preserve the valuable Morton Williams Supermarket while preserving the possibility of bringing a much-needed school to Greenwich Village," said **Congressmember Dan Goldman**.

"Thank you to NYC SCA, NYU, and the Morton Williams family for moving us forward."

"Making sure that Greenwich Village residents retain access to a supermarket while also ensuring that the City retains its option to build a school in the neighborhood was not an easy feat," said **Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine**. "I'm thankful to the SCA, NYU, and

Morton Williams for working on this agreement, which balances what the neighborhood needs now and how the community may grow in the future."

"In numerous meetings with the School Construction Authority, NYU, Morton Williams, elected colleagues, and community residents, I've emphasized the critical importance of not pitting the goal of creating a new school against the need for a supermarket. I am pleased that the agreement reached this week achieves that goal—ensuring that the community will have access to a reliable, full-service supermarket for many years to come while preserving the option to build a new school in the future," said **State Senator Brian Kavanagh**. "I thank NYU, the SCA, Morton Williams, my elected colleagues, the Save Our Supermarket coalition, Community Board 2, Washington Square Village and other community residents, and the supermarket workers represented by RWDSU Local 338 for all the work that has gone into achieving this consensus."

"After many months of working to ensure the preservation of both the supermarket and the option of a school, I am pleased that an agreement has been reached," said **Assemblymember Deborah J. Glick**. "I look forward to continued discussions with the understanding that for the time being, the grocery store and garden will remain, and the door is left open for the

option of a school in the future, all of which are commitments by NYU that the community has depended upon.”

“Preserving the supermarket and option to build a school is a long-term commitment to ensuring the community has the necessary amenities and investments to stay healthy. Education and food access should never be pit against one another, and I commend Mayor Adams’ office, the School Construction Authority, and New York University for finding productive solutions to save the supermarket and be able to flexibly plan for future educational needs,” said **Council Member Carlina Rivera**. “This deal would not be possible without the advocacy from community members, and I look forward to working with them on the future needs of the neighborhood.”

“When we fight, we win – I am so proud to represent a fiery constituency that petitioned and protested to have their voices heard throughout a process that tried so hard to remain behind closed doors,” said **Council Member Christopher Marte**. “Greenwich Village is still very much a village, and a grocery store and a garden are some of the most valuable parts of this community’s ecosystem. While we celebrate this deal, we will also keep the City to their promise of a new school.”

"Community Board 2 is gratified that the City retained its option to build the 100,000 sq. ft. Bleecker Public School — an option currently valued at more than \$65 million to NYC taxpayers and likely increasing, given the scarcity of land in Greenwich Village, the Bleecker School's transit-rich location and the need for new school capacity as the city implements smaller class sizes,” said **CB2 Chair Susan Kent**. “I am relieved that our community will continue to be able to patronize Morton Williams, a full-feature, traditional supermarket, at its current location.”

“This is a wonderful Holiday present! It's a great victory both for the community, maintaining an essential service and garden, and maintaining community bonds of which the Morton Williams supermarket remains an integral part. This victory shows the power of united community activism. We especially thank our local elected officials, the Adams administration, and our friends in Local 338 and the Butchers union, as well,” said **Alan Gerson, Co-Chair, Save Our Supermarket.**

In 2021, Morton Williams and NYU renewed a lease for an additional twenty-years, consisting of a ten-year initial lease and two five-year renewal options. Morton Williams has operated the supermarket since 2001. At the same time, for the last nine years, NYU has given the City of New York extensions of its original 2014 deadline to exercise its option to build a public school on the site. With this new agreement, the deadline for the SCA to exercise an option to build a new school has been extended to 2035.