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**Lenox Hill agrees to shrink planned medical tower as it earns key Council approval**AMANDA D'AMBROSIO 

Councilman Keith Powers, who represents the Upper East Side, said at a meeting Wednesday that the smaller medical tower at Lenox Hill Hospital addresses community concerns while investing in health care.

John McCarten/NYC Council Media Unit

Northwell's Lenox Hill Hospital agreed to shrink the size of its planned medical tower on the Upper East Side to secure **key approvals** in the City Council on Wednesday.

The council's land use committee and zoning subcommittee voted unanimously to pass zoning changes at the site of Lenox Hill Hospital to make way for a 370-foot medical tower. The committees approved a much smaller version of the 436-foot tower that Northwell proposed earlier this year, following criticism from local community members that the building was too big and that nearly decade of construction required for the project would disrupt the neighborhood.

Though approval will require Northwell to shave off 66 feet from its blueprint, the tower will still include 475 single-bedded rooms, preserving the patient capacity the health system sought in its original proposal, Councilman Kevin Riley, who chairs the subcommittee on zoning and franchises, said during the meeting. The smaller building comes with a slightly shorter construction timeline; the project will require eight years of construction, including five and half years of external work.

The councilmembers voted to ensure that 95% of the new building will be reserved for medical use only, up from Northwell's proposal to use 75% of the space for that purpose, and updated a planned ambulance bay to ease traffic on 77th Street.

"Let there be no confusion, this process is difficult," Upper East Side Councilman Keith Powers said during an explanation of his vote, pointing to the years of negotiations to meet the community's concern about the project.

"It's also undeniable that we cannot go down a path of disinvestment and the lack of hospital capacity," Powers added. "We've seen firsthand in Manhattan what it looks like when we lose our hospitals."

Joseph Kemp, a spokesman for Lenox Hill Hospital, said the vote "marks a major win for New York City" after years of planning and conversation.

"We remain committed to building a state-of-the-art hospital that will serve generations of New Yorkers, while also balancing the needs and concerns of our neighbors," Kemp said.

The vote is one of the final hurdles before Northwell can get city approval to redevelop its flagship Manhattan hospital. The project is set to go up for a vote before the full council next week, and after that the mayor will review it.

Northwell Health first introduced a plan to redevelop Lenox Hill Hospital in 2019, which included a 516-foot medical tower and 200-unit apartment building. The proposal was met with fierce opposition from community members due to its size, as well as pushback from health advocates who said the redevelopment would exacerbate health disparities by serving a neighborhood oversaturated with hospitals.

The health system went back to the drawing board and introduced two alternate versions of the proposal earlier this year. The first proposal included a 436-foot, narrower version of the medical tower, and an alternative wider, yet shorter, 395-foot proposal.

Once Northwell gets city approval for its Lenox Hill expansion, it must submit its project for review by the state Department of Health.

**August 6, 2025:** A previous version of this story stated that the council's land use committee was a subcommittee. The story has been corrected.

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