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Mayor Commits $24 Million To Lincoln Center Rebuilding

By ROBIN POGREBIN

Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani yesterday authorized the city to allocate the first installment of a $240 million commitment for Lincoln Center's $1.2 billion redevelopment plan, several people associated with the project said.

The mayor's approval secures $24 million from the city's capital budget, the first part of a 10-year commitment the mayor made before Sept. 11 toward a redevelopment program that was originally estimated at $1.5 billion.

The city's approval is an important vote of confidence for the project, which has been plagued by infighting at a time of economic uncertainty that will likely make fund-raising more difficult for cultural organizations.

The allocation is particularly welcome for Lincoln Center, given that on Monday the mayor announced a $1.3 billion modification to the city's budget that included cuts of $766 million for various city agencies.

Anthony P. Coles, the deputy mayor who was the point person for the city on the Lincoln Center project, could not be reached for comment.

Lincoln Center's redevelopment plan calls for an extensive upgrade that includes a wide range of projects, from a $326 million rebuilding of Avery Fisher Hall to a $58 million redesign of entrances and lobbies at the Vivian Beaumont and Mitzi E. Newhouse theaters to a $10.5 million expansion of the facilities of the Film Society of Lincoln Center.

Disputes about various aspects of the project have yet to be resolved, and the particulars could change in the coming months. Each of the 11 constituents participating in the plan — including the Metropolitan Opera, the New York Philharmonic, the New York City Ballet and Jazz at Lincoln Center — has the right to a veto. As a result, the plan has been rife with conflict, a situation many believe forced Marshall Rose, the chairman of the redevelopment project, to resign in October. Gordon J. Davis, the former president of Lincoln Center, resigned just a few weeks before Mr. Rose.

Ms. Sills declined comment through a spokeswoman, Janice Price. Ms. Price said that it was up to the mayor to make any announcement and that she thought the plan still had to go through a formal approval process.



Carol Halebian for The New York Times

The Metropolitan Opera House, at left, and Avery Fisher Hall, home of the New York Philharmonic, are constituents of Lincoln Center, which has gone through a lot of infighting to come up with a satisfactory redevelopment plan.

But one Lincoln Center executive involved in the redevelopment said that any subsequent approval was merely a formality, given that the city has had the plans for 10 days. "It is tantamount to approval," the executive said. "The mayor responded enthusiastically and asked for the appropriate documents to proceed forthwith."

Among the issues that have yet to be decided is the future home of the New York City Opera. Building a new house for City Opera in Damrosch Park at Lincoln Center was strong opposed by the Metropolitan Opera's general manager, Joseph Volpe, and by Ms. Sills.

As a result, the master plan submitted to the city allocated $240 million for a 2,200-seat opera house outside the center's West Side campus. If City Opera chooses to stay at the New York State Theater, which it shares with the New York City Ballet, the plan calls for spending up to $87 million to improve the acoustics.

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