

Honorable Amanda Burden
Chair, City Planning Commission
22 Reade Street
New York, New York 10007

October 3, 2007

Dear Chair Burden:

On behalf of the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and its more than 4,000 architect and public members, we would like to express our support for the re-zoning of Manhattanville from a manufacturing district to a commercial district. We are cognizant of the importance of Columbia University's future growth and expansion, both for the University community and for New York City as a whole, as Columbia continues to attract excellent researchers and students to its campuses. We strongly believe that the neighborhood can benefit significantly from the changes in use that have been put forward today. The wonderful West Harlem Waterfront Park will bring a new focus to this area for residents and visitors alike, and they should be welcomed with a more vibrant, mixed use streetscape such as has been envisioned by both CB 9 and Columbia. For this reason, we support the overall aim of the Special District to allow the university to expand, while revitalizing this underutilized section of Harlem in a manner that will benefit the surrounding businesses and community.

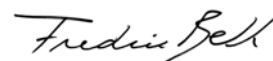
We hope that Columbia University will continue to engage those here today, as well as the architects and planners working on this proposal, to develop greater linkages between the Waterfront Park and the streets running east-west through the site. The opportunity to create a cohesive urban design for the area, one which extends beyond the new Columbia campus, cannot be missed. We also hope that the great community amenities of open space, which the Columbia plan addresses with the "Grove" and "Square" definitions, can be expanded upon to the north, in order to create a more extensive, linked network of green public spaces throughout Manhattanville.

Rezoning Manhattanville will be a crucial step forward for the neighborhood, as well as for Columbia University, and will contribute to the economic health of New York City as a whole. We support this rezoning and look forward to continuing this conversation as plans develop.

Sincerely,



Joan Blumenfeld, FAIA, IIDA
2007 President, AIA New York Chapter



Fredric Bell, FAIA
Executive Director