

Honorable Christine Quinn
Speaker, New York City Council
City Hall
New York, New York 10007

December 12, 2007

Dear Speaker Quinn:

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 continued support for the rezoning of Manhattanville from a manufacturing district to a special mixed use district. We testified at City Planning on this issue in October, and were gratified to hear of the Commission's decision to support Columbia University's and Community Board 9's modified land use plans, which call for streetscape and buildings in character with the surrounding neighborhoods, changes in use that will animate the area at all times of day and night, and well designed public streets and spaces.

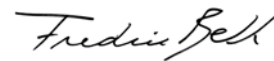
We are cognizant of the importance of Columbia University's future growth and expansion, and believe that this growth can occur in a way that will benefit both the University community and the residents of Upper Manhattan. The wonderful West Harlem Waterfront Park will bring a new focus to this area for residents and visitors alike, and they should be welcomed with a more vibrant, mixed use streetscape such as has been envisioned by both Community Board 9 and Columbia. With the revised land use plans calling for mixed use and public spaces along all the boundaries of the site, including Broadway and 125th Street, we are optimistic that the new campus will be both welcomed by and welcoming for its neighbors.

We hope that Columbia University and Community Board 9 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 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, truly public spaces throughout Manhattanville. Design considerations such as these, and ground floor transparency of academic buildings, should be at the forefront of future conversations. We look forward to participating.

Sincerely,



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



Fredric Bell, FAIA
Executive Director