



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
COMMUNITY BOARD 9
MANHATTAN

Morningside Heights
Manhattanville
Hamilton Heights
Sugar Hill

January 20, 2026

Alfred P. Sloan Foundation
630 Fifth Avenue
Suite 2200
New York, NY, 10111

To Whom It May Concern,

At its regularly scheduled General Board Meeting held on Thursday, January 15, 2026, Manhattan Community Board No. 9 passed the following Letter of Support re: **The development of the Equitable Development Index (EDI) at the J. Max Bond Center for Urban Futures at the City College of New York (CCNY)** by unanimous consent with 38 members present:

As a local government body navigating New York City's increasingly complex land-use landscape, we recognize the EDI as a vital intervention in the digital infrastructure of urban governance.

The current land-use review process (ULURP) is characterized by a profound "information asymmetry." While developers utilize proprietary modeling to project feasibility, Community Boards often rely on static, dense reports that lack interactivity. The EDI addresses this by building a rigorous decision-support tool that aggregates and structures disparate public datasets, from census demographics to Environmental Review (CEQR) filings into a common fact-base. By utilizing user-weighted indicators, the platform moves beyond simple visualization into predictive modeling. This allows stakeholders to simulate how adjustments in variables like the Universal Affordability Preference (UAP) or 485-x tax incentives impact a project's "equity score" relative to its financial viability.

The urgency of this tool is heightened by recent "City of Yes" initiatives and city charter referendums that have accelerated project approval timelines. While these policies aim to address the housing crisis, they significantly shorten the window for community analysis. The EDI provides the "analytical speed" necessary to match this new regulatory pace, translating technical legislative tools into observable indicators that allow MCB9 to evaluate projects not in isolation, but through a lens of cumulative equity.

MCB9 strongly supports the J. Max Bond Center's proposal. The Equitable Development Index is a critical piece of civic technology that ensures urban growth is guided by transparency and academic rigor.

Thank you for your consideration, if any further information is needed please do not hesitate to contact me and/or our District Manager, Eutha Prince, at the board office (646) 355-3172.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Victor Edwards".

Victor Edwards
Chair

cc: Hon. Kathy Hochul, Governor
Hon. Anthony Delgado, Lt. Governor
Hon. Zohran Mamdani, Mayor
Hon. Letitia James, Attorney General
Hon. Mark Levine, NYC Comptroller
Hon. Brad Hoylman-Sigal, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Cordell Cleare, New York State Senate
Hon. Chuck Schumer, New York State Senate
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, Congressman
Hon. Micah Lasher, Assembly Member
Hon. Al Taylor, Assembly Member
Hon. Shaun Abreu, City Council Member
Hon. Yusef Salaam, City Council Member
Zead Ramadan, Executive Director, WHDC



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January 21, 2026

Dr. Laura Rosenbury, President of Barnard College
219 Milbank Hall 3009 Broadway
New York, NY 10027

Claire Shipman, Acting President
Office of the President of Columbia University
202 Low Library, 535 W. 116 St., MC 4309
New York, NY 10027

Dear President Rosenbury and President Shipman,

At its regularly scheduled General Board Meeting held on Thursday, January 15, 2026, Manhattan Community Board No. 9 passed the following Letter of Support re: **Columbia University Tenants' Union** by unanimous consent with 38 members present:

WHEREAS, Columbia University is the largest private landowner in New York City, owning two-thirds of the buildings across Morningside Heights and acting as a landlord to over 10,000 tenants.

WHEREAS, Columbia University, as a nonprofit university, is permitted to take units out of rent-stabilization and use them for student housing once the primary tenant dies or otherwise vacates.

WHEREAS, Columbia University has a long history of buying up residential buildings across West Harlem with the specific goal of converting the units into unregulated student housing, often forcing out longtime residents and reflexively opposing succession right claims.

WHEREAS, Columbia University displaced at least 15,000 tenants between 1960 and 1983, resulting in the creation of a 1000-member strong Columbia University Tenants' Union throughout the 1970's and 1980's.

WHEREAS, an additional 5000 residents were displaced as a result of the University's expansion into Manhattanville in 2008.

WHEREAS, Morningside Heights, Manhattanville, and Hamilton Heights collectively lost about 14 percent of their Black populations and 10 percent of their Hispanic populations between the 2010 and 2020 censuses, a demographic shift that Columbia University played an active role in creating as a landlord.

WHEREAS, these neighborhoods also lost nearly 6,000 rent regulated apartments during this same time period and have suffered more than 1,000 residential and commercial evictions since 2017.

WHEREAS, Columbia University acts as a landlord and employer for many students, staff and faculty, and can potentially offset any wage increase with a corresponding increase in rent.

WHEREAS, Columbia University has increased the rent paid by some new tenants by as much as twenty-two percent over the amount paid by the previous tenants of the same units.

WHEREAS, Columbia University reserves the right to evict students on short notice as soon as they decide that the student has violated a University rule.

WHEREAS, Columbia University exercised this right throughout the spring of 2024, giving as many as fifty students no time, or only fifteen minutes, to gather their belongings and leave University housing following an alleged violation of University rules.

WHEREAS, Barnard College students living at 620 West 116th Street have been without cooking gas since May 2025, but were not offered any reductions in housing costs; instead, the University suggested that the students buy an air fryer or invest more money in their meal plan.

WHEREAS, Columbia University notified approximately 160 students at 503 West 121st Street and 600 West 113th Street to vacate their apartments in June 2025 via an email that contained no explanation for this enormous disruption, other than that the building will "no longer be available for the upcoming academic year."

WHEREAS, students at 503 West 121st Street were given less than a week by Columbia to decide whether they wanted to be relocated into other university housing or have their leases cancelled altogether.

WHEREAS, the above-mentioned facts reflect a long pattern of Columbia University mistreating its tenants.

WHEREAS, the Columbia University Tenants' Union represents an organized, tenant-led effort to collectively and equitably address these issues.

WHEREAS, other academic institutions, like Cornell University and the University of Texas at Austin, have created tenants' unions that have won significant concessions from landlords in Ithaca and Austin.

WHEREAS, the Columbia University Tenants' Union will work to ensure building protection from warrantless law enforcement intrusion.

WHEREAS, the Columbia University Tenants' Union will use its resources to identify systemic problems for repairs in buildings and expand repair services available to tenants.

WHEREAS, the Columbia University Tenants' Union will provide support to evicted tenants, especially nonaffiliates and students facing disciplinary measures from Columbia.

WHEREAS, the Columbia University Tenants' Union can be a collective force in negotiating rent increases for affiliated tenants in University housing and in supporting nonaffiliates in their advocacy with New York City rent-setting agencies.

WHEREAS, the Columbia University Tenants' Union will serve to identify and promote amenities and programs to improve the quality of life in Columbia-owned residential buildings.

WHEREAS, the Columbia University Tenants' Union will be another step towards achieving dignity and respect in the struggle to create a University more accountable to its students and to the residents of its community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Manhattan Community Board 9 formally and emphatically **SUPPORTS** the creation and organizing efforts of the Columbia University Tenants' Union as it strives to make Columbia University a more accountable and responsive landlord.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Manhattan Community Board 9 calls on Columbia University to meet the demands of the Columbia University Tenants' Union to protect the affordability and availability of units for non-Columbia affiliated tenants, ensure building protection from warrantless law enforcement intrusion (ICE, DHS, etc.), expand repair services to tenants, negotiate fair rent increases for affiliated tenants in Columbia housing, assist nonaffiliates in advocacy before City rent-setting agencies and identify and promote amenities and programs to improve the quality of life in Columbia-owned residential buildings.

Thank you for your consideration, if any further information is needed please do not hesitate to contact me and/or our District Manager, Eutha Prince, at the board office (646) 355-3172.

Sincerely,

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Victor Edwards

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