



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
COMMUNITY BOARD 9
MANHATTAN

Morningside Heights
Manhattanville
Hamilton Heights
Sugar Hill

October 17, 2025

Hon. Tricia Shimamura

Manhattan Borough Commissioner
NYC Department of Parks and Recreation
24 W. 61st Street, 5th floor
New York, NY 10023

Dear Borough Commissioner Shimamura,

Manhattan Community Board 9 voted at its regularly scheduled General Board Meeting on Thursday, October 16, 2025, in favor of presenting this letter of support - in a unanimous consent, with 34 of its 50 members in attendance - to The NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, expressing strong support for the St. Nicholas Park – 136th St. Staircase Renovation project.

The reinvestment project represents a model of equitable development and responsive governance. We deeply appreciate the Parks Department's commitment to engaging an award-winning design team and conducting a thorough analysis of the site's safety, infrastructure, and landscaping needs. The project's goals—to replace or reset stone treads, address sunken and open areas, install handrails and lighting, and eliminate rat harborage—are critical steps in enhancing safety and accessibility for park users.

The design phase, as presented to our Parks and Landmarks Committee on September 3, 2025, by NYC Parks and MKW & Associates lead designer Al Juba, and his team, aligns with the historic markers and environmental needs of the park. We thank the Mayor's Office for allocating \$3 million from the Rat Mitigation Program to fund this urgently needed work. The planned improvements are not only necessary for public safety but also represent a broader investment in Harlem's future.

St. Nicholas Park is a designated NYC Legacy Park and serves as one of the largest and most vital green spaces for Central and West Harlem residents. Generations of Harlem families have built memories within its 22 acres. While this project is a much-needed step forward, decades of underfunding and ongoing budget constraints continue to challenge the park's upkeep and future improvements.

To build on the current momentum, we respectfully request additional funding to extend the scope of the project to include the 134th Street staircase, which is also in urgent need of repair. Addressing this area concurrently would support a more comprehensive approach to improving the park's infrastructure and creating a safer, more welcoming environment for all.

New York City parks are essential to our communities, our environment, and our collective health and well-being. Manhattan Community Board 9, along with the Friends of St. Nicholas Park, remains committed to advocating for capital investments in the park. We will continue to identify and prioritize funding needs in the FY2027 Mayor's Preliminary Budget and District Needs Statement.

Thank you for your continued dedication to Harlem. We look forward to working closely with your office, the NYC Parks Department, and our community partners to ensure the successful restoration and long-term stewardship of this treasured public space.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Victor Edwards", written in a cursive style.

Victor Edwards

Chair

CC: Honorable Eric Adams, Mayor
 Honorable Brad Lander, NYC Comptroller
 Honorable Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President
 Honorable Iris Rodriguez-Rosa, NYC Parks Commissioner
 Honorable Shaun Abreu, Member of the NYC Council, 7th Council District
 Honorable Victor Edwards, Manhattan Community Board 9 Chair
 Honorable Heather Jason, Former LPP Co-Chair
 Steve Simon, NYC Parks Chief of Staff
 Ms. Karen Asner, Friends of St. Nicholas Park