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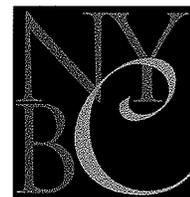
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NEW YORK
BUILDING
CONGRESS

VIA OVERNIGHT MAIL

March 3, 2009

Ms. Amanda Burden, Chair
City Planning Commission
22 Reade Street
New York, NY 10007-1216

Dear Chair Burden and Members of the Commission:

On behalf of the New York Building Congress, please accept this letter in lieu of testimony at the March 4 City Planning Commission public hearing on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement concerning the application for a zone text amendment and special permits to facilitate a proposed expansion of Fordham University ("Fordham Expansion Proposal" or "Proposal").

As the City's largest and most diverse coalition of the design, construction and real estate industry, the Building Congress is committed to promoting well-planned development that improves the City's economic health and quality of life. We have demonstrated that commitment over the years, including support of a variety of cultural, financial and educational institutions in their plans to build, renovate or expand their facilities. Most recently, we endorsed Columbia University's comprehensive development plan for expanding and modernizing its facilities and curricula, recognizing Columbia's need for the project to come to fruition and the substantial benefits that would redound to the City from its construction.

As we explained in our letters urging the New York City Planning Commission and City Council to give Columbia's development proposal favorable consideration, New York City has long been a global capital, drawing the brightest, most skilled people from all over the world who want to live and work here. With the increasing popularity of other cities, like London and Shanghai, however, the City faces growing competition for attracting the talent upon which our economy largely depends. To maintain its competitive edge, New York needs to ensure that it offers the best infrastructure, services, cultural facilities, and education and institutional resources. The Fordham Expansion Proposal significantly furthers steps toward this goal.

Fordham University has been an integral part of the New York region's higher-education infrastructure for over 100 years, earning an excellent academic reputation and affording a rich combination of four undergraduate colleges as well as graduate

programs in law, business, education, social service, religion and arts and science. In addition to the unique educational opportunities it provides students, Fordham substantially contributes to the City's economy by employing more than 2,000 faculty members, administrators and staff, and another 500 contract employees, and enriches communities across the City through a vast array of intellectual, cultural, legal and social service offerings. For example, Fordham's School of Law provides free legal clinics and, as part of their training, students from the Schools of Social Service and Education provide 184,100 hours of professional services a year citywide.

Fordham is severely constrained by its current space, however, and needs to grow in order to meet the increasing needs of its students and New York, not to mention compete with other universities on a national level. In particular, Fordham's Lincoln Center campus, the location of Fordham College and the Schools of Law, Business, Education and Social Services that was originally designed to handle 3,500 students, far exceeds capacity with almost 8,000 students, and it is projected to have over 11,000 students by 2032. This overflow translates into 106 square feet per student, compared to 388 square feet per student at neighboring schools such as Columbia and an average of 360 square feet per student at universities nationwide.

The Fordham Expansion Proposal would maximize the existing footprint of the Lincoln Center campus, which currently has 820,000 square feet of developed space, through height, setback and curb variances that will add 2.36 million square feet of space to the campus over the next 24 years. This expansion will enable Fordham to attract and cultivate even more talent from all over the country and the world, a boon to local and regional employers.

Among the most compelling features of the Proposal are the considerable economic benefits that would be realized from its construction, particularly at a time when New York City will need economic stimulus. In its recent edition of *Construction Outlook*, the Building Congress reports that almost 30,000 construction jobs could be stripped from New York City's construction workforce by 2010. Fordham hopes to begin construction in 2010, pumping jobs and spending into the City at a critical point in its economic recovery. Expansion of the Lincoln Center campus is projected to generate an estimated \$1.6 billion in construction and 4,500 to 5,000 construction jobs over the life of the project and about 520 permanent and 200 contract jobs. Additionally, new residential space, a component of the plan that will be built by private developers, is expected to produce about \$13 million a year in tax revenue for the City.

Though some concerns about the Proposal have been raised, we are hopeful that Fordham and the community will continue to work together to resolve them, without imposing such onerous conditions on Fordham that the Proposal becomes too costly to implement. Fordham has already shown good faith by addressing some concerns raised by the community and Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer and committing, among other things, to reduce the size of the overall projects, improve public access to the campus, widen sidewalks and increase street-level activity, and reduce vehicular traffic by cutting planned parking spaces by 56 percent. Fordham

Chair Burden and Members of the City Planning Commission

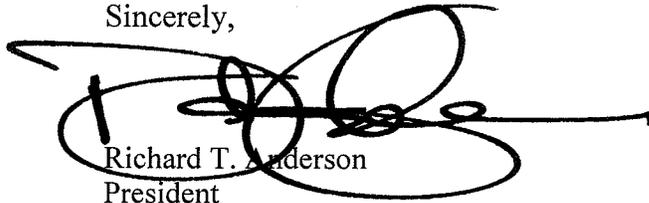
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also has pledged to take extensive precautions to minimize the impact of construction on its neighbors, including the use of noise-reduction technology and high-grade exhaust filters on heavy equipment.

Clearly, the planned expansion of Fordham's Lincoln Center campus will benefit all New Yorkers in the short term and the decades to come. The Building Congress supports this important Proposal, and we urge the Commission to approve it as quickly as possible to allow construction to begin in 2010.

Sincerely,



Richard T. Anderson
President

Best regards.

cc: The Honorable Gale Brewer, New York City Council
The Honorable Christine C. Quinn, Speaker, New York City Council
The Honorable Scott M. Stringer, Manhattan Borough President