

## **Empire State Development News**

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### **FOR RELEASE: IMMEDIATE**

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## **ESDC BOARD ANNOUNCES RELEASE OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY GENERAL PROJECT PLAN**

The Empire State Development Corporation announced today that the ESDC Board of Directors has adopted the Columbia University General Project Plan and authorized a public hearing for the university's proposed expansion.

The \$6.28 billion project, which is to be funded entirely by the university, will add up to 6.8 million square feet of new, state-of-the-art facilities in up to 16 new buildings and in an adaptively reused existing building. The additional space will be used primarily for graduate-level teaching facilities, academic research, housing and recreation, and open active ground floor uses. The proposal also calls for the development of open spaces accessible to the general public, including widened sidewalks, mid-block open spaces, a large square and smaller open spaces.

Columbia University has long been a leader among the state's private colleges and universities – a sector of the economy that has grown at a rate more than three times that of the state's overall economy. Columbia is New York City's seventh-largest private employer, with approximately 14,000 employees, over two-thirds of whom live in New York City. The project is expected to add 14,000 construction jobs and 6,000 new university jobs.

"This project underscores Columbia's commitment to its neighbors by providing benefits to many segments of the local community: partnering with local secondary schools to enhance math and science curricula; providing scholarships for local residents, medical facilities for school-age children and funds for development; and by setting a 40 percent goal of minority and women labor. Columbia, my alma matter, continues to be a vital part of this city and State," said Governor David A. Paterson.

"This exciting project will keep one of the world's premier universities at the forefront of higher education and academic research for decades to come. In addition, Columbia's expansion will bring thousands of new jobs to the city and revitalize an area that has been plagued by underinvestment," ESDC Downstate President Avi Schick said.

"In today's increasingly competitive global economy, New York City must continue to attract the best and brightest researchers, scientists and students, and Columbia University's expansion will go a long way in that effort," said Deputy Mayor for Economic Development Robert C. Lieber. "In addition to creating an integrated state-of-the-art academic research campus, the Columbia expansion will create thousands of new permanent and construction jobs, improve pedestrian streetscapes and provide critical new open space for the local community."

"This project and the benefits that community leaders, local politicians and state officials negotiated to be a part of it, promises to transform the lives of Upper Manhattan residents for years to come," said Congressman Charles Rangel (D-NY). "I look forward to the public hearings and the process moving along so that there is no delay in establishing the public & private partnerships needed to improve housing, education, job creation and other issues in the Manhattanville area."

"I commend the Empire State Development Corporation in moving the Columbia University General Project Plan forward. The West Harlem Community has long anticipated the opportunity to comment on the amenities to be included in the expansion plan. It is my hope that Columbia University will be eager and willing to take the steps necessary to incorporate our community's needs and demands into this historic project," said Assemblyman Keith L.T. Wright of Harlem.

"Columbia's long-term plan for an educational mixed-use area in the old Manhattanville manufacturing zone was overwhelmingly approved last year by the City Council as part of New York City's rigorous land use review process," said Columbia University President Lee C. Bollinger. "We are gratified by the Empire State Development Corporation's adoption of a General Project Plan as the next step for a civic project that has moved forward with widespread support from local officials, elected representatives and a wide coalition of public interest groups committed to sustainable growth and vibrant urban neighborhoods. This support is built on the broad recognition that a thriving system of higher education is essential to preserving New York's historic role as a place that provides good middle-income jobs for a diversity of local citizens -- and as a global center for attracting the great minds that make a difference in our society. What's more, through the public amenities included in this state plan and other commitments, Columbia's long-term growth will deliver a broad range of new civic benefits and University resources to those who live and work in our local community."

The principal portion of the site is bordered by and includes 12th Ave on the west, Broadway on the east, 125th Street on the south and 133rd Street on the north. The project site also includes an irregularly shaped area east of Broadway, from 131st Street to 134th Street. The Project Site is part of a larger (35-acre) area that was rezoned by New York City at the end of 2007.

In adopting the General Project Plan, the ESDC board accepted the findings of a neighborhood conditions study conducted by the consulting firm AKRF Inc. and a comprehensive audit of that study by Earth Tech Inc. Both reports found that the area surrounding the project's 17 buildings was mainly characterized by aging, poorly maintained and functionally obsolete industrial buildings, with little indication of recent reinvestment to revive their generally deteriorated conditions.

It is envisioned that the benefits provided by the project, including employment opportunities, open campus design and increased campus activity, publicly accessible open spaces and new active ground floor uses, would revitalize the site along with the commercial and social life of the surrounding community.

In addition to the benefits previously negotiated with the City Council and the Office of Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, ESDC has secured the following additional community benefits from Columbia University:

- \$20 million in funds for the Harlem Community Development Corporation to focus on community development and planning.
- \$1 million for expanded CUNY Health Science and Medical Technician training.
- Annual undergraduate and Lifelong Learner scholarships for area residents, including local NYCHA tenants.
- A goal of 40% MWL workforce participation for construction jobs related to project.
- Provision of a mobile dental center for preschool children, space for senior service programming and a center on disease education for children K-12.
- Columbia University will also partner with local middle and high schools to develop and implement math and science course support.

All project costs are Columbia University's responsibility and ESDC will be reimbursed for any costs it incurs in assisting the project's implementation. Columbia will fund a relocation program that will provide relocation assistance at no cost to any residential and non-residential occupants that may be displaced by the project.

A public hearing is being scheduled. Details on hearing date, time and location will be provided at a later point.

Empire State Development is New York's chief economic development agency, encompassing business, workforce and community development. ESD also oversees the marketing of "I LOVE NY," the State's iconic tourism brand. For more information, visit [www.nylovesbiz.com](http://www.nylovesbiz.com).

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