



SCIENCE FOR THE BENEFIT OF HUMANITY

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May 6, 2014

Honorable Benjamin Kallos  
250 Broadway, Suite 1738  
New York, New York 10007

Re: The Rockefeller University River Building – Nos. C140157 ZSM, M 821257D ZAM,  
C 140468(A) MMM and N 140159 ZMM

Dear Council Member Kallos:

The Rockefeller University and I personally thank you for your leadership and the attention you have given to planning with us for a River Building addition to our University. We are pleased to present to you, to the City Council and to our community of neighbors this Letter of Commitment setting forth the University's promised undertakings. (Attachment 1 offers a short profile of The Rockefeller University.)

I. Landscaping and Maintenance of the Esplanade

The esplanade covering the area described in the restrictive declaration (the "Esplanade") is a delightful and potentially even wonderful public space that has engaged our focused attention. We are committed to restoring the supporting sea wall and enhancing the Esplanade as a very high priority that will bring substantial gains to the public. When the River Building is enclosed, the University will enhance the Esplanade with new pavers, benches, pedestrian walkways and mapped greenway bike lanes, shade trees and plantings as provided in the restrictive declaration. In addition, we commit to providing the funds that will maintain this stretch of the esplanade in perpetuity as described below.

- A. We have earmarked \$8 million of our University's budget as the estimated cost for meeting two basic commitments that are described in the restrictive declaration.
  - 1. Our first commitment is to repair and shore up the deteriorating sea wall on which the Esplanade rests as provided in the restrictive declaration. This repair will significantly contribute to the safety and longevity of the sea wall.
  - 2. Our second commitment is to refurbish and landscape the Esplanade, as provided in the restrictive declaration, with inviting and new amenities and plantings to enhance the experience of strolling, walking, running or biking along the East River.
- B. The restrictive declaration requires as a partial mitigation under CEQR that the University perform for a period of not less than twelve (12) years, enhanced maintenance of the Esplanade from the centerline of demapped

68<sup>th</sup> Street to a point 150-feet south of the southerly edge of the new River Building. In order to accomplish this mitigation, and to expand upon it, the University will establish a one-time, \$1 million restricted endowment for the perpetual maintenance of the Esplanade plantings in the area described in the restrictive declaration. The restricted endowment will be created upon completion of the enhancement project described above.

1. The landscape maintenance endowment will be carried as a restricted line item in the University's total endowment, with the annual draw-down for Esplanade maintenance determined by the spending formula annually applied to the total endowment that generates the annual budget for the University. This annual draw-down will be in an amount sufficient to cover the costs of this maintenance obligation, which is presently estimated at approximately \$50,000 per year.
2. Over time, in the event that the restricted endowment grows to a point at which the annual draw is more than could be reasonably spent to cover the original scope of landscape maintenance, the excess funding may be used, at the discretion of the responsible entity, (See Section II) to expand the scope and/or expand the area of coverage beyond that referenced in the restrictive declaration.
3. The annual draw from the restricted endowment will be provided to an entity responsible for deploying the funding in support of landscape maintenance on the Esplanade. The restrictive declaration requires the University to engage and pay private contractors to perform this work for a period of at least twelve (12) years. Alternative responsible entities for this work could include the Department of Parks and Recreation or an appropriate conservancy (See Section II). The University commits to securing all required City approvals, consistent with the terms of the restrictive declaration, should this work be delegated to an alternate responsible entity.

## II. Conservancy for the Esplanade

We have engaged with the Friends of the East River Esplanade ("Esplanade Friends"), a neighborhood, tax exempt organization, whose purpose is "to encourage, support and fund the restoration and renovation of the waterfront esplanade along the East River from 60<sup>th</sup> Street to 120<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan as a public pedestrian promenade or public trail for the benefit of the general public, with the goal of improving the safety and quality of the running paths, boating access, fishing piers and bike paths, and making it safe and beautiful destination for community use and cultural and environmental events." Upon completion of the unconditional approval of the River Building project by the New York City Council and the expiration of the period within which to challenge the approval or a final non-appealable judgment upholding the approval, we will implement the following commitments to the Friends of the East River Esplanade.

- A. If elected, an officer of The Rockefeller University will serve on the Esplanade Friends Board of Directors. As discussed, we have tentative



agreement with two other institutions, Hospital for Special Surgery and New York Presbyterian, regarding the potential for each of them to encourage one of their officers, if elected, to join the Esplanade Friends Board. In addition, we will reach out to other neighborhood institutions with the intention of securing a critical mass of corporate officers who will, if elected, serve on the Board of Esplanade Friends.

- B. Esplanade Friends is led and supported by an energetic and committed group of volunteers who have devoted their time and creativity to carrying out the group's purposes as stated above. In support of Esplanade Friends' ongoing efforts to engage appropriate staff and plan, organize and publicize events, to mobilize the community for the restoration and enjoyment of the esplanade, and to raise funds in support of the entity's mission, we commit to making a contribution of \$150,000 to be used consistent with the organization's mission as the Board of Directors of Esplanade Friends determines. Our commitment will be implemented upon City Council approval of our River Building project as described in Paragraph II. above.
- C. Referencing back to Section I. of this Letter of Commitment, if the entity so wishes and has the necessary skill and capacity, Esplanade Friends would become a candidate for receiving and responsibly expending the annual Esplanade maintenance funds generated out of the University's perpetual endowment for that purpose.

### III. Programmed/Regulated Public Access to The Rockefeller University

We are proud to have been part of the Upper East Side community for over 100 years. A large fraction of our employees live within blocks of our campus, shop locally and send their children to local schools. We are a local institution, and in recognition of that fortunate fact, we have established cultural and educational events to which we invite our neighbors. We currently host free concerts and open lectures as well as educational programs for students and teachers. Some events are open to all members of the public; others are targeted to specific subsets of guests, e.g., disadvantaged high school students.

- A. A significant number of partial-day events (1-3 hours), such as lectures, science discussions, concerts, open-house and campus tours, occur yearly. Typically there are approximately 60 such events – about 150 hours – each year.
- B. Several full-day events for elementary, middle and high school students, including the Holiday Lectures, Science Outreach Days and Science Saturday occur yearly. Typically there are approximately 5 full day events (25 hours) each year.
- B. We will continue to schedule these events on dates and at times convenient for the community, and, upon completion of construction of the River Building, the University commits to the expansion of our programmed public access events by a minimum of 20%.

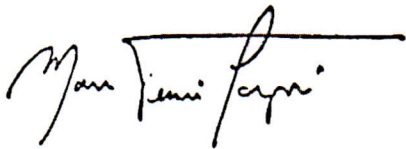
IV. Reduction of Noise for Enhanced Enjoyment of the Esplanade

The objective of this commitment is to reduce noise generated by traffic on the FDR Drive as experienced by people using the East River Esplanade. We have committed to constructing a noise-reducing barrier between the Esplanade and the FDR Drive as provided in the restrictive declaration.

- A. As originally conceived, the barrier would have been five (5) feet high and would have eliminated any increase in noise created by the presence of the new River Building. At the request of Community Board 8, we have raised the planned barrier to a height of eight (8) feet, with the result that there will be less noise after the construction of our River Building than users of the Esplanade experience now.
- B. We are committed to studying the various types of barriers that would best meet the dual goals of noise reduction and maintenance of an inviting setting for people using the Esplanade. A green barrier and alternative options are currently under consideration. The plans for the barrier ultimately chosen must receive approval from all City and State agencies as required by law. The design must be welcomed by the community and, in any event, may not compromise the functionality of the Esplanade.

Thank you, again, for your support and guidance as we plan for The Rockefeller University's River Building. We look forward to engaging with you, the City Council and our community on this exciting project.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Marc Tessier-Lavigne". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Marc Tessier-Lavigne  
President, The Rockefeller University



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## Attachment 1

### PROFILE OF THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

The Rockefeller University is one of the world's leading biomedical research centers. Founded in 1901, Rockefeller was one of the world's first institutions devoted exclusively to biomedical research. For more than 110 years, our scientists have conducted innovative studies aimed at improving the understanding of life. The university is focused exclusively on biomedical research. We admit and graduate only PhD and MD/PhD students.

Rockefeller has been one of the most successful biomedical research institutes in the world with an unparalleled record of scientific accomplishment. We have had on our faculty more Nobel Laureates in Medicine and Chemistry than any other institution in the world – 24 to be exact, 5 in past 15 years.

To maintain our success, the university has to work diligently year in and year out to attract and retain the world's top scientists. Our success is based on recruiting the very best scientists, providing them with a highly interdisciplinary, free flowing environment, and encouraging them to interact across boundaries and disciplines. What those top scientists look for today are state of the art laboratories that maximize opportunities for collaboration through large floor plates and adjacencies of lab space that enable open exchange of information and ideas. To meet their expectations, we must be able to offer world-class laboratories that meet or exceed the standards of competing institutions across the country and abroad. The planned River Campus is expected to meet the expectations of scientists who will join us and continue to fulfill the promise of Rockefeller's founding principle: to engage in extraordinary science for the benefit of humanity.