April 25, 2012

Hon. Amanda Burden
Chair, NYC Department of City Planning
22 Reade Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Burden:

I write to express my support for the New York University Core Project. The McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research located within the Silver School of Social Work oversees numerous applied research studies aimed at addressing the root causes of poverty, as well as examining approaches to address and reduce the consequences of poverty.

Recently released census figures confirm that the number of children and families living in poverty in increasing nationwide. New York City’s Center for Economic Opportunity reports that the City’s poverty rate stands at 21%, the highest it has been since 2005. The development of research and interventions focused on assisting and empowering impoverished communities is crucial.

We intend to hire additional staff and continue to build the Institute to meet these pressing needs. However, McSilver’s space constraints are inhibiting our ability to increase our research capacity. Without proper offices, research labs, meeting rooms and additional classrooms, the McSilver Institute is unable to move forward with its organizational expansion.

McSilver studies are multidisciplinary and employ collaborative action research models. We are fortunate to be able to draw on the intellectual capital of New York University’s 18 schools and colleges. Our close proximity to Washington Square allows for hands on involvement of faculty from several of the University’s schools, including Steinhardt, Wagner and the Law School.

I urge you to vote to approve the New York University Core Project.

Sincerely,

Mary McKernan McKay, Ph.D.