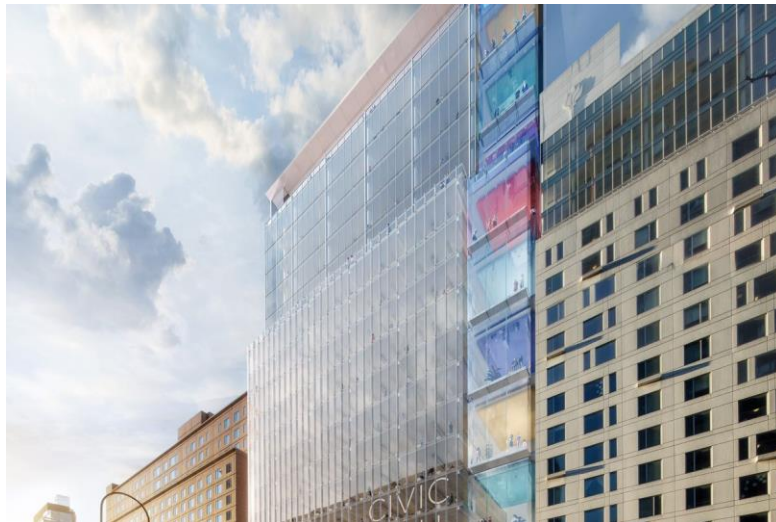




Union Square's tech hub gets crucial community support

Two subcommittees of Community Board 3 voted Wednesday to support the P.C. Richard & Son-replacing development

By [Tanay Warkerkar](#) Feb 9, 2018, 11:24am EST



Despite opposition from some local residents, Community Board 3's land use and economic development subcommittees voted Wednesday night to approve the Union Square Tech Training Center (formerly Tech Hub), being pushed forward by the de Blasio administration.

A packed crowd had gathered at a basketball court at the Henry Street Settlement on the Lower East Side to discuss the merits and potential impacts of the tech hub. As plans stand right now, the 21-story building will replace the P.C. Richard & Son building on East 14th Street, and bring with it an affordable digital skills training center, office space for startups, a retail and market area operated by Urbanspace on the ground floor, and traditional office space on the upper levels.

Residents concerned about the development reiterated their position Wednesday that they weren't opposed to the tech hub, but were hoping for zoning protections in the surrounding area, particularly along Third and Fourth Avenue, [to prevent future over-development](#) following the construction of the tech hub.

“Who could deny a job training center that has so many wonderful attributes?” asked Jean Crier, one such concerned resident, at Wednesday’s meeting. “We are not against the tech hub, but the zoning change will open the door to a whole raft of development that will negatively impact the community. Let this project be unique and restrictive.”

The public testimony and discussion by community board members was preceded by a lengthy presentation by the developer RAL Development Services, and their various partners on the project including Civic Hall, the tech non-profit that will run the digital skills center, and Urbanspace, the organization that will operate the food hall.

As of right, the developers can build a 14-story tower at the site, but if that comes to pass, the developers likely won't be incentivized to include many of the community benefit aspects of the project. Residents who spoke in favor of the development at Wednesday’s meeting spoke about how the tech hub would open up access to a vast variety of digital skills to low-income New Yorkers.

In the end the community board subcommittees voted 17-6 to approve the tech hub without zoning protections. The application will now be heard by the full community board on February 27, [according to](#) the Lo-Down. From there it will make its way to the borough president’s office, followed by the City Planning Commission, and then end up at the City Council for a final verdict.

<https://ny.curbed.com/2018/2/9/16995130/union-square-tech-hub-community-board-verdict>