



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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CHRISTINE BERTHET
Chair

Jesse R. Bodine
District Manager

March 10, 2015

Kyle Kimball
President
New York City Economic Development Corporation
110 William Street
New York, NY 10038

Dear Mr. Kimball,

On February 11, 2015 the Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee of Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) heard a presentation by the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates of the proposed design of Block 4, between West 36th and West 37th Streets, of the six-block, Hudson Park and Boulevard.

On the recommendation of the Committee, Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) at its regular Board meeting on March 4, 2015, by a vote of 38 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible, voted to thank EDC for its presentation and to commend the Van Valkenburgh Associates team for its exceptional design for Block 4. The Board commends the design team for its imaginative use of park space, the variety of play and passive areas, the diversity of plantings, and the park's inviting layout and graceful contours. The team packed a lot of park into a small patch.

Block 4 is the first block of Phase Two of the proposed six-block park, currently named, until a better name is selected, "Hudson Park Boulevard." The park, when completed, will lie between West 33rd Street and West 39th Street and between the new Hudson Boulevard East and Hudson Boulevard West (between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues). Phase One includes blocks one through three.

In the spring of 2014, several members of MCB4 including members of its Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee and Waterfront, Parks, and Environment Committee, visited the design studio of Valkenburgh Associates in Brooklyn to view a model of Block 4. The Board is grateful that the designers addressed the concerns and incorporated a number of the suggestions members of the Board posed.

Features

Although the area of Block 4 is small, interest and variety has been created by different and distinct play and seating areas, a variety of plants and planting areas, a higher grade at one end of the block, and a variety of pavings and building material. An ingenious interior pathway was developed allowing for both circulation through the block as well as along the boulevards.

A variety of deciduous and evergreen trees and understory shrubs will provide the park with color year-round and perennials and groundcover will soften the surface areas. Park seating of weathered *Robinia pseudoacacia* boards and powder coated ductile iron stanchions with stainless steel arm rests

Programmatic diversity is achieved by having a single enclosed playground area separated into multiple landscapes offering both play and social opportunities for various age groups. Playground areas for children ages 5-12 include a climbing structure with "Flubber" seating and a swing with 3 belt seats and one accessible seat.

For younger children (ages 2 to 5 years) a "Flower Play Garden" with play house has "daises" of engineered spruce petals, black locust stems and leaves and "tulips" of engineered spruce petals, black locust stems. There's even a sand play area for those who prefer a more elemental play arena.

Storm Water Retention

As with all new park designs, MCB4 urges that every effort be made to minimize, either through absorption through the ground underneath the plantings, through the use of permeable surface, or through recycling, as much storm water runoff as possible to prevent storm water from overwhelming the sewers.

Because the City's combined stormwater/sewer system cannot handle the increased volume of water from a heavy rain, the untreated overflow goes into the rivers through combined sewer outfalls. Every bit of rain we keep out of the sewer means that much less sewage goes into the river.

Pedestrian-Friendly Boulevard

Given the potential for active use of the park by a large number of visitors, MCB4 believes that the boulevard adjacent to the park should be a relatively quiet environment where safety for children and parents is of paramount importance. This is especially important along Block 4 which is designed in large part toward active recreation of younger children.

The Board is also concerned that drivers going to the Lincoln Tunnel will use the East Boulevard as a shortcut to Eleventh Avenue, thereby encouraging speeding, honking, and back ups. The Board urges DOT to give serious consideration to finding a solution to this potentially dangerous situation by designing Boulevard East and West in such a way that they are unified with, rather than separate from, the park. This can be achieved possibly by distinctive paving materials, raised pedestrian crossings, or pedestrianizing the street by giving it more of a plaza feel.

Sincerely,



Christine Berthet
Chair



Jean-Daniel Noland
Chair, Clinton / Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee

cc: Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates
Signe Nielson, President, NYC Public Design Commission
Margaret Forgione, Manhattan Borough Commissioner NYC DOT
Robert Benfatto, Executive Director, HYHK Alliance