

CITY OF NEW YORK  
**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**  
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[www.nyc.gov/mcb4](http://www.nyc.gov/mcb4)

**Lowell D. Kern**  
Chair

**Jesse R. Bodine**  
District Manager

January 16, 2020

Steve Simon  
Chief of Staff  
Manhattan Borough Commissioner  
NYC Department of Parks and Recreation  
Arsenal West  
24 W. 61<sup>st</sup> Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10023

**Re: Toddler Playground Area, Hell's Kitchen Park (West 48<sup>th</sup> Street and Tenth Avenue)**

Dear Mr. Simon:

Manhattan Community Board 4's (MCB4) Waterfront, Parks, and Environment Committee (WPE) thanks you and your staff for the update regarding the plans to install a shade feature in the toddler playground area at Hell's Kitchen Park, located at the corner of West 48<sup>th</sup> Street and Tenth Avenue. As you know, earlier this year the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) cut down a diseased mature tree in the toddler playground area. The removal of such a mature tree drastically reduced the amount shade over the toddler area of the park. As a result, many residents reported the toddler area was unusable as the heat of the sun prevented kids from being able to enjoy the playground; the increase in sun also adversely affected the many community garden plots which were planted for shade. Since that time, the Waterfront, Parks, and Environment Committee has been asking for a plan for the space by the Parks Department so the area can become usable again in the spring of 2020. At a meeting of its Full Board on January 2, 2020, by a vote of 37 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 present not eligible to vote, and 0 abstaining, the full board supports the following recommendations:

MCB4 supports DPR efforts to install a large triangular shade sail over the area, with two sides affixed to the fence along the handball courts, and another coming across to the northwest corner of the playground space. As stated, the shade sail will be installed in the spring. MCB4 would like an update from DPR regarding how the sail will be handled in the winter next year. While MCB4 would prefer the original tree to be replaced we recognize it would take years to replace the shade canopy of a mature tree by replanting a new tree.

In December of 2019, as a part of its budget ask to the city, MCB4 requested the Parks Department begin working with the community to redesign and renovate Hell's Kitchen Park. Recognizing that planting any new trees now would tie the future design to today's layout, we look forward to working with the community to update, design, and reconstruct Hell's Kitchen Park.

In addition, a softening of the play area surface is another welcome improvement, and the holes from the existing trees should also be leveled to mitigate any tripping hazards.

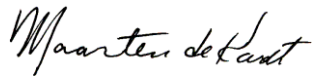
And finally, we welcome the addition of a playhouse structure at the northwest corner of the toddler area as another temporary measure to improve the park.

Thank you.

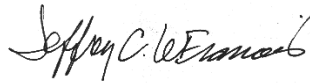
Sincerely,



Lowell D. Kern  
Chair  
Manhattan Community Board 4



Maarten de Kadt  
Co-Chair  
Waterfront, Parks & Environment  
Committee



Jeffrey LeFrancois  
Co-Chair  
Waterfront, Parks & Environment  
Committee