



CITY OF NEW YORK  
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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April 12, 2024

Robert J. Benfatto  
President  
Hudson Yards Hell's Kitchen Alliance  
412 W. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10036

**Re: The Canoe (W. 36<sup>th</sup> Street, 9<sup>th</sup>-Dyer Aves)**

Dearp President Benfatto,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) requested from the Hell's Kitchen Hudson Yards Hell's Kitchen Alliance (BID) a report on the conditions of the "Canoe" related to syringe usage and drug abuse that hinders the use of this stretch of sidewalk as a mini plaza. The Canoe is located on the north side of West 36<sup>th</sup> Street between Ninth and Dyer Avenues. By a vote of 39 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to vote, MCB4 recommends that pedestrian lighting be installed along the super sidewalk.

The Canoe is a tree lined 400-ft long super-sidewalk installed by the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) in 2013, on a site previously occupied by a New Jersey barrier and police parking. The City had committed this work in its 2009 Western Rail Yard Points of Agreements with City Council.

The DOT owns the southern half of the Canoe, and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) owns the northern half. It leases it as is and at will to the BID. A continuous tree pit with 11 trees was installed on the northern section in 2018. These improvements created an attractive 10-ft wide walk-lane with trees on both sides and undergrowth plantings. Pedestrians use it frequently to reach the western parts of the district, including the main Javits

Center entrance located at West 36<sup>th</sup> Street. It is very well maintained by the BID who provides sanitation and horticulture.

During the COVID pandemic, thousands of homeless persons were living in hotels one block away. The Canoe became a gathering place and since then, heroin addicts use the westernmost part of the Canoe, close to the tunnel entrance, making it impossible to deploy table and chairs and convert it to a plaza as it was before COVID. Providing security in such a small place has proven very challenging.

The Port Authority meets regularly and works closely with the BID to maintain their properties, including this area, clean and free of encampments. The BID should continue to request help from PANYNJ in addressing the drug uses on the Canoe. More comments are likely to come after the MCB4 Housing and Human Services Committee, who are experts in this field, has a chance to review the situation.

In addition to installing lighting, MCB4 suggests two courses of action for the BID if they want to add a plaza use to the original design as a walk lane:

- Experiment with deploying tables and chairs on the eastern part only, and limit the hours of operation to midday, when the space is most welcoming. Another option would be to install stand-up tables only.
- Include the Canoe in the plans for the larger green spaces the Port Authority Bus Terminal Replacement project will create. The goal is to ensure that the Parks Department is authorized to deploy Park Enforcement Patrol (PEP) officers in the whole area including the Canoe.

We thank the BID for their excellent stewardship of this greened super sidewalk.

Sincerely,



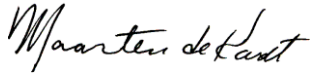
Jessica Chait  
Chair  
Manhattan Community Board 4



Christine Berthet  
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Transportation Planning Committee



Jesse Greenwald  
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Transportation Planning Committee



Maarten deKadt  
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