



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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COREY JOHNSON
Chair

ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.
District Manager

July 27, 2011

Ann Weisbrod
President
Hudson Yards Development Corporation
225 West 24th Street, Suite 1402
New York, New York 10122

**Re: Hudson Park and Boulevard
Updated Design dated April 28, 2011**

Dear Ms. Weisbrod:

Manhattan Community Board 4's (CB4) Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee reviewed the updated design for Hudson Park and Boulevard (the "Park") at its committee meeting on June 8, 2011. CB4 is appreciative of the opportunity to review the most current design concept and pleased with the progress that has been made since the Board's previous letter to you on January 20, 2011. However, the Board believes the Park's success hinges on a more focused design centered on creating more generous lawn areas and playground space. In the current iteration of the design, there has been great improvement in those areas, however the design remains cluttered. There are simply too many features and not enough of any single feature to create full functional use for the current and developing community surrounding the Park.

The Board requests:

- Further expansion of the playground on Block #3, between West 35th and West 36th Streets; and
- Deletion of the ice ribbon skating feature to create more lawn and seating areas on Block #2, between West 34th and West 35th Streets.

Our detailed comments are noted below.

West 33rd – West 34th Streets: Block #1

The Board is pleased with, and supports, the proposed changes on Block #1. The updated design for that block of the Park consolidates the planting areas from the originally proposed eight, down to six. This consolidation enables the creation of an expanded lawn area to provide much needed passive recreation space. The expanded lawn on Block #1 will have the most southern exposure as a result of the Western Railyards site design to the south. CB4 also appreciates the reduction in the area of the Park surrounded by bollards to only the #7 Subway entrances; this change creates a more welcoming and less fortress like appearance for Block #1.

West 34th – West 35th Streets: Block #2

CB4 recognizes that the revised design of the ice skating ribbon is an improvement from the previous iteration. However, this feature simply overwhelms the design of Block #2 and consumes a large percentage of the open space. Any ice skating feature will only be operable for approximately 4 months out of the year. It is in the warmer months that the Park will receive its greatest use, and its design should be geared to that time of year. Even as a water feature during the warmer months, the ice ribbon continues to overwhelm Block #2. It is simply too much on a 200 foot by 175 foot block. The bridges, the railings (which would be at eye height to persons seated on benches), the width of the water feature, the fountains and the island represent too much design activity in a very compact open space. The inclusion of the ice skating ribbon simply cuts down the usability of the Park for the sake of a more splashy design (pun intended).

The “Ice Ribbon” takes up too much room in this small park and is simply not a good fit.

CB4 cannot support the inclusion of an ice ribbon on Block #2. The Board requests an expanded lawn and a smaller water feature that would draw both commercial and residential users throughout the majority of the year.

West 35th – West 36th Streets: Block #3

CB4 is pleased that the updated Park plans feature an expanded playground on Block #3, between West 35th and West 36th Streets. This ensures that there will be adequate play area space for children early on even if the northern three blocks of the Park are on a longer timeline for completion. Play space for children is greatly needed in Hell’s Kitchen and will support the existing and expanding residential population of the neighborhood in the West 30’s. The larger playground will also help to animate the Park.

CB4 requests that the playground be expanded to include the kidney shaped area to the northeast of the proposed play area. The current design of the expanded playground should be programmed to include space for older children as well as for toddlers. Block #3 has the smallest footprint of the three blocks. Again we note that fewer, but larger and more accommodating, design features are requested over multiple, smaller design features.

CB4 appreciates the ongoing design dialogue with HYDC. The design continues to develop, but in its essence the Park features too many design elements and not enough usable park space for the community. We appreciate your continued responsiveness and look forward to working with you to create a more focused and usable design.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CJ', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Corey Johnson
Chair
Manhattan CB4

cc: Honorable Jerrold Nadler, Member of United States Congress
Honorable Tom Duane, New York State Senator
Honorable Richard N. Gottfried, Member, New York State Assembly
Honorable Deborah Glick, Member, New York State Assembly
Honorable Christine Quinn, Speaker, New York City Council
Amanda Burden – Chair of CPC
Edith Hsu-Chen – DCP
Erika Sellke – DCP
Keith O'Connor - DCP
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Public Design Commission