



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 34th Street, Suite 1402
New York, New York 10122

Re: Hudson Boulevard and Park Design Concepts

Dear Ms. Weisbrod:

Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) wishes to thank the Hudson Yards Development Corporation for the opportunity to comment on the proposed design.

We endorse the comments in the letter of June 20, 2011 the Hudson Yards Advisory Committee (HYCAC) has sent to you on the Hudson Park and Boulevard. We have participated actively in the preparation of those comments, and they should be considered comments of CB4 as well as the HYCAC.

It is our hope and expectation that this consultation will continue as the Hudson Park and Boulevard moves toward completion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CJ'.

Corey Johnson
Chair

cc: NYC Department of Transportation
NYC Department of Parks and Recreation
NYC Department of City Planning
Speaker Christine Quinn
Senator Thomas Duane
Congressman Jerrold Nadler
Assembly member Richard Gottfried
Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer

The Hudson Yards Community Advisory Committee
c/o Manhattan Community Board No. 4
330 West 42nd Street, 26th Floor
New York, NY 10036

June 20, 2011

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

Re: Hudson Boulevard Park

Dear Ms. Weisbrod:

The Hudson Yards Community Advisory Committee (HYCAC) is grateful for this opportunity to review and comment on the next iteration of the design concept for the planned Hudson Boulevard Park. We believe the design is much improved from the first iteration we saw in January, and, as before, we appreciate the opportunity to participate in this thoughtful discussion.

We would like to comment on three specific large issues and on three smaller ones

Accessible Lawn Areas

The new plans for Block 1 consolidate eight planting areas from the earlier plan into six, including one large one with accessible lawn area. This consolidation and simplification dramatically improves the block. We are especially pleased with the size of the main lawn area. This is particularly important to us since we learned at the meeting that following full build-out the “cave-like” conditions on the other blocks will provide less than the minimum number of hours of sunlight required for lawn to grow. We recommend that the design team explore the possibility of planting accessible lawn areas in Blocks 2 and 3 now while there still is light, with the expectation that they will be transitioned to low light plants as buildings that block the sun are built.

Play Feature

We appreciate the replacement of the small play area formerly in Block 3 with a significantly larger one relocated from Block 4. As we wrote in our letter of February 10, this change means that the community would have the benefit of a reasonably sized play area at least several years earlier than with the original design. We note, however, that the proposed play area appears to be significantly smaller than the one that had been proposed for Block 4.

We request that the play area be expanded by whatever means possible, including the incorporation of the currently open area immediately to the northeast. The need to provide separate play areas for children of different groups (toddler, pre-K, preteen) necessitates a larger area devoted to it. We note that relocating the café to Block 2 would free up additional space for an expanded play area. A bolder alternative, and the one we prefer, would be to move the play area to Block 2, where not only is there space available for a significantly larger play area, but children and families would enjoy greater light and air.

Ice Ribbon

We continue to fail to understand the fascination with the ice ribbon. Although the revised design is more finished and arguably more interesting, it remains a massive, inappropriate feature that dominates the second largest block in the park with a passive water feature for three quarters of the year, restricts circulation and precludes other, more community-friendly uses, such as accessible lawn areas (while there is sun) and an expanded play area. We note that the revised plan involves numerous fountains that would be expensive to build and to maintain, and significantly reduces the size of the planted.

We believe that the proposed ice ribbon squanders precious park space and other resources on a specialized feature that will be enjoyed by relatively few during the brief winter months while occupying the bulk of an entire block of park.

Lighting

We appreciate the extended discussion of both lighting fixtures and technologies. We understand that your efforts to get the city to adopt a new standard most likely will not come to fruition in time for Phase I, but we wish you success in your efforts. We agree that it is crucial that whatever is finally chosen is sufficiently flexible to accommodate evolving technologies such as LEDs that promise significant benefits in energy usage and light quality. We also appreciate that lighting poles will be placed at the edges of landscaped areas to maximize planted areas and minimize walkway/plaza areas.

Bollards

We appreciate your efforts to reduce the required bollards to those truly necessary to protect sensitive areas such as the subway entrances and hope that your good sense will prevail with those who have final say over security issues.

Bench Materials

We remain committed to the use of sustainable materials and are happy to learn about the potential use of native black locust for the benches.

We are pleased with the progress on the design and the general trend towards a more community-friendly park. With the exception of the proposed ice ribbon, we now can begin to imagine ourselves happily enjoying the park. We hope that our thoughts will lead to further consideration and design work, with, we hope, an emphasis on expanding the play area and eliminating the ice ribbon. We look forward to reviewing the next iteration and to progress towards ground breaking. Again, we appreciate the opportunity to participate in the design process.

Sincerely,



John Lee Compton, Chair
Hudson Yards Community Advisory Committee

Cc: NYC Council Speaker Christine Quinn
NYS Senator Thomas K. Duane
NYS Assemblyman Richard Gottfried
Congressman Jerrold Nadler
Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer
Amanda Burden – Chair of CPC
CPC – All Members
Edith Hsu-Chen, Erika Sellke – DCP
Borough Commissioner William Castro, Steve Simon, Michael Bradley – NYC DPR
Wendy Leventer, Aron Kirsch – HYCD
Elizabeth Silver, Brynn Perrine, Emily Walker, Matthew Urbanski - MVVA