



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**JEAN-DANIEL NOLAND**  
Chair

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

July 14, 2008

34<sup>th</sup> Street Partnership  
Dan Biederman  
500 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1120  
New York, NY 10110

Re: Proposed History Sign System in the 34<sup>th</sup> Street Business Improvement District

Dear Mr. Biederman:

Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) appreciates the 34<sup>th</sup> Street BID presenting their proposed History Sign System to the Transportation Committee at its May meeting. While we understand that the proposal is still in its early stages, we like the concept and believe, if properly implemented, it will be a valuable addition to the area. We are commenting only on the five proposed signs and locations in the Community District 4 area.

The proposed signs will be 14 inches by 32 inches mounted on a five foot brown poli-coated pole located 2 feet from the curb. Each site was measured to ensure a minimum 8 foot pedestrian clearance. There will be two signs at roughly 45-degree angles attached to each of the poles. Each sign will also have a 4 inch brown background with white lettering saying "34<sup>th</sup> Street District." The signs will include historic pictures from the sign area, a short description of the history of that location, and summary of the 34<sup>th</sup> Street corridor. If funding is sufficient a phone number will be provided for people to listen to recorded information at the site and area. The signs will generally deal with three overall themes – Commerce, Community, and Transformation.

A total of 20 signs are proposed, of which 4 are within the Community District 4 area. *Our comments on each site is in italics:*

- North side of 34<sup>th</sup> Street, between Eighth and Ninth Avenue: This sign will focus on the Manhattan Center (formerly Oscar Hammerstein's Opera Company) and Hotel New Yorker. *This corner is extremely crowded, especially during events at the Manhattan Center, when barricades are typically also put up. While a sign near this location makes sense, given its historical significance, the precise location should be carefully selected in consultation with Manhattan Center management and CB4.*
- South Side of 34<sup>th</sup> Street, just east of 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue: This sign will focus on area nonprofits, including New York Institution for the Blind and Sloan House YMCA, as well as novelist Horatio Alger's residence at 223 West 34<sup>th</sup> Street. *There is a bus stop at this location and a lot of street furniture. We encourage discussion with the Community Board on specific locations.*
- In front of 419 West 34<sup>th</sup> Street (between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenues: This sign will focus on the history of the surrounding community including the immigrant populations and the

- concentration of distilleries, glue factories, and slaughterhouses that were located in the area. *This location seems appropriate.*
- 424 West 33<sup>rd</sup> Street (between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenues): This sign will focus on the printing industry that was in the area, represented by this site, as well as the Masters Printer's Building and Printing Crafts Building. *This location seems appropriate.*
  - In front of the James Farley Post office on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue between 33<sup>rd</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> Street. *This location seems appropriate.*

CB4 makes the following additional recommendations:

- The 34<sup>th</sup> Street Partnership should do outreach to area residents, nonprofit organizations, and businesses to find out their histories and involvement in the neighborhood.
- The 34<sup>th</sup> Street Partnership should consider using solar power to have backlighting for the signs at night.
- Locations near the building line (rather than the curb) should be considered.

We encourage the Partnership to return to the board with draft wording for the signs, when it is prepared. We are also looking forward to reviewing a list of (potential) landmarks in the 34<sup>th</sup> Street Business Improvement District for inclusion on the signs.

Community Board 4 voted to support this initiative, subject to the incorporation of our comments and proper consultation. We appreciate the opportunity to review this proposal and look forward to continuing to work with the 34<sup>th</sup> Street Partnership on this effort.

We thank the 34<sup>th</sup> Street Partnership for creating a history design system.

Sincerely,



Jean-Daniel Noland  
Chair  
Manhattan  
Community Board 4



Christine Berthet  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning  
Committee



Jay Marcus  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning  
Committee

c.c.: Manhattan Borough Commissioner M. Forgione, Department of Transportation