



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**COREY JOHNSON**  
Chair

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

March 13, 2013

Margaret Forgione  
Manhattan Borough Commissioner  
NYC Department of Transportation  
59 Maiden Lane, 37<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10038

**Re: Gansevort Plaza – Chelsea Triangle Permanent Design**

Dear Commissioner Forgione:

Manhattan Community Board 4 reiterates its support for creating an improved and permanent redesign for The Gansevort Plaza – Chelsea Triangle –which goes between Ninth Avenue and Hudson Street, between Gansevort Street to the south and W. 16<sup>th</sup> Street to the North. We are pleased that several of the recommendations made by Manhattan Community Board 4, after presentation of DOT's preliminary plans, have been included in the redesign – and request some additional changes..

The proposed redesign will include several elements that reinforce a uniform historic district both north and south of W. 14<sup>th</sup> Street including installing smooth cobblestone finishes on the plaza areas and crosswalks, landmark grey sidewalks and bulb-outs, recycled cobblestone on the west side vehicular area, and black crook oval lights (similar to existing area lights installed by Chelsea Improvement Corporation (CIC)).

The redesign also includes several elements that should improve the Chelsea Triangle area. It will extend the Plaza area 8 inches further south along W. 14<sup>th</sup> Street and add bulb-outs on both the northeast and northwest corners on W. 14<sup>th</sup> Street and on the southwest and northwest corners of W. 15<sup>th</sup> Streets and all four corners on W. 16<sup>th</sup> Street. Several three seat metal benches will be installed near the north western edge of the plaza. It will also include repainting the bicycle lane for the north half block on the east side of Ninth Avenue between W. 14<sup>th</sup> and W. 15<sup>th</sup> Streets and the mid-block buffered bicycle lane and “shared” bicycle/turning vehicle lane for the south half of the block. Larger Cherry, Serviceberry and Crabapple trees and more garden and landscape elements along the eastern borders of Plaza between W. 14<sup>th</sup> and W. 15<sup>th</sup> Street and north to W. 16<sup>th</sup> Street and both sides of the sidewalk are also included. There will also be signs added, as per CB4 request, to signal drivers to use W. 15<sup>th</sup> Street to access the West Side Highway and between W. 17<sup>th</sup> and W. 18<sup>th</sup> Street explaining the division of lanes further south.

While we support these above changes, we request several additional elements be included:

- The redesign should include consideration of changes to traffic light timing. Specifically, we request either a separate right turn signal from Ninth Avenue onto W. 15<sup>th</sup> Street or, at minimum, a leading pedestrian signal for those crossing W. 15<sup>th</sup> Street on the west side. The pedestrian traffic on this block has grown substantially over the last few years and, while we support the proposal to encourage vehicles

to use W. 15<sup>th</sup> Street to access the West Side Highway, we feel mitigants to the safety concerns of increased turning vehicles should be included;

- We are concerned about the bicycle lane just south of W. 15<sup>th</sup> Street and the high volume turnover in the adjacent loading/unloading parking zone. Ideally, we would prefer not to have any vehicles permitted there to enable bicycle safety. However, given the needs of the businesses in that area, we would request that DOT discuss a smaller window of loading/unloading hours to minimize the conflict times.
- We appreciate that DOT included additional Trees and plantings on the Eastern edge of the Plaza, as CB4 requested. However, we would also like to see additional planting and smaller trees in the center of the Plaza area to improve its ambiance as a sitting and community congregating area.
- The redesign of the Plaza will only be as successful as a community open space if it is allowed to function that way. Specifically, we request that, along with this redesign, DOT make amendments to its agreement for use of the Plaza. First we request that the number of commercial events be restricted to no more than 10 or 15 days a year, 3 or 4 days a month. We have been concerned by the number of commercial/marketing related events during the summer months that the Plaza hosts. We also request that any on-going commercial structure on the Plaza be limited in size. The current food stand on the Plaza is larger than the Community Board was initially told and takes too much space away from public usage.

We appreciate your consideration and involvement and look forward to working with you as the project moves towards construction and completion.

Sincerely,



Corey Johnson  
Chair



Christine Berthet  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning Committee



Jay Marcus  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning Committee

cc: Chelsea Improvement Corporation  
Colleen Chattergoon – DOT  
NYC Council Speaker Christine Quinn  
Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer