



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**DELORES RUBIN**  
Chair

**JESSE R. BODINE**  
District Manager

January 12, 2017

Hon. Carl Weisbrod  
Chair  
City Planning Department  
120 Broadway, 31st Floor  
New York, NY 10271

Mitchell Silver  
Commissioner  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
Arsenal West  
24 West 61st Street  
New York, NY 10023

**Re: Block 4 Concept Design, Hudson Boulevard Park**

Dear Chair Weisbrod and Commissioner Silver,

At the December 14, 2016, meeting of Manhattan Community Board 4's (MCB4) Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use and Zoning Committee, Tishman/Speyer and Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVV) presented their concept design for Block 4 (West 36th Street to West 37th Street) of the Hudson Boulevard Park ("Park"). The committee was unified in its praise of the design's abundance of plantings, including deciduous and evergreen trees and understory shrubs; ample open space for seating and event programming; and a sinuous, flowing design for the planting beds and pathway network.

MCB4 is aware that Department of Parks and Recreation and Public Design Commission approval is necessary for any change of programming or revisions to the previously approved design.

On January 4th, 2017, Manhattan Community Board 4 at its monthly Full Board meeting, with 35 in favor, 0 opposed, and 2 present but not eligible, voted to recommend approval of Tishman/Speyer's concept design for Block 4.

**Block 4 of the 6-Block Park**

Block 4 lies between Manhattan's West 36th Street and West 37th Street, from Hudson Boulevard West to Hudson Boulevard East (which is between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues), and

is part of the Phase Two portion of the Hudson Boulevard Park. Phase One, Blocks 1, 2, and 3, between West 33rd and West 36th Streets, has been completed. Of Phase Two, Blocks 5 and 6, West 37th to West 39th Streets, have yet to be acquired by the City.

Tishman/Speyer, the owner of the majority of the property around Block 4, will be using the in-kind-contribution mechanism in the Hudson Yards Special District zoning, that will allow them to build Block 4 of the Park and pass ownership to the City.

Since Tishman/Speyer currently owns only about three-quarters of the Block 4 site, the concept design envisioned, first, a park space complete in itself on the three-quarters' portion that Tishman/Speyer owns. And, second, since Tishman/Speyer is "actively pursuing" acquisition of the remaining portion of the Block 4 site, a vision of the entire block as park space.

Tishman/Speyer's presentation to the Committee included a large, detailed scale model of the proposed Block 4 design. The Committee expressed unanimous approval of the design concept (both concepts, that is: the partial as well as the complete) and thanked Tishman/Speyer for agreeing to meet with the Department of Transportation and MCB4 to explore the possibility of creating a more pedestrian-friendly plaza-like street on Hudson Boulevard East, bordering Block 4. The Committee also suggested adding planters to the platform that will span the Amtrak cut.

The Board notes that while there is no play area for older children in the present Block 4 design, one was envisioned for this block in the original Park plan. A play area for older children in the Park is still an objective of the Board. Since Block 4 will front commercial buildings, the Board considers it reasonable to consider deferring the playground to Block 5 or Block 6, where residential buildings have been proposed.

### **Hudson Boulevard Park: The Saga**

The history of Hudson Boulevard Park is a saga of the community attempting to get the City to keep its promises to the citizens of Hell's Kitchen.

In February 2003, the Department of City Planning (DCP) and the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) released the Hudson Yards Master Plan Preferred Direction Open Space Plan (the "Preferred Direction") which detailed a new open space network of over 20 acres, including Hudson Park and Boulevard.

Subsequently, DCP released the Hudson Yards Development Information (the "Development Information") which represented this extensive network of open space. The Preferred Direction and the Development Information also proposed:

- A series of parks and greening measures along Dyer Avenue;
- A mid-block open space on West 42nd Street;
- A landscaped active recreation space on Block 675, between West 29th and West 30th Streets between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues; and,
- A full block open space on Block 679 between West 33rd and West 34th Streets.

DCP certified the Hudson Yards Rezoning in 2004; however, plans for this extensive greening did not proceed. Therefore, while a great deal of open space had been proposed and promised for this area, only the plans for Hudson Park and Boulevard materialized. Originally part of a comprehensive plan for open space, Hudson Park and Boulevard, is the sole remaining component.

As envisioned and mapped, Hudson Park and Boulevard spans six blocks, from West 33rd Street to West 39th Street, between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues. The three blocks between West 33rd and West 36th Streets (known as Blocks 1, 2, and 3) ) are the only ones that are currently developed and serving Hell's Kitchen and the rapidly growing residential and commercial community of Hudson Yards.

**Summary**

MCB4 recommends approval of the design concept for Block 4 and is encouraged that Tishman/Speyer is actively pursuing acquiring the additional parcel of land which it does not own. The Board thanks MVV for it excellent design and Tishman/Speyer for:

- agreeing to meet with DOT and MCB4 to explore the possibility of creating a more pedestrian-friendly plaza-like street; and,
- considering the addition of planters to the platform that will span the Amtrak cut.

MCB4 believes that Block 4 built will add momentum to getting Blocks 5 and 6 acquired and built as park space. It will affirm the community's determination to get its promised and much-needed Park. And it will demonstrate the City's commitment to honor its promises to the people of Hell's Kitchen.

Sincerely,



Delores Rubin  
MCB4 Chair



Jean Daniel Noland, Chair  
Clinton Hell's Kitchen Land Use  
and Zoning Committee

- CC Mayor's Office  
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President's Office  
Hon. Brad Holyman, Senator  
Hon. Richard Gottfried, Assembly member  
Hon. Corey Johnson, Council member  
Hudson Yards Development Corporation  
Hudson Yards/Hell's Kitchen Alliance  
Tishman/Speyer  
Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVV)