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March 31, 2017

Hon. Mitchell J. Silver
Commissioner
NYC Parks & Recreation
The Arsenal
830 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10065

Dear Commissioner Silver:

At the General Meeting, Tuesday, March 28, 2017 Community Board 12 Manhattan, passed the following resolution with a vote of 32 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstention supporting the proposed Phase I design presented by MKW & Associates and the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation at the March 7, 2017 Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee meeting, and encourages the Public Design Commission to approve it as well.

Whereas: Mayor de Blasio announced a \$150 million Anchor Parks Initiative, giving \$30 million for infrastructure improvements in one large park in each borough, and the designated Manhattan park is Community Board 12's own Highbridge Park, stretching from W. 155th to Dyckman Streets between Edgecombe, Amsterdam, and Fort George Avenues and the Harlem River Drive; and

Whereas: the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation (NYC Parks) engaged the design firm of MKW & Associates to help develop a Master Plan for Highbridge Park and several phased projects to be funded through the Anchor Park Initiative within the scope of the Master Plan; and

Whereas: NYC Parks held public visioning sessions on November 28, 2016 and January 31, 2017 at the Highbridge Rec Center, and maintained an open comment period to solicit additional public feedback; and

Whereas: MKW & Associates and NYC Parks presented at the March 7th meeting of the Community Board 12, Manhattan (CB12M) Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee (PCA); and

Whereas: the Master Plan's goals include improving, increasing, or adding north-to-south connectivity, play opportunities, bathrooms, wayfinding, lighting, gathering spaces, and grand entrances, and a complete repair of the Water Tower which already is underway pursuant to a separate capital project, with potential improvement locations including the Sugar Hill Luminaries Lawn; Polo Grounds; southern entrance to Croton Aqueduct path to the High Bridge; Adventure, Sunken, and Fort George Playgrounds; stone retaining walls north of the Sunken Playground; pathways to the High Bridge and from W. 190th to Dyckman Streets; north-south linkage between the ballfields and skate park and other places in the central sections; Dyckman Rest; the Grand Staircase at W. 184th Street; the W. 187th Street stairway; and the Dyckman Street entrance; and

Whereas: the proposed Phase I focuses on the northern end of the park, with goals of increased accessibility, improved connectivity, more gathering spaces, improvements to lighting and safety, repaving paths, and adding benches; the work will focus primarily on the Grand Staircase renovation, a new sitting area where the Harlem River Drive meets Dyckman Street, and pathways in the northern area of the park; will include a rain garden, porous pavers, and other green infrastructure; and will cost \$10.1 million, leaving \$19.9 million for subsequent phases; and

Whereas: members of the PCA and the public suggested that steel picket or other more attractive fencing be used in Phase I in lieu of chain link fencing where financially practicable, solar lighting be used where feasible, and various signage enhancements; and

Whereas: the public strongly urges enhancements to the southern end of the park, particularly near the Edgecombe playgrounds; added bathrooms in the park; handball court improvements, including restoration of at least some of the courts that were repurposed for other recreational uses; accessibility enhancements to the Croton Aqueduct trail to bring it into compliance with ADA to the extent that the grade permits; to be included in subsequent Phases; and

Whereas: each phase will take about three-and-a-half years and will proceed concurrently with overlapping timelines, with design for Phase II beginning in May; and

Whereas: Installation of new lighting in Parks is a capital improvement under the purview of NYC Parks but the repair of existing lighting is under the purview of the NY Department of Transportation; now, therefore be it

Resolved: that Community Board 12, Manhattan supports the proposed Phase I design presented by MKW & Associates and the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation at the March 7, 2017 Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee meeting, and encourages the Public Design Commission to approve it as well so that these vital improvements may be made to our beloved park; and be it further

Resolved: that Community Board 12, Manhattan urges MKW & Associates and the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation to continue their work on subsequent Phases to make other needed improvements to the park as noted above, including but not limited to enhancements to the southern end of the park, particularly near the Edgecombe playgrounds; added bathrooms throughout the park; restoration of the W. 187th St. stairway; hand ball court improvements, including restoration of at least some of the courts that were repurposed for other recreational uses; accessibility enhancements to the Croton Aqueduct trail to bring it into compliance with ADA to the extent that the grade permits; the use of steel picket or other more attractive fencing in lieu of chain link fencing where financially practicable; the use of solar lighting where feasible; and various signage enhancements; and be it further

Resolved: that Community Board 12, Manhattan respectfully requests that the NYC DoT work with NYC Parks on the maintenance of lighting throughout Highbridge Park; and be it further

Resolved: that Community Board 12, Manhattan urges all of our elected officials to continue to fund improvements to Highbridge Park to realize the full goals of the Master Plan which exceed the \$30 million Anchor Park Initiative funding and other resources already invested in the park.

Sincerely,


Shahaduddeen A. Ally, Esq.
Chairperson

cc Hon. William Castro, NYC Parks Borough Commissioner
Hon. Andrew Cuomo, Governor
Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor
Hon. Letitia James, Public Advocate
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Comptroller
Hon. Gale Brewer, Borough President

Hon. Adriano Espaillat, Congressman
Hon. Marisol Alcantara, State Senator
Hon. Herman D. Farrell, Jr., Assembly Member
Hon. Carmen De La Rosa, Assembly Member
Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez, Council Member
Hon. Mark Levine, Council Member