CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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July 27, 2015

Adam Ganser
Vice President of Planning and Design
Friends of the High Line
The Diller – von Furstenberg Building
820 Washington Street
New York, NY 10014

Re: Conceptual Design of the Spur of the High Line

Dear Mr. Adam Ganser,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) was presented with a new conceptual design of Phase 2 of Section 3 of the High Line. Section 3 of the High Line includes the widest point of the High Line at Tenth Avenue and 30th Street referred to as The Tenth Avenue Spur continuing west on 30th Street through the Coach Building (Tower C) which is currently under construction. The concept presented to MCB4 is a complete reimagining of the Tenth Avenue Spur. This design responds to revelations made as the surrounding section of Section 3 is being built out and previously supported elements by this Board. Overall MCB4 is very impressed and supports the conceptual design of Phase 2 of Section 3 of the High Line.

The Friends of the High Line previously presented the idea of a "Bowl" and then more recently a "Forest" concept for this very unique section of the park. One of the discoveries made by the design team was how attracted people were to look out over Tenth Avenue as the Spur offers a very rare view across an avenue. Another special feature of the Spur is the ability to look back on the High Line in multiple directions. With all this in mind, the new plan calls for three sections:

- Green Space
- Seating Area
- Open Space

Building on one of the suggestions from MCB4 and taking inspiration from London's Trafalgar Square, Friends of the High Line envision the Spur as a flexible space where major works of art can be featured on a center platform that can be elevated or lowered. The idea is to commission art that would need to be designed specifically for this space and offered as a free exhibit to the

public. As mentioned, the Spur is the widest area on the High Line and when built out will be able to accommodate up to 650 people. This is a great opportunity for the High Line to add to their 450 free public programs already offered throughout the park. MCB4 is appreciative the High Line proactively engages with park patrons and the community at large through the free public programs and other initiatives.

The re-design achieves some new objectives while maintaining some elements that were viewed favorably by MCB4. The open design provides better circulation and an opportunity for diverse programming. Removable tables and chairs offer a relaxing spot for park visitors and when removed the space is opened up to accommodate performances, dancing, exercise classes and a whole host of other creative, interactive ideas.

Unchanged in the plan presented to MCB4 is the area of the passage through the Coach Building. This section will be a majestic space as the the height of the passage creates a very different experience for park visitors. This Passage will include a small concession area, planters where the most sunlight is available and protruding spaces, or balconies where people can sit under the building and look straight up at the impressive height of Tower C. Programming is also possible in this covered area. Also unchanged, the fixtures and furniture in Section 3 will follow the same theme as found throughout the park.

Although this design will not have dense vegetation as previously planned, the green space will still include many trees and shrubs. The trees will offer an ideal way for the High Line to capture more rainwater, helping to reduce the amount of water entering New York City's combined sewer system. MCB4 welcomes all efforts to retain and reuse rainwater.

MCB4 is especially pleased this design still allows the High Line to add rest rooms which are sorely needed in the Park. In the same space the High Line can have a storage room and a place for mechanicals, eliminating the need for a vault to house mechanicals at street level.

Even with the support of the new design, MCB4 would again like to highlight a few points for consideration.

- MCB4 suggests the High Line prominently feature local artists from the district or works in conjunction with the surrounding galleries of the area. MCB4 has the most concentration of art galleries in the city and these are all in the vicinity of the High Line. Many of these galleries were hard hit by Super Storm Sandy and additional exposure may be helpful to rebuild the sector.
- Any illumination of the Spur must not create a disturbance for area residents.
- Tree selection should include trees that can offer elements that can be enjoyed in all seasons.
- The placement of the large trees should not be such that there is a risk to pedestrians at street level of falling branches.
- The current concessions available are at a price point which may not be ideal for all area residents. MCB4 urges the High Line to consider a more diverse array of concessions. The use of multiple small food carts instead of one large concession stand may be a way

to achieve this. But keeping in mind the limited amount of space in the passage any concession arrangement should be conservative to prevent potential congestion.

- This new section of the park gives the High Line the opportunity to be a leader in sustainability. The additional space on the Spur would be an appropriate spot for additional recycling and possibly compost bins. Solar or some other renewable energy could provide the illumination of the Spur. The use of renewable energy, recycling and composting throughout the park can set an example for other parks throughout the city.
- Programming space will be increased by the addition of Section 3. As stated in a previous letter regarding the earlier design plans.
- MCB4 would like to see educational programming featuring topics around conservation and sustainability.

The High Line envisioned a bold plan with their former design of the "Bowl" and the "Forest" for the Tenth Avenue Spur. This redesign, just as bold offers an achievable goal of delivering a response to the incredible amount of development in the district. This design of Phase 2 of Section 3 of the High Line is creative and thoughtful and has the potential to create special moments for park visitors. MCB4 looks forward to the project moving forward and appreciates the High Line's careful consideration of MCB4's needs, requests and suggestions.

Sincerely,

Christine Berthet
Chair

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Waterfront, Parks &
Environment Committee

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