



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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CHRISTINE BERTHET
Chair

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

July 25, 2014

Signe Nielsen, President
Public Design Commission of the City of New York
City Hall, Third Floor
New York, NY 10007

Adam Ganser
Director 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 Phase 2, Section 3 of the High Line

Dear Ms. Nielsen and Mr. Ganser:

Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) was presented with a 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 West 30th Street referred to as The Tenth Avenue Spur continuing west on West 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 and the Tower C passage. This design addresses previous concerns 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 High Line design for Phase 2 of Section 3 looks to raise the High Line on West 30th Street from west to east at a 5% grade making the walking surface at its highest point, 7 feet above the normal High Line surface. The non-pedestrian area will have a much steeper slope raising the High Line at the highest point 12 feet to allow for views of the Hudson River, depth for larger trees and an area for rest rooms and storage space which can also house mechanicals well above flood levels. Within the larger area of the Spur, the design calls for spaces which sink down and are nestled within heavy vegetation. These spaces are likened to burrows where visitors can get a sense of being in a “forest” among the behemoth buildings of Hudson Yards including Tower C, the Coach building. The center space on the Spur will have seating and an open space which is large enough to accommodate programming. In the design the High Line planners seek to create a “spotlight” of the larger trees by illuminating the Spur at night.

The passage through the Coach Building features a majestic space created by the height of the passage. The plan includes 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.

Fixtures and furniture in Section 3 will follow the same theme as found throughout the park.

MCB4 welcomes the additional vegetation including large trees which is made possible by the increased sloping height that allow soil depth of at least five feet. These 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 is pleased this design 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. Damage from Super Storm Sandy provided a valuable lesson for the district of the flood risks and consequences.

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

- Further development on West 30th Street to both the west and east of Tenth Avenue is a possibility. The intention to add larger trees and increase the density of vegetation may be successful given the current make-up of the surrounding neighborhood. If more of this block is built out potential reduction of sunlight may limit the High Line in producing the "forest" affect the design seeks;
- The planned areas of burrows need to provide a comfortable and obvious means of egress for park users;
- 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;
- Section 3 offers some of the largest pockets of space in the park. This allows for additional art installations. 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;

- 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” 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



Maarten de Kadt Co-Chair
Waterfront, Parks &
Environment Committee



Delores Rubin Co-Chair
Waterfront, Parks &
Environment Committee