

April 3, 2003

Amanda Burden
Chair
City Planning Commission
22 Reade Street
New York, NY 10007

Re: Support for retention of the High Line

Dear Chair Burden,

Manhattan Community Board No. 4 voted in favor of retaining the High Line for use as public open space at its regularly scheduled full board meeting on April 2, 2003 by a vote of 28 in favor; 1 opposed; 1 present, but not eligible to vote; and 2 abstaining.

As support for preserving and reusing the High Line grows both at the community level and at the city level, and as we plan for the future of West Chelsea, we recognize that we must comment on this, a dominant feature of the blocks west of 10th Avenue.

This Board notes that the development of the High Line as public open space provides the following benefits:

- Of the city's 59 community boards, this district ranks 57th in terms of open space. The High Line would provide 6.7 acres of linear parkland, stretching through the entire southern half of our district, from 34th Street to 14th Street, continuing into the northern part of Community Board No. 2 before terminating at Gansevoort Street.
- As public open space, the High Line would provide a unique urban experience, with views of the city streets and Hudson River from 30 feet above street level. If properly planned and built, it would become a citywide destination, as well as a great amenity for Chelsea residents.

This Board further notes that the development of the High Line as public open space must include the following considerations:

- The space under the High Line, both in its completed state and in the interim, must be improved for the benefit of those living nearby and passing beneath it. Any entity charged with the maintenance of the High Line must address any negative issues, such as bird

droppings and poor lighting, associated with the rail line as soon as ownership issues make such work possible.

- As discussions continue regarding the future of West Chelsea, design and zoning controls on buildings adjacent to the High Line must be created to maximize the light, air and views available to users of the elevated rail line. In order to ensure its success as public open space, the walkway must not be reduced to a canyon between tall buildings.

The Friends of the High Line, a non-profit group dedicated to the preservation and conversion of the rail line, has committed itself to raising funds for the project's development.

Finally, Manhattan Community Board No. 4 gives its support provided this Board, and therefore its constituents, is included in any future discussions regarding plans for the High Line with City agencies, the Friends of the High Line or any other entity. This Board is particularly concerned about access, lighting, and safety. In addition, this Board will evaluate any proposal regarding zoning changes that might accompany preservation of the rail line, including the transfer of air rights around a High Line district, on the basis of its impact on the area as a whole.

Thank your for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Simone Sindin
Chair
Manhattan Community Board No. 4



Lee Compton
Co-Chair
Chelsea Preservation & Planning Committee

Edward S. Kirkland
Co-Chair
Chelsea Preservation & Planning Committee

cc: Hon. Michael Bloomberg, Mayor
Hon. C. Virginia Fields, Manhattan Borough President
Local Elected Officials
V. Chakrabarti
J. Mulligan
CSX
Friends Of the High Line