

February 6, 2004

Mayor Michael Bloomberg
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor Bloomberg:

Manhattan Community Board No. 4 is greatly disturbed by the process your administration seems to be adopting in connection with the Hudson Yards project on the West Side of Manhattan. As the window of opportunity begins to close, there are signs that the public's right to know and comment are being compromised.

Some of our general concerns about the lack of information that is being made public we share with those expressed by Borough President C. Virginia Fields in her letter to you dated January 20, 2004 and with similar remarks by Assemblymember Richard Gottfried which were recently reported in the press. We also concur with the comments made by Councilmember Christine Quinn about apparent attempts to evade legislative oversight or action which were recently reported in the press. And we are certain that other elected officials have similar concerns and may have made them known to you already or will do so in the near future.

I now want to address some of the more specific procedural "flaws" that concern our Board

- A year has passed since the Hudson Yards plan was revealed at the Javits Center and still there is no publicly available financing plan. Press comments suggest secret approaches to financial institutions in hopes of evolving a plan and vague administration hints that a plan will be forthcoming shortly. Should a plan eventually emerge, it is obvious that the time for public debate will be far too brief for a project of this scope and expense. EDC has even suggested that City Planning certify the project in the absence of a financing plan, a most shameful approach.
- We have been told that the final scope of the needed EIS is to be released simultaneously with the EIS itself. This deprives the community of an opportunity to comment on the revised scope before the EIS is completed.
- We understand that there are plans to build underground parking on 35th street but we have received no details of such parking garage as of this date and have no opportunity to comment.

- City Planning will make public the zoning changes and design features for Hudson Yards on February 25, and we are told it expects to certify the project in Mid-March. This will give the public and our Board almost no opportunity to comment prior to certification.
- The press notes that protests about property to be condemned are being made by businesses or property owners involved and that the administration is making changes in the plan to minimize opposition. Unofficially we understand that one building has been removed from the plan because of opposition from the occupants. We have not been advised either of the original cost of condemnation or of changes being made.
- We understand that the Jets have offered not to stage events that compete with Madison Square Garden. Since 150 such events were presumably needed by the Jets to finance operation of the stadium, how will financing proceed? Will the City be picking up the deficit?

Manhattan Community Board No. 4 fully supports the rational development of the West Side. It offers great possibilities if done properly with maximum input from the public and our Board on behalf of our community.

Lastly, we find your remarks in College Point on February 3, if quoted correctly in the press, a disservice to the citizens of our great City. The issue is not, and never has been, the number of people who live in the immediate area of Hudson Yards which we believe is approximately 20,000. The misguided stadium project will hurt the residents and businesses of a large swath of mid-Manhattan, and unjustifiable cost each and every taxpaying New Yorker hundreds of dollars. These people do vote and are entitled to your respect.

Thank you,



Walter Mankoff
Chair

This letter was adopted at a full meeting of Manhattan Community Board No. 4 on February 4, 2004.

cc: Elected Officials
D. Doctoroff
A. Weisbrod
A. Burden
V. Chakrabarti
Community Boards