



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD No. 4**

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**J. LEE COMPTON**  
Chair

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District Manager

November 2, 2006

The West Side Rail Yards:  
Principles for Development

WHEREAS, in August and September 2005 the Hell's Kitchen/Hudson Yards Alliance established, and this Board endorsed, Principles for Development for the West Side Rail Yards in response to the recommendation by the MTA's Executive Director that the MTA work with the local community to develop a master plan for the development of the MTA's West Side Rail Yards; and

WHEREAS, the September 28, 2006 agreement among various MTA parties and the City concerning the Rail Yards presents a renewed opportunity to plan comprehensively for this valuable development asset; and

WHEREAS, the agreement recognizes that "substantial planning, public outreach and land use approvals must be undertaken" "in order to realize upon and maximize the potential of the Rail Yards Sites," and includes commitments that the planning process, which will be led by the City, will include a program of public outreach and consultation, and that development on the Western Rail Yards will ultimately be subject to the City's ULURP process; and

WHEREAS, a vehicle for that outreach and consultation already exists with the Hudson Yards Community Advisory Committee (the HYCAC), which was formed pursuant to the Points of Agreement between the City Administration and the City Council with respect to the Hudson Yards rezoning in January 2005; five Board members serve on the HYCAC as representatives of this Board; and

WHEREAS, in anticipation of this planning process the Principles for Development have been updated and restated by the Alliance, with advice and assistance from the Board's leadership, based on this Board's previously-stated positions concerning development in the area.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Manhattan Community Board No. 4 commends the City and the MTA for the commitment to substantial planning, public outreach and land use approval efforts reflected in the agreement; and further

RESOLVED that this Board confirms that the attached restated Principles for Development continue to reflect this Board's previously-stated positions concerning development in the area, and therefore endorses the restated Principles for Development; and

RESOLVED, that the Board looks forward to participating in the planning process through the HYCAC.

# The Hell's Kitchen/Hudson Yards Alliance

c/o Housing Conservation Coordinators  
777 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
New York, NY 10019

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## The West Side Rail Yards: Principles for Development

The City's agreement with the MTA concerning the John D. Caemmerer West Side Rail Yards presents a renewed opportunity to plan comprehensively for this valuable development asset. The Hell's Kitchen/Hudson Yards Alliance particularly welcomes the City's commitment to develop a plan for the Western Rail Yards through a consensus-building process that involves the community, and is subject to the City's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) and City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR), culminating in City Council review and approval of the development plan.

In anticipation of our participation in that consensus-building process, the Alliance restates its basic principles for a master plan for the West Side Rail Yards:

- The plan should be **comprehensive and integrated, for the entire Rail Yards area**, both “eastern” (30th to 33rd Street, east of Eleventh Avenue) and “western” (30th to 33<sup>rd</sup> Street, west of Eleventh Avenue) rail yards, as well as 29<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> Street west of Eleventh Avenue (Block 675) and 33<sup>rd</sup> to 34<sup>th</sup> Street west of Eleventh Avenue (the current Javits Center marshaling yards).
- The Rail Yards area should be devoted to **mixed-use, primarily residential, development**. Any commercial development should be concentrated along Eleventh Avenue. Residential development should occupy the area closer to the waterfront, scaling density downwards toward the Hudson River Park. Development should not increase the amount of commercial floor area currently permitted in Hudson Yards area but should instead provide opportunities to absorb that floor area in a rational way. To that end, the Western Rail Yards and the block between 33<sup>rd</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> Streets should be included in Large-Scale Plan Subdistrict A of the Special Hudson Yards District, eligible to receive transfers of floor area from the Eastern Rail Yards that would otherwise be transferred to the east side of Eleventh Avenue.
- Residential floor area equal to at least 30% of the housing and a percentage to be determined of the commercial floor area **must be housing that is permanently affordable** to low-, moderate- and middle-income residents. Given the scale of the site, a portion of the housing should also be targeted at very low-income New Yorkers with special needs. The affordable component of the residential development should be on-site and integrated with market-rate housing.
- A significant portion of the Western Rail Yards should be **publicly accessible open space**, planned as an **upland extension of the Hudson River Park**, connected to the existing park across Route 9A and administered by the Hudson River Park Trust. The open space should be organized around a **strong east-west axis** with 32<sup>nd</sup> Street as its basis, and financed by contributions from adjacent

development. The High Line structure north of 30<sup>th</sup> Street should be preserved and should be fully connected with the Hudson River Park and the proposed Hudson River Park Extension.

- The development plan should include **specific sites designated for the infrastructure** necessary to support a new residential community, including but not limited to the infrastructure outlined in the Hudson Yards Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement: public schools, a police station, a fire station, a power substation, a library and day care facilities.
- The plan should also address our community's pressing need for below-market-rate **space for small, non-profit theatrical and arts companies**. In addition to performance space, the plan should include office, studio, rehearsal and storage space for these companies, as well as support facilities for the performing arts and theatrical industry in general.
- **Transportation options** should be explored that would connect the Rail Yards to Moynihan and Penn Stations, emphasizing the 30th-34th Street east-west corridor.
- Development should comply with the **Comprehensive Off-Street Parking Regulations** contained in Article 1, Chapter 3 of the Zoning Resolution.
- The **950-space public parking garage** planned beneath the proposed mid-block boulevard between 34<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> Streets should be **relocated to the Rail Yards**.
- Construction and ongoing employment opportunities should be subject to **strong labor provisions** (including prevailing wage, standard benefit and apprenticeship training program requirements) and should maximize opportunities for **minority- and women-owned businesses**.
- All development, public and private, should be subject to **high standards of green building practices and environmental sustainability**, such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification by the U.S. Green Building Council or any other standard established pursuant to Local Law 86 of 2005 applicable to City-owned or City-funded capital projects.
- Development, including the rail yards and the blocks between 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Streets and 33<sup>rd</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> Streets, should be subject to **all local zoning and environmental laws** and be subject to review through the City's uniform land use review procedure (ULURP).
- Development should be **reintegrated into the city grid** to the greatest extent possible, while maximizing opportunities for the creation of open space.
- Development should reflect **multiple visions**, featuring a diversity of architectural styles and forms. The development plan must also be **flexible and incremental**, allowing construction to advance in phases and adapt to changing financial and political conditions over time; it cannot depend on the success or failure of one big idea.

Some Alliance members support convention center expansion plans that would utilize the Western Rail Yards. These principles are intended to be consistent with either possibility.

*Revised October 20, 2006*