



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

330 West 42nd Street, 26th floor New York, NY 10036
tel: 212-736-4536 fax: 212-947-9512
www.ManhattanCB4.org

JEAN-DANIEL NOLAND
Chair

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

October 29, 2007

Amanda Burden, Chair
City Planning Commission
22 Reade Street, Room 2E
New York, NY 10007

Re: N 0800081 ZRY
Proposed Street Tree Planting Zoning Yards Text Amendments

Dear Chair Burden:

At the recommendation of its Chelsea Planning and Preservation Committee and Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee, Manhattan Community Board No. 4 submits the following comment on this application.

The Department of City Planning is proposing City-wide text amendments that would require street tree planting within all zoning districts. (It would also require a planting strip between the sidewalk and the curb in lower-density residential districts, of which there are none in CD4.)

Community District 4 has long had the benefit of a street tree requirement throughout the Special Clinton District, and we strongly support the expansion of the requirement throughout the City.

Being CB4, however, we have a few comments:

1. Large alterations should require street trees too. The proposed requirement would apply only to developments, enlargements or conversions of non-residential buildings to residential use. In the Special Clinton District the requirement now also applies to alterations involving 30 percent or more of the existing floor area of a building (see Section 96-51). The Special Clinton District has seen many gut renovations of older residential buildings, and many new street trees have been planted as a result, without substantial additional cost to the developer. This provision should be added to the proposed amendment. At a minimum, it should continue to apply in the Special Clinton District.
2. Alternative locations should be in same Community District. The proposed basic street tree planting requirement in Section 26-41 would allow trees to be planted at alternative locations "within the Community District or half mile of the #development# site" under

certain limited circumstances. The half mile possibility is not necessary and should be eliminated.

3. Standards for species and caliper (size) should be clear. Proposed Section 26-41 says that “the species and caliper of all #street trees# shall be determined by the Department of Parks and Recreation. . . “ The standards that DPR will use in making that determination should be made clear by referring, presumably, to DPR’s Tree Planting Guidelines. We note that the Tree Planting Guidelines allow trees “no larger than 3.5 inches in caliper”, while proposed Section 26-41 would replace the individual requirements in many special zoning districts for trees not less than 4 inch caliper. The Tree Planting Guidelines should be updated to specify an appropriate minimum size for trees planted pursuant to Section 26-41.
4. Manufacturing districts need trees too. The proposed requirement would apply in manufacturing districts, but not to developments or enlargements for industrial uses. We believe it should, as is now the case in the Special Clinton District. Our manufacturing districts need the environmental benefits of streets as much as any place else, if not more. At a minimum, the requirement should be left in place in the Special Clinton District.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,



Jean-Daniel Noland
Chair



Anna Hayes Levin, Chair
Clinton/Hell’s Kitchen Land Use



Walter Mankoff
Co-Chair
Chelsea Preservation and Planning

[signed 10.29/2007]

Lynn Kotler
Co-Chair
Chelsea Preservation and Planning

Cc: Calendar Information Office
Edith Hsu-Chen, Deputy Director, Manhattan Office
Erik Botsford, Manhattan Office
Erika Sellke, Manhattan Office
electeds