



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JEAN-DANIEL NOLAND

Chair

ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.

District Manager

January 7, 2008

Mr. Adrian Benepe, Commissioner
New York City Department of Parks and Recreation
The Arsenal, Central Park
830 5th Avenue
New York, NY 10065

Re: Trees for Hell's Kitchen South in 2008

Dear Commissioner Benepe:

Manhattan Community Board No. 4 applauds the Mayor's plan to plant "One Million Trees" as part of the overall PlaNYC initiative. It is our intention to coordinate with Susan M. Donoghue, PlanNYC Project manager, regarding specific needs for trees in Manhattan Community District No. 4. This letter asks that a special emphasis be placed on a portion of our district that currently has a complete lack of trees, virtually no parks, and an extremely high level of traffic and pollution, exacerbated by the fact that it encompasses myriad access ramps and roadways to the busy Lincoln Tunnel and Port Authority Bus Terminal.

This area is between 42nd Street and 35th Street, from 8th Avenue to 10th Avenue, and is generally referred to as South Hell's Kitchen. This area lies between Chelsea to the south and Hell's Kitchen (aka Clinton) to the north, which define Community District No. 4. Due to extremely high traffic, idling buses, and recent high rate of construction, this area suffers from the third highest rate of asthma hospitalizations in Manhattan, exceeded only by East Harlem and Central Harlem-Morningside Heights. Among other benefits, street trees are known to help reduce airborne pollutants and thus contribute materially to the health of residents.

The importance of street trees, as well as a neighborhood park, in this area was identified by this community and recognized by the City during the Hudson Yards rezoning process starting in 2002. We were disappointed that the neighborhood park disappeared from the Hudson Yards plan, but we had several discussions with EDC staff at that time that we expected would at least result in the planting of street trees. Unfortunately, no trees have been planted – yet. We are pleased that the PlaNYC initiative provides renewed hope that they will be.

The Hell's Kitchen Neighborhood Association has tabulated 350 planting locations within the area defined above, and is writing separately to request that these locations be planted with a variety of trees in the 2008 season. Manhattan Community Board No. 4 supports this request.

We further request that the Department of Parks & Recreation plant additional trees along the entire 9th Avenue corridor, an avenue that is among the busiest in the city with regard to traffic. Additionally, Manhattan Community Board No. 4 will be surveying additional planting locations, as well as conditions

of existing street trees, and will be providing follow up requests in due course for Chelsea and Hell's Kitchen/Clinton.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and again, thanks to the Mayor and the Department of Parks & Recreation for this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Jean-Daniel Noland, Chair Manhattan Community Board 4



John Doswell, Co-Chair
Waterfronts & Parks Committee



John D. Lamb, Co-Chair
Waterfront & Parks Committee

Cc: Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Pedestrian Safety Coalition
Hell's Kitchen Neighborhood Association
Susan M. Donoghue, PLaNYC Project Manager
Elected officials