

1 **Chelsea Preservation & Planning Committees**

Item #: 6

2
3 April 4, 2012

4
5 David Harney
6 Chief of Staff
7 Deputy Fire Commissioner
8 New York City Fire Department
9 9 MetroTech Center
10 Brooklyn, NY 11201

11
12 **Re: Midtown West EMS Station – 512 W. 23rd Street**
13 **ULURP #: 120177 PCM**

14
15 Dear Mr. Harvey:

16
17 On the recommendation of its Chelsea Preservation and Planning Committee, Manhattan
18 Community Board 4 voted at its regular board meeting on April 4, 2012, __ in favor, __
19 opposed, __ abstentions, and __ present but not eligible, to recommend conditional
20 support for the acquisition for lease or purchase of the site located at 512 West 23rd
21 Street for which there is an existing license agreement for use by the Fire Department's
22 Bureau of Emergency Services (EMS).

23
24 EMS has been operating a station at this location, which is under the High Line, since last
25 November as a "temporary" facility under a license agreement with a private owner with
26 office trailers and parking for EMS vehicles (a seven vehicle capacity). A west side
27 location for an EMS station was made acutely necessary with the closure of St. Vincent's
28 Hospital in May 2010, which had provided ambulances as part of the City's emergency
29 medical response system. Though EMS vehicles are typically dispatched from locations
30 throughout the city rather than directly from the stations, the time it takes a response team
31 to return to a station from delivery of a patient to a medical facility represents time that a
32 response team is unavailable for another call and in turn reduces the ability for EMS to
33 respond promptly to other emergency calls. All of the other EMS stations in Manhattan
34 are located on the eastside, which is why the gap in the network created by the loss of St.
35 Vincent's Hospital is especially important to fill.

36
37 The primary function of an EMS station is to provide a location for EMS response teams
38 to resupply and decontaminate themselves and their vehicles as necessary, and for EMS
39 to provide lockers and staff support space to staff. Vehicles are dispatched from the
40 stations to street corner locations in readiness for emergencies and are only supposed to
41 be dispatched directly to an emergency situation from the station when other vehicles are
42 not already better positioned to respond.

43
44 Though we are conditionally supporting an EMS station at this location on 23rd St., we
45 need to emphasize that we strongly request that the City expand the search for a
46 permanent EMS station location at a west side site that is not on a residential block as this

1 location is, and is not directly adjacent to a park such as the High Line, since it has been
2 noted by committee members that vehicle dispatches from the current station have not
3 been infrequent and the sound of the vehicle sirens impacts the quality of life for the
4 station's neighbors. Since a very large percentage of patients were reported to be
5 delivered to Roosevelt Hospital, perhaps a station closer to that hospital would reduce the
6 time that an ambulance needs to travel to the station for decontamination and be available
7 for emergency responses sooner.

8
9 In addition to our request for searching for an alternative permanent location, our support
10 is conditioned on the following:

- 11
- 12 ● The number of emergency dispatches directly from the station must be minimal to
13 reduce the frequency of vehicles departing the station with their sirens on, consistent
14 with the operating model presented to the committee.
- 15
- 16 ● The appearance of the facility must be improved to standards of the neighborhood.
17 At present, EMS is limited in its ability to improve the site due to its current tenant
18 status under a licensing agreement. Once FDNY obtains a lease or acquires the site,
19 the Department should be able to significantly improve the site's appearance. With
20 approval of the application, we expect improvements to the site, including the
21 demolition of the old parking lot booth on 23rd St.
- 22
- 23 ● Signage warning High Line park users of the presence of the active driveway must be
24 installed and visible be from the High Line's elevator users.
- 25
- 26 ● EMS staff will not use placard parking in the neighborhood where residential and
27 commercial parking is already very limited.

28
29 Sincerely,

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31
32 Corey Johnson
33 Lee, Bret
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