



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JOHN WEIS
Chair

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District Manager

November 3, 2010

Ann Weisbrod
President
Hudson Yards Development Corporation (HYDC)
225 West 34th Street, Suite 1402
New York, NY 10122

Re: Hudson Park & Blvd – Update Presentation

Dear Ms. Weisbrod:

Manhattan Community Board No 4 (CB4) wishes to thank the Hudson Yards Development Corporation for its update presentation to the Board by the designated architects, Michael Van Valkenburgh Landscape Architects.

The presentation did not contain anything substantially new since the design team was selected, so our comments are limited at this point as we understand the plan at this stage is still to be refined. In general, the comments presented in our 1 October 2008 letter from CB4 and The Hudson Yards Community Advisory Committee (HYCAC) still apply and there is no need to repeat them in detail here. But a few points stand out and are worth mentioning.

Phasing

First, it has always been understood that the southern three blocks of Hudson Park & Blvd (Phase I) are the portions most likely to be built, at least in the near future, with the remainder (Phases 2a & 2b) much further in the future if at all. Therefore, and as the designers themselves stated in the presentation, CB4 is in favor of moving some of the greener and more park-like and community oriented features – such as lawns and playgrounds - to the Phase 1 segment (currently in Phase 2a). The resulting park should work to serve both commercial tenants as well as current and future residential tenants equally.

Traffic

The biggest challenge this park will face is to provide both connectivity and safety is what is essentially as an automobile boulevard surrounding a series of parks. These new roadways should not be intended to be major north/south thoroughfares, but rather meant

primarily to service the residential and commercial developments that surround the Park.
Therefore, these roadways should be designed to minimize traffic, as much as possible.

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In addition, the crossings of the streets (33rd, 34th, 35th and 36th Streets) that divide the mini-parks will need special attention, especially as the designers propose a concept of a pathway or pathways that connect the three parks from north to south, and because these intersections are likely to be heavily used by pedestrians. CB4 recommends the use of "speed table intersections" and/or "bulb outs" or other traffic calming methods to ensure that these new pedestrian/vehicle intersections do not become hazardous.

Other comments

Given that the park will be closely surrounded by retail on the east and west borders, and given the relatively small areas available for park use, we strongly urge that any buildings in the park itself be avoided. Food, beverages and the like can easily be provided within the retail portions of the building. The idea of incorporating public rest rooms into the surrounding buildings should also be considered.

The water features, as well as sustainability features, are appreciated but need to be simple and maintainable. For technical reasons, a floating lighting scheme was said to be abandoned with no replacement concept at this stage. As this will be a park surrounded by tall buildings, it will be important to come up with a lighting scheme that ensures that the park does not become a cold shaded series of spaces.

As the design of this park progresses, we look forward to working closely with the designers to ensure that this park meets the needs of not only the new developments planned on either side but of the neighborhood at large. What we saw, combined with statements from the designers, was encouraging. But usability for the community and pedestrian traffic safety will continue to remain our major areas of attention as this project moves forward.

Sincerely,

Carmen Matias
Co-chair, Waterfront & Parks

Capt. John Doswell
Co-chair, Waterfront & Parks

John Weis
Chair, Manhattan Community Board #4

Cc:
Michael Van Valkenburgh Landscape Architects
NYC DPR
NYC DOT
NYC Planning
NYC EDC