



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD No. 4**

330 West 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, 26<sup>th</sup> floor New York, NY 10036

Tel: 212-736-4536 Fax: 212-947-9512

[www.ManhattanCB4.org](http://www.ManhattanCB4.org)

**WALTER MANKOFF**  
Chair

**ANTHONY M. BORELLI**  
District Manager

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Anthony Borelli

## **West Side Community Board Weighs in on Hudson Yards Plan** *Supports need for rezoning; finds many faults in City's plan.*

Manhattan Community Board No. 4 today submitted its recommendations on the City's Hudson Yards Plan to the City Planning Commission. The submission marks the completion of the first step in the official public review process for City's controversial plan to redevelop Manhattan's far West Side, roughly between 28<sup>th</sup> and 42<sup>nd</sup> Streets. The City's plan includes new commercial and residential development, an extension of the No. 7 subway line, a new football stadium for the New York Jets, and an expansion of the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center.

"Virtually everyone in our community agrees that balanced development in the Hudson Yards area could benefit both the local community and City as whole," said Walter Mankoff, Community Board 4's chair. "But, after careful study of the plan and hearing from the public, the Board found that the City plan did not meet the needs of either the community or the City".

The Board agrees that parts of the Hudson Yards area now zoned for low-density industrial use should be rezoned to allow for contextual expansion of residential and commercial uses in Hell's Kitchen, but disagrees with the scale of development contemplated by the overall plan.

The Board recommendation listed several major concerns with the City's plan including: excessive density that would allow 70 and 80-story towers to block the waterfront from the City, tremendous risk to City's finances, major environmental problems with traffic and air pollution, and the unnecessary condemnation of private property that would lead to the direct displacement of 85 households, a family shelter housing at least 290 residents and an estimated 340 businesses and 1,200 to 3,000 private sector jobs.

The Board also raised concerns about precedent. "Not only is this one of the largest rezoning plans undertaken by the City, it includes a number of unprecedented and potentially dangerous elements," Mankoff said. "It includes a new mechanism called the District Improvement Fund which allows developers, by contributing to the Fund, to achieve unlimited building heights and densities. And the plan allows the City to dispose of many large and valuable city-owned properties with no specific details or plans for their development many years from now."

Two overriding considerations about the plan dominated the community board's deliberations. First is the plan to build a football stadium for the New York Jets just east of the West Side Highway between 30<sup>th</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> streets. The Board argues the stadium would create traffic nightmares, would deter desirable development and wastes a valuable waterfront development site that would be better used for offices, housing and open space, and for the southward expansion of the Javits Center.

The second is the lack of a real plan to create affordable housing.

"We cannot and will not support any plan that does not provide the amount and type of permanent affordable housing the community needs to retain its diversity," said Anna Hayes Levin, Chair of the Board's Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee. "We must be able to accommodate librarians as well as lawyers, police officers as well as stockbrokers, and school teachers as well as bankers."

The Board's goal is to have 30 percent of all housing units constructed in the rezoning area as permanently affordable.

For a group of 42 volunteers, reviewing and responding to the Hudson Yards plan has been a Herculean task. Community Boards are given the responsibility by the City Charter to take the first crack at reviewing major land use proposals. As with all actions subject to ULURP, Community Board 4 has had a 60-day period to review, evaluate and respond to the ten land use applications and the related 6,000-page environmental study.

The community board's entire 46-page response to the Hudson Yards land use applications is available online (<http://www.ManhattanCB4.org>) or by request by calling the board's office. A three-page summary of the board's positions follows this release.

The next steps of public review for the Hudson Yards plan will be review by the Borough President and the Borough Board, the City Planning Commission and the City Council.

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## HUDSON YARDS PLAN and LAND USE APPLICATIONS

### Summary of Recommendations by Manhattan Community Board No. 4

August 23, 2004

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#### THE COMMUNITY'S CONCERNS WITH THE HUDSON YARDS PLAN

- 1. Excessive Density: The proposed rezoning adds an amount of density to our neighborhood that is unprecedented, undesirable and ultimately unnecessary.** The Hudson Yards plan would permit 70- and 80-story office towers on Eleventh Avenue. These densities are achieved through unprecedented mechanisms designed to serve the plan's financial needs. The massive buildings will block light, air and views, bring traffic and place burdens on city services. They will not create a vibrant, mixed-use community. We cannot accept that 28 million square feet of commercial office space is truly needed in our neighborhood.
- 2. No Plan for Affordable Housing.** We cannot and will not support any plan that does not provide the amount and type of permanent affordable housing the community needs to retain its diversity. We must be able to accommodate lawyers and librarians, stockbrokers and policemen, school teachers and bankers. **Not less than 30% of all housing units constructed in the rezoned area must be permanently affordable.**
- 3. Tremendous Risk to the City's Finances.** The total estimated public cost of the plan is almost \$3 billion, excluding borrowing costs, but would not be subject to the City's normal, public decision making process for capital projects. They would be financed through an untried and aggressive financing scheme that would evade the City's budget but could lead to a City bail-out if the plan fails.
- 4. Beyond ULURP's Reach: Barricades to the Waterfront.** The stadium should not be part of the overall plan for the area. We support the expansion of the Jacob Javits Convention Center, though expansion to the south remains the preferred direction for expansion. Both projects should be subject to public review.
- 5. Environmental Concerns.** The Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement confirms our fears that the congestion, pollution and other environmental impacts associated with the Hudson Yards plan will be overwhelming.
- 6. Condemnation of Residences and Businesses.** The plan would result in the direct residential displacement of 85 households or housing units housing an undisclosed number of residents, and a family shelter housing at least 290 residents. An estimated 338 to 344 businesses and 1,200 to 3,000 private sector jobs would also be directly displaced. We oppose these displacements.
- 7. Missing Infrastructure.** The City's plan does not adequately provide for Hell's Kitchen Park South or a consolidated bus parking facility.
- 8. Architectural Historic Resources.** The area contains a large number of buildings that embody the City's commercial, industrial and immigrant history. Landmark designations will encourage preservation and development of these irreplaceable historic resources.
- 9. Parking Requirements.** The plan's parking requirements would reverse long-standing parking policies and attract more traffic. A comprehensive traffic management plan is sorely needed.

## **THE UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW PROCEDURE (ULURP) APPLICATIONS**

### **Zoning Map Change (C 040499 ZMM)**

We agree that parts of the project area should be rezoned, but disagree with the scale of development contemplated by the overall plan; we recommend approval of the proposed zoning map changes provided changes are made to limit the development to the proposed base densities shown on Attachment D.

### **Zoning Text Amendment (N 040500 ZRM)**

We recommend denial unless the proposed zoning text is amended in many respects, including:

- The District Improvement Fund Bonus and Eastern Rail Yard floor area distribution is eliminated;
- Mixed use (rather than required commercial use) in C6-4 districts is permitted;
- Provisions relating to Hudson Boulevard and Park are eliminated;
- Distribution of floor area to create open space in Hell's Kitchen is eliminated;
- Overall building heights in Hell's Kitchen and on Tenth and Eleventh avenues is established;
- Parking requirements are eliminated;
- Existing Special Clinton District 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Perimeter Area bonus mechanism is preserved; and
- Special permit requirements are restored.

### **Site Selection and Acquisition for Tow Pound and/or Sanitation Facility(ies) (C 040501 PCM) and City Map Change for Rooftop Park (C 040508 MMM)**

We recommend approval only if the multi-agency facility is below the Eleventh Avenue grade, and the park permits a community advisory role and is adequately funded.

### **Site Selection and Acquisition for a Public Parking Garage (C 040502 PCM)**

We recommend denial.

### **Acquisition of Property for Subway Extension (C 040504 PQM)**

We recommend denial of this proposal and consideration of less expensive, less risky alternatives.

### **Acquisition of Eastern Rail Yard (C 040505 PQM)**

We recommend denial. The Eastern and Western Rail Yards should be developed pursuant to a new comprehensive plan without a stadium.

### **Disposition of City-Owned Properties (C 040506 PPM)**

We recommend denial.

### **City Map Change Related to Hudson Boulevard/Park (C 040507 MMM) and Acquisition of Easements for Mid-block Pedestrian Bridge (C 040503 PQM)**

We oppose creation of the boulevard and park, and prefer a series of linked parks and open spaces over and around the Amtrak cut. We recommend denial.

**All of our conditional recommendations are subject to two additional overriding conditions:**

- **A REAL PLAN FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING**
- **NO STADIUM**

**Density**

▷ base FAR

▮ CB4 revisions

Attachment D:  
Zoning map revisions

