



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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CHRISTINE BERTHET
Chair

Jesse Bodine
District Manager

October 19, 2015

Ms. Margaret Forgione
Manhattan Borough Commissioner
NYC Department of Transportation
59 Maiden Lane, 35th Floor
New York, NY 10038

Re: Proposed Revocable Consent for sidewalk and above space for an elevator and extended above-ground Plaza on West 31st Street between 9th Avenue and Dyer Avenue

Dear Commissioner Forgione:

Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) opposes the application of Brookfield Office Properties for a revocable consent to construct an elevator and overhead plaza near the corner of West 31st Street and Dyer Avenue, including on public sidewalk space, unless the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) approves their proposal to build a bulb-out at the corner of West 31st Street in order to provide a minimum of 8' continuous clearance between the elevator and the bollards.

As part of the Brookfield's Manhattan West project - which will include two 60+ story commercial buildings, a 62 story residential building, a hotel or residential tower that is still in planning, and a 2 acre Plaza development between 9th and 10th Avenues and West 31st and West 33rd Street - Brookfield is required (as per Section 93-73 of the zoning text) to provide a "connector" between West 31st Street and the 2 acre Plaza, located approximately 20' above street level. Brookfield has proposed both a staircase and an elevator to access the Plaza area. While the staircase will be located within their property line, the elevator will take up 3' by 10'-10" of the sidewalk on West 31st Street, and 3' by 64'-7" of air space above for the elevator queuing area, which require a Revocable Consent for the use of public right-away.

Community Board 4 supports the concept of a connector and appreciates several elements of the design and proposal, including the 10' 10" by 9' glass enclosure of a rectangular glass elevator,

the proposed uniform lighting style and the 24 hour elevator operation and Plaza access from West 31st Street.

However, we are disappointed that the distance between the elevator and surrounding bollards (required by the NYPD Counter Terrorism Division) leaves only 7'-4" to 7'-8" along the West 31st Street and Dyer Avenue corner. We believe strongly that a minimum of 8' of continuous pedestrian access should be provided, consistent with DOT's requirements for pedestrian (including those in wheelchairs) right of way and is a necessity given the likely increased pedestrian traffic from the adjacent new residential entrance, as well as the elevator and staircase access to and from the Plaza area. We note that a bulb-out at the corner would not only create the requested 8' pedestrian access, but would also improve safety for those crossing West 31st Street at Dyer Avenue, a likely highly trafficked corner given the new residential tower immediately to the east and the entrance for the High Line and Hudson Yard development to the west.*

We understand Brookfield had already approached DOT regarding the proposal to include a bulb-out and we're disappointed to hear DOT's initial reaction was not positive. As stated below, the re-envisioned West 31st Street between 9th and 10th Avenue will be heavily trafficked by both Brookfield and Hudson Yards Plaza residents and workers and those en-route to the High Line and the Park areas within both Hudson Yards and the Brookfield project. The existing distance to cross Dyer Avenue – and the ambiance created immediately out of the tunnel portion of Dyer Avenue – is not conducive to a safe pedestrian crossing. Further west, numerous loading bays and curb cuts will make walking difficult on the northern sidewalk. A bulb-out on West 31st Street at the northwest corner of the intersection with Dyer Avenue would enable a safer and more conducive place to cross for pedestrians and will direct them to the south sidewalk, which is much safer to walk on. We urge DOT to reconsider our request.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Christine Berthet
Chair



Ernest Modarelli
Co-Chair, Transportation
Planning Committee



Jay Marcus
Co-Chair, Transportation
Planning Committee

* Community Board 4 will be commenting later this year on the full Brookfield proposal for West 31st Street.