



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**CHRISTINE BERTHET**  
Chair

**ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.**  
District Manager

January 29, 2014

Kenneth Adams  
President & CEO  
Empire State Development  
633 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10017

**Re: Bayview Correctional Facility  
550 West 20<sup>th</sup> Street  
Request for Proposals and Future Use**

Dear Mr. Adams:

At the January 16, 2014 meeting of Manhattan Community Board 4's (MCB4) Housing, Health and Human Services (HH&HS) Committee and the January 22, 2014 meeting of the Chelsea Land Use Committee, the Committees reviewed the Request for Proposals (RFP) for Bayview Correctional Facility (Bayview) at 550 West 20<sup>th</sup> Street by Empire State Development (ESD). MCB4 is both pleased and encouraged that ESD has been responsive to MCB4's request to:

- Preserve and restore the historic facade of the building and,
- Include a community facility use to be operated by a non-profit organization which can continue to provide both social and neighborhood benefits.

After reviewing the RFP and learning that the site will only be used for commercial use as a job generator, MCB4 understands and accepts that the building will not address the need to create additional affordable housing in the district.

In order to achieve the community's goals, MCB4 would like to clarify the community's objectives:

**Historic Preservation**

- The Bayview building is an historic resource and must be preserved. Designed by Shreve, Lamb & Harmon, the architects of the Empire State Building, Bayview housed the Seamen's YMCA from 1931 to 1966. The building is both historically and architecturally significant and was deemed State and National Register Eligible in 2005 in the Environmental Impact Statement for the West Chelsea Special District Rezoning.
- The Board requests that ESD only entertain proposals from respondents which include:

- Preservation and restoration of the brick and masonry façade including multiple terracotta plaques
- Installation of historically appropriate windows and doors
- Restoration of building entry sconces
- Additions, if sought, which are minimal and consistent with the building character
- Preservation and reuse of stained glass windows, a mural and a commemorative bas relief plaque located within the current chapel on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the building

## **Zoning**

- The Bayview building is located within the Special West Chelsea Zoning District (SWCD) which exists to encourage development within the area while enhancing the neighborhood character, specifically through the creation of additional affordable housing, and restoring and maintaining the High Line open space. SWCD was approved by the City Council in 2005 and was carefully crafted with specific regulations for height, setback and use across 9 subareas with different regulations. As a major condition of the approval, SWCD the Mayor and the City Council executed a West Chelsea Points of Agreement document, in response to community concerns, to record those agreements (copy attached).
- MCB4 cannot support any variance from the SWCD, subareas D<sup>1</sup> and E<sup>2</sup>, in which Bayview is located, especially the height, setback and use provisions. The SWCD does however allow for a wide range of commercial uses.
- MCB4 requests that ESD amend the language of the Zoning, Development Goals and Zoning Calculation sections<sup>3</sup> of the RFP to remove language which allows proposals from respondents which do not comply with the current zoning of the recently enacted, carefully crafted SWCD.

## **Community Use and Benefit**

- The Bayview building was built as the Seamen's House YMCA in 1931 and contains both a gym and swimming pool with decorative mosaics on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors. Their location in the center of this C-shaped building can be separated from the surrounding eastern and western portions of building with a dedicated building entrance and access core.
- MCB4 ranks 57 out of 59 Community Boards in the City of New York in open space and recreational space. Reuse of the existing facilities represents a unique opportunity to address this serious deficiency. These recreational resources, with adequate support space, must be preserved.
- Today's City budgets are hard pressed to construct such facilities. These recreational resources, with adequate support space, must be preserved and be operated by a not-for-profit organization to provide recreational space for youth and teens.

MCB4 appreciates ESD's willingness to work together again so disposition of the Bayview site will bring benefits to both New York State and the Chelsea community.

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<sup>1</sup> Subarea D: Base height between 60' and 90', maximum height of 250'

<sup>2</sup> Subarea E: Base height between 60' and 105', maximum height of 120'

<sup>3</sup> Zoning section text on page 5, Development Goals section text on page 7 and Zoning Calculation section text on page 11

Sincerely,



Christine Berthet  
Chair

[signed 1/29/2014]  
Barbara Davis, Co-Chair  
Housing, Health &  
Human Services Committee



Joe Restuccia, Co-Chair  
Housing, Health &  
Human Services Committee



Lee Compton, Co-Chair  
Chelsea Land Use  
Committee



Betty Mackintosh, Co-Chair  
Chelsea Land Use  
Committee



Pamela Wolff, Chair  
Landmarks Committee

cc: Brad Hoylman, NY State Senator  
Richard Gottfried, NY State Assemblymember  
Jerold Nadler, Congressman  
Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Corey Johnson, NYC Councilmember