



**HIGH LINE COMMUNITY INPUT FORUM  
DECEMBER 2, 2004  
Summary of Comments & Recommendations**

On December 2, 2004, nearly 200 participants from the greater High Line community gathered at the Chelsea Recreation Center to meet with the design team of Field Operations with Diller Scofidio + Renfro and receive an update on the design concepts for the conversion of the High Line to public open space. Below is a summary of participant comments and the recurring themes that emerged from the evening's dialogue.

**Overall, participants felt strongly that the design team had listened to them at the last public forum and had incorporated their comments into this stage of the design.**

- “[The design team] captured the overall intent of the [High Line] experience.”
- “These design forums have been extraordinary—I’ve really grown to trust the design team.”
- “[The designers] really responded to [the] feedback of [the] first session.”

**COMMENTS ON THE DESIGN IN PROGRESS**

**Planking**

While participants expressed unanimous support for the creation of a wild, slow, meandering experience, there was concern voiced about the materials used to create that experience. A few expressed the desire to leave the wild nature of the High Line intact. Others expressed safety and security concerns.

- “Like the meandering paths.”
- “What’s up with the planks?”
- “Think of something [more] organic [than] concrete.”
- “Planking — great idea but reduces experience.”
- “Planking is too dominant — want more clumps of nature vs. small strands popping out of cement.”
- “Concerned that deeper pits will lead to trash, vandalism, and worse.”

**Plantings**

Overall, the plans for plantings were well received. Participants expressed support for the planned diversity in plantings. Participants expressed a few questions related to maintenance.

- “Like variety and textures.”
- “Like variety of planting.”
- “Nothing that adds bulk at street crossings — need to keep from obstructing east/west views.”

## **Access Points**

Some participants thought too little access was presented in the proposed plan, while others said there was too much. Most expressed support for the “slow ramp” and providing ADA access.

- “There are not enough access points.”
- “Too many access points—consider access only through buildings where it initially gave access.”
- “Like the slow ramp.”

## **Seating**

Participants expressed genuine interest in the innovative seating solutions described, but there were a few who wanted to see materials that are more in harmony with the existing High Line.

- “Love the movable seating.”
- “Don’t like non-indigenous high-tech material.”
- “Movable chairs not a good idea.”

## **Railings**

Participants understood the necessity of having a safe and secure environment but expressed mixed opinions about the options described. Of primary importance to participants: that railings not impede the views afforded by the High Line and that materials used are in harmony with the High Line.

- “Like the mesh as long as it isn’t surrounded by metal.”
- “Don’t like the mesh or the glass — both are foreign to the structure.”
- “8-foot railing stinks.”
- “No one likes the 8-foot fence — preference for mesh over glass — no one wants to be kept from the edge — looking over is the point.”

## **Lighting**

In general, participants liked the proposed lighting, although there was some concern expressed about the brightness and duration of lighting.

- “Like the idea of light below and seeing underside detail more closely.”
- “Liked glowing lighting from within the High Line — [it is] respectful of community and integrates the underside of the High Line.”
- “Residents of 14<sup>th</sup> street area aren’t sure they like 24-hour lighting down there.”

## **RECURRING THEMES**

### **The High Line should respect the natural landscape and wild aesthetic that currently exists.**

- “Keep the wildness.”
- “Preserve the structure and feel/aesthetics.”
- “Preserve the artifacts.”
- “Preserve it — keep it simple, peaceful for public use.”
- “Preserve the special nature of the High Line, especially with the current rezoning proposals and the possible stadium at 31<sup>st</sup> Street.”
- “High Line design elements should be compatible with original High Line construction materials.”
- “The High Line should practice “green-design” techniques to aid sustainability.”

### **The High Line should be as accessible as possible to all neighboring communities.**

- “[Ensure] public housing access [to site].”
- “[Ensure] ADA access [to site].”
- “Make sure there are activities for kids.”
- “Should be a site for learning.”

### **Commercial activity on the High Line should be carefully controlled.**

- “Dislike commercial buildings— they should be regulated [to be] in keeping with design.”
- “Privatization/commercialization needs to be approved in advance with the design itself.”
- “Would love to see/participate in a public forum / info session on commercialization and zoning. It feels like the topic is being avoided. A forum on the topic is as necessary for maintaining community support as these design forums have been (which have been extraordinary by the way) — I’ve grown to trust the design team.”

### **Comments related to High Line Programming**

- “[Encourage the] incorporation of public art.”
- “[It] would be interesting to have murals underneath the High Line.”
- “[Need to] create a “community” to maintain, support, and fund the ongoing development of the High Line, even after completion of the project.”
- “None of the design showed use by anyone other than hip 20-year-olds. How about kids, the elderly, wheelchairs etc.?”
- “Concerned about over-programming” — New York needs more “cool spots” [not another “hot spot”].”

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

### **Q: Will dogs and baby strollers be allowed on the High Line?**

The design team is still identifying appropriate uses for the High Line as a whole and for specific locations, but the public space will be as inclusive as possible given its space constraints.

### **Q: How will security be achieved?**

The design team is working with security experts to ensure the safety of people on and below the High Line. A security plan will be included in the next stage of the design, which will be brought before the public in 2005. As we said during the last meeting, no public space is successful unless people feel safe. Safety has been and will continue to be one of the design team’s primary concerns.

### **Q: How much will the project cost?**

A new cost estimate reflecting the design team’s proposal will be made available following the completion of the framework plan and the preliminary design for section 1.

### **Q: Do you know at this point which areas will be left as preserves with protective walk ways?**

The design team is still working to locate the most appropriate uses and environments for various sections of the High Line.

### **Q: Are there areas with only “natural” city lights, without the “ribbon” of light?**

One of the principles of the lighting strategy is to create a continuous, low level of light down the entire length of the High Line. In addition, the City of New York has specific standards and requirements for public space lighting. The design team will work to create a lighting design that will balance these needs and the needs of the community.

### **Q: Will there be ADA compliant ramp for access in case elevators break down?**

To ensure the High Line is accessible to all users, the design team has proposed an access plan with large elevators in multiple locations. The elevators will be properly maintained and kept in the best possible working order. It will be difficult to provide a continuous, ADA-compliant ramp from street level to High Line level given the length of the ramp that would be required (400+ feet, or almost two city blocks). The design team is reviewing solutions to icy and snowy conditions and their impact on walkways and elevators.

**Q: Is the amphitheater still part of the plan?**

A gathering place for viewing performances may be included in one form or another. The design team is reviewing locations that may be appropriate for projection or theatrical events.

**Q: What types of events will take place at the stage area?**

No decisions have been made regarding events on the line. The design team and FHL will continue to work to identify various types and locations of programs that will take place on the High Line.

**Q: How will management be structured?**

We expect that the management structure for the High Line will involve a partnership of public agencies and a private governing entity, similar in concept to the Central Park Conservancy, for example.

**Q: How will garbage cans be incorporated?**

The design team will locate trash receptacles and service facilities, including sanitation facilities and restrooms, along the length of the High Line. Exact locations will be determined in future design phases.

**Q: What kind of uses will be allowed for the private spaces adjoining the High Line?**

We will work closely with private property owners to foster good relationships and to encourage uses for adjoining private space that are compatible with the public space of the High Line.

**Q: Where is the money coming from?**

On October 6, 2004, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and City Council Speaker Gifford Miller announced \$43.25 million in City capital funding to design and build the High Line. To complement the City's funding commitment, U.S. Representative Jerrold Nadler has included \$5 million for the High Line in the six-year federal transportation bill that is now moving through Congress. U.S. Senators Schumer and Clinton are also working to supplement the \$5 million while the bill is in the Senate. The FHL expects to raise additional private funds to complete the project.

**Q: What is the status of billboards?**

The railroad has long-term lease contracts for the placement of billboards along the High Line. We will review these agreements under the trail-use agreement between the City and the railroad.

**Q: Can a link be made to the Hudson River Park?**

It is a goal of the project to connect the High Line to the City's open space network, including Hudson River Park. However, a pedestrian bridge over the West Side Highway/Route 9A is not currently included in the budget for the High Line.

**Q: What are the criteria for selecting the plantings?**

The design team has been sensitive to the community's request to maintain the wild and simple nature of the High Line as it currently exists. As a result, they have identified species of robust plants that are native or complementary to native species, that require low maintenance, and that have shape and/or flower in all seasons.

**Q: How will you treat the underside of the High Line?**

With the exception of streets and sidewalks, the property under the High Line is privately owned. We will seek to work with private owners to create uses and experiences that will complement the High Line and neighborhood in general. At locations where the High Line crosses the street, the design team is studying elements, including lighting and measures to prevent pigeons from roosting under the tracks, which will make the underside of the structure more attractive and secure.