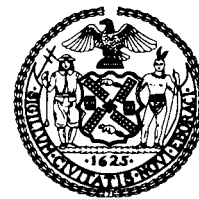




News...

FROM COUNCIL MEMBER

CHRISTINE C. QUINN



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Testimony of Councilmember Christine C. Quinn Before the Surface Transportation Board Regarding a Certificate of Interim Trail Use for the Manhattan High Line

July 24, 2003

Good afternoon. My name is Christine Quinn, and I am the elected Councilmember who represents the City's 3rd Council District, including both the Hell's Kitchen/Clinton and Chelsea neighborhoods.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to comment in strong support of the City's proposal that the Surface Transportation Board (STB) grant a Certificate of Interim Trail Use (CITU) for the Manhattan High Line. Granting the High Line a CITU, as you know, will impact a significant amount of my district by protecting this unique space from demolition.

The 1.45 mile-long High Line, which was originally paid for in part with public funds in the 1930's and served as a commercial freight railroad until 1980, is a historic landmark that has the promising potential to be even more significant to the people of New York City. I believe that by granting a CITU and allowing the City of New York and the Consolidated Rail Corporation to preserve the Manhattan High Line, the STB would be doing an invaluable service to the people of New York City by creating a much-needed park and public space. The High Line, with its unique location, would link the lively cultural and growing West Side neighborhoods together, forming a recreational center for the three surrounding communities that would attract visitors and help area business. As seen in the popularity of the Hudson River Park, the High Line is another example of a deserted commercial/industrial facility that can be successfully converted into open space.

I am a long-time supporter for the preservation of the Manhattan High Line. I have been working closely with Speaker Gifford Miller, Deputy Mayor Dan Doctoroff, and Mayor Michael Bloomberg to not only save this timeless piece of our city's history, but to restore it for public use. The conversion of the High Line, like the Hudson River Park, is another creative way of enhancing the quality of life for many New York City residents. In such a crowded community and city, this type of improvement is not only encouraged but necessary as the West Side lacks the parks and open space the City's residents and children need. I urge the Board to look favorably upon the request of Conrail, the City, and community residents and issue a CITU to preserve the High Line for public use. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to share my thoughts and concerns.

Joseph M. Calisi
P.O. Box 1369
Bronx, N.Y. 10475
Office phone: (718) 694-1561
E-mail: jmcalisi@yahoo.com

July 23, 2003

Surface Transportation Board
26 Federal Plaza
New York, N.Y.

Dear STB,

With the recent proposals made concerning the new development of mass-transportation in the New York City area, I feel that the abandonment or interim trail use of the former New York Central 'High Line' viaduct on the west side of Manhattan, is a poor alternative and is a candidate for use in an entirely new manner (STB Decision 33319). What I am about to propose is an exciting transportation plan that creates a low-cost, seamless rail link into Lower Manhattan.

I propose that the High Line be used by both Metro-North and Long Island Railroad commuter trains as a means to access the Financial District. This can be accomplished by:

1. widening and strengthening the access ramps that go up the line to accommodate a two-track operation onto the viaduct outside the LIRR west side yard;
2. extending the viaduct south to the former World Trade Center that continues as an extension of the line south of Gansevoort Street, where the original former New York Central line ends;
3. a four to six-track elevated terminal could be built near the former World Trade Center complex to accommodate and service commuters traveling from as far away as New Haven, CT; Poughkeepsie, NY (Upstate New York) and Montauk, NY (eastern tip of Long Island).

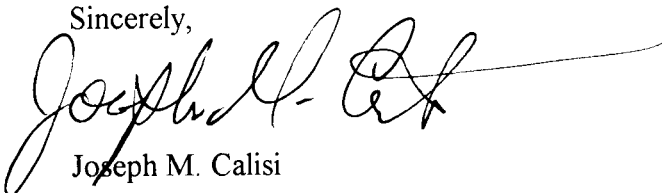
The benefits are:

1. In terms of cost, an extension of the viaduct is a cost-effective method of providing transportation to the New York Metropolitan Region compared to tunneling costs.
2. It would help improve access and revitalize the economy of New York City by making it easier to locate new jobs in Lower Manhattan and would also create more jobs when constructing the southern extension.

Trains could access the viaduct through the NY Penn Station area. Long Island Railroad trains could continue through the station from Long Island. Metro-North trains could use the Amtrak line over the Hell Gate Bridge (for Connecticut riders) and through Amtrak's 'West Side line' that runs south of the bridge at Spuyten Duyvil (from Poughkeepsie). Granted, there would have to be some negotiation of trackage rights for this plan to come to fruition, but this whole line that sits currently unused, could be the vital cog to an expanding regional rail network.

I can be reached at my office during business hours at (718) 694-1561 or via e-mail at: jmcalisi@yahoo.com.

Sincerely,



Joseph M. Calisi

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July 24, 2003 Public Hearing of the Surface Transportation Board: Docket # AB-167 (Sub-No. 1094)A

The Municipal Art Society is a private, non-profit membership organization whose mission is to promote a more livable city. Since 1893, the Society has worked to advocate excellence in urban design and planning, contemporary architecture, historic preservation and public art.

For the past several years, we have strongly supported the preservation, protection, and reuse of the High Line. We are here today to urge your support for issuing a Certificate of Interim Trail Use (CITU), as proposed by the Friends of the High Line and the City of New York. Opened in 1934, the High Line is one of the last surviving reminders of the commercial and manufacturing past of the west side of Manhattan below 34th Street. Its construction as part of New York Central's West Side Improvement project was an innovative response to the dangers posed by the original West Side Line, which ran at grade level down heavily used 10th Avenue and was frequently the cause of accidents and pedestrian fatalities. As a major transportation link, the High Line helped New York City achieve dominance in the country's industrial economy for over fifty years. As a work of engineering and design, the Highline creates a distinctive sense of place along a more than 30 block stretch of Manhattan's Far West Side and serves as a visible reminder of fascinating period in New York City's history.

The Society believes that in addition to its historical importance, this unique and evocative structure can serve as a critical recreational resource for the growing residential neighborhood of West Chelsea. We are optimistic that it can become an important public amenity through the initiative being led by The Friends of the High Line to convert it into an elevated oasis of open space. The organization's recent studies have shown that access to the High Line is feasible, and that a safe and secure environment can be created upon the High Line as well as below it. The project has the support of the City and can be executed with minimal City funding. The potential to provide an open space-deprived neighborhood with an innovative new urban park is one of the most exciting prospects to come to this neighborhood in a long, long time.

We urge the Surface Transportation Board to support the move to place the High Line into the Federal “rail-banking” program so plans for its conversion can begin in earnest. We thank you for this opportunity to share the Society’s views.

AIA New York Chapter

The Founding Chapter of
The American Institute of Architects



Comments by the AIA New York Chapter
Surface Transportation Board
Public Hearing in regard to the High Line
24 July 2003
Federal Conference Center
26 Federal Plaza
Rick Bell, FAIA, Executive Director

I am speaking today on behalf of the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and its 3,400 members, including architects and urban designers who have studied the issue at hand and formally and repeatedly expressed support for preservation of the High Line. The AIA, founded in New York in 1857, now has 70,000 members nationwide, and is arguably the architectural vocation's leading professional organization. We maintain a strong and ongoing interest in the quality of the urban environment, expressed in planning, building design and historic preservation.

The AIA New York Chapter has previously given its strong endorsement in support of use of the High Line as public open space for Manhattan's Far West Side. I am honored to be invited to speak today to reiterate that the architectural community in New York City strongly supports the proposal of the Friends of the High Line to save this historic elevated railway for interim trail use, as a greenway surmounting an important relic of New York's industrial heritage.

The area in which the High Line is situated is an urban district that is not adequately graced by parks and recreational open space. By "rail-banking" the High Line, we could quickly add open space of nearly seven acres in a linear configuration more than a mile and a half in length. It has been estimated that purchasing an equivalent amount of open space in the real estate market might cost over a quarter of a billion dollars. That kind of money is not likely to be in the municipal budget despite the need for parkland in the area.

Preserving the High Line and reusing it as public open space will provide an important pedestrian link between the communities on Manhattan's West Side. It will add value to surrounding properties, contributing to the long-term economic health of the City. The High Line will most certainly become a well-loved public environment, treasured by residents, workers and visitors to the community for generations to come. It has already catalyzed rethinking of open space possibilities in adjacent neighborhoods. For example published plans for the proposed Olympic Stadium or New York Jets green football stadium immediately to the north benefit from the High Line as elevated pedestrian pathway and connector. Imagine the Olympic Torch finding its way in the year 2012, carried aloft along the High Line to the opening ceremonies of the summer games in what has been called the world's second home, the eyes of the world focused on the torch bearer but also on the path of movement.

It is almost axiomatic that reusing the High Line as public open space is feasible. There are no impediments. Ample access can be demonstrated. A safe and secure environment can be created below its protective canopy as well as atop its elevated platform.

The High Line itself is unique, still futuristic in its concept of passing elevated rail service through the buildings being served. In Paris a similar elevated rail structure was converted into a beautiful linear park. Its use and acceptance has demonstrated that such environments are safe, utilized by a wide cross section of people and popular as important social centers for their communities.

Speaking personally for a moment, I still recall, some twenty-four years after, the opportunity I had as a New Yorker to bicycle and occasionally stroll to work atop the now-demolished stretch of the West Side or Miller Highway. Knowing that the daily journey to my first architectural job was not imperiled by rushing taxicabs, looming trucks or frustrated motorists made the separation from the morning rush hour street frenzy almost indescribably pleasurable, a chance to greet others not encumbered by on-grade grubbing and an opportunity to breathe in the relatively fresh air a story above the mean streets below. Perhaps you can't go home again, at least not by bicycle. But I would like to think that with the solidity of the air-borne High Line linear structure in place, that a new generation of New Yorkers, visitors, commuters, strollers and railroad buffs will have a chance to experience our City's special resource first hand, not through photographs of a moment lost in vague memories related decades later but experienced viscerally, through what could be called voting with ones' feet.

The AIA New York Chapter hopes and requests that the Surface Transportation Board ratify and assist the efforts of the Friends of the High Line, the many professional and civic organizations allied in its efforts and the elected leaders of the City of New York to create a spectacular new public space on the far West Side by allowing for interim trail use of this extraordinary historic structure. In so doing:

We honor those who created the transportation infrastructure of our City to preserve this significant urban archeological treasure.

We reward and respect our neighbors today and all others who can currently chance upon this special structure, to create a path and a place that transcends the street grid. And lastly,

We owe it to those who will come after us to take advantage of this unparalleled opportunity and, as we celebrate the 150th anniversary of enabling legislation that created Central Park, to in turn today create a linear park that will inspire festivities and appreciation for generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

**Testimony of Ethel Sheffer, President
NYMetro Chapter of the American Planning Association**

**Surface Transportation Board Hearing
July 24, 2003**



Thank you for giving me the opportunity to appear before you today on this significant planning initiative in New York City. The NY Metro Chapter of the APA represents almost 900 members in the New York metropolitan region, including the five boroughs of New York City, Nassau and Suffolk counties on Long Island, Westchester County and the Hudson Valley. Our members are planners involved in land use, open space preservation and development, transportation, community and economic development, and urban design.

New York has an unusual opportunity to plan for its future by acting to preserve an engineering marvel that is part of the city's unique industrial and transportation history. The 1.5 mile High Line, which was built as an innovative and efficient means of transportation in a dense and congested city, brought goods to the area and the region by means of trains moving along tracks above the streets and directly into warehouses and factories. Now this commercial structure can become an educational and recreational resource for residents and visitors to enjoy the vistas of New York's waterfront, to walk and bicycle for recreation and to use as a practical means to get to their destinations along the west side. New Yorkers in this part of Manhattan need more open space and the High Line can help to provide that. To preserve the High Line for pedestrian use and as a transportation corridor for potential future light rail or other innovative transit is to promote long-range civic and municipal planning at its best.

It is important not to forever preclude such adaptive re-use of this unusual structure by demolishing it, as some surrounding property owners would wish. The High Line is located in the neighborhoods of Chelsea and Clinton/Hell's Kitchen, which are themselves excellent examples of the city's vitality and adaptability to changing needs, market trends and urban re-invention. The west Midtown area to the north is now the focus of the city's most far-reaching comprehensive planning efforts for commercial and housing development, cultural and recreational expansion and improved pedestrian and transportation amenities. The City is also exploring new zoning options for west Chelsea. Planning for the re-use of the High Line should be an integral part of this broader planning initiative and should be part of the civic dialogue.

It is encouraging that the Bloomberg Administration and the City Council are supporting efforts to obtain agreement with the owners for interim trail use and that funds have been appropriated to promote planning and reconstruction measures. The NYMetro chapter of APA applauds these efforts and urges the Surface Transportation Board to grant a Certificate of Interim Trail Use for the High Line. Thank you.

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TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL SLATTERY, REAL ESTATE BOARD OF NEW YORK, INC. BEFORE THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD CONCERNING DOCKET NUMBER AB-167 (Sub-No. 1094)A, *Chelsea Property Owners – Abandonment –Portion of the Consolidated Rail Corporation’s West 30th Street Secondary Track in New York, NY.*

July 24, 2003

Good Afternoon. My name is Michael Slattery, Senior Vice President of the Real Estate Board of New York, Inc., a broadly-based trade association of over 5,000 owners, developers, brokers and real estate professionals active in New York City. REBNY would like to express its support for the retention and reuse of the railway section known as the High Line, provided that an economically feasible land use plan is adopted for the area.

The High Line is not enhancing the west side of Manhattan in its current state. It is an unused rail line that has become a blight on the neighborhood. However, we believe that if it is developed as its supporters envision, it could be transformed into a park or trail that would be an asset to the neighborhood and to all New Yorkers rather than a liability. In order to accomplish this, it is important that sufficient sources of funding be identified for the design, reconstruction, repair and maintenance of the structure.

Equally important is that a land use plan be developed that allows for appropriate development around the High Line. It does not make sense to invest millions of dollars in a park that few people will use. The neighborhood is now thinly populated and is out of the way for residents in other neighborhoods. We believe that an economically viable rezoning of the parcels underneath, adjacent to and in the vicinity of the High Line must be undertaken. Such a rezoning plan would include a transfer of development rights to adjacent parcels thereby increasing the allowable density. We support the retention of the High Line only if the rezoning plan allows high density buildings to be constructed nearby. The investment in the reuse of the High Line would not be justified unless zoning allows the development of significant amounts of new housing which would increase the surrounding population and add to the city’s tax base.

The Real Estate Board of New York, Inc. 570 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022 TEL: (212) 532-3100 FAX: (212) 683-1185

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 1, 2003

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8TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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Hon. Roger Nober
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Re: *The High Line - Docket No. AB-167 (Sub No. 1094)A*

Dear Chairman Nober:

I am writing to encourage the Board to take action consistent with preservation of the rail right of way known as the High Line. The High Line connects 23 blocks of my Congressional district, on the West Side of Manhattan. Twice in the last two years, once on August 16, 2001 and again on August 6, 2002, I have written to the Board and to CSX urging that alternatives to demolishing the High Line be found. Preserving the High Line could provide much-needed park land in a neighborhood that ranks near the bottom of all New York City districts in terms of open space, and would preserve this unique rail line for future intermodal transportation uses. On the other hand, demolishing the High Line would destroy a piece of New York City's transportation history and would preclude forever any future use of this transportation corridor. In addition, my August 6 letter explained that the Board should not rush to judgment on whether abandoning the High Line is in the public interest until the City has an opportunity to determine its post-September 11 public transportation needs.

The City has now begun to devise its development plan for the far West Side of Manhattan. In connection with this plan, the City has submitted a request for a Certificate of Interim Trail Use to preserve and reuse the High Line.

I believe it is in the public interest to allow the City to continue to develop its plans, and I urge the Board to encourage the parties to work together to reach a solution that addresses the concerns of all involved. We cannot afford to lose this valuable opportunity to preserve an important piece of Manhattan's transportation and manufacturing history.

Sincerely,

JERROLD NADLER
Member of Congress

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Congress of the United States

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**U.S. Representative Jerrold Nadler's
Testimony to the Surface Transportation Board
on the High Line
July 24, 2003**

Thank you for allowing me to testify today about this very important issue. I would like to take this time to welcome members of the Surface Transportation Board to New York's Eighth Congressional District.

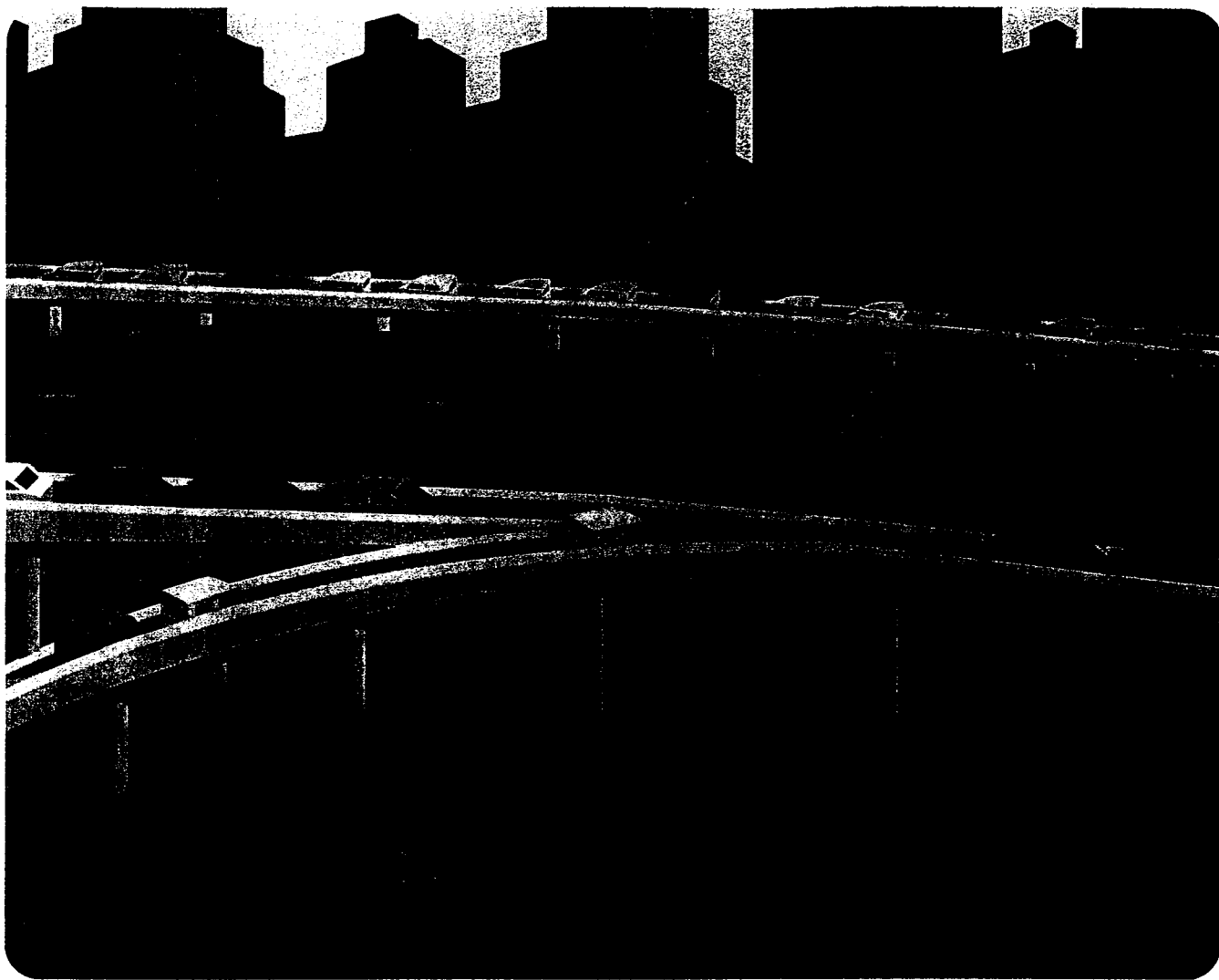
As you know, the High Line is one of Manhattan's most vivid monuments to New York's proud railroad heritage. Having served the city for over 70 years, the High Line continues to provide multifaceted appeal to industry and community alike. Saving the High Line preserves a vital historic link to the city's lineage as a transportation and manufacturing hub. It also provides a practical solution to the anticipated public transit congestion problem that is now just beginning appear as a result of the population growth along the far West Side of Manhattan. By utilizing this existing transportation infrastructure of the High Line, the city can alleviate some of the area's congestion and preclude the need for unnecessary development. The High Line can once again serve as a prominent piece of our city's transportation infrastructure.

I have been an advocate for preserving rail assets within New York City and its environs for over 20 years. The High Line elevated rail viaduct offers a reuse potential for our city that is unparalleled. Any hasty decision resulting in demolition would be shortsighted and a grave disservice to the City of New York. Many people talk about the costs that would be incurred to restore the High Line to prominence, however, that cost is dwarfed by any plan that would propose to build a new piece of transportation infrastructure from scratch. It makes no sense to tear down a piece of perfectly good transportation infrastructure that could not only move people, but do so in such a unique manner. That is the very essence of New York City.

Preserving the High Line will precipitate saving a versatile mode of transportation that will service the fast-growing population of Manhattan's far West Side. However, it will also act to create a large swath of open space for the recreation of thousands. Currently, the far West Side is booming and beginning to place a burden on the existing transportation infrastructure of that area. By preserving the High Line, it would be possible to move residents north and south along a significant stretch through Manhattan and alleviate some of the anticipated congestion.

Further, by preserving the High Line, the City and State of New York will be able to create a world-renowned urban amenity that will serve its community and attract a wide variety of visitors. Its transportation and recreational uses will artfully complement the Hudson River Park and act as a boon to Greenwich Village, the Meat Packing District, Chelsea, and lower Clinton. If the High Line is allowed to be demolished, however, nearly 1½ miles of elevated open space, which connects four vibrant and burgeoning neighborhoods, will vanish forever. Such a structure could never be replaced or replicated.

The High Line is a monument to New York's great past as a transportation and manufacturing hub. Let us not lose the unique opportunity it presents us now to create a spectacular public space for future generations to enjoy and admire. Many of you have heard me say before, "By preserving this one-of-a kind monument to New York's railroad heritage, the city can keep its transportation options open in a rapidly changing neighborhood." I urge the Surface Transportation Board to preserve the High Line. Thank you.



Changing Lanes: Watch What's Coming on Tomorrow's Roads

Unlocking gridlock will require more efficient use of the space we already have for transportation.

One answer is designing smaller vehicles and putting them on safe guideways above highways and within existing rights-of-way.

By Robert C. Maass and Terry Brewer
Illustration by Nip Rogers

Just as steam engines replaced the waterwheel and electric trams took the place of horse trams, so the twentieth-century car-and-highway transportation system is due to be replaced by something dramatically different in the twenty-first century.

Since the halcyon days of its introduction, the automobile has produced half the world's carbon dioxide and hollowed out cities in the United States, and it is now doing the same in cities all over the developing world as their inhabitants rush to embrace industrialization and its mistakes. The car-and-highway system has proved to be a disastrously inefficient land-use choice for high-density urban transport in the United States.

Henry Ford's common-man cars and highways to support them were achievements of the last century.



Highway traffic and urban gridlock familiar to everyone commuting to work or driving around town will soon be a thing of the past. The roads of the future will carry more cars and move them along faster, safer, and without choking exhaust.

However, the ability of ordinary Americans simply to go where they need to is being vitiated by the sheer volume of vehicles in the system. We can't build enough highways where they're needed to accommodate the traffic that's already there, much less provide for what's coming.

We've reached a stage of almost constant traffic jams in urbanized areas. In a megalopolis, popular destinations add more and more traffic to the system. We simply have no more room for new roads or highways within the present system's architecture. To survive the onslaught of more and more cars, our system must *double* the capacity of urban roadways, and do so without taking up any new real estate.

Dangers of Mixed-Use Highways

One irrational feature of today's jerry-built highway system is the unholy mix of vehicles crowding onto roads and highways—from oversized cars to huge trucks mixed in with buses and vans. Today's Commuter Joe feels he must drive the biggest SUV and duke it out with monster double-bottom trucks on the trip to work. But an 18-wheeler can still squash even the biggest SUV when a truck driver pulls one shift too many and dozes at the wheel.

Since England first ran massive steam-powered trains, we have known that dinky horse-drawn vehicles could not safely share the same right-of-way with them. Mam-

moths shouldn't mix with mice on the road. But the U.S. highway system has us locked into this unsafe condition.

While traffic balloons beyond the system's ability to cope, oil-consuming nations can no longer rely on a free-flowing supply. Now is the time to redirect energy policy away from oil and toward clean, *electrified* transportation using a different, more-sophisticated roadway system.

Super-Productive Lanes

The only way to increase *capacity* in urbanized areas is to maximize vehicle payload and roadway productivity.

A correct mix of Intelligent Vehicle Highway Systems (IVHS) elements and the more arcane dualmode guideways—two new transportation architectures—plus wayside electric power can produce cost-effective, safe, high-density rights-of-way. And it can be done without using additional urban space by allowing certain kinds of vehicles to run in super-productive rights-of-way shoehorned into existing roadways or even above them.

By making vehicles and highways more efficient in terms of both transporting people and cargo and consuming energy, we can move toward a more secure future. Reducing petroleum imports as we phase out the carbon-fuel economy in favor of electricity means slowing global warming as we build a new post-petroleum civilization.

Why Intelligent Systems Aren't Smart Enough

In Intelligent Vehicle Highway Systems (IVHS), the road and the car work together to do the driving. Touted by the professional highway community since the 1980s, IVHS has important features for new roadway system architectures.

Unfortunately, industry pushed a bit too aggressively into the arena of IVHS, hoping to supply a huge assortment of high-tech systems for existing vehicles and an aging American highway system without addressing the system's critical problems.

Original supporters of guideway

systems were shoved aside in the hustle and bustle of IVHS development in favor of keeping the old U.S. interstate highway system as is. Motorola and Detroit's smart-vehicle products stole the show from guideway innovators whose more mechanical, architectural solutions offered higher highway capacities and greater right-of-way productivity.

For example, the highway technology establishment is still prepared to spend big bucks solving "non-recurring" delays like warning drivers of an overturned truck ahead. But that information is available on the car radio or with on-board software—and is much cheaper.

Today's real problems are *recurring* delays at "chokepoints" in urban areas. These delays are as predictable as sunrise, occurring at bridges, tunnels, and merge points along everyone's daily route every day as narrated by local news anchors in every city, morning and evening.

Another highly touted advantage of smart car/smart highway systems is the promise of hands-free driving, allowing commuters to read or munch doughnuts. But you can do that on the 7:10 a.m. train to Grand Central and save the state billions of dollars.

The most appealing aspect of IVHS is "close-interval operations." This allows vehicles to follow one another on an automated highway with only a hair's breadth of space between them—and thus can increase lane capacity by an order of magnitude.

Robotic Trucks Deliver the Goods

One attractive application for IVHS is robotic-truck operations on guideways eventually moving in close-interval mode. This novel use for robotic trucks provides an exclusive lane—width and height appropriately reduced—between guideways for driverless "trucks." With fully computerized controls, a standard 20-foot shipping container placed on a wheeled carriage or with bogies attached can roll goods night and day. The achievement of close-interval mode within an IVHS environment will dramatically improve city-to-city trucking.

Robotic trucks will run adjacent to and pick up power from a contact rail on the highway's median barrier. When the robo-unit leaves the contact rail, it switches to its own on-board battery power. The robo-unit exits to a designated overpass using an ascending off-ramp and maneuvers itself into an exclusive queue on the elevated crossing roadway. There it waits, out of traffic and with no engine noise or pollution, for an assigned human trucker to board and drive the unit to its final destination. The driver steers and brakes as in an ordinary truck. The "robotic transporter" is driven along ordinary streets to a nearby loading dock. There, after a quick turnaround to empty and reload, the wheeled container is ready to run another hard day's night without a drink, a shave, or a nap.

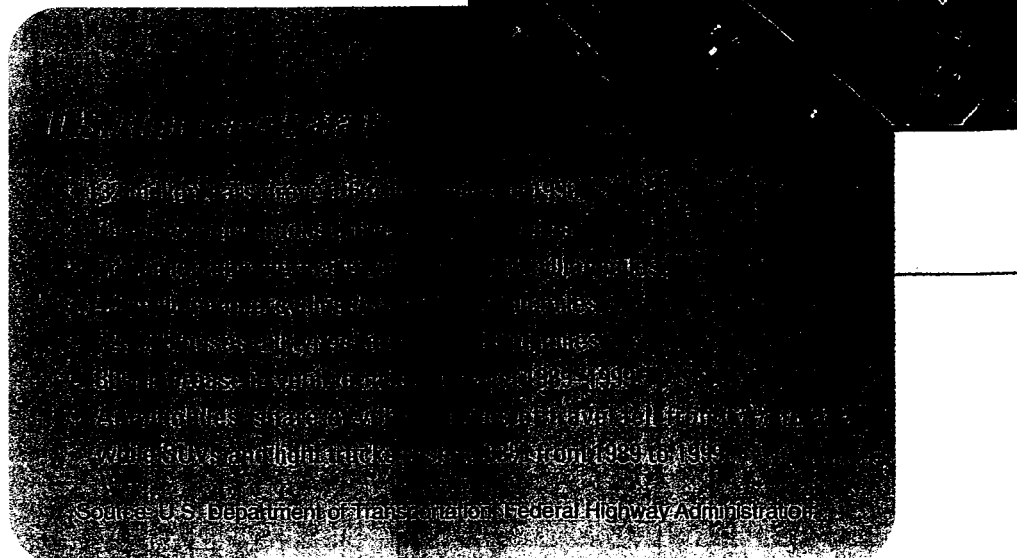
Two Proposed Systems For Right-of-Way Use

It has been said that insufficient right-of-way space is endemic to older American cities and other cities all over the world because they were designed to accommodate nineteenth-century carriages, not modern vehicular traffic. Therefore, common wisdom says enough space can never be found in the present system for today's magnitude of human and goods movement.

With two proposed systems—Metropolitan Personal Transporter Sys-

We've reached a stage of almost constant traffic jams in urban areas. . . . We simply have no more room for new roads or highways.

© PHOTODISC INC.



tems (MPTS) and Occupancy-Rated Vehicle Architecture (ORVA)—both the existing highway system and any ordinary urban street or rear property zone can be exploited to offer virtually inexhaustible right-of-way space for significantly increased productivity.

The key to increasing commuter traffic flow is to maximize the numbers of people moving in and through the system—that is, passengers per square foot of right-of-way per unit of time. Replacing the Long Island (commuter) Railroad, for example, would require an estimated 40 lanes of interstate highway. The

challenge is to achieve this level of right-of-way productivity while maintaining the mobility we associate with private passenger cars.

The typical street—the basic capillary of transportation circulation—has changed little since Iron Age and Graeco-Roman cities were first built and traffic proceeded on foot, by ox, or by two-wheeled horse-drawn chariot. The space allocated for vehicles today is based on two standing and two moving vehicles, or four “lanes.”

Ancient and medieval roadways were suitable for cumbersome, horse-drawn carriages or omnibuses,

but there were few of them on the road. In Europe, one-lane roads connecting towns and cities were the rule for centuries. By the last half of the twentieth century, America’s limited access highways offered multiple lanes in each direction with on/off ramps to facilitate armies of traffic moving in two directions.

But the inherent problem of the loner in a touring car occupying as much street space as a truck has constrained the productivity of the multi-lane highway system enough to produce virtual megalopolitan gridlock.

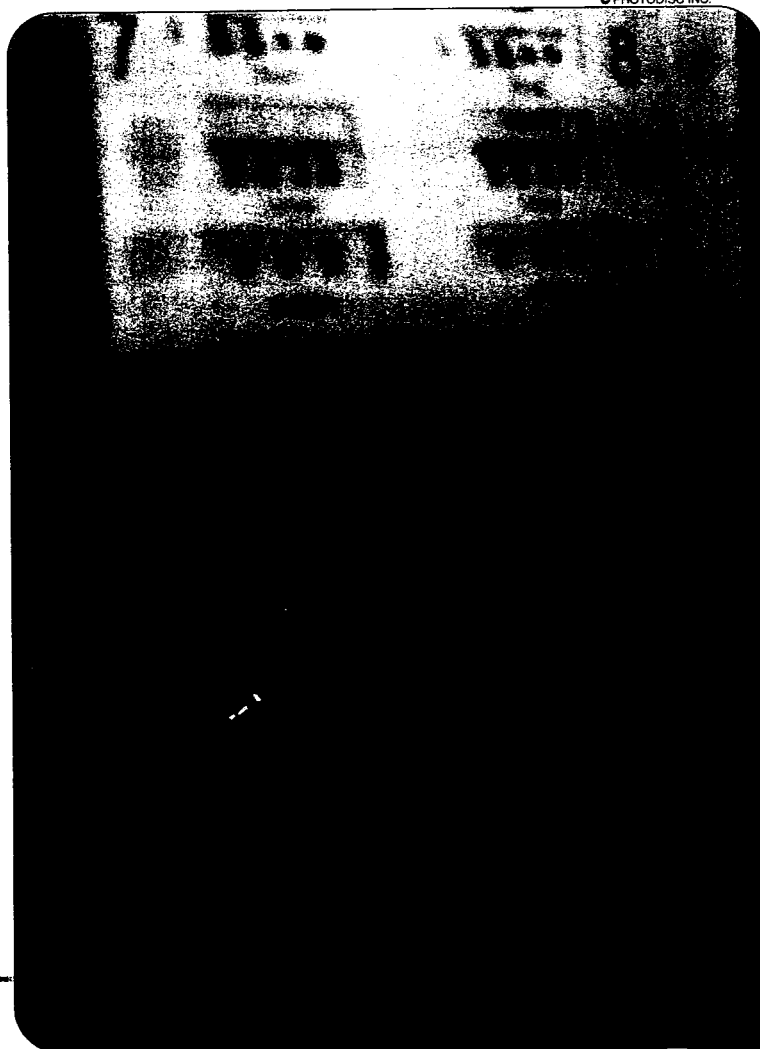
The Metropolitan Personal Transporter System

We can launch a Metropolitan Personal Transporter System simply by designating the smallest conventional vehicle widely available in the United States, the subcompact econobox, as our system-compatible vehicle. Using the econobox, which is driven almost universally in Europe and other environmentally conscious places, means significantly lower fuel requirements.

Once the econobox vehicles are modified (at low cost), they will operate in new and revolutionary “guidelanes” that exploit existing

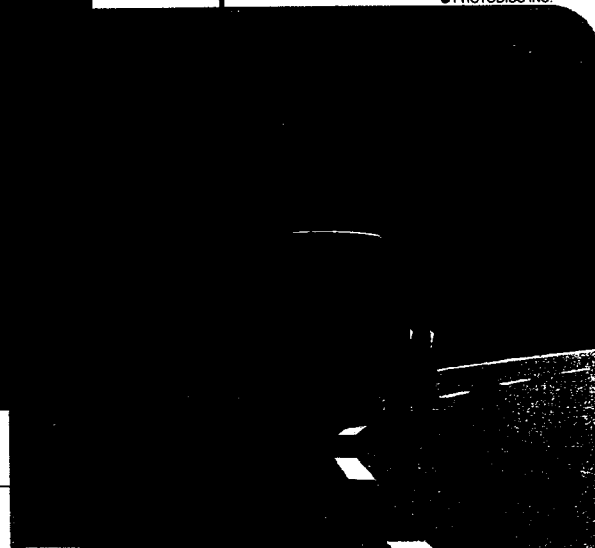
Your gas-guzzling vehicle may soon be a thing of the past. The cars of the future will run on electricity and speed to their destinations on new guidelanes above traffic.

© PHOTODISC INC.



Exhaust spewing from automobiles produces more than half the world’s carbon dioxide and contributes significantly to global warming. Electric vehicles will eliminate noxious fumes and free drivers from dependence on oil.

© PHOTODISC INC.



rights-of-way on modern highways *above* conventional traffic. At present, to prevent large vehicles from striking and rolling over the median barrier, buses and trucks are prohibited from using ordinary inside lanes that are exclusively reserved for passenger cars. Constructing an elevated guidelane above these lanes exploits air space and adds an additional lane in each direction without taking up new real estate. This proposal will also significantly reduce the small car's vulnerability to accidents with larger vehicles.

Furthermore, with a metered on-ramp, there will be no need for a big engine under the hood of our econobox since there will be no need to outrun oncoming 18-wheelers to enter on the highway. The MPTS transformation only requires modest adaptation of available products and equipment. There will be no need to break concrete, invent new passenger cars, or reroute traffic.

The innovative MPTS guidelane facility provides an aerial lane within a 5-foot by 6-foot right-of-way—as compared with the 12-foot by 14-foot space of the conventional highway lane. Since only a single class of vehicle is allowed to operate in the guidelane, there is no weight disparity to jeopardize the safety of the occupants of the econobox on its guidelane, as there is on today's open road.

Introducing Metropolitan Personal Transporter System on a six-lane highway increases the total facility's capacity by 25%. The number of cars per hour moving on the guidelane would be about the same as an ordinary car lane, about 2,000 vehicles per hour. Adding incremental capacity to existing facilities and adding different guideway modes will increase productivity while substantially reducing accidents.

Accepting the econobox with its (preferably hybrid) internal combustion engine as our original equipment is likely to speed public acceptance and investor interest, as well as reduce costs and system start-up time. Later, of course, with the installation of wayside power in the right-of-way, gasoline engines will be replaced completely as vehicles are retrofit for electric propulsion.

Transportation Links

Intelligent Transportation Systems, www.its.dot.gov/home.htm: A U.S. Department of Transportation agency that applies information technologies and advances in electronics to the transportation network. These technologies include the latest in computers, electronics, communications, and safety systems.

Intelligent Vehicle Initiative, www.its.dot.gov/ivi/ivi.htm: A Transportation Department initiative formed to accelerate the development and availability of advanced safety and information systems applied to all types of vehicles. Its primary goal is to help drivers operate vehicles more safely and effectively.

National Transportation Library, ntl.bts.gov: Administered by the Transportation Department's Bureau of Transportation Statistics, the agency serves as a repository of transportation-related information from public, academic, and private organizations.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: www.nhtsa.dot.gov: Responsible for reducing deaths, injuries, and economic losses resulting from motor-vehicle crashes by setting and enforcing safety performance standards for motor vehicles and motor-vehicle equipment.

Office of Transportation Technologies, U.S. Department of Energy: www.ott.doe.gov: Dedicated to helping reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil by developing advanced transportation and alternative fuel vehicle technologies.

Innovative Transportation Technologies: faculty.washington.edu/jbs/itrans: Managed by Jerry Schneider of the University of Washington, this site offers a comprehensive collection of information on unconventional transportation technologies and links to projects around the world. Includes a matrix comparing the ideas and reporting project status.

Occupancy-Rated Vehicle Architecture

An even smaller vehicle than the econobox can achieve urban right-of-way productivity on a par with rapid transit. Occupancy-Rated Vehicle Architecture is a proposed vehicle/system architecture for *solo* travelers in a guidelane high above and safe from street traffic. At its heart is an individual driving (or even pedaling) to work in an authentic micro-car, commuter capsule, or "bubble vehicle" roughly one-fourth the size of an econobox and weighing just a few hundred pounds.

The space that a driver actually uses is but a fraction of the area the typical car or SUV occupies as it

moves along street and highway. Likewise, parking ties up available street space, often all day. This means a conventional vehicle's payload simply does not correlate efficiently with its size or with the amount of highway and street area used, and represents an astonishing misappropriation of high-value urban space. To understand the futility of current traffic capacity measurement and associated "traffic correctives," we must realize that these conventional means and measurements will not solve the basic inefficiency of our car-highway system.

The problem today is the ridiculously low lane productivity as seen by comparing the payload (number of occupants—sometimes only one—

delivered to a destination) to the cross-sectional area taken up by the vehicle. The conventional highway lane delivers 10 solo drivers per square foot of right-of-way per hour, while MPTS delivers 100 solo drivers and ORVA delivers 200 solo drivers.

Once the benefits of putting econoboxes on these proposed mini-highway guidelane systems are clear, investors and users should be convinced there are ready alternatives. These are far superior to what is being offered by conventional highway planners and automakers, particularly as commuters face the prospect of tens of thousands more cars crowding the ultimately limited traditional highway networks.

Where the Metropolitan Personal Transporter System would deliver a sixfold improvement—up to 60 passengers per square foot per hour, Occupancy-Rated Vehicle Architecture would deliver as much as a 15-fold improvement—100 to 150 commuters per square foot per hour. These astounding upgrades in right-of-way productivity would be accompanied by even more compelling fuel economies and emissions reductions than MPTS.

All of these systems—robotic trucks, personal transporters, and individual micro-vehicles—could be combined in a commuter dualmode system. While robotic trucks would be automated, the others would operate manually and at lower cost.

Personal Transport Goes to Extremes

On the lighter side, there can be a transporter in which the commuter's individual transportation space is only a third of the size of the tiny ORVA transporter. Right-of-way use would be so efficient that it would substantially reduce the need for large rights-of-way as in multilane highways. We can travel through right-of-way facilities that resemble the structure of today's industrial air conditioning and ventilation ducts using a "MAG-Luge."

In this mode, commuters travel feet first, head raised, body supine. The human/vehicle is buoyed by magnetic levitation, propelled by electric linear induction motors, and

Highway Congestion in Metropolitan Areas

Being stuck in traffic has far-reaching impacts:

- It wastes people's time, increases the time to transport goods, and causes missed meetings and appointments.
- It increases fuel consumption because of increased acceleration, deceleration, and idling.
- Greater fuel consumption leads to higher emissions of greenhouse gases and may raise the level of other air pollutants.

The Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) studied 68 U.S. metropolitan areas in order to estimate congestion and its impacts. Between 1982 and 1997, congestion (measured by average annual delay per eligible driver) increased throughout the United States. Overall, average annual delay per driver almost tripled during the 15-year period, rising from 16 hours per driver in 1982 to 45 hours in 1997—as high as 54 hours per driver in metropolitan areas with a population of more than 3 million. More recent data from TTI show congestion continued to increase between 1997 and 1999.

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, www.bts.gov.

protected and augmented by pneumatic pressure management within the tube type construction.

Of course, people who are less physically fit may not be attracted to the MAG-Luge mode of travel. But former skateboarders, rock-and-roll Harley bikers, fitness buffs, and sportsters will be happy to use it.

Message from the Future

Even if these hypothetical architectures became commonplace in North America, global carbon dioxide levels and temperatures will continue to rise for a half century more *after* we put our house in order. Therefore, according to current climate science, we can expect our grandchildren to witness the flooding of coastal zones and the disappearance of the world's islands as glacial deposits melt and anthropogenic warming continues.

Stuck in a car-and-highway system unfriendly to alteration or update, we can still apply innovative thinking and accomplish a (quiet) revolution to save our cities and our planet and break the impasse created by obsolescent infrastructure and old ideas.

The impact of the car-and-highway mode on human society and the biosphere makes it mandatory that the system be transformed to fit the new epoch. Ideally, a new era will allow us to cut ties to global corporations concerned with the bottom line and government institutions mired in fixed paradigms and political pork. Instead, unaffiliated inventors and innovators should rethink the architecture of land transport in the tradition of trailblazing innovation. □



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Brewer

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Their essay "Delivering the Goods" appears on the World Future Society's online Social Innovation Forum, www.wfs.org/innovate.htm.

FEEDBACK! Send your comments about this article to letters@wfs.org.

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TO: SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD, FOR INCLUSION IN 7-24-03
HIGH LINE HEARING

CONTENTS:

1--WHY NOT MORE THAN ONE USE FOR THE HIGH LINE?

Text for High Line Panels Submitted 5/23 and re-edited
for today's STB HEARING 7-24-03

2--"DELIVERING THE GOODS"

World Future Society Web Forum, Social Innovation

By Ronald Adams and Terry Brewer

<http://www.wfs.org/adams.htm>

3--WEST SIDE ELEVATED BIKE/RUN/WALKWAY PROPOSAL 10-30-80

4--STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF PRESERVING THE HIGH LINE

By George Haikalis, Inst.for Rational Urban Mobility

WHY NOT MORE THAN ONE USE FOR THE HIGH LINE?

Recall the prime tenet of urban planning--always to search out the highest and best use. The High Line should not be refurbished in such a way that other compelling uses are obviated. The High Line is too important a facility and location to do that. Modest research combined with analysis has shown that multiple use is feasible.

In their golden age, railways built upon their line-haul role of intercity people and goods movement--with horse-drawn wagons to collect and distribute goods closer to their ultimate destination than downtown, or waterfront terminals

In the twentieth century, railroads even came to add motor trucks to handle the local deliveries, under the name: Railway Express Agency. After WWII however, American railroads beset by militant labor, and the proliferation of over-the-road trucking on a growing Interstate Highway system, shrank precipitously, abandoning all but long distance, inter-city "line-haul" transport.

However, they soon began to take back certain increments of goods movement from over-the-road truckers with strengthening clout. This was accomplished in "modular" fashion--loading the (wheeled) highway trailer freight "module" directly onto a flat car--called "piggy-back" later, Trailer-on-Flat-Car (TOFC). Why pay forty highway tractor-trailer drivers when you can pay for just one railroad engineer?

In an urban context, contemplate how much more efficiently a single tunnel track can handle a 40 flat-car train than--the equivalent, 160 18-wheeler tractor rigs coming through motor-vehicle tunnels like the Lincoln Tunnel in New York.

The multitude of two-axle trucks that have taken over the REA business in the collection and distribution phases of goods movement congest, pollute, and cause pedestrian casualties. When new, they produce at least a half dozen grams per mile of hydro-carbons and oxides of nitrogen per mile; numbers that double as the vehicle ages; they spew four times that amount of carbon monoxide; and they produce a hundred times as much carbon dioxide--principal cause of global warming.

Instead, 160 containers coming from the gigantic container port, Port Newark in New Jersey, or down the old New York Central tracks from Albany to reach the Hudson River waterfront by lighter (as the old rail barges did and as recently proposed by the New York Port Authority) would roll eventually into the old Penn Station 30th Street yard. From there, the containers-on-flat-car could be easily pushed along the High Line by electric locomotives like the ones they used for decades.

CLANG FOR THE TROLLY--to get the fullest benefits and utilization of the High Line--include the "open cut", i.e. the depressed below-grade section of the old New York Central trackage north of the 30th street yard--tracks now used only by infrequent Amtrak runs.

Among the options to be considered--not summarily excluded --is light rail transit (LRT). The Regional Plan Association has seriously urged its implementation in the High Line refurbishing plans.

The question arises, how can this trio of uses: freight, passenger, and recreational strollers, be accommodated on the aged artifact? The most straightforward mode would be to locate the Friends of the High Line's esplanade above the dynamic vehicle profile of LRT and (single stacked) container-on-flat car (COFC) movements on present rails.

Assuming the primary target locations for trolley stops would be 14th, 23rd, and 34th streets, such an alignment structure could be readily implemented. It would be premature to speculate on the other two, but when 23rd street is considered for an LRT stop, we should anticipate that the proposed esplanade would bifurcate, east-ramp and west-ramp--and the two ramps would lead pedestrians down to the matching vertical position needed to permit level access and egress to the floor of stopped LRV vehicle(s) before ramping back to the overhead "roof" positions, once past the station.

RAIL-TO-TRUCK FACILITIES--THERE SINCE BEFORE AGE OF RAIL

Post Office Goods Handling Facilities; Morgan North/south

The existing east spur leaving the High Line south of 30th Street yard could accept--and guide--articulated ABC double-stacked flat cars into one of railroad's oldest infrastructural grounds, Morgan North, Postal Service goods handling facility. This building has 9 foot deep, concrete beams still visible from the street.

Starrett/Lehigh and the Terminal Warehouse Structure

Like Morgan North, a number of such buildings were built to handle boxcars arriving from lighters on the Hudson waterfront before the Port Authority took goods-handling away from New York, and moved it to New Jersey. Perhaps the PONYA will return that which they took away in the new century.

Single-stacked ABC flat cars would penetrate beyond Morgan at 30th Street, heading south, then west, to reach a newly constructed westbound spur to Starrett/Lehigh. This would preclude adjusting the pedestrian promenade for clearance. Such rail cars require no more head-room than a trolley (LRV).

111 Eighth Avenue--Inland Terminal # 1

This mighty structure, covering an entire block in the Manhattan grid performed the same services as those just mentioned--except 111 had elevators for boxcars.

Neglected Urban Resource--Rear Property Space

A refurbished High Line could exploit Manhattan's warren of "rear property" spaces to facilitate an early introduction of robotic goods movement for our new century.

There is a vast, untapped resource--in New York--and most older American Cities, that can and should be employed to relieve the polluting, corrosive congestion of trucks in Lower Manhattan.

Keeping the western High Line tracks vertically clear, would permit, in time, single stack flat cars to reach 111 Eighth Avenue.

However, an "east-ramp" would only be positioned high enough for the robotic "track mobiles" to turning off the old, existing High Line trackage, to travel, via rear property lines, inland, and to the east.

Ideally, the esplanade structure(s) would be pre-fabricated so that changes can be made over time to meet changing conditions.

How did this vast warren of now unused rear property space come into being?

For most of the 19th century, before widespread use of iron--eventually, steel--and before motor vehicles, buildings were small, due to the limitations of masonry and wood construction. In the absence of electric illumination, floor areas were kept small to take maximum advantage of available sunlight. Buildings were arranged around the perimeter of the large blocks of the Manhattan grid, creating a collective rear yard space within each block. There were usually a number of apertures left for vehicular and ground access to this interior block space.

These apertures allowed entry and egress of carts and wagons whereby service personnel and delivery men served owners and tenants--both residential and commercial--located on the block.

After motor vehicles replaced horse-drawn wagons and carts, many of the large openings became the site of single storey buildings--often called "taxpayers," chiefly, parking lots or small stores. By and large, rear space yards delineated by lot lines were fenced off, and in residential areas plants and trees were introduced by occupants of the buildings.

After WWII, much larger steel structures went all the way to the property line. Often, larger structures simply straddled the portion of the block on which they were erected since ample power for illumination and heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning permitted much larger floor areas.

In Manhattan's many pre-war commercial districts, these rear yard areas remain remote, undeveloped and underutilized. The air space above them served to provide air and light to the commercial buildings to either side of the common property line before Mr. Edison went into business. These mostly prewar structures are usually two or three times the height of older residential buildings.

The extensive rear property spaces represent derelict, unproductive real estate that can be exploited by electric "track-mobiles," operated robotically, to deliver goods with few environmental externalities. The principle focus initially will be the garment, fur, plant, and electronics districts, as well as the equally appropriate "Ladies' Mile," as far east as Fifth, and even Park Avenue. This beckoning opportunity may be the most compelling reason to "save the High Line"--and to do so for whatever uses emerge

NEW YORK CITY'S PLAN FOR THE HIGH LINE

Presentation to the Surface
Transportation Board
July 24, 2003



High Line: Once-in-a-Lifetime Opportunity



High Line: Opportunity

- Certificate for Interim Trail Use (**CITU**) is the **most effective way to seize this opportunity**
- Today's speakers will **describe the City's plans** for the High Line:
 - **Overall context:** Deputy Mayor Doctoroff
 - **West Chelsea rezoning:** Amanda Burden, Chair, NYC Planning Commission and Vishaan Chakrabarti, Director of the Manhattan Office, NYC Department of City Planning
 - **City Council's role:** Honorable Gifford Miller, Speaker, NYC Council

High Line: Precedent

- New York City has a history of creating parks in order to transform neighborhoods, to create value, and to enhance identity



Gramercy Park



Central Park

High Line: Opportunity

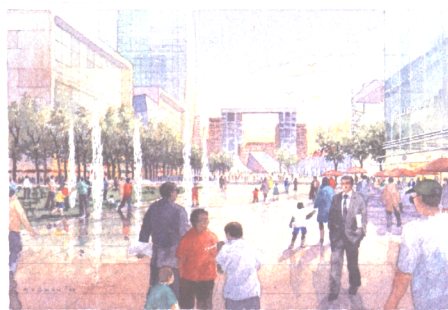
- The High Line traverses three distinct neighborhoods ready for transformation
- If converted to a park, the High Line would allow pedestrians to walk 22 blocks above street traffic



High Line: Opportunity

Hudson Yards (30th to 42nd St)

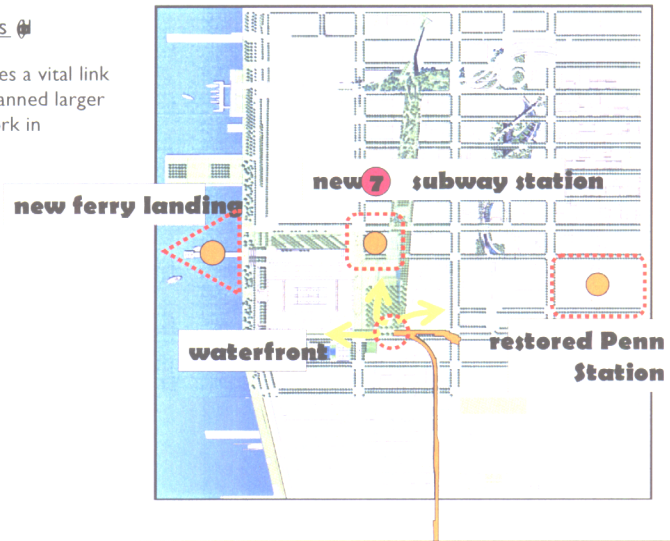
- City and State initiative to transform underused manufacturing area into a new central business, entertainment and residential district



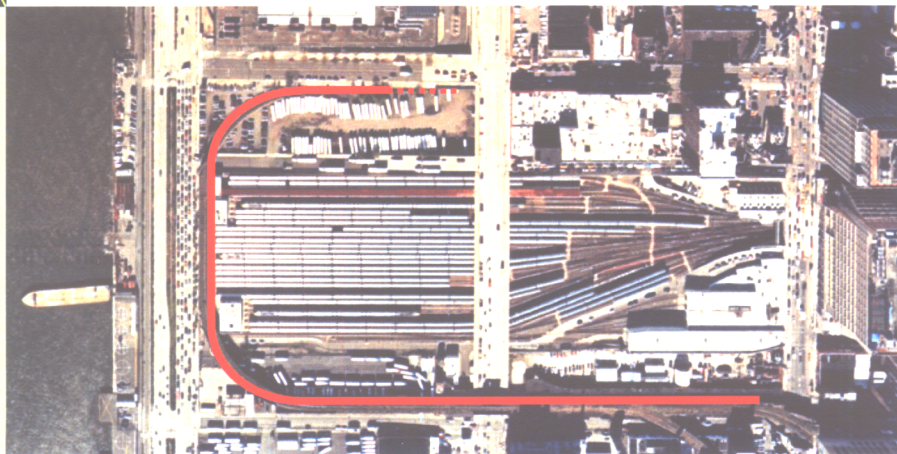
High Line: Opportunity

Hudson Yards

- The High Line provides a vital link to the current and planned larger transportation network in Hudson Yards



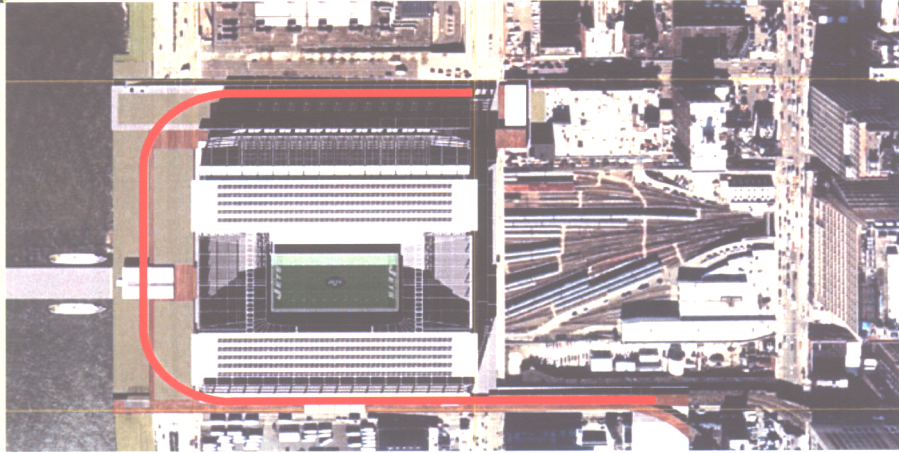
High Line: Opportunity



Existing condition

High Line: Opportunity

- Right of Way required by CITU will be consistent with Hudson Yards plan

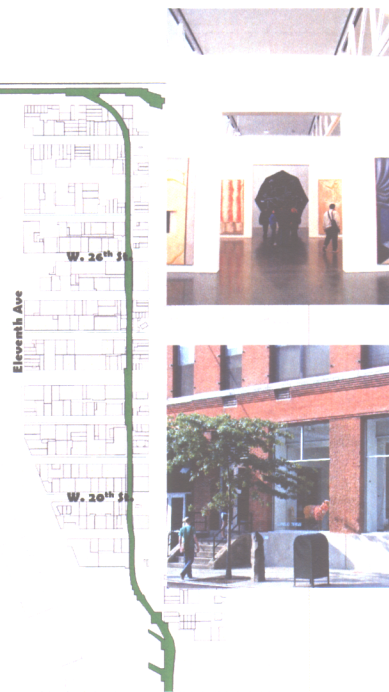


Proposed final configuration

High Line: Opportunity

West Chelsea (16th to 30th streets)

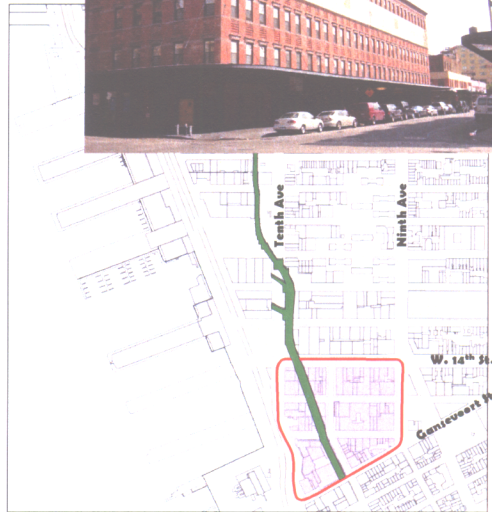
- New York City's premier art gallery district
- City initiative to create a vibrant mixed use neighborhood combining residences, arts and commercial uses
- A pedestrian trail along the High Line will provide opportunities for second level entrances to galleries and shops and provide connections to adjacent neighborhoods



High Line: Opportunity

Gansevoort Meat Market (Gansevoort St. to 14th St.)

- Historic Meat Market, transformed into a destination neighborhood for shopping, dining, and nightlife
- A pedestrian trail along the High Line will preserve a critical piece of the neighborhood's history while providing a pedestrian link to the waterfront and West Chelsea to the north



High Line: Opportunity

- This part of the City desperately needs open space:
 - Community District 4, which surrounds the High Line, ranks 57 out of 59 community boards in terms of open space acreage per resident
 - Less than 1/5 of an acre of open space per 1,000 residents vs. the citywide average of 2 1/2 acres per 1,000 residents
- Success of Hudson River Park demonstrates strong demand for parks
 - Approximately 5.8 million visitors per year



High Line: Opportunity

- **CITU is the best way to capture this opportunity**

- Preservation of corridor under Rails-to-Trails makes it more feasible
- Right of way will meet STB standards

- **Outstanding issues regarding High Line's re-use are being addressed locally**

- City pursuing other necessary public actions, including rezoning plan for West Chelsea
- Development of plan for a new kind of park in tandem with the City Council and the Friends of the High Line

- **We urge the STB to approve the CITU, which will allow CSX to negotiate the Trail Use Agreement with the City**

High Line: Opportunity



High Line: West Chelsea Rezoning



High Line: West Chelsea Rezoning



High Line: West Chelsea Rezoning



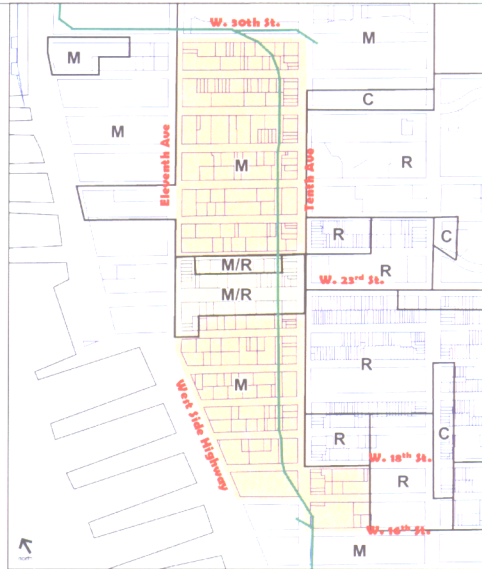
High Line: West Chelsea Rezoning



High Line: West Chelsea Rezoning

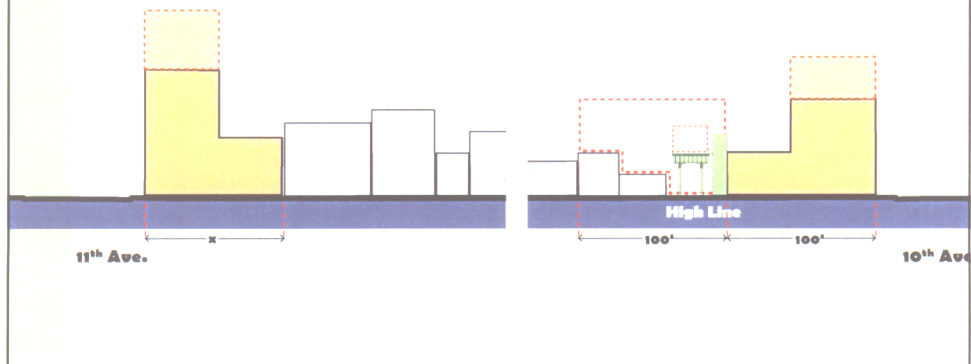
Existing zoning:

- R:** Residential
- M:** Manufacturing
- M/R:** Mixed residential, commercial and light manufacturing
- study area



High Line: West Chelsea Rezoning

Development rights transfer mechanism

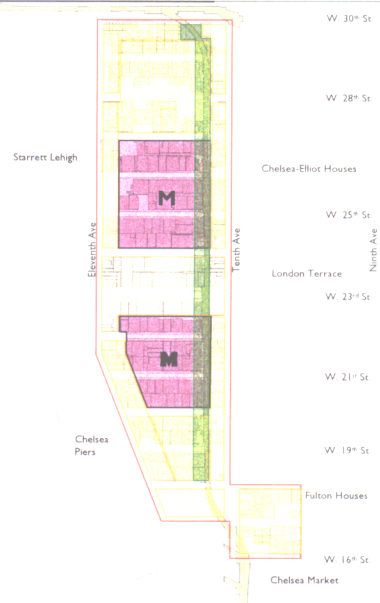


High Line: West Chelsea Rezoning

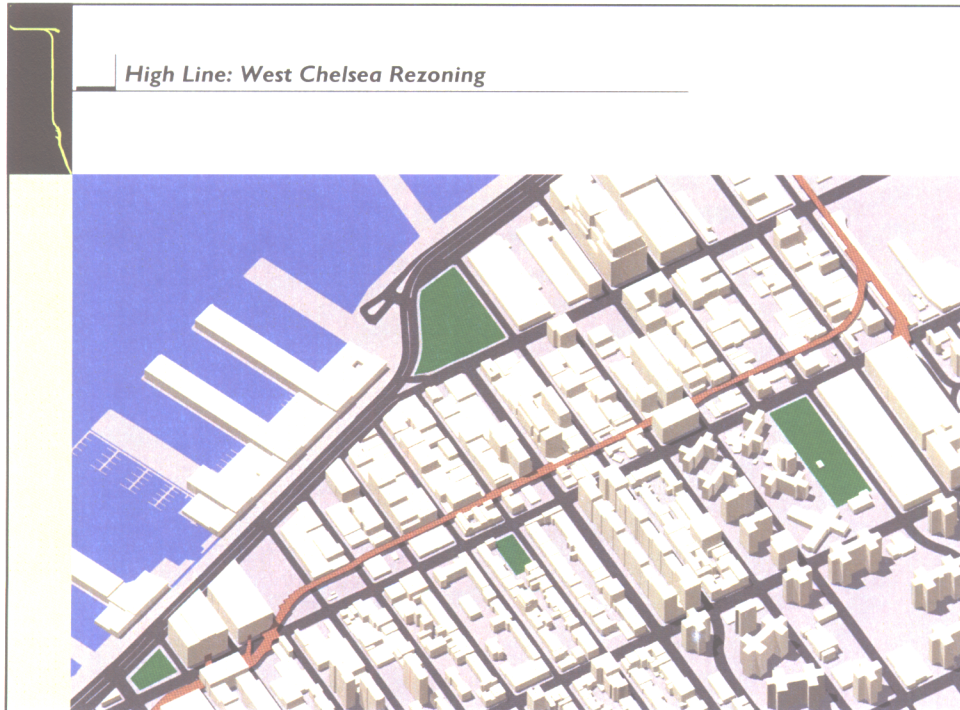
Zoning proposal:

Special West Chelsea district

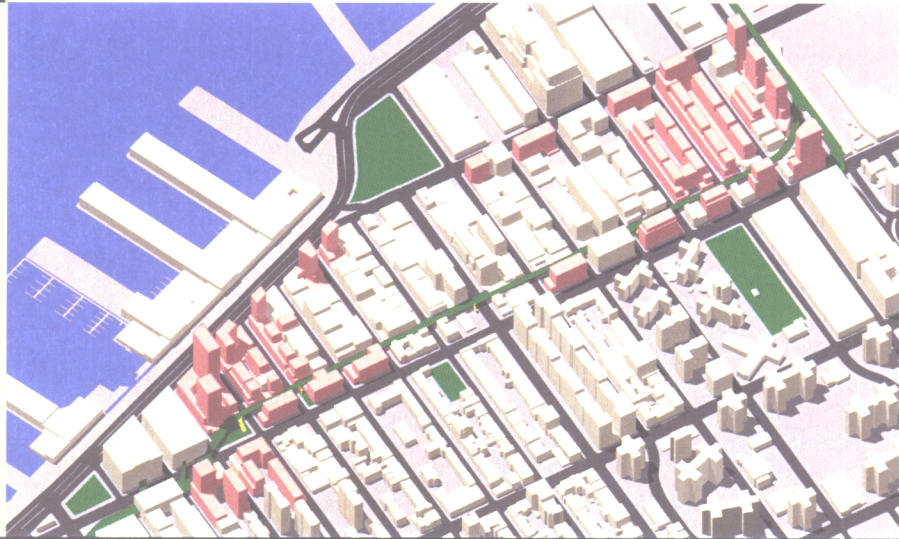
- ▶ allow the **transfer** of development rights away from the High Line
- ▶ new **residential** uses
- ▶ retain **manufacturing** zoning at the core of the arts district



High Line: West Chelsea Rezoning



High Line: West Chelsea Rezoning



High Line: West Chelsea Rezoning



High Line: West Chelsea Rezoning

Proposed schedule (assuming CITU):

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Summer '03 | - Refine zoning proposal |
| Fall '03 | - Release of draft environmental scoping document and public hearing |
| February/March '04 | - Certify draft Environmental Impact Statement |
| February/March '04 | - Certify Special West Chelsea District zoning application and commence public review |
| August/September '04 | - Adopt Special West Chelsea District zoning |

High Line: Opportunity



High Line: Opportunity



High Line: Opportunity



THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL AND THE HIGH LINE

- **February 2001** Adopted Resolution No. 1747 calling upon the Mayor and the Governor to apply to the U.S. Surface Transportation Board for a CITU
- **NYC Fiscal Years 2002 through 2004** Provided expense budget funding to Friends of the High Line in support of railbanking efforts
- **June 2003** Allocated nearly \$16 million in capital budget funding to the High Line
- **2004** Will be the final decision maker West Chelsea rezoning plan

HIGH LINE FACT SHEET

OVERVIEW

The High Line is 1.45-mile-long elevated rail structure on Manhattan's far West Side. It was built in the 1930s as part of a \$150 million infrastructure project, funded by the City and State of New York and the New York Central Railroad, to remove dangerous trains from Manhattan's streets. No trains have run on the High Line since 1980. In 1999, Friends of the High Line (FHL), a community-based 501(c)(3) non-profit group, formed to preserve the structure for reuse as an elevated promenade through the federal "rail-banking" program. In 2002, the City of New York endorsed the project and filed with the federal government to transform the High Line to an elevated walkway.

HIGH LINE FACTS

Constructed 1929-1934
Spans 22 blocks, from 34th Street to Gansevoort Street
1.45 miles long
6.7 acres of space atop elevated rail deck
30-60 feet wide and 18-30 feet high
Built to support 2 fully loaded freight trains
Primary construction materials: steel and reinforced concrete
Owners: Conrail/CSX Corporation

FHL FACTS

FRIENDS OF THE HIGH LINE (FHL) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the High Line for reuse as an elevated public open space.

Co-Founders: Joshua David & Robert Hammond
Operations Manager: Justin Rood
Director of Development: Juliet Page

Friends of the High Line
Hudson Guild, Room 225
441 West 26th Street
New York, NY 10001
212-631-9188 info@thehighline.org www.thehighline.org

PRESERVATION

The Threat Since the mid 1980s, a group of private property owners who purchased land under the High Line at prices that reflected its easement have lobbied for High Line demolition.

Preservation Victories

July 2001: The New York City Council passes a resolution 38-0 in favor of High Line preservation and reuse.

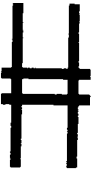
March 2002: FHL wins lawsuit challenging the City of New York's participation in an agreement that could have led to demolition.

March 2002: Preservation League of New York State puts the High Line on "Seven to Save" list of significant, threatened historic State sites.

August 2002: FHL petitions the federal Surface Transportation Board (STB) to reopen a 1992 decision that could permit demolition.

December 2002: The City of New York, by filing with the STB for rail-banking, makes it City policy to preserve and reuse the High Line.

(over)



REUSE

Rail-banking “Rail-banking” is a mechanism created by Congress in 1983 to preserve irreplaceable transportation corridors and allow them to be used as trails. Over 12,000 miles of rail-trails have been created nationwide. The City of New York took the first step toward rail-banking the High Line in December, 2002.

Reuse Study In Spring 2002, FHL published *Reclaiming the High Line* in partnership with the Design Trust for Public Space. The study examined the structure, its history, its neighborhood context, and developed a set of recommendations for reuse. The study is available as a PDF on FHL’s website, www.thehighline.org.

Feasibility Study In Summer 2002, FHL conducted a feasibility study with Hamilton Rabinovitz & Alschuler (HRA) at the request of the NYC Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Rebuilding. Key findings:

- Conversion of the High Line to public open space is technically and legally feasible. No unreasonable or insurmountable obstacles are posed by federal, State, or City regulation.
- Reuse of the High Line is economically rational. It will create substantial economic benefits by increasing property values and tax revenues. Those new revenues will be at least equal and up to twice the costs of rehabilitating the structure and creating an attractive, safe, well-maintained park environment.

Project Features 1.45-mile public open space with A.D.A.-compliant access locations, landscaped areas, smooth-surfaced walkway, benches, lighting, pigeon-detering improvements, security system, other site amenities.

Project Cost \$65 million

Funding Planning and construction costs will be raised from private, foundation, federal, State, and City funding sources. FHL is preparing a major capital campaign and, with the backing of the City of New York, is working in Washington to bring federal transportation funds to the project.

DESIGN COMPETITION

“Designing the High Line,” is an open, international ideas competition seeking visionary design proposals for the reuse of the High Line. It will culminate in a major exhibition at Grand Central Terminal July 9-26, 2003. All competition materials are available online at www.thehighline.org. Registration Deadline: April 25, 2003. Submission Deadline: May 23, 2003

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

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THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 2002 - VOL. CCXI, NO. 38 - * * * * \$1.00

A Magic-Carpet View of the City

By Phillip Connors

New York

Having moved here from Montana nearly four years ago, I found it difficult to suppress the urge to climb, to explore, to seek out remnants of wilderness. I was eager to get up—not by an elevator but by my own two feet. A few climbing adventures in industrial Queens provided gorgeous city views, but factory rooftops were no match for timbered peaks.

Then I noticed the High Line.

A strip of elevated railroad on Manhattan's West Side, it runs from 34th Street and 12th Avenue to Gansevoort Street in the meatpacking district. It is a treasure now mostly because it's the structure that time forgot.

It beckoned because it was . . . green. From 23rd Street and 10th Avenue, I looked up and saw a strip of meadow in the sky. I had to get there. But how? Now owned by CSX, a Virginia-based rail and shipping company, the track was built in the 1930s as a freight line. It carried its last shipment, three cars of frozen turkeys, in 1980. Passenger trains never used it. Thus, no stairs or other means of pedestrian access. I followed its path several blocks north until I spied a route up. This required climbing a fence, heaping old automobile tires into a pile, scaling the pile and heaving myself onto a factory rooftop, then shimmying up steel support beams onto the tracks. (Only later—much later—did I find an easier way.)

Behold! The city opened like a flower, the towers of Midtown cupping the Empire State Building like petals around a gleaming silver stamen. Even more remarkable than the urban panorama was the view at my feet. A swath of Manhattan had gone to seed, reverting to a kind of native prairie: knee-high grasses, white and yellow wildflowers, a miracle born of neglect. I fell for it instantly and have gone back again and again.

At 30th Street the tracks run east-west for two long blocks, then curve south again. Here a corrugated tin barricade blocks the way, but someone has torn a gash in it just big enough to allow a man to slip through. Recently, an artist painted a mural on the back side. It depicts the view to the north and west, including the river and the low-slung black box of the Javits Center. In the sky are the words "save the tracks," as if written by an airplane skywriter. On the right-hand side of the curve, going south, a sculpture collection sits on a rooftop: funky-looking abstractions fashioned of multicolored hoops and painted wire mesh, like the offspring of a Slinky and a tennis racket.

Soon you come to another tin barrier. This one you must crawl beneath on your belly. When you emerge on the other side, you see something sublime: a small garden with a tiny maple tree, a miniature pine and a patch of daisies and sunflowers.

The gardener tends this lovely plot by stepping from a third-floor apartment window on a plank laid across to the tracks. For a few seasons, the little pine was wreathed by a string of Christmas lights.

Forgive me if I make the High Line sound like an elevated Eden. In fact, part of its charm arises from juxtapositions of what might be considered the sacred and the profane.

In a shady spot where the tracks are bracketed by two old warehouse buildings, a miniature forest has risen; yet just beyond it the tracks are littered with rusty buckets, old spray-paint cans (graffiti detritus) and a lonesome-looking pair of turquoise underpants. In this way the tracks are like the streets

carved wooden owls perched on a ledge. From the street I would never have noticed them.

The High Line, though, is increasingly drawing notice. A group called Friends of the High Line (www.thehighline.org) has been working to transform the structure into a seven-acre strip of levitating parkland, by making it part of the federal government's vastly successful Rails-to-Trails program. West Side property owners dream, instead, of dismantling it and building condos and office buildings. A very talented photographer, Joel Sternfeld, has taken pictures of the tracks in all seasons and published them in a marvelous book, "Walking the High Line," published by Steidl.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg has even ordered a study on the High Line's future, and his administration's report is due this month.

It's hard to root for the real-estate developers in this case.

A park along the High Line would be a stunning amenity in a city as dense as New York. Walking the tracks, it's possible to feel as if you're on a slow-motion magic carpet ride. Admittedly, a selfish and proprietary part of me wishes the tracks would simply be left to another 20 years of benign neglect. But then I remember the commanding city views we New Yorkers so recently lost. And I think that in its relative humility, its unprepossessing message that beauty and nature endure in the unlikelyst of circumstances, a park on the High Line could be a consoling gift we give to ourselves and the future of the city.

Forgive me if I make the High Line seem like an elevated Eden. Part of its charm arises from the juxtapositions of the sacred and the profane.

below—elegant here, grubby there—and they turn Henry Adams's dictum on its head. "Chaos," he observed, "was the law of nature; Order was the dream of man." On the High Line nature has restored order to a chaotic sliver of Manhattan's West Side, and the only evidence of chaos appears in the flotsam left behind by humans.

In a passing scene is his novel "Great Jones Street," Don DeLillo imagined a distant future when archaeologists would scale the mounds of rubble in our abandoned cities and attribute our culture's demise, in part, to the fact that we stored so much of our beauty high in the air, out of eyesight. I thought of DeLillo as I looked down onto the roof of a grimy little auto-repair shop and saw two immaculately



Time Out New York

The obsessive guide to impulsive entertainment
February 13-20, 2003 Issue No. 385 \$2.99

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TONY surveys our city's dream projects—and shows how they'll shape the way we live, work and play

Of all the large-scale projects, the High Line, the old elevated railway tracks in West Chelsea, has emerged as a sentimental favorite among a wide cross section of citizens. Although former mayor Giuliani wanted to tear it down, the Bloomberg administration supports its redevelopment, most likely as some sort of winding walkway or elevated park space. "The best outcome for the High Line is that it can be the catalyst for the development of that area; it's such an unusual feature to have," says Frank E. Sanchis, executive director of the Municipal Art Society. "There's a great opportunity to use it in conjunction with Hudson River Park. Buildings will be built around it, to take advantage of its location. And the fact that it gives you access to mid-blocks and access to individual buildings makes it quite an unusual creature in the city. We're lucky to have it."

FRIENDS OF THE HIGH LINE

SUPPORTERS

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mayor Michael Bloomberg
Speaker Gifford Miller
Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields
Councilmember Christine Quinn
U.S. Representative Jerrold Nadler
State Senator Thomas Duane
State Senator Eric Schneiderman
State Senator Martin Connor
Assembly Member Richard Gottfried
Assembly Member Deborah Glick
U.S. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton

PROMINENT SUPPORTERS

Philip Aarons, Principal, Millennium Partners
Kevin Bacon, Actor
Andre Balazs, Hotelier
Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, Cityscape Institute
Sandra Bernhard, Actress
Mary Boone, Gallery Owner
Dominique Browning, Editor, House & Garden
Amanda Burden, City Planning Commissioner
Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Artists
Joan K. Davidson, Philanthropist
Ian Falconer, Author and Illustrator
Tom Fontana, Television Producer
Glenn Close, Actress
Elizabeth Gilmore, Philanthropist
Joel Grey, Actor and Performer
Sebastian Junger, Author and restaurateur
Harvey Keitel, Actor
Leonard and Evelyn Lauder, The Estée Lauder Companies
Lynden B. Miller, Public garden designer
Bette Midler, Actress and Performer
John Cameron Mitchell, Actor and Performer
Cynthia Nixon, Actress
Edward Norton, Actor
Todd Oldham, Designer
Warrick Price, Conservancy for Historic Battery Park
Alexis Rockman, Artist
Charlie Rose, Talk Show Host
Tom Sachs, Artist
Kyra Sedgwick, Actress
Cindy Sherman, Artist
Martha Stewart, Martha Stewart Omnimedia
Alan and Donna Sullman, Smith & Wollensky Restaurant Group
Jean-George Vongehrchten, Restaurateur
Diane von Furstenberg, Designer
William Wegman, Artist

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

300 West Block Association
Far West Chelsea Neighborhood Association
Hell's Kitchen Neighborhood Association
Fifteenth Street Block Association
Spears Building Board of Managers
Chelsea Village Partnership
The Municipal Art Society
Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation
Preservation League New York State
Dia Art Foundation
Save Gansevoort Market
Neighborhood Open Space Coalition
Design Trust for Public Space
New York Civic
Trust for Public Land
New York Parks & Conservation Association
East Coast Greenway Alliance
Columbia University; Richard A. Plunz Professor of Architecture
Transportation Alternatives
New Yorkers for Parks
Horticultural Society of New York
Open House New York
American Institute of Architects NY
The Kitchen
Rails-To-Trails Conservancy
Fine Arts Federation of New York
Place Matters
Munetta Brook
Institute for Rational Urban Mobility, Inc.
Chelsea Village Business Owners
American Academy in Rome
The Museum of Comic and Cartoon Art

LOCAL BUSINESSES

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2/20 Gallery
303 Gallery
Prestone Printing
American Fine Arts
Anton Kern Gallery
Art and Objects
Art Merchandising Inc
Jim Kempner Fine Art
Luhning Augustine Gallery
The Aurora Gallery
Auto
Axis Gallery
Banchet Bianca Flowers
Deborah Bell Photographs
Belladonna Productions
ACA Galleries
Lost Art/ Space 515
Art of this Century
Beyul
Steven Scharoff
Denise Bibro Fine Art
David Binder Productions
NL
Tanya Bonakdar Gallery
Mary Boone Gallery
Chelsea Bistro & Bar
Boston Market
Boucher Jewelry
Breukelen
Cynthia Broan Gallery
Bruce Wolf Studio
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Charles Bumgardner Creative Services
Clementine Gallery
Cabo Rojo Restaurant
Denise Cade Gallery Ltd.
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Blue Mountain Gallery
Paula Cooper Gallery
Cristnerose/Josée Bienvenu Gallery
eyestorm.com Ltd.
D'Amelio Terras
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zugmagazine
Andrew Edlin Gallery
El Faro
Electronic Arts Intermix
Eleni's
Bottino
Thomas Erben Gallery
Eyemag Media Inc.
Feigen Contemporary
LFL Gallery
Fitz & Co
Fatima Productions
Kim Foster
La Lunchonette
Team Gallery
Fredericks Freiser Gallery
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Gloo Design
Empire Diner/Nothing Heavy Inc.
Gotham Builders & Renovators, Inc.
Jay Grum/James Graham & Sons
H55
Stephen Haller Gallery
2/20 Gallery
Mechanism Digital Inc
Hell
Heller Gallery
Hellerstein Katz Inc
Glass
Steven Holl Architects
Howard Scott Gallery
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Stephan Jakitsch Design
1-20 Gallery
Jeffrey
Paul Kasmin Gallery
HellKatz Design
Greenberg/Kingsley
Feigen Contemporary
Klotz/Simon Gallery
Kravets/Wehby Gallery
First Street Gallery
Le Cafetiere

Ten in One Gallery
Gallery Henoch
Little Pic Company
Long Fine Art
Florence Lynch Gallery
Chambers Fine Art
Rocco/Maresca
Kathryn Markel Fine Art
Matthew Marks Gallery
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Marvelli Gallery
Bill Maynes Gallery
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DUC Library Program
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Restaurant Florent
Kanvas Bar & Lounge
Viridian Artists Inc
White Box Gallery
The Half Kung
Metropolitan Pavilion
Paint Box Gallery
Parke & Ronen
Gorney Bravin + Lee
Creative Time
Printed Matter, Inc
Max Protech Gallery
Radio House Gallery
Creative Time
ARENA
Yancey Richardson Gallery
Briggs Robinson Gallery
Paul Rodgers/9W
Room Service Antiques
Perry Rubenstein Gallery
Joseph Helman
Lot 61
Bitforms
Amy's Bread
RN Realty LLC
Neil Selkirk, Inc.
Glass
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Gary Snyder Fine Art
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Stretch
Stefan Stux Gallery
The Original Old Homestead
DJT Fine Art
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Gary Tatitsian Gallery
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MEET
The 12 Partners Group
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Smith and Thompson Architects
Balenciaga America, Inc.
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Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates LLP
Robert A.M. Stern Architects
Elmslie Osler Architect
Bernard Tschumi Architects
Beyer Blinder Bell
Bll Smith Studio
Pace/Magill Gallery
Lynn Gaffney Architect

The Metro Section

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2002

The New York Times

On West Side, Rail Plan Is Up And Walking

Mayor Favors Remaking Elevated Line as a Trail

By DAVID W. DUNLAP

A once-quirky proposal to turn an abandoned rail line on the far West Side of Manhattan into an elevated public promenade has been formally embraced by the Bloomberg administration, almost exactly a year after the Giuliani administration moved to demolish the hulking structure.

Now, rather than seeking to tear down the 1.45-mile railroad viaduct, known as the High Line, New York City has asked the federal Surface Transportation Board to grant a certificate of interim trail use, which would preserve the route as a distinctly urban stretch in the national rails-to-trails network.

"We think the High Line, ultimately converted into a park, will enhance the character of the entire far West Side," Daniel L. Doctoroff, the deputy mayor for economic development and rebuilding, said in an interview on Friday.

"The High Line will remain up," he said, "and in conjunction with this we would seek to rezone portions of the areas surrounding the High Line in order to accommodate residential development. We think the High Line can be an important amenity."

The City Council speaker, Gifford Miller, said, "It's a huge step in the right direction."

That is not easy to envision while standing in the dark shadow of the viaduct, which has all the charm of an el. But it becomes clearer on the deck, where trees, weeds and wildflowers among rusting tracks and switches create a verdant swath through Hell's Kitchen, Chelsea and the Gansevoort Meat Market.

As a practical matter, the CSX Corporation, which manages the High Line, is still under an order from the Surface Transportation Board to pursue demolition, an outcome sought by Chelsea Property Owners, which objects to the structure as a dismal, dangerous blight that cannot be rehabilitated feasibly, attractively or economically — especially at a time of budget deficits.

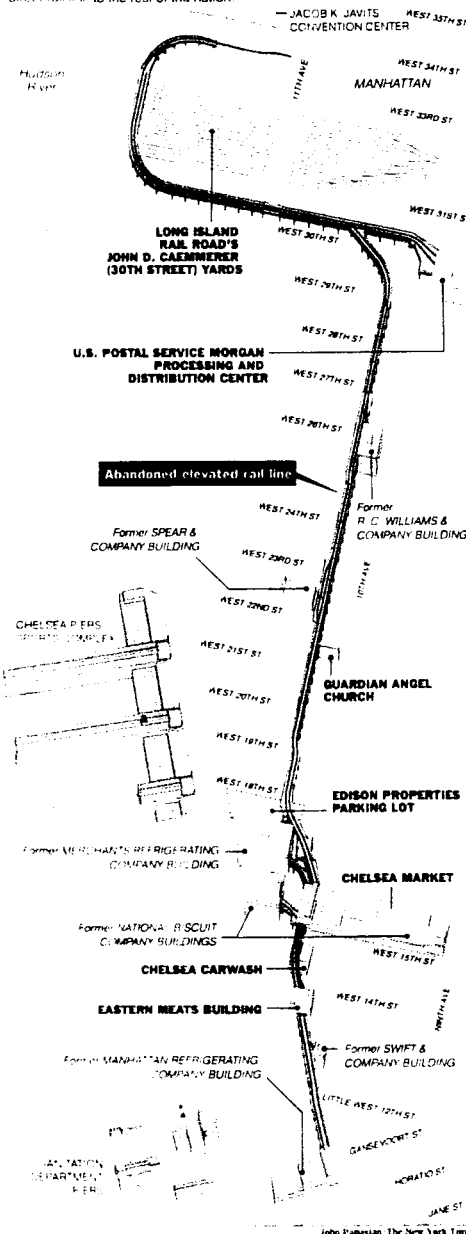
Douglas Sarini, president of the group, which represents commercial owners along the High Line route, did not reply to requests for comment.

Earlier this year, however, the group said in one of its fliers: "Money doesn't grow on trees. And the last time we checked, it wasn't growing in the weeds of the High Line, either."

In fact, there is no money now to create a public space, nor even a plan to follow, although a private group called Friends of the

Old Tracks, New Use

The Bloomberg administration is backing plans to turn a rusting, abandoned elevated rail line on the far West Side of Manhattan into a promenade, rather than tearing it down, as has been proposed. The 1.45-mile railroad, known as the High Line, served industries along the lower Hudson River waterfront from the 1930's until 1980, giving them a direct rail link to the rest of the nation.



Mayor Backs Walking Plan For Abandoned Rail Tracks

Continued From Page 43

High Line intends to sponsor a competition for ideas early next year.

What last week's filing does do is ally the city firmly with efforts to rehabilitate the 69-year old High Line, which runs about 30 feet above sidewalk level from Gansevoort to 34th Streets on a path that primarily parallels Tenth Avenue. The line, which in some places runs through or has spurs into buildings, linked the warehousing and industrial district along the Hudson River to the rest of the nation until 1980, and has been deteriorating since then.

"I understand that for property owners and many in the community that if you have to choose between the High Line as it currently is and no High Line, bringing it down makes sense," Mr. Miller, the Council speaker, said. "But I believe — and I think the administration has also seen — that when you consider the possibilities for a preserved and re-used High Line as a public space and a signature moment in the New York landscape, that the positives are almost limitless."

Robert Hammond, co-founder of the Friends of the High Line, said the city's action was "at the top of my Christmas list." Two years ago, his well-connected but fledgling group faced considerable skepticism when it suggested that the High Line might one day rank with the Promenade Plantée in Paris, an old railroad viaduct that has been turned into a landscaped walkway.

A year ago, the group was in court, along with the City Council and C. Virginia Fields, the Manhattan borough president, challenging the tentative demolition agreement reached on Dec. 20, 2001, in the last days of the Giuliani administration. The High Line's backers argued that because

A rusting freight line could serve backpackers instead of meatpackers.

the agreement involved property easements along the route of the viaduct, it should have been subject to the city's uniform land-use review procedure, known as Ulurp.

In March, they won a ruling from Justice Diane S. Lebedeff of State Supreme Court in Manhattan, who wrote that the administration's "determination to forego Ulurp review was undertaken without 'lawful procedure' and was an 'error of law.'" The ruling is being appealed. What is also holding up demolition is that a final, signed agreement has yet to be reached. And in its filing with the Surface Transportation Board, the city expressed "serious doubt" that such an agreement could ever be attained.

Instead, Mr. Doctoroff said, the city now hopes to reach a new agreement with CSX in the next few months, permitting "interim trail use," although he cautioned that this is a legal term; it does not mean that the viaduct would be open to strollers, skaters and bicyclists any time soon.

"A significant investment will have to be made," Mr. Doctoroff said.

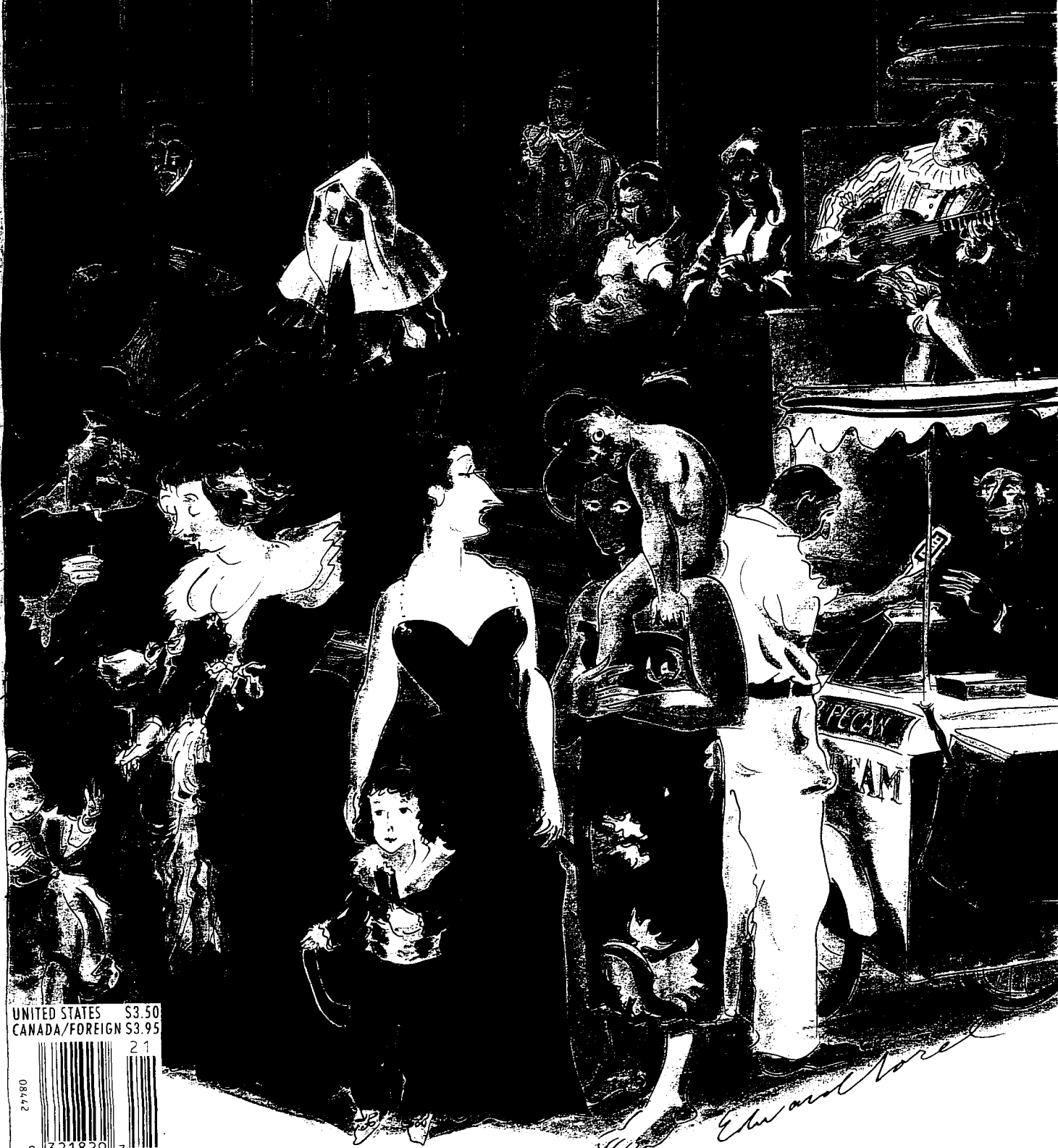
In its filing, the city said that to establish an interim trail use, it would be willing to assume full responsibility for management of the right-of-way and any legal liability.

Without taking a position, Laurie Izes, a consultant to CSX, who is overseeing the High Line, said the company was "interested in a responsible and expeditious solution" and would review the filing if the board granted the city's request for interim trail use.

PRICE \$3.50

MAY 21, 2001

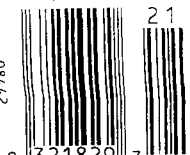
THE NEW YORKER



UNITED STATES \$3.50
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21

2780



A WALK ON THE HIGH LINE

The allure of a derelict railroad track in spring.

BY ADAM GOPNIK

High is to New York what wet is to Venice—the necessary condition that has become the romantic condition. To be up, and above, though still felt as imprisonment in too many office-closeted lives, can, with the addition of a breeze or an eccentricity, become an escape, a source of renewal, and even provide a feeling of belonging. In Manhattan, to look down is not always to look down on. It is a communal experience, with something of the feeling of sailors in crow's nests looking at other sailors, a fellowship of the air—not avoiding the storm, exactly, but at least sharing news of it early. Moguls in the spires of skyscrapers stare at other moguls, and millionaire actors wave across the Park at other millionaire actors, and tourists go to the top of the World Trade Center to gaze with binoculars at tourists in the crown of the Statue of Liberty, and, if people crowd the Brooklyn Bridge, it is not to jump but to admire the falcons' scrape on one of the towers, an enviable home up high. When Superman is spotted in the sky above the city, people think mildly that he might be something else, a bird or a plane . . . The archeology of Manhattan is reversed: the past is not buried in the ground but held up in the air, on the upper floors. You see old things clearly: ghostly unlit Longchamps signs and forgotten Deco-Aztec metal detailing and abandoned penthouse night clubs. In New York, the overhead viewpoint is curiously peaceful and nostalgic—the beautiful vista, rather than the sublime. (The sublime vista is subterranean—the No. 6 train approaching the Fourteenth Street station through the gloom, eyes on fire.)

The most peaceful high place in New York right now is a stretch of viaduct called the High Line. The High Line is a derelict elevated railroad track, about two stories high, running a mile and a third along the western edge of the city, from Thirty-fourth Street to Gansevoort Street. It encloses about eight acres, or

half a million square feet, of taffy-pulled, thirty-to-fifty-foot-wide horizontal space. Many people who pass under it think that it is an old El track. In fact, it is, or was, a New York Central Railroad track, used for fifty years to convey goods from all over America to little shuntings among the West Side warehouses. For more than two decades—ever since the last three carloads of frozen turkeys made their transit to Gansevoort Street—it has been under a provisional death sentence, condemned by the property owners caught in its shadow. But one thing or another has kept it from being torn down, and, just recently, it has become a gleam in the eye of some West Side dogooders, who call themselves the Friends of the High Line and who see it as a potential midair park. The Giuliani administration has been hostile to the project—the Mayor's men apparently viewing it as exactly the kind of touchy-feely, hey, kids, let's make that broken-down railroad into a park!, Upper West Side quixotism that would leave the whole city carpeted with moss if left unchecked—but a lot of other local pols, topped off by Senator Clinton, are all for it.

For the moment, the High Line has gone not to wrack and ruin but to seed: weeds and grasses and even small trees sprout from the track bed. There are irises and lamb's ears and thistle-tufted onion grass, white-flowering bushes and pink-budded trees and grape hyacinths, and strange New York weeds that shoot straight up with horizontal arms, as though electrified. A single, improbable Christmas tree can be found there, and a flock of warblers have made themselves a home, too. In one sheltered stretch between two tall buildings is a stand of hardwood trees. The High Line combines the appeal of those fantasies in which New York has returned to the wild with an almost Zen quality of measured, peaceful distance.

The poet-keeper of the High Line is the photographer Joel Sternfeld. He has



The view looking east on Thirtieth Street, photographed by Joel Sternfeld, who wants to save a piece of New York as it really is.

been taking pictures of it in all seasons for the past year, and he has a gift for seeing light and space and color—romantic possibility of every kind—where a less sensitive observer sees smudge and weed and ruin. He would not just like the High Line to be saved and made into a promenade; he would like the promenade as it exists now to be perpetuated, a piece of New York as it really is. Where many of the High Line's supporters see it as potential—they are not averse to picturing, in imagery that evokes the airy, weightless, jaunty style of an architect's rendering, picnic tables and mono-rails and sculpture parks—he sees it as a thing already accomplished, and wants to keep it more or less as it is.

"It's more of a path than a park," he said one recent afternoon at the beginning of a traverse. "And more of a Path than a path." (He makes caps with his eyebrows.) Several times a week, he lugs an immense, Mathew Brady-style

eight-by-ten camera, complete with black silent-movie-comedy cloth, up to the tracks and, pulling it under fences and through sidings, records the High Line's moods and light.

"Central Park," he went on as he set up tripod and camera facing the river, to take a study of a chimney, beautiful in the grayish afternoon light, that stands starkly by the side of the tracks, "is really cosmetic in many ways. This is a true time landscape, a railroad ruin. The abandoned place is the place where seasonality resides. These little shoots—see this! This is the *real* look of spring. Central Park is a construct in so many ways. A beautiful construct, but made for an effect. This"—he gestured around the old track bed—"is what spring in New York actually looks like when it's left up to Spring."

Spring in New York looks like this: low grasses and weeds abound at shoe-top level and tawny grasses are folded over on each other, like winter wheat. The

onion grass gives an acid smell if you get down close, and clover lends a sweetness. Knee-high plants that look like tarragon grow in neat rows and, as you look east, seem to enter into a distinct, perspective-keeping compact with the canyons of Thirty-first and Thirtieth Streets, whistling away toward the East River. It is quiet there, and the Hudson, which fills the vista in the opposite, or western, direction, suddenly seems not a distant rumored presence but the obvious point of the joke—the reason people settled this island in the first place. It is a mirror, bouncing off light and provoking breezes.

The High Line does not offer a God's-eye view of the city, exactly, but something rarer, the view of a lesser angel: of a cupid in a Renaissance painting, of the putti looking down on the Nativity manger. That little height makes even ugly things below look orderly and patterned. From the first section of the High Line, you see the cars of the

L.I.R.R. commuter trains, waiting; a man's voice, immense on a speaker, occasionally breaks the silence, calling out track numbers. On a ramp in the middle distance four trucks are parked, with enormous slanting letters offering this reiteration: RELIABLE, RELIABLE, RELIABLE, RELIABLE. In the far distance, a small building says O/V/E/R/S/E/A/S, each letter carefully painted beside a window, and, up above, DIAL JOE/1234. Alongside, a vast, low Federal Express depot sweeps away, the brutal lavender-and-orange FEDEX its only inscription. (It looks smugly back at its little shipping neighbor, as if to say, "Dial Joe? You gotta be kidding, I mean . . . Dial Joe?")

"It's a history of supercession, all visible," Sternfeld says. "First this railroad, and then overseas shipping, and then Federal Express." He was dismantling his tripod, since the picture he'd had in mind had struck a snag. The people who are addicted to the High Line, particularly Sternfeld, like to say that it offers a "transporting" experience, the experience

of a pilgrimage more than a promenade; it does have a mythical aspect, with an Olympus in the Starrett-Lehigh Building, which looms, vast and glassy, to the west, and the superintending presence of two enormous goddesses, who look calmly down—one, its recessive Artemis, advertises the clothes of the Gap, the other, farther on, is Aphrodite, splayed out on a chair, and beckoning the pilgrim from the path on behalf of the Guess company. Right now, the girl in the Gap ad kept getting in the picture. ("She'll take over the photograph," Sternfeld says, with a practiced sigh. "She always does, and it gets a little obvious, you know, this world against this. A little too on the nose.")

"You know what I'm seeing!" he says suddenly, excited. "It's that beer bottle! It's prominent in a shot I took last fall—and it hasn't moved!" He walks over and, without picking it up or disturbing it, gently gazes down at the clear-glass bottle and shakes his head—amazed, like Proust, at the strange persistence of beauty in the face of time.

Now, down in the city, you see: a homeless men's encampment, laid out on a tarpaper roof. There are frying pans and boxes and big plastic tubs, and an exquisite wrought-iron chair, dragged out into the light. Someone has brought a television dish up to the High Line and fastened it to a railing, and someone else—one of the homeless guys, apparently—has parasited on a second cable, and run it down toward the Hooverville. The enormous girl on the Gap ad looks mutely away. A small switch hotel stands just south of the rails, with its telltale roof generators and towers.

Joel smiles. "There are no derelicts here," he says decisively, "and no rats—what would rats and derelicts do up here?—although the people who are trying to pull it down like to say there are. There was one homeless man up here last year. But he was fanatic about recycling."

There is a corrugated-metal fence at the end of this section of the path—why, no one is quite sure—and, once you've wriggled, sideways, through a

hole that has been punched in it, a second, short placid section leads you to another fence. You have to crawl under that one, shimmying flat on your back.

But a surprise is waiting: a neatly ordered vista, among the grasses, of crocuses, daffodils, and tulips, and a dwarf maple and the smallest Christmas tree in the city, wrapped in lights. A white gangplank leads from the window of an apartment nearby onto the High Line. The apartment is rented, and the garden kept, by a designer named Ken Robson, who lives there with his elegant, nervous dachshund, Ross. Ken has been edgily walking out, pirate style, along his white gangplank high above the alley for about five years, carrying bulbs and seeds and Christmas lights and topsoil. "You can really dig right down into it," he says of the track bed. "It's good for growing."

The history and the politics of the High Line are just possible to summarize, though to do it plunges you into the New York place called the Alphabet

Dimension, where government agencies and programs with strange acronyms and abbreviations award money and fight for power. In brief: When Conrail took over the New York Central, in 1980, nobody used the High Line anymore. When another rail company, CSX, acquired Conrail's tracks east of the Hudson, twenty years later, it left the High Line alone, too. Meanwhile, local property owners, under an umbrella group called C.P.O., or Chelsea Property Owners, had pressed the government, through the I.C.C. (the Interstate Commerce Commission), to force the railroad to tear down the unused line. (It can do this, by law, if a line is derelict; this section of railroad is not, strictly speaking, property but what is called an easement in the air, which can be forcibly torn down if it is no longer in use.) In 1992, the I.C.C., which has since become the S.T.B. (the Surface Transportation Board), gave Conrail a conditional abandonment order. Several tricky money questions—basically, who's going

to pay how much to tear it down and who's going to go to court if someone sues for something that happens while it's being torn down—have kept the demolition stymied and the High Line up.

While this dispute was going on, a couple of neighborhood residents, Robert Hammond and Joshua David, noticed the High Line, without even knowing what it was, and thought that it might be worth saving as some kind of public space. They were surprised by how much support they received, and how many ideas—for parks and promenades—were brought forward. Fortunately for the High Line's friends, there exists an organization, called the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, that helps groups that want to take old railroad lines and turn them into "recreational" areas. There are already eleven thousand miles of such trails in the country; and the High Line would be eligible for conversion. Estimates—what are known among Chelsea Property Owners as "laughably conservative estimates"—put the cost of park conversion at around forty million dollars, which is not, by the standards of a city that spends a billion and a half dollars a year on environmental protection, really all that much money. Federal funds would act as seed money for public fund-raising.

For the moment, the High Line's

friends would like to get, well, a C.I.T.U.—a Certificate of Interim Trail Use—from the S.T.B., which would save the line and let them start raising money. "We *want* the development of the area," Hammond says, "but the bottom line is that this runs through three changing neighborhoods—the meat-packing district and Chelsea and the lower edge of Hell's Kitchen—and it's a great piece of infrastructure. We just want to save it for *thoughtful* development. The one thing you can be sure of is that there will never be an opportunity to build again a mile-and-a-third-long parkway in the sky on the West Side. If we lose it, it's gone for good. We don't know what it might become, but we know that if it goes it's gone. The weird thing is that the High Line is just a structure, it's just metal in the air, but it becomes a site for everybody's fantasies and projections. People see rats and derelicts where there aren't any, or else, like Joel, who's a visionary, they see the city the way it ought to have been."

After the garden, the wood. A small stand—hey, a glade!—of ailanthus trees has grown up, a few hundred yards or so from the little garden, in the tight shadowed space by the Wolf Building. The wood is hard, and the trees are ten

and twelve feet tall. Joel has a particular affection for this part of the High Line. "I just pray that, if they save the High Line, they'll save some of the virgin parts, so that people can have this kind of hallucinatory experience of nature in the city."

In the city below, you see: a junk yard rumbling and gabbling. It is an elephant's graveyard for computers and computer parts. Whole mainframes can be seen down in the yard, awaiting the blow of the lobster claw, returning them to the metal they came from. The junk yard, or "recycling center," is neatly divided—old pipe here, electronics parts there—and three huge machines, magnet, claw, and shovel, take turns doing their work. The railing on the High Line next to the yard is gone; Joel suspects that, in a hungry moment, the claw turned, rose, and gobbled it up.

Then you also see: the crowds of gallerygoers on Twenty-fourth and Twenty-second Streets, weaving in and out of Mary Boone and Matthew Marks. Al-

though Twenty-fifth and Twenty-third Streets look the way streets on the far West Side have always looked—a low-slung melange of taxi garages and electrical-repair shops—Twenty-second and Twenty-fourth have been transformed, two fingers of SoHo probing into the depths of Chelsea. Antonio Homem, the dapper director of the Sonnabend gallery, nips down Twenty-second on his way back from lunch, sees visitors on the High Line above, and tips his hat. A sign hanging outside a night club reads, "Be Good to the Roxy and the Roxy Will Be Good to You."

The High Line can be traversed only to Sixteenth Street, and the old National Biscuit Company buildings, now Chelsea Market. A bank of grape hyacinths blossom in its shadow. A giant dot-com sign is painted on the side of a nearby building. Joel Sternfeld assembles his eight-by-ten camera and tries to frame a picture. Gesturing toward the sign, he says, "It's a choice: the Zeitgeist or the grape hyacinth." He turns his camera

in the other direction, gets under his cloth, and frames a picture there. The light on two old tenements fills his frame, and so does the sexy sprawled Guess girl. He emerges from under his blanket and sighs. "It would make a good picture, a little overdetermined, but true enough: Do you put her in, or stay on the Path?"

The Friends of the High Line often say that they would like to see it become a *promenade plantée*, a long snaking viaduct with flowers, like the one, in Paris, that runs from the Bastille out to the Bois de Vincennes. The difference, evident to anyone who has walked both, is that the *promenade plantée* is a piece of Paris that happens to be above Paris—an elegant flowered walkway looking down on elegant flowered streets—while the High Line is a place where the discordant encounters of its city are briefly resolved. If it is saved, it may become in reality what the real-estate lawyers, of all improbably poetic people, have always known it was, an easement in the air. ♦

DAILY @ NEWS

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NEW YORK'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

Tuesday, March 11, 2003

Contest goes to el and back

By CELIA McGEE

DAILY NEWS FEATURE WRITER

A scheme for green, an outdoor community of hip, is chugging closer to realization on Manhattan's far West Side.

The idea: Turn the High Line — the 1930s elevated railroad tracks running from 34th St. south to Gansevoort St. — into a 1.5-mile-long pedestrian walkway and park.

The city is negotiating with the line's owner, CSX Corp., and has filed a request with the Surface Transportation Board in Washington, D.C., for permission to turn the out-of-use rail corridor into recreational trails.

The steps reversed an earlier move toward demolition of the line by the Giuliani administration.

Now Friends of the High Line, the organization founded in 1999 to preserve the steel construction and turn it into a 0.7-acre planted promenade, has gained enough confidence from this policy change to announce an open design competition for architects, landscape artists and other urban design professionals.

Designers are being asked to submit proposals for the High Line's future, for many of the buildings along its course, and the streets and vacant lots underneath.

The areas it traverses range from the gentrifying Meat Market District to West Chelsea and its art galleries to the Hudson Rail Yards, where plans for a high-tech sports complex including a stadium for the Jets are under consideration.

The line — overgrown and desolate — has been out of commission since 1980, when the tracks carried their last three rail cars of frozen turkeys to Gansevoort Market.

The competition's deadline is April 25, but Joshua David, who runs Friends of the High Line with co-founder Robert Hammond, says the group has "already had 65 registrations. We're expecting many more locally and internationally."

Whether or not the dream green is realized, some of the competition's appeal is a scheduled exhibition of finalists at Grand Central Terminal in July. The Ground Zero design contest and the intense debate it engendered has raised the general interest level in architecture and the urban environment.

Between 2000 and 2001, photographer Joel Sternfeld chronicled the viaduct in all lights, weathers and seasons. It has helped nurture the perception of the High Line as a work of urban art.

In the current economic climate, though, Hammond acknowledges, the money needed to carry a plan forward "can't come from the city or the state. But there is federal funding available, especially from the newly passed Transportation Authorization Bill."

CLEARING THE HIGH HURDLES

The challenges to anyone entering the competition are equally steep.

In addition to presenting a "comprehensive vision for the reuse" of the High Line, solutions are needed to the lack of access to the 22-block tract, which passes private property as well as public real estate. The constituencies involved — those who live nearby, city government, political and business interests, the design community — all will want a say.

A high-powered jury has been appointed to streamline the process.

Topping the list are Vishaan Chakrabarti, director of the Manhattan office of the City Planning Department; John Lee Compton, co-chairman of the Chelsea Preservation and Planning Committee of Community Board No. 4; Columbia University architecture dean Bernard Tschumi; Marilyn Jordan Taylor, chairman of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill; landscape architect and professor Julie Bargmann, and Murray Moss, proprietor of SoHo design lab Moss.

The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center also has earmarked an award for "the best proposal using native plants," Hammond said, since "the High Line is wildly seeded now."



JOEL STERNFELD

TRACK OR TREAT: Design ideas are being solicited for the far West Side's High Lin

CITY

In This Pool, a Single Lap Is a Workout

Many Proposals For Rusty Rail Line On the West Side

By DAVID W. DUNLAP

After the last boxcar rumbled along the High Line in 1980, imagination began riding the rails.

Battling landowners' opposition, official intransigence and — frankly — common sense, quixotic New Yorkers periodically dreamed of ways to save the High Line, an elevated railroad viaduct that threads its way through the far West Side of Manhattan, from Gansevoort to 34th Streets.

That dreaming has now gone global.

Entrants from Berlin, Vienna and Tokyo were among the four winners chosen on Friday by an influential jury in a competition that sought ideas for redesigning the High Line. There were 720 proposals from 38 countries, said Robert Hammond, director of Friends of the High Line, which sponsored the competition.

They ranged from pure whimsy — several contemplated turning the High Line into a cow pasture and one of the winners imagined it as a 7,920-foot-long swimming pool — to visions as starkly provocative as the structure itself, which can be seen as a romantic industrial relic or as a dangerous blight.

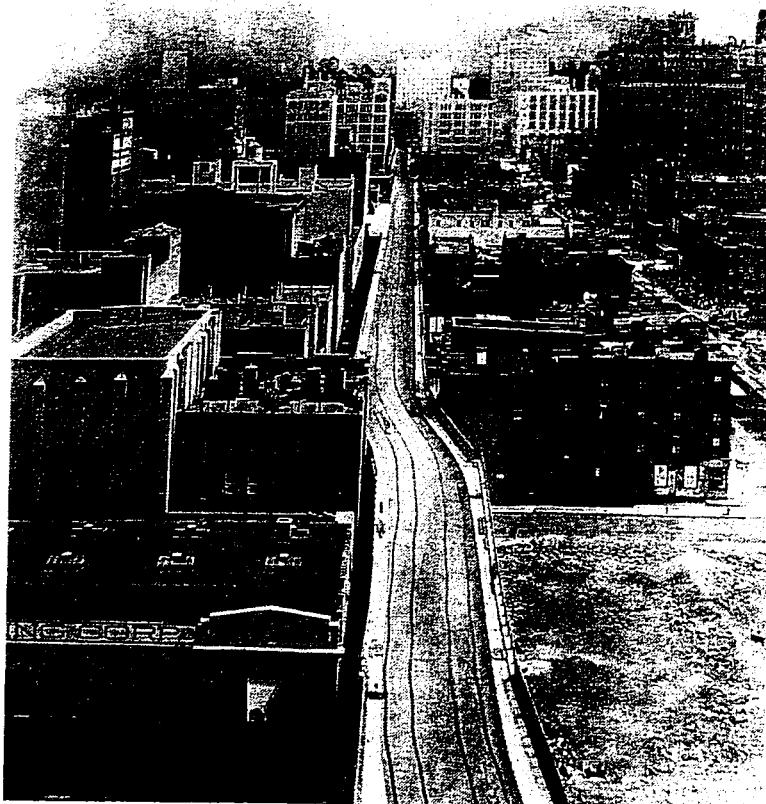
None of the ideas stand a chance of getting built as conceived. But the competition marks another step forward in the campaign to reuse the High Line.

"What it proves to me is that no matter what the design of the High Line ultimately is, something great will occur," said Vishaan Chakrabarti, director of the Manhattan office of the Department of City Planning, after he and the other jurors finished their daylong review.

"It's obvious from this competition that the conceptual is going to get us to the real," he said.

Mr. Chakrabarti's presence was significant. It reflects a turnaround at City Hall from the position of the Giuliani administration, which favored demolition of the High Line, to the Bloomberg administration, which embraces its preservation.

The swimming pool proposal, by Nathalie Rinne of Vienna, was one of the winners chosen by a jury that included the architects Steven Holl, Marilyn Jordan Taylor and Bernard Tschumi and the landscape architects Julie Bargmann and Signe Nielsen.



One proposal would turn the elevated High Line railroad line, which snakes through the far West Side, into an elongated swimming pool.



Nancy Siesel/The New York Times

They also picked "Black Market Crawler," a moving structure with shops, galleries, theaters and places for a full range of activities — not all of them legal. It was submitted by Hugo Beschoor Plug of Berlin.

Ernesto Mark Faunlagui of Hoboken won for his proposal to alter the viaduct through incisions and displacement, creating new openings, parapets, walls and skylight wells. And Matthew Greer of New York won for his plan to let the structure continue to evolve naturally into a

kind of wild meadow.

A separate award for public access was won by Takuji Nakamura of Tokyo, who proposed illuminated shafts penetrating the viaduct, with stairs and elevators.

Other entries recreated the High Line as a farm, a fluorescent fun house, a log-flume ride, a trellis-wrapped garden, a roller coaster, a small-scale Appalachian Trail and the zones of Dante's paradise, purgatory and inferno. Mr. Greer even proposed to bring back a boxcar.

What's Behind
Ford's Fast
Fall

Why Fund Managers Blew It • Freedom vs. Security

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JOEL STERNFELD—PACE/MCGILL GALLERY

Taking the high road

When **Joshua David** started the battle to save an old elevated railway in New York City, he discovered that living well means doing good.

Before I discovered the High Line, it was my job to travel to five-star resorts for glossy magazines, critiquing the tropical drinks that were brought to me by pool attendants whose smiles were as bright as their tight, white tennis togs.

My world, once paved with marble, is now clad in linoleum. I spend most days, and many evenings, in community rooms, government offices, and school auditoriums. Yet I enjoy a luxury offered by neither the Ritz in Paris nor the Hotel Bora Bora. I love my work. I believe in what I'm doing. To admit this feels radical. In the fluffy world where I've spent most of my career, "earnest" is a word to wince at. Now I speak in earnest pretty much every day.

It started two years ago, when Robert Hammond and I founded a not-for-profit group called Friends of the High Line. We'd both become fascinated with the out-of-use elevated rail viaduct that runs through our neighborhood, from 34th Street south to the Meatpacking District, on the Lower

West Side of Manhattan. We believed it could have a spectacular second life as a public park or promenade.

We knew that the conversion wouldn't be easy; there is a small group that wants the High Line torn down. But we also knew that the steel viaduct, with its art deco detailing, was a key architectural element in the old manufacturing district that has become the hub of New York City's art world, and that the rail easement on the structure offered a one-time chance to create a dramatic public space. The project is entirely feasible: American rails-to-trails programs have existed for years. In Paris, a similar structure has already been converted into a gorgeous park (the Promenade Plantée).

So we started proselytizing—about the importance of New York's history as a transportation and manufacturing center, about the public's right to reclaim the 6.7-acre rail bed, about the need for bold design visions in a city that has lately seen the construction of so many clunky apartment



Friends in deed Joshua David (left), Robert Hammond

ERIC MICHAEL

buildings with chain stores at their bases. We didn't foresee that the effort might become as important—or more so—than our “real” jobs (Robert is a startup consultant). But it has.

The most exciting part of the project is taking visitors to the top of the structure, where a carpet of green unrolls for 22 blocks between warehouses and factories lifted from Edward Hopper paintings, with glimpses of the Hudson River, all of it backed by the midtown skyline.

Mostly, though, it's back-to-back meetings, planning sessions, and conference calls. We gather signatures at street fairs. We make presentations to tenants' associations. We strategize with lawyers. We pitch our cause to socialites over tea. We hold

benefits—which turn out to be a lot like weddings, with guest lists, invitations, caterers, flowers, tents, and endless anxiety about the weather. We testify at City Hall. After we testified, the New York City Council voted 38–0 in favor of turning the High Line into a rail-trail. While Mayor Giuliani's administration had wanted to tear it down, all the leading mayoral candidates support our cause. In the wake of the World Trade Center at-

tack, I'm not sure what will happen. Like many planning initiatives that were hotly debated before Sept. 11, the High Line may rightly move to the back burner.

But it won't go away. When the High Line was completed in 1934, the trains were lifted off the ground, and the West Side became more attractive for development. Public funds were used because it would offer long-term economic benefit to the city. The High Line, preserved and developed, can still make New York more prosperous. It can be a unique attraction that tourists will want to see. It can provide fertile ground for architects to design innovative buildings that interact with public space. It can add value and convenience to our isolated convention center....

Or so goes the speech that I now deliver whenever you pull the string in my back.

Sometimes—no, often—I find myself at Kinko's, and I remember a line from *The Road Warrior*: In the post-apocalyptic wasteland, a dogfood-eating vagabond, nostalgic for the good old days, wistfully asks, “Remember lingerie?” I look back at a life lived not so long ago, test-driving Porsches and comparing the beach chairs at Cap Juluca with those at Malliouhana, and I wonder if I've done the right thing. But I don't wonder for long.

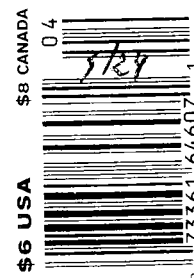
A show of High Line photographs by Joel Sternfeld opens Nov. 14 at PaceWildenstein Gallery (534 West 25th St., New York City; 212-929-7000). “Reclaiming the High Line,” a study of the viaduct's reuse potential by the Design Trust for Public Space, opens Jan. 23, 2002, at the Municipal Art Society (457 Madison Ave., 212-935-3960). For information on Friends of the High Line: 212-606-3720; www.thehighline.org.

ARTnews

APRIL 2002

Cut It Out!

*Kara Walker Plays Havoc
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What Should Lower Manhattan Look Like?

Western Expansion

With more than 170 galleries and others still arriving, Chelsea keeps growing and growing • By Carly Berwick

The clusters on the sidewalk are the tip-off. People spill out of glass-fronted galleries onto otherwise deserted side streets along Manhattan's Tenth Avenue, the crowds like signs pointing toward free wine and new art. More leading contemporary-art galleries are located in less than one square mile of Chelsea than anywhere else. Everyone—from uptown, downtown, and out of town—flocks to see the shows, with opening nights drawing the largest crowds. One recent evening at the Brent Sikkema Gallery, Anne Pasternak, executive director of the nonprofit arts organization Creative Time, and sound artist Paul D. Miller (also known as DJ Spooky) chatted before new photographs by Brazilian artist Vik Muniz. A few blocks north, a couple exited the Sean Kelly Gallery, noses in a *Gallery Guide*, searching for the next opening, while inside, Thelma Golden, deputy director of the Studio Museum in Harlem, checked out German photographer Frank Thiel's New York debut.

"I'm astounded at the thousands of people who come through



Some gallerists are fighting to preserve the High Line, a defunct elevated rail line that runs through Chelsea. Here, the architecture firm Proun Space Studio's illustration of a proposal to transform the High Line into a park.

Chelsea every week," says Andrea Rosen, who moved her gallery here from SoHo in 1998. "On an average Saturday there are probably 10 to 50 people in the space at any time."

A decade ago, west Chelsea was an industrial area of garages, warehouses, and taxi stands, notable for a few big dance clubs and prostitutes working the streets. But as rents escalated in SoHo and as galleries began to outgrow uptown's prewar buildings and downtown's lofts, Chelsea's raw, open spaces began to look appealing. The Dia Center for the Arts led the way, opening an exhibition space on West 22nd Street in 1987, in a converted warehouse designed by architect Richard Gluckman. The Matthew Marks Gallery left Madison Avenue for Chelsea in 1994, followed by a handful of other gallerists, including then-

newcomer Paul Morris and the late veteran dealer Pat Hearn. In 1995 Paula Cooper bought a warehouse and hired Gluckman to renovate it. Galleries continue to arrive, including Haim Chanin's second-floor space on Eleventh Avenue near 24th Street, which opened in February.

Now, more than 170 galleries are in Chelsea, and the area keeps expanding with new arrivals. The art nexus runs roughly from 13th Street in the Meatpacking District to 29th Street, where Sean Kelly opened a year ago, and from the Hudson River on the west to Seventh Avenue at the eastern edge, near Marlborough Gallery's Chelsea outpost. Kelly moved his business from SoHo after finding a ground-level space, which he had renovated by architect Steven Lerner. Despite the influx of galleries and visitors, he says, "Chelsea



As part of their exhibition at the Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, artists Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset put a Prada sign in the window, suggesting that Chelsea, like SoHo before it, could become a target for rampant retail development.

PROUN SPACE STUDIO

COURTESY TANYA BONAKDAR GALLERY

still doesn't have the infrastructure that SoHo does. I have to walk about eight blocks to get a cappuccino." While inconvenient, he accepts that this may be something of a blessing. "It weeds a certain proportion of the lookers out and one gets a more dedicated audience. Certainly that was part of our thinking in coming to 29th Street."

For many Chelsea dealers, SoHo is an often cited example of what can go wrong with a gallery district. Pioneered by artists in the 1960s and '70s, SoHo transformed itself over the years from a collection of cast-iron manufacturing buildings to a lively community of galleries and then to a shopping destination. Internationally known retail stores followed the path set by galleries, driving up rents and property taxes.

As part of an exhibition last fall, the Berlin-based artist duo Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset suggested that Chelsea was the next target of rampant commercialization, putting a sign in the window of the Tanya Bonakdar Gallery on 20th Street: "Prada—Coming Soon." While some of the signs of a neighborhood undergoing gentrification are appearing—clothing retailer Comme des Garçons opened a space in Chelsea in 1999—many gallerists, such as Cooper and Kelly, bought their spaces to avoid the possibility of being driven out by rising rents.

More cafés, restaurants, and bars have also sprung up near the long-standing Empire Diner on Tenth Avenue and at points west. Among the most recent are the Park, Lot 61, author Sebastian Junger's Half King bar, and a minimalist boîte called Open. But such amenities remain relatively sparse. Arne Glimcher, director of PaceWildenstein, which moved its SoHo gallery into a Robert Irwin-designed space in Chelsea early last September, regrets leaving the bustle of SoHo behind. "SoHo is a much more interesting place than Chelsea," he says. "I think the restaurants and boutiques are a plus. But most of the galleries moved from SoHo, and it was necessary to be where the galleries are."

Next month, Sperone Westwater is relocating from SoHo, where it has been based since 1974, to a newly renovated building on West 13th Street shared with the Bohen Foundation, a private nonprofit art organization. "It's clear that things have shifted westward," says Sperone Westwater director David Lieber. Mary Boone, who opened her Chelsea gallery in November 2000, was attracted to the area's architecture. "The kind of spaces you get downtown are different from uptown. With Chelsea's high ceilings and

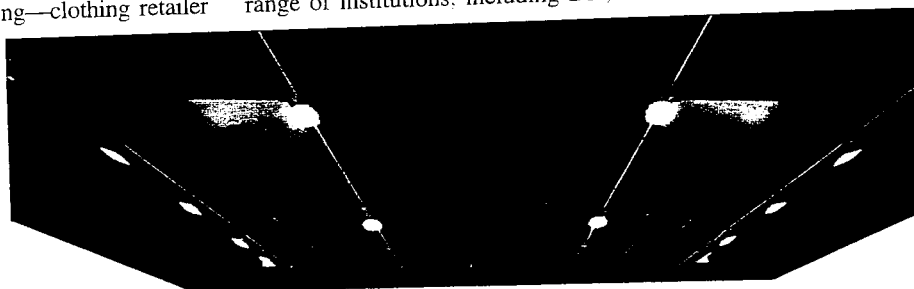


Gallery co-owner Elizabeth Dee (left) and director Pearl Albino in front of the new Dee/Glasoe space on 20th Street.

single-business dwellings, you have ground-floor spaces and room for skylights," says Boone. Rosen says that her Chelsea gallery is big enough to allow for more versatility in exhibitions. Like Glimcher, Rosen says she had qualms about leaving SoHo, "but the opportunity to have the quality of this space was irresistible."

Also searching for light, room, and ground-floor visibility, the Dee/Glasoe Gallery recently moved within Chelsea, from an upper-level space to street level on 20th Street. Co-owner Elizabeth Dee notes that her gallery joins others on the block, including Anton Kern and Sara Meltzer, in promoting younger or emerging artists. Sandra Gering

moved last May from SoHo to her ground-floor gallery on 22nd Street. At \$120 per square foot annually, her rent is among the highest in the area. (According to New York STAT, a newsletter focusing on the city's economy, the average rental rate for commercial office space in Chelsea was \$30.39 last November.) But, says Gering, the "jewel of a space" in a neighborhood of art lovers is worth it. She shares the block with a range of institutions, including Dia, the art-book store Printed



Sean Kelly moved his gallery from SoHo to Chelsea last year, inaugurating his new space with a show of photographs by James Casebere.

Matter, one of Matthew Marks's two Chelsea galleries (the other is on 24th), and the Wild Lily Tea Room, a quiet Japanese tea shop facing Comme des Garçons.

Across the street from Dee/Glasoe's space, a women's correctional facility hunkers down on the corner of Eleventh Avenue, while a windowless church, the Kingdom Hall of Je-



Partial view of "Game On," a 2000 group show about the notion of play at the Sara Meltzer Gallery. The gallery's ground-floor space was renovated by the architecture and design firm LOT/EK.

hovah's Witnesses, sits near Tenth Avenue. This varied use—where housing projects limn northern Chelsea, and the El Flamingo nightclub faces down Paula Cooper's gallery on 21st—is one of the things Chelsea denizens old and new appreciate. "I've been living here for over 15 years, and I'm happy the neighborhood hasn't changed that much yet," says Cooper, who has a town house a block away from her gallery. "It's getting a little upscale, but it's still a nice, mixed neighborhood."

One change Cooper does worry about is the potential demolition of the High Line, the elevated rail line that runs from Gansevoort Street in the Meatpacking District to West 34th Street, which has been in disuse since 1980. "If the city knocks the High Line down, they'll build tall buildings and destroy the area," she says. The rail has its own advocacy group, Friends of the High Line, whose supporters include Glenn Close, Cindy Sherman, Todd Oldham, and gallerists Cooper and Marks. "Whatever happens to the elevated rail will clearly shape whatever's built in that area, because the High Line will account for a fair amount of developable land," says Peter Rider, chief of staff for city-council member Christine Quinn. Last December, the city lifted a temporary restraining order against demolition of the line. But Mayor Michael Bloomberg, as a private businessman, was supportive of the rail; since taking office, he has handed the issue over to Deputy Mayor Dan Doctoroff, who has told Friends of the High Line that it has three months to develop a viable plan for it. "The High Line is an important way to keep a part of the industrial character that attracted a lot of people to the area," says Friends of the High Line cofounder Robert Hammond.

Edward Kirkland, chair of the planning and preservation committee of the Chelsea community board for the area and a longtime resident, says, "City planning is finally looking at the goal of trying to discourage big retail stores like the ones in SoHo, because that's the kind of thing that destroys the character of a mixed-use, slightly grungy arts district, as do big luxury

residential buildings." In 1999 the area between Sixth and Tenth Avenues and 23rd and 14th Streets was rezoned under the Chelsea Plan, which ties the allowable total bulk and height of new construction to that of existing buildings, most of which are four- or five-story town houses or low-rise garages and industrial spaces. High-rise condominiums and apartments begun before the application of the Chelsea Plan have gone up on Tenth Avenue and 20th Street and on Ninth Avenue and 22nd Street, and others are under construction on West 23rd between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues. "The community board is looking ahead to that western portion, west of Tenth and beyond," says Rider. "That's an area under incredible residential pressure."

As residential construction continues apace, building plans for a new museum and an arts center in Chelsea are in the works. Dorothea Keeser, a onetime immunologist and former gallerist, is planning to open the Chelsea Art Museum with her husband, abstract painter Jean Miotte. Scheduled for completion in the fall, the museum will feature the couple's own collection of Abstract Expressionist paintings and will host traveling thematic shows. Because the area between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues is zoned for light industry and manufacturing,

commercial galleries are within code, but nonprofit entities are not (the Dia Center is an exception). Having received rezoning permission from the community board and the planning commission, Keeser and Miotte have hired Alfredo Carballude of the architecture firm CMA Design Studio and have started construction on the building they own at 22nd Street and Eleventh Avenue. Chelsea is the right neighborhood for a new, internationally focused museum, says Keeser, because "this is where someone interested in art goes—artists, critics, philosophers, and writers all come here." Another museum, Eyebeam Atelier, devoted to digital media, is in the process of selecting an architect to design its building on 21st Street. The construction is scheduled to be completed in 2003, and the unfinished building currently hosts temporary exhibitions.

While owning their spaces might help galleries and nonprofits weather all kinds of economic cycles, artists with rented studios observe change slightly more warily. Nick Weber, who has had a studio at 601 West 26th Street since 1997, has seen his neighbors' rents nearly double from pre-1998 rates of less than \$10 per square foot annually. The structure, known as the Starrett-Lehigh Building and formerly full of printers, now houses Martha Stewart Omnimedia and various new-media companies, alongside artists' and photographers' studios and the offices and exhibition spaces of art consultants, like Pamela Auchincloss. Weber recently completed a series of paintings of the building's freight-elevator operators, many of whom have worked there since the 1970s. Weber observes that, for artists, "if you notice how this area is transforming, it's a really fertile time." He mentions Joel Sternfeld's photographs of the High Line as an example of particularly effective images capturing this moment in Chelsea's history. In them, grass has taken over the bed of the rusting rail, offering an eccentric flush of green visible above gallery skylights. ■

Carly Berwick is an associate editor of ARTnews.

The New York Times SundayStyles

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, JULY 14, 2002

EVENING HOURS

Bill Cunningham

City Smarts

Turnouts for education,
the arts and an old viaduct.



July 10: Friends of the High Line held a benefit dinner at the Starrett-Lehigh Building on West 26th Street. The event was attended by 275 people and raised \$200,000. The organization was founded to preserve the 1.45-mile elevated railroad viaduct that runs from Gansevoort Street to 34th Street, parallel to the Hudson River. The group's plan is to turn the structure into a promenade.

9. 7:35: From left, **ROBERT HAMMOND**, a co-founder of the organization; **CHRISTOPHER MELONI**; **SHERMAN WILLIAMS**; and **JOSHUA DAVID**, also a co-founder.

10. 7:50: From left, **LINDA** and **SANDY LINDENBAUM** and **KEVIN BACON**.

11. 7:40: **GIFFORD MILLER** and **KYRA SEDGWICK**.



NEW YORK

February 17, 2003

Scene



Joshua David, Diane von Furstenburg, and Robert Hammond at the designer's benefit for Friends of the High Line.



Adrian Benepe, Robert Hammond, Gifford Miller, and Christine Quinn.



Alexandre von Furstenberg.



Diane von Furstenberg and Florent Morellet.

HIGHLINE

"Friends of High Line" benefit hosted
by Alexandre von Furstenberg
The Diane von Furstenberg Studio
January 29, 2003

PHOTOS BY THOS ROBINSON/PMC



Stephen Hall.



Joshua David.



Joel Sternfeld.

NEW YORK The Sun



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LARGED
surrender to police on
week. Sports, page 7.



LOOKING FOR MR. GOODBAR

Feast your eyes on Creations Bar, the highly coveted low-fat snack that's flying off the shelves. DAILY CANDY, page 12.

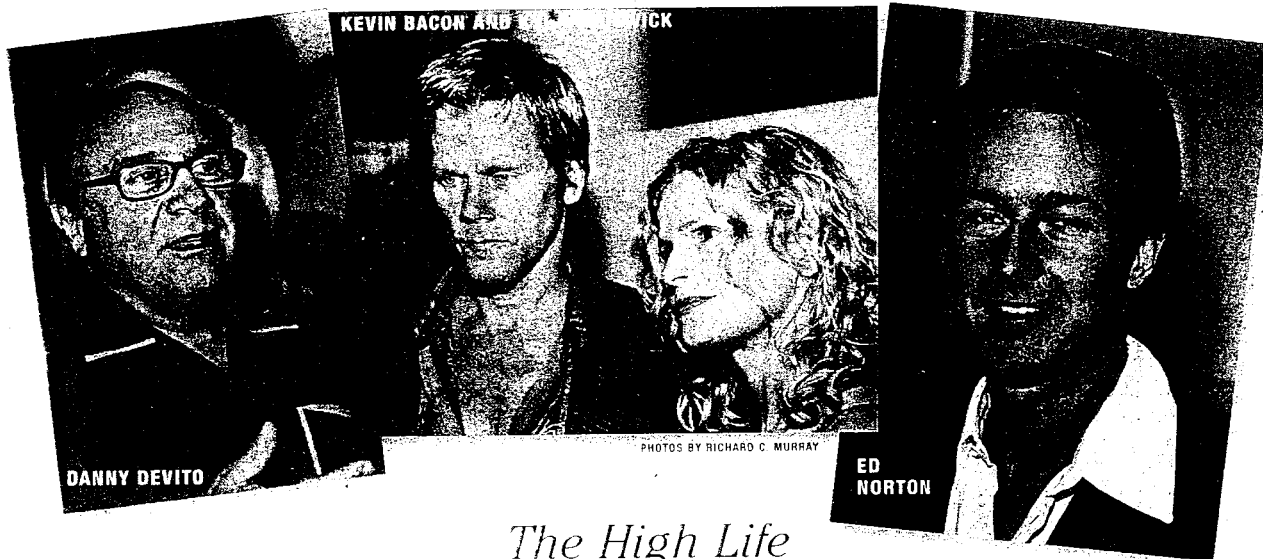
LIVING THE HIGH LIFE

Edward Norton wants to revive an elevated rail line. Gary Shapiro, page 8.

PAGE 8

WEEKEND EDITION, JULY 12

GARY SHAPIRO



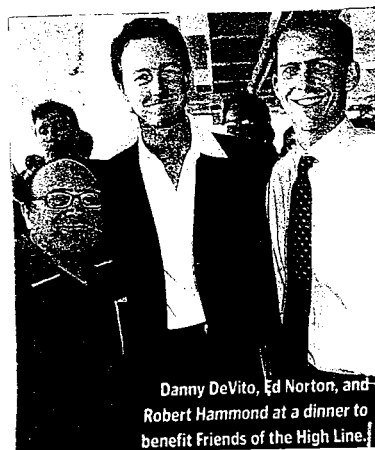
The High Life

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES Danny DeVito, couple Kevin Bacon and Kyra Sedgwick, Edward Norton, and a cross-section of New Yorkers from the arts and culture scene enjoyed drinks and candle-lit dinner at the Starrett-Lehigh Building for the second annual summer benefit for the Friends of the High Line. Joshua David and Robert Hammond co-founded the organization dedicated to the preservation and reuse of the out-of-use elevated rail station on the far west side of Manhattan that runs from the 30th street rail yards through the west Chelsea art gallery district and the Meat Packing District.

**Older Women,
Younger
Men**
THE NEW
CRADLE
ROBBERS

JULY 29 - AUGUST 5, 2002
NEW YORK

Scene



Danny DeVito, Ed Norton, and Robert Hammond at a dinner to benefit Friends of the High Line.