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MAYOR MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG AND CITY COUNCIL SPEAKER GIFFORD MILLER ANNOUNCE THREE MAJOR MILESTONES IN THE EFFORT TO TRANSFORM THE HIGH LINE

City Commits Over \$43 Million, State and the Railroads Join City in Request for "Rail-Banking" and Friends of the High Line & City Sign Contract for Master Plan Design Team

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and City Council Speaker Gifford Miller today announced \$43.25 million in capital funding to design and build a great, new public open space on the High Line, the unused elevated rail structure on Manhattan's West Side. The Mayor and Speaker along with Friends of the High Line (FHL) also announced the selection of a design team, led by landscape architecture firm Field Operations with architects Diller Scofidio + Renfro, to create the master plan for the High Line. Lastly, the High Line project took another vital step forward when the State joined the City in a legal filing seeking permission to transform the High Line into public space through the federal rail-banking program. City Planning Department Director Amanda Burden, Economic Development Corporation: (www.nycedc.com/) President Andrew Alper, Parks & Recreation Commissioner Adrian Benepe, FHL Co-Founders Robert Hammond and Joshua David, Actor & FHL Member of the Board of Directors Edward Norton, Field Operations Principal James Corner joined the Mayor and Speaker for the announcement on the High Line structure at 14th Street and 10th Avenue.

"These three developments are crucial to achieving a central goal of our administration: creating a beautiful new public amenity that will serve as the spine of vibrant neighborhoods on Manhattan's Far West Side and create new economic benefits in the years to come," said Mayor Michael Bloomberg. "As the City's population grows, we've got to become more creative in developing open space and the area along the High Line is a perfect illustration of that innovative thinking taking place in New York City."

"As one of the High Line's earliest supporters, I'm especially proud of the Council's vital role in driving this project forward," said City Council Speaker Gifford Miller. "The progress announced today, which includes over \$35 million in funds from the Council, is essential to making the dream of the High Line become a reality."

"Today we're taking an important step forward to realize the full potential of the High Line," Governor George E. Pataki said. "Thanks to great cooperation at all levels of government, the High Line can now be transformed into a new open space for all New Yorkers to enjoy. I want to commend the Friends of the High Line for their enormous efforts to turn this out-of-use rail structure into a beautiful greenway which will enhance the West Side of Manhattan."

"What started as a grass-roots effort by a couple of local residents has now become a model partnership between the community, the City, the State, and the railroads," said Edward Norton, actor and member of FHL Board of Directors. "It's a great example of what's so amazing about New York. Citizens take up a cause, and not only do their leaders listen, but they actively work with them to create something necessary and beautiful – something as unique and spectacular as the city itself."

"We're investing in the City's future economic vitality at the same time that we build a great new park for future generations to enjoy," said FHL Co-Founder Robert Hammond. "The transformation of the High Line is expected generate over \$250 million in new real estate tax revenues over a twenty-year period. We are extremely pleased that the State and the railroad have joined the City in its efforts to create one of the world's most innovative public open spaces. And we're certain that Field Operations, working with Diller Scofidio + Renfro, can define a vision for the High Line that will make it a global model."

Funding Commitments Enable Project to Move Forward

Today's new funding increases the City's commitment by \$27.5 million for a total of \$43.25 million over the next four years. The funds will pay for project costs such as planning, design, engineering and construction. To complement the City's funding commitment, Congressman Jerrold Nadler has included \$5 million for the High Line in the six-year federal transportation bill that is now moving through Congress. Senators Schumer and Clinton are working to supplement the \$5 million while the bill is in the Senate.

Design Team Begins Master Planning Process

FHL and the City also announced today that a team led by the landscape architecture firm Field Operations, working with architects Diller Scofidio + Renfro, have been selected to create a master plan for the High Line. A Steering Committee of representatives from the City of New York and Friends of the High Line selected the Field Operations team after a six-month selection process. The process began in March of 2004 with an open Request for Qualifications, which drew 52 team responses. The field was narrowed to four finalist teams in May of 2004, and the preliminary selection of the Field Operations team was made in August of 2004.

The master planning process for the High Line will begin immediately; to engage public participation in the master planning process, a community input forum will be held on October 19th at 7:00 pm, at Metropolitan Pavilion, 110 West 19th Street. This will be the first of many public programs designed to ensure a high level of public participation in the planning process. To RSVP to the community input forum, e-mail community@thehighline.org.

The team selected by FHL and the City to design the High Line master plan is led by Field Operations, a landscape architecture firm based in New York City. The architecture firm of Diller Scofidio + Renfro will partner with Field Operations in the master planning process. Horticulturist Piet Oudolf will guide the selection of plant materials employed in the High Line landscape.

"The High Line is a once in a lifetime opportunity to create one of the world's most spectacular public urban spaces," said Field Operations Design Principal James Corner. "Imagine a mile-and-a-half of surreal gardens in the sky, a linear stroll where time slows down and the spectacle of nature in the city is heightened to new levels of surprise and pleasure. And the High Line raises a host of extraordinary opportunities for new synthesis of ecology, art, urbanism, and urban culture."

"We're excited about re-tooling this distinctive piece of industrial infrastructure for post industrial use," said Elizabeth Diller, Architect and Principal of Diller Scofidio + Renfro. "We foresee a new paradigm from the intersection of visual culture, civic responsibility, and public policy in which dualisms such as nature/artifice will be dissolved."

"We are excited that we are able to apply an innovative use of [zoning](#) to ensure light, air and public access onto the future High Line," said DCP Director Amanda Burden, who also participated in the selection committee for the High Line design team. "By successfully integrating this important industrial artifact with an entirely new concept of open space, we are creating a future treasure that we can enjoy and that will create even greater value in this exciting West Side neighborhood and for the city as a whole."

"The adaptive reuse of the High Line will add a bold new dimension to the variety and quality of public open space in New York City," said Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe. "The experience of walking through a park suspended over the hustle and bustle of the city streets will be second to none."

Federal Filing by State, Railroads, and City: A Powerful Push for Open Space Use

In one of the most significant developments to occur during the five-year High Line initiative, the State of New York, CSX Transportation and Conrail, respectively the current and former owners of the unused viaduct, and the City have filed a joint legal petition to the federal Surface Transportation Board (STB) transform the High Line into public space through the federal rail-banking program. Rail-banking, a process defined by federal legislation in 1983, allows rail easements across the country to be used as public open space. Over 12,000 miles of rail corridors across the country have been converted to rail-trails, many through rail-banking.

Were pleased with the progress that has been made toward resolving the status of the High Line, said John P. Casellini, Regional Vice President of Public Affairs, CSX Corporation. We look forward to our continued work with the City and State of New York to reach an agreement that will enable the line to be used for the public's benefit.

The City began the rail-banking process in December of 2002, when it petitioned the STB to grant a Certificate of Interim Trail Use (CITU) for the High Line. The issuance of a CITU would allow the City to negotiate with the railroads to open the Line to the public. The September 22nd filing adds crucial State and railroad support to the City's 2002 CITU request. The State of New York signed onto the filing through the Empire State Development Corporation. Both CSX Transportation, the Line's current owner, and Conrail, its former owner, signed on to the filing.

The High Line was built in the 1930s as part of the West Side Improvement Project, one of New York City's largest investments in transportation infrastructure. No trains have run on the structure since 1980. In 1999, neighborhood residents founded Friends of the High Line with the mission of converting the structure to an elevated public space a greenway or promenade. In December of 2002, the City took the first step in converting the High Line to a public walkway through federal rails-to-trails legislation. Friends of the High Line is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization, founded in 1999 to preserve the High Line for reuse as an elevated public open space. Support for the project comes from hundreds of local residents, business-owners, and civic organizations, as well as numerous elected officials. For more information on Friends of the High Line, please visit www.thehighline.org: (www.thehighline.org/).

The High Line is private property, owned by CSX Transportation, and managed by CSX and the City. At this time, the

site is not open to the public, and trespassers are subject to prosecution.

City Planning

The Department of City Planning is responsible for the City's physical and socioeconomic planning, including land use and environmental review; preparation of plans and policies; and provision of technical assistance and planning information to government agencies, public officials, and community boards.