To: High Line Area Property Owners, Commercial Tenants and Residents

As a group of interested community leaders, property owners, business owners and residents, we are reaching out to our fellow neighbors who are invested in the success of our new world-class park. Over the past ten years, thanks to an extraordinary community effort, the High Line has been transformed from a derelict railroad into a first-rate, unique amenity for New Yorkers and visitors to enjoy. With the first Section of the High Line now open from Gansevoort Street to 20th Street, we must ensure that the park and its access points are maintained to a level that we all should expect and can be proud of. Securing financial support for this maintenance is critical to the park’s success, and therefore we have begun to explore the establishment of a special “High Line Improvement District” to help maintain the park to an exceptional standard.

From the very beginning, efforts to save and restore the High Line have been based on public-private collaboration. Friends of the High Line (FHL) and the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation have entered a partnership whereby FHL will manage the day-to-day operation and maintenance of the High Line, while the City will provide security as well as maintain the High Line structure itself and its elevators. Although the City and FHL are committed to supporting the basic needs of the High Line, funds generated from the Improvement District would be directly targeted to meet the unique needs of this park and assure its success as a value-enhancing neighborhood amenity.

We would use the existing Business Improvement District (“BID”) law to establish the “High Line Improvement District”. Once established, the Improvement District is managed by a board of directors. The majority of directors are area property owners. Commercial tenants, residents, and public officials serve as directors as well. The Improvement District is funded by a special assessment that is levied on properties within its boundaries. The City collects the assessment from the property owner and appropriates it to the Improvement District. Where a lease allows for pass-through of taxes, the landlord may collect from the tenant in turn. To date, there are 63 BIDs in New York City, providing a range of services based on their district’s needs and resources.

The High Line Improvement District would be different from other Districts in that here funds would be used solely for park maintenance on the High Line and at its access points, keeping our services focused and our assessment low. This Improvement District is also distinguished from other Districts because the restoration of this unique linear public open space was directly facilitated in large measure by the creation of the Special West Chelsea High Line zoning district. It would also help ensure the high standard of maintenance required to retain its value as a neighborhood amenity.

We are proposing an annual budget of approximately $1 million, which will cover a portion of the total annual maintenance budget for the High Line (from Gansevoort Street to 30th Street) of approximately $3.5 - $4.5 million. The rest of the High Line maintenance costs will be covered by corporate and foundation giving, membership fees, events, sponsorships and the City’s in-kind contributions.

The $1 million would be raised through a two-tiered assessment structure. Properties in Subdistrict A as shown on the map, which are those closest to and benefiting most directly from the High Line, would pay an annual assessment rate of approximately 9 cents per square foot for most properties. For example, a 1,000 square foot property at the 9 cent rate would pay $90 a year. Properties in Subdistrict B, which are less directly improved by the High Line, and storage and warehouse facilities throughout the entire district, would pay roughly 1/3 of the rate.
Under the plan for the District, almost 50% of District members would pay less than $100, and almost 70% less than $200 per year.

The process for creating an Improvement District takes many months, and takes into account the voices of all property owners, commercial tenants and residents, and we will be seeking input and support from all of these stakeholders along the way. To launch this process, we will be holding two introductory public meetings, both in the 9th Floor Penthouse of 511 West 25th, on July 28th from 6:30pm to 8:00pm, and on July 30th from 9am to 10:30am. As space is limited, please RSVP to district@thehighline.org or leave a message at (646) 502-7863. The process also requires the approval by the City Council, and review by the Community Board and City Planning Commission.

In addition, if you have questions about this planning effort or are interested in participating more actively, you may contact us via the email and phone above, and please visit our website at www.thehighline.org/district.

Thank you,

The High Line Improvement District (in formation) Steering Committee

Bob and Veronica Bailin, Residents
Ellen Gribben Bornet, General Manager, London Terrace Gardens
Rosa Chang, Tamarkin Co.
Jane Cohan, James Cohan Gallery
John Lee Compton, Resident and Member, Community Board 4
Christopher Collins, London Terrace Towers Co-op Owner and Resident
Joshua David, Co-Founder, Friends of the High Line
Jill Fink, Edison Properties
Greg Gushee, Related Companies
Robert Hammond, Co-Founder, Friends of the High Line
Andrew Harris, Madison Equities (Chelsea Modern)
John Jacobson, Bishopscourt Realty
Paul Krich, Greenway Mews, Property Owner
Alf Naman, Alf Naman Real Estate Advisors
Ian Nicholson, The Standard Hotel
Douglas Oliver, Ten Twenty-Six Investors
Scott Pactor and Jee Won Park, Appellation Wine & Spirits
Jim Pastreich, Pinetree Group, Property Owner
Adam Ritter, Vesta 24 Condo, Resident
Joseph Rose, Georgetown Companies
Terry Savage, Co-Owner, Cookshop
Neil Selkirk, Property Owner
Trevor Stahelski, Cardinal Investments
David Zwirner, David Zwirner

Map and FAQ Sheet Attached