

Testimony of Andrew Hollweck
Vice President, New York Building Congress
At a Hearing of the New York City Council
Subcommittee on Zoning, Franchises and Concessions
April 23, 2014

The New York Building Congress – a membership organization of the design, construction and real industry – is pleased to support Brookfield Properties’ application to modify the zoning at its Manhattan West development site to include additional public open space.

This project and the zoning changes requested today are important for many reasons. I will focus on them in relation to a new Building Congress Report, *Moving Midtown West*.

In our report, the Building Congress highlights the explosive growth of the Hudson Yards neighborhood, which was rezoned in 2005 to allow up to *26 million square feet* of new development. The report points to this growth as a critical reason to make major new investments in the area’s transportation infrastructure, including completing Moynihan Station, directly across the street from Manhattan West.

By opening its doors, via expansive public spaces and arts-focused amenities, Manhattan West can become a gateway to a vast, new, vibrant part of the City. These public spaces would dovetail seamlessly with access points that would be built for passengers alighting from Amtrak service next door at a modernized Moynihan Station, or across the street at a new southern extension of Penn Station built to accommodate Amtrak’s Gateway Program.

Simply put, Brookfield’s new design can help solidify the link between the Midtown of today and the expanded center of Manhattan of the future.

What’s more, it has already been observed that Manhattan Community Board 4 has one of the lowest amounts of publicly available open space in the City, so this project really helps transform the neighborhood from its industrial past to its future as a commercial and residential hub.

The City’s resurgence after the economic downturn is remarkable – thanks in part to the investments being made at Manhattan West and elsewhere in Hudson Yards. The small yet important changes being considered today are what will continue to draw businesses and residents to this new neighborhood.

For these reasons, we urge the Council to approve these modifications. Thank you.