A CASE OF RECLAMING RUIN:
BEYOND THE HYPE & HYPERBOLE OF
NEW YORK'S HIGH LINE

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ABSTRACT

A Case of Reclaiming Ruin: Beyond the Hype & Hyperbole of New York's High Line

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As a result of economic, social, and cultural changes, cities across the country are looking to outdated and abandoned infrastructure for use as public space. The primary objective of this study is to comprehensively examine one such project, the High Line in New York City, to contribute to the body of literature related to urban transformation, reuse, and analogous projects. In this thesis, the High Line was analyzed as a case study and examined in-depth, through an array of data gathering methods. A historical study of the site was conducted through archival research. A typology, and subsequent description, of the key role-player involved with the project was also established through analysis of over 300 newspaper and blog sources. The design and creation process concludes the archival research portion of the study. Subsequently, the designed environment of the High Line was evaluated for its role as public space, measured against established principal elements found in urban design literature. Special attention was paid to the places where the former infrastructural use has been utilized to provide those public space elements. Behavior observations, surveys, and interviews helped determine how the space is used and perceived by its visitors. Research indicated that while the High Line looks different than traditional public space, it contains all the elements crucial to making public spaces successful. Additionally, it was discovered that the High Line influences perceptions of the City of New York, beyond the physical structure of the High Line. The final outcome of this study is a complete narrative portrait of the High Line from the creation and subsequent reuse, the influencing surrounding factors such as cultural context and physical setting, and how the space is actually used and perceived. The narrative informed implications on the utility of the High line model for other cities across looking to create similar reuse projects.

Keywords: High Line, Adaptive Reuse, Public Space, Infrastructure, Urbanism, Urban Parks, Urban Development, Urban Rediscovery, Elevated Railway, Zoning, Urban Design

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You don't have to worry about this country, if people can think like these kids did in putting this together. You're all right. This country is going to survive, but well. It staggers the imagination.

- Bill Cunningham, 2009

Chapter 1. Introduction

Cities are a physical expression of their economic and social past. While technology, economies, and populations change rapidly, old infrastructure remains and responds to societies needs more slowly. The suburbanization of America was not just about the movement of people from cities outward: industry also soon followed. It is easier to abandon decaying and underutilized infrastructure and industry than to clean and replace it (Berens, 2011, p.18). As a result many American cities have become saddled with a legacy of outsized and over-abundant infrastructure. Today, planners, designers, and ordinary residents are beginning to recognize that outdated infrastructure can be seen as an asset instead of a burden. Abandoned bridges, roads, parking lots, and defunct rail lines have been reimagined as pocket parks and urban public spaces. Early examples of reimagined public spaces can be seen on the nation's waterfronts in cities like Baltimore, which have been transformed from their industrial uses to centers of retail and entertainment (Breen, 1996). More recently Pavement to Parks, a program created to transform parking spaces into small pocket parks in San Francisco, has been emulated in cities throughout the world. Now former metered parking spaces operate as vibrant public spaces.

Figure 1.1 Infrastructure Recycling, Baltimore & San Francisco

Traditional provision of public spaces, which focuses on normative forms, Greek Agora, Roman Forum, New England Town Green, draws inspiration and design from these outdated models and very often are unable to accommodate all the residents of modern cities. Boston's City Hall Plaza was modeled after the Piazza del Campo in Sienna, considered to be the world's premiere

normative public space. However, City Hall Plaza in Boston, with many of the same features and design as Sienna's prized space, is widely considered an abysmal failure (Project for Public Spaces, 2004). The abundance of abandoned and under-utilized infrastructure could provide hidden opportunities for a reimagined public realm better suited to the contemporary urban environment, in an era of cash-strapped cities, climate change, and social-technology savvy citizens. As Castells (2004) notes, there is no predetermined model that can be followed to create successful public spaces (p. 91). A space can be designed in many different forms: square, street, pocket park, outdoor café, string of converted parking spaces, piece of underutilized roadway. A normative form is not a critical element of successful public space in the contemporary city, but rather it is density and spontaneity of uses, potential for interaction, and the multiculturalism of street life.

Figure 1.2 Historic and Modern Plaza Design

There are opportunities to be found in both thriving global cities such as New York, as well as within the world's "shrinking cities", those cities that have lost considerable population due to shifts in the industrial economy in the previous decades, to look inward to their infrastructure to enhance their public realm with non-normative forms. As cities adaptively reuse their infrastructure it becomes critical to study recent landmark projects such as the High Line in New York City and similar projects to illuminate the processes involved in their creation, and evaluate their formation and use.

The High Line is perhaps the most highly visible and chronicled infrastructure reuse project and has caught the attention of scholars, urban bloggers, architectural critics, and urban theorists alike. New York's High Line and the role-players involved will serve as the basis of case study for this research effort. The amount of press and praise lavished on the High Line sets it apart from similar projects, speculated to be the most hyped project ever conceived (Jacobs, 2009). The press, praise, and frenzy surrounding the High Line highlight the need for critical and in-depth study to look beyond the hyperbolic journalism and distill fundamental implications.

On July 14, 2010 The New York Times ran the story: *After High Line's Success, Other Cities Look Up* (Taylor, 2010a). The article detailed cities such as Chicago, Detroit, and Jersey City that are looking to embark on infrastructure recycling projects in the wake of the High Line's hype. Projects using the High Line as a model for development are also underway elsewhere in the world in places such as Rotterdam and Manchester. The Friends of the High Line, the advocacy group responsible for the preservation of the park, have received teams of officials from Singapore, Rotterdam, Jerusalem, Paris, and Hong Kong hoping to take the High Line model to their home cities and complete similar projects (Taylor, 2010a).

Architectural Review, in September 2009, went as far to claim that The High Line and similar projects ushers in a new form of urbanism in the United States (Kolb), and visiting officials suggest that the ideas have disseminated throughout the developed world (Taylor, 2010a). These claims are substantial, but not entirely unwarranted. They present researchers with a "call to arms" to unveil these projects and create an understanding of what they might mean to the future of urban form and process. By looking at the creation, process, actors, users and spaces together, the comprehensive story of The High Line can be constructed, which can help inform future actors seeking to undertake similar projects.

The primary objective of this study is to comprehensively examine the High Line to contribute to the body of literature related to urban transformation, reuse, and analogous projects. In addition, the lessons learned and universal principles established in this work can serve as a guide for professionals undertaking similar reuse projects. The High Line was analyzed as a case study and examined in-depth, through an array of data gathering methods. A historical study of the site was conducted through archival research. A typology, and subsequent description, of the key role-player involved with the project was also established. The design and creation process concludes the archival research portion of the study. Subsequently, the designed environment of the High Line was evaluated for its role as public space, measured against established elements found in urban design literature. Special attention was paid to the places where the former infrastructural use has been utilized to provide those public space elements. Behavior observations, surveys, and interviews helped determine how the space is used and perceived by its visitors. The final outcome of this study is a complete narrative portrait of the High Line from the creation and subsequent reuse, the influencing surrounding factors such as cultural context and physical setting, and how the space is actually used and perceived. The narrative detailing the project includes a design inventory and evaluation, presented through photographs, verbal descriptions, and design drawings. Details from the behavior observations, survey, and interview results are incorporated to provide insight to the High Line that has not been thoroughly examined. A synthesis of the narrative, role-players, the design, and the users fully completes the case study as research. Finally, implications are included for the site as well as for other cities with similar situations. Universal principles are culled that could be broadly shared that inform similar adaptive reuse projects in the future. Cities throughout the United States have vast swathes of abandoned and underutilized infrastructure (Trancik, p.1, 1986). This is vital process if these will indeed create a new form of urbanism and as other cities attempt to complete similar projects.

Chapter 2. Review of Existing Literature

2.0 Introduction

An understanding of the nature of cities is the critical link between a population and place creation. Shared symbolic meaning is created through public space design, which serves as the nexus between culture and technology (Castells, 2004). In this chapter, texts that posit new paradigms and present new understanding of the dynamics of contemporary cities are examined to provide a deeper understanding of how today's cities function and what they mean to their inhabitants. New urban realities are also explored along with a historic perspective of the changing nature of cities through time, from Industrialization to Suburbanization to the contemporary period of Urban Rediscovery (Hall, 2002). The form of cities is a legacy of these former eras. Only recently, because of changes in urban thought and citizen compositions, could an elevated railway or pieces of roadway be considered suitable as a site for public space. The High Line reuse project not only reflects a realignment of urban citizenry and models of participation, but also fits into the historical context of public space and the nature of the public realm. The history of public space thought and provision places these innovative projects in the larger historical narrative. Finally, new ideas of urbanism have recently challenged the traditional notions of planning and design of public spaces. The High Line and similar projects will be placed amid newer ideas of the "everyday urbanism", "loose space", "insurgency space", which challenge designers to look at the urban fabric through a new lens.

2.1 Traditional Provision of Public Space

Public open space, be it plaza, square, or village green, was at the literal and figurative heart of the early American city. The roots of public spaces of the early Colonial City can be traced to European Baroque and Renaissance city planning traditions that owe much to ancient Greek and Roman town planning ideals. That same tradition of a public space at the heart of a city is found in Spanish Colonial town planning, as prescribed in *The Law of the Indies*; around the central public space, the Colonial City was laid out (Bacon, 1967). This came in the form of a “square, plaza, common green, or place d’armes” (Sideris, 1998, p. 35). A similar pattern, though not as regimented, is also found in the New England colonial towns. This model, a town centered on a well-defined public space, is the defining method of city core urban design from Antiquity through the early 20th Century.

The major precursor of modern public space is the Agora, the ancient Greek secular market and meeting place, and later the Roman forum, an open space used for commerce, religious congregation, assembly, and informal gathering (Mumford, 1961). The Greeks engaged in a thriving public life, which they considered to be at the heart of their democratic tradition. The Agora was “no mere public space, but the living heart of the city” (Hall, 1998, p.38) and was the center of daily communications among its citizens. The Romans adopted many Greek traditions, the central public space is no exception. The Roman Forum was similar to the Agora, but on the much grander scale. Monumental scale and defined spatial order became integrated and formalized under Roman influence (Mumford, 1961, p. 223). The Forum incorporated the secular market as well as spaces for religious congregation and political assembly. The essential design of the Roman city center was built to “aggrandize the emperor”, as well as serve as the social, religious, civic, and commercial center of the city. (Carr, 1993, p.53) This tradition of a public space at the heart of the city, formalized by the Greeks and Romans, is the dominant form of public space provision in the urban western world. Providing for a thriving public realm has been the concern of planners since the birth of the modern planning movement.

Figure 2.1 Law of the Indies Plan of Santa Fe

The Law of the Indies was inspired by the Greek and Roman traditions and is the first formal guidelines of city planning found in America. Philip II of Spain handed down the royal ordinance in 1573, which specified new town site selection criteria and design specification (Reps, 1965, p.28). The formalized town building requirements set out in the doctrine, although a “genuine product of Renaissance thought”, (Kostof, 1991, p.114) can trace its origins to Roman times through the writings of Vitruvius in his works on

architecture and town planning (Bacon, 1967). Many of the principles Vitruvius suggested are found in the Law of Indies: a forum at the heart of the city with prescribed dimensions, orientation to the four principal winds, surrounded by key religious and civic buildings (Morgan, 1926). The Law of the Indies set the public plaza as the key to the entire settlement, from which the entire town was built around. The design of the plaza was such to best serve public uses: “this shape is best for fiestas in which horses are used and for any other fiestas that should be held” (Dufour, 1987).

The early American Colonial city had a similar form, though not handed down through official degree. The settlers of the American Colonies were inspired by the same principles of Baroque and Renaissance Europe that inspired the Law of the Indies (Zucker, 1959, p.237). The principle of a public open space, with multiple uses, surrounded by key civic and religious buildings can be found in nearly every town built in the Colonial period. The form wasn’t specifically codified in American Colonial town building; public spaces varied slightly from that of the Spanish Colonial towns. Although central squares and plazas were the predominant form of public space, several other forms were used in Colonial towns. The less formal village green is a slight departure from

the rigorous town square. Many New England squares and greens were open-ended, framed by single-family houses, and built with irregular geometry (Zucker, 1959, 243). Boston Common and the Green in New Haven are famous examples of these village greens still recognizable today.

Figure 2.2 Boston Common, A Traditional Town Square

As cities grew denser during the Industrial Age, the goods and services required by its citizens began expanding and, as a result, specialized retailing districts began to form. By the 1830s the colonial marketplace began to give way to specialized retailers known as merchant-showmen (Goldfield, 1990, p.114). Suddenly the heart of public life shifted from the tradition town square to the retail and commercial areas of the city. Soon after this transition the notion of the “downtown” began, and retailing became housed in more monumental forms in the department store. With the rapid change in the use and form of cities, it was no longer true that public space came in the form of a traditional town square.

In the face of these rapid changes, merchants and residents still viewed public space as a necessary public commodity. The early part of the 20th century was a time of strong civic pride, and cities were deeply concerned with their image and quality of life. Cities throughout the country during this period razed ramshackle buildings to redevelop them into public pocket parks and small urban squares (Crankshaw, 2009, p.63). These pocket parks were created in much the same fashion, as seen in the recycled pedestrian plazas in New York and San Francisco today.

Figure 2.3 City Beautiful Exemplar, San Francisco Civic Center

The City Beautiful movement exemplifies a still dominant form-heavy production of public space planning through the early portion of the 20th century. Inspired by grand civic architecture and classical design, designers during this period attempted to emulate the great Baroque cities of Europe. In keeping with previous

eras of urban design, an impressive civic public space was created at the heart of the city, around which the great civic buildings were constructed. During this period, spatial order and aesthetics was valued in the design of public space. And continuing in the historical trajectory, the important design feature of City Beautiful was the “paramoury of the public sphere and the parallel notion of civitas and the public man” (Sideris, 1998, p. 47). The high regard for public space during era certainly left its mark on Chicago, New York, and many other American cities. But perhaps San Francisco’s Civic Center best captures the built legacy of the period, where the major components of City Beautiful still remain. All the components of the built form were meant to celebrate a functioning civic and public life: grandiose neoclassical architecture, a grand central plaza, and monumental civic buildings. City Hall, the California Supreme Court, San Francisco Public Library, a civic auditorium, concert hall, theater, opera house, and museums all flank the grand public plaza. An ostentatious plan developed by City Beautiful mastermind Daniel Burham, focused on the majestic civic center and a city surrounded by a grand circular boulevard was created but never implemented (Sideris, 1998, p.45).

While the City Beautiful era was dominated by grand civic designs, the Modernist Era, can be seen as a time of spreading out and shooting up in American cities. It was an era of the skyscraper and the suburb, where efficiency, movement, and rationality were elemental.

Suddenly the civic ideal is no longer at the fore and public space creation becomes obscured (Brill, 1989). To exemplify this shift Gehl points out, “the trend from living to lifeless cities and residential area that has accompanied industrialization, segregation of various city functions, and reliance on the automobile also has caused cities to become duller and more monotonous.” (1987, p.23) It’s during this time that cities become dominated by freeways and skyscrapers, and

Figure 2.4 Corporate Plaza, New York City's Seagram Building and public plaza

public space was delivered by planners leveraging corporate interests through incentivized zoning (Kayden, 2000, p.3). Open space in commercial areas was encouraged in exchange for increased building heights. During this period the amount of public space actually proliferates in American cities, however the publicness of this space is the subject of debate. With cities strapped for cash, they traded taller buildings for open spaces in the densely packed commercial areas where the price of land was far beyond what a city could purchase to create park space (Halpern, 1978, p.25).

Figure 2.5 Narrative of Loss Quasi-Public Space, Horton Plaza San Diego

Historical and normative forms of public space often fail to meet the needs and lifestyles of the denizens of the contemporary American cities. A city is only as healthy as its public realm, which is largely dependent upon public spaces for definition and expression. However, there is a perceived “withering of the public realm” (Banerjee, 2001, p. 9) and as a result the modern discourse on public space is dominated by a

“narrative of loss” (Crawford, 1995, p.4). The mismatch between design of public space and desires of its users led to this perceived devaluation of the public realm and the subsequent “narrative of loss” literature, which has become a dominant school of thought on the issue of public space and the nature of the public realm (Davis, 1990; Mitchell, 2003; Sorkin, 1992).

The history of public space helps place the High Line and similar projects within the context of a longer narrative. A public space built from an abandoned piece of railway is the story of public space as much as it is the story of the story of infrastructure. Many of the same epochs of urban thought that influenced the design of public space were the result of realities created by the interplay between industrial development and infrastructure. The High is one instance where those two narrative timelines converge.

2.2 The American Infrastructural City

Massive infrastructure projects were constructed in American cities during the 20th century and ushered in the Modernist Era (Varnelis, 2008). Although the era of “heroic” infrastructure has passed, the legacy remains. The legacy of these massive infrastructural systems demands that the future planner and architect behave more like a hacker, reappropriating the systems of the past and staging an urban intervention more appropriate for our time (p. 12).

The historic provision of streets, bridges, tunnels, and water and power systems, shaped the development of cities. Contemporary cities now function with now often-underutilized infrastructure and massive infrastructural ecologies. Urban regions can be seen as waste products, or drosscapes, formed by and linked to economic and industrial processes (Berger, 2007). Now operating under new economic models, the remains of the past eras, these lost spaces, have the potential to be reimagined for the benefit of those who now inhabit the world’s cities through the creation of thoughtful and vibrant public spaces (Trancik, p. 6, 1986). Additionally, as global oil production continues to level, city structure will continue to change and an infrastructural legacy of cheap oil will remain, also requiring reimagination.

America’s older cities grew a great deal during the early 1900s, and the central cities were the most rapidly growing section of metropolitan areas with maximum growth occurring in a five-mile ring around city centers (Wilson, 1966, p.5). Two New York City neighborhoods important in the story of the High Line, Chelsea and the Meatpacking District,

Figure 2.6 19th Century Chelsea Infrastructure, Luxury liner arriving at the Chelsea Piers

which are both subject of further investigation in this study, still retain the legacy of this era. By 1900, the neighborhood housed over 250 slaughterhouses and meatpacking plants. This industry was served by “heroic” transportation infrastructure: an elevated rail line meant constructed to hold two fully loaded locomotives, and the Chelsea Piers, which served as the pre-eminent luxury liner berth for New York until the advent of World War II when it was used as an embarkation point for soldiers leaving to the battlefields of Europe.

As American cities experienced rapid industrialization they were faced with unfavorable living conditions. Industrialization was coupled with massive waves of immigration that left many cities severely overcrowded. Workers were housed in tight, poorly constructed tenements in close proximity to polluting factories, creating unsightly, unsanitary, and unhealthy conditions (Carmona, 2003, p. 27). New York, during the late 19th century, has come to epitomize the squalid conditions of urban life in the Industrial Era. Journalist and photographer Jacob

Figure 2.7 Industrial City Living Conditions, Riis (1890)

Riis, above all others, gave sensational expression to these conditions with the publication of *How the Other Half Lives* (1890). The book gave descriptions of tenement slum life that stoked the contemporary fears of the bourgeois: immigrants as a threat to the American social fabric and the city as a breeding ground for moral corruption (Hall, 2002, p.35). The response to these conditions reflects a period of moral reformation beginning in the 1890s and continuing through the 1920s. The Progressive Era can be characterized by a favorable attitude toward urban-industrial society, and the belief that the ills of society could be solved through science, technology, and engineering. It was during this reform-minded era that the squalid and dangerous conditions of New York City on Death Avenue

spurred a group of middle class activists to lobby for the elevated railway along the western edge of Manhattan that would later become the High Line.

The physical expression of the Progressive Era is what has become known as the City Beautiful Movement. Faced with the threat of moral chaos and ethnic heterogeneity, reformers looked to the built environment to instill a moral order, combat socialism, eradicate depravity, and create sanitary conditions within American cities (Boyer, 1978, p.269). Daniel Burnham's Plan of Chicago is emblematic of the era with its grand civic architecture, believed to be prerequisite for the emergence of a harmonious social and moral order (Hall, 2002, p.179). Monumental buildings and infrastructure, used as a means to achieve social objectives in response to the chaotic conditions of the Industrial City, had appeal to the middle and upper class Progressive Era backers (Peterson, 1976, p. 430). The nation's first zoning ordinance, enacted by New York City 1916 was an attempt to codify the "language of civic beautification [...] inherited from City

Figure 2.8 First New York City Subway

Beautiful" into a scientific, engineering, and regulatory response to unhealthful and unsanitary conditions created by the Industrial city (Revell, 2003, p.205-209). The Municipal Art Society, a key role-player in the story of the High Line, is emblematic of the Progressive Era reform group that was key in the adoption of the 1916 New York City zoning ordinance in addition to other reforms around the turn of the century such as spurring the building of the New York City subway (MAS, 2011).

The conditions of the Industrial City not only inspired monumental architecture but also spurred the beginning of a mass exodus of the cities by the middle and upper classes. Horse-drawn transport, and later motorized trams and streetcars, permitted the decentralization of American cities during the early 1900s (Carmona, 2003, p.28). Mass motorization accelerated the movement to the suburbs beginning in the 1920s. During this period the suburbs of New York were growing at a rate 3 times that of the central city (Hall, 2002, p.276). Motorization and decentralization were supported through massive expansion of transportation systems, expansion of the middle class, and steady increase of automobile ownership (Carmona, 2003, p.28). The 1956 Federal-Aid Highway Act marked the beginning of the freeway suburb era as freeways cut through the heart of cities to create corridors of accessibility from city centers to outlying suburbs. Not only did this facilitate the movement of the middle-class from the central city and fragment ethnic neighborhoods, but it acted to decentralize the central cities as trucking freed industry from big urban rail hubs (Brown et al., 2009, p.84).

Figure 2.9 Robert Moses

Urban planners, notably New York's Robert Moses, used the freeway system for efficient mobility and as tool to remove blighted areas in central city areas (Hall, 2003, p.292). Moses has become the symbolic embodiment of urban renewal. During his reign over New York, stretching over a period of 50 years in various positions, Moses was responsible for \$27 billion worth of public works. (Caro, 1974, p.10) This includes bridges, tunnels, expressways, parkways, public pools during his early years and the most extensive public housing program in the United States during urban renewal (Hall, 2002, p.249). While Moses' projects may have been visually impressive, he was known to be a bully, "brutally indifferent to neighborhoods he considered slums" who paid little attention to the impact his renewal efforts had on communities or

community members (Bethune, 2009). Moses was finally handed defeat and irrelevance when his plans to raze portions of the West Village met protest and his plans were halted (Hall, 2002, p.250). His initial demolition however, did result in removal of the southern section of the remaining High Line. He no longer led urban renewal in New York City and finally stripped of office in 1968 at the age of 79 (Hall, 2002, p. 251).

2.4 The Informational City

In the wake of previous eras of urbanism, more recently urban renewal, suburbanization and post-industrialism, Manuel Castells (2004) proposes a new concept of urbanism, more adapt to the information age. This new concept is necessary because the nature of society is now radically divergent. He points to rapid urbanization and the growth of mega metropolitan areas, changes in communicative technology that are changing the meaning of place, the restructuring of the traditional patriarchal family structure to increasingly individualized units, and changes in living and work patterns as indicative of a reconstituted nature of modern society.

The informational city is also witness to heightened dichotomies in function, meaning, and form. Cities are being pulled towards both the global and the local, and should serve as the critical linkage between the two. However this presents a logical inconsistency for decision and policy makers who are failing to bridge that gap. Society, defined as the interface between individuals and community identity, has seen increased tension between individual identity and larger cultures. This results from a restructuring of the form of the Informational City. Cities in a global economy depend on global communication networks, global transportation connectivity, and adept human resources. This creates globally competitive nodes within cities, or “spaces of flow”, that receive priority in investment and management. However, the remaining structure of the city represents “spaces of place”, or city area that are organized and lived around their locality. These diametric forces (global vs. local, individual vs. community, and space of flow vs. space of place) tear cities from inside as they attempt to respond to both forces simultaneously (Castells, 2004).

Though globalization has firmly taken hold, the Informational City lacks a dominant culture, since the only entity capable of sounding a overarching message, the global media, now mirror the myriad cultures as they have adapted to their markets. Though nostalgia exists for a dominant public realm based on a universal set of values, the structural trends of diversity, specification, and individualization are far greater forces when fueled by new realities of work, space, and

communication. The non-global nodes of the informational city can adapt to new symbolic meaning and identity, often through appropriation by groups and individuals. Public spaces as communication devices of society have become more important than ever-inept formal political institutions. It is largely online sociability that has led to increased importance of place, instead of its predicted degradation. Together this new local nodal structure, public space restructuring, and new social communication patterns create a hybrid city, where flows and place are interwoven (Castells, 2010).

Peter Hall (2002) presents a theory of the global information city, similar to the notions expressed by Castells (2004). He believes that the global information city has fueled the engine of capitalism, rather than cooled it as many had predicted. He attributes this fact to the decentralization of production facilities as well as the increased importance in centralized cities, where information special information is exchanged. The traditional urban centers are the winners in this new digital restructuring: places like New York, San Francisco, London, and Tokyo where interaction, networking, and buzz tip the balance in their favor. However, this was a localized phenomenon occurring in key nodes within these cities, what Castells refers to as “space of flows”, and within cities nodes were becoming connected globally while areas adjacent were suffering from urban decay. Hall suggests that the last century has come full circle and we are experiencing the same problems at the dawn of the 21st Century as at the turn of the last. Recent interest in the appearance of cities echoes the City Beautiful movement. Also, much like during the early 20th Century, Hall believes that emphasis is being placed on normative forms of public space, while the places where ordinary people live are being neglected. The last parallel he draws to the early 1900’s is a vision of permanent urban underclass that will soon be concentrated in cities around the world (Hall, 2002, p.295).

In the same fashion that Castells (2004) recognizes a restructuring of society and need for new form of urbanity, Bertolini (2006) suggest that our systems of mobility call for a redefinition of

urbanity. Briefly defined, urbanity refers to the distinctive quality of cities, as well as what we need and want from our cities. While mobility refers to both movements that can be physical or virtual, it can encompass immobility, and can come at a variety of scales, both spatially and temporally. The terms used by Castells and Bertolini may differ but the phenomenon they limn is essentially the same.

These changes in mobility create a growing need to link the transformation and expansion the infrastructure of mobility, in its various forms, and the design of places. City structure provides for agglomerations and concentrations of different forms of economic activity. Bertolini shows that the differing mobility zones of cities have experienced concentrations of differing economic functions. Using Amsterdam as a specific example to illustrate the larger global trend, he shows that the dense city center with excellent public transportation access, availability of “slow modes” (walking and bicycling), but weaker access by cars and international air travel, has seen concentrations in the cultural and media industry. Castells (2004) echoes this by illuminating that urban core sites formerly used for industrial purposes are now suited for and thus have experienced concentration of informational productivity. In contrast, the multi-modal mobility nodes, with connectivity through various forms of mobility and access, have experienced concentration of financial and business services while experiencing a declining share of transportation and manufacturing industries, which have made intra-city moves. Location trends in the housing market are emerging as people are concentrating into these different zones of mobility according to lifestyle preference (Bertolini, 2006).

New realities found in contemporary cities, such as globalism, migration flows, and hyper-mobility, together create a new challenge: development of the public realm. Spatial considerations, as they related to zones of mobility, must be provided for the development of diverse economies. For instance, cultural institutions and industry locate near pedestrian mobility zones while manufacturing and industry will gravitate to highway mobility systems. In addition,

cities need to provide opportunities for splintering populations to interact. It is at the spaces of exchange and confrontation where the public realm will be defined in the new metropolis. The traditional sites where these different worlds to interact with each other are losing their publicness, and have been dominated by limited number of activities and users. While the nature of traditional public spaces is being reorganized, Bertolini suggests that new public spaces could be emerging. It's at the intersections of mobility flows that present opportunities for the development of new public spaces. Here, urban designers can play a role by ensuring that the mobility flows of the splintered urban environment overlap in space and time. Urbanity can be fostered through these new public spaces by creating places of diversity and exchange, brought about by the right economic and social conditions, and through the thoughtful provision of mobility infrastructure (telecommunications and transport), and land use that meets the needs of the mobile society.

Similar to Castells' ideas that cities are operating under a new paradigm, Fishman (2005) recognized a restructuring of cities as a result of the tidal flow of population back into cities and away from suburban areas. In what he has termed "The Fifth Migration", Fishman sees a structural shift in the global movement of population from the in-migration from immigrants as well as long-term regional residents who are similarly rediscovering those areas that abut the city center. In the same manner that various industries are finding the different mobility regions of the city recognized by Bertolini, people are discovering the advantage of inner ring suburbs, which include the availability of mass transit, a pedestrian scale, and structural resistance to the automobile.

The concept of migratory waves in America is an idea first conceived by urban theorist and historian Lewis Mumford (1925). Mumford identified four significant eras of population movement throughout the history of the United States. The "First Migration" is the period of pioneers who settled the vast stretch of the North American continent. The "Second Migration" resulted from

industrialization, as Americans moved en masse from farms to factory towns. A “Third Migration” occurred when people streamed into Americas cities and created the great metropolitan regions. Finally, the final or “Fourth Migration” Mumford envision was the decentralization of population away from the old city cores, an idea best exemplified in suburbanization. Fishman builds on these waves and suggests that we are experiencing a rapid repopulation of those inner city areas abandoned during the fourth migration.

Castells (2004) would believe that in design we will find the solutions to accommodating the new populous of the network city; Bertolini (2006) suggests that it is the overlap in time and spaces of the flows of mobility that will foster urbanity; Fishman believes it is the creative reuse and recovery of the structure already in place left before the fourth migration that will foster new and timely urbanity. While none of these ideas are mutually exclusive, Fishman (2005) offers the concrete and tangible solutions. He suggests the reuse of abandoned factories, polluted waterways, derelict waterfronts, and other relics of the industrial age can unify and unite communities.

Richard Florida (2003) tells a different story of urban restructuring and the quest for a new idea of urbanity. Without explicitly referring to the information age or the fifth migration, these ideas are implicit throughout his study of where the main drivers of new economies, what he calls the Creative Class, prefer to locate. Florida is convinced that it is a particular type of human capital is the key driving force of economic growth: creative people. This class of people is defined as those who create meaningful new forms. This includes “scientists and engineers, university professors, poets and novelists, artists, entertainers, actors, designers and architects.” Other sectors of this class include the thought leadership (analysts, cultural figures, non-fiction writers, etc.) and the creative professionals (computer programmers, financial analysts, creative business leaders, etc.). This group of individuals, so important in driving where and how economies thrive, represents about one-third of the U.S. workforce.

Creative centers, places where the creative class elects to live and where creative firms begin or chose to relocate, have seen relative economic vitality in our age. According to Florida (2003), these places thrive, not because they have the right mix of mobility infrastructure as posited by Bertolini, but instead because they have essential elements that attract the creative class. The essential elements that Richard Florida has uncovered are what he calls the “three t’s”: talent, tolerance, and technology. Talent is a concentration of those that are highly educated, for Florida it’s those who possess at least a bachelor’s degree. Tolerance is “openness, inclusiveness, and diversity to all ethnicities, races, and walks of life.” Technology refers to concentration of both high technology and innovation, best exemplified by regions such as Silicon Valley in the San Francisco Bay Area and the Research Triangle in North Carolina.

The argument made by Florida (2003) adds depth to the idea proffered by Fishman (2005) by giving some weight to the pull factor of urban core areas. It lends a human quality to the idea of Castells (2004) that location is ever important, despite the ease of access to the entirety of the world through communicative and transportation technologies. The idea is also put forth by Florida that not all urban regions are the same in terms of their degree of attractiveness. Castells, Fishman, and Bertolini all present forces inherent in the space and society restructuring that are operating on intra-regional level, but Florida illuminates forces that are working between metropolitan areas. Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis all have world-class universities and thus an educated population, but lack the essential tolerance and fail to act as attractors of the creative class and economic dynamism. Whereas Seattle, San Francisco, and Austin possess all three essential elements and are sites of in-migration of the creative class and are centers of innovation and a dynamic economy.

2.5 New Urban Realities: Public Space Use and Perception

In the global informational city there is growing valuation of urbanity, civic culture, street life, and meaningful spatial expression in spaces of place, while at the same time rise of defensible space, global economic competition, and global mobility (Castells, 2004). Since there is no predetermined structural future of cities, urban design can play an increasingly important role as informational cities seek to assert themselves as global capital attractors. Design has the capacity to connect the seemingly diametric forces of the informational city, such as the global vs. the local. Especially important are the public spaces in the new symbolically nodal nature of the hybrid city, which give rise to civic engagement, culture, and sociability. Design can also play a critical role in the reconquest of public space. There is no clear model for the provision of these spaces and they can be created in many different forms. Here form becomes unimportant, instead it is the milieu of the space that matters ultimately. Public space design is the bridge between technology and culture in the new city context as it creates shared symbolic meaning for its citizens.

The struggle to bring The High Line, a new park built from an abandoned piece of elevated railway on the west side of Manhattan into existence, has contributed to the interest in infrastructure reuse in cities throughout the United States. The sudden interest has caused planners and citizens to evaluate their existing landscape for sites of potential reuse. The High Line project demonstrates that the legacy left by the centralization of industry and the rapid deindustrialization over the past 60 years can be seen now as an opportunity rather than an unsightly burden. Not only that, the project calls into question the cookie-cutter provision of parks in our cities, which is “at best, insipid, non-contextual [...] with plugged-in gardens and water features” (Kolb, 2009). The high profile and apparent success of the project has already inspired plans for copycat projects around the world, and given city builders a fresh look at aging infrastructure as a mean of providing public amenities (Taylor, 2010a). The High Line not only causes a shift in the ideas towards public space, something much needed in this country, but it

creates a new model of public participation by demonstrating what a few ordinary citizens can do when they rally around the ideals of public space (Kobl, 2009). While there are specific locations that we can look to for new models or ideas of urbanism such as the High Line, there are other authors who are looking at trends in population makeup, technology, migration, and transportation as the key factors in defining new forms of urbanism.

2.6 New “isms”

Recently, scholars have sought manifestations of the public realm in unexpected places and in non-traditional forms. Margaret Crawford (2008) presents ‘everyday space’, what she sees as the crucially important places of everyday public life, as a stark contrast to the carefully planned Greek Agora reproduction public spaces that are so often under-used in many American cities. ‘Everyday Urbanism’ is an urban design concept that attempts to connect research and design with ordinary humans and social meanings. Celebrated and heavily used spaces, the High Line in New York can be viewed as a link between formal design and the everyday. It’s the ‘everyday’ that represents potential for new social arrangements and forms of imagination.

Insurgent Public Space, a concept and book presented by Jeffery Hou (2010), demonstrates how urban actors are redefining the concept of public space the world over by utilizing spaces in unconventional ways. Both the High Line and similar projects owe their genesis to insurgent practices. Insurgent public space is suggested in infrastructure reuse projects, in that it represents “city making that is different from the institutionalized notion of urbanism and its association with master planning and policy making (p. 15).” Karen Franck (2006) presents the idea of *Loose Space*, which is representative of the ways that urban residents creatively appropriate spaces for their desires and give life to cities in unexpected ways. Finally, Roger Tranik (1986) suggests that the era of Modernism has left the contemporary city with huge swaths of abandoned and underutilized areas he refers to as *Lost Space*. These leftover spaces present designers with opportunity to reclaim these spaces to make valuable connections between the places that matter.

Just as dedicated public spaces can be reappropriated for creative uses, underutilized and abandoned infrastructure can be redesigned for newly imagined uses. A “Lost Space” typical of many American cities, a large portion of San Francisco’s Central Freeway Fell Street off-ramp

that was damaged in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, was recently converted into the temporary urban agriculture site while City officials decide what to do with the space (Roth, 2010).

Top-down planning and urban design approaches, once so heralded as models of urban renewal have given way in light of new urban realities due to changing demographics, new communicative technologies, social trends, and economic realities. The new *isms* reflect these new realities: creative energy generated by a “creative class” in the absence of top-down planning structure in an era of bankrupt municipalities and legacy of overabundant and often abandoned urban territory and infrastructure.

In the following chapter, lessons learned from the existing literature will be discussed along with gaps in existing research and their relationship to the research questions of this study.

Chapter 3. The Research Problem

3.0 Gaps in Existing Research

After examining the existing literature relating to reuse of infrastructure for public space, it is clear that there is a need to study this phenomenon more in depth. The excitement generated by adaptive infrastructure reuse projects has led to a re-examination of aging and under-utilized infrastructure in cities; designers, planners, and real estate interests in cities around the U.S. have begun to look at their aging infrastructure through a new lens (Kolb, 2009; Taylor, 2010a). The High Line is among the most chronicled projects in the country, however it has been received little critical study. If these projects are indeed creating a new form of urbanism in the United States, as suggested by Kolb (2009), and as other cities look to complete similar projects (Taylor, 2010a), the case study method of research of these spaces is not only critically important, but timely as well.

It is unclear how recent adaptive infrastructure reuse projects are used, and whether this differs from use of more traditional public spaces. There has been no study to examine the design of the park and where it differs from traditional public space. The regulatory framework may be ill equipped to handle reuse of an elevated parkway and might have faced implementation challenges. Additionally, an examination of the actors and their specific roles in creating places like these seems apropos, especially considering the noise generated by their high profile. The organization of the role-players has never been examined within the larger context of history and urban thought although The High Line story appears emblematic of new actors in the urban realm acting under new circumstances. Proponents of the High Line declare, “the park of the future will be built on industrial sites” (Iovine, 2004), but beyond that the model for organization structure needed to bring the High Line as park into existence is the potential public space delivery model of the future as well.

3.1 Study Focus

The focus of this study was to contribute to the understanding of how The High Line was created, preserved, designed, and is now used. Additionally, attention was paid to the challenges faced in the adaptive reuse of the elevated rail line. Gaining an understanding of the project and key players involved yielded valuable insight into the improvement of these spaces, provided understanding for the creation of similar projects, informed advocates, city officials, urban planners, and designers seeking to complete similar projects.

The High Line is a section of elevated railway, constructed in New York City during the 1930's and used to transport freight through the 1970s. After disuse and abandonment, a self-seeded meadow grew atop the railway and the High Line became an important transgressive public space for photographers, graffiti artists, locals, and others "in the know". The defunct railway was saved from demolition by a neighborhood non-profit and ultimately reimagined as a formal public space. The newly reimagined and designed High Line reopened in 2009 as a public space to great fanfare.

This research study addresses many aspects of adaptive infrastructure reuse of the High Line, neighborhood development, community organizing, and grassroots urbanism. A complete understanding of the process, design, and use of the High Line contributes to the currently insufficient body of knowledge regarding this type of project.

3.2 The Research Questions

Research Question 1.1: What led to the creation of the High Line as a public space?

This question was pursued through an examination of the context, history, and culture that surround the High Line. This included an overview of historical use, from creation to abandonment. The physical setting was examined as the context that made the structure suitable for reuse. Finally, an investigation included the neighborhood and larger city attitudes that made the site prime for repurposing. This question was answered through archival research and study of the key players involved.

Research Question 1.2: Who are the main role-players in the preservation, creation, and design of the High Line?

Understanding the role of those individuals critical to the establishment of The High Line as a public open space, when they became active in the project, and what influence they had in the process and design will be useful for other cities to assemble their own role players when they look toward their infrastructure for similar projects. Site use and perceptions were checked against the manifestations of influence by the role players to understand how influences early in the process affect use. These key role-players were identified through archival research.

Research Question 1.3: What barriers did the project face and how were they addressed?

Studying the hurdles faced by the case study project can provide insight into potential barriers that will be faced by future projects. Understanding these obstacles, why they happened, and how they were overcome, will provide potential “lessons learned” for future city officials, designers, and advocacy groups involved in similar projects. Finally, barriers could also present

concessions made in the design and implementation process that would influence both use (Research Question 3.1) and perception (Research Question 3.2) of the spaces.

Research Question 2: How does the designed environment of the High Line accommodate the behavior of users?

Designing a public space from a piece of roadway or an elevated rail line presents both constraints and unique opportunities. To answer this question an investigation of the remnants of past use readapted for current use were sought. Especially of note were the traditional public space elements that were provided through their former use as infrastructure. As adapted sites of infrastructure, it is worth observing exactly how the environments of the High Line are used, especially when compared to traditional public spaces. Their legacy as infrastructure and the incorporation of those elements into the design of the projects could have an affect on the type of user and their behavior.

Research Question 3.1: How does the designed environment of the High Line influence the perceptions of users?

The major role-players, be they mayor, designer, or advocate all had preconceived ideas of what these spaces would mean to those who used them. This question will be a test of where the ideas of the role-players match the desires of the users. Again the creation process and the infrastructural legacy will also influence perception of the users.

Research Question 3.2: How does the High Line influence perceptions of user beyond its physical structure?

Beyond literally offering a new perspective of New York, The High Line could offer new insights into the city building process, future of cities, and the role of government in park projects.

Chapter 4. Research Methodology

4.0 Introduction

This study employs a case study methodology, and a multi-method approach. As a research method a case study is defined as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2003, p.13). Further, case study as an empirical research method “copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points” (p.13). This study is limited to one data point, the High Line in New York City, however there are a multitude of variables at play that define this space and are the subject of inquiry. A well-constructed case study also “relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion” (p. 14). This study triangulates archival research, interviews, design evaluation, surveys, and behavior observation.

Within the case study research methodology, a multitude of methods were used in order to “extend the breadth and range of inquiry” as well as “develop new understandings, interpretations, and suggest areas for further exploration” (Gaber, 1997). The multiple methods are part of the larger multiple case study, the best-suited approach to triangulate results (Yin, 2003, p.47) as well as to answer the important “how” and “why” questions of the study (p. 6). This is an approach suggested by Yin to answer the “hows” and “whys” of research, where behavioral events can’t be controlled, and when the focus is on contemporary events (p.5). Research Question 1 can really be viewed as “How did the High Line as a celebrated public space come to be?” The question has been broken down further (Research Question 1.1 – 1.3) to really parse the particulars of the story.

Once the narrative of the High Line was completed and role-players were identified, typified, and their roles told in narrative, the space was examined to identify the elements of the physical environment and the microscale elements of the behavioral environment. These were then checked against the established elements, essential for public space success. Vikas Mehta

(2007) used a similar approach by creating a typology of essential public space elements through a review of public space and urban design literature and observations along neighborhood commercial streets in order to address the relationship between social behavior and the environmental features along several blocks in Boston. Akin to the study by Mehta, this endeavor funnels the literature, the physical environment (with special attention paid to the remnants of the former infrastructure use), and behavioral environment analysis, parallel to the narrative and commentary of the role players of the High Line.

4.1 Study Area

Figure 4.1 Aerial View of Western Manhattan, with High Line drawing

This study presents an in-depth analysis of The High Line in New York City. This site was chosen because it represents arguably the most highly visible adaptive-reuse infrastructure to public space projects in the nation. Jaffer Kolb (2009) posits that The High Line and similar projects are propelling cities towards a new kind of urbanism. In addition to a transformative project, the High Line has been both heavily chronicled and is physically accessible given time and monetary constraints of this research project. Research of greater depth would also included other similar projects in their nascence, such as the Bloomingdale Trail in Chicago, the Reading Viaduct in Philadelphia, or The Harismus Stem Embankment in Jersey City, as well as the Promenade Plantée, a similar project in Paris that precedes the High Line.

4.2 Methods

4.2.1 Archival Research

In order to answer research questions 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3, a selection of newspapers, blogs, community meetings, press releases, and site specific plans for each space were examined to gather pertinent information on each project, the role-players, the design, the process, and barriers in order to establish the context, history, and culture of these spaces. Zeisel (2006) suggests that archival research provides “investigators with imagination to see opportunities where others see waste” (p. 316). This process of archival research, which begins with evidence, identifies and organizes the data, evaluates it, and creates the ‘story’, is recommended by Groat and Wang (2002) in “constructing a narrative from the evidence that is holistic and believable” (p. 137). Every instance of role-players, context, and future vision for design and use will be culled from each source and recorded with the date and pertinent information. The ultimate outcome of this is a visual timeline (see xx), role-player typology (see 6.3), and narrative of history, culture, and context (see 6.1). This will be constructed in general terms in order to reapply the story to other sites in the future.

To establish a comprehensive story of the High Line each instance of The High Line in The New York Times was compiled and examined to construct the story and identify the major role-players. The New York Times was used to construct the history because of its national perspective. In order to construct the context and culture surrounding the High Line, each instance of the High Line in The Village Voice, The Villager, and Chelsea Now, all neighborhood newspapers, was compiled and examined. Local papers can present a more nuanced picture of the social and cultural context of an issue, especially one as visible as the High Line. NY Curbed and The Gothamist, two prominent New York City blogs that focus on the built environment in context with culture, were gleaned for further mention of the High Line to further answer research question 1.1. Metropolis Magazine, a monthly design and architecture magazine based in New York, has

covered the High Line long before its opening in 2009 and presents a design perspective that can answer research question 1.1 and was used to establish research question 2.

4.2.2 Role-player Typology

In order to answer research question 1.2, the influential actors were identified during the archival research process. From these, a simple typology of roles was created and described in detail. This list was expanded and refined after being informed by the archival research process. Rather than heavy focus on specific individuals, this delves into the roles played, the influence each typological group played, and where in the process they were instrumental. This helps make the process highly adaptable for other cities, especially since adaptive reuse projects are site specific and the same process can never be exactly duplicated.

4.2.3 Site Analysis & Design Inventory

The High Line was subject to a design inventory. This included analysis of the main physical features on the site. Design plans, documents, and renderings were examined to cull the potential of the space, as envisioned by the key role-players, and compared with the analysis of the post-implementation site. Several authors have researched extensively those elements of public space that enhance the experience for their users (Alexander, 1977; Whyte, 1980, 1988; Cooper-Marcus, 1997; Gehl, 1987, 2003, 2006, 2010). A compilation of those elements essential for the users of public spaces was created and each of the High Line was then measured against those criteria. It is critical to understand how these new types of spaces, such as the High Line, provide the principal elements of successful public space.

4.2.4 Behavior Observations

In order to answer research question 3.1 and research question 3.2 behavior observations were conducted for select locations along the High Line. This method was used to examine “how a

physical environment supports or interferes with behaviors taking place within it, especially the side effects the setting has on relationships between individuals or groups.” (Zeisel, 2006, p. 191) Of particular interest in this approach is the manner in which the remnants of infrastructure that remain in the repurposed High Line influence the “expected uses, new uses, and misuses of place” (p. 191). This research method sought general behavior patterns as they relate to the built environment of the site.

4.2.5 In-depth User Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with users found on the High Line. These interviews were conducted in order to determine whether the aims of the designer match with the perception of the users. These are the instruments needed to answer research question 3.1 and research question 3.2. These interviews were conducted on and near the High Line in person.

4.3 Instrumentation

4.3.1 Instruments of Archival Research

Each article used in archival research was cataloged in a spreadsheet (see Appendix xxx). Information was recorded on role-players, their role, the context of the High Line, mentions of design elements or aspirations, and pertinent quotations. This information was used to reconstruct the story of the High Line (see 6.2), including the key role-players involved as well as the challenges faced in the reuse of the space.

4.3.2 Instruments of Site & Design Inventory

A site inventory was recorded through photographs and notes during each site visit. Hand sketches were completed on site to reconstruct the various environments of the High Line and how they were used.

4.3.3 Instruments of Behavior Mapping

Behavior mapping was conducted on multiple occasions at different times of the day and week at the High Line locations as advised by Zeisel (2006, p. 211). Walk-by observations and unstructured direct observations were used in select environment to monitor and record behavior of High Line park users, similar to the process used by Mehta (2007). Tally sheets, photographs, and video were employed to record general behavior patterns. These were used to see what design elements affect use of each site.

4.3.4 Instruments of In-depth Interviews

Targeted in-depth interviews were administered to site users. Questions were asked to create an understanding of the perception of users. Questions were asked to complete an understanding of how the design matches the perception of those who inhabit the space. In addition, basic lifestyle

information was gleaned to determine if the users of these spaces are reflective of the trends posited in the literature, such as the 5th Migration (Fishman, 2005), Creative Class (Florida, 2003), and the Informational City (Castells, 2004).

Research question		Method
RESEARCH QUESTION 1.1	<i>What led to the creation of the High Line as a public space?</i>	4.2.1 Archival Research
RESEARCH QUESTION 1.2	<i>Who were the main role-players in the preservation and reuse of the High Line?</i>	4.2.1 Archival Research
RESEARCH QUESTION 1.3	<i>What barriers did the project face and how were they addressed?</i>	4.2.1 Archival Research
RESEARCH QUESTION 2	How does the designed environment of the High Line accommodate the behavior of users?	4.2.2 Design Inventory
RESEARCH QUESTION 3.1	<i>How does the designed environment of the High Line influence the perceptions of users?</i>	4.2.2 Design Inventory
		4.2.4 Behavior Observations
		4.2.3 Interviews

Chapter 5. Research Protocol

5.0 Research Design

This research project began in August 2010 and was completed in June 2011. The work began with an extensive review of literature on the topics of public space, infrastructure, adaptive reuse, park and open space design, city theory, and trends in urbanism. This process began at the onset of the thesis and continued through the duration of the project. The data collection portion of the project began in November 2010 and stretched through March 2011. The data analysis section of the thesis, summarized in length in the following chapter, followed (and somewhat overlapped) the collection of data. Analysis began in January 2011 and was concluded by late May 2011.

Data collection began following the initial completion of the literature review. The first phase of data collection, the archival research portion, began in November 2010. The various newspapers, blogs, newsletters, and magazines chosen were thoroughly searched for mention of the High Line, read, and catalogued. In total, over 300 individual articles, blog posts, and newsletters were reviewed. The process largely concluded in January 2011, however, additional articles were uncovered as late as May. Prior to site visits, a complete design inventory of the High Line was constructed to help the researcher construct a data-gathering strategy and provide a rounded base of knowledge for a space that had not previously been visited. Base maps and interview questions were developed prior to the New York site visits.

Fig 5.1 Photographs recorded during site visits, used to construct the design inventory and record behavior observations.

A series of site visits were conducted between March 15 and March 21, 2010. The High Line was visited each day for no less than 4 hours. Behavior observations, physical inventory, and user interviews were conducted on each day of study. In addition to the record of behavior, inventory, and interviews, photographs and video were recorded to supplement the analysis portion. A total of 65 interviews were performed during the week of study on the High Line. These interviews were conducted during each day of the week and covered morning, afternoon, and evening visitors to the park. The weather during this period ranged from bitter cold (32 degrees) and windy to warm (78 degrees) and sunny. The interview subjects were all English speakers, however there were a handful of foreign visitors captured by the study. Those polled from the U.S. represented 11 different states. New York City residents from each borough provided input, with the bulk coming from the immediate surrounding neighborhoods (Chelsea, Meatpacking District, West Village). Interviews followed a series of set questions, however, many of the interviews covered additional territory not outlined by the researcher. Each interview lasted at least 15 minutes, with some lasting considerable longer (at the request of the interviewee). Following the New York site visits, the data from behavior observations, inventory, and interviews were recorded and coded.

Fig 5.2 Interview with High Line user

Finally, the findings were written between February and May 2011. This included a synthesis and triangulation of all the data collected. An amalgamation of the archival research was constructed to complete the history, story of the role-players, and to establish the context of the project. The design inventory, behavior observations, and interview results were combined with the archival research to construct the interrelationship between these. This was then examined within the context of the literature review to complete the section on design, use, and perception and ultimately, to answer the research questions.

Chapter 6. Findings

6.1 History, Role-Players, and Challenges

Figure 6.1 The High Line in Abandon

The following sections (6.1 - 6.3) answer:

Research Question 1.1: What led to the creation of the High Line as a public space?

Research Question 1.2: Who were the main role-players in the preservation and reuse of the High Line?

Research Question 1.3 What barriers did the project face and how were they addressed?

Data was collected through archival research of over 300 individual publications. This included articles from the New York Times, Chelsea Now, and Village Voice, blog posts, and articles from design magazines. This information was used to recreate a detailed history of the High Line, beginning with the arrival of the railroad into Western Manhattan in 1847 and extending to 2009 when the High Line opened as a public park. Also examined were zoning documents and the development review framework of New York City, which set the project in a regulatory context. Finally, a typology of role-players and their stories were crafted from data that arose from the archival research.

6.1.1

The High Line History 1847 –1998

In 1847 the City of New York authorized the Hudson River Railroad to lay tracks along the western edge of Manhattan as far south as Canal Street. Trains began to run throughout the day between Manhattan and Albany, led through Manhattan by a railroad employee on horseback, known as the Westside Cowboy, who waved red flags to warn pedestrians of the approaching train. A total 12 men rode the 2-mile stretch, waving the red flag by day and a red light by night, for 80 years starting in 1850 (Subramanian, 2006). However, train traffic increased in the following decades along with the concern about the dangerous conditions resulting from a train running at grade through a dense

Figure 6.2 Westside Cowboy

Figure 6.3 Death Avenue

industrial city. To allay the concerns of residents, traffic guards were stationed at several intersections 24 hours a day. Despite these efforts, pedestrian accidents were quite common and the stretch of rail line became commonly known as “Death Avenue”.

In response to the dangerous conditions, proposals were made to elevate the railroad. Reform-minded community groups in the ideals of the Progressive Era, such as the League to End Death

Avenue, advocate for alternatives and the Municipal Art Society hosted an exhibit for a plan to elevate trains, trucks, and cars on three separate levels (Subramanian, 2006). Finally, in 1914 The City of New York and New York Central Railroad agreed to partner and construct an elevated railroad from Canal Street to 57th Street. However, with the need to divert steel and human resources the project was put on hiatus as a result of the United State's involvement in World War I.

Figure 6.4 High Line Under Construction

Following the delay imposed by the war effort, plans resumed to separate train traffic from the street along the west side of Manhattan. In 1926 the State of New York issued \$300 million of bonds to fund railroad grade eliminations, \$50 million allocated specifically to New York City. The New York City Grade Crossing Elimination Act was passed in tandem with funding, and the railroad then began to work with the city to exchange real estate and easements that would allow for an elevated freight line to be built. Following engineering studies and plans, financing

agreements, and New York City approval, construction commenced on the double track viaduct in 1931. When construction began, the New York Central railroad had purchased 95 percent of the land required for its easement. The High Line required a private right-of-way through 350 properties, each of which required the negotiation of a separate transaction, in what is arguably the most complicated real estate transaction in New York City's history (Luongo, 2003). A total of 640 buildings had to be demolished to make way for the new rail structure. Finally, the High Line officially opened on June 28, 1934 as part of the \$125-million West Side Improvement Project, which was an astronomical public investment for the height of the Depression. The project was heralded as a model of progress that can be made where there is cooperation between public and private interests (Hotz, 2004) and considered an engineering marvel of its day (Lueck, 1999). Despite the high hurdles and fanfare, the High Line would only be fully operational for 25 years.

Figure 6.5 High Line in Operation

Figure 6.6 Train on the High Line

Following World War II, the United States began to invest heavily in roadway infrastructure and as a result truck transportation quickly supplanted the railroad as the major distributor of goods (Gray, 2008). In response to the decline and reduced rail traffic, the New York Central Railroad sold the St. John's Park Terminal, at the southern terminus of the High Line, in 1960. Service was then halted at Bank Street, leaving approximately a mile of abandoned track. Three years later, as part of a 14-block urban renewal project along Hudson Street in the West Village, the High Line was demolished south of Bank Street. Then in 1980, rail service completely ended on the High Line when the last train carried three boxcars of frozen turkeys.

Figure 6.7 The High Line Abandoned

Figure 6.8 Once High Line Owner Peter Oblatz

In order to divest itself from unprofitable lines, Conrail, who had assumed ownership of the High Line through consolidations of the various railroad companies, filed a *Notice of Intent to Abandon* the structure in 1984. No interest was expressed by any City or State agency to purchase the abandoned line and Conrail agreed to sell the High Line for \$10 to the West Side Rail Line Development Foundation, started by Chelsea resident and train enthusiast Peter Oblatz (Gill, 2007). The aim of Oblatz to establish passenger rail service on the elevated line by holding on to the property until New York City Planning Department realized the need for rail service on the western side of Manhattan (Gottlieb, 1984). Oblatz then figured his group would then turn the property over to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority for reuse. In the interim, Oblatz established the West Side Rail Line Development Foundation, and made plans to lease a locomotive and several parlor cars to carry tourists on the High Line to the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center (Barron, 1996). The purchase of the High Line was made possible by the National Trails System Act, passed by congress the year prior, which allowed abandoned rail lines to be used as pedestrian or bicycle trails while held for future transportation needs.

The ownership of the High Line by Peter Oblatz elicited immediate challenges by the City and State of New York, developers, and adjacent property owners. A group known as Chelsea

Property Owners, the Rockrose Development Corporation, and the New York State Department of Transportation all filed separate legal suits against Peter Obletz. In 1987 the Interstate Commerce Commission (now the Surface Board of Transportation) issued a ruling that nullified the sale of the High Line to the West Side Rail Line Development Foundation and Obletz, saying that neither had the sufficient resources to own or operate a railroad.

With Conrail back in ownership of the High Line, both the Chelsea Property Owners and Rockrose Development Corporation lobbied to have the viaduct demolished. Rockrose was successful in razing the southernmost 5 blocks of the High Line by agreeing to pay for the demolition and paying Conrail for the property's value (Dunlap, 1991a). The group razed the West Village portion of the High Line amid some protest and built 265 apartment units during the development boom of the 1990s (McKinley, 1995; Dunlap, 1999). The Chelsea Property Owners took a slightly different approach and requested that the High Line be declared adversely abandoned, which would require Conrail to pay for demolition. Instead, the request was denied and the ICC ruled that the Chelsea Property owners were responsible for the financing and insurance costs needed to demolish of the High Line. However, in the time that Rockrose was able to demolish the southern portion of the High Line, Community Board 4 adopted a resolution to retain the High Line until further study of reuse options is completed (Dunlap, 1991b). This resolution, along with the complicated legal and financial imposed by the ICC, stymied the Chelsea Property Owners and kept the High Line intact long enough for the real battle for preservation and reuse to begin.

6.1.2 Fight for Preservation and Reuse 1999 – 2002

With the fate of High Line still in the balance due to the complications posed for the Chelsea Property Owners to secure demolition funds and insurance, a group of concerned local residents, led by Joshua David and Robert Hammond, formed Friends of the High Line to advocate for the structure's preservation. Described as a pair of "neighborhood nobodies", the two met at a public meeting to discuss the future of the High Line where they found that there was no voice present to advocate for preservation and reuse. The mission of the group became preservation and reuse of the structure as an elevated public space. The group helped bring attention to the High Line preservation effort, engaged in fund raising, and rallied support from diverse interests. The group worked with the Design Trust for Public Space, who established two fellowships to investigate the variety of interests and issues involved in the potential reuse of the elevated railway.

Meanwhile, New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani and his administration cast its support with the Chelsea Property Owners and their aim to demolish the elevated structure. The Mayor, City Planning Commissioners, and staff suggested that reuse of the High Line was an unreasonable idea and would stagnate development in the area, which was experiencing a real estate boom. The Chelsea Property Owners again started to press Conrail and the Surface Transportation Board for demolition of the High Line, so they could develop the property they owned under or adjacent to the line. Interests within the City believed that reuse was unfeasible given the cost of repair, operation, construction, and maintenance of an elevated parkway and also believed that the neighborhood was the wrong context for such a project. In April 1999 the City of New York and Chelsea Property Owners brought a \$150 million suit against Conrail for their refusal to remove or repair the High Line and to pay for property damage caused by falling debris from the aging viaduct (Kilgannon, 1999).

The aim of the Friends of the High Line was aided by a change in ownership of the elevated viaduct. In 1999, just prior to the formation of Friends of the High Line, CSX Transportation Inc.

and Norfolk Southern merged and assumed ownership of Conrail and their interest in the High Line. While Conrail sought to divest itself from its underused assets, and worked with developers to have the High Line demolished, CSX reversed this position and proposed that the City or a private organization transform the platform into an elevated park, bike path or promenade with shops and outdoor cafes. The railroad group commissioned a study by the Regional Plan Association, a non-profit regional planning organization, which concluded that the High Line could support a variety of public amenities, including a bike trail, light rail service, restaurants, and art galleries. It was suggested that CSX took the position of preservation and reuse for financial rather than communitarian reasons; Property taxes on the High Line were as high as \$300,000 per year, and the company was liable for at least \$7,000,000 of the demolition costs (Lueck, 1999).

With a new position from the structure's owner, the Friends of the High Line started to work for preservation with the Design Trust for Public Space, a non-profit organization with the aim of improving the public realm of New York City. The non-profit provided two fellowships that resulted in the publication of "Reclaiming The High Line". The product produced by the two fellows established the planning framework for the High Line's preservation and reuse. The report presents a recommendation for public reuse along with several options for reuse, which included an open space plan, a plan for transit use, a commercial option, and a plan for demolition. The report became a tangible product that presented viable and visual options that advocates of use could promote and decision makers could easily envision.

Fine-art photographer Joel Sternfeld took the cover photograph for the report, and most of the now iconic early photographs of the High Line in its "found" state. At the behest of the Robert Hammond and Joshua David, who first brought Sternfeld atop the ruinous High Line, Sternfeld began photographing the High Line beginning in 2000. Sternfeld's High Line photographs were needed by the Friends of the High Line to truly convey their vision in a way they could never fully

articulate verbally. The photographs represent “the moment that the High Line became a park in the minds of New Yorkers” (Steen, 2005). *Walking the High Line* (Sternfeld et al., 2001) is a collection of Sternfeld’s early photographs of the High Line along with an essay by Adam Gopnik, who wrote a pivotal piece in the *New Yorker* now credited with bolstering support for the High Line with New York’s elite, that featured the now famous Sternfeld photograph (2001, p.44). The photographs were also displayed at an art gallery in West Chelsea in November 2001.

Figure 6.9 High Line by Joel Sternfeld

Advocates for reuse of the High Line won a symbolic victory in the July 2001 with the unanimous passage of City Council Resolution No. 1747. The measure called upon the mayor and governor to take all necessary steps to rail-bank the High Line, a critical step toward reuse as a public promenade. Prominent supporters of the High Line including Senator Hillary Clinton, U.S. Representative Jerrold Nadler, Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields, presented testimony urging a policy of reuse.

Despite Resolution No. 1747 and the viable options presented by the Design Trust and Friends of the High Line, a group of private property owners negotiated a demolition agreement with the Giuliani administration during its final days. The agreement was a last-ditch effort by the Chelsea Property Owners to have the elevated rail line torn down before a new administration took office. The Friends of the High Line, Manhattan Board President, and New York City Council filed a law suit with the New York Supreme Court, and argued that the demolition agreement was invalid since it failed go undergo the New York City development review process. The Supreme Court ruled the demolition agreement was “undertaken in violation of 'lawful procedure' and [was] an 'error of law'” and issued a Temporary Restraining Order. The order nullified the current Mayoral administration from signing a demolition agreement for the High Line until the matter could be further deliberated in the court. The matter was settled a few months later when the Supreme Court of New York decided that any demolition plans for the High Line, which would alter the official City Map, would need to undergo the New York City Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) (Lee, 2002).

In step with the publication of “Reclaiming the High Line” (David, 2002), Michael Bloomberg took office as Mayor of New York City in 2002. On the campaign trail Bloomberg had taken the position that High Line preservation as a public open space was a priority and kept that promise once in office (McIntire, 2003). The feasibility report produced by the Design Trust is said to have convinced Bloomberg to support reuse (FHL, 2002). In early 2002 the plans set forth by the

Friends of the High won their first official public support with the passage of a City Council resolution that advocated reuse of the High Line as a public open space. Without the threat of demolition and with the support of the Mayor's Office, the City worked with the Friends of the High Line to complete a financial feasibility study in addition to a engineering study to assess the structural integrity for reuse of the High Line as an elevated promenade park.

In the wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the economic feasibility of preservation of the High Line became a crucial concern for the Friends of the High Line and other supporters (Steen, 2005). The economic feasibility study eventually, conducted by consulting firm Hamilton, Rabinovitz & Alschuler, Inc. (HR&A), found that the tax increases generated by the park would far exceed the substantial costs of construction, a major victory for preservation and reuse (FHL, 2002). According to the report the park was expected to generate \$262 million in new tax revenues over a 20-year period; in addition, substantial value would be added to the surrounding neighborhoods. The report found the necessary adjacency controls delivered through a zoning amendment would also provide air and light that would increase the value of future development. The most interesting finding to come out of the report was the economic value the High Line would provide by giving the area an identity that it desperately needed in order to be viable for development. With these essential components in place, reuse of the High Line was solidified as an official city policy by the end of 2002.

6.1.3 The High Line Finance, Design, & Planning 2003 – 2009

2003 marked the first full year that Robert Hammond and Joshua David were fully dedicated to the Friends of the High Line, a year that would prove productive and pivotal. In early 2003 the Friends of the High Line announced an open international ideas competition for reuse of the elevated rail line. The juried *Designing the High Line* competition generated tremendous interest: 720 entries were submitted from 38 countries. Friends of the High Line cofounder Robert Hammond and Vishaan Chakrabarti, director of the Manhattan office of the Department of City Planning, were two member of the jury panel. The involvement of Chakrabarti was considered symbolic of the change of position in New York City Hall from Rudy Giuliani who opposed the project to Michael Bloomberg who embraced preservation of the structure (Dunlop, 2003).

The objectives of the competition were simple; it sought to define a comprehensive vision for reuse as an open space, identify design solutions to the challenge of providing plentiful, universal access to the High Line's elevated platform, Conceive an innovative plan for the environment to be experienced by a visitor to the High Line's elevated platform, and finally define compelling treatments for the spaces beneath the High Line (FHL, 2003).

Figure 6.10 Winning Entry, Designing the High Line, the entry imagines the High Line redesigned as a swimming pool.

The entries ranged from pure whimsy, such an idea to turn the High Line over to a cow pasture and one to repurpose the structure as a 1.5-mile swimming pool, to stark and provocative (Dunlap, 2003). While the competition was simply an idea-generating event and had no chance of physical actualization, four entries were selected as winners of the competition, two from the New York City area, one from Germany, and one from Austria. Several others were given awards and honorable mentions. The 18 winning entries and honorable mention submissions were held for free public viewing at Grand Central Station's Vanderbilt Hall during July of 2003 (Louie, 2003).

Just ahead of the unveiling of the ideas competition, The Friends of the High Line were awarded their first major funding commitment. City Council Speaker Gifford Miller secured and announced a city funding commitment of \$15.75 million, which he hoped would demonstrate the City's dedication to preservation of the High Line and hopefully serve as a catalyst to attract federal, state, and private funding (Dunlap, 2003). The Friends of the High Line saw it as an opportunity to secure foundation and corporate donations as well (FHL, 2003). The fund allocation came from the City's capital budget, which is meant for project costs including planning, design, and construction.

The Friends of the High Line faced two significant regulatory challenges in 2003 one at the Federal level with the Surface Transportation Board and one locally with the local community board. Members of the Federal Surface Transportation Board made a special trip to New York in July 2003 to conduct a forum concerning the future of the High Line. The meeting was not conducted for the Surface Transportation Board to make any ruling, but instead was meant to create a dialogue and record of the various interested parties. Panelists included many of the key role-players including Deputy Mayor of New York representing Michael Bloomberg, City Planning Commission Chairperson Amanda Burden, Director of Manhattan Planning Vishaan Chakrabarti, Speaker of the New York City Council Gifford Miller, strategist Phil Aarons, Friends of the High

Line Cofounder Robert Hammond, a representative of the Chelsea Property Owners, two CSX officials, Congressman Jerrold Nadler, and Municipal Art Society leader Frank Emile Sanchis III (STB, 2003).

The Friends of the High Line employed one of their most popular tactics for bolstering support for reuse of the High Line when they invited Surface Transportation Board Chairman Roger Nober to climb atop the structure the morning of the meeting. The Chairman said he was impressed with the High Line as a piece of railroad engineering, but also referred to the structure as an “eyesore”. The Chairman was quick to remind the panel that the High Line was the one of its agencies oldest, being unresolved since 1989, and most difficult cases having come before the board on many past occasions.

The advocates for reuse of the park presented information about the proposed zoning changes that would eventually be codified in the West Chelsea Special District zoning amendment, which the City adopted in 2005. Burden and Chakrabarti explained to the panel how they proposed to support the park with adjacency controls that would permit light and air but also create residential uses that would put eyes on the park during all times of the day. In addition, these planners went into detail about a proposed transfer development rights scheme for the property under and adjacent the structure. Advocates explained the lengthy process involved of gaining approval of such changes, including the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) and the City’s environmental review procedure (CEQR), and urged the Surface Transportation Board to grant a Certificate of Interim Use. Such an issuance was a necessary step needed to “railbank” the High Line. The Chelsea Property Owners argued that the Surface Transportation Board should uphold the issuance of abandonment made by the Surface Transportation Board (then the Interstate Commerce Commission) in 1992 (McIntire, 2003).

The Friends of the High Line won another symbolic victory early in 2003 with a 28 -1 vote by Manhattan Community Board 4 in support of the effort by the group to preserve and reuse the High Line as a pedestrian promenade. At the time of the vote of support by the Community Board, the park needs of the community were substantial: Community District 4 ranked 57th of the 59 New York City districts in terms of open space acreage per resident. That translated to .2 acres for every 1000 residents compared to the citywide average of 2.5 acres per 1000 residents. As the neighborhood shifted from industrial uses to the world's center of contemporary art culture, there was a great need for parks.

Two significant developments during late 2003 played a significant role in the surrounding context of the future High Line. Several blocks that immediately abut the southern end of High Line, Gansevoort, Little West 12th, 13th, 14th, and 15th, became part of the Gansevoort Market Historic District. The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission voted to approve the designation that had been campaigned for by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation during the previous three years (Amateau, 2003). The elevation of the neighborhood as an officially recognized historic district meant that the historic character of the gritty, industrial Meatpacking

Figure 6.11 Views of the Historic Gansevoort Market Neighborhood

District would be preserved. Today, the historic neighborhood is one of the most popular views from the High Line and creates a historical context for the structure that isn't available from the other neighborhoods that adjoin the park.

While the Gansevoort Market Historic District preservation was an important step in determining the context of the High Line, the zoning proposal unveiled by the city two weeks later would determine the height and bulk of any new building proposed near the High Line. The zoning proposal preserved some of the industrial uses which gives the area much of its character, but radically changed many of the industrial and commercial uses to allow the addition of 4200 new housing units. The low-lying warehouses that house more than 200 Chelsea art galleries, found mostly at mid-block locations, would be retained to support views from the High Line (Hu, 2003). Included in the proposal was the transfer development rights strategy, which amounted to as much as one million square feet of development potential for property owners under the High Line that could be sold to increase development intensity on sites within the district.

After a major funding commitment, community board support, and an idea generating design competition completed in 2003, the High Line project received additional funding from new sources, New York State support, and another design competition to finalize the future of the High Line during 2004. The Friends of the High Line also faced several legal and regulatory challenges during the year, however the High Line as an elevated parkway began to take more definite shape.

During the second week of 2004 the Appellate Division of the New York State Supreme Court overturned the ruling which had prevented the demolition order of the High Line issued during the last days of the Rudy Giuliani administration. Given the change of mayoral administrations and the city's commitment to preserving the High Line, the order did not place the High Line in imminent threat of demolition. However, if for whatever reason city policy were to change after the

ruling the appellate court decision meant that demolition of the High Line would not be subject to New York City's development review system, the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). Had the Giuliani Administration still been in office, it's likely that this ruling would have meant the destruction of the High Line.

Despite the ruling by the State Supreme Court, the State of New York, through its Empire State Development Corporation officially endorsed reuse of the High Line toward the end of 2004. The State endorsement came when it signed onto a joint legal petition with the City of New York and owner of the High Line, sent to the Surface Transportation Board. The filing sought to convert the High Line to a public promenade under the federal rail-banking program. Rail-banking is a federal program that was enacted by congress in 1983 to allow abandoned rail lines to be preserved through interim trail use. Since its inception, nearly 4000 miles of track have been set aside for bike paths, hiking trails, and other public amenities throughout the United States (Lueck, 1999). Rail-banking however, is only a potentially temporary transformation of railroad right of way to public use, as the Surface Transportation Board can restore future rail service on a rail-banked railway (Vitello, 2005). The City of New York and the Friends of the High Line had started the rail-banking process in 2002 when they filed with the Surface Transportation Board for a Certificate of Interim Trail Use (CITU). CSX, owner of the High Line, signed onto the petition to urge for the CITU, which had to be in place in order for the rail line owner to negotiate with City and the Friends of the High Line to open the line to the public.

The announcement of state support was made at a press conference atop the High Line that included many of the key role-players. In addition to the announcement of support, officials at the press conference announced the winning team selected to create the High Line's master plan. The process of selecting a design team started earlier in 2004 when the Friends of the High Line, in conjunction with the New York Economic Development Corporation, announced an open Request of Qualifications. Respondents were required to assemble a team of design experts, led

by a firm specializing in landscape architecture, architecture, or urban design. A total of 52 responses were submitted by a variety of design teams. From these, a selection of four finalist teams was selected to each develop a project approach from which the City and Friends of the High Line would select a final design team. A special exhibition was created for the four final design teams that summer, held at the American Institute for Architects' Center for Architecture.

The four finalists included teams led by Steven Holl Architects, Zaha Hadid Architects, TerraGRAM: Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, and Field Operations. The team led by Steven Holl Architects, which also included HNTB and landscape designer Hangreaves Associates, presented a plan that highlighted the structure as a "lost and found" sculpture. Design features included an observation tower, tiered plaza inspired by the Spanish Steps in Rome, and a bridge leading to a water taxi on the Hudson River. The team led by Zaha Hadid Architects, also including Skidmore, Owings & Merrill Architects and landscape architect Diana Balmori, stressed flexibility in their design and included a series of stages and event spaces. Their designs left much of the self-seeded landscape and also included photovoltaic cells to line the High Line, which were intended to help power the surrounding neighborhoods. The TerraGRAM team, which was led by Michael Van Valkenburgh who had once been the head of Harvard's landscape architecture department, also included D.I.R.T Studio and Beyer Blinder Belle. The team's design concept focused on potential social and programmatic links between public space and urban ecology (Iovine, 2004).

Figure 6.12 High Line Design Proposals

Despite the inspired ideas presented by the other three finalist teams, the winning concept announced at the press conference on the High Line came from the team led by James Corner and Field Operations. The team was also comprised of architecture firm Diller Scofidio + Renfro, and horticulturalist Piet Oudolf. The strategy proposed by the group, which they deemed “agriculture”, “combines organic and building materials into a blend of changing proportions that accommodates the wild, the cultivated, the intimate, and the hyper-social (Friends of the High Line, 2004).” The proposal to repurpose an industrial conveyance into a post-industrial instrument of life, leisure, and growth, sought to retain the other-worldliness of the High Line and create a space where people would meander slowly, unlike any place found in New York (Irvine, 2004). What the winning design team presented that differed from the other entries was the degree to which the High Line itself was made the prominent feature of the future project, rather than architectural additions; the winning concept was the only entry that “had the confidence, and the humility, to let the High Line be the High Line” (Nobel, 2004).

WHAT WILL GROW HERE ?

Inspired by the melancholic, unruly beauty of the High Line where nature has reclaimed a once vital piece of urban infrastructure, the team retools this industrial conveyance into a postindustrial instrument of leisure, life and growth. By changing the rules of engagement between plant life and pedestrians, our strategy of **AGRI-TEXTURE** combines organic and building materials into gradients of changing proportions that accommodate the wild, the cultivated, the intimate, and the hyper-social. In stark contrast to the speed of Hudson River Park, this parallel linear experience is marked by slowness, distraction and an other-worldliness that preserves the strange character of the High Line. Providing flexibility and responsiveness to the changing needs, opportunities, and desires of the dynamic context, our proposal is designed to remain perpetually unfinished, sustaining emergent growth and change over time.

AGRI-TECTURE: A FLEXIBLE, RESPONSIVE SYSTEM OF MATERIAL ORGANIZATION WHERE DIVERSE ECOLOGIES MAY GROW.

The animal surface transitions from high intensity areas (100% hard to fully expressed bumps) (100% soft) with a variety of experimental gradients in between.

A METHODOLOGY FOR CONSTRUCTING HARD SURFACES AND STRUCTURES AS MEANS OF PRODUCING DIVERSE SOCIAL AND NATURAL HABITATS. Designed as a continuous, single surface, yet built from individual precast units that may fold down to permit travel through the three structural

ARE THEY SAFE, THESE TUNNELS? Designed as a continuous, single surface, yet built from individual precast units that may fold down to permit water through the most structural section of the High Line or hold up to pass over it without disturbing the natural "preserves."

Figure 6.13 Winning Design Proposal

In addition to the newly minted state support, and the finalized design and planning team, the press conference also announced additional funding for the project by the City of New York. An additional \$27.5 million was awarded to cover the planning, design, engineering, and construction costs of the project. Again, the funding was granted to the Friends of the High Line by the New York City Council, led by advocate and Council Speaker Gifford Miller. Earlier in the year the first federal funding had been committed to the project through the Transportation Appropriations Bill. Senators Charles Schumer and Hillary Clinton and Representative Jerrold Nadler, all proclaimed High Line advocates, worked to secure \$500,000 as part of that years' allocation of transportation funding.

By 2005, most of the essential pieces needed to complete the High Line project were in place, however the City still did not have control of the rail line and could not negotiate with CSX for title transfer without the issuance of the CITU by the Surface Transportation Board. An authorization of Certificate of Interim Trail Use was finally issued in June 2005, nearly three years after the City and Friends of the High Line first petitioned the federal agency on the matter (Vitello, 2005). Soon thereafter the City of New York was able to acquire the title to the High Line from owner CSX. The rail company happily donated the structure to the City, finally rid of its financial and legal responsibility for the structure (O'Donnell, 2005). The issuance of the CITU and title transfer to the City now meant the High Line was officially "rail-banked", one of the earliest goals made by the Friends of the High Line, and construction of the park could finally move forward.

The second major advancement made on the project in 2005 was the addition of funding commitments made by the Federal Government. Senator Hillary Clinton, who for the previous three years had made the High Line one of her "top priorities", helped secure \$18 million of federal funding through the passage to the 2005 transportation bill, commonly known as SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users) (Clinton, 2005). New York senator Charles Schumer and Congressman Jerrold Nadler

also took credit for appropriations for the High Line. Shortly after the bill was passed Friends of the High Line cofounders Joshua David and Robert Hammond, along with Senator Hillary Clinton, announced the federal funding as part of a photo-op and walk atop the High Line.

The Special West Chelsea zoning changes were approved during 2005, which increased density through the district and allowed much great swaths of residential use. It was during this time that an incredibly rapid pace of development began to occur in what was being referred to as the “High Line District”. A New York Times article stated that the development occurring in Chelsea and the Meat Packing District with the new zoning changes “amounts to Manhattan's biggest land grab since a handful of Native Americans took a few beads in trade for the entire borough” of Manhattan (Wilson, 2005), referring to the myth that that island of Manhattan was traded by the its original inhabitants to Dutch for a few beads. Even those who had witness famous gentrification other New York City neighborhoods such as Soho and the Lower East Side during the 1980s and 90s, would be “dumbstruck by the pace of gentrification wrought by the High Line (Ouroussoff, 2006).” By the end of the year plans were already in place to develop 5,500 housing units in the newly rezoned neighborhood, with the heaviest concentration of buildings immediately abutting the High Line. A bulk of the proposed development was condominiums for the famously well heeled with units selling for as much as \$1200 per square foot. Only 20 percent of the development would be provided as affordable housing (Wilson, 2005).

The projects surrounding the anticipated High Line Park attracted a spate of all-star architects, including Jean Nouvel, Renzo Piano, Shigeru Ban, and Robert A. M. Stern, and Frank Gehry. As a result of the density of high-profile projects, the area along 10th Avenue between Gansevoort and 24th street began being referred to by many as “Architects’ Row (Silverberg, 2007).” Even after the economic slowdown and real estate collapse during the later years of the decade, the pace of development still hadn’t slowed in the neighborhood (Gregor, 2010). At the High Line ribbon cutting ceremony mayor Michael Bloomberg said that project had spurred a “renaissance

in the neighborhood: more than 30 new projects are planned or under construction nearby (Pogrebin, 2009). The development also proved to be good business for the High Line, with as much as \$22.5 million of developer contributions going directly to the park.

By the time construction began on the High Line in early 2006, the bulk of the hurdles had been overcome and the structure was well on its way to opening to the public. However, the Friends of the High Line had only secured two-thirds of the elevated structure. Acquiring the remaining section, a northern spur that wraps around the Hudson Rail Yards between 30th and 34th streets, was (and still remains) the main challenge facing the group. Construction of the project began in 2006 and would continue until 2009 on the first section and until 2011 for the second. Although everything needed to be removed from the High Line before any park planting could begin, the elements of the self-seeded landscape were preserved for future use. Finally, the Friends of the High Line also turned to social media during this time in attempt to raise the necessary funding to operate the park.

Groundbreaking officially began on the High Line on April 10, 2006 with a ceremonial party at ground level on Little West 12th Street next to the High Line. Speeches were made by many of the High Line role-players including Kevin Bacon, Edward Norton, Hillary Clinton, Michael Bloomberg, Diane Von Furstenberg, and others (Dobkin, 2006).

Figure 6.14 High Line Role-Players at Ground Breaking

The rather unconventional park had a rather unconventional groundbreaking: rather than the traditional spade-in-the-ground ceremony, the Friends of the High Line celebrated the beginning of the construction process with a ceremonial rail lifting (Amateau, 2006).

Construction of the project, which involved a two-step process, had actually started a month prior to the official groundbreaking ceremony. It was spearheaded by the New York City Economic Development Corporation on an accelerated schedule that required the precise coordination between a handful of different city agencies. Adding to the challenge of coordination, the demanding construction process had no model that the construction team could refer to. Despite these challenges the construction process largely came in on time and on budget (Collins, 2008).

Despite the appeal of the discovered landscape found on the High Line, which created the juxtaposition between industrial decay and nature that made the project so compelling, everything atop the structure needed to be removed in the first phase of construction. The steel rails, ties, gravel ballasts, debris, soil, and plants, all need to be removed along the entire stretch of the structure in order to complete a systematic check of the structural integrity, remove all the toxic chemical contaminants leaked by decades of freight trains, and install a drainage system (Collins, 2008). All of the original railroad tracks that were removed were tagged and stored so they could be returned to their original location (FHL, 2006). Pigeons that had been roosting in the beams, damaging concrete and steel and creating unpleasant conditions on the High Line, necessitated a pigeon mitigation program to protect the structural integrity and pleasantness of the park (Collins, 2008; Priluck, 2006). To prevent pigeons from roosting and dropping their acidic waste that is corrosive to steelwork, angled plates welded atop girders were installed along the High Line (Collins, 2008).

Figure 6.15 High Line Painting

Once all the debris, contaminants, and all other materials on the High Line had been removed, the flaking lead paint on the rusting structure was sandblasted in containment tents along the entire 1.5-mile long structure. The process was completed one

25-foot section at a time, and the railings were repainted with 18,000 gallons of paint in three coats to mimic the color of the original structure. An estimated 1 million rivets were individually replaced on the structure in order to preserve the original steel plates that give the structure an “industrial folk art” and “Art Decoish” appeal (Collins, 2008). Any pieces that were missing from the original structure or any pieces damaged needed to be refabricated to restore the structure to its original design (FHL, 2006).

Advocates of the High Line preservation often pointed the self-seeded, wild-sown landscape found on top of the High Line cite such an important element in their effort to save the structure. Despite the importance and appeal of the found landscape, the demands of construction meant the removal of all the plants that had managed to take root on the structure. In order to preserve the world that had take hold, volunteers chosen by lottery ascended the High Line at various

Figure 6.16 Volunteers Collect Seeds for Seed bank

times during the construction process to harvest the seeds of the various species found on the rail line. 74 distinct plants were discovered growing on the High Line, 39 of which were native to the region. The seeds from all of the species were collected and saved in the nearby Greenbelt Natural Plant Center on Staten Island that operates as a seed bank run by the New York City Department of Parks (Amateau,

2006). Park designers hoped to included some of the original species in the second section of the High Line, between 23rd and 34th Streets. Eventually the short spur that emerges just north of the Chelsea Market Passage, now known as the Northern Spur Horticultural Preserve, was designed to recall the self-sown landscape that grew on the High Line after trains stopped running (Hazari, 2009).

Figure 6.17 High Line Cell Phone Walking Tour Sign

During the lengthy construction process the Friends of the High Line needed to develop creative solutions in order to maintain interest in the park, retain and recruit a member base, and raise money for the park operations. The group during this period employed a series of innovative techniques to maintain and bolster their support

base. In addition to new techniques the group also

turned to social media sources to help spread their outreach. One tactic the Friends of the High Line order to “involve all sorts of people in the High Line” and “keep people engaged in the park” during the doldrums of construction was a cell phone walking tour of the High Line narrated by role-players including celebrity boosters, designers, and big money contributors (Amateau, 2006). Bright green tour markers, the High Lines’ trademark color, were placed on several locations along the High Line with a toll-free number and code that would play a narration about some historical aspect of the High Line and neighborhood (Lerner, 2006).

Figure 6.18 Elementary School Children Chalk the way to the High Line

Another interesting community involvement and awareness-generating exercise relied on the bright green High Line color in order to draw attention to the project. Nearly 50 children from a Chelsea school gathered a few block from the High Line and were fitted with four-inch thick bright green chalk shoes, held in place with a

Velcro strap. The students shuffled their way to

future entrances of the High Line as part of the performance-art piece, leaving bright green chalk markings in their path. The Friends of the High Line and artist Julia Mandle, who approached the group with the idea and designed the chalk shoes, coordinated the project. The idea of the

involvement project was to “relate moments that allow audiences to pause and heighten their perception of everyday environments, just as the park promises to reveal a new perspective of the city (Gersh, 2008).” The shoes later went on display at stores and restaurants in the surrounding neighborhoods (Hedlund, 2008).

The Friends of the High Line also attached themselves to the international public space awareness program known as Park(ing) Day. The event, which occurs during September each year, allows participants to transform metered parking spaces into temporary public parks in an expression of insurgent urban transformation. The arts advocacy group Rebar started the project in San Francisco when they transformed a single metered parking space into a temporary public space in downtown San Francisco. The single act was meant to highlight the distinct lack of open space in cities and quickly became a worldwide phenomenon. The program was formalized by the San Francisco City Planning Department, which now allows business, community groups, and residents to submit their own plans to permanently transform metered parking spaces into these “parklets” (Arieff, 2009). Friends of the High Line created a parklet for Park(ing) Day 2008 in Chelsea a few blocks away from the High Line. Their park design was meant to reflect the future elevated park with grass, plants, seating, and snacks. The group used the parklet as a vehicle to raise the profile of the park, create an opportunity to inform Chelsea residents about the project, and to display a mock-up of the green roof system now being installed on the High Line (FHL, 2008).

Figure 6.19 Park(ing) Day, groups transform parking spaces into temporary public green space. Courtesy of Friends of the High Line

These innovating involvement and awareness projects serve to raise the profile of the High Line, and as park approached its target opening date the group started to rely on social media sources to chronicle these unique efforts, further heighten awareness for the park, and extend their base of supporters. In the early years of the organization Joshua David and Robert Hammond had relied heavily on their Yahoo! e-group mailing list to rally support when needed (Steen, 2005). In early 2008 the Friends of the High started a new official blog, to further extend the influence of the High Line group. The groups' blog was updated daily by contributions of all eleven current staff members to disseminate information about events, construction, design, and other High Line related topics. The design rendering of the future park were a consistent feature of the blog. At the same time that the Friends of the High Line created their official blog, they also started a Facebook page to extend their reach (FHL, 2008). Despite the lack of excitement that was generated during the fight for preservation and design phase, the Friends of the High Line had swelled their numbers paying members, which by 2008 was 1500 strong (Finn, 2008).

With the park nearing construction the Friends of the High Line began to transition their role from an advocacy group to a park conservancy. A licensing agreement was created with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation under which the Friends of the High Line would oversee

the maintenance, operations and public programming for the High Line. The group was also responsible to raise the essential private funding to complete the High Line's construction, support more than 70 percent of park operations, and create an endowment for its future operations (NYC-Arts, 2011). Yearly operation for the park, not including security that will be provided by the Department of Parks and Recreations, was estimated to cost between \$2 and \$4 million (Pogrebin, 2009a). The group proved to be adept at fund raising, relying heavily on their network of supporters to generate the funding necessary to operate the park. During the first decade of advocate work, the Friends of the High Line had raised an impressive \$59 million in private funds (Kovaleski, 2009).

Long-time supporters and High Line role-players made two very substantial donations to the Friends of the High Line a few days prior to the official park opening. The Friends of the High Line assembled many of their moneyed supporters atop the park to ask their needed support to operate the park. Just prior to the event, media mogul Barry Diller and fashion designer wife Diane von Furstenberg, both of whom had been long-standing advocates of the project, made a \$10 million challenge grant to support the park. The couple had previously donated \$5 million to the park in 2005. Before Joshua David could finish his speech to encourage guests to match the fund raising challenge, Lisa Marie Falcone approached the microphone, whispered in Mr. David's ear, and was then handed the microphone. Falcone then announced that she was so moved by the project that she and her husband would match the \$10 million donation themselves (Pogrebin, 2009). Lisa Marie and husband Philip Falcone represent the younger hedge fund managers, real estate executives, and other member of the new money class not quite established enough to join the boards of major New York City cultural institutions but eager to make a mark. The High Line became an attractive project that needed support and where these role-players could have an impact (Goldberger, 2011).

After the long struggle to bring the High Line into being, the park finally opened to the public on June 9, 2009 to a tremendous amount of press and fanfare. Final costs for the first two section of the park were estimated to cost \$153-million (Goldberger, 2011). Over 100,000 guests visited the park during the first ten days of operation, with certain days welcoming over 25,000 eager park-goers (Lee, 2009). Demand was so great during the peak weekend hours during the first two weeks that the park operations staff had to limit the entry to control the crowds, however the wait was never longer than an hour (FHL, 2009). Largely through a volunteer effort, the Friends of the High Line began programming the High Line with events such as story telling for children, guided historical tours, and lessons about the High Line flora and fauna. Paid programs were also quickly available such as walking tours with the Friends of the High Line and arts programs at the park and the surrounding galleries. With opening behind the group, members began to focus on Section 2 (opening in 2011) and the as of yet not secured Hudson Rail Yards section of the High Line (Lerner, 2007).

Figure 6.20 High Line Visitors Ascend the Gansevoort Stair

6.2 Regulatory Setting

The story of the High Line is only fully understood within the context of the regulatory structure in which it exists. The surrounding setting of the High Line was shaped by New York City zoning and the reuse project required an update to the code to harmonize new development with an elevated park. The New York City development review procedure was crucial in the story of preservation and was influential in the approval process to reimagine the structure into a public open space. This section presents a history of zoning in New York, outlines the New York City development review procedure, and details the zoning amendments that the City implemented to compliment the High Line, which have shaped the context surrounding the park.

6.2.1 New York City Zoning & Development Review

The regulatory framework of zoning and development review is one of the challenges faced in the reuse of the High Line as a public open space. An elevated park built atop a former rail viaduct presents challenges in the zoning code for the park itself and the surrounding uses that abut the structure. Traditional zoning codes, which aim to separate incompatible land uses, fail to address the issues inherent in adaptive reuses projects. The City used newer tools, such as adjacency controls and the transfer of development rights, to guide development of the High Line and the surrounding neighborhood. Projects are subject to zoning for their physical locality but often subject to a labyrinthine review process. In New York projects such the High Line must undergo the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), environmental review, and are now subject to conform to the goals and polices of PlaNYC, the city's sustainability plan for the future. Advocates not only had to push their plans for High Line through ULURP, they used the process to save the High Line from demolition early in the process.

6.2.2 Zoning History

In 1916 Edward Basset crafted the nation's first comprehensive zoning ordinance for the City of New York. The resolution defined three distinct zoning districts that addressed the use, height, and area for each zone. The three use zones were simply residential, commercial, and unrestricted use. The city was divided into five classes of height districts. The height limitations also imposed shape and bulk restrictions for buildings. Three classes for each use district also presented requirements for yards, courts, and open space at street level. The intent was to limit the right of landowners to do what they want in order to protect public health, safety, morals, and general welfare (Barbanel, 2004)

Figure 6.21 Impacts of 1916 Zoning Ordinance, drawing presented by architects to explain the impacts of New York City's original zoning ordinance

The 1916 Zoning Resolution came in response to several factors present in New York at the time. Rapid industrialization had caused dangerously overcrowded conditions, often next to polluting factories, in the tenement areas of New York City. In addition to crowded residential areas, there was a growing conflict between high-end retailers on 5th Avenue and the garment industry that was slowly encroaching to be closer to their market. Finally, changes in technology, namely steel frame construction, the telephone, and elevator, combined with the price of real estate in Lower Manhattan had fueled a skyscraper boom during the late 1800's and early 1900's. With no restrictions in place, tall, bulky building began to compete for as much light as possible, which subsequently choked light and air from the streets of Manhattan. These conditions gave a growing number of citizens and city officials cause for concern about the future of Manhattan (Kayden, 2000. P.8).

These factors led to the establishment of New York City's Committee on City Planning in 1913 to consider the aspects of building controls to improve the condition of the city. The Committee issues two reports that recommended the City implementation of land use controls that would be adopted under the state's police power to regulate health, safety, and welfare. The Committee on City Planning worked with the State of New York to amend the City Charter to provide the City with the authority to institute land use and zoning controls. Two years later the entire city was subject to a new regulatory framework, however the controls were not applied retroactively and only applied to new projects.

New York City underwent massive changes in the decades following the adoption of the original 1916 Zoning Resolution, such as the increase of automobile use, urban renewal projects, government housing, and a sharp increase in population. In response to these changes, the document had been weighted down by a total of 2500 amendments by 1961, prompting the city to write an entirely new zoning resolution. The 1916 regulations were also woefully outdated in the

prescribed densities for the city: zoned densities would allow for 55 million residents with provisions for 250 million workers (Kayden, 2000, p.9).

6.2.3 Current Zoning and Trends

The 1961 Zoning Resolution was more suited for the realities of the mid-century urban metropolis. Use and bulk regulations were better coordinated, parking provisions and requirements were added, incentivized zoning was introduced to provide downtown open space, and residential densities were lowered throughout the city, particularly at the fringes. While many of the provisions of the 1961 resolution have been amended, such as the Corbusian-style tower public housing and far-flung suburban development, the document still guides development in New York City 50-years later in the present day. Despite this antiquated framework, the innovative, three-dimensional adjacency controls codified to support the elevated High Line, were created within these regulations.

Amendments to the Zoning Resolution since 1961 have further refined the incentivized zoning provision, created for contextual zoning, drafted inclusionary housing incentives, and deemphasized the segregation of uses to promote lively mixed-use neighborhoods. Today public plazas built in exchange for density increases for commercial buildings are held to a high level of scrutiny and required to pass performance standards to assure that public needs are met. Contextual zoning districts regulate the height and bulk of new buildings, their setbacks, and the specified width along the street frontage to create buildings that match the existing character of the neighborhood.

Recent zoning amendments have been included to accommodate Mayor Michael Bloomberg's goals of building and preserving 165,000 affordable housing units under the City's "Housing Marketplace Plan". The zoning changes offer significant density bonus to developers who provide at least 20 percent of the floor area to affordable units. Original inclusionary zoning was limited to

a few high-density residential areas, but since 2005 it's been expanded neighborhoods to that have been re-zoned for residential use throughout the city. The density bonus program, in conjunction with a variety of housing subsidy programs, led to the creation of 2000 affordable units within the first four years.

Finally, mixed-use neighborhoods and buildings have recently added via zoning amendments to the 1961 Zoning Resolution. Mixed residential and commercial buildings are allowed in most commercial zones in the city and residential with light industrial is also allowed in some instances. Mixed-use special districts have been created in a handful of neighborhoods throughout the city to create lively neighborhoods, where workers can live in close proximity to their work places. These neighborhoods allow for combinations of residential, commercial, and industrial uses.

6.2.4 Zoning Administration and Districts

Zoning in New York City is interpreted, enforced, and administered by the NYC Department of Buildings. Most development in New York City is permitted *as-of-right*, and a building permit will be issued so long as the project conforms to the zoning regulation and building standards. In certain cases where a development is proposed that requires zoning amendments or is in a manner that zoning presently prohibits, discretionary action is required for a special permit or authorization by the City Planning Commission at public meetings. Discretionary action also requires compliance with City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR), which administers the State Environment Quality Act (SEQRA). If present zoning presents an individual property owner with a development that would be practically or financially unfeasible, a variance from zoning can be requested from the Board of Standards and Appeals.

New York City is still divided into the three basic zoning districts that were created in the original 1916 ordinance: residential, commercial, and manufacturing. These basic categories are then further distinguished by a variety of lower, medium, and higher density districts. Each district

further regulates the permitted uses, the size of the building as it relates to the size of the lot, dwelling units for residential, lot coverage, the setbacks from other buildings and public right of way, and parking requirements.

Anything beyond these three uses, such as mixed-use, is overlaid with a special purpose district that can be tailored for the specific needs of a neighborhood. Currently, New York City has 46 special purpose districts in place to achieve specific planning and urban design objectives in defined areas with unique characteristics. The West Chelsea District was created in response to rapid development pressure in the neighborhood and the unique requirements presented in reuse of the High Line.

6.2.5 Uniform Land Use Review Procedure

The post World War II era brought polarized the realm of development best epitomized by the battle waged between Robert Moses, representing efficient Modernism, and Jane Jacobs, the neighborhood preservation advocate. While Moses left a legacy of freeways, public beaches, and corbusian public housing towers, the defeats that Jacobs handed Moses left a legacy of land use process that favors heavy public involvement (Zukin, 2010a, p.15). Under a new city charter in the post-Moses era, approved by voters in 1975, New York City established a standardized local review process known as the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). The process was established to create a standardized procedure whereby applications affecting the land use of the city would be publicly reviewed at multiple stages. The Charter also established mandated time frames within which application review must take place. A new city charter was approved in 1989, which expanded the process as it remains today. The actions that require ULURP include: changes to the City Map, change of zoning districts, special permits within the Zoning Resolution requiring approval of the City Planning Commission, housing and urban renewal plans and project pursuant to city, state and federal laws, and the acquisition of real estate by the City.

This complicated process, that was brought about in response to a top-down urban planning approach best exemplified by Robert Moses, was an important factor that ultimately saved the High Line. An order for demolition that was signed by the outgoing Giuliani administration was struck down by the New York State Supreme Court for failure to comply with ULURP. When the updated Special West Chelsea Zoning District was crafted, which paved the way for the High Line, it was subject to the development review described below.

New York Department of City Planning

All projects that undergo the ULURP begin at the New York Department of City Planning. The planning staff will assist an applicant with the regulatory framework and review process that will

be involved with their proposed project. Applicants are encouraged to arrange a pre-application meeting with the department for technical assistance. In certain instances these meetings mandated, in the case of zoning amendments or changes to the City Map. A Land Use Review Application and supplemental documentation are then filed with the Department and pre-certified as complete. If the project is subject to environmental review (CEQR) a “negative declaration”, “conditional negative declaration”, or a Draft Environmental Impact Statement must be issued for the application to be considered complete. City Planning then has a mandated five days once the application is complete to forward all of the materials to the City Council, Borough President, and the appropriate Community Board.

Community Board

Public participation in the urban planning process became much more prominent in the 1950’s, and especially by the late 1960’s. New York’s Community Planning Boards, which were established in 1951, serve as the forum for public participation by neighborhood organizations. New York City is divided into 59 community districts, which serve as advisors to city government and have the responsibility for advising the City Planning Commission on matters of development or welfare of the community. Each community board is made up of as many as 50 community member residents or worker, appointed by each Borough President or City Council, serving without pay.

The majority of the High Line falls within Manhattan Community Board 4, which is made up of the Chelsea, Clinton, and Hell’s Kitchen neighborhoods. 50 members serve CB4, 25 appointed by either of the two City Council members for the district and the other half appointed by the Manhattan Borough President. Interested members of the public can also submit a formal application to the Borough President for appointment to the board. Each appointment lasts for 2 years and members generally serve on two standing committees: The first being the

neighborhood land use committee for either Hell's Kitchen or Chelsea/Clinton and the second being a sub-committee, such as Housing, Landmarks, Transportation, or Quality of Life. Board members represent nearly 90,000 residents living in 51,000 housing units on the western edge of Manhattan from 14th Street to 59th Street.

As mandated under the City Charter, Manhattan Community Board 4 reviews land use applications in public meetings as part of the Urban Land Use Review Procedure. Most land use applications that require discretionary review under ULURP are first submitted by applicants at public meetings of one of the land use committees – Chelsea Preservation & Planning Committee or Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee. The land use committee votes on recommendations that will be submitted to the full board for final recommendation. The process of notifying the public, holding a Land Use Committee review, conducting a full Board review, and submitting the recommendation to the Borough President is required under ULURP to take no less than 60 days.

Borough President and Borough Board

New York City is made up of five boroughs, Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, Bronx, and Staten Island, each headed by an elected Borough President that serve four-year terms. The Borough President is also a member of the Borough Board, which also consists of the each borough's city council members, and the chair from each of the borough's Community Boards. Each Borough President is responsible for the appointment of one member to New York City's Planning Commission, but generally have very little power under the current City Charter. However, every land use item in their respective borough passes through their office for comment and recommendation.

Following a recommendation from a Community Board, the Borough President has 30 days to submit a written review and recommendation to the City Council. The ULURP might also be

subject to the purview of the full Borough Board, usually in cases, such as the High Line, that involve land in two or more community districts.

City Planning Commission

New York City's Planning Commission was formed under the 1936 City Charter with seven members, all appointed by the Mayor. When the city adopted their new charter in 1989, they expanded the Commission to 13 members. The Chair of the Planning Commission, who also serves as the Director of the City Planning Department, is appointed by the Mayor, serving with no set term length. The Mayor is also responsible for six other appointments; every Borough President and the Public Advocate each have a single appointment. Members of the Planning Commission serve staggered five-year terms.

The City Planning Commission has a 60-day window to take a discretionary action at a public meeting after a review has been received from the Borough President. The Commission can either vote to approve, approve with modifications, or disapprove an application under the ULURP. A simple majority of seven votes is required to officially adopt a City Planning Commission report. However, if the Borough President has recommended against an action, then an affirmative vote from nine members is required to approve an action. Disapproval of an application at the City Planning Commission is most often final and ends the ULURP.

While most ULURP applications end at the Planning Commission, some require action by the City Council and those are subject to veto by the Mayor. Urban renewal applications that are disapproved are mandated for City Council review. Finally, the Mayor has the ability to stamp an application with a "certificate of necessity", which means disapproval at the City Planning Commission means an automatic review by the City Council.

City Council

The City Council of New York is made up of 51 elected officials from each of New York City's council districts. Council members generally serve terms of four years, except for two consecutive two-year terms every twenty years (starting in 2001 and 2003 and again in 2021 and 2023).

While most of the applications under ULURP end at the City Planning Commission, all zoning map changes, zoning text changes, housing and urban renewal plans, and disposition of residential buildings are all reviewed by the City Council. In addition, the Council can elect to review certain projects such as City Map changes, subdivision maps, disposition of commercial or vacant property, or site selection. Once an ULURP application arrives from the Planning Commission, the City Council is mandated to hold a public hearing to approve, approve with conditions, or disapprove the decision of the Planning Commission. A City Council action requires a simple majority vote of the council present. If the Council issues an approval with conditions, the application is then remanded to the Planning Commission, who then decides whether the conditions warrant environmental review or additional ULURP review. If no additional review is needed according to the City Planning Commission, the application is then adopted with the prescribed conditions.

Mayor

City government in New York is organized under its City Charter, which provides a highly centralized strong mayoral/city council system. The Mayor is not required to approve any project under ULURP, but the Mayor can veto a decision made by the City Council within 5 days. The City Council then has 10 days to vote to override a Mayor's veto, which requires a 2/3 vote.

6.2.6 Environmental Review

Discretionary actions are not only subject to the Urban Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), but are also subject to the City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR). CEQR is the process that New York City has crafted to implement New York's State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), enacted by the state legislature in 1975. The Act is modeled after the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA). CEQR requirements must be satisfied before an application can be declared complete under ULURP guidelines.

CEQR Process

As outlined in SEQRA and implemented under CEQR, city agencies are required to assess, disclose, and mitigate to the greatest extent practicable the significant environmental consequences created from a project they approve. A determination of significance is made by the lead agency, in the case of ULURP it is the Department of City Planning, in an Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS). The EAS considers the potential impacts to factors such as air quality, wildlife, historical resources, and consistency of the community's goals or plans of a proposed project.

Based on a completed EAS the lead agency can make three determinations of significance: Negative Declaration, Conditional Negative Declaration, or Positive Declaration. If the lead agency determines that a proposed project will present no significant adverse environmental impacts for each of the technical areas it will issue a Negative Declaration, which constitutes completion and full compliance with CEQR. When the lead agency determines that a proposed project will present significant impact but those impacts can be eliminated or avoided by mitigation measures or changes to the project, it will issue a Conditional Negative Declaration. Once a Conditional Negative Declaration is issued there is a 30-day public comment period

before the determination is made final. If, however, during this time there are substantive comments that identify potentially significant impacts not considered or inadequately reviewed, the lead agency must rescind the Conditional Negative Declaration and instead issue a Positive Declaration. Finally, if the lead agency determines that the project will have one or more significant adverse environmental impacts, it will issue a Positive Declaration, which necessitates the completion of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) before the agency can approve the project under ULURP.

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement is required to outline at a minimum: the proposed project and its environmental setting, a statement of the environmental impacts (both short and long-term), adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided should the project be implemented, a discussion of alternatives, and a description of mitigation measures proposed to minimize the significant adverse impacts. A public scoping meeting is required for review and comment of the draft scope of work before work on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement begins. An additional public comment period and a public hearing must be held after the completion of the DEIS, however this can be satisfied under the Community Board Meeting held under the ULURP and need not take place at a separate public meeting. Once this process is complete the lead agency can certify full compliance with CEQR and issue a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

PlaNYC & Sustainability

The population of New York City is predicted to be well over 9 million by 2030, over a million new residents than currently reside in the nation's largest city. In order to accommodate the influx of population and balance the challenges presented by climate change, the City adopted PlaNYC, a wide-ranging sustainability plan, in 2007. PlaNYC adopted ten major goals, such as providing affordable housing for the increasing population and cleaning all contaminated land in the city,

which will be achieved through 127 separate initiatives. The sustainability goals will be achieved also through public sector projects, which will include incorporating the PlaNYC initiatives into the City's regulatory framework that guides both public and private actions.

Not all of the 127 separate PlaNYC initiatives have yet been incorporated into the codes, regulations, and public policies of New York City. However, new CEQR guidance suggests that PlaNYC initiatives be incorporated in environmental assessment for each proposed project where relevant. In particular, this new guidance stresses that large publicly sponsored project support the initiatives of PlaNYC where they have not be fully incorporated into the regulatory framework.

6.2.7 High Line Zoning Introduction

Unlike the regulatory and urban planning structure of many states, cities, and counties, New York City does not require general plans to guide large-scale development nor specific plans to guide local improvements. In place of general and specific plans, New York City adopts special zoning regulations for neighborhoods with special circumstances that require regulations beyond what the general zoning ordinance can provide. The plan for reuse of the High Line as a public park, the rapid pace of redevelopment, and a desire to preserve the character of West Chelsea prompted the City to adopt a special zoning district to better guide the neighborhood's development. The major elements of the updated zoning include special height and setback regulations along the High Line, provisions to enrich the arts community, a High Line Transfer Corridor for the exchange of development rights, and inclusionary housing bonuses.

Figure 6.22 Special West Chelsea District

6.2.8 The Chelsea Plan

While New York City does not utilize specific plans for development guidance, Section 197-a of the latest City Charter does allow for the Mayor, Planning Department, Community Board, and the like to sponsor plans to guide the growth, development, and improvement of targeted neighborhoods. These are commonly known as “197-a” plans. The City currently has eleven 197-a plans in place to guide future actions of city agencies in the areas addressed in the documents. In 1996 Manhattan Community Board Number 4 sponsored a 197-a plan for Chelsea, which was officially adopted by the City Council. The Plan recommends zoning changes that seek to balance development pressures, the need for residential uses in the area, and a desire to preserve the character of Chelsea. The Chelsea Plan is simply a guiding document and required the creation of the West Chelsea Special Zoning District for its implementation.

6.2.9 Special Height and Setback Regulations

Figure 6.23 High Line 3D Adjacency Controls

A successful elevated parkway, one that is particularly narrow such as the High Line, requires that adjacent buildings support the use. The Zoning District is divided into nine subareas, each with specific density, height, and bulk regulations to support the High Line and the other surrounding lower-scale historic uses. Figure 6.17 shows the boundary of the West Chelsea Zoning Area, the location of the High Line, and the nine subareas. Through most of the district the High Line runs mid-block, parallel to Tenth Avenue, 100 feet west of the street. The bulk of the regulations apply to these narrow subareas. These controls were put in place to preserve views, light, air, and to provide public access points onto the High Line.

Special height and bulk controls are established for the properties that sit immediately east and those just to the west of the High Line. In those areas that are between 10th Avenue and the High Line bed (east), only 40 percent of the building frontage that abuts the park can reach the maximum height allowed for the given zoning designation. The remaining 60 percent of the building frontage, at a minimum of 25 feet, is permitted to rise no higher than 3.5 feet above the

Figure 6.24 Special West Chelsea District Adjacency Controls

bed of the High Line. These controls ensure that users of the High Line will encounter a variety of experiences as the traverse the park and that light, air, and views will be preserved. Figure 6.19 (left) shows the height and bulk controls for the area between 10th Avenue and the High Line for subareas C, F, and G (see Figure 6.17).

Additional adjacency controls are in place on the other side of the block, along 10th Avenue. To complement the surrounding neighborhood, a street wall is mandated along the entire frontage of 10th Avenue and 50 feet on the side streets. A lowered street wall area is required for 25 – 30 percent of the building envelope to place light, air, and view controls for the other side of the block. These controls are complicated and restrictive, but necessary to both support views on the High Line and persevere the character of the neighborhood.

While the controls along the eastern side of the High Line are somewhat complicated, those on the western side are decidedly less so. Buildings that abut the High Line on the west are permitted to rise only as high as the bed of the park, for a minimum of 15 feet; that is unless a building occupies more than 60 feet of a narrow block, in which case a 30-foot setback of no higher the rail bed is required. The bulk and height requirements are less complicated along the western side of the High Line and the area is entitled to transfer their development rights to receiver sites within the West Chelsea Special District, under certain conditions.

6.2.10 High Line Transfer Corridor

Rezoning on the eastern side of the High Line depends on a series of complicated height, bulk, and setback controls to complement the High Line by permitting light and air to penetrate down to park and preserve views from structure. The zoning on western side allow for transfer of development rights to preserve the light and air, while helping create view corridors out to the Hudson River (see Figure 6.20). Property owners who held property directly under the High Line had originally fought the Friends of the High Line and the City in their plans to reuse the High Line as an elevated park, since the structure limited the full development potential of the parcels. The High Line Transfer Corridor (HLTC) was created to allow property owners to realize the full development potential of their property through transfer of development rights and at the same time created development adjacent to the High Line that supports use as a park.

The HLTC generally extends west 100 feet from the eastern edge of the High Line, for ten blocks from the north of 19th Street to 29th Street. Receiving sites within the Special West Chelsea District will be able to purchase the floor area from properties within the HLTC to increase their floor area ratio (FAR). Throughout most of the Special District the base floor area ratio is 5.0, with the exception of areas A and H, which allow for a base FAR of 7.5. Receiver sites can increase their floor area by as much as 2.5 through purchases made from the High Line Transfer Corridor. These increases can be combined with floor area bonuses though the inclusion of inclusionary housing up to the established Max FAR.

Figure 6.25 High Line Transfer Corridor

6.2.11 Inclusionary Housing Bonus

Similar to floor area increases allowed through the purchase of development rights from the High Line Transfer Corridor, the provision of inclusionary housing in residential developments can add additional floor area up to the Max FAR. This option helped the city meet its goal of providing affordable housing for lower-income households and created profit opportunity for developers at the same time. Developments attaining the full bonus are required to provide an amount of affordable housing equaling 20 percent of the residential floor area developed on the site. In order to earn the bonus, lower-income units must be affordable to households at or below 80 percent of Area Median Income (AMI), and must remain affordable for the life of the development receiving the bonus. Special provisions for the Special West Chelsea District allow for a portion of the affordable units for moderate or middle-income households, provided that a majority is still made available to lower-income households. The inclusionary housing bonus in the Special District is expected to create as many as 1005 affordable dwelling units when fully built-out.

Taken together, the increases in floor area allowed through purchase of development rights from the High Line Transfer Corridor and through an inclusionary housing bonus significantly increased the intensity of development in the Special District. For instance, Subarea A at the northern end of the district has a Base FAR of 7.5, with the floor area bonuses allowed the floor area ratio can increase to as high as 12. Similar bonus increases are permitted throughout the district.

Figure 6.26 Base Density Increases from Incentives

6.2.13 The High Line District

Figure 6.27 The High Line District

The pending arrival of the High Line park was part of a larger development boom in West Chelsea. The demand for new residential buildings near the High Line was accommodated in the new zoning framework created in the West Chelsea rezoning effort. The boom ushered in a slate of new buildings designed by many world-renowned architects, which began to reinforce an identity for the neighborhood. The West Chelsea began to be referred to as The High Line District and the area immediately around the High Line, which houses most of the new development project, started to be called “Architects’ Row”.

Figure 6.28 High Line amid Architects' Row

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Figure 6.29 Buildings of Architects Row
(1. IAC Headquarters, 2. DVF Studio, 3. Chelsea Modern,
4. 245 10th Avenue, 5. 200 11th Ave, 6. Chelsea Art Tower, 7. The Tate 8. 100 11th Ave 9. HL23 10. 524
West 19th)

6.3 Role-Players

Figure 6.30 High Line Role-Players, (from upper left): Political Champion Michael Bloomberg, City Builder Amanda Burden, Friend Robert Hammond, and Friend Joshua David

6.3.1 Introduction

The story of the High Line is as much an account of the history and current use, as it is a story about those key players involved with the project. It is often necessary, for public projects to get built today, a need for private organizations to champion them (Steen, 2005); beyond a single private organization, a coalition of interests is often needed. Any undertaking with such high profile that has opponents, costs a fortune, requires deft political wrangling, needs substantive changes made to city code, and presents a web of legal hurdles at city, state, and the federal level requires the right mix of the right people in the right places. A project of this nature also necessitates a single organization with an unwavering commitment to consistently champion the cause and generate interest with a base of equally committed supporters. High Line role-players brought these exact blessings to the process.

6.3.2 Friend

At the center of any story chronicled of High Line are the two founders of the Friends of the High Line: Robert Hammond and Joshua David. The Friends of the High Line origin story has been retold so many times that it's reached a "mythic status" (Steen, 2005). Described as a couple of "neighborhood nobodies" who met at a public meeting to discuss the future of the High Line, at which there was no voice present to advocate for reuse or preservation. The two reportedly sat next to each other at the meeting and afterward, when they investigated and found that no group was championing preservation of the High Line, they decided to create one.

Neither David or Hammond had any experience with public works, planning, design, city government, nor issue-advocacy, yet the pair rallied support, corralled a network of sophisticated advocates in government, academia, the arts, architecture, in addition to some high profile celebrities, and ultimately saved the High Line from demolition and repurposed the rusting viaduct into one of the world's most lauded parks. The Friends of the High Line's base in Chelsea certainly helped the group, which had "its roots were planted firmly in the world's most sophisticated art and design community" (Goldberger, 2011).

The pair did not accomplish this feat alone; there were many moments of perfect timing, allies in the right position, and plenty of happenstance that led to the creation of the High Line as it now stands. The form of advocacy that Hammond and David deployed was nothing new, however it is considered to be one the most vivid examples of the new advocacy model – "a potent force that combines old-fashioned grassroots activism with business savvy, inclusive operations, and a strong sense for the power of good design" (Steen, 2005). In 2010 the Friends of the High Line cofounder Robert Hammond and Joshua David were bestowed with the Rockefeller Foundation's prestigious Jane Jacobs Medal. The Foundation awards the Medals each year to recipients whose work "creates new ways of seeing and understanding New York City, challenges traditional assumptions, and creatively uses the urban environment to make New York City a

place of hope and expectation. (Taylor, 2010b)" The pair each received \$60,000, of which they donated \$20,000 to the Friends of the High Line.

The Friends were needed to guide the project through the entire process and their success came in several areas. First and foremost, the Friends of the High Line proved successful for their ability to rally to support of influential partners throughout the process. The Friends leaned on lawyers, photographers, high-profile celebrities, politicians and all levels of government, planners, designers, and developers when their help was needed. They were also able to assemble an extensive support network of donors and volunteer citizens to fight for their causes. Their network and keen ability to raise funds allowed Hammond and David to commit to their organization on a full-time basis. Strategist, and founding Friends of the High Line board member Philip Aarons, advised the group early on to commit their early funds to pay for lawyers, rather than relying on pro-bono support (Steen, 2005).

Following the long-standing tradition of using graphic artists in land-use battles, the group turned to Paula Scher of Pentagram, famous for her red and blue Citigroup logo, to design the official Friends of the High Line logo. The group went as far as to credit the logo, photographs, and visually stunning reports as part of their ability to create awareness, bolster support, and have supporters donate time and money (Dunlap, 2002). Design was always an important consideration of anything with the Friends of the High Line mark on it; they realized early, it helped show their commitment to the project and made the project "look more real than it was." Robert Hammond went as far to state, "if you have a crappy brochure, people think you'll build a crappy product" (Steen, 2005). Their commitment to design at all levels of the organization is one of the significant aspects that separates the High Line from projects in other cities that hope to achieve the same results.

Another arena of visual expression that separates the High Line from similar projects was the use of fine-art photography to win the hearts and minds of New Yorkers. The group took world renowned photographer Joel Sternfeld atop the High Line, a popular technique used by the Friends of the High Line to bolster support, and urged him to create photographs that the group could use to demonstrate the magnitude of the High Line from on top the structure (Steen, 2005). Until that point the view that residents had of the High Line was the one disseminated by the Chelsea Property owners of its “corroding underbelly (Steen, 2005)” “that looms depressingly over Chelsea, darkening streets and cutting off views of the Hudson River (Dunlap, 2002).”

Finally, the group sustained interest in the project during the construction period, a crucial step the Friends took in order to generate the necessary funds needed to operate the park as they transitioned from an advocate group to park conservancy. The group relied heavily on their blog, which was updated daily with every member of the staff working as a contributor. The group extended their reach through social media when they joined Facebook in early 2008. They also used creative community involvement techniques, such as the chalk shoes performance, to engage the local residents and sustain interest in the park while it was under construction.

6.3.3 Political Champion

As a result of the structural organization outlined through the city’s charter, New York City has a strong centralized core government. Many high-level positions are filled by appointees, who serve at the “leisure of the Mayor”, as a result the mayor is able to set policy agenda that is carried out throughout the various city departments. It is doubtful that the High Line would have been possible without a strong advocate in the Mayor’s office, which exactly what occurred when Michael Bloomberg took over from Rudy Giuliani. Another critical position in the New York City government structure is the City Council Speaker, an elected position rather than an appointed office. Once again advocates for the High Line were dealt favorable circumstances when early

advocate Gifford Miller was elevated to City Council Speaker and vocal preservationist Michael Bloomberg where both elected to office.

Robert Hammond, a college classmate of New York City Council Speaker Gifford Miller, goaded his friend, the Speaker, to join the he and Joshua David on the top of the High Line. The Friends reasoned a view from atop the rail bed was needed to convey to Miller the importance of preservation. The trip atop the abandoned viaduct was an eye-opening experience for Gifford who then became very passionate about preservation and reuses. Following the visit, Gifford described himself as “probably the High Line’s biggest supporter”, and kept a giant color photograph of the railway in his home (Hu, 2003). As City Council Speaker, he was in a position to award more public money to projects such as the High Line than any other New York City official, including the Mayor. Miller awarded the High Line its first large public funding when he allocated city funds to the project in 2002. At a benefit to highlight the design of the future park, Miller announced that the City of New York would allocate \$15.75 million for the planning and construction related to the High Line's conversion to public space. This funding demonstrated the City’s commitment to High Line reuse, a crucial step for securing other private, state, and federal funds. Two years later, Miller announced an additional \$43.25 million toward the High Line reuse.

Michael Bloomberg was the most vocal of all the candidates for New York City Mayor in 2002 for High Line reuse, and even made the High Line the center of his parks platform. After being elected Mayor the strong centralized government structure meant that appointees at the top levels of New York City government could further the agenda of Michael Bloomberg. Adrian Benepe (Parks Commissioner) and Amanda Burden (City Planning Director) were two of the most vocal advocates for High Line reuse.

6.3.4 News Maker and Photo-Opportunist

New Makers and Photo-Opportunists are members at the highest levels of government that represent the state and the congressional districts that house the High Line. These role-players secured sizable funding commitments from the federal government. In addition to windfall funding, these key members were able to bring a high amount of visibility to the project that made its way into the national media spotlight.

Senator Hillary Clinton was an early advocate for High Line reuse. At a critical public hearing before the New York City Council, Senator Clinton presented testimony in support of a resolution calling upon the mayor and governor to take all necessary steps to rail-bank the High Line. In 2004 Senator Clinton was credited with securing \$500,000 in the Transportation Appropriations Bill for High Line reuse. A year later Clinton finally walked the High Line with Joshua David and Robert Hammond in what was “billed as a photo-op” in celebration of the \$18 million that Clinton was able to secure for High Line reuse as part of the federal transportation bill. In early 2005 New York Senator Clinton secured a further \$3 million as part of the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality and Improvement Program (CMAQ), allocated by the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council's New York City Transportation Coordinating Committee (FHL, 2005).

Congressman Jerrold Nadler, who fought to save the High Line from demolition in the 1980's, not for park use but rather for use as a freight connection between New Jersey and Brooklyn, later became an ardent supporter of the effort put forth by the Friends of the High Line. Nadler was ready to stop the Javits Convention Center project, built just north of the Hudson Rail Yards where the northern terminus of the High Line sits, if the underground rail connection wasn't kept. Nadler is credited with securing funds for High Line reuse in Congress on a several occasions, including \$250,000 in 2003 as part of the Transportation Appropriations Bill and again \$5 million in 2005 as part of SAFETEA-LU (The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity

Act: A Legacy for Users). Nadler's position on the Transportation Appropriations Committee put him in unique position from which to advocate for the project.

6.3.5 Booster

Boosters are key role-players who gave a heightened level of visibility to the project through their high-profile status. The annual winter and summer benefits held to raise funds for the Friends of the High Line were sponsored by these celebrity boosters and quickly became one of New York's favorite causes and one of the few with a critical mass of supporters under age 40 (Goldberger, 2011). Photographs from the events found their way onto the pages of New York newspapers' society coverage, helping the cause of High Line preservation to become the "favorite cause of New York's rich and powerful (Ouroussoff, 2009)." The two most involved boosters in the project came to the Friends not because the High Line preservation was a "sexy" project, which many believe, but because they were local residents both highly attuned to city building because of their upbringing.

Area resident, Kevin Bacon came to the Friends of the High Line to offer his support after receiving a postcard in the mail. He came, along with wife Kyra Sedgwick, to a fund raising party at a Chelsea art gallery in 2000. Bacon says that he was interested in these sorts of issues because his father who was a notable urban planner. Edmund Bacon served as the executive director of the Philadelphia Planning Commission from 1949 to 1970 and authored *The Design of Cities*, still considered an important city design text. Bacon and Sedgwick were also instrumental in fund-raising effort for the Friends of the High Line. In December 2003 the couple hosted a benefit party at the grand opening of Crobar, a Chelsea nightclub along with Annie Leibovitz, Amanda Peet, and Glenn Close. Bacon lent the Friends of the High Line his voice for a self-guided cell phone tour of the High Line in order to keep the public engaged in the project during the lengthy construction process (Lerner, 2006).

Edward Norton read about the High Line in *The New Yorker* and decided to contact the Friends of the High Line shortly after the group had formed. The actor had first become interested in the High Line in 1996 when he lived nearby on Horatio Street, but like Kevin Bacon, Norton attributes his interest in the High Line to his father; Edward Norton Sr. was the founding chairman of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (Monchaux, 2005). He eventually became the public face and board member of the Friends of the High Line. Edward Norton and Robert Moses biographer Robert Caro hosted a fund-raising event to debut the results of the conceptual design competition. He then hosted the annual fund raising benefit for the Friends of the High Line during the summer of 2004 and again in the summer of 2005. The event quickly became one of “New York’s favorite causes” (Goldberger, 2011). He called the promise of High Line project, “exactly the kind of strange miracle that only happens in New York” (Kilgannon, 2003).

6.3.6 Big Money

Big Money role-players were individuals who were able to donate large amounts of private money to the project. It’s been suggested that these newly affluent New Yorkers were shut out of the traditional New York high society circles and the High Line was a place where they could make their mark. A spirit of do-gooderness was experienced in post-9/11 New York City and the High Line provided a feel-good outlet for these younger hedge fund managers and real estate executives with a philanthropic bent (Goldberger, 2011). Especially generous were philanthropists who had a stake in the neighborhood. Diane von Furstenberg, whose design studio sits directly alongside the High Line, and husband media mogul Barry Diller, whose IAC Headquarters on “Architects Row” designed by Frank Gehry, proved to be the most generous of all High Line supporters. Together the couple donated upwards of \$15 million dollars to the Friends of the High Line. As thanks for their generous support the incredibly popular sundeck on the park was named in their honor. In addition to the honor of the popular locale of the High Line being named after Von Furstenberg, the Diller-Von Furstenberg Sundeck, the advocate was awarded the 2011

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Medal by Non-Profit role-player Municipal Art Society for her involvement in positively transforming the Meatpacking District, including her work with the High Line (Lee, 2011).

Phillip Falcone and wife Lisa Marie Falcone best represent the younger hedge fund manager philanthropist. Falcone is the founder of successful Harbinger Capital, a private hedge fund based in New York City. Wife Lisa Marie became very active in philanthropic causes and looked to make her mark by donating \$10 million dollars to the Friends of the High Line just days before the grand opening of the park.

6.3.7 Non-Profit

New York City has several non-profit design and public space advocacy organizations that can create a serious force when they lend support for a project. Two notable organizations that were instrumental during the fight for preservation of the High Line were The Design Trust for Public Space and the Municipal Art Society. In 2001 the highly respected Design Trust hosted a forum to discuss the future of the High Line. The event was attended by many of the key role-players, including those who wanted to have the High Line demolished. The purpose of the forum was to discuss all the pertinent issues of the project including the stakeholders, government interests, politics, finance, design, and zoning regulations. The event also announced the future publication of the Design Trust's *Reclaiming The High Line*. The feasibility study was released by the non-profit in early 2002 and credited as "the linchpin that ultimately led to Mayor Bloomberg's decision in 2002 to rescind the outstanding demolition order on the High Line (Design Trust, 2011)." The publication was a joint effort between the Friends of the High Line and Academics Keller Easterling and Casey Jones, two Design Trust fellows. The group presented the history, context, current zoning, and existing conditions of the structure. The study further examined several potential future uses for the High Line, including demolition, transportation, arts-related,

commercial, and open space. Many of the design strategies and recommendations found in the report have been implemented in the reuse of the High Line.

The second non-profit role player involved in the project is the Municipal Art Society, a powerful organization credited with saving Grand Central Station and connected to the infamous Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis (Progrebin, 2009). The Society was an early advocate for High Line reuse and still leads many walking tours of the park and neighborhood. The non-profit group dates back to 1893 and was firmly rooted in the City Beautiful Movement, which was influential in shaping the public spaces of American cities at the time. Formed by a group of architects, painters, sculptors and civic leaders, the Municipal Art Society came together to create murals and monuments for New York's public spaces (MAS, 2011). The Municipal Art Society hosted an exhibit to highlight the study following the publication of *Reclaiming the High Line* (David, 2002). In addition to hosting the event and many others prior to the opening of the park, the group presented awards to Friend and Big Money role-players (Taylor, 2010b; Lee, 2011), along with an award given to designers of High Line straddling Standard Hotel (McElroy, 2009).

6.3.8 Strategist

The Strategists are professional experts in the critical areas of the High Line project that lent their insight and expertise in the areas of development and government relations early in the High Line project. While the Friends of the High Line is a non-profit organization, the strategists recognized that degree of complexity inherent in transforming the High Line from a derelict railbed to a designed elevated public space would need a level of sophistication not usually expected from up-start non-profits. These pivotal members also brought to the Friends the lesson that ideas alone don't create something like the High Line; credible evidence of the success of the park was needed to sell their project to decision makers and to silence detractors.

Developer and Founding Friends of the High Line Board Member Philip Aarons best represents the Strategist role-player. Early in the process Aarons advised Robert Hammond and Joshua David that they should use their early money to pay for legal services rather than rely on pro-bono work, a strategy they credit with many of their successes. Aarons is co-founder of the Millennium Partners development concern as well as a former president of the New York City Public Development Corporation (Dunlap, 2000). He testified on behalf of the Friends of the High Line during the important Surface Transportation Board Hearing held in 2003. In the meeting Aarons described the economic feasibility study that was commissioned by the Friends of the High Line at his urging. Aaron's keen insight into the project from his perspective as a developer would prove key since the major roadblocks from the onset came from the development community. Given the level of sophistication that the project would entail, which was obvious from the onset, the strategist advised the group to operate more like a business than a typical non-profit (Steen, 2005).

6.3.9 Academic

The Friends of the High Line were advised by Strategists early in their incubation period to conduct studies to ensure the structural integrity of the High Line and to prove the economic viability of the project (Steen, 2005). Another important step that gave credibility to the project was to enlist academics to give the push for reuse a further level of mandate. The Friends approached Non Profiteer role-player group Design Trust for Public Space to host two fellowships to conduct a comprehensive planning study and exploration for future options for the High Line. Academics Keller Easterling and Casey Jones were enlisted from the project that resulted in publication of an interactive website and a report that outlined the history, context, and potential reuse options of the High Line (David, 2002).

6.3.10 Insurgent

Preeminent fine-art photographer Joel Sternfeld took the now iconic photographs of the High Line in its found state. Robert Hammond and Joshua David brought Sternfeld, considered one of the most influential fine-art photographers living today, up to the High Line in 2000 and requested a photograph that could fully sell their vision of the High Line as a park. Sternfeld recognized that power that photographs can have in the debate over land use issues (Steen, 2005). Concrete imagery has been used to sell land use projects as far back as the 1870s; photographs taken by William Henry Jackson were credited with encouraging Congress to create Yellowstone National Park (Dunlap, 2002). In 2001, Sternfeld published “Walking the High Line” (2001), a coffee table photography book of the famous High Line photographs. It was through the Sternfeld photographs that the Friends of the High Line started to turn the tide in their fights for the hearts and minds of New Yorkers. Whether the High Line would be demolished or preserved as a public park came down to whether New Yorkers believe it is worthwhile to undertake the daunting task of turning it into a public greenway (Dunlap, 2002). The publication of the Sternfeld photographs “represents the moment that the High Line became a park in the minds of New Yorkers (Steen, 2005).” Sternfeld was well aware of the effect his photographs might have in getting New Yorkers to understand exactly what it was like atop the structure, he even likened himself to William Henry Jackson and hoped his photographs would create similar results (Dunlap, 2002).

6.3.11 City Builder

City Builder role-players are members of the architecture, planning, and urban design community who offered their assistance to the High Line project at various stages. These members have served as founding board members of the Friends and served as an advisor during the important design competitions and were able to generate project buzz from within the design community. They were instrumental within the City’s planning department, creating the critical zoning framework that has made the High Line and the development surrounding the park so successful.

Some of these role-players have received recognition for their work on the project from organizations in their respective fields.

The role of designer is represented well by Gary Edward Handel. Handel is an architect and Founding Board Member of Friends of the High Line and worked advocating on behalf of the High Line's preservation and reuse from the very beginning. Crucial to Friends of the High Line success, Handel lent his vision and expert guidance "Designing the High Line" ideas competition. Friends of the High Line credit Handel with playing a major role in the success of the early years of the organization. Beginning very early during the process, Handel's firm donated thousands of hours of pro-bono assistance to the High Line project, even designing the Friends of the High Line Meat Packing District office. In addition architects with Handel designed and produced the "Reclaiming the High Line" exhibition at the Municipal Art Society.

An early advocate for the High Line reuse project was Vishaan Chakrabarti, the former Manhattan Borough Director of New York City Planning. He served as an advisor and juror from the design community for the formative *Designing the High Line Competition*. Chakrabarti formulated the successful use of a transfer development rights framework as part of the West Chelsea Zoning update of 2005. The provision allowed property owners under and next to the High Line to sell their development rights to receiver sites elsewhere in West Chelsea, a critical step to appease the Chelsea Property Owners who opposed the project from the outset.

Another key City Builder from the City's Planning Department was New York City Planning Director Amanda Burden. Burden was an early proponent and advisor to Friends of the High Line after the Joshua David and Robert Hammond brought her atop the viaduct to show her the potential of the defunct rail line for reuse. Burden claimed early on that she had no power to help the Friends, however she did help the group connect to other influential New Yorkers. At the time she offered her support toward the High Line she was a planning commissioner, but was later

appointed by Mayor Bloomberg as director of New York's City Planning Department in 2002 (Steen, 2005). Burden is a former mentee of New York urban planning legend William Whyte, whom she worked with at the architecture firm Gruzen & Partners and later at the Project for Public Spaces. She was responsible for the critical rezoning effort for the West Chelsea neighborhood that included adjacency controls and the transfer development rights agreement. The success of the High Line is tied to the fine-grain approach, thoroughness, and attention to detail that Burden is known for. Before allowing the planning commission to vote on any rezoning project, she requires that each of the planning commissioners visit the entirety of the site (Cardwell, 2007). The zoning ordinance won Burden the Urban Land Institute's Global Award for Excellence in 2009 in addition to the J.C Nichols Prize, which honors visionary place-making, it was the first time the award was granted to an urban planner (Riggs, 2009). The real estate community has been critical of Burden for being dictatorial, and holding new development projects in New York City up to a higher standard. However, the design and planning community have praised her efforts and focus on the small details of the City Planning Director pointing to the "profound effect" she has already had on New York City (Cardwell, 2007).

6.3.12 Opponent

These role-players were made of the property owners opposed to the project and city officials who supported their position. The timing of early Friends newsletters and requests for support often came at times of crisis generated by these opponents and many advocates came forth in response to the threats posed by these role-players. The "friends" moniker also immediately suggests that there are "enemies" of the High Line, and creates a positive association for those in favor of preservation. At the center the debate against perseveration of the High Line was the Chelsea Property Owners, led by Douglas Sarini. In 1991, Rockrose Reality tore down a portion of the High Line in the West Village and built housing in its place; this provided Chelsea advocates for demolition with a model of success (Lobbia, 2001). The housing project built by Rockrose in place of the demolished section of the High Line was part of the overall development

“bonanza” that was gripping the West Village during the 1990s (Dunlap, 1999). Property owners in Chelsea saw the High Line as a decaying relic standing in the path of development that had skipped over the area despite the building boom of the 1990s. Property owners in Chelsea chided proposals for reuse presented by the Friends of the High Line and expressed their frustration for what they considered an idle fantasy: “they’re presenting and illustrating a picture that who could be against? Who could be against beautiful open space on the island of Manhattan?” The High Line is a crumbling, corroding ‘disaster waiting to happen that looms depressingly over Chelsea, darkening streets and cutting off views of the Hudson River (Dunlap, 2002).”

Mayor Rudy Giuliani sided with the local developers and worked on their behalf to have the High Line torn down. The strong centralized government structure of New York, where many of the top officials serve at the Mayor’s leisure, mean that the policy set by the mayor filters down through all levels of city government. The heads of City Planning, Economic Development, Emergency Management, and heads of other Giuliani Administration departments all went on and denounced reuse of the High Line. Mayor Giuliani called reuse of the High Line “idle fantasy” (Lueck, 1999) and a “very remote option” (Dunlap, 2000). City Planning Commissioner Joseph Rose referred to the High Line as “the Vietnam of old railroad trestles” in reference to the long battle to have the structure demolished (Lueck, 1999) and believed it should be torn down because “someone could be killed by the thing (Dunlap, 2000).” A delegation from Chelsea Property Owners once arrived at City Hall with a suitcase full of concrete they said had fallen from the High Line and nearly killed a passerby (Amateau, 2006).

Figure 6.31 Visual Timeline

6.4 Design, Use, & Perception

Figure 6.32 Famous Rendering of High Line Section 2 Lawn

The following section (6.4) answers:

Research Question 2: How does the designed environment of the High Line accommodate the behavior of users?

Research Question 3.1 How does the designed environment of the High Line influence the perceptions of users?

Research Question 3.2: How does the High Line influence the perceptions of users beyond its physical structure?

The data was collected through archival research, behavior observations, and user interviews. Researcher notes, photographs, video, and interviews were all recorded during site visits to document the observed behavior of users. Weather conditions were noted with each interview subject as were time and date. The design of High Line is examined in the context of urban design literature on public space elements as they relate to success and human enjoyment. Use and perception is also viewed through this lens, as well as through texts on environmental psychology and behavior. Landscape, history/adaptation/reuse, discovery, views of activity/sensory stimuli, views of city scene, and comfort/seating are the areas examined.

6.4.1 Environments of Section 1 of the High Line

Figure 6.33 Map of High Line Environments & Surrounding Context

1. Gansevoort Woodland

This is the southern most portion of the High Line and includes the most heavily used entrance to the park and conversely the most secluded portion of the park. Here, raised corten-lined planter beds allow for adequate soil depth for trees to grow, which helps create a more secluded atmosphere. A dense thicket, largely comprised of birch and serviceberry trees, sits behind the main entrance and is overlooked by many of the visitors. The tall trees are visible from street level, which presents the most dramatic juxtaposition of any point seen at ground level. This area

Figure 6.34 Gansevoort Woodland Vegetation

differs from the rest of the park in that the original rails removed from this section were not integrated into the tiered planters, which are higher than the other vegetative landscapes found on the park. The entrance is created by dramatic cut through the bottom of the railbed and culls the visitor forward with a sense of anticipation as the elements of the park slowly emerge.

Figure 6.35 High Line Southern Terminus

Figure 6.36 Gansevoort Stairs

2. Washington Grasslands/Standard Hotel Breezeway

Figure 6.37 Washington Grasslands

This section, which stretches, past the Gansevoort Entry landing area, to the 14th Street Passage, is characterized by narrow, diverging and returning paths and shorter grasses. The planting areas are incorporated with the original steel rails, which at some points become hidden by the vegetation. The narrow paths and the vegetation give way to hardscape and benches at the Standard Hotel. The hotel is built on concrete pilings and straddles the High Line. The building

Figure 6.38 Standard Breezeway

creates a semi-enclosed experience and is the first structure that appears immediately alongside to the park. On warmer days the shade and the perpetual cooling breezes make the benches under the Standard a popular portion of the High Line.

Figure 6.39 Washington Grasslands at Night

Figure 6.40 Under the Standard at Night

Figure 6.41 Washington Grasslands

3. 14th Street Passageway

Figure 6.42 Moveable Chairs in the 14th Street Passage

One of the interior spaces on the High Line, where the former railbed runs through a building at 14th Street, is the least visited portion of the park (in terms of stationary users). While the effect of a rail line running above ground cutting through a building should provide a dramatic interplay of seemingly incongruous elements, here the drama is not found. The space is dimly lit and on a cold, wet day is considerably unpleasant. The space feels leftover and unloved when compared to the other environments of the High Line. The few vendors allowed on the High Line pedal their wares are found in this space. The interior passage does, however, host art installations, which can be very popular with visitors.

Figure 6.43 Vendor in the 14th Street Passage

Figure 6.44 Art Installation in the 14th Street Passage

4. Sundeck

Figure 6.45 Users Enjoying the High Line Sundeck

The Diller-Von Furstenberg Sundeck, so named for Big Money role-players Diane Von Furstenberg and husband Barry Diller, is arguable the most recognizable and photographed portion of the High Line. It is fitting that the largest contributors to the High Line (over \$15 million) would have the most iconic section of the park named in their honor. This short length of the park features wooden chaise lounge seats built on steel wheels, meant to mimic train wheels, and sit on original steel rails. Plantings of shrubs and grasses fill in the areas between the seating. Here the park is bifurcated with upper and lower tiers on separate elevations. The combinations of seating here, available by sliding the chair together, make the spot very popular for groups, who

Figure 6.46 High Line Water Feature

Figure 6.47 Sundeck Lower Tier

can easily gather closely and watch the activity on the Hudson River and the promenading of other visitor on the High Line. During the spring and summer months a shallow pool of water allows visitors to sit on the Sundeck benches and cool their feet. The Sundeck Water Feature is a popular spot for children to play and for park users to take photographs.

Figure 6.48 The Diller-Von Furstenberg Sundeck at dusk

5. Chelsea Market Passage & Northern Spur

Figure 6.49 The Chelsea Market Passage

The Chelsea Market Passage is another interior space on the park, but is designed much better to enhance the experience of the park. The two tiers found on the Sundeck continue through the Chelsea Market building. The lower level is filled with brightly colored café tables and resembles public plazas found elsewhere in the city. The upper level is an inviting passage through the former National Biscuit Company factory, with seating along the eastern wall, which allows visitors to

Figure 6.50 Chelsea Market Passage by Night

Figure 6.51 The Northern Spur Preserve

watch people walk by. The western wall houses the colorful window art installation, composed of colors recorded on the Hudson River. Immediately north of the Passage, is the Northern Spur Preserve, which is an inaccessible, but viewable, portion of the park meant to represent the wild landscape that grew on the High Line after trains stopped using the tracks.

Figure 6.52 Art Exhibit Inside the Chelsea Market Passage

6. 10th Avenue Square

Figure 6.53 10th Avenue Square from above

This portion was observed to be the most popular portion of the park. It consists of the 10th Avenue Amphitheater, which gives visitors an aquarium-like view to the city and traffic below, and the 10th Avenue Square, a small area of benches dotted with maple trees that emerge from the wood planking. Apart from the maple trees that are rooted below the park level, there is a small planter area vegetated with short shrubs. The all-wooden benches that emerge from the deck differ from the benches used in rest of the park. From the top of the square a visitor is

Figure 6.54 10th Avenue Plaza with view to traffic

Figure 6.55 10th Avenue Plaza Users

presented with a perfectly framed view of the Statue of Liberty.

Figure 6.56 10th Avenue Plaza seen from street level

7. Chelsea Grasslands

Figure 6.57 Chelsea Grasslands

Just past the popular 10th Avenue Square is the Chelsea Grasslands area of the park. This is a long, narrow, and relatively straight portion of the park. A single pathway here is narrow and planted with taller grasses and short shrubs on each side. Benches line the sides of the path, but almost at a distance too close for comfort. This section offers the most spectacular views of Manhattan. Visitors lean on railings and pose with the Empire State Building in the distance. The Chelsea Grasslands section extends to the northern terminus of section 1.

Figure 6.58 Chelsea Grasslands and City Scene

6.5.3 Landscape

Figure 6.59 High Line Landscape

Landscape in a public open space is one of the most crucial elements of a vibrant and loved environment. Studies have found that landscaping adds sensory stimuli in a variety of forms, textures, smells, and colors, which contributes to the user experience in public space and the adds to the volume of users (Cooper-Marcus, 1997, p.25). Thoughtful plantings in an urban setting can cool and cleanse the air, add definition of city spaces, and complement hardscape elements to accentuate important sites. Beyond simple aesthetic and sensory value, landscaping expresses a symbolic value. Introspection, beauty, serenity, sustainability, and diversity of nature are all messages that public space users interpret from the interplay of built and natural form (Gehl, 2010, p.179). Finally, the emphasis of time and season expressed through the natural cycle of a landscape serves to create a deeper temporal and spatial legibility to a space (Lynch, 1990. P.471).

The landscaping of the High Line is arguably the most compelling component of its reuse. A self-seeded landscape on the abandoned viaduct is, after all, the inspiration for the design of the park. The initial “discovery” of a “floating carpet of meadowland improbably rolled through raw industrial

area” (Dunlop, 2000) was the impetus for the preservation and adaptive reuse movement and what gave rise to the vision for the High Line as it exists today. While none of the original plants remain from the abandonment period, the seeds were collected in 2006 from 74 species found growing on the High Line and stored at a seed bank at the Department of Parks’ Greenbelt Natural Plant Center on Staten Island (Amateau, 2006). A selection of those plants is included in the plantings found today that approximate the wild growth found on the viaduct. The aim of the design team was to recreate the atmosphere of the abandoned High Line, which was described as a terra incognita that offered unimaginable tranquility on the completely unrestricted space (Gill, 2007).

Figure 6.60 The High Line in its 'found' state, a floating carpet of meadowland. (Joel Sternfeld, 2000)

The Friends of the High Line continue to make the landscape aspect a very important part of the narrative of the space. The group maintains a list of over 200 plantings on the High Line posted on their website and produces seasonal plant guides for visitors that highlights individual plant species and gives information as to their native location, drought tolerance, and attractiveness to wildlife (FHL, 2010). Each publication reminds readers that “the High Line’s planting design is inspired by the self-seeded landscape that took root on the elevated rail tracks after the trains stopped running” (FHL, 2011)

Figure 6.61 Landscape and Steel Rails incorporated to create a wild growth effect

The “self-seeded” and “wild growth” effects were created on the park in two ways: through the use of planking that pulls away unevenly and then through the plant beds that are laid with original rail tracks. The planking that peels away to the pathway creates the effect of plantings struggling to emerge from an abandoned urban concrete structure at the interface while having fully taken over at the outside edges and the rail beds evoke the railbed in its state of abandonment.

As discovered through observation, the landscape elements found on the High Line influence the behaviors of users of the space, though to a lesser extent than do the other public space elements. During stationary and walking behavior observations many of the park users were seen investigating the planting areas, taking photographs of the plants, and solo visitors most often sat in the more secluded and heavily planted areas.

Figure 6.62 High Line users respond to the landscaped elements of the park. (Photographing (left) the plants is a common activity. Seating choice for solo visitors was most popular near the more secluded portions park, which were created through landscape (Right).)

Landscape was an important theme that emerged from interviews with of park users. While observable behaviors related to planting and natural elements were more challenging to interpret, compared to some of the others, users had much to say about the elements. 52 percent of those interviewed mentioned a landscaping element when asked the question “What do you most like about the park?” Several respondents believed that the current plantings on the High Line were preserved from the time rail bed was “discovered” in its found state, and many more expressly liked the “native plants”. Several respondents expressed an unfavorable opinion of the landscaping, did not care for the native grassland areas of the park that had browned during the winter months. These respondents wished to see more green plants rather than the “native” vegetation enjoyed by the majority of the interviewees. In total, the responses indicate that the landscape elements of the High Line are a success and the design aims of preserving the

elements of abandonment and nature's overtaking the urban form, were captured by the designer team.

Figure 6.63 The High Line in its found state (above by Joel Sternfeld) recreated through landscaping on the park (below)

High Line users resoundingly echoed the notion proffered by Jan Gehl that vegetative elements could convey a deeper meaning of introspection, beauty, and serenity. “Serenity”, “peace”, “calm”, “relaxation”, were among descriptors similar to those limned by Gehl expressed by High Line users when asked about their favorite elements of the space or what brought them to the park on that specific day. In addition, many people consider the park to be a “green space”, and expressed that they “appreciate the addition of more nature in the city”, and love the design which is “like nature is overtaking the city.”

6.5.4 Elements of History, Reuse, and Adaptability

The allure of an industrial design aesthetic, defined by a clear expression of construction materials, is partially credited with igniting the imagination of a generation of designers interested in reuse. Further, the allure of the industrial aesthetic is crucial for the success of adaptive reuse projects, such as the High Line (Berens, 2011, p. 39). The incorporation of cues from the past can promote satisfaction in city inhabitants in terms of spatial and temporal legibility. Exposing the scars of history while not compromising the future intention of a space as expressed in its form, allows an urban environment to effectively orient users to past, present, and future (Lynch, 1990, p. 471). Beyond communicative features that orient observers spatially and temporally, the success of adapted spaces also depends on what Lynch calls “fit”, or the congruity between use, especially behavior that is consciously desired, and form (Lynch, 1981, p. 153).

The Friends of the High Line have made the history of the project an important part of the narrative of the site. The group’s website hosts a historical timeline, which outlines the history of the rail line starting in 1847 a continuing through 2011: the projected date of the completion of the second section of the park. In addition, a series photo galleries with photographs dating from the early 1900s can be found on the Friends of the High Line website. A plaque relaying a brief historical narrative of the site is found near the entrance of the park, which highlights two of the favorite points consistently conveyed by the Friends of the High Line that are subsequently echoed in articles about the High Line: 1. The High Line was first created in response to the conditions of “Death Avenue” and 2. The last train that rolled down the tracks in 1980 carried a delivery of frozen turkeys. The near viral bit of information about the turkey delivery can be found in *National Geographic*

Figure 6.64 High Line History Plaque

(Goldberger, 2011), *The New York Times* (Dunlap, 1991b; McKinley, 1995; Barron, 1996; Dunlap, 1999; Jackson, 2003; Collins, 2008; Klausner, 2009), *The Villager* (Amateau, 2005; Amateau, 2010), *The New Yorker* (Gopnik, 2001), *Times London* (Dyckhoff, 2004), *The Los Angeles Times* (Hotz, 2004), as well as scores of other blogs, websites, travel guides, and the like.

Figure 6.65 National Biscuit Company Building ((above), during abandonment (middle) (courtesy of Friends of the High Line), and integrated into the High Line (below))

The integration of the historic steel rail tracks into the newly landscaped elements, serves as the most significant reminder of the High Line's former life. During the construction phase, each individual piece of rail was marked and tagged with its location so that it could be returned to the exact spot it came from. The Chelsea Market Passage section of the High line, which cuts through the historic National Biscuit Company Building (now Nabisco) where the first Oreo cookie was made, has preserved much of the elements of the historic structure (David, 2002). The decaying industrial elements of the brick building have been preserved, not altered nor amplified but rather left in their found state, and fused with contemporary design elements such as bright blue lighting, sleek planking, and brightly colored modern furniture. These elements are fused together in a sophisticated and unapologetic manner, which prevents the

High Line from feeling like a “saccharine exercise in nostalgia” (Ouroussoff, 2009).

Many of the users interviewed on the High Line expressed delight with the incorporation of history on the site, and expressed verbal appreciation for the reuse and adaptability of the former rail bed; neighborhood residents and tourists alike shared this outlook. Certain elements do not elicit behavioral responses among users that can be directly observed; perception, however, can be culled in response to these elements. Of those surveyed using in-depth interviews, 29 percent referred to the element of history or the adaptation/reuse of the site. Interviewee responses touched on history and/or adaptive reuse when asked: 1) If the High Line had changed their perspective of New York or the surrounding area, 2) If the High Line story or experience of visiting the park had taught them anything new about the city, and 3) What they especially liked about the park. Respondents revealed that through the High Line, from either being on the park or from media about the project, they had been exposed to the history of the rail bed and of the surrounding neighborhood. A surprising number of these responses came from park users who live in the immediate surrounding neighborhoods, such as Chelsea and the West Village.

The perspective of non-New Yorkers was less about history and more about reuse and recycling of space. Many of these interviewees said that the High Line was enlightening as to the possibility of urban transformation, the process of reuse, and possible structures that can be salvaged. These responses support the claims that the High Line has the potential to spread a similar variety of urbanism throughout the United States (Kolb, 2009) if these visitors take their experiences on the High Line to their own city, where they face an increasing likelihood of encountering a similar project in the planning and development stages (Taylor, 2010a).

Adaptability was assessed through interviewing park users about their individual likes and dislikes about the park. During each interview respondents were asked, “Is there anything that you dislike about the High Line? Do you feel there is anything missing or could be changed or improved?”

Over half of the interview subjects simply replied, “No”. Several were disappointed that “there wasn’t more of it” or they “wished that the second section was open.” Very few of the respondents expressed any activity that they desired but were prevented from doing on the park. The main points uncovered with this question are:

1. Accessibility is a point of concern
2. Some of the visitors wished that the plants were not dormant during the winter months
3. Some visitors wished for more food availability on the park
4. Tripping on the peeled away planking was a concern
5. The width of the paths at several locations is too narrow for easy passage

Obviously these interviews did not represent the needs and desires of all potential park users and those on the High Line are there because it serves to meet their needs. To fully investigate this matter it would be equally important to interview people who choose, or are unable to access and use the park to fulfill their desires.

6.5.5 Discovery

Discovery, in the context of urban design and environmental psychology, stems from new and unexpected experiences that derive from a designed environment in which one is able to explore, a basic human need (Carr, et al, 2007, p 238). In public spaces discovery can mean observing the behavior and actions of others (Gehl, 1987, p.24). The designed environment can elicit discovery and exploration by variety of physical design and providing a series of vistas and providing enough stimuli to encourage people to linger (Carr et al. 2007, p.238). The well-designed space elicits discovery by the contrast and juxtaposition of elements, levels, materials, or vistas, and invites the user to explore the world (Lynch, 1960, p. 119). These contrasts and juxtapositions allow an urban environment to become visible in a deeper sense as an observer moves through a series of views, which become alive with a sense drama (Cullen, 1961, p.11).

Figure 6.66 Mystery. (The High Line from street level (upper) presents an unexpected landscape that culls visitors up the Gansevoort Stairs as additional vistas emerge (lower).)

The design of the High Line strongly encourages users to meet their basic need to explore and delights them through discovery. When first seen from below, the park represents a secret landscape full of the promise of discovery. Silhouettes of park users emerge from and are again hidden by planted landscapes, images that provide viewers at street level with a certain amount of intrigue. Once atop the park a wanderer is led through a series of landscapes, urban canyons, river and city views, spaces of human activity, all with a partial view to the next place to explore. This what Cullen refers to as “mystery” in the urban design context, a glimpse of the unknown that propels an urban explore forward with the promise of the possibility that anything might be just ahead or anything could happen in the next setting (Cullen, 1961, p.51) At several places along the High Line, level changes the park and offers differing views and views of potential spaces of discovery. The contrasts found on the High Line (designed/wild, plant/concrete, synthetic/natural, water view/city view) evoke a desire for discovery congruent with Lynch, who suggests a well-formed space would evoke such responses (1960, p. 119).

Users respond to the discovery aspect of the High Line prior to ever being on the park. Many people were seen to hasten their pace as they approached one of the few access points. The limited access adds to the secret and exclusive aspect of the park that fuels a desire to explore and thus discover. The first section of the High Line only has five access points from the street. While the southern access point clearly informs users how to access the park, the others connect directly at side streets where access presents more of a challenge, but perhaps also excitement and anticipation, for visitors. When finally found, the approach from any of the access points is laden with the promise of discovery as glimpses of plants, people, and buildings come into view.

Once atop the park, the majority of users migrate northward at a pace that is more like what one would see at a museum than on a city street. Users are drawn by a series of what Cullen describes as “emerging views”, a play on the emotional response of users through elements of built form as perceived through visual stimuli. The contrasts created by light and dark spaces

divide the park into clear sections and when seen from the “existing view” compels a user to move through the space to the next locale. Views on the High Line never long enough to allow a user to become under-stimulated, but never short enough to create a disconnect with the sections that abut on either side.

While perceptions of users, as they relate to discovery, are difficult to cull from interviews, they are easily seen in the behavior of users. Discovery is a higher-level concept that relates more to how people interact with the space than why they use it or why they like it. However, some of the visitors from outside of New York City had happened upon the High Line and were drawn-in by the compelling sight of people and plants atop a viaduct, where one might not expect such things. One frequent park user who lives in the neighborhood said that what brings her to the High Line is the possibility she will discover something new each time she visits the park.

6.5.6 Views of Activity and Sensory Stimuli

The activity generated by people in a public arena as sustained by a built environment, that perhaps is the most important contributor to the livability of the urban realm (Knox, 2011, p.241). Studies from around the world consistently demonstrate that human presence and activity as the ultimate attractor of activity (Gehl, 2010, p.25). Thus people gather where there is presence and activity of other people. While the built environment defines a space, human activity offers an almost infinite amount of variability and visual stimuli beyond the capacity found in buildings and public art; human activity, rather built form, breaks the monotony of an urban setting (Gehl, 1987, p.23). Gehl, in his earlier works, placed a heavy emphasis on the role that human activity plays in the success of the public realm; while more recently, he has advanced the notion that public art can further enrich the human experience in space. Art in the public realm, be it sculpture, fountain, building detail and decoration, communicates beauty and comments on the interplay between the human experience in context of built form (Gehl, 2010, p. 179).

The design of the High Line presents users with the opportunity to both casually sit or stand and observe human behavior and to have a non-human sensory experience through the landscape, art, and city activity below. These opportunities range from the very public and open, such as the 10th Avenue Square, to the secret and secluded, such as the environment of the Gansevoort Plaza. Many of the benches are also backless and allow users to determine their level of interaction with other park users. There are benches that are found on narrow pathways that give the user an intimate distance to the passersby and also seating moved off the path to let seated users to chance to people watch with enough distance to provide comfort for the observer and the observed. This perfect distance is found on the Diller-Von Furstenberg Sundeck, where the lounge seating is just off the path and places an observer about 12 feet from the center of the path.

Figure 6.67 The High Line's Sundeck

Sensory stimulus on the High Line comes not only from human activity, but also from plant materials, the city scene, and a series of art pieces that dot the park. The plantings offer visual as well as olfactory stimuli, attract wildlife that further enhances the experience. The city scene produces noise from the bustle below, though somehow surprisingly suppressed, and an endless supply of color, material, and texture. The art pieces on the High Line are keenly aware of sensory stimuli that they create but also the sensory experience of New York in general. *A Bell For Every Minute* is an art installation on the High Line created by artist Steven Vitiello. The installation, found in the 14th Street Passage, is a recording of bells from all over New York, which play intermittently. Patrons can match the bell for each minute with a map of New York that identified the location within the city where each recording was made (Vogel, 2010). In the second interior space along the High Line, the Chelsea Market Passage, is another art installation that brings stimuli from the outside New York environment, however this exhibit is a play on visual stimulus. Artist Spensor Finch took photographs of the water each minute during a 700-minute period on the Hudson River. A windowpane was created from a color pixel of each photograph and arranged in chorological order. The installation changes with time of day and weather conditions, which alters the ambiance of the Chelsea Market Passage space (Vogel, 2009).

Figure 6.68 High Line Art Installation

The most populated portions of the park tended to be areas that provided views of activity. The Diller-Von Furstenberg Sundeck was consistently occupied, and individuals, couples, and groups were observed reclining in the chaise lounges and watching those passing by on the path. This “people watching” was also observed on benches throughout the park. In general, when a backless bench provided a user the opportunity to face a variety of directions on a bench, the user almost always faced toward pedestrian activity, even if it meant facing away from city views. Popular benches proved to be those that allowed for a view of both the city and pedestrian activity on the park.

Another popular spot for lunching, socializing and sitting was the sunken portion of the Tenth Avenue Square with views of activity on the street below through a glass window. This spot was especially popular during lunch, when groups would congregate and sit facing the glass window to eat on the benches. During the evening, couples were seen sitting in this secluded area, holding quiet conversations or sharing a bottle of wine while watching the traffic below. Although

this portion of the plaza was completely visible from the main level of the highline, most visitors observed passing the square were drawn down the stairs or ramp in order to examine the view through the glass window, while many others stopped along the railing above the plaza to watch the passing traffic and visitors clustered below.

Direct behavior reactions to sensory stimuli on the high line were also observed. The stimuli that garnered responses from users varied, and included plants, the surrounding cityscape and views of the river, and art pieces in the park. Pedestrians in the park gravitated toward art pieces. Those strolling casually through the park often stopped to read plaques explaining the art pieces, or interact with the pieces themselves. One of the best examples of this phenomenon was observed throughout all observation periods at the art installation Viewing Station. Lines formed behind this installation as people waited their turn to step up to the viewfinder and peer out at the city. Perhaps the popularity of this art installation can be attributed to the fact that it is an interactive art installation and it involves the cityscape, two qualities that many users indicated as being their favorite aspects of the highline.

The audio art piece also caused observable physical reactions of High Line users. Strollers were observed stopping in their tracks when passing through the 14th Street Passage to investigate the *Bell for Every Minute* art installation. Some users ignored the bells, and continued to move through the space, while others stopped in their tracks and looked around amused. Those who were interested often found the plaque explaining the art project and spent a prolonged amount of time in the underpass listening to the art installation.

Park users also seemed to gravitate toward the High Line railings, especially in areas that looked over impressive vistas. Users were consistently seen leaning over the edge of the rail at the tenth street plaza to look down on Chelsea, or out at the new high rises in the area. Users were also observed looking toward the river, especially during dusk, when the sun set picturesquely over

the water. Chatting couples and groups often planted themselves at these areas as they leaned on the rail and held conversation. Users who were clearly tourists were observed taking photographs from these locations, pointing out notable buildings to one another, and stopping at these places to talk about the city.

User interviews provide insight into perceptions related to activity and sensory stimuli on the High Line. These perceptions support the observations of users and reinforce the important role of activity and stimuli in highly used public spaces. Many of those surveyed indicated that one of the things they liked most about the highline was watching others in the space. Several respondents even indicated that they specifically liked watching others who seemed to be enjoying the space and enjoying themselves.

The importance of sensory stimuli in public space is again reinforced by several of the responses given in the user surveys. Many of the answers regarding what users liked about the park or discovered while on the High Line relate directly to stimuli provided by the surrounding area, like the views of the city, the river, or nearby buildings. Others specifically noted the art pieces as qualities that made the space unique and enjoyable. Several who users noted that their favorite aspect of the space were the visual details throughout the park.

6.5.7 Views of City Scene

Figure 6.69 A High Line user photographs the Empire State Building

The stimuli offered by the views of the cityscape on both sides of the High Line, with bustling Manhattan to the east, Hudson River and New Jersey cityscape to the west, contributes to a visual factor that has been identified in urban design literature as contributing to a pleasing experience for public space users. Not only can the sights found inside the space be an attraction, those experienced from the space can be equally compelling and should be emphasized wherever possible (Cooper-Marcus, 1997, p.25) Additionally, the views to city scene from parks, public open space, and gardens present “vistas and panoramas that allow the observer to see important relationships (Lynch, 1990, p.406).” These are relationships that Lynch

suggests can both create a tangible and powerful sense of the city and immediately convey the connection of the viewer to the city.

Views to the city scene from the High Line are on of the most celebrated features of the park as discovered through archival research. The slight elevation above the street has been described as alerting and altering the perceptual experience of New York from the unique vantage (Ouroussoff, 2009). The High Line at times feels like a dissection plane where the “vestiges of the meatpacking district and the water towers and buildings become elements of a great canvas all around you (Benzel, 2010).” The transformative photograph used by the Friends of the High Line that showcased the brilliant self-seeded landscape on the rusting trestles becomes compelling with the city scene is juxtaposed, with the Empire State Building along one flank and a aging brick smokestack along the other.

Figure 6.70 High Line users take in the view of Manhattan city scene, a common activity observed at the park.

The design of the High Line was clearly created with the views of city scene as an important consideration. A walk along the park takes its ambling users through a series of cityscapes that highlights a variety of New York urban scenery. The viaduct turned public park snakes “through a

secret landscape of derelict buildings, narrow urban canyons and river views, it allows you to make entirely new visual connections between different parts of Manhattan while maintaining a remarkably intimate relationship with the surrounding streets (Ourousoff, 2009).” The views of city scene were important to the designers of the park, who take users through a series of views of Manhattan, and helped preserved through the 2005 West Chelsea plan which mandated building setbacks to help preserve views from the structure.

The initial approach onto the structure, if made from the southern Gansevoort Stairs, unveils a towering building emerging behind the High Line foliage. The building is the newly constructed Standard Hotel, which actually straddles the structure, is built on concrete pilotis and sits 30 feet above the High Line (56 feet above the ground). The building design is a response to the new 2005 zoning guidelines unlike any other that abuts the High Line; it’s meant to float above but in no way meant to be “overly shy or revert to it (Tyrnauer, 2009).” The glass-slab building is the first view of city scene that is unveiled to users and it’s most intentional and jarring.

The unique position of the High Line offers views of city streets unlike anywhere else in New York. At the level of the rail bed above the city a visitor is “able to perceive, with remarkable clarity, aspects of the city’s character you would never glean from an office window” and at the same time “you are still close enough to make eye contact with people on the sidewalks, so that you never lose your connection to the street life (Ourousoff, 2009).” The first section of the High Line bisects a total of 10 streets: several narrow and calm brick streets with historic buildings in the Meatpacking District, bustling 10th Avenue, residential streets flanked with brownstones in Chelsea, and 14th Street a wider cross-town street. There are breaks in the vegetation along the park in several locations that pull a user to view the city scene that align to the middle of cross-town streets, these are most compelling at 14th, 16th, and 18th Streets, all looking eastward toward the heart of Manhattan. Where the High Line jumps across 10th Avenue, between 16th and 17th streets, is the sunken 10th Avenue Square. Here a series of benches cascade down to an

observation window that perfectly frames 10th Avenue below. Visitors have a view up the length of Manhattan as automobiles roll out directly beneath them.

The behavior of users on the High Line in response to city vistas was established by employing both stationary and walk-through observations. Stationary standing park users were clearly influenced by the interplay of the park space and vistas found along the High Line. Seated users were less influenced by cityscape as a whole, as the placement of seating dictates the vantage. The two most heavily used locations on the High Line, as experienced through observations, 10th Avenue Square and the Diller-Von Furstenberg Sundeck, are clearly oriented towards city scene affords seated park users with opportunity to interact with the cityscape of New York.

Standing lingerers on the park always planted themselves along a portion of railing that opened up to a city view, an exception to this rule was not observed by the research team during the observation period. Seated users differed in this respect, but their decision as to where to sit was dictated in large part by the placement of furniture. The most popular location along the High Line for this standing activity was observed just north of the 10th Avenue Square. This vantage affords viewers with the most expansive views of Manhattan. Either as a single participant or in groups of two or more, people would depart from their stroll on the park and grab a piece of railing to lean on and take in the cityscape. Users in groups were seldom seen to verbally outline this plan; instead, it would seem as though they had naturally gravitated toward this positioning. The conversations overheard from these park users involved a discussion about the surrounding neighborhoods, the buildings that surround the park, and the activity on the river/waterfront.

Views from the High Line to city scene are one of the most popular activities on the park. It's no coincidence then that the commissioned art piece installed by Richard Galpin along the stretch of the park, "Viewing Station", is just what it promises: a cityscape cutout made of simple geometric patterns and a viewing apparatus. The interactive art piece offers altered and abstract views of the Manhattan cityscape. "One of the wonderful experiences the High Line has provided to visitors is a new vista of Manhattan. Similarly, Galpin's artwork will offer a novel reconsideration of our surroundings" (Lindquist, 2011). The installation is popular with users as evidenced by the long lines to interact with the piece and learned during the in-depth interviews with the users.

Figure 6.71 Viewing Station

The orientation of the Diller-Von Furstenberg Sundeck and the 10th Avenue Square are each directed towards views of city scene, and draw users who use the spaces longer than other portions of the High Line. From the Diller-Von Furstenberg Sundeck park users who use the chaise lounges look directly east at the Hudson River and the Hoboken and Jersey City skyline across the river in New Jersey. Activity on the river, frequent boats traveling up and down the Hudson, provide users with constant city activity to observe. The evening sunset, even on cold and windy days, is a particularly popular time for users to gather and linger on the Sundeck as witnessed through behavior observations. The 10th Avenue Square remains popular throughout the day. Here people also congregate on the tiered seating and the never-ending flow of car, bus, and taxi traffic that emerges from below on 10th Avenue. The first bench row in the Square is usually the first to be occupied and participants linger here seemingly longer than other users. This affords the best and most captivating views of the city scene from not only the automobile traffic, but the from the cityscape along the length of 10th Avenue.

Views of city scene and cityscape were an important factor for park users and influenced both the reason for their visit and the pleasure they derived from the High Line. Of the participants interviewed 31 percent explicitly mentioned views of the city as one of their favorite facets of the park or the reason they came to visit on that particular day. Several of the interviewees identified “new views”, “different perspective of the city”, and similar sentiments when asked about any changes of perspective the High Line has given them or what they particularly liked about the park.

Figure 6.72 High
Line Users
Respond to City
Scene

The Friends of the High Line often pointed to the Promenade Plantée as inspiration for the design of the New York elevated park. However much inspiration they drew upon, the group also learned the lessons from the design of the Promenade Plantée, which is “one of the least interesting new Paris parks.” The park was built in 1990’s atop an abandoned rail viaduct and prior to the opening of the High Line’s opening, was the world’s only elevated park. The park fails because it is disconnected from the city, offers no views, has unclear access, static design, and is inhibited by narrowness and isolation (Berens, 2010, p.72). An early opponent to the High Line actually made the very misguided quote when comparing the utility of the potential High Line park to the Promenade Plantée: “That sounds very good but this is not the center of Paris. This is not near an opera house. What are they going to see?” (Dunlop, 2000). As it turns out, the views from atop the High Line are a major component of the success measured from the use and perception of users.

6.5.8 Physical Comfort and Sitting Space

Figure 6.73 Physical Comfort

Physical comfort is a fundamental human need and therefore is a special consideration in the design of public spaces. Weather considerations, whether relief from sun on a hot day or sun exposure on a cool day, and the comfort created by sitting spaces, the location, design, and orientation, are several of the important aspects of human comfort. Designers have the ability to create microclimates and make careful considerations of seating choices, which in turn acts as a function of the length of stay by a visitor (Carr et al, p.231). Importantly, a city that can extend its staying power, which is mostly accomplished through comfort, is crucial for vibrant city life and creates a lively city (Gehl, 2010, p.143). Cooper-Marcus advises that successful public spaces have a maximum amount of area that falls into the human being “comfort zone”, the range of weather conditions (temperature, sun, humidity, and wind) that a physically pleasing to a visitor in casual clothing (1997, p.32).

Seating and comfort are intrinsically linked in public spaces. Attractive seating depends on the microclimatic conditions, placement, orientation, proximity to activity, view, noise level, and of course it must allow for the desired activity or the user, whether is it reading, eating, socializing, resting, or privacy (Cooper-Marcus, 1997, p. 33; Gehl, 2010, p. 140; Whyte, 1980, p. 9; Carr,

1993, p. 231). The seating itself is also important. Seats with back are more comfortable than backless benches and people are observed to stay longer in benches with backs. (Gehl, 2010, p.143) At the same time, backless benches allow four different orientation choices for users. Moveable chairs offer the maximum amount of choice, and allow users to choose the right combination of location and orientation (Cooper-Marcus, 1997, p. 42). Moveable seating also allows users to arrange their own social space needed for the specific situation (Gehl, 2010, p.145) and provide the greatest amount of choice, comfort, and flexibility (Whyte, 1980). Finally, the material choice of seating is an important consideration and relates to the success of a space. Wood is warm and comfortable and is recommended for primary seating options whenever possible. Whereas, cold and harsh materials, such as metal, concrete, stone, and tile, should be reserved for places that can double as seating such as railing or stairs, which is often referred to as “secondary seating” (Cooper-Marcus, 1997, p.44).

The regulatory framework established in the West Chelsea Zoning was created to “facilitate the restoration and reuse of the High Line” (Article IV, Chapter 8, Section 98-00.d) with considerations relating directly to comfort: buildings that relate and compliment the structure, with special consideration for views to microclimatic effects such as light, wind, and air (West Chelsea Zoning Proposal, 2005). This mandate was important to ensure that the views from the High Line were preserved and that the park wasn’t left in a dark canyon, hemmed in by towering, bulky buildings.

Designers of the High Line obviously gave special consideration, if not ultimate consideration, to elements of human comfort when designing the park. The original High Line design, which allowed the train to travel through buildings is still found on the park and creates a series of interior and exterior spaces that helps create a variety of microclimates ensuring that critical “comfort zone” in extreme weather. The interior spaces provide respite from sun, rain, and humidity. Ample sunlight reaches most of the seating areas of the park during daylight hours,

however shaded areas also available throughout. The sunken plaza at 10th Avenue protects users from the cold wind that blows off the Hudson River during the colder winter months. All told, most of the park is accessible and comfortable during most weather conditions over most times of the year. A perfect balance between interior and exterior space is created in the breezeway created by the Standard Hotel. Here the colder temperatures of the true interior spaces aren't found however, shade and a perpetual cooling breeze are.

Seating is ample and provided throughout the park. On most outside stretches of the park there is a bench available every few feet. Even here the options of between benches are varied: some are backless to provide several different seating options, some have backs for more comfort and longer duration, the 10th Avenue Square has tiered seating that accommodates groups, and the Diller-Von Furstenberg Sundeck has chaise lounges that work for individuals or groups to recline together. Wood is the material choice for all the fixed seating on the park and answers exactly what Cooper-Marcus advocated. Moveable chairs, considered so important by public space scholars, are found on the High Line in the interior spaces along with café tables. The relationship between seating and landscaping also provides for basic human comfort by modifying the climatic condition of the park. During the colder winter months when sunlight exposure is necessary for warmth and comfort the trees on the park are chosen to be free of foliage, while in summer the same spaces are hidden in a cooling shade.

Figure 6.74 High Line Seating Options

Users of the High Line are seen to respond directly to the condition of comfort found on the park. On the cold days and times of observation the cold interior passageways were mostly devoid of people participating in any stationary activity. The temperature in these interior spaces drops noticeably compared to the exposed spaces on the High Line, even those in the shade. However, on the warmer days where the temperature reached 80 degrees, the passageways were seen to have a few seated users, who mostly used the lower tier where moveable tables and café tables are a popular place to have lunch. The art installations were the only other reason that people lingered in either passage, despite the presence of several Friends of the Line-approved vendors, who were given very little attention by park users.

On the days where the temperature hovered around 50 degrees, the warmth of the sunlight was sufficient to induce stationary activity at the park. In general, the number of park visitors could serve as a thermometer: as the temperature increases so do the number of visitor. Further, the length of stay and activity on the park was also reflective of the weather conditions: during the colder days and hours a high percentage of park users simply stroll the length of the park; whereas when the temperate increases so do the sheer number of visitors and the percentage of those who are observed in stationary activity. The only exception to this was observed at sunset on clear days when many people were seated on the Sundeck to watch the sunset despite the cold and windy conditions. The total number of park users was relatively low, however the proportion of stationary to walking visitors was higher than expected.

In addition to responses to the microclimatic conditions of the park, users were seen to respond to the seating options that are provided on the High Line. The Diller-Von Furstenberg Sundeck and the 10th Avenue were the most popular locations during all times of the day and with every temperature for stationary activity. Larger groups tended to congregate themselves in the square, while the smaller groups, couples, and individuals were observed more on the Sundeck. Groups frequent the 10th Avenue Square for lunch and dinner, which allows groups to face each other on

the different tiers. Individuals at the park usually choose the benches that are scattered on the outsides. These areas tend to be less populated and quieter, which supports the activities most individuals were engaged in: reading, writing, drawing, studying, and talking on the phone. A slight departure was the solo visitors who brought a lunch. They more often located themselves along the popular pathways, such as the benches across from the chaise lounges, where there was a greater amount of human activity to observe.

The behavior of park users indicates that comfort can be found on the High Line in a variety of weather conditions. Sunlit, shady, inside, outside, and protected environments are all found on the park. Some of these are simply the benefit of the legacy of the former use, while many of the others were thoughtfully added. Further, the seating provided adds to the comfort of the park and allows the users to engage in the activities they consciously desire. A range of groups of and individuals can all be accommodated at various locations on the park. The seating provided can support a variety of stationary activity. People were seen reading, writing, drawing, studying, eating, making phone calls, relaxing, eating, playing games, and engaging in countless other activities.

The perceptions of High Line users reinforce the comfort atop the park as seen in observation in response to the microclimate and seating options. 80 percent of interview subjects mentioned elements of comfort in their positive descriptions of the High Line. These responses came mostly from the questions about what they liked about the park and also from the questions about what normally brings them or brought them to the High Line on that specific day. As uncovered in the discussions about landscape, parks and natural spaces can give the perception of health and cleanliness. "Fresh air" was a common theme mentioned by many of the interview subjects, as were "weather", "sunshine", "beautiful day", and "sunset". These responses came during all times of the day, during weather that ranged from 40 degrees and windy to 80 degrees and sunny. The elevation above the ground also gives park users this perception as well. Many respondents

mentioned that they “come up here for fresh air” or they liked the “clean air”, suggesting that the perceptions of air quality is better atop the park than at street level. One respondent, who had played hooky from work to enjoy record high March temperature, simply stated, “This is just where you go when the weather is nice.”

Only one respondent had anything negative to say about the High Line related to comfort. This particular interview subject mentioned that what he disliked about the High Line was unpleasant odor that is given off by some of the plants when in bloom. However, the plantings on the High Line are meant to bloom at staggered times and any unpleasant smells should be able to be avoided.

Sitting and the available seating were identified by several of the park visitors as their favorite aspects of the park or what brings them to the High Line. Several respondents identified the specific seating options such as the Sundeck chairs, the 10th Avenue Square, and the standard High Line benches. Without hesitation several respondents stated “the benches”, “bench design”, or “the rolling chairs” (chaise lounges) when asked what they most liked about the park. Many Chelsea and West Village residents who were interviewed went as far as to claim that the High Line is the absolute best place in New York to sit. This is quite a claim for a City with an almost infinite number of seating options in an untold number of parks, plazas, and other open spaces. Again, these comments should be taken with the reminder that High Line users are self-selecting and they visit the park because it meets their needs. However, all of the first time visitors to the park had overwhelmingly positive perceptions about the park.

Gehl considers “the view” from seating in public spaces to be the most important aspect of success (2010, p.xxx). The following series of photographs were taken from each bench on the High Line at the eye level of a seated user. Views East along the High Line (South to North):

View West along the High Line (South to North)
Figure 6.75 The View

6.5.9 Other Observed Behaviors

While the design of the High Line seems best suited for passive uses and majority of the High Line users were observed strolling and enjoying views of the City from the park, a surprising number of people were observed using the park in more active ways. Several individuals, especially in the early morning and evening observations, were observed jogging through the High Line. It can be assumed that the lack of potential conflicts with cars, bicycles, and other pedestrians makes the High Line a good place to jog when it is not busy. However, the High Line is only a few blocks in length and so the utility of the park as a place to jog wasn't exactly clear apart from the views it affords.

Another surprising observation was the number of children who found the High Line to be a place to run, play, and explore. The well-designed benches, which were a favorite of design conscious adults in the park, made excellent slides for small children who were observed hopping from bench to bench, and sliding down the side of the benches. The 10th Avenue Amphitheatre was a popular play location for children as well as adults. Making their way down to the window to the street, people of all ages were observed bounding from each successive tier of the plaza. On several occasions the children would race their parents to the top of the structure, parents bounding and children taking the zigzag ramp path. Children were observed playfully interacting with many of the design elements of the park including the planking, train tracks, and art installations.

6.5.10 Perceptions Beyond Design Elements

Figure 6.76 View to points beyond the High Line

The most remarkable aspect of the High Line is the degree to which it alters your perspective on the surrounding city (Ouroussoff, 2009). Not only does the park create entirely new and previously unseen visual connections between different locations of Manhattan, but they park itself was found to alter the perceptions of users in much more interesting ways. It has been proffered that the High Line is a gift to every urban dweller in America, not just to New York City, in that it will serve as a model of a new attitude toward public space, a new model of civic engagement, and a new delivery method (Kolb, 2009). In-depth interviews with High Line users were conducted to assess those very claims.

Notions that the High Line was responsible for offering a change of perspective of New York as an idea rather than on the physicality of place was an overwhelming theme from respondents interviewed. Thirteen (20 percent) of respondents immediately identified a change of perspective about New York in general when asked, “How has the High Line changed your perspective?”. It seems that the High Line is emblematic of what many described as the “New New York” or the “post 9-11 New York.” In the context of public space, scholar Setha Low have described the post 9/11 park as “redesigned to restrict activities” through a “pattern of design and management that exclude some people and reduce social and cultural diversity” and this often comes as a by-product of historic preservation (Low, et al, 2005, p.1). The High Line is a highly controlled environment in line with the park environment described by Low; there are five controlled access points, surveillance cameras, a long list of prohibited activities, and roving officials that patrol the park at all times. Despite what many public space scholars deem to be threats to traditional notions of parks and open space, those interviewed expressed positive responses to the controlled environment found on the High Line. A popular fear is that the post-9/11 city would be characterized by people barricading themselves indoors and denying the opportunity to express a sense of community and optimism (Low, et al, 2005, p.2). However, it has been noted that the High Line allows New Yorkers to partake in recent passions: “spending time out-of-doors and hanging out in public spaces,” and also reflects a hunger for community (Zukin, 2010b).

A second surprising perception that emerged from interviews with High Line users was that notion that the High Line changed their view about the future of cities. Through the park a full 12 percent of those interviewed said that the High Line has altered or helped form their view of what the city of the future will be like. Friends of the High Line cofounder stated this as early as 2004, by suggesting that the park of the future would be akin to the High Line (Iovine, 2004). The ability of a park to shape the future city is not without precedent. After New York City debuted Central Park it inspired decades of parks building in cities throughout the United States (Rybczynski, 2011). A

50-year parks movement swept through cities across North America after the introduction of Central Park in the 1840s. Parks built during the period followed the Central Park model, and many were even designed by Vaux and Olmsted, the original designers of New York's still famous open space (Low, 2005, p.23). Many have gone as far to claim that the High Line is the 21st century equivalent to Central Park (Amateau, 2005; Croughton, 2009). During the critical Surface Transportation Board hearing several of the High Line advocates evoked the Central Park when describing the impact that the future High Line park would have on the surrounding neighborhoods in terms of property values and identity creation (Surface Transportation Board, 2003). While claims made by advocates and columnists that the High Line is the Central Park of its time and thus a model of the future park of the future city might appear to be mere hyperbole, the notions uncovered by park users give a certain weight to this claim.

Figure 6.77 High Line Context, Chelsea Market (above, middle) and New York City Public Plaza

The context in which the High Line sits could also be responsible for perceptions of the park as reflective of the future city. The park abuts the Chelsea Market, an indoor specialty food market and office space adapted from the 19th century factory complex. The Chelsea Market sits cater-corner to the Chelsea Triangle, a public plaza maintained and programmed by the Chelsea Improvement Company that has been carved from former 9th Avenue roadway as part of the innovative Public Plaza Program recently introduced by the New York City Department of Transportation. On 9th Avenue is a physically separated bicycle lane, part of New York's greatly expanded bicycle infrastructure network. This is all within the Gansevoort Market Historic District, a former industrial district now

home to fashionable art galleries and clothing boutiques. Finally, the High Line sits amid what has been termed “architects row”, due to the explosion of buildings designed by world-class superstar architects. Given this context of innovative buildings, transportation infrastructure, public plazas, historic preservation, and adaptive reuse, it’s understandable that being atop a park floating above the city built on a former railbed might change the perceptions of visitors as to the future of cities.

A further 8 percent of those surveyed suggested that the High Line changed their perception about adaptive reuse and the possibility for urban transformation. More specific than those interviewees that mentioned a change of perception about the future city, these subjects said that for them the High Line expanded their view of the possibility of adaptive reuse in terms of exactly what structures could be adapted for our future needs. What is interesting about these responses is that several came from practicing design professionals, including two landscape architects, an urban designer, in addition to an urban planning student. This means that the High Line has expanded the range of possibility with key individuals involved in the process that determines the form of the built environment. In total, apart from the students, all of the urban designers, planners, and landscape architects interviewed who came to the High Line out of “professional curiosity” came from locations outside of New York. This suggests that not only has the High Line helped expand the range of what repurposing of the industrial past is possible in the minds of these professionals, but they will take those lessons back to their practice elsewhere in the United States.

For several of the users, 18 percent of those interviewed, found that the High Line altered their perceptions about the health of New York. “Cleaner”, “greener”, “friendlier”, and “safer” were common terms that were used during the in-depth interviews. These responses are especially poignant because, at the time of survey collection, physically, the space was not green at all, indicating that survey respondents were using the word “green” to refer to sustainability and the

environment. This indicates the public space users understand the deeper concept of environmental sustainability that is associated with the adaptive reuse of infrastructure and buildings. This goes beyond the many respondents who had come to the High Line to enjoy the “fresh air”, it means they felt the health benefits of the park extended beyond the structure itself.

Some of the most interesting responses came from individuals who had lived in the area, or in New York, their entire lives, and could reflect back on their perception of the City through time. Several of these respondents noted that the High Line was a reflection of a city that is downright friendlier than it has been in the past. The new friendly city has been noted by many journalists, including New York Times columnist Diane Cardwell who noted interesting behavior on the High Line:

It even inspires crusty New Yorkers to behave as if they were strolling down Main Street in a small town rather than striding the walkway of a hyper-urban park — routinely smiling and nodding, even striking up conversations with strangers.
(2009)

New Yorkers have also been known to act as “impromptu tour guides” on the High Line in response to their love of the neighborhood and park (Cardwell, 2009). This type of friendly behavior was also observed on the High Line as evidenced by the ease that the research team was able to find willing and even eager interview subjects. In fact, on several occasions park users who wanted to share their interest in the High Line approached the researchers.

Several survey respondent’s views suggestion that the High Line has actually changed some people’s perception of City Government. One respondent commented that the High Line shows “exactly what the City is capable of”, and several respondents commented that it was nice to see that the City was willing to put money, planning, and energy into the provision of new public spaces of high quality. It seems the High Line is actually impacting public perception of City Government as well as the City as a physical place. The building of the High Line signals to New

Yorkers that city officials and urban planners are concerned with livability, aesthetics, and quality spaces for people. A longtime New Yorker said they were “glad that the City is behind such a great project” and they “were excited for what could possibly come next.” It would seem that the focus on creating people friendly environments such as the High Line, which is a central tenant found in PlaNYC, New York’s plan to enhance the quality of life for its residents, has inspired a certain level of confidence in New York City government.

In line with positive associations with city government, of 65 interviewees, 11 percent mentioned that their experience of being on the High Line or learning about the project changed their perception about public open space found in cities. In the majority of these responses survey subjects indicated that these perception changes were positive. One respondent said the High Line stimulated their interest in the public spaces and public life of New York City. Another respondent mentioned that the High Line set a new bar for the quality of public spaces they should come to expect from cities. What the respondents underscored was an appreciation for what they considered a thoughtfully designed public space available for their use.

Analysis of the responses given to the question “how has the highline changed your perspective?” gives us insight into public perception of public space, safety, a “new New York” and even the future of cities. The answers also reveal that the designers of the High Line not only created a successful “public space”, but also made a space that forces users to reexamine their perception of the built world. The designers of the High Line did not just build a park; they built a park that successfully reflects a city that has transitioned in a post-industrial economy. The designers were able to simultaneously pay homage to the past while signaling a paradigm shift in the provision of public space and design in cities and make a physical place that embodies the past, present, and future.

Chapter 7. Conclusions

7.0 Research Questions Answered

Through extensive study of the history, role-players, design, use, and perception of the High Line through the mixed-method case study approach, the initial research questions have been answered to a certain extent. This chapter presents a concise recapitulation of the answers to the research questions that were uncovered and discussed in great detail in the previous chapter. This is an important reminder of the original intent of this research effort given the unexpected amount of information that was gathered through archival research, interviews, design inventory, and behavior observations.

7.1 High Line through the eras of the American City

Research Question 1.1: What led to the creation of the High Line as a public open space?

The High Line can be read as the story of the American Industrial City, with each epoch etched into the narrative of the structure. The steel rail was laid down the length of Manhattan to deliver goods to supply the ravenous demands of the Industrial City. The constant trains running at grade created dangerous and unhealthy conditions very emblematic of the Tenement City. Dangerous and crowded conditions like these inspired the City Beautiful and Municipal Reform movements, reflected by the League to End Death Avenue, the community advocacy group with the aim to elevate the train traffic above the street. The structure, considered an engineering marvel of its time, was built with Depression-era labor and New Deal-era money. The High Line became defunct with the decentralization and decline of the American city in the post World War II era defined by truck transportation and the rise of Suburbia. Robert Moses tore down the southern section of the structure as part of his plans to redevelop the West Village during the Urban Renewal period. The very fight over Urban Renewal in the West Village, which led to the demise of the southern section of the High Line, was also the genesis of the community involvement process championed by Jane Jacobs and later codified by New York City in its urban land use development procedure, the very process that would eventually save the Chelsea portion of the

structure. The High Line was preserved by an arts and design community housed in the former manufacturing area of New York representative of the new citizen composition of the Post-Industrial City in an age of Urban Rediscovery. The High Line management structure, which is run, managed, programmed, and financed by an advocacy group turned conservancy but owned by the City is the quintessential partnership between public and private interests in an era of bankrupt cities. Finally, the images and ideas of adaptive public space reuse of a defunct railroad disseminated around the globe and inspire similar projects in the Informational City.

7.2 A Perfect Storm, Somewhat

Who were the main role-players in the preservation and reuse of the High Line?

The story of the High Line is reflective of the many periods of urban America, but its reuse is a largely its own tale of a perfect storm of the right individuals with the right connections coming together at the right time. At the center of the story are the two founding members of the Friends of the High Line, Robert Hammond and Joshua David. When CSX assumed ownership of the High Line through the acquisition of Conrail, it determined that the structure should stand rather than be torn down. Chelsea property owners derided the rail owner for what they considered to be an attempt to save them the cost of demolition. This move by CSX brought together, at a community meeting, the two unlikely advocates for preservation of the structure when no interest to keep the High Line came forward. The position taken by CSX that the structure had a utility as a pedestrian space gave the Friends of the High Line an idea to run with, however, the pair need an extensive network of well-connected allies to support their vision.

The High Line remained standing long enough to bring a new mayoral administration to power that make the preservation of the High Line espoused by these advocates the centerpiece of its parks platform. The Friends of the High Line deftly created a network of supporters, which included two members who would be elevated by the new Mayor to the Direction of New York

City Planning Department and the Speaker of the City Council, to two of the most important positions in city government especially in the connection to parks building. The Friends also found support from two key politicians who were able to secure enormous amounts of federal funding for the project and add serious clout during the preservation battle.

Two high profile celebrities, each of whom were attracted to the project because each had a father with a certain prominence in the urban planning field, sought out the Friends of the High Line and became the boosters of the cause. The group leaned on a fine art photographer who was able to capture through film what the vision that they were not able to fully articulate verbally. Non-profit organizations and academics outlined all the key issues of the project, clearly defined the context, and presented viable reuse options for the High Line. These options were strengthened by professional strategists who helped formulate clear legal, economic, engineering, and design approaches and solutions to further the project. Finally, support and the largest private donations came from a fashion designer and her husband who had a stake in the High Line neighborhood.

Perhaps most important to the story is the huge amount of supporters that the Friends of the High Line were able to rally to the cause very early on in the process. While much of the attention is given to the big names that are involved in the process, without the support of an extensive network of neighborhood supporters and volunteers, it is unlikely that the High Line would be the project it is today.

7.3 Obstacles, Overcome

What barriers did the project face and how were they addressed?

The three significant obstacles faced in the preservation of the High Line were the considerable cost of the project and feasibility of such a radical park-building approach, the regulatory structure

surrounding an elevated park built on an abandoned railroad, and the battle over the different futures proposed for the structure.

Early opponents of High Line reuse suggested that the project was idle fantasy considering the considerable cost needed to rehabilitate the structure, cost of construction, and costs required to operate and maintain a park. Opponents argued that the structure was not structurally sound and a looming liability for the City. Finally, it was argued that an open space option that presented for the future High Line would not work as a successful park. These doubts created an obstacle in the minds of many city officials, journalists, and New York residents. Advocates for reuse countered these doubts by soliciting feasibility studies for each area of concern and securing early funding from key supporters. A report conducted by a prominent non-profit limned several reuse strategies and the likelihood of their success. An engineering study found that the High Line was structurally sound, built not only to hold a park but also to support several freight-loaded locomotives. An economic feasibility report countered claims the claims that the park would be a financial burden on the City; it found that the High Line would create a windfall of tax revenue increases and spur a considerable investment in the area. Finally, the considerable costs of the projects were raised through commitments by the City, Federal Government, and through private donations.

Constructing an elevated park on an abandoned piece of railway infrastructure in the densest portion of the largest city in America presented an elaborate tangle of legal and regulatory hoops and barriers. Reuse of a piece of rail network required an issuance made by the Surface Transportation Board. An issuance of demolition from the ongoing mayoral administration meant a legal battle at the state level over a complicated city review process. And the future 3-dimensional park faced a 50-year old zoning framework. These barriers presented a complicated set of challenges requiring creative solutions, legal help, and political support at various levels of government. Early advice given to the founders of the upstart Friends of the High Line advocacy

group was to use early funding to hire lawyers, rather than rely on pro-bono help. Following this advice helped the Friends overcome the significant legal challenges they faced early in the fight for preservation. The lengthiest barrier of the process, the issuance of the Certificate of Interim Trail Use (CITU), required legal help in addition to political support from key members of City, State, and Federal Governments; the action by the Federal Government was followed by separate statements of support by the City and State of New York and was a necessary step before the City could acquire the High Line. Finally, to build an elevated park above property owned by opponents of the structure within a zoning context created in 1961 required a creative solution of adjacency controls through zoning to support the use of the High Line as a park and transfer development rights program to appease owners unable to capitalize on their property investment potential.

The final significant barrier that advocates for High Line preservation faced was the challenge presented by landowners and a mayoral administration that believed that the best solution for the Chelsea neighborhood was to tear the structure down. The Friends of the High Line, who created the pragmatic strategy to save the structure as illustrated above, first needed to create a future vision for the High Line to win popular support and overcome this barrier. The group did this by creating high-quality products in terms of design and presentation that signaled that the future product (the High Line park) would also be of that same caliber. The group also succeeded in this by taking control of the High Line narrative. They did this by outlining the history of the structure and making it their own, by doing this they laid claim to the future of the structure. By claiming the narrative, the group created a positive feedback cycle through the media where their vision dominated the story. Importantly, the Friends of the High Line purposefully left the future of the High Line free of one single definitive future; by doing this they built support and consensus by allowing a variety of interests to rush to their aid and imagine their own future for the structure. The High Line became an effort in preservation of New York's industrial past, an economic development tool, a park and open space, and a cutting edge architecture project simultaneously.

7.4 Design and Use

How does the designed environment of the High Line accommodate the behavior of users?

The self-seeded environment “found” on the structure after it fell into disuse heavily influenced the creation of the High Line as an elevated public promenade and open space. In addition to an unconventional inspiration for a park, the structure presented designers with an unorthodox setting on which they could create a public space. Despite the unique inspiration and setting, the designers of the High Line were able to provide many of the elements found in successful public spaces. The High Line includes elements of nature, physical comfort, views of activity, opportunity to socialize, discovery, sensory stimuli, and elements of history and reuse. Many hours of behavior observations were conducted in order to ascertain the influence of the design elements have on the use of park visitors.

A series of observation techniques found that High Line visitors utilize the park in a myriad of ways. Some visitors come to simply walk the length of the park to take in the sights, others come with plant guides in hand to learn about the plantings in bloom, many come in groups to socialize, individuals come with a book or lunch and find a intimate locale to relax, while many come in the evening for a unique view to the sunset over the Hudson River. The design elements support the use of park visitors.

Landscape influenced use by providing an additional element of interest that High Line visitors could indulge. Landscaping created microenvironments on the High Line, particularly in the Gansevoort Woodland, that were used by individual users looking for seclusion. The emerging views created by the design of the park cull users forward as they seek to discover each new environment. The narrow promenade along the length of the park places seated users with an ideal vantage to people watch. Art pieces, plantings, human activity, and city scene offer sight, sound, and smell stimuli that encourage High Line users to discover their surroundings and remain on the park. The surrounding City Scene offers views that many of the park users stop to

observe, point at, photograph, and discuss. Finally, the available seating and the physical comfort offered by the design of the High Line was seen to be the most influential factor for use of the park. The park design creates a variety of microclimates and the seating accommodates various group sizes all seeking to participate in a wide array of activities.

7.5 Design and Perception

How does the designed environment of the High Line influence the perceptions of users?

The use of the High Line was determined directly through observation of the park users. Certain design aspects have a heavier influence on the perceptions of users. These factors cannot be directly observed, but were instead culled through in-depth interviews. Landscape was one the most commonly identified favorable element of the park. The design gave park users a sense of peace, calm, and serenity that was surprising for many to be found in a space in such a dense and bustling city like New York. History and reuse were elements that were identified by a large portion of users. Many expressed positive sentiments with the park as adaptive reuse and the incorporation of certain historical elements, such as the steel rails, interior spaces of preserved buildings, and the surrounding historic neighborhood. Despite being the most crowded city in American, many High Line users appreciated the opportunity that park gave them to people watch. The view of the city beyond the park and the change of view offered by the elevated promenade was a critical factor influencing perception of users, identified slightly less often than landscape. Despite the heavy influence that the art work, views of human activity, landscaping, and incorporation of history found on the park, the ultimate influential factor on the perceptions of High Line users were the elements of physical comfort. The variety of High Line seating options and design of the park created positive perceptions identified by the vast majority of users.

7.6 Perceptions beyond the park

How does the High Line influence perceptions of user beyond its physical structure?

The initial motivation of this study was inspired by the hyperbolic journalism that has consistently surrounded the High Line. Beyond altering the perceptions past the immediate physical surroundings, many suggested that the influence of the High Line extends well outside of New York City. The perceptions of users as they related to the designed environment of the High Line were assessed through interviews. Another aim of these interviews was to ascertain what influence the High Line has on the perceptions beyond the park or the immediate surroundings. Many users said the High Line was formative in their view of the post-9/11 New York; the High Line and surrounding context are emblematic for many of the new New York. And not only did the interviews illuminate perceptions of the reconstituted nature of New York, but also perceptions of the nature of the city of the future; many saw the High Line as a possible glimpse into the what changes are in store for New York and cities everywhere. Further, changes of perspective toward public space, adaptive reuse, city government, and the friendliness of the city were uncovered by many interviewees. While claims that the High Line will usher in a new era of urbanism in American cities may be exaggerative, the park does heavily influence the perceptions of those who climb atop the structure.

Chapter 8. Implications

8.1 The High Line as Development Model

A great amount of press and praise was lavished on the High Line with the opening of the project in June 2009, the design team, and the Friends of the High Line cofounders, Joshua David and Robert Hammond (Taylor, 2010a). Projects in Philadelphia, Chicago, The Florida Keys, Detroit, and other cities, however, have been dreams on paper well ahead of the opening of the High Line (Hotz, 2004). The difference is that New York went all-in and actually completed the work on the High Line, but in doing so demonstrated that the model of converted a piece of elevated railway into a public promenade could be a financial success. This success has meant that these floundering projects now have a renewed interest being expressed by their advocates (Taylor, 2010a). The Promenade Plantée in Paris was a working model that was often pointed to by the Friends of the High Line as a similar project, however the success of the Paris park is subject of debate (Berens, 2010; Garreta, 2005).

The High Line has eclipsed the Promenade Plantée in terms of buzz and received so much attention that Metropolis Magazine writer Avinash Rajagopal believes that “the High Line has become a sort of urban-planning stereotype by now. Just tagging a project with the words ‘High Line’ defines it instantly – community-led revival of defunct infrastructure for the creation of public space (2010).” Given the prevalence of the stereotype, he even suggests that a project with similar components would be well served to attach itself to the High Line’s success. The High Bridge and the Gowanus Lowline are other two projects in New York City alone that have sought to attach themselves to the success of the High Line in order to increase their profile and signal the type of project (The High Bridge, 2010; Gowanus by Design, 2011). The interest generated extends beyond the projects in New York and other cities in the United States. The City of Manchester, England has taken inspiration from the High Line and has started putting plans in place to transform an abandoned viaduct into a public park (Linton, 2011). High Line designers and the Friends of the High Line have received teams of visitors from around the world hoping to

take the High Line model back home and complete similar projects. These visitors have ranged from Singapore, Rotterdam, Jerusalem, Paris, and Hong Kong (Taylor, 2010a).

In a New York Times Op-Ed urban theorist Witold Rybczynski (2011) criticized the notion that the High Line as a development model for other cities is ill-advised and adaptation of rail lines for public spaces would saddle cities with the same burden that moribund downtown malls do today. He suggests that the keys for a successful elevated park, as evidenced from the High Line in New York and the Promenade Plantée in Paris, require a combination of high density apartment dwellers, expensive detailing, interesting buildings surrounding the structure, vibrant surrounding neighborhoods, the real estate bubble economy of the mid-2000s, and a public and private financing structure that is impossible in any other city apart from those cities. Rybczynski is right on the mark with his assessment that a future project cast in the same mold of the High Line or Promenade Plantée would not necessarily work elsewhere; obviously what works in Paris or New York might not work in St. Louis or Jersey City. However a nuanced analysis of the subcomponents of these projects suggest that they are scalable for other cities and there are fundamental principles to be learned by jurisdictions everywhere. What the High Line does for the American city is offer a new and innovative solution for problems that will always be present in cities: what to do with the defunct infrastructure of the past and how to provide for the recreational needs of citizens.

What the Rybczynski argument illustrates is that the project is an ongoing debate. Development was going to happen in Chelsea anyway, arts-inspired gentrification led the way. But perhaps the stalling led to better development in the area with so much focused attention and a building period that occurred during a real estate bubble that brought world-renowned architects to the neighborhood. It is unlikely today that the significant funding needed to build the High Line (\$153 million) would have been as easy to come by in the current economic reality. Also the \$44 million raised through private donations might also be an accomplishment hard to fathom in other

American cities. While the High Line was an expensive project, there are also rewards that come from the project. It is estimated that the High Line is responsible for \$4 billion in private investment in the neighborhood, and will generate \$300 million in additional revenue for the city over 30 year (Cortese, 2008). Millennium Park in Chicago has proven to have a similar return on investment, the \$240 million dollar park is estimated to have generated an increase of \$1.4 billion in local real estate value and \$2.6 billion in increased tax revenue (Corner, 2009).

8.1.1 The G-Word and One Last Role Player

There is a thin line between development and gentrification. The High Line was simply part of a longer account of development in West Chelsea, not the harbinger of gentrification. But for many the High Line has come to symbolize the drastic changes that occurred in the area, replacing the gritty meatpacking warehouses with sleek glass condos; after all, the elevated park became the centerpiece of the neighborhood and gave identity to an area that was a blank spot on the map for many New Yorkers. While many associate the High Line with a new luxury neighborhood out of the reach of all but the famously well-heeled (Wilson, 2005), still others suggest that the High Line was in part responsible for preserving those elements of the neighborhood that made it attractive in the first place (Brozan, 2004).

The project initiated by the Friends of the High Line was, at its very core, a community-building project. The group brought together an unlikely group of individuals and institutions to save an unlikely structure from demolition and was able to provide the neighborhood with a beloved public amenity. The project and surrounding development have given the neighborhood a certain pedestrian quality, which would not have occurred had the Chelsea Property Owners razed the structure and developed a massive FedEx distribution center (Kilgannon, 1999). Debate aside, there has been much lost from the neighborhood's gritty past, perhaps best exemplified by the story of an often overlooked High Line role-player, Florent Morellet.

Under the typology created for this research Morellet is best aligned with the Insurgent role, however he also acted as a neighborhood pioneer and relationship facilitator. It was Morellet that introduced Diane Von Furstenberg and many other key supporters to the Friends of the High Line (Steen, 2005). Florent, the restaurant that bore its owner's name, was a neighborhood institution and an important gathering place that served as the command center for the preservation of the neighborhood. For a period in time the restaurant was for many, a perfect representation of

exactly what New York was supposed to be, but no longer is: a third-place in an unknown neighborhood where “you are as likely to see Calvin Klein at the counter as you are to see a homeless transgender prostitute (Amsden, 2008).” It was a voluble mix of eccentricity, intellect, and sleaze, a combination that “makes New York worth the trouble” (Cunningham, 2001). Morellet was a tireless champion of both the High Line and the preservation of the historic Gansevoort Market, but priced out of the neighborhood he was so vital in defining.

Morellet’s presence in the neighborhood predates, by a decade, the first mention of gentrification in association with the Meatpacking District found in *The New York Times* (Cohen, 1997); for a point of comparison, the first mention found concerning gentrification in Chelsea dates back to 1982 (Bennetts). Florent was a pioneer. He opened his restaurant at a time when the Meatpacking District was a dark hole on the map (Cohen, 1997) and considered crazy for starting an establishment in a derelict neighborhood known for “crack dealers and transvestite prostitutes” (Dyckhoff, 2004). Florent was an early High Line preservation advocate and led the effort for historic preservation of the Meatpacking District; he was the co-chair of the successful Save Gansevoort Market campaign, which led to the creation of the Gansevoort Market Historic District. Despite, or perhaps as a result of his efforts, Florent was forced to shutter its doors just prior to the grand opening of the High Line. The first lease Morellet held for his restaurant was for \$1350, which was the price for the first ten years it was opened and considered high for the neighborhood. When his lease expired, Florent was paying \$6180 a month. During the negotiation period, Florent offered his landlord \$18,000 per month to stay in business without substantially raising prices or altering his business plan, but this figure was rejected. After Florent was closed the space was being offered for \$35,000 a month, nearly double the best that Florent could offer.

The story best represents what is often lost when development frenzy takes hold of a neighborhood. Even the efforts to preserve what is being threatened can still price out those who

are the very saviors. But undaunted, Florent Morellet will continue to strengthen New York's public realm, pushing for more and better public spaces (Buckley, 2008).

Precedent: Promenade Plantée

Figure 8.1 Promenade Plantée

Prior to the opening of the High Line the Promenade Plantée had the distinction of being the world's only elevated park. The Paris-Strasbourg Railway Company built the brick and stone viaduct in 1859 and ran suburban commuter rail service until the 1970's. The City of Paris sided with preservationists who urged the city to convert the abandoned viaduct in the early 1980's. The linear Promenade Plantée stretches nearly 3 miles through central Paris on portion of the abandoned viaduct and footbridges. The park, which opened to the public in the early 1990's, served as a model for reuse of an elevated rail bed often pointed to by the Friends of the High Line as what could potentially exist above the streets of West Chelsea. (Garreta, 2005) The public promenade houses a green space above and artisan workshops and galleries in the vaults below (Hotz, 2004).

The Plantée opened in conjunction with the new Opera House on the former site of the Bastille Railroad Station, which had been torn down. With the new opera house and the opening of the Promenade Plantée the neighborhood experienced a dramatic shift in its urban texture. The

eastern part of Paris, once a solidly blue-collar began to gentrify through these projects, and received a facelift through a host of other government investments, and other development projects (Garreta, 2005).

Figure 8.2 Street View Promenade Plantée

Potential: Reading Viaduct

Figure 8.3 Reading Viaduct

The Reading Viaduct is a High Line-inspired project that has been pointed as a potential preservation project of an abandoned piece of infrastructure. The aging viaduct runs above ground for a length of 1.5 miles, above the streets of Philadelphia. A similar debate is raging over the Reading Viaduct that was seen in New York over the High Line; a group of advocates have stepped up to save the structure while landowners beneath the structure wish it torn down. The project has never had the traction that the High Line had in it's infancy, however the press surrounding the High Line's opening has given a boost to the group who aims to save the rail (Walsh, 2009).

Figure 8.4
Reading Viaduct and
Surroundings

Potential: Bloomingdale Trail

Figure 8.5 Bloomingdale Trail at dusk, courtesy of Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail

The Bloomingdale Trail is a proposed elevated linear park on the northwest side of Chicago and it is both longer (2.7 miles) and wider than the High Line, which has sparked interest in reuse as a mixed-use trail. Since 2004 the City of Chicago has planned to convert the line, owned by the Canadian Pacific Railway, into a park similar to the High Line with the addition of a multiuse trail. The City has gone as far as to secure \$3.1 million of state and federal funding for the initial design, engineering, and planning studies. The effort is spearheaded by The Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail, a group expressly modeled after the Friends of the High Line. To further attach their project to the High Line, the Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail commissioned a runner-up from

Figure 8.6 Bloomingdale Trail Logo, courtesy of Friends of the Bloomindale Trail

the High Line design competition to complete a design master plan for the elevated structure (Taylor, 2010a). The advocates for the future Chicago park have learned certain lessons from the Friends of the High Line but these efforts have fallen short of the benchmark established by the New York advocacy group. The Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail do have a logo for their organization; however don't have a logo for the future park. The group has also created a history section on their website in attempt to gain control of the structure's narrative, but there are no pictures, no viral pieces of information, and only four entries (FBT, 2011).

Figure 8.7 Bloomingdale Trail, courtesy of Friends of the Bloomindale Trail

Potential: Harismus Stem Embankment

Figure 8.8 The Stem,
photo from Wikipedia
Commons

A few short miles from the High Line across the Hudson River in Jersey City is an abandoned elevated rail embankment, known as the Harismus Stem Embankment. The Embankment, self-seeded and overgrown similar to the original High Line, is 100 feet wide and now covers six separate blocks segments, which have been truncated at each street crossing. The Embankment Preservation Coalition, a preservation advocacy organization, has worked since 1998 to preserve the former railroad structure and repurpose it as a passive park and greenway. The group formed to combat a proposed housing development in place of the embankment proposed by pro-development mayor Bret Schundler. In 2004 the City acquired the property through eminent domain and has raised several million dollars through private donations, state, and federal funding sources. The Embankment Preservation Coalition, who have sought advisement from Robert Hammond and Friends of the High Line, would like to included the future Embankment Park as part of the much grander East Coast Greenway, a 2600-mile trail running from Florida to Maine (Applebome, 2005).

Figure 8.9 The Stem Street View, from Flickr Commons

Potential: The High Bridge

Figure 8.10 The High Bridge, from New York City Parks

Built in 1848 to connect Manhattan with the old Croton Reservoir in the Bronx, the High Bridge is an aqueduct-style bridge spanning 1200 feet across the Harlem River and the oldest existing bridge in New York. The structure has sat abandoned and boarded-up since the early 1970s. In 2007 Michael Bloomberg, New York City mayor and vocal champion of the High Line, committed \$50 million of city funds to restore the abandoned structure into public walkway as part of PlaNYC. His funding commitment was then matched with federal funds secured by Congressman José E. Serrano. Using a organization structure similar to what was developed by the Friends of the High, The High Bridge Coalition, a group of organizations including Friends of Highbridge Park, the New York Restoration Project and Transportation Alternatives, has been responsible for moving the project forward (Rivel, 2005).

Figure 8.11 The High Bridge Approach, from New York City Parks

Potential: The Castlefield Viaduct

Figure 8.12 Castlefield Viaduct, from Wikipedia Commons

8.12

Developers and planners have started formulating designs for a viaduct turned elevated parkway in Manchester, England on the abandoned Castlefield Viaduct. Like many other cities around the world, rail service ended on the rail line in 1969 and the viaduct was abandoned. In the intervening years a self-seeded landscape took hold atop the structure. Following a similar organization structure as the High Line, the effort is citizen led but the project is looking to high-profile backers (architects and politicians) for support. The Manchester based design firm BDP, and the non-profit Manchester center city improvement group cityco are collaboratively spearheading the project. Castlefield, the center city area that houses the viaduct, is located in a quickly gentrifying Manchester neighborhood (Linton, 2011). Much of the 19th century buildings and infrastructure have been adaptively reused and the neighborhood is a vibrant shopping and nightlife destination, very much akin to the Meatpacking and Chelsea neighborhood.

Potential: Iron Horse Trestle

Figure 8.13 Iron Horse Trestle, from Great Greenways

One final High Line-inspired project being planning is the Iron Trestle project in Saint Louis. The Iron Horse Trestle is an abandoned railroad located to the north of Downtown St. Louis, Missouri. Running a length of 1.5 miles 25 feet above the city, the structure provides access to the 11 mile Riverfront biking and walking trail that runs along the Mississippi. Efforts are underway to reclaim the trestle as a “green ribbon in the sky” and connect it to the network of parks, trails, and greenways that make up the River Ring in the St. Louis region. (greatrivers.info). Plans for the trestle include a bicycle plaza, park, public art and educational programming. Planners and advocates of the project view the trestle redevelopment as a chance to provide education and recreation opportunities to city residents, stimulate the economy, attract tourists to the region, and serve as a model project that integrates the arts, education, and sustainability (executive summary, 2007).

8.2 Implications Beyond Viaducts

The High Line story has implications that extend passed adaptation of abandoned viaducts for public space reuse. There are lessons that can be gleaned by city builders (planners, designers, and architects), decision makers, and advocacy groups. The High Line revalidates certain truths known about parks and public spaces and proves the applicability of these lessons for innovative spaces still to come. Many of these implications needed to be distilled amid the noise inherent in the story of the park: celebrity boosters, staggering costs, captivating design, hyperbolic journalism, and the rapid development of the city that occurred in step with the delivery of the High Line.

8.2.1 Implications for Community-led Urbanism

- The Friends of the High Line did it right

The advocacy group provides valuable lessons, through the High Line preservation and reuse ventures, which can be used by other groups involved in similar efforts. And beyond reuse projects, the lessons learned from the High Line story extend to advocacy groups perusing a wide range of interests. What follows are ten important steps the Friends of the High Line took in their successful endeavor:

1. Commitment to high quality design

One of the first steps that the Friends of the High Line took in their history was to contract with Pentagram, a graphic design company with an impressive resume, to create a logo from the High Line. The Friends understood early on that quality communication products were necessary to signal that the future park they built would also be a quality product. This attitude extended through every product that was produced by the group, which still continues today.

2. Took control of the narrative

The Friends of the High Line did very well was present the story of the High Line as their own. The Chelsea property owners had a long history with the project,

but the Friends reached back further and gained control of the narrative by presenting the history of the structure. Importantly, what they did was highlight the small but interesting details that emerged from the history, including the story and images of the Westside Cowboy, story of Death Avenue, and the viral fact about the last train hauling several boxcars full of frozen turkeys. Their message became the dominant voice in the news media.

3. Stressed preservation rather than a concrete future use

With purposeful intent, the Friends of the High Line stressed preservation and a reuse for the High Line, but remained uncommitted to any one specific reuse option. The Friends were able to build a consensus by letting potential supporters imagine their own future for the High Line.

4. Let key players see the unique environment firsthand

Seeing is believing. The Friends of the High Line used a strategy to bring as many important potential supports atop the structure to demonstrate the uniqueness of the structure with the self-seeded wilderness amid industrial decay and unexpected views of Manhattan and the Hudson River.

5. Used fine-art photography to convey what they couldn't articulate

To achieve the same end that bringing potential supporters to the railbed, and to reach a much wider audience, the Friends convinced a fine-art photographer to capture the experience and environment of the abandoned High Line through photographs. These photographs were used in nearly every early publication produced by the Friends. They also were housed in art galleries, used in public meetings concerning the fate of the High Line, and made available to everyone through the Friends of the High Line website.

6. Matched vision with hard feasibility

Many supporters were attracted to cause espoused by the Friends of the High Line because it was visionary and novel. The High Line, however, was not supported and funded because of its visionary nature; it required hard feasibility to move from dream to reality. The group solicited studies planning, design, engineering, and finance studies to assess the feasibility of reuse and quell the disquiet created by opponents of the project.

7. Maintained an extensive network and sustained interest

The Friends of the High Line assembled an extensive network of supporters and tapped their help whenever necessary in the battle for preservation. They maintained an extensive database of supporters and kept them informed through email newsletters, and then later through their blog and social networking sites. The group was able to raise funds when necessary, call upon supports to amass at public meetings, and sustained interest in the project during the times of less activity.

8. Generated buzz through an open ideas competition

When it was clear that preservation of the High Line was a likely outcome, the Friends of the High Line help an open ideas competition. The competition drew 720 entries from counties all around the world. The responses generated buzz for the project far beyond New York City, and captured a considerable amount of media attention and blogosphere activity.

9. Created partnerships with other key entities

The Friends of the High Line found surrounded themselves with an experienced cadre of development, design, legal, and political advisors. These advisors helped steer the project toward its preservation. The group also partnered with important non-profits and academics, which helped the group see the bigger picture and provided a context of the High Line. They also focused on winning support of all the Mayoral candidates during the election that eventually sent their most vocal advocate into office.

10. Organized like a business, not a traditional non-profit

The group hired lawyers early in the process rather than rely on unpredictable pro-bono work. This strategy was part of a conscious effort to operate with the sophistication of a business rather than like a traditional non-profit. The challenges present in the project demanded a pair of inexperienced advocates assemble a higher level of organization in a relatively short amount of time. The pair proved themselves and still remain official stewards of the park through the Friends of the High Line that has transitioned to a park conservancy.

- Demonstrates the viability of community-led efforts

The Friends of the High Line have set a new bar for an advocacy group and community-led urbanism efforts. In addition to that, they have demonstrated how forceful a community-led effort can be in defining the urban realm and delivering a public amenity that is truly creative. The grassroots nature of the project has is a large part of what make the story of the High Line so compelling for journalists, urbanists, and scholars. The process shows that community groups, if they strategically organize, can accomplish remarkable achievements. The process might seem out of reach of a small town in America, but the players, the money, the design are all scalable; the town might not have Kevin Bacon, but they could easily have a high-profile resident attuned to planning issues who could lend thief effort and status to the project. The project illustrated the importance of connections, lobbying, visioning, and hard feasibility. These qualities are not unique to New York by any means.

- Advocate for something, not against

The Friends attributed much of their success to being supportive of creating something, rather than the traditional advocacy role of stopping something. The group could have easily been for the prevention of the High Line demolition, but instead they pursued saving the structure for a use that could benefit the community at large. Advocacy groups could take a cue from this and frame the debate to pursue the creation of something rather than simply working to stop something from taking place.

8.2.2 Implications for the city builders

- New spaces still require age-old public space design principles

So much of the attention that is paid to the High Line is focused on the celebrity boosters involved, the uniqueness of an elevated park, the substantial cost, the high level of creative detailing, or the creative design elements. Unfortunately, what have been overlooked are the traditional elements of successful public space that make the experience of the High Line enjoyable for the user. While no other public space has movable wooden seating on rails that sit amid plantings, the seating arrangement on the Sundeck still fulfills the very basic public space amenity of movable seating that can accommodate various arrangements of groups and individuals oriented with a view of the action. No other park cuts through the third story of historic factories, surrounded by as many buildings designed by world-renowned architects, or has a tiered amphitheatre directly above a busy avenue, but these just fulfill basic requirements that are found in beloved public spaces around the world. The creative design elements of the High Line are novel and garner the attention but the fundamental principles of good urban design are what make the park a success. If built, a replicated High Line in another city that provided unique design elements that fail to fulfill basic needs of park users would simply be a work of art, not a beloved space able to accommodate the needs and desires of city dwellers.

- Attention to detail is important and integration of history will not be overlooked

The details of the High Line represent one of the most beloved aspects of the park. These come from the plantings, the art exhibits, the innovative design elements, and the integrated elements from the structure's former use. The detail helps create a series of unique environments along the park that call a user from each to the next. Along the way a user encounters a multitude of surprising details, and many walk through the space as though in a museum. Users were aware

of the interplay between the various elements such a city, nature, decay, history, design, landscape, concrete, etc., and appreciate that the elements of the past were saved but don't dominate the experience. The historic elements serve as a reminder of what once was but aren't heightened or highlighted, they rest at ease with contemporary design elements. The integration of history is subtle on the park, in a large part the designers just left elements they could in place and unadulterated. And while subtle, the users responded favorably to integration.

- Control without consumption

While some authors decry what the High Line represents, a highly controlled space with limited access all under the surveil of cameras and park officials, users appreciate the managed nature of the experience and escape from the city below. What many users appreciate about the experience is that it offers the control found in many highly commercialized quasi-public spaces without the spaces of consumption.

- New spaces will demand creativity

The Friends of the High Line advocated for the preservation of an industrial relic that housed an unexpected self-seeded landscape that had grown after the last train rolled along its tracks. The group crafted a creative vision that reimagined the space as a public promenade. The project illustrates that there are unexpected opportunities presented by the legacy of the past that can be repurposed for the city of the future. Huge dividends can come from city builders who are open to innovative approaches to delivering the needs of the population.

- Use the surrounding context to create a novel experience

Designers of the High Line used the surrounding context to create the unique experience found on the park. Rather than design novelty into the park, they creatively incorporated the park into the buildings and surrounding city. The strange vantage and juxtaposition of elements made the High Line compelling for preservation and designers capitalized on that experience and designed the park in context.

8.2.3 Implications for the postindustrial city decision maker

- The provision of public amenities creates a positive image of city government in the eyes of city dwellers.

The High Line has been a positive addition for Chelsea and the entire City of New York. The industrial past of the neighborhood meant the area was critically lacking in public open spaces and the High Line connected the need for green space with the push for historic preservation advocated for in Chelsea. The interviews with local residents found that the High Line instilled a positive image of New York City government. Residents and visitors alike expressed surprise and delight that a city government had supported, what they considered, such an innovative project. This is a reminder that a city officials can create trust for their government among residents if they remain open to innovative projects that filter up through the community.

- The High Line is a testament to innovative park financing

Parks are an expensive amenity for cities to build and operate. The High Line was an incredibly expensive project to plan, design, and construct. The park also has also proven to be costly to maintain and operate. This is a result of the considerable effort needed to maintain the landscape and the proportionally high number of park employees. While the City of New York incurred a considerable amount of the initial cost (over \$100 million), they are free from the cost of operations and maintenance, which are covered by the Friends of the High Line. In an age with bankrupt cities, this model of city ownership but conservator-run operations perhaps serves as a viable option to bestow residents with well-maintained public and open spaces.

- Parks create a return on investment

The City of New York spent an astonishing amount of money to bring the High Line from a derelict rail trestle to a heavily used public open space; well over \$100 million was spent by the

City for the planning, design, rehabilitation, and construction of the High Line promenade. The figure is staggering and unthinkable for most cities and it is another point of the High Line that obscures an important lesson: the investment made by cities in parks often comes back many times in terms of increases in tax revenue. City officials have long known that proximity to park raises property values. The High Line is the centerpiece of a development program for West Chelsea that brought \$4 billion in private investment, an increase in property values, and a windfall of tax revenues for the City that total at least three times what they initially invested.

- High profile projects can create a neighborhood identity

Years before the High Line ever opened to the public, the park was already a formative factor in the new identity being created for the West Chelsea Neighborhood. Articles as early as 2005 began to call the neighborhood “The High Line District” and continue to do so today. A considerable amount of attention goes to the rapid development that occurred in tandem with the park building, but what is equally important was the ability for the High Line to give an identity to a neighborhood that projected a sometimes negative and often unclear image. This neighborhood image was not just created by the High Line, but by the community members who dedicated themselves to the project.

- In addition to identity creation, citizen-led projects can help with community building

The fervent involvement of so many community members, which remains unabated today, also illuminates the power of community-led urbanism in neighborhood building. The grassroots project brought together business owners, designers, the art community, and Chelsea residents in support of preservation and reuse of the High Line. Not only did the community bring to bear a physical space to build community, but brought together a cadre of unlikely supporters from the arts, architecture, design, and creative world, not traditionally known as a politically active group in general. And the luster of the High Line hasn’t faded; even today the Friends of the High Line

have a long waiting list of interested New Yorkers who would like to volunteer in support of the park.

8.2.4 Lost Spaces to Loose Space and Repurposed Cityscapes

During the 1950s and 1960s the High Line was demolished in a piecemeal fashion as development occurred in Soho and the Village. When Robert Moses came to redevelop the West Village in the 1960s nobody so much made a noise in response to demolition of the southern section of the High Line. Advocates for preservation at the time did not think the hulking industrial relic was worth saving. In the early 1990s rumblings were heard when a large section was demolished to make way for residential development (Dunlap, 1991a). However, by 1999 there was an apparent sea change in the population of New York, and this time when developers sought to raze the structure it led to protest, which this time, saved the structure from demolition. Unthinkable a generation prior, a piece of modernist infrastructure became the center piece of a community-driven urbanism effort, not to prevent its arrival but rather to save its demise.

In response to an environment filled with architectural detritus from a previous era, termed Lost Space (Trancik, 1986), there has been a shift to an environment of Loose Space, new uses for spaces left over from the legacy of the past. As cities have shifted from centers of manufacturing to postindustrial sites filled with creative class knowledge workers, the demands of residents have changed by the physical structure of the past remains. What the story of High Line perhaps illuminates is that there has been a loosening of space and designers, planners, city officials, and community groups are cognizant of the change and have found the lost spaces of the past and now readapt them to suit the needs of the present.

Areas of Future Study

The main thrust of this research effort was to provide an in depth overview of the High Line creation, role players, design, and perception of the space and city by answering the several research questions posed at the onset of this study. Analysis of the findings and implication reveal several areas of future study. Understanding the High Line and planning process through further study could prove to be highly beneficial for the City of New York as they embark on future planning endeavors, and for cities across the globe, as they undertake efforts to create similar projects. Additionally, there could be future areas of study on the High Line in this similar vein that could yield insight for planners, advocacy groups, and city officials.

Figure 9.1 A High Line Advertisement

- Further study into the effectiveness of the transfer development rights program. This program proved to be an effective tool to appease those with monetary interest in tearing down the highline structure. An in depth look at how these development rights were used,

where they were used, how effective they were, and how this program can be replicated in other areas could be an interesting course of study.

- In-depth economic study to fully understand the return on investment of the highline and subsequent building in the area
 - By completing formal studies into the return on investment for the city because of this project, New York can provide invaluable insight into the economic benefits of investing in public space. If other cities have an understanding of these benefits perhaps they would be more inclined to provide public amenities when there is a clear economic return on their investment.
- Study to obtain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced and overcome (or not overcome) during the entire process.
 - Challenges faced during the high line creation process were examined in depth through archival research for this thesis. It is suggested that extended in-depth interviews with as many role players as possible would be highly beneficial in order to glean a better understanding of the challenges that were not covered by the media.
- Study into the impact that a project, such as the highline, can have on the perception and public sentiment of city government and bureaucracy.
 - Through research it appears as if projects such as the highline, which are high profile and innovative, can have a positive impact on public sentiment. Understanding these non-monetary benefits of public space creation is crucial for other cities wishing to undertake similar projects.

- Further study into the financing process, how it can be replicated, especially the public/private aspects of it.
 - The High Line was unique in that the financing of the project was innovative in several ways.
 - Cities can learn from the financing of the highline.
- User observations, surveys and monitoring over time to understand the relevancy of the park as it matures.
- Deeper look at the advocate's strategy including the marketing of the highline as an idea, the PR done during the process, the high profile people involved. Could be really groundbreaking to understand how planning ideas and projects can be "sold" effectively to the public.
- A longitudinal study to assess the High Line beyond it being a buzz space. If other cities copy the project, will it remain the lofty project it is today? Further it a study would be merited into the Friends of the High Line as the park conservator and how the group raises funds for the expensive park and how that approach changes over time. This might be a sustainable model that cities, large and small, can use to enliven their public spaces through careful management.

There is little doubt that further study into the high line can reveal invaluable insight for planners, designers, financiers, advocates, and city officials.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Primary Researcher Notes

Wednesday March 16, 2:30 PM

We made our approach to the High Line from the south in the afternoon after the rainstorm had passed. The first portion of the rail line that was encountered was at the Westbath building. Here the line is still in its state of decay: graffiti still abuts the line, wild growth can be seen from the street, and the line is rusted and decrepit. Here the decaying line reflects the surrounding uses that are older and most likely house industrial uses.

The southern entrance to the High Line is an impressive sight. The former rail bed dramatically hangs above the entrance plaza, which is clean and very well maintained. Signage is clear and immediate; the person who stumbles upon the park would know that it is a public space. Trees at the glass railing further announce that the promenade is vegetated above. On the eastern side of the entrance the character of the neighborhood changes dramatically; the industrial uses give way to well-maintained sidewalks with boutiques that have given the facades of the buildings a recent facelift. The western side still has a distinctly industrial character. At the entrance the Standard Hotel looms large and the bright colors and green glass are a striking contrast to the surroundings that are heavier materials: black metal, aging brick, and dark asphalt.

As you ascend the stairs the Standard Hotel fills the view until you reach the rail bed level. However, once you are at the park level the view opens to a 360-degree view of Manhattan and the Hudson River. The path at the entrance is narrow and urges you forward. The contrast between the hustle and bustle below and a calm serenity above is the first thing that you notice at the top of the stairs. The plantings are low grasses and bare, short trees. Exposed tracks are in place in the bed. There are only a few people visible, but I'm mostly focused on the design elements and the views available to me. As I first move along it is really surprising how quiet it is on the park. Below was the normal New York City buzz of activity and noise, yet somehow above it's incredible quiet.

As I move along the High Line I take in the views on each side. New Jersey looks surprisingly attractive from up here and the Hudson River is stunning. On the other side the Meatpacking District is visible and what striking at street level, the clean and slick boutiques, disappears and the industrial charm becomes visible. You can easily imagine the cars replaced with horse carts, the retail shops become butcher shops, and the brick

streets...well those remain the same, and this helps quickly see the street as it once was.

The few people on the High Line seem like they are following my same path heading uptown. Groups of two are the most common, but individuals can be easily found as well. More individuals are sitting on the benches, and many of them are reading or talking on the phone. The weather is chilly, but not entirely unpleasant. It's not uncomfortable to walk the length of the park nor to take a seat and watch the passersby or watch the Hudson. Many of the visitors to the High Line are armed with expensive cameras and unapologetically take photos of anything and everyone they come across. If I didn't know any better I'd think that the High Line is a portrait studio.

The several interior spaces of the park are completely devoid of people. Today these are cold and dark and so those out on a stroll increase their pace as they move through the enclosed areas. A few art exhibits can be found inside the building spaces but today there hasn't been anyone stopping to view the displays. The second building space houses the very impressive Spencer Finch window exhibit. The bright colors are a nice juxtaposition to the dark interior space.

As the day moves on more visitors appear on the High Line. A common sight of the visitors is constant pointing out toward the horizon as the views open up. People seemingly move from view to view and stop at each to point and discuss what it is they see. The one spot where visitor will linger the longest is the "traffic amphitheatre" that is right above the center of 10th Avenue. Rows of benches parallel 10th Avenue and windows give view to traffic as it moves uptown. Those seated in this area don't seem to really notice the traffic, or the views of the city but instead engage in conversation.

Toward the northern end the plantings again become more prominent and the path narrows at the approach of the current terminus, which is blocked by a chain link fence. Many people gather at the end to read the information about the park and the expansion that is slated to open in the coming months. Some of the visitors express disappointment, hoping that their visit was in time for the opening.

The two exits at the northern end are the most prominent on the line. The others in the middle section are much less visible. The uses along the park also change near the top. The Meatpacking district gives way to automobile oriented uses, such as a gas station and several parking lots. There also appears to be more buildings under construction visible at points further north. These buildings look like luxury condos and have a more modern style with brighter colors and materials than surrounding

buildings. This is also the least enclosed space of the High Line with no buildings nearby on either side.

At street level the character of the neighborhood is remarkably different from the southern end. Immediately to the east, now in Chelsea, are neighborhood streets that, while nicely maintained, don't have the clean feel that the Meatpacking district does. Car traffic is heavier on 10th Avenue and foot traffic appears to be a little light.

Thursday March 17, 10:30AM

Weather-wise today was a nicer day, sunny and in the low 60's. Today we approached the High Line from 18th Street through the Chelsea neighborhood. While at the south end you arrive on the High Line through the rail bed, at the current northern terminus you enter from the side up a clearly visible staircase. The staircase is flanked by backside of the large billboard that is very prominent when you traverse the High Line heading uptown. The staircase rises 6 feet above the rail bed and becomes a popular spot to take pictures from and on.

The more favorable weather has a dramatic effect on the number of visitors to the park. Today there are at least three times the numbers up on the High Line. I walk the length of the park a couple of times in order to see how it's being used on a nicer day. For one, there are more people seated on the benches throughout the park by themselves. Again these solo visitors can be seen reading, studying, or talking on the phone. There are also more pairs of people seated as well, most of these talk while some can be seen reading from guidebooks. Still the majority of users walk the length of the park and most often heading in an uptown direction. The interior spaces are still mostly unoccupied (it's noticeably colder inside), however people have been spending time with the several art exhibits. There are also High Line staff doing maintenance, planting, and walking the park.

With simple observations and photographs recorded, I decide that it's time to begin interviewing/surveying park users. On the streets of Manhattan it would be nearly impossible to chase down the speedy pedestrians, but on the High Line the average pace of those strolling is more similar to people at a museum. Visitors are chosen at random, rather than just those who seem easiest to approach. This method proves perfectly adequate and every person or groups of people I approach are more than willing to participate in a brief interview and survey. In fact most every respondent seems almost delighted to express their views of the High Line and the surrounding neighborhoods.

It's surprising, but most of the interview subjects are from the immediate neighborhoods: Chelsea and the West Village. These respondents have the most to say and are clearly informed about the history of the project and their surroundings neighborhoods. These respondents talk longer than those from elsewhere and go above and beyond the questions asked. While the local crowd talks longer, those from out of town will often follow up our interview with questions of me about the project and become interested in the history and role-player discussions that we have. My target for the day is to conduct 12 user surveys, which does not require much time at all.

At lunch time the park quickly fills with visitors who bring food purchased from the local lunch spots. The two spots that are most favored today are the 10th Avenue Amphitheatre and the Diller-Von Furstenberg Lounge Area. Groups of 3 or more are more common during lunch. By 2PM the lunch-rush has ended but the number of visitors at the park still remains high.

The presence of vendors has increased today. All of the vendors are confined to the first interior space and the items they have for sale are small pieces of art: pinhole photography, wind art to hang outside, and similar items. As I walk back and forth, I rarely see any of the park patrons giving much more than a passing glance at the vendors and their merchandise. This holds true when I conduct observations.

Friday March 18, 2:00PM

I'm told that today is a record high temperature in New York City. It's 76 and perfectly sunny today. As a result of the nice weather, the park is teeming with visitors when the research team arrives. We walk the length of the park several times and note the behaviors that we can see. There are more children, most of whom prefer to play in the amphitheatre and the bench area just beyond, where the benches are used as slides. For the third day in a row we see a group of young children at the park on a field trip. From what we can overhear they are learning about the plants on the High Line and also about the city below.

Again we begin today with brief interviews of the visitors. The crowds and nice weather mean people have queued to view the exhibit and are very happy to discuss their thoughts with us. My impression was that of the survey respondents today over half are from New York City, and mostly from Chelsea and the West Village. This is surprising; I had figured that we'd be seeing mostly tourists at the park. Most have responded that that they are there on that particular day because they had to come out and enjoy the nice day and the High Line is their favorite spot to come when it's nice. In fact quite a few interviewees suggested

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that they have called in sick or taken the day off from work in order to spend it outdoors on the High Line. One woman who lives nearby told me “there is a strong summer association with the High Line. If it’s nice out you’re either hear or at Central Park, but mostly here.” This sentiment is reflected in many of the users who all seem to have an orientation toward the sun. The sun deck area is packed, and most of the chaise lounges are occupied. The other benches are filled too, often with people laying on their backs in the sunshine.

Even though many people might have played hooky today there is a substantial lunch crowd in the amphitheatre again today, everyone seems to be armed with a camera or two, and students are out in force with textbooks and readers. The behaviors observed are mostly the same as seen on the previous two days with the exception of the short sleeves and the sun worship.

The final task for today once interviews and observations are complete is to take a series of photographs from each seat on the High Line. One picture was taken at eye level facing each direction on the seat. In total 55 photographs were taken in each direction.

Saturday March 19, 12:00PM

Today was another nice and sunny day on the park; however, temperatures were considerably lower than yesterday. Today brought crowds on par with the previous day. As I expected, they general make-up of the visitors was different today with more visitors from outside of the immediate area. While not at all tourists, these were visitors from the other boroughs of New York. Larger groups were more common on the weekend observations, including many multi-generational families. Many middle-aged respondents had suggested they were there to bring their older parents. Children on the park are left to semi-supervised play, especially at the amphitheatre and the landing with benches just above. The High Line provides one of the safest and most comfortable spaces in New York City, or in any major city for that matter.

A large portion of visitors to the park can be overheard speaking foreign languages. French, German, Italian, and Spanish are most commonly overhead, and therefore I’m willing to posit that there are just as many foreign tourists, if not more, than domestic tourists that visit the High Line.

The ease of access to interviews and the insightful responses that are provided are no different today than the previous. Today I encountered a group of design professionals: landscape architect, urban design, planner, and architect. For them the High Line was there first place they needed to see in New York. The urban

design professional was at the park to observe the materials used for inspiration for a public plaza he was currently designing. The landscape architect told me he couldn't wait to return to the office and put on paper all the great ideas he now had for his professional practice. The urban planner expressed that the experience of being on the High Line was transformative in terms of her view of public space and the nature of cities. What I find remarkable is, not when design professionals speak in these terms, but when tourists do the same, and many of them do. Many speak to new appreciation of public spaces, cities, and/or design.

Today the park staff has taken notice of our activities and has approached to inquire into what we are doing. After explaining that we are there for academic research and aren't soliciting, which is prohibited, they see no problem and wish us luck. Not only does the park staff approach today, three other park users do as well to inquire what I am studying. I wasn't being particularly conspicuous, but I was noticed doing observations. I can imagine few instances where people who are generally interested and excited by a researcher would approach me in a public space. Perhaps it's the draw of the High Line for researchers that makes users aware; a group of photography students and a filmmaker have approached me today.

Sunday March 20, 6:00PM

The nice weather has disappeared and things are more seasonable for New York in March today. It's colder and the wind from the Hudson River is biting. Despite the weather, there are still plenty of visitors to the High Line on the cold Sunday evening. I believe the main attraction today is the magnificent sunset on the Hudson River. Most of the visitors stroll from the southern end and head uptown and the stationary activity is concentrated in the amphitheatre and on the chaise lounges. The lights from traffic on 10th Avenue make the tiered seating a nice place to watch the city activity and provide a respite from the wind, while the sundeck provides the best view of the sunset.

More pictures are taken during the sunset period than I've seen thus far. It's mostly small groups out for strolls tonight and I there are far less children than during the other observation times. I conduct a few brief interviews, but the cold doesn't make the best environment for standing around so I stick to mostly observations and video recordings. The High Line staff suggests that these are the right conditions for a marriage proposal, so I'm hoping I can record some video of such an occurrence. This has to be that the High Line is immaculate, without a single thing out of place or without some intention. That couples with the city backdrop that is just far enough removed that the sounds, smells,

and grit of New York below disappear and what's left almost feels like a Hollywood set of a perfect urban setting.

The high degree of intention with every inch of the park is not lost on the children who use the park as a playground. One child was heard to ask what a particular branch of a barren tree was "there for." For the first time the lights are on at the park. These were hardly noticeable during the daytime, but now all of the plantings have thin light fixtures that emit a soft glow. The underside of railings and benches also now illuminate in a similarly soft glow.

The neighborhoods below are all but empty tonight and the boutiques have been shuttered for a few hours. The vehicle traffic in the Meatpacking District, while always lighter than elsewhere, is almost non-existent tonight. The serenity and isolation that one feels on the High Line are both amplified tonight, and the park is all the better for it. This is probably my favorite time at the park given the soft illumination, the sunset on the river, and the bright glow that the low sun gives to the buildings on the eastern edge of the park.

While none of the video clips capture a proposal of marriage, they do capture many of the common observed behaviors. Couples stroll along the park while chatting and look in each direction, pointing and discussing the sights they see. Young and old alike bound down the amphitheatre steps or attempt to race the boundaries by running the zigzag path downward. A group huddles together on the chaises to watch the sunset over the river. And a pair of joggers reaches the northern terminus and turn and job back downtown.

Monday March 21, 10:00AM

It's a cold and rainy day in New York. Visitors on the High Line are almost non-existent and the neighborhoods below are equally devoid of activity. With the weather turning and too few people to observe, the research team decides to make Monday a half day of observations. A few final interviews are conducted, and even with the weather the park visitors are in good spirits. Observations suggest that the only activity on the High Line on rain days is walking through and inspecting the elements on and beyond the park. Stationary activity is more limited than witnessed before.

Appendix B: Secondary Researcher Notes

DAY 1

Today we conducted an initial walking survey of the highline. Seeing the highline for the first time when it was not very crowded (there were a total of about 30 people on the park at the time) allowed for an important and complete examination of the park itself, before observing behaviors. I had seen a few pictures of the highline before today, and read a bit about it, but was stepping onto the park with very preconceived notions as to what I would see or experience.

Some first impressions that stood out about the park were:

- The integration of the original rail tracks and railing are very well done. Since the plants are dormant for the winter, the rail tracks are especially visible. As the week went on, I was pleased to learn that many people noticed the careful integration of the original Highline infrastructure. I thought that most people would overlook the rail lines and historic railings that ran along either side of the Highline, and use the park as a park, and I couldn't believe how many people approached the Highline like a museum or work of art.
- I was surprised to see people jogging along the highline. Most people seemed to be strolling and enjoying the views, but there were some people jogging and running.
- I was surprised to see how many people were spending time on the highline simply looking at the city. The highline, because of its location on the river, and position above ground, lends itself to watching people and cars on the street, and simply seeing the city in a different way. I was expecting most people on the Highline to either be using it as a park, or to be inspecting the Highline itself for its design and function. It seemed to me through observation, that while people appreciated the highline, and many were there using it as a public space, eating their lunches, or strolling, the majority of the people on the Highline spent some time leaning on the railing, talking with friends and pointing at the city around them. Many of the conversations I overheard included discussions of the surrounding neighborhood, buildings that people hadn't noticed before, and how surprised people were that there was such a great view of the river from this spot.
- My favorite part of the highline was the amphitheater, fronted with glass, that faces the street. This part of the highline allows individuals to watch the traffic and street life below. Given the number of people on the highline I observed simply looking down at the city, this amphitheater seemed to be an excellent use of space. Later in the week, when I spent more time observing behavior, it became clear that this was one of the most popular spots for people to sit on the highline.
- The indoor art exhibit, a demonstration of various bells from the city of New York at different times in history is an incredible use of space. On the minute, each minute, a bell rings in one of the interior space, sometimes surprising those passing through along the highline. I observed several people sitting in front of the plaque about the art project listening to each bell, and several people walking through the area talking about the art project. Throughout the week I observed people appreciating this unique art project.

As our observation time moved on the highline began to fill with more people doing a variety of activities. Some came up to use the benches to eat lunch or a snack, others came to stroll, and some just came to relax.

DAY 2

Today was warmer than yesterday, and the highline was much more crowded. It was great to be able to observe the highline from before lunch, during lunch, and after the lunch rush to see how behaviors change on the park during different times of the day.

One thing I noticed was that there were more vendors (of art) on the highline. I was actually surprised to see vendors allowed on the highline. While they didn't seem that popular with people on the highline (maybe because most of the people during the week at lunch time seemed to be locals eating lunch) they did add an aspect of urban life up on this park.

Today I also began to notice a bit more how controlled the highline felt. During observation time, I noticed a handful of people wearing highline shirts either restoring landscaping, walking the highline, or answering people's questions. This made the park seem controlled, and I had mixed feelings about uniformed people walking the highline. It was a clear reminder that this was not a true public space, but was privately run and tightly controlled.

I was surprised at how friendly people were when approached to talk with me about the highline. About half the people I talked with were tourists, and half were locals. Both types of individuals had great things to say about the highline, many people remarked that they were surprised at the highline, and that the highline, and new types of public space like the highline are an indication of the changes happening in the City of New York. Several people even remarked that recently New York has become "friendlier" and the highline reflects the desire of New Yorkers to spend more time outside, with one another, and interacting in new ways with the city. Other people remarked that they were pleased to see that people in the City are willing to spend money to make places like this for all citizens to enjoy.

One of the most interesting interviews I conducted today was with a group of students and their teacher from a local school. The students were enjoying their time on the Highline, and they noted that they didn't know that something "this cool" existed in their neighborhood. When I asked the teacher why she brought her students to the area she stated that she wanted to show them "how beautiful" their city could be.

DAY 3

Today was another warm day. This, and the fact that it is a weekend, makes for very crowded conditions on the highline, and I was able to complete a number of interviews with Highline users. Today's interviews are the first time I hear people saying things they don't like about the highline. Most of these concerns are minor and are related to the fact that it is winter, and the trees have no leaves and the flowers are not blooming. Other concerns include the fact that the planted areas are cordoned off with temporary markers that were clearly an afterthought to the overall design of the highline. Observation suggests that this was necessary to keep people from walking through the planters, and killing the plants. One young man stated that he didn't like all of the construction along the Highline, both of buildings surrounding the Highline, and construction on the Highline itself.

Today I was mainly stationed near the traffic amphitheater. I noticed several people tripping on the raised edges of the concrete pavers, this may be a design element that the designers should look into changing for the remaining parts of the highline. Many people seemed to enjoy the art pieces, and several people, during our interview, remarked that they wanted more art pieces on the highline to make it more interactive.

It was also interesting to hear what people thought about vending on the highline. It seemed to me that about half the people I spoke with thought there should be food vending up on the highline, and half the people felt that there should absolutely not be any commercial activity on the highline. One person even noted that the highline seemed to be one of the only places in the city where they were free from commercial activity, and it was a nice repose. Those that were opposed to vending seemed to feel very strongly that there should be no vending on the Highline. It will be interesting to see how vending is handled in the future as the Highline expands.

I began to take note of the specific words that people used when describing the highline, and I noticed that MANY people seemed to like the highline because it was a break from the bustling city, but they still felt like part of the city. Words used included: repose, quiet, calm, and removed. One student even noted that he “felt like a bird” because he was able to look down on the city from a quiet viewpoint, but was still in the city. Several people also noted that they enjoyed the highline because it was separate from traffic, and they could walk for longer than a block without worrying about conflicts with cars.

It was also interesting to observe how different people used the various parts of the highline as it began to get more crowded. The weekend activities were clearly different from weekday activities. During the weekday, many people used the Highline as a lunch spot. During the weekend, people used the Highline for almost everything. One of the most noticeable differences was that there were many more children on the weekend. While there was nothing on the highline provided specifically for children, like play furniture, etc. many seemed to have a great time on the park. The park benches, which adults enjoyed to sit on, provided entertainment for small children as they slid down their sloped sides. Children seemed to also enjoy peering out over the city and watching the cars and boats pass by.

DAYS 4, 5, 6

Today we were able to go to the highline in the evening, around sunset. It was great to be able to see the park at this time, and the views over the Hudson were incredible as the sun was setting. Unfortunately today was a colder day, and as the sun was setting the highline was windy and chilly. There were still a few people and groups of people enjoying the view and taking an evening stroll.

The temperature made it impossible to conduct interviews today, but the success of the previous days interviewing made interviews today unnecessary. It was informative, however, to walk the highline during sunset and observe people using the park during the evening. Several people were sitting and talking in the traffic amphitheater, and others were strolling and watching the sunset. I can imagine that during summer evenings, the Highline is a very popular place to enjoy the outdoors.

OVERALL OBSERVATIONS

After spending a week talking with people on the Highline, observing behaviors, and taking pictures in the park, I found I had a deep appreciation for the park and the effort that went into its design. Every space on the Highline seemed to be useable. The designers clearly put a lot of

thought into how to make the park a playful place for adults, where one could forget about work, city life, and traffic, but still feel like part of the City.

Talking with people for interviews allowed me to understand how both locals and visitors interpret the place, and how it changed their view of the City. I was really surprised at how many locals were at the park with friends from out of town. The Highline really seemed to be a destination in the City. Several people I talked with had only a day or a few hours in the City, and they chose to spend some of this time on the Highline. I was also surprised to hear how many people made remarks about how they discovered something new about a neighborhood they thought they knew well by being on the Highline. People discovered new views of their city, new buildings in the neighborhood, and some even seemed to have gained a new appreciation for public spaces and the beauty of New York City. Several people remarked to me that the thing they liked best about the Highline was people watching, and that it was an especially great activity on the Highline because people seemed to be really happy when they were on the Highline.

Appendix C: Archival Research Sample Page

Article	Date	Source	Role-Players	Role	Context	Design	Quotes
Which Track for the High Line Article about the role players and their various view of the High Line	31-Dec-00	New York Times	Friends of the High Line	Advocate	hazard, threatening, obstruction, inhibiting development, lowering property values	Promenade Plantee in Paris	
			Philip Aarons Chelsea Property Owners Group CSX Transportation Rudy Giuliani Joseph Rose Irwin Cohen (director of ATC Management, opposed) Jerome Gottenson (Edison Properties, owner of entire block under High Line, opposed) Douglas Sarini (Edison, Chelsea Property Owners) Robert Hammond (Friends of the High Line) Joshua David (Friends of the High Line) Design Trust for Public Space (establish fellowships for design for the promenade) Andrea Woodner (Design Trust) Jerrold Nadler (House Representative, advocate) C Virginia Fields (Borough President, advocate) Municipal Art Society (advocate) Lynden B. Miller (designer, advocate)	Friends of the High Line, no stake just a civic duty Opposition, willing to pay to tear it down owner, not sure what to do, obtained it in 1999, \$400k year for ownership Mayor, opposed City Planning Commission Chair, opposed Unrealistic to expect a non-transportation use Dangerous and decrepit Structurally sound Not the center of Paris, this is not near an opera house. What are they going to see? Irreplaceable corridor linking West Side neighborhoods Highline essential to maintain the character of the neighborhood	floating carpets of meadowland improbably rolled through raw industrial area intimate and isolated Will stimulate appropriately scaled development Blighting effect on property Barriers in finance, operation, maintenance, operation, and liability Unrealistic to expect a non-transportation use Dangerous and decrepit Structurally sound Not the center of Paris, this is not near an opera house. What are they going to see? Irreplaceable corridor linking West Side neighborhoods Highline essential to maintain the character of the neighborhood	Shaped by community Part of Rails to Trails network Inviting pedestrian corridor from the West Village to whatever is built at the rail yards Landscape to move though, place to people to meet for supper	
In This Pool, a Single Lap Is a Workout Article about the design competition	1-Jun-03	New York Times	Robert Hammond Vishan Chakrabarti Michael Bloomberg	Friends of the High Line Director of Manhattan Office of City Planning Advocate, embraces preservation		Sponsored design competition for the High Line	"Something great will occur"
Designers Dream on Paper of a City Park Called the High Line Article about the design competition, 720 entries were submitted from 38 countries, they selected around 100 for the competition, which was held at Grand Central Terminal for two weeks	3-Jun-03	New York Times	Robert Hammond Joshua David	Friends of the High Line Friends of the High Line	daisies, wild grasses, a crap apple tree grow on the high line	Elevated promenade	
Millions Set For Public Space City commits \$15.75 million for rehabilitation of the High Line	10-Jul-03	New York Times	Gifford Miller	City Council Speaker			"We hope this will serve as a catalyst"
Boldface Names Opening reception of exhibit	11-Jul-03	New York Times	Edward Norton Patricia Hearts	Booster; Host of design competition opening reception Booster; local resident	Giant planter choked with unintended vegetation	Grassy promenade	"Exactly the kind of strange miracle that only happens in New York" & "I can't really overstate the impact [my first visit] had on me"
Move to Reclaim Rail Line Receives Bipartisan Push	25-Jul-03	New York Times	Gifford Miller	City Council Speaker	Antiquated eyesore	Lush park	"We believe we can turn this space into one of New York's great places"
			Surface Transportation Board Coalition of Property Owners Michael Bloomberg Roger Nober	Federal Transportation Panel, decides on the fate of High Line and needed to untangle the legal issues involved in reuse Had won Federal backing in 1992 to tear down the High Line, supported by Rudy Giuliani, failed because they couldn't agree on the price in favor of the project, will block any attempt to raze the High Line Transportation Board Chairman, confused	Spine that connects three rapidly evolving and exciting neighborhoods Rusting incongruity and hulking relic Verdant deck of tall native grasses and wildflowers	Signature development	"Engine for economic growth for the neighborhoods" "Back then, elected officials were saying the High Line had to come down. Why is it now in the public interest to maintain it?"
From Rail to Ruin	November 2 2003	New York Times			Nondescript Art deco railings Incongruously elegant bounds Juxtaposition of high density urban development with hardy urban nature is nowhere on earth so stark or so exciting Lure for 2012 Olympic bid	Understanding of history Nature preservation, even in the most unlikely circumstances Space to breathe, space to celebrate its past and its uniqueness	
Elevated Visions	July 11 2004	New York Times	Joel Sternfeld Friends of the High Line City Officials Field Operations & Diller, Scofield & Renfro Steven Holl Architects Zaha Hadid Architects Terragram	Photographer, took famous pictures of the High Line in 2000 Judge of competition Judge of competition Competition Finalist Competition Finalist Competition Finalist	Eerie serenity		"The park of the future will be built on industrial sites like this one"

Appendix D: Survey Instrument

DATE		MO.		DAY		CITY		STATE		ZIP		CITY		STATE		ZIP	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
<p>What's your Zip Code?</p>																	
<p>Has The High Line Changed Your Perspective of New York in any way?</p>																	
<p>Have you discovered anything new about New York while on/because of the High Line?</p>																	
<p>What are things you most like about the High Line?</p>																	
<p>Is there anything that you don't like about the High Line?</p>																	
<p>What brought you to the High Line today?</p>																	

GRUMMAN AIRCRAFT ENGINEERING CORP. Thank you!

Appendix E: Interview Results

Survey #	Where did you first hear about the High Line?	Zip Code	Changed Your Perspective?	Discovered Anything New?	What Do You Most Like?	Dislike?	Reason For Visit?	Notes
1	Friends of the High Line	Chelsea	Awesome thing about what public space can be	How great NY can be	People, outdoor/natural space above the street	Nope	Sit and make phone calls, came out of the way a bit, vegetation	
2	Knew about it from the neighborhood	West Village	Supportive of similar projects	No	Coolness, landscaping	Nope	Sun and fresh air	
3	Friend	New Haven, CT	How nice a park can be	No	Really good use of space, nice area to walk around and sit	Nope	Research	Phd student taking pictures for 3D modeling software
4	Daughter in Planning School	Piedmont, CA	Pace of gentrification	Urban Planning in general	Bells art exhibit, plants, city views	Nope	Tourist, close by other amenities, exercise	Creative field
5	Outside Magazine	Cleveland, OH	Neighborhood	Views	Standard Hotel	Nope	Tourist, close by other amenities, exercise	
6	New York Times	Long Island, NY	How nice it is to be above the street but still outside	The View, possibility of urban space	Earth in the middle of train tracks, someone thought to do this	Nope	Wandering around, nice day, been meaning to get here and was in the neighborhood	Athlete
7	Living Social	Denver, CO	Different point of view to the City	Place to bring a group, friends	Seeing things you wouldn't otherwise notice	Nope	To finally see it, came specifically for the High Line	Travel Agent
8	Blog	New Jersey	New take on the City, been coming to New York all my life	Serenity that is possible above the street	Serenity	Nope	Meaning to see it	
9	NYU Class	Chelsea	Interest in Public Space	History of the area	Train tracks, wild growth, reappropriation, integration of history, industrial feel	Not enough of it	Sunshine, came out of my way to study up here	Urban Planning student at NYU
10	Friend	West Village	Relaxation that's possible in the City	appreciate the addition of more nature in the city	Plantings, what naturally grows here	The No dogs rule	Beautiful day	NYU Art Student
11	Friend	Chelsea	Being above traffic but part of it	No	Vendors, rolling chairs	Nope	Live near by, come here all the time	NYU Art Student
12	Live in the Neighborhood	West Village	Caused me to think about New York more than anything else before	New Streets	History and the tracks, condos nearby	Accessibility	Weather	
13	New York Times	Upper West Side	Being high, seeing the cross streets from above	Hudson River/West Side Development	Plantings, neighborhood, restaurants nearby	Accessibility, can't bring everyone because of the limited access, how easy it is to trip	Galleries in Chelsea	
14	Friend	Queens, NY	Exactly what New York is.	Nice Views, traffic	Sunny, water, sit or walk, people and vendors	Nope	Sit and read, the sunshine	
15	Request for money from the Friends of the High Line	Chelsea	Exactly what New York is capable of	New boutiques that sell \$750 t-shirts	Friends of the High Line, casual, natural, interesting views	Lack of food vendors	Beautiful day, go for a walk	
16	Seeing the project	Chelsea	When do you don't think New York can get any better it does	No	Very creative, wonderful to stroll, design, native plants	Tripping	Been away and wanted to see if the new section was open	
17	Friend	Union Square	The High Line is very New New York	Summer association	Amphitheatre, Summertime, design	Dead plants	Nice day	Creative field
18	Friend	Brooklyn	History	Recycling of City	No vendors, design, when the plants are alive	Should be more events	Chat, nice day	Creative field urban planning student
19	Blog	Brooklyn	Views from this high, better place to see the city	Cleaner neighborhood	Everything about it, the design, history, and views	Nope	Friends form out of town	
20	Live in the Neighborhood	Chelsea	Discover something new each time	No	Plantings	The money could have been used for other things	Nice day, peace	
21	Took a tour before it opened	Chelsea	No	Process of how these things happen	Perspective	Tourists	Waiting for new section	
22	Other Professional	Washington	Cleaner and safer	Potential for reproposing the industrial landscape	Plantings	Nope	Professional curiosity	Landscape Architect
23	Landscape Architecture Magazine	Boston	Possibility	What structures can be kept in the urban environment	Design and views	Too early to tell	Hobby farmer looking inspiration	Landscape Architect
24	Journal	Reston, VA	Too early to tell	High perspective	Native plants	Nope	Urban designer looking at materials	Urban Designer
25	Professor	Brookline, MA	Definitely	New buildings, nature in the city	Plantings, nature that is overtaking the city	Nope	Taking portraits for photo class	Photography student

	Where did you first hear about the High Line?	Zip Code	Changed Your Perspective?	Discovered Anything New?	What Do You Most Like?	Dislike?	Reason For Visit?	Notes
26	Mayor's Office during the planning stages	Brooklyn	Makes the city greener, healthier, and cleaner	No	Great place to walk and watch the people and city, plantings, best place to sit, great view of buildings	Sometimes it's not easy to walk on the narrow paths	Brought father who is visiting from out of town figured he'd like it	Planner Mayor's office
27	News Article	San Francisco	Wonderful City	What it's like to be above the hustle-bustle but still be in the city	Design	Nope	Glorious day, first day in New York	
28	Friend	New Haven, CT	Attention to detail	Bench design is amazing	Design	Nope	Had to see it	
29	New York Times	Rensselaer, NY	New neighborhood that we wouldn't have normally visited, gentrification	New neighborhood, luxury in this part of town	Accessibility, tracks, integration of the rustic with city and plants	Nope	To do the best New York things	Professor at RPI
30	Blog	East Village	Making it "green" in a way	Architecture of the area is very different from other areas	The space, allows you to see another view of the city, seating	Nope	Thesis project, interviewing people for film	Film student
31	friends	38119	the area, good way to see the neighborhood	the neighborhood	water views, makes you feel like you are not in the city, landscaping	nope	weather	
32	living in new york, heard about it	new york	reiterates how unique and special the city is	the views	it fits well into Chelsea area, green space is great, like the art piece	more elevators and ramps	day off and the weather is beautiful	
33	son lives in new york, told them	raised in new york currently in jersey	no	the highline itself	the feel, new york, but its peaceful, they preserved the history, it's a park but its very "new york" it feels authentic, the vertical lines that complement the railroad tracks motif	its not that well marked, but maybe that is not a horrible thing	weather	
34	friend	columbia	friendly place		the views, the plants, it's a great way to see the city in a different way	nope	friend told to come, the weather	first time at highline
35	new york times	kent	surprising how quiet it is more outdoors, above ground, great people watching, water views	water (the river) seeing things like buildings wouldn't normally notice	relaxing, the sun on you feels nice, its great to see people walking slowly in the city	nope	on list of things to do, leaving the city today and wanted to make sure to see it	
36	word of mouth	city		the bar next door	people watching, sitting, views, plants	plants smell bad sometimes	bringing friend from out of town	20 something girl
37	New York Times	seattle	didn't know about the city at all before this, it was his first impression of the city		love being two stories up. Its odd. Likes to sit in the "Aquarium of traffic"	not yet	working at an art gallery in the area with a friend from town who told him to come, enjoy the weather	artist
38	cousin who lives here	monterey	no, this is the first day in the city	no	old rail road tracks integrated with the plants, something you might not know about before you visit	no	cousin	student, the fact that this is the first place his cousin brought him in town is telling
39	heard about it from hotel	massachusetts	yes, both conceptually and visually, possibility of the future city		clever use of recycled space. The architectural details, the design details both large and small	more plants, and flower beds,	hotel told him to come.	relax
40	friend from NJ	Long Island, NY	"its cool", New York is cooler than I had though it	didn't know old train line was here, gave new perspective of area	the city views	hot dog stand	they were in the city, it's a FREE attraction in the city	
41	five minutes before from friends in photo club	boston	"sure" she had never been to the city, sense of history that was different than before	first time in the city	design of the benches	multi-media incorporation	photo club	photo club member they were taking photographs on the highline
42	internet newspaper	new york	"reminded me how beautiful the city is" its good to see that the city is willing to put money into parks, I'll support parks	just a new perspective on a unique city	benches, interacting with people in relaxed environment	too short!!	weather, lunch time	
43	online	the city		no	pedestrian and historic. Like the architectural elements, landscape	no	lunch and the weather, serenity	first time
44	saw people walking	new york new resident	more open	just got to the park, not sure not really, first time in the city, had no notion of what it would be like	its open, its not cramped like the rest of the city but still in it, views	doesn't like the areas that are roped off	work in the building nearby and was running errands, wanted to walk above the traffic and city on the way back	new new york resident
45	friends	los angeles	first time in the city		the intergration of concrete and grass design	no, "I would like to see it when it is green"	had three hours in the city total, had to come see this, to relax	

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46	New York Times	new jersey	see things that you would never ever see, specifically buildings	(pointed to buildings around)	openness, the whole concept of restoring something innovative and making it a park	no	friends coming to the city, suggested they do this as an activity today	
47	brother	texas	no	no	green space (later in the year)	no	brother	
48	friend	Brooklyn	no	the rail line	likes the use of the rail throughout	no	running errands	
49	urban planning class	LA	the buildings from this perspective	yes, changed perspective of cities in general	the design is "nice", spacious even with people	it looks dead	stroll	
50	reality tv show (kim and khloe)	Phoenix	different point of view to the city	makes the city seem friendlier	likes that there is no traffic, likes the "loungey chairs"	more art installations, more color	stroll	
51	magazine	scotland	gives unity to the city		location	meeting a friend in chelsea	came to chat	
52	through a friend	italy	you can see the city as a whole instead of pieces from the ground		the planting between the tracks, the seating areas are good as well. Likes that it is well maintained, free, and there are no restaurants or commercial activities	wanted to see "cool stuff" in the city	Sun and fresh air	
53	online	Queens, NY	"I feel like a bird" didn't know much before, surprising that its so nice and well done		above ground view, the art installations	the plants are dead "it didn't look like this on the computer"	its really nice outside	highschoolers from queens
54	saw it from the boat on the river	canada	its so nice and well done	good use of old train	no cars. Its elevated provides great views, seating is good design is amazing, and the people seem to be enjoying themselves. Its great for people who live near the park, plantings	wants a café	in the area and thought it would be a nice thing to visit	
55	friend	montreal	we are higher up, I understand New York better from up here			no	curiosity	
56	news	born in the city now in NJ	discovered there were tracks up here, noticed little things		elevated viewpoint. Respite from the city, the gardens, the new perspective	make it longer, make sure it doesn't become commercialized	beautiful day, spring break	
57	friends and internet	boston	one story higher, "its made me realize there is more greenspace in the city"	didn't know about the reuse of old stuff	the way the cement bleeds into the plants. The drinking fountains, anything that can get you into the sun is great, always great to see reuse of such a great ?	nope		
58	professor	texas	nice place to walk and bring friends and have coffee, seeing from different view	its cool to see where he was walking from above	the benches, its well planned	no	free time, seen the other big sights and professor of design told him to come	design student from texas
59	teacher brought them	chelsea	the city looks more beautiful	the art stuff	unique, its high up, the chairs, the walk, its tranquil	construction in the interior sections of the highline	beautiful day, the teacher wanted to "show them something beautiful about their neighborhood"	middle schoolers from the neighborhood with their teacher
60	New York Times	new york	live in upper west side, gave them a chance to come here and bring friends to this neighborhood	another neighborhood it gives context, interesting way to see the city, wouldn't come to this neighborhood normally	serendipitous, glass wall, the bells art exhibit	no, but would like signs on the plants to explain what they are	friends in town, and the weather is beautiful	
61	"the buzz"	new york	I think its exciting	can see the hudson river, from different views	layout, very aesthetically pleasing, modern but warm, rustic but wild, past, present and future	nope	proximity to where they were going originally	
62	brought here by daughter	santa rosa	looking from above is great		clean, benches, no homeless people, likes going through the buildings	there are no moving sidewalks, nothing green	brought by daughter	
63	friends with designer	from the city	yeah, different experience to be up, hear about great stuff, this is an example of a facelift for the area, feels dynamic	views	the views, sence of calm	wish it was wider, more art installations	playing hookie from work, and the 70 degree weather, peace above the city	
64	newspapers	austria	not changed, but feels like it fits in the area. Seems like it reflects the change in the city since 9/11 which is that people are friendlier	its unique, its new	design, the site, the idea behind it (preservation), the benches, wild plants	the temporary fencing off of the planters	read about it, and wanted to see it in person, wanted a relaxing experience after hectic visit	
65	online, came up on search of stuff to do	bronx	shows that the city has been doing a lot in redevelopment, this is a good example of it, nice to see that the city is behind this and excited for what could possibly come next		design is really good, like the blended concrete with train tracks and plants, exposed but not overly deliberate, the bench design is amazing	don't like that its not done yet	the one thing left on their list of things to do in the city, nice to relax	