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December 21, 2017

James Patchett
President
New York City Economic Development Corporation
110 William Street
New York, NY 10038

Dear Mr. Patchett,

I am writing in opposition to the New York City Economic Development Corporation's (NYCEDC) proposal to create a pedestrian bridge at East 54th Street ("54th Street Upland Connection"), as an access point to the 53rd to 61st Street section of the East Midtown Greenway. Construction on the new portion of the esplanade, the proposed Phase 2 of the East Midtown Waterfront Project, is scheduled to begin in 2019. Representatives from NYCEDC and the Stantec design firm have presented the current design proposal to Community Board 6's Land Use and Waterfront Committee. Community Board 6 unanimously voted against the design, and local community groups, including the Sutton Place Parks Conservancy, Sutton Area Community and the Turtle Bay Association, have expressed their concerns.

The 54th Street Upland Connection, if constructed, would impose a serious hardship on Sutton Place Park South. The park is a valuable resource to the Sutton Place community—a peaceful and open-air oasis in East Midtown. As designed, the park is beautiful and tranquil, with a historic feel. The Upland Connection as designed would harshly cut through the park, destroy the harmonious design and eliminate access to much of the space. In the design presented, the 54th Street Upland Connection would slice through a significant portion of the Clara Coffey Park portion of Sutton Place Park South, eliminate benches and encircle the Armillary Sphere that serves as a focal point for the park. The design overtakes much of the available walking space and completely overwhelms the park. Instead of creating harmonious connections to the new esplanade, the design virtually supplants the old park and renders it incidental to the massive and intrusive pedestrian bridge. Residents are also concerned that the bridge would intrude upon their privacy.

I urge NYCEDC to reconsider the placement of this pedestrian bridge in the design for the Upland Connection. A much more suitable site for an Esplanade access point can be found just one block south at East 53rd Street. Community Board 6 has requested greater consultation and an opportunity for community concerns to be heard. Given the significant encroachment on the Clara Coffey Park, I strongly urge NYCEDC to engage in real consultation with the community and to reconsider its current design and placement of the Upland Connection, consistent with all applicable rules and regulations.

Very truly yours,

CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress

CBM/dl

Please Reply To: 1651 Third Avenue, Suite 311, New York, NY 10128-3679