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## That's high 'end'

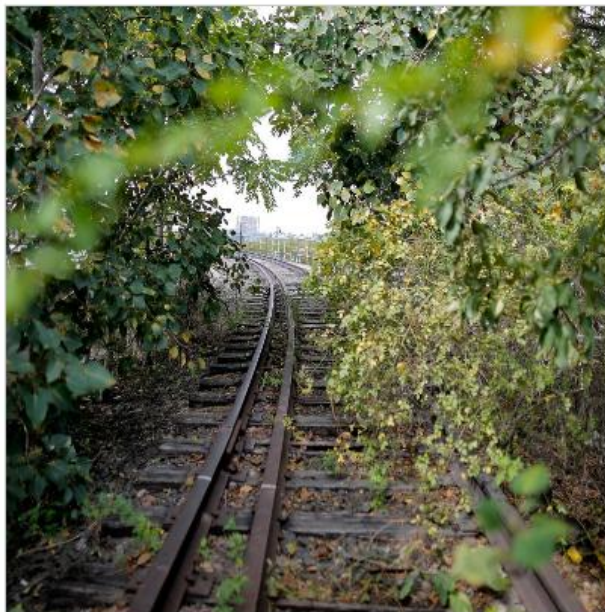
### Elevated W. Side park begins last expansion

By DAVID SEIFMAN

The High Line is growing by leaps and bounds.

Mayor Bloomberg yesterday launched a project to open the third and final section of the rail trestle, a \$90 million effort that will extend the wildly successful elevated park around the West Side rail yard.

“Mark it down,” Bloomberg said of the historic day. Elected officials and High Line supporters gathered for another milestone celebrating the mile-long stretch of urban parkland that has sparked a building boom on the Far West Side and has become one of the city’s top tourist attractions.



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**LININ' UP:** The High Line elevated park's final half-mile extension will wrap the popular tourist attraction around West Side rail yards and up to 34th Street. The expansion plan is expected to cost \$90 million and be completed by 2014.

The extension from 30th to 34th streets will loop around the proposed Hudson Yards development that will be built above the rail yard and add another half-mile of parkland with astonishing views of the Hudson River, the West Side’s new high-rises and the rail yards.

An interim walkway along that final stretch is scheduled to open in 2014.

The Related Companies and Oxford Properties, which are developing the rail properties into the city’s newest neighborhood, chipped in \$27.8 million toward the \$90 million price tag, while the city added \$10 million and private donors \$20 million.

One of the largest donors, designer Diane von Furstenberg, proclaimed the park a “dream that didn’t seem possible” when she moved to the Meatpacking District 13 years ago. Now,

she said, “This has been an example all over the world.”

Officials said the total contributions of von Furstenberg and husband Barry Diller have reached an astounding \$35 million.

Diller said he was sorry the project was coming into the home stretch.

“Truly, I’d like to start all over again,” he declared.

To underscore plans to retain much of the final section in its wild form, Bloomberg joined students from Clinton Middle School in Chelsea in tossing native grass and wildflower seeds in a unique “break-ground” ceremony.

The mayor also used the occasion to trumpet his own achievements, arguing the success of the High Line and the recent decision of a pharmaceutical research giant to relocate to Manhattan showed his administration had “done more” in his third term than either the first or second terms.

When asked about criticism that the High Line was transforming Chelsea too rapidly, Bloomberg responded in an even voice that “cities have to evolve.”

“If we didn’t change Midtown, Central Park would be a shanty town like it was for many, many years,” the mayor said.

Officials said they expect the High Line to attract four million visitors this year, a couple million less than the Met Museum, consistently ranked one of the city’s top tourist sites.

An opportunity to walk the closed parts of the High Line is being offered during the first two weekends of October, when it will open from noon to 4 p.m. for tours. Reservations can be made starting Thursday at [www.thehighline.org](http://www.thehighline.org).