

West Chelsea more pedestrian friendly

An ambitious project to make the West Chelsea-Meatpacking District area safer and more pedestrian friendly, while also creating a more pleasant approach to the soon-to-open High Line park, is nearing completion, announced Daniel A. Biederman, president of the Chelsea Improvement Company (CIC), the neighborhood's local business improvement association.

Workers are putting the finishing touches on an extensive tree and flower planting program along 14th Street west of Eighth Avenue that complements other CIC-led improvements to the neighborhood, including new sidewalk lighting from building-mounted fixtures; a mini-park and sitting area on Ninth Avenue between 14th and 15th Streets; renovation of an underused pocket park at the corner of Tenth Avenue and 15th Street; and taxi stands to reduce traffic and its accompa-

nying noise during evening hours when restaurant and club traffic in the neighborhood increases.

"Our two-year project brings a bit of nature to what had been an industrial district and enhances the shopping and leisure experience for the area's residents and visitors, and for the employees in newly developed office space along Eighth and Ninth Avenue," Biederman said.

The Chelsea Improvement Company has been working with local property owners in the neighborhood since 2007. During that time, the area — roughly between 14th Street and 17th Streets, and from Ninth to Tenth Avenues — has seen a nearly complete transition from a wholesale meat market and industrial zone to a neighborhood of restaurants, popular night spots, and high-end residential buildings.