

**Community Board 12, Manhattan –Traffic &Transportation Committee**

**November 5, 2011**

**Resolution Supporting George Washington Bridge Bus Station Redevelopment Project**

**(AS MODIFIED BY LAND USE COMMITTEE ON FEBRUARY 1, 2012)**

- Whereas: The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ)'s George Washington Bridge Bus Station opened in 1963 and was designed by noted Italian architect Pier Luigi Nervi, who is known for designing the Palazzetto dello Sport in Rome, which was used in the 1960 Summer Olympics, and
- Whereas: PANYNJ is about to embark on a renovation of the George Washington Bridge Bus Station between W. 178<sup>th</sup> & W. 179<sup>th</sup> Streets; and,
- Whereas: Since the bus station is owned by PANYNJ it is not subject to New York City's Landmarks Preservation Law. Nonetheless PANYNJ has consulted with the Landmarks Preservation Commission on design-related matters and plans to have a preservation advisory committee. The redevelopment project will highlight, not obscure, the station's original architecture, retaining and repairing its entrance canopy and creating a state-of-the art bus terminal under the iconic roof structure with attention incorporating and being better integrated in the surrounding community; and
- Whereas: The renovation is much needed and greatly desired by the community because:
- retail spaces are currently not well cared for;
  - the east side of Broadway between W. 178<sup>th</sup> and W. 179<sup>th</sup> Streets is a blank wall;
  - the roof (3<sup>rd</sup> floor) of the "east building" (i.e., on the east side of Broadway), formerly public parking, is now unused except as a bus turnaround;
  - the bus platform is very inefficient and gets backed up with only a few buses loading;
  - the street level areas and main entrance are forbidding;
  - buses now board in various places around the facility other than the main platform; and,
- Whereas: There are many improvements planned for the Bus Terminal, including:
- a more efficient bus concourse, and consolidation of all bus service on one concourse;
  - creation of an improved retail environment on the west side of Broadway;
  - addition of a new retail area on the east side of Broadway;
  - increased retail throughout the complex, including a supermarket;
  - a public space for the community;
  - brightly-lit, glassed-in entrances on Broadway and Fort Washington Avenue, which are attractive and provide greater visibility; and,
- Whereas: The renovation project will increase the bus station's number of gates by 30%, from 17 to 22, thus allowing it to take pressure off of PANYNJ's 42<sup>nd</sup> Street bus station, where the 183 gates are at or near capacity; and

Whereas: The redevelopment project will generally improve and enliven the streetscape around the bus station, but further attention must be given to the pedestrian environment at Fort Washington Avenue and at Wadsworth Avenue. Under the current build program, no new construction or improvements are proposed for the Wadsworth Avenue end of the bus terminal complex. It is recommended that PANYNJ and the developers, in consultation with residents of neighboring residential buildings, consider improvements to the bus complex's block-long blank wall along Wadsworth Avenue such as public art featuring local artists, a display on the history of the bus station and the neighborhood or display cases related to the new retail tenants. Further, while the redevelopment project provides for new storefronts and signage along Fort Washington Avenue, based on renderings of the completed project, the pedestrian environment still feels grey and visually uninviting. It is recommended that PANYNY and the developers include streetscape elements such as way-finding signs, banners or kiosks to add color and visual detail;

Whereas: There are opportunities for the work of local artist to be displayed on interior walls throughout the redeveloped bus station; and

Whereas: Planning for the redevelopment project did not consider opportunities for the bus station to expand upon mass transit service; and

Whereas: The Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance (NoMAA) is a local arts service organization with the mission to cultivate, support, and promote the work of artists and arts organizations in Northern Manhattan; NoMAA has a solid trajectory of facilitating the creation of new artistic work by diverse, emerging, and established artists for presentation to the community; strengthening the infrastructures and sustainability of local arts organizations; encouraging public dialogue, engagement, and collective reflection around issues affecting Manhattan's uptown cultural community; and fostering Northern Manhattan's economic development and overall vibrancy; and

Whereas: There will be much disruption in the community during construction, including:

- a trailer to be sited on the east side of Fort Washington Avenue between W. 178<sup>th</sup> and W. 179<sup>th</sup> Streets, to act as the waiting room;
- elimination of underground access to the A-train for unspecified period(s) of time, forcing hundreds of commuters onto an already crowded streetscape;
- drastic reduction of street width around the terminal during construction to accommodate construction vehicles, impinging on free flow of traffic around the terminal and bridge, which bridge is the most heavily travelled bridge in the world, and already creates tremendous traffic on the surrounding city streets due to a complete lack of traffic enforcement; and,

Whereas: The current plan for 250 square foot community room space is inadequate not only in terms of size but also location in the building, as well as in lack of planned program. A community room space should be able to hold at least 100 people for performance and exhibitions of various types, as well as administration, management and support of the space; now therefore, be it

Whereas: Whereas, unemployment in Washington Heights & Inwood hovers at nearly 14 % and the George Washington Bridge Bus Station Redevelopment project is slated to create 746 permanent new jobs and 530 construction jobs.

- Resolved: Community Board 12, Manhattan fundamentally approves of the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey (PANYNJ)'s program to renovate the George Washington Bridge Bus Station, notwithstanding specific recommendations and concerns regarding traffic control during construction and community use space; and be it further
- Resolved: That CB12M demands that the PANYNJ fund traffic control agents (whether their own, the NYPD's, or other) to be stationed at all corners around the construction zone, and ensuring smooth flow of traffic in the streets, into and out of the terminal, and on to and off of the Bridge, from 7am to 7pm, 7 days a week; and be it further
- Resolved: That the PANYNJ provide adequate community space in the renovated Bus Station, and fund a program to maintain and make available this space for the purpose of providing a home for fine and performing arts in Washington Heights; and be it further
- Resolved: That the PANYNJ and the developers further improve and enliven the streetscape between West 178<sup>th</sup> and West 179<sup>th</sup> Street along Fort Washington Avenue and Wadsworth Avenues; and be it further
- Resolved: That the PANYNJ and the developers create opportunities for local artists to exhibit work on interior wall space in the redeveloped bus station; and be it further
- Resolved: NoMAA should serve as the manager of the public space for the community as mentioned in the improvements planned for the Bus Terminal; and be it further
- Resolved: That that PANYNJ study and consider opportunities to expand mass transit service at the bus station.
- Resolved: That PANYNJ work with the NYC Business Solutions and the NY Women's Chamber of Commerce to hold at least 4 M/WBE Certification Drives Washington Heights and Inwood so local contractors could qualify towards the M/WBE utilization goal; and be it further
- Resolved: That CB12M demands that PANYNJ increase the M/WBE utilization goal from 17% to 20%; and be it further
- Resolved: That PANYNJ guarantee that subcontractors', whether local or not, have at least a 30% employed workforce of residents from the following zip codes 10025, 10026 10027, 10029, 10030, 10031, 10032, 10033, 10034, 10035, 10037, 10039, 10040, 10451, 10454, 10455, 10474; and be it further
- Resolved: That PANYNJ guarantee that 10% of every construction trade within the projected designated to women construction workers; and be it further resolved
- Resolved: That PANYNJ guarantees that living wages will be provide to all jobs; and be it further
- Resolved: That PANYNJ guarantee that at least 50% of all on-site permanent jobs are reserved for local Washington Heights and Inwoods residents and that this guarantee is in writing; and be it further

Resolved: That PANYNJ set aside at least 40 % of all remaining retail space within the renovated George Washington Bridge Bus Station for local business owners within Washington Heights and Inwood; and be it further

Resolved: That PANYNJ work with the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone, NYC Business Solutions, Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation, union apprentice and pre-apprentice programs, and other local community based organizations that provide job development services to hold at least 4 job fairs and job training programs for all residents of Washington Heights and Inwood related to business that will be housed within the new George Washington Bus Station.

Approved unanimously: T&T Committee, 5; Board, 1; Public, 2.

Approved by Land Use Committee: LU Members 7-0-0, Bd. Members 2-0-1, Public 2-0-0.

Approved by Parks and Cultural Affairs Committee: PCA Members 6-0-0, Board Members 0-0-0, Public 5-0-1.

Approved unanimously: Economic Development Committee- Committee 5; Board 1