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## COMMUNITY BOARD No. 2, MANHATTAN

3 WASHINGTON SQUARE VILLAGE

NEW YORK, NY 10012-1899

[www.cb2manhattan.org](http://www.cb2manhattan.org)

P: 212-979-2272 F: 212-254-5102 E: [info@cb2manhattan.org](mailto:info@cb2manhattan.org)

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July 24, 2009

Howard H. Roberts, Jr.  
President  
MTA NYC Transit  
2 Broadway  
New York, New York 10004

Dear President Roberts:

At its Full Board meeting on July 23, 2009, Community Board #2, Manhattan adopted the following resolution:

### **Resolution in response to MTA NYC Transit Presentation of Alternative Concepts for housing the proposed subway fan plant at Mulry Square**

**WHEREAS** Community Board No. 2 Manhattan (CB2) thanks MTA NYC Transit (NYCT) for its presentation at our community input session on June 22, 2009, in response to CB2's request, of three alternative concepts for housing NYCT's proposed subway fan plant at Mulry Square; and

**WHEREAS** CB2 recognizes that all three NYCT alternatives place some bulk below grade and thereby maintain a height of 40 feet in keeping with adjacent buildings and also appreciates the intention to build a green roof; and

**WHEREAS**, there was unanimous opposition from the community to all three alternative concepts that were presented, because:

- None of the alternatives reflect the importance of this site as a gateway to the Greenwich Village Historic District and the setting for the 9/11 memorial tiles, a meaningful piece of recent history of great significance to the community. Their off-the-shelf, generic nature fails to capture the spirit of the place in any way, and they appear to be superimposed rather than organically integrated within the existing context.
- The street walls in all three scenarios, especially at ground level, are blank and lifeless facades, lacking articulation and design elements or any dynamic link that would contribute to a sense of lively community. They neither relate to the surrounding area and its activities nor enhance the pedestrian experience, thereby creating the impression of a dead zone.

- Not one of these alternatives responds sufficiently to the community’s repeated requests for usable open space. The small triangular green area does nothing to mitigate the structure’s bulk or its lack of character, functioning more as a superfluous extension into the sidewalk than as an attractive, appealing public place.
- The options presented for incorporating the 9/11 commemorative tiles lack sensitivity to the tiles’ importance as the only memorial to 9/11 in the Village (which was significantly impacted) and a historically unique response to the tragedy that deserves careful consideration in its treatment and representation through a respectful, deliberative process, as opposed to a hasty, ill-thought-out approach in which expediency is the driving force; and

**WHEREAS** in addition to the general objections voiced about features common to all three alternatives, there also were concerns specific to each proposal as follows:

- NYCT “21<sup>st</sup> Century” – CB2 never approves generic architecture in our historic districts.
- “Faux Historic” – CB2 will not support a hollow, free-standing façade wall with cutouts and an unfitting wide expanse of glass, positioned in front of another wall.
- “Vertical Garden” – CB2 cannot undertake the responsibility to fund and maintain the plantings that would be required, that at any rate would require an exceptional design concept and application; and

**WHEREAS** new construction in historic districts should not necessarily imitate surrounding structures, but should reflect and complement them in terms of materials, proportion, rhythm, and texture of openings; and

**WHEREAS** the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) has oversight of all changes and new construction in the City’s historic districts, and the NYC Public Design Commission reviews art, architecture and landscape architecture on City-owned property;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that CB2 strongly calls upon NYCT to immediately engage the LPC in a Certificate of Appropriateness process to develop a new design for housing the ventilation plant at Mulry Square that is appropriate to the Greenwich Village Historic District and that enhances the character of the neighborhood and its street life; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that CB2 believes that it is essential for NYCT to work with its Arts for Transit program to select outside art and museum curatorial professionals to incorporate the “9/11 Tiles for America” into an appropriate and sensitive design at the Mulry Square site, and that the design be presented to the NYC Public Design Commission; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that CB2 asks that NYCT return as soon as possible to CB2, to consult with CB2 representatives and our elected officials, concerning the necessity for re-thinking the design for both housing the fan plant and the preservation/maintenance of the tiles, and the parameters of the process to move the project forward.

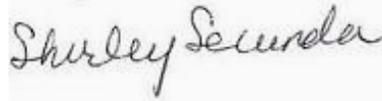
Vote: Unanimous, with 33 Board members in favor

Please advise us of any decision or action taken in response of this resolution.

Sincerely,



Jo Hamilton, Chair  
Community Board #2, Manhattan



Shirley Secunda, Chair  
Traffic & Transportation Committee  
Community Board #2, Manhattan

JH/gh

cc: Hon. Jerrold Nadler, Congressman  
Hon. Thomas Duane, NY State Senator  
Hon. Deborah Glick, Assembly Member  
Hon. Scott Stringer, Man. Borough President  
Hon. Christine Quinn, Council Speaker  
Hon. Alan Jay Gerson, Council Member  
Hon. Rosie Mendez, Council Member  
Lolita Jackson, Commissioner, CAU  
Robert B. Tierney, Chair, NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Adrienne Taub, Assistant Director Government & Community Relations  
MTA New York City Transit  
Kathy Howe, NYS Office of Historic Preservation  
Tim Stock, Mulry Angle/W.11th Street Block Association  
Marilyn Dorato, Greenwich Village Block Association