

2
3 June 1, 2016

4
5 Thomas K. Wright, President
6 Regional Plan Association (RPA)
7 4 Irving Place, 7th Floor
8 New York, NY 10003
9

10 **Re: RPA Fourth Regional Plan Recommendations**

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12 Dear Mr. Wright,

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14 Manhattan Community Board Four (CB4) would like to thank the Regional Plan Association for
15 your presentation to our Transportation Committee on May 15, 2016, and for this opportunity to
16 provide comments and recommendations on RPA's Fourth Regional Plan. We would like to
17 applaud RPA for their dedication to improving the quality of life of the New York-New Jersey-
18 Connecticut metropolitan region. Many of the issues addressed by RPA have a direct impact on
19 Manhattan Community District Four (MCD4) as it is at the center of many current and future
20 infrastructure projects which will impact the larger New York City region, and have an even
21 greater impact on our district.
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23 CB4 is looking forward to the 2017 release of RPA's Fourth Regional Plan, and we would like to
24 offer the following recommendations and comments that should be studied or included in the
25 plan. RPA has identified three key issue areas for the Fourth Plan and we have broken down our
26 comments into these issue areas.
27

28 CB4 believes that across all issue areas and important to all development projects the
29 consideration and preservation of neighborhood character. Large infrastructure projects often
30 invade a neighborhood and destroy the character that makes it unique, and we hope RPA will
31 emphasize the importance of neighborhood preservation in all of their work and make the
32 concept central to their Fourth Plan.
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34 **Prosperity and Opportunity**

- 35 ● CB4 recommends that RPA study and recommend planning that decentralizes
36 commercial areas and business districts in order to create a closer proximity between
37 home and work for commuters. This should include ways to make areas other than
38 Manhattan attractive to organizations which create jobs and industry.
- 39 ● We recommend the inclusion of pedestrian friendly focused development, creating
40 improved streetscapes that will benefit pedestrians and businesses. We offer the success
41 of retail pedestrian plazas such as Times Square as examples where this has been
42 successful.
- 43 ● We encourage RPA to include recommendations that promote retail affordability and
44 inclusion of retailers that meet community needs.

- 45 ● We recommend that RPA consider ageing and disability access in all of their advocacy
46 and planning.
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48 Sustainability and Resilience

- 49 ● CB4 recommends RPA include the decentralization of transportation hubs, thus creating
50 a more sustainable transportation system. In and around MCD4 we have two major
51 transportation hubs, Penn station and the Port Authority Bus terminal. This concentration
52 not only causes congestion it is also an environmental concern and has a negative impact
53 of the quality of life for residents in the area.
54 ● We recommend an increased focus on preserving and increasing green space, and open
55 air space, in all areas that will have major regional infrastructure projects but particularly
56 in areas with dense development such as MCD4.
57 ● CB4 recommends that RPA increase their study and inclusion of new transportation
58 technologies in their Fourth Plan. Such technologies will soon be the dominant
59 transportation methods, and the awareness of these technologies and inclusion in all
60 regional planning is essential for sustainable infrastructure.
61

62 Movement and Connection

- 63 ● CB4 recommends consideration for and integration of bicycle friendly transportation and
64 improved connection with public transportation systems. RPA should actively advocate
65 for improving bike transit integration on all major New York City connections including
66 bridges, tunnels, and public transportation methods such as buses and trains.
67 ● Along with this CB4 recommends that RPA advocate for the inclusion of bicycle specific
68 lanes or dedicated tunnels in any cross Hudson River tunnel projects.
69 ● We recommend that RPA advocate for protected crosstown bike lanes in Manhattan.
70 ● We recommend that RPA study and advocate for improving connections between
71 transportation infrastructure hubs and the region's major airports JFK, LaGuardia and
72 Newark.
73 ● We recommend that RPA advocate for and include in their Fourth Plan all regional rail
74 possibilities, which should include converting bus traffic to rail and improving and
75 expanding current rail structures to capture more commuter traffic and reach more
76 destinations.
77

78 In addition to the above recommendations we would also like to applaud RPA for their recent
79 advocacy on limiting street traffic on Fourteenth Street to buses, deliveries, and bikes during the
80 L train construction project. CB4 believes such an idea if implemented could lead to a permanent
81 street function that restricts use of private cars, and thus increases crosstown transportation
82 conditions for public transit and more environmentally friendly transit options. This is a concept
83 CB4 strongly supports and hopes will come to fruition.
84

85 CB4 once again thanks RPA for their regional planning and advocacy. We hope you will
86 implement our recommendations into your efforts and make them part of the Fourth Plan. We
87 would also like to invite RPA back to present the completed Fourth Plan to our Transportation
88 Committee in 2017.
89

90 Thank you for the consideration of our comments and recommendations.
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