



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**JOHN WEIS**  
Chair

**ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.**  
District Manager

May 6, 2011

Janette Sadik-Kahn  
Commissioner  
New York City Department of Transportation  
55 Water Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, N.Y. 10041

**Re: 34th Street Transitway EAS**

Dear Commissioner Sadik-Kahn:

Manhattan Community Board 4 is pleased that NYC Department of Transportation has revised their plan for the 34<sup>th</sup> Street Transitway to incorporate many of the concerns expressed by this Community Board, its representatives on the 34<sup>th</sup> Street Community Advisory Committee, and area residents and businesses. We are particularly pleased that the new plan includes a bus lane and building loading/unloading areas on at least one side of the street in most areas, and on both sides of the street West of Ninth Avenue. We understand that NYC DOT will be undertaking an Environmental Assessment Study of this project and its various components before conferring with Community Boards 4, 5, and 6, the CAC, and making a final decision later this year.

While it is an improvement over the previous proposal, there are several aspects to the current design that we have concerns with and request be studied in the EAS:

- **Loading/Unloading at 400 and 408 West 34<sup>th</sup> Street:** The current plan limits a loading/unloading zone to approximately 10 feet, which is insufficient for the size of most delivery vehicles. This space is constrained by the No Standing zone at the church immediately to the west and a potential turning lane onto Ninth Avenue immediately to its east DOT has proposed to eliminate south turns from 34<sup>th</sup> Street onto Ninth Avenue and thus convert the turning lane into a Loading/Unloading zone.

While eliminating south turns would enable additional Loading/Unloading for 400 (The Skylight Diner) and 408 W. 34<sup>th</sup> Street, it might also create traffic problems along West 34<sup>th</sup>, particularly since delivery vehicles traveling east from that location would not be able to turn off of West 34<sup>th</sup> Street until Madison Avenue, given current turn restrictions. As indicated about, leaving the right turn would restrict the Loading/Unloading zone and, given its short length, also likely cause some back-up into the bus lane. We hope DOT will examine the implications both alternative, as well as speak with St. Michael's Church

(414/424 W. 34<sup>th</sup> Street) to see if there might be times they could permit load/unloading along their curb for their neighbors.

Separate from the above, we repeat our request that a Loading/Unloading zone in front of 408 and 430 W. 34<sup>th</sup> Street immediately be implemented. Since our request for this change last summer, DOT has acknowledged the need for this, but in the interim the tenants still report frequent ticketing for Loading/Unloading and even for drop offs. The implementation of the 34<sup>th</sup> Street Transitway is not scheduled to take place until mid-2012 at the earliest. There is no reason that some area for a loading/unloading zone should not be immediately installed for the less trafficked hours of 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

- **Bus Stop on the North Side of W. 34<sup>th</sup> between Ninth and Tenth Avenues:** Since the bus stop at W. 34<sup>th</sup> and Dyer was removed last year, there has been no bus stop on the North Side of West 34<sup>th</sup> Street between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenues. Given the substantial number of large residential buildings on this block, including a large percentage of elderly residents, this creates a real hardship. We hope the removal of most of the curb cuts in front of Emblem Health might create an opportunity. Emblem Health appeared in front of the committee and committed to have them removed within 12 months.

In addition, this Community Board is already on record as requesting that DOT consider removing the north turn lane from W. 34<sup>th</sup> Street onto Dyer (and converting the North bound lanes between W. 34<sup>th</sup> and W. 35<sup>th</sup> Streets into park land). We hope the EAS will examine this possibility, which would also enable additional space both for loading/unloading for 413 W. 34<sup>th</sup> Street and a bus stop.

- **No Parking on West 34<sup>th</sup> Street between Ninth Avenue and Dyer Avenue:** Current DOT plans suggest that the proposed Loading/Unloading zones for this area would also include time for parking. Given the need for Loading/Unloading, and with the support of the residents of the 400 block of West 34<sup>th</sup> Street, we request that parking not be included.
- **Ensure any disrupted or temporarily removed trees are replaced with similar type and mature trees:** The substantial number and girth of the trees on the South side of West 34<sup>th</sup> between Ninth and Tenth Avenues creates a more pleasant pedestrian and residential experience, despite its proximity to a major Lincoln Tunnel entrance/exit at Dyer Avenue. It is important that these trees remain or be replaced with similar quality trees, if the installation of the new transit-way and/or the related fare payment machines on the sidewalk disrupt them.
- **Designate a Deputy Mayor to oversee this project:** Even with the revisions, the proposed West 34<sup>th</sup> Street Transitway is a major realignment of one of the most heavily trafficked pedestrian areas in the city and, particularly when the #7 train extension is built, one of the largest transit hubs in the country. Its implementation will require multi-agency cooperation and communication. Specifically, the Department of Transportation is under the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development, while the NYPD, Traffic Enforcement, NYFD, and Sanitation Departments are under the Deputy Mayor for Operations. We request one of the Deputy Mayor's be assigned to oversee this project's planning and

implementation or, short of that, that there be a designated Project Manager that is a liaison between both departments.

Manhattan Community Board 4 is pleased with the proposed Transitway and the process that included bold thinking and extensive community outreach and lead to the current proposal that ultimately can benefit pedestrians, public bus users and residents. We will continue to work closely with DOT on this project and look forward to the EAS analysis including the above comments.

Sincerely,



John Weis  
Chair  
Manhattan Community Board No. 4



Christine Berthet  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning Committee



Jay Marcus  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning Committee