



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD No. 4

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J. LEE COMPTON
Chair

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

October 6, 2006

Mr. George D. Warrington
Executive Director
NJ Transit
One Penn Plaza East, 9th floor
Newark, NJ 07105

Re: Trans-Hudson Express (THE) Tunnel

Dear Mr. Warrington:

Manhattan Community Board No. 4 supports the proposed Trans-Hudson Express (THE) Tunnel and looks forward to working with New Jersey Transit on the design and construction timeline for the project.

THE Tunnel will provide two additional tracks (from the current one track) for rail commuters from New Jersey and suburban/exurban New York more than doubling the existing commuter capacity. It will create new one seat ride capabilities from rapidly growing Rockland and Orange Counties.

CB4 bears a large part of the problems reflected in the outdated commuter infrastructure, particularly as it related to the heavy traffic, pedestrian conflicts, increased pollution, and safety concerns created by excessive use of the Lincoln Tunnel. The substantial suburban growth continuing to the west of Manhattan and the estimated 350,000 new jobs expected in midtown Manhattan over the next 20 years will only make matters worse. We understand that the best way to reduce auto usage is to create mass transit alternatives and thus support the creation of THE Tunnel. We encourage our local officials, who already have been supportive of this project, to work to secure the Federal funding required to complete this project.

The proposed new station will extend from 8th Avenue to 6th Avenue under 34th Street. (the trail tracks will extend closer to fifth avenue on the east). Thus far there are proposed to be three entrances – one east of 8th Avenue at 34th Street, one west of 7th Avenue at 34th Street and one west of 6th Avenue at 34th Street. We are pleased that these entrances will be along the Street line and will also serve as entrances to the subway, replacing existing on-the-sidewalk stations.

The creation of the Tunnel will also require the creation of six fan plants (20' by 20') – two that will be from the Hudson River to the 8th Avenue, one that will be the east and three that will be along the perimeter of the station. There are several possibilities for both the precise location and the design of those fan plants.

We greatly appreciate the sense of partnership that New Jersey Transit has brought to this project – having a representative from CB4 on their advisory committee, briefing CB4 staff on an on-going basis and meeting with the Transportation Committee several times. We also appreciate their responsiveness, thus far, to our concerns and suggestions. The project is still in the early engineering and design stages and an EIS is currently being drafted for release later this year. Construction phase designs are expected to be completed in 2007 and construction to begin in 2009 and be completed in 2016. Thus far \$500 million has been committed from the state of New Jersey and \$1 to \$2 billion from the Port Authority towards a total budget of approximately \$7.2 Billion.

We are pleased that New Jersey Transit has agreed to meet with CB4 regarding several issues we have raised:

- ▶ The location and design for taxi stands;
- ▶ The underground linkages to Moynihan Station and Penn Station (some of which have been defined, so of which remain uncertain);
- ▶ The location and design of the fan plants;
- ▶ Creation of dialogue with surrounding residents and businesses regarding the construction schedule and impacts (and the creation of mitigations) and coordination of construction with Moynihan Station;
- ▶ The design of any commercial space that might be included;
- ▶ The design of THE Tunnel commuter entrances.

CB4 also requests another briefing of the Transportation Committee upon release of the draft EIS.

One issue that we are pleased that NJ Transit has offered to work with the Community Board on is the interaction of the fan plants with planned public space. Since most of the parcels they will acquire for the fan plants will be larger than the required 20' by 20' actual fan plant, the remainder of the space can be used for public purposes. Among the potential locations NJ Transit has identified for the western-most fan plants is on 33rd Street between 9th Avenue and 10th Avenue. The Hudson Yards Plan contemplates a network of neighborhood open spaces extending between 33rd Street and 40th Street between 9th and 10th Avenues, referred to as the Hell's Kitchen Mid-block Parks. That plan shows as open space two of the parcels on 33rd Street that NJ Transit has indicated they are considering – these sites are specifically Block 731 Lot 72 (owned by the Port Authority and used as a community garden) and Block 731 Lot 22 (a privately owned parking lot). We have long desired to find a way to maintain that garden while making it more open to the public. We urge you to give careful consideration to locating the fan plant on the parking lot site and working with Port Authority and possibly also the City's Department of Parks and Recreation to create publicly accessible open space on the adjacent site and portions of the parking lot site not needed for the fan plant. This could be a win-win arrangement that provides an appropriate location for the fan plant and brings much-needed open space to the community.

Once again, we look forward to continuing to work with NJ Transit as it completes its design, financing and development of this most needed project.

Sincerely,



J. Lee Compton
Chair
Manhattan Community Board No. 4



Jay Marcus
Chair
Transportation Planning Committee

cc: Arthur Silber, NJ Transit
Alan M. Weinberg, NJ Transit
Alexandra Zetlin, Zetlin Strategic Communications, Inc.
Electeds