



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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Congressman Jerrold Nadler
201 Varick Street, Suite 669
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Uchenna Madu
NYMTC, New York City TCC
47-40 21st Street, 9th Floor
Long Island City, NY 11101

Re: NYMTC 2008-2012 TIP amendment – Comments on Potential Projects to be funded through the National Economic Recovery Legislation

Dear Hon. Nadler and Mr. Madu:

New York Metropolitan Transportation council (NYMTC) has identified a list of potential transportation projects that may be funded through the National Economic Recovery Legislation that is currently under development. As a prerequisite to obtain federal funding, the NYMTC 2008-2012 Transportation Improvement Program needs to be amended to include these projects. Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) recommends that NYMTC include the projects listed below that will benefit the Tri State area, New York City and our community.

Community District 4 is a major transportation hub for the region, with approximately a third of its space dedicated to transportation facilities. For many years now, the growing residential population has suffered from the effects of such infrastructure. We are also experiencing the third highest-level of asthma hospitalization in Manhattan¹.

Tri State Area:

- **Cross-Harbor Freight Tunnel.** Truck traffic overall increased significantly in recent years and is affecting our neighborhood in many ways. Since 2000, the truck volume has increased by 50% to 2.88 million, annually in 2007 in the

¹ New York City Department of Health - 2006

Lincoln Tunnel.² And a half mile portion on Ninth Avenue near the tunnel has the second highest rate of truck accidents per mile in the city³.

- **Second Bus/HOV lane in the Lincoln Tunnel.** The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey has been studying this option for a while. We are asking that its implementation be accelerated to improve the tunnel efficiency in terms of passenger and tons transported and reduce the amount of single occupancy vehicles queued on our streets. The tunnel is currently saturated in terms of vehicles and the excess congestion overflows for hours on our streets on a daily basis.
- **Access to the Region Core (ARC)** –This large-scale project central to expand our mass transit infrastructure should deliver on its long-term objectives and satisfy demand for the next 50 years. Thus, fully funding the current project and further funding the second phase, linkage to Grand Central Terminal and the East Side, will provide spare capacity, take many more New Jersey commuter cars off the streets, avoid taxi and pedestrian crowding at Penn Station, reduce our energy footprint, and increase the competitiveness of New York.

New York City Area

- **Tenth Avenue stop on #7 line extension.** Funding a full station at 41st Street and funding only a shell station at 33rd Street is more in line with the current resources and needs. The 2005 Hudson Yards rezoning included the extension of the # 7 line with two stations. The first one was planned at 33rd Street to serve the new multi-use facility and the expanded convention center. Another station was planned at 41st Street and Tenth Avenue to serve the large-scale residential developments that have sprung up along 42nd Street, west of Ninth Avenue and along Tenth Avenue. In light of escalating construction costs, the city cancelled the 41st Street station, not even keeping a shell. The residential developments on 42nd Street are well underway and in some places completed, while the economic crisis is slowing down if not halting for the foreseeable future any development at 33rd Street. Due to the lack of transportation infrastructure, many buildings on 42nd Street operate private shuttle services that further clog streets already overwhelmed with traffic. Thus, funding a full station at 41st street and a shell at 33rd Street better addresses current needs.
- **Charter Bus Garage in Midtown.** As tourism has become a major industry in New York, every day hundreds of charter buses bring tourists to Broadway, Times Square and Lincoln Center. These buses have no place to park while waiting for their customers. Currently they overrun the streets illegally idling and parking in delivery and residential parking spaces. The Hudson Yards FEIS

² NYMTC – 2007 Truck Toll Volumes – p29, Table1 - ANNUAL TRUCK VOLUMES AT NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY TOLL FACILITIES

³ DOT - Truck Route Management and Community Impact Reduction Study Final Draft Technical Memorandum 2 – May 2006 - Truck Routing Analysis p 183 – Table 5-1- Manhattan On-Route Truck Accident Corridors

committed to the creation of a garage to accommodate both commuter buses and charter buses. While The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey is funding the commuter bus garage, the Economic Development Corporation is not studying or funding the charter bus portion of the garage. Increasingly, residential developments line the sidewalks where these buses currently park at curbside, thus making charter buses unwelcome. For a sustainable economic development of the city, charter buses are the only appropriate way to bring so many tourists to New York City.

Community District 4 Area

- **Pedestrian Safety: Install four neck downs each at ten intersections between 31st Street and 57th Street on Ninth Avenue:** there were 500 pedestrian injuries on Ninth Avenue⁴ over a 10-year span and five fatalities in 2007 alone. Only last month, at the corner of Ninth Avenue and 38th Street a truck killed a seven-month pregnant, 23-year old woman.
- **Resident's Safety: 15th Street Reconstruction from Sixth to Twelfth Avenues.** This street has seen repeated gas main breaks, water main breaks and Con Edison is constantly opening the street and repairing the infrastructure under it. At the same time, trucks use this route more often, putting additional wear and tear to the unstable surface. There are a number of schools and churches on that street in addition to residences. Reconstructing this street would address once for all this hopeless patchwork of deficient infrastructure, ease the traffic, and restore safety for its residents.
- **Bicycle Parking: Swap two car parking spaces each at ten intersections on Ninth Avenue between 34th and 55th Streets to install bicycle parking.** The avenue is lined with restaurants, which depend on bikes for their delivery business and outdoor cafes, and trap doors that prevent the installation of bike racks. The side streets sidewalks are equally narrow.
- **Pedestrian Safety: Ninth Avenue Reconstruction from 14th to 55th Streets.** This section is under study as part of the federally funded Clinton-Hell's Kitchen traffic study, and the NYCDOT will complete its recommendations by June 2009. With funding, the DOT could proceed immediately with implementation of pedestrian safety features, bus/bike lanes, and bike parking.
- **Pedestrian safety: Install four neck downs at all intersections between 29th Street and 43rd Street on Eighth Avenue.** This stretch of Eighth Avenue is a very crowded pedestrian highway for commuters coming and going to the Port Authority Bus Terminal and Penn Station. The number of pedestrian injuries is very high with so many turning cars conflicting with pedestrians.

⁴ New York City DOT – FOILed information - 2003

- **Bicycle Parking: Swap two car parking spaces each at five intersections on Eighth Avenue between 29th Street and 43rd Streets on Eighth Avenue.** The avenue's sidewalks are narrow and the subway ventilation grids take up a large portion of the sidewalks making them unsuitable for the installation of bike racks. The side streets sidewalks are equally narrow.
- **Pedestrian Safety: Eighth Avenue Reconstruction from 33rd to 47th Streets.** CB4 is on record for repeatedly asking for a widening of sidewalks on that stretch which experiences a high level of pedestrian injuries. As Penn Station and its surroundings are being redeveloped, a new office tower is proposed for the Port Authority bus terminal, and the planned Access to the Region Core (ARC) station are built the existing overcrowding on sidewalks will reach unacceptable levels as we commented in the ARC FEIS. Pedestrian space must be increased, a bike lane installed and pedestrian safety features implemented to make the last mile of the commuter trip safe.
- **Pedestrian Safety: Ninth Avenue Reconstruction from 14th to 31st Streets.** The New York City Department of Transportation (NYC DOT) has completed an interim design of the avenue from 14th Street to 31st Street. This section now needs a permanent treatment.
- **Transit: Separate Bus Lane on Ninth Avenue from 59th to 34th Streets.** Ninth Avenue is host to many Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities and Caring Institutions. Their residents rely exclusively on the M11 bus for all of their movements in the neighborhood. This bus is unreliable and excessively slow due to the conflict with traffic, which obstructs the existing bus lane. A dedicated protected bus lane would alleviate this problem and bring back a critical mean of transportation to the many elderly members of the community.
- **ADA: Audible Pedestrian Signals (APSs) at all renovated intersections.** The Draft Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (*Draft PROWAG*), published in June 2002 and updated in November 2005, require *pushbutton-integrated APS* that provide an audible and vibrotactile indication of the WALK signal at upgraded intersections. While final regulations have not yet been promulgated, we understand the city has both an inventory of this equipment and federal funding for their installation. Funding will allow installing of the signals at all upgraded intersections in our district.
- **Pedestrian Safety: Pedestrian Bridge at Twelfth Avenue and 54th Street.** Clinton Cove was just completed a year ago, as part of New York State's development of Hudson Park. However, residents do not use the park because crossing the Henry Hudson Highway is so dangerous. The pedestrian signal does not allow enough time for adults to cross the two segments. The speed of vehicles scares those frail residents that would benefit the most. Now a plan for an expanded Pier 92-94 convention center is entering the EIS process and its operator expects its shows to have up to 7,000 attendees. An overpass pedestrian

bridge would allow attendees, pedestrians, seniors and children to access the park and the convention center safely.

- **Transit : Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on Eleventh Avenue.** From 30th to 42nd Streets, this avenue is part of the 2005 Hudson Yards rezoning. New York City Department of City Planning has a proposal ready to rezone the portion between 42nd and 55th Streets. Construction of hotels, offices and residences are underway and an affordable residential complex, including the doubling in size of the P.S. 51 School is in advanced stage of design and approval by HPD. However, there is no transportation on Eleventh Avenue. A BRT route, serving West End Avenue to Wall Street was part of the 15 original corridors considered by the MTA. For this area to develop without excessive car traffic, a segment of BRT line must be installed on Eleventh Avenue.
- **Transit: Refurbishing of the 14th Street and Seventh Avenue Subway Station.** This station presents dangerous conditions for riders, slippery stairwells, constant ceiling leaks and mold and it is not wheelchair accessible. This is particularly acute on the North West entrance to the station.

CB4 appreciates your continuous support in improving our regional transportation, while bringing much needed traffic relief to our community.

Sincerely,



Jean-Daniel Noland
Chair
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Community Board 4



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Co-Chair
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