



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

330 West 42nd Street, 26th floor New York, NY 10036
tel: 212-736-4536 fax: 212-947-9512
www.nyc.gov/mcb4

CHRISTINE BERTHET
Chair

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

February 5, 2014

Carmen Bianco
President
MTA New York City Transit
2 Broadway
New York, NY 10004

Re: Proposed Manhattan West Side Route

Dear Mr. Bianco:

Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) applauds the MTA for creating a new proposed bus route on the far west side of Manhattan from W. 58th Street and Seventh Avenue to West 14th Street (herein referred to as M12). CB4 has long been on record for asking for such a route in order to service the thousands of new residents that have settled there since the 2005 Hudson Yards and West Chelsea rezoning. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed route and we thank the MTA for returning to CB4 as was requested in February 2013.

The proposed route would begin at W. 58th Street and Seventh Avenue and travel west, connecting the route with the Columbus Circle transit center. The route turns south on Eleventh Avenue, then west on to on W. 49th Street to Twelfth Avenue (West Side Highway), travels south on Twelfth Avenue from W. 49th to W. 34th Streets where it then turns east back to Eleventh Avenue and travels south to W. 14th Street. The northbound route travels north on Twelfth Avenue to W. 57th Street where it turns east to Seventh Avenue.

The buses would run every 30 minutes, from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week. The stops would be spaced every three and a half blocks and provide easy transfer to other major crosstown buses or subway (M57, M31, M50, M42, M34, M23, M14, M11, M8, M21, Subway lines 7, A, C, D, B, and 1).

After review of the revised plan, we are asking the MTA to address several issues and to take into consideration the board's suggestions. We request that the MTA return to CB4 to present their final plan before it gets implemented.

The Route

- CB4 is particularly concerned by the proposal to have the route travel south bound on Twelfth Avenue, and we are opposed to this proposal. CB4 is concerned for the safety of

the riders who would be forced to cross the West Side Highway to catch the southbound bus. It is also unclear if it would even be possible to place bus stops on the southbound lane of the West Side Highway. Furthermore placing the route so far west makes it inaccessible for the majority of the population living between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues. Finally, CB4 would like the MTA to review the possibility of changing the eastbound turn from W. 34th Street to W. 42nd Street as traffic conditions on Eleventh Avenue are not as intense as the more northern part of the route.

- As previously requested during the MTA's preliminary presentation on the proposal CB4 strongly urges MTA to ensure reliable service from the outset: **changing Eleventh Avenue from two-way to one-way between W. 57th and W. 45th Streets is a prerequisite** to any reliable service: this avenue has only two moving lanes southbound between W. 57th and W. 45th Streets. These lanes are extremely congested during most of the day but particularly in the peak hours of the afternoon, as they provide queuing reservoir for the north tube of the Lincoln Tunnel. CB4 is on record asking for such a change, and DOT has already found it feasible in its Hell's Kitchen traffic Study.
- CB4 appreciates the adjustments made by the MTA on the proposed route to include a connection to Columbus Circle. CB4 would like to request that the MTA look into possible route connections that could be made with Upper West Side bus routes in the W60's.

The Stops

- Ensure minimal comfort and safety: Bus shelters are critical: because of the long wait between buses and the windy conditions on Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues, it is critical that bus shelters be installed at all bus stops in CB4. We also request that single phone booths equipped with Wi-Fi and phone charging capability be installed adjacent to these bus stops to provide safety and the opportunity to productively use the wait time. (Such installations could be relocated from Ninth Avenue).
- Ensure service to main generators and destinations: We recommend that beyond the main connections mentioned above, the following additional bus stops be provided:
 - W. 59th Street
 - W. 55th Street serving the Cove and Terminal 5
 - W. 45th Street serving the Intrepid, and Pasha
 - W. 39th Street serving New Jersey ferries
 - W. 30th Street serving the High Line and Hudson Yards
 - W. 20th Street where there is a crossing on the highway
 - W. 17th Street to serve Pier 57.

The Service

- CB4 is disappointed that the service will be limited to every 30 minutes. Such a sparse schedule will severely limit usage, which will distort usage statistics and defeat the

purpose. Without changing the overall number of buses, we request that the service be every 15 minutes in the a.m. and p.m. peak hours and less frequent in between.

- We recommend that the service be extended to 1 a.m. in the morning since most cultural events on the piers do last until such hours.
- We also request that all buses hybrid-electric or CNG (compressed natural gas) vehicles with a lower floor.
- Further we recommend that the MTA consider making the new far west side bus line a Select Bus Service (SBS) route as currently operates on the M34 bus line. We believe this will improve service and better accommodate the growing west side population.

CB4 appreciates all the constraints the MTA is operating under and is delighted to have been selected for one of the very few new routes in the city. Our comments aim at improving ridership and make this line as successful as possible.

Sincerely,



Christine Berthet
Chair



Jay Marcus
Co-Chair, Transportation
Planning Committee



Ernest Modarelli
Co-Chair, Transportation
Planning Committee

CC: Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal
Council Member Corey Johnson
Department of Transportation