



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**DELORES RUBIN**

Chair

**Jesse Bodine**

District Manager

John J. Degnan  
Office of the Chairman  
The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey  
4 World Trade Center/150 Greenwich Street, 23rd Floor  
New York, NY 10007

August 2, 2016

Dear Chair Degnan,

At the July 21st meeting of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Board of Commissioners at 4 World Trade Center in Manhattan, Congressman Jerrold Nadler, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, State Senator Brad Hoylman, State Assemblymember Richard Gottfried, State Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal, and Councilmember Corey Johnson called for the termination of the Port Authority's Design + Deliverability Competition ("Design Competition"). Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) joins with our elected representatives to urge you to put the brakes on the Design Competition and sit down with all stakeholders to examine *all* the variables in the vital task of planning for the projected increase of commuters into Manhattan in the next 20 years.

The brush off at the press conference following the Board meeting of the concerns expressed by the elected representatives of the people of the west side of Manhattan is regrettable. At the public session you stated that you do not wish to be Robert Moses. The peremptory dismissal of our elected representatives' legitimate issues is a page out of the Moses playbook.

At the public session New Jersey Senator Loretta Weinberg in a series of plaintive anecdotes claimed that a new bus terminal was a "quality of life" issue for New Jersey commuters. For the people of Hell's Kitchen it is a *life* issue. Demolishing homes, local small businesses, and community institutions for the comfort and convenience of commuters passing through can no longer serve as justification for the destruction of an inner city neighborhood.

The air quality in midtown Manhattan already runs afoul of Federal air quality standards. The proposal to add more carbon emissions to the mix without studying how to mitigate the current unacceptable and dangerous air betrays a callous disregard for the health of the people who live in the vicinity of the bus terminal, as well as for commuters passing through. Your claim that "the air quality in the neighborhood could be helped because the new terminal would have room for buses to park" is a surmise, not a fact based on any known environmental study. Facts and

studies are what we need; not speculation.

MCB4 urges the Port Authority to halt the design competition and, as Deputy Mayor Shorris requested in his April 25th letter to you, Vice-Chair Rechler, and Executive Director Foye, “begin a comprehensive public engagement and planning process that considers all possible options for a new terminal and views the project in an appropriate regional context.”

Specifically we demand that the Port Authority, before contemplating siting any new terminal in Community District 4, respect our community character and comply with existing zoning and prior planning studies. The Port Authority’s “preferred alternative” calls for the destruction of the very heart of Hell’s Kitchen South. We will accept no degradation or destruction of the Hell’s Kitchen community’s visual and functional assets. We will accept no seizure of private property. We will accept no demolition of homes and businesses through eminent domain. The history of the devastation of the Hell’s Kitchen South neighborhood for transportation infrastructure in the 1920s and in the 1940s and in the 1950s and in the 1960s is not one we have forgotten. We see the scars every day.

Second, the quality of the air around the Port Authority Bus Terminal is one of the worst in the City. Air quality must be improved substantially before bringing in more buses, adding more pollution, and creating more vehicular congestion in midtown Manhattan. And any staging or queuing facility as part of a new terminal is not appropriate in our residential neighborhood.

Third, a rigorous and detailed planning process with all stakeholders must be undertaken to prepare for the next 50 to 100 years, not just for the next 20. We need to know how a projected increase in commuter traffic affects other parts of our district and the City’s transportation system, including specifically the proposed Moynihan Station. We must explore ways to integrate bus, rail, and subway. And we must have *meaningful* community engagement on site selection, land use, and design of any proposed public facility in Community District 4.

Chair Degnan: New York City is at a crossroads. There is energy afoot to build and improve mass transit. You are a vital part of that effort. We urge you to seize this opportunity, put the design competition on hold, sit down with New York City’s DOT and DCP, NJ Transit and the MTA, Amtrak and Metro North and the City and our community to create a truly first class, world class, comprehensive, city and regional transit system.

The people of New York and New Jersey deserve no less.

Sincerely,



Delores Rubin  
MCB4 Chair  
and Zoning Committee



Jean Daniel Noland, Chair  
Clinton Hell’s Kitchen Land Use

CC: Commissioner Polly Trottenberg, Department of Transportation  
Commissioner Carl Weisbrod, Department of City Planning  
Mayor's Office  
Congressman Jerrold Nadler  
Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer  
State Senator Brad Hoylman  
State Assembly Member Richard Gottfried  
State Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal  
City Council Member Corey Johnson  
Tri-State Transportation Campaign