



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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April 14, 2017

Chairman John Degnan
The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
4 World Trade Center
150 Greenwich Street – 22nd Floor
New York, NY 10006

**Community Guidelines
On Replacing the Port Authority Bus Terminal (PABT)**

Dear Chair Degnan:

In 2016, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey revealed plans for the replacement of the Port Authority Bus Terminal (PABT) on Eighth Avenue. The plans, which included the possibility of using eminent domain to take private property in Hell's Kitchen South, had been disclosed neither to the public nor to Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4), nor to Manhattan District 4's (MCD4) elected representatives.

Manhattan Community Board 4 responded to the proposed plans with a series of public Clinton Land Use Committee and Transportation Planning Committee meetings as well as with two public community forums. Along with Manhattan Community District 4's (MCD4) elected representatives, MCB4 held a public town hall on April 18, 2016 to hear the local Hell's Kitchen community's reaction. A second town hall to survey the community's vision of the future of Hell's Kitchen South was held on December 6, 2016.

At its March 8, 2017, Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee meeting, the committee voted to synthesize the input from the MCB4 committees and public meetings and draft guideline on the proposal to replace the PABT. These guidelines were presented to the MCB4 Full Board on April 5, 2017. The Board recommended approval of the guidelines by a vote of 33 for, 0 against, 0 present not eligible.

MCB4 RESPONSE TO REPLACING THE PABT

The 67-year old Port Authority Bus Terminal faces, according to the Port Authority, "structural limitations that complicate its day-to-day operations." Moreover, the Port Authority estimates that by 2040, peak-hour passenger traffic will increase by 35% to

51% and peak-hour bus traffic by 25% to 39%. In order to meet this estimated increase in bus traffic, the Board of PANYNJ contends that the current PABT must be upgraded or replaced entirely.

On February 17, 2017, The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Board passed a resolution to allocate \$70 million to the first phase of a comprehensive planning effort for the advancement and further definition of capital projects related to the development of a replacement for the Port Authority Bus Terminal on the West Side of Manhattan (Port Authority Bus terminal - Replacement Planning and Development - Planning authorization - Phase 1). The resolution included planning for support facilities, such as bus parking and staging facilities and planning for potential intermediate bus staging and storage facilities and other initiatives for the efficient operation of the interstate bus network.

The Port Authority did not consult with MCB4 while scoping and designing this study.

While Manhattan Community Board 4 recognizes the Port Authority's contention that a terminal replacement can only be on the west side of Manhattan, it also recognizes that the days of obliterating a neighborhood's homes and business, churches and community institutions to replace a new bus facility are over. Any replacement for the current PABT in MCD4 must not only consider the needs of commuters, but also take into account the health, safety, and quality of life of the people in whose neighborhood a bus terminal would be located. And a terminal must integrate into the existing and future transportation infrastructure of midtown Manhattan.

Therefore, MCB4 insists on the following guidelines for replacing the Port Authority Bus Terminal.

1. FIRST DO NO HARM

1. Avoid Eminent Domain

The southern end of historic Hell's Kitchen ran from West 30th to West 42nd Streets, and from Ninth Avenue to Eleventh Avenue, comprising Hell's Kitchen South. Parts of four blocks — on the northwest corner of Ninth Avenue and 40th Street; the north and south frontages of West 40th Streets between Ninth and Dyer Avenues; the east and west frontages of Ninth Avenue between West 39th and West 40th Streets; and a small mid-block portion on the southern side of West 39th Street between Ninth and Dyer Avenues are shown in the Port Authority's September 2015 "Midtown Bus Master Plan" for the site of a new or interim bus terminal and ramps. Properties would have to be condemned by the Port Authority for the new or interim bus terminal, resulting in the destruction of residences, businesses and community.

Over the past 110 years, the southern portion of Hell's Kitchen that has been impacted the most by the largest transportation infrastructure projects in the City of New York. Projects have included:

- The construction of Penn Station and its adjacent rail yards (1906);
- The construction of the Lincoln Tunnel (1938);
- The West Side Improvement creating a rail cut between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues (1934);
- The extension of the Lincoln Tunnel Dyer Avenue approaches (1957 and the mid-1970s); and,
- The construction of the Port Authority Bus Terminal (1949-1950).

Each successive improvement required the loss of community institutions, the demolition of hundreds of apartments, and the displacement of hundreds of neighborhood families. The devastation and destruction of poor neighborhoods to build transportation infrastructure was not unique to New York City. It occurred in minority neighborhoods throughout the country.¹

Through determined and sustained community activism since the 1970s, Hell's Kitchen has fought back against the disfigurement of the area and Hell's Kitchen has become a thriving, vibrant neighborhood — and a desirable one in which to live. Homes, businesses, houses of worship, and social service organizations are essential components of the Hell's Kitchen South neighborhood. Any plan to improve the current Port Authority Bus Terminal should assume the preservation of homes and businesses in the affected area. ***They must not be demolished.***

2. Comply With Existing Zoning & Prior Planning Studies

This Hell's Kitchen South core area is bounded by West 41st Street on the north, West 35th Street on the south, Tenth Avenue on the west, and Ninth Avenue on the east. While the Port Authority has preliminarily identified part of this area for the bus terminal expansion, MCB4 has pointed out that the area immediately west of Ninth Avenue under consideration for a new bus terminal is governed by the Special Hudson Yards District (SHYD) and that its Hell's Kitchen Subdistrict has specific restrictions against demolition.

MCB4, the New York City Department of City Planning, and our council member, who at that time was Speaker of the New York City Council, spent the years between 2001 and 2005 in negotiations to achieve the special district and the restrictions against demolition. Dismantling this hard-won zoning — zoning carefully crafted to ensure a vibrant and balanced development of the far west side of Manhattan — might seriously derail the City's vital and ongoing efforts to encourage and integrate commercial and

¹ <http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/sanchez-moving-to-equity-transportation-policies.pdf>

residential development in the area. It should be pointed out that the City zoned the area with an expectation of producing a significant portion of affordable housing. And the zoning called for the construction of a tour and charter bus layover facility by 2025 to replace current on-street bus parking.

MCB4 also points out that area immediately west of Ninth Avenue which was under consideration for a new bus terminal is zoned residential, as a result of the same City efforts — in contrast with the present location of the bus terminal on Eighth Avenue, which is zoned commercial.

3. Use Only Port Authority Property

Any bus facility must be sited on currently existing Port Authority property, comply with existing zoning and prior planning studies, and not degrade the neighborhood's functional and visual assets.

4. Follow NYC Land Use Procedures

The Port Authority must defer to New York City land use procedures, specifically, its Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), in selecting the site for a new terminal.

II. IMPROVE AIR QUALITY

MCD4 has the third worst air quality in New York City and is an United States Environmental Protection Agency non-attainment area. Since adding bus facilities would seem to violate the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Air Act, and New York State's Environmental Quality Review Act, plans must be in place to have the air quality of MCD4 meet Federal environmental air quality standards before any bus facility is built.

1. Eliminate Parking or Staging areas

No new parking or staging areas whether intermediate or permanent should be located in MCD4, a predominantly residential area. This is particularly true for bus staging facilities, where hundreds of buses could be idling while waiting for their gates to become available.

2. Install Filtration Systems

The new bus terminal facility should be a completely enclosed, net zero carbon emission building equipped with filtration systems. We understand that in the future bus fleets may run on “clean energy”, but no one can predict when or can mandate the private carriers to switch their fleets. And in our experience to date, the Port Authority has been unable to curb idling on its parking lots.

3. Reduce Idling, Mitigate Congestion

To prevent the extensive idling of queuing buses, which worsen air quality in the district, there should be no access to the terminal on street level or on bus ramps. All bus accesses

to the terminal from the Lincoln tunnel should be located underground with proper ventilation equipped with air filtering. Traffic mitigation strategies should be considered, including underground walkways, wider sidewalks, and underground taxi stands.

III. INTEGRATE WITH REGIONAL AND NYC TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

There has been intense focus on the replacement of the bus terminal on the west side of Manhattan in order to meet PANYNJ's goal of providing a 45% increase in capacity of bus commuter ridership by 2040.

The bus terminal, however, is only one of three components (along with the Lincoln Tunnel and the subway lines) of the system delivering bus commuters from New Jersey to their ultimate destination. (Each component of the system is operating at maximum capacity and will need upgrading to meet the 2040 goal.) Planning for a bus facility also must consider how future commuter demand will integrate with existing — and future — rail transportation infrastructure in MCD4, including the Moynihan Station and Amtrak's Gateway project.

Planning to meet the 2040 goal must also include these considerations:

1. Tour/Charter Bus Garage

Building a separate long distance bus terminal combined with a tour and charter bus garage would add 10% to systems capacity in 2040. This would reduce the on-street bus traffic and allow for a more compact commuter-only station.²

2. Extend the 7-Line

Extending the 7-line to New Jersey by building a transfer station in Secaucus with a PATH 7 train that seamlessly connects to the Hudson Yards Station and to the east side. Such a facility would add 25% to the systems capacity in 2040. This would be particularly attractive to bus commuters who travel to the east side and to the many who currently have a two-seat ride. This would significantly reduce pedestrian and taxi congestion in our district.³

3. Rail Projects

When completed, Gateway and New Jersey rail capacity improvements will absorb 6% of 2040 bus riders' demand.⁴

² <https://www.panynj.gov/bus-terminals/pdf/bus-board-3-19-15u-no-annotations.pdf>

³ https://www.panynj.gov/about/pdf/Trans-Hudson_Commuting_Capacity_Study-Summary_Report_9-21-16.pdf

⁴ https://www.panynj.gov/about/pdf/Trans-Hudson_Commuting_Capacity_Study-Summary_Report_9-21-16.pdf

CONCLUSION

As noted earlier, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Board passed a resolution on February 17th to allocate \$70 million to a planning effort related to the development of a replacement for the Port Authority Bus Terminal.

MCB4 is disappointed that the Port Authority did not consult our community while scoping and designing this study. Since MCD4 will be the main theater of operations of present and future bus facilities, it would have proved sensible and prudent to consult the community while designing the study.

The Port Authority can, and needs, to do better in working with this community.

Because a bus terminal will be placed in an already congested midtown Manhattan where millions of people live, work, and visit daily, forward-thinking transportation planning is critical. And because of the limited space for expansion in MCD4, the increasing residential character of the neighborhood, and the need to address capacity increase in the entire transportation system, all options to reduce bus congestion in MCD4, to reduce its attendant pollution and traffic safety impacts, and to divert demand to other regional resources and modes must be considered.

We hope the general guidelines in this letter will contribute to the constructive spirit our community feels is essential for the successful future replacement of a Port Authority Bus Terminal.

Sincerely,



Delores Rubin
Board Chair



Jean Daniel Noland
Chair, Clinton/Hell's Kitchen
Land Use Committee

cc

Congressman Nadler
Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer
State Senator Brad Hoylman
State Representative Linda Rosenthal
State Representative Richard Gottfried
NYC Councilmember Corey Johnson
Pastor Tiffany Triplett Henkel, Hell's Kitchen South Coalition