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May 16, 2012

Janette Sadik-Khan
Commissioner
NYC Department of Transportation
59 Maiden Lane, 37th Floor
New York, NY 10038

Re: Temporary Permit for Megabus Stop on West 41st Street

Dear Janette:

I write to request that Megabus's temporary permit for West 41st Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues not be renewed and that the stop be moved to 34th Street between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues, as Community Board 4 recommended in its letter dated October 5, 2011.

While the current Megabus stop on West 41st Street might seem a logical place for a stop, it does not address the root of the problem. The discount buses have free access to our streets and our sidewalks. The queuing lines created for boarding the buses curve around to Ninth Avenue and the removal of a traffic lane slows the flow of traffic in an already congested part of town. Passengers are required to step into the street to board the bus, and though they are "protected" by a Jersey barrier, they are nonetheless put in a dangerous situation. There is no other example of this type of boarding in the City. DOT should not jeopardize its standards for safety to accommodate a bus company by renewing this permit.

In public meetings, bus operators have objected to placing their pick-up and drop-off locations on the outskirts of our neighborhoods. But it is not up to them to decide where they can park their buses. While I am not an expert on bus travel, I am confident that travelers seeking discounted bus fares will be happy to travel a few blocks to meet the bus. Most importantly, these stops are an improvement for the community because of the lower pedestrian use of the 34th Street site.

As you know, Community District 4 has seen a significant increase in discount inter-city buses that do not use the Port Authority for their departure and arrival operations. The presence of these large and obtrusive buses has diminished the quality of life and jeopardized the sidewalk safety of residents and pedestrians in the Hell's Kitchen and Chelsea neighborhoods while taking away parking or traffic lanes. It has also drained resources from the Port Authority. Numerous bus operators pay the Port Authority millions of dollars per year to operate from the terminal, but Megabus and Boltbus are operating free of charge on our city streets. Whether or not DOT

moves the 41st Street bus stop, the bus operators ought to be required to pay fees to the City for this private for-profit use of public space, with a higher rate for the stop's proximity to the Port Authority and the heart of Mid-town.

I appreciate what DOT has done to address these problems thus far and especially the efforts to work with community boards. I hope you will continue to work with the community to find the best solution. Not renewing the permit at West 41st Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues is critical to mitigating the negative effect these buses have on the neighborhood. Moving the stop to 34th Street between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues and requiring a fee for public sidewalk use will create a safer bus stop, diminish the negative footprint on the neighborhood, and increase revenue for New York City.

Best regards.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard N. Gottfried". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Richard N. Gottfried
Assembly Member

cc: Community Board 4