

# HELL'S KITCHEN SOUTH DECEMBER 6, 2016 PLANNING SESSION REPORT

Manhattan Community Board 4

January 2017



# Manhattan Community Board 4



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## INTRODUCTION

Following the alarming images posted on the Port Authority's website depicting a new Bus Terminal over the areas of Ninth and Tenth Avenues, our community and our elected officials came together with one loud, clear voice against the use of eminent domain and any plan to displace our local businesses and neighbors. The community conversation continued and real thought was put into identifying concerns and issues of this Bus Terminal which sits within our District. These conversations also gave our community an opportunity to articulate potential visions for our future neighborhood. This document summarizes the prevailing themes of these community conversations and serves as a resource regarding the Hell's Kitchen South area.



## I. TIMELEINE OF EVENTS

### In 2015

- **March** - The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey released the Midtown Bus Master Planning Update. This report presented 5 concepts for a replacement terminal, all in midtown Manhattan. The Port Authority reported that the current terminal will not meet future demand and the facility needed major upgrades. One of the concepts that the PA began to focus on included placing the terminal in an area currently occupied by residential and commercial buildings and community facilities.
- **November** – MCB4 writes a letter of objection about the plans and demands that there be no eminent domain in order to build a replacement bus terminal
- **December /January 2016** – The Port Authority Board leadership decides not to build a terminal in New Jersey and launches an international design competition for designs of the terminal. At the same time, they announce that a study that looks into transit across the Hudson River, The Trans-Hudson Commuting Capacity Study, will be used by the competitors to inform their designs.

### In 2016

- **April** – MCB4 and local New York elected officials convene a town hall attended by over 200 citizens. Manhattan Community Board 4's Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use committee forms a working group to advise and focus on the Port Authority Bus Terminal Project
- **May** – MCB4 writes a letter asking the Port Authority to "Do No Harm". New York elected officials work with MCB4 on a response to the Port Authority.
- **July** – New York elected officials write a letter asking the Port Authority to terminate the Design competition
- **August** – MCB4 writes a letter protesting the poor air quality, the use of eminent domain and lack of public consultation with the Port Authority on the bus terminal design. New York elected officials hold a press conference to call for the termination of the design competition
- **September** – Port Authority agrees to restart the process
- **October** – Port Authority releases jury comments on the five design finalists and Trans-Hudson Commuting Capacity Study. The Port Authority meets with NY and NJ Elected Officials and MCB4 and MCB5, and agrees to form a working group

## II. METHODOLOGY

The event was created to solicit input from neighborhood residents and businesses in Hell's Kitchen South. Attendees were given seven sticky notes and an agenda as they walked in. They were instructed to place a sticky note on a topic they felt was important, or to write comments on the sticky notes on a specific issue relating to the topic. Throughout the room, posters were set up to represent a topic of community concern.

The seven topic areas were:

1. Neighborhood Preservation
2. Small Business/Community Services
3. Housing
4. Transportation
5. Air Quality
6. Parks
7. Other

First, there was a short introductory presentation to explain what events had taken place over the last year between the Port Authority and Manhattan Community Board 4. Next, to allow people multiple ways of expressing their ideas, the event was divided into two parts. The first part consisted of people placing sticky notes on posters around the room, with each topic area having a facilitator who could guide conversation or answer questions. The second part was designed to solicit discussion-based feedback. After a short oral re-cap of comments that had been written so far on the posters, attendees were invited to speak to the entire group about what they felt was a concern for the neighborhood.

The entire exercise was designed to allow free-flowing discussion between attendees, open engagement on areas of concern and the foundation for future planning actions in Hell's Kitchen South. The following report includes all of the comments on the posters, as well as comments from the discussion portion of the event. A month after the planning session, a survey was sent out to everyone who attended to solicit additional comments.



### III. RESULTS

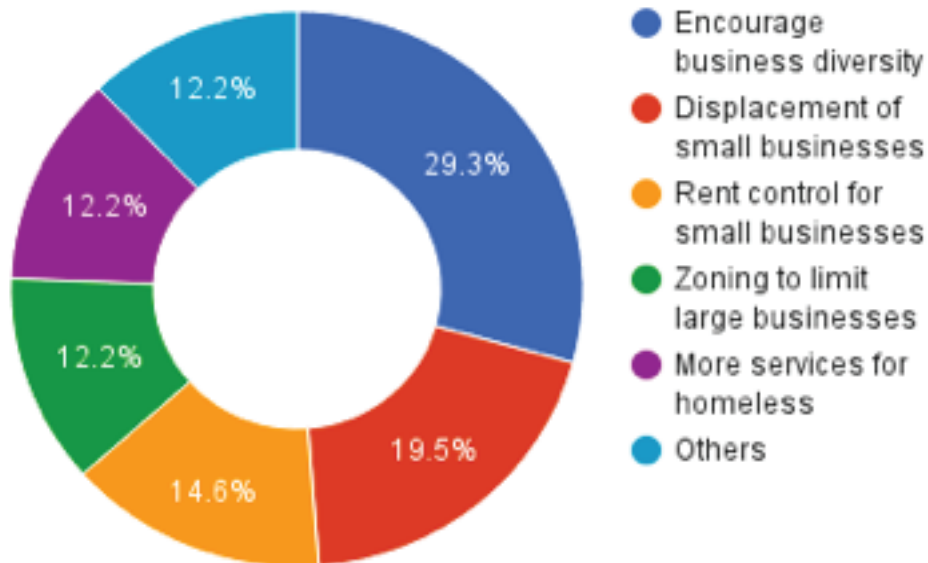
In total, 113 people attended the event. The Transportation poster had the most comments (56), but all posters had ideas and concerns about the future of the Hell's Kitchen South neighborhood.

#### a. Small Businesses/Community Services

Small Businesses / Community Services includes concerns over encouraging business diversity; displacement of small businesses and rent control for small businesses. The most common theme was encouraging business diversity (29.3% of comments) and displacement of small businesses (19.5% of comments). There were 41 total comments on this poster.

Five most common areas of concern (in order of most responses): 1) Encourage business diversity ; 2) Displacement of small businesses; 3) Rent control for small businesses; 4) Zoning to limit large businesses and 5) More services for homeless

**Comment Breakdown: Small Businesses/  
Community Services in Hell's Kitchen South**

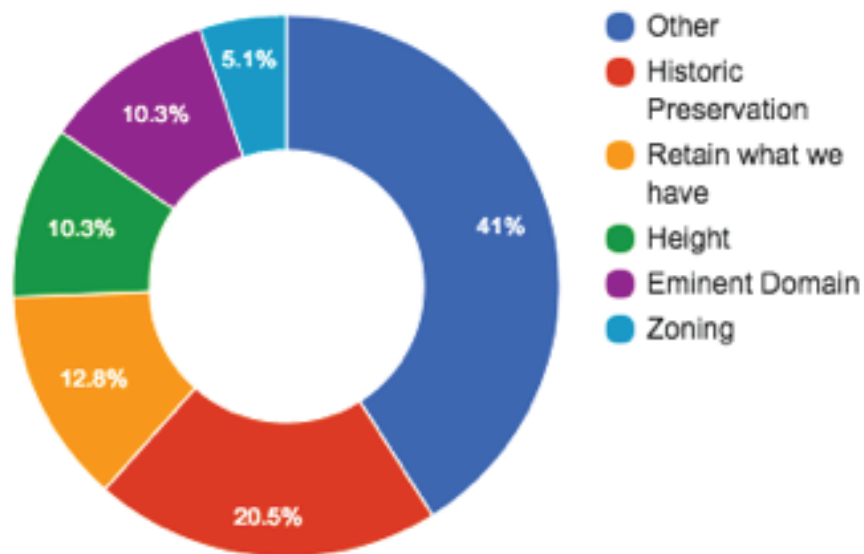


## b. Neighborhood Preservation

Neighborhood Preservation includes concerns over preservation of historic buildings and the neighborhood fabric, including building height and scale. The most common theme was preservation of historic buildings (20.5% of comments) and retaining structures that are already existing (12.8% of comments). There were 39 total comments on this poster.

Five most common areas of concern: 1) Preserving Historic Structures; 2) Retain What we have; 3) Eminent Domain; 4) Height and 5) Zoning

**Comment Breakdown: Neighborhood Preservation in Hell's Kitchen South**



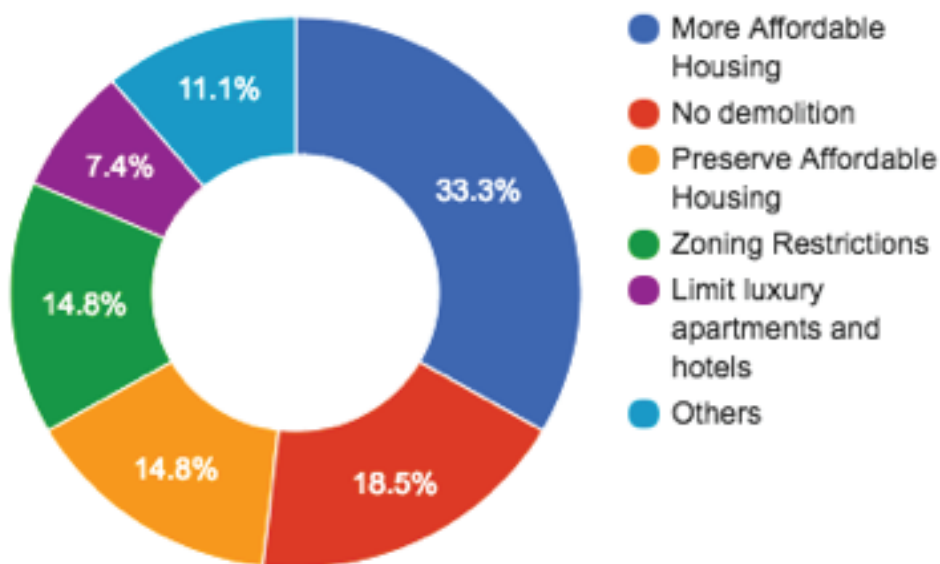


### c. Housing

Housing concerns include more affordable housing units, no demolition and zoning restrictions to preserve current neighborhood characteristics. The most common theme was more affordable housing (33.3% of comments) and no demolition (18.5% of comments). There were 27 total comments on this poster.

Five most common areas of concern: 1) More affordable housing; 2) No demolition; 3) Preserve affordable housing; 4) Zoning restrictions and 5) Limit luxury apartments and hotels.

**Comment Breakdown: Housing in Hell's Kitchen South**

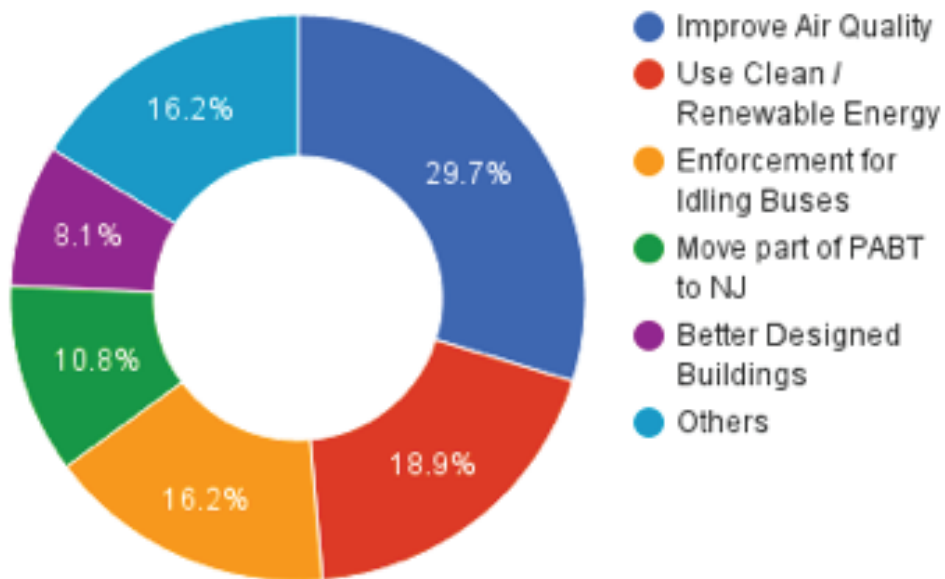


#### d. Air Quality

Air quality concerns include adopting clean/renewable energy, improving air quality, and enforcement for idling buses. The most common theme was improving air quality (29.7% of comments) and use clean/renewable energy (18.9% of comments). There were 37 total comments on this poster.

Five most common areas of concern: 1) Improving Air Quality; 2) Use Clean/Renewable Energy; 3) Enforcement for Idling Buses; 4) Move part of PABT to NJ and 5) Better Designed Buildings

**Comment Breakdown: Air Quality in Hell's Kitchen South**

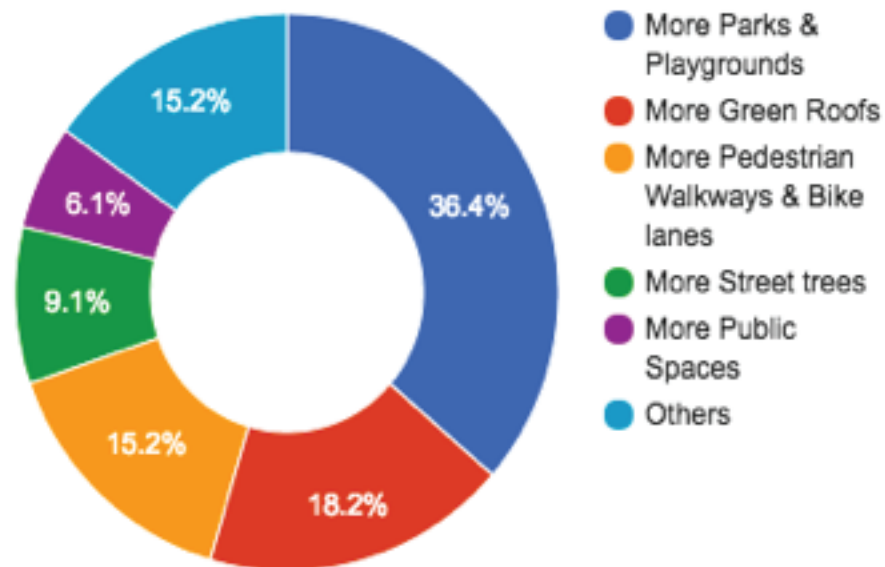


## e. Parks

Parks concerns include more parks and playgrounds, more green roofs and more pedestrian walkways in the neighborhood. The most common theme was more parks and playgrounds (36.4% of comments) and more green roofs (18.2% of comments). There were 33 total comments on this poster.

Five most common areas of concern: 1) More Parks & Playgrounds; 2) More Green Roofs; 3) More Pedestrian Walkways & Bike Lanes; 4) More Street Trees and 5) More Public Spaces

**Comment Breakdown: Parks in Hell's Kitchen**

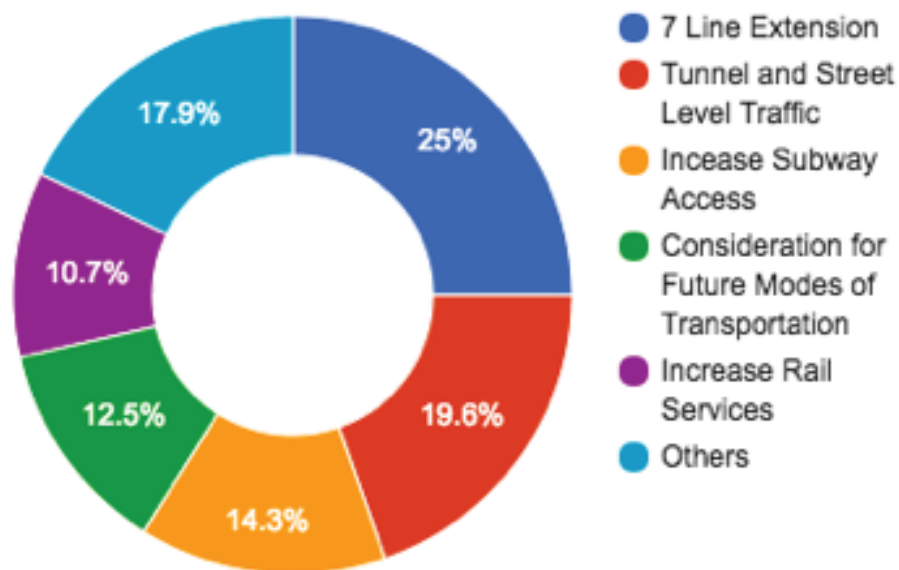


## f. Transportation

Transportation concerns include the 7 line extension, traffic in the tunnel and on the street level, increase subway access and consideration for the future modes of transportation. The most common theme was the 7 line extension (25% of comments) and Tunnel & Street Level traffic (19.6 % of comments). There were 56 total comments on this poster.

Five most common areas of concern: 1) 7 Line Extension; 2) Tunnel and Street Level Traffic; 3) Increase Subway Access; 4) Consideration for Future Modes of Transportation and 5) Increase Rail Services

### Comment Breakdown: Transportation in Hell's Kitchen South



## g. Discussion Session

The second part of the planning session was a chance for anyone to give a statement regarding the community concerns or the replacement bus terminal. In summary, the comments concentrated on solutions the Port Authority should implement to better the functionality of the terminal and improving the quality of life for the residents and businesses in Hell's Kitchen.

## IV. ANALYSIS

- **Small business/Community Services** – respondents focused more on the small business aspect of this issue and not the community services. The comments in general centered on retaining and encouraging small businesses in the neighborhood. Specific businesses were called out as essential, such as the fish store.
- **Neighborhood Preservation** – 20.5% of respondents were concerned about preservation of historic buildings, and 12.8% of comments focused on retaining structures that already exist. This is an area that will continue to need community support and action in order to achieve preservation of existing and historic structures.
- **Housing** – This category garnered responses that were reactionary to the long term effects of a new bus terminal. Respondents made comments about the availability and attainability of current and future affordable housing in Hell’s Kitchen South. 18.5% of respondents commented, “No demolition”, demonstrating the link between older residential buildings being used as affordable housing. 7.4% of respondents wanted to, “Limit Luxury Apartments and Hotels”.
- **Air Quality** - respondents suggested several solutions to improving air quality in the neighborhood, including 10.8% of respondents saying to “Move part of PABT to NJ”. Other comments were concerned with solutions apart from the Bus Terminal, “Use Clean/Renewable Energy” had 18.9% of responses and, “Better Designed Buildings” had 8.1%.
- **Parks** – this category had mostly similar comments; respondents answered that they wanted more of any type of green space. 36.4% wanted “More Parks & Playgrounds”. These comments show the lack of open space in the neighborhood felt by all residents.
- **Transportation** – This category had comments on the two transit issues seemingly at odds with one another – too much “Tunnel and Street level Traffic” (19.6%) and wanting more public transit options, a combined 50% of comments, “7 Line Extension” (25%), “Increase Subway Access” (14.3%), and “Increase Rail Services” (10.7%). This theme seems especially apparent as residents will have to weigh the positives of access to additional transit and the negatives of increased traffic from an expanded bus terminal.

## V. HOW TO STAY INVOLVED

There are many ways to stay involved in Hell's Kitchen South planning and Port Authority Bus Terminal project updates.

**a. MCB4 Webpage** - Manhattan Community Board 4 has a dedicated web page for the Port Authority Bus Terminal. All of the letters, reports, updates and other background information can be found there. [http://www.nyc.gov/html/mancb4/html/land/port\\_authority\\_bus\\_terminal\\_design.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/mancb4/html/land/port_authority_bus_terminal_design.shtml)

**b. Community Coalition** - Another way to stay involved is to join the Community Coalition and sign up for the monthly newsletter. The Community Coalition will be made up of neighborhood residents, business owners, community organizations and others. This group will be the active voice in future discussions with the Port Authority over the bus terminal replacement project. Their aim is to continue to write letters to the Port Authority expressing concerns, inform neighborhood residents and business about upcoming events and project updates, and be a source of information. To continue to participate, attend future planning and informational events hosted by Manhattan Community Board 4, elected officials or the Community Coalition.

**c. Port Authority Bus Terminal Webpage** - In addition, the Port Authority website also has press releases, reports and the associated material. <http://www.panynj.gov/bus-terminals/port-authority-bus-terminal.html>