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CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR
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Rick Cotton
Executive Director
Port Authority of New York & New Jersey
4 World Trade Center, 150 Greenwich Street, 22nd Floor
New York, NY 10007

Re: Bus Terminal Gates Capacity

Dear Director Cotton,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) greatly appreciates the update provided on the Port Authority Bus Terminal (PABT) operations during the pandemic at our February Transportation Planning Committee meeting. During this period of low demand, MCB4 at its March 3rd Full Board meeting, with a vote of 41 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to vote, urges the PABT to experiment with new models to allocate gates slots. Such models could offer flexibility and satisfy some of the demand for intercity buses' curbside stops that will arise in the next 10 years, until a new terminal is operational.

In the last 12 months, the PABT has seen its passenger load reduced by 75%, and its bus load by 27% overall. Typical passenger loads per bus are half of those in 2019. New Jersey Transit is operating a schedule close to pre-COVID, while other carriers have significantly reduced or cancelled their service.

And yet nearly all gates are sitting empty, due to governing long-term contracts for full-time gate usage. At the same time, intercity bus companies continue to seek permits for curbside departures and arrivals in our district.

PABT is actively seeking tenants for two gates that recently became available. As a best practice, it would be useful to publicize gate availabilities on the PABT website, and communicate them to NYC Department of Transportation, so that applicants for new curbside permits can be directed to this resource first.

Airports and co-working companies have demonstrated that selling space in time slots on shorter lease terms can be both profitable and beneficial. This method provides a service critical to

smaller companies and reduces the dependence on large tenants that monopolize the market. Such business model would also open much-needed capacity to relieve the pressure on our public sidewalks and our residents. PABT could test this practice on a limited set of gates as a pilot; contingency planning would need to be put in place to accommodate part-time operators in the event of delayed arrivals.

We further urge the PABT to use green certification¹, safety standards² and accommodation for disabled passengers as key selection criteria to award new leases. Recently, a Washington DC-based bus company indicated that their fleet is equipped with “idle-free” technology, which monitors idling and automatically switches off engines in order to comply with local idling regulations.

We value enormously the PABT Operations team, which is always quick to help and address our concerns. We look forward to exploring these options.

Sincerely,



Lowell D. Kern
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Christine Berthet
Co-chair
Transportation Planning
Committee



Dale Corvino
Co-chair
Transportation Planning
Committee

CC: Ed Pincar, Commissioner, NYCDOT

¹ [Certification for Sustainable Transportation, University of Vermont](#)

² [Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration](#)