

JEFFREY LEFRANCOIS
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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April 19, 2022

Kevin O'Toole
Chairman
Port Authority of New York & New Jersey
4 World Trade Center, 150 Greenwich Street, 22nd Fl.
New York, NY 10006

Re: Mitigation of Lincoln Tunnel congestion on Ninth Avenue

Dear Chairman O'Toole,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4), at its Full Board meeting on April 6th, 2022, by a vote of 42 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible, reiterates its August 16, 2021 requests that drastic measures be taken immediately to alleviate the extraordinary traffic congestion and air quality degradation due to the considerable increase in Lincoln Tunnel bound vehicular volume since the beginning of the COVID recovery period. Every day, seven days a week for a total of eight hours, mornings and evenings, the community endures gridlock, honking, and unhealthy air quality. Businesses are directly affected as the situation is an order of magnitude worse than pre-COVID conditions.

Since our last letter, there have not been any improvements in the traffic or in the management of the Lincoln Tunnel queues. It is not clear that discussions of remedies are underway.

A variety of measures could be explored to alleviate the congestion, unsafe conditions and honking on Ninth Avenue

- Reduce volume and merging conflicts at ramp C by closing Dyer Avenue North from West 34th to West 36th Streets. This traffic could be redirected to Eleventh Avenue northbound.
- Install traffic management and pedestrian safety agents at critical crossings. The recent month-long test conducted by Hudson Yards Hell's Kitchen Alliance BID resulted in an 88% reduction of blocked intersections and crosswalks and 78% reduction in honking.¹

¹ The test consisted of 4 agents placed at West 37th and West 38th intersections with Ninth Avenue at a potential cost of \$150,000 a year for four days a week, nine months of the year.

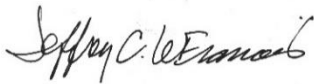
The program included five agents contracted with Sam Schwartz Pedestrian Traffic Management Service Inc. (NYPD impact cannot be measured as their agents' presence has been sporadic at these intersections, and agents have not been trained to focus on gridlock and pedestrian safety).

- Congestion Pricing will only help reduce tunnel congestion if the Lincoln Tunnel surcharge is significant enough to reduce the number of vehicles coming into and leaving Manhattan.

Addressing this issue is critical since the new bus terminal will add bus volumes to the Tunnel in the evening periods, causing further delays. Such delays result in prolonged idling and honking, diminishing both our air quality and our peaceable enjoyment.

We cannot emphasize enough the heavy burden that unmanaged Lincoln Tunnel traffic puts on our residents and businesses. We appreciate your help in addressing this issue.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey LeFrancois
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4

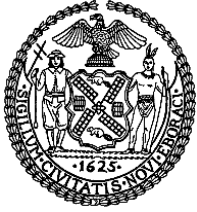


Christine Berthet
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning Committee



Dale Corvino
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning Committee

Enclosure



Lowell D. Kern
Chair

Jesse Bodine
District Manager

CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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August 16, 2021

Hon. Bill de Blasio
Mayor of the City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Rick Cotton
Executive Director
Port Authority of New York & New Jersey
4 World Trade Center, 150 Greenwich Street, 2nd Fl.
New York, NY 10006

Re: Lincoln Tunnel Congestion on Ninth, Tenth, and Eleventh Avenues

Dear Mayor de Blasio and Mr. Cotton,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4), at its Full Board meeting on July 28th by a vote of 33 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible, requests that drastic measures be taken immediately to alleviate the extraordinary traffic congestion and air quality degradation due to the considerable increase in Lincoln Tunnel bound vehicular volume since the beginning of the COVID recovery period. Every day, seven days a week for a total of eight hours, mornings and evening, the community endures gridlock, honking, and unhealthy air quality. Businesses are directly affected as the situation is an order of magnitude worse than pre-COVID conditions.

The corrective measures should provide immediate relief to the community by assigning traffic agents to prevent and enforce "blocking the box," and aggressive ticket issuing for horn citations. We also recommend swift implementation of a High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) only policy at the New Jersey entrance to the tunnel, or at a minimum, HOV priority lanes in the tunnel, on Ninth and Eleventh Avenues, at the southbound entrances to the Lincoln Tunnel off Ninth and Eleventh Avenues, and on Tenth Avenue from 23rd Street to 41st Street.

As the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey (PANYNJ) is installing cashless tolls on the New York side, PANYNJ should explore adding tolls to exit the city and applying variable rates to reduce congestion at peak hours.

Manhattan Community District 4 is home to all the entrances and exits to the Lincoln Tunnel. Decades ago, those roadways tore apart our community. While the Port Authority has begun to engage community stakeholders in its planning of the Bus Terminal replacement, we continue to struggle with the Lincoln Tunnel traffic in our streets.

As the city emerges from the COVID-19 Pandemic, this surge in traffic is threatening the fledgling economic recovery: businesses complain of losing customers and deliveries due to traffic, restaurants cannot take advantage of the Open Restaurant program as honking chases away patrons, and customers are staying home to avoid the chaos, the poor air quality, and lack of safety. A recent study ranked Ninth Avenue as one of the 60 most dangerous stretches in the USA. Many studies have proven that traffic and congestion stifle the economy and severely damage the environment. This situation is a case in point. Many businesses remain closed and the conditions in the area deters new entrepreneurs.

Our observations are that a vast majority of the Tunnel-borne private vehicles are single occupancy, which suggest an ongoing reluctance to use public transit post-pandemic. A single occupancy private vehicle takes up a minimum of 35 square feet of roadway and the resultant congestion dumps tons of toxic pollutants into the air. To make matters worse, drivers stuck in the congestion of their own making constantly honk their horns. Single occupancy vehicles must be disincentivized, while the City concurrently encourages a return to mass transit and car-pooling.

The City and the PANYNJ have the opportunity to help our district's economy recover from the pandemic. We look forward to the swift implementation of greater enforcement and HOV or more effective road pricing measures.

Sincerely,



Lowell D. Kern
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Christine Berthet
Co-chair
Transportation Planning Committee



Dale Corvino
Co-chair
Transportation Planning Committee

CC: Hon. Brad Hoylman, NYS Senator
Hon. Linda B. Rosenthal, NYS Assembly Member
Hon. Corey Johnson, Speaker, NYC Council
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Ed Pincar, Manhattan Borough Commissioner, DOT
Kim Y. Royster, Chief of Transportation, NYPD