



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JEFFREY LEFRANCOIS
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

May 16, 2023

Ed Pincar
Manhattan Borough Commissioner
NYC Department of Transportation
59 Maiden Lane, 37th Fl.
New York, NY 10038

Rick Cotton
Executive Director
Port Authority of New York & New Jersey
4 World Trade Center
150 Greenwich Street, 22nd Floor
New York, NY 10006

Re: Mitigation of Lincoln Tunnel congestion on Ninth Avenue

Dear Borough Commissioner Pincar & President Cotton,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4), at its Full Board meeting on May 3rd voted by 38 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible, reiterates its August 16, 2021¹ and April 19, 2022² 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.

¹ <https://cbmanhattan.cityofnewyork.us/cb4/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2021/08/53-New-Bizz-TRANS-Letter-to-Mayor-de-Blasio-and-PANYNJ-re-Lincoln-Tunnel-congestion.pdf>

² <https://cbmanhattan.cityofnewyork.us/cb4/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2022/04/18-TRANS-Letter-to-PANYNJ-re-9th-Avenue-Congestion.pdf>

- We support the Hudson Yards / Hell's Kitchen Alliance BID (HYHK) and reiterate our request that the Department of Transportation (DOT) and Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PA) work together to test the viability of a solution which the Port Authority proposed: reduce volume and merging conflicts at ramp C by closing Dyer Avenue North entrances from West 34th to West 36th Streets. This traffic would be redirected to the Eleventh Avenue entrance northbound.
- We also repeat our request that the green light cycle be reduced on Ninth Avenue at the intersections with West 37th, West 38th and West 39th Streets. Green light cycle should also be reduced on West 37th, West 38th and West 39th Streets at the intersections with Ninth Avenue.

We'd like to recognize and thank DOT for their serious efforts to date to resolve this issue: a no-turn sign into Ramp C every day, from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. was installed. This is intended to direct to Eleventh Avenue the cars arriving from east of West 37th Street and free up capacity to allow the center tube of the Lincoln Tunnel to absorb the volumes of Ninth Avenue queues. This sign must be enforced by traffic agents. HYHK committed to fund one agent at this intersection daily.

After a few weeks of operation, it has become clear that this approach is not sustainable and has some unintended consequences:

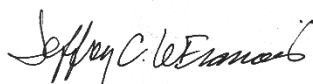
- Preventing cars from turning in the two-lane ramp requires two agents. This is twice the expected cost and a significant financial burden on the BID.
- The traffic is so intense and hectic that some agents refuse to step in the way. Even when NYPD traffic agents are on site, they are reluctant to enforce the sign.
- In some instances, the West 37th Street queue of cars being redirected west of Ninth overflows, blocking the entrance to Ramp C.

As you know, 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

Cc: Hon. Brad Hoylman-Sigal, NYS Senator
Hon. Tony Simone, NYS Assembly Member
Hon. Erik Bottcher, NYC Council Member
Hon. Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President
Kevin O'Toole, Port Authority of New York & New Jersey
Robert Benfatto, President, Hudson Yards Hell's Kitchen Alliance