



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JESSICA CHAIT
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

July 12, 2024

Alicia Glen
New York Commissioner & Co-Chair
Gateway Development Commission
120 Broadway, 10th Floor
New York, NY 10271

Re: Hudson River Gateway Tunnel Project

Dear Commissioner Glen,

The Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) Waterfront, Parks and Environment Committee (WPE) at its June 13, 2024 meeting heard a presentation on the coming phase (Section 4f) of the more than 10 year, \$16 billion Hudson River Gateway Project tunnel boring. This part of the project will take three or so years and will affect the Hudson River Park, surrounding streets, and a chunk of our westside district. We thank you for sharing your plans as they currently stand and listening to our concerns as part of your commitment to inform our community. This is an historic project that will not only improve Amtrak's northeast corridor but will improve travel access in our community, as well. MCB4 shares the commitment to building a better, more accessible mass transportation infrastructure. But considering the size and budget of this colossal infrastructure project, we are dismayed there are no existing plans or considerations for any neighborhood amenities upon completion of the project.

At its July 11th Waterfront, Parks & Environment Committee meeting, the Committee voted to express its approval of this phase of the long-awaited Hudson River Tunnel Plan along with its concerns and suggestions contained in this letter¹.

Background

The Hudson Tunnel is being built to provide redundancy to the existing North River Tunnel (NRT) under the Hudson River, allowing for much needed repairs to the NRT resulting from the

¹ The deadline to submit this letter is July 15th, before the Manhattan Community Board 4 Full Board meets. This letter is subject to ratification at the July 24th Full Board meeting.

super storm Sandy and eventually will be used for increased capacity on Amtrak's Northeast Corridor and for New Jersey commuters' trains that would terminate in the planned Penn Station expansion. It is part of the Gateway program which includes multiple projects in New Jersey and New York to improve rail capacity in the Corridor.

The Tunnel alignment in New York City will go eastward from the Hudson River, the Hudson River Park, the block delimited by West 29th and West 30th Street and 12th Avenue (Block 675), Hudson Yards, 10th Avenue between West 31st and West 33rd Streets and merge with the Penn Station tracks. The sections under 11th Avenue and under the eastern portion of Hudson Yards have already been completed (circa 2018).

According to the Gateway Project's update, the tunnel's construction will require staging and the drilling of two shafts. Removal of the drilling spoils from these shafts is currently planned to be by truck primarily through the Lincoln Tunnel with considerable vehicle workflow on the West Side Highway and our immediate local streets. Pedestrian and bike paths are planned to temporarily be relocated further to the west along the Estuary. A temporary bridge is planned for the movement of materials over the highway from the 12th Avenue construction staging area, Block 675, Lot 1. Recreational boat traffic will be directed away from the shoreline into the main channel to prevent boaters from moving through construction zones. The southern two pads of the existing heliport will be closed during the construction period.

Community Impact

MCB4 requests a commitment of supplementary funds for community improvement, outside the Gateway Project scope. Though we recognize and agree with the overall benefit of this welcome rail improvement, we cannot ignore the tremendous burden on our immediate neighborhoods. We also will be living for years with a truncated version of our park - this in a district already deficient in green space. These auxiliary monies will partially compensate for the displacement and temporary appropriation of our streets and park by helping to provide neighborhood improvements aligned with our shared objectives. We hope the Gateway Development Commission recognizes the enormous disruption in our area and will strive to leave our neighborhood better off than where it was found. We will also be following up with our local elected representatives on this point.

Concerns and Suggestions

- Consider barging to transport materials to and from the above groundwork area. We were told that the boring comes from NJ so the boring spoils will move westward back towards NJ through the tunnel space. Other spoils coming from the two shafts on the NYC side planned to be moved on the streets and through the Lincoln Tunnel clogging our streets, burdening our neighborhood and adding dirty air emissions. Barging would avoid that incursion.
- Noise. No blasting is planned. However, construction hours are scheduled to extend to 11pm. We request no loud construction after 8pm and not include weekend construction.

- Air emissions remain a concern for residents. Our district is listed as having the third worst air pollution area in the city. We request a comprehensive mitigation plan as work gets underway.
- Create opportunities for use of renewable energy when appropriate during construction i.e. solar electricity for lighting.
- Always maintain bus, cyclist, and pedestrian passages as required per New York City law. Establish alternate routes for cars and trucks and use NYPD traffic agents, and construction watchmen and flagmen at negatively impacted areas.
- Establishing a construction task force with regular meetings to address any open issues, plan community communication and resolve conflicts with other projects (Bus terminal interim parking). Set up phone line and email communications with community members and businesses.
- Work with MCB4 to identify local artists to beautify the work and staging areas during construction.
- Continue to coordinate with Hudson River Park Trust and ensure rebuilding the park's portion after work completion.

MCB4 appreciates the communications we have had about this phase of the Hudson River Tunnel project thus far. We hope to continue the open lines of conversation as we head into the work phases and explore further ancillary community benefits.

Sincerely,

Jessica Chait
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4

Maarten deKadt
Co-chair
Waterfront, Parks & Environment Committee

Leslie Boghosian Murphy
Co-chair
Waterfront, Parks & Environment Committee

CC: Hon. Chuck Schumer, NYS Senator
Hon. Jerry Nadler, NYS Congressman
Hon. Kathy Hochul, NYS Governor