



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JESSICA CHAIT
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

September 23, 2024

Demetrius Crichlow
Interim President
New York City Transit
2 Broadway
New York, NY 10004

Re: Need for Elevators at 23rd Street Stations (Sixth & Eighth Avenues)

Dear President Crichlow:

The Manhattan Community Board 4 (“MCB4”) Transportation Committee writes again to express our community’s urgent need for elevators at the MTA stations located on Eighth Avenue and 23rd Street and Sixth Avenue and 23rd Street.¹

On December 20, 2023 (the “December 2023 Letter”), MCB4 informed you that it would meet with relevant community groups and advocacy organizations to provide the MTA with the information it needs to designate elevators on 23rd Street as high priority for its 2025-2029 Capital Program.² On September 18, 2024, the MTA released its proposed 2025-2029 Capital Program, which includes 23rd Street and Seventh Avenue as a station targeted for elevators by the end of the decade. MCB4 wishes to express its sincere gratitude to the MTA for taking MCB4’s needs for additional elevator access in our community seriously, and for selecting this station on 23rd Street for near-future elevator installation.

¹ The MCB4 Transportation Committee voted unanimously to support this letter and is subject to ratification by the Full Board at its upcoming October 1st meeting.

²<https://cbmanhattan.cityofnewyork.us/cb4/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2023/12/11-TPC-Letter-to-MTA-re-Request-for-Elevators-at-23rd-St.pdf>

The September 18, 2024 proposed 2025-2029 Capital Plan also leaves room for the selection of an additional 30 unidentified subway stations to be prioritized for elevator installation. Since submitting the December 2023 Letter, MCB4 has met with various community and advocacy groups, and wishes to provide the MTA with the following information pursuant to the MTA’s selection criteria (as provided to MCB4 on January 4, 2024) as to why **the Sixth and Eighth Avenue stations on 23rd Street still must receive priority status in the 2025-2029 Capital Plan:**

Ridership:

The MTA considers “which stations could serve the greatest number of customers,” and “which neighborhoods are growing.”

First, the 23rd St stations on Eighth Avenue and Sixth Avenue see significantly higher daily ridership than the station on Seventh Avenue.³

Second, Chelsea has seen rapid population growth over the past decade (25.9%),⁴ and is set to rapidly expand. There are *numerous* multi-story residential buildings currently being constructed or set to commence construction, some with hundreds of rental units.⁵ Likewise, under the current Fulton and Elliott-Chelsea Houses Redevelopment Project proposal, the West 20’s of Chelsea could see as many as 3,500 additional residential units, growing the population of those blocks by many multiples of 3,500.⁶

Demographics:

The MTA further considers the “populations of seniors and people with disabilities,” as well as the “socioeconomic status of neighborhood residents.”

As indicated above, the West 23rd Street Stations are the closest subway stations for thousands of Chelsea’s elder and disabled residents. In particular, located by these subway stops are:

- Selis Manor, at 23rd and Sixth Avenue, is NYC’s only residence and facility for the Visually Impaired and Disabled, and **has hundreds of residents and countless clients who must regularly travel to their location;**
- Penn South, on Eighth Avenue and 23rd Street, is a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community, **with thousands of elderly residents;** and

³ <https://new.mta.info/document/113331>

⁴ [NYC Planning Population Fact Finder](#)

⁵ <https://newyorkyimby.com/neighborhoods/chelsea>

⁶ https://www.nyc.gov/assets/nycha/downloads/pdf/fec_draft_scope_of_work_jan_2024.pdf

- The Chelsea-Elliot NYCHA houses, extending between 16th Street and 27th Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues, **houses thousands of senior or medically vulnerable persons.**

Destinations:

When selecting stations for ADA upgrades, the MTA emphasizes communities with “priority destinations, such as schools, parks, retail, cultural hubs, medical centers, and other community institutions.”

Chelsea is replete with priority destinations, including but not limited to:

- The High Line;
- Chelsea Art Galleries;
- Hudson River Park;
- Chelsea Market;
- Selis Manor, at 23rd and Sixth Avenue, is NYC’s only residence and facility for the Visually Impaired and Disabled;
- Penn South, on Eighth Avenue and 23rd Street, is a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community;
- The Chelsea-Elliot NYCHA houses, extending between 16th Street and 27th Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues;
- The Hudson Guild Senior Centers;
- SAGE (a center supporting senior individuals in the LGBTQ community);
- Senior Planet (a technology and computer learning center for seniors);
- 29 public schools;
- 7 parks; and
- 38 hospitals and clinics.

Coverage:

The MTA identifies that when selecting stations for ADA upgrades, it is important that “neighborhoods across the city are never too far from an accessible station.”

Currently along 23rd Street from the Hudson River to East River there are 5 subways stations, but – as of now – the only one with an elevator is all the way on Manhattan’s east side.

Although the MTA notes that Chelsea is currently served by ADA accessible stations at 14th Street and 34th Street, the MTA’s own Accessible Stations map shows that the elevators on the

Eighth Avenue line are in the midst of a “long-term elevator outage.”⁷ Accordingly, as an example, a resident of Penn South on Ninth Avenue and 24th Street may have to travel nearly a mile to the nearest accessible working elevator (at 33rd at Seventh Avenue). Importantly of course, Chelsea extends much farther west than Ninth Avenue, and so as another example, a resident of NYCHA Chelsea-Elliot or Fulton Houses would have to travel even farther.

* * *

In conclusion, MCB4 reiterates the need in the community for elevators at the 23rd Street subway stations on Eighth Avenue and Sixth Avenue, and requests that the MTA seriously considers these stations for elevator installation in its 2025-2029 Capital Program.

Sincerely,



Jessica Chait
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning Committee



Jesse Greenwald
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

⁷ <https://new.mta.info/map/5346>