

CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

424 West 33rd Street, Suite 580 New York, NY 10001

tel: 212-736-4536
www.mcb4.nyc

JESSICA CHAIT
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

February 11, 2025

Andrew Kimball
President and CEO
NYC Economic Development Corporation
One Liberty Plaza
New York, NY 10006

Re: Manhattan Cruise Terminal - Master Plan Renovation

Dear President Kimball,

At our January 8, 2025 meeting, Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) Waterfront, Parks & Environment Committee (WPE) hosted a presentation by the NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC) on the Manhattan Cruise Terminal (MCT) Master Plan, studying the usefulness of the piers for the next 50-75 years. MCB4, by a vote of 43 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstentions and 1 present but not eligible, approved the following comments at the February 5th Full Board meeting.

Though we are excited about a potential update of Piers 88, 90 and 92, we are disturbed by the approach the EDC has taken regarding shore power, neglected oversight of Pier 92, the planned Ports America (PA) renovation and overall direction of the MCT. After preparing for the \$80 million PA funded Pier 90 refurbishment, including shore power infrastructure, completion of the EDC's own million dollar Jacob study and the promise of shore power by 2028, we are dismayed that this is all wasted efforts.

MCB4 thanks Hatch Design & Engineering for their presentation and public workshops. We appreciate the magnitude of this undertaking and note the 30-year rebuilding timeline tendered. Below is an initial list of considerations for the development planning stage.

Shore Power

We cannot stress enough the need for immediate shore power. MCB4 certainly does not see the completion and execution of the Master Plan as an antecedent to delivering electric power to the Cruise Terminal. The current condition of the piers is inconsequential to starting work on an electric connection on terra firma. We fully expect the EDC to establish parallel paths moving forward, one

continuing the Master Plan process and one developing the electric, connective infrastructure. We also expect shore power be the first item on the Master Plan completion list with an interim system implemented, including the placement of the necessary transformer.

Modernization Requests

The following needs to be included in any renovation plans:

- Holdover security measures from 9/11 have prohibited the public any access to the huge swath of waterfront between West 47th & West 54th Streets. Travel security has greatly evolved in the last 20-plus years and the need to cordon offshore access in its entirety is antiquated. The area should provide open and usable access to the riverfront.
- To that end, please recognize this dangerous and disconnected part of Hudson River Park (HRP) and plan a community-minded esplanade seamlessly joined to the north and south areas of HRP for pedestrians, bicyclists and passive park-goers. MCB4 requests the EDC work closely with the HRPT to seamlessly connect Pier 86 to Clinton Cove with a community-friendly esplanade. We also request the EDC take advantage of HRPT's experience and expertise in designing these park side avenues along the Hudson River.
- Long queues of tractor-trailers consistently line up on the southbound auxiliary road (MCT entry lane) waiting to service the outgoing ships. These semis often stay overnight and with running motors contaminating our neighborhood with even more pollution. We expect any redesign will include appropriate indoor facilities for service vehicles. (*Photo A attached*) This would also include a rethinking of the entry and exit ramps to the roof to allow for larger vehicle access for terminal operations. Currently, the ramps are prohibitive to many ship service vehicles which are contributing to the pile up along the highway.
- Create an adequate and accessible local transportation zone for embarking and disembarking passengers within the MCT Master Plan area. Currently, cruise travelers are dumped onto the state Route 9A highway with no convenient access to shuttles, public transportation or private vehicles creating dangerous and uninviting conditions. (*Photo B attached*).
- Provide more robust public transportation options, specifically, bolster the local MTA bus routes. At present, the closest, southbound city bus station is on Rt 9A south of 46th Street. To catch a northbound bus, travelers have to cross the highway. We expect the creation of public bus pickup and drop off areas within the MCT's footprint. This will eliminate masses of people rushing across the highway, allow for "off street" boarding and exiting and encourage the public transportation option.

Environmental Budgeting

MCB4 broadly expects all aspects of renovations at Piers 88-92 incorporate the greenest and most environmentally sustainable elements including but not limited to:

- Sustainable, recyclable, and low-impact materials
- Sustainable sourcing
- Thermal comfort including air quality, and noise control
- Waste management
- Integrating renewable energy sources and passive design strategies

We are encouraged the EDC seems to share our initial thoughts of prospects for a blue highway for Pier 92 but MCB4 would like to hear more details on what this would look like and how it may affect the surrounding areas before commenting further. We look forward to the development of this area with consideration to sustainable and environmentally friendly options.

Please update us on the estimated budget and plans for financing the elements of the Master Plan, itemized when they become available. We expect the timeline to be fastened to the allocation of funds and would like to be assured of our shared priorities. The repeated mention of the dependence on federal grants is not encouraging and seemingly illustrates an unawareness of the current political climate. MCB4 anticipates the EDC is working on a reliable budgeting plan to fund shore power and the subsequent renovation recommendations from the Master Plan.

MCB4 is less than enthusiastic with the current survey the EDC is providing on the MCT. It provides no context, treats the user as if they have a working knowledge of the terminal and the question formats are ineffective. In fact, it makes **zero** mention of shore power and public transportation/shuttle access and options - the two most important elements of any redesign.

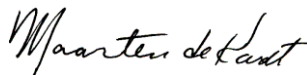
It is unfortunate the EDC didn't take advantage of the "downtime" in the cruise industry through the COVID pandemic to initiate these infrastructure studies but rather waited until now. Though we understand city agencies, including the EDC, were constructing COVID-related responses, with forethought, the EDC would be in a much better position to take advantage of the current cruise travel boom.

It is also unfortunate the EDC refuses to share the 2-year Jacob study after presenting the findings to MCB4's WPE Committee this past July. It is curious why after much palaver on the study's results, it is not being shared publicly. We look ahead to more transparency and a fruitful working relationship as the Master Plan moves forward.

Sincerely,



Jessica Chait
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4
Environment



Maarten de Kadt
Co-Chair
Waterfront, Parks & Environment
Committee



Leslie Boghosian Murphy
Co-Chair
Waterfront, Parks &
Committee

Enclosure

cc: Hon. Jerry Nadler, U.S. Congressman
Hon. Brad Hoylman-Sigal, NYS Senator
Hon. Linda Rosenthal, NYS Assembly Member
Hon. Erik Bottcher, NYC Council Member
Noreen Doyle, President, Hudson River Park Trust

Mayor's Office of Climate & Environmental Justice
Ports America



Photo A
Courtesy, Catie Savage



Photo B
Courtesy, Phil O'Brien