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CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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February 12, 2025

Ed Pincar  
Manhattan Borough Commissioner  
NYC Department of Transportation  
59 Maiden Lane, 37<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10038

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

**Re: 34<sup>th</sup> Street Enhanced Bus Priority Service**

Dear Commissioner Pincar and President Crichlow,

At its February 5, 2025 meeting by a vote of 44 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to vote, Manhattan Community Board 4 (“MCB4”) voted in favor of the DOT’s plan to enhance bus service on 34<sup>th</sup> Street (the “Bus Service Plan”), and to support a 34<sup>th</sup> Street busway with enhanced delivery facilities and sidewalk widening with the following reservations and recommendations.

Given the critical need to enhance public transportation infrastructure in this highly congested area of Manhattan, this project needs to significantly improve the efficiency and livability of 34<sup>th</sup> Street for both commuters and pedestrians.

The 34<sup>th</sup> Street corridor connects some of the most iconic destinations in Manhattan, including New York Hospitals, the Empire State Building, Herald Square, Macy’s Department Store, Penn Station, Hudson Yards, Javits Convention Center and both Greenways. With the expansion of Penn Station set to accommodate 40% more commuters, and thousands of new residents in the area, there is an urgent need for better public transit options. Currently, there are 28,000 daily passengers who rely on the buses on 34<sup>th</sup> Street, but the average bus speed is only 4.6 mph.

Likewise, between 2019 and 2023, over 450 people were injured in crashes along this corridor, including the most dangerous intersections at 11<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenues.

A dedicated busway will provide a faster, more efficient mode of transportation for tens of thousands of daily commuters who are still hampered by private cars and trucks' interference on the very slow M34 SBS and M34A SBS routes.

The success of the 14<sup>th</sup> Street busway serves as a compelling precedent. After implementation, bus speeds on 14<sup>th</sup> Street increased by at least 24%, and bus ridership grew by 30%. Crucially, a study found that the project did not result in significant congestion on nearby streets, demonstrating that dedicated busways can be both effective and non-disruptive to surrounding traffic.

Further improvements on 34<sup>th</sup> Street like 24/7 busway implementation and more frequency would prioritize bus movement, potentially encouraging a shift away from private vehicle use. This shift would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality, aligning with New York City's sustainability goals.

In addition to the busway's delivery and drop off facilities, sidewalk widening on 34<sup>th</sup> Street is crucial to accommodate the area's significant pedestrian traffic. Overcrowded sidewalks create unsafe conditions and reduce the quality of life for residents, workers, and tourists alike. The 14<sup>th</sup> Street busway resulted in a 42% reduction in injuries. Wider sidewalks will not only enhance pedestrian safety but also contribute to local business growth by improving the retail environment and increasing foot traffic.

MCB4 acknowledges and appreciates the stated goals of the Bus Service Plan: improving bus speeds and reliability and improving pedestrian safety along 34<sup>th</sup> Street. To address these issues, the Bus Service Plan intends to be designed using the current toolkit: limited busway priority, bus queue jump signals, center running bus lanes at certain times of the day, physical protection on sidewalks, pedestrian islands, and curb extensions.

These proposals are a step in the right direction, but do not go far enough. MCB4 requests that the corridor be converted into a busway as was successfully done on 14<sup>th</sup> Street.

The following recommendations should be considered for District 4:

- Significantly improve service 24/7, with higher speeds than the 14<sup>th</sup> Street buses and increased bus frequency;
- Improve space usage and convenience for other street users with center running bus lanes, numerous deliveries and drop off zones and wider sidewalks;
- Include seats and shelter from the weather, at each stop
- Restrict eastbound Lincoln Tunnel traffic to truck and buses only since there are alternate exits for cars to reach 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue south or the East side.

We also request that you study variations on the busway:

- Create circular routes that loop some of the buses at regular intervals from 34<sup>th</sup> Street up and around 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and down back to 34<sup>th</sup> Street both ways providing for a single seat ride between ferries, Grand Central and Penn Station.
- If traffic accumulation is unsustainable in a busway scenario, allow vehicular traffic to use the corridor to leave Manhattan in the evening peak hour by travelling from 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the west side without having to turn at the next block.

Sincerely,



Jessica Chait  
Chair  
Manhattan Community Board 4



Christine Berthet  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning Committee



Jesse Greenwald  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning Committee

cc: Hon. Erik Bottcher, NYC Council Member  
Hon. Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Eric Adams, NYC Mayor