



JESSICA CHAIT
Chair

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District Manager

CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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May 15, 2025

Marie Therese Dominguez, Esq.
Commissioner
NYS Department of Transportation
Hunters Point Plaza
47-40 21st Street
Long Island City, NY 11101

Re: Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad New York Byway

Dear Commissioner Dominguez,

At its May 7, 2025 meeting, by a vote of 39 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to vote, Manhattan Community Board 4 (“MCB4”) writes to request that the New York State Department of Transportation (“NYSDOT”) approve the Corridor Management Plan (“CMP”) for the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad New York Byway (hereinafter, the “Underground Railroad Byway”).

MCB4 understands that the Underground Railroad Byway is to begin in our district on the West Side Highway, somewhere near 42nd Street, and will extend all the way to Niagara Falls. The proposed designation of a 550-mile corridor, as with all scenic byways, will be a self-guided public road that invites travelers to explore and enjoy related attractions along the dedicated route within 22 municipalities. The Underground Railroad Byway will highlight the stories of those who risked their lives to self-emancipate or seek freedom, and those who assisted them, by providing “exceptional and inclusive experiences” along the route.

In light of current federal government’s attempts to erase or soften key aspects of American history, the Underground Railroad Byway may be more important now than ever¹. Recent changes to National Park Service websites—such as removing references to Harriet Tubman,

¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/2025/04/06/national-park-service-underground-railroad-history-slavery/>

diminishing the roles of Black Americans in their own liberation, and reframing the Underground Railroad as simply a story of racial cooperation—represent a disturbing turn towards historical revisionism. These edits obscure the brutal realities of slavery and the extraordinary courage of figures like Tubman and others, who risked everything to lead others to freedom. In preserving “the voices of those who sought personal sovereignty,” we reaffirm our commitment to an honest reckoning with the darkest chapters of American history to learn and evolve from.

Accordingly, MCB4 fully supports the Underground Railroad Byway, and encourages the DOT to approve the proposed CMP. MCB4 also requests, per CMP requirements, that no new billboards are constructed along US 1 within the boundaries of our district.

Sincerely,



Jessica Chait
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning Committee



Jesse Greenwald
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning Committee

Cc: Hon. Linda Rosenthal, NYS Assemblymember
Hon. Erik Bottcher, NYC Councilmember
Hon. Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President
Noreen Doyle, President, Hudson River Park Trust
Sage Hamilton-Hazarika, Corridor Coordinator, Underground Railroad Consortium of
New York State