



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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COREY JOHNSON
Chair

ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.
District Manager

July 27, 2011

Timothy Gilchrist
President
Moynihan Station Development Corporation
633 Third Avenue, 36th Floor
New York, NY 10017

**Re: Moynihan Station Development Project Section 106 Historic Review Process
Pre-Final Phase 1 Design**

Dear President Gilchrist:

Manhattan Community Board 4, at its July 27, 2011 Full Board meeting approved the following comments to the Pre-Final Phase 1 Design.

At this stage in the review it must be recognized that the task is to review the design as it has been developed to this point and suggest any refinements, minor corrections and improvements which seem to be required. The main features of the design have been presented before and have been developed in detail in the presentation of 04/21/2011; the task now is to evaluate the result of the process up to this point and, if necessary and possible, smooth out any rough edges. In general the work has been well done and the comments will be brief.

The entry plazas seem well planned; and the use of materials, including the marble, shows careful thought. The proposed subway entrance will not be obtrusive in itself, but the use of such a conspicuous feature as subway globes is questionable as detracting from the general character of the area, which should be dominated by the historic materials and character of the Post Office. The IND subway came almost 30 years later and needs no celebration in NYC. The new location is not the original one, so that the case for historic appropriateness is weak.

The treatment of the existing openings appears quite satisfactory. We continue to regret that the design of the canopies was not based on more appropriate classically-derived models (in modern materials) that would have had the advantage of creating more effective identification for the entrances, including signage, and perhaps even provided a little shelter for persons waiting at the entrance in bad weather.

The exterior signage has been improved by putting it on two lines. The suggestion to locate additional copies on the west walls of the north and south staircase is good, since it will be

immediately visible to people coming from odd angles or from vehicles pausing on Eighth Avenue and will not be too intrusive in what was originally a secondary space.

The pylons are more problematic and need study. There is no indication of the design, including any lettering proposed. The proposed height of 15 feet seems excessive, it interferes with views of the façade and would appear awkward in a space that would often have few persons in it; 10 feet or at most 12 should be enough to enable the pylons to be visible above people standing nearby. People will naturally tend to group around them, and so they must be carefully located not to block traffic both visually and physically. At 33rd Street the location near the subway exit appears fine, since it is out of the main traffic flow. But at 31st Street a location slightly to the southwest might be better as somewhat more out of the traffic flow, although indeed the flow will be less at this entrance.

The grand stairs are an important feature. Do they produce enough water flow to require a trench drain?

Lighting is very important, and has received careful thought. A possible problem of an elaborately planned system like this one is that it may end up being too elaborate. Putting too much emphasis on details of a well-designed monument can spoil the effect of the whole. Balance is important, and the amount of lighting proposed on details suggests a review of the whole should be made with this in mind.

Thank you for all the hard work put into the design and for consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CJ', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Corey Johnson
Chair
Manhattan CB4

cc: U.S. Senator Charles Schumer
U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand
Congressman Jerrold Nadler
U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood
NYS Governor Andrew Cuomo
NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg
NYS Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver
NYS Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos
NYS Senator Thomas Duane
NYS Assemblyman Richard N. Gottfried
NYS Assemblymember Deborah Glick
NYC Council Speaker Christine Quinn
Manhattan Borough President
Friends of Moynihan Station

Regional Plan Association
34th Street Partnership
American Institute of Architects - New York Chapter
General Contractors Association of New York
Municipal Art Society
National Trust for Historic Preservation
New York Building Congress
New York Landmarks Conservancy
New York League of Conservation Voters
New York State Laborers
Partnership for New York City
Preservation League of New York State
Transportation Alternatives
Tri-State Transportation Campaign