



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**JOHN WEIS**  
Chair

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

June 1, 2011

Mr. Tom Lewis  
President  
Coach USA  
160 South State Rt. 17  
Paramus, New Jersey 07652

**RE: MegaBus Long Distance Bus Stop at 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and Ninth Avenue**

Dear Mr. Lewis:

Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) has received numerous complaints about the temporary Megabus, a division of Coach, passenger loading area on the west side of Ninth Avenue between 31<sup>st</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> Streets. We appreciate your meeting with us and describing the numerous steps Megabus has taken to improve the conditions. While residents acknowledge improvements have been made, a few critical issues remain that must be addressed for this location to be viable as a temporary bus loading area:

- Restroom accommodations for bus customers,
- Unobstructed and clean pedestrian space on the sidewalk and crosswalks.
- No double parking or idling by busses there or in the larger neighborhood
- Excess passenger volumes boarding buses at another location.

Since the temporary relocation of the Megabus passenger loading area from 31<sup>st</sup> Street adjacent to the Madison Square Garden last fall there have been unforeseen negative consequences in the immediate area of the bus loading spaces as a result of Megabus using public curbside street and sidewalk space for bus loading.

**Traffic:**

While Megabus was allocated two bus spaces, up to five buses were often double parked at the location. Those buses combined with taxis and private automobiles dropping off passengers, contributed to congestion in an area adjacent to two already highly congested Lincoln Tunnel entrances.

- Megabus has organized queuing of additional buses on Tenth Avenue and posted a dispatcher to call the buses when a space becomes available. This has substantially addressed the problem at the loading area. However, we continue to see buses illegally standing and idling (sitting, with their motor running) in the bus lane on 34<sup>th</sup> Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues and in a double-parking mode on Ninth Avenue north and south of 34<sup>th</sup> Street. Some of the buses block the pedestrian crossings and force pedestrians to walk into the incoming traffic.

- Buses should not double-park, stand, idle or block pedestrian crossings in the area - including Tenth Avenue. The loading area is within 500 ft. from a school and subject to a one-minute limit on idling<sup>1</sup> that should be strictly respected. Again, while improvements have been noted, particularly at the temporary bus stop itself, related problems have been observed in the surrounding areas of West 34<sup>th</sup> Street and Ninth Avenue.

### **Sidewalk:**

The western sidewalk has no business or residential properties except at the corner and is preferable to the mostly scaffolded east side of the avenue. In inclement weather, some of the travelers congregate across the avenue under the scaffold, obstructing that sidewalk as well. We appreciate the very successful steps Megabus has taken to free up the sidewalk: passengers now line up on the southern portion of the adjacent parking leased by Megabus from Edison. Further, the dispatcher has been instructed to release five passengers at a time only to load in the bus, and a camera has been installed to monitor compliance.

- However, enforcement needs to go a little further. Several passengers still obstruct the sidewalk with their luggage and newly added food vendors have increased sidewalk crowding and litter. We request that additional personnel be assigned to enforce waiting period policies (eg. avoid passengers seeking to jump the line by waiting on the sidewalk) and work with local vendors to keep the sidewalk clean.

### **Noise and Waste Pollution:**

With larger groups of people – upward of over 1,000 at peak bus schedule times such as Friday and Sunday afternoons – comes excessive noise and unpleasant odors. Megabus has largely addressed the noise issue by no longer using bullhorns and by having sufficient staff to discourage overly disruptive waiting activities. However, there have been substantial complaints of Megabus patrons urinating on the street or behind some of the residential buildings. We are pleased that Megabus has begun discussions with surrounding businesses to utilize their restrooms, but a plan to address this issue is required in the next month (before the summer weather exasperates the smell) and we look forward to hearing a plan before the Transportation Committee's June 15 meeting.

While we strongly support mass transit options and recognize the importance of maintaining convenient adjacency to the major transportation hub in the area at Penn Station, the residents are entitled to marked and consistent improvement in the site conditions. We appreciate the changes that have been made to date and look forward to the necessary additional steps to be implemented in the next month or two. We should note that most the residents who have attended CB4 Transportation Planning Committee meetings support the relocation of the temporary bus loading/unloading area to a location where the negative impacts will be lessened, such as 34<sup>th</sup> Street between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues. We have tabled that recommendation and asked for their patience until we see if the existing site can be made more tolerable.

We thank you again for your efforts to be a good neighbor. We'd like to invite you to attend CB4 September Transportation meeting to share the progress.

Sincerely yours,

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<sup>1</sup> Section 24-163 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York - subdivisions f and g



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Chair  
Manhattan Community Board No. 4



Christine Berthet  
Co-Chair  
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Cc: George Lence  
Cc Margaret Forgione , DOT  
Cc: NYPD 10th Precinct  
Cc: Inspector Pilecki  
Cc: Elected officials