



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD No. 4**

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**J. LEE COMPTON**  
Chair

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

February 26, 2007

Willis Edwards  
Operations Program Manager  
Port Authority of NY/NJ  
General Manager's Office  
Port Authority Building  
New York, NY 10036

Dear Mr. Edwards:

Community Board 4 is writing to you regarding a serious community concern that we believe is long overdue in being addressed around the area of 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 41<sup>st</sup> Street. We write not just to reiterate our concern, which we have discussed with you and others at the Port Authority (PA), but to continue the opening up of a dialogue that aims to discover what can be done in both the short-term and the long-term around the 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue corridor by all the parties concerned.

As you know, the space rented from the PA by Open Door, a part of Urban Pathways, is a drop-in center for homeless on a 24 hour 7 day basis. Although we acknowledge the need for services to our homeless population, especially around and within the PA building, we believe the drop-in center is poorly run.

However, as a short-term measure, but for the foreseeable future, the PA must manage the area better. There are no lights near or under the overpass making the corner extremely dark and attractive to those congregating who normally do not wish to be seen. We have confirmed reports from the police and Open Door that a great deal of drug activity occurs on this corner. The lack of lighting clearly adds to and abets this problem.

We have no idea when the construction to the façade of the PA building on 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue will be done, nor when the jersey barriers will be moved. To put it bluntly, the area is a mess and totally out of keeping with the restaurant/commercial lure of 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue on either side of 41<sup>st</sup> Street. In addition, 41<sup>st</sup> Street between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenues needs to be cleaned.

In addition, we understand from the Port Authority Police that the public payphone located on 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 41<sup>st</sup> Street also causes problems. This is a Verizon phone and no longer works. We plan to have it removed but we need assistance in getting something in writing from you detailing any disturbances responded to or violations given on record that occurred near that payphone.

When looking at long-term goals, we believe the PA needs to consider engaging with another provider to run the drop-in center. We are willing to work with you to find another provider and possibly another space.

You may want to consider finding tenants for that part of 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue who are more in keeping with all of midtown west and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This would entail working with the senior center, Project Find. This center provides much needed services but is poorly located near the drop-in center and under an overpass.

The PA and the area have gone through many changes over the years, many of them for the better. We look forward to continuing this conversation and working with you to clean up and revitalize 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue near 41<sup>st</sup> Street and the PA entranceway.

Sincerely,



J. Lee Compton  
Chair  
Manhattan Community Board No. 4

Jean Daniel Noland  
Co-Chair  
Quality of Life Committee

Millie Glaberman  
Co-Chair  
Quality of Life Committee

Cc: local elected officials