



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

330 West 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, 26<sup>th</sup> floor New York, NY 10036  
tel: 212-736-4536 fax: 212-947-9512  
www.ManhattanCB4.org

**J. LEE COMPTON**  
Chair

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

March 13, 2007

President of the Partnership for New York City  
Ms. Kathryn Wylde  
One Battery Park Plaza, 5th Floor  
New York, NY 10004

**Re: Partnership for NYC on their “Growth & Gridlock” Report.**

Dear Ms. Wylde:

Manhattan Community Board #4 supports the recommendations of the Partnership for New City’s “Growth or Gridlock? The Economic Case for Traffic Relief and Transit Improvement for a Greater New York” report. We urge the Mayor’s office, the Department of Transportation, and nonprofit advocacy groups to aggressively move forward on a pro-active agenda to address the severe traffic issues in the city and urge the city to take advantage of U.S. Department of Transportation planning grants to create a master plan to address congestion.

The report documents the substantial increase in congestion in the region during the last decade and its detrimental affect on the local economy, particularly businesses in mid- and downtown Manhattan. Each weekday almost 1 million cars (40% of which are single occupancy vehicles) travel into Manhattan below 60<sup>th</sup> Street – about half of whom are commuters. This number of cars, which is expected to increase by about 7,000 each year, creates excess congestion that slows the average speed of traffic to less than 12 MPH and causes excess delays. Commute times (primarily residents commuting to this part of Manhattan) have substantially increased between 1990 and 2000 throughout the region – currently over 50 minutes on average to mid- and lower Manhattan. The four outer boroughs have the 4 highest commute times of all counties in the country. Using conservative economic modeling techniques, the report estimates over \$13 billion dollars and 50,000 jobs are lost to the region as a result of this congestion. Among the negative impacts they cite are:

- Increased and less predictable delivery times;
- Extra costs in fuel and vehicle operating expenses;
- Extra personnel time for travel;
- Delays in surface based mass transit;
- Fewer customers for businesses located in lower Manhattan, due to the extra delivery times and inconvenience related to travel.

The above result is higher operating costs and lost revenues. The most affected industries are manufacturing (44.5% of the estimated lost business revenue and almost 40% of the estimated lost jobs), wholesale (2/3<sup>rd</sup>s of the increased business costs) and construction (28% of the lost business

revenue and 23% of the jobs lost). The businesses that have the highest percent of employees commuting by car are (ironically) transportation and warehousing and government.

The report, does not document, but this Community Board is all too familiar with the negative impacts this congestion creates for residents. New York is among the areas in the country with the worst air pollution, likely partially responsible for a cancer rate that is 50% higher than the national average; pedestrian/automobile conflicts have resulted in over 1,500 fatalities each year and several times that in injuries; and formerly residential areas become travel and bus and truck parking zones.

To encourage the city to move ahead rapidly in investigating and implementing many of the reports suggested remedies:

- Implementing the proposals from the recently completed Truck study, including variable message signage, encouraging “out of normal hours” deliveries, better education of truck drivers on truck routes and increased enforcement. While trucks are under 5% of the vehicles in mid- and lower- Manhattan, they account for a substantial percentage of the delays;
- Encourage zoning and building code changes that ensure sufficient and appropriately designed loading docks and freight elevators and incentives for existing owners to upgrade existing loading facilities;
- Restrict the government employee free-parking privileges – which leads to an estimated 77% illegal use of the 150,000 government provided permits;
- Expedite the implementation of the Bus Rapid Transit program;
- Expand the use of ferries (including through integrated use of Metrocards and transit passes and through reducing ferry costs for pier leasing and through creating fuel purchase cooperatives);
- Increasing street parking costs (in non-residential areas);
- Create HOT lanes (combination HOV and extra charge lanes); and
- Promote congestion pricing.

On the latter point, the Community Board encourages the Partnership to take leadership in researching and promoting a congestion pricing program appropriate for New York City.

More than support the above initiatives, Manhattan Community Board #4, by its proximity to the negative affects of congestion and its location within the Manhattan’s Central Business district, intends to be a partner with the Partnership, NYC Department of Transportation, Transportation Alternatives and other nonprofit advocacy groups, other Community Boards and our local elected officials to investigate and implement these above recommendations and to support city efforts to receive Federal Transportation funding towards these efforts.

Sincerely,



J. Lee Compton  
Chair  
Manhattan Community  
Board No. 4



Jay Marcus  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning  
Committee



Christine Berthet  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning  
Committee