



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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J. LEE COMPTON
Chair

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

May 11, 2007

Patrick J. Foye
Chairman
Empire State Development Corp./Downstate
633 Third Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Dear Chairman Foye:

Manhattan Community Board 4 is home to three large projects either controlled by, or important to, state agencies: the Javits Convention Center, the Western Rail Yards and Moynihan Station. We also have the ongoing construction of the Hudson River Park and various infrastructure projects proposed for Port Authority.

We are grateful for the opportunities we have had to participate in the planning processes for each, some more than others, but we are concerned that even though they are in close proximity to each other, they are being treated as discrete projects rather than as interrelated projects that together will remake the western part of midtown Manhattan. Together they demand a level of coordinated consideration and oversight that has not been in evidence.

We have concerns about each individual project:

Javits: newly expressed concerns by users of the facility that it is inadequate for their needs and thus obsolete before ground is broken, and the failure to consider all expansion options or the potential value of a newly-invigorated riverfront;

Western Rail Yards: doubts about the wisdom of a single developer approach and the difficulty of balancing competing public goods, such as maximizing the return to the MTA vs. affordable housing and other community needs;

Moynihan Station: the push to complete the programmatic scope of the project in the next four weeks despite the complexity of integrating the needs of three transportation entities, an entertainment company, the US Postal Service, historic preservation interests, and the creation, siting and use of several million square feet of space.

But we also have concerns about how the projects interact, such as the certainty that decisions about the development of the Western Rail Yards may eliminate future expansion options for Javits.

As experienced participants in the planning process and as the local stewards of the development sites, we ask that you meet with the leadership of Community Board 4 to discuss our concerns and hear the thoughts of those who live and work here.

I will call your office early next week to set up such a meeting.

Sincerely,

J. Lee Compton
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4

cc: Governor Eliot Spitzer
Mayor Michael Bloomberg
Speaker Christine C. Quinn
Congressman Jerold Nadler
NYS Senator Tom Duane
NYS Assembly Member Richard Gottfried
Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer