



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JEAN-DANIEL NOLAND

Chair

ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.

District Manager

September 5, 2008

Evan Korn
Executive Director
NYC Citywide Event Coordination and Management
100 Gold Street, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10038

Re: NFL Week

Dear Mr. Korn:

Manhattan Community Board 4 is dismayed that there was no community consultation for the NFL Kick-off event at Columbus Circle beginning September 4, 2008. We are writing relaying our serious concerns about this event and how it was organized and asking for a meeting with you and with representatives from the two other community boards affected – Manhattan Community Board's Five and Seven.

We only received notification of this event on August 26, and were not involved in the planning for the event. We understand that Manhattan Community Boards Five and Seven (which also border Columbus Circle), the Lincoln Square BID, and the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit, were only notified in late August as well.

This event had severe impacts on auto and pedestrian access, traffic and public transportation, created significant noise and disruption in the area. It included the closing of Columbus Circle interior lanes and pedestrian access from Columbus Circle Plaza from August 30th to September 6th, and closing Broadway from 57th to 65th Street, Central Park South from Columbus Circle to Fifth Avenue, and Sixth and Seventh Avenues from 58th to 59th Streets from the morning of Thursday September 4th to the morning of Saturday September 6th.

The areas used for the event, Columbus Circle and the area around the Maine Monument are public parks. It has long been our policy that public parks should not be used for private uses that obstruct pedestrian and/or auto usage beyond a few hours without due consideration and discussion with the neighboring communities. In addition, the area is a hub for vehicular traffic and, at the moment, the site of three (3) large construction projects. These factors combine to make Columbus Circle a poor choice for such a large special event.

In addition to minimizing community disruption and confusion, we feel that community consultation could assist special events to operate more smoothly.

Among the observations neighborhood residents have mentioned are:

- ❑ **Parking of trailers/trucks on the south side of West 58th Street:** West 58th Street between Eighth Avenue and Ninth Avenues is a major loading area for the Time Warner Center and the Hudson Hotel and has a very busy taxi stand. Alternative streets might have proven a more effective staging area;
- ❑ **Obstruction of the area in front of Central Park:** The plaza area at the entrance to Central Park at the corner of CPW and CPS is a major gathering place for New Yorkers and tourists. It is a signature part of west side Manhattan. Its obstruction, without advance area posting or notice, by the installation of the view stands, have caused confusion among the crowds and frequent traffic delays;
- ❑ **Closing of and obstruction (with lighting equipment and scaffolding) of certain subway stops:** Several of the subway stops both within CB4 (e.g., the SE corner of West 58th and Broadway) and other CD areas are heavily trafficked, including tourists who are less familiar with the streets in the area. Appropriate signage would assist in reducing the confusion and interference with NFL event workpeople which seems to have occurred;
- ❑ **Coordination with area businesses on delivery and trash removal:** Several area businesses reported that they were unaware of the street closures and uncertain on how it would affect their deliveries and trash removal. Advance notice and communication could have mitigated the impact of these closings;
- ❑ **Public Notice of Bus Rerouting:** no notice was provided to areas residents or businesses about the re-routing of MTA buses, leaving commuters and visitors stranded.
- ❑ **Coordination and communication with area nonprofits including senior centers and educational institutions:** The affected area is rich with educational institutions (including the Fordham Lincoln Center campus, John Jay College, and New York Institute of Technology) and services (Roosevelt Hospital and the Lincoln Square Senior Center) whose attendees utilize subway and bus stops that were affected by the event. Advance communication and notice could have assisted in mitigating disruption.

Mayor's Executive Order 100 (March 15, 2007), which created the Citywide Event Coordination and Management Office (CECM) and moved the Street Activity Permit Office to their jurisdiction from the Community Affairs Unit, requires CECM to "work with affected agencies," specifically mentioning the Community Affairs Unit (which at the time of EO100 was named the Community Assistance Unit). It also requires that the CECM "enhance communication and cooperation among the various agencies...and ensure that affected agencies are provided with timely information for proper advance planning so that unnecessary disruptions to vehicular and pedestrian traffic and excessive noise in neighborhoods hosting events are avoided." Clearly, with respect to notification of the Community Affairs Unit and the affected community boards this did not occur. Given that this event is the result of the Giant's winning last year's Super Bowl (the

winning team's city is expected to host the next year's NFL's kick-off event), the CECM had several months advance notification of this event and should have included the CAU in their planning.

We request that CECM create procedures for any Special Events that require that closing of streets or park land (we understand that very few Special Events require full Street closings) for more than a few hours submit applications at least 60 days in advance and that the CAU and Community Boards be notified at least 45 days in advance for their comments and input.

The Office of Manhattan Community Board 4 will be in touch on Monday, September 8, 2008 to schedule the meeting for all parties concerned.

Sincerely,



Jean-Daniel Noland
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4

Cc: Mayor Michael Bloomberg
NYC Council Member Gale Brewer
Mayor's Office of Community Affairs
Borough Commissioner Margaret Forgiione, DOT
Adrienne Taub, MTA
Manhattan Community Board Five and Seven
Lincoln Center BID
Fordham Lincoln Center
John Jay College
New York Institute of Technology
Lincoln Center Senior Center
Roosevelt Hospital
James Kleeman, General Manager, Time Warner Center