



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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COREY JOHNSON
Chair

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

February 6, 2013

Thomas F. Prendergast
President
MTA New York City Transit
2 Broadway
New York, NY 10004

Re: Proposed Manhattan West Side Route

Dear Mr. Prendergast:

Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) applauds the MTA for creating a new proposed bus route on the far west side of Manhattan from W. 59th Street to Spring Street (herein referred to as M12). CB4 has long been on record for asking for such a route in order to service the thousands of new residents that have settled there since the 2005 Hudson Yards and West Chelsea rezoning. We understand that the service could start as early as the fourth quarter 2013 and appreciate the opportunity to comment on the new route.

- After review of the preliminary plan, we are asking the MTA to address a few issues and to take in consideration the board's suggestions. We request that the MTA return to CB4 to present their final plan before it gets implemented.

Between W. 59th and W. 24th Streets the M12 would follow Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues. From W. 24th to W. 14th Streets buses would use West Street (West Side Highway) for both northbound and southbound services. From W. 14th to Spring Street the buses would use Washington and Greenwich Streets.

The buses would run every 30 minutes, from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week. The stops would be spaced every 3.5 blocks and provide easy transfer to other major crosstown buses or subway (M57, M31, M50, M42, M34, #7, M23, M14, M11, M8, M21).

The route:

- Ensure reliable service from the outset: changing Eleventh Avenue from two-way to one-way between W. 57th and W. 45th Streets is a prerequisite to any reliable service: this avenue has only two moving lanes southbound between W. 57th and W. 45th Streets. These lanes are extremely congested during most of the day but particularly in the peak hours of the afternoon, as they provide queuing reservoir for the north tube of the Lincoln Tunnel. CB4 is on record for asking such a change, and DOT has already found it feasible in its Hell's Kitchen traffic.

- We request that MTA works with DOT to convert this portion of Eleventh Avenue to one way. Without such changes this new service will be as unreliable as the M11 where it is common for riders to experience 45 minutes delays.
- Increase connectivity and ridership: Expanding the end loops to connect to the subway will significantly increase the attractiveness of the service: the northern loop is only three blocks west of Columbus circle. Connecting with the subway lines would be extremely beneficial and make this route much more attractive. We have heard of many residents who clamor for such a service. This would also alleviate many trips and serious congestion at W. 58th Street, where private mini buses, bring commuters every ten minutes from the west to the subway stop.

The stops

- Ensure minimal comfort and safety: Bus shelters are critical: because of the long wait between buses and the windy conditions on Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues, it is critical that bus shelters be installed at all bus stops in CB4. We also request that single phone booths equipped with Wi-Fi and phone charging capability be installed adjacent to these bus stops to provide safety and the opportunity to productively use the wait time. (Such installations could be relocated from Ninth Avenue).
- Ensure service to main generators and destinations: We recommend that beyond the main connections mentioned above, the following additional bus stops be provided:
 - W. 59th Street
 - W. 55th Street serving the Cove and Terminal 5
 - W. 45th Street serving the Intrepid, and Pasha
 - W. 39th Street serving New Jersey ferries
 - W. 30th Street serving the High Line and Hudson Yards
 - W. 20th Street where there is a crossing on the highway
 - W. 17th Street to serve Pier 57.

The Service

- CB4 is disappointed that the service will be limited to every 30 minutes. Such a sparse schedule will severely limit usage, which will distort usage statistics and defeat the purpose. Without changing the overall number of buses, we request that the service be every 15 minutes in the a.m. and p.m. peak hours and less frequent in between.
- We also recommend that the service be extended to 1 a.m. in the morning since most cultural events on the piers do last until such hours.
- Further, we request that all buses hybrid-electric or CNG (compressed natural gas) vehicles with a lower floor.

CB4 appreciates all the constraints the MTA is operating under and is delighted to have been selected for one of the very few new routes in the city. Our comments aim at improving ridership and make this line as successful as possible.

Sincerely,



Corey Johnson
Chair



Christine Berthet, Co-Chair
Transportation Planning Committee



Jay Marcus, Co-Chair
Transportation Planning Committee

CC: Margaret Forgione, NYC Department of Transportation
Manhattan Community Board 2