



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**COREY JOHNSON**  
Chair

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

October 4, 2013

Margaret Forgione  
Manhattan Borough Commissioner  
NYC Department of Transportation  
59 Maiden Lane, 35<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10038

**Re: Bolt Bus Stop relocation**

Dear Commissioner Forgione:

At its October 2013 full board meeting, Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) voted unanimously to approve relocating two Long Distance Bus on Street Terminals (On Street Bus Loading and Unloading zone) to the north curb of West 33<sup>rd</sup> Street just west of Eleventh Avenue.

While CB4 agrees to approve a limited number of interim stops in appropriate locations, we continue to request that the city create a permanent bus terminal structure to accommodate this growing mode of transportation. Such a bus terminal was committed, as part of the 2005 Hudson Yards rezoning and this Community Board has advocated for its development since that time.

CB4 applauds the initiative to relocate two existing Bolt Bus on-street terminals from their present locations on West 33<sup>rd</sup> Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues and West 34<sup>th</sup> Street just west of Eighth Avenue. These stops continue to be problematic for the neighboring businesses and for pedestrians. In addition, if the existing West 34<sup>th</sup> Street terminal is not relocated, it will obstruct the West 34<sup>th</sup> Street Select Bus Service corridor currently under construction.

CB4 appreciates being consulted by the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) as required by New York State law on this relocation and the fact that Bolt Bus, the applicant and DOT were willing to evaluate the West 33<sup>rd</sup> Street location proposed by the Transportation Planning Committee, as alternative to their initial choice of West 39<sup>th</sup> Street and Eleventh Avenue, that proved problematic to the community<sup>1</sup>. We are particularly pleased that DOT took the time and effort to expeditiously address community concerns and to research and provide the information necessary for CB4 to properly evaluate the site.

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<sup>1</sup> The West 39<sup>th</sup> Street and Tenth Avenue location originally proposed by DOT and Bolt had insufficient space for queuing passengers, was adjacent to one of the very few parks in south Hell's Kitchen, was dangerous to pedestrians, and was challenging for bus egress.

The proposed relocation would allocate an average of 41 daily departures and 42 daily arrivals to the west side of Manhattan, during the hours of 6:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. serving existing destinations (Greenbelt/Baltimore, Philadelphia/Cherry Hill, Washington, D.C.), and a new destination, Pittsburgh. During peak days departures at this new stop would reach 52 daily with up to six departures and three arrivals per hour.

Separately, fourteen departures and fourteen arrivals from the existing West 33<sup>rd</sup> and West 34<sup>th</sup> Street locations would be relocated to the East side of Manhattan serving Boston.

Buses will use Eleventh Avenue to arrive from the Lincoln Tunnel and the West Side Highway and West 40<sup>th</sup> Street to leave for their destination, thus, having no impact on residential or more commercial streets. The applicant already uses a layover location on Eleventh Avenue.

The waiting area would be on a 300 foot long, 10 foot wide sidewalk, along the Javits truck marshaling yards, 4 feet of which would be used for loading, unloading and circulation, and 6 feet for passenger queuing. This allows for up to 200 passengers queuing, on a stretch of sidewalk currently mostly devoid of pedestrian traffic.

Bolt Bus provided a sidewalk location plan for waiting passengers. Bolt Bus has assured that they will have a minimum of two (2) staff people during all hours of operation and additional at peak hours. DOT will also require that they keep the sidewalk area free of litter and ensure on-going clean up. There seems to be sufficient space for food vendors to congregate at either end of the stop. We are concerned that DOT does not require applicants to make arrangements for rest room facilities, either through agreements with nearby businesses (in this location likely the Javits Center) or with Port-a-sans. Given our experience at other locations, we will be watchful of whether this policy is appropriate and may ask DOT to require on-site port-a-sans or linkages to area businesses for this and/or other locations. Bolt provides rest rooms on their buses.

CB4 has long expressed concern about private use of public spaces, including sidewalks. We thus feel that when a private entity uses public spaces they should be some related immediate area improvements and/or beautification to compensate for the loss of public space. We appreciate that DOT is requesting the city to remove surrounding graffiti. While beautification (e.g. improving nearby landscaping/installing additional trees) or additional public use benefits (e.g. installation and maintenance of public benches) may be limited for this location given its limited pedestrian use and being surrounded by major construction projects, we reserve this option for future proposed location.

- If feasible we request Bolt Bus install up to twelve trees further west along this sidewalk, to provide some shade in the summer and to beautify this public space they will occupy.
- We further request that the above proposed operations plan and configuration for passenger waiting and departing sidewalk space be part of a written agreement between DOT and Bolt Bus.

According to the 2009 Western Rail Yards EIS, there were only 15 vehicle turning movements/hr. from Eleventh Avenue onto West 33<sup>rd</sup> Street at peak hours. While it likely has

increased since then, it is still fewer than most corners in the area. As such the intersection is fairly safe for approaching travelers, who will mostly arrive via the West 34<sup>th</sup> Street SBS or the #7 subway train at West 33<sup>rd</sup> Street, once open.

Thank you for your partnership with CB4 in implementing practical and appropriate intercity bus location in our district.

Sincerely,



Corey Johnson  
Chair



Christine Berthet, Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning Committee



Jay Marcus, Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning Committee