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Chair

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District Manager

CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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Jeremy Colangelo-Bryan
Chief Planner
Capital Planning and Programs
New Jersey Transit
One Penn Plaza East
Newark, NJ 07105

RE: Hudson Tunnel Project

Dear Mr. Colangelo-Bryan:

Thank you for your briefing on the Hudson Tunnel Project (“the Project”) at the February 21st Chelsea Land Use Committee meeting. We are very pleased that the project will improve the resilience of the North River Tunnel infrastructure without interrupting intercity rail service. We understand that this project will include the construction of a new tunnel with two tubes and the rehabilitation of the two existing tubes, and that no new rail capacity will be created until the number of Penn Station rail platforms is increased.

We realize that there will be a public comment period for the published Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to be released in June 2017. However, Community Board 4 (CB4) wants to highlight immediately a number of concerns before that document is published. We also hope that our issues inform the Project’s refinement in the near future and that if revisions are made before June, CB4 will be briefed. We have the following concerns:

Block 675 (between West 29th and West 30th Streets, 11th and 12th Avenues)

- The design of the ventilation building should allow for the southern view from the High Line. This view is extremely important; it includes the mouth of the Hudson River and the Statue of Liberty. The northwest corner of the ventilation building should be slanted and set back from the corner to preserve that view.
- Early collaboration between Georgetown (the developer of Lot 1), the Department of City Planning, CB4 and the Hudson Tunnel Project partners could increase the chance that the design for the ventilation building could include many of the interests of these stakeholders.

- The Project should facilitate the earliest possible construction of the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) facility on Lot 12. The existing site for the EMS facility on West 23rd Street is less than ideal for the NYC Fire Department’s purposes and causes on-going aggravation for adjacent residents.

Traffic Issues

- West 30th Street is heavily used for access to the Lincoln Tunnel. The Project’s Construction Staging Area includes a decked area (“cut and cover”) and a truck route on West 30th Street. Maintaining as much vehicular access on West 30th Street as possible is a high priority.
- Coordination with CB4, the Department of Transportation (DOT) and bus companies is essential if designated on-street bus parking spaces will have to be relocated during the Project construction period. Because so much other construction is taking place in the neighborhood, it is increasingly difficult to find on-street parking for these buses.
- Construction for the Project crosses 12th Avenue and trucks will use 12th Avenue for construction access. Any disruption of the traffic flow on this heavily-used highway will have serious consequences for the adjacent neighborhood. Interruption of traffic should be minimized. Extensive notification to the community and signage for drivers are imperative.

Hudson River Park

- CB4 is pleased that “limited site disturbance” is a Project goal for the tunneling under Hudson River Park. Keeping as much of the public pathway open as possible during construction is very important. If the pathway is narrowed so bikes and pedestrians have to share the same route, a dangerous condition for both walkers and bike riders may result.

CB4 looks forward to working with NJ Transit, Amtrak, and the Port Authority on this very important project. As it progresses and revised plans are created, we ask that the Project partners not wait for the formal EIS process to begin but inform CB4 on a regular basis.

Sincerely,



Delores Rubin
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



John Lee Compton, Co-Chair
Chelsea Land Use Committee



Betty Mackintosh, Co-Chair
Chelsea Land Use Committee

cc: Charles Moorman, President/CEO, Amtrak
Pat Foye, Executive Director, The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
Marisa Lago, Chair/Director, Department of City Planning
Polly Trottenberg, Commissioner, NYC DOT
Hon. Jerrold Nadler, Congressman
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Brad Hoylman, State Senator
Hon. Richard Gottfried, Assembly Member
Hon. Corey Johnson, City Council