



Community Board 12 - Manhattan Washington Heights & Inwood

530 West 166th St. 6th Floor, New York, NY 10032
Phone: (212) 568-8500, Fax: (212) 740-8197

Richard R. Lewis, Chairperson
Ebenezer Smith, District Manager

April 1, 2019

Hon. Charles Schumer
U. S. Senator for N. Y.
780 Third Avenue, Suite 2601
New York, NY 10017

Hon. Kirsten Gillibrand
U. S. Senator for N. Y.
780 Third Avenue, Suite 2301
New York, NY 10017

Hon. Adriano Espaillat
Congressman (13th C. D.)
163 West 125th Street, Suite 508
New York, NY 10027

Hon. Richard H. Anderson
President & CEO Amtrak
60 Massachusetts Ave. NE
Washington, D.C. 20002

Re: Calling upon Amtrak to remove the billboard structure at Riverside Drive and West 155th Street

Dear Senator Charles Schumer, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, Congressman Adriano Espaillat, and President Richard Anderson:

At the General Meeting on Tuesday, March 26, 2019, Community Board 12 Manhattan, passed the following resolution with a vote of 37 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention, calling upon Amtrak to remove the billboard structure it recently and partially installed at Riverside Drive and West 155th Street forthwith and not to place any other billboards in our community district at any point in the future and calling upon Senators Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, Congressman Adriano Espaillat, and our other local elected officials to join Council Member Mark Levine in calling upon Amtrak to remove the billboard entirely.

Whereas: Amtrak has erected a large billboard structure in its right-of-way between the Henry Hudson Parkway and Riverside Drive at West 155th Street, alongside a residential area designated as the Audubon Park Historic District; and

Whereas: The structure will apparently hold two billboard signs facing northbound and southbound traffic on the highway; and

Resolution to Remove Amtrak Billboard

April 1, 2019

Page 2

Whereas: These large signs, situated across the street from the site of John James Audubon's home in the 1800s, will detract from the historical character of this community; and

Whereas: These signs will have a further negative environmental impact by interfering with residents' and visitors' views of Riverside and Fort Washington Parks, the Hudson River and the Palisades, and by emitting light pollution that will affect residents' peaceful enjoyment of their homes; and

Whereas: These signs also will be a traffic safety hazard by distracting drivers on both the northbound and southbound lanes of the Henry Hudson Parkway, as well as on Riverside Drive, in an area that has experienced several accidents in the past; and

Whereas: Installing these signs close to the Henry Hudson Parkway violates the spirit of the federal Highway Beautification Act; and

Whereas: Amtrak told Council Member Mark Levine that it would lower the billboard by two feet; he deemed that response to the community's concerns to be insufficient and held a press conference last week calling upon Amtrak to remove the billboard entirely; and

Whereas: Pressure from State and City officials and the community succeeded in getting Amtrak's predecessor, Conrail, to remove a similar billboard structure along the same right-of-way in the 1980s; and

Whereas: Community Board 12-Manhattan passed a resolution at that time denouncing the billboard as a "deplorable condition," a characterization that applies in the current case as well; now, therefore, be it

Resolved: Community Board 12-Manhattan calls upon Amtrak to remove the billboard structure it has installed at Riverside Drive and West 155th Street forthwith and not to place any other billboards in our community at any point in the future; and be it further

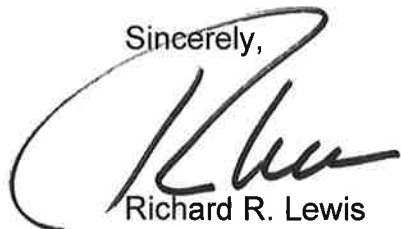
Resolution to Remove Amtrak Billboard

April 1, 2019

Page 3

Resolved: Community Board 12-Manhattan calls upon Senators Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, Congressman Adriano Espaillat and our other local elected officials to join Council Member Mark Levine in calling upon Amtrak to remove the billboard entirely.

Sincerely,



Richard R. Lewis
Chairperson

cc: Hon. Anthony R. Coscia, Amtrak Chairman
Hon. Andrew Cuomo, Governor
Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor
Hon. Jumaane Williams, Public Advocate
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Comptroller
Hon. Brian Benjamin, State Senator
Hon. Robert Jackson, State Senator
Hon. Al Taylor, Assembly Member
Hon. Carmen De La Rosa, Assembly Member
Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez, Council Member
Hon. Mark Levine, Council Member
Hon. Padmore John, Chairperson CB9M
Michael Depta, Amtrak Customer Relation