



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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COREY JOHNSON
Chair

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

February 3, 2012

Margaret Forgione
Manhattan Borough Commissioner
New York City Department of Transportation
55 Water Street, 9th Floor
New York, New York 10041

Re: Expansion of private bus use and street location

Dear Commissioner Forgione:

Manhattan Community Board 4 is very concerned with the temporary doubling of the size of Megabus operation in our area (see our February 3, 2012 Megabus Temporary Locations letter) and the soon to be displaced Bolt Bus operation presently on West 34th near Eighth Avenue due to the Bus Rapid Transit corridor later this year. It is becoming obvious to us that requests for additional sites for private bus uses will be sent to us for consideration.

The expanded use of limited public sidewalk space by private bus operators in the highly traveled Hell's Kitchen Ninth Avenue corridor is disturbing in light of the fact that this use of the sidewalk creates inherent problems (e.g., bathrooms for waiting passengers, insufficient queuing space so as not to disturb pedestrian access, etc.) for which the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the individual operators seem to have no solutions.

We will **oppose any and all proposals for additional sites** for any operator until DOT commits to the following specific requests:

1) *Prepares a Fair Share Analysis.*

When completed it needs to be distributed and reviewed by CB 4, elected officials and other relevant agencies consistent with the 2010 Charter Revisions, which include the placement of certain kinds of transportation facilities that are owned and operated privately or by the State and require that map and text must be consulted and taken into account by City agencies when planning to open a new facility, or close an existing one.

2) *Creates a comprehensive plan designed to accommodate the rapidly growing private long-distance buses that exceed Port Authority capacity.*

It is clear that this operation and this industry are growing extremely fast. A recent study notes: “Curbside bus services grew 32.1% in 2011. Buses have been the fastest-growing mode of intercity transportation for the last four years, outgaining airlines, trains and automobiles. Arguably, the explosive growth of curbside service has been the most significant change in downtown--oriented long-distance travel in more than a half-century”¹.

These operations have far exceeded the capacity of a curbside (sidewalk terminal), and they will continue to grow at a fast pace. At this rate, we will need many more locations in three years. In 2009 there was an accumulation of 1,284 buses at 1:00 p.m. in the Central Business District².

Our neighborhood is host to the Port Authority Bus Terminal and its ~6,000 daily commuter buses, the MTA Quill Bus Depot, UPS and FedEx truck depots, parking for ~ 350 tour and charter buses and countless commuter vans.

3) *Makes significant progress toward implementing a requirement that long distance bus companies either pay an appropriate fee to the city for sidewalk use and/or rent parking lots and other locations for loading/unloading.*

For the DOT to consider resolving this problem by the use of parking spaces is not realistic. Many other companies (Verizon, news operations) lease parking lots to do their business. Private bus companies are now of such size that they should provide for their own infrastructure.

If the operators do not or are unable to provide for their own infrastructure, public space should not be given to private companies to profit from without agreement from and significant compensation to the community or the City. For example, in Washington, D.C., Megabus used to pay the city \$ 61,840 per year for the privilege of using public space. They have now moved into Union Station where they pay \$ 115,000 a year. There is ample cause for the DOT to begin such a program for long-distance buses in Midtown and Hell’s Kitchen.

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to working closely with the DOT to reach a solution.

Sincerely,



Corey Johnson
Chair



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning Committee



Jay Marcus
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning Committee

¹ Joseph P. Schwieterman, director of the Chaddick Institute for Metropolitan Development and a professor in DePaul's School of Public Service; *“The Intercity Bus Rolls to Record Expansion.”*

² NYMTC, Hub Bound Travel, 2009

cc: NYC Council Speaker Christine Quinn
Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer
Congressman Jerrold Nadler
NYS Senator Thomas Duane
NYS Senator Liz Kruger
NYS Assemblyman Richard Gottfried
NYS Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal
NYC Council Member Gale Brewer
NYC Council Member James Vacca