



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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DELORES RUBIN
Chair

Jesse Bodine
District Manager

August 9, 2016

Luis Sanchez
Acting Manhattan Borough Commissioner
NYC Department of Transportation
59 Maiden Lane, 37th Floor
New York, NY 10038

Veronique Hakim
President
MTA New York City Transit
2 Broadway
New York, NY 10004

Re: M23 Select Bus Service Proposal

Dear Mr. Sanchez and Ms. Hakim,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) appreciates that DOT and MTA came back to the board in response to our letter dated May 9, 2016 to propose a final design before implementing the M23 Select Bus Service river to river during the summer.

CB4 supports the overall plan, although we strongly object to the placement of the fare payment machines in their current configuration and request that it be changed to allow users on scooters and wheelchairs – and all other users - to safely pay their fare.

Select Bus Service (SBS) is installed on nine routes in New York City including the M34A in Community District 4 (CD4). SBS travel time is faster by up to 23% on avenues, and a safer street design leads to up to 20% reduction in overall crashes. The current M23 corridor serves 15,000 daily passengers, residents in areas far from the subway, and an additional 28 express buses. The line connects with 9 subway/rail lines and 14 bus routes. However, buses on the current route are not moving during 51% of their travel time – they are either loading passengers at bus stops or stopped in traffic. In CD4 the segments between 7th and 9th Avenues are the slowest, but not as slow as the segments from Broadway to 1st Avenue where speeds of less than 4 mph affect the whole route.

Improved Commuter experience: We were pleased to hear that a bench will potentially be installed at 7th Avenue and bus clocks would be installed at

- EB 11th, 9th, 8th, and 7th Avenues
- WB 8th and 7th Avenues

We continue to hear negative comments on the fare collection system from all users in our district, and particularly from users of scooters and wheel chairs: The location of the fare payment machines makes it extremely difficult if not dangerous for these users to maneuver their scooter on the very narrow gangway adjacent to the moving traffic.

We request that you locate the payment appliances as close as possible to the curb with the user interface facing the buildings. This configuration uses much less space on sidewalks that are already too narrow for the volume of pedestrians and provides a much more comfortable experience for the users, especially wheelchair users.

Improved Safety: CB4 thanks DOT for studying crashes on 23th Street and we are pleased to hear that midblock crossings are not an issue.

While DOT will continue to study the addition of signals and traffic safety measures at the 10th Avenue intersection, CB4 continues to request that a turn bay and a split phase be installed with a red arrow for north turning eastbound movements. At a minimum, a trailing green arrow signal should be installed.

This area is teeming with visitors to the High line and to the Gallery district. It is critical that their safety not be compromised by the design of the corridor.

Improved Bus Flow: While DOT is unable to create turn lanes to prevent vehicle back up from the right turns in the 34th Street bus lane, we are pleased that DOT is investigating day-lighting at the right turn locations, which will help free up the bus lanes.

CB4 is also pleased that New York City Transit will increase the service frequency and thus decrease the number of buses at the West side terminus.

In the absence of bus loading sidewalk extensions that are the norm on 34th street – CB4 recommends that the bus stop area on the road along the curbside be painted in the same dark red paint as the bus lane, and be enforced by cameras to dissuade vehicles from parking there.

CB4 also recommended that the maximum time allowed by the loading regulations be shortened from the current 3 hours to 1 hour. We believe the current regulation encourages parking instead of loading and contributes to the double-parking issues. We urge DOT to perform a pilot in our district and publish the results.

CB4 appreciates being consulted and generally supports the plan for the 23rd Street SBS, while we request that the fare payment system be relocated.

Sincerely,



Delores Rubin
Chair



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair, Transportation
Planning Committee



Ernest Modarelli
Co-Chair, Transportation
Planning Committee

CC: Hon. Jerrold Nadler, House of Representatives
Hon. Carolyn Maloney, House of Representatives
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Brad Hoylman, State Senate
Hon. Richard Gottfried, State Assembly
Hon. Corey Johnson, City Council