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Testimony of Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney
Regarding the Supplemental Environmental Assessment
to the Second Avenue Subway Final Environmental Impact Statement:
72nd and 86th Street Station Entrance Alternatives
June 18, 2009

Thank you for the opportunity to express my views on the Supplemental Environmental Assessment to the Second Avenue Subway Final Environmental Impact Statement relating to the 72nd and 86th Street Stations (EA). I appreciate the fact that the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) has made an effort to accommodate the concerns of my community, particularly with the changes at the 72nd Street entrance.

At 72nd Street, the MTA has made an extraordinary effort and has gone back to the drawing board after the community objected strongly to plans that would have created two sidewalk entrances in the mid-block adjacent to residential buildings, and an elevator mid-block across the street. The MTA has agreed to purchase a nearby building that has been for sale for a period of time, and is placing five elevator banks in the building. It's an elegant solution that has won the support of the neighborhood. The MTA should be commended for their success at this site.

Unfortunately, the proposal for 86th Street retains all the problematic elements that raised concerns at 72nd Street. The MTA is calling for mid-block entrances in front of a residential building. The MTA tells us that the original proposal to place the entrance in commercial space currently occupied by a Food Emporium is not feasible because of construction issues, and that the elegant solution that works so well at 72nd Street will not work at 86th Street. Clearly this is a result that will not please the community. The MTA argues that the corresponding building on 86th Street is configured along the side street rather than along the avenue as the 72nd Street location is; 72nd Street has a second entrance across the street with a staircase for emergency egress while 86th Street does not; the alignment of the 86th Street station does not allow sufficient room to support the tunnel roof; and to accommodate a staircase, a second building would have to be taken at 86th Street adding to the cost and the number of residents displaced. Additionally, it should be noted that unlike 72nd Street, the 86th Street building has a private drive, reducing concerns that the mid-block entrances will affect drop-offs and pick-ups. All of the foregoing are valid, if relatively weak, arguments.

Residents of 86th Street worry that the mid-block entrance will draw crowds in front of what has been a predominantly residential street. They are concerned about glass entrance covers that will impede the views from their windows. They expect that eager commuters will cross 86th

Street in mid-block rather than waiting to cross at the corners, causing accidents and increasing traffic congestion. All of these are significant problems that are not discussed in the section of the EA addressing potential impacts of the 86th Street station.

Eighty-sixth Street is a major thoroughfare, with cross-town and north-south bus stops. There clearly must be a station at this location. If the construction issues at other locations are insurmountable, the sidewalk alternative becomes the default solution. It is regrettable that the best the MTA can offer residents of 86th Street is a unattractive solution that many people believe will cause accidents, create an increase in traffic and alter the nature of a residential street.