

vision42

a light rail landscaped
boulevard, river-to-river
Advisory Committee:

Andrew Bata, Regional Manager, UTIP North America;
Dan Biederman, Pres., Bryant Park Corp.; **Jonathan Bowles**, Research Dir., Center for an Urban Future; **Harry Coghlan**, Pres., Clear Channel/Spectracolor; **Carter Craft**, Waterfront Planner, Outside NY;
Janine DiGioacchino, General Manager, Mme Tussaud's Wax Museum, NYC; **Douglas Durst**, Co-President, The Durst Organization; **Alfred Fazio**, Deputy Chief Eng., Amtrak;
Robert F. Fox, Jr., Partner, Cook + Fox Architects, LLC; **Tom Fox**, Pres. & CEO, Tom Fox & Assocs.; **Alexander Garvin**, Pres. & CEO, Alex Garvin & Assocs.; **Ashok Gupta**, Sr. Energy Economist, Natural Resources Defense Council; **Jeff Gural**, Chairman & CEO, Newmark Knight Frank; **Tony Hiss**, urbanist, author; **Georges Jacquemart**, PE, AICP; **Jeffrey Katz**, Pres. & CEO, Sherwood Equities, Inc.; **Fred I. Kent**, Pres., Project for Public Spaces, Inc.; **Charles Komanoff**, Principal, Komanoff Energy Assocs.; **Dr. Floyd Lapp**, FAICP; **Roland Lewis**, Pres. & CEO, Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance; **Pamela Lippe**, Exec. Dir., Earth Day NY; Phillip **Maccioli**, Pres. & CEO, 21st Century Rail/URS Corp.; **Howard Milstein**, Chairman, Milstein Bros. Capital Partners; **Maura Moynihan**, Exec. Dir., Friends of Moynihan Station; **Lucius J. Riccio**, PhD, PE, Former NYC DOT Commissioner, Exec. VP, GRC Consultants; **Elliot G. Sander**, Pres. Bombardier Rail Transport, Region of the Americas; **Sam Schwartz**, PE, Cooper Union, and CEO, The Sam Schwartz Company; **Kate Slevin**, VP, Planning and Policy, Municipal Art Society; **Vukan R. Vuchic**, PhD, UPS Emeritus Professor of Transportation, University of Pennsylvania

11 February 2021

Commissioner Hank Gutman & Chief Operations Officer Margaret Forgione
NYCDOT Department of Transportation, Commissioner, NYC Department of Transportation, 55 Water Street, 9th Floor, New York, NY 10041

Dear Mr. Gutman and Ms. Forgione:

It is a pleasure to learn that Mayor de Blasio has asked you to lead the NYCDOT. Our very best wishes to you both as you take on this challenging effort.

We are writing to request your careful consideration and endorsement of a proposal that we began more than two decades ago – **vision42** – a modern low-floor river-to-river light rail line in an auto-free, landscaped 42nd Street. This proposal might have seemed innovative in 1978, when civic activist Fred Papert first advanced the idea of light rail along 42nd Street. But today light rail lines have been very successfully completed in cities around the world, many of them in auto-free streets. Despite these advances, however, New York, the largest and densest city on our nation, remains mired in its love affair with the automobile. To his credit, the Mayor has recently championed a modern light rail line along the Brooklyn-Queens waterfront – dubbed the BQX. We are happy to see that Mr. Gutman has lent his support to this initiative.

The **vision42** advocacy is hosted by the NYC-based Institute for Rational Urban Mobility, Inc. (IRUM), whose purpose is to advance transportation projects that will reduce car use and improve the sustainability of the city and region. Since 2004, under the aegis of the NY Community Trust, IRUM has commissioned a group of technical studies of **vision42**, including its expected economic impacts (by Urbanomics, Inc.) its traffic impacts (by Sam Schwartz, LLC), and its costs (by Halcrow, LLC). Even this late in the Mayor's second term, he retains substantial authority, both under existing laws, and with the bully pulpit of his office. While clearly, the **vision42** project could not be completed before he leaves office, the Mayor can complete a comprehensive technical study of the project within existing USDOT procedures. Commissioner Gutman, as a voting member of NYMTC's governing council, could gain sufficient planning funds to complete the studies for **vision42** that were begun by our organization.

IRUM would urge NYCDOT to take charge of these analyses and complete the work needed to make **vision42** a shovel-ready project. Given your current experience with the BQX project, there would not be an extensive learning curve needed to move forcefully ahead with **vision42**. Margaret Forgione was quite involved in the initial 42nd Street light rail proposal from its outset and would be a tremendous resource for detailing the remaining work.

We would welcome an opportunity to discuss this proposal with you at your earliest convenience.

Roxanne Warren, AIA, Chair, **vision42** and George Haikalis, ASCE, President, Institute for Rational Urban Mobility, Inc. rwarchitectsv42@gmail.com