

Below is a summary of the statement given to the Port Authority board on January 24th 2020 by Christina Howell:

My name is Christina Howell and I am the Executive Director of Bloomfield Development Corporation. Thank you for providing this opportunity to address the board. On behalf of residents and employees of Bloomfield, as well as many residents of Garfield and surrounding neighborhoods who attended a community meeting in Garfield last night, I am here to speak to the bus consolidation process. First, specifically, the Millvale/Penn stop on the 88 Penn is slated to be consolidated with the stop at Mathilda/Penn. However, the Millvale stop is the more heavily used stop. This means that more minority and disabled riders undoubtedly use that stop, and these are protected classes of people. The Port Authority has a policy against discrimination and by not being transparent about the criteria used to make consolidation decisions and the fact that the stop is one of the more heavily used stops, the decision to remove the Millvale/Penn stop appears to discriminate against these protected classes. Our organization is not against consolidation, however this decision does not make sense.

Second, generally, BDC requests the release of all detailed criteria used to make consolidation decisions, including how each criteria is weighted. Many different data points can be included in the term ridership and the Port Authority has a duty to users and taxpayers to be transparent and provide that information immediately and in a way that is accessible.

Finally, there needs to be an equitable community process. BDC and other organizations like us want to be a partner in community engagement. An equitable community engagement process is vital, and organizations like ours can help bring people to meetings and distribute information. However, instead of partnering with the community to make informed decisions about riders' needs to access vital services such as food pantries and homeless shelters, we are forced into an antagonistic role in order to address the needs of our vulnerable populations.