



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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May 15, 2015

Ms. Margaret Forgione
Manhattan Borough Commissioner
NYC Department of Transportation
59 Maiden Lane, 35th Floor
New York, NY 10038

Re: DOT Traffic Safety Improvements Proposal: LPI, 11th Avenue, and Turn Bans

Dear Commissioner Forgione:

Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) is pleased with the recommendations the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) has made for traffic and safety improvements in Manhattan Community District 4 (CD4). At the April 15, 2015 meeting of the CB4 Transportation Committee the DOT presented several improvements in our community including the installation of Lead Pedestrian Interval traffic signals, changes to the direction of 11th Avenue, and the removal of turn bans. While CB4 supports most of these proposals, we have recommendations for their implementation and CB4 is opposed to the removal of turn bans in our community.

Installation of More Lead Pedestrian Interval Traffic Signals

CB4 has supported the installation of split phase leading pedestrian interval traffic signals (LPI) in our community for many years. The LPI installed last year at 43rd street and 9th Avenue has greatly improved safety for pedestrians at this intersection. CB4 is pleased that the DOT has recommended the installation of 10 more LPI's in our community in the summer of 2015 and recommends the following locations based on DOT crash analysis, and on total number of injuries and fatalities over the last three years. . We urge DOT to install LPIs at all of the following locations. These LPI's will help CB4 improve the safety of our streets in accordance with the New York City Vision Zero initiative.

1. On West 55th Street turning south onto 9th Avenue
2. On West 53rd Street turning south onto 9th Avenue
3. On 8th Avenue turning west onto West 51st Street
4. On West 50th Street turning north onto 8th Avenue
5. On 9th Avenue turning east onto West 46th Street
6. On West 39th Street turning south onto 9th Avenue
7. On 9th Avenue turning east onto West 38th Street
8. On 8th Avenue turning west onto West 39th Street
9. On 8th Avenue turning west onto West 35th Street
10. On 8th Avenue turning west onto West 29th Street

Additionally we strongly urge the DOT to install accessible pedestrian signals at these intersections and at all intersections that have changes to the usual traffic patterns.

Change to 11th Ave Direction

CB4 strongly supports the proposal to change the direction of 11th Avenue from two-way to one-way between W. 57th and W. 44th Streets, restore the two-way traffic between 37th and 34th streets, and convert traffic to two-way between 34th and 22nd streets.

11th avenue has only two moving lanes southbound between W. 57th and W. 44th Streets. These lanes are extremely congested during most of the day but particularly during the peak afternoon hours, as they provide queuing to the north tube of the Lincoln Tunnel. While traffic is continually backed up in the Southbound lanes the northbound lanes are underused. CB4 is on record asking for such a change, and is pleased that the DOT now plans to implement this in early 2016.

CB4 requests that DOT comes back to CB4 to present the proposed design in the fall of 2015 for review and comments.

Removal of Turn Bans

CB4 is greatly concerned about the proposal to remove two turn bans in our community one located at West 37th street and 9th Avenue on to Ramp C of the Lincoln Tunnel approach and the other at West 41st Street and 10th Avenue. We would like to ensure that proper education, information and incentives have been given to drivers, and that such changes will not have a larger impact on the traffic flow at the various approaches to the Lincoln Tunnel.

- CB4 recommends that all new turn bans (37th and 9th, 36th and Dyer) and existing ones (23rd and 10th, 41st and 10th) be officially communicated and advertised to all GPS systems providers.

CB4 originally requested the implementation of the turn ban on West 37th street and was delighted when it was installed. We believe this ban is vital to the safety of pedestrians crossing at this intersection and to the flow of traffic on 9th Avenue.

We have observed that without this ban, traffic becomes so congested at this intersection that pedestrians must weave in between cars when crossing the street and the intersection becomes backed up, blocking the flow of traffic down 9th Avenue. When properly enforced there is considerably less congestion at the intersection and pedestrians are more safely able to cross the street.

We note that the DOT only observed this intersection on weekdays, and CB4 has found that Saturday and late evenings are times when there is significant congestion at this intersection. CB4 will be seeking an increased NYPD presence at this intersection during relevant hours.

Furthermore, we believe that compliance with the regulation would improve with improved signage.

- CB4 urges DOT not to remove the turn ban at West 37th Street and 9th Avenue and that they install more signage leading up to the intersection. Signs indicating that traffic must travel past 9th Avenue and use 11th Avenue for Lincoln Tunnel access should be placed at 8th Avenue and every 50 feet on West 37th street approaching the intersection. Such way-finding signage should also be continued from 9th to 11th Avenues.

- CB4 noted that the traffic agents posted at this intersection routinely installs cones to extend the flexible bollards north of the crosswalk, a few feet in the intersection. This gives a visual clue to drivers that the left turn is not permitted in the ramp. We recommend that DOT extend the flexible bollards to the same footprint.

CB4 is also concerned about the removal of the turn ban on West 41st Street and 10th Avenue which we believe is vital to the safety of the increasing amount of pedestrians who cross this intersection and to the road capacity needed to absorb bus flow emanating from 9th Avenue and 41st Street. It is also a key part of the effort to direct Tunnel traffic to the Expressway at 30th Street.

Although DOT has observed that it is not enforced, validating the removal of the turn ban requires further study. The west side of our community has seen a significant influx of new development, much of which has been residential buildings, including the development of a residential building at this intersection. In the last two years one pedestrian was killed and there were 7 injuries at that intersection. With more pedestrians crossing this intersection we expect the number of conflicts with turning vehicles to increase.

Therefore we recommend that DOT not remove the turn ban and at 41st street and 10th Avenue until a study has been completed of this intersection, showing this impact on other part of the system and proving a method to improve the pedestrian safety at this location. CB4 is very grateful to the DOT for their responsiveness to our concerns about the safety of our streets, and we look forward to the implementation of these proposals with our recommendations. Thank you for your partnership with CB4 in implementing these traffic improvements.

Sincerely,



Christine Berthet
Chair



Jay Marcus
Co-Chair, Transportation
Planning Committee



Ernest Modarelli
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