



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**CHRISTINE BERTHET**  
Chair

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Acting District Manager

October 10, 2014

Polly Trottenberg  
Transportation Commissioner  
NYC Department of Transportation  
59 Maiden Lane, 37th Floor  
New York, NY 10038

**Re: Request to Study Protected Crosstown Bike Lanes in Midtown Manhattan**

Dear Commissioner Trottenberg,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) has been an advocate for protected bicycle lanes for over 10 years. We were pleased that the first protected bicycle lane in Manhattan was on 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and hope we can be among the first Community Boards to host a cross town bicycle lane. More specifically, we request that the Department of Transportation (DOT) study potential streets in midtown that might be viable for a crosstown protected bike lanes from the Westside Highway to the FDR Drive.

Within Community District 4 we recognize that not all streets would be ideal for crosstown bike lanes, and we encourage the DOT to consider the appropriateness of the streets included in this study. In particular we are concerned about smaller residential streets that exist in many parts of the Special Clinton District, which are narrow and have unusually small sidewalks. We have the same concern for many blocks in Chelsea. However we believe that many blocks between West 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and West 42<sup>nd</sup> Street could safely accommodate a crosstown bike lane and we hope the DOT will consider conducting a study on this area. Furthermore we would like the DOT to report back to CB4 with their findings and allow for community input on any street they identify as a potential candidate for the installation of a crosstown bike lane.

CB4 continues to support the protected bicycle lanes, not only because these lanes are an important part of a vision we share with DOT for a more bicycle friendly city and provides protected bicycle access to many parts of city, but because protected bicycle paths have a proven record of decreasing pedestrian and bicycle accidents and improving pedestrian safety. It is also important that DOT understands the increased residential (and tourist) nature of the “midtown” areas of CB4 and the pressing need to prioritize pedestrian and bicycle needs along with those of vehicular traffic (which have historically been the higher city priority).

The improved safety features of protected bicycle lanes – specifically refuge areas on every other block that reduce pedestrian street crossing distances and the actual separated protection for bicycles - are particularly important given the dangerous conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists

that exist in our neighborhood. Since 2005, more than 20 pedestrians have been killed in our community, with 4 occurring this year alone.

In 2013, after the installation of protected bike lanes in many parts of New York City the DOT reported a 75% decrease in the average risk of a serious injury experienced by cyclists in New York City. Furthermore, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene reports that over half a million New Yorkers rides a bike at least several times a month. The installation of protected crosstown bike lanes will further increase the amount of bike rides, and greatly improve the safety conditions of the streets they ride on.

With more New Yorkers turning to bikes for public transportation CB4 strongly urges the DOT to increase bicycle rider education. CB4 also urges DOT to work with NYPD to increase enforcement of cyclists violating traffic laws.

CB4 hopes that DOT will seriously consider this request and report back to our board with potential streets that could be studied for protected crosstown bike lanes.

Sincerely,



Christine Berthet  
Chair



Jay Marcus  
Co-Chair, Transportation  
Planning Committee



Ernest Modarelli  
Co-Chair, Transportation  
Planning Committee