



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD No. 4

330 West 42nd Street, 26th floor New York, NY 10036
tel: 212-736-4536 fax: 212-947-9512
www.ManhattanCB4.org

J. LEE COMPTON
Chair

ANTHONY M. BORELLI
District Manager

December 13, 2005

Margaret Forgione
Manhattan Borough Commissioner
New York City Department of Transportation
40 Worth Street
New York, NY 10013

Re: Eighth Avenue Bicycle Lane

Dear Commissioner Forgione:

Manhattan Community Board No. 4 is excited that the Department of Transportation (DOT) will begin installing a 5-foot-wide bicycle lane on the western side of 8th Avenue from 14th Street to 57th Street, except for 39th Street to 42nd Street, adjacent to the Port Authority, in 2006. We believe that this bike lane, combined with the existing lanes from Broome to 14th (along Hudson) and from 62nd northward into Harlem and Washington Heights, will create a more livable and enjoyable city environment and reduce bicycle/auto and bicycle/pedestrian conflicts. We thank you and your staff for your attention to the requests of this Board and our elected officials, and for following through with the studies and proposals that are now bringing this beneficial new public amenity to fruition.

We have a few recommendations that we consider crucial to the future success of the lane.

- 1) *Creation of a buffered lane:* 8th Avenue is a busy street with complicated traffic patterns, particularly north of Penn Station. Zoning changes to the West in Chelsea and Hudson Yards, planned new growth in the Broadway theater district, and the development of Moynihan Station are likely to increase congestion. Consistent with the adjoining Hudson Street bike lane, we feel a buffered lane would enhance bicycle safety and enable a smoother flow of auto traffic. We understand a 2- to 3-foot-wide buffer on the lane would be feasible with relatively minor adjustments the widths of the 4 driving lanes on 8th Avenue. The resulting buffer would greatly increase safety for cyclists, pedestrians, and motorists.
- 2) *Increase safety and reduce cyclist/auto conflicts from 39th Street to 42nd Street:* There is no easy solution to the severe taxi, car, and bus traffic adjacent to the Port Authority. But difficult locations like these are precisely where most clarity is needed. It is our understanding that there is room for a bike lane in this stretch, we feel that such a lane would help, not hinder, taxis, other motorists, and bicyclists in maneuvering through. Perhaps if the lane were colored and pega-tracked (dashed) it would better highlight the presence of bicycles to cars that may be crossing their path. We ask that you review the options and consider making the lane continuous through these blocks. A less desirable option (though a much needed one if a continuous lane is not feasible) would be signage where the lane temporarily discontinues at 39th Street, indicating that the interruption is temporary and that the lane continues at 42nd Street. "Share the Road" signage

should also be a part of this treatment, indicating to both cyclists and motorists that they must take care and respect each other in this congested location.

- 3) *Consideration of creating a green bicycle lane:* We understand that use of green paint for bike lanes is being tested by DOT and is supported by the Federal Highway Administration. We feel that use of such coloring would help the bicycle lane to stand out and be observable. We hope DOT will consider creating the bicycle lane with a different color than white. The painted lane adjacent to the Manhattan Bridge, for example, helps to make the bicycle lane more noticeable, and cyclists who use it report feeling that it adds to their safety.
- 4) *Enforcement:* We request that the installation of the bicycle lane be matched with increased enforcement by the NYPD of cars that drive in or block bicycle lanes. We also feel that with benefit comes responsibility, and thus we would also request for increased enforcement of bicyclists riding illegally on sidewalks, crossing red lights, or threatening pedestrian safety.
- 5) *Reporting:* The bicycle lane should be a tool to enable safer bicycling and reduce auto/pedestrian/bicycle conflicts. We request that DOT and NYPD work together to collect data on auto tickets given for auto violations in bike lanes; data on violations by cyclists; and data on bicycle-related accidents. We would like DOT/NYPD to report annually to the Community Board with such information
- 6) *Training:* Change of behavior is also fostered by training. We commend the local Precincts and Transportation Alternatives for distributing materials at area businesses and offering trainings on bicycle safety and laws, and we encourage DOT to support increased training and outreach efforts along the proposed bike route in any way it can.

Again, Community Board No. 4 appreciates DOT's responsiveness to our request for a bicycle lane along 8th Avenue and the partnership the bicycle division staff has shown in discussions with the Community Board. We look forward to a continued partnership as the bicycle path implementation moves forward.

Sincerely,



J. Lee Compton
Chair
Manhattan Community Board No. 4



Jay Marcus
Chair
Transportation Planning Committee

cc: Elected Officials
Local Police Precincts
NYPD Traffic Control Division
Transportation Alternatives