



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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

JEAN-DANIEL NOLAND
Chair

ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.
District Manager

March 14, 2008

Borough Commissioner Margaret Forgiione
NYC Department of Transportation
59 Maiden Lane, 35th Floor
New York, NY 10038

Re: Recommendations for proposed bike parking and bike rack locations in Manhattan District 4

Dear Commissioner Forgiione:

At its February 20, 2008, meeting the Transportation Planning Committee of Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) reviewed the list of proposed bike rack locations in our district transmitted by your office.

Both Ninth and Eighth Avenues pose particular challenges when it comes to sidewalk space. Ninth Avenue has very narrow sidewalks, crowded with cafes and cellar trap doors that in some cases remain open most of the day and evening. Moreover, we expect the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to plant numerous trees over the next few years adding to the clutter on the sidewalks. At the same time, a number of restaurants operate on Ninth Avenue and depend on bikes for their delivery business. The side streets are equally narrow.

The ventilation grid of the subway, which runs under Eighth Avenue, occupies a very large portion of the sidewalk. As part of the Environmental Impact Study (EIS) for the Access of the Region Core, pedestrian pathways have been analyzed based on volume and capacity. Congestion has been translated into a pedestrian level of service (LOS) rating from A to F, where LOS A represents an un-crowded condition and LOS F represents extreme congestion. Eighth Avenue pedestrian traffic is intense, resulting in a service level of D or E for many sidewalk locations.

BIKE RACKS

In this context, we reviewed the proposed locations, removed a number of them, and added many more to the list that you will find attached. Our suggestions reflect the following guidelines:

1. All rack placement measurements should include the additional footprint of two parked bicycles, to maintain an 8-foot pedestrian path. In most locations, a double rack does not permit such a path. Apart from a few noted exceptions, we request that only single racks be installed parallel to the curb on the avenues or on the side streets.
2. In cases where trap doors are present, the 8-foot clearance should be measured from the trap doors to the rack with bikes. While an 8-foot path is preferable, a minimum of 4 feet between the bikes and the trap doors should be maintained at all times to comply with ADA regulations.
3. In case there are subway grids, guideline #2 above should apply.
4. No bike racks should be installed on streets or avenues where the sidewalk service level is worse than "C".
5. Where there is a buffered bike lane, for example between 14th and 23rd Streets, bike racks should be installed on the bike lane striped buffer, rather than on the sidewalk where they sometimes conflict with sidewalk cafes (23rd Street and Ninth Avenue, southeast corner).

BIKE PARKING

The board requests that at certain intersections to be selected parking spaces- on both side street corners abutting Ninth Avenue - be swapped for bike parking, from 36th Street to 56th Street (except 42nd Street) and as needed on other to be selected intersections on Eighth Avenue.

The swapped parking spaces would be the first one adjacent to a pedestrian crossing on the side streets, except where there is a truck loading and unloading area or prohibitory street regulations.

The car parking swaps would be similar to the ones installed next to the Bedford Avenue stop on the L train, with added greenery. We applaud the Department of Transportation for this innovative initiative to improve bike parking and look forward to working with you on this matter.

Since community consultation is critical to the success of such a program, the board asks that at least four weeks before any specific installation is scheduled, DOT give formal notice to the board and to residents, institutions, and businesses adjacent to the selected sites.

In addition, the board will hold a public meeting, as soon as feasible, to ensure all residents, institutions, and businesses have a chance to comment on the program.

In conjunction with this effort, the board encourages DOT to initiate an education program (such as Transportation Alternatives') for businesses and their employees who use bicycles for deliveries. Renewed enforcement against bicyclists driving on the sidewalks is also required to preserve the safety of pedestrians.

On March 5, the full community board voted in favor of DOT proceeding with the installation of the attached list of racks. Plus, we look forward to working with you on choosing parking swap locations. Thank you again for giving us the time to weigh in on this decision.

Sincerely,



Jean-Daniel Noland
Chair
Manhattan
Community Board 4



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning
Committee



Jay Marcus
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning
Committee

cc: Hon. Christine Quinn, Speaker NY City Council
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Manhattan Borough President
Josh Benson, Department of Transportation
Noah Brudnick, Transportation Alternatives
Caroline Samporano, Transportation Alternatives

Attachment: ATT 19 TRANS DOT bike racks final - 03072008