



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

July 28, 2008

Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan
Department of Transportation
40 Worth Street, 10th Floor
New York, NY 10013

**Re: Implementation of Bike Path and Pedestrian Safety Improvements:
- Ninth Avenue from 23rd to 31st Streets**

Dear Commissioner Sadik-Kkan,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) supports the Department of Transportation's plan to extend the existing bike path on Ninth Avenue from 23rd to 31st Streets.

The plan includes removing an auto travel lane and installing flexible plastic bollards between the bike path and the parking/traffic lanes and creating landscaped pedestrian islands at each corner. The pedestrian islands, each equipped with detectable warning strips, will shorten the crossing distance on the avenues by 37%, making the street safer and less challenging, particularly for elderly or mobility-impaired pedestrians. For those side streets within the Penn South area that are 55 feet wide, the islands will also be aligned with the narrower (and more typical) 33 feet streets west of Ninth Avenue to both create a safety zone for pedestrians to cross the side street and to act as a traffic calming device. Every left turn will have a left turn arrow that will be timed to be green separately from the north-south walk signal, reducing pedestrian-vehicular conflicts on the eastside of the Avenue.

We expect the proposed redesign of the avenue will greatly improve the safety of both pedestrians and cyclists. According to DOT the accident rate involving pedestrians and cyclist has dropped dramatically (> 40%) after the implementation of the bike path on Ninth Avenue between 14th and 23rd Streets. We are impressed and encouraged by these early findings and look forward to working with DOT toward a bike path that enhances pedestrian, bicyclist, and auto safety and enhances community ambiance.

DOT invited the Community Board to comment on the possibility of disallowing left turns from Ninth Avenue onto West 24th Street in order to give more priority to pedestrians and cyclists, and preserve more parking spaces. We recommend against that proposal since the businesses on the east side of Ninth Avenue between 24th and 25th Streets have an off-street loading alley that is accessible only via 24th Street. Community members also felt that it would likely increase traffic on the streets further south that permit left-turns.

The Community Board also requests that during the planning and design stages of the proposal that DOT address additional community concerns regarding the safety of pedestrians standing in the pedestrian refuge islands, the confusion of drivers emerging from the Lincoln Tunnel, businesses' ability to get deliveries without disrupting traffic flow and as well as the many conflicts between pedestrians and bicyclist on the sidewalks. Specifically CB4 requests DOT:

- Install way finding signage at the Lincoln Tunnel exit on 30th Street to advise the large volume of non-resident drivers of the change in the traffic pattern and the presence of bicycle lane;
- Install "No turn in the bike lane" signage on the westward streets before Ninth Avenue intersections;
- Install bell bollards or other such pedestrian defense mechanisms on all the pedestrian islands, and in particular at 31st Street and Ninth Avenue and 23rd Street and Ninth Avenue;
- Install audible pedestrian signals, with pedestrian buttons that activate them, as required by Title II of ADA for all new construction;
- Install a Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI), with ample time to cross the avenue to protect north-south crossings of Ninth Avenue at the intersections with 23rd, 24th, 26th, 28th and 30th Streets;
- Provide non-sidewalk bicycle parking either by swapping a parking space on each street at the intersection along the bike path (at locations to be determined in discussion with the Community Board) or preferably, by extending the islands and installing bike racks on the delineated medians between the bike lane and the parking lane;
- Meet with the individual businesses along Ninth Avenue to ensure they understand the bicycle lane and to address any delivery/loading issues created by the bicycle lane;
- Install the plantings before the winter season.

Based on residents' input at the Pedestrian Safety Town Hall May 1st, DOT indicated it will hold pedestrian education sessions to initiate the residents to the new crossing patterns and we welcome this initiative.

In addition, CB4 requests that DOT work with the NYPD to bring bicycle mounted agents to increase enforcement of bike riding rules, including stopping at traffic lights, signaling turns, and yielding right of way to pedestrians. CB4 has received offers of assistance from Transportation Alternatives in this area, and we welcome a structured program to conduct training and orientation for area businesses that employ bike riding delivery personnel and messengers. We also request DOT work with NYPD to increase enforcement to prevent delivery truck utilization of the enclosed bicycle area.

CB4 appreciates the continued efforts of DOT to enhance the safety and experience of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles in our neighborhood and enthusiastically supports this proposal.

Sincerely,



Jean-Daniel Noland
Chair
Manhattan
Community Board 4



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning
Committee



Jay Marcus
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning
Committee

c.c.:

Borough Commissioner Margaret Forgiione, DOT
Colleen Chattergoon, DOT
Josh Benson, DOT