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CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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August 8, 2016

Luis Sanchez
Acting Manhattan Borough Commissioner
NYC Department of Transportation
59 Maiden Lane, 37th Floor
New York, NY 10038

Re: Pedestrian Fatality at West 38th Street and 8th Avenue

Dear Acting Commissioner Sanchez,

On Tuesday afternoon, June 6, 2016, on a dangerous stretch of 8th Avenue, a driver turning in a vehicle killed a woman, while she crossed 8th Avenue with the walk sign in the pedestrian crossing, at the very busy intersection of West 38th Street. It is one more tragedy in our neighborhood, which has seen already 8 fatalities in recent years, a tragedy even more so because this could have been easily prevented by a proper street design.

Manhattan Community Board 4 urges the New York City Department of Transportation to immediately initiate a study of the Eighth Avenue corridor that runs between 30th Street / Penn Station and 43rd Street/ the Port Authority Bus Terminal, to determine what measures can be implemented to improve pedestrian safety and walkability of the Avenue. Furthermore we urge DOT to move quickly to implement the findings of this study and improve the safety of this corridor before another preventable tragedy occurs.

We recognize the DOT's commitment to improving pedestrian safety and acknowledge the recent installations of six Split Lead Pedestrian Interval Signals (LPI) ¹at dangerous intersections on Eight and Ninth Avenues, and a Split Phase Signal², at the location of

¹ Split Lead Pedestrian Interval (LPI) gives a red light arrow to turning vehicles during the first seconds of the pedestrian crossing phase, then a blinking yellow arrow advising caution to turning vehicles while pedestrian can still cross.

² Split Phase Signal gives a red light arrow to turning vehicles for the full period when the pedestrians and bicyclists cross and then converts to a green arrow signal to let cars turn while the pedestrians have a "do not walk" signal, ensuring no pedestrian/car conflicts.

another recent fatality on 40th Street and Ninth Avenue. Despite these efforts this most recent incident is evidence that much more needs to be done to make the streets of our neighborhood safe for all, and to achieve the Mayor's Vision Zero Plan.

As part of this study CB4 requests that DOT evaluates the capacity of the sidewalks on this very congested part of Eighth Avenue. DOT's Vision Zero Manhattan Pedestrian Action plan issued in 2014 recognizes that the Eighth Avenue corridor is one of the most dangerous in the city. This intersection is located on a very congested stretch between Penn Station and the Port Authority Bus Terminal where the volume of pedestrians far exceed the capacity of the sidewalks, forcing pedestrians to walk in the street or in the bike lane. The volume of pedestrians is such that the bike lane is practically unusable for bicyclists, putting pedestrians and bicyclists in danger. CB4 is on record for asking in each of its annual Statements of District Needs that the sidewalks be widened.

Since June 2012, there have been 181 injuries between West 35th Street and West 42nd Streets on 8th Avenue, including 97 pedestrians and 26 bicyclists (in spite of the presence of a protected bike lane), and now this fatality.³

When the 8th Avenue Bike lane was installed in 2012 on this section, the Community Board sent letters to the DOT to ask for increased pedestrian safety features⁴. We have continued to ask that split phases be installed along all new bike lane corridors like 6th Avenue.

In 2015, our Council Member requested that a number of intersections be studied and equipped with split phases, including 42nd and 8th, one of the most dangerous intersections in the city.

We ask DOT to urgently study this stretch of 8th Avenue and immediately apply all necessary safety measures to improve pedestrian safety and walkability, in particular at 8th Avenue and 38th and 42nd Streets before another tragedy happens.

Sincerely,



Delores Rubin
Chair



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair, Transportation
Planning Committee



Ernest Modarelli
Co-Chair, Transportation
Planning Committee

³ NYC open data <https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Public-Safety/NYPD-Motor-Vehicle-Collisions/h9gi-nx95>

⁴

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/mancb4/downloads/pdf/Resolutions/october%202011/12%20Trans%20Letter%20to%20DOT%20re%208th%20&%209th%20Ave%20Bike%20Lane%20Extension.pdf>