



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR
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Burt Lazarin
Chair

Jesse R. Bodine
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June 12, 2018

Corey Johnson
Speaker, City Council
224 W. 30th Street, Suite 1206
New York, NY 10001

Ydanis Rodriguez
New York City Council
618 W. 177th Street, Ground Floor
New York, NY 10033

Re: “Complete Streets” Design Guidelines

Dear Speaker Johnson and Councilmember Rodriguez,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) supports, by a vote of 35 in favor, 0 against, 1 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to vote, the adoption of Complete Street Design Guidelines to accelerate improvements in transit and traffic safety in our district. We recommend the addition of our suggestions below be integrated in the proposal.

We understand that this proposal is being discussed by Transportation Alternatives¹ and the City Council to become legislation and would welcome the opportunity to comment on this introduction when the time comes.

The adoption of “Vision Zero” by the Mayor in 2014 is starting to pay off: in 2017 pedestrian traffic fatalities declined by 30% compared to five years ago in New York City. This was accomplished by deploying road engineering, education, and enforcement, the three pillars of the international Vision Zero initiative.

Street design is crucial to the success of Vision Zero, which still has a long way to go; there were still a total of 254 fatalities and 61,371 traffic injuries in 2017. To-date, the

¹Transportation Alternatives is a 40 year-old non-profit organization with a mission to reclaim New York City streets from the automobile and advocate for better bicycling, walking and public transit for all New Yorkers. They were instrumental in the City’s adoption of the Vision Zero safety initiative.

engineering portion of the program has implemented piecemeal street changes rather than addressing how the city's grid plan encourages vehicular speed and engenders conflicts.

In order to accelerate the progress of Vision Zero and ensure its sustainability at a reduced cost, it is important to get out of prototyping mode and adopt a robust blueprint; “Complete Streets” or “Vision Zero Street Design Standard” is a set of safety-based design standards to guarantee that the arterial roads accommodate effectively all modes of transportation and provide the best safety outcome for all users. The design elements exist in the Department of Transportation’s (DOT) current toolkit:

- ADA accessibility, public amenities (benches), pedestrian islands, wide sidewalks, signal protected pedestrian crossings
- Dedicated mass transit facilities and dedicated unloading zones
- Narrow vehicular lanes, protected bike lanes, signal retiming for speed limit

The new approach calls for the DOT - when they undertake the reengineering of an arterial road - to include in the plan all the elements necessary to make it a Complete Street rather than doing it piecemeal, over time or not at all. If some elements were missing from their plan, DOT would be compelled to explain to the council why, before starting the project.

We applaud this approach and propose the following recommendations to strengthen this process:

- The objective of the Complete Street standard should include prominently “reduce conflicts” in addition to “reduce speeding” as 25% of all pedestrians are killed by turning vehicles due to conflicting signals.
- Each project should state a crash reduction goal; this would bring the safety objectives to the fore in evaluating the methods and success for each project.
- Bulb-outs and bike corrals should be added to the complete street toolkit. Bulb outs (or neck-downs) are effective to reduce crossing distances and improve visibility at corners. Bike corrals provide a necessary service to bicyclists without encroaching on the pedestrian right of way. Such a feature will be crucial if dock-less bike share services are deployed.
- Mass transit facilities should be “dedicated and protected.”

Please keep us abreast of the discussions and let us know when the bill is introduced.

Sincerely,



Burt Lazarin
Chair
Manhattan Community
Board 4



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning
Committee



Dale Corvino
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning
Committee

CC: Erwin Figueroa, Transportation Alternatives