



Burt Lazarin
Chair
Jesse R. Bodine
District Manager

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.nyc.gov/mcb4

February 15, 2018

Luis Sanchez
Manhattan Borough Commissioner
NYC Department of Transportation
59 Maiden Lane, 37th Floor
New York, NY 10037

Re: Crosstown Protected Bike Lanes – 26th and 29th Streets

Dear Borough Commissioner Sanchez,

At its February 7th Full Board meeting, Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) voted with 39 in favor, 1 against, 0 abstaining and 0 present but not eligible to vote in support of the 2018 installation of two crosstown parking-protected bike lanes for 26th and 29th Streets in Manhattan, provided that some elements of the design are modified to address our serious concerns.

The New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) chose 26th and 29th Streets because they connect all the way crosstown from First to Twelfth Avenues where they provide access to the Greenway. The lanes are 34-feet wide, enough to allow a protected bike lane to be installed without losing any traffic or loading lanes, which have proven dangerous in the past (three bicyclists have been killed in recent years in Community District 4 on these streets).

DOT will install a standard configuration very similar to the existing one on Eighth and Ninth Avenues: a three-foot bicycle lane along the south curb of the street, with a two-foot buffer, a floating parking lane, a moving lane in the middle and a parking lane along the opposite curb. Pedestrian refuges will be painted and curb cuts and loading zones will not be affected. The loading areas will be expanded and emergency services bypass areas will be created to improve the speed of emergency services that are currently delayed on crosstown streets.

The community and the members expressed concerns about the overall design:

- The mixing zone treatment currently found on most avenues force bicyclists to veer into traffic at every intersection, or find themselves squeezed against the curb and trapped by turning vehicles, which obstruct the bike lane while waiting for pedestrians to cross. Often, motorists do not check whether bicyclists are coming and do not yield to them, causing injuries and falls. This environment makes cyclists feel unsafe and defeats the purpose of protected bike lanes. We are pleased that DOT is studying alternative treatments at intersections to remedy these deficiencies. The study results are expected in the spring.
 - We ask that the solutions recommended in the study be applied at all intersections and that mixing zones not be installed here. Our preferred option is split phases with a turning lane, which would improve the flow in the moving lane. Split phases have proven extremely safe on Ninth Avenue. At minimum, green markings should be extended to the intersection or even through the intersections.

- Because of the absence of any concrete barrier, there is a real concern that the bike lanes will be overcome with delivery trucks and parked vehicles.
 - Beyond NYPD committing to a very strong enforcement campaign against such abuses, we are asking that you provide some form of physical separation (bollards, armadillos¹ or low separators) to keep vehicles away from the bike lanes.

Issues specific to our district:

- The proposed solution shows that a bike lane would not be installed on the 29th Street block from Eleventh to Twelfth Avenues. The sanitation trucks are illegally parked on this street and will be relocated shortly when a residential development on Block 675 (between 29th and 30th Streets) begins. This will bring 1,200 apartments to the block. We ask that the bike lane be extended to include the block between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues on 29th Street.

- The postal service loading docks on 29th Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues present challenges. We ask that increased lighting be installed in the underpass to improve visibility by all street users.

- On 26th Street, between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues, the Starrett-Lehigh Building (601 West 26th Street) has numerous docks with very large trucks and wide turning radius that obstruct most of the street. MCB4 had requested that a mid-block crossing be installed to allow pedestrians to use only the south side and then cross to the north mid-block. This situation should be reviewed carefully and a mid-block crossing should be installed.

¹ Small plastic separators with the overall shape of an armadillo installed at intervals on the road between traffic lanes to keep users in their intended lane. Vehicles can drive over them if needed.

- Both 26th and 29th Streets are exceptionally wide between Eighth and Ninth Avenues. On these blocks we anticipate that the large painted buffers planned by DOT will be used for double parking and bus parking. We request that either the pedestrian zones be expanded or two-way bike lanes be installed on these blocks to link the Eighth and Ninth Avenue bike lanes that are heavily used.
- We ask that DOT do an extensive outreach to residents, schools and businesses along the path to evaluate their loading and access needs. We note that the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) is currently installing a water main connection on various locations on 29th Street. It will be important to coordinate with them to minimize residents' inconvenience.

Along with this redesign, we ask that all ADA ramps be brought in compliance and Accessible signals be installed along modified or new traffic signals.

DOT also presented a general plan for the balance of crosstown protected bike lanes: a two-way crosstown lane will be installed on 13th Street as part of the L train mitigation; 52nd and 55th Streets have been chosen as the next pair to be designed; DOT is evaluating various other pairs to install in Midtown. We reiterate that MCB4 is on record as asking for crosstown protected bike lanes on 37th and 38th Streets in Midtown. The four crosstown installations would be completed in 2019.

We are very supportive of crosstown bike lanes, which are a critical element to making the bike network safe. We look forward to the DOT sharing with us a modified design that addresses our concerns well in advance of the start of implementation.

Sincerely,



Burt Lazarin
Chair
Manhattan Community
Board 4



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning
Committee



Dale Corvino
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning
Committee