



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**BURT LAZARIN**  
Chair

**JESSE R. BODINE**  
District Manager

April 16, 2019

Ed Pincar  
Manhattan Borough Commissioner  
NYC Department of Transportation  
59 Maiden Lane, 37<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10037

**Re: Proposed Crosstown Bike Lanes for 52<sup>nd</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> Streets**

Dear Borough Commissioner Pincar,

At its April 3<sup>rd</sup> Full Board meeting, Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) voted with 29 in favor, 2 against, 0 abstaining, and 0 present-not-eligible, in support of the 2019 installation of two crosstown parking-protected bike lanes for 52<sup>nd</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> Streets in Manhattan, provided that some elements of the design are modified to address our substantive concerns.

The NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) chose 52<sup>nd</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> Streets because they connect all the way crosstown from First to Twelfth Avenues where they provide access to the Greenway. The roads are 34-feet wide, enough to allow a protected bike lane to be installed without losing any traffic or parking lanes.

Building on the enormous success of the crosstown lanes installed on 26<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Streets, DOT proposes to install a 4-ft bicycle lane along the curb, with a 3-ft buffer, an 8-ft floating parking lane, an 11-ft traffic lane in the middle, and an 8-ft parking lane along the opposite curb. Pedestrian refuges will be painted and curb cuts and loading zones will not be affected.

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

- Commendably, the design had none of the ‘mixing zones’ used in previous designs and installations, which have proven to be highly dangerous to bicyclists as vehicles invariably drift into the bike lanes without yielding. In the proposed design, vehicles are forced to proceed all the way to the intersection before making a full 90 degree turn, preventing the slow, early drift that forces bicyclists either into the curb or, more often,

out into traffic. To further the safety of the proposed design, we ask that the green paint of the bike lane be continued *through* the intersection, even if intermittently, to make it clear to vehicles that they must yield to bicycles crossing the intersection.

- On 55<sup>th</sup> Street, between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues, the bike lane moves away from the curb between turning lanes for vehicles entering Twelfth Avenue. This leaves the bicyclists unprotected in the middle of traffic. We ask that the bike lane be protected, at least on one side, by armadillos or bollards.
- Lead Pedestrian/Bicyclists Intervals (LPI's/LBIs) should be installed at all possible intersections
- The block on 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, between Eighth and Ninth Avenues, has a post office that makes it unrealistic to install a bike lane as proposed. Postal trucks routinely park on both sides of the street. The trucks are 8'-0" wide, and 9'-6" mirror-to-mirror. An analysis indicates that, when the trucks park opposite each other on both sides of the street, as they now do, even if parked perfectly, the traffic lane will be left with only 9'-0" between their mirrors. At 9'-6", this would make it impossible for a postal truck (and others) to pass through. The inevitable result will be postal trucks parked in the bike lane's buffer zone. Since the mirrors will already, necessarily, have their mirrors projecting 1'-0" into that buffer zone, even under the best of conditions, once the trucks move into the buffer zone the mirrors will be dangerously close to the bicyclists' heads in the bike lane. Therefore, we insist that DOT install a striped "No Standing Zone" on the north side of the street, across from the entire length of Postal Truck parking on the south side.

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