



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR
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Burt Lazarin
Chair

Jesse R. Bodine
District Manager

June 27, 2018

Polly Trottenberg
Commissioner
NYC Department of Transportation
55 Water Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10041

Re: Proposed Tenth Avenue Protected Bicycle Lane (West 52nd Street to West 72nd Street)

Dear Commissioner Trottenberg,

Manhattan Community Board 4's (MCB4) Transportation Planning Committee (TRANS) held a duly noticed public hearing regarding the Tenth Avenue bike lane proposed by the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) on June 18, 2018. At its regularly scheduled Executive Committee (EXEC) meeting on June 25, 2018, the Committee voted, by a vote of 9 in favor, 1 opposed, 0 abstaining and 0 present but not eligible to vote, to have the DOT look into MCB4's concerns and return to the Transportation Planning Committee meeting in July. This letter is subject to ratification by the Full Board to be held on Wednesday, July 25th.

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) appreciates the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) proposal to install a parking-protected bicycle lane on Tenth Avenue from W. 52nd Street continuing north to W. 60th Street in Community District 4 (CD4) and then up to W. 72nd Street and Amsterdam Avenue in CD7 to connect with the existing Amsterdam Avenue bike lane. We applaud the fact that this proposal will connect potential crosstown protected bike lanes on 52nd and 55th Streets with Tenth and Amsterdam Avenues' protected bike lanes (even though crosstown bike lanes are in the very early stage of planning and have not yet been presented or approved). It is part of NYC DOT's effort to create an expanded network of protected bicycle lanes to enhance safety for all street users and achieve the goals of the Mayor's Vision Zero initiative.

However, the plan as currently envisioned does not include crucial elements that would ensure pedestrian and bicyclist safety. More specifically, the proposal does not, but should, include

- Split-phase turn signals at all left turn intersections, rather than the proposed “mixing zones” where neither pedestrians or bicyclists are protected from turning vehicles
- Raised concrete pedestrian refuge areas to ensure that pedestrians are fully protected from speeding trucks and cars
- Signal timing adjustments to conform to the 25mph legal speed limit during the day or night.

We are pleased that NYC DOT has agreed to look into including these elements and will return to the MCB4 Transportation Planning Committee in July with a revised plan.

Manhattan Community Board 4 has been one of the earliest and strongest proponents of parking protected bicycle lanes because they benefit both pedestrians and bicyclists. We are pleased at the success of the lower Ninth Avenue protected bicycle lane, which resulted in a 43% reduction in crashes. As a matter of fact, DOT brochures most frequently feature that section of bike lane, with generous concrete pedestrian islands and trees, and split phase signals at every turning lane to protect pedestrians and bicyclists from conflicts with vehicles.

Proposed Bike Lane:

At peak hour, the avenue has six travel lanes and four lanes during non-peak. One of the peak travel lanes would be repurposed to locate the bike lane along the west curb of the avenue and protected by a row of floating parking adjacent to the east side of the bike lane in a similar configuration to the Eighth and Ninth Avenue bike lanes. The parking regulation on the floating parking would now allow parking even during peak hours.

Twelve pedestrian islands would be painted on the road with flexible bollards. Neither concrete islands nor trees would be provided to accommodate pedestrians. Of the four left turn bays, one would be equipped with a split-phase signal at 57th Street. The other three (W. 53rd, W. 55th and W. 59th Streets) would provide mixing zones, offering no additional safety for bicyclists or pedestrians.

It is not clear if the traffic signals are timed to comply with the 25 mph speed limits during the day.

Context

The demand for bike infrastructure is surging: in the six months of good weather in 2017, there were 2.4 million Citibike trips started or ended in CD4 while the number of bikes crossing 50th Street (north - south) has grown 55% in the last five years.

Tenth Avenue is a dangerous environment for cyclists: many residents do characterize the avenue as a speedway; in fact according to DOT statistics, 79% of vehicles speed on the corridor. In the last five years there were 114 injuries and one cyclist fatality on this corridor in CD4.

The West Clinton Rezoning in 2011 allowed for residential development. Many residential towers have been built, whose occupants would benefit from pedestrian and cycling safe options. Three major schools are located along this segment of Tenth Avenue: P.S. 111 at W. 53rd Street (410 students), School of Environmental Studies at W. 55th Street (1,300 students) and John Jay College of Criminal Justice Campus at W. 58th Street (15,000 students). Mount Sinai West Hospital is located on Tenth Avenue between W. 58th and W. 59th Streets (3,000 staff and 1,073 patient trips per day).

In such a sensitive environment, the above proposal lacks several key features that would ensure the safety of students and hospital patients and visitors, and further enable reductions in crashes, injuries and fatalities required to achieve “Vision Zero.” More specifically, we request that DOT’s revised proposal include the following elements or acceptable alternatives:

- Encouraging pedestrians to step off the curb and wait for a light on a non-protected island with no curb degrades their safety compared to being on a sidewalk. It seems extremely dangerous, even more so on a corridor well known for speeding. The greenway tragedy illustrates well that a curb or bollards can be a serious deterrent to accidental or malevolent driving. This situation is compounded by the presence of so many large schools, with students that may be distracted or less cautious when they are crossing in groups, and the hospital.
 - We ask DOT to provide concrete pedestrian refuges with trees, to maintain the same level of safety that pedestrians currently enjoy on a curb, protected from traffic; the eight priority locations are as follow:
 - On the north side of the following intersection: W. 52nd Street (beginning of bike lane – transition from six lanes to five), W. 53rd Street (school and left turn), W. 55th Street (left turn and school), and W. 57th and W. 59th Streets (left turns, school), where the pedestrians are most exposed to incoming traffic
 - On both the north and south side of schools/hospital crossing (W. 58th Street and W. 59th Street)
- We applaud the installation of a split-phase signal at W. 57th Street. However the community at large was upset that the other three left turns were designed as mixing zones. On June 29, 2017, a 17-year old cyclist was killed at W. 55th Street and Tenth Avenue by a truck turning left, the exact configuration a mixing zone will replicate. 27% of pedestrians’ crashes involve a left turn vehicle not yielding the right of way. With the presence of large schools, it makes sense to be very cautious and provide as much safety as possible.
 - We ask DOT to install split-phase signals at W. 55th Street (where there was a cyclist fatality), W. 53rd Street (P.S. 111 crossing), and W. 59th Street (John Jay College crossing), in addition to the one at W. 57th Street.

- While the elimination of a traffic lane will reduce speeding and crossing time, these benefits will accrue to a very small portion of the avenue. MCB4 is on record asking for traffic calming on Tenth Avenue.
 - We ask DOT to change the signal timing on the whole avenue to comply with the 25 mph limit during day and night
- We also ask for a date commitment in the reasonably near future to complete any aspect of the project that would not be completed at the first installation.

At the MCB4 Transportation Planning Committee meeting, many residents asked that the bike lane be expanded to reach all the way to 14th Street, as many parts of the avenue are quite dangerous for cyclists. MCB4 is on record for requesting that the bike lane be installed further south, between 34th and 42nd Streets as a first phase of an installation on the whole avenue. We would like an estimate for the timing of such roll out.

Finally the MTA M11 bus route uses Tenth Avenue. A Select Bus Service (SBS) lane would provide a crucial service to the rapidly growing number of residents, located quite far from the nearest subway. Please let us know how the bike lane plans do accommodate such a future installation and if there are plans for such an SBS corridor.

Thank you for your attention to this issue and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Burt Lazarin
Chair
Manhattan Community
Board 4



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning
Committee



Dale Corvino
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning
Committee

cc: Edward F. Pincar, Jr., Acting Manhattan Borough Commissioner, NYC DOT
 Hon. Corey Johnson, Speaker, City Council
 Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
 Hon. Brad Hoylman, NYS Senate
 Hon. Richard Gottfried, NYS Assemblyman
 Hon. Linda B. Rosenthal, NYC Assemblywoman
 Hon. Helen Rosenthal, NYC Council