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October 18, 2017

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

Re: Proposed Eleventh Avenue Safety Improvements

Dear Commissioner Sanchez,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) is pleased that the safety improvements planned for Eleventh Avenue will be implemented in April 2018. Specifically, DOT will be changing the flow of traffic from two-way to one way and improving the street design. We also support the newly proposed addition of a bike lane to the avenue. MCB4, at its October 4th Full Board meeting, voted to approve of these safety improvement designs and proposed bike lane addition with a vote of 33 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 present but not eligible to vote.

Below we reiterate several requests, which were initially made by MCB4 in 2005, and then as part of the Hell's Kitchen Transportation Study, with additional requests discussed in our April and October 2016 letters.

MCB4 is disappointed again in the fact that the one-way conversion does not extend to 57th Street. Furthermore, it is critical that the design preserve the option to install a bus lane in the future; this will become an even more important mode of transportation as the district continues to be developed. This is important as Ninth Avenue is the main corridor for Lincoln Tunnel access and remains an unreliable bus route. Despite these factors, MCB4 supports DOT's proposal to install a bike lane on the west side of the avenue in road space freed up by the conversion. With the Hudson River Greenway being at maximum capacity, such a lane will provide a safe alternative route for cyclists. The east side of Eleventh Avenue has been rezoned for residential use, and we expect the lane to be heavily used by local residents and businesses that rely on buses and jitneys to get around an area that is currently a transit desert.

MCB4 would like to thank the Department of Transportation (DOT) for completing the first phase of the project earlier this year by converting Eleventh Avenue from one-way to two-way

from 34th to 42nd Streets with the following enhancements: a Leading Pedestrian Interval¹ at 37th Street, where a fatality occurred last year; high visibility markings at all the crossings; and split phase signals at the northbound and southbound turns from 34th Street to Eleventh Avenue. We understand that the green phase will become a trailing green, which is safer for pedestrians. We continue to request that Accessible Pedestrian Signals be installed at each crossing where a new signal is installed.

Eleventh Avenue one-way – 44th to 52nd Streets:

MCB4 continues to support the conversion of Eleventh Avenue from two-way to one way southbound between 44th and 52nd Street in order to reduce the congestion on Eleventh Avenue and prevent drivers from going the wrong way between 44th and 45th Streets.

- Going south on Eleventh Avenue, DOT's plan calls for the number of northbound lanes be reduced from three lanes (two through lanes and a turn lane) at 57th Street to one through lane at 52nd Street. A parking protected bike lane would start at 55th Street. Then from 52nd to 43rd Streets, there will be four southbound lanes (or three through lanes and one turning lane) and a parking protected bike lane along the west side. On the block between 43rd and 42nd Streets, there will be three through lanes and two turn lanes, with no bike lane.
- Concrete pedestrian refuges with trees will be installed all along the bike lanes, in the middle of the crossings at 56th and 55th Streets at each end of a lane separator, and in the middle of the crossings, from the north of 42nd Street to the south of 35th Street. This will create a safer and pleasant environment for pedestrians.
- 40th Street and Eleventh Avenue will be made safer with the installation of a pedestrian crossing phase by creating a third phase for pedestrians to cross. Such a phase would not delay the Lincoln Tunnel flow, but instead would take time away from the through traffic phase on 40th Street.

In light of the detailed plans you presented we ask that:

- 54th Street between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues be restored to a one-way eastbound street, consistent with the normal alternate pattern of Manhattan streets. Drivers headed to the West Side Highway use 53rd Street, which is now very residential with hundreds of new apartments as a speedway. They make a northbound turn onto Eleventh Avenue and then a westbound turn on 54th Street, a two-way street. Starting the one-way segment of Eleventh Avenue at 57th Street would also resolve this important safety issue.
- The southbound signal to turn from westbound 42nd Street to Eleventh Avenue become a trailing green arrow, instead of currently a leading green arrow.

We continue to request that:

- The one-way section start at 57th Street: At each of our meetings, the residents

¹ A Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI) typically gives pedestrians a three to seven second head start when entering an intersection with a corresponding green signal in the same direction of travel. LPIs enhance the visibility of pedestrians in the intersection and reinforce their right-of-way over turning vehicles.

who live in proximity of the 52nd Street intersection were very vocal in their support.

- Proper signage be installed overhead starting at 47th Street to direct cars to their proper lanes. While remaining at a city scale, signage should be large enough (larger than Ninth Avenue bus lane) to be clearly visible.
- To facilitate local flow on the west side of the avenue, we recommend that a narrow lane delineator between tunnel and local traffic be extended up to the 46th Street intersection and between 40th and 41st Streets.
- Pedestrian safety: Tunnel bound travelers often forget that they are on city streets. We request that all pedestrian crossings on this segment be equipped with high visibility markings.
- A split LPI signal be installed for the southbound turn from 53rd Street to protect families and pedestrians crossing Eleventh Avenue to reach the park.
- Accessible Pedestrian Signals be installed at each crossing where a new signal is installed.
- Upon completion of this phase of the project, a **way-finding signage design project** is undertaken in collaboration with the Community Board, the Hudson Yards/Hell's Kitchen Alliance Business Improvement District and the Port Authority, as well as an update of GPS mapping vendors to educate drivers on the best use of these new routes.

We are pleased with the many features of this project and look forward to working with you to finalize the details.

Sincerely,



Delores Rubin
Chair



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair, Transportation
Planning Committee



Yoni Bokser
Co-Chair, Transportation
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