



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

330 West 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, 26<sup>th</sup> floor New York, NY 10036  
tel: 212-736-4536 fax: 212-947-9512  
[www.nyc.gov/mcb4](http://www.nyc.gov/mcb4)

**DELORES RUBIN**  
Chair

**Jesse R. Bodine**  
District Manager

February 9, 2016

Ms. Margaret Forgione  
Manhattan Borough Commissioner  
New York City Department of Transportation  
59 Maiden Lane, 37<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10038

**RE 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bike Lane (14-33<sup>rd</sup> Streets)**

Dear Commissioner Forgione:

Manhattan Community Board 4 supports the installation of a parking protected bicycle lane from 14<sup>th</sup> to 33<sup>rd</sup> Street on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, but deplors the lack of important safety features.

Manhattan Community Board 4 has been an early adopter and a champion of bike lanes in the past, causing NYCDOT to install the first protected bike lane in the city on lower 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenues. We applauded the NYC Department of Transportation initiative, in response to requests from MCB's 2, 4 and 5, to install a parking protected bicycle lane on 6th Avenue between West 8<sup>th</sup> and West 33rd Street as part of an effort to create an expanded network of protected bicycle lanes to enhance safety and achieve the goals of the Mayor's Vision Zero initiative.

In November we had asked NYCDOT to revisit the bike lane proposed design in order to improve safety and be more consistent with Vision Zero and we appreciate them coming back in a timely manner.

We are pleased that the NYCDOT agreed to restore pedestrian refuges at every avenue crossing. These installations are critical to reduce crossing length for seniors and children in particular. Such refuges have been installed at all crossings on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue bike lanes.

However, due to their smaller footprint, these refuges will be equipped with neither detectible warning pads, nor tree pits. The former is concerning since institutions for vision impaired persons are located in the vicinity of the proposed bike lane. We request

that:

- Every pedestrian ramp on each side of the pedestrian crossings on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue be brought to ADA compliance and retrofitted with detectible warning pads;
- The surface of the refuge at street level be textured
- NYCDOT work with the community to identify refuges to be planted with lower bushes or flowers, and maintained by a local group. This will contribute to catching more run-off water and provide gardening opportunities to the community
- NYCDOT implement a training program to help drivers and bicyclists to understand new signals

We are dismayed that the NYCDOT refuses to install more life-saving features at all the intersections where drivers turn left.

NYCDOT proposes to install fully exclusive split phases only at 14th and 23rd Street intersections with 6th Avenue, thus leaving unsafe conditions at 9 intersections that account for 65 % of all injuries on that stretch. NYCDOT's data from other protected bicycle corridors indicate injury and fatality reductions of approximately 50%, as compared to 20% to 30% in corridors without split phases<sup>1</sup>.

NYCDOT explained that during this study, no one analyzed crash data to figure how crashes were taking place; NYCDOT blamed it on NYPD's inability to collect accident (sic) data.

In a corridor where pedestrians experienced most of the severe injuries (27 versus 10 for bicyclists, and 15 for vehicles) in 2009 to 2013, it is baffling that NYCDOT would fail to analyze available data and that pedestrian safety would not be given higher attention. This is even more incomprehensible in the context of the recent announcement for 2016; the mayor unveiled \$115 million dollars in new capital investment for plans to make hazardous left-turns safer.

We request that:

- NYCDOT study two specific intersections (15<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Streets) that are listed in the top 10% of KSI (killed or severely injured) in Manhattan and return to CB4 in 4 months with the detail of the crashes, as well as corrective actions to make these intersections safer
- NYCDOT also study which other intersections would benefit from the new left turn protection feature touted by Mayor di Blasio (neck downs made of paint and flexible bollards)

We also request that NYCDOT collect and report additional data that can assist NYCDOT, Community Boards, and other policy makers to better understand which features of the enclosed bicycle lanes are most useful in reducing crashes, injuries and

---

<sup>1</sup> Protected Bike Lanes in NYC – NYCDOT - September 2014  
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/2014-11-bicycle-path-data-analysis.pdf>

fatalities. This should include data on “mixed zones versus split phases”, specific pedestrian and traffic counts for any streets they judge to not be feasible for split phases, and more specifics on the crashes that do occur.

With Vision Zero as a mandate, one expects NYCDOT to take this opportunity to make whole corridors safer for all users.

Sincerely,



Delores Rubin  
Chair



Christine Berthet  
Co-Chair, Transportation  
Planning Committee



Ernest Modarelli  
Co-Chair, Transportation  
Planning Committee