



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**LOWELL D. KERN**  
Chair

**JESSE R. BODINE**  
District Manager

July 24, 2020

Ed Pincar  
Manhattan Borough Commissioner  
NYC Department of Transportation  
59 Maiden Lane, 37<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10038

**Re: 38<sup>th</sup> and 39<sup>th</sup> Streets Crosstown Bike Lanes**

Dear Commissioner Pincar,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) is delighted that the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) plans to expand the bike lane network in Midtown with a pair of bike lanes on 38<sup>th</sup> and 39<sup>th</sup> Streets from First to Eleventh Avenues with connection to the Greenway. The connection to the West Side Greenway will be via Eleventh Avenue and West 40<sup>th</sup> Street. The installation is scheduled for 2020. By a vote of 46 in favor, 0 against, 1 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to vote, MCB4, at its July 22<sup>nd</sup> Full Board meeting, voted to generally support this initiative.

While we are pleased to note that the DOT has developed a more robust set of design tools to respond to local needs, we oppose certain proposed elements because they present serious safety and economic hardship issues. We request a revised design prior to moving forward, incorporating the following:

- Using the Javits Center sidewalk as a two-way bike path on Eleventh Avenue between 38<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> Streets will create conflict between cyclists and the thousands of Javits Center visitors.
- Replacing 800-ft or 40 loading spaces on the south side of West 38<sup>th</sup> Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues with a rush hour moving lane adjacent to a very narrow and overused sidewalk will put pedestrians at risk. Further, the loading lane is heavily used by businesses and residences and is critical to the economic survival of these businesses.

We also urge you to install armadillos or adequately spaced vertical delineators along these bike lanes, as there are no parked cars to protect them. Fast turnover and loading/unloading regulations during the day welcome aggressive bus, delivery, and New Jersey drivers who do not understand or respect markings and will put cyclists in harm's way.

Generally, we are concerned that a 4-ft bike lane is too narrow for the cycling demand in midtown: 4-ft will have to accommodate bicycles, package-laden cargo bikes, and newly-sanctioned electric bikes that operate at higher speeds. We expect these bike lanes to be heavily used and recommend you increase their width to 5-ft at a minimum.

In the chaotic context of Midtown, these changes are necessary to provide real safety to all street users, and to keep everyone in their lanes.

### **Block-by-Block comments:**

We request that you extend the daytime curb regulations (Loading/Unloading) from 12 to 24 hours a day on West 38<sup>th</sup> and West 39<sup>th</sup> Streets, Eighth to Eleventh Avenues. There is very little demand for overnight parking, whereas trash storage and 24-hour deliveries are critical to the economic survival of the district.

#### **West 39<sup>th</sup> street – Between Eighth and Ninth Avenues**

We ask that you do not reduce the size of the current bike lane. The existing bike lane is 5-ft wide and the parking lane is 8-ft wide. The proposal reduces the bike lane to 4-ft and expands the parking to 9-ft. The bike lane should remain at 5-ft with the parking lane width on the south side at the current 8-ft.

There is a large residential building that experiences a lot of tenants' move in and out as well as drop offs. We request the installation of a striped "No Parking Zone" in front of 330 West 39<sup>th</sup> Street.

Require the two traffic lanes to merge into one on West 39<sup>th</sup> Street east of Eighth Avenue before the traffic crosses the avenue, instead of west of Eighth Avenue, to prevent merging cars from encroaching on the bike lane west of Eighth Avenue.

#### **West 39<sup>th</sup> Street – Between Ninth and Tenth Avenues**

As previously requested, bus parking should be removed from the eastern portion (200-ft) of the north sidewalk at the northwest corner of Ninth Avenue.

#### **West 39<sup>th</sup> Street – Between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues**

The conflicts with DHL and the towing company are worrisome. There are many vehicles rushing in and out of the garage with little visibility. Vertical delineators are particularly critical at this location.

#### **West 38<sup>th</sup> Street – Between Eleventh and Tenth Avenues**

There is never any rush on this block.

The HYHK Business Improvement District has expressed interest in installing and maintaining planters on this segment. Please remove the rush hour lane and resize the parking and moving lanes so that the buffer is expanded to 5-ft to accommodate planters.

**West 38<sup>th</sup> Street – Between Tenth and Ninth Avenues**

The HYHK Business Improvement District has expressed interested in installing and maintaining planters on this segment. Keep the moving lane at its current size and/or reduce the parking lane to 8-ft on the north side so that the buffer is expanded to 5-ft to accommodate planters.

**West 38<sup>th</sup> Street – Between Ninth and Eighth Avenues**

As indicated above, removing 800-ft of loading space will have serious negative effects on the businesses in this block. This loading lane is heavily used during the day, and even at night for laying out trash for pick-up by carting companies. Putting a moving lane along sidewalks that have heavy pedestrian volumes is outright dangerous. Because of building construction on the block, traffic has been using only one lane for the last two years without negative consequences. We request that you install two parking lanes of 8-ft each, a 10-ft travel lane and widen the bike lane to more than 6-ft on this busy segment.

There is a large residential building that experiences a lot of tenants’ move in and out as well as drop offs. We request the installation of a striped “No Parking Zone” in front of 320 West 39<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Eleventh Avenue – Between West 38<sup>th</sup> and West 40<sup>th</sup> Streets**

As indicated above, requiring the Javits Center sidewalk be used by cyclists is not an option for safety reasons. There is ample capacity on Eleventh Avenue for a southbound lane to be dedicated to a two-way bike lane.

MCB4 is 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,



Lowell Kern  
Chair  
Manhattan Community  
Board 4



Christine Berthet  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning  
Committee



Dale Corvino  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning  
Committee

cc: Hon. Jerry Nadler, U.S. Congressman  
Hon. Brad Hoylman, U.S. Senator  
Hon. Richard Gottfried, NYS Assembly Member

Hon. Linda Rosenthal, NYS Assembly Member  
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon Corey Johnson, New York City Council Speaker  
Sean Quinn, DOT