



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

P.O. Box 2622, New York, NY 10108
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LOWELL D. KERN
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

December 8, 2020

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

Re: Permanent Open Street – West 22nd Street (7/8)

Dear Borough Commissioner Pincar,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) at its December 2nd Full Board meeting, voted by 38 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to vote, to support the community request that the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) designate the current Open Street on West 22nd Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues as permanent, 365 days a year.

The Open Street program was initiated in May 2020 to allow more distancing for pedestrians, as well as provide recreational space for residents and their families. The program requires a local partner to display signage and maintain NYPD-provided barricades at the entrance of the street to prevent thru traffic from using the street. Local vehicular traffic travelling at a maximum of 5 mph is permitted. To date, 96 miles of Open Streets have been approved, with nine blocks in MCD4.

The West 22nd Street Open Street Program has been extremely successful thanks to the commitment of the Block Association and its activist Melodie Bryant, who partnered with the DOT. MCB4 received a large number of letters supporting this request and none opposed. The garage located on the block is overflowing with clients, including Amazon cargo bikes. Even construction trucks are cooperating, and close the barricades as needed.

We are also requesting that the DOT implement improvements to the program that will make it easier for this block and others to participate. Official DOT signage is critical to increase drivers' compliance. The gates need to be both more resilient and easier to move. Examples include waterfilled construction gates set up in a chicane, so moving them is only required for trucks, or

manual barrier gate arm operators, such as the one in operation at West 27th Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues (Fashion Institute of Technology). Such barriers should be provided by DOT as it seems inappropriate to distract the NYPD from more critical tasks.

We appreciate all the work DOT has done in opening the streets to pedestrians to allow for social distancing in these challenging times and look forward to seeing improvements to the program.

Sincerely,



Lowell D. Kern
MCB4 Chair



Christine Berthet
Co-chair, Transportation Planning Committee



Dale Corvino
Co-chair, Transportation Planning Committee

Cc: Melodie Bryant, Activist for 22nd Street Open Street Program