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CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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March 11, 2021

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

Re: Instilling a Culture of Compliance among Cyclists

Dear Commissioner Pincar,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4), at its March 3rd Full Board meeting by a vote of 41 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to vote, requests that the Department of Transportation (DOT) deploy educational outreach and a new engineering solution within our district, both with the goal of instilling a culture of compliance among the city's cyclists.

As you know, MCB4 is very appreciative of the rollout of protective bike lanes in our district. We recognize that the city's in-progress bike infrastructure represents a new reality for the city's residents, and as the bike infrastructure advances, we had hopes that a culture of compliance would begin to take root among the city's bikers.

Unfortunately, the last year under COVID pandemic restrictions and changes with a large influx of new cyclists has not been good for fostering a culture of compliance. Busy open outdoor restaurant enclosures ("streeteries") alongside bike lanes are experienced as obstructions for many cyclists, while lower vehicular traffic loads in travel lanes lead them to feeling safer traveling in travel lanes (or, worse, on sidewalks) instead of the bike lane.

Education

We appreciate that the DOT has developed educational programs on bicycle safety and compliance, such as the Bike Smart content¹. However, it may need updates to account for this

¹ <https://www1.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/bicyclists/biketips.shtml>

new environment of streeteries alongside bike lanes. We encourage DOT to amplify this content in our districts, for instance, by using the LinkNYC kiosks to broadcast the information.

Further, we request your office's assistance to deploy the Street Ambassador Program at problematic locations in our district this Spring.

Engineering

Starts and stops are considerably more challenging for cyclists than they are for pedestrians or drivers. As a result, cyclists have a built-in incentive to keep going at all costs, which results in regularly running red lights. Other cities, like Amsterdam², have curtailed these behaviors by changing the signal timing to afford a longer green wave³ to pedestrians and bicyclists without shortening it for cars.

By adjusting the timing of traffic signals, a 2018 study shows that New York City could provide 13 blocks of uninterrupted cycling. This timing would also yield 19 and 45 blocks of uninterrupted walking and driving respectively.⁴ It would significantly increase the chances of cyclists stopping since they would encounter many fewer red lights.

Fortunately, since 2019, DOT has been experimenting with "Bicycle Progression" often referred to as "bicycle green wave." We request that Eighth and Ninth Avenues be selected by DOT to be the next corridors to receive such improved green wave.

We recommend this two-pronged approach of outreach and engineering in order to instill a culture of compliance in our district and beyond and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Lowell D. Kern
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Christine Berthet
Co-chair
Transportation Planning
Committee



Dale Corvino
Co-chair
Transportation Planning
Committee

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=knbVWXzL4-4&feature=youtu.be>

³ Green wave is achieved when traffic signals turn green at such intervals that the driver does not encounter a red light. This was originally created to avoid start and stops and improve air quality.

⁴ <http://chekped.com/will-bicyclists-and-pedestrians-ever-be-on-the-same-wavelength>