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MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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January 13, 2022

Hon. Lorraine Grillo
First Deputy Mayor, City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Edward Grayson
Commissioner
NYC Department of Sanitation
125 Worth Street
New York, NY 10013

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

Re: Equitable practices for snow removal

Dear Deputy Mayor Grillo, Commissioner Grayson, and Borough Commissioner Pincar,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) is grateful for Sanitation Commissioner Grayson and DOT Commissioner Gutman's July 13, 2021 detailed response to our letter dated May 13, 2021. In addition, the Snow Plan for Manhattan in 2021-2022¹ is very informative. MCB4 at its January 5th Full Board meeting, voted 43 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to seek additional clarifications to address the concerns our residents have expressed related to bus stops, corners, and bike lanes during snowstorms. Our goal is to ensure equitable delivery of sanitation services to the residents of our district and beyond.

¹ https://dsny.cityofnewyork.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/2021-2022-Snow-Plans_Manhattan_Final.pdf

There are 6,200,000 New York City residents who commute by bus and subway as compared with 1,056,000 who commute by car. Transit users walk on sidewalks and use corners to cross the streets at each end of their commute. Transit users include more low income and diverse populations than drivers. Community District 4 (CD4) is one of the districts in New York City where most people walk or use transit to go to work.

There is an acute need for parity in transportation services during snowstorms, when the most vulnerable users, including persons with disabilities, have the most challenges. In March 2021, we surveyed 1,000 residents of MCB4. 67% of persons with disabilities told us that bus access was often narrow or impassable during or after a snowstorm. 64% of all respondents observed bus stops not cleared after 24 hours and 74% indicated that ramps and corners are often impassable. The continued complaints from our residents related to bus stops, corners and bike lanes indicate that we have a long way to go to achieve this goal.

We note that changes in method of operation could alleviate bus stop issues. Currently, plows are fixed to the right to avoid blocking oncoming traffic and left-turn lanes and snow piling operators use bus stops to pile the snow.

- The bus stops are all located on the right side of the road. On all bus routes, therefore, the plows should be switched to the left side. It would minimize the accumulation of snow that blocks bus stops and makes it impossible for our residents with disabilities to travel on snow days and forces commuters to wait in the street.
- The snow piling operators should be forbidden to pile in front of bus stops; heavy fines should be imposed if they do.

Here are our further questions based on the text (in italic) of the "Snow Fighting: 2021-2022 Season" presentation:

In November, DSNY increases manpower on both night shifts to ensure coverage for snow or winter weather response

- Was the manpower increased to also clear bike lanes, bus stops, corners, and crosswalk access in CD4?
- What is the % increase and absolute number for those respective categories in CD4?

DSNY and DOT recruit snow laborers to assist with bus stops, crosswalks, and other pedestrian infrastructure

- Do they clear corners as well? We have not seen them deployed in CD4. How many are dedicated to CD4? Do they start their work at the same time as the plows start their work on the roadway? If not, why not?

DSNY added additional skid steers last snow season to better clear crosswalks, bus stops, and pedestrian areas. DSNY acquired approximately 30 pieces of equipment to clear snow from all protected bike lanes, in addition to the Department's fleet of skid steers, pickup trucks, and other smaller pieces.

- Do they clear corners as well? We have not seen them deployed in CD4. How many are dedicated to CD4? Do they start their work at the same time as the roadway crew? If not,

why not? Is there a special protocol when Open Restaurants obstruct bike lane buffers?
Please describe.

Salt spreaders begin applying salt to roadways at the first trace of snow or frozen precipitation; Department will pre-treat roadways with brine up to 24 hours in advance of a snowstorm. Nearly all entrances & exit ramps of major highways and known challenging locations will be treated

- Is salt /brine spread on bike lanes, in front of bus stops, at corners, and crosswalks?
- When is it applied at those locations? At the same time as roadways?

Complaints are addressed once all roads and streets have been plowed and/or spread and are in passable condition. In times of heavy snowfall this may be several hours after snow has stopped.

- What about complaints of inaccessible bus stops, corners, crosswalks, and bike lanes? All these elements are in the roadway and are critical for pedestrians and transit users to go to work. Shouldn't they be a priority?

Bus shelter franchise s responsibilities related to snow?

- What is the timing of snow removal? How many hours from the end of the snowstorm?
- Does their responsibility for clearing "Three feet on all sides of the shelter" extend to three feet into the roadway?
- What happens when the shelter is installed more than three feet away from the bus stop? Does the franchise responsibility extend to the length of the bus stop?
- What are the penalties for non-compliance? How many penalties were collected in 2021 related to bus shelters and snow?

What are the MTA s responsibilities related to snow?

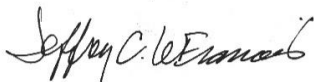
- Who clears the snow from the bus stops without bus shelters?
- Is there a timeline for doing so?

Reports for sidewalks that have not been shoveled generally resume four hours after snow has stopped falling citywide,

- In 2021, in CD4, how many fines were given to landlords who had not cleared their paths? What was the average amount of the fines?

We thank you in advance.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey LeFrancois
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Christine Berthet
Co-chair
Transportation Planning
Committee



Dale Corvino
Co-chair
Transportation Planning
Committee

CC: Hon. Linda Rosenthal, New York State Assembly
Hon. Erick Botcher, New York City Council
Hon. Gale Brewer, New York City Council
Hon. Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President
Carlos Castell Croke, New York League of Conservation Voters
DSNY District 4 Supervisor