



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JEFFREY LEFRANCOIS

Chair

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District Manager

December 14, 2023

Ed Pincar

Manhattan Borough Commissioner

NYC Department of Transportation

59 Maiden Lane, 37th Fl.

New York, NY 10038

Re: Universal Daylighting Across NYC

Dear Borough Commissioner Pincar,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) at its December 6th Full Board meeting, by a vote of 36 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible, supports the implementation of **universal daylighting** within our district and across the city to increase pedestrian and biker safety.

It seems now almost every day a new report will echo through our friend-groups, text threads, and social media platforms: another pedestrian or biker, struck by a car on our streets, and all too often, fatally. MCB4 has heard testimony from numerous individuals in our community who are afraid of getting struck by a driver or biker when they navigate the City's streets. That fear is justified: in our district alone, **in the last year**, there have been 5 fatalities and 697 injuries, some of them life threatening. City-wide, 9% of car crashes in NYC involve an injured or killed pedestrian.¹

This is not normal. Compare New York City, for example, to its neighboring city across the Hudson – where in Hoboken there have been *zero* accidents involving cars and pedestrians or bikers in the last five years.² Albeit New York City has a higher population density than Hoboken, but similar-size zip codes in New York City have 76% more injuries than Hoboken.

¹ <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/legal/nyc-car-accident-statistics/>

² <https://www.curbed.com/2022/06/hoboken-traffic-deaths-none-vision-zero-streets.html>

The disparity is striking and begs the question of why we should accept the status quo as tolerable.

One significant difference between the two cities is the use of “daylighting” on nearly every intersection in Hoboken, compared to a dearth of the safety design implemented on New York City streets.

As you know, “daylighting” is a method to increase visibility at intersections, such that obstacles at or above eye-level are removed to keep clear sightlines between drivers and pedestrians using the adjacent crosswalk. Regular obstacles are cars, trucks and large SUVs that park right up or even encroaching on the crossing.

Although state law prohibits parking within twenty feet of an intersection, New York City explicitly opted *out* of that requirement by choosing parking over safety.³ Perhaps that is why 79 percent of pedestrian injuries and **55 percent of fatalities** in New York City occur at the intersections.⁴

We commend the DOT for its recent announcement that it plans on doubling the rate of installing daylighting, in New York City, “delivering upgrades to at least 2,000 intersections per year,” including a target of “1,000 [that] will receive daylighting treatments.”⁵

To reach its target, and to further improve intersection safety, the Department of Transportation (“DOT”) should immediately take the following steps:

- When a street is set to be re-paved, the DOT should take the opportunity to install daylighting by painting curb extensions and placing shorter objects (rain garden, slabs of rock, bike corrals, planters, bollards etc.) within 20 feet of the cross-walks on each side of the road where the traffic enters the intersection;⁶
- Amend the DOT Traffic Rules to prohibit parking within twenty feet of an intersection; and
- Where appropriate, *i.e.*, particularly dangerous intersections as identified by crash statistics, DOT should install raised crosswalks in addition to daylighting.

We also strongly encourage City Council to pass legislation requiring DOT to implement the above measures.


Sincerely,

³ DOT Traffic Rules, Title 34, Chapter 4, 4-02(e).

⁴ <https://www.6sqft.com/nyc-pledges-to-make-1000-intersections-safer-for-pedestrians/>

⁵ <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/914-23/mayor-adams-launches-new-effort-make-thousands-nyc-intersections-safer-of-broad-new>

⁶ Daylighting should be also installed on any arterial where the curb lane is used for parking and where other critical street safety measures, such as exclusive split phase signals and complete street measures such as protected bike lanes and dedicated bus lanes, are not in place.



Jeffrey LeFrancois
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Christine Berthet
Co-chair
Transportation Planning Committee



Jesse Greenwald
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning Committee

Cc: Hon. Brad Hoylman-Sigal, NYS Senator
Hon. Tony Simone, NYS Assemblymember
Hon. Erik Bottcher, NYC Councilmember
Hon. Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President