



CITY OF NEW YORK
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January 16, 2024

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

Re: Ninth Avenue Super Sidewalk

Dear Borough Commissioner Pincar,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) is delighted that the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) is responding positively to our February 13, 2023 letter and is starting to plan the extension of the Ninth Avenue super sidewalk on two segments: phase 2 from West 30th to West 34th Street, and phase 3 from West 34th to West 50th Street. We are very pleased to be consulted early on so that these conditions can be analyzed as part of the Port Authority Bus Terminal Replacement Project. DOT plans to return to MCB4 once they have a more developed design. Phase 2 would be completed in 2024, and phase 3 in 2024/2025.

This stretch of the Avenue is a connector for commuters between Hudson Yards, Penn Station and the Bus Terminal, and services many restaurants and delivery activities. After Robert Moses took away pedestrian space 70 years ago, to allocate it to Lincoln Tunnel traffic, these projects will finally make the eastern sidewalk of Ninth Avenue from West 30th to West 58th Street compliant with DOT's Pedestrian Mobility guideline of 20-ft for this Avenue¹. The projects complement phase 1 and portions of phase 2, which included the concrete super sidewalk in front of Moynihan Station (West 31st to West 33rd Street), and the painted super sidewalk from West 50th to West 57th Street.

According to the high-level concept, the configuration will have three moving lanes - consistent with the existing configuration above West 50th Street, a 12-ft painted sidewalk, and a bike lane

¹ <https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/pedestrians/pedestrian-mobility.shtml>

expanded from 6-ft to 9-ft. A delivery lane will be maintained on the east side, adjacent to the bike lane. The westernmost lane will be converted to a bus stop and delivery lane.

The configuration will maintain bus operation, evaluate the feasibility of relocating pedestrian islands and include treatments to prevent bikes and vehicles from using the new sidewalk.

MCB4 requests that DOT take the following in consideration for the design:

- Implement solutions to keep vehicles and bikes out of the super sidewalk and install signs to educate and direct pedestrians to use the super sidewalk, which might include:
 - Hard elements at the cross streets, decal, signage and vinyl markings;
 - Bike corrals in the floating parking lane to keep bikes away for the sidewalk area;²
 - Implement solutions to better separate bike lane and walking lane: hard elements, signage, decal; and
 - Explore the feasibility of building the super sidewalk in concrete by using embedded gutters or other best in class sewage management solutions.
- Implement all possible solutions to prevent cyclists riding against the flow of traffic, activity which is all too prevalent and both illegal and dangerous. Those cyclists have the strongest incentive to use the walk lane. At a very minimum, “wrong way” signage should be installed.

MCB4 at its January 3rd Full Board meeting, voted by 40 in favor, 1 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to make the following recommendations:

- Retain or install as many pedestrian refuge islands as possible without limiting the options for future permanent reconfiguration. The north side of the even-numbered (44, 46, 48, etc.) intersections should be equipped with concrete islands where today there are painted.
- Add zebra-striped green bike lane markings, neck downs and offset turning at all eastbound intersections to slow down cars and establish pedestrians and cyclists in the intersections. If used, the yellow and black striped bumps need to be longer.
- Include physical vertical protection between the bike lane and the parking lane, similar to the flex posts installed in the buffer zone between the lane and parked cars on Eighth Avenue.
- Generally split phase left arrow signals, with seven seconds of red, followed by blinking yellow have been very effective in protecting cyclists and pedestrians from turning cars. They also reduce pressure on turning vehicles and honking. Install them as often as possible.
- The intersection of West 46th Street has remained stubbornly dangerous with 13 people injured in the last five years and nine in the last year. Install an exclusive split phase (red

² See our previous request: October 2023 MCB4 letter to DOT – page 11 <https://cbmanhattan.cityofnewyork.us/cb4/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2023/10/17-TPC-Letter-to-DOT-Electeds-re-Pedestrian-and-Bike-Rider-Safety-Initiatives.pdf>

arrow) at this intersection. A bike green wave should also be installed on the corridor, without decreasing green time for vehicles and pedestrians.

- The intersection of West 42nd Street with Ninth Avenue continues to be dangerous (12 injuries in the last 12 months). The pedestrian crossing on the south leg is not protected, and the tourists crossing on the western leg are confused and at risk. The split phase signal for southbound cars coming from the east must be converted to an exclusive red arrow and the westbound thru traffic stopped while the cars are turning. It would also be beneficial to let both southbound lanes coming from the east and the west turn at the same time, giving pedestrians a car-free crossing.
- Reduce the permitted delivery time on Ninth Avenue from three hours to one hour which would increase the turnover.

We are grateful for this early consultation. We understand that the project design and timing is dependent on the pedestrian island determination and the traffic analysis. Your traffic engineers should be made aware that another project is being discussed with the Port Authority to improve the flow on Ninth Avenue. We are hopeful that a capital project for reconstructing Ninth Avenue will eventually be undertaken, where both east and west sidewalks will be expanded.

Sincerely,



Jessica Chait
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning Committee



Jesse Greenwald
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning Committee