



**JESSICA CHAIT**  
Chair

**JESSE R. BODINE**  
District Manager

CITY OF NEW YORK  
**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

424 West 33 Street, Suite #580  
New York, NY 10001  
tel: 212-736-4536  
[www.nyc.gov/mcb4](http://www.nyc.gov/mcb4)

November 25 ,2024

Lauren Newman  
Youth & Schools Organizer  
Transportation Alternatives  
111 John Street, Suite 260  
New York, NY 10038

**Re: Reduced Citi Bike Fares**

Dear Ms. Newman,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) heard a proposal by the Youth Committee of Transportation Alternatives (TA) to extend to public school and CUNY students, a program currently available to NYCHA and SNAP recipients. The “Reduced Fare Bike Share” program reduces the monthly subscription from \$18 to \$5. By a vote of 35 in favor, 1 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible, MCB4 submits these comments.

MCB4 agrees that cost should not be the sole barrier for access to bike programs in New York City. Over 70 percent of students served by NYC Public Schools are economically disadvantaged<sup>1</sup> and half of all the students served by CUNY institutions come from households with incomes less than \$30,000<sup>2</sup>. Meanwhile, the per-minute fees for regular bikes have increased [40%](#) and e-bikes 60% from 2023 to 2024<sup>3</sup>, the recent price hikes for Citi Bike memberships poses a significant barrier to accessibility for many New York City students.

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<sup>1</sup> NYC Department of Education demographic data from 2022-2023 academic year  
<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/reports/doe-data-at-a-glance>

<sup>2</sup> CUNY's Contribution to the Economy [https://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/documents/CUNY\\_Report.pdf](https://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/documents/CUNY_Report.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2024/07/03/lyft-raising-citi-bike-e-bike-per-minute-fee-and-cap-on-price-of-rides-into-and-out-of-manhattan>

However, there were numerous comments from the public concerning safety (16-years is too young, helmet and training should be required), equity (why not all students?), and context (with the current lack of rules and enforcement, this could add to the present chaos and danger).

#### Background:

As it stands, the current Citibike program is accessible to anyone 16-year old or over for both regular and electric bikes. Helmet or training is not required. The discount for the NYCHA/SNAP program is applicable to regular bikes only.

Bike safety training programs do exist and they are mandatory for students, but DOE has failed to include bike safety training in its curriculum. “While State education law requires that all students be provided instruction in traffic regulation and bicycle safety {...} just eight schools offer biking curriculum {...} with trained instructors in schools.” In 2022 Council Member Erik Bottcher Resolution 129 was adopted, that calls on the DOE to teach bike safety in NYC schools, in order to correct the present deficiency.<sup>4</sup>

Here are some examples of training programs:

- Bike New York sends educators to the schools.
- NYC DOT's Get Kids Biking Initiative: This program integrates biking into the physical education curriculum for seventh graders in New York City public schools. Each student receives six 45-minute sessions of bike safety education. Approximately 9,000 students have participated since its inception, with plans to expand its reach post-pandemic (<https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/pr2024/bike-to-school-day.shtml>).
- SHAPE America's Bicycle Safety Curriculum: Developed in collaboration with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, this curriculum targets grades 6-12 and provides teachers with resources to educate students on safe biking practices. It includes lessons aligned with national standards for physical education.

Before MCB4 can take a position on TA’s proposal, we would like the following questions addressed and answered:

- Would the program apply to regular and electric bikes, or regular only?
- Would there be a speed controller built in the bikes- can it be disabled by the rider?
- How would the students be trained? Would they pass an exam?
- Who would fund and distribute the helmets?
- What would be the start up and annual costs to the city? Would other entities fund the program?
- What enforcement resources will be deployed to meet increased ridership and when? Would GPS be used for enforcement of illegal behavior?

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.instagram.com/ebottcher/p/Cc-m9zcOW-m/>

MCB4 agrees that transportation must be equitable and bike share should be available to all students alike -- regardless of economic status --, as is the case for mass transit. We look forward to revisiting this proposal once the details of this program have been fleshed out.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J Chait".

Jessica Chait  
Chair  
Manhattan Community Board 4

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christine Berthet".

Christine Berthet  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jesse Greenwald".

Jesse Greenwald  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning Committee