



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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District Manager

November 7, 2011

Margaret Forgione  
Manhattan Borough Commissioner  
New York City Department of Transportation  
55 Water Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, New York 10041

**RE: Hell's Kitchen Traffic Study**

Dear Commissioner Forgione:

Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) very much appreciated the Department of Transportation (DOT)'s public presentation of the Hell's Kitchen Traffic Study Findings. We agree with the community members who spoke that night that the scope of the study was impressive and the recommendations are on-target for meeting important community improvement needs. We understand the substantial analysis that is required to make changes and difficulty in implementing them in the very complex and fragile traffic and street system in Hell's Kitchen.

CB4 is also grateful to DOT for the number of improvements already implemented and, in particular, appreciate the hard work Andrew Lenton and Gregory Haas, the Project Team, and Colleen Chattergoon our DOT Community Board representative have done to enable these changes and to the responsiveness of DOT staff in the last few years.

We especially appreciate that the draft report includes some long-standing community recommendations including installing a sidewalk and enabling pedestrian crossing on the west side of 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and West 36<sup>th</sup> Street (currently a ramp C entrance), barring south turns from 37<sup>th</sup> Street onto the Ramp C lanes, closing Northbound Dyer Avenue at 34<sup>th</sup> Street at PM peak hours or increasing 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue southbound capacity. The redirecting of westbound buses on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street from turning south at 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue to turning south at Dyer Avenue is an outstanding suggestion we support wholeheartedly.

However, there are still some hurdles ahead and we ask that the final report address the following points:

**Pedestrian / Bike Safety:** The pedestrian crossings at the south side of West 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the north side of West 42<sup>nd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue are consistently ranked first and second most dangerous for pedestrians in NYC in DOT reports. A split phase signal for turns and exclusive pedestrian crossing are required at these two intersections. DOT must give the same level of protection as given to 23rd street and 9<sup>th</sup>, and 34<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> for these two dangerous intersections. We also feel pedestrian signal count downs at these corners would enhance pedestrian safety.

Such treatments (split phases and count down signals) should also be provided at the intersections of 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenues, where a very large number of residents has moved in the last five years.

For the rest of this vast study area with 135 intersections, the DOT proposed only five split phases (between turns and pedestrian crossing) instead of the list the community asked for based on proximity to schools, seniors and previous crashes and injuries/fatalities. We request DOT implement these additional community requested split phases. Three in particular that this Community Board has

previously requested and remain a high community priority are West 41<sup>st</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and both West 29<sup>th</sup> and West 25<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

The report did not include any recommendations for neck downs, though we understand some may be forthcoming as part of the DOT "midtown for seniors" initiatives. We request that the report include a list of potential neck down sites for further community discussion.

Change in parking regulations on the North side of West 36<sup>th</sup> between 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Dyer: High volumes of tradeshow visitors walk in the street or worse on Ramp C itself, to reach 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue because the sidewalk is obstructed by perpendicular parking. This is an accident waiting to happen. The relocation of the police parking to the north side of 36<sup>th</sup> street east of 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue should be undertaken immediately and the regulation changed.

Pedestrian Barricades: We expect the pedestrian barricade to be removed from the west side of both 9<sup>th</sup> avenue between 36<sup>th</sup> and 37<sup>th</sup> Streets and 8<sup>th</sup> avenue between 42<sup>nd</sup> and 43<sup>rd</sup> Streets in conjunction with related proposed improvements.

Port Authority Taxi Stand: As indicated in our 10/2011 letter regarding the proposed 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue bicycle lane extension, we request that DOT investigate moving the Port Authority Taxi Stand from the west side of 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue between West 41<sup>st</sup> and West 42<sup>nd</sup> to directly on West 41<sup>st</sup> Street and/or West 40<sup>th</sup> Street. We feel this will improve both pedestrian and bicycle lane safety.

**Congestion:** The Community Board has already requested the permanent closure of the northbound Dyer Avenue between 34<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> Streets. It is a congestion nightmare not only at PM peak hours but during the weekend as well. It will get much worse with the proposed reduction to one single traffic lane on 34<sup>th</sup> Street next year. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey requires a simulation and some convincing to close it permanently. We hope the simulation will be undertaken as soon as possible. This is critical to the success of the 34<sup>th</sup> St. transitway and to gaining some green space in the area.

11<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southbound: We reiterate our long-standing recommendation that 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue be one way north of West 42<sup>nd</sup> Street up to 50<sup>th</sup> Street. The proposal in the draft study to retain a single northbound lane on 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue for four blocks calls does not seem viable. Many businesses currently use the northbound lanes to double-park their trucks even though they have a dedicated courtyard. In addition making this segment one way is a prerequisite to the installation of a much-needed Bus Rapid Transit lane on this Avenue. CB4 is on record for repeatedly asking for this transit improvement, most recently as part of the 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue area rezoning.

**Implementation Schedule:** The draft report does not include an implementation schedule. While we understand several of the suggested changes require capital or operating funding in a difficult financial environment, a proposed schedule can guide us in community expectations, as well as CB4's budget recommendations.

**Enforcement:** finally a number of proposed solutions were dependent on enforcement. We cannot help but being skeptical that the enforcement situation will improve at those locations. We recommend that the solutions be refined to not need any enforcement, for example making closures permanent, or – if impossible - , we will request that NYPD make a commitment to these resources.

We thank the DOT personnel for this excellent work and consider this project a model of extensive collaboration between the DOT and the community. The DOT indicated it continues to work on testing options and meeting with the Project Advisory committee. CB4 looks forward to the final report to be published at the end of this year.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,



Corey Johnson  
Chair  
Manhattan Community Board 4



Christine Berthet  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning Committee



Jay Marcus  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning Committee