



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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District Manager

September 2, 2011

Ms. Margaret Forgione  
Manhattan Borough Commissioner  
New York City Department of Transportation  
40 Worth Street  
New York, New York 10013

**RE: Bike Lane Installations on West 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Streets**

Dear Commissioner Forgione:

Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) appreciates being consulted regarding the installation of a pair of unprotected bike lanes on West 29<sup>th</sup> and West 30<sup>th</sup> Streets. The Department of Transportation (DOT) proposes these locations because it will enable the Eighth and Ninth Avenues bicycle lanes (and in a future phase bicycles coming from the east side/east river) to have direct access to the Hudson River Greenway west of 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue. While we are supportive of the concept, our support is subject to further study and several provisions. CB4 requests that the DOT make a follow-up presentation to CB4 before moving forward with the installation.

The unprotected bike lanes would be installed on the south side of each street, on the lane adjacent to the curb lane. No traffic lanes would be lost as the traffic and parking lanes currently have widths in excess of what is required. Eight parking spaces will be removed to allow for the creation of seven dedicated turn lanes.

While we understand the appeal of creating direct "river to river" bicycle path, we are concerned about the safety of these streets, particularly between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenues. As DOT noted, West 30<sup>th</sup> Street is in the 89<sup>th</sup> percentile of serious injuries/fatality ranking of streets in New York City. The accident rate on West 29<sup>th</sup> Street is also high and a US postal truck killed a bicyclist on 29<sup>th</sup> Street last month.

Between Ninth and Tenth Avenues these streets serve the loading bays of the US Postal service and, on West 30<sup>th</sup> Street the local traffic merges with incoming traffic from the Lincoln Tunnel. West 29<sup>th</sup> Street, which is mostly covered by an above street building, has very large postal trucks coming in and out of loading bays throughout the day and evening. These trucks often block the entire street as they enter their bays, including through backing up. Loading bays on the south side of West 30<sup>th</sup> Street are used between 3am and 7am. While DOT feels the installation of the bicycle lane and appropriate signage and lighting would create increased safety, we are concerned that it might, instead, create a false sense of safety.

We would prefer to be more cautious and thus request that DOT investigate the feasibility of using other streets instead for the bicycle lanes, with turns on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue to then connect them to the West 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Street entrances to the Greenway. A similar detour may be required further east for access to the East River. We feel these slight detours will ensure a higher standard of safety for the majority of users, even with the minor inconvenience. We specifically ask DOT to study the (auto and truck) traffic and turn volumes and accident rates on those streets versus West 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Streets in making this consideration.

However, if other streets prove unfeasible, CB4 requests that the following measures be implemented on the 29<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup> pair in order to mitigate the adverse environment.

- Provide for truck drivers education and step up speeding enforcement of Postal truck.

On 29<sup>th</sup> Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues:

- Install 24 hour lighting in the underpass where the visibility is poor. Ensure the installed lighting does not create glare for the drivers using their rear view mirrors.
- Install flashing beacons to alert bikes of truck movements in and out of the two truck bays;
- Install signs for bicyclists at West 29<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue indicating "caution, substantial truck movement"
- Do not use the sidewalk for bicycle path.

29<sup>th</sup> Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues:

- Install a Lead Pedestrian Interval (LPI) to protect pedestrians crossing the south leg of Ninth Avenue from cars turning south onto 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This will also allow bicyclists to turn west from Ninth Avenue to 29<sup>th</sup> Street.
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25<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Streets intersections with Eighth Avenue

- Install a split phase signals on Eighth Avenue both at West 25<sup>th</sup> Streets and West 29<sup>th</sup> Streets, similar to what is used on the enclosed bicycle path between 14<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. These split phase signals were requested by CB4 in our comments on the installation of the 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue enclosed bicycle lane extension to 30<sup>th</sup> Street. These requests have become more urgent as there have been several community member reports of postal trucks turning at high speeds at West 29<sup>th</sup> Street and we received a petition with over a thousand names requesting the same at West 25<sup>th</sup> Street from Penn South residents. These changes are also consistent with DOT's commitment to increasing safety in Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORC's)

On 30<sup>th</sup> Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues

- Provide data on the number of vehicles exiting the Lincoln Tunnel at Dyer and West 30<sup>th</sup> who then turn south on Ninth Avenue. We feel these movements add substantial risk to bicyclists on the street, particularly those crossing 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue. If a bicycle lane is installed and the vehicle numbers above are substantial, increased signage and potentially flashing lights letting drivers know of the bicycle lane might be appropriate.
- In any case, install a Lead Pedestrian Interval (LPI) to protect pedestrians crossing the south leg of Ninth Avenue from cars turning south on Ninth. This will allow bicyclist to cross over east to continue on 30<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Install flashing beacons to alert bikes of truck loading and movements between 3:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m.
- Install additional lighting on the south side of the street.

On 30<sup>th</sup> Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues;

- Locate the bike lane on the North side of the street to reduce the odds that an opening car door will hit a bicyclist.

- Install a split phase at Eighth Avenue to protect the heavy volume of pedestrians that cross the north leg of Eighth Avenue, while maximizing the flow going straight.

At 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Streets intersections with the Greenway, post key bicycle rules to be observed on City Streets.

On Eighth Avenue, step up enforcement of rules of the road, especially cyclists going the wrong way and going through red lights.

CB4 welcome the constructive and open exchange with DOT on these installations. We do want to make sure the installations deliver the maximum safety for all street users. We look forward to a presentation of final findings and design before the DOT installs the lanes.

Sincerely yours,



Corey Johnson  
Chair  
Manhattan Community Board 4



Christine Berthet  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning Committee



Jay Marcus  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning Committee