



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD No. 4**

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**J. LEE COMPTON**  
Chair

June 8, 2006

Margaret Forgione  
Manhattan Borough Commissioner  
New York City Department of Transportation  
59 Maiden Lane, 35<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10038

**Re: Pedestrian and Motorist Safety Conditions at West 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Ninth Avenue**

Dear Commissioner Forgione:

This is in response to your April 10, 2006 reply to our request to investigate the timing of traffic control signals on Ninth Avenue and West 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> Streets. In that letter, you indicated that the signals at the West 17<sup>th</sup> Street intersection were working properly with adequate time for pedestrian crossing. The Board's concern is not with the length of the pedestrian crossing time, but with the timing of the sequence of traffic control signals on Ninth Avenue from 18<sup>th</sup> Street to 16<sup>th</sup> Street.

Motorists traveling south on Ninth Avenue expect a steady sequence of green lights, as this is the pattern for most of its length. However, the signals at 18<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Streets turn green at the same time, while the signal at 17<sup>th</sup> Street remains red for another 5-10 seconds. This interruption in the pattern causes drivers to disregard the red light at 17<sup>th</sup> Street too frequently.

When motorists driving down Ninth Avenue look ahead to the signal at 16<sup>th</sup> Street and see that it has already turned green, they assume that the signal at 17<sup>th</sup> Street is synchronized and will turn green by the time they will reach it. When they reach 17<sup>th</sup> Street, the signal is still red and the cars either brake abruptly or run the light, with pedestrians still crossing the Avenue. Two years ago a pedestrian was killed at this intersection and many more accidents have happened since then. Police reports indicate that 18 accidents took place at this intersection in 2005, which is substantially greater than nearby intersections. Please change the timing of the 17<sup>th</sup> Street signal so it turns green in a safe, predictable sequence.

We hope this clarifies our concern. Please contact us if it does not, so we can explain more thoroughly. Members of the Board and/or staff would also be happy to conduct a site visit with staff from your office. We look forward to working with you to improve pedestrian and auto/truck safety on Ninth Avenue.

Sincerely,

J. Lee Compton  
Chair  
Manhattan Community Board No. 4

Jay Marcus  
Chair  
Transportation Planning Committee

cc: Fulton Tenants Association