



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD No. 4**

330 West 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, 26<sup>th</sup> floor New York, NY 10036  
tel: 212-736-4536 fax: 212-947-9512  
www.ManhattanCB4.org

**J. LEE COMPTON**  
Chair

July 27, 2006

Deputy Mayor Daniel Doctoroff  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: Department of Transportation**

Dear Deputy Mayor Doctoroff,

Manhattan Community Board No. 4 believes that the recent reorganization that puts the Department of Transportation under your leadership as Deputy Mayor offers exciting possibilities and synergies and we look forward to working with you. We believe sustained economic development requires a strong transportation system. Given the drastic changes in land use throughout the city, and particularly in our Community Board area, we encourage the city to create a comprehensive transportation plan to foster more efficient vehicular movements, improved pedestrian access and street level experience and a well functioning mass transit system.

Worsening private car traffic (60% of vehicles in Manhattan are commuters) and transportation capacity problems are limiting economic development. Throughout Clinton/Hell's Kitchen and Chelsea, overwhelming traffic has had negative impacts on the quality of life, the environment, and public safety. In 2004, 15,316 pedestrians and cyclists were injured in the City, costing the City roughly \$918 million<sup>[i]</sup>. Numerous studies connect traffic's effects to increased risk of heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and asthma. Furthermore, New York has among the dirtiest air of any city in the country<sup>[ii]</sup>. Approximately 80% of the cancer risk linked to poor air quality in all five boroughs can be attributed to pollutants spewing from an unprecedented concentration of vehicles.

We urge you to implement a people-first transportation policy in our city that includes an active community driven planning process to make movement of people and goods as efficient as possible. A recent analysis of the New York State Households Survey and US Census data shows that 94% of shopping trips in Manhattan's Central Business District are made via mass transit and by walking, and 90% of Manhattan bound drivers have transit alternatives<sup>[iii]</sup>. The times beckon for a strong shift in transportation policy and planning that match today's realities and create a more dynamic and livable city.

**Institutional Change:** While we appreciate the efforts of the Department of Transportation staff that works with our Community Board, the major focus of that agency is on vehicular movement and flow. That experience will be valuable as the limitations of the city's street design and infrastructure create increased traffic congestions. However, we also hope that the City will empower the Department of Transportation to increase its focus on the pedestrian experience.

**Development and Growth:** The City's street network is over-capacity at crucial areas for many hours of every day, and the burgeoning demands of development and tourism threaten our competitiveness as an international commercial center. With its population expected to hit nine million by 2020 <sup>[iv]</sup>, and commuter traffic likely to increase, the City must adapt to growth with a modern transportation policy or become a victim of its own success. We expect new innovative techniques being used elsewhere including people movers and congestion pricing to be required in the years to come. We encourage you to bring the same creative spirit you have brought to economic development to transportation policy to assist the city to meet this challenge.

**Better Performing Streets:** By reapportioning streets to favor pedestrians, bus riders and cyclists, and by introducing new traffic allocation schemes, our streets can more efficiently accommodate deliveries and trips. Better management of curbside parking to achieve a critical level of vacancy/turnover further enhances performance. "Parking cruising" traffic and double parking can be significantly reduced.

**Enforcement:** The worst menace to safety on our streets comes from drivers who do not heed the law. We ask the City to use the winning "broken windows" techniques to upgrade enforcement. The City could allocate senior level personnel from the NYPD traffic division to enforce laws – running red lights, unnecessary noise, illegal trucks, and certainly, gridlock. EMS vehicles are routinely trapped in traffic here.

Sincerely,



J. Lee Compton  
Chair  
Manhattan Community Board No. 4



Jay Marcus  
Chair  
Transportation Planning Committee

cc: Scott Stringer, Manhattan Borough President  
Christine Quinn, New York City Council Speaker  
John Liu, Chair of New York City Council's Transportation Committee

[i] Necessity or Choice, The Auto's Use in Manhattan, Schaller Consulting, 2006  
[ii] Estimating the Costs of Unintentional Injuries, National Safety Council, 2004  
[iii] Environmental Protection Agency, February, 2006  
[iv] New York Times, 2/19/06