



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD No. 4

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

J. LEE COMPTON
Chair

ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.
District Manager

January 5, 2007

Borough Commissioner Margaret Forgione
Department of Transportation
35th floor
59 Maiden Lane
New York, NY 10038

Re: 15th street congestion mitigation: Illegal truck traffic, back ups east of 9th Avenue and dangerous pedestrian crossing.

Dear Commission Forgione:

The residents of West 15th Street have long complained about the illegal truck and bus traffic on their street. In spite of clear markings at the intersections of 15th Street and 5th, 6th, and 7th Avenues indicating "No trucks except local deliveries," many trucks use this route as an alternate route to 14th Street to reach 11th avenue (route 9A).

At the intersections of 15th Street with 8th Avenue and with 9th Avenue, there is no signage to indicate whether this is a local delivery street only. Between 9th avenue and 10th avenue, there are a number of loading bays and a lumberyard at the southwest corner. Trucks block the street as they double park and maneuver to back in the loading bays. In addition the green light interval on 15th street and 9th avenue is unusually short (16 seconds). These elements, combined with through truck traffic, contribute to daily vehicle back ups that spill over to the residential blocks east of 9th avenue.

While the DOT Truck study recently published notes that the 15th - 16th street corridors are problematic, the recommendations mostly focused on 16th street. The community board requests the following mitigations measures for 15th street:

- 1- Posting of way finding signs directing trucks to 14th street at the intersections of 15th street with 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th avenues
- 2- Your assistance in requesting NYPD enforcement of the "local delivery only" signs between 6th avenue and 9th avenue.
- 3- Increase to 25 seconds (from 16 currently) of the green light interval, at 9th avenue for cars traveling westward on 15th street, by reducing the northbound contra lane green light interval on 9th avenue to 11seconds (from 20 seconds currently).

Over the last few years, the residential population of 15th Street between 6th Avenue and 9th Avenue has increased significantly, especially due to increased construction of residential buildings. In addition, West 15th Street has been the focus of City Hall's economic development policies regarding the computer internet and tourism industries. As a result, its sidewalks have become very crowded with pedestrians and the crosswalks at its intersections congested.

West 15th Street's two schools, The Nazareth Nursery at 216 West 15th Street and Corlears School at 324 West 15th Street, now have a total of more than 250 students, faculty and support staff. Added to that number are family members taking the children to school and picking them up afterwards.

111 Eighth Avenue is also on West 15th Street between 8th and 9th Avenues. The former Port Authority Trucking Terminal, which has an office capacity greater than the Empire State Building, is now the busy international headquarters of Google, Inc. with many, many new employees coming to the site. The huge building now also has ground floor retail, banking, and a newly refurbished U.S. Postal Service Center drawing much more additional pedestrian traffic. Furthermore, Saint Vincent Cancer Care has recently opened in 111 Eighth Avenue attracting many walk-in clinic patients with ambulatory difficulties and the people accompanying them.

On the west side of 9th Avenue, both The Chelsea Market as well as Western Beef nearby now attract very large numbers of shoppers, tourists, and employees including New York 1 TV staff, all of whom need to cross 9th Avenue safely. In addition, West 15th Street has a growing number of popular restaurants and art galleries attracting additional pedestrian traffic.

We are participating in the redesign of lower 9th Avenue, in coordination with the Gansevoort study. However until such change is implemented, the 15th Street intersection with 9th Avenue remains the most dangerous south of 23rd Street. An immediate change in traffic timing will provide the added advantage of doubling the time dedicated to pedestrian crossing the Avenue.

Sincerely,



J. Lee Compton
Chair
Manhattan Community Board No. 4



Jay Marcus
Chair
Transportation Planning Committee

Cc: Jo Hamilton, GG UIP
Captain Hughes, NYPD, 10th Precinct