



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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J. LEE COMPTON
Chair

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

Hon. Christine C. Quinn
City Council Speaker
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Scott Stringer
Manhattan Borough President
Municipal Building, 19th Floor
New York, NY 10007

March 20, 2007

Re: Pedestrian Safety Task Force

Dear Madame Speaker and Borough President

The recent escalation in pedestrian fatalities and injuries in Community Board 4 has reached crisis proportion: in the last three weeks two pedestrians were killed along Ninth Avenue and one other is in critical condition, suffering from massive head injuries. In each case, the vehicles (bus, truck and van) were turning, while the pedestrians were in the crossing, waking with the light. In each case, the driver rode away with a simple summons. Additional deaths reported in the last two weeks point to a citywide problem.

The DOT highlights citywide improvements in pedestrian safety, but this brings no relief to residents who live close to the 10% of corridors where 50% of all pedestrian injuries occur. Ninth Avenue for example is getting more dangerous every year. Recent statistics show pedestrian injuries increasing at 11 intersections since 2002, growing by 200% in some cases. Specifically the recent death at 45th Street and 9th Avenue is a repeat of a death at the same location five years ago. Changes at 16th Street were requested 3 years ago and will at last be implemented in April, too late for the woman killed. The 37th Street and 9th Avenue intersection has been the subject of multiple requests - which were all rejected.

While the NYPD Traffic Task Force has been very responsive in Community Board 4, it lacks the resources to staff all dangerous intersections 24 hours a day seven days a week. The problems require coordination between so many different agencies, as well as procedural and structural changes; and Community Board 4 has had little success in improving the situation by working on an agency-by-agency basis.

Community Board 4 urges you to convene a citywide task force - as you did for nightlife - bringing the various players to the table to address street and signal engineering, agencies jurisdiction, enforcement and traffic safety laws, reporting traffic problems and police procedures in accidents. This is our only hope to prevent further tragedies.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Liu'.

cc: NY Senator Tom Duane
Assemblyman Richard Gottfried
NYPD Chief Ray Kelly
US Congressman Jerry Nadler
City Council Transportation Committee Chairman Liu