



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JEAN-DANIEL NOLAND

Chair

ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.

District Manager

December 8, 2008

Ms. Margaret Forgione
Borough Commissioner
Department of Transportation
59 maiden Lane, 35th Floor
New York, NY 10038

Re: Protected pedestrian crossing at West 23rd Street and Ninth Avenue

Dear Borough Commissioner Forgione:

In order to provide a fully protected, longer and safer pedestrian crossing of 23rd Street on the eastside of Ninth Avenue, Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) supports the proposal to ban westbound vehicles on 23rd Street from turning left on Ninth Avenue,

According to the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT), without this left turn ban there will not be enough time during the light cycle to establish a fully protected pedestrian and cyclist crossing period on the eastside of the intersection (across 23rd Street).

CB4 supports this left turn ban to accommodate a safer pedestrian crossing on the eastside of the intersection, and better flow on Ninth Avenue with the following conditions:

- The signal timing design will increase crossing to time to 33 seconds or more for pedestrians to cross 23rd Street, on the east side of Ninth Avenue. This equates to a walking speed of 1.58 feet per second.
- All pedestrian signals at this intersection will be equipped with audible alarms as prescribed by ADA rules.
- Signage will be installed at Eighth and Seventh Avenues (on 23rd Street and on both avenues) before the intersections to give drivers an early warning of the ban and direct them to use alternate routes¹.

CB4 also requests DOT's assistance in getting NYPD traffic agents at this intersection to enforce the new traffic pattern.

The intersection at 23rd Street and Ninth Avenue is notoriously dangerous; 84 injuries occurred there during the past 10 years including one fatality last year (CrashStats, Transportation Alternatives). Thankfully, NYS Senator Tom Duane and City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn successfully improved pedestrian safety at this intersection by persuading DOT to install a left turn arrow on westbound 23rd Street and to implement two Lead Pedestrian Intervals (LPI's)

¹ We reiterate our March 2008 request that an LPI be installed to give a head start to pedestrians crossing 23rd Street on the Westside of Ninth Avenue.

on both the north and south crossings. However, the east crossing at this intersection (across 23rd Street) remains extremely dangerous for both pedestrians and cyclists because there are no protected crossing times. This is especially problematic to the elderly population in the neighborhood (including some Penn South residents) for whom the crossing time is too short.

In April 2008, CB4 requested a fully protected pedestrian crossing on each side of the intersection. On May 1st, at the Pedestrian Safety Town Hall meeting, the community and the local elected officials once again requested the DOT Commissioner to address the safety concerns at this intersection.

As part of the complete street reconfiguration of Ninth Avenue from 23rd to 31st Streets, all pedestrian crossings east of Ninth Avenue will now be better protected. However, Ninth Avenue at 23rd Street poses a particular challenge since 23rd Street is a major two-way street and in order to allocate enough time during the light cycle for a fully protected pedestrian crossing on the eastside of the intersection (across 23rd Street), the left turn from westbound 23rd Street onto southbound Ninth Avenue needs to be eliminated.

While CB4 appreciates being consulted on this issue, two days is not an acceptable advanced notice. Committee chairs and members need to familiarize themselves with the issues through site and the board office needs more time to provide community outreach. In the future, we will not accept requests that are not presented to us at least seven day prior to a committee meeting.

CB4 supports banning the left turn for vehicles travelling west on 23rd Street at the intersection of Ninth Avenue with the above conditions and looks forward to greatly improved pedestrian and cyclist environments in our community.

Sincerely,



Jean-Daniel Noland
Chair
Manhattan
Community Board 4



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning
Committee



Jay Marcus
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning
Committee

c.c.

Speaker Christine Quinn
Senator Thomas Duane
Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer
Assembly member Richard Gottfried
Penn South Mutual Redevelopment Houses Inc.
Inspector Hughes – NYPD 10th Precinct