



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: Enclosed Bicycle Lane Eighth Avenue between West 14th and West 23rd Street

Dear Borough Commissioner Forgione:

Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) supports the proposal by the Department of Transportation (DOT) to install an enclosed bicycle lane along the west side of Eighth Avenue from 14th Street to 23rd Street. Our support is contingent on DOT agreeing to several modifications, parking regulation changes and additional communication discussed below and presented to the Board in advance of the proposed spring installation.

The proposed redesign would replace the existing buffered bicycle lane along the west side of Eighth Avenue with an enclosed bicycle lane. The redesign will maintain the same numbers of moving lanes, while placing the existing 9 foot bicycle bath and 4 foot buffer zone between the sidewalk and the parking/turning lanes. The additional changes would include: 1) installation for approximately 10 feet from non-turning lane corners, a raised, planted pedestrian refuge area, and 2) the reduction of the buffer to 1 foot in other locations (but with the addition of bollards) to accommodate both auto parking and left turn bays.

This redesign has several advantages:

- **Increased pedestrian and bicycle safety:** The proposed redesign will create a fully protected bicycle path and shorten pedestrian crossing from 54' to 32'. It will create conflict free, fully protected pedestrian crossing on the west side of the avenue. This should yield safety improvements comparable to those recorded during the first 9 months of the enclosed 9th Avenue bicycle lane, where injuries are down 53% (from 32 to 15) and pedestrian and bicycle accidents are down 20% and 39%, respectively.

- Improved street environment: The redesign will create planted beds with a small tree and low plantings along most corners.
- Increased bicycle usage: The enclosure of the bicycle lane will increase actual and perceived safety for bicyclists. During the last few years, the city has seen a 35% increase in bicycle usage, in part because of the increase in the number of bicycle lanes. The creation of these enclosed lanes will likely further this trend. In fact, surveys from the first nine months of the enclosed bicycle lane along Ninth Avenue have found an increase of over 50% in bicycle use along that stretch.

However, we are also aware that the redesign will present several challenges.

It removes 29 parking spaces -- 21% of the parking along this section of the avenue. This will make truck deliveries (which often illegally use the existing bicycle lane and buffer zones for delivery parking) more difficult and likely reduce one lane of traffic in areas where cars or trucks double park. It also increases bicycle usage without increased enforcement for illegal cyclists' maneuvers (e.g., passing a red light).

We are dismayed to learn that the budget for the redesign does not include auditory pedestrian signals required by the ADA federal regulations to make the new crossing patterns safe for visually impaired pedestrians.

We thus request that the DOT provide CB4 a plan to mitigate these concerns in advance of the planned spring installation.

We request the following actions be taken by DOT:

- Change the Parking Regulations:
 - on the South Side of West 19th Street for the 80 feet west of Eighth Avenue to "No Standing Except Trucks Loading and Unloading 7 a.m. to Midnight";
 - for two parking spaces on the West side of Eighth Avenue between 18th and 19th Streets and 22nd and 23rd Streets, to "No Standing Except Trucks Loading and Unloading 7a.m.-5 p.m."; and,
 - Make other recommendations for parking regulation changes, based on communication with the Greenwich Village/Chelsea Chamber of Commerce and area businesses and based on a survey of any areas heavily used by access-a-ride.
- Install fully handicapped accessible signal at the intersections as mandated by Federal ADA regulations;
- Provide a plan for traffic light timing and turning movements at the 14th and 23rd Streets intersections;

- Provide a specific schedule for the installation and the plan for notification of area residents and businesses;
- Provide a plan from NYPD for increased enforcement of illegal bicycle activity commencing with the enclosure installation; and,
- Provide a plan to educate bicyclists on safe and legal bicycle riding.

CB4 supports and commends DOT's goal to increase alternative transportation use and improve bicycle and pedestrian safety, and we appreciate their efforts to engage the community during the planning process. We look forward to a safer and more pedestrian and cyclist friendly neighborhood.

Sincerely,



Jean-Daniel Noland
Chair
Manhattan
Community Board 4



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning
Committee



Jay Marcus
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c.c.

Speaker Christine Quinn
Senator Thomas Duane
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Assembly member Richard Gottfried