



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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DELORES RUBIN

Chair

Jesse Bodine

District Manager

May 11, 2017

Polly Trottenberg
Commissioner
NYC Department of Transportation
55 Water Street
New York, NY 10041

Re: 7th Avenue Protected Bike Lane

Dear Commissioner Trottenberg,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) is pleased that the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) plans to install a parking protected bike lane on 7th Avenue from Clarkson Street to West 30th Street, with the intent to expand it northward and southward in the future. However we have serious concerns about speed, safety of proposed intersection treatments and pedestrian safety that should be addressed as well, to make this priority corridor much safer. We are asking for written commitments that specific solutions will be part of the installation.

The bike lane would be installed later this year, protected by a parking lane and planted pedestrian refuges. One lane of moving traffic will be removed, based on excess vehicular capacity on this stretch of 7th Avenue. Each intersection is to be equipped with a mixing zone¹, while split phase signals will be installed at the West 14th Streets intersections. At West 23rd Street, the existing split phase will be maintained, while the northeast pedestrian refuge will be removed to make space for both a turning lane and the bike lane.

¹ A mixing zone is a non-protected section of a protected bike lane in which vehicles may merge into the bike lane to prepare to make a turn. Cars, bikes and pedestrians all have a green light at the same time but vehicles must yield to bicycles already occupying that space and to pedestrians at all times.

In the context of Mayor Bill diBlasio's Vision Zero initiative we are concerned that the proposal does not do enough and more needs to be done to ensure this stretch of 7th Avenue is made safer for all its users.

Speeding:

- The signal timing currently allows a speed in excess of the legal speed limit of 25mph during the day. We ask that signals be adjusted to reduce the speed limit so that it does not exceed 25 mph, 24hours a day.
- Some of the lanes will remain unnecessarily wide, which encourage speeding: we ask that all moving lanes should be limited to no more than 10' each in width.

Safety at Intersections:

- The design of intersections calls for mixing zones, except at West 14th Street and West 23rd Street. This design has proven unsafe for both bicyclists and pedestrians. Just recently a turning driver killed a bicyclist in a mixing zone on First Avenue. While we are very pleased to hear that DOT is starting a study of intersection treatment and that all intersections will be retrofitted with the resulting improvements, safety cannot wait. We have long advocated for split phase signals, like those installed on the 9th Avenue bike lane below 30th Street, which – according to a DOT study - are 100% safer than mixing zones. We understand the DOT has installed Split LPIs at some intersections along bike lanes notably on 2nd Avenue. We request that all the intersections with minor streets on the 7th Avenue bike lane be equipped with such signals and that the protected phase last at least 20 seconds. In addition bicyclists have indicated that flexible bollards between the bike lane and the car lane in the mixing zone, that extend to the intersection side of the pedestrian crossing may encourage drivers to slow down before the turn.

Pedestrian Safety and Accessibility:

- The intersections of West 17th and West 19th Streets with 7th Avenue are currently more dangerous than West 23rd Street with more crashes and one fatality in the last 5 years. We request that you study those intersections and install traffic calming and safety measures to reduce the number of injuries as part of the project.
- A pedestrian refuge will be removed on the north side of West 23rd Street in the vicinity of a social service organization for the blind and visually impaired. Considering that a travel lane will be removed and the traffic lanes are still very wide, it seems that with a bit of ingenuity a smaller pedestrian refuge could be installed at this location. This will maintain the same street experience for the clients of the organization. We ask you to investigate this option.
- All intersections that have been changed should be equipped with Accessible Pedestrian Signals as required by law.

We appreciate you taking this opportunity to make this Vision Zero priority corridor much safer for all users.

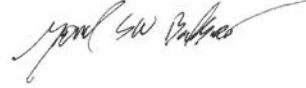
Sincerely,



Delores Rubin
Chair



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair, Transportation
Planning Committee



Yoni Bokser
Co-Chair, Transportation
Planning Committee

CC: Luis Sanchez, Manhattan Borough Commissioner, NYC DOT
Colleen Chattergoon, NYC DOT
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Richard Gottfried, New York State Assembly
Hon. Brad Hoylman, New York State Senate
Hon. Corey Johnson, City Council
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