



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD No. 4

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J. LEE COMPTON
Chair

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

February 8, 2007

Mr. Anthony E. Shorris,
Executive Director,
Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
225 Park Avenue, 15th Floor
New York, NY 10013

Re: Reopening of 41st Street between 8th and 9th Avenue.

Dear Mr. Shorris:

Manhattan Community Board 4 is encouraged by NYC DOT's initiatives to improve pedestrian safety in the district.. However, one crucial improvement we have frequently discussed with Port Authority has yet to be acted on. To this effect, Community Board 4 is requesting that the Port Authority and DOT reopen 41st Street between 8th and 9th Avenues to bus and truck traffic 24 hours a day. This resolution was adopted by a unanimous vote at the February 7, 2007 full Community Board.

41st street is a 4 lane (two moving, two parking) westbound commercial street. It continues west of 9th Avenue into a wider street, which connects to the Lincoln Tunnel plaza and its dedicated bus lane between 10th and 11th Avenues. Between 8th and 9th Avenues, an elevated passageway bridges the north and south wings of the Port Authority bus terminal. The truck entrance to a post office is located on that block and a Port Authority bus exit continues to operate on the block.

41st Street used to funnel charter and commuter buses coming from the east side and the theater district, as well as trucks into the Lincoln Tunnel. For security reasons, the street was closed immediately after September 11, 2001.

Since then buses and trucks heading for the Tunnel use a detour, traveling west on 42nd Street or residential streets above, to 9th Avenue, make a left turn onto the avenue and then a right turn onto 41st Street to enter the Tunnel, multiplying the traffic/ pedestrian conflicts at all intersections along the route. Since the detour was instituted in 2001, there have been 389 pedestrian and bicycle injuries above 41st street on 9th avenue. At the intersection of 42nd Street and 9th Avenue, injuries increased by 86% between 2001 and 2004. The table below shows the most recent data on the total number of accidents in the vicinity

Table with 4 columns: INTERSECTION, 98-00, 01-04 normalized to 3 years, increase. Row 1: West 43rd Street and Eighth Avenue, 78, 126, 62%

West 43 rd Street and Ninth Avenue	57	107	88%
West 42 nd Street and Eighth Avenue	196	359	83%
West 42 nd Street and Ninth Avenue	187	224	20%
West 41 st Street and Eighth Avenue	80	100	25%
West 41 st Street and Ninth Avenue	138	164	18%
TOTAL	736	1079	47%

Source: NYC DOT. School safety engineering report. Holy Cross school final report. November 3, 2006

According to DOT data, Holy Cross Elementary School, located at 43rd Street, between 8th and 9th Avenues is the second most dangerous school to walk to in Manhattan. While the DOT is planning measures to secure the school itself, the children walk through the 42nd Street intersections that the detour affects most. Similarly the recently released NYC DOT study of truck routes shows that 9th Avenue corridor between 37th and 47th Streets have the second highest rate of truck accidents per mile in Manhattan.

While we understand that the **Street** was closed for security concerns related to the Port Authority pedestrian bridge overpass, there has been sufficient time since the closure to devise alternative security plans or report back to the Community Board as to their viability. The extra security provided by the often unmanned street barricades on 41st Street at 8th avenue and the control of license plate for a small proportion of vehicles at 9th Avenue do not seem to outweigh the security hazards caused by the street closure.

This street closure gives a false sense of security. At the same time, the negative effects of this closure on the neighboring population are real and measurable.

Community Board 4 asks that Port Authority reopen 41st Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues as a full time bus and truck route to guarantee the security and safety of neighboring residents. Until then the detour will undermine any safety efforts undertaken by the DOT in the vicinity - including for children walking to school.

Sincerely,



J. Lee Compton
Chair
Manhattan Community
Board No. 4



Jay Marcus
Chair
Transportation Planning
Committee



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning
Committee

Cc: NY City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn
cc: NY Senator Tom Duane
cc: Assemblyman Richard Gottfried
cc; NYPD Chief Ray Kelly
cc: Assemblyman Richard Brodsky
cc: Jon Orcutt