



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

330 West 42nd Street, 26th floor New York, New York 10036
tel: 212-736-4536 fax: 212-947-9512
www.nyc.gov/mcb4

JOHN WEIS
Chair

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

October 6, 2010

Margaret Forgione
Manhattan Borough Commissioner
New York City Department of Transportation
40 Worth Street
New York, New York 10013

RE: Temporary Play Street on West 33rd bet. Ninth & Tenth Aves.

Dear Commissioner Forgione:

Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) supports the Clinton School for Writers & Artists (Clinton School)' request for a temporary play street on West 33rd Street from Ninth Avenue to the East of Dyer Avenue, for one hour four days a week (Mondays through Thursdays, 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.) with limited vehicular access as detailed below.

This approval is limited to the 2010-2011 school year. The principal will reapply for use of the street if necessary for the following school year.

The Clinton School for Writers & Artists, a successful and diverse public middle school, is temporarily (four years) moving to the site of St. Michael's Academy at 425 W. 33rd Street between Ninth & Tenth Avenues, while its new building is being built at 10 E. 15th Street.

The St. Michael Academy building is undergoing renovations to bring it in compliance with public school requirements: the cafeteria is currently closed during the repairs and the work to create an outdoor space- as required by the Schools' Chancellor for all middle schools- is not even scheduled yet. Until then, Clinton School would like to have a safe place for the kids, ranging in age from 10 to 14, to have their lunch break while also being able to get some fresh air outside of the building.

The neighboring properties, businesses and the business improvement district were consulted and although it is an inconvenience for their tenants, whose loading dock is located on that stretch, they understand the principal's dilemma and, as a compromise,

expressed their support for the street closure Monday to Thursday, 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. with the following stipulations:

- The street will remain open until the Department of Transportation has given its approval.
- Until the cafeteria reopens (November 30th, 2010 at the latest) NYPD will install barricades at 9th Avenue to prevent traffic to go through. Edison Parking transient customers from the corner lot will not use that exit during this specific hour. Only local deliveries (including access for Edison monthly parkers in the mid-block lot) will be allowed while the children will have the full use of the street for one hour.
- After November 30th, NYPD will continue to maintain barricades at 9th Avenue but local traffic will be permitted to pass the barriers for access to properties on West 33rd Street and the children will only use a portion of the street limited to the north side parking lane. There will be no parking of the north side of 33rd Street during this hour and NYPD will install additional barricades between the parking lane and the moving lane, to delimit the space the students can use. The principal will organize a staggered schedule for the students to access the play street. All local traffic (i.e. any vehicular traffic originating from or going to any property on West 33rd Street and Edison parking customers, both transient and monthly) will be permitted to pass the barriers.
- Clinton School will work with the DOT and the 34th Street Partnership to explore the installation of a permanent system to separate the north side parking lane from the remaining portion of the street so that NYPD no longer needs to maintain the barricades at 9th Avenue and so that traffic can flow normally. This system could be a construction zone delimiter or a “green Street” with trees and plantings.
- Clinton School will have sufficient supervision over the students and use its best effort to reduce the noise levels from students in the street in consideration of neighboring office workers and residents.
- While the street is closed to normal traffic flow, Clinton School will install a temporary way finding sign at the 9th Avenue barricade to direct Lincoln Tunnel traffic to the nearest entrance (31st Street and Ninth Avenue).
- Clinton School, with the support of our elected officials will make every effort to obtain the interim use of an adjacent empty lot- west of the school building- which belongs to the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey (Access to the Region Core Project). This presents a great opportunity to provide the school children with safe, off-street play space.
- Clinton School will make every effort to expedite the conversion of the building’s roof into a proper outdoor space for the students.

The 10th Precinct supports the street closure. A sign would be posted on the Ninth Avenue barricade, mentioning “local traffic only” and there would be a School Safety Agent positioned nearby. The NYPD has been in communication with the Port Authority (PA) about the closure and the PA has been reassured that the tunnel exit will not be affected.

Thank you,

Sincerely,



John Weis
Chair
Manhattan Community Board No. 4



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning Committee



Jay Marcus
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning Committee

CC: 34th Street Partnership
Edison Properties
424 West 33rd Street
Clinton School
Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
CD4 Elected officials
NYC Department of Education