



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**JEAN-DANIEL NOLAND**  
Chair

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

May 18, 2009

Borough Commissioner Margaret Forgione  
NYC Department of Transportation  
59 Maiden Lane, 35<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10038

**Re: Play Street Initiative West 17<sup>th</sup> Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues**

Dear Commissioner Forgione,

Community Board 4 supports the Fulton Youth of the Future and Transportation Alternative's proposal to close the eastern portion of 17<sup>th</sup> Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues (beginning at approximately 15 yards before the Caledonia building going east to 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue) on four to-be-designated Sunday's from 10am to 5pm this summer. Fulton Youth of the Future is a nonprofit 501c that provides services to families and youth in Fulton Houses and the surrounding area. Transportation Alternatives is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) that advocates for pedestrians, bicyclists and public transit in New York City.

The proposal, which has engaged the active partnership of a wide variety of community organizations, will include games, arts and crafts, and a mini-farmer's market designed to educate children on healthy eating. Among the organizations participating in the event are the Tenth Avenue Precinct, Transportation Alternatives, Hudson Guild, The Chelsea Improvement District, Fulton Houses Tenant Association, and Chelsea Market.

The Community Board makes the following requests, which the applicant has agreed to:

- Provide minimum clearance required for emergency vehicles along the street;
- Have a minimum of 4 volunteers (with badges or other indication that they are volunteers) at all time;
- There be no commercial activity at the street fair;
- Provide the Board office with documentation of support from the Fulton Tenant Association;
- Notify, at least one month in advance, the businesses along Ninth and Tenth Avenues between 16<sup>th</sup> Street and 18<sup>th</sup> Street;
- If the crane near the corner of Tenth Avenue has been removed, the Fulton Youth should arrange with the police department to see if the remainder of the street could be two-ways during the street fair, to enable cars to both exit and enter the Caledonia garage.

In addition, we request that the Department of Transportation:

- Post signs along Ninth Avenue, Tenth Avenue and between Eighth and Ninth Avenues on West 17<sup>th</sup> Street beginning at least one week before the first street fair;

- Post signs along West 17<sup>th</sup> Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues at least two weeks before the first street fair indicating that parking will not be permitted from 8am to 5pm on Sundays; and
- Issue warnings, rather than tickets, to cars parked on the block for the first two Sunday street fairs.

We note that the owner of the Caledonia and the garage located in that building objected to this closure. Both noted that West 17<sup>th</sup> Street (which goes west) is the primary means that residents and garage customers use to arrive at the building and garage and that the closure would harm their business. While Community Board members were sympathetic to their concern, we felt the inconveniences would be relatively minor (the garage and building also have an entrance on West 16<sup>th</sup> Street and the West 17<sup>th</sup> Street garage and building entrances are west of the proposed street closure) and were outweighed by the benefits to both Caledonia and Fulton Houses residents. However, at our request, the sponsors have reduced their request from 8 Sundays to 4 Sundays during the summer and reduced the hours of operation from 9 hours to 7 hours. We also note that our approval is just for the current summer.

We are hopeful that the partial street closure to create a children's play area, which has been successful at a location in Jackson Heights, will prove successful and another model for re-prioritizing the streets for more pedestrian and resident use.

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.

Fulton Youth of the Future  
Transportation Alternatives