



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JOHN WEIS
Chair

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

December 7, 2009

Ms. Margaret Forgione
Manhattan Commissioner
Department of Transportation
59 Maiden Lane, 37th Floor
New York, New York 10038

Re: Safe Streets for Seniors

Dear Commissioner Forgione:

Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) applauds the Safe Streets for Seniors initiative and the inclusion of Clinton-Hell's Kitchen Chelsea in the areas of focus. Our community has long suffered from excessive traffic and has a disproportionate number of pedestrian injuries and fatalities. We appreciate that your recommendations will be presented to the Community Board before implementations, you will remain in contact with the community to seek input and to this effect we. We suggest that a mayoral endorsement would go along way to ensure that the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the New York Police Department (NYPD) share the same priorities when it comes to traffic enforcement and pedestrian safety. In addition, we have provided below a number of suggestions specific to our neighborhoods

The area of the Safe Street for Seniors' study stretches from 23rd Street between 9th and 7th Avenues to 52nd Street between 9th and 8th Avenues. Between 29th and 47th Streets, it extends east to include Broadway. A major portion overlaps with the Clinton Hell's Kitchen study area and we are pleased to hear that the teams are working together. We understand that your consultants will start their work early next year and that most of their recommendations will be implanted in 2011- 2012.

Our neighborhoods are dominated by the presence of the Lincoln tunnel - with no transition from the highway to the streets- and the Port Authority Bus Terminal with its massive number of buses using our streets.

Recently with the closing of the Holland tunnel, the number of trucks that use the Lincoln tunnel to access Manhattan grew exponentially.

Although 9th Avenue has seven entrances to the tunnel, the police presence is minimal at these locations even during peak hours, holidays, weekends etc. When the police are present at an intersection, it seems to focus more on moving cars even if it is at the expense of pedestrian safety.

Thus, we reiterate the following suggestions:

- Signage at all Lincoln tunnel entrances in the City to remind drivers that there is “no turn on red” and to “yield to pedestrians”
- Lead Pedestrian intervals or Protected turns are the most efficient rampart against hurried drivers that are going to or coming from the tunnel at highway speed
- The left turns at intersections of wide streets are really turning lanes. Adding a turn red phase and moving the turn green phase to the end of the cycle will make the traffic at these intersections more orderly and the crossing safer.
- Many pedestrian crossings are still missing ADA compliant ramps
- Low vision residents often rely upon counting time to figure when to cross. A targeted education of the new signal timing will help them make the transition safely.
- All bus drivers and Port Authority traffic engineers should receive training
- The NYPD traffic must cooperate and give priority to pedestrians at intersections. A mayoral endorsement of the campaign would go a long way toward acquiring NYPD cooperation.

CB4 looks forward to hearing the results of your analysis and the implementation of traffic calming in our area.

Sincerely,



John Weis
Chair
Manhattan Community Board No. 4



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning Committee



Jay Marcus
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning Committee

CC: Mayor Bloomberg
Christopher Ward
Margaret Forgione
CB4 elected officials