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COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

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March 21, 2014

Margaret Forgione
Manhattan Borough Commissioner
NYC Department of Transportation
59 Maiden Lane, 35th Floor
New York, NY 10038

Dear Manhattan Borough Commissioner Forgione:

At its Full Board meeting March 20, 2014, Community Board #2, adopted the following resolution:

1. Resolution in support of a parking-protected bicycle lane upgrade on Lafayette St./4th Ave. bet. Spring and 14th Sts.

Whereas the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) is proposing a protected bicycle lane with buffer on Lafayette St./4th Ave. bet. Spring and 14th Sts. to replace the current un-protected one that has serious safety problems and severe deterioration; and

Whereas the Lafayette St./4th Ave. corridor bet. Spring and 14th Sts. is heavily used by both pedestrians and bicyclists whose safety is greatly compromised by the overly wide street width there (Lafayette-48 ft./4th-71 ft., curb to curb) coupled with relatively light vehicular traffic causing speeding and aggressive driving, creating long pedestrian crossing distances, and, with scant markings or delineations, allowing for overlapping and disorganized bicycle and vehicular traffic movement; and

Whereas the upgraded lane will involve reconfiguration of the street bed and other changes that include:

- Primarily curbside bike lane, then buffer, then floating parking, requiring re-allocation of parking spaces resulting in a net increase of three spaces.
- Pedestrian islands in the crosswalks, shortening pedestrian crossing distance, planted with trees and also able to house planting beds (if there are maintenance partners).
- Moving lanes narrowed to 11 ft. (more appropriate for urban environments than what is currently a highway standard width) that will slow down and regularize vehicular traffic, promoting safety, while keeping the existing number of lanes.
- Adjusted signal timing to lessen waiting times (and extend crossing times) for pedestrians, who currently are kept from crossing the street for unnecessarily lengthy intervals.

- A “double-barreled” bike lane design between E. 12th and E. 14th Sts. (one lane on left; one lane on right) to facilitate safe right turns for bicyclists.
- Daylighting applications for unobstructed views at intersections.; and

Whereas DOT presented figures showing notable decreases in crashes and injuries after parking-protected bike lanes like the one proposed for Lafayette St./4th Ave. were installed on 1st, 2nd and 8th Aves., and studies have shown that more bicyclists use protected lanes than un-protected ones, keeping bikes moving in the right direction (as opposed to a contra flow) and out of the way of automotive traffic, better organizing the street; and

Whereas there is an exceptionally large and increasing number of pedestrians on Lafayette St., especially at the three subway locations at Houston St., Bleecker St. and Astor Pl., who need to be accommodated with larger than typical pedestrian islands to ensure adequate safety havens in crossing the street, including for those who are disabled; and

Whereas there is a continuing need to accommodate commercial parking for the Lafayette St./4th Ave. area, with many businesses and institutions along the way requiring regular pickups and deliveries, and DOT has indicated its openness to creating more commercial-friendly parking and establishing delivery zones on the side streets (as has been done in Community Board 4M) as well as its intentions to contact all businesses involved to ascertain their loading needs, has agreed to restore loading zone regulations and signage previously altered during past construction, and also has conveyed that the agency is looking into metering 3-hour loading zones there to provide more commercial parking turnover; and

Whereas in response to concerns about emergency access, DOT has specified that its standard design is to maintain 11 ft. clearance for first responders, maintenance crews, and other emergency vehicles; and

Whereas in response to concerns about potential conflicts with major construction occurring on Lafayette St., DOT has outlined its customary approach to handling integration of bike lanes at construction sites (a common and frequent occurrence around the city), including identifying every construction permit and contacting the people involved to make proper transportation arrangements, and presented photos of how bike lanes are moved to allow for staging in parking lanes, while being defined by flexible delineators; and

Whereas there is a considerable amount of taxi activity on Lafayette St., often with hailed cabs stopping short in the middle of the street, which would now be compounded by a lack of curb access because of the protected bike lane’s design, and DOT has affirmed its willingness to install taxi stands, requesting that the community identify preferred locations; and

Whereas because Lafayette St. bet. 8th and 9th Sts. and 4th Ave. on the same stretch currently accommodate MTA NYC Transit buses laying over at peak hours with three or four parking lanes that, with the City’s anticipated reconstruction of Astor Pl., will be reduced by two and the streetbed narrowed, there is concern over whether the protected bike lane as currently designed could coexist with buses laying over as it passes through Astor Pl.; and

Whereas close to 50 local people turned out in favor of the protected bike lane from addresses evenly spread both above and below Houston Street around the Lafayette St./4th Ave. area (as evidenced by the sign-in sheets), and letters of support were received; and

Whereas it was suggested that the protected bike lane begin at Grand St. going north from the west-east protected lane there;

Therefore be it resolved that Community Board 2, Manhattan (CB2) supports installation of the parking-protected bicycle lane upgrade on Lafayette St./4th Ave. bet. Spring and 14th Sts.; and

Be it further resolved that CB2 appreciates DOT's sharing their proposed plan for this lane with and inviting input from the community, and encourages DOT to continue to inform, communicate and work with the community as the project progresses, consulting not only with CB2 but with all local stakeholders, including the three Business Improvement Districts, merchants and other businesses, property owners and residents, on local needs, potential refinements, timetables, impacts and other concerns, giving ample advance notice; and

Be it further resolved that CB2 urges DOT to provide larger pedestrian islands in the Lafayette St. crosswalks at Houston St., Bleecker St. and Astor Pl.; and

Be it further resolved that CB2 asks that DOT work with the neighboring BIDs, businesses, other stakeholders and elected officials to ensure that provisions are made for planting and maintaining flowers and other attractive blooms in the pedestrian islands (like those on 9th Ave.), organizing maintenance partners, in order to provide needed enhancement; and

Be it further resolved that CB2 calls upon DOT to follow through in working with adjacent businesses and institutions in establishing pickup and delivery accommodations, including delivery zones on the side streets as needed (as in CB4M) for both larger and smaller stores and for upstairs businesses in larger commercial buildings, as well as loading and unloading parking provisions on Lafayette St. (e.g. in the floating parking areas), where possible, with accompanying signage (including corrected signage, previously altered, reflecting current commercial loading zone needs), plus keep the community abreast of any plans for metered 3-hour commercial loading zones and get their input; and

Be it further resolved that CB2 requests that DOT work to ensure that the necessary access is provided for emergency medical technicians, fire trucks and other emergency vehicles, including the Great Jones St. firehouse; and

Be it further resolved that CB2 urges that DOT work not only with those who have construction permits, but also with the affected local stakeholders in ensuring in advance that there is smooth, safe and comfortable integration of the necessary bike lane format where construction takes place, including signage for bicyclists indicating a construction detour when the bike lane is interrupted, along with monitoring of its operation, and that there are clearly fashioned plans for re-configuration of the protected bike lane when construction is completed and allocated funds for its implementation; and

Be it further resolved that CB2 requests that DOT reach out to the local stakeholders to ascertain preferred taxi stand locations, and install them where needed; and

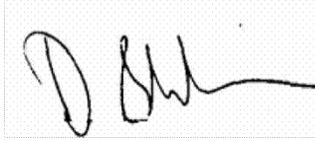
Be it further resolved that CB2 urges DOT to undertake a study of the bus layover spaces on Lafayette St. and on 4th Ave. bet. 8th and 9th Sts. in relation to their accommodation needs considering the new protected bike lane in concert with the new design of Astor Pl. as soon as possible to determine any adjustments that may need to be made in advance of the protected bike lane's implementation; and

Be it finally resolved that CB2 suggests that DOT study the feasibility of beginning the new protected bike lane route at Grand St. going north from the protected west-east lane there.

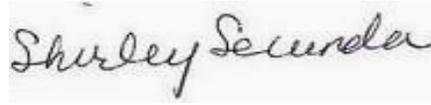
Vote: Unanimous, with 42 Board members in favor.

Please advise us of any decision or action taken in response to this resolution.

Sincerely,



David Gruber, Chair
Community Board #2, Manhattan



Shirley Secunda, Chair
Traffic & Transportation Committee
Community Board #2, Manhattan

DG/jrm

- c: Hon. Jerrold L. Nadler, Congressman
Hon. Brad Hoylman, NY State Senator
Hon. Daniel Squadron, NY State Senator
Hon. Deborah Glick, Assembly Member
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Margaret Chin, Council Member
Hon. Rosie Mendez, Council Member