



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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CHRISTINE BERTHET
Chair

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District Manager

April 3, 2014

Mayor Bill de Blasio
City Hall Park
New York, NY 10007

Re: Comments on *Vision Zero*

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) is hopeful that your *Vision Zero* initiative will result in dramatic improvements of pedestrian and bike safety in our community. We enthusiastically support the action plan, especially community outreach, inter-agency collaboration, street design, vehicle control and legislative initiatives. We look forward to working with you, the Department of Transportation, and the NYPD on implementing this initiative. Several of the intersections with the highest pedestrian injuries and deaths in New York City are in Community District 4 (CD4).

While CB4 supports the *Vision Zero* initiative we would like to offer the following comments on the plan:

Enforcement remains the most crucial element of preventing accidents from occurring. As pointed out in your *Vision Zero* report, 70 percent of pedestrian fatalities are from causes outside of the pedestrian's control, typically driver speeding or failure to yield. The success of *Vision Zero* will thus be dependent on the active involvement of NYPD to increase enforcement for vehicle violations such as improper turns, phoning/texting while driving, and speeding. We are pleased your initiative includes providing NYPD with an increased number of speed guns. Similarly, we are glad the Mayor has proposed increased training for officers on how to investigate and preserve crash site evidence and expanding the Collision Investigation Squad's jurisdiction to include crashes with critical injuries, a position this Community Board endorsed several years ago.

In addition to the enforcement of vehicular traffic we would like to request that increased enforcement be made on bicyclists. Bike lanes have been installed on many streets in our community and while we support increased bicycle usage we are concerned about bicycle compliance with traffic regulations. We hear complaints from residents on a regular basis that bicyclists pay little attention to traffic laws, and that enforcement is almost nonexistent. We hope that the *Vision Zero* initiative will place greater emphasis on the enforcement and education of bicycle traffic regulations. We would specifically like to applaud and request *Vision Zero* incorporate the efforts made by DOT as well as community groups such as Transportation

Alternatives, and CHEKPEDS who have taken up the initiative to educate commercial bicyclists on the bicycle traffic regulations.

We are pleased to see that more NYPD resources will be allocated to traffic enforcement but NYPD already has a large pool of personnel to reallocate to life saving posts: Certain traffic agents would make terrific Highway patrol officers. The others should be retrained to become crossing guards/ gridlock prevention or enforcement. They could be authorized to give failure to yield tickets, in addition to gridlock and idling tickets that they already are permitted to give. The majority of highway patrol personnel should be deployed on arteries where most of the pedestrians are hurt and less on highways. The name of their unit should be changed accordingly to reflect the new focus.

We were pleased to see opportunities to involve the community in *Vision Zero*. There are a few easy ways to open and organize the flow of information between the NYPD traffic forces and the public:

- The precinct safety plans should incorporate public input by consultation with Community board and local associations.
- A high-ranking traffic officer should attend monthly community precincts meetings or community board meetings to hear enforcement complaints and report on action from last month.

Many members of our communities are a part of Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCS)e and these communities are especially vulnerable to traffic accidents. Since these communities require increased efforts to ensure safety, we recommend that *Vision Zero* incorporate the placement of traffic officers on busy intersections around NORC's.

We have found that the installation of dedicated turn signals, or split phase signals are effective in improving pedestrian safety at dangerous intersections. The installation of a split phase signal at the intersection of West 23rd street and Seventh Avenue has resulted in a 63% reduction in pedestrian injury at this intersection. We hope that the *Vision Zero* plan will incorporate the expansion of these installations at more intersections across the city.

CB4 is happy that a reduction in the speed limit is incorporated into this initiative. However, we would like to see the speed limit become 20 mph and not the proposed 25 mph.

CB4 is happy that the mayor has taken up this initiative and we believe this plan will greatly improve the safety of pedestrians in New York City. While the plan is a step in the right direction we believe the incorporation of the above suggestions will further strengthen this initiative and greatly benefit the pedestrians in our community and across New York City.

Sincerely,



Christine Berthet
Chair



Jay Marcus
Co-Chair, Transportation
Planning Committee



Ernest Modarelli
Co-Chair, Transportation
Planning Committee

cc:

Polly Trottenberg, Commissioner NYC DOT
Councilmember Corey Johnson
Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer
NYPD