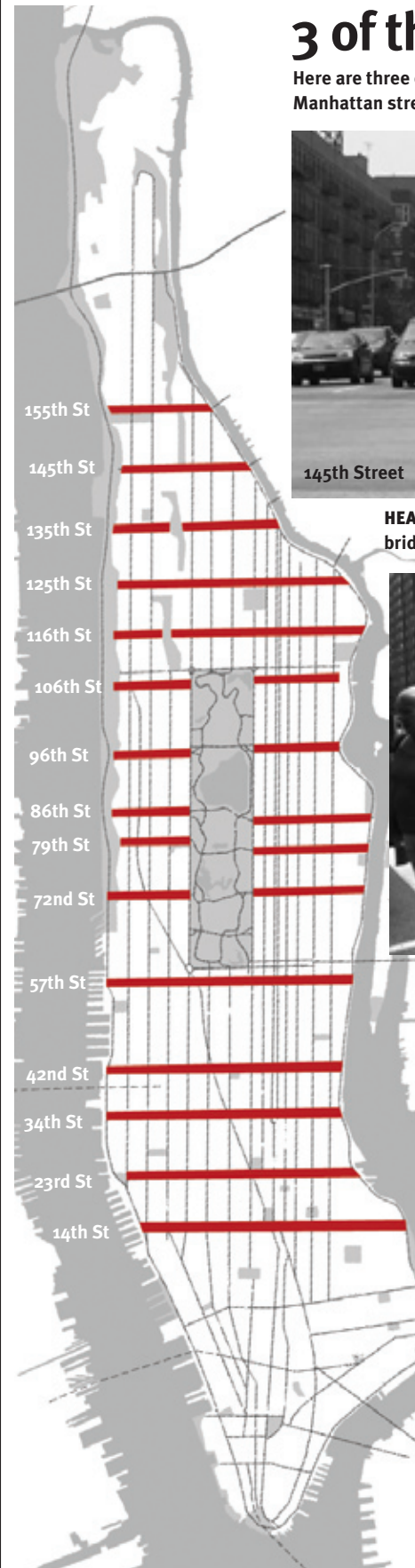


Safe Seniors

3 of the “15 Streets”

Here are three examples of what makes these 15 Manhattan streets particularly dangerous.



145th Street

HEAVY TRUCK TRAFFIC races to the 145th Street bridge while onlookers wait on a narrow median.



57th Street

HEAVY VEHICULAR VOLUMES and pedestrian volumes throughout 57th Street consistently put pedestrians at risk.



42nd Street

VEHICLES FAIL TO YIELD TO PEDESTRIANS almost 90% of the time at several intersections along 42nd Street.

Vital Streets Friendly

1 “15 Streets” Takes Shape

BIG STREETS ADVERSELY AFFECT QUALITY of life, especially for senior citizens, to whom they are barriers to services, exercise and social life. Seniors who must traverse Manhattan’s busy cross-streets repeatedly report that their daily struggles crossing these streets lead to isolation, fear and outrage. T.A.’s Safe Routes for Seniors campaign is working with local seniors, senior service providers and elected officials to win simple safety measures that will improve the safety and health of seniors, and the millions of other New Yorkers and visitors, who walk across Manhattan’s 15 crosstown streets every day.

The City’s 1811 grid plan laid out the 15 cross-town streets—14, 23, 34, 42, 57, 72, 79, 86, 96, 106, 116, 125, 135, 145 and 155—exactly 100-feet from building to building line. Today, thanks to modern crash-mapping, the danger these 15 streets pose to senior citizens is clear: these streets account for less than one percent of all of the intersections in Manhattan, yet 18% of senior injuries and fatalities occur at these intersections.

T.A.’s 15 Streets campaign seeks four simple improvements at each intersection along these streets:

- An exclusive walk signal of five to nine seconds where no vehicles can move from any direction;
- Crossings free of trip hazards like potholes and poorly completed utility cuts;
- Consistent crosswalk markings to guide people across the street and
- Curb cuts or pedestrian ramps that are flush with the street and in line with the crosswalk markings.

These commonsense infrastructure improvements. All would either be part of the Department of Transportation’s routine maintenance schedule or are required by Federal law under the Americans with Disabilities Act. While the DOT has installed some of these measures at locations along these 15 streets, the City has no systematic schedule to make these basic (and required) improvements on all of them or to monitor public safety, health and quality of life at these locations. The 15 Streets campaign seeks to put these streets first for improvements to greatly enhance the safety, health and quality of life for everyone that uses these places each day.

15 Streets to Senior Safe Streets

Many of these 15 streets neither have sufficient crossing time nor safe curb cuts, crosswalks or sidewalk conditions to allow the elderly or people with impairments to get across before cross town traffic gets the green light. Where these streets cross the major avenues, people must walk at least 60 feet, depending on sidewalk width. Additionally, these streets are through streets to the major highways and bridges that line the east and west sides, bringing significant truck and bus traffic, high vehicular volumes and fast speeds.

The 15 Streets campaign is supported by State Senators Liz Krueger and Tom Duane, Assembly Members Sylvia Friedman, Pete Grannis, Daniel O'Donnell, Richard Gottfried and Deborah Glick and City Councilmembers Daniel Garodnick, Jessica Lappin and Rosie Mendez who have all written to Mayor Bloomberg asking him to adopt a policy to immediately implement low-cost safety measures and improve the environment around these streets now.

2 Elder Districts Gain Support

SENIORS REPRESENT OVER A THIRD OF the pedestrian injuries and fatalities each year, while only accounting for 13% of the City's population. Much of this can be attributed to just four characteristics of New York City streets: crossing distance, number and speed of cars, the amount of time to cross the street and the quality of the street.

The advocacy effort of the 15 Streets campaign (see above) focuses on making simple modifications to the street environment in the near future to improve the most dangerous streets in Manhattan. Based on this work, T.A. has launched a citywide senior pedestrian safety campaign to establish "Elder Districts" in neighborhoods with large senior citizen populations.

The Elder District campaign is based on one fact: the environment has a greater impact on senior health than health care systems or medical services. The July 2006 issue of the *American Journal of Public Health* is almost entirely dedicated to research inspired by this fact. While public health campaigns for the elderly have primarily focused on access to health care,

medical services and nutrition, the Elder District campaign focuses on improving the street environment to encourage walking and active aging. Recently, local seniors, elected officials and senior advocacy and housing groups have signed on to make this one of the largest environmental policy changes since school zone requirements were adopted into law.

Why is it important to create zones, like school zones, specifically for the elderly? Statistics show that of the 1.25 million seniors living in New York City, roughly 40% live in small pockets of the City. T.A. looked at census tracts along the 15 Streets campaign's corridors (see above) and found that many of these neighborhoods have a concentration of almost 30% of residents over the age of 65. While some people in Manhattan, especially the Lower East Side and Chinatown, are simply living out their lives in the city, statistics show that more and more seniors are moving to the city for the services and quality of life an urban environment has over rural areas. Most studies agree that the population of people over 60 living in urban areas will almost double in the next twenty years.

The Elder Districts campaign seeks to make New York City streets easier and more pleasant for seniors, to develop the social networks necessary to maintain quality of life

and to minimize to near zero the isolating impacts of busy streets. This campaign uses the 15 Streets campaign as a pilot and then goes beyond it to win a City policy to complete the four basic steps of the 15 Streets campaign in areas with high concentrations

of seniors. Elder Districts also prescribe additional street features that the original Safe Routes for Seniors participants mentioned as essential to their ability to maintain their walking activities.

These additions include well maintained sidewalks, benches in bus shelters and wherever they can be installed while maintaining good sidewalk widths, places of refuge, like the malls along Broadway, for people to rest while crossing wide streets. Because many of the senior fatalities involve buses and trucks turning corners and overtaking people, T.A. has also included additional prevention mechanisms like bollards (3.5

feet tall, metal columns or planters) at each corner, as well as moving the stop bar on busy streets further from the intersection so vehicles of 40 feet or greater can make turns without hitting the curb with their back wheels.

T.A. is working to bring Elder District legislation through City Council in the fall. With the continued support of State Senators Liz Krueger and Tom Duane, Assembly Members Sylvia Friedman, Pete Grannis, Daniel O'Donnell, Richard Gottfried, and Deborah Glick and City Councilmembers Daniel Garodnick, Jessica Lappin and Rosie Mendez, this campaign will become the best quality of life policy that has happened for New York City's seniors, disabled community and youth in many years.

You can make a difference to promote change in this ever changing City by writing a letter to your local elected officials and Mayor Bloomberg asking them to make your streets safer by implementing 15 Streets and Elder Districts modifications now. □

145th Street and Lenox Avenue

How would this intersection change if it was designated an Elder District?



1. Bus stop shelter
2. Stop bar striped farther from intersection
3. Ladder-style crosswalk
4. Curb extension
5. Extended median
6. Median tip with bollards
7. Extended and pedestrian-exclusive signal timing

TakeAction!
WRITE to your city councilmember and ask them to co-sponsor Elder District legislation and improvements to the 15 streets mentioned in these articles.