

# NYC Plaza Program // 2016

## Application for Proposing Organization

Please read through the Plaza Program Application Guidelines before completing the application.

ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION	
Name of Proposing Organization:	(working title, nonprofit in formation) "Friends of James Cagney Place" (aka E. 91st St. between 2nd and 3rd Ave.)
EIN/Date of Incorporation:	EIN: pending Date: in process
Type of Organization:	Not-for-profit corporation
Address:	1619 Third Avenue
	City: New York
	State: NY Zip: 10128
Phone Number:	212-534-7771
Fax Number:	212-534-6140
Website:	
Executive Director/Paid Staff Head:	
Contact Person and Title:	
Contact's Address:	1619 Third Avenue
	City: New York
	State: NY Zip: 10128
Contact's Telephone:	212-534-7771
Contact's E-mail:	

AREA SERVED BY ORGANIZATION	
Borough:	Manhattan
Community Board(s):	8
Neighborhood(s):	Yorkville
NYC City Council Member(s) and District #(s):	Benjamin Kallos (5)

Briefly describe the area served by the organization, highlighting commercial and residential uses, current conditions, activities and trends.

Since 1968, The DeMatteis Corporation and R-Y Management Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of DeMatteis has owned, maintained and operated E. 91st St as a landscaped Pedestrian Plaza on the former urban renewals land. Occupying 3/4ths of the land are three high-rise towers. The 4th quarter of the two-block area is occupied by a New York City Park, Ruppert Park. The land in question was designated urban renewal and acquired by the city in 1966.

A total of 1,836 apartments were developed with assistance from the city, state Mitchell-Lama program along with federal subsidies for tenants with middle, moderate or low incomes and for the elderly. The tower, Knickerbocker Plaza located at the NW corner of E. 91st St. and Second Avenue had 70% of the 578 units for individuals or couples over 62 years old. The remaining 30% were for non-elderly, low-income families.

## EXISTING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Please provide the following information on your staff:

How many members are on your full staff? 0 Number of Full-Time: 0 Part-time: 2

Below, indicate the number of people on your staff principally dedicated to the following:

Economic Development: \_\_\_\_ Workforce Development: \_\_\_\_ Social Services: \_\_\_\_

Urban Planning: \_\_\_\_ Environmental: \_\_\_\_ Art/Cultural: \_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_

\*Please attach a list of names and titles of the employees working in community development; include the duration (months/years) that each has been employed with the organization.

Please provide the following information about your Board of Directors or similar governing members:

How many members are on your full board? 4

How often does your full board meet? Monthly: ☐ Quarterly: ☐ Annually: ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_

Does your board have an active committee structure? Yes ☐ No ☒

\*Please attach a list of names and titles of Board Members or similar governing members to your application; include the date (month/year) that each member began serving with the organization.

Briefly describe the mission, history, and principal activities of your organization. If the organization has had experience in some type of public space management, please explain:

The applicant, which represents a group of builders, property owners and condominium owners who together own or manage the adjoining properties along the present closed street, are responsible for numerous residential properties in the NY metro area. As such, the applicant's supporters have decades of experience constructing and maintaining residential and commercial properties.

With respect to the existing space to which this application relates, these supporting entities built and maintained the pedestrian mall on E. 91st Street between Second and Third Avenue for the past 40 years, as an integral part of the design for the two-block complex that encompasses Ruppert and Yorkville Towers and Knickerbocker Plaza, as well as Ruppert Park.

One example of a successful economic development or community planning initiative undertaken by your organization: Design, construction and maintenance of this closed 91st mall for 40 years

Please describe the goal, approach taken, and the results of the completed initiative.

Goal:

Architects Davis Brody, whose other, Waterside project followed two years later, designed the pedestrian mall to knit together the "immense and overwhelming" density of the three towers into a single welcoming community (AIA Guide to NY).

Approach taken:

Although documentation on city filings establishing the closure are apparently lost (DCP and DOT have been unable to find them), the city clearly approved the closure as part of the Large Scale Residential Development Plan within the Ruppert Brewery Urban Renewal Area. The street was repaved with "z-bricks," lined with benches and enhanced lighting and planted areas. Bollards and swing gates were emplaced at each end to allow for emergency access by FDNY and others. Maintenance, cleaning, sidewalk and street bed repairs, snow removal, lighting maintenance etc. are provided by the sponsoring complex buildings.

Results/Accomplishments:

What would otherwise have been an undistinguished grouping of large towers instead has become a small community, a classic tower-in-a-park grouping, that draws neighbors, particularly older Yorkville residents and those with disabilities for whom the nearest parks, Carl Schurz or Central Park, are just too far to walk. For 40 years, the closed mall and adjoining Ruppert Park, which was designed in concert with the towers and mall, have been a respite and a neighborhood gathering; a safe zone for children, dog walkers and residents.

What are the most pressing internal needs that your organization is currently addressing?

☐ Staffing   ☐ Funding   ☐ Board Participation   ☐ Management   ☒ Other

Please explain:

The applicant has maintained and operated E. 91st Street successfully for the past 4 decades. Maintaining the street included the purchase, installation and maintenance of street furniture including curbside benches, garbage cans and daily garbage pick-up and Security patrols conducted 24/7, 365 days a year. In order to comply with DOT's guidelines, 4-6 community based organized activities will be conducted on an annual basis.

Please provide information on the budget of your organization:

What was the operating budget for FY15? \$ \$113,500

What percent of the FY15 budget was dedicated to:    programmatic services/costs? 90 %  
    administrative costs? 10 %  
    (These should add to 100%)

What percent of the FY15 budget was for community/economic development? 50 %  
 (Include economic development staff salaries, materials and programmatic costs.)

What is the projected operating budget for FY16? \$ 115,500

What percent of the FY16 budget is dedicated to:    programmatic services/costs? 90 %  
    administrative costs? 10 %  
    (These should add to 100%)

What percent of the FY16 budget is for planning/economic development? 50 %  
 (Include economic development staff salaries, materials and programmatic costs.)

	FY 15 Actual		FY 16 Projected		FY 17 Projected	
Governmental Support		%		%		%
Non-governmental Support	100	%	100	%	100	%
Earned Income		%		%		%
Other		%		%		%
Total	100	%	100	%	100	%

For "Other," please specify:

This does not include any DOT funding normally provided for pedestrian plazas, nor any future City Council discretionary support of small events, e.g., summer movies and concerts.

## PROPOSED SITE

### I. Site Selection

Specific Location (Streets): E. 91st Street between Second and Third Avenues

Community Board (if different): 8M

Census Tract(s) (of site only): 154

### II. Adjacent Uses

What uses surround the potential site? Mark all that apply.

- ☐ Residential: 3 high-rise apartment towers with 1836 total units
- ☐ Office: Fertility Clinic; ProHealth Care (Urgent Care outpatient)
- ☐ Retail: Kings Pharmacy, NY Sports Club, Hallmark
- ☐ Industrial: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Institutional: Gillen Brewer School; NY Foundling Home
- ☐ Transportation Related (Train Station/Bus Stop): M15, M15-SBS, M101, M102, M103, 2d Ave Subway
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### III. Nearby Institutions

What are the largest nearby institutions?

List and name all that apply.

- ☐ Schools: P.S. 198, P.S. 77
- ☐ Hospitals: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Cultural/Arts: 92nd Street "Y," Ballet Academy East
- ☐ Government: USPS Yorkville Finance Station
- ☐ Other: Our Lady of Good Counsel Church

### IV. Maintenance of Site

Is your organization willing to maintain, operate, and program the plaza? Yes ☒ No ☐

Has your organization secured other funds for this project? Yes ☒ No ☐

Funding Amount and Source Applicant's supporting sponsors' budget \$113.500

## PROJECT SUMMARY

Describe the proposed plaza that you would like for your community, include potential programming activities. Explain why you believe this site is currently underutilized and how it could be better served for pedestrians.

We are addressing a unique situation. The question speaks to a "proposed" plaza, not to formalizing an existing and longstanding (40+ years) Pedestrian Plaza. The Ruppert Yorkville Knickerbocker Towers residential complex were constructed around a closed, dedicated vehicle-free street, a pedestrian mall, albeit one whose documenting was poorly recorded by the Lindsay and Beame administrations during the 1970s.

The existing pedestrian mall is not underutilized; it is under protected; the NYC Department of Transportation has noted that its legal status is that of a street, one that could be reopened to traffic by the DOT at will.

The "proposed plaza" is intended to protect existing uses, by children playing, dog walkers, individual runners practicing on the steep slope, seniors enjoying an outdoor respite within walking distance of their homes, and neighbors and residents enjoying the linked open spaces of Ruppert Park and the pedestrian mall.

To meet the formal requirements DOT sets for the pedestrian plaza designation, the organizers will provide protective barriers -- bales of hay -- at the bottom of the snow-covered mall, a favorite sledding site for local residents after a storm.

The organizers will hold small-scale programs to bring home the message that the pedestrian mall is officially theirs as few realize how vulnerable it is to the vagaries of administrative rulings. These would include: Movie nights, concerts, a Halloween Masquerade Parade, December Holiday street lighting and Holiday Sing-along.

## COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

If there has been community support or locally-based planning efforts for this plaza concept, please explain and attach relevant outcomes (see Guidelines, page 5: Application Review & Evaluation, Community Initiative).

Attached are supporting letters and related documentation including:

- Resolution by Manhattan Community Board #8 (September 23, 2014, letter to City Planning Commission chair by CB8M chair Nicholas Viest
- Letter from current CB8M Chair James G. Clynes
- Letter from Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer (TO BE SENT UNDER SEPARATE COVER)
- Letter from Council Member Benjamin J. Kallos, 5th District
- Letter from Civitas Executive Director Jameson Mitchell
- Letter from Knickerbocker Tenants Association President Rita Popper
- Letter from Joel Burris, President, Ruppert-Yorkville Towers Tenants Association
- Documentation relating to the City Council passage, and Mayor Ed Koch's signing, of Local Law 53-1989, renaming East 91st Street between Second & Third Avenues as James Cagney Place, with a plaque and flag pole on a set-back site, funded by the complex's developer DeMatteis.
- Additional letters in support of the application are expected and will be sent separately.

## NYC PLAZA PROGRAM APPLICATION SUBMITTAL PROCESS

Return all completed applications to the New York City Department of Transportation as per instructions on page 4 of the Guidelines.

Please submit the following by e-mail or post mail; e-mail submissions are preferred:

- ▶ Applications must be postmarked by **Wednesday, August 31, 2016.**
  - Do not include CD-ROMs, promotional materials, or other extraneous materials.
  - In addition to the application, attach the following documentation:
- ▶ **Staff:** List of names and titles of the employees working in community development; include the duration (months/years) that each has been employed with the organization.
- ▶ **Board or Governing Body:** List of names and titles of Board Members or similar governing members to your application; include the date (month/year) that each began serving with the organization.
- ▶ **Financials** (see Guidelines, page 3: Financial Information).
- ▶ **Letters of support** (see Guidelines, page 3: Support and page 15: Appendix B: Example Letters of Support). Please address all letters to Emily Weidenhof, contact information below.
- ▶ **Conceptual drawings or a summary of relevant outcomes from a public workshop** (if one has been developed).
- ▶ **Photos of the proposed plaza site.** Please attach 3 photos.

To be eligible, applications must be received by the abovementioned deadline. DOT reserves the right to reject, at its sole discretion, any application received past the deadline. All applicants will be sent confirmation of receipt of their proposals.

Please address letters of support and any questions to:

EMILY WEIDENHOF  
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SPACE  
NYC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
55 WATER STREET, 6TH FL  
NEW YORK, NY 10041  
Tel: (212) 839-4325  
Email: [plazas@dot.nyc.gov](mailto:plazas@dot.nyc.gov)



**East 91st Street Between Second and Third Avenues a.k.a. James Cagney Place**





**LOCAL LAWS  
OF  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
FOR THE YEAR 1989**

**No. 53**

Introduced by Council Member Dryfoos; also Council Members Castaneira Colon, Crispino, Foster, Gerges, McCaffrey, O'Donovan, Williams and Wooten.

**A LOCAL LAW**

**In relation to a street name, East 91 Street-James Cagney Place, Borough of Manhattan.**

*Be it enacted by the Council as follows:*

Section one. The following street name is hereby designated as here-after indicated.

New name	Present name	Limits
East 91st Street- James Cagney Place	East 91st Street	from Second Avenue to Third Avenue

Section 2. This local law shall take effect immediately.

THE CITY OF NEW YORK, OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK, S.S.:

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of a local law of The City of New York, passed by the Council on June 29, 1989, and approved by the Mayor on July 18, 1989.

CARLOS CUEVAS, City Clerk, Clerk of the Council.

CERTIFICATION PURSUANT TO MUNICIPAL HOME RULE LAW §27

Pursuant to the provisions of Municipal Home Rule Law §27, I hereby certify that the enclosed local law (Local Law 53 of 1989, Council Int. No. 1278) contains the correct text and:

Received the following vote at the meeting of the New York City Council on June 29, 1989:  
32 for, 0 against

Was approved by the Mayor on July 18, 1989.

Was returned to the City Clerk on July 20, 1989.

JEFFREY D. FRIEDLANDER, Acting Corporation Counsel

# Introducing Jimmy Cagney Place



May 16, 1991

NEW YORK -- The late Jimmy Cagney's upper Manhattan neighborhood paid tribute Thursday to its favorite son by renaming East 91st Street between Second and Third avenues 'James Cagney Place.'

A brick monument commemorating the legendary film star was unveiled at the flag-draped Ruppert-Yorkville and Knickerbocker Towers on the renamed block at ceremonies attended by a delegation of city officials and show business and sports personalities headed by Mayor David Dinkins.

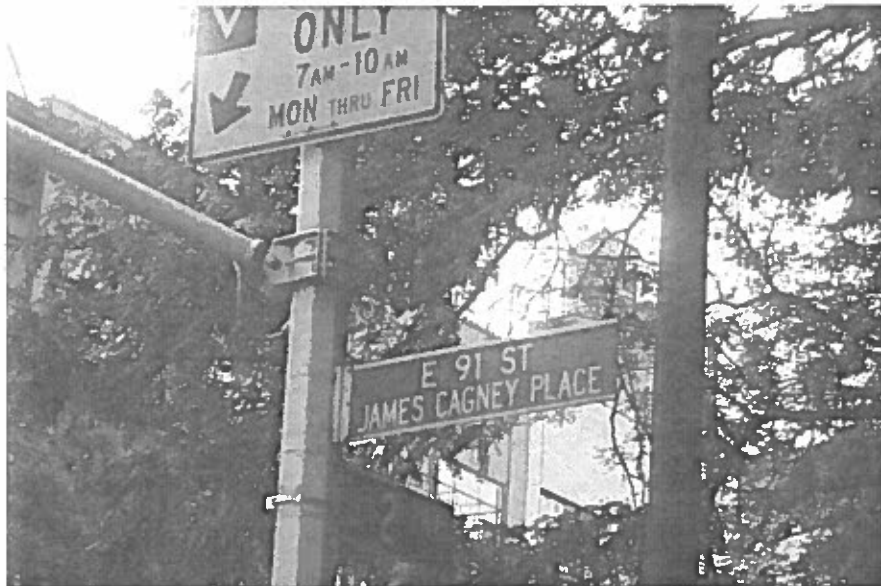
Construction of the monument bearing a bronze plaque reading 'Yankee Doodle Dandy --James Cagney, 1899-1986,' and the changing of street signs at the corner of Third Avenue and 91st Street were sponsored by the DeMatteis Organizations, builders of the Ruppert-Yorkville and Knickerbocker Towers residential facilities. City Councilman Robert Dryfoos was author of the bill.

Cagney was born on Manhattan's lower East Side but was raised in Yorkville, an area heavily populated by German emigrants and noted for its breweries, including Ruppert's on the 91st Street site.

Cagney established and funded the James Cagney Foundation which has been generous in aiding Yorkville charities, such as the Rhinelander Children's Center for underprivileged youth.

Actress Mary Tyler Moore was on hand at the ceremony to accept a contribution from the foundation for one of her favorite charities, the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation.

Others honoring the Academy Award-winning actor remembered for his tough roles and Irish charm as a song-and-dance man were former heavyweight champion Floyd Patterson, former Yankee batter Joe Pepitone, and Milos Forman, director of 'Ragtime,' Cagney's last motion picture, and Marge Zimmerman, an executor of the Cagney estate.







Nicholas Viest  
Chair

Latha Thompson  
District Manager



505 Park Avenue  
Suite 620  
New York, N.Y. 10022  
(212) 758-4340  
(212) 758-4616 (Fax)  
www.cb8m.com Website  
info@cb8m.com - E-Mail

**The City of New York  
Manhattan Community Board 8**

September 23, 2014

Chairman Carl Weisbrod  
New York City Planning Commission  
22 Reade Street  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: A request to permanently close East 91<sup>st</sup>  
Street between Second and Third Avenues to  
vehicular traffic. (joint with Parks Committee)**

Dear Chair Weisbrod:

At the September 17, 2014 Full Board meeting, the board passed the following resolution of approval by a vote of 43 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstentions and 0 not voting for cause:

WHEREAS East 91st Street between Second and Third Avenues has been closed to vehicular traffic for approximately four decades; and

WHEREAS this street serves as an oasis for New Yorkers of all ages, in a district that currently boasts less than half an acre of open space per thousand residents; and

WHEREAS The Related Companies closed nearby Ruppert Playground three years ago, further decreasing open space in this area;

WHEREAS the closure of this street has not been made official and therefore is at risk of reversal in the future; and


WHEREAS this street does not require extensive maintenance; and

WHEREAS the East 91st Street bicycle route includes a bicycle path on this block;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that, in order to assure the permanent preservation of East 91st Street between Second and Third Avenues as public open space, Community Board 8 Manhattan urges our elected officials and the City of New York, particularly DOT and Parks, to seek the best way to permanently close this block to vehicular traffic, through de-mapping or via some other legal means that they determine; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan requests that the East 91st Street bicycle path be retained, regardless of whether the street is de-mapped.

Sincerely,

  
Nicholas Viest  
Chair

  
A. Scott Falk and Charles Warren  
Co-Chairs, Transportation Committee

cc: Honorable Bill de Blasio, Mayor of the City of New York  
Honorable Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Honorable Carolyn Maloney, 14<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Representative  
Honorable Liz Krueger, NYS Senator, 26<sup>th</sup> Senatorial District  
Honorable Dan Quart, NYS Assembly Member, 73<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District  
Honorable Ben Kallos, NYC Council Member, 5<sup>th</sup> Council District  
Honorable Daniel Garodnick, NYC Council Member, 4<sup>th</sup> Council District  
Margaret Forgiione, Manhattan Borough Commissioner, NYC Department of Transportation  
William Castro, Manhattan Borough Commissioner, NYC Department of Parks and Recreation

James G. Clynes  
Chairman

Latha Thompson  
District Manager



505 Park Avenue, Suite 620  
New York, N.Y. 10022-1106  
(212) 758-4340  
(212) 758-4616 (Fax)  
[www.cb8m.com](http://www.cb8m.com) - Website  
[info@cb8m.com](mailto:info@cb8m.com) - E-Mail

## **The City of New York Manhattan Community Board 8**

August 25, 2016

Hon. Polly Trottenberg  
Commissioner  
New York City Department of Transportation  
55 Water Street  
New York, NY 10041

Dear Commissioner Trottenberg:

R-Y Management, a wholly owned subsidiary of the DeMatteis Organization, the original developers of the Ruppert Yorkville Towers, seeks to have the Department of Transportation designate East 91st Street between Second and Third Avenues, which has been closed to vehicular traffic since the mid-1970s, as a Pedestrian Plaza.

I write to express Manhattan Community Board 8's strong support of a formal designation of this long-closed block as a vehicle-free street. This has been expressed by several resolutions of CB8M, most recently that of September 17, 2014, captioned "A request to permanently close East 91st Street between Second and Third Avenues to vehicular traffic," which passed 43-0 with one abstention.<sup>1</sup> It previously passed 16-0 at a joint meeting of CB8M's Parks and Transportation Committees. CB8M's goal, supported by all our elected officials, is to preserve this closed pedestrian mall in perpetuity; a Pedestrian Plaza is a reasonable first step.

Our Board has repeatedly noted that the CB8M district area has among the least public open space of any district in New York City, despite the district's large and growing population, soon to be magnified by development along the new Second Avenue Subway corridor. As noted in our FY2016 District Needs Assessment, CB8M has the largest percentage of older adults, 60+, in Manhattan (20.8%)<sup>2</sup>.

Any risk to the closed status of this block threatens both to decrease our already limited open space and to directly affect the neighborhood's senior citizens and disabled. Knickerbocker

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<sup>1</sup> Letter to Chairman Carl Weisbrod, NYC Planning Commission, from Nicholas Viest, chair, CB8M, September 23, 2014

<sup>2</sup> <http://cb8m.com/sites/default/files/FY2016%20District%20Needs%20Statement.pdf>, p. 9, Sect. 2.9, Health, Seniors and Social Services

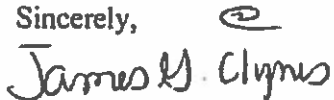


Plaza, one of the three towers on the closed block, was reserved for 70% seniors and 20% low income. While the property has left the Mitchell-Lama program, many of its elderly remain with the assistance of a special Section 8 rent subsidy program. The bench-lined block has become a haven for our older residents, many too frail to avail themselves of Central Park or Carl Schurz, many blocks away.

As the AIA Guide to New York notes about Ruppert and Yorkville Towers, "The density is immense and overwhelming." The vehicle-free status of this block along with the adjoining Ruppert Park, reflect the designer's, Davis Brody & Associates, intent to knit together these towering structures, a park and a pedestrian mall into a community.

We support this as a first step toward permanently protecting this enclave as a vital community asset.

Sincerely,



James G. Clynes

Chairman

Manhattan Community Board 8

cc: Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor of the City of New York  
Hon. Carolyn Maloney, 12<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Representative  
Hon. Liz Krueger, NYS Senator, 28<sup>th</sup> Senatorial District  
Hon. Dan Quart, NYS Assembly Member, 73<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District  
Hon. Rebecca Seawright, NYS Assembly Member, 76th Assembly District  
Hon. Daniel Garodnick, NYC Council Member, 4<sup>th</sup> Council District  
Hon. Benjamin Kallos, NYC Council Member, 5<sup>th</sup> Council District  
Margaret Forgione, Manhattan Borough Commissioner, NYC Department of Transportation  
Emily Weidenhof, NYC Plaza Program Director, NYC Department of Transportation

**BENJAMIN J. KALLOS**  
COUNCIL MEMBER, 5<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT

244 East 93<sup>rd</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10128  
(212) 860-1950 Voice  
(212) 980-1828 Fax  
www.BenKallos.com

BKallos@BenKallos.com



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August 25, 2016

Hon. Polly Trottenberg  
Commissioner  
New York City Department of Transportation  
55 Water Street  
New York, NY 10041

Dear Commissioner Trottenberg:

As a Yorkville resident, former Community Board Member and now Council Member for the 5th District, I have long recognized the importance of protecting the vehicle-free status of the pedestrian mall that bisects the Ruppert Yorkville Knickerbocker Towers housing development, and joins it together into a human-scale, welcoming urban enclave.

I write in strong support of the application of R-Y Management, a wholly owned subsidiary of the DeMatteis Organization, the original developers of the Ruppert Yorkville Towers, to the NYC Department of Transportation to designate this block as a Pedestrian Plaza.

My office has been working with Community Board 8M's East 91st Street Task Force, which operates under the September 17, 2014 unanimous resolution of CB8M "to seek the best way to permanently close this block to vehicular traffic." We met with the CB8M Task Force co-chairs and both former Civitas Executive Director Emma Bologna and Jameson Mitchell, her successor, who are supportive of this initiative.

Borough President Gale Brewer joined me in an April 17, 2015, letter to Margaret Forgione, expressing our belief that this block should be "maintained in perpetuity as open space for public use and enjoyment."

The open space afforded this area by officially designating E. 91<sup>st</sup> Street between Second and Third Avenues as "Pedestrian Plaza" is a reasonable first step toward this community's ultimate goal of protecting this enclave in perpetuity. I request your support of this application.



**BENJAMIN J. KALLOS**  
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL MEMBER  
DISTRICT 5, MANHATTAN

Sincerely,

*Ben Kallos*

Benjamin Kallos  
City Council Member, District 5

cc: Honorable Bill de Blasio, Mayor of the City of New York  
Honorable Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Honorable Carolyn Maloney, 12<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Representative  
Honorable Liz Krueger, NYS Senator, 28<sup>th</sup> Senatorial District  
Honorable Dan Quart, NYS Assembly Member, 73<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District  
Honorable Daniel Garodnick, NYC Council Member, 4<sup>th</sup> Council District  
James Clynes, Chair, Community Board 8 Manhattan  
Margaret Forgione, Manhattan Borough Commissioner, NYC Department of  
Transportation  
Emily Weidenhof, NYC Plaza Program Director, NYC Department of Transportation



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IN URBAN LIFE

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August 29, 2016

Hon. Polly Trottenberg  
Commissioner  
New York City Department of Transportation  
55 Water Street  
New York, NY 10041

Commissioner Trottenberg:

CIVITAS is pleased to support R-Y Management's application for a Pedestrian Plaza on 91<sup>st</sup> Street between Second and Third Avenues. This designation is consistent with the historical use of the space, which has been closed to automobile traffic, though not de-mapped, for four decades.

The preservation of valuable open space in the Upper East Side, which despite its proximity to Central Park lacks adequate open space for its population, is critical and falls directly in line with CIVITAS's mission to improve the quality of life in the Upper East Side and in East Harlem.

CIVITAS is proud to lend its support to R-Y Management and to join Community Board 8, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, and Council Member Ben Kallos in this effort.

Sincerely,



Jameson Mitchell  
Executive Director

JOEL G. BURRIS, PRESIDENT  
RUPPERT YORKVILLE TOWERS CONDOMINIUM  
1619 THIRD AVENUE  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10128  
(212) 508-7334 OFFICE  
[JBURRIS@BHSUSA.COM](mailto:JBURRIS@BHSUSA.COM)

August 31, 2016

Emily Weidenhof  
NYC Plaza Program Director  
Division of Traffic and Planning  
New York City Department of Traffic and Planning  
55 Water Street, 9<sup>th</sup> floor  
New York, New York 10041

RE: Official Designation of Existing Mapped but Defacto Closed Street as a  
Pedestrian Plaza: Borough of Manhattan - 91<sup>st</sup> Street between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenues

Dear Director Weidenhof,

I am writing to you in my capacity as President of the Ruppert Yorkville Towers Condominium. The Ruppert Yorkville Condominium complex contains over 1,200 residential apartments in two block front buildings that were constructed in the 1970s as a Mitchell Lama project. The buildings comprising the Condominium are located on Third Avenue and extend from the north side of 90<sup>th</sup> Street to the south side of 92<sup>nd</sup> Street. 91<sup>st</sup> Street from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenues adjoins and runs through the middle of the Ruppert Yorkville Towers Condominium complex. The street also abuts Knickerbocker Plaza, which was a third very large apartment building constructed as part of the Mitchell Lama project.

Although 91<sup>st</sup> Street is a mapped street, since the time Ruppert, Yorkville and Knickerbocker Towers were constructed in the mid 1970s, the street has been closed to vehicular traffic. For in excess of 40 years, the street bed has served as a pedestrian mall and a de facto park for the entire community.

91<sup>st</sup> Street is constructed of attractive interlocking pavers (as opposed to asphalt) and the street is lined with park benches, trees and greenery. Recently, in order to further serve the community, a Citi Bike Station has also been installed in the street bed. The street serves as a sanctuary for elderly, children and the community. From being the Sleigh Riding hill and play area for children to the meeting hall and town center for our seniors, this area is the community's pedestrian park/plaza/mall. Thus, the street is already a pedestrian plaza servicing the entire Yorkville and Carnegie Hill neighborhoods and it is appropriate for this to be legalized as such.

As President of the Ruppert Yorkville Towers Condominium and as a resident of the community for 30 years, I fully support legitimizing and legalizing the closure of 91<sup>st</sup> Street and its being designated as a Pedestrian Plaza, the use it has served for over 40 years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joel Burris".

Joel G. Burris

Knickerbocker Plaza Tenants' Association  
1751 Second Avenue  
Suite 14C  
New York, NY 10128  
Tel: 212-860-4540  
Fax: 212-860-7729

August 23, 2016

Emily Weidenhof  
NYC Plaza Program Director  
Division of Traffic and Planning  
New York City Department of Transportation  
55 Water Street, 9<sup>th</sup> FL  
New York, NY 10041

Dear Director Weidenhof:

I write on behalf of the 578 units 1751-1763 Second Avenue, a.k.a. Knickerbocker Plaza, in support of the pending application for a Pedestrian Plaza on the closed section of East 91<sup>st</sup> Street running from Second to Third Avenues.

Knickerbocker Plaza's 578 units were developed to house 70% for individuals and couples over 62 years of age. The remainder of the units was for low-income families regardless of age. Many of those tenants remain after the owners opted out of Mitchell-Lama in 2009, thanks to a special Enhanced Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher for former Mitchell-Lama tenants.

All the apartments have electricity and gas as utilities but air-conditioning units in Knickerbocker Plaza came with a monthly year-round surcharge. Most of the low-income families could not afford the surcharge and opted not to have air-conditioning. Their refuge from the heat was the protected curbside benches on the closed street, installed by the DeMatteis Co. and maintained by R-Y Management Co., a wholly owned subsidiary of DeMatteis and the applicant for the Plaza designation.

As a well-organized tenants association formed in 1976, we will do everything we can to support the application and the Pedestrian Plaza when it is approved. It is very upsetting to our elderly, disabled, and families with children to consider that any future circumstance could result in the reopening to traffic of this wonderful refuge. We recently went through a losing fight to preserve a neighboring open space, the Ruppert Playground, one block north, where a new Related Management tower now rises. That site also had ambiguous status: some argued it was intended to remain as an offset to Related's Carnegie Park tower on Third

Avenue but the city in its wisdom gave that developer a right build on the site after 25 years.

As a member of CB8M's Parks & Recreation Committee, I know that our district has less than half an acre of open space per thousand residents. With the opening of this new tower the area is even more densely populated.

Please note that the application for a Pedestrian Plaza requires little or no initial investment aside from funding a few community events, outdoor movies on the steeply sloping hillside, concerts and continued sleigh riding when weather permits with a shoveled safety barrier. This request is very economical. We don't need to construct the plaza, it has existed for over 40 years, maintained already by R-Y Management, which maintains the benches, garbage pickup, gardening, lighting not otherwise provided by DOT and shoveling of snow where NYC Dep't. of Parks and Recreation's domain alongside Ruppert Park stops.

Thank you for considering this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rita Popper". The signature is written in dark ink and extends to the right with a long, thin horizontal stroke.

Rita Popper  
President  
Knickerbocker Plaza Tenants' Association

cc: Honorable Bill de Blasio, Mayor of the City of New York  
Honorable Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Honorable Carolyn Maloney, 12<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Representative  
Honorable Liz Krueger, NYS Senator, 28<sup>th</sup> Senatorial District  
Honorable Benjamin J. Kallos, Council Member, 5<sup>th</sup> District  
Honorable Dan Quart, NYS Assembly Member, 73<sup>rd</sup> Assembly  
District Honorable Daniel Garodnick, NYC Council Member, 4<sup>th</sup> Council District  
Margaret Forgione, Manhattan Borough Commissioner, NYC Department of  
Transportation  
Emily Weidenhof, NYC Plaza Program Director, NYC Department of  
Transportation  
James G. Clynes, Chair, Community Board 8 Manhattan