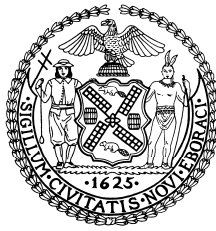


James G. Clynes
Chairman

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**

February 23, 2015

Faith Rose
Executive Director
Public Design Commission
City Hall, Third Floor
New York, NY 10007

Feniosky Peña-Mora
Commissioner
NYC Department of Design and Construction
30-30 Thomson Avenue
Long Island City, NY 11101

Re: Update on the East 81st Street Pedestrian Bridge

Dear Ms. Rose and Commissioner Pena-Mora:

At the February 18, 2015 Full Board meeting, the board passed the following resolution by a vote of 34 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstentions and 0 not voting for cause:

WHEREAS NYC Dept. of Design & Construction (DDC) has entered into a contract to replace the East 81st Street Pedestrian Bridge (project ID HBPED100M); and

WHEREAS the New York City Charter requires Public Design Commission approval before a bridge can be erected, but PDC has not yet approved this project; and

WHEREAS this project consists of three main components:

1. An ADA-accessible ramp onto John Finley Walk, to be constructed on East 81st Street
2. The replacement of the pedestrian bridge over the FDR Drive at East 81st Street
3. A new 452-foot ramp from the pedestrian bridge down to the lower esplanade level; and

WHEREAS on October 17, 2012, Community Board 8 Manhattan (CB8M) passed a resolution that “urges the DOT and the DDC to make further changes to the 81st Street pedestrian bridge so that it blends into the surrounding neighborhood in a better way and to ameliorate the impact of the eight foot high fence facing the buildings in the area” (by a vote of 39 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention, 1 not voting for cause); and

WHEREAS DDC did not effectively respond to repeated requests from CB8M to come back to the Transportation Committee with further updates and modifications to the project design prior to awarding the construction contract; and

WHEREAS DDC has repeatedly affirmed their willingness to “tweak” the design in conjunction with CB8M to address community concerns, and to convene a small working group including CB8M and area residents; and

WHEREAS relocating the 452-foot esplanade ramp to connect to John Finley Walk at a point north of 81st Street might address both practical and aesthetic concerns about this project; and

WHEREAS CB8M is committed to working with the residents of the East 82nd Street cul de sac and other area residents on any alterations to the current bridge design that could negatively affect them; and

WHEREAS the current view south from the end of John Finley Walk at 81st Street will be negatively impacted by the 8-foot-high fence required for new construction in close proximity to a highway; and

WHEREAS DDC has repeatedly expressed the intention for an “open” design to minimize visual impact and maximize sightlines; and

WHEREAS the community is concerned that the planned 1” x 1” stainless steel mesh fencing will impact sightlines and invoke the look of a prison yard; and

WHEREAS CB8M believes clear fencing materials will be more appropriate and more aesthetically pleasing, and passed a resolution on 12/17/14 that CB8M “wants DDC to use clear/transparent materials for all fences for this project, including the fence at the southern end of John Finley Walk and the fences lining the 452-foot esplanade ramp, even if such fencing material must be obtained from new, alternate vendors” (by a vote of 38 yes, 1 no, 0 abstention, 0 not voting for cause);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan asks the Public Design Commission to delay consideration of the East 81st Street Pedestrian Bridge while CB8M and DDC, DOT and Parks work in cooperation with residents of the surrounding area to address community concerns regarding the design of the bridge; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan urges the Dept. of Design & Construction not to proceed with construction of the new East 81st Street Pedestrian Bridge prior to receiving PDC approval, and urges DDC, DOT and Parks to be prepared to rethink many elements of the existing design.

Please advise this office of any action taken regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

James G. Clynes
Chairman

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, 14th Congressional District Representative
Honorable Liz Krueger, NYS Senator, 26th Senatorial District
Honorable Dan Quart, NYS Assembly Member, 73rd Assembly District
Honorable Rebecca Seawright, NYS Assembly Member, 76th Assembly District
Honorable Ben Kallos, NYC Council Member, 5th Council District
Honorable Daniel Garodnick, NYC Council Member, 4th Council District
William Castro, Manhattan Borough Commissioner, NYC Department of Parks and Recreations
Margaret Forgione, Manhattan Borough Commissioner, NYC Department of Transportation