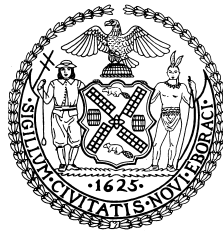


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## The City of New York Manhattan Community Board 8

### Transportation Committee

Wednesday, April 2, 2014

*MSK-Rockefeller Research Laboratories*  
430 East 67th Street (First-York) Room 103  
6:30 PM

### Minutes

*Present:* Michele Birnbaum, Lori Bores, A. Scott Falk, Lorence Hockert, Jonathan Horn, Rita Popper, Charles Warren, Hedi White, Timothy Yeo; Michael Dillon & David Menegon (Public Members)

*Absent (Excused):* Lowell Barton

*Absent (Unexcused):* Rebecca Seawright

The Meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM.

#### **1. A request for a bike corral at Le Bilboquet, 20 East 60th Street.**

Inbar Kishoni from NYC Dept. of Transportation's Bicycle Program presented a proposal to install an on-street bicycle parking corral in front of 20 East 60th Street (between Park and Madison Avenues) at the request of Le Bilboquet, French bistro that recently opened in this new location after 27 years of operation on East 63rd Street.

NYC DOT's Bike Corral Program installs rows of bike racks on city streets, in a curbside lane that is never used for travel, at a site that must be at least 15 feet from fire hydrants and that does not block crosswalks, driveways, or utility covers. Applicants must agree to maintain the corrals, with responsibility for keeping the site clear of debris and snow, sustaining plantings, and reporting abandoned bicycles. There are currently 31 such bike corrals citywide, but this is the first proposed site within Community Board 8 Manhattan's district.

The proposed corral would remove from the curbside lane on the south side of the street one space that is currently used for commercial loading during the daytime and for parking at other times. The corral would consist of four bike circular racks that would provide parking for eight bicycles, with large planters and reflective flexible delineators on either side of the racks; in addition, DOT would add a stripe to define the parking lane along the south side of this block.

Le Bilboquet presented DOT with five letters of support from other businesses on the block and over 100 petition signatures gathered in cooperation with The French Institute Alliance Française, a package of supporting documents that Ms. Kishoni from DOT called "the most response we've ever gotten." DOT, the applicant, and some of the letters all agreed that there is inadequate bike parking in the area, which has led to a proliferation of bikes chained to scaffolding, sign posts, and bus stops, sometimes blocking the sidewalk; according to DOT, the bike corral program allows the city to provide a legal alternative to chaining bikes on the sidewalk.

Marc Glazer, vice chair of Community Board 7 Manhattan, spoke about CB7's positive experience with a bike corral maintained by Henry's on the Upper West Side.

Following the presentation, the Committee passed the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the restaurant Le Bilboquet has operated in the East 60s for nearly 30 years, most of that time continuously; and

WHEREAS, Le Bilboquet has recently relocated to 20 East 60th Street, between Park and Madison Avenues; and  
WHEREAS, there are currently no bicycle parking racks on that block, leading to a chronic problem of bikes being chained to scaffolding, sign posts, and bus stops, interfering with the flow of pedestrians; and  
WHEREAS, Le Bilboquet has applied to NYC Department of Transportation for an on-street bike parking corral in front of their restaurant; and  
WHEREAS, the proposed location for this bike corral meets DOT's siting requirements, namely that the curbside lane in front of the applicant's business is never used for through traffic; the corral is not within 15 feet of a hydrant; and the racks will be located so as not to obstruct any utility covers, crosswalks, or driveways; and  
WHEREAS, the corral will provide parking for eight bicycles, helping to clear the sidewalks of illegally parked bikes; and  
WHEREAS, Le Bilboquet has agreed to maintain the corral by keeping it clear of debris and snow, maintaining the planters, and reporting abandoned bikes; and  
WHEREAS, 109 people have signed petitions and five other businesses on the same block have written letters of support of this application;  
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan supports the proposal for a bike parking corral in front of Le Bilboquet at 20 East 60th Street.

*Approved: 8 Yes, 1 No, 0 Abstentions*

*Yes: Bores, Falk, Hockert, Horn, Popper, Warren, White, Yeo*

*No: Birnbaum*

*Public Member Votes: 2 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions*

*Yes: Dillon, Menegon*

## **2. A request for a revocable consent to install a fenced-in area and steps at 63 East 92nd Street.**

Jesse Fearins of CWB Architects appeared on behalf of an application for a revocable consent to install a fenced-in area and steps at 63 East 92nd Street (between Park and Madison Avenues), a row house that is undergoing an extensive renovation. The applicant wishes to extend the front yard to its historic location (4' 9" inches past the property line, and 6' 6" from the building) in order to create a "more generous" entry to the building; the applicant has received staff-level approval from the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

It was noted that there is a tree pit directly in front of the applicant's building, which would leave only 5' 7" of clearance if the consent were to be granted. The building to the west has a stoop that extends into the sidewalk, but that is the only remaining stoop on this side of the block. The applicant is proposing to fence in a garbage enclosure with a planted area at the front, with two steps leading down from the sidewalk, but the building façade is not being extended.

All of the members of the public who spoke about this item, including the neighbors on both side of the applicant and Lo van der Valk of Carnegie Hill Neighbors, opposed the application. More than one person spoke about heavy pedestrian traffic on this block, and expressed grave concerns about the bottleneck that would be caused by approving this application.

Following some discussion, the Committee passed the following unanimous resolution to disapprove the application:

WHEREAS, the applicant has requested a revocable consent for a fenced-in area and steps at 63 East 92nd Street, and  
WHEREAS, there is a tree pit located in front of this building, and  
WHEREAS, there would only be 5' 7" of clearance between the proposed fence and the tree pit, and  
WHEREAS, all public comments were in opposition to the application, including opposition from the neighbors living immediately adjacent to this building on both sides,  
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan DISAPPROVES the applicant's request for a revocable consent to install a fenced-in area and steps in front of 63 East 92nd Street.

*Approved: 9 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions*

*Yes: Birnbaum, Bores, Falk, Hockert, Horn, Popper, Warren, White, Yeo*

*Public Member Votes: 2 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions  
Yes: Dillon, Menegon*

### **3. A request for a revocable consent to install a fenced-in area at 155 East 79th Street.**

John Englund of BKSK Architects presented a request for a revocable consent for a fenced-in area at 155 East 79th Street, which is being developed into a condominium. The developer proposes to add a planter that would extend three feet from the building. Unlike the previous application, this applicant has wide sidewalks in front of their building, with more than 19 feet of sidewalk clearance remaining between the front of the planter and the curb,

Following some discussion, the Committee passed the following unanimous resolution to approve the application:

WHEREAS, the applicant has requested a revocable consent for a fenced-in area at 155 East 79th Street, between Lexington and Third Avenues, and  
WHEREAS, the applicant proposes to install a planter that will extend three feet from this building, echoing a similar planter in front of the neighboring building at 151-153 East 79th Street, and  
WHEREAS, there is a wide sidewalk on East 79th Street, with more than 19 feet of additional clearance remaining, and  
WHEREAS, the applicant says they will not be placing any planters along the curb in front of their building,  
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan approves the applicant's request for a revocable consent to install a fenced-in area at 155 East 79th Street.

*Approved: 9 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions  
Yes: Birnbaum, Bores, Falk, Hockert, Horn, Popper, Warren, White, Yeo*

*Public Member Votes: 2 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions  
Yes: Dillon, Menegon*

### **4. Old Business**

A Committee member asked whether representative from the Caedmon School had been invited to the meeting to discuss ongoing issues relating to double parking in front of the school; the co-chairs confirmed that school representatives have been invited to appear at our May 6 meeting.

New York City Transit has also been invited to the May 6 meeting for discussion of several topics, including schedule issues with the M31 bus, a request for a new MetroCard bus location, and a period general review of transit issues.

### **5. New Business**

There were two items of new business.

#### **A. Accumulation of gravel in the bicycle lanes adjacent to the Roosevelt Island Bridge:**

Roosevelt Island resident Janet Falk complained about an accumulation of gravel in the bicycle lanes leading to and from the Roosevelt Island Bridge, which has been an ongoing problem for more than a year. Ms. Falk made repeated complaints to RI311 (Roosevelt Island's 311 service), before she was told by the Roosevelt Island Operating Corp. (RIOC) that this would fall under the purview of the City. A subsequent service request to NYC 311 was quickly closed out, with the following response:

General maintenance and cleaning is on a regular schedule. The next scheduled maintenance and cleaning will correct the condition.

Ms. Falk also noted that although the gravel is a problem in both directions, on both the Roosevelt Island and Queens sides of the bridge, the problem is worse heading eastbound on the Queens side, approaching Vernon Blvd. She noted that the gravel is a safety hazard that leads cyclists to ride closer to motor vehicles than they should, and that regular sweeping is needed to remove the gravel.

Michael Klatsky from NYC's Dept. of City Planning, project manager for the Western Queens Transportation Study, attended the meeting to provide additional information. The Queens side of the Roosevelt Island Bridge is located in an industrial neighborhood that sees extremely heavy truck traffic; the Queens end of the bridge is surrounded on both sides by the Transcanada Ravenswood Generating Station/Big Allis plant, which has big mounds of gravel outside. In addition, many of the trucks traveling throughout the area are carrying heavy construction materials from concrete companies and brickworks; the heavy vehicles also cause roadway crumbling in certain areas.

Mr. Klatsky also noted that City Planning is expecting to propose in the coming months "a new concept for connecting Roosevelt Island to Western Queens," which will include reconfiguring the bike lanes in question. RIOC had notified City Planning of the complaints about gravel in these bike lanes.

Josh Orzeck of the DOT Manhattan Borough Commissioner's Office said that there had been some internal dialog about these problems, that DOT was looking at the situation, and that they would keep CB8M informed when they had a response to the complaint.

The Committee proposed establishing an operational working group, to look at mitigating the causes of the gravel and to make sure that regular cleaning is done on an adequate schedule. The working group might consist of some or all of the following:

- DOT's Queens Borough Commissioner's Office
- DOT's Manhattan Borough Commissioner's Office
- DOT's Bridges Division
- Dept. of Sanitation's Queens West Office
- Dept. of City Planning
- RIOC
- Council Member Benjamin Kallos
- Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer
- Community Board 8 Manhattan, CB1 Queens, & CB2 Queens

A member of the Committee suggested that it might be helpful to reach out to Queens CB1 and CB2 now.

Caitlin Goodspeed of Bike New York raised another safety issue relating to the Roosevelt Island Bridge bike lanes, namely that the metal grating was extremely slippery when wet, which had led to a number of cyclist crashes. According to Bike New York, Chicago has had success with installing "SlipNOT" slip-proof coverings on bridges to make biking safer over metal gratings. Ms. Goodspeed asked whether NYC DOT could do something similar on the Roosevelt Island Bridge.

#### **B. Degraded curb cut at the 96th Street entrance to the East River Esplanade.**

Mary Nell Hawk and Philip Yee of East River Crew appeared before the Committee to request repair of the curb cut at the 96th Street entrance to the East River Esplanade, where the Community Board had previously succeeded in getting new crosswalk markings and pedestrian crossing signals installed. There are several deficiencies in the curb where East River Crew wheels its 25' wooden rowing boats onto and off of the Esplanade, which has resulted in damage to one of the boats; in addition, there is a risk of injury to wheelchair users because the curb cut is not flush.

Ms. Nell and Mr. Yee presented photos of the conditions at this curb cut and requested resurfacing of a section of the asphalt and pavers on this pedestrian ramp. Josh Orzeck of DOT said that this would be a complex construction due to a number of factors including the location at a highway ramp, adjacent to a pier, with a metal curb. The complaint will be forwarded to DOT's Roadways Division along with a request for "a temporary asphalt fix" while they investigate the feasibility of a proper reconstruction of the pedestrian ramp.

East River Crew's opening day for their 2014 season will be on April 22.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:47 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A. Scott Falk and Charles Warren, Co-Chairs