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

September 25, 2019

Polly Trottenberg  
Commissioner, NYC Department of Transportation  
Water Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, New York 10041

Sarah Carroll, Chair  
Chair, NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
55 Municipal Building  
One Center Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Commissioner Trottenberg and Chair Carroll,

Community Board 8 Manhattan's Landmarks Committee strongly opposes the NYC DOT's plan to place bus shelters on Madison Avenue between 57 and 78 Streets. We urge the question of the proposed bus shelters be referred to the Landmarks Preservation Commission for a binding report. We ask that bus shelters not be placed in a historic district. The shelters, which will be eight feet, ten inches tall and fourteen feet, eight inches long will block much of the ground floor displays of a typical twenty-foot wide storefront. In addition, the digital advertising screens that are seven feet, six inches in height, facing both north and south, will disrupt the unique qualities of Madison Avenue in the Upper East Side Historic District.

Installation of these structures will undermine the pedestrian scale and architectural merit of Madison Avenue, which has been legislated and enforced by the City through both landmark and zoning regulations. LPC' District Master Plan for Storefronts on Madison Avenue in the Upper East Side Historic District, created to protect retail, and specifically prohibits businesses from installing internally illuminated box signs with glass or plastic lenses, flashing signs and moving signs. The Landmarks Preservation Commission is charged with evaluating the appropriateness of sidewalk cafes and newsstands on Madison. With the Commission determining the appropriateness of sidewalk use, it would be correct and appropriate to refer this matter to it.

Therefore, the digital signage planned as a revenue producer directly conflicts with the nature of the Madison Avenue Historic District. It will distract pedestrians from the carefully planned and often expensively produced store windows warranted by the atmosphere of Madison Avenue. It will, like a magnet, draw passersby's attention from the stores and pull it toward the brightly lit, potentially moving image that may even be of a competitor to the store behind to the bus shelter. Madison Avenue, particularly in the early evening, is quiet, elegant, and full of character and charm. The shelters, precisely because of the sharp visibility of bright digital advertising, will interfere with the serene ambience. Like a beacon, each shelter will scream at bus and taxi riders and pedestrians, drowning the calm of the quiet street. This will have a negative impact on the image of Madison Avenue, the very image that lures JC Decaux to Madison to begin with.

Allowing JC Decaux to install advertising signs within seven feet of storefronts whose displays businesses meticulously design would be in direct conflict with regulations controlling Madison Avenue in the Upper East Side Historic District.

Moreover, the shelters will create an unpleasant and potentially unsafe pedestrian pathway, dissuading shoppers from walking in front of or going into the stores behind the shelters.

The Upper East Side's portion of Madison Avenue has a particular nature, enhanced by the strict requirements of compliance with the Landmarks Preservation Commission's rules. We believe that placing bus shelters on Madison Avenue will, in the long run, harm the City by diminishing the character, historic ambience and revenue generated by one of the world's leading shopping destinations.

Please advise us of any action taken on this matter.

Sincerely,

  
Alida Camp  
Chair

  
David Helpern and Jane Parshall  
Co-Chairs, Landmarks Committee

cc: Honorable Bill de Blasio, Mayor of the City of New York  
Honorable Carolyn Maloney, 12<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Representative  
Honorable Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Honorable Liz Krueger, NYS Senator, 28<sup>th</sup> Senatorial District  
Honorable Dan Quart, NYS Assembly Member, 73<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District  
Honorable Rebecca Seawright, NYS Assembly Member 76<sup>th</sup> Assembly District  
Honorable Ben Kallos, NYC Council Member, 5<sup>th</sup> Council District  
Honorable Keith Powers, NYC Council Member, 4<sup>th</sup> Council District