



Community Board 12 - Manhattan Washington Heights & Inwood

530 West 166th St. 6th Floor, New York, NY 10032

Phone: (212) 568-8500, Fax: (212) 740-8197

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Shahabuddeen A. Ally, Esq., Chairperson
Ebenezer Smith, District Manager

July 5, 2016

Hon. Polly Trottenberg
Commissioner
Department of Transportation
55 Water Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10041

Hon. Mitchell J. Silver
Commissioner
NYC Parks & Recreation
The Arsenal
830 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10065

Dear Commissioners Trottenberg and Silver:

At the General Meeting on Tuesday, June 28, 2016 Community Board 12 Manhattan, passed a resolution with a vote of (30) In Favor, (0) Opposed, (0) Abstention and (1) Not voting due to conflict calling on our elected officials immediately to fund the W. 181st Street Beautification Project; and requesting that DoT & DPR work together to coordinate funding and completion of such project(s) and requesting that DDC exercise the utmost care and stewardship over the extant plantings and restoration of same in the course of managing the renovation project.

Whereas: The W. 181st Street Beautification Project (W181BP) is a small 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to making the neighborhood a more attractive and caring place, providing neighborhood youth programming at several sites in Washington Heights and having created beautifully terraced gardens on either side of the Pinehurst Ave. / W. 181st St. step street in 1986 through Operation Green Thumb and has maintained them for the last 30 years; and

Whereas: The gardens consist of 22 terraces (11 on either side of the steps) and provide visual beauty as well as seating and respite for residents of Washington Heights, and are a cherished neighborhood amenity providing "old world" charm in the urban visual landscape; and

Whereas: The W181BP presented to the Traffic & Transportation Committee of Community Board 12, Manhattan (CB12M) on June 6, 2016 and to CB12M's Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee on June 14th with regard to the deteriorating conditions, citing two inter-related problems – rotting timbers and a rodent infestation replete with a vast network burrows that has eroded the terraces' underlying infrastructure – which have conspired to render the terraces unsafe for the public and for volunteer gardeners; and

Whereas: The step street is a mapped street under the auspices of the NYC Department of Transportation (DoT), and was renovated in 2001 by DoT and the NYC Department of Design & Construction (DDC), both of which agencies took great care to preserve what plantings they could and to restore the gardens following construction; and

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Whereas: DoT agrees that it has the responsibility to correct the current structural issues facing the step street, but lacks the landscaping and gardening expertise to evaluate the problem and identify the best corrections action(s) and would defer to NYC's Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR)'s expertise; and

Whereas: CB12M supports a joint effort by these two agencies to effect a short-term project to evaluate the situation and provide immediate stabilization, and a long-term project to provide a complete and enduring repair; now therefore be it

Resolved: That CB12M calls on our elected officials immediately to fund such projects; and be it further

Resolved: That CB12M requests that DoT & DPR work together to coordinate funding and completion of such project(s); and be it further

Resolved: That CB12M requests that DDC exercise the utmost care and stewardship over the extant plantings and restoration of same in the course of managing the renovation project(s) of the Pinehurst Ave. / W. 181st Street step street's terraced gardens; and be it further

Resolved: That CB12M requests that the NYC Department of Health immediately engage in an evaluation and extermination program to mitigate the severe rat infestation plaguing these terraced gardens.

Sincerely,


Shahabuddeen A. Ally, Esq.
Chairperson

cc: Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Letitia James, Public Advocate
Hon. Charles Rangel, Congressman
Hon. Bill Perkins, State Senator

Hon. Herman D. Farrell, Jr., Assembly Member
Hon. Guillermo Linares, Assembly Member
Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez, Council Member, Chair of Council's Transportation Committee
Hon. Mark Levine, Council Member, Chair of the Council Park's Committee
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, State Senator



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Hon. Polly Trottenberg
Commissioner
Department of Transportation
55 Water Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10041

Dear Commissioner Trottenberg:

At the General Meeting on Tuesday, June 28, 2016 Community Board 12 Manhattan, passed a resolution with a vote of (31) In Favor, (0) Opposed, (0) Abstention proposing holding a workshop on the transportation needs of the immediate area and the proposed design changes to Dyckman Street and that the information gathered at the workshop be used to produce enhancements and refinements to the proposed plan for Dyckman Street.

Whereas, as part of its Vision Zero pedestrian safety efforts, the New York City Department of Transportation is in the process of introducing traffic calming measures to many streets, and,

Whereas, the need exists for an east-west bicycle connection in the vicinity of Dyckman Street, and,

Whereas, the New York City Department of Transportation has proposed a new design for Dyckman Street from Broadway to 10th Avenue, and,

Whereas, in the view of the Department of Transportation, Dyckman Street from Broadway to Nagle Avenue is currently organized as four lanes, one combined travel and parking lane and one travel lane in each direction, and,

Whereas, this stretch of Dyckman Street is typical of many wide streets throughout our community and the city at large and,

Whereas, during the decades upon decades during which all of these streets operated, a culture developed as to their actual usage, and,

Whereas, in fact and usage our residents consider the street to be divided into three lanes in each direction, the one next to the curb for parking, the one closest to the center for travel, and a de facto intermediate lane used for a variety of purposes, and,

Whereas, the de facto intermediate lane is normally used for travel, and,

Whereas, emergency vehicles use this de facto lane for parking, and have every right to do so, and,

Whereas, of necessity some specialized delivery vehicles, for example fuel trucks, must park in the intermediate lane to make their deliveries, and,

Whereas, similar exigencies exist for other delivery trucks, and moving vans which park in the intermediate lane as well, and,

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Whereas, due to the absolute dearth of public parking in our district, shoppers also use the intermediate lane to double park while they quickly run into a store, and,

Whereas, the proposed plan for Dyckman Street envisions only one travel lane in each direction, which by its design problematically appears to make it impossible for any double parking to occur, even that which is necessary and legal, without its entirely disrupting movement in the single travel lane, and,

Whereas, the Department of Transportation has implemented a similar treatment on West 170th Street between Fort Washington Avenue and Broadway, which has worked so poorly, and has so infuriated residents of the block, that dozens came to a recent Community Board Traffic and Transportation Committee meeting to demand its removal, and,

Whereas, because of the low density and dispersion of businesses along the street, discrete loading zones may not be helpful, nor do the proposed taxi stands deal directly with a double parking problem caused by the aforementioned insufficiency of spaces, and,

Whereas, there are aspects of the proposed design that constitute a significantly better fit, such as the painted curb extension and normalization of the intersection at Dyckman Street, and the creation of a safer and more organized bicycle experience and east-west connection, including protected bike lanes east of Nagle Avenue, and,

Whereas, in the past Community Board 12, Manhattan has desired to hold a workshop concerning this stretch of Dyckman Street so that all stakeholders could weigh in on any new proposed design, and,

Whereas, a proposed design from the Department of Transportation is now available for discussion, therefore,

Be it resolved, that Community Board 12, Manhattan proposes holding a workshop on the transportation needs of the immediate area and the proposed design changes to Dyckman Street, at a local and accessible venue as soon as practicable in our new season that starts in September, making sure to invite the community and all relevant stakeholders, e.g. business owners and bicycle and disability rights advocates, as well as representatives of the Department of Transportation and elected officials, and,

Be it further resolved, that the information gathered at the workshop be used to produce enhancements and refinements to the proposed plan for Dyckman Street which should foster securing its acceptance and successful implementation.

Sincerely,



Shahabuddeen A. Ali, Esq.
Chairperson

cc: Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Letitia James, Public Advocate
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