

Resolution in Support of Retaining Wall on Riverside Drive between West 168th St. and
West 171st Street
Traffic and Transportation Committee
September 10, 2012

Whereas: A presentation by the NYC Department of Design and Construction (DDC) at the September 10, 2012 Traffic and Transportation Committee meeting, **brought our attention to** the existence of the retaining wall that runs along the east side of Riverside Drive from West 168th Street to West 171st Street; and,

Whereas: The retaining wall allows the eastern lane of northbound Riverside Drive to meet the very busy ramp that connects to the Cross Bronx Expressway and the George Washington Bridge; and,

Whereas: The retaining wall is in urgent need of repair. There is significant parapet damage. Bricks are missing throughout the length of the retaining wall. Cracks and bulges are visible in a number of places, caused by water leaking from pipes under the ramp that allow water to pool on the ramp. Re-pointing is needed throughout the project area; and,

Whereas: The DDC has developed two plans for repairing the retaining wall. One plan will partially replace the retaining wall. This plan will cost approximately \$11.5m and repair the wall for an estimated 20-year period. The second plan would involve complete replacement of the retaining wall. This plan will cost approximately \$13m and repair the wall for 50 years. DDC strongly recommend that the city pursue the complete replacement, but understand that the city's budget is severely constrained; and,

Whereas: Trees will necessarily be removed to effect the repair, but the DDC is committed to replace the lost trees by planting a larger number of smaller trees during the final phases of the project; and,

Whereas: The DDC estimates that the length of this project will extend 18 months, and, throughout the duration of the work, traffic will continue to flow on northbound Riverside Drive and the ramp to the Cross Bronx Expressway; and,

Whereas: the plan of the DDC calls for 63 lost parking spaces alongside the retaining wall on both its east and west perimeters, and for a period estimated to be as long as 14 months; and,

Whereas: Parking in Washington Heights is notoriously difficult to find when all possible space for parking is usable; and,

Whereas: At the T&T committee meeting, the DDC was asked to implement the parking loss plan in stages in order to mitigate car owners' pain, but the DDC rejected this suggestion due to specifics of the construction site, materials, and equipment needed for the project that must remain on site throughout the duration of the project; and,

Whereas: At the T&T committee meeting, the DDC was asked to consider other forms of parking loss mitigation, including opening a temporary parking area further north along Riverside Drive or working with NY Presbyterian Hospital to arrange for free or discounted overnight parking for neighborhood car owners. Representatives of the DDC did not react in a positive way to these suggestions, either. In fact, Mr. Rahman of the Department of Transportation (DOT), who was also present at the meeting, stated unequivocally that the DOT will not pay for any parking-related changes to the project.

Therefore, be it resolved: That the Community Board is primarily concerned with the safety of our neighbors, and is convinced that the retaining wall is a danger to passersby. We support the reconstruction of the retaining wall; and further,

Be it Resolved: that the Community Board is extremely concerned about the loss of 63 parking spaces for 14 months and strongly urges that the DDC and the DOT and responsible elected representatives work together to fully mitigate this tremendous loss of parking space.

Vote:

Board: 4-0-1

Public: Majority voted in favor