

COMMUNITY PLANNING FELLOWSHIP, 2015-2016

Manhattan Community Board 3
Chinatown Pedestrian Circulation Study

Study Area: East Broadway between Kimlau Square and Rutgers Street

Project Description: East Broadway is one of the most heavily trafficked and congested commercial corridors in Chinatown. Retail stores, sidewalk displays, street vendors, interstate bus loading/unloading, and sidewalk furniture (newspaper boxes, muni meters, etc.) heavily constrict pedestrian movement within the study area. The *Chinatown Pedestrian Circulation Study* will analyze existing conditions within the study area and propose recommendations for improving pedestrian circulation. The project will also survey how pedestrian accessibility on sidewalks is impacted with concern for seniors and mobility disabled.

Project Goals:

1. Identify challenges and opportunities for improving pedestrian circulation on East Broadway.
2. Research feasibility and potential funding sources for widening sidewalk within study area in order to better accommodate pedestrian traffic.
3. Locate opportunities for creating more navigable sidewalk space (e.g. relocating / removing sidewalk furniture or improving interstate bus loading within the study area).
4. Determine if business vendors using sidewalk within the study area are operating in compliance with New York City permitting laws.
5. Identify locations within study area that do not have pedestrian ramps and are therefore not wheelchair accessible.

Data Sources: NYC Department of City Planning, NYC Department of Transportation, NYC Open Data, NYC Pluto Data, site visits and surveying within the study area, academic articles, news articles, case studies, resident interviews, NYC Department of Consumer Affairs, The Village Alliance, Transportation Alternatives, Streetsblog NYC.

Timeline:

Phase 1 – Literature Review & Preliminary Data Collection

- Gather data on physical dimensions of East Broadway within the study area, including street, sidewalk, and moving/bike/parking lane widths.
- Conduct literature review to determine existing best practices for relieving sidewalk congestion.
- Conduct research about NYC vendor permitting process/regulations.
- Research the planning/implementation process of the 1998 sidewalk widening of Eighth Street in the West Village and any potential applicability for the study.

Deliverable: November 10, 2015: Summary of existing physical conditions of East Broadway and literature review findings. Particular focus should be paid to the elements of pedestrian circulation studies conducted in other neighborhoods/cities and their applicability to East Broadway.

Phase 2 – Fieldwork

- Conduct walkthroughs on East Broadway.
- Identify impediments to pedestrian movement within the study area.
- Identify potential solutions and challenges to improving pedestrian circulation.
- Pinpoint locations of interstate bus facilities and identify potential alternative locations/scenarios for bus loading and unloading.
- Consult with NYC Department of Consumer Affairs to determine which vendors within study area are operating legally/illegally.
- Conduct field survey of sidewalk amenities and clutter.
- Conduct a field survey of existing businesses and vendors.
- If possible, conduct interviews with local business owners and residents to determine their thoughts and suggestions for improving pedestrian circulation and challenges to pedestrian movement on East Broadway.
- Identify pedestrian accessibility concerns and potential solutions.

Deliverable, December 30, 2015: Short report summarizing fieldwork and interviews. Excel databases and maps of sidewalk furniture, businesses and vendors within study area.

Phase 3 – Planning

- Determine feasibility of widening sidewalk within study area.
- Develop alternative street configuration scenarios (e.g. eliminating on-street parking or relocating bike lanes onto parallel streets in order to accommodate sidewalk widening).
- Develop proposals for reconfiguring, removing, or consolidating street amenities to free up sidewalk space.
- Identify potential sites for “street seats” and other alternative ideas for adding sidewalk space.
- Pinpoint potential locations for neckdowns.
- Identify opportunities and develop strategies for educating and encouraging noncompliant street vendors to conform to permitting laws.
- Develop recommendations for short- and long-term projects to help improve pedestrian circulation.
- Identify next steps necessary to implement the various pedestrian circulation improvement proposals.

Deliverable, January 22, 2016: Short report summarizing ideas and alternative scenarios.

Phase 4 – Final Report

Final Report Contents:

- Executive Summary
- Description of study area
- Project goals
- Existing Conditions – sidewalk, businesses, vendors
- Challenges/Opportunities
- Case studies – Pedestrian circulation studies & best practices from other cities

- Recommendations – short-term, long-term, next steps
- Supporting graphics, maps, Excel database tables

Deliverable, May 6, 2016: Final report summarizing findings and delivering recommendations.

Deliverable, May/June (to be determined): Short presentation of findings and recommendations to full community board / longer presentation to committee.