



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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CHRISTINE BERTHET
Chair

Jesse Bodine
District Manager

October 27, 2015

NYC BID Association
c/o Hudson Yards/Hell's Kitchen Alliance
412 West 42nd Street
New York, NY 10036

The Street Vendor Project of the Urban Justice Center
40 Rector Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10006

City Council Member Corey Johnson
250 Broadway, Suite 1804
New York, NY 10007

Re: Proposal by the NYC BID Association for study of the effect of lifting the ban on additional Street Vending permits and licenses

Dear NYC BID Association, Street Vendor Project and Councilmember Johnson:

Manhattan Community Board #4 appreciates the presentations made by both the NYC BID Association and the several local street vendors (through the Street Vendor Project) to the Transportation Planning Committee regarding the likely upcoming legislation to lift the cap on Street Vending licenses and permits and to reactivate the NYC Vendor Review Panel. We understand the problems presented by the cap and the prevention of any street vending in several areas and believe these proposals should be studied. We also agree with the NYC BID Association that these proposals, as well as alternatives to addressing these issues, should be studied by a broad range of potentially affected groups in advance of legislative proposals.

Manhattan Community Board #4 appreciates the long history of street vending in NYC and its role in empowering immigrants and U.S. veterans (who have priority for receiving licenses) as well as being a part of NYC street life. We also appreciate that the limit on vending permits, unchanged since the early 1980's, has led to a "black market" of vending permits costing as much as \$20,000/year and substantial illegal street vending. The lack of a legislatively mandated

Street Vendor Review Panel for the last 15 years has left restrictions on vending in any C4, C5, or C6 zoning districts or between 2nd Avenue and 9th Avenue between West 30th Street and West 55th Street, parts of lower Manhattan, and on other streets at various dates and times, creating additional pressure on surrounding areas, including substantial portions of CB4. We appreciate how the myriad of requirements and restrictions, and related extra costs, create hardship for many of street vendors - as pointed out by the long-term neighborhood based vendors who presented to the Transportation Committee.

However, we are also concerned, as pointed out by the NYC BID Association (an Association of the 72 BIDS in NYC), that lifting the existing cap will place additional pressure on already overcrowded sidewalks, affect (both positively and negatively) the ambiance of neighborhood retail corridors and have other unintended consequences. Reactivating the Street Vendor Review Panel to add and/or remove location restrictions and/or legislative proposals to change restricted streets should be done with thought and include study on affected areas and in an inclusive manner.

We encourage City Council members to consult with organizations such as the NYC BID Association, the Street Vendor project, pedestrian and cyclist advocates, economic development experts, community and block associations and Community Boards in drafting legislative remedies to the problems presented by the black market in vendor licenses and the lack of flexibility in the definition of existing vending restricted areas. We encourage the Council to both look at existing studies, as well as request new research, to ensure a fair and balanced approach.


We also encourage the two organizations who presented to the Transportation Planning Committee – The Street Vendors Project and the NYC BID Association, who both have important and unique perspectives and constituencies related to street vending – to begin an active dialogue to define some of the issues that may require study and to come up with ideas for reform.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Christine Berthet
Chair



Ernest Modarelli
Co-Chair, Transportation
Planning Committee



Jay Marcus
Co-Chair, Transportation
Planning Committee