



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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Eleazar Bueno, Chairperson
Ebenezer Smith, District Manager

April 29, 2021

Hon. Corey Johnson
NYC Council Speaker Corey Johnson,
City Hall Office
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez
Council Member
250 Broadway, suite 1763
New York, NY 10007

Re: Asking that the New York City Council designate W. 169th Street & Broadway "Coogan's Way."

Dear Speaker Johnson, and Council Member Rodriguez:

Please be advised that Community Board 12, Manhattan, passed a resolution with 35 votes in favor, 6 opposed, 6 abstentions, 1 not voting, at its Tuesday, April 27, 2021, General Meeting, asking that the New York City Council designate W. 169th Street & Broadway "Coogan's Way."

Whereas: Coogan's Bar & Restaurant, on Broadway & West 169th Street, opened for business on Halloween 1985. During its 35 years, Coogan's was a beloved neighborhood institution and one of the mainstays of life in Washington Heights. Coogan's represented the best of what New York aspires to be: inclusive, diverse, and egalitarian. It was a bulwark against tribalism and prejudice.

Whereas: The warm atmosphere at Coogan's built trust where there had once been suspicion. It offered an under-resourced neighborhood a venue for all of life's celebrations, for moments one needed a quiet drink by yourself, and everything in between. Over the decades, Coogan's turned countless strangers into lifelong friends, many memorialized on Coogan's walls where one found the neighborhood's history in a living, evolving photo album of the community it served.

Whereas: In the challenging years of the late 1980s and early 1990s, when Washington Heights suffered the city's highest crime rates, Coogan's was a refuge where those who were trying to improve life in the neighborhood could gather and collaborate. Police officers, public officials, community board members, neighborhood groups and activists all frequented Coogan's. During the civil unrest that shook the neighborhood in July 1992, Coogan's stayed open 24 hours offering a place of rest and respite.

Whereas: Coogan's supported numerous organizations and events throughout the years. They sponsored the Police Officer Michael J. Buczek Little League; they supported Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation's annual Brides March, a demonstration against domestic violence; the Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance Uptown Arts Stroll, a month-long performing and visual arts showcase; Dave Crenshaw's Uptown Dreamers program for neighborhood schoolchildren; Incarnation Children's Center for H.I.V. positive orphans; the annual Hike the Heights event, which promoted the use and care of neighborhood parks. In a final act of support, after its closing, Coogan's raised over \$120,000 through, and with United Way, distributed \$5,000 grants to over 20 small businesses.

Hon. Corey Johnson, Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez

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Whereas: In 1999, Coogan's established its own signature event: the annual Salsa, Blues, and Shamrocks 5K Race, which brought thousands of runners from around the region to the neighborhood and turned the streets of Washington Heights into a carnival.

Whereas: Coogan's was not only a community hub; it was a successful small business that over the years employed hundreds of local residents, supporting neighborhood families with living wages. For many young people in Washington Heights, a job at Coogan's was their first. Peter Walsh, Dave Hunt and Tess O'Connor McDade watched with pride as their former busboys, bartenders, and waitresses went on to careers in every imaginable field. Even as they shuttered the business for good, the three owners worked with vendors to generate sufficient cash to meet an additional payroll for its employees.

Whereas: Coogan's helped connect Washington Heights to the wider world. Nobel Prize-winning scientists and distinguished scholars from Columbia University and renowned physicians from New York-Presbyterian Hospital dined there. The long association between Coogan's and the Washington Heights Armory made it the world's number one runners' bar. Collegiate runners from all over the country filled the dining room every week during the indoor track season, and at celebrations following the Millrose Games and the Fifth Avenue Mile, Olympic-caliber athletes would sing karaoke at Coogan's.

Whereas: From its earliest years, Coogan's fostered the arts in Washington Heights. The restaurant's Gallery Room showcased the work of local artists. There were poetry readings, book signings, theatrical performances, and music of all kinds, from doo-wop to jazz to gospel and rock 'n' roll. "Hamilton" creator Lin-Manuel Miranda celebrated birthdays at Coogan's, freestyling with friends and family at his table.

Whereas: When, in 2018, the owners of Coogan's faced a rent increase that would have put them out of business, the community rallied to save the restaurant. Dave, Tess, and Peter, responded with the following message printed on a banner above the restaurant's entrance:

*SAVED BY A NEIGHBORHOOD NURTURED BY A COMMUNITY OPEN TO THE WORLD WE ARE
HUMBLED AND FULL OF YOUR LOVE.*

Resolved: To honor the unique place that was Coogan's – one of true community, communal spirit - and its enduring legacy, Community Board 12 Manhattan asks that the New York City Council designate W. 169th Street & Broadway "Coogan's Way."

Sincerely,



Eleazar Bueno
Chairperson

cc:

Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Jumaane Williams, Public Advocate
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Comptroller
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, Congressman

Hon. Robert Jackson, State Senator
Hon. Brian Benjamin, State Senator
Hon. Carmen De La Rosa, Assembly Member
Hon. Al Taylor, Assembly Member
Hon. Mark Levine, Council Member



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Ebenezer Smith, District Manager

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Hon. Margaret Forgiione
Acting Commissioner
NYC Department of Transportation
55 Water Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10041

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

Re: Requesting a pilot of Henry Hudson Parkway / Greenway and consideration of permanent Manhattan – Bronx Greenway connection

Dear Commissioner Forgiione and Commissioner Silver:

At the General Meeting on Tuesday, April 27, 2021, with a vote of 35 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, 1 no voting, Community Board 12 Manhattan, passed a resolution requesting New York City DOT and Department of Parks & Recreation investigate a temporary solution, described below, to the problem of bike access during the Greenway closure as a pilot during the Greenway repair project, between W 180th and Dyckman Street; and requesting New York City DOT and New York State Department of Transportation, review the HHP Greenway concept from W 180th – Henry Hudson Bridge as a permanent enhancement to the Greenway connection as part of the Empire State Trail.

- Whereas: A bike and pedestrian path currently runs along the West Side of Manhattan, and north of the George Washington Bridge (GBW), runs adjacent to the Henry Hudson Parkway (HHP) as far as Dyckman (the Greenway); and,
- Whereas: The Greenway on the west side is part of the Empire State Trail, which extends through New York State to the border with Canada; and,
- Whereas: The section of the Greenway roughly north of W 181st Street has one dramatically narrow section and is also in need of critical repairs to the retaining wall. NYC Parks will be closing this section of the Greenway to make necessary repairs later in 2021; and,
- Whereas: There are no north/south protected bike lanes in CB12, and few north-south bike routes north of W 190th Street, making this the only option for travel between the GWB and Dyckman without sharing the space with vehicles; consequently, NYC Parks is working with NYC DOT to identify an alternative route for cyclists during the construction period; and,
- Whereas: Bronx / Manhattan bicycle connections are few, and considered sub-par. The Henry Hudson Bridge is quite difficult to access via Inwood Hill Park (and includes a challenging up and down a staircase to cross a bridge over Amtrak tracks). Poor conditions for cyclists on Broadway make the Broadway Bridge a poor option for all but the most intrepid bikers.
- Whereas: The Henry Hudson Parkway (HHP) is a New York State DOT highway that runs through Fort Washington Park, Fort Tryon Park, and Inwood Hill Park. It is maintained along with New York City DOT and New York City Parks. The Henry Hudson Bridge is operated by MTA Bridges and Tunnels; and,

Hon. Margaret Forgione

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- Whereas: A CB12 resident conceived of a temporary solution to the problem of bike access during the Greenway closure, that would - much like the bike path on the Harlem River Driveway - utilize the left-hand lane of the Henry Hudson Parkway to allow cyclists to travel from roughly W 180th to Dyckman Street. This concept could be implemented primarily with jersey barriers, and as such, should be both a relatively low-cost solution, and one that would be fairly quick to implement; and,
- Whereas: The HHP was originally a four-lane road, and what data is available indicates that the current levels of vehicle traffic are comfortably served by two lanes.
- Whereas: The HHP Greenway proposal could address both a near term need during Greenway closure from 181st to Dyckman, as well as address the problems associated with current Manhattan / Bronx connections at the Henry Hudson and Broadway bridges; and so be it,
- Resolved: Community Board 12, Manhattan requests New York City DOT and Department of Parks & Recreation investigate this concept as a pilot during the Greenway repair project, between W 180th and Dyckman Street; and be it further,
- Resolved: Community Board 12, Manhattan requests New York City DOT and New York State Department of Transportation, review the HHP Greenway concept from W 180th – Henry Hudson Bridge as a permanent enhancement to the Greenway connection as part of the Empire State Trail.

Sincerely,



Eleazar Bueno
Chairperson

cc: Hon. Edward F. Pincar Jr. Manhattan Borough
Commissioner
Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor
Hon. Jumaane Williams Public Advocate
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Comptroller
Hon. Gale Brewer, Borough President
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, Congressman

Hon. Robert Jackson, State Senator
Hon. Brian Benjamin, State Senator
Hon. Al Taylor, Assembly Member
Hon. Carmen De La Rosa, Assembly Member
Hon. Ydanis Rodríguez, Council Member
Hon. Mark Levine, Council Member