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COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

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Greenwich Village □ Little Italy □ SoHo □ NoHo □ Hudson Square □ Chinatown □ Gansevoort Market

March 24, 2021

Ed Pincar Jr.
Manhattan Borough Commissioner
NYC Department of Transportation
59 Maiden Lane
New York, NY 10038

Dear Commissioner Pincar:

At its Full Board meeting March 18, 2021, Community Board #2, adopted the following resolution:

Resolution in support of the Meatpacking Business Improvement District (“Meatpacking BID”) Pedestrian Oriented District (“POD”): Enhanced Open Streets Restaurants (“OSR”) and Open Streets Program

Whereas

State of the Open Streets Restaurants Program: Temporary and Permanent

1. Mayoral Executive Order No. 153¹ and City Council Int 2127-2020² set the expiration of the City’s current outdoor dining program to September 30, 2021 (self-certified, temporary sidewalk seating and self-certified roadway seating), and set the replacement of the current outdoor dining program with a permanent program allowing for the use of roadway seating as outdoor dining areas;
2. The City’s guidelines for the permanent outdoor dining program, allowing for the permanent use of roadway seating as outdoor dining areas, have not been established;

Key Learnings from the Open Streets Program

3. Open Streets are not successful unless they are actively managed, and when Open Streets lack management it leads to drivers disregarding barriers and/or speeding down an open street, endangering pedestrians and those dining outside;

Meatpacking BID’s History with the Current DOT Open Streets Restaurants and Open Streets Programs:

4. The Meatpacking BID is a DOT partner in the current Open Streets and Open Streets Restaurants (OSR) programs (with three existing street closures in CB2 and one street closure outside the district) and the

¹ Office of the Mayor Emergency Executive Order No. 153: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/home/downloads/pdf/executive-orders/2020/eo-153.pdf>

² City Council Bill Int 2127-2020: <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4647999&GUID=8A4B065C-C372-4797-A38E-FEF39C3C02D2&Options=ID|Text|&Search=outdoor+dining>

BID intends to include these streets as part of their proposed Enhanced Open Streets Restaurants and Open Streets Programs:

- a. Gansevoort Street from Ninth Avenue to Washington Street (CB2)
 - b. West 13th Street from Ninth Avenue to Washington Street (CB2)
 - c. Little West 12th Street from Ninth Avenue to Washington Street (CB2)
 - d. Ninth Avenue (Westernmost lanes) from West 15th Street to West 14th Street (CB4);
5. The Meatpacking BID currently employs both a sanitation crew and a public safety crew that handle the opening/closure of the French barricades (Meatpacking BID Sanitation Crew) and monitoring of the Open Streets (Meatpacking BID Public Safety Crew). The BID plans to expand the level of monitoring service provided by engaging a more pedestrian-management-focused contractor;

Introduction of the Meatpacking BID's Enhanced Open Streets Restaurants and Open Streets Programs

6. The Meatpacking BID's plan for a Pedestrian Oriented District: Enhanced Open Streets Restaurants and Open Streets Program offers an excellent opportunity to provide a safe, attractive, vibrant and less traffic-congested environment that serves businesses, residents and visitors in the community, while also evaluating and improving features as they are in use and acting as a pilot program from which certain aspects may serve as examples of potential for betterment to other communities;

Key Points from the Meatpacking BID's Enhanced Open Streets Restaurants and Open Streets Program

7. The Meatpacking BID is working with DOT to get a past CB2 request³ implemented, which is to reverse the traffic on 13th Street at Ninth Avenue, creating an eastbound traffic flow on 13th Street from Ninth Avenue to Eighth Avenue;
8. In addition to the current Open Streets listed in No. 4 above for inclusion in the Meatpacking BID's Enhanced Open Streets Restaurants and Open Streets Programs, the following street closures were introduced and identified as "Potential OSR block" closures (see the "i.e." in the parentheses below and the yellow lines in the map below), however, at this time the Meatpacking BID does not necessarily intend to close these streets:
- a. West 13th Street from Washington Street to 10th Avenue (i.e., closure of West 13th from 9th Avenue to 10th Avenue) (CB2)
 - b. Little West 12th from Washington Street to 10th Avenue to (i.e., closure of Little West 12th Street from 9th Avenue to 10th Avenue) (CB2)
 - c. Gansevoort Street from Washington Street to 10th Avenue and Gansevoort from Hudson Street to Ninth Avenue / Greenwich Street (i.e., closure of Gansevoort from Hudson to 10th Avenue) (CB2)
 - d. West 15th Street from 9th Avenue to 10th Avenue (which will potentially direct more cars into CB2 via Hudson) (CB4)

³ CB2 February 2009 Full Board Minutes, pages 24-25 https://cbmanhattan.cityofnewyork.us/cb2/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/downloads/pdf/fullboard_2009/02_february_2009.pdf



Meatpacking District Map: Exhibit A

The **green** lines on the map are also the current streets that the Meatpacking BID has managed and continues to manage under the current DOT Open Streets Restaurants and Open Streets Program.

Traffic and For-Hire Vehicles

9. Comprehensive traffic studies have long been a part of potential material changes to the Meatpacking District as evidenced by CB2 resolutions in October 2006, November 2006, July 2007, February 2008, and February 2009 (See Appendix);
10. The traffic study provided in the February 24, 2021 presentation was completed in July 2020 during the Covid-19 lockdown and while the results correlated to a study done a few years ago in terms of types of vehicles in the District during different times of the day it is not an accurate representation of the impacts of these street closures on the anticipated traffic and pedestrian flow once the State of New York's quarantine is lifted and there is a return of tourists to the District;
11. Concerns have been voiced about the diversion of vehicular traffic – with the closure of the current Open Streets (No. 4) and the Proposed OSR blocks (No. 8) – to adjacent neighborhood streets and the need for dropoff/pickup locations to prevent vehicular entry that can't be accommodated with the new street pattern and would cause congestion;
12. The Meatpacking BID is actively in talks with Lyft and plans to connect with Uber in aligning these for-hire-vehicle (FHV) apps with a designated dropoff/pickup point for drivers on the respective platforms, and while this will address some of the for-hire vehicles, it will not necessarily work in diverting yellow cabs;
13. 14th Street is now an Express Busway between 9th Avenue and 3rd Avenue, which means that between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m., only buses and trucks have been allowed to make trips between 9th and 3rd Avenues, with all other vehicles limited to staying on the street only until the next right turn. If approaching from the north on 9th Avenue, turning west onto 14th Street is prohibited;

Barriers

14. Given that the Meatpacking BID is wholly in the Gansevoort Historic District and partially in the Greenwich Village Historic District, the aesthetics and materials of the proposed hexagonal barriers will be reviewed by the CB2 Landmarks Committee on Thursday, March 11, 2021, and are not part of this resolution;

Seating Accessibility

15. While specific seating options for the proposed Pedestrian Oriented District were not part of the Meatpacking BID's presentation⁴, there are seats illustrated in the background of renderings on page 7 in the presentation which show seats similar to what the BID uses now (i.e., seats with backs) as well as low, backless seating with planters on pages 3 and 13. There was not an indication that the BID would be adding additional seating to the POD. It was communicated to the Meatpacking BID that if any additional seating is planned in the future, that the seats should have backs and generally be taller in height to accommodate anyone with physical challenges, such as older people and those with disabilities;
16. It is understood that the tables and table seating on the sidewalks and in the roadbeds used exclusively for table service by restaurant operators are provided solely for the exclusive use of those restaurants under the Open Restaurants program for sidewalk and roadbed dining and are not part of this proposal;

Area Considerations

17. One block south of the Meatpacking District is a highly populated residentially-zoned area with narrow streets and no stop lights, an area that has absorbed many of the negative impacts of the destination area that the Meatpacking District became before the pandemic;
18. While this residential area is outside the boundaries of the Meatpacking BID, residents spoke out in favor of the proposed street closures so long as the Meatpacking BID makes a concerted effort to proactively protect the quality of life of residents of this area including traffic impacts and work with them for the duration Enhanced Open Streets Restaurants and Open Streets Programs;
19. The following venues are anticipated to have a material impact on the pedestrian and traffic flow in the Meatpacking District:
 - a. One new hotel opening in the area: Restoration Hardware Hotel on Gansevoort Street between 9th Avenue and Washington Street (anticipated to open Fall 2021/ Early 2022). This brings the total number of hotels in a concentrated 6-block area to four (4) (Gansevoort Hotel, The Standard, Soho House (Member Club & Hotel) and the still being constructed Restoration Hardware Hotel);
 - b. City Winery (Hudson River Park Pier 57 between 14th and 15th Streets) opened October 2020. The roof will be a large landscaped public park and will host Tribeca Film Festival June 2021 and the ground floor will have a public marketplace and restaurant, indoor and outdoor seating areas. Expansion of Google offices at Pier 57;
 - c. 60-74 Gansevoort Street – Match Group (Tinder, Hinge parent company) new headquarters;
 - d. Little Island (Hudson River Park Pier 55 between 14th and 13th Streets) is anticipated to open at the end of Spring 2021 including a crosswalk opening at 13th Street. The roof will be a large landscaped public park and will host Tribeca Film Festival June 2021;
 - e. Gansevoort Peninsula (Hudson River Park Pier 52 between Gansevoort and Little West 12th Street), which is slated to open Spring 2023;

⁴ Meatpacking BID Presentation of proposed Pedestrian Oriented District: Enhanced Open Streets Restaurants and Open Streets Programs, February 24, 2021: https://cbmanhattan.cityofnewyork.us/cb2/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2021/02/EnhancedOSR_CB2_sml.pdf

- f. The Whitney's David Hammons *Day's End* sculpture opening May 2021 at the southern end of Gansevoort Peninsula;
- g. Hyundai / Genesis event space, restaurant and car showroom at 40 10th Avenue (corner of 13th Street);

20. Unusual to other parts of the City, there is no way out of the District for vehicles going north until they reach 10th Avenue at 14th Street, and the only way one gets there in a vehicle from the District is by transiting north on 9th Avenue to a very congested, highly pedestrianized intersection at 14th Street where all vehicles are required to turn westbound. This is why it is critical to reverse the traffic on 13th Street to eastbound on 13th Street from 9th Avenue to 8th Avenue;

Therefore be it resolved that Manhattan Community Board 2 (CB2) supports the Meatpacking BID's Enhanced Open Streets Restaurants and Open Streets Programs, as recommended by CB2 above and agreed to by the Meatpacking BID, as a one-year Demonstration Project of the proposed plan that will act as a pilot to test the above-described proposed application and make modifications where necessary, while observing how this works in all seasons, in particular as tourists and visitors return to the Meatpacking District post-Covid;

Be it further resolved

Reporting on Demonstration Project

- 1. CB2 asks the Meatpacking BID to present to the Board in six months, giving updates on the operations and experience of the Pedestrian Oriented District and Enhanced Open Streets Program including the usage, improvements, modifications, challenges, reception, etc., and following that, present again to the Board in six-month intervals thereafter, including a comprehensive review at the end of the one-year Demonstration Project, which should be prior to the Spring 2022 season;

Closing of Potential OSR Blocks

- 2. Prior to closing any of the Potential OSR Blocks, the Meatpacking BID should present a traffic analysis showing impacts of any Potential OSR block closures on the immediate Meatpacking BID area and the residential area to the south. The Potential OSR block closures are listed directly and are designated by yellow lines on the map in No. 8:
 - a. West 13th from 10th Avenue to Washington Street;
 - b. West 13th from 9th Avenue to Hudson Street;
 - c. Little West 12th from 10th Avenue to Washington Street;
 - d. Gansevoort Street from 10th Avenue to Washington Street;
 - e. Gansevoort Street from Greenwich Street to Hudson Street;
 - f. West 15th from 10th Avenue to 9th Avenue (while not located in CB2, the impact of this closure affects entry and exit into the Meatpacking District);

Traffic and For-Hire Vehicles

- 3. CB2 requests that the Potential OSR blocks (No. 8) are studied with the results of these closures presented as part of the two (2) six-month updates requested above i.e. studied on days/evenings when there are multiple events happening simultaneously at different venues listed in Area Considerations (No.17-20);
- 4. CB2 urges that specific locations for dropoff/pickup spots and taxi/FHV stands be established at key points outside the area of central activity to discourage vehicular entry while allowing for convenient walking access;
- 5. CB2 recommends that once locations for dropoff/pickup spots and taxi/FHV stands have been selected that the Meatpacking BID work to encourage its member businesses (venues and restaurants) to acquaint their customers with the selected dropoff/pickup spots and encourage their use via a PR campaign;

6. CB2 continues to support its recommendation from February 2009⁵ that DOT reverse the traffic on 13th Street at Ninth Avenue which would create an eastbound traffic flow on 13th Street from Ninth Avenue to Eighth Avenue, adding speed humps, if necessary, to control traffic speed by the school;

Barriers

7. CB2 strongly supports the BID's plans to expand the level of monitoring service to ensure regular attention to both monitoring activity and opening and closing needs;

Area Considerations

8. CB2 strongly recommends that the Meatpacking BID work in concert with the residential neighbors directly south of the District in mitigating potential issues during the implementation of the program to ensure it is a success for all who are impacted.

Appendix of Past Community Board 2 Resolutions and Attachments

- 2006-10 CB2 Resolution in Support of Co-Sponsoring Proposed Traffic Study in Gansevoort Area with CB 4 Traffic Committee;
- 2006-11 CB2 Letter Resolution in Support of Co-Sponsoring Proposed Traffic Study in Gansevoort Area with CB 4 Traffic Committee;
- 2007-07 CB2 Letter Resolution in Support of New York City Department of Transportation Proposal to Re-Design Ninth Avenue Between 16th and 14th Streets;
- 2007-07 CB2 Letter Resolution in Support of Community Plan to Re-Claim Public Space and Address Pedestrian Safety and Vehicular Congestion Issues on 9th Avenue between Gansevoort Plaza and 16th Street;
- 2008-02 CB2 Letter Resolution in support of proposed parking regulations changes in conjunction with Greater Gansevoort Urban Improvement Project proposed changes in the Gansevoort Market neighborhood;
- 2008-02 CB2 Letter Resolution in support of Greater Gansevoort Urban Improvement Project proposed changes in the Gansevoort Market neighborhood;
- 2009-02 CB2 Resolution (No. 2) in Response to the community input at the Gansevoort Market Traffic Project Public Forum on January 13, 2009.

**Vote: Passed, with 43 Board Members in favor
1 Recusal (D. Raftery)**

Please advise us of any decision or action taken in response to this resolution.

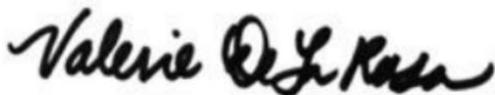
Sincerely,



Carter Booth, Chair
Community Board #2, Manhattan



Shirley Secunda, Chair
Traffic & Transportation Committee
Community Board #2, Manhattan



Valerie De La Rosa, Chair
Reopening Working Group
Community Board #2, Manhattan

⁵ CB2 February 2009 Full Board Minutes, pages 24-25 https://cbmanhattan.cityofnewyork.us/cb2/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/downloads/pdf/fullboard_2009/02_february_2009.pdf

CB/EM

c: Hon. Jerrold L. Nadler, Congressman
Hon. Brad Hoylman, NY State Senator
Hon. Deborah J. Glick, NY Assembly Member
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Corey Johnson, Council Speaker
Jeffrey LeFrancois, Meatpacking BID
Evan Sweet, Meatpacking BID