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COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

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March 28, 2022

Edward 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 24, 2022, Community Board #2, adopted the following resolution:

Resolution in response to proposal by DOT to install a protected bike lane on Centre St./Cleveland Pl. and to upgrade the existing bike lane on Lafayette St., from Canal St. to Prince St.

Whereas the NYC Dept. of Transportation (DOT) presented a proposal for protected bicycle lanes on both Centre (continuing on Cleveland Pl.) and Lafayette Sts. going from Canal St. to Prince St. This would be a continuation of protected bike lanes already established btw. the Brooklyn Bridge and Worth St. and approved but not yet installed from Worth to Canal Sts., with plans to continue this network up to Union Sq. The need for a protected bike lane directly north from the Brooklyn Bridge has long been recognized, and with a new 2-way bike lane on the Brooklyn Bridge, bicycle traffic from the bridge into Manhattan has increased, which DOT is looking to safely accommodate along with current unprotected bicyclists along those Lafayette and Centre St. corridors; and

Whereas the DOT plan proposes:

Centre St. from Canal St. north to Broome St

- Installation of a parking-protected bike lane along the west curb. (6 ft. bike lane, 3 ft. buffer, 10 ft. floating parking), with one 11 ft. travel lane, and a 9 ft. parking lane along the east curb.
- Installation of pedestrian refuge islands at each intersection to reduce e-w, w-e crossing distances.

Cleveland Pl. from Broome St. north to Spring St.

- Installation of a 6 ft. bike lane along the west curb (alongside Petrosino Sq. from Kenmare to Spring) with a 3 ft. buffer, then a 10 ft. travel lane and a 10-foot turn/parking lane.
- Maintain open restaurants on the east curb.

Lafayette St. from Canal St. north to Spring St.

- Installation of a 6 ft. parking-protected bike lane along the east curb (alongside Petrosino Sq. from Kenmare to Spring), replacing the existing buffered bike lane, with a 3 ft. buffer, 8 ft. floating parking, with two 10 ft. travel lanes, and a 9 ft. parking lane along the west curb.

- Installation of pedestrian refuge islands at each intersection to reduce e-w, w-e crossing distances.

Lafayette St. from Spring St. to Prince St.

- Upgrade the existing buffered bike lane (currently one-way northbound) to a two-way protected lane on the west curb.
- The northbound protected bike lane from Cleveland Pl. to Spring St. would continue to the existing protected bike lane on Lafayette north to Prince St.
- A new southbound protected bike lane from Prince to Spring St. would connect to the Lafayette St. protected lane south of Spring St. allowing for east to west crosstown bicyclists on Prince to head south on Lafayette (while west to east bicyclists on Spring already can head south).
- Dimensions: Two 4 ft. (floating) parking protected bike lanes, a 3 ft. buffer, one 10 ft. travel lane, and an 18 ft. travel/parking lane.
- Installation of pedestrian refuge islands facilitated by removing 3 parking spaces that also allows for left turn treatments.

Whereas there's a great deal of variation from block to block among the streets addressed by the DOT proposal, such as in dimensions, uses, character, activities, modal split, movements, parking and people. No one size fits all, and a more extensive, in-depth look at these settings is required to determine the needs and challenges of each of them beyond the very necessary protected bicycle lanes, to provide safety not only for bicyclists but for all others using these streets, including pedestrians and the physically challenged, office workers and laborers, residents, tourists, children at play and people doing everyday chores, as well as all types of motorists, to avoid piecemeal solutions that produce more dangerous outcomes than before and instead work to create a balanced environment that safely serves all users; and

Whereas community members all recognize the importance of having protected bike lanes and they support their installation, but also have identified conditions that must be considered and resolved before these lanes can be installed successfully on Centre, Lafayette and Cleveland, among them:

- Centre St. btw. Canal and Grand Sts. has several wholesale food purveyors: a meat market at 208 Centre btw. Hester and Grand, a seafood one at 206 Centre, and one for vegetables at 216 Centre, all doing extensive trucking, loading and unloading much of the day, starting at 5 am at least through mid-afternoon. There is also a UPS Store located at 217 Centre St., that picks up packages several times a day until 7 pm on weekdays and 5 pm Saturdays. With one lane, this heavy truck traffic, lacking spaces to park or double-park, will back up along with other plentiful truck traffic going through there, hindering the advance of all northbound vehicles, including traffic turning east on Kenmare St., already problematic. Trucks also will tend to circle the blocks looking for parking, causing additional air pollution.
- On Centre St. btw. Canal and Broome Sts. outdoor dining sheds operate curbside that it was conveyed might need to relocate to the floating parking area with the proposed single lane configuration. *Community Board 2 Manhattan (CB2) opposes roadway dining in a floating parking lane separated from the curb by a bike lane, because of, as stated in its Permanent Open Restaurants Resolution, Sept. 2021: "...the dangerous conditions posed by service lanes that cross bike lanes and other dangers resulting from crossings through such bike lanes. Allowing roadway cafes to exist across bike lanes severely impedes not only bicyclist safety, but also pedestrian and worker safety...."

- On Cleveland Pl. btw. Broome and Spring Sts. the street becomes exceptionally narrow. Btw. Kenmare and Spring there are several dining sheds at the eastern curb that jut out in the roadbed beyond their legal boundaries, further narrowing the street width and disrupting passage of oncoming traffic that includes not only cars but also the M1 bus and the NYU shuttle bus (both of which stop there at the Spring St. end and are forced to drop off and pick up passengers in the middle of the street) as well as trucks making deliveries (having to double park) and all manner of other vehicles including FHVs, limousines, e-bikes, mopeds and electric scooters (many often illegally taking up curb space for parking that never was allowed) that further congest the shed-constricted street. Dining sheds and unenforced illegal parking now take up the curb space previously used for loading and unloading activities. Current available roadbed widths btw. the edges of the dining sheds (on the east) and the west curb alongside Petrosino Sq., measured by the local community, are 21 ft. at 19 Cleveland Pl., 20 ft. at 21 Cleveland Pl. and 23 ft. at 23 Cleveland Pl., in contrast to the DOT measurement of 29 ft. which fails to reflect the reality of actual street conditions. Turning conflicts on Kenmare St. also need to be worked out to provide adequate space for maneuvering turns into Cleveland Pl.
- On Lafayette St. btw. Kenmare and Spring St. dining sheds line almost the entire western curb, often protruding into the roadbed outside their legal limits. If this outdoor dining were moved to the proposed floating parking lane on the east side of the street, it would present the same hazardous conditions as outdoor dining in a floating parking lane on Centre St., an action CB2 opposes in its Permanent Open Restaurants Resolution, Sept. 2021, as cited above.* An Open Street is designated to operate on Lafayette every day from noon to 11 pm, however, hours are sporadic and not posted, nor are barriers consistently put out. The sponsor, Restaurant Osteria Morini, fails to manage the space, and it is dominated by skateboarders, eliminating any possibility of use by pedestrians, who feel at risk; and

Whereas the community has observed that given existing conditions, there is insufficient space to accommodate both parking-protected bicycle lanes and street bed dining sheds without seriously endangering users of these streets, constricting movement and creating conflicts that would overwhelm and damage the street environment. The majority favor removing the dining sheds now rather than at some later date when a permanent outdoor dining program with a different format is planned, so that space for protected bike lanes can be claimed now; and

Whereas the dining sheds at the eastern curb of Cleveland Pl. btw Kenmare and Spring are located in a No Standing zone where Temporary Open Restaurant rules (along with the proposed Permanent Open Restaurant rules) disallow them, but enforcement has been lax like it has been for other infractions such as taking up unallowed street space, also on Lafayette and Centre Sts. The Temporary Outdoor Dining Siting Requirements provide for revoking or suspending authorization if an establishment is not compliant. With these outdoor dining structures expected to be phased out, and since full indoor dining is now restored, the original need for these temporary areas is disappearing. They were required to be easily moved, and if not, those responsible for their construction should be obliged to remove them as quickly as possible; and

Whereas the Worth St. to Canal St. segment of this project was approved in Sept. 2021 (six months ago), with installation not expected until Spring or Summer 2022, giving leeway to allow for devoting more of the very much needed time to study the proposed Canal to Prince St. segment in a comprehensive manner that takes into account the varied and at times conflicting activities on the

different areas of Cleveland Pl., Centre and Lafayette Sts., such as trucking, loading, unloading, roadbed dining, parking, buses, and all types of vehicular traffic including emergency and crosstown, and how they can co-exist (or not) with protected bike lanes while also sufficiently accommodating pedestrians;

Therefore be it resolved that CB2 supports the installation of a protected bicycle lane on Centre St./Cleveland Pl. and upgrading the existing bike lane on Lafayette St. to a protected lane, from Canal St. to Prince St., including the proposed two-way protected lane on Lafayette St. btw. Spring and Prince and the pedestrian refuge islands at each intersection to reduce e-w, w-e crossing distances if used in conjunction with floating parking. We urge DOT to thoroughly examine the varying conditions and activities on these streets from block to block and analyze in detail the most effective way to protect the bike lane in relation to these conditions and activities, including changes in design and uses; and

Be it further resolved that CB2 cautions that the study area needs to be observed holistically to serve all uses and needs rather than hastily installing a bike lane before considering how it can work in concert with these other activities to create a well-functioning environment for all; and

Be it further resolved that CB2 is aware that DOT has indicated that it will "have to deal with a lot of outdoor structures" and urges DOT to consider removing at least some of these dining structures right now to provide the space needed for the desired protected bike lane in conjunction with serving the other needs and uses on the affected streets; and

Be it further resolved that CB2 recommends that DOT explore other approaches to bike lane protection should shed removal be delayed, such as strong vertical elements like tall metal bollards or a narrow raised curb or (if there's room) a concrete barrier (perhaps with a painted design as has been done before by DOT's public art program) or planters, to allow the room needed for the many other movements on the street. CB2 also advocates sturdy bollards to separate the proposed curbside bike lane on Cleveland Pl. from vehicular traffic and on narrower parts of Centre St.; and

Be it further resolved that should the proposed pedestrian refuge islands be built rather than painted, CB2 would welcome plots with soil in them created by DOT for community gardeners to plant and maintain, similar to those on 6th Ave. above W. 8th St.; and

Be it further resolved that CB2 advises that DOT consult with the many businesses in the study area to determine their needs and get input on their ideas; and

Be it further resolved that CB2 asks that DOT consider paving the Lafayette St. Open Street area (aside from the bike lane) with epoxy gravel or a comparable surface (similar to the shared street surface in the Flatiron District) to supply friction that deters skateboarding; and

Be it finally resolved that CB2 requests that DOT prepare detailed recommendations based on their in-depth findings for overall improvements in concert with the protected bike lane on Cleveland Pl., Lafayette and Centre Sts., including consideration of different block-to-block conditions, and present them at the May meeting of CB2's Traffic and Transportation Committee or as quickly as possible.

Vote: Passed, with 31 Board Members in favor.

5 Against (C. Booth, C. Dignes, D. Raftery, A. Wong)

3 Abstain (R. Kessler, M. Metzger, A. Zeldin)

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

Sincerely,



Jeannine Kiely, Chair
Community Board #2, Manhattan



Shirley Secunda, Chair
Traffic & Transportation
CommitteeCommunity Board
#2, Manhattan

JK/EM

- c: Hon. Jerrold L. Nadler, Congressman
Hon. Nydia M. Velázquez, Congresswoman
Hon. Brian Kavanagh, NYS Senator
Hon. Deborah J. Glick, NYS Assembly Member
Hon. Yuh-Line Niou, NYS Assembly Member
Hon. Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Christopher Marte, Council Member
Hon. Carlina Rivera, Council Member