



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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BURT LAZARIN
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

November 13, 2019

Hon. Gale Brewer
Manhattan Borough President
One Centre Street, 19th Floor S.
New York, NY 10007

Eusebio Formoso
Interim Commissioner
Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications
2 Metro Tech Center, 5th Floor
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Re: LINK NYC Removals on Eighth Avenue

Dear Manhattan Borough President Brewer and Commissioner Formoso,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4), at its November 6th Full Board meeting, voted to support the community's request to remove the following LinkNYC Structures by a vote of 36 in favor, 0 against, 1 abstaining and 0 present but not eligible to vote. These LINKs are all on the west side of Eighth Avenue between West 20th and West 22nd Streets:

211 Eighth Ave - (20th St. - 21st St.)
225 Eighth Ave - (21st St. - 22nd St.)
197 Eighth Ave - (20th St. - 21st St.)
213 Eighth Ave - (20th St. - 21st St.)

The technology, as well as the structures themselves, has become a security concern and constitute a public nuisance as they facilitate illegal activities including drug dealing, loitering, aggressive panhandling and intimidation. The situation developed over the last three years and has become untenable. It is compounded by the presence of a construction shelter and multiple news boxes on the blocks.

The Transportation Planning Committee received numerous testimonies from residents and business owners, including the head of P.S.11's PTA. Many children travel on these two blocks

regularly on their way to and from the school located around the corner on West 21st Street. We also received a letter from NYPD's Tenth Precinct Commanding Officer who had to increase significantly the manpower dedicated to these blocks.

These removals (or possibly relocations) are contemplated in the SRV (services) Attachment to the LINK NYC Franchise Agreement of December 10, 2014¹ as follows:

“2.3. Public Use, Other - The City may inspect the Structures and order the removal, replacement, relocation, or reinstallation of any Structure upon a determination by DoITT in its reasonable discretion, that any of the Structures unreasonably interferes or will unreasonably interfere with the use of a street by the public, constitutes a public nuisance, creates a security concern, or that removal, replacement, relocation, or reinstallation is necessary to address changing conditions. Relocations may also be directed by the City which are not related to changing conditions or security concerns, but these relocations will be limited to no more than 50 per year and replacement locations will be confined to the same community district as the installation that is being removed. If the Franchisee fails to so remove, replace, relocate, or reinstall the Structures as directed by the City, the City may remove, replace, relocate or reinstall such Structures, and the Franchisee shall reimburse the City, or the City shall be able to withdraw from the Security Fund, for all costs and damages incurred by the City.”

We recommend that the City remove the structures. Should removal not be feasible, we request that the charging and phone functions (except for 911) be disabled at these locations.

Sincerely,



Burt Lazarin
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning Committee



Dale Corvino
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning Committee

Enclosures

¹ [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doitt/downloads/pdf/Attachment-SRV-Services-\(REVISED-FINAL-12-10-2014\).pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doitt/downloads/pdf/Attachment-SRV-Services-(REVISED-FINAL-12-10-2014).pdf)

Dear Mr. Burt Lazarin,

Recently, the 10th Precinct has been collaborating with Chelsea residents and businesses to combat quality of life issues on the 8th Avenue corridor from W 18th Street to W 22 Street. I'm grateful for this collaborative effort with the Chelsea community in our shared responsibility to improve the neighborhood.

The community has indicated that combinations of environmental conditions and quality of life issues have created a disorderly atmosphere. These community concerns include: scaffolding that runs the full block, poor lighting under the scaffolding, several linked Wi-Fi towers in a condensed space, and seemingly abandoned newspaper boxes (which some people turnover and use for sitting).

Since August, I'm proud to see and hear about an improvement with the quality of life problems and the 10th Precinct is committed in our continued partnership with the community to fix these issues. I wanted to touch base with you to see if Community Board 4 could provide any assistance, perhaps helping with some of the concerns noted above.

Thanks for your attention regarding this matter. Please feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Captain Kevin J. Coleman
Commanding Officer, 10th Precinct
10th Precinct, NYPD
230 West 20th Street
New York, NY 10011
Office/Desk: (212) 741-0284
Emergency: 911
Email: Kevin.Coleman@nypd.org

Pretente, Janine

From: Jennifer Mallicote <msjennifermallicote@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 16, 2019 7:00 PM
To: Christine Bethet; Pretente, Janine
Subject: Fwd: Linknyc 8th Ave - Letter of Support

Begin forwarded message:

From: Jonathan Panetta <screamingangel@nyc.rr.com>
Date: October 16, 2019 at 2:13:04 PM EDT
To: msjennifermallicote@gmail.com
Subject: Linknyc

To Whom It May Concern,

It has been validated by my neighbors after realizing this myself, that the Linknyc charging stations in Chelsea on 8th Avenue have clearly become a nuisance for the community. Every day, drug addicts, prostitutes and the homeless knock over the outdated free newspaper racks to congregate in front of the charging stations, creating unnecessary havoc on the streets. These unlawful activities have been creating a very hostile and unsafe neighborhood which are clearly encouraged by these useless charging stations. Just yesterday, I saw a man with a needle in his arm passing out in front of a charging station on 8th Avenue as music blared from his charging phone. The whole idea of these charging stations is obviously not practical or necessary, as I have yet to see an everyday average person or tourist use one. In fact, why would a person use something that is now affiliated with being homeless? I myself am frightened to use one as the homeless have become increasingly aggressive, invasive, and verbally abusive in recent years. I have lived in Chelsea for over 26 years and have never witnessed the neighborhood in worse conditions. The neighborhood is constantly filthy and dirty compared to other places in NYC and it's become out of hand. The only reason why I've stayed is because I have a rent stabilized apartment. Once upon a time, Chelsea was a hidden gem tucked away in Manhattan that used to sparkle and thrive. Today, the community I used to know now looks like a bomb went off with no change in sight. I hope that something can be done to bring back the life of this neighborhood before it totally disintegrates, as will the rest of NYC. Please feel free to pass along this letter and to contact me regarding any of these issues.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Panetta
335 West 19th Street #C8
New York, NY 10011
(917)653-7389

Sent from my iPhone

Joshua David
354 West 21st Street
New York, NY 10011
joshuacharlesdavid@gmail.com
(917) 687-7011

Christine Berthet
Dale Corvino
Co-Chairs, Transportation Planning Committee
Manhattan Community Board #4
330 West 42nd Street, 26th Floor
New York, NY 10036

RE: 8th Avenue, 20th – 22nd Street

Dear Co-Chairs Berthet and Corvino,

I write to strongly support my neighbors' request to remove or deactivate some or all of the four LinkNYC wifi kiosks sited on the west side of 8th Avenue, between 20th and 22nd Streets. I also support requests to expedite improvements or removal of sidewalk sheds on those same blocks.

These blocks of 8th Avenue have had public nuisance and crime issues related to the two adult "bookstores" on 8th Avenue, between 20th Street and 21st Streets, for years. Many of my neighbors have witnessed drug dealing and prostitution / solicitation on the sidewalks directly around the doors of these establishments – especially Rainbow Station. I have been told that basement cabins at Rainbow Station are rented for \$12 for 12 hours – which appears to attract a combination of drug dealers, sex-workers, and homeless people to the establishment and to the surrounding sidewalk.

The installation of LinkNYC kiosks on the block several years ago took a moderate public nuisance and crime situation and blew it up exponentially. I walk my dog on these blocks every morning at 6:00 AM, and I regularly see people collapsed in doorways, loitering on the sidewalks, making runs on bicycles kept unlocked and ready to move. While I have not personally witnessed drug-dealing, many of my neighbors have, and I regularly see people huddled in or emerging from basement stairwells on the surrounding side streets, following what appears to be either drug-taking, sex, or both. I have witnessed public urination by members of this group on multiple occasions, as well as disputes involving hand-to-hand assault and screaming threats with broken beer bottles. The 10th precinct has provided their presence on these blocks in recent weeks, but the problem remains. The combination of two all-night adult "bookstores," two all-night delis, four LinkNYC kiosks, newspaper boxes that can be used as furniture around the kiosks, and multiple sidewalk sheds has created a perfect storm of conditions that encourage people to station themselves on these sidewalks for extended periods of time.

While I agree in principle of a policy to help provide wifi and phone-charging services equitably to all New Yorkers, having four LinkNYC kiosks in a two-block stretch of 8th Avenue is creating serious public safety and quality-of-life issues. I ask that the committee do all in its power to hasten the deactivation and/or removal all of the kiosks between 20th and 22nd Street, or at the very least reduce their number.

I've lived in this neighborhood for over 30 years, and I have watched this problem develop gradually over years. We won't be able to eradicate it until the adult "bookstores" are better policed or closed – but an improvement would certainly come from the removal of the kiosks, which has taken a bad situation and made it much, much worse.

I regret that I cannot attend your meeting in person to express these views, and I'm grateful for your consideration of this letter as a substitute for in-person comment.

Best,

Joshua David



To Whom it May Concern,

I'm writing on behalf of Foragers Market and Wine Shop to express our longstanding frustration with the conditions outside our retail space. The presence of the LinkNYC stations on the west side of 8th Avenue, just below 22nd Street, has caused a daily detriment to our business and the quality of life on our corner since they were first installed. The stations, combined with the scaffolding on the building and the presence of newspaper bins converted to furniture by the homeless community, have created an environment that is increasingly untenable. Those who congregate at the stations have been observed not just drinking alcohol but using and dealing drugs and in the past weekend we had to call the police on a gentleman who was yelling at and exposing his genitals to passersby. Obviously this not only detracts from walk-in business but adds to a feeling of discomfort among our staff members. Neither is something we at Foragers wish to tolerate further. If there's anything that can be done to improve the situation – be it the removal of the Link Stations, increased police presence, or any other solution you can recommend – we would greatly appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Drew Harris
Manager/Beverage Director
Foragers Table & Foragers Wines
231 8th Avenue
New York, NY 10011

Pretente, Janine

From: Pamela Wolff <wolff.pamela@gmail.com> on behalf of Pamela Wolff <pamela@angel.net>
Sent: Tuesday, October 15, 2019 7:48 AM
To: Christine Berthet; Jesse Bodine
Cc: Burt Lazarin; Pretente, Janine
Subject: LINK/nyc kiosks

Dear Chair Berthet,

I am unable to attend your committee meeting tomorrow. I write to express my hope that the matter of the four kiosks on the west side of the two blocks of 20th to 22nd Streets is fully aired.

These two blocks bracket the approach to PS11, hence are traveled twice daily by hundreds of school children.

The kiosks have become the site of constant drug dealing, day and night, and the gathering places of dealers and users. I will not provide the committee with the dozens of photographs I have of this activity as I feel it is an abuse of the poor and helpless to exploit such images.

The sidewalk sheds in place covering the entire block and extending into the school street as well as 22nd street provide shelter for the lost souls that are the victims of these dealers. This can only get worse as winter comes.

The derelict newsboxes become furniture at every kiosk.

But the perfect storm of circumstance hinges on the kiosks. If they are gone, or even just disabled, the attraction is removed. That is my ask.

Thank you,

Pamela Wolff
Chelsea resident