



Lowell D. Kern
Chair

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CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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August 5, 2021

Stefan Grybauskas
Street Activity Permit Office
Office of the Mayor of New York City
253 Broadway, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Ed Pincar
Manhattan Borough Commissioner
NYC Department of Transportation
59 Maiden Lane, 37th Floor
New York, NY 10038

Re: Open Streets for Open Culture Program

Dear Mr. Grybauskas and Commissioner Pincar,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) applauds New York City's initiative to use Open Streets space to host various activities and allow cultural groups to set up performances with an expedited permit.

While the program, administered by the Street Activity Permit Office (SAPO) has been very successful, and a lifeline for many cultural groups during the COVID epidemic, certain obstacles remain that prevent a wider and more equitable activation of Open Streets.

Unfortunately, drivers continue to park when an event is planned, even when flyers have been posted. Such parking precludes the installation of the required 15-ft fire lane. NYPD enforcement and towing should be available, as it used to be for streets fairs.

The requirement for block managers to carry insurance is also a major obstacle to small, informal groups and block associations participating in and benefitting from the program. There are currently no insurance requirements for block parties, which are similar in nature. The same treatment should be applied to Open Streets activities.

We are happy to hear that you are drafting a new set of rules for activity permits on Open Streets, including an annual permit similar to Plaza permits. We ask that you incorporate our suggestions, that were voted out of MCB4's July 28th Full Board meeting by 35 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present, not eligible, herein to make the program, safer, more inclusive, and accessible to all.

Sincerely,



Lowell D. Kern
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Christine Berthet
Co-chair
Transportation Planning Committee



Dale Corvino
Co-chair
Transportation Planning Committee

cc: Kyle Gorman, Senior Program Manager, Dept. of Transportation