

CITY OF NEW YORK  
**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**JEFFREY LEFRANCOIS**  
Chair

**JESSE R. BODINE**  
District Manager

February 10, 2022

Melanie La Rocca  
Commissioner  
NYC Department of Buildings  
280 Broadway  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: Sidewalk Sheds**

Dear Commissioner La Rocca,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) thanks members of the Department of Buildings (DOB or “the Department”) for the Department’s August 13, 2021 letter (“August 2021 letter”) providing responses to questions regarding the permitting and oversight of sidewalk sheds. We continue to remain concerned about the number and duration of sidewalk sheds on our neighborhood streets, however, and hope to continue dialogue with DOB on how we can support the Department’s efforts to ensure that façade inspections and repairs are completed, and sidewalk sheds removed as speedily as possible.

To that end, MCB4, at its February 2<sup>nd</sup> Full Board meeting, by a vote of 41 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible, requests that DOB:

1. Expand its existing Long-Standing Sheds (LSS) Program to include any buildings maintaining sidewalk sheds for over one year;
2. Confirm what actions DOB has taken to ensure properties in our district that have maintained sidewalk sheds for 5+ years (see attached appendix) have a plan to complete any required façade work and remove their sheds in the coming months; and
3. Change sidewalk shed design standards to require shed supportive horizontal bars to be situated no lower than eight feet above sidewalks and prohibit shed legs from being placed in the center of sidewalks or in the middle of garage exit lanes.

In addition, we would also like DOB to provide us with some additional information in response to questions articulated within this letter, which will help us understand how we can best support the Department's efforts to improve public safety and speed of building repairs.

### DOB Long-Standing Sheds ("LSS") Program

In its August 2021 letter, DOB noted that it currently lacks the resources to expand its Long-Standing Sheds Program to buildings with sheds standing for fewer than five years. We feel waiting to begin outreach to properties maintaining sidewalk sheds only after they have been up for a full five years is unacceptable. Given the tremendous disruption sidewalk sheds cause on neighborhood streets and the need for building repairs to be speedily completed to preserve public safety, we request that the Department expand its LSS Program to include any buildings with sheds up for over one year in its efforts. We would be happy to help the Department advocate for any additional resources needed. We have also articulated this request in this year's MCB4 Statement of District Needs and Community Board Budget Requests.

Furthermore, the Department's August 2021 letter stated that DOB had a list of 180 buildings with sheds standing for over five years that the Department intended to contact. However, that same letter provided an update on sheds at only 73 of those 180 buildings.<sup>1</sup> What is the status of the Department's outreach to the remaining 107 buildings on the Department's referenced list? Does the Department need any additional resources to expedite its outreach to buildings already in the scope of the LSS Program? Please let us know how MCB4 can be supportive.

### Status of Priority MCD4 Sidewalk Sheds

We thank the Department for its update on site conditions at 353 West 57<sup>th</sup> Street in its August 2021 letter. We were thrilled to see the long-standing shed finally removed this past year and expect that the vacant storefront previously underneath the shed will now become more marketable.

We would now appreciate if DOB could confirm whether it has contacted all properties within MCD4 on the attached list that have held sidewalk shed permits since 2016 (5+ years), per DOB data at the time of our June 10, 2021 letter ("June 2021 letter"). Please also confirm the expected timeline for work completion and shed removal at these sites, as known. We previously requested this information in our June 2021 letter.

### Shed Design

MCB4 recognizes that there are legitimate public safety reasons why sidewalk sheds may have to be erected on neighborhood sidewalks for extended periods of time. Consequently, beyond

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<sup>1</sup> The August 2021 DOB letter stated that 42 of the 180 sheds had since been removed and façade work begun at an additional 31 buildings.

finding ways to reduce the amount of time sheds remain on our streets, this Board is also very interested in improving sidewalk shed design to reduce the amount of public space sheds consume when necessary.

To help accomplish this secondary objective, we request that DOB change design standards for sidewalk sheds to:

1. Require shed supportive horizontal bars to be situated no lower than eight feet above sidewalks to avoid blocking pedestrian movement; and
2. Prohibit shed legs from being placed in the center of sidewalks or in the middle of garage exit lanes.

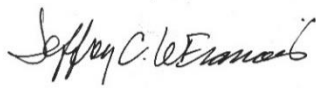
At present, the standard shed design is unattractive and obtrusive, creating an array of transportation, economic, safety, and quality of life problems in our neighborhoods. Both of our requested design changes would significantly reduce the amount of public space sheds consume and thereby improve pedestrian movement, street safety, and accessibility, particularly for visually impaired and mobility-restricted community members.

#### Potential Legislative Changes

What legislative changes does DOB believe would help reduce the number and duration of sidewalk sheds? We previously asked this question in our June 2021 letter and are interested to hear the Department's perspective, so we can understand how best to support the Department's efforts.

We look forward to receiving your responses.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey LeFrancois  
MCB4 Chair



Christine Berthet  
Co-chair  
Transportation Planning Committee



Dale Corvino  
Co-chair  
Transportation Planning Committee

**Enclosure**

**APPENDIX: List of Properties within CB4 Holding Sidewalk Shed Permits since at least 2016**

Source: DOB sidewalk shed data, May 2021

<b>Applicant Business Name</b>	<b>House Number</b>	<b>Street Name</b>	<b>Job Number</b>	<b>First Permit Date</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Permit Expiration Date</b>	<b>BIN Number</b>
ROCKLEDGE SCAFFOLD CORP	335	WEST 39 STREET	110426619	1/8/2009	4525	7/9/2021	1083618
BS GROUP INC	443	WEST 40 STREET	120725705	6/16/2011	3636	2/5/2022	1026319
ARSENAL SCAFFOLD INC	444	WEST 21 STREET	120987236	3/1/2012	3377	6/10/2021	1083575
CORE SCAFFOLD SYSTEMS INC	408	WEST 58 STREET	121545364	2/27/2013	3014	1/7/2022	1026890
EVEREST SCAFFOLDING INC	326	WEST 42 STREET	140106374	8/16/2013	2844	9/18/2021	1024926
EVEREST SCAFFOLDING INC	435	WEST 19 STREET	140261721	10/3/2014	2431	8/14/2021	1012575
ROCK GROUP NY CORP	101	7 AVENUE	140369722	7/17/2015	2144	7/1/2021	1014572
TRI BOROUGH SCAFFOLDING.&	217	WEST 20 STREET	140380932	7/29/2015	2132	3/23/2022	1014031
DHS FRACO LLC	319	WEST 38 STREET	140428035	11/23/2015	2015	9/1/2021	1013659
PHOENIX SUTTON STR INC	556	WEST 52 STREET	140468090	3/10/2016	1907	7/27/2021	1082288
VEMA GROUP LLC	216	WEST 23 STREET	122702049	3/31/2016	1886	4/13/2022	1014130
PROFESSIONAL LINE CORP	409	WEST 33 STREET	140521727	7/19/2016	1776	4/8/2022	1012851
SAFWAY ATLANTIC LLC	536	WEST 20 STREET	122887242	11/3/2016	1669	1/13/2022	1012284