



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JESSICA CHAIT
Chair

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District Manager

July 30, 2024

Hon. Eric Adams
Mayor
City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: Eighth Avenue Sidewalk Expansions

Dear Mayor Adams,

At its July 24, 2024 meeting by a vote of 37 in favor, 2 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to vote, Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) writes to express its disappointment in the Mayor’s recent comments expressing “concern” regarding the Eighth Avenue Sidewalk Expansions (the “Sidewalk Expansions”), which have been an extraordinarily successful infrastructure improvement in the theater district since they were installed between 2017 and 2022.¹ As suggested in a recent *Streetsblog* article, the Mayor – along with representatives of the Shubert Organization and the Broadway League – recently misidentified the Sidewalk Expansions as a source of traffic congestion and as an impediment for theatergoers to easily attend performances.² Nothing could be further from the truth. The Sidewalk Expansions have vastly improved access to the theater district for those traveling by foot, subway, bike, or motor vehicle.

¹ <https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2024/07/05/mayor-adams-opens-the-door-to-nixing-sidewalk-expansions-on-bustling-eighth-ave>

² *Id.*

As documented in a video taken of Eighth Avenue in May of 2018,³ navigating Eighth Avenue for pedestrians around rush hour was outright *dangerous*.⁴ The Eighth Avenue sidewalks have long been overly congested due to workers commuting home at the same time pedestrians are trying to make their way to the theater. At peak hours, nearly 12,000 pedestrians traverse Eighth Avenue, constituting approximately 88% of the road usage (as compared with approximately 10% for cars).⁵ Consequently, before the Sidewalk Expansions, pedestrians would regularly spill out onto the street and bike lane, at great risk to their own safety and to the safety of cyclists, essentially rendering the bike lane unusable during rush hour. In the last three years Sidewalk Expansions have reduced pedestrian injuries by 46% and injuries to motorists by 10%.⁶

Likewise, the traffic flow of cars has actually *improved* since the installation of the Sidewalk Expansions. The former pedestrian spillover itself caused traffic congestion, as pedestrians navigating Eighth Avenue would often block a lane of traffic. Indeed, the Department of Transportation (DOT) has since installed split-phase signaling, vastly improving cars' ability to turn onto Eighth Avenue, and changed signal timing to better facilitate the traffic flow. We invite you to tour the Super Sidewalk and see for yourself.

The Sidewalk Expansions have been a resounding success – they have calmed what used to be a chaotic stretch of roadway, and with the addition of adornments like planters, they have beautified what used to be an ugly and unclean corridor. It is of no surprise then that property owners on Eighth Avenue wrote to MCB4 to emphatically approve of these improvements.

Consequently, MCB4 is certain that the Sidewalk Expansions have positively contributed to the theatergoing experience. As the Broadway League itself acknowledges, the vast majority of theatergoers do not drive.⁷ And for those few that do drive, the traffic flow on Eighth Avenue has improved. If there are additional enhancements to be made, MCB4 encourages the Mayor to study the problem of double parking, including by directing the NYPD to be more vigilant, and directing the DOT to evaluate whether the no-standing regulations should be extended to midnight, after the theatergoers have exited the performances.

Seeing a Broadway show is a remarkable experience. And thanks to the Sidewalk Expansions, getting there doesn't have to be a miserable one.

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xR2QIRnpEdQ>

⁴ MCB4 is aware of at least one cyclist who spent three days in the hospital after being elbowed by a pedestrian. (See <https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2018/05/30/eighth-avenues-narrow-sidewalks-land-a-cyclist-in-the-hospital>).

⁵ <https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/8th-ave-38-st-51-st-jul2022.pdf>

⁶ [NYC Open Data, via Crashmapper](#)

⁷ <https://lede-admin.nyc.streetsblog.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/48/2024/07/Broadway-NY-Demographic-2022-2023.pdf>

Sincerely,



Jessica Chait
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning Committee



Jesse Greenwald
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning Committee

cc: Hon. Tony Simone, NYC Assembly Member
Hon. Erik Bottcher, NYC Council Member
Hon. Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President
Broadway League
Times Square Alliance