



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**COREY JOHNSON**  
Chair

**ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.**  
District Manager

December 1, 2011

Emil Lissauer  
Director  
Mayor's Street Activity Permit Office  
100 Gold Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
New York, New York 10038

**Re: proposed changes to the Rules of New York concerning Street Activity permits.**

Dear Mr. Lissauer:

Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) appreciates the opportunity to comment on proposed changes to the Rules of New York concerning Street Activity permits. We understand the need to clarify the rules, incorporate new processes, and provide better planning and better opportunity to share the streets.

Thus the recommendations for the applications to be filed by December of year preceding the fair, for limiting to a single fair per sponsor per year, for requiring the sponsor to disclose its expected vendors and revenues one week before the fair, for increased insurance and for reserving a 15 ft. lane for emergency vehicles seem reasonable. However the proposed rules raise serious concerns on four different fronts:

The vast majority of our street fairs fall in a category that is not contemplated in the proposed rules: they occur on a single block on a side street, during a single day; they are sponsored by a block association or a non-profit residing on the same block, and the only commercial activity consists in a "garage sale" by residents of the same or adjacent blocks (no vendors allowed).

These events are integral to the fabric of our communities and would certainly disappear if they were subjected to the proposed rules for Street Fairs.

We ask that the Block Party definition be expanded to allow non-commercial, non-vendor "sales".

At the other end of the spectrum, the "Hell's Kitchen Flea Market" has been taking place on a single block on a side street every Saturday and Sunday of the year since 2005. It has contributed to attract visitors, activate street life and has turned out to be a real asset to the surrounding businesses and the community. This is considered as a single fair and we hope the new rules will not preclude this fair, nor make it so expensive to do business that it would have to close.

The proposal includes a one-year period during which new street fairs would not be allowed. CB4 is under the impression that a policy is currently in place that bars any new multi blocks fairs. We recommend that this policy remain in place for the foreseeable future beyond the one-year proposed in the rules.

Finally we can't help to note that while long notification periods (90 day to one year) are requested for the community driven event, the commercially driven events need not give more than 14 business days of notice. This seems woefully inadequate for a street closure. We are requesting that any event that will cause a street closure be required to notify the city 30 days in advance so that residents and businesses can plan accordingly.

Please note that these comments are provided on an interim basis and will be the object of a vote by the full board on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to working with your office to address the above issues.

Sincerely yours,



Corey Johnson  
Chair



Christine Berthet  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning Committee



Jay Marcus  
Co-Chair  
Transportation Planning Committee

cc: NYC Council Speaker Christine Quinn  
Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer  
NYS Senator Thomas Duane  
Assembly Member Richard Gottfried  
Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal  
Council Member Gale Brewer  
Congressman Jerrold Nadler