

FINANCIAL
DISTRICT
NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSOCIATION

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March 8, 2019

The Hon. Polly Trottenberg
Commissioner
New York City Department of Transportation
55 Water Street, 9th Floor
New York, New York 10041

RE: Financial District Mobility – Slow Zone Pilot Proposal (*Make Way for Lower Manhattan*)

Dear Commissioner Trottenberg:

The Financial District Neighborhood Association (FDNA) is pleased to present to you our report *Make Way for Lower Manhattan* – a call to action for a new way of living and working in the Financial District. We respectfully request your leadership in championing it to the next level with short-term tactical interventions and long-term ideas for innovative designs for our neighborhood.

The main idea is a slow-street district in the historic core of Lower Manhattan. Further carrying out the goals of the Mayor de Blasio's successful Vision Zero action plan, our proposal effectively recognizes what's really happening in the streets of FiDi and embraces those realities in a way that improves safety, mobility and quality of life for those who live, work and visit here.

Attached is page 30 of the report, which shows the proposed district. We request a six-month pilot project starting this spring to demonstrate how successful it could be and to fully vet any complications.

The slow-street district pilot project would:

- Be in place from April through September of 2019;
- Be bounded by Broadway and Water Street to the east and west, and City Hall Park and the Battery to the north and south;
- Encompass and expand on the DOT's 2010 Shared Streets district;
- Facilitate tourist travel within the district;
- Install traffic calming gateways at the entrances to the district;
- Allow all traffic, with a 10 mph speed limit;
- Assign large swaths of delivery and pickup bays for commercial and residential uses by recapturing spaces currently occupied by placard parking, and relocating placard parking into nearby garages;

- Designate select parking spaces as collection locations for residential garbage that do not block the sidewalk;
- Create an interagency task force to coordinate the work of other City agencies in the district, *e.g.*, a special sanitation district to allow DSNY operations to coordinate large pick-up sweeps of residential garbage piles before morning rush times;
- Convert former parking spaces into parklets, event spaces, and gardens;

During the pilot, our team would work with the DOT to develop designs for future slow-speed, people-friendly streets for Lower Manhattan. The designs would emphasize the safety and place-making potential of these transformative ideas, based on community input and the best ideas from around the world.

With your help and at the urging of Council Member Margaret Chin, the City previously allocated Budget funds toward a pedestrian mobility and safety study within FiDi. That study has not yet come to fruition. ***We believe the \$500,000 already allocated to DOT should fund the effort we're now proposing to you.***

This pilot program would achieve the goals of the pedestrian mobility and safety study for FiDi by collecting data on proposed interventions and their impact on mobility while also tangibly improving quality of life in the neighborhood.

The Financial District is the most natural location in the City to implement these pilot ideas. The small, winding streets are already shared and slow-moving in many places. More than 80% of residents do not own a car, and fewer than 20% of workers commute by car. It is part of one of the largest tourist sites in America, with beautiful buildings and historic landmarks in one of the original European settlements in North America. And yet, walking in FiDi – especially walking with children – is a chaotic journey battered by honking cars, piles of garbage bags, ever-present scaffolding, illegal placard parking, and absurdly narrow sidewalks.

For more than half a century, public and private studies have called for making the historic core of Lower Manhattan a walking paradise for residents, workers, and tourists alike. The FDNA believes it is time to move past studying and start transitioning the streets of Lower Manhattan in ways that embrace our mixed-use vibrancy and improve the streetscape for all users.

We are available to meet with you at your earliest convenience to move this idea into reality.

Respectfully yours,



Patrick M. Kennel, President
Financial District Neighborhood Association

