



John Herrold
Riverside Park Administrator
24 West 61st Street, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10023
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July 17, 2019

Re: Riverside Park Bike Bypass

Dear Mr. Herrold,

After hearing from community members at the Community Board 7 joint Parks and Transportation Committee Meeting on July 15, 2019, we wanted to share our feedback. While we appreciate that NYC Parks and the Riverside Park Conservancy have responded to the unsafe conditions for pedestrians and cyclists along the Greenway near the 79th Street Boat Basin, we are concerned that the current solution creates more danger.

First, while the bypass removes potential encounters between cyclists along the waterfront path for ten blocks, it creates new points of conflict at entry and exit points that are highly dangerous. As both pedestrians and cyclists agreed at the Community Board meeting “you’ve simply moved the problem and made it worse.” Given the incline on both ends of the bypass, cyclists rejoining the waterfront path on either end are entering at high speed at a point where pedestrians crossing may not be aware that bikes are re-entering the path.

Secondly, there are safety hazards for cyclists all along the bypass, including insufficient lighting and confusing signage and markings. There are natural obstructions such as tree roots along the path which are dangerous to cyclists, especially those riding downhill at speed. More concerning are the man-made hazards including reports of a dumpster left obstructing the path. Finally, ridehailing and parks vehicles have been reported using the path, which presents a grave danger to cyclists, especially given the limitations in sight lines due to hills and greenery along the path. There have been several reports of cyclist injuries

since the bypass became mandatory and there will certainly be more if a better solution is not found.

Finally, the incline presents an accessibility issue for many cyclists, including people who are not regular riders and those who are older or younger or who have other physical limitations. We should encourage everyone to both enjoy the waterfront Greenway and to use greener forms of transportation such as cycling.

We support Community Board 7 Parks and Transportation Committee's resolution to consider alternatives to the mandatory bypass and to look for safer solutions to crowding on the Greenway. We propose, as one possible solution, signage allowing cyclists to choose to take a slower route near the water with speeds capped at 8-10 mph and directing higher-speed cyclists to the bypass. As proponents of active transportation, we would be happy to work with you to create flyers or better signage and/or to engage with the public. This solution would make this portion of the Greenway safer and more accessible for everyone. We hope NYC Parks and the Riverside Park Conservancy will be able to find alternate solutions that allow all Greenway users to enjoy the park and to interact safely.

Sincerely,

Lisa Orman
Director, Streetopia-UWS

Cc: Dan Garodnick President and CEO Riverside Park Conservancy
Lori Lennon Bassman, Chair Riverside Park Conservancy Board
City Council Member Helen Rosenthal
Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer
Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal
State Senator Robert Jackson
Roberta Semer, Chair Community Board 7
Penny Ryan, District Manager Community Board 7
Bike New York
Transportation Alternatives