

Council Member Bottcher Statement

Zoning & Franchises Subcommittee Feb. 23

Chair: I will now read a statement from Council Member Bottcher, and note that a written copy of these remarks will be submitted to the record.

This part of Chelsea that includes the site of these parking applications has seen an increase in pedestrians, bicyclists, buses, rideshare service, and taxis in recent years. The transportation system here has evolved, with the City adding Citi Bike stations, bike lanes, bus lanes, a dedicated busway, sidewalk widenings and other pedestrian improvements, and subway infrastructure improvements by the MTA, with still more to come. In fact, if you look at Zillow listings for these buildings, you'll see that: the Walk

Score is 99 (out of 100), the Bike Score is 95, and the Transit Score is 100. It is increasingly easy to get around without a car, and we want that trend to continue.

To give you a sense of the bountiful transit options at this location: just a few steps to the 1 train at 28th Street; a few blocks to the C and E trains at W. 23rd Street and 8th Avenue, or the D, F, and M trains as well as the PATH train to New Jersey at W. 23rd and 6th Avenue; and less than a 10-minute walk to two of the most well-connected transit hubs in North America, at Penn Station/Moynihan Train Hall and Herald Square/Greeley Square, including access to Amtrak inter-city rail and the Acela high-speed network, the Long Island Rail Road and New Jersey Transit commuter rail systems, the PATH train, and the 1, 2, 3, A,

B, C, D, E, F, M, N, Q, R, and W subway trains. Also within a 10-minute walk, there is access to the M34 SBS and M23 SBS rapid buses, as well as as well as nine local buses and 32 outer-borough express buses. And beyond that, the Penn Station Access project is expected to bring MetroNorth commuter rail service to Penn Station by 2027.

Cutting carbon emissions in this neighborhood is a vitally urgent action considering that, in large part due to vehicle traffic, CB5 already has the very worst air pollution in the city, rated at 9.2 PM 2.5 Micrograms per cubic meter. And keep in mind that conservative estimates count PM 2.5 air pollution as the cause of at least five percent of deaths and hospitalization for at least 6,300 New Yorkers annually.

The applicant has indicated their intention to accommodate electric vehicles at 25 of the 77 parking spaces they are proposing and to be prepared to potentially accommodate electric vehicles at the remaining spaces. However, we don't know how long it will take before all (or even just a significant number) of garage users will be driving EVs, nor is there any guarantee that they will, as the developer will not control the vehicle type of garage users given their intent to sell the parking spaces. In the meantime, those spaces would be accommodating gas engine vehicles. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that all of the remaining spaces would be electrified.

I'll note in closing that over the course of a lengthy public review process, these are some of the reasons that formed

the basis of the Community Board's and Borough President's votes for disapproval.

Given all of these factors, I cannot support this application, and must recommend disapproval by this subcommittee.