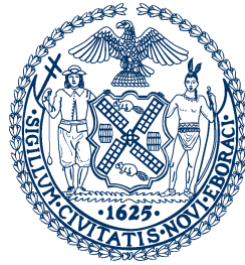


BENJAMIN J. KALLOS
COUNCIL MEMBER, 5TH DISTRICT

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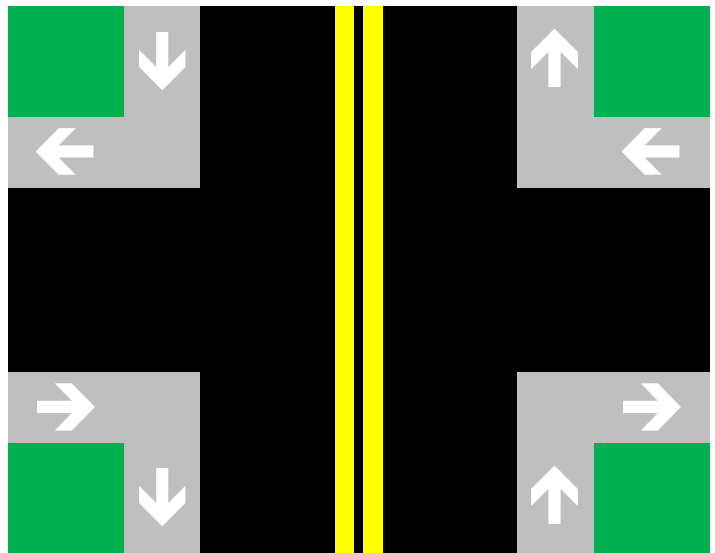
May ##, 2020

Dear Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Trottenberg,

In recent weeks residents in my district have expressed concern about how difficult it can be to simply walk down the sidewalk in a safe, socially distant manner, proposing a suggestion that I support of designating different sides of each street for pedestrians to walk in a particular direction.

For senior citizens and immunocompromised New Yorkers, simple but essential errands can become a daunting task when narrow sidewalks are filled with pedestrians walking and running – many without masks – both ways to get to the pharmacy or grocery store. Similarly, parents with small babies and children who are too young to wear masks that we now know are susceptible to coronavirus in the form of multisystem inflammatory syndrome are fearful of putting their children in danger walking down a narrow street to get to a park with some semblance of social distancing. I personally share both of these concerns.

I propose that we create space for social distancing on our sidewalks by facilitating opposite flows of foot traffic in high-density areas of our city. Similar to ‘one-way’ streets for vehicles, pedestrians would be encouraged to use sidewalks in one direction so that they do not have to cross pedestrians coming the opposite direction. On streets running east to west, the north side would be designated for westbound pedestrians and the south side would be designated for eastbound pedestrians. On avenues or streets running north to south, the east side would be designated for northbound pedestrians, the west side would be designated for southbound pedestrians.



With two-way foot traffic, social distancing is simply not feasible on a sizable portion of New York City’s sidewalks. Last month, as reported by the *New Yorker*, Meli Harvey, an urban planner and architect, published [Sidewalk Widths NYC](#), an online map of New York City’s streets, color coded by the width of the sidewalks. According to Harvey’s website, the map, which was created from the NYC Open Data Portal, “is intended to give an impression of how sidewalk widths impact the ability of pedestrians to practice social distancing.” The map shows



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DISTRICT 5, MANHATTAN

many neighborhoods, throughout all five boroughs, where the sidewalks are primarily colored pink and labeled “impossible” (0–5.9 ft) or colored red and labeled “very difficult” (6–8.9 ft). In the vast majority of cases, I believe two pedestrians crossing each other on these narrow sidewalks will not effectively socially distance.

I want to be clear that, in putting forth this suggestion, I am not looking for arrests or criminal punishment of any sort to result from not following this guidance. Rather, I believe with proper signage or markings on our sidewalks, New Yorkers might welcome a design that gives them an easy way to keep their neighbors and themselves safe. New Yorkers would look after one another, and auxiliary officers could be used to educate the public. This policy would only be in effect for the pandemic and as a useful tool in returning to normal.

I hope you will take this suggestion into consideration as we all work together to come up with ways to prevent a second wave of COVID-19 from hitting our city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ben Kallos".

Ben Kallos
Council Member