

Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council

Open Streets Town Hall Meeting

Monday, August 24, 7:00PM

Transcript from Zoom chat

From Michael Bobker & Marta Panero to Everyone: 07:23 PM

Glad to hear of success on Vanderbilt Avenue with restaurants being supported. There is a serious problem with the Carleton Ave closing, where there is no commercial enterprise and has caused a major traffic problem on Park Place, including frequent obstruction of emergency vehicles.

From Jeannine Zito to Everyone: 07:23 PM

Are there future volunteer opportunities on this program?

From Michaella Blissett williams to Everyone: 07:24 PM

I will like to speak as a business who is not a restaurant

From Me to Everyone: 07:25 PM

Go here to volunteer <http://forms.phndc.org/open-street-volunteers/>

From Gabriel Brunswick to Everyone: 07:26 PM

Any times that are most needed right now?

From Michael Bobker & Marta Panero to Everyone: 07:27 PM

Who manages the Carlton Ave part of the project now, if it is not the 77th and 78th Precincts?

From Phillip Godzin to Everyone: 07:28 PM

The Open Restaurants program was extended to start again in June 2021 -- has Vanderbilt been approved for next year? Do we expect it to be?

From Samantha Safer to Everyone: 07:30 PM

With parks now open again what is the point of closing Carlton and Underhill? During the week they aren't being used and are essentially serving now purpose anymore.

From Carey Tan to Everyone: 07:30 PM

The wooden barriers are a poor solution. They are impossible for a single person to move without breaking them. We need the metal barricades that the NYPD has now.

Also, "Local Traffic" is confusing to most people. The message should be "No Thru Traffic"

From Betty Boodansingh to Everyone: 07:30 PM

Someone on Carlton Ave btwn Dean and Bergen has been adding additional barriers at either end that fully block the street. I live on that block and have been verbally harassed for trying to park in front of my own house. This needs to be addressed.

From Jeff Weil to Everyone: 07:31 PM

I live on Carlton Ave and the neighbor children use it almost everyday

From Carey Tan to Everyone: 07:31 PM

More people would use the Open Streets if there weren't so many cars coming through. It doesn't feel safe for pedestrians.

From Michael Bobker & Marta Panero to Everyone: 07:32 PM

The MAJOR problem on Park Place is DURING WEEKDAYS!

From Samantha Safer to Everyone: 07:32 PM

The barricades also block cycling traffic which has been dangerous.

From James Walsh to Everyone: 07:33 PM

north of st marks no one uses open streets
b/n st marks and dean are the most used

From kylie sachs to Everyone: 07:33 PM

we use it north of st marks but not really north of prospect on a regular basis

From Andrew Saunders to Everyone: 07:34 PM

Good plan. I second.

From Jeff Weil to Everyone: 07:34 PM

Carlton Ave between St Mark's and Dean are used in regular basis

From kylie sachs to Everyone: 07:34 PM

sorry - south of st marks in front of james

From Michael Lazar to Everyone: 07:34 PM

I would think the space south of St Marks near James would be a priority as the one commercial space on the avenue

From Michael Bobker & Marta Panero to Everyone: 07:34 PM

You are creating a dangerous situation if ambulances and firetrucks are stuck on Park Place

From Carey Tan to Everyone: 07:35 PM

Check out what these other neighborhoods are doing to protect their Open Streets:

https://twitter.com/Loisaida_OSCC

https://twitter.com/NBk_OSCC

From Daniel Mainz to Everyone: 07:35 PM

Why bother with barricading just two blocks on Carlton when we could use those barriers and volunteer availability to better maintain Underhill and Vanderbilt?

From Michael Bobker & Marta Panero to Everyone: 07:35 PM

Yes, Daniel, exactly!

From Betty Boodansingh to Everyone: 07:35 PM

Agree with Daniel

From Andrew Saunders to Everyone: 07:35 PM

As a volunteer I would say that it has been great to connect with the residents and neighbors who I now know much better than I ever did.

From Jeff Weil to Everyone: 07:35 PM

Because there are tons of kids on those two blocks on carlton

From James Walsh to Me: (Privately) 07:35 PM

we want carlton partially closed near James

From Wilma McDaniel to Everyone: 07:36 PM

Thank you to all the volunteers

From Natalie Be'er to Everyone: 07:36 PM

We love the open streets but have had a hard time walking around Vanderbilt as cyclists are still using the streets without slowing down

From Michael Moss to Everyone: 07:36 PM

The Park Place block association would like you to consider shifting the open street entirely from Carlton to St. Marks to give us some relief.

From Kate Sullivan to Everyone: 07:36 PM

Do you think the schedule will be too confusing or think people will look them up when driving?

From James Walsh to Everyone: 07:36 PM

we value carlton open streets!!!!

From Natalie Be'er to Everyone: 07:36 PM

We've been using Carlton and Underhill as "safe" streets for our toddler; Vanderbilt doesn't allow for that.

From James Walsh to Everyone: 07:36 PM

many families use it on a daily basis

From Kristi Azaroff to Everyone: 07:37 PM

how will school opening at PS10 effect open streets on Underhill between St Marks & Bergen?

From Jeff Weil to Everyone: 07:38 PM

Yes, I have two children and the open street on carlton has saved their sanity and ours!

Kristi, you mean Ps 9, I think

From Rachel Bonsignore to Everyone: 07:38 PM

Can you share more information on what the volunteers do?

From Samantha Safer to Everyone: 07:38 PM

Also how is it equitable to the surrounding neighborhoods, such as Washington where all of Vanderbilts vehicle traffic is being diverted all weekend. It has been a mess on Washington, honking, cars running lights etc. Did any one here consider how that would effect the businesses on surrounding streets?

From Kristi Azaroff to Everyone: 07:38 PM

I mean PS 9

From Daniel Mainz to Everyone: 07:38 PM

I'm not opposed to Carlton open street — the more the merrier — just concerned like others that the barriers are quickly moved and therefore can't be relied upon. I'd rather have well-enforced open streets. (I live on Washington, and yes, it's hell.)

From Jeff Phillips to Everyone: 07:39 PM

I would echo other carlton ave residents and say it is being used.

From Michael Lazar to Everyone: 07:39 PM

We should close traffic on weekends on Washington too

From Sandra Mandel to Everyone: 07:39 PM

Could we create Open Streets Parking permits people could put in their windshields?

From Michael Bobker & Marta Panero to Everyone: 07:39 PM

Please barricade Park Place too

From Andrew Saunders to Everyone: 07:39 PM

yes

From James Walsh to Everyone: 07:40 PM

i have no problem parking on carlton with open streets? Is this truly a problem for anyone?
What is the issue with parking? If anything its much easier.

From Carey Tan to Everyone: 07:40 PM

I have encountered many drivers who assume that they can drive through because they live in the general area. This is not what is actually meant by "Local Traffic Only." We need to be clear that the rule is NO THRU TRAFFIC.

From Jeff Weil to Everyone: 07:41 PM

Parking is the easiest it has been in years!

From Michael Lazar to Everyone: 07:41 PM

The easiest thing we could do is do expand the open streets programs and divert road traffic out of the neighborhood. This has been proven over and over again around the world. Local residents can still come in and park and emergency vehicles can pass through as needed, but we don't need cars blazing through the neighborhood.

From James Walsh to Everyone: 07:41 PM

yes Carey I agree

From Dimitri Moderbacher to Everyone: 07:41 PM

I agree, Carey! "NO Thru Traffic" is clearer.

From Michael Lazar to Everyone: 07:41 PM

100% agree Carey. I have personally tried to fix barricades and had drivers nearly run me over just to drive off and not stop on the blocks

From Michael Moss to Everyone: 07:42 PM

I endorse Michael Lazar.

From Dimitri Moderbacher to Everyone: 07:42 PM

Michael Lazar, I agree with that. Too many cars seem to use residential streets to cut past traffic.

From Joyce Yu to Everyone: 07:42 PM

There is no problem parking and moving slowly on Underhill for residents. Initially very busy but now there are many hours with no use other than dog walkers and others simply walking thru.

From Andrew Saunders to Everyone: 07:42 PM

I find the nimby-ism of "remove traffic from the neighborhood" a bit rich. How about a little empathy for your neighbors trying to get home from work. You want traffic - come up to Grand Army Plaza!

From Michael Bobker & Marta Panero to Everyone: 07:42 PM

Your FAVORITE restaurant.....really?

From Gib Veconi to Everyone: 07:42 PM

To volunteer as a marshal for Vanderbilt Avenue Open Streets: Restaurants
<http://forms.phndc.org/open-street-volunteers/>

From Carey Tan to Everyone: 07:42 PM

I spent my own time and money to repair and improve some barricades on Vanderbilt. They were completely shattered by the following morning.

From Sara Epstein to Everyone: 07:42 PM

can someone please clarify if PNHDC will be taking over the volunteer coordinating on all the streets?

From Michael Lazar to Everyone: 07:43 PM

Sorry Andrew, I have no problem with our neighbors parking or driving in our neighborhood

From Rachel Bonsignore to Everyone: 07:43 PM

yes!

From D H to Everyone: 07:43 PM

yes

From Kate Sullivan to Everyone: 07:43 PM

+1

From Betty Boodansingh to Everyone: 07:43 PM

The parking issue comes from residents who are misinformed and think no one is allowed to move a car on the block they live on. Carlton btwn Bergen and Dean has additional barriers fully blocking the street. I am nearly 70 and cannot move these barriers myself to get my car out.

From Gib Veconi to Everyone: 07:43 PM

To volunteer to maintain the Carlton Avenue Open Streets barriers, <http://forms.phndc.org/carlton-avenue-volunteers/>

From Andrew Saunders to Everyone: 07:44 PM

But let's remember that underhill playground and PS9 were CLOSED - now they are OPEN!!!

From Gib Veconi to Everyone: 07:44 PM

To volunteer to maintain the Underhill Avenue Open Streets barriers, <http://forms.phndc.org/underhill-avenue-volunteers/>

From Danae Oratowski to Everyone: 07:44 PM

Program closes at 8 pm

From Peter Krashes to Everyone: 07:45 PM

Would it be possible for each speaker to identify where they live prior to speaking? That would be helpful.

From kylie sachs to Everyone: 07:45 PM

except on weekends when we use carlton much earlier during the day - people use it much of the day on weekends

From Michael Lazar to Everyone: 07:46 PM

I'd be curious to understand what the complaints really are about open streets. From what I can tell in the chat, basically its the diversion of traffic onto Park Place and other residential streets are there other issues?

From Kate Sullivan to Everyone: 07:46 PM

We're adults with no kids and use Underhill ALL the time to see our friends who we don't live with. And we're grateful for it. Agree with Athena that we see lots of ppl out after 5pm

From Jeff Weil to Everyone: 07:46 PM

unfortunately, kids can't go out on the street by themselves so usually need their parents (after work) to take them

From Michael Bobker & Marta Panero to Everyone: 07:47 PM

Carlton Ave Closure at 5 and later would be a good solution -- traffic on Park Pl is from am through afternoon.

From Jeff Weil to Everyone: 07:47 PM

let's keep in mind that schools won't open every day

From Mike Isler to Everyone: 07:47 PM

As a parent with a stroller, Open Streets has given us much more room to walk than a narrow sidewalk provides

From Michael Lazar to Everyone: 07:47 PM

schools are open every day (kids just cannot attend every day) (as of current plans)

From Cathy D'Amato to Everyone: 07:47 PM

school will open every day- the dull population of kids won't be in

From Betty Boodansingh to Everyone: 07:47 PM

Jeff, schools will be open every day in the current model proposed by the DOE

From Samantha Safer to Everyone: 07:48 PM

I agree with problems surrounding park place, it needs to be accessible from Flatbush ave

From David Lipkin to Everyone: 07:48 PM

Many schools will be hybrid and a lot of kids will have some time that is fundamentally free during the day - also little kids are eating, getting ready for dinner after 5pm. During the day is better for those with young families.

From Peter Krashes to Everyone: 07:48 PM

I posted this earlier — sorry to be a broken record. Can speakers identify where they live before they speak.

From Cathy D'Amato to Everyone: 07:49 PM

as a parent of small kids I personally prefer my kids to play on Vanderbilt as there are no parked cars and we don't have to yell at the kids to avoid the parked cars if we throw a ball, bike, etc. I do think we need to slow down the bikes. they are very fast.

I live on park place and the traffic after 4 on Friday's is insane and I can't even take a call with windows shut with all the honking and idling. so do want to see something to release that traffic.

From Alyssa Keil to Everyone: 07:50 PM

To "raise your hand" click on "Participants" at the bottom of the screen. You should then see three options below the list of names. One says "Raise Hand"

From Wilma McDaniel to Everyone: 07:51 PM

@robert wither wax I have a possible option for the DOT rep on this call

From Peter Krashes to Everyone: 07:51 PM

Can Flatbush Avenue restaurants be invited to be provided some space on Vanderbilt? There is a lot of empty space.

From james ellis to Everyone: 07:52 PM

Please join a merchant focused forum at Slack: phndc.slack.com

From Laura Leopardo to Everyone: 07:54 PM

@Michael Lazar. Yes, is something being done about the excess garbage on the streets/sidewalks and spilling over of the city garbage cans?

From Michael Lazar to Everyone: 07:54 PM

Thanks Laura. Totally agree! That is a real issue.

From Sara Epstein to Everyone: 07:55 PM

also is there any talk of reaching out to the precincts again? versus volunteers?

From Daniel Mainz to Everyone: 07:55 PM

Does one need an invite to join that Slack room?

From Samantha Safer to Everyone: 07:55 PM

I agree with Michaella, many of the restaurants have yards and Vanderbilt has a wider sidewalks than most neighborhoods, so restaurants had options to serve the community pre open streets. It seems like only the positives of Open streets were brought to your attention. Open streets on Vanderbilt is

negatively impacting surrounding business and neighborhoods by drawing crowds of 300-400 at a time. Washington in particular is dealing with the overwhelming car traffic while Vanderbilt is "open" on the weekends, those businesses are suffering as a result.

From Me to Alyssa Keil: (Privately) 07:56 PM

thanks! I meant to mention the blue hand....

From Betty Boodansingh to Everyone: 07:57 PM

Can the DOT official please clearly define "local traffic" for us

From kylie & Alex Sachs to Everyone: 07:58 PM

any chance Sanitation Dept can collect the Vanderbilt trash cans on the corner more often in general but especially overnight after open streets so that in the mornings they are empty again to accommodate the significant increase in attendance.....

From Gib Veconi to Everyone: 07:58 PM

Volunteer links:

Open Streets: Restaurants on Vanderbilt Avenue

<http://forms.phndc.org/open-street-volunteers/>

Carlton Avenue Open Street

<http://forms.phndc.org/carlton-avenue-volunteers/>

Underhill Avenue Open Street

<http://forms.phndc.org/underhill-avenue-volunteers/>

From Kate Sullivan to Everyone: 08:00 PM

Suggestion: put signs on the barriers leading to the PHNDC website/Facebook page

From Danae Oratowski to Everyone: 08:00 PM

Agreed about communication. Maybe there's a graphic designer in this group who can help out?

From Daniel Mainz to Everyone: 08:01 PM

Yes, signs on the barriers would be great. This is the first I'm learning of how the barriers are maintained, and by whom (and yes I just submitted a volunteer form).

From Dimitri Moderbacher to Everyone: 08:01 PM

I can make signs

From Betty Boodansingh to Everyone: 08:02 PM

Can we get a clear definition of local traffic please?

From Saskia Haegens to Everyone: 08:03 PM

yes this re nypd

From Gib Veconi to Everyone: 08:03 PM

Good suggestion. We'll work on getting more info on the Carlton and Underhill barriers.

From Daniel Mainz to Everyone: 08:03 PM

Increasingly drivers are just servants of their GPS's. Forcing a driver on a clock to think is deeply unsettling to them. Maybe detour suggestions on the signs too?

From Gib Veconi to Everyone: 08:03 PM

To sign up for PHNDC's email bulletin, visit <http://www.phndc.org>.

From John Gold to Everyone: 08:05 PM

I see that this meeting is being recorded, will there be a link posted to view this later?

From Betty Boodansingh to Everyone: 08:07 PM

I find the NYPD logo makes the barriers seem more official and drivers may be more likely to adhere to them

As opposed to a homemade looking barrier

From Gib Veconi to Everyone: 08:08 PM

Yes, we plan to post the video. Please follow our Facebook feed and subscribe to our bulletin for info.

From James Walsh to Everyone: 08:09 PM

great idea wilma!!!!

From Natalie Be'er to Everyone: 08:09 PM

But Park Pl isn't closed?

From Gabriel Brunswick to Everyone: 08:09 PM

I would suggest one better than a sign — a barrier
A permeate one

From Michael Moss to Everyone: 08:09 PM

I love that idea Wilma

From Cathy D'Amato to Everyone: 08:09 PM

yes Wilma! agreed! we need more signage!

From Kristi Azaroff to Everyone: 08:09 PM

Restaurant owners in Prospect Heights & across the city can sign up for free design help to take advantage of open streets. <https://nycxdesign.com/design-corps>

From Gib Veconi to Everyone: 08:09 PM

Restaurant owners in Prospect Heights & across the city can sign up for free design help to take advantage of open streets. <https://nycxdesign.com/design-corps>

From Michael Bobker & Marta Panero to Everyone: 08:10 PM

well said Wilma. But two years minimum in process would be my best guess.

From Michael Lazar to Everyone: 08:10 PM

We could, as a community, put up our own signs, right?

From Michael Bobker & Marta Panero to Everyone: 08:11 PM

DOT: are we allowed to put up our own traffic advisory signs?

From Michael Lazar to Everyone: 08:11 PM

also, maybe we should register open streets with Google and other maps platforms so that cars understand and avoid the area

From Dimitri Moderbacher to Everyone: 08:11 PM

I think Open Streets already shows up on Google Maps.

From Gabriel Brunswick to Everyone: 08:11 PM

It is

From Carey Tan to Everyone: 08:11 PM

I came verrrry close to buying a No Thru Traffic sign and putting it up myself. You can buy them online...

From Michael Lazar to Everyone: 08:11 PM

it does, but it still recommends cars drive there!

From Gib Veconi to Everyone: 08:12 PM

Google Navigation will usually route a driver around an Open Street.

From Dimitri Moderbacher to Everyone: 08:12 PM

Oh.

From Cathy D'Amato to Everyone: 08:13 PM

signage for drivers and for bikes to slow down to encourage use of Vanderbilt to families with kids 😊

From Dimitri Moderbacher to Everyone: 08:13 PM

Wouldn't keeping traffic out of the neighborhood be more effective than letting them in part way and then divert them?

From Michael Moss to Everyone: 08:13 PM

Dimitri: yes, but how?

From Dimitri Moderbacher to Everyone: 08:14 PM

Like putting barricades on Atlantic and Flatbush instead of Pacific and Park Place.

From Cathy D'Amato to Everyone: 08:14 PM

park place is an emergency route - I do not think you can shut that street but maybe DOT can explain

From Michael Moss to Everyone: 08:15 PM

We've been putting metal barricades on Flatbush and Carlton and drivers take them down.

From Dimitri Moderbacher to Everyone: 08:15 PM

Oh, yeah, that sucks of course.

From Daniel Mainz to Everyone: 08:15 PM

Sounds like Washington Ave.

From Laura Leopardo to Everyone: 08:15 PM

Is something being done about the excess garbage on the streets/sidewalks and spilling over the city garbage cans?

From Cathy D'Amato to Everyone: 08:16 PM

I think because DOT is on the call and not sanitation they won't address garbage on this call but it's a problem for sure

From Gib Veconi to Everyone: 08:17 PM

We have reached out to the BK08 Sanitation depot about the Vanderbilt Avenue street cans not be fully emptied on the Saturday collection.

From Natalie Be'er to Everyone: 08:17 PM

Lawrence with the RECEIPTS

From Michael Lazar to Everyone: 08:17 PM

Thanks Gib. The sanitation thing is an issue. If Sanitation isn't willing to do it, can we as a community do volunteer work on that? Perhaps we could bring bags and do 2-3 times per day weekend cleans? I just signed up to volunteer, happy to help on that

From Gib Veconi to Everyone: 08:18 PM

I should mention that the 77th Precinct and the 78th Precinct were invited to this meeting.

From Gabriel Brunswick to Everyone: 08:18 PM

Thanks Gib, that addressed one of my questions

From Dimitri Moderbacher to Everyone: 08:18 PM

Can we dock their pay? ;-)

From Laura Leopardo to Everyone: 08:18 PM

Yes, we will also volunteer to doing garbage shifts. We will go to the volunteer website.

From Gib Veconi to Everyone: 08:19 PM

Michael, we're discussing a street cleaning initiative on Vanderbilt Avenue to happen during Open Streets. Stay tuned, and subscribe to our bulletin and Facebook feed for updates.

From Michael Lazar to Everyone: 08:19 PM

Thanks Gib. I don't use Facebook, but have signed up for volunteering and your mailing list.

From kylie & Alex Sachs to Everyone: 08:20 PM

re trash on Vanderbilt - the public bins - we own milk bar and try to bag it up and put the bag on top of the overflowing canister to deter more overflow. as of now I can see it still hasn't been picked up.

From Michael Lazar to Everyone: 08:20 PM

We could do community street cleaning unrelated to open streets by the way. Let's have some pride in the neighborhood

From james ellis to Everyone: 08:20 PM

Resource to volunteer to be a corner garbage bin partner:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/site/contact/get-involved/adopt-a-basket-program>

From Dimitri Moderbacher to Everyone: 08:20 PM

My brother and I fixed our barricades on Underhill & Prospect.

Yeah, it's sad how little people care about their city.

From Carey Tan to Everyone: 08:20 PM

Count me in for trash cleanup, Michael!

From Wilma McDaniel to Everyone: 08:20 PM

Thank you to this council and the volunteers. Open Streets is not perfect, ppl will always have a complaint. That said, it's a vital benefit right now.