



Tuesday, September 12, 2023

Department of Transportation: Pedal-Assist Commercial Bicycles

Times Square Alliance applauds the City of New York for their efforts to implement alternative transportation methods. We welcome efforts to rationalize curb access, and to explore the use of pedal-assist bicycles to reduce the density of trucks in overcrowded districts like ours.

As the business improvement district that exists to make Times Square clean, safe, and desirable for all, we value the accessibility and overall experience of the over 400,000 pedestrians who walk through our district on any given day.

The proposed rules state that “a pedal-assist commercial bicycle may not be parked on a sidewalk, while attended or unattended, except temporarily for the purpose of and while actually engaged commercially in loading and unloading property.”

We oppose the dangerous precedent of allowing motorized vehicles on the sidewalks. Sidewalk space is already scarce in our district without vehicles as large as 4 feet wide and 4-wheeled running at speeds of up to 12 mph threatening pedestrians. The rules propose the creation of bicycle loading zones – this is the right solution as we also cannot threaten the safety of cyclists.

We urge you not to enact the portion of the rule that allows sidewalk loading and unloading. Already, many cyclists ride on the sidewalk even though it is illegal. Our Times Square 311 YTD data shows 349 sidewalk complaints including many regarding e-bikes, scooters, and skateboards. We are grateful to DOT for this proposal. However, unless all vehicles are prohibited from using sidewalks and without aggressive, consistent enforcement, commuters, tourists and residents' safety will be at jeopardy.

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