As someone who has relied on the Brooklyn Bridge pedestrian walkway for my commute for 20 years, I am so disappointed by the vendor situation. It was such a relief when the bike lane was relocated (thank you to whoever came up with that brilliant idea!!) because it was finally possible to walk across the bridge stress-free: no worrying about being injured by a speeding bike or having to athletically dodge the tourists at the end of a hectic day. There was more than enough space for all pedestrians. Over the last several months, I have watched everyday as the vendors have slowly taken over the walkway, once again reducing the amount of space available to pedestrians by half due to the tables, photo platforms and the groups of tourists who crowd in front of each vendor stall. Every day there are new vendors creeping further and further up to the middle span of the bridge from both the Manhattan and Brooklyn sides.

In addition, there is even more garbage across the bridge. Before the garbage cans were overflowing with discarded coffee cups and water bottles. Now, we also have discarded cardboard boxes, plastic wrappers and hangtags across the length of the walkway. The Manhattan entrance to the walkway is absolutely disgusting at the end of everyday from all of the garbage. I feel so bad for the DSNY employees who have to clean up this unnecessary mess.

I’m also terribly embarrassed for our city. The Brooklyn Bridge is one of our most iconic landmarks which is why so many tourists flock to it every day, and what they find is a garbage-covered bargain-basement bazaar. It’s absolutely awful. I understand the vendors need to make a living, but the city has to find a way to locate them in an area where they aren’t getting in everyone’s way and creating such an eyesore. Why not section off a portion of the gigantic plaza behind City Hall for the vendors to set up in an organized manor since they are going to find a way to sell in the area anyway?

As a tax-paying resident, there are so few daily opportunities to move through the city in a stress-free manor. Relocating the bike lane allowed that on the pathway, and that opportunity has been destroyed by the vendors.