

Testimony on 8/8/24
Department of Sanitation Rules Hearing

Open Plans writes today in regard to new proposed rules on containerized trash. Our sidewalk is our greatest public asset, and it's time we cleaned it up. It's our shared resource, and millions of New Yorkers use it daily to shop, commute, and socialize. Piles of smelly, leaky trash bags soil our sidewalks and streets, and we applaud DSNY's effort to shift to sturdier, rodent-proof containers. However, at this critical juncture in the evolution of trash management in New York City, we must set a precedent that takes due care to preserve and improve the pedestrian experience. Detailed comments on this and more are below:

- **Sidewalk bins don't solve a key issue: space.** For too long, New Yorkers have been forced to navigate narrow sidewalks crowded with mountains of trash bags. In neighborhoods with narrow streets, entire sidewalks have been rendered unwalkable on collection days. Sidewalk bins may be rat-proof, but they won't solve the fundamental issue of trash obstructing sidewalk space. Many buildings lack indoor storage, meaning rows of bins will live on the sidewalk even outside of collection days, creating accessibility issues and visually blighting the facades and entryways of businesses and homes. There's a better way.
- **Keep sidewalks beautiful, accessible, and spacious — put trash in the curb lane.** New Yorkers are always in motion, we are a city of people who walk and roll. Our pedestrian city deserves spacious and beautiful sidewalks. Trash should not be on the sidewalk, in bags or in bins. Using our curbside space – which is public space – for trash containerization and collection instead of free parking will benefit the entire city. It will also make life easier for DSNY workers who already have one of the hardest jobs in the city, and curb lane bins that can be accessed by the mechanical arms of the new trucks means that DSNY employees will no longer have to break their backs. The department's own pilot projects have already shown that containers placed in the curb lane are an effective and efficient use of public space.

We encourage DSNY to expand the opportunities for curb lane disposal and lower the thresholds for what types of buildings are eligible for in-street containers. This



would be one giant step forward in making sure our city's streets support a clean, safe, and vibrant pedestrian life.

Respectfully,
Open Plans

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