

Testimony on 8/26/24

Department of Transportation Rules on Private Sidewalk Charging Cabinets

Open Plans writes today in regard to new proposed rules on expediting the installation of private e-bike charging cabinets on our sidewalks. The current landscape of illicit charging stations in bodegas and homes is a public hazard. We applaud the city's efforts to safely and efficiently serve e-mobility users. However, we call for a more holistic approach to charging that doesn't degrade vital sidewalk spaces. We call on DOT to preserve and improve the pedestrian experience.

Detailed comments on this and more are below:

- **Clutter on our sidewalks.** Sidewalks are our shared resource that millions of New Yorkers use daily to shop, commute, and socialize. Between sidewalk cafes, trash bins, benches, kiosks, and myriad other street furniture, space on our sidewalks is at a premium. For many, cluttered sidewalks make walking difficult and blight our pedestrian spaces. For New Yorkers with mobility issues, cluttered sidewalks are a massive obstacle to accessibility. Charging cabinets will add yet another element of clutter. Crucially they will also invite users to park their e-vehicles adjacent to the cabinets on the sidewalks themselves. Why add more chaos when there is a better way?
- **Keep sidewalks beautiful, accessible, and spacious — put cabinets in the curb lane integrated with bike parking.** Placing charging cabinets in the curb lane with designated parking spaces for e-bikes while they await charging would organize the chaos and get essential charging infrastructure out of the pedestrian realm. The city has already dedicated curb lane space to charging for electric cars, it should do the same for electric bikes. The City's own strategic documents, from the Streets Plan to the recent vision for the Cross Bronx Expressway, call for increased accessibility, better public space, smart curb management, and even specifically the placement of crucial transportation infrastructure in the curb lane. By putting e-bike charging stations on the sidewalk, the City would be contradicting its own vision for our streets and sidewalks.

We encourage DOT to integrate e-bike charging into the roadway, in parking lots, freight hubs, and other sites off our sidewalks that can accommodate them. Doing



so would ensure safe charging doesn't come at the expense of the sidewalk experience and would be one step towards a better public realm for all.

Respectfully,
Open Plans

Sara Lind
Co-Executive Director
sara@openplans.org

Jackson Chabot
Director of Advocacy and Organizing
jacksonchabot@openplans.org

Michael Sutherland
Policy Analyst
michael@openplans.org

Matt Choi
Graduate Intern