



Local Democracy In Action

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This evening I presented the full case for bike lanes, bike parking, bike lane enforcement to my local community board - [CB8 Manhattan](#). After two weeks of leafletting, postering, emailing and in cooperation with [Transportation Alternatives \(TA\)](#), we got about 35 local residents show up to support biking at a sub-committee meeting. From what I understand in these matters, that's huge! We also had representatives from the NYC DOT, Borough President's office, Councilmember Lappin's office and several people from local neighborhood associations.

After I gave my 4 minute [speech](#) about why I want to bike to work and what I would like the Community Board to do, a representative from TA inoculated us from local fears about illegal biking - on sidewalks, wrong way on streets, etc by bringing copies of their poster for the working cyclist program, which educates businesses and their food delivery people about the laws for cycling in the neighborhood.

And it was interesting to hear "the other side" of the "biking issue". Basically it was just a jumble of "we tried that before and it didn't work", "cyclists are a menace", "Second Avenue Subway will be ready by 2012", "Bus Rapid Transit is already taking a lane from First and Second Avenue"...

Mass Transit is great, but here's the thing, cycling is different than mass transportation. Mass transportation gets you most of the way to your destination, but rarely provides door to door service. Here in Northern Manhattan, there simply is no crosstown subway service, so you are forced to wait outside for slow moving and unreliable mass transit. Bikes have all the flexibility and reliability of cars while taking up less than 1/12 the space.

So the end result of the meeting was that we would meet again with more facts, figures and information around us to discuss what we can do for biking improvements for the UES in April. I will have some time to build my base of support before then and mobilize a large group to attend the full community board meeting when they provide a recommendation.

Tomorrow I'm presenting roughly the same ideas on a borough wide scale to the Manhattan Borough Board.



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