



COMMUNITY DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL 30

28-11 Queens Plaza North, Room 512

Long Island City, NY 11101

Tel: 718-391-8380

Fax: 718-391-8500

Website: cec30.org

Email: cec30@schools.nyc.gov

RESOLUTION #155

IN SUPPORT OF THE 34TH AVENUE OPEN STREET

WHEREAS, starting in April 2020, parts of 34th Avenue in Jackson Heights were closed to cars and trucks between 8:00 am and 8:00 pm, except for local traffic with a speed limit of 5 miles per hour;

WHEREAS, in October 2020, 34th Avenue from 69th Street to Junction Boulevard was designated an permanent Open Street by the Department of Transportation;

WHEREAS, four schools—P.S. 149, P.S. 398, I.S. 145, and I.S. 230—are directly on the 34th Avenue Open Street, two other schools—PS 212 and PS 280—are within one block of the Open Street.

WHEREAS, as of the 2020–2021 school year, 8,842 students, or 35% of K–8 students in District 30 schools, attend a school within two blocks of the 34th Avenue Open Street;¹

WHEREAS, Jackson Heights and neighboring Elmhurst and East Elmhurst are some of the neighborhoods in New York City with the least amount of access to public park space;²

WHEREAS, even before the pandemic, a number of the schools near the Open Street lack sufficient outdoor space for recess for their student populations;

WHEREAS, because of the significantly higher risks for transmission of the SARS CoV-2 virus in indoor spaces, providing outdoor space for socializing, exercising, eating, and other activities has taken on increased importance;³

WHEREAS, during the COVID-19 pandemic, public schools in New York City have provided less social distancing than recommended by the Centers for Disease Control, which recommends six feet of distance between unvaccinated individuals, heightening the need for the use of outdoor spaces, especially during breakfast and lunch, when students take off their masks;⁴

¹ Data compiled from school profiles for P.S. 69, P.S. 148, P.S. 149, P.S. 152, P.S. 212, P.S. 222, P.S. 228, P.S. 228, P.S. 398, I.S. 145, I.S. 227, and I.S. 230 at <https://www.schools.nyc.gov>.

² New York City Independent Budget Office, "Which Neighborhoods Have More Nearby Park Space Per Capita?" (July 15, 2020), <https://ibo.nyc.ny.us/cgi-park2/2020/07/which-neighborhoods-have-more-nearby-park-space-per-capita/>

³ Centers for Disease Control, "Participate in Outdoor and Indoor Activities" (Updated, August 19, 2021), <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/outdoor-activities.html>; Christina Veiga, "COVID Complicates Back-to-School Lunch Plans for NYC Students," *The City* (September 6, 2021), <https://www.thecity.nyc/2021/9/6/22659562/covid-complicates-school-lunch-for-nyc-students>.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control, "Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools" (Updated August 5, 2021), <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html#physical-distancing>

WHEREAS, the Department of Transportation has offered each school on the Open Street full street closure during school and afterschool hours, which would prohibit all cars, bikes, parking, and pedestrian access directly in front of the school, providing the school an expanded area for arrival and dismissal and an opportunity for schools to conduct activities outdoors on the Open Street;

WHEREAS, Car violence is the leading injury-related cause of death in children in New York City. In 2018, a student at PS145 on 34th Ave was seriously injured when leaving school;⁵

WHEREAS, the Open Street recently extended its daily hours to start at 7:30 am rather than 8:00 am, so that students and their families have use of the street while walking to school;

WHEREAS, Jackson Heights has no protected bicycle lanes, making the Open Street the safest place in the neighborhood for cycling, especially for children; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the District 30 Community Education Council enthusiastically supports the 34th Avenue Open Street;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Transportation should devote resources to expanded, inclusive community engagement and design to improve the safety and ease of use of the Open Street for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists, including teachers and DOE staff at schools in Jackson Heights who commute by car to work;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education and District 30 should encourage and promote schools using the Open Street for eating, recess, and other activities by providing resources such as play equipment and outdoor storage. In addition, use of available outdoor space should be part of administrators' routine evaluations;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education and District 30 should arrange with the Department of Transportation to have bike parking installed at the six schools on or within one block of the Open Street.

In Favor: 6 Jonathan Greenberg, Juliette-Noor Haji, Fatima Lakraflī, Michelle Moore, Chuck Park, Marisela Santos, Esther Verhalle

Abstain: 1 Deborah Alexander

Not Present: Kristina Berrouet, Kelly Craig, Whitney Toussaint

Resolution # 155 APPROVED: October 18, 2021

⁵ Brad Aaron, "Health Department: Car Crashes Remain Leading Injury Killer of NYC Kids" *Streetsblog* (May 26, 2016), <https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2016/05/26/health-department-car-crashes-remain-leading-injury-killer-of-nyc-kids/>; "Andrew Siff, "12-Year-Old Boy Pinned by Jeep in Front of Queens School: Police, Witnesses" (March 28, 2019), <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/12-year-old-hit-by-car-near-queens-school-police/1563533/>