

PRESS RELEASE

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SOHO BROADWAY INITIATIVE CONTINUES EFFORTS TO IMPROVE SIDEWALK CONGESTION THROUGH OUTREACH CAMPAIGN WITH SIDEWALK VENDING COMMUNITY AS STREET VENDOR PROJECT HOLDS MARCH AGAINST INITIATIVE

The Initiative's efforts to improve sidewalk congestion by providing SoHo Broadway vendors with current rules governing where sidewalk vendors are allowed coupled with City action leads to a 30% decrease in the number of sidewalk vendors operating from illegal locations along SoHo's Broadway.

"Since the Initiative's formation, our priority has been to improve sidewalk congestion along Broadway and over the past 12 months, we've started to see significant improvements" said Mark Dicus, Executive Director of the SoHo Broadway Initiative. "The 30% decrease in the number of vendors operating from illegal locations is the result of a combination of sidewalk vendors working with the Initiative to find legal locations along SoHo's Broadway and the City conducting enforcement activity for vendors who continue to operate illegally."

The Initiative, in response to extensive stakeholder input during the formation process, has prioritized improving sidewalk congestion. In the Initiative's 2016 Community Survey, 76% of respondents stated that improving sidewalk congestion was very important to them.

From June to August 2015, the Initiative studied illegal sidewalk vending within the District and published a Sidewalk Vending Initial Conditions report in September 2015 that showed between 70% to 80% of sidewalk vendors were located in illegal locations. After releasing the Initial Conditions report, the Initiative developed and published a Sidewalk Vending Guidebook in January 2016 that includes a summary of the rules governing sidewalk vending and Curbside Vending Regulation Maps of the District that show where vending is permitted within the District. Since January 2016, the Initiative has conducted a robust outreach and education campaign with the sidewalk vending community operating along SoHo's Broadway handing out over 350 Sidewalk Vending Guidebooks and working with vendors to find legal locations to operate in the District. In addition, the Initiative has also worked closely with City agencies including the New York Police Department, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and other City Agencies to share information about conditions along SoHo's Broadway and advocated for greater enforcement of the rules already on the books.

To help with the outreach efforts, the Initiative hired Frank Wessels, a retired NYPD Detective, as the Initiative's Director of Public Safety. Mr. Wessels, speaks with sidewalk vendors daily and helps vendors who position their carts or tables in questionable locations. "We get at least one call a week from a sidewalk vendor looking for help in finding a legal location within the district," said Frank Wessels, Director of Public Safety of the SoHo Broadway Initiative. "Sidewalk vendors who follow the rules and vend with care are welcome to

operate within the District” added Mr. Wessels. “Those vendors who choose to operate outside the law should be reminded that conducting commercial activity in public space is a privilege, not a right.”

“I have a good relationship with the street vendors on my block” added Leigh Behnke, a longtime SoHo Broadway resident. “Too much crowding is bad for vendor business and makes our quality of life issues more complicated.”

The Initiative is a little surprised to learn that the Street Vendor Project was organizing a march against the Initiative’s efforts to educate vendors and have vendors follow the rules. “The Initiative’s goal is simply to improve sidewalk congestion by having all sidewalk users use the sidewalk in a legal, respectful and responsible manner.” added Mr. Dicus. “If the Street Vendor Project wants to change the law, they should march South toward City Hall.”

About the SoHo Broadway Initiative

The SoHo Broadway Initiative is a small not-for-profit, tax-exempt organization that represents the business improvement district for SoHo’s Broadway from Houston to Canal (the “District”). The Initiative is a public private partnership whose purpose is to foster a unique, vibrant, mixed-use district with enhanced maintenance and public safety, effective advocacy and administration, technical and professional services for its members, and strategic capital improvements. The Initiative serves those who live, work and visit the District.

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