

Re - Hearing's on Intro 257-A – Regulation of ATMs

Monday, October 25, 2010

Manhattan CB4 applauds the City Council Transportation committee's undertaking to improve security for all ATMs and to regulate ATMs on sidewalks. The proliferation of so called amenities on the sidewalk has made walking very difficult in our neighborhood, just when the mayor is encouraging the citizens to walk more.

CB4 opposes the installation of ATMs on the sidewalk at least south of 60th Street in Manhattan. Bank branches are ubiquitous and numerous ATMs are installed inside stores. One wonders what portion of the public needs to withdraw cash every 25 ft when even taxicabs accept credit cards for payment.

The ATMs are only 3 ft deep, but when a person withdraws cash, 4.5 ft of sidewalk is obstructed; some are located right at the corner of very crowded intersections like 42nd Street and 9th Avenue; finally as with phone booths, ATMs are a convenient place to dump garbage.

However should the committee feel compelled to permit private ATMs to be installed on the public right of way, we recommend that the following be taken in consideration:

Placement:

A Sidewalk ATM should be located no less than 300 ft from a bank or another ATM (located inside or outside). As an example, in Hell's Kitchen, on a 200 ft stretch we have two bank branches, two sidewalk ATMs and one indoor ATM.

A sidewalk ATM should be located at least 10 ft away from the corner of two buildings at an intersection, preferably not in front of a building where the first floor is residential.

A sidewalk ATM should allow for 9.5 ft of walking path clearance similar to the newsstands clearance rules.

Licensing Fees:

ATMs should be subject to a licensing fee comparable to what a sidewalk café pays today: ATMs are competing with sidewalk cafes and newsstands for the use of public space. Based on a 3x3 ft footprint, an ATM license would cost \$300 or more per year.

Appearance and Footprint:

Each ATM's size should be strictly limited to the 3x3x4 and posting of advertisement should not be allowed on them. This will prevent a repeat of the regrettable phone booth initiative, where exceedingly large installations proliferated for the purpose of generating advertisement revenue.

Down lighting should be directed at the keyboard and not shine in pedestrians' or neighbors' eyes.

Similarly to phone booths and sidewalk cafés, a complaint number should be prominently posted on ATMs.

Although all of these measures will limit the negative impact, allowing ATMs - a for-profit enterprise with NO public benefit - to use our public space, would set an unfortunate precedent. These ATMs encroach on the already crowded sidewalk space and limit the placement of newsstands and cafes, which generate jobs or bike racks and bus shelters and trees, which provide valuable service to the public. Consequently CB4 opposes the installation of ATMs on the sidewalks south of 60th Street in Manhattan