



**Greenwich
Village
Society for
Historic
Preservation**

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May 15, 2013

Hon. Robert Tierney, Chair
New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Centre Street, 9th floor
New York, NY 10007

Re: Landmarks Preservation Commission Review of Bike Share Stations

Dear Chair Tierney:

As you know, in recent weeks the City has installed dozens of bike share stations throughout Manhattan and Brooklyn, including within designated historic districts. None of these, as we understand, went through the Certificate of Appropriateness public review and approval process at the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

GVSHP is generally very supportive of initiatives to reduce vehicular traffic in our city and neighborhoods, and to increase access to public space by pedestrians and bicyclists. We believe such measures are essential to the future of our city, especially to neighborhoods like ours, and to the health and well-being of our residents. We believe that a bike share program can and should be a welcome addition not only to our neighborhoods but to our historic districts.

However, we are concerned about the lack of a landmarks public review and approval process for the siting of these stations, for two very important reasons.

First, there is no denying that these stations do have a visual impact – some are very large, and include signage. Many similar street furniture changes do require public review and approval by the Commission, and we believe these stations deserve no less a degree of public vetting. We certainly think that these stations can be found appropriate within our historic districts, though we believe their size, design, and placement should be reviewed and considered by the Commission in such a way that allows public input.

However, there is a second and important reason why we believe these stations should go through this public review and approval process, and it relates to the public's buying into the landmarks regulation process.

As you know, small property and business owners in historic districts often face arduous scrutiny by the Commission of the smallest details of proposed changes to their storefronts or properties as they go through the public review and approval process, down to and including the exact color of the paint they chose and the particular dimensions of a window mullion. In most (if not all) of these cases, we believe that this exacting level of scrutiny is not only warranted but beneficial, as it

helps ensure that the irreplaceable character of our historic neighborhoods, from which the entire public benefits, is preserved.

However, if we are to expect small property and business owners to willingly accept this level of regulation, we must ensure that standards are applied fairly and broadly, to powerful real estate interests, large institutions, and city agencies as well as small business and property owners. Unfortunately, this is not always the case.

It is difficult to dispute that these bike share stations have at least as much impact upon the visual look and feel of an historic district as choices like the color of paint or the exact dimensions of a window frame. Therefore in the interest of fairness, they should be subject to the same exacting and thorough public review and approval process through the Commission as these other changes. There is no reason why bike share stations cannot be approved for, appropriately located within, and designed for historic districts. But there is also no reason why they should be sited without the benefit of the same public review that average New Yorkers must undergo for infinitely smaller and more mundane proposed changes within designated historic districts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Berman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Andrew Berman
Executive Director