CURBSIDE CHAOS: REFORMING THE CURB, RECLAIMING THE RIGHT-OF-WAY
METHODOLOGY

- Expert Interviews
- Secondary Research
- Community Engagement
- Observation
WHAT IS THE CURBSIDE LANE?

Myrtle Ave between Hall St & Ryerson St

Legend
- Curbside Lane
- Travelway
- Pedestrian Realm
HOW IS IT USED?

- Outdoor dining
- Construction zone
- Double parked car, unloading
- 2 hr metered parking
- Metered parking being used as loading zone
- No standing zone
- Myrtle Ave between Hall St & Ryerson St

Legend:
- Curbside Lane
- Travelway
- Pedestrian Realm
CURBSIDE LANE OBSERVATIONS IN NYC
CAR DOMINANCE IN THE STREETSCAPE IN NYC

75% of the shared streetscape is dedicated to the movement and storage of vehicles.

Source: Transportation Alternatives

Streets and sidewalks make up 80% of public spaces in cities.
CURB USES EMPLOYED BY NYC DOT

FREE ON-STREET PARKING

Image Source: Walker Johnston

METERED PARKING

Image Source: Walker Johnston

EV CHARGING STATIONS

Image Source: NYC DOT

CAR SHARE

Image Source: NYC DOT
CURB USES EMPLOYED BY NYC DOT

BIKE CORRALS

Image Source: Walker Johnston

BIKE Lanes

Image Source: Walker Johnston

BIKE SHARE

Image Source: Walker Johnston

BUS-ONLY LANES

Image Source: Walker Johnston
CURB USES EMPLOYED BY NYC DOT

OONEE BIKE STORAGE PILOT

TAXI & FHV RELIEF STANDS

NEIGHBORHOOD LOADING ZONES

LOADING ZONES
CURB USES EMPLOYED BY NYC DOT

CONTAINERIZED TRASH

CURB EXTENSIONS

BUS BULBS

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

*DEP
Curb Uses Employed by NYC DOT

Street Seats

Open Restaurants

Open Streets
In-person Outreach on Open Streets

What would you like to see in the curbside lane?

Responses: public pool — a place to chit-chat, gossip, and people-watch — community garden — live music — dj — dancing — moving walkway — bidirectional bike lane — public restrooms — parklet (small public space) — restaurants — a place to eat without paying or going to a restaurant — English Country Dance — CitiBike stations
Curb productivity and public benefit matrix

Most productive

Least public benefit

Q1  Q2

Q3  Q4

Most public benefit

Least productive
CURB PRODUCTIVITY AND PUBLIC BENEFIT MATRIX

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<thead>
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<th>Least public benefit</th>
<th>Most productive</th>
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<td>Q1</td>
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Least productive

FREE VEHICLE PARKING
Curb Productivity and Public Benefit Matrix

Most productive

Least public benefit

Q1

Q2

Most public benefit

Q3

Q4

Least productive

Free vehicle parking

Green infrastructure
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GUIDING PRINCIPLES

PUBLIC SPACE, PUBLIC BENEFIT
COMMUNITY AGENCY & EMPOWERMENT
TRANSPARENCY & ACCESSIBILITY
CLIMATE RESILIENCE & LIVEABILITY
SAFETY & ANTI-POLICING
PRODUCTIVITY & FLEXIBILITY
GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The curbside should be managed, designed, and used for the **community's benefit**.

Communities should have **equitable access to resources** that give them **agency** in initiating changes at the curb.

Curb regulations and usage should be **transparent and accessible** by the public.

The curbside must play a role in **climate change adaptation** and neighborhood **livability**.

Curb reform should support **safety** of all community members & move toward **self-enforcing street design**.

Curbside management should prioritize **productivity and flexibility** over fixed uses.
Recommendation 1: Streamline information about curb usage and programs on DOT website under one branch devoted to curbside management.

Curb Management

NYC DOT is responsible for managing the curbside lane, which is part of the public right-of-way. While car parking is currently the dominant use, the curb is home to a variety of programs that benefit all New Yorkers. Learn more about alternate uses of the curb and how to request them!
RECOMMENDATION 2: HOUSE CURB USAGE DATA WITH COMMUNITY BOARDS OR COUNCIL DISTRICTS SO THAT IT IS MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR PUBLIC USE.

I wonder how much space is devoted to (free car parking, loading zones, etc.) in my neighborhood…?

How many curb extensions have been installed in the last 5 years in Jackson Heights?

In Clinton Hill, there are…

##

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Not enough! But so far, we’ve gotten …
Recommendation 3: Create paid public space manager positions to help communities repurpose the curbside.

Sample Responsibilities and Impacts:

- Help community members plan and design curbside projects (in addition to other public spaces)
- Help solicit ideas surrounding the curbside and gather feedback about new curb designs and installations
  - Communities feel more ownership of their public spaces and more engaged

Main Policy Recommendations

1. Create the Office of Public Space Management led by a commissioner appointed by the Mayor

2. Define sectors per community board district, each to be managed by a paid, full-time, public space manager as an adjunct to the community board

3. DOT to create a street hierarchy, classifying every street according to its value to the transportation network

4. NYC agencies create a toolkit, setting clear guidelines defining which street treatments and uses are allowed on specific types of streets.
Recommendation 4:

Create and implement a hierarchy of curbside priorities that are dependent on land use.

Precedent: The City of Seattle’s Flex Zone/Curb Use Priorities Model

Source: City of Seattle
RECOMMENDATION 5:

IMPLEMENT DAYLIGHTING CITYWIDE. DESIGN THE STREETS WITHOUT NEED TO ENFORCE NY STATE LAW PROHIBITING PARKING WITHIN 20 FT OF CROSSWALK.

SECTION 1202

Stopping, standing or parking prohibited in specified places

Vehicle & Traffic (VAT) CHAPTER 71, TITLE 7, ARTICLE 32

No person shall: Stand or park a vehicle, whether occupied or not, except momentarily to pick up or discharge a passenger or passengers: b. **Within twenty feet of a crosswalk at an intersection**, unless a different distance is indicated by official signs, markings or parking meters.
Recommendation 6: Incorporate green infrastructure on every city street that supports it, prioritizing neighborhoods in high risk of flooding.

Most of this space is taken up by cars and it’s free parking … if we want to prioritize our needs for climate adaptation, we need to be more creative in using this very important space.

Marcel Negret, senior planner at the RPA
RECOMMENDATION 7: EXPAND TRASH CONTAINERIZATION PROGRAM CITYWIDE AND ENSURE MANDATORY PARTICIPATION.

Clean Curbs Residential Bin Pilot in Hell’s Kitchen. Image Source: Streetsblog. Source: Noah Martz

Containerized trash and recycling in the curbside lane in Barcelona. Photo: ZarateMAN
Thank you!