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Daily News Editorial

Proposed improvements to Prospect Park West bike lane have gotten completely out of hand

Saturday, April 23, 2011

That bike lane in Brooklyn - the one that's famous or infamous, depending on your cycling zealotry - becomes ever more the path to crazytown.

Transportation Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan installed the thing alongside Prospect Park West as a shining example of her vision for New York's two-wheeled future.

Some loved it. Some hated it. Some sued, alleging that Sadik-Khan had thrown together bogus numbers to prove her brainchild was not only in high demand, but had smoothed traffic and saved lives to boot.

And, with the bicycling world watching, she really, really, really wants to avoid having the local community erupt into open revolt. She offered improvements, like rumble strips at street crossings to bounce cyclists into slowing down. (Why they wouldn't simply ride in the street to avoid jolt after jolt after jolt is beyond us.)

Now, the local community board has responded with improvements to Sadik-Khan's improvements, while hilariously informing her that "although this resolution obviously presumes the continued existence" of the bike lane, she should not conclude that the board supports having it.

Among the items wanted by the board are landmark-quality pedestrian islands, wider islands, islands that are shortened to allow more parking, seasonal no-parking or no-standing signs at a drop-off zone, phased traffic signals for bicyclists with louvered lights and, perhaps, "push-button activated pedestrian crossing signals."

All of which could cost the city hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars, creating what the board described as "a showcase - even on a national or international level - for successful design and development of a project of this nature."

Are all this effort and money really worth it to create room for bicycles on a 1.8-mile strip of roadway? Before you answer, consider this: A mere stone's throw away, there are beautiful cycling paths provide unfettered freedom to ride inside Prospect Park.