

Contractors dealing with Local Law 11 provisions or other building façade work are appropriately required to protect areas used by pedestrians, and they usually do so by sub-contracting the installation of sidewalk sheds. The businesses that install the sheds generally appear eager for the work and upon contracting, usually do so very rapidly — often long before work on the building actually begins. Then they are required to leave them in place after the work is completed and after it is certified by a professional engineer, until a Department of Housing inspector comes out and OK's the engineer's approval and certification of the completed project. Then, and only then can the sheds finally be removed — at the convenience of the shed contractor, of course.

During the entire time that sheds are up, landlords, cooperative apartment shareholders and condominium owners must shoulder the unnecessary burden of costs associated with the sheds outside of the time that work is being done on the buildings. Important in this discussion is that cooperators and condominium owners must pay for the sheds individually out of their household budgets via maintenance or assessment costs (and not out of profits as landlords may). Worse still is the less frequent event that finds landlords and building owners (other than cooperators and condo owners) walking away from their premises leaving the sheds in place without governance — resulting in the potentially unsafe structures remaining as unnecessary and unsightly sources of sight pollution to our city landscape!

The cost of erecting and maintaining the sheds is generally calculated by the foot by the day, includes all of the “down” time before any work begins and then often long after the work is completed and not until the Department of Building inspectors OK their removal.

We strongly urge the all City officials to address

- 1) the practice of erecting sidewalk sheds too soon / leaving them up too long;
- 2) the disregard by the DoB of a professional engineer's assessment and approval of work that has been safely and properly completed; and
- 3) the delay in getting DoB building inspectors to sites once work on façades is completed.

Failure to remedy these conditions will allow the continued, unfair and unnecessary financial burden that is now borne by many buildings that are affected by Local Law 11 or otherwise require façade maintenance. The Association of Riverdale Cooperatives & Condominiums strongly urges that representatives in City government aggressively pursue the issues described and seek proper remediation.