



IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated May 25, 2018 from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Coney Island Riegelmann Boardwalk by the Landmark Preservation Commission on May 15, 2018 (List No. 506/LP No. 2583), Borough of Brooklyn, Community District 13.

Pursuant to Section 3020.8(b) of the City Charter, the City Planning Commission shall submit to the City Council a report with respect to the relation of any designation by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, whether of a historic district or a landmark, to the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements, and any plans for the development, growth, improvement or renewal of the area involved.

On May 15, 2018, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Coney Island Riegelmann Boardwalk as a scenic landmark. The landmark designation consists of the 2.7 mile long public beachfront boardwalk stretching from West 37th Street in Coney Island to Brighton 15th Street in Brighton Beach. The landmark stretches from the Coney Island neighborhood to the Brighton Beach neighborhood, both in Brooklyn Community District 13.

The Coney Island Riegelmann Boardwalk is one of the best-known waterfront promenades in the world. The boardwalk is named after Brooklyn Borough President Edward J. Riegelmann, who advocated for public waterfront access in Southern Brooklyn during his term from 1918 to 1924.

The 2.7-mile-long boardwalk was part of a plan to revitalize the Coney Island neighborhood and the beach. Inspired by the success of earlier public boardwalks in Atlantic City, New Jersey and other locations, officials hoped the boardwalk would turn the area into a year-round resort. Prior to the 20th century, most of Brooklyn's waterfront was privately controlled. A public boardwalk was proposed for Coney Island as early as 1897, but it was not until 1913, when the Kings County Supreme Court ruled that at low tide the beach was owned by the state and belonged to the public, that fences and barriers were removed along the waterfront. In 1921, the New York State Legislature voted to transfer the land to New York City, which made various improvements to the beach and the adjoining street grid.

Planned and designed by engineer Philip P. Farley, the Coney Island Boardwalk is an elevated deck supported by reinforced concrete piles and girders. Eighty feet wide and 9,500 feet long, the first section, between Ocean Parkway and West 37th Street, opened in May 1923. Two years later, the boardwalk was extended 4,000 feet east, to Coney Island Avenue, and in 1941 it was extended an additional 1,500 feet, to Brighton 15th Street, under Parks Commissioner Robert Moses. The boardwalk's most heavily-used section, between Ocean Parkway and Stillwell Avenue, was straightened and moved inland in 1940.

With the opening of the boardwalk and beach, a new street plan was implemented in Coney Island. Approved by the Board of Estimate in December 1922, construction ran from 1923 to 1925. Surf Avenue and Stillwell Avenue were widened and approximately 18 asphalt streets, mostly 60 feet wide, were opened between West 8th and West 35th Streets. Streets that were formerly private were also integrated into the street grid and widened. These changes improved public access to the boardwalk and beach. Sidewalks, curbs, and sewers were also installed.

As originally constructed, the boardwalk deck consisted of wood planks laid in a modified chevron pattern, flanking two longitudinal paths. On the ocean side, stairs led down to the beach at regular intervals, approximately every block and a half, and comfort stations and shade pavilions were provided in several locations, both at boardwalk level and beneath the boardwalk at beach level. On the land side, entrance ramps (not part of this landmark designation) connected the boardwalk to the adjacent sidewalks. The boardwalk also connects to the 1,040-foot long Steeplechase Pier, which was originally a wood ferry dock with vertical posts, diagonal bracing, and decking.

The boardwalk planking has been replaced as part of regular cyclical maintenance and reconstruction over the years, and the current deck is constructed of various materials. In addition to replacement wood planking laid in a modified chevron pattern, concrete paving has been installed from Brighton 1st Road to Ocean Parkway, and from West 33rd to West 37th streets. Recycled plastic lumber with a concrete carriage path has been installed from Brighton 15th Street to Coney Island Avenue. Recycled plastic lumber was also used in the 2013 reconstruction of Steeplechase Pier after it was destroyed by Hurricane Sandy in 2012. Firebreaks, with interlocking pavers of various shapes, interrupt these materials at Stillwell Avenue and Brighton 2nd, West 2nd, West 15th, West 21st,

West 27th, and West 33rd streets. These firebreaks project onto the beach and have curved ends. The deck's original concrete supporting piles remain, though they are less visible because, after various modifications, the beach is now at a higher elevation than when the boardwalk was originally constructed.

Both the Coney Island and Brighton Beach neighborhoods of southern Brooklyn are primarily residential in character, with clusters of commercial uses along Mermaid, Neptune, and Brighton Beach avenues. Both neighborhoods also feature significant entertainment and amusements along the waterfront. There are several individual landmarks adjacent to the boardwalk within the Coney Island neighborhood, including the Child's Restaurant Building (LP-2106), the Parachute Jump (LP-1638), The Wonder Wheel (LP-1708), and The Cyclone (LP-1636).

The boardwalk is owned by the Department of Parks and Recreation and therefore is not located on a zoning lot or tax lot. Pursuant to Section 74-79 of the Zoning Resolution, the unique regulations associated with the transfer of development rights from landmark sites are not applicable for the boardwalk and no additional analysis has been conducted.

The subject landmark does not conflict with the Zoning Resolution. In addition, the Commission is not aware of any conflicts between the subject landmark designation and projected public improvements or any plans for development, growth, improvement, or renewal in the vicinity of the landmarked structure.

MARISA LAGO, *Chair*

KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, ESQ., *Vice Chairman*

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