



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 6
1932 Arthur Avenue, Room 403-A, Bronx, NY 10457
Telephone: (718) 579-6990 Fax: (718) 579-6875 Email: bronxcb6@bronxcb6.org
Honorable Ruben Diaz Jr., Bronx Borough President

MS. EVONNE CAPERS
Board Chairperson

MR. JOHN SANCHEZ
District Manager

Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes
Ms. Maria Garcia, Committee Chairperson
Thursday, April 18, 2019

The Transportation Committee met on Thursday, April 18, 2019 at the Bronx Community Board #6's district office located at 1932 Arthur Avenue, Room 403-A. The following members were present at this meeting: Claudette Coles, Frank Franz, and Laura James.

The New York City Department of Transportation presented on the proposed traffic and safety improvements to Southern Boulevard from East 182nd Street to East Fordham Road. The attendees included the Bronx Borough Commissioner and Deputy Bronx Borough Commissioner. The plan would entail removing 82 parking spaces between East 182nd Street and East Fordham Road on Mondays through Fridays from the hours of 7 am to 7 pm to improve safety and also provide space for bike lanes. The plan would also provide pedestrian safety measures on Southern Boulevard and East Fordham Road to make it easier for pedestrians to cross the street. The Southern Boulevard corridor is a Vision Zero priority due to the high number of serious vehicular accidents between 2012 and 2016. More than 250 accidents occurred during that time. The plan would install a platform for buses to easily load and unload passengers, which would be the first installed in the New York City.

The committee was concerned about the impact of removing 82 parking spots during the day for residents that work at night. The committee was also concerned about the school buses that park in front of the Bronx Zoo in the summer utilizing these parking spaces for their own use creating even more traffic issues. The New York City Department of Transportation responded that they would need traffic enforcement assistance from NYPD.

The New York City Department of Transportation stated that the Bronx Zoo was in favor of the plan as presented in its entirety. However, in a letter dated, February 21st, 2019 the Bronx Zoo stated that it only supported restricting parking between East 182nd Street to East 185th Street. The committee recommended that the full board oppose these proposed safety and traffic improvement changes.

The next Transportation Committee meeting will be on Thursday, May 16, 2019 at 6:30 pm in our district office.

Honorable Ritchie Torres,
City Council Member, 15th Council District

Honorable Rafael Salamanca Jr.,
City Council Member, 17th Council District



John F. Calvelli
Executive Vice
President
Public Affairs

February 21, 2019

Mr. Nivardo Lopez
Bronx Borough Commissioner
NYC Department of Transportation
1400 Williamsbridge Road
Bronx, NY 10461

Dear Borough Commissioner Lopez,

I write to express the Wildlife Conservation Society's (WCS) conditional support of the NYC Department of Transportation's (DOT) proposed Southern Boulevard Traffic Calming & Bike Lane Project with one necessary change to ensure the safety of schoolchildren visiting our Bronx Zoo. We respectfully request that there be no parking permitted from 7:00am to 7:00pm, Monday through Friday from 182nd Street to 185th Street on the northbound side of Southern Boulevard. The current proposal directly impacts the ability for buses to load schoolchildren departing the Bronx Zoo.

As a world-class destination and economic engine for the City, and in particular for the borough, the Bronx Zoo attracts nearly 2 million visitors per year, in addition to being a popular venue for the public and community groups. Each year, we expect more than 430,000 schoolchildren and their teachers/chaperones to visit and take part in our numerous educational and recreational programming at our facility. Currently, we have up to 150 school buses that arrive at the Bronx Zoo daily. Although the majority of these buses park in our lots, approximately 50 of them prefer to do curbside drop-off and pick-up near our entrance on 185th street and Southern Boulevard. This represents up to 3,000 schoolchildren a day who are unloading and loading onto the northbound Southern Boulevard sidewalk and whose safety is of our utmost concern.

School buses unload students onto the Southern Boulevard sidewalk from 9:00 - 10am, and return to pick-up between 12:00 - 2:00pm. The current DOT plan has northbound traffic on Southern Blvd. going to one lane from 10:00 - 3:00 pm Monday through Friday, which would no longer allow for school bus pick-ups and instead encourage buses to pick-up using unsafe methods. Buses would be prone to stopping in the only lane of moving traffic or parking on the opposite side of the street, which will necessitate school children having to cross the street, a practice we strongly discourage. Therefore, we respectfully request that the plan instead

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expand the no parking requirement from 7:00am to 7:00pm, Monday through Friday from 182nd Street to 185th Street on the northbound side of Southern Boulevard. This would ensure the best measure of safety for students as they depart from their visit at the Bronx Zoo. Our guests' experience, regardless of age, to our park is critical to our operations, including how they arrive and depart. As you may be aware, the Bronx Zoo has most recently undertaken major investments to improve the transportation facilities at the Bronx River Gate and Southern Boulevard parking areas to alleviate some of the traffic congestion around the zoo and provide improved access to the park for those arriving by public transportation or car. There have also been improvements in signage and wayfinding to increase accessibility to the Zoo. These kinds of safety and infrastructure investments enable the Bronx Zoo to serve the public with its world-class exhibits and facilities, inspiring a nation of learners and lifelong stewards of the environment.

We agree that this project can meet its objectives. However, it should not come at the risk of the thousands of schoolchildren who utilize the northbound Southern Boulevard curbside to access the Bronx Zoo. We look forward to your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



John F. Calvelli

Cc: Ruben Diaz Jr., Bronx Borough President
Polly Trottenberg, Commissioner, Department of Transportation
Evonne Capers, Chair, Community Board 6
Jean Hill, Chair, Community Board 7