

**Minutes of the Traffic & Transportation Committee Meeting  
Bronx Community Board 8  
March 31, 2022, 7pm via Zoom**

The meeting was called to order at 7:04pm

**Attendees**

*Committee:*

Present: Debra Travis (Chair), Kelli Buford, Mary Ellen Gibbs (CCM), Christopher Calhoun, David Gellman, Edward Green, Georgia Santiago

Absent: Osvaly Jimenez

Board Members: Martin Wolpoff, Nick Fazio, Rosemary Ginty, Camelia Tepelus, Laura Spalter, Sylvia Alexander, Rob Jacklosky, Charles Moerdler, Lisa Daub, Rob Spalter (CCM), Bob Bender, Omar Murray

Elected Officials: Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz, Council Member Eric Dinowitz, Frederic Klein (AM Dinowitz), Randi Martos (AM Dinowitz)

City Agencies: Keith Kalb (Interim Bronx Borough Commissioner), Holly Malone (Greenway Coordinator), Darisa Cruz (Senior Borough Planner), Chris Brunson (Director of Safety Projects and Programs), Alicia Posner (Deputy Director of Safety Projects and Programs)

**Agenda**

Due to the large number of people in attendance for the Riverdale Avenue street safety presentation, the approval of the February minutes was moved by unanimous consent the approval to after the budget items in order to give it the proper amount of time to make some requested edits.

**Chair's Report**

None

**DOT Presentation of Safety Improvement Project on Riverdale Avenue from West 254<sup>th</sup> Street to West 261<sup>st</sup> Street / the city line**

The Bronx Borough DOT presented a plan for street safety on Riverdale Avenue from West 254<sup>th</sup> Street to the West 263<sup>rd</sup> Street (city line). This plan would entail converting two travel lanes in each direction to one travel lane in each direction, adding a center left turn bay and bike lanes in each direction in the parking median. The reason DOT is making these improvements is that they have identified Riverdale Avenue as having unsafe conditions due to left turns and speeding. The data they presented was from 2015-2019 which indicated that 66 total injuries occurred, including 3 fatalities, particularly impacting seniors. 55% of the crashes occurred while a pedestrian was crossing

with the signal in their favor and 58% of the pedestrian crashes occurred when a driver was making a left turn. Approximately 50% occurred between 9am and 3pm which is much higher than the borough average of 30% for that time period. 34% of motor-vehicle injuries were caused by rear-end collisions which is indicative of speeding. They believe there is excess volume of roadway which contributes to speeding and when combined with double-parking leads to erratic lane changes and too much complexity for drivers making left turns. The changes to the roadway are common treatments used throughout the Bronx. According to DOT, similar treatments on Morris Park Ave led to a 42% reduction in total injuries and 37% reduction in motor vehicle injuries. While this project includes a bike lane, this is not considered a bike safety project and the bike lane is not the highest priority. A protected bike lane was not considered because it would have an impact of parking. DOT will post their proposal online after their presentation and plans to complete the work this summer.

Speakers from community organizations and local businesses included: Sarah Hughes (St Margaret's of Cortona Church), Barbara Connolly (President, Riverdale Gardens), Kevin DeGroat (CMSV), Lee Chong (RSS Social Action Committee), Rob Spalter (Broadway Community Alliance), Michael Heller (Former T&T Committee Chair), Damian McShane (Riverdale Main Street Alliance). A letter in opposition from Enzo Feriangi of Riverdale Bagels was read by Nick Fazio.

The overwhelming majority of comments from the public were opposed to this plan. Both Council Member Eric Dinowitz and Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz rejected this plan and called for other options to be considered first.

**Concerns raised were:**

- DOT does not have a plan to connect Riverdale Avenue at both ends to existing roads with the new lane configuration. DOT responded that they have not spoken to the city of Yonkers yet, but they will coordinate once the project is finalized and being implemented.
- Other less impactful remedies such as speed cushions, reducing the speed limit and adding left turn signals or delineators were not considered. DOT responded that speed cushions and left turn signals are not feasible with the current 4 lane configuration but Riverdale Avenue could become eligible if there was a two lane configuration with a center turn bay and that this plan does not foreclose future changes to address further safety needs
- The lack of transparency in the development of the plan because the plan was not released prior to the public, community board and the elected and no merchants were contacted during the development for input
- Traffic congestion will be worse because double parking is chronic in front of PS 81 and there is substantial bus traffic. DOT stated they could reach out to the schools to discuss any concerns they are having
- Business delivery would be hampered by the reduction in lanes and no loading zones are part of this plan. DOT responded that they would consider loading zones.
- Speed cameras would be more effective in reducing traffic. DOT responded that they are not operable 24 hours and their implementation is tightly controlled

- Traffic volume may increase in the future and city planning and the Land Use committee has not been involved in the development of this plan
- Riverdale Avenue is not the area of greatest need unlike Broadway at West 230<sup>th</sup> or Bailey Avenue which have substantial crash volume. DOT stated they would look into the Broadway corridor.
- Turning onto Riverdale Avenue will be more difficult because there will be steady streams of cars in the available lane
- Additional congestion will lead to vehicles using side streets to get to Mosholu Avenue.

The committee discussed the communities concerns and passed the following resolution from the floor:

**RESOLUTION:**

**WHEREAS**, the Bronx Department of Transportation presented on March 31<sup>st</sup> to the Bronx Community Board 8 Traffic and Transportation Committee a street safety plan for Riverdale Avenue between West 259<sup>th</sup> Street and the city line which would involve converting 4 travel lanes to two travel lanes with a left turn bay and bike lanes one each side of the street;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT**, the Traffic and Transportation Committee rejects the proposal as presented.

**Committee Vote:**

Favor: Kelli Buford, Mary Ellen Gibbs (CCM), Christopher Calhoun, Edward Green, Georgia Santiago

Oppose: Debra Travis, David Gellman

\* Please see the April 20, 2022 Traffic & Transportation minutes for the final version of this resolution as voted on by Community Board 8 on April 12, 2022.

**SAPO Request for Full Street Closure of Johnson Avenue from West 235<sup>th</sup> to West 236<sup>th</sup> Street on May 22<sup>nd</sup> to Host Pop-Up Farmers Market**

The committee heard a presentation from Shira Silverman, who manages the much loved Riverdale Y Sunday Market, on her request for a full street closure of Johnson Avenue from 235<sup>th</sup> to 236<sup>th</sup> Street for a pop-up farmers market on Sunday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>. This one-day event is supported by KRVC and City Council Member Eric Dinowitz. Nick Fazio (Chair of the CB8 Economic Development Committee) said he spoke to several businesses immediately impacted and they were excited for the event. The hours will be from 7am to 3pm including setup and breakdown.

## **RESOLUTION:**

**WHEREAS**, the Riverdale YMHA presented their plan for a one-time Sunday pop-up market on Johnson Avenue on May 22<sup>nd</sup> in support of a full street closure permit;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT**, the Traffic and Transportation Committee supports the permit for the full street closure on May 22<sup>nd</sup> on Johnson Avenue between West 235<sup>th</sup> Street and West 236<sup>th</sup> Street.

### **Committee Vote:**

Favor: Debra Travis, Kelli Buford, Mary Ellen Gibbs, Christopher Calhoun, David Gellman, Edward Green

Oppose: None

### **Discussion of Budget Priorities for FY24 and Agency Response to Budget Priorities for FY23**

There was a committee discussion of the current draft of the budget priorities. There was strong support within the committee for storm water management around the Major Deegan / Broadway corridor after the flooding last fall and to focus on step street repair and poor conditions and repairing road surfaces that are not in good condition. DOT has requested that the committee request the needs of the step streets as maintenance requests and they will inspect and advise if any require inclusion in the capital budget priorities. The committee is also considering a request for a parking study of the Broadway corridor. The Chair will discuss further with the BID to confirm they are agreed that it is a priority.

### **Approval of Minutes of Meeting of February 17, 2022**

The minutes of the February 17, 2022 committee meeting were unanimously approved with changes.

### **Old Business**

None

### **New Business**

Since the last meeting, the chair inquired about a picture posted to Twitter showing an MTA bus driver removing a pedestrian safety sign at the intersection of Johnson and Kappock. Frederic Klein contacted MTA and they investigated. The sign had not been placed there by DOT and was removed because it was blocking the safe turning of the bus. No further actions were warranted regarding the drivers behavior.

Chris Calhoun reported that at the intersection of West 232<sup>nd</sup> and Broadway there is a new traffic light

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:16pm