

(Draft Pending Committee Approval)

Minutes of the Traffic & Transportation Committee Meeting

Bronx Community Board 8

September 15, 2022, 7pm EDT

St. Margaret's of Cortona School
452 W. 260th Street, Bronx, NY 10471

The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm

Attendees

Committee: Sylvia Alexander, Kelli Buford, Christopher Calhoun, David Gellman, Mary Ellen Gibbs, Daniel Padernacht and Debra Travis

Agencies:

NYS DOT: Mohammad Islam, Nasim Ghani and Glorimar Reyes

NYC DOT: Ydanis Rodriguez (Commissioner), Margaret Forgione (Deputy Commissioner), Alicia Posner and Holly Malone

Elected Officials: Jeffrey Dinowitz and Frederic Klein (AM Dinowitz)

CB 8 Members: Lisa Daub, Myra Joyce, Camelia Tepelus, Laura Spalter (Chair)

Community: Tommy B., D. Burke, L. Hogan, S. Hughes, Y. Jimenez and T. McMaster

Opening Remarks

Committee Chair Buford welcomed Committee Members, Agency Personnel, Elected Officials and the Community. She thanked the host, St. Margaret's of Cortona School, for allowing the Community Board and Traffic and Transportation Committee to use their facility to conduct the meeting. She also thanked the Committee Members for their dedication and service to the community and stated that she looked forward to working with everyone and encouraged the agencies and community to work together. She further advised that, in accordance with the bylaws, a Vice Chair must be appointed and indicated that Dan Padernacht was asked to serve in this capacity and noted that Mr. Padernacht agreed to serve accordingly. Ms. Buford noted that with all Committee Members present a quorum existed and the meeting proceeded. She then outlined the meeting process.

Chair's Report

Ms. Buford advised that she did not have anything new to report.

Approval Item: Minutes (June 8, 2022 Meeting)

Ms. Buford referred the Committee Members to the draft minutes of the June 8, 2022 Traffic & Transportation Committee Meeting for review and approval, which the Committee duly approved.

Information Item: Discussion with NYS DOT regarding Rehabilitation of Southbound Henry Hudson Parkway Retaining Walls in the Vicinity of the West 232nd Street Bridge

Referring to materials provided to the Committee prior to the Meeting, Messrs. Mohammad Islam and Nasim Ghani presented the New York State Department of Transportation (NYS DOT) planned rehabilitation of the southbound Henry Hudson Parkway retaining walls as detailed in the *Reconstruction of Southbound Henry Hudson (HHP) Retaining Walls, West 231st Street to West 235th Street* document.

NYS DOT advised that the project was needed as the existing retaining walls show signs of rotational movement and rehabilitation will address safety concerns and provide permanent stabilization of the retaining walls. The project will commence in late 2022 and indicated the rehabilitation will be performed in three stages (Stage 1, Stage 2, Stage 3) and indicated that each phase was estimated to take six (6) months to complete for total project completion time of 18 months.

It was noted that Stage 1 will primarily consist of installing grouted tiebacks through existing retaining walls. The work will include the long term closure of the right shoulder and shift two 11 feet wide travel lanes toward the median, eliminating the left shoulder. Stage 2 will focus on the construction of a new retaining wall and lock off grouted tiebacks. The work will result in long term closure along the southbound HHP and reduce the travel lanes to two 10 feet wide travel lanes. Stage 3 will partially demolish the top of the existing retaining walls, construct moment slab and barrier, relocate light poles and restore pavement at southbound HHP mainline shoulder and HHP West service road. This phase will restrict parking along the HHP West service road from West 231st Street to the southbound West 232nd Street off-ramp (Exit 19) and an 11 feet wide travel lane along the service road will shift to the right. It was also noted that the bus stop at the southwest corner of HHP West service road and West 232nd Street will be temporarily moved to the northwest corner and following project completion will revert to the SW corner.

Responding to Committee Member inquiry, NYS DOT advised the tiebacks will be similar to those used in construction at the World Trade Center. It was also noted that the stone façade would be replaced. NYS DOT was advised that the HHP is not only a scenic highway but also a National Historic Highway. In response to a question regarding project days and hours, NYS DOT indicated that a permit from NYC DOT was required and noted anticipated hours were 10pm-5am weekdays and 10pm-3pm on Saturdays. With respect to material storage, it was noted that materials would be stored within the worksite. The Committee also noted that NYS DOT should limit parking restrictions and indicated contractors should not “reserve” parking spaces for their personal vehicles. Lastly, the agency was asked to send the contact information for the project liaison to the Board Office.

Information Item: Discussion with NYC DOT regarding Changes to Riverdale Avenue Road Diet (West 254th Street to W 262nd Street/Yonkers City Line)

Ms. Buford indicated that the Riverdale Avenue Road Diet was completed in early September and advised that New York City Department of Transportation was present to discuss the project and receive community feedback. Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz expressed his concerns. He indicated that the project was completed in record time and contrary to DOT practices. He also requested that the agency

reconsider installation of left turn signals at the intersections of 256th Street and Riverdale Avenue and 259th Street and Riverdale Avenue. It was also noted that three accidents occurred along the corridor since implementation and while the cause of the accidents was not yet determined, the redesign could have contributed to the accidents. DOT was also urged to work with the school, PS 81, and NYPD to help reduce the double-parking during drop-off and dismissal.

Deputy Commissioner Margaret Forgione explained that the project was accelerated to ensure completion before the start of the school year. She also noted that DOT was aware of several complaints relating to repaving of bus pads and explained that bus pads work would be performed by contractors in the coming weeks. She further advised that DOT is studying patterns at the referenced intersections and indicated a determination to install left turn signals would be made within six months. DOT also indicated that it would review the total project and return to the Community Board in one year to discuss data and, depending on findings, potential remedies. Ms. Forgione also indicated that DOT would work with PS 81 to mitigate traffic concerns during drop-off and dismissal periods.

Ms. Buford indicated that the Community Board received several comments, favorable and unfavorable, via email and indicated that the Board Office would forward the comments to DOT accordingly. She then noted that several Community Members were in attendance to express their concerns and called upon Ms. Y. Jimenez who conveyed concerns regarding increased congestion and overall safety.

Ms. D. Burke also expressed concerns and requested that DOT provide a copy of the study that precipitated the project. Ms. T. McMaster advised that in additions to concerns previously raised by fellow Community Members, she was concerned about Emergency Services response times given the new design and limited space that emergency vehicles had to traverse and requested statistics on Emergency Services response times prior to the redesign, times since implementation and information on projects of similar size and scope following implementation. CB 8 Board Chair Laura Spalter advised that the redesign impacted traffic flow along Mosholu Avenue and noted that the thoroughfare has experienced increased noise, including honking. Ms. Spalter also expressed concern about the pedestrian ramp leading to the Skyview Shopping Plaza and expressed review of the left turn measures at 256th and 259th Streets.

Committee Member Gellman encouraged DOT to continue to work with the Community. He also advised that DOT should speak with the Principal of PS 81 to recommend changing dismissal locations from Riverdale Avenue to 256th Street, the pre-pandemic location.

Committee Member Travis encouraged the community to be patient and give the changes some time. She noted that some areas within the city showed marked improvement following implementation. She also advised that she looked forward to DOT follow-up on the left turn signals in six months.

Committee Member Padernacht advised that motor vehicle accidents increased since the implementation of the Vision Zero initiative and noted that there are many more obstructions and distractions on the road, including awkward placement of dedicated bike lanes.

Community Members also indicated that NYPD should issue more traffic tickets at schools.

NYC DOT Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez thanked the Community Board and the Community and noted that the overall goal is to reduce speeding and improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety.

Chair Buford thanked the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner for their time and indicated that the Community appreciated their willingness to attend and hear its concerns. She advised that everyone wants the same thing and was encouraged by their presence represented the willingness of DOT to work with the Community. Ms. Buford stated that each district and neighborhood is unique and that there is no one-size fits all solution and noted that she looked forward to the six-month and one-year updates related to the Riverdale Avenue Road Diet. She also suggested that, in addition to the Public Service Announcements (PSAs) encouraging drivers to slow down and focus on the road that DOT should create PSAs geared toward pedestrians that remind them to cross at dedicated locations, look both ways before crossing and refrain from crossing while distracted. The creation of an appropriate cyclist PSA was also suggested.

Old Business

Mr. Padernacht asked DOT to take another look at the redesigned intersection of Van Cortlandt Avenue West and Sedgwick Avenue as the implemented measures appear to be creating more problems than they attempted to solve, including pedestrian and vehicular accidents. Chair Buford and Member Travis concurred with this request.

New Business

Intersection 235th and Oxford Ave – Committee Member Alexander advised that a 99-year-old resident was struck and killed by a vehicle at the intersection. It was noted that the intersection has an All-Way Stop and requested that NYC DOT review the intersection for additional safety mitigation measures.

235th and Netherland Ave – Committee Member Mary Ellen Gibbs advised that construction at 3220 Arlington Avenue was causing major traffic issues at the intersection. She advised that the back of the building is on Netherland and a portion of the street is blocked and impacting pedestrian and driver safety. Ms. Buford requested submission of the information and photographs to the Board Office.

Next Meeting

Ms. Buford advised that the next meeting will be in October at a date to be determined.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 9:02pm.