

Pending Committee Approval
Traffic and Transportation Committee
Bronx Community Board 8
December 19th, 2019
Riverdale YM-YWHA – 5625 Arlington Ave

Committee Members Present:

Dan Padernacht (Chair)
Sylvia Alexander
Margaret Donato
Diomarys Escano
David Gellman
Rosemary Ginty (Ex-Officio)
Edward Green (Vice Chair)
Myra Joyce
Tao Moran
Georgia Santiago

Committee Members Absent:

Eric Bell (Vice Chair)
Daniella Fuchs
I. William Stone

Guests:

Jacqueline Carter (NYC Transit), Mark A. Holmes (MTA NYCT MTA Bus), Jessica Cignarella (MTA NYCT), Eric Dinowitz, Linda Schwartz, Rose Sandick, Rhea Varoh, Lisa Daub (BX CB8), Julia Gran, Sherie Lem, Robin Schwartz, Jilly Traganou, Michael Schwartz, Camelia Tepelus, Phyllis Rosner, Miriam Gomez, Christine Keaveney, Judith Green, Daniel Ginsburg, Brian Fitzpatrick, Dorothy Feldman, Sandra Werner, Michael Dowdy, Frederic Klein (AM Dinowitz), Norman Danzig, Hanne Nielsen, Arlene Zwyer, Ruth Herzal, Patricia Hill, Don Bluestone, John Centrone, Bobby Roper, Jack Martin, Keith Ferguson, Carol Harren.

Chair Padernacht called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and introduced guests.

- 1) Jack Marth discussed resident request for a traffic study at Cannon Place and Orloff Avenue with the intent to create a crosswalk with “Greenstreet” traffic island or other barrier to shorten the intersection.

Chair Padernacht proposed the following resolution:

WHEREAS, testimony has been presented to the Traffic and Transportation Committee of Bronx Community Board 8 that the intersection at Cannon Place and Orloff Avenue is a wide intersection with no median;

WHEREAS, testimony has been presented to the Traffic and Transportation Committee of Bronx Community Board 8 that there is no safe pedestrian crossing at the intersection at Cannon Place and Orloff Avenue;

WHEREAS, testimony has been presented to the Traffic and Transportation Committee of Bronx Community Board 8 that vehicles speed through the intersection at Cannon Place and Orloff Avenue;

WHEREAS, testimony has been presented to the Traffic and Transportation Committee of Bronx Community Board 8 that vehicles frequently make illegal U-turns in the middle of the intersection at Cannon Place and Orloff Avenue;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, Bronx Community Board 8 requests that the NYC Department of Transportation perform a feasibility study for traffic calming measures at the intersection of Cannon Place and Orloff Avenue;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, after such feasibility study is completed, and prior to initiating plans to make alterations to this intersection, the NYC Department of Transportation present the results of the feasibility study and possible traffic calming alternatives to the Traffic and Transportation Committee of Bronx Community Board 8.

In Favor: S. Alexander; M. Donato, D. Escano, D. Gelman, E. Green, M. Joyce, T. Moran, D. Padernacht, G. Santiago

- 2) Don Bluestone discussed resident request for “Hidden Driveway” sign at the garage entrance to 3755 Henry Hudson Parkway West (Agenda item #3).

Chair Padernacht proposed the following resolution:

WHEREAS, testimony has been presented to the Traffic and Transportation Committee of Bronx Community Board 8 that a dangerous condition exists by virtue of the hidden driveway leading to the garage entrance at 3755 Henry Hudson Parkway West;

WHEREAS, testimony has been presented to the Traffic and Transportation Committee of Bronx Community Board 8 that this hidden driveway is located on a sharp curve of a roadway that is heavily traversed by vehicles and located on a bus route;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, Bronx Community Board 8 requests that the NYC Department of Transportation investigate the benefits of placing a “Hidden Driveway” sign at this location to warn drivers of oncoming vehicles from the driveway.

In Favor: S. Alexander; M. Donato, D. Escano, D. Gelman, E. Green, M. Joyce, T. Moran, D. Padernacht, G. Santiago

3) Jacqueline Carter of MTA New York City Transit (NYCT) gave a presentation on Bronx Bus Network Redesign Proposed Final Plan.

- Jacqueline Carter stated that there will be about one year of discussion before the plan is implemented so that MTA can receive feedback and make changes to the plan. She encouraged CB8 residents and Board Members to share their concerns and suggestions during this time period with the MTA.
- Mark A. Holmes of MTA Bus stated that MTA is working on solutions to extend bus service based on the input they received at public meetings with community residents.
- Jessica Cignarella of NYCT discussed the Bus Network Redesign Outreach Summary, Redesign Strategy (More direct routing, bus stop balancing, improving bus stop spacing, 400 local stops proposed for removal, proposed changes to the BXM1, BXM2, BXM3 & BX M18), Improved Connectivity (Ease of connections at key transfer locations), Identified Bus Priority Corridors (Analyzed 46 major Bronx corridors), Increased Frequency.
- Jessica Cignarella stated all information in MTA's presentation would be available on the NYCT website as early as tomorrow (12/20/19).
- Committee Member David Gellman stated that east to west bus service was not addressed. Mark A. Holmes of MTA Bus stated MTA was in the process of working on solutions.
- Committee Vice Chair Ed Green stated BX CB8 T&T Committee wanted to receive notification of any and all changes to bus routing and scheduling before it was implemented by MTA. Mark A. Holmes stated MTA would appear before the CB8 to address any alterations made to their initial presentation before changes were implemented.
- Sylvia Alexander inquired about the specifics of BXM2 discontinued service.
- Diomarys Escano stated she didn't see anything in the plan addressing "bus bunching." Mark A. Holmes stated that most bus bunching is due to traffic congestion caused by double-parked cars and various other obstacles busses encounter on the roads during rush hours. He stated MTA is working on new technologies designed to assist Bus Drivers manage traffic congestion.
- Chair Padernacht inquired about the possibility of MTA conducting a Rail Link Pilot Program on weekends to increase availability to the Metro North Railroad. Mark A. Holmes stated he doesn't know if this can be done and he will get back to CB8 on this matter as soon as he has more information.
- Chair Padernacht inquired about electric busses on smaller routes to decrease emissions and noise in communities. Mark A. Holmes stated MTA hopes to have 500 electric busses on the road by the end of 2020 and convert the entire system to electric busses by 2040.

- Guest Evy Mayer read a letter she wrote and sent to MTA's Andy Byford opposing the cuts in express bus service. She gave the letter to CB8 for review. She stated the proposed express bus changes would create a hardship for her and many other people with disabilities as well as elderly residents. She stated decreasing or eliminating bus service would drive down property values in the Riverdale area and no longer make the neighborhood a desirable place to live for many residents that rely solely on traveling by Express Bus service at off peak hours. She stated many residents don't feel safe riding subways at night so eliminating bus service is a public safety issue as well.
- Judy Green asked MTA what input, if any, did Elected Officials have with MTA on this project?
- Carol Harren voiced her displeasure of the proposed bus service changes and stated she doesn't feel the subways are safe enough to ride in the evening.
- Dorothy Feldman inquired about the specific names of politicians involved in the discussion with MTA about this matter and what type of input they provided.
- Sandra Werner inquired as to when the Planning Board was notified of MTA's presentation. Jessica Cignarella of NYCT stated the proposed final plan was released in October of 2019 and stated everyone in the community is encouraged to provide feedback.
- Eric Dinowitz asked the MTA to take the needs of seniors into consideration and not just cater to the needs of 9 to 5 commuters.
- Michael Schwartz stated community residents want confirmation that CB8 will receive MTA's plan before the public meeting in February.
- Christine Keaveney stated medical patients need more bus stops to get home without suffering hardship because walking longer distances is too physically demanding for many people with severe medical issues. She asked MTA to consider offering a senior discount and off-peak discount fares. She stated Access-a-Ride is not a viable alternative.
- Camelia Tepelus stated MTA should take into consideration that special needs busses are available to accommodate special needs children and senior citizens should be essentially viewed as a special needs group.
- Arlene Zwyer stated NYC Subways are the lifeblood of NYC and Express Busses are the lifeblood of Riverdale and MTA should take that in consideration.
- Mary Court stated she was very upset with the idea of "deadheading."
- Carman Ogando stated one of the main reasons she moved to Riverdale was because of the availability and access to express busses for commuting purposes.
- Norman Danzig stated when Liberty Lines buses was originated they were required to grant seniors access. He stated he believes the data compiled by MTA (specifically 4 passengers per bus at hours stated) is inaccurate, because he travels during those hours and encounters a lot more passengers than MTA claims are riding the bus. He stated he was on the

bus yesterday at the time in question and counted fifteen passengers on the bus.

- Bobby Roper requested MTA put back the time schedules they removed from bus stops. He stated elderly residents were generally not too tech savvy and needed schedules posted at bus stops to know when busses were scheduled to arrive.
- Daniel Ginsburg stated subway commuting at night requires too much traveling time and is too strenuous a journey for many seniors.
- Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz stated he met with MTA's Andy Byford about this matter and was disappointed MTA would not commit to guaranteeing additional bus stops. He stated the turnout at Riverdale Temple was 500 people that came out in the pouring rain on short notice. He stated many neighborhoods that are not in Manhattan rely on express busses. He stated MTA's final plan has not been completed yet and believes MTA has heard, and will continue to hear, the voices of the community and believes changes need to be made to MTA's proposed plan to accommodate them.

Chair Padernacht proposed the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the MTA/New York City Bus has undertaken an exhaustive process of redesigning the Bronx Bus system;

WHEREAS, the MTA has been conducting outreach throughout the Borough of the Bronx seeking input from residents, businesses and other stakeholders to inquire about the wants and needs of bus riders;

WHEREAS, the MTA appeared at the Traffic and Transportation Committee of Bronx Community Board 8 on April 11, 2019 to present the Bronx Network Existing Conditions Report;

WHEREAS, the MTA published its Proposed Bronx Bus Redesign Final Plan ("Proposed Final Plan") in November 2019;

WHEREAS, the MTA does not plan to implement its Bronx Bus Redesign Plan until Fall 2020;

WHEREAS, the Proposed Final Plan is still subject to comment and change by the MTA prior to its implementation;

WHEREAS, the Proposed Final Plan calls for the reduction of downtown BXM1 Express Bus service from Riverdale to Manhattan such that Weekday service will be reduced to the hours of 5:30am - 4:45pm; Saturday service of 6:30am - 6:30pm; and Sunday service of 8:30am - 5:30pm;

WHEREAS, the Proposed Final Plan calls for the reduction of uptown BXM1 Express Bus service from Manhattan to Riverdale such that Saturday service will be reduced to the hours of 8:00am - 12:00am; and Sunday service of 10:00am - 10:00pm;

WHEREAS, the Proposed Final Plan calls for the reduction of downtown BXM2 Express Bus service from Riverdale to Manhattan such that Weekday service will be reduced to the hours of 6:00am – 3:00pm; Saturday service of 6:30am - 5:30pm; and Sunday service of 7:30am - 1:30pm;

WHEREAS, the Proposed Final Plan calls for the reduction of uptown BXM2 Express Bus service from Manhattan to Riverdale such that Weekday service will be reduced to the hours of 12:00pm – 12:45am; Saturday service of 12:15pm - 12:15am; and Sunday service of 3:15pm – 11:15pm;

WHEREAS, the Proposed Final Plan calls for the reduction of downtown BXM3 Express Bus service from Riverdale to Manhattan such that Weekday service will be reduced to the hours of 5:30am – 1:45pm; Saturday service of 6:30am - 2:30pm; and Sunday service to be eliminated.

WHEREAS, the Proposed Final Plan calls for the reduction of uptown BXM3 Express Bus service from Manhattan to Riverdale such that Weekday service will be reduced to the hours of 3:00pm – 12:00am; Saturday service of 3:15pm - 12:15am; and Sunday service to be eliminated.

WHEREAS, the Proposed Final Plan calls for the downtown BXM18 Express Bus service from Riverdale to Manhattan to change frequency of service from 15 minutes to 20 minutes;

WHEREAS, many individuals within Bronx Community Board 8 rely upon Express Bus service to and from Manhattan;

WHEREAS, Bronx Community Board 8 has predominately hilly terrain;

WHEREAS, the Express Bus service provides an accessible and nearby means of public transit to Manhattan for seniors, people with disabilities and parents traveling with children;

WHEREAS, many individuals use Express Bus service to travel to medical appointments in Manhattan;

WHEREAS, local realtors in Bronx Community Board 8 market the availability of Express Bus service to prospective homeowners and renters, thereby having an affect on our housing market;

WHEREAS, residents in Bronx Community Board 8 use Express Buses to commute to and from work at various hours of the day and night;

WHEREAS, Bronx Community Board 8 believes that limiting Express Service will decrease ridership;

WHEREAS, Bronx Community Board 8 supports the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through strategic planning and public transit initiatives;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, Bronx Community Board 8 strongly opposes the cuts in service to the BXM1, BXM2, BXM3 and BXM18 Express Bus service;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, Bronx Community Board 8 recommends the restoration of Express Bus stops (northbound and southbound) at Mt. Sinai Hospital, Metropolitan Museum of Art and the American Museum of Natural History;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, Bronx Community Board 8 recommends initiatives by MTA to increase the reliability of Express Bus service to increase ridership;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, Bronx Community Board 8 recommends studying the feasibility of alternating articulated buses in late evening and early morning hours with regular or electric buses on select routes to decrease emissions and noise in communities;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, Bronx Community Board 8 recommends a pilot program of Rail Link service on weekends to increase availability to the Metro North Railroad.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, Bronx Community Board 8 recommends expanding the discount program on the Express Bus for all riders during off-peak hours.

In Favor: S. Alexander; M. Donato, D. Escano, E. Green, M. Joyce, T. Moran,
D. Padernacht, G. Santiago

Oppose:

Abstain: D. Gelman

Chair Padernacht presented the November 2019 minutes for committee approval:

R. Ginty asked that she be recorded as an ex-officio member on the committee's attendance.

R. Ginty asked that on page 3 of the November minutes, the minutes be changed

From: "Rosemary Ginty stated BX CB8 needs to receive all available information from BX DOT to determine exactly how many parking spots were lost."

To: " Rosemary Ginty stated BX CB8 needs to receive information from BX DOT to map exactly where and how many parking spots were lost, work with DOT to recover parking spaces, then map where and how many are recovered."

R. Ginty asked that on page 4 of the November minutes, the minutes be changed

From: “Rosemary Ginty suggested that no proposal by BX DOT given to the T&T Committee should get voted on until BX DOT provides a specific, comprehensive plan of action.”

To: “Rosemary Ginty suggested that no resolution was necessary until BX DOT, working with Committee, provides a specific, comprehensive plan of action.”

R. Ginty asked that on page 5 of the November minutes, the minutes be changed

From: “Rosemary Ginty asked if DEP was brought in to evaluate the water drainage. The answer was no.”

To: “Rosemary Ginty asked at a prior site visit if DEP was brought in to evaluate the water drainage. The answer was no.”

Chair Padernacht presented the proposed minutes as amended:

In Favor: S. Alexander; M. Donato, D. Escano, D. Gelman, E. Green, M. Joyce,
T. Moran, D. Padernacht, G. Santiago

Oppose:

Abstain:

Meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.

Dan Padernacht
Chair, Traffic and Transportation Committee

Minutes submitted by Vice Chair Edward Green