

**MINUTES OF THE TRAFFIC & TRANSPORTATION  
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON JULY 2, 2007  
AT THE BOARD OFFICE, 5676 RIVERDALE AVENUE**

*Board Members of the Committee present:*

Bradford Trebach, Committee Chairman  
Anthony P. Creaney  
Karen Pesce  
I. William Stone

*Other Board Members present:*

None

*Community Members of the Committee present:*

Travis Epes  
Ed Ravin

*Also in attendance:*

Joseph Gordon (rep. Councilman G. Oliver Koppell)

*The Committee met at 7:30 p.m. – B. Trebach in the Chair.*

1. It was agreed that the Minutes of the Committee's meeting of May 15, 2007 be adopted.
2. It was decided that the following item should be laid before the Board for approval by resolution:

**RESOLUTION ON CONVERTING THE P.S. 24 PORTION OF WEST 236<sup>th</sup> STREET TO ONE-WAY EASTBOUND OPERATION**

*WHEREAS*, two-way traffic in front of Public School 24 (660 West 236<sup>th</sup> Street) poses a hazard to local schoolchildren, and resulted in a serious accident in April 2007; and

*WHEREAS*, the principal of P.S. 24 requested that the New York City Department of Transportation investigate the feasibility of converting West 236<sup>th</sup> Street between Hudson Manor Terrace and Independence Avenue to one-way eastbound operation from two-way operation; and

*WHEREAS*, a field investigation by the Department of Transportation determined that converting the P.S. 24 portion of West 236<sup>th</sup> Street to one-way eastbound operation would expedite safer arrivals and departures for children attending the school; and

*WHEREAS*, the Department of Transportation consequently recommends that the P.S. 24 portion of West 236<sup>th</sup> Street be converted to one-way eastbound operation; therefore

*BE IT RESOLVED*, That Community Board No. 8, Bronx, supports the Department of Transportation's recommendation that West 236<sup>th</sup> Street be converted to one-way eastbound operation between Hudson Manor Terrace and Independence Avenue; and urges that such change be made before the academic year 2007-2008 begins on September 4, 2007.

VOTE: 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions

IN FAVOR

Community Board Members of the Committee: B. Trebach, A.P. Creaney,  
K. Pesce, I.W. Stone

Community Members: T. Epes, E. Ravin

3. Pothole Repairs.

The Board Office has contacted the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) to report potholes at the following locations:

- == W. 236<sup>th</sup> St. at Hudson Manor Terrace (northeast corner)
- == Henry Hudson Pkwy. East at Iselin Ave.
- == Independence Ave. at W. 235<sup>th</sup> St.

4. Defaced or Damaged Traffic and Street Signs.

The Chairman reported that he compiled a list of 30 damaged or defaced traffic and street signs in need of replacement in Community District 8. The list has been sent to Bronx Transportation Commissioner Constance Moran with a request that she assign the matter to the DOT's sign-maintenance staff to conduct a field survey and replace the signs.

5. Street Defects.

Noting that rippled, pitted or uneven roads are hazardous to pedestrians and drivers alike, the Chairman sent a letter to Commissioner Moran on June 26, 2007 to report defects in street surfaces at the following locations:

- == Riverdale Ave. at W. 236<sup>th</sup> St. (bus stop in front of 3700 Riverdale Ave.)
- == Riverdale Ave. at W. 238<sup>th</sup> St. (opposite 3765 Riverdale Ave.)

== Independence Ave. at W. 239<sup>th</sup> St. (in the crosswalk)

K. Pesce asked the Chairman to report defects in the road surface of W. 246<sup>th</sup> St. between Cayuga Ave. and Post Rd., and E. Ravin asked that Broadway northbound between the Broadway Bridge and W. 225<sup>th</sup> St. also be reported. I.W. Stone added that a complaint should be submitted for surface defects and pooling storm water on the service road in front of Hudson Pointe nursing home at 3220 Henry Hudson Pkwy.

## 6. NYC Traffic Congestion-Pricing Plan

The Chairman outlined Mayor Bloomberg's plan to charge motorists for driving in much of Manhattan during certain hours and use the revenue to improve mass transit. The plan, known as congestion pricing, is a major component of the Mayor's long-term environmental agenda, and is meant to cut pollution and encourage more people onto public transportation.

If the measure is approved by the New York State Legislature, New York City would become the first city in the United States to impose a broad system of congestion pricing. The proposal is similar to the system used since 2003 in London, where government officials contend it has significantly reduced traffic. Earlier this year, the size of London's congestion zone was doubled.

Under the latest version of the plan available on July 2, vehicles would be charged to travel into, out of, or within Manhattan below 86<sup>th</sup> St. between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. on weekdays. The cost of E-ZPass bridge or tunnel tolls would be deducted from the congestion fee, meaning that the driver would be charged only the difference between the toll and the fee.

The fee would be levied only once a day per vehicle. In other words, a person who drives into and back out of the zone on the same day would be charged only once.

Passenger cars, vans and small trucks entering or exiting the zone would pay an \$8 fee. Taxis, livery cars and emergency vehicles would be exempt.

Large trucks entering or exiting the zone would be charged \$21. However, there would be a congestion-pricing discount of two-thirds for trucking-fleet owners and individual diesel-fuel operators who buy more efficient vehicles or retrofit existing trucks to meet tougher environmental standards. For those trucks, the fee would be \$7.

Drivers whose trips start in the zone and do not leave it would pay only a \$4 fee for passenger cars, vans and small trucks, or \$5.50 for large trucks.

The fee would be charged to a vehicle's E-ZPass. Drivers without E-ZPasses would have their license plates read by one of several hundred cameras that the Mayor has proposed installing, and can set up special accounts from which the fee would be deducted. Those who don't pay would receive summonses.

Drivers who use the Franklin D. Roosevelt Drive or West Side Highway (9A) without exiting in Manhattan south of 86<sup>th</sup> St. would not be charged.

The Mayor has projected that the annual cost of administration will be \$240 million a year. The projected net revenue that the plan would generate for the City would be \$380 million a year.

The Mayor has warned that if the Legislature does not approve the plan before a July 16 application deadline for matching Federal funding, the City could lose as much as \$500 million in expected transportation aid. It is unclear whether the Legislature, now in summer recess, will reconvene in special session to consider congestion pricing or any other issue.

Congestion pricing would begin as a three-year pilot program. The Mayor would then have sole power to decide whether the program would be made permanent.

A new public authority would be created to oversee the program. The authority would be headed by an eight-member board. Half of the authority's board members would be appointed by the Governor and the other half by the Mayor.

The sentiment of the Committee was lukewarm to the Mayor's plan, with at least one Member adamantly opposed to congestion pricing.

Members of the Committee raised the following points:

- Concern about any ripple effects the program might have on traffic, pollution, parking and mass transit in areas on the edge of the congestion zone or outside Manhattan. For example, would parts of District 8 turn into virtual parking lots for commuters looking to park here and use mass transit to enter into the zone?
- Concern that rate increases here would follow the example of London, where the fees paid by drivers rose greatly after congestion pricing began. It was argued that a system of electronic charging makes it easier to increase prices since drivers tend to be less aware of automatic payments.
- The argument that traffic in Manhattan is no more of a problem than in the busiest parts of the outer boroughs, where traffic congestion similarly threatens business and public health.
- The idea that the plan could be viewed as a stealth tax that will burden both individuals and businesses, particularly small businesses. Conversely, it was noted that, for many self-employed people and small businesses, improved mobility around Manhattan could actually increase profitability.
- Some argued that the plan would hit hardest those who can least afford it, while others said that the cost of running a car in Manhattan is already high and that

those who can least afford to pay the congestion fee are relying on mass transit already.

- Fear that retail businesses in the congestion zone would suffer as people trying to avoid paying the fee would shop elsewhere.
- The argument that if congestion pricing does not end up reducing traffic, motorists would be paying for congestion that they used to get for free.
- Concern that the proposal leaves the decision on whether to renew the pilot program to the Mayor, and that there is no sunset provision that would send it back to the Legislature or City Council for reauthorization.
- Concern that since the Governor and Mayor would appoint the board members of the new congestion-pricing authority, the Legislature would be largely cut out of its operation.
- By contrast, it was noted that the Governor nominates all 17 of the voting board members of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, though the Mayor recommends four of them. And while all MTA board members must be confirmed by the State Senate, none of the new congestion-pricing authority's board would require Senate approval.

#### 7. Wave Hill Parking.

The Committee discussed a May 25, 2007 letter from Kate French, the president and executive director of the Wave Hill public garden and culture center, about a problem with parking enforcement at Independence Ave. and W. 249<sup>th</sup> St. In the letter, Ms. French complained that personnel from the NYPD Traffic Control Division recently started ticketing the cars of visitors who park along the shoulder of the southbound lane of Independence Ave. near Wave Hill's front gate.

The Chairman noted that over the past four decades that Wave Hill has been open to the public, visitors have been able to park on Independence Ave. without being ticketed.

The Committee recommended that the Chairman send a letter to the commanding officer of the Traffic Control Division, (a) expressing strong support for the existing pattern of allowing Wave Hill's visitors to be able to park on the shoulder of the southbound lane of Independence Ave.; and (b) asking that he issue a reminder to local police and traffic-enforcement personnel that parking is allowed there, and that visitors should not receive tickets for parking there.

#### 8. Henry Hudson Bridge Pedestrian Crossing

E. Ravin complained that construction is blocking pedestrian crossing at the Henry Hudson Bridge. The Chairman said he would write to the president of the MTA to ask about the possibility of restoring pedestrian access across the bridge.

9. Commendation Letter for James O'Reilly.

On a motion by I.W. Stone, the Committee agreed to ask the Board Chairman to send a letter of commendation to J. O'Reilly thanking him for exemplary service to Community District 8 during his years as Chairman of the Traffic & Transportation Committee.

10. Crosswalk Request

The Committee discussed a request from Ethical Culture Fieldston School for a north-south crosswalk at Fieldston Rd. and Manhattan College Pkwy. The Chairman said that he would ask DOT to give the matter prompt attention.

Any other business -- No other matters were raised.

*At 9:00 p.m., the Committee was adjourned to a day and time to be fixed by the Chairman.*

Respectfully submitted,

Bradford Trebach  
*Chairman*  
*Traffic and Transportation Committee*