

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

**MINUTES OF THE TRAFFIC & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON APRIL 17TH, 2012 AT THE
RIVERDALE JEWISH CENTER**

PRESENT

Daniel Padernacht
Robert Press
Sylvia Alexander
Bob Bender
Joyce Pilsner
Pedro Reyes
Georgia Santiago
Andrew Sandler
Daniel Johnson
Paul Elston
I-C L-Engel
Walter Hickey
Erika Leyva
Angel Ortega
Justine Johnson
Hilary Kitasei
Sandy Shalleck
Miawling Lam
Frank Pascual
G. Slade

AFFILIATION

Committee Chair
Committee Vice Chair
CB8
CB8
CB8
CB8
CB8
rep. Councilman Koppell
rep. Assemblyman Dinowitz
Friends of the Hudson
BCEQ
Henry Hudson Bridge
Taxi & Limousine Commission
Briar Oaks
Taxi & Limousine Commission
HHP Task Force
Riverdale Nature Preservancy
Riverdale Review
Henry Hudson Bridge
Kingsbridge Heights Neighborhood Improvement
Association (KHNIA)
KHNIA
Triborough Bridge & Tunnel Authority (TBTA)
Skyview Wines

Elizabeth Thompson
Joyce Mulvaney
Gary Wartels

The meeting was called to order at 7:38 PM by Chairman Dan Padernacht.

Gary Bogacz, Planning Director of the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC), presented the status of the Hudson River Greenway project which is to run through Riverdale. Mr. Bogacz explained that NYMTC brings in transportation dollars from the federal government. In 1991, the State created the Hudson River Greenway and in 1996 Congress designated the area a national historic area.

NYMTC is conducting a study to link the Manhattan and Westchester parts of the Greenway by using existing routes that have been designated by NYMTC's steering committee. The Greenway goes from Jackson Wanders in Troy to the South Manhattan waterfront area, and the goal is to close the gap between north and south using current routes such as the Old Croton Aqueduct Trail. Twenty different projects are proposed to unify the preferred route.

The Bronx route alternatives are from Inwood Hill Park to the Henry Hudson Bridge (HHB) or Dyckman Street to the HHB. From the HHB, the route can proceed north on Palisades Avenue along the waterfront or Independence Avenue or Riverdale Avenue.

There is a question about how to get across the Henry Hudson Bridge. Currently there is a 7 foot wide walkway that drops down to 3 ½ feet by beams that intrude into the path. The path can be extended by moving the end barrier into the oversized roadway or by using a 10 foot cantilever pathway on the outside of the current lower roadway. The cost of the cantilever is estimated at approximately 15 million dollars. It was announced that the MTA included fittings in its recent reparations of the bridge railings so that the cantilever could be placed on the bridge if funding is provided.

The Bridge walkway ends on the Riverdale side of the bridge close to the 5 point corner of Kappock Street & Independence Ave. From there, the greenway can run along Independence Avenue to West 232nd Street and turn left along Seton Park with a path to the waterfront. An alternate is to use the DEP pumping station site in Seton Park for a bridge to the waterfront.

Between the two Riverdale Metro North stations, the waterfront has to be accessed by a bridge or walkway around the sub station. After access is obtained, there is a question of where the greenway should proceed. A service road that is in use by the MTA cannot be used. NYMTC presented slides of other similar areas which are possible solutions for this plan.

At the Riverdale Metro North Train Station, the driveway by the Yacht Club can be used for waterfront access as is used to the MTA area. Track 6, which is not used by the MTA, could be moved to allow for a greenway that would be fenced away from the live tracks as there is no service road above the Riverdale Station to Yonkers.

When asked about the possibility of using the upper roadway path for the greenway, NYMTC responded that MTA stated that it was not a possibility to use that path. In addition, NYMTC stated that the NYC Parks Department did not want the greenway to go through Inwood Park because it is a "Forever Wild" park.

The study on the greenway will be completed in the Fall and conceptual designs for all 20 projects will be presented with 8 projects to be designated to connect to the preferred route. Then, the projects will be submitted to city, state, and federal agencies to try to get funding from various agencies.

One issue raised is who will have jurisdiction over the greenway, particular its maintenance. Mr. Elston spoke of an April 19th meeting that will try to address some of those questions. It was stated that a conservancy was a possibility to take charge of the maintenance. NYMTC stated that it is possible to have vendors along the greenway.

Chairman Padernacht read a resolution submitted by the Friends of the Hudson River Greenway which passed unanimously subject to the review of the Parks Committee.

There was a presentation by Justine Johnson of the Taxi and Limousine Commission on the new outer borough taxi plan. Ms. Johnson stated that 97% of all yellow taxis are in Manhattan or the airports. Presently, livery cars can only pick up passengers through pre-arranged pick-ups. However, it has been common practice that people hail them as taxis on the street. Under the proposed taxi plan, the new outer borough taxis will have a uniform color, meters, credit/debit readers, a roof light, and GPS tracking. There are currently over 50,000 livery cabs in NYC. Under the plan, only 18,000 licenses will be available for these outer borough taxis with each license costing \$1,500.00 initially (subject to increase). 20% of the licenses will be reserved for handicap vehicles. Additionally, these outer borough taxis will not be allowed to pick up

passengers below East 96th Street/ West 110th Street or at airports. Licenses will be on a first come basis.

The MTA presented its current project on the Henry Hudson Bridge. The MTA presentation was made by Frank Pascual, Director of Bridge Operations of the Henry Hudson Bridge, Walter Hickey, Facility Engineer of the Bridge, and Joyce Mulvaney, Community Relations Coordinator. The present project is being done on the upper roadway to replace structural steel beams and railings on the Bridge which are more than 70 years old. As part of the project, the three travel lanes on the upper roadway will be widened to bring the roadway into compliance with new federal standards and to create a safety shoulder for vehicles and bridge personnel. Work commenced in April 2011 and will last approximately three months. The two left lanes will continue onto the Henry Hudson Parkway while the right lane will remain as a drop lane for the Kappock Street exit. There was a question from Dr. Elizabeth Haase and Hilary Kitasei about whether the removal of the path on the upper walkway was subject to State Historic Parks Office (SHPO) review because the Henry Hudson Parkway is eligible for the list of historic places.

Mr. Pascual said that the MTA and SHPO began communicating about a month ago regarding the project. MTA stated that it submitted the construction plan to SHPO and awaits its comments. Parks Committee Chair Bob Bender said that the project should have been sent to SHPO before the work commenced and that the community board should wait for an answer from SHPO. Since SHPO deals with park issues, it was agreed that a letter to SHPO seeking that its comments on the project be rendered expeditiously come from the Parks Committee. Board Chair Fanuzzi asked the Parks Chair to communicate with SHPO on the issue.

No representative from the State Department of Transportation was present to speak on the issue of the new signage on the Henry Hudson Parkway. The chair noted that SDOT's absence was unexpected and tabled the issue to the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:13 PM.

Submitted by,

Dan Padernacht
Chair
Traffic & Transportation Committee