




TO: CEQR Files

FROM: Naim Rasheed, Director 
Traffic Planning

RE: Fordham Transit Plaza Reconstruction, Bronx
Type II Determination
CEQR No.:11DOT001X

DATE: July 20, 2010

Pursuant to Sections 5.03 and 5.05 of the Rules of Procedure for the City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR), the NYC Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) is assuming lead agency status for the above referenced action and may make binding determination whether an environmental review is required.

The Office of Project Analysis/CEQR, on behalf of NYCDOT, has reviewed the above referenced application which is a reconstruction of the Fordham Transit Plaza (“the Plaza”) located in the Fordham section of the Bronx. Fordham Transit Plaza is a 1.75-acre open-air multi-modal transit nexus which is built on a city-owned bridge spanning the Metro-North railroad tracks and related station platforms. It is the terminal destination for three local bus routes and it hosts key stops for four additional local bus routes, three regional bus lines, and New York City’s first bus rapid transit line, the Bx12 Select Bus Service (SBS). The Plaza is the vital connection point between these surface transit routes, which provide service to approximately 43,000 daily riders, and the Fordham Metro-North regional rail station which, with 11,000 daily riders, is the third busiest station system-wide for Metro-North Railroad after Grand Central Terminal and Stamford Station. The Plaza anchors the Fordham Road retail corridor, one of New York’s busiest, with pedestrian volumes exceeding 80,000 in a 12-hour period. The reconstruction proposal is bounded by Fordham Road to the north, Third Avenue to the east, East 189th Street to the south and Park Avenue to the west. The project is located in Community Boards 6 and 7 and the Build year is 2013.

Despite all this intersecting activity, Fordham Transit Plaza is failing to live up to its potential as an attractive public space. Bus boarding and transfers are inconvenient and confusing; buses are slowed by severe traffic congestion on the surrounding streets; and the inadequate, outdated plaza facilities and structures require an upgrade to meet the needs of the surrounding community and to develop a stronger sense of place. The Plaza and the adjacent street network are not efficiently serving the bus routes they are intended

to accommodate. Heavy congestion at the intersections of 3rd Avenue at the Plaza bus loop exit, Fordham Road and Webster Avenue, and Fordham Road and 3rd Avenue causes significant delays at busy times. The pedestrian environment both on the Plaza and the surrounding streets is confusing, impeding transit users making connections and those traveling on foot. The Plaza buildings and facilities are unattractive, do not serve the needs of the Plaza users, and in some cases are poorly maintained.

The Plaza Project will reconfigure the circulation of buses through the Plaza to create a more usable, contiguous public space, implement a block-long bus-only transit mall on 3rd Avenue to maximize transit efficiency, and make intersection geometry and traffic operational modifications to the surrounding streets to significantly alleviate traffic congestion, enhance vehicular and pedestrian safety and improve the overall coherence of the project area. The project also seeks to replace the existing Plaza buildings and structures and, in particular, to open up the Fordham Station platform stairs that provide access to and from the Plaza. Elements of the Plaza Project will have four major strategic design interventions: Relocate the existing bus turnaround loop from the pedestrian plaza to the adjacent street (3rd Avenue), making the public space contiguous and conflict-free; create a bus-only transit mall on 3rd Avenue and consolidate bus drop-off and pick-up locations to minimize pedestrian conflicts, increasing the safety and convenience of all bus-to-bus and bus-to-rail connections on the Plaza; renovate and visually accentuate the existing but scarcely utilized rail station platform south access stairways located on the Plaza; and the pedestrian environment at streets and intersections surrounding the Plaza will be made safer and more accommodating to improve the experience of arriving at the Plaza by foot.

Classes of actions that do not have a significant impact on the environment have been designated by the State Department of Environmental Conservation as Type II actions. When an agency finds that an action is Type II, it has “no other responsibilities” under Section 617.5 of Title 6 New York Codes, Rules and Regulations (6 NYCRR) of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). Under SEQRA regulations, “installation of traffic control devices on existing streets, roads and highways” Section 617.5 (c) (16) as well as “routine and continuing agency administration and management, not including new programs or major reordering of priorities that may affect the environment” Section 617.5 (c) (20) are classified as Type II actions and are not subject to environmental review.

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Based on the Type II categories and exemptions set forth above, we have concluded that an environmental review is not required for this action.

c: D/C G. Soffian, D/C J. Jarrin, A/C R. Russo, A/C A. Wiley-Schwartz, Assoc./C J. Therattil, B/C C. Moran, A. Rasty, A. Taylor, R. Galtz, J. Benson, L. Bailey, S. Ahmed, H. Colon, File

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