



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10
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Transportation Committee

Tuesday , October 14, 2014

Hon. Maria Garcia, Chair

Minutes

Presentation Items:

- I. 155th Street-St.Nichols Place-Edgecombe Avenue-Macombs Bridge Pedestrian Safety Measures Joint Resolution – MCB’s 9, 10, and 12
 - a. Letter of Recommendation Request - Granted

St. Nicholas Place & W. 155th St. Intersection Safety Improvements. Commissioner Polly Trottenberg New York City Department of Transportation Presented to CB 9 on October 2nd, CB 12 on October 6th, & CB 10 on October 14, 2014

Background

Community Requests

- Former Council Member Jackson originally requested the pedestrian safety improvements
- NYPD 30th Precinct requested DOT safety investigation and indicated that this is one of their high crash locations
- Support from NYPD 30th and 33rd Precincts for proposed DOT improvements

Main Safety Issues

Goal: To create a better condition for pedestrians and drivers

- Long crosswalks
- Pedestrian crashes
- Multi-leg intersection with multiple conflicting movements (for vehicles s and pedestrians in the intersection)

Public Meetings

- 12/06/12 – 1st site walk through and workshop with community members (first public meeting)
- 8/13/13 – 2nd site walk through and workshop with community members
- 5/21/14 – Community forum and presentation
- 6/02/14 – Presentation to CB12 committee

- 6/05/14 – Presentation to CB9 committee
- 6/11/14 – Presentation to CB10 committee

Proposed Changes to the Intersection of St. Nicholas Place and W 155th St.

1. Add new pedestrian safety island on St. Nicholas Pl at W.155th St.
2. Install five neckdowns at W.155th & St. Nicholas Pl.
3. Install two neckdowns at W.155th & St. Nicholas Ave.
4. Add left turn lane on W.155th St (E/B)
5. Modify signal timing to process W.155th vehicles through St. Nicholas Pl and St. Nicholas Ave.
6. Ban southbound lefts off of W 155th St.
7. Ban southbound right from Edgecombe
8. Ban westbound lefts off of W 155th St.

Proposed Changes to St. Nicholas Place

1. Add pedestrian islands at 151st St, 152nd St and 153rd St.
2. Add yield crosswalk on St. Nicholas Pl at W 152nd St.

Transportation Committee Meeting

Committee Vote: 6 In Favor 0 Against 1 Abstentions 0 Present 7

Full Board Vote for November 5, 2014 not needed for the request of a letter of support

John Lynch moved to provide a letter of support. Keith Taylor seconded.
 Karen abstained noting that the changes presented at this meeting were not significantly different or took into any great length the community concerns expressed at previous meetings.

Please note the attached Public Input of committee and community responses attached as per the October 14 CB10 Transportation Committee Meeting.

Reviewed and attached are all minutes and agenda items for the project below:

- October 2014 new Transportation Committee
- September 2014 Parks Recreation and Transportation Committee
- June 2014 Parks Recreation and Transportation Committee including draft resolution language

Chair Maria Garcia What was some of the issues of concern from the other community boards?

Sean Quinn: At the joint meeting of all of the community boards last year had a lot to do with Saint Nicholas Avenue. The boards had a positive response to having opened up the slip ramp. Sean Quinn shared that when the June 2014 Joint committee meeting was held with all of the

community boards, a lot of the concerns and those expressed since that meeting have to deal with the Saint Nicholas Avenue intersection making sure it is dealt with . Both board were happy to see that the *Slip ramp has been opened up since the last proposal at the request of some of the community residents. Cb12 had no reservations but CB9 had still some reservations regarding the turning movement restriction.*

Committee member Camille Edelen: Mentioned that it is hard to see the changes as presented and asked if there is a presentation on the website to allow for you to see the changes side by side?

Sean: Current and proposed information was on this presentation on concurrent slides for these issues in question. Currently the intersection is very wide and DOT will reduce its width.

Committee member Camille Edelen: The pedestrian crosses on Saint Nicholas Place: Do you find that crossing lights help to improve visibility at night and for pedestrians to people follow it a night or does it matter? Is it equally easy to see in the day time as in the night?

Sean: The sign is reflective and when placed without other controls, NYCDOT likes to also install other traffic calming elements and is why the island is being proposed along with the other cross walks. Not only do they have the marked crosswalk but they have an element in the road that causes drivers to have to slow down and increase the visibility of the crossing. Flashing pedestrian signs are not generally done in NYCDOT.

Chair Garcia requested an electronic copy of the presentation, making mention that it has been necessary to contact Josh Orzeck in the past to access the presentation s which could not be easily downloaded.

Sean: the presentation is on the website.

Commissioner Margaret Forgione: offered to send the link asking to verify that the presentation could indeed be opened.

Chair Garcia: What is your projected timeline for finishing this project?

Sean: Start of construction is next spring or summer. It would take about a month and a half to two months to fully construct. There will be new signal installations; tree plantings and pedestrian islands; signage that gets changed; the process is fairly quick compared to that of a capital projects that can take months to years to complete.

Karen Horry: At the last meeting and earlier meetings concern was expressed by residents regarding the turning restrictions; and a question about ACS Audio Countdown signals.

Was there consideration given to the changing of the timing for the traffic signals? The turning restrictions would make it more difficult for resident to get to there destinations and did not see any consideration given to community concerns

Sean: This project will get the ACS in the future; only 25 ACS intersections are prioritized per year by the city; this location is on the list of signals for investigation.

Commissioner Forgione: Some components of the study include accessing the population of the area; determining if people in the community need it; type of facilities there are in the area, combined with the accident statistics. This location will be researched in the future.

Sean: A lot of work and analysis was done regarding the changing of the timing for the traffic signals at the request of all three boards and the assembly member. It has been explained since the beginning of the project that this intersection is so tight for time (90 second cycle) that removing time from any one movement to give to it to another movement has a detrimental affect on the other movements and causes more congestion to the intersection. NYCDOT tried to figure out how to get pedestrian phase in or to give some time for some of the turns. Right now the intersection functions at a level of service F from a range of (A which denotes free flow or very low traffic versus F traffic at a virtual stand still).

The proposed turning restriction plans to remove some of the conflict between the cars; with a goal of improving flow at the intersection helping vehicle to process without having to wait behind a lot of the bettering the current conditions. Without reducing the signal timing and shortening the crosswalks there is a shorter distance to cross.

To address some of the concerns with the turn restrictions; the slip was opened back up. Some vehicles who wanted to get into the neighborhood earlier will have access through Edgecombe; not directly to Saint Nicholas Place but it is giving access to the neighborhood and improvements to other intersection where the traffic volume would be redirected to help process the intersection and help to make it safer for pedestrians in the intersection.

Community Comments:

William Hamer: Harlem Advocated for Seniors

One of the concerns is that we begin to retrofit for the senior community and be very senior friendly so that our community can benefit. The changes reflect the challenges for crossing by seniors; another concern is that there will be a bigger denser population in that area because of a new development with an early childhood center and with more pedestrian traffic coming right out onto 155th street. Kids, families and seniors will all have to traverse that area to get across the street which is a consideration. It seems that some of the work needed has been done already. There is a lot of support for the changes but obviously there are some tweaks that need to take place but is in favor and likes the project.

Christopher Minnick Community Resident

I drive, cycle, and walk with his children almost everyday. I think the proposal is excellent with a couple of changes specifically without the option to opening up the slip. Understanding that

this decision is based on community feedback, but as someone who drives the area every day, I am of the opinion that the original proposal to keep the slip closed is actually better from a safety perspective.

As cars come down the hill, it is a very steep hill and you get a lot of speed. The cars coming across 155th are still going to have a problem with speeding and collision. Requests that the corridor continue to be monitored.

Sean: We will expect to monitor this location especially with the increased amount of volume and use. Currently the slip is uncontrolled but NYCDOT has plans to stop it to help the pedestrians cross in that location. The residents concern is noted.

Laura McCray

Lives on Edgecombe, and is a member of the block association and has been in the area for over 40 years. She says it is a dangerous area and intersection. She is a driver but is more concerned about pedestrians who cross everyday. She is not comfortable crossing that intersection because of traffic approaching from Yankee stadium making a left onto Saint Nicholas Place. She has to stop to let the cars go by. She has almost been struck several times.

This area around Saint Nicholas Place is used for speeding because there is no light until you reach 150th and Saint Nicholas Place. Laura is in favor of banning the left hand turn on Saint Nicholas place. As a driver she does not mind going an extra ten minutes to get to her destination. She is in favor of the proposal.

Bishop McGee of Salvation and Deliverance church

Approaches 156th street and Broadway traveling from 7th and Lenox to come across the bridge and finds it to be very congested with very long vehicle lines.

Once on 7th Ave. crossing onto the Macomb's Dam bridge onto 155th street to and from the Bronx, it can take up to 20 minutes to cross the bridge from 155th and Saint Nicholas.

A traffic agent is needed close to Saint Nicholas Avenue and 155th and Saint Nicholas Place to control the vehicle and bus traffic as had been on that site in the past; during rush hour. Cars get impatient and drive across on the wrong side of traffic.

Sean: Removing some movement in the intersection should help with the flow. Also plan to do better signal timing between both intersections: Incremental improvements but not perfect.

Resident: TRAFFIC Back ups are not always constant.

Commissioner Forgione: NYCDOT will request a traffic agent for the area and recommended that the community board actually write a letter of Request to NYPD for a traffic agent to be installed at this location. Not the Precinct but Central Traffic and will share the contacts from both the Manhattan and Bronx sides. Agents are needed on none game days on a regular basis.

Chair Garcia proposed that this meeting and all future meetings will be recorded for accuracy and to transcribe all of the information. Several committee members were excused in order to conduct other simultaneous meetings. The transcript will be provided. A vote will be requested.

Sean: Staging takes 6 weeks or two months but this is not a phased project.

Chair Garcia: What is the process for monitoring the safety impact of the project? If an initially implemented idea is not really working, what is the process for requesting changes to the project? How long does NYCDOT give a project of this sort to watch, monitor and gauge progress and then to consider a different proposal with a request to NYSDOT to return with a different design?

Sean: NYCDOT lets the project settle for three months; collects observational data for 3-6 months but doesn't collect safety data until one year later; conducts travel time runs with speed gun studies to monitor improvement and see if some of the goals have been met. NYCDOT can come back with a report at the time. Restrictions are made up of signs and marking can be undone if ineffective.

Commissioner Forgione: 0-3 month

Within the process of observation changes are done and NYCDOT does not just wait to begin these implemented changes after 3-6 months because the location is being watched all of the time. Changes are not allowed to fester.

Committee member Camille Edelen: Do you increase police presence to implement the behavioral changes needed?

Commissioner Forgione: There is a learning curve. NYPD supports the proposal and will work with NYCDOT who is not looking to summons the residents on the first day of changes since they are used to making the same turning movements for years. There is a grace period. Summons would be issued after a few weeks of project implementation. Signs have a highlight that says NEW in YELLOW to help people see the change and help with compliance. After a few months this is removed.

Committee member Camille Edelen: Requested that the committee meet in three months to gauge the community reaction to the changes

Chair Garcia: Will be in contact this NYCDOT on a consistent basis and will share communications with the committee on a timely basis and not wait until three months to being collecting public comments or concerns.

Sept. 10, 2014, Parks, Rec, Transportation Committee Mtg

155TH STREET -ST. NICHOLAS PLACE - EDGECOMBE AVENUE - MACOMBS BRIDGE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY MEASURES

A preliminary resolution was drafted and presented for the Committee's review. The draft included community concerns and requests as well as DOT recommendations. The Edgcombe Avenue community has substantial concerns regarding community impact from the proposed pedestrian island installation, banning of turns and slip closure with respect to residents' navigation of the area and access to their residences.

Outcome: A motion was made to table the resolution until more information is acquired from the community.

June 11, 2014, Parks, Rec, Transportation Committee Mtg.

155TH STREET-ST. NICHOLAS PLACE EDGECOMBE AVENUE-MACOMBS BRIDGE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY MEASURES

The three-fold objective of the project to improve safety at the intersection of St. Nicholas Place, West 155th Street and Edgcombe Avenue is as follows; (1) reduce speeding and calm traffic, (2) improve navigation of the complicated intersection, and (3) create a safer pedestrian crossing. The project was originated by former Council Member Robert Jackson as a request to improve pedestrian safety as a result of a winter 2012 and summer 2013 site walk-through and safety improvement workshop with community members. The NYPD 30th Precinct also requested a DOT safety investigation. The safety issues addressed by the project include; long crosswalks, crashes involving pedestrians and a multi-leg intersection with multiple conflicting movements. The site is the location of the HPD financed Sugar Hill affordable housing development, an early childhood education center and the new Children's Museum of Art & Storytelling.

The proposed improvements detail; (1) expansion of the existing green street island, (2) addition of a new triangle island on St. Nicholas Pl at West 155th Street, (3) addition of a new pedestrian island on St. Nicholas Pl., (4) ban of southbound left turns onto West 155th St., (5) ban of southbound right from Edgcombe, (6) ban of westbound lefts off of West 155th St., (7) optional slip ramp closure at W. 155th St. to Edgcombe. The proposed project also includes the addition of pedestrian islands at 151st, 152nd and 153rd Streets and addition of a yield crosswalk on St. Nicholas Pl. at W. 152nd Street. Crosswalks would be shortened by sidewalk extensions.

Assemblyman Denny Farrell issued a statement in lieu of his attendance due to scheduling conflicts. His staff members substantiated the official's opposition to "closing left and right turns by automobiles in some locations". The Assemblyman is however, in support of the bulk of the DOT plan. He has been in correspondence with DOT and expressed that DOT agreed that "traffic signal timing of the lights in some areas might create excessive traffic backups, especially east- and westbound traffic on 155th Street during the Yankee Home Games, Friday evenings or at other times". He expressed great concern about the re- routing, which would result in increased traffic around the area of elementary school P.S. 28. There is also concern from the community that the left and right turn bans will excessively inconvenience residents in accessing their homes.

Specific community suggestions are as follows:

Suggestion from Board Member Christina Curry:

- Installation, at strategic locations, of Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) - (integrated devices that communicate information about the Walk and Don't Walk intervals at signalized intersections in non-visual formats to pedestrians who are blind or have impaired vision. The crossing aid features audible tones and vibrotactile surfaces).
- Inclusion of Yankee game schedule as part of the community information packet
- Changing of traffic signal timing on the three north-south streets in the area
- Elimination of the left-turn ban at St. Nicholas Place

The project will overlap with the project to rehabilitate the Fender System and West 155th Street Viaduct of the Macombs Dam Bridge over the Harlem River. DOT is requesting a joint resolution from Community Boards 9, 10 and 11.

Outcome: The Committee will correspond with the Transportation Committees for CBs 9 and 11 to draft a joint resolution.

NYCDOT has since changed its request to a letter of support.

II. Stanley McCintosh – Decorative Lighting

a. Letter of Recommendation Request –Granted

Presentation Notes:

- Neighborhood block preservation of buildings from the urban renewal program.
- Emailed presentation to assistant district manager who forwarded it to transportation committee chair
- Gale Brewer's office recommended to seek an endorsement from CB10
- This is not a landmarks item however, aesthetics, contextual appropriateness and adjacent support of the LPD (church: Saint Allowishus) is very important.
- Questions from landmarks committee chair provided guidance and consistency between committees
- Recommended that this item be reviewed by this committee Consulted Daniel Parcerisas regarding the review of this item and
- Decided to hold a conference call to ask applicant questions rather than requiring attendance at that both meetings
- Enhance the block and provide more of a historical feeling to help enhance the block

Commissioner Margaret Fiorgione's Remarks □ Often times a single block will look to get distinctive street lighting NYCDOT won't do one block locations or one or one street light in front of one building they will only do one full block.

The block is not land marked it won't go to the LPC INSTEAD it will go to the public design commission. It is of worthy enough note that there is one landmark property on that street and along those lines what we will do is once the funding is secured NYCDOT will meet with them we will walk the block and determine together what an appropriate light might be. There is a little bit of controversy. The public design commission will not put up a historic pole if the whole block is not land marked. So we might

have to find a distinctive light pole that looks appropriate with the adjacent property it may not be BISHOPS CROOK if that is what you have your heart set on but we will work out a distinctive light pole

- III. Presentation for Street Co-Naming were tabled pending further documentation that is needed and is being requested by the committee