

Traffic & Transportation Committee, Manhattan CB12 – November 2019

Committee Members Present: Nicholas Martinez (Chair), James Berlin, Gerard Dengel, Danielle Jettoo, Bruce Robertson, Mary Anderson, Robin Cruz, Omar Tejada

Board Members Present: N/A

Public Members Present: N/A

Public Members Absent: Edith Prentiss

Public Attendees: Thomas Whyke, Robin Kalap, Paul J. Historstemmer, Megan Mattocks, Kelsey Depalo, Caroline Castano, Edward Powers, Linda Trotter, Jim Quinn, Lucas Sanoff, Mohammad Hague, Jonathan Shin, Hayden Benjamin, Elena Lunyova, Meghan Hughes, Gary Macio, Derek Ratenbeck, Karen Greene, Ed Koenig, Monica Roth, Loren Parkins, Keisey Dural, Jama Tounge, Marcel Dejean

1. Call to Order

Nick welcomed everyone to the monthly Traffic and Transportation meeting and went through Robert's Rules.

2. 34th precinct presentation on proposed traffic pattern change to Cabrini Boulevard.

- Officer Bryant requested for Cabrini Boulevard to be changed to one way south from Margret Corbin Plaza to 190th Street and Cabrini Blvd. Also, requesting 190th Street between Cabrini and Fort Washington Avenue to be converted from a two-way street to a one way heading eastbound. Success Academy is a cause of the traffic as residents have complained about gridlock.
- CB12 James mentioned this had been a complaint of the neighborhood for years.
- DOT Lyle mentioned there had been conversations between the school, the precinct, and DOT. DOT does not recommend the lane reversal on Cabrini Blvd. DOT policy is only to drop-off on the side of the school. In terms of converting 190th Street to a one way eastbound is strongly not suggested because of 190th Street as it is one of a few westbound access points north of 181st Street. The main entrance of the school was switched from Fort Washington to Cabrini Boulevard due to the MTA bus traffic on Fort Washington Avenue. The only possible solution could be to remove parking on Cabrini Boulevard to free up space for drop-offs.
- Officer Bryant mentioned their proposal would still be to use the DOT lane to let the children out on the curbside where the school is.
- CB 12 Nick mentioned that further discussions between DOT and 34th Precinct need to occur for a possible next committee meeting presentation for a solution.
- CB 12 Gerard stated that if the loss of parking spaces is on the table, community outreach is needed on that possibility occurring for opinions.

Public Comments

- Lauren Parkins lives across the street from Success Academy and is a driver. "It's a nightmare due to traffic and congestion due to the school drop off. 100's of cars in a residential area blocking access for firefighters. The school doesn't belong in this area due to the traffic issue. They have mentioned expansions which cannot be sustained."
- CB 12 Gerard asked if Lauren had solutions.
- Lauren said they shouldn't be allowed to double-park. Either move the cars away or drop-off further away.
- CB 12 Gerard clarification on a request for "No Drop-off" Zone?
- Lauren said if this removes the idling, then we need a no-drop off zone.
- Paul wanted clarification on the direction of the proposals.
- Karen mentioned that DOT was going to remove nine parking spaces, which the neighborhood was not informed. It is blocked off by cones and not used. People are stopping in the middle of the street, and some are parking on the hydrants. People are parking on Margret Corbin Circle. When the school opened, we were told that the kids would use public transportation, and it's not been the reality.
- Derrick is representing 689 Fort Washington Avenue the closest building to Success Academy. "It affects our residents very much. They have DOT approved parking spaces, yet the parents take these spots and laugh at the residents. The amount of honking is intolerable. Success has not cared about the concerns of the residents."

- Lucas of 900 West Fort Washington: "I have seen parents get out of their cars and confront each other. Could a traffic light help or drop off walking point? The school is inconsistent in enforcing traffic direction."
- Kelsey DePalo, Principal of Success Academy: "For the last six years, we have been trying everything to ease traffic. Believes the precinct idea is brilliant. They have a walking program in which a child could be escorted to the school. They moved up their arrival time by reducing teaching times to help with traffic directing. Many of our students walk, carpool, take public transportations, have told parents not to honk. We are trying everything we can to be good neighbors."
- Tom of 689 Fort Washington: "This problem is about traffic and noise for two hours a day; one hour in the morning and one in the afternoon. These are permanent solutions to a temporary problem. Can the school provide further help for traffic control? This solution doesn't change the volume of cars entering the neighborhood."
- CB 12 Nick: Has there been the possibility of hiring traffic control?
- Kelsey said that as of 6:00 PM that day, they received a call that two traffic coordinators will be provided by DOT for use starting tomorrow.
- CB12 Jim says there are a variety of bad things. When the former school operated as a high school, they took public transportation. Maybe the school could be used for other grades. There needs to be an environmental study of the area. There needs to be a study on the number of cars being used to drop kids off.
- CB 12 Gerard suggested a drop off-zone point for the kids further away from the school to alleviate traffic.
- CB 12 Daniel, "Can kids that age be dropped off?" The answer to the question was no.
- Public Karen asked the principal how many students were in the school? Kelsey DePalo answered that there are 530 students Kindergarten through 4th Graders, and the population is not expected to grow.
- Ed has lived at the corner of 190th Street and Cabrini Boulevard and had a question: "In the afternoons from 3:00 PM to when schools end, the streets are filled with double-parked cars. Is there something that can be done and make the people move? They sit there and keep honking all afternoon."
- CB 12 Nick asked if there have been any conversations on shutting the street down for pick-up and drop-off as it's done for Good Shepherd School? Many said no.
- CB12 Jim mentioned we need more information on this topic.
- DOT Lyle had two questions: For the precinct, "have they thought of ticketing the double-parked cars? Has staggered start time been thought of?"
- Officer Bryant mentioned that parents get out to pick up young kids. Kelsey Principal said they had an audit, and due to that DOT audit, they have staggered arrivals and dismissals.
- CB12 Jim, "Do we have this issue anywhere else?" Officer Bryant mentioned, "Yes, it does as parents double-park for pick up and drop off all over the district."
- CB12 Gerard, "Can we draft a proposal on the precinct suggestion or can write one requesting alternatives."
- DOT Lyle mentioned there is not much space to make changes. The only solution would be to remove parking spots.
- CB12 Nick, "I don't believe we are at a resolution point tonight."
- Lyle mentioned that depending on the suggestion, it would determine when the determinations could be shared. He does not know what else DOT could do beyond studying a parking removal.
- CB12 Omar asked Kelsey, Principal of Success Academy, "Why can't more kids be bussed into the school?" Kelsey answered that due to the distance and student age, it's not possible. Parents either take public transportation or drop off their children with private vehicles.
- CB12 Robin mentioned every parent waits for their child to walk inside the school because they want to ensure their children enter the building.
- CB12 Jim requested that an environmental and traffic study be conducted.
- CB12 Gerard mentioned that if there was a misrepresentation that the school was to open with kids taking public transportation, yet this is not the case. The school should provide resources to looking for this solution.
- Public comment Parkins said the school has not been receptive to the complaints. Too many cars are not enough space. The school runs a business in a residential area that blocks emergency vehicles — not enough space for all these cars.
- CB12 Mary mentioned the school is not going to move. Conversations need to be tabled.
- CB12 Nick table conversation until an environmental/traffic study is made and mediation between all parties involved as well as the school provide data.

3. MTA presentation on 4-Yr Sewer Project

- Cancelled as MTA rep could not make it.

4. DOT and DOC School Safety presentation and updates on West 157th Street Ramp, Hillside Avenue and Broadway

- Consultant Jim Quinn hired by DOT presented.
- CB12 Omar mentioned that last month DOT presented a bike lane and road direction change for this same project area. Can DOT show a final product that shows both projects?
- Public comment questioned this project in alignment with last month's project.
- DOT representative mentioned that the two projects are different scopes of work with the same overall project. The one presented last month is done with paint on the road. This month's project brings more permanent materials which would take a few years.
- CB12 Gerard asked if phasing of projects can be shown. DOT took the point.
- CB12 Jim said we don't want to delay this project if it affects the safety of the children. Second that in the bid process it should be a complete project not done in bits and pieces.
- DOT Ayden representative said that usually DDC usually sends these plans to CB12.
- CB12 Danielle asked how this proposal is correlated to school safety.
- DOT rep said that funding is allocated to certain schools based on crash data around schools. That drives the study of five years of crash data. This is a Vision Zero approach.
- CB12 Danielle asked how these types of school safety projects are initiated. DOT responded that this comes from vision zero data and they select which projects they can implement. Lyle clarified that is a vision zero corridor thus it's a cause and effect selected project.
- CB12 Bruce mentioned that there are two schools.
- CB12 Nick mentioned we can draft a resolution. CB12 Jim added we can draft a resolution with a request for further updates.
- Committee voted to support this project 8-0-0. Public voted 2-0-0.
- Resolution will be written.

5. Old Business

- Update on 157th ramp. DOT Lyle said they are planning to come back to present to the board on this issue. They haven't forgotten.
- Broadway/Hillside USPS buses parking and blocking vantage point for pedestrians. DOT Lyle said that the USPS trucks are federal vehicles and they don't have enforcement over them.
- Dyckman Bike Lanes update. DOT Lyle mentioned the final plan was sent to the board. CB12 Nick requested an update to this project be presented in January.

6. New Business

- Member of the Public Paul presented pictures of double parking on St. Nicholas Avenue as it could happen on Dyckman Street. Advised to show information at Public Safety committee, as it's an enforcement issue.
- Meeting ended at 9:17pm.

Minutes recorded by Omar Tejada