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January 24, 2020

Edward Pincar Jr.
Manhattan Borough Commissioner
Department of Transportation
55 Water Street
New York, NY 10041

Dear Commissioner Pincar:

At its Full Board meeting January 23, 2020, Community Board #2, adopted the following resolution:

Resolution in response to presentation by NYC Dept. of Transportation (DOT) and Sam Schwartz Engineering (SSE) on the independent monitoring program for the 14th St. Transit and Truck Priority Pilot Project (TTP) and an update on the pilot project, sharing results from the preliminary report.

Whereas the 14th Street Transit & Truck Priority (TTP) Pilot Project was implemented by the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) in October 2019, aiming to improve operations of the M14A/D Select Bus Service, safety on this Vision Zero Priority Corridor, and emphasize its importance as a truck route. The first of quarterly reports on the operation of the TTP and its impact on bus riders and on the side streets was conducted by SSE and presented by Dan Schack, Director of Planning at **Sam Schwartz Engineering SSE**; and

Whereas from 6 AM–10 PM, only buses, trucks, and emergency vehicles are allowed to drive on 14th Street from 3rd Avenue to 8th Avenue heading westbound, and 9th Avenue to 3rd Avenue heading eastbound. Other vehicles are allowed to drive on 14th Street for local trips and garage access but must make the next available right turn off of 14th Street. All left turns are restricted off of the TTP corridor, except for MTA buses at certain intersections. Updates to the curb regulations along the TTP corridor were implemented to prioritize drop-off and pick-up activity and commercial loading. Additional elements of the pilot include new pedestrian space around Union Square, painted curb extensions to shorten pedestrian crossings, and bus boarding platforms, which are in the process of being installed; and

Whereas early results show 22% improvement in travel time westbound at peak hours, and 36% eastbound- or approximately 5.3 minutes and a 24% increase in ridership during weekdays. Double-parking decreased to 2% of vehicles, and bike ridership increased significantly. However, the impacts on side streets vary widely which casts some doubt on the reliability of vehicle volumes and travel times; and

Whereas CB2M received detailed correspondence from affected residents and block associations and approximately 75 community stakeholders also attended CB2M's January 2020 Traffic & Transportation Committee meeting. While a few of the comments were positive, most highlighted specific problems that need to be addressed including lack of clarity about access, congestion and noise, particularly around West 12th and 13th Streets between Fourth and Fifth Avenues. Residents at the meeting felt their neighborhood is being seen solely as a transit corridor, not as somewhere that people actually live. Particularly problematic are West 12th and 13th Sts.; and

Whereas The elderly and persons with disabilities complain that yellow taxis and FHV's refuse to pick up and drop off on the corridor, even though it is allowed; and

Whereas residents also expressed concern that the emptiness of 14th Street may be impacting local merchants due to reduced pedestrian traffic; and

Whereas with the reduction of traffic agents and police on the busway detail, more drivers on 14th St. now head straight past University Place instead of making the mandatory right turn; and

Whereas vehicles servicing businesses along 14th Street report receiving tickets and summonses; and

Whereas as part of the busway, the direction of University Place between 14th and 13th Sts. was reversed but the rest of University Place still runs northbound. Therefore, eastbound drivers are forced to take a right turn from 14th St. onto University Place and must turn right onto 13th St. before they can find a way to head back east again. The shared space block is extremely problematic for residents and drivers, because the current configuration leads to bottlenecks, lengthy drive-arounds with increased emissions from the extra travel times, and difficulty for yellow taxis and FHV's. Seniors and the disabled are particularly affected by the confusion of reversed directions and increased vehicular turning movements making it more hazardous to cross the street; and

Whereas adding to the confusion are police cars and vans attached to a homeless outreach unit newly based at the Police Athletic League building on 12th St. between University Place and Broadway; and

Whereas most of residents' complaints focus on the increased congestion and noise levels along West 12th and 13th Streets between Broadway and Fifth Avenue; and

Whereas on 12th Street, the buffer lane bordering the new bike lane —intended to double as a drop-off — is constantly used for police parking; and

Whereas residents have witnessed congestion creating high risk for residents who need fire trucks, ambulances and Access-a-Ride. Often, access issues are caused by police cars parked in the buffer lane;

Therefore be it resolved, CB2M requests a number of adjustments, enumerated below, either to provide missing information or to reduce the impact of the project on specific side streets:

Metrics and Measurement

- It is important to conserve baseline data for all future comparisons and to make all presentations consistent by using percentages throughout or whole numbers.
- It is also important to break out how much of the savings in travel time is a result of actions taken prior to the installation of the busway, such as the reduction in bus stops, banning left turns and early ticketing.
- Noise levels in side streets need to be measured in order to accurately capture impact.
- The bus-mounted enforcement cameras will be activated this month. Currently, there are up to 16 traffic agents. There were reports of increased illegal vehicular activity when agents are removed. We ask that measurement be taken with and without traffic agents.
- Volumes for bus ridership was a total for an average weekday and should be broken out by eastbound and westbound ridership as well as by block.
- Vehicle travel times, speed and volumes on the side streets should be measured block by block, instead of just the whole corridor. Land use and other conditions on each block can significantly affect the results.
- In addition, measurements in the evening are not enough. The community is complaining of congestion and honking on certain blocks throughout the day when these measurements also should be done.
- Turning volumes must be studied for the impacted side streets and the avenues. If the volumes increased, then turning movements increased as well, and those are the most dangerous locations for pedestrians (30% of all pedestrian fatalities in New York City occur at left turns).
- There should be a study of response times for emergency vehicles.
- The bus journey travel time is not a meaningful index and needs to be broken down to isolate bunching and timeliness indices that are typically tracked by MTA.

14th Street

- DOT and NYPD Traffic should ensure that all agents are aware of current regulations which allow pick up and deliveries.
- CB2M requests that the DOT and MTA NYCT consider some measures to increase vehicle usage along 14th Street – such as allowing yellow taxis - which remains “barren” for much of the day and which will mitigate the congestion along the side streets, decrease honking and traffic noise and improve quality of life for local residents.
- Allowing yellow taxis to use the busways should also be considered for better use of the wide, mostly empty street as well as the possibility of offering incentives for cabs to drop-off/pickup in the current configuration.
- Additional signage is necessary to confirm access, loading and unloading times.
- CB2M recommends obtaining feedback from local businesses.
- Pedestrian traffic should be documented.

University Place Shared Space

- Alternative approaches to the southbound turn on University Place need to be considered, for example, extending University southbound one more block to 12th Street to allow drivers the option to head east instead of being forced to turn west on 13th and go around again to head east via some other route, or legalizing vehicles proceeding past University to Broadway, as they're doing now.
- Placard parking should be eliminated in this area.

Side Street Congestion

- Signage and enforcement for honking, trucks and buses would be beneficial. We suggest that cameras be installed on the block to enforce the rules.
- DOT should consider whether eliminating parking on the south side of 12th Street would ease congestion.; and

Be it further resolved that that the DOT should conduct more outreach and education to the Taxi Limousine Commission for yellow taxis and FHV's. Additionally, information should be disseminated about how interested stakeholders can provide input on an online survey on the busway through the SSE website; and

Be it finally resolved that SSE should release all of its data for community review.

Vote: Unanimous, with 41 Board Members in favor.

Please advise us of any decision or action taken in response to this resolution.

Sincerely,



Carter Booth, Chair
Community Board #2, Manhattan



Shirley Secunda, Chair
Traffic & Transportation Committee
Community Board #2, Manhattan

CB/EM

- c:
- Hon. Jerrold L. Nadler, Congressman
 - Hon. Carolyn Maloney, Congresswoman
 - Hon. Brad Hoylman, NY State Senator
 - Hon. Deborah J. Glick, NY Assembly Member
 - Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
 - Hon. Corey Johnson, Council Speaker
 - Hon. Carlina Rivera, Council Member