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COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

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March 23, 2018

Polly Trottenberg, Commissioner
Department of Transportation
55 Water Street
New York, NY 10041

Andy Byford, President
MTA New York City Transit
2 Broadway
New York, NY 10004

Dear Commissioner Trottenberg and President Byford:

At its Full Board meeting March 22, 2018, Community Board #2, adopted the following resolution:

Resolution in response to update on plans for the L Train Canarsie Tunnel shutdown.

Whereas NYC Transit (NYCT) and the NYC Dept. of Transportation (DOT) have proposed a plan addressing the Canarsie Tunnel-L Train closure taking place in 2019. This includes a dedicated busway and SBS bus service on 14th St. + shuttle buses, a 2-way protected bike lane on 13th St. and other new bicycle facilities, increased subway service on the G, J, M and Z lines, and added ferry service connecting to the new 14th St. SBS service, all with the goal of discouraging automotive traffic and its impacts during the project by providing alternatives to driving, while aiming to achieve a balance among transport modes that reduces subway crowding and allows for people's diverse travel throughout their communities; and

Whereas CB2 thanks NYCT and DOT for their presentation of an update of this plan and for the opportunity for our community to give input, which included many different opinions for and against the proposed plans, including the 14th St. busway and the 13th St. 2-way bike lane; and

Whereas the plan also includes adding 70 buses per hour coming across the Williamsburg Bridge with 40-50 of those buses continuing along Kenmare St., then looping around via Cleveland Pl. > Lafayette > East Houston Sts., with bus stops in proximity to local subway stations (Spring St.; Broadway/Lafayette; Prince St.), and with the potential for impacts in these neighborhoods (e.g., on narrow, congested Kenmare and tiny Cleveland where bus turns would be tight and difficult or where many development projects and film and TV shoots in the area's streets block passage) that to date haven't been addressed nor has traffic analysis been done; and

Whereas NYCT and DOT have indicated that they've done extensive traffic analysis and modeling of alternative approaches to mitigating impacts during the project and that they are amenable to further modeling of other alternatives to assess potentially less impactful and more efficient changes; and

Whereas at this time the plan provides for busway operation at "peak hours," which are typically 6am to 9am and 3pm to 7pm, however, 14th St. is constantly congested, and people now use the L-train all day long and will

require similar bus availability, which may call for more continuous, consistent busway service (instead of service on-service off) to avoid confusion and congestion; and

Whereas constituents are concerned about the proposed 2-way protected bike lane on the south side of 13th St., citing the potential for double parking with no room for vehicles to pass, fully blocked traffic, reduced emergency vehicle access and passing space for access-a-ride, lack of room for deliveries and sanitation trucks, and interference with drop-off/pick up (especially at City & Country School, which also has emphasized concerns for children's safety and submitted a petition with almost 200 signatures opposing the bike lane, but indicating potential support for a westbound bike lane on the north side of 13th St. in the event of no other viable alternative), DOT and NYCT indicated that the proposed 2-way bike lane would be temporary for the project; and

Whereas the community expressed concern that increased vehicular traffic will be diverted to small neighborhood, mostly residential, side streets and impact them negatively in terms of bad air quality, noise, congestion, and compromised safety; and

Whereas the speedy and efficient movement of buses is necessary to motivate the switch from private motor vehicles and FHV's to using the proposed buses instead, and paying fares slows down bus boarding and consequently bus movement, as does single door boarding, a delay that leads to gridlock and slowdowns that would discourage such a switch; and

Whereas the plan includes adding 200 diesel buses. While these diesels are supposed to be a newer cleaner technology, even with low sulfur fuel they still have emissions that increase air pollution, while electric buses wouldn't create any pollution; and

Whereas closing University Pl. btw. 13th and 14th Sts. is being considered, however, there are many restaurants and retailers there that receive multiple deliveries; these businesses need the street to be open to accommodate these deliveries as well as garbage pickup; and

Whereas even now there's not enough bus stop seating on 14th St.; with the heavy increase in buses to come, it will be more important than ever to provide sufficient seating in bus wait areas, especially for the many seniors and disabled bus users in the community's varied residential and working populations; and

Whereas NYCT and DOT have explained that no EIS has been done because all the proposed changes are temporary and that they are complying with necessary NEPA requirements and filling a report with FTA; they also have stated that if they consider making any temporary measures permanent, they will do further evaluation, however, further details have been requested by the community; and

Whereas CB2 is pleased to learn that there are plans to have all lanes on the Williamsburg Bridge become HOV3, but so far HOV3 is only required during peak hours. Traffic volume needs to be reduced at all times, therefore SOV use needs to be discouraged at all times through HOV3. In addition, steps need to be taken to avoid shifts of traffic to other East River bridges that so far haven't been given an HOV designation; and

Whereas NYCT will be doing some station improvements - in capacity, stairs, and platforms, but subway stations need ADA access with elevators and escalators. CB2 understands the need for space to accommodate diverted riders transferring to uptown/downtown subway routes, however, with L-train stations closed, this still is a unique opportune moment to install handicap access, without the difficulty that would be entailed doing so once all stations are open again; and

Whereas extensive law enforcement will be needed to monitor and ensure the safe and orderly progression of all vehicular traffic, including buses and bicycles as well as cars and trucks, also to secure pedestrian safety, and to oversee HOV3 compliance; and

Whereas the one-way toll on the Verrazano Bridge is a significant reason why a great deal of traffic comes over the Williamsburg Bridge through downtown Manhattan: to avoid the one-way toll, legislated by the Federal government. For 24 years, CB2 has been asking for a 2-way toll to be restored on the Verrazano Bridge, because

of the influx of automotive traffic, including heavy trucks, congesting our local streets. With tollbooths being removed from the Staten Island side of the Bridge and electronic tolling now in operation, there's no longer any reason for the one-way toll which originally was put in place to avoid backups on the Staten Island side. Restoring the 2-way toll, even if temporarily, would help redirect and reduce incoming traffic over the Williamsburg Bridge, easing some of the L-Train project's impact on local streets in the Kenmare/Cleveland/Lafayette area; and

Whereas DOT and NYCT have indicated that they will be constantly monitoring conditions and evaluating the impact of the proposed changes as the project progresses to make revisions, if necessary;

Therefore be it resolved that CB2 urges DOT and NYCT to do a complete study, including community input, to assess neighborhood impacts in the Kenmare/Cleveland/Lafayette/East Houston area from buses and other automotive traffic coming off the Williamsburg Bridge, and investigate alternative solutions to alleviate such impacts, while also considering a limitation on building permits for any construction project and a moratorium on film and TV production for the L Train project's duration in both the Kenmare/Cleveland/Lafayette area and in all other areas affected by the project; and

Be it further resolved that CB2 asks that actual peak hours being considered be clarified and that additional modeling be done that evaluates a 24/7 and another lengthier than peak busway option that would still include access for local deliveries and parking garages as well as for emergency vehicular and para-transit access; and

Be it further resolved that CB2 requests that modeling be done to evaluate a 2-way bike lane on 14th St. design option; also that further assessment of impacts of the proposed bike lane on 13th St. be done and investigation of alternatives. Should 13th St. be the only viable alternative, CB2 advises that the bike lane be moved to the north side of 13th St. (to avoid conflicts with school children) and that removal of parking on the south curb be considered, to allow space for pickup/dropoff and deliveries and passage of emergency vehicles, and that specific curbside management regulations be established there to serve local curb access needs (e.g., loading and unloading and time of day restrictions); and

Be it further resolved that CB2 favors implementation of applicable traffic calming measures to discourage vehicular incursions on residential side streets, such as street direction changes for one block or more, 5-10 mph speed limits, and slow zones; and

Be it further resolved that CB2 fully encourages instituting free boarding and all-door boarding on all 14th St. bus routes and shuttles during the project, to speed up buses while also adding a money-saving motivation to switch from private vehicles and FHV's to buses; and

Be it further resolved that CB2 urges that every effort be made to have electric buses used in preference to diesel buses, preferably entirely, or as much as possible; and

Be it further resolved that CB2 opposes the closure of University Pl. btw. 13th and 14th Sts.; and

Be it further resolved that CB2 would like to see more bus stop seating added on 14th St., whether with increased bus shelters (preferable) or CityBenches or both.

Be it further resolved that CB2 requests that NYCT and DOT provide further details about their compliance with specific NEPA requirements, e.g. the report they're filing with FTA, and to provide assurance that, should they decide to make temporary changes permanent, the appropriate environmental evaluations, such as an EIS, will be conducted; and

Be it further resolved that CB2 highly recommends having HOV3 24/7 on the Williamsburg Bridge and having at least HOV2 on the other East River bridges to avoid diversion of traffic from one bridge to another. CB2 also urges heavy HOV3 enforcement preferably done by the NYPD, with possible use of technology for automated enforcement as a supplementary measure; and

Be it further resolved that CB2 again urges NYCT to take advantage of this one-time opportunity, while stations are closed, to install ADA accessibility especially in the 6th Ave. station as well as to upgrade the other 2 CB2 stations; and

Be it further resolved that CB2 strongly urges DOT and NYCT to work closely with NYPD, including CB2's local police precincts and the NYPD Traffic Division, to organize extensive traffic control and enforcement activities throughout the project area; and

Be it further resolved that CB2 encourages DOT and NYCT to confer with our federal lawmakers, both those representing District 2, Manhattan and those representing Staten Island to restore the 2-way Verrazano Bridge toll at least temporarily to provide needed traffic mitigation for the duration of the project; and

Be it finally resolved that CB2 urges NYCT and DOT to do continuous monitoring and evaluation of conditions as well as to consult with the local community and commuters for further assessment of both impacts and mitigations for the duration of the project, and to make adjustments where necessary.

Vote: Unanimous, with 34 Board Members in favor.

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

Sincerely,



Terri Cude, Chair
Community Board #2, Manhattan



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

TC/EM

c: Hon. Jerrold L. Nadler, Congressman
Hon. Carolyn Maloney, Congresswoman
Hon. Nydia Velázquez, Congresswoman
Hon. Brad Hoylman, NY State Senator
Hon. Brian Kavanagh, NY State Senator
Hon. Yuh-line Niou, Assembly Member
Hon. Deborah J. Glick, Assembly Member
Hon. Gale Brewer, Man. Borough President
Hon. Margaret Chin, Council Member
Hon. Carlina Rivera, Council Member
Hon. Corey Johnson, Council Member