

COMMUNITY BOARD 11 QUEENS

COMMITTEE REPORT

TO: All Board Members

FROM: Bernard Haber and Mohan Jethwani, Co-Chairs Transportation Committee

RE: One way conversion of 254 Street
216 Street Pedestrian Bridge

DATE: Sept. 26, 2008

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On Monday, September 22, 2008 the Transportation Committee met to discuss the proposed reconstruction of the 216 Street pedestrian bridge over the LIRR, and the proposal to convert 254 Street to a one way street from the Horace Harding Expressway to Thornhill Avenue. The following committee members were present: Bernie Haber and Mohan Jethwani, Co-Chairs, Joan Garippa, Dennis Novick, David Millet, John Rosse, Ed Doster, Allan Palzer, Laura James, Joe Sollano, Frank Skala, Andy Rothman and Jerry Iannece. Also present were Susan Seinfeld, District Manager, Maura McCarthy Queens DOT Commissioner, C. Peter Goslett, NYCDOT liaison, Bharat Parekh, Department of Design and Construction and Gene McSweeney, for Assembly Member Carrozza. Twelve residents attended for the 254 Street conversion issue and thirteen residents for the 216 Street bridge project.

254 Street One Way

At the request of a resident, the NYC Department of Transportation conducted a study to determine if 254 Street could be converted to a one way street northbound from the Horace Harding Expressway service road to Thornhill Avenue, the distance of one block. It was noted that traffic on 254 Street increased, causing considerable safety concerns, after the NYS DOT reconfigured the entrance to the Long Island Expressway. This issue was discussed by the Board in 2001 when NYS DOT moved the entrance ramp from 252 Street to 254 Street. The motion to make the street one way northbound was tabled by the Board at that time. After a thorough discussion with residents the following recommendations were made:

- 1- 254 Street should NOT be converted to a one way.
- 2- The preference was for a one way street from Thornhill Avenue to Leeds Road, however there were some objections by residents to this proposal also.

3- Residents preferred that the entrance 'nosing' to the 254 Street westbound entrance to the Long Island Expressway be extended eastward approximately 100' past 254 Street. This would eliminate the traffic southbound on 254 Street entering the LIE on-ramp at 254 Street. (This suggestion was made to NYS DOT in 2001).

Therefore, we asked NYC Department of Transportation to study and review these suggestions.

216 Street Pedestrian Bridge

NYC DOT advised us in 2004 that the pedestrian bridge at 216 Street over the LIRR tracks was scheduled for replacement. DDC designed a new bridge that includes ADA compliant helical ramps. Last year the Committee met and reached out to the adjacent business owners and homeowners for their opinions. No one supported the redesign because of the negative visual impact on the properties and the concern that the ramps would become an attractive nuisance and a haven for criminal activities. Following our objections Corporation Counsel advised the NYC DOT that any rehabilitation work on the bridge must include the construction of ADA compliant ramps. DOT has returned to the Board and asked for a meeting to determine if they should go ahead with the project as designed or demolish the bridge and not replace it.

Bernie Haber explained that the steel structure of the bridge is safe but basically needs new cement, repair to the risers and paint. The engineer from DDC agreed with this assessment. Jerry Iannece offered to speak with the Corporation Counsel attorneys to discuss the Federal Disabilities Act further to determine if this project could be exempt. There were several issues raised about the interpretation of the law. Commissioner McCarthy said that they could wait further for a resolution but would have to eventually be addressed.

Following the discussion with the residents the Committee recommended the following:

- 1- They do not want the bridge demolished and removed.
- 2- They want the bridge to be repainted and repaired where required.
- 3- They do not want the construction of a new bridge as presented by DDC that provides for helical handicap ramps at each end.

The NYC DOT was asked to consider these opinions and wait until further investigation can be conducted.