



*Melinda Katz*  
*Queens Borough President*

## Community Board No. 2

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*Patrick A. O'Brien*  
*Chairman*

*Debra Markell Kleinert*  
*District Manager*

\*Revised as of February 24, 2016

January 5, 2016

Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes

### Committee Members-

#### Present

Denise Keehan-Smith, Chairperson

Claudia Chan

Dana Frankel

Jordan Levine

Sheila Lewandowski

Santiago Vargas

#### Committee Members Absent

Bessie Cassaro

Charles Markey

Donald McCallian

#### Community Board 2 Staff

Debra Markell Kleinert, District Manager

#### Public Members

Joseph Conley

#### Guests

Luke DePalma, MTA NYC Transit

Samantha Dolgoff, NYC DOT

B. Patel, NYC DOT

Linda Sturman, NYC DOT

Nick Pettinati, NYC DOT

Albert Silvestri, NYC DOT

Neil Gaglinard, NYC DOT

Penny Lee, Department of City Planning

Anne Berman, Parsons

Patricia Quesada, LaGuardia Community College

Shahir Erfan, LaGuardia Community College

Ajay Patel, NYC DDC

Rhiannon Weitawitz, NYC DDC

Denise Keehan-Smith, Chairperson, welcomed everyone to the Transportation Committee Meeting.

### **REVISED AGENDA**

#### **MTA – Update-Luke DePalma**

Luke DePalma, MTA, announced that the MTA NYC Transit had a new president, the first woman president of NYC Transit, Veronique Hakim.

Mr. DePalma provided the following updates:

- 2016's schedule of Flushing #7 Line's work - A copy of the service calendar of dates with the changes, is attached.
- There will be eight full suspensions of service scheduled in 2016 between Queens Borough Plaza and Times Square.
- The changes will run between early Saturday and early Monday. The first change will begin on the weekend of January 23 to January 25, 2016.
- Free shuttle buses will be provided to all suspended stations between Vernon/Jackson and Queens Borough Plaza. No E or G train service will be suspended while these service changes are taking place, and additional N and Q trains will be provided during this time, as well.

The MTA has been working on the following:

- An updated, modernized signal system for the #7 line. The MTA has been installing this system.
- Replacing track patterns across the track on the elevated line.
- Completing the Steinway Tunnel – Rehabilitation and post sanding fortification.
- MTA is working on a very big track panel replacement project this year, between 61<sup>st</sup> Street and 59<sup>th</sup> Street, around the 61<sup>st</sup> Street/Woodside Station. They will be working on non-consecutive weekends (three to 5 weekends) between March and May 2016.

Luke DePalma stated that during extreme weather conditions, broken rails can occur, causing problems with the many train lines.

There was a discussion on long term ways to add capacity on the various train lines (#7 line, the R, M, E and F lines) to allow for the population growth and development of housing and business and industry in the CB 2 area.

Luke DePalma requested that any suggestions for recommendations to try to alleviate the volume of riders be presented to the MTA for consideration.

A statement was made regarding the horrendous conditions of the platform and stairs at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Street subway station. The question was asked if the station was scheduled for renovations. Luke DePalma stated that he would look into this issue, and advise CB 2.

An issue was raised about the poor service of the Q60 bus. There are often times when several buses run together, causing extensive wait times for riders along the route. The problem also exists at the first stop on 60<sup>th</sup> Street and Second Avenue. There are occasions when there are three buses idling, while dozens of people are waiting on line to board.

There was a discussion regarding how to improve this issue. A suggestion was made to perhaps add a Limited Q 60 bus to the route to ease the backup of the buses. Luke DePama requested specific times of day and locations when this is happening. He can request MTA Bus review the issue and consider a Limited bus on this route. Road control will investigate the issues on this problematic bus route, and provide alternate solutions.

Luke DePalma provided MTA Subway Maps, MTA Queens Bus Maps and NYC 2015 Bike Maps for distribution to the Transportation Committee.

Denise Keehan-Smith thanked Luke DePalma for his information and updates.

## **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

### **DOT Presentation and discussion on 29<sup>th</sup> Street and 28<sup>th</sup> Street One-way Conversions**

B. Patel and L. Sturman, NYC DOT Representatives, Traffic Engineering and Safety Office, presented the following proposal for the one-way conversions on 29<sup>th</sup> Street and 28<sup>th</sup> Street:

- They stated that in 2013, DOT was asked by LaGuardia Community College to do an area wide study of the area surrounding the college to see what safety improvements could be made for pedestrians along Thomson Avenue.
- In 2014, DOT looked into the intersection of 29<sup>th</sup> Street and Skillman Avenue. There were and continue to be, numerous safety issues, including crosswalks and bicycle lanes blocked with pedestrians, head-on conditions at 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 29<sup>th</sup> Street and congestion delays. In addressing this problem, DOT looked into the feasibility of having 29<sup>th</sup> Street converted into a one-way street.

Existing conditions:

- 29<sup>th</sup> Street is very narrow. It is 30 feet wide with parking on both sides. This is a two way street. Multiple trucks use this street to go to the industrial area south of 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue. When a truck attempts this, vehicles are not able to pass through on the opposite side. To counter this, vehicles are parking on the sidewalk. This, in turn, created a hazard for pedestrians, because it takes away a pedestrian's right of way.
- Also at 29<sup>th</sup> Street and 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue, it is very difficult for motorists to cross 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue. For pedestrians, it creates a blind spot as cars and motorists are already proceeding on to 29<sup>th</sup> Street while pedestrians are only one-half way across the crosswalk.
- Another hazardous condition exists south of 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue; 29<sup>th</sup> Street varies in width and there is no crosswalk for pedestrians. Vehicles are angle parked where normally a crosswalk would be located. This block has a very heavy volume of trucks, and there are a lot of industrial warehouses, as well. Pedestrians are forced to walk in the street. The street becomes narrow near 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue where it is only 23 feet wide, and barely enough space for one vehicle to pass by.

Therefore, the intersection at 29<sup>th</sup> Street and Skillman Avenue is constantly gridlocked for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. This is because when vehicles are travelling north on 29<sup>th</sup> Street, and approach Skillman Avenue to make their right turn, there is barely enough room for one vehicle.

To address these issues, the following changes were proposed:

1. Convert 29<sup>th</sup> Street into a one way street southbound from Skillman Avenue to Hunters Point Avenue.

This would eliminate the situation on Skillman Avenue. Extending 29<sup>th</sup> Street southbound from 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Hunters Point Avenue would negate the head on conditions.

There was a discussion regarding bottlenecks of traffic and safety conditions relating to the turn signals with this proposed change.

2. Convert 28<sup>th</sup> Street one way northbound from 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Skillman Avenue. This will create a better flow with 29<sup>th</sup> Street going southbound, and 28<sup>th</sup> Street going northbound.

Both 28<sup>th</sup> Street and 27<sup>th</sup> Street are currently underutilized. They have light volume so the change in traffic flow to both streets would not affect the current operation.

3. Daylight the southwest corner of 28<sup>th</sup> Street and Skillman Avenue. This will make it easier for vehicles who are attempting to make a right or left turn from 28<sup>th</sup> Street to more clearly see pedestrians. Parking on the southwest corner of 29<sup>th</sup> Street will be restored. It is currently daylighted, but if the direction of the street is changed to southbound, the daylighting is no longer necessary.
4. Currently on the north side of Skillman Avenue, between 29<sup>th</sup> Street and Thomson Avenue, there is an existing 'No Standing Anytime' sign. DOT wants to extend that sign all the way to the

center of 29<sup>th</sup> Street. This will allow vehicles that choose to make a left turn, and vehicles going to the south side, go around them.

5. Regarding the parking - Currently 29<sup>th</sup> Street on the east side, is no parking 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday. With the conversion, it will restore parking on the east side, and possibly restore meter parking around the area right now. This would be a significant gain of legal parking spots. Meter hours would be similar as what is in the area now.

A request was made by a Transportation Committee Member to review and revisit the 12 hour parking meter limits, but a LaGuardia representative believes 6 hour parking is sufficient.

There was a discussion regarding the alleviation of the volume that will be created by this conversion.

A motion was made and seconded to support this project. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Denise Keehan-Smith thanked Mr. Patel and Ms. Shurman for their presentation.

## **TRANSPORTATION ISSUES**

### **Continue discussion of Queens Blvd. Safety Improvement Project –**

Denise Keehan-Smith reported that Council Member Van Bramer had invited DOT Commissioner, Polly Trottenberg, the DOT team as well as Pat O'Brien, Debbie Markell Kleinert and her, to do an on-site visit at Queens Blvd. between 58<sup>th</sup> Street and 63<sup>rd</sup> Street to address some of the issues brought about by residents in the community. These are the same problem areas that have been identified by the Transportation Committee and brought to the attention of the DOT.

Pictures of cracked sewers along Queens Blvd were submitted by a resident, but Denise Keehan-Smith stated it could not be confirmed the problems were caused by the Queens Blvd Safety Project.

There was a discussion regarding the various issues, and complaints, and suggestions as to what can be done to resolve them.

### **Backup onto the BQE at Queens Blvd. Exit (CB 2 received many complaints)**

Samantha Dolgoff, DOT, reported that DOT will still be following up regarding safety improvements on this project. Some areas of concern include:

- Better signage throughout
- Lane definition markings to let people know that there are actually two moving lanes that go through the intersection of 65<sup>th</sup> Place
- Crossing times; particularly at 58<sup>th</sup> Street
- Maximize Parking spaces in the area
- Relocation of the westbound lights at 60<sup>th</sup> Street
- Improvement of the commercial area between 63<sup>rd</sup> and 64<sup>th</sup> Streets

DOT will provide an update on the outstanding Queens Boulevard issues.

Continued discussion and update regarding the on site visit of Hunters Point and Greenpoint Avenues. A study was completed regarding traffic and the conversion around the gas station at 36<sup>th</sup> Street. Cars use this location at Hunters Point Avenue as a short cut to avoid the traffic light. CB 2 had requested that 36<sup>th</sup> Street be converted to a one-way northbound street rather than southbound, to resolve this issue (CB 2 sent letter on June 15, 2011) DOT stated a study would be conducted (no tracking number or letter provided).

Samantha Dolgoff, DOT, reported that the one way conversion team was attending this meeting, and that they found that it will be feasible to reverse the direction at this point, and convert 36<sup>th</sup> Street northbound at 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue. A signed letter will be forthcoming.

### **DOT Presentation and discussion on LIC/Hunters Point Street Reconstruction Project**

Samantha Dolgoff, DOT, stated that this was a workshop approach, where the individuals broke into small groups, assimilating people's ideas, likes, dislikes, issues, major areas of concern, and how to improve things.

The project entailed a conceptual design area-wide, which included safety, and the identifying of priority areas.

Ms. Dolgoff provided a slide presentation, showing project time line limits:

Project schedules:

- Project kick-off at the end of 2014, beginning of 2015, when the consultants began with DDC. Consultants did an inventory analysis of traffic, mapped out actual streets, and conducted an inventory of trees.
- There was a community workshop on December 9, 2016.
- Information that was gathered at the workshop was assimilated, and ideas on how to improve the major areas of concern were discussed.
- Information will then go to the Public Design Commission for review of the conceptual designs.
- Preliminary design will then be completed in the summer of 2016.

Major goals for the project:

- Improve safety for passengers, motorists and bicyclists.
- Improving connections through the neighborhood with regard to passengers, motorists, and bicyclists getting to and from major destinations, as well as improvements for connections with public transportation.
- Create more livable streets in the neighborhood through greenery and landscaping.
- Traffic calming.

Design approach:

- Shortening crosswalks.
- Shortening the pedestrian crossing distance at intersection.
- Adding more bus shelters.
- Create more open public spaces.

There was a discussion regarding specific areas where traffic operations needed to be looked into and addressed. Some of those areas included South of Borden Avenue, Jackson Avenue and Vernon Avenue.

A request was made to make improvements at Jackson Avenue, and straighten this street out. DOT stated they would very much like to do exactly that, and they were to provide suggestions for accomplishing this. Samantha Dolgoff, DOT stated that this is something that DOT would very much like to do, and they plan to talk with the Transportation Committee and present some of their ideas. She stated that this is something that the consultants have been working on from a traffic engineering perspective.

A DOT representative stated that they do not as yet have the official word on the drainage plan and full funding for the project. It is still in draft form and details are still being worked out.

A DOT representative stated that one important issue this project contact is looking at is how climate change will impact the design and the treatment of the plan, how effective it will be, and the costs involved in implementation. He stated that DOT would explore a range of options.

Ms. Dolgoff, DOT, reported on a community workshop that was designed to highlight major safety issues and community concerns. She stated that the workshop broke into 4 groups, and at the end of the workshop, each of the groups reported on their high priority areas, most important issues to resolve, and most desired goals/outcome for the redesign:

#### High Priority Areas

- Vernon Mall area.
- Pulaski Bridge approach at Vernon Blvd. and 11<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Length of Jackson Avenue generally.

#### Most important issues to resolve:

- Pedestrian safety.
- Traffic calming and speeding control.
- \*Improved lighting.

#### Most desired goals/outcome for the redesign:

- Pedestrian crossings.
- Bicycle activity.
- Inviting streetscapes.

Ms. Dolgoff reported that DOT had met with LIC Partnership, and discussed some of the developments, priority issues, and important area needs.

There was a discussion regarding keeping the balance of focus on all of the needs of the total community, not just one faction.

Denise Keehan- Smith inquired if industrial business concerns and traffic issues were talked about in the workshop.

Ms. Dolgoff reported that mention was made that it was very important to make sure that trucks are still kept in the design, and that space is made available for them to access the industrial area, especially directly north of this area,

Community Board 2 Member, Sheila Lewandowski, stated that she had noticed that at the workshop, DOT didn't have the voice of the businesses, or the industry at the workshop. What DOT had primarily was the voice of pedestrians and bikers. She stated that if that is the primary focus, you could lose a really important essence of the focus, that of the businesses, and it is important not to lose that voice.

A DOT representative stated that DOT was actively looking into the truck routes in the neighborhood to see what makes the most sense. He stated that the Freight Mobility Group had installed 21 high-glass cameras throughout the neighborhood to look at truck traffic, and truck-turning movements, to see where trucks are moving through the neighborhood, where they are making turns, and where they need to make the turns. DOT is still processing that data, and when completed, geometric designs are going to be made to accommodate truck turns throughout the area.

With respect to truck traffic at the Vernon Mall, it is true that the Vernon Mall does get a great deal of truck traffic. It was suggested, however, that the traffic was not the problem with the Vernon Mall, but the area surrounding the mall that needs to be addressed.

Ms. Dolgoff provided a map showing several possible DOT approaches to calm traffic in the Vernon Blvd and 21st Street area:

- Potentially moving the truck route from Vernon Blvd. to 11<sup>th</sup> Street below 44<sup>th</sup> Drive. (This is one idea which is still being analyzed).

There was a discussion regarding this idea.

Sheila Lewandowski stated that she was concerned, and it should be taken into consideration that most of 11<sup>th</sup> Street is strictly residential.

A suggestion was made to make 11<sup>th</sup> Street a second truck route, or an alternative truck route.

Other possible DOT approaches to calming traffic would be:

- 49<sup>th</sup> Avenue is now one way eastbound on to the Pulaski Bridge. DOT is potentially suggesting reversing the direction, and using this as a bicycle route.

- Closing the flip lane on 48<sup>th</sup> between 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Jackson Avenue, making this a bigger space, and connecting the triangle up.
- Taking the existing island out, moving it to one side, and building and fixing the sidewalk, and expanding the sidewalk. In addition, DOT stated that when re-building that extended sidewalk, they could potentially build a curb at that location to narrow the actual crossing distance, so that even though a stop sign cannot be placed at the location, the curb will slow down the turn that people are making off the bridge.

It was noted that what was determined here was identifying some areas that need further studies.

It was suggested that once conceptual designs are completed, DOT will come back to the Transportation Committee to present and discuss the designs, and get feedback on them for the final designs phases.

A synopsis of suggested improvement areas in the LIC/Hunters Point Street Reconstruction Project that have been highlighted:

- Vernon Blvd. from Borden Avenue up to 48<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Street at Borden Avenue.
- Straightening out Jackson Avenue as it continues on to Borden Avenue.
  1. 21<sup>st</sup> Street and Jackson Avenue.
  2. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and Jackson Avenue.
  3. 44<sup>th</sup> Drive and Jackson Avenue (because of all the development that is going on around it).
  4. 43<sup>rd</sup> Drive and Jackson Avenue (this area is outside of the discussed parameter).
- 21<sup>st</sup> Street and 44<sup>th</sup> Drive.
- 44<sup>th</sup> Drive and Vernon Blvd. – (44<sup>th</sup> Drive between Vernon Blvd. and the river).

Chairperson Denise Keehan-Smith suggested that perhaps another follow-up working discussion session with DOT and the Transportation Committee would be beneficial prior to the completed conceptual design meeting.

A suggestion was also made to include the LIC Partnership Group in that meeting.

Ms. Keehan-Smith thanked DOT for their comprehensive presentation, and for sharing their feedback and ideas with the Transportation Committee.

### **Follow up on Safety Improvement Issues**

**Continue discussion on new community complaints received about traffic safety with regard to the bicycle lanes on Greenpoint Avenue by the LIE overpass.**

Ms. Denise Keehan-Smith reported that there have been many complaints received regarding Hunters Point Avenue, and Borden Avenue, and the bicycle lanes that have been added to Greenpoint Avenue by the overpass. She stated that this has been causing quite a bit of congestion in the area.

Additionally, Ms. Keehan-Smith reported that she had met with a business owner who had attended last month's Transportation Committee meeting. They did a walk-through at Greenpoint Avenue and 37<sup>th</sup> to 38<sup>th</sup> Street, as the business owner expressed concern that he and approximately seven or eight other businesses in this two block area, had no room for parking, and no space provided for truck loading and unloading.

Ms. Dolgoff, DOT, stated that DOT would conduct a study to see the feasibility of putting in loading zones to resolve this issue.

**Discussion and vote on speed bumps.**

**Speed hump between Queens Blvd. and 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Southbound).**

This speed hump is located on 61<sup>st</sup> Street between Queens Blvd. and 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Southbound).

**Speed hump between 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Laurel Hill Blvd. (Southbound).**

This speed hump is located on 61<sup>st</sup> Street between 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Laurel Hill Blvd. (Southbound), on the north side of the BQE.

**Speed hump between Queens Blvd. and Laurel Hill Blvd. (Northbound).**

This speed hump is located on 63<sup>rd</sup> Street between Queens Blvd. and Laurel Hill Blvd. (Northbound).

**Speed hump at 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue between 69<sup>th</sup> Street and 73<sup>rd</sup> Street (DOT 233727-F2P9)**

Ms. Dolgoff stated that she would check the exact location of where the speed hump would be placed, and advise CB 2.

**Speed hump on 41<sup>st</sup> Street between 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Queens Blvd. (DOT-260773-Q4G2)**

Ms. Dolgoff stated that she would check the exact location of where the speed hump would be placed, and advise CB 2.

**Speed hump on 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue between 58<sup>th</sup> Street and Woodside Avenue (DOT-213496-G3S6).**

A motion was made to table the votes on the speed bumps until clarification of the exact placement of each bump was verified. The motion was carried.

Ms. Dolgoff stated that DOT would prepare the necessary letters for the votes at each speed bump location listed above, and forward to CB 2.

**Discussion of request of a stop sign at the location at 5<sup>th</sup> Street and 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue. (Original request by CB 2 November 2013) (DOT-284121-B2B5).**

Ms. Dolgoff reported that this study on a stop sign request at the location of 5<sup>th</sup> Street and 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue is still with DOT Signal's Unit. The study should be completed, and a response received by the end of January early February 2016.

**Continue discussion of safety improvements at Greenpoint Avenue and 41<sup>st</sup> Street and 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue. (CB 2 continues to receive complaints at location).**

Ms. Dolgoff reported that the capital project for the above safety improvements at Greenpoint Avenue and 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue was already registered for fiscal year 2017, so it could begin anytime on or after July of 2016.

There was a discussion regarding which safety improvements would be the most effective at the above location, since it is a very long intersection.

Council Member Van Bramer's Office had requested shortened crossing distances at the above intersection. It was a discussion, and the Community Board was not included in that discussion at the time. When it was brought to the Community Board, they stated that they did not want to see this change, but were open to traffic improvements.

Ms. Dolgoff stated that she would look into this further. No decision was agreed upon. Discussions will continue.

**OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS -**  
**Issues and Concerns:**

- There was a building out of safety developments at the Triangle at Greenpoint Avenue and 50<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 39<sup>th</sup> Street. The corners were built out so that there were shorter intersections. The developer has taken up 5 parking spots in doing this. It has become a dangerous situation, because when there is traffic, due to the change in traffic patterns, when trucks come in, they cannot make a turn without going into the oncoming traffic, and when trucks are going out, traffic is impeded because there is high density traffic on Greenpoint Avenue.

There was a discussion as to how to resolve this issue. Photos will be provided in the designated area for DOT to view.

- Denise Keehan-Smith reported that a request was made by a CB 2 Board Member to provide designated parking for teachers in the area of P.S. 11, as it is most difficult to find parking there.
- Continuation of discussion on traffic control at the intersection when vehicles at Borden Avenue are turning left on to Jackson Avenue. When the arrow indicates to turn left on to Jackson Avenue from Borden Avenue, people are also getting a signal to go left from Vernon Blvd..
- Continuation of discussion regarding a request for a stop sign at 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue and 5<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Request for a bike lane at 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue and 5<sup>th</sup> Street.

- Request for a study to be conducted regarding parking and a continuation of a bike lane at 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue between Center Blvd. and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.
- Request for a stop sign at 50<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Center Blvd.
- Request to eliminate the No Parking signs on 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue, south side of the street, between Vernon Blvd. and 11<sup>th</sup> Street.

Denise Keehan-Smith thanked everyone for attending the Transportation Committee Meeting. She stated that the next Transportation Committee Meeting was scheduled to be held on February 2, 2016.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Joan Bergman/Debra Markell Kleinert

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