



## COMMUNITY BOARD # 4Q

Serving: Corona, Corona Heights, Elmhurst, and Newtown

46-11 104<sup>th</sup> Street

Corona, New York 11368-2882

Telephone: 718-760-3141 Fax: 718-760-5971

e-mail: qn04@cb.nyc.gov

**Helen Marshall**  
Borough President

**Louis Walker**  
Chairperson

**Barry Grodenchik**  
Director of Community Boards

**Christian Cassagnol**  
District Manager

---

### PUBLIC HEARING

**DATE: TUESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2013**

**TIME: 6:30 P.M.**

**PLACE: VFW Post #150  
51-11 108 STREET  
CORONA, NY**

### **SUBJECT MATTER**

1. SCA – P.S. 315 – Request for temporary street closure of 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue between 97<sup>th</sup> Place and Junction Blvd. Also request that 97<sup>th</sup> Place, which is currently a two-way street be converted to a one-way moving north temporarily for the construction of P.S. 315. This will last for three years.
2. Elmhurst Slow Zone – Program that reduces speed limit from 30 MPH to 20 MPH. Area in Elmhurst bounded by Roosevelt Avenue, Junction Blvd., Corona Avenue, Broadway and Baxter Avenue.
3. Charter School Extension of Parking – Request to change parking regulations for the areas on Junction Blvd. and 56<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Extend current No Parking 7 A.M. to 4 P.M. on school days to 7 A.M. to 6 P.m. on school days.

Chairperson Louis Walker opened the meeting at 6:45 p.m. The first agenda item for the Public Hearing was read into the record by the Board Chair.

District Manager Christian Cassagnol took the attendance. A quorum was present.

#### 1. SCA PS 315

Ms. Monica Gutierrez, Queens Community Relations Manager, SCA, introduced her team members Dean Johanson, Senior Project Officer, Gordon Tung, Borough Chief and Peter Chiodo, Contractor.

Copies were distributed of the new school design. Ms. Gutierrez explained the site was formerly a chicken slaughter house and the upcoming school will enhance the community. P.S. 315 were designed by architects

who designed buildings in Paris; and before it became the chicken slaughter house, it was the Tiffany factory. To preserve the community's heritage, contents of the Tiffany factory were added in the new school design. Approval is being sought for the SCA's two requests presented tonight. Ms. Gutierrez turned the floor over to Mr. Peter Chiodo to provide more information. Mr. Chiodo explained the SCA is requesting a temporary closure of 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue Between 97<sup>th</sup> Place and 270 ft. down towards Junction Blvd., which is the length of the property.

Ms. Gutierrez said on page 2 of the hand-out, on the left side, the area is marked in red, which is the beginning of the property to the end of the property on the same street and across from the railroad, which would not affect anyone.

Mr. Chiodo explained the reason the street needs to be closed is that it is a 12 ft. wide road, which is very narrow. There is a 5 ft. wide sidewalk also very narrow. The existing building must be demolished and the school will be built in its place. The side of the school along 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue is the high rise portion, which is about 75 ft. tall. For the safety of the public, the road needs to be closed. Equipment will be stationed on this road as well as delivery and concrete trucks will be on site, much demolition will occur, as well as debris produced at the site. A crane will be placed on 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue, noting the SCA did not want 43<sup>rd</sup> Avenue affected, which is constantly in use by the Fire and Police Departments. Requested closure for this portion of the road will be approximately 2 ½ years.

Subsequently, Ms. Gutierrez provided details on the second request for 97<sup>th</sup> Place, which is currently a two-way street to be converted to a one way street temporarily for construction purposes. Mr. Johanson explained this is needed to direct traffic away from the site and would be turned into a dead end for a short period of time.

Mr. Pennachio asked what the timeframe for the construction is. Mr. Johanson explained construction had already begun--the construction fence was up. The completion date for the project is May, 2015.

Board Member Lucy Schilero asked if this proposal was discussed with the Fire Department and the 110 Police Precinct and if outreach was done to the neighbors surrounding the project. Mr. Johanson explained notification letters were sent to all the neighbors. Additionally, he had spoken to a representative at U. S IT Properties and the occupants of the two homes on 97<sup>th</sup> Place.

Next, Board Member Lucy Schilero brought up the fact because of the vast number of construction projects, water pressure is an issue, especially since this is a huge project. Will this affect the people living in the community?

Mr. Tung responded the water connection will be reviewed and approved by DEP prior to the construction, Hydrant tests will be conducted for water pressure changes. However if a water pressure drop should occur, Ms. Gutierrez can be contacted..

Lastly, Board Member Schilero asked about land marking by the Queens Historical Society since the SCA is taking contents from Tiffany's. Is it part of the process by the SCA to preserve local history from that area, she inquired.

Mr. Dean Johanson answered the SCA had incorporated aspects in the school design that reflected Tiffany's, for example, the window guards located around the perimeter of the building. There are 1x2 windows that have those window guards, which mimic Tiffany's. Additionally in the lobby, there are designs that mimic Tiffany's.

Board Member Schilero thanked the SCA for preserving history.

Next, Board Member Judy D'Andrea said for the record, she totally disapproved of this project. It was an absolute disaster for a school to be built at this location. The design is beautiful but, in reality, it does not reflect what the community is on either side of it. Next to the proposed school is an extremely busy fire station. There are residential houses on both sides and across the street. Although the design is impressive, it does not reflect the surrounding neighborhood. She emphasized the design should reflect the character of the neighborhood and noted the rear is adjacent to the Long Island Railroad.

At this point, Board Member Tony Moreno stated this is an exercise in futility as the school construction was voted down by the Board. He agreed with Mrs. D'Andrea. The Board has no power and the City of New York does what it wants.

Furthermore, Board Member D'Andrea stated if the Board voted not to approve the street closing, it would be closed anyway. Similarly, if the Board voted not to convert 97<sup>th</sup> Place to a one way, it would be done anyway.

At this point, Mr. Andrew Rich, represents Wal-Rich Company, which is located between National Street and 97<sup>th</sup> Place on 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue. His concern was if the street is closed, how would his company ship and receive freight on 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The business property spans between 43 and 44 Avenues. The site is also an SCA site for the future. Immediate concerns are the company's need to access Junction Blvd. Right now the way the construction shed is set up, Wal-Rich cannot get the swing from trailers to make the right turn northbound on 97<sup>th</sup> Place. Is there a solution?

He also spoke about a food distributor on 43 Avenue that created an issue with trucks parking there. Some of Wal-Rich's inbound and outbound freight had been affected.

Discussion ensued about the swing of the trailer making a right off of 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue onto 97 Place. Mr. Johanson asked is it because cars are parked there or there is not supposed to be parking on the east side of that street? If minor adjustments are needed, the SCA is happy to do so, said Mr. Johanson.

Although the construction process is two years, said Mr. Johanson, it is understandable businesses in the area need to continue to function; the goal of the SCA is to work with those businesses.

Next, Board Member Al Perna asked how the Fire and Police Departments will be affected by the trucks, the crane operation, and all the activity which will occur during the day, from 7:00 a.m. to 5 p.m., by the street closure and converting 97<sup>th</sup> Place to a one-way.

Mr. Johanson responded to close 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue is to prevent traffic from going through that section when the building is closed. As far as affecting the Police and Fire Departments, they are primarily located on 43<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.

Mr. Perna commented Police and Fire Depts. do utilize the area when the street will be closed, and trucks will be lined up to get in. Lining up on streets in one area, which is a one way going to where concrete will be poured or delivering material, traffic will be detoured during the day. Were those changes taken into consideration, he asked.

Definitely traffic will be increased in the area said Mr. Johanson. The contractor is responsible for flagging trucks etc. into the site. The situation will be monitored and the SCA is obligated to follow the rules and regulations of the Department of Transportation. If congestion does become an issue, the SCA will monitor it, along with the NYPD traffic.

Mr. Perna asked if the SCA had spoken to the Police and Fire Departments.

Mr. Johanson said he visited the Fire Department a few months ago and registered notification letters were sent to the Ambulance Corp., the Fire and Police Departments.

Mr. Perna also pointed out people in the neighborhood need emergency services to come to them, and if there is obstruction due to construction issue, it is a major problem. He suggested a meeting should be set up to devise an alternate way to get through the street if it is blocked.

Mr. Chiodo said the proposal is to contain the construction within the site. By having a slightly larger site to place a crane, a place to back trucks in, and a place to lug steel, would move trucks from the street into the construction site.

Mr. Perna said it creates a box for waiting. There is a waiting time; sometimes four trucks are needed and cannot wait at the location so they have to wait on another block.

Mr. Chiodo said SCA is very tough on concrete. A truck that sits too long is rejected.

More discussion ensued about trucks sitting too long idling.

At this point, Chairperson Walker introduced Police Officer David Saponieri, from the 110 Police Precinct, who reported D.I. Leyson could not attend tonight's Board meeting due to a previous commitment. A new captain is on staff at the Precinct, Ralph Forgione.

Police Officer Saponieri extended an invitation to the SCA for more information or to meet at the job site to talk about the street closure. No one was contacted at the Precinct about this proposal he reported.

Discussion ensued about issue of trucks and noise and how these issues were addressed.

Board Member George Onuorah inquired how existing bus lines would be handled during the construction phase.

The reply was bus lines may not be affected.

District Manager Cassagnol inquired is the three year construction date indicative of the street closure or not.

Mr. Johnson responded the project must be finished by contract and handed over in May, 2015.

Mr. Tung added the three year period is the construction period. The construction period started without the street closure.

Next, Board Member Tony Moreno talked about P. S. 102 being constructed. Although there were problems, those problems were rectified the next day by all involved in the process. He expressed optimism the same would occur again.

Next, Board Member Lucy Schilero is it possible for someone to stay at night for issues at night. In this way the Fire and Police Departments can be contacted.

Mr. Johanson responded security is on site around the clock. Ms. Schilero brought up the issue of language barriers and contacting DOT individuals overnight. Mr. Tung responded security is there and phone numbers are posted for assistance. The agency will call Mr. Tung personally if needed.

Next, Mr. Nick Pennachio asked about the school buses—where will they be arriving and parking? Mr. Johanson responded the main entrance to the property is on 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 97<sup>th</sup> Place. The school administration will have the option of dropping children off at 9<sup>th</sup> Place, 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue, or a combination of both.

Next, Board Member Judy D’Andrea suggested a drive up be built to the school so that the buses are not parked on the street, there is no danger of children running into the street, it is safer, and the buses will not block traffic, which is a concern for the Fire Department if an emergency should occur.

Mr. Johanson responded one problem in the city is real estate. It is so limited. To get a good sized block of land together, is far and few between. This is a great piece of real estate, but there is no room to build a bus pull in lane. More details were provided. The elevations selected were at 97<sup>th</sup> Place and 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the quieter streets were chosen to pull in the buses. SCA did not want to pull buses into 43 Avenue.

Board Member D’Andrea continued buses are always an issue. They are big and noisy and diesel. They sit and idle constantly.

Board Member Nick Pennachio agreed the school buses are a huge problem, especially in this congested area.

At this point, Chairperson Louis Walker asked if there were any other questions from the Board members or Public. Since there were none, the Chair preceded to the next agenda item:

## 2. Elmhurst Slow Zone

Mr. Robert Viola, NYC Department of Transportation, talked about the Neighborhood Slow Zone proposed for Elmhurst. He has worked for a number of years on the programs dealing with pedestrian safety and traffic calming throughout the city.

With the aid of a power point presentation, he explained the proposal was requested by the community. Basically, the speed limit would be lowered from 30 mph to 20 mph in a small portion of the neighborhood, approximately 5 blocks by 5 blocks or a quarter of a square mile. The zone will be announced with signage and gateway treatments. When entering the zone, it will be self-enforcing with speed humps. It is not a speed trap. When you are in the zone you are supposed to bring your speeds down and you will get the physical reminder to do so. Markings are also throughout the zone. It is 20 mph. The main reason for the slow zone is safety and to avoid crashes for injuries. The inspiration for this came from people in other locations. There is a very big program in London, which has been in effect for 20 years. Reductions in crashes have resulted, almost 50% in fatal and severe injury crashes.

Collision migration was not seen, which means crashes taken away in one area did not increase in other areas. Details about similar programs adopted in other countries were explained.

Aside from safety benefits, quality of life is improved. For example, if you reduce traffic speed you can reduce traffic noise. If vehicles can only travel 20 mph, it can reduce cut through traffic. Hopefully, the motorist will travel the main roads. Also, it results in slower and less busy streets, making streets more social.

Next, he spoke about the Slow zone Components: Gateways

Roadway is narrowed by sign base, signs and markings to bring down vehicle speeds

Drivers are clearly alerted that they are entering a traffic calmed zone

1-2 Parking spaces removed at each gateway (“day lighting”)

Next, Mr. Viola discussed speed bumps which keep vehicle speeds around 20 mph, 15 mph near schools

30% reduction in mid-block crashes

20% reduction in speeds

Speeds bumps distributed evenly throughout the slow zone

Key element in making the Slow Zone “Self-enforcing”

The standard speed bump criteria must be followed when choosing streets for installation.

Next, he spoke about speed humps vs. speed bumps

The speed bump is not used in New York City. It is a high, narrow bump that you hit a parking lot. You cannot drive over it more than 5 mph. The speed hump is a gradual rise designed to be taken at 15-20mph and is 3 to 4 inches in height. It is must less noisy and better for the vehicles.

Lastly, he spoke about the 20 mph markings. Those markings will be installed on streets in between or infeasible for speed bumps. They will be excluded on streets leaving the Slow Zone or very short blocks.

The Slow Zone Application period was early 2012 and was open for a few months. The application was submitted by P. S. 89. Proposed implementation is February 2013 speed hump installation, and signs and markings installed in June 2013. DOT is installing 30 slow zones citywide in 2012-2013. This is one of the four zones being installed in Queens. One Slow Zone had been installed in Corona, which is almost adjacent to this proposal.

In terms of why the Elmhurst area was selected, it was determined it is an ideal size, good boundaries (wide busy streets), average injuries per year 44.6, 2 schools, and 5 pre-K/Head Start/Daycare Centers.

Neighborhood photographs were shown for Gateway locations and a map of the Slow Zone was also displayed.

Boundaries of the area include Roosevelt Avenue (north), Junction Boulevard (east), 44<sup>th</sup> and 43<sup>rd</sup> Avenues, Broadway and Baxter Avenue-- 23 proposed speed bumps and 22 proposed gateways are planned.

Pointing to the map, he explained the “yellow” markings are the proposed speed bumps and those in “grey” are the existing ones.

Before concluding his presentation, Mr. Viola stated the original application needed to be adjusted since it was submitted, specifically, the boundaries.

At this point, questions were taken from the Board. Board Member Lucy Schilero asked if outreach was done including the Fire Department and 110 Police Precinct. When the projects are done, outreach is done to the Police and Fire Departments, said Mr. Viola, to ensure it is not interfering with any emergency service work, He believed outreach had already been done. Ms.Hiliary Gietz added some of the elected officials were involved in the application process.

Board Member Lucy Schilero inquired have responses been received from Elmhurst Hospital as well as the 110 Police Precinct. Mr. Viola stated as yet a response had not been received from Elmhurst Hospital. Usually, outreach is done with the Fire Department and they coordinate with all emergency services.

Similarly, she asked if confirmation via letter was received from the 110 Precinct. Mr. Viola responded it is in the process.

Board Member Judy D’Andrea stated emergency vehicles would not have to comply with the 20 mph restriction. Mr. Viola was in agreement.

Board Member Joseph DiMartino stated bus routes would not have speed bumps. Again, Mr. Viola was in agreement and continued truck routes are not allowed in any of the zones. Sometimes truck routes are out of the boundaries and bus routes do go through the zones, but on those designated streets no bumps.

Chairperson Louis Walker asked how many parking spaces will be lost as a result of the project. Mr. Viola answered he did not have an exact time to present, but based on one way streets it tends to be about one and a half, averaging it out, per Gateways.

Since there are more two-way streets in the zone, fewer spaces are lost because it is harder to put the signs out on the streets because they are too narrow. An estimate is 15 spaces lost over 1/3 of a square mile area, said Mr. Viola.

Chairperson Walker responded he thought the number was closer to 30 parking spaces lost.

Chairperson Louis Walker asked if the Police Department would be expected to enforce the 20 mph speed limit in the Slow Zone.

Mr. Viola answered it is not set up for the Police Department to come in and patrol the area. This is one of the reasons the concept is self-enforcing via speed bumps, markings and signage.

Regarding the number of parking spaces lost, Mr. Viola said he would provide the exact number to the Community Board.

#### Charter School Extension of Parking

Mr. Jesse Tang, Principal of Central Queens Academy Charter School, and Ms. Melissa Cole, Operations Manager, addressed the Board. Last time both speakers addressed the Board was in September, 2011 when preparations were being made for the school to open. The school opened this fall enrolling 110 fifth graders, serving Elmhurst and the surrounding neighborhood. The mission is to serve immigrant families and English language learners. A Board resolution is requested to extend evening parking hours from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in a No Parking zone in front of the school.

The Queens Academy Charter School is located at 55-30 Junction Boulevard.

The floor was turned over to Ms. Melissa Cole, who reported the school is looking to extend the parking regulations. Currently, there is a No Standing regulation from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The school is requesting to extend the regulation to 6:00 p.m. Primarily, peak hours of dismissal are between 4:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Regular school dismissal is at 4:00 p.m. and the after school program dismisses at 5:30 p.m. Since there is a lot of traffic with double parking and safety hazards crossing a busy street, an accident was cited where a child was struck by a car. Support letters from residents and selected officials in favor of the request were produced.

Board Member Priscilla Carrow asked if two spots were involved and where the parking spots were located. Yes, Ms. Cole answered two spots on Junction Blvd. The school is located on 56<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Junction Blvd. The school is looking to extend those corner two spots.

Board Member Tony Moreno asked about the school's hours of operation. Ms. Cole replied the school opens at 7:30 a.m. and ends at 4:00 p.m. The after school programs ends at 5:30 p.m.

Board Member Moreno asked if one spot is located on 56<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the other on Junction Blvd. Ms. Cole responded no. The two spots are on Junction Blvd., nothing on 56<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Board Member Tony Moreno asked what's on 56<sup>th</sup> Avenue now. Are there parking meters? Board Member Priscilla Carrow said no, but P. S. 13 is down the block.

Chairperson Walker added there are three spaces currently on 56<sup>th</sup> Avenue that have No Standing from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., which is not part of this request and will stay the way it is. The spaces in question are located on Junction Blvd.

At this point, Chairperson Walker called for any other questions or public comments.

Board Member A. Redd Sevilla commended the Charter School for adding school seats in Elmhurst. The school is very impressive and recommended to provide support.

At 7:45 p.m., Chairperson Walker closed the Public Hearing since there were no other speakers and/or comments.

Chairperson Walker called for a ten minute recess before proceeding to the regular Board meeting.