

Community Board 1 Queens Full Board / Public Hearing Meeting Transcript

Tuesday May 19, 2026

Present:

Ingrid Baquero
Kian Betancourt
Christina Chaise
Alma Cruz
Jean Marie D'Alleva
Eleni Desiervo
Julie Drexler Johnson
Stacey Eliuk
Katie Ellman
Elizabeth Erion
Robert Feltault
Adam Fisher-Cox
Frank Fredericks
Tyrone Gardner
Shahenaz Hamde
Evie Hantzopoulos
Amy Hau

Jacqueline Ibarra
Richard Khuzami
Huge Ma
Athanasios Magoutas
Gabriella Malave
Brian Martinez
Amin Mehedi
Andreas Migias
Dino Panagoulis
Phyllis Parra
Juliet Payabyab
Thomas Ryan
Plinia Sarchese
Marie Torniali
Ryan Van Manen
Selena Witcher
Corinne Wood-Haynes
Hassan Yousuf

Pablo Zuniga

Excused

Antonio Alfonso
Daniel Aliberti
Michelle Amor
Dean Feratovic
Christopher Hanway
Patricia Mahecha
Stella Nicolaou
RoseMarie Poveromo
Dominic Stiller
Mario Vergara
Quinella Williams

Absent

Cristian Batres
Gerald Caliendo
Kathleen Warnock

Board Staff:

Florence Koulouris, District Manager

Elected Official / Representatives:

Council Member Tiffany Caban - Erika Neal
Council Member Julie Won – Farah Salam
State Senator Kristen Gonzalez – Isamar Brito
Assembly Member Steven Raga – Kazi Maryam
Assembly Member Diana Moreno – Justin Martinez

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: Meeting called to order at 6:30pm. The Chairwoman presented the agenda.

Item # 1: Presentation - Department of Transportation, Jason Banrey, Carl Sunstrom, Paul Ruberia, Claire Brenan - YouTube marker 0:05:17

Department of Transportation street improvement project 31st Avenue Safety Improvement Project Phase 2 Complete Street Redesign. Information was shared with sister agencies. Sign off by the agency with a timeline is included in the presentation. The goal of the project is to make streets safer which includes micromobility. Improvements were made based on feedback on Phase 1.

Question & Answers - YouTube marker 0:39:38

Amin Mehedi - Requested 31st at Crescent Street be made 2 way.

Jason Banrey - Would like to take this conversation into the Community Board realm with the Transportation Chair to discuss further.

Frank Fredericks - Double checking that if bike lanes replace parking, FDNY can better access buildings.

Jason Banrey - Correct. FDNY approved the project as presented.

Shahenaz Hamde - Requested an education program on bike safety as part of the project to ensure safety.

Jason Banrey - Works with NYPD and Public Safety unit in advance of a project to share education ahead of enforcement.

Richard Khuzami - Asked about signage, school safety zones and micromobility.

Carl Sunstrom - Traffic direction changes need extremely visible signs. Will start early with temporary signs to ensure that people are aware of the changes. Working closely with the schools to ensure they understand the new bus routes and will provide pick-up and drop off zones as requested.

Robert Feltault - Proud to be a part of the changes. Requested expanded hours for loading zones.

Jason Banrey - We will be sharing information on the hours of loading zones ahead of implementation. We have a curb management unit at DOT to make sure it works.

Adam Fisher-Cox - Stated that he was pleased with how the project is progressing. Asked about epoxy gravel over the painted islands to reinforce that certain areas are shared spaces.

Carl Sunstrom & Claire Brenan - They are considering replacing painted islands with more substantial markers. They are considering epoxy gravel.

Huge Ma - Asked how DOT determined the final design and wondered if the use of concrete would make the use of the space more confusing for bike riders.

Carl Sunstrom - Best practices for round-a-bouts were used to determine the design even though it isn't a round-a-bout. DOT believes that the use of concrete will be a safe and comfortable experience. Maintaining access for trucks was important in the final design.

Dino Panagoulis - Agrees that the concrete makes for a confusing design for bike riders.

Carl Sunstrom - We had in depth debates about the design. It came down to the fact that you must cross the street twice and only have to enter once plus it provided extra green space.

Ryan Van Manen - Stated that area of 31st Street is prone to flooding. Asked if they worked with the DEP on that issue.

Jason Banrey - The plan is currently in markings, but if DOT was to take it into the Capital project it would request funding to mitigate the issue. Encouraged people to take a look at the roundabout in Lindenwood just north of old Howard Beach.

Kian Betancourt - Asked about securing the street furniture on 31st Street and 31st Avenue so it could not be moved. Also wondered if a bench would be installed in the green space at the roundabout.

Jason Banrey - DOT will be instituting secure street furniture this summer at the request of the businesses. A bench could be installed in the green space in future.

Athanasios Magoutas - Applauded the design; Suggested green dashes along the section where crossovers occur.

Jason Banrey - DOT will put that in for consideration.

Eleni Desiervo - Suggested public art in the green space as part of the maintenance plan.

Carl Sunstrom - Take that into consideration.

Hassan Yousuf - Asked how 35th Street, especially around 43rd Street, will be able to handle traffic after the plan as it did in the past. Also asked how the businesses have been reacting to phase 1.

Jason Banrey - 31st Street was never finished, which is why there have been issues. The second phase will correct the problems from the incomplete first phase. 57% of businesses provided

completed surveys and stated they were concerned about deliveries and cyclist safety. The feedback will result in loading zones and pedestrian safety initiatives.

Stacey Eliuk - Asked if cyclists could take up the full lane to avoid collision.

Carl Sunstrom - The sign plan will state "cyclists use full lanes."

Phyllis Parra - Asked about changes made on 35th Street and 31st Avenue.

Claire Brenan - We extended the neighborhood loading zone on the northwest corner; we added a neighborhood loading zone on the southeast corner; changed the way that the furniture and the blocks are in the intersection; we are coming back with signal timing. We are utilizing feedback from businesses to keep improving the plan.

Katie Ellman - Asked if they received positive pedestrian feedback regarding safety following Phase 1 implementation.

Jason Banrey - Phase 1 implementation provided promising statistics. Will continue working with 114th Precinct on education and enforcement to keep the statistics positive.

Christina Chaise - Asked if cyclists who break the rules will receive increased penalties. Requested trees and benches for people who are mobility impaired. Also requested free helmets as part of the safety program.

Jason Banrey - Working with elected officials on free helmets; DOT will work with enforcement partners to provide education and enforcement; trees and benches are part of the plan.

Andreas Migias - Requested that the raw data and statistics be sent to the committee.

Jason Banrey - The statistics will be on the website. Snow removal, street sweeping etc. will be done by our sister agencies. They are aware of the project and have planned for what needs to happen.

Public Comments - YouTube marker 1:27:48

Alex Duncan - Stated that he and his wife loved the project. Phase 1 is great looking forward to Phase 2. The answer to 35th Street congestion is to stop driving on 31st Avenue. Take a different route. Share the space.

Unknown speaker - Does not feel safe crossing the street. Requested speed bumps and police officers to arrest speeders.

Corey Hannigan - Five people killed on this corridor in the last 5 years. Feels safer with Phase 1 as a cyclist. The only problem is that it ends at Steinway Street.

Emma O'Teague - Concerned parents of Astoria appreciate the plan so that children can cross safely.

Joe Vella - Supports the project and requests more consultation with people outside the area.

Ashley Miller - Supports the project. Phase 1 made the area safer.

Christine Devnikos - Is not a confident cyclist. Applauds the plan to make the intersection safer.

Alice Tha - Feels safer since Phase 1 was implemented. Encourages more enforcement.

Neil Herdan - The bike lane is confusing, it needs to be one way. It is impossible for drivers to move in and out of their apartment without fines. Requested the sources for the statistics that DOT used in developing the plan.

Rosamund Gianoutsos - Appreciates the treatment and requests that it be expanded to her neighborhood.

Josh Brewer - Loves the plan. Is spending more time and money on 31st Avenue than he has in the past.

Richie Foreman - Supports the plan. Looks forward to the Phase 2 implementation.

Robert Reichenbach - Supports the round-a-bouts to improve pedestrian safety. Need more education - bike helmets, drivers and pedestrians stay off your phone and look where you are going.

Alwai Amendel - Requests DOT look at the bus lane on Steinway Street and also Astoria Boulevard. Needs parking enforcement. Homeless taking over the streets.

Chris D'imino - Against the proposal to bubble the tennis courts. It has been tried twice before and it failed because the community does not want it. 1,400 signatures of people who are against it and will raise money to resurface the courts.

Kevin Conan - Against the 31st Street bike lane because a tower ladder can not get up to the top floors. Judge Bugs said you can't put the bike lanes in but the City did it anyway.

Melissa Skalarz - Penn Station access is a great idea but will increase train traffic. Seeking abatement for train noise.

Liz H - Against the bubble over the tennis courts.

Mary Oliveri - Asked for an update on the Q 104 line.

Neil Herdan - Opposes the renewal of the Irish Whiskey Bar because it is in dangerous disrepair.
Deeanne Gorman - Wants to preserve the site of the Dutch Reform Church on 12th Street which was destroyed in the fire.
Felipe Garcia - Quality of life complaints are not being taken seriously by city agencies. Will work with the Community Board to advocate for funding for mental health programs and community assets.
Luigi Toppi - Is against the bubble at the tennis court because it will reduce greenery and negatively impact the environment.
Jeana Fucelo - Against the bubble at the tennis court.
Ahmed Tomal - Is against transferring traffic enforcement agents from NYPD to DOT.
Gloria Maloney - Is against the 31st Street bike lanes because of fire safety issues.

Business Section

Motion to approve the March 2026 minutes - YouTube marker 2:11:15

Motion - Andreas Migias Second - Frank Fredericks

Motion approved unanimously.

Chair's Report - YouTube marker 2:11:50

Evie Hantzopoulos - Apologized to new members for not providing committee assignments yet. Will be holding discussions with committee chairs and get those appointments.

District Manager Report - YouTube marker 2:23:01

Florence Koulouris - 311 reports have been included in your folders. Working with the Department of Homeless Services to facilitate individuals who require services in shelter. The iconic Neptune diner has been officially demolished; the Staples store on 31st Street will close July of 2026. Our office is following up with the Parks Department on the little library. The soccer fields and restrooms in Astoria Park will be open 24 hours during the World Cup.

Business and Economic Development, Brian Martinez - Next meeting June 17, 2026 featuring discussion on women in non-traditional roles. Astoria Pride will be held on June 20, 2026 at Socrates Park.

Capital & Expense Budget, Amy Hau - Mayor's preliminary budget is out. No numbers yet. Chair's please take notes for expense items we might discuss over the summer or in early September. Want to try to match the participatory budget for school upgrades.

Communications & Public Outreach, Quinella Williams - No Report

Consumer Affairs, Chair Evie Hantzopoulos - The committee has no objection to the approval of liquor licenses for anyone on the list. We require the Irish Whiskey Bar to install an outdoor camera in order to be approved.

Motion to approve Liquor License Applicants - YouTube marker 2:20:00

Motion - Marie Torniali Second - Dino Panagoulas

Discussion

Jacqueline Ibarra - Questioned whether applicant Vegan Urban Roots was still open.

Answer - Yes, they are just changing their menu from vegan to vegetarian.

Questioned called - Motion carries

Marie Torniali - The committee heard from 3 applicants for cannabis informing us of location and two applicants for outdoor dining, Mason de Monti and The Coffee Lab. The committee has no issues with any of the applicants.

Motion to Approve - Athanasios Magoutas second Phyllis Parra YouTube marker 2:22:10

Discussion

Jacqueline Ibarra - The Bronze Frog Dispensary and Woodside Cannabis Dispensary are in close proximity to elementary schools and should not be approved.

Marie Torniali - These licenses are approved. They are only informing the board regarding the location.

Jacqueline Ibarra - Opposes the marijuana industry because it has not delivered the promised good to the community.

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos - The board can send a letter stating your concerns regarding cannabis. It can also state that we believe the location is too close to schools. We are reviewing the locations and can state whether we agree or disagree with the location.

Corinne Wood-Haynes - Is this an item that we must vote on?

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos - There is a motion on the floor to state there are no concerns with the location and to approve outdoor dining applications. That motion needs to be voted on.

Kian Betancourt - Stated that he would be uncomfortable recommending against something that is within the legal guidelines for approval.

Motion withdrawn - Athanasios Magoutas

Motion to approve Outdoor Dining Applicants - YouTube marker 2:36:00

Motion - Marie Torniali Second - Frank Fredericks

No Discussion.

Marie Torniali - Asked the District Manager what the process is for the cannabis locations.

Florence Koulouris - The board has 60 Days to review the location. The board does not have to vote on the location, it chooses to vote on locations. It is up to the State Cannabis board to apply the guidelines regarding the locations.

Motion to approve all 3 cannabis locations - YouTube marker 2:39:21

Kian Betancourt second Frank Fredericks

No Discussion

Motion carries. 28 For 8 Against 0 Abstentions

Education, Libraries & Youth - No report.

Environmental/ Sanitation - No report

Health and Human Services, Shahenaz Hamde - Lengthy meeting about a family being sent to a men's shelter and about health care. The meeting is on YouTube if anyone is interested in watching it. We can discuss cannabis at the September meeting.

Housing - No report

Land Use & Zoning - The next meeting is June 3, 2026.

Legal, Legislative & Parliamentary - No Report

Office Budget and Staff, Chair Evie Hantzopoulos - There will be a meeting on June 2, 2026. The City has changed the personnel policy as it relates to personnel pay raises and time changes from being an action that the Chair signs off on to something the entire board signs off on. Because we have employees we wish to increase time and salary, we are introducing a motion to be voted on tonight.

Motion to make the following personnel changes: Community Assistant elevates to Community Associate, employee goes from part time to full time; small salary increases for the three staffers. YouTube marker 2:50:02

Frank Fredericks second Amy Hau

Discussion

Corinne Wood-Haynes - Asked for an explanation about why the board was rushing into a resolution rather than waiting for a response from OMB.

Dino Panagoulis - Is confused about providing a raise without a budget to support it.

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos - Spoke with OMB and they stated that it needs to be specified in the by-laws who can provide the raises.

Shahenaz Hamde - Inquired whether the by-laws addressed how the title changes and pay raises are handled currently.

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos - The by-laws are not specific enough.

Frank Fredericks - This sounds like it is procedural in order to provide pay raises before the budget runs out.

Phyllis Parra - Questioned whether the resolution was following procedure and inquired how the employees knew about the raise and promotion.

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos - The District Manager and Chair have had conversations with the staff about the raise.

Florence Koulouris - Explained exactly how the conversations with staff regarding title and salary occurred. The hiring and titles have been done according to the by-laws in the past so an inquiry was made as to whether the title changes and raises could proceed using the authority in the by-laws but the inquiry was not answered before this meeting.

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos - The resolution is to ensure that the process for the salary and title changes is acceptable to OMB.

Adam Fisher-Cox - Explained that the salary and title changes could be done by by-laws or by resolution and both would be legitimate. The resolution is a legitimate avenue to enable the Chair to approve the pay raises and title changes.

Eleni Desiervo- Call the question. **YouTube marker 3:06:25**

Motion carries - 31 For 5 Against

Parks/Recreation/Cultural Chair Richard Khuzami - The discussion about the tennis bubble was the same as what was brought up in the petition. Next meeting June 1, 2026.

Public Safety, Frank Fredericks - Committee discussed the budget items. Next meeting in June.

Transportation, Athanasios Magoutas - **Motion to send out letter of support for Phase 2 redesign - YouTube marker 3:12:41 Second Ryan Van Manen**

Discussion

Andreas Migias - Friendly amendment to the letter to include community concerns regarding 35th Street and Crescent Street. Seconded **Hassan Yousef**

Motion carries

Old Business/New Business

Shahenaz Hamde - Inquired whether the District Manager heard back regarding Queensbridge Station.

Florence Koulouris - No response yet.

Richard Khuzami - OANA meeting May 27, 2026 - what to do in the summer.

Phyllis Parra - Asked that the Board send a letter regarding MIH on the new building on 34th and Steinway Street.

Elected Official Representatives

Erika Neal, Council Member Tiffany Caban's office. Overrode Mayor Adams veto of the safer sanctuary act. Reintroduced the delivery protection act, a bill that regulates the last mile delivery facilities for delivery companies like Amazon. Passed the receipts act 2.0 a bill that builds upon the current accountability measures for HR through the original receipts act of 2025. Free clinics include: legal housing consultations, veteran's clinic. Call 718-274-4500. Events include May 23rd Spring Festival.

Farah Salam Council Member Julie Won's Office - June 17th One LIC task force meeting - CUNY School of Law from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. 9,883 total votes in participatory budgeting cycle. Top three projects: tech upgrades for high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools. Please attend executive budget hearings to advocate for items. Please come out on June 3rd to advocate for the \$109 million for Queensbridge Park upgrades and new spaces.

Isamar Brito, State Senator Kristen Gonzalez Office - Hosted a small business know your rights canvas in Astoria to share resources and information with small business owners and workers about what to do if ICE comes to the business and how to find assistance with immigration questions. Senator just wrapped up her third annual AI week that included four days of programming featuring various sponsors and co-sponsors of priority AI legislation, Maria Rain, the mother of late Adam Rain,

and advocates from organizations like Common Sense Media, the National Association of Social Workers, and Food and Water Watch. Mobile office hours - May 20th from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Kazi Maryam, Assembly Member Steven Raga's office - June 3rd celebrate Polish Heritage Day up in Albany. June 13 holding an R&B concert at Big Bush Park from 7 PM to 8:30 p.m. We will host a fellowship aimed at introducing students on how government works at the local level, how laws are created, and how public officials serve their communities. The program will run for 4 weeks on Saturdays from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Students from 8th grade to 12th grade are welcome to join.

Justin Martinez, Assembly Member Diana Moreno - Newsletter sent. Corporate tax bill 10340 was included in the House budget proposal and is hoping to see the budget voted on very quickly. Mobile office hours held at Astoria Broadway Library from 4:00 to 6:00 on the second Thursday of every month.

Motion to adjourn - Frank Fredericks Second - Amy Hau
Meeting was adjourned at 9:54pm

ATTENDANCE FULL BOARD MEETING

Date: May 19, 2026

KEY:

- P Present
- A Absent
- E Excused

	Community Board Member	P	A	E
1	ANTONIO ALFONSO			✓
2	DANIEL ALIBERTI			✓
3	MICHELLE AMOR			✓
4	INGRID BAQUERO	✓		
5	CRISTIAN BATRES		✓	
6	KIAN BETANCOURT	✓		
7	GERALD CALIENDO		✓	
8	CHRISTINA CHAISE	✓		
9	ALMA CRUZ	✓		
10	JEAN MARIE D'ALLEVA	✓		
11	ELENI DESIERVO	✓		
12	JULIE DREXLER JOHNSON	✓		
13	STACEY ELIUK	✓		
14	KATIE ELLMAN	✓		
15	ELIZABETH ERION	✓		
16	ROBERT FELTAULT	✓		
17	DEAN FERATOVIC			✓
18	ADAM FISHER-COX	✓		
19	FRANK FREDERICKS	✓		
20	TYRONE GARDNER	✓		
21	SHAHENAZ HAMDE	✓		
22	EVIE HANTZOPOULOS	✓		
23	CHRISTOPHER HANWAY			✓
24	AMY HAU	✓		
25	JACQUELINE IBARRA	✓		

	Community Board Member	P	A	E
26	RICHARD KHUZAMI	✓		
27	HUGE MA	✓		
28	ATHANASIOS MAGOUTAS	✓		
29	PATRICIA MAHECHA			✓
30	GABRIELLA MALAVE	✓		
31	BRIAN MARTINEZ	✓		
32	AMIN MEHEDI	✓		
33	ANDREAS MIGIAS	✓		
34	STELLA NICOLAOU			✓
35	DINO PANAGOULIAS	✓		
36	PHYLLIS PARRA	✓		
37	JULIET PAYABYAB	✓		
38	ROSEMARIE POVEROMO			✓
39	THOMAS RYAN	✓		
40	PLINIA SARCHESE	✓		
41	DOMINIC STILLER			✓
42	MARIE TORNIALI	✓		
43	RYAN VAN MANEN	✓		
44	MARIO VERGARA			✓
45	KATHLEEN WARNOCK		✓	
46	QUINELLA WILLIAMS			✓
47	SELENA WITCHER	✓		
48	CORINNE WOOD-HAYNES	✓		
49	HASSAN YOUSUF	✓		
50	PABLO ZUNIGA	✓		

Number of Board Members Present: **36** on

May 19, 2026

PRESENT	36
ABSENT	3
EXCUSED	11