



The City of New York

## Queens Community Board 11

Serving the Communities of Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston, Hollis Hills  
Little Neck and Oakland Gardens

**Michael Budabin** Chairperson / **Joseph Marziliano** District Manager

To: All Board Members

From: Victor Dadras, Committee Chair

Date: March 23, 2022

Re: NYS DOT Improvement Projects

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On Tuesday, March 22, 2022, the CB11 Transportation Committee met via Zoom to hear presentations from the New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) regarding improvement projects on the Grand Central Parkway (GCP) between Union Turnpike and Commonwealth Blvd. over the Cross Island Parkway (CIP) and construction of an auxiliary lane for the eastbound Long Island Expressway between the Clearview Expressway (CVE) and Springfield Blvd. and the replacement of the bridge at Oceania Street over the Long Island Expressway (LIE).

### **Committee Members**

Michael Budabin, Chair

Victor Dadras, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair and Committee Chair

Henry Euler, 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Chair

Joan Garippa

Eileen Miller

Benjamin Turner

Jena Lanzetta

Chris Scherer

Stephan Popa

Mary Donahue

Sam Wong

Wendy Pelle-Beer

### **CB11 Staff**

Joseph Marziliano, District Manager

Jane Bentivenga, Community Coordinator

Christina Coutinho, Community Associate

### **Guests**

Thomas Bayer, Asst. to the Regional Director, NYS DOT

Agyenim Oti, Job Manager, NYS DOT

Nasim Ghani, Project Design Supervisor, NYS DOT

Several other NYS DOT representatives

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Mr. Dadras began the meeting by introducing Thomas Bayer of NYS DOT who reviewed the projects that were going to be presented at this meeting. Mr. Bayer then gave the floor to Mr. Oti who presented the details of the plan for the work that will affect the four bridges along the Grand Central Parkway between Union Turnpike and Commonwealth Blvd. (which includes Vanderbilt Motor Parkway and Winchester Blvd.).

Mr. Oti reviewed the presentation which was screenshared. He reviewed the details of each step of the construction covering the location map, construction staging, community and traffic impact, communication efforts, mitigation efforts and project coordination. (Please see attached presentation for complete details.) There will be some short-term closures and sidewalk detours when temporary shielding is installed. Signage will be installed for any detours. Pedestrian access will always be maintained on one side. Work at the Vanderbilt Parkway bridge will be done at night. Dept. of Sanitation on-street parking will not be allowed during construction. Closure of the ramp from northbound CIP to westbound GCP will be required. A temporary ramp connection to the westbound GCP will be constructed which will allow motorists to re-enter the GCP. If a contingent plan is required, they can detour traffic north on the CIP, west on the LIE and then south on the CVE back to the GCP. That need is unlikely to happen.

There will be air and noise monitoring. There will be an on-site community construction liaison. The purpose of this project is to improve the existing condition of these bridges. They expect to extend the life of these bridges for 40 years. Design approval is expected by summer of 2022. Construction is scheduled to begin in summer of 2023. Completion is anticipated by 2027.

Mrs. Garippa remarked that since this is extensive work, hopefully, these improvements will last a very long time. Mr. Dadras asked if four to five years is the typical time frame for this type of work. Mr. Oti said since they need to keep lanes open during the work, it takes longer; however, they may be able to complete the work in a shorter time period. Mrs. Garippa wanted to be assured that all these closures will not happen simultaneously. Mr. Oti stated that will depend on if the contractor thinks the work can be completed in a shorter time. There are incentives included in these types of contracts if the work is completed ahead of schedule. Mr. Euler questioned what efforts will be made to mitigate noise and lighting for nearby homes. Meena Kuriakose, Project Supervisor, replied standard noise, air and lighting mitigation is built into the contract and notice will be given to the community. Mrs. Garippa added that there is a seminary and townhouses in that immediate vicinity and is concerned for street access. Mr. Oti said traffic access will always be maintained. Mrs. Donahue asked if the impact on the parking of Dept. of Sanitation (DSNY) trucks will affect trash collection. Mr. Oti stated that DSNY is looking into options to store their trucks and service interruptions are not anticipated. Mr. Dadras requested that NYS DOT keep CB11 updated on this project.

Next, Mr. Bayer introduced Nasim Ghani to present PIN X228.69/D26449, the eastbound LIE auxiliary lane project between CVE and Springfield Blvd. and the Oceania Street bridge replacement project. There are four ramps included in the project limits. The project components include roadwork, bridge replacement, noise barriers and retaining walls, lighting, intelligent transportation system (known as ITS), traffic signals, utility work and drainage and landscaping. Ramp reconstruction is slated for northbound CVE to eastbound LIE, eastbound on-ramp on Horace Harding Expressway near 212 Street and the eastbound off-ramp at exit 29, Springfield Blvd. The ramp for southbound CVE to eastbound LIE is slated for an acceleration extension.

The Oceania Street bridge replacement will have four lanes; dedicated left turn lanes for each direction. The bicycle lane will be separated from vehicular and pedestrian traffic and the new sidewalks and ramps will be ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant. Short-term closures will be necessary for the installation of girders for the new bridge.

There will be 6,500 feet of noise barriers, some standalone, some combined with retaining walls, that will be installed as part of this project in eastbound and westbound directions. They are absorptive on both sides. (Please see attached copy of presentation for all proposed work.) Construction is scheduled to begin in Spring 2022 and completed by Fall of 2024.

Mr. Bayer next spoke about their traffic management plan. He introduced Robert Colucci, Engineer in Charge, who explained that parking will need to be removed along the LIE service road for the duration of the project since they need to maintain a work zone lane abutting the expressway while maintaining traffic and safety. Intermittent closures of the left lane will be required leaving what is now the parking lane as the only through lane.

Mr. Euler thanked DOT for the comprehensive presentations and commented that he hopes they will come to present and answer questions at any affected civic association meetings regarding both projects. He also referred to the 190 trees being removed and replaced with 201 trees. He inquired if the replacement trees will be of equal maturity as the trees that will be removed. Mr. Ghani said the engineer in charge will work with the arborist to make those decisions based on site conditions, however, they are supposed to replace in kind. Mr. Euler also raised the issue of the extreme congestion at the southbound Clearview Expressway exit to eastbound and westbound LIE. Mr. Colucci stated that adding to the acceleration lane should help with this congestion. Mr. Ghani added that the changes that will be made to the northbound CVE to the eastbound LIE ramp should help as well.

Mr. Turner commented that he feels this will be a futile, short-lived solution to the traffic conditions on the LIE and it does not address sustainability. Mr. Dadras asked how sustainability and resilience play into DOT's design and planning. Glorimar Reyes, Director of Design, NYS DOT, stated that this is not a mainline widening project; it is a mobility improvement project. Susan McClelland, NYS DOT Engineer, stated that this project is about mobility which will improve sustainability as emissions improve. Mr. Turner disagreed.

Mrs. Miller said thank you on behalf of the Bayside Hills Civic Association and surrounding areas. These improvements will address significant quality-of-life issues. She also commended the design of the new Oceania Street bridge. Mrs. Garippa stated she would like an inch count regarding the removal and replacement of trees. Mr. Dadras, Mr. Euler and Mrs. Miller would like this information as well. Mr. Ghani said he will investigate and advise CB11. Mr. Euler asked if NYS DOT has any plans to extend noise barriers to the west of the area. Mr. Bayer stated that noise barriers are only erected as part of a capital project.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted 3-24-22*