



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
Date: June 3, 2021
Re: Transportation Committee Report

On Monday, May 24, 2021 the CB11 Transportation Committee held a meeting to discuss various issues.

Present

Committee Members

Michael Budabin, Board Chair
Victor Dadras, Committee Chair
Christine Haider, 2nd Vice Chair
Henry Euler, 3rd Vice Chair
Mary Donahue
Joan Garippa
Sharon Chin
Stephan Popa
Eileen Miller
Benjamin Turner
Barbara Gillespie
Akshar Patel
Jyothi Sriram
Albert Galatan
Laura James
Christina Scherer
John Kelly
Paul DiBenedetto

Non- Board Committee Member

Lindsay Mayer

Board Members, Non-Committee Members

Jessica Burke
Jason Chen
Jena Lanzetta

CB11 Staff

Joseph Marziliano, District Manager
Christina Coutinho, Community Associate

Special Quests

Lucille K. Songhai – Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA)

Mark Holmes – NYC Transit/MTA Bus Service

Mr. Dadras opened the meeting by stating that item two on the agenda will be discussed first. Lucille Songhai, representing the MTA, gave a presentation for NYC Transit Project; Bus Radio System Modernization: Bayside LIRR Yard Monopole. There will be a 75 ft. monopole erected in the vicinity of 217 Street and 41 Avenue, at the Bayside LIRR yard. The monopole will consist of four antennas and two microwave dishes located at the top of the pole; this is very similar to what is currently at the site. This site was chosen because of existing utility tie-ins and to provide efficient connection with other monopole locations systemwide and will be a one-to-one, in-kind replacement. The new equipment will be the same size of current pole. The site will not be leased for private use and is solely being used for the bus radio system.

The monopole material is made of composite wood to blend into surroundings and can withstand weather elements. The current monopole is metal. There was an environmental assessment of the site and safety review of the equipment per NYS's Environmental Quality Review Act requirement in accordance with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The MTA was assigned a specific frequency range that does not interfere with surrounding telecommunications equipment or personal medical devices. The power density from the wireless antenna is considerably less than the maximum allowed at 7.336% of the public limit. No mitigation measures are needed for LIRR employees or the surrounding community because of the low levels of radio frequency.

Ms. Songhai continued with the presentation by stating that this upgrade is to improve voice and data communications between buses and the NYC Transit Bus Command Center, expand digital radio coverage for Bayside and routes serving Northeastern Queens, and will enhance operator and passenger safety. A new computer-aided dispatch/automatic vehicle location for bus monitoring, and new equipment to be installed on 6,250 buses and support vehicles. There will be 35 monopoles erected throughout the city.

The site survey work will begin on May 26, 2021 with installation of site shelter. The project will start with the decommissioning of the current pole and then installation of the new monopole. Installation of the new monopole should take place in June and July with a total project timeframe of six months. Construction hours will be between 7:00 AM through 4:00 PM weekdays. There will be no evening or weekend work scheduled.

Northeast Queens and the Bayside bus routes that will be affected: Q12/13/16/25/28/30/31/34/46/76, QM2/5/8/20/32/35.

Ms. Songhai introduced Mark Holmes, Chief Officer for NYC Transit/MTA Bus Services, who explained that the current bus radio system is over 30 years old and in need of upgrading. He said this modernization enhances the safety of employees and passengers and allows for a more reliable bus service. Mr. Holmes said that there will be several monopoles erected throughout the city. This upgrade will allow for better communication to improve ridership.

The presentation concluded and a question and answer period followed: Questions were answered by Ms. Songhai and Mr. Holmes.

- 1) Will bus service communication systems be interrupted? Later, when the new system is ready.

- 2) How close is the nearest residence? The monopole is in the center of the yard.
- 3) How much will the whole project cost? The overall project cost citywide is estimated at \$300 million: 6,000 plus buses to receive system upgrades, new command center and 35 monopoles installed. Mr. Dadras stated that this is a worthwhile investment to improve bus service.
- 4) Is the Jamaica yard monopole erected? Yes, and it is 134 ft. tall. Ms. Songhai stated that local elected officials for the Bayside area advocated to keep the pole at 75 ft.

Ms. Songhai ended with stating that they will have a follow up meeting in six months.

The next items on the agenda discussed were:

An update on the Board's requests to the Dept. of Transportation (DOT). Tracking numbers have been issued by the DOT.

Mr. Dadras stated that the Friends of Crocheron Park asked to defer to their presentation for a street permit to the June meeting. Representatives from DOT asked to defer their presentation on bike safety to June meeting.

Mr. Dadras stated that on twitter he noticed there was a tweet regarding an Eastern Queens Greenway meeting that the CB was not informed about. This was an important issue that the Board had discussed. Mr. Silvestri, DOT representative, contacted Mr. Dadras and said that he was not aware of the greenway meeting. Mr. Budabin said this was very disappointing and asked Mr. Dadras to try and obtain a copy of the presentation.

Mr. Dadras discussed a request for PS 390 (the former site of St. Roberts/Divine Wisdom school). The school is requesting to temporarily close 214 Street between 56 Avenue and 58 Avenue for lunch recess since there is no yard. Ms. Miller, a member of the Bayside Hills Civic Association, said that the school has closed the street in the past and there were no issues.

The next item discussed was Benjamin Turner's proposal regarding the LaGuardia Airport (LGA) AirTrain Project. Mr. Turner stated that in March 2021, the FAA released an Environmental Impact statement on the LaGuardia Airport Access Improvement Project. One item that is relevant to our community is the proposal to build an AirTrain like JFK Airport. This would connect at Willets Point and affect the 7 Train and the LIRR. Mr. Turner said he is in favor of improving access to the airports but there are some concerns as to what has been chosen as a solution. He said the cost would be estimated at \$2 billion and that does not include the constructing of any additional transportation access points. Connection would be made at Willets Point. He stated that the question has been raised if there was outreach to the neighborhoods along the routes. Mr. Turner also stated that this could potentially overcrowd the 7 Line and the Port Washington LIRR Line. Mr. Turner suggested that CB11 request that the NYS of Dept. Transportation (NYSDOT) conduct a thorough and transparent investigation of all options available before moving ahead with LGA AirTrain project. Mr. Turner said there is no projected timeframe but the shovel to ground date is approaching. Mr. Turner made a motion that CB11 Queens request the NYSDOT to conduct a thorough and transparent investigation of the options available before moving ahead with the LGA AirTrain project. Stephan Popa seconded the motion. Discussion ensued with several questions. Mr. Turner explained that this is a stand alone AirTrain and will not connect to JFK Airport.

Mrs. Garippa is a member of the LGA and JFK roundtable and she stated that alternatives were reviewed but this proposal was the best. She agreed that a request for an additional review is a good idea. Mr. Euler suggested that the two major airports should be able to connect. He also asked if the opposition from the Corona and Flushing communities has been cleared up. The AirTrain structure will be running through their communities. Ms. Chin stated that the potential for increased ridership should be reviewed. Mr. DiBenedetto said if this is controversial in other communities, CB11 should show support. He wanted to make sure that this motion does not interfere with the opinion of directly-affected communities. Mr. Dadras said that has been considered for many years and there have been several proposals. This is a Port Authority project funded by the State. Mr. Kelly said that there is documentation that this has not been thought out and there have been other solutions that were turned down. Overcrowding the 7 Line will slow service and express lines could be lost. Mr. Kelly supported a further review. Mrs. Haider asked if homes would be demolished. A suggestion was made to obtain reports from the roundtable to see what was approved and have the Port Authority make a presentation. Mr. Budabin said additional information is needed and proof is needed that other options were presented or considered. The motion was amended to add that CB11 would like a presentation from NYSDOT and/or Port Authority regarding the process and what was considered. Mr. Popa seconded the amendment. Mr. Kelly said parkland will be demolished. He said original documents are posted online at AirTrain LGA. Mrs. Garippa mentioned reaching to CB7 and Member, Warren Schreiber. Mr. Dadras said he will contact Mr. Schreiber. A committee roll call vote was taken resulting unanimously in favor.

Mr. Kelly asked about homeowners repaving over their front lawns. Mr. Marziliano asked for an email with the address.

The meeting adjourned.