



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: July 14, 2022

Re: School Safety Traffic Issues
NYC DOT Bicycle Lane Network Development Revised Proposal for CB11

On Wednesday, July 13, 2022, the CB11 Transportation Committee met via Zoom to discuss various school safety traffic issues and NYC DOT's revised proposal for Bicycle Lane Network Development in Community Board 11.

Committee Members

Michael Budabin, Chair
Victor Dadras, 1st Vice Chair and Committee Chair
Henry Euler, 3rd Vice Chair
Eileen Miller
Paul DiBenedetto
Chris Scherer

Stephan Popa
Mary Donahue
Benjamin Turner
John Kelly
George Hadjiconstantinou
Lindsay Mayer - Non-Board
Member Committee Member

CB11 Staff

Joseph Marziliano, District Manager
Jane Bentivenga, Community Coordinator

Guests

Amber Yoon, AM Rozic's office

Mr. Dadras began the meeting by reviewing the topics for discussion at this meeting.

Mr. Marziliano stated part one of the first issue to be discussed was the extension of the sound barriers on the Long Island Expressway (LIE). Mr. Marziliano said part two is to remove this request from CB11's Capital & Expense request list as this request falls under the auspices of New York State Department of Transportation. Mrs. Miller suggested this issue be put on the

next Transportation Committee meeting agenda as Christine Haider and Rob Liatto were not in attendance. Mr. Dadras agreed with that.

The next item discussed was safety concerns at P.S. 98 in Douglaston. Principal Chan has renewed her 2018 request for improvements around the school. The renewed request asks for the installation of school crossing signage, painting the entire curb (yellow) along the front and rear of the school property and installation of speed bumps near the school's main entrance and back school yard entrance. Mr. Popa asked if New York City installs raised crosswalks; they can function dually as speed bumps. They were installed in the Frank Padavan campus in CB13. Mr. Dadras thinks they are a good idea but does not know if they were only part of this campus design. Mrs. Miller made a motion to send a letter to the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) requesting the improvements Ms. Chan has asked for. Mr. Popa seconded the motion. Mrs. Miller requested a subcommittee for school safety concerns across the district be formed. She volunteered to be the contact person to find out what issues all the schools are having that need to be addressed. Mrs. Miller said she would like to address this in September. A roll call vote was taken regarding the motion on the floor. All were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

At this point, the Committee discussed the revised Bicycle Lane Network Development plan for CB11. Mr. Dadras feels DOT came back with an improved plan. Mr. Marziliano screen-shared the revised plan from DOT. Mr. Euler read a statement regarding the proposed sharrow treatment for 33 Avenue from Jena Lanzetta who was not able to attend this meeting. The statement asserted that the Northwest Bayside Civic Association is not in favor of this proposal; the principal of P.S. 159 feels it will create a dangerous situation for pedestrians and vehicles alike. The Northwest Bayside Civic Association requests 33 Avenue be removed from this plan. Mr. Euler asked if a motion could be taken regarding the removal of 33 Avenue from this plan. Mr. Dadras said rather than have numerous motions for each proposed street, he would like to hear an overall motion that mentions segments of the plan.

Mr. Dadras added that DOT proposed a "calm corridor" for 33 Avenue; therefore, they do not view this as a specific, proposed bicycle lane, but as an alternative that will serve many purposes for a safe street. Mr. Dadras does not feel it would be practical to do nothing on this stretch of roadway. Mr. Budabin questioned the three traffic diverters that appear to prevent motorists from driving eastbound on 33 Avenue all the way through. Mr. Dadras' understanding is this will discourage traffic on this street. The goal is to make this street safer. Mr. Budabin feels that CB11 needs clarification regarding how 33 Avenue will function. He would like further information and feedback. Mr. Euler agrees. Mr. Turner doesn't understand the opposition to 33 Avenue. He has seen this treatment on other City streets; it slows and calms the traffic. This will preserve parking and make the street safer. 33 Avenue serves recreational and educational locations. It could potentially be extended all the way into Flushing while preserving parking spaces. Mr. Turner stated that the Northwest Bayside Civic Association does not speak for him; he lives in that area. Mr. Dadras added that 33 Avenue has not been designed yet. Mr. Dadras reviewed the photo of the example calm corridor on 39 Avenue in Sunnyside that DOT provided in the revised plan. It may include reduced speed limit, curb extensions, enhanced crossings, signal timing enhancement and traffic diverters. Mr. Dadras would like to hear ideas for improvement from those who are in opposition to changes on 33 Avenue.

Mr. DiBenedetto spoke next. He does not agree with the characterization of Ms. Lanzetta. She did not say she is against bicycle lanes; she said 26 Avenue is preferable due to its width. 33 Avenue east of the Clearview Expressway (CVE) does not have issues with speeding and traffic. He is not opposed to the changes proposed for 33 Avenue. However, it does need to be noted that it is a high traffic area west of the CVE. It does connect to parks and schools which he is in favor of. He would like to see an actual, rendered proposal for 33 Avenue. Mr. Dadras thinks DOT wants something done east/west that is south of 26 Avenue.

Mr. Dadras raised the issue of removal of parking on streets with protected bike lanes (PBL). He explained that when this Board comprehensively countered-proposed treatments to DOT's original Bicycle Lane Design, it was done under the notion that there would be little loss of parking. It appears that DOT's proposed PBL include the loss of parking on one side of the street. Mr. Popa asked if that was only for 46 Avenue. Mr. Marziliano said it pertains to all streets with proposed PBL and read correspondence from DOT regarding this into the record. This would essentially remove a few hundred parking spaces.

Mr. Popa stated he is not sure why DOT removed Cloverdale Blvd. from the proposal. He feels that this would make the connection to Queensborough Community College and Cardozo High School much better for Oakland Gardens residents and the Alley Pond Park Greenway. Mr. Popa also spoke to the issue of parking removal. He said with gas prices being what they are, it is becoming increasingly unaffordable to own a motor vehicle. Giving people more options for mobility and less reliance on gas and oil, may make northeast Queens more affordable in the future. A complete bike lane network may convince people, who can, to sell their motor vehicles.

Next, Mrs. Miller screen-shared a presentation regarding the narrow streets with malls in Bayside Hills and the safety issues bicycle lanes would present. The residents' concern is strictly safety. Most avenues in Bayside Hills have malls running through them. This area extends from 211 Street east to Springfield Blvd. People can park on the street in Bayside Hills. This will narrow the space between a cyclist and a motor vehicle even further. Painted lines only provide a false sense of security. Mrs. Miller does not want to see any fatalities due to human error. Bike lanes are needed, but they must be done safely. Cyclists can connect to bike lanes through surrounding streets. Mr. Dadras thanked Mrs. Miller for her presentation. He added that CB11 needs to figure out the best way to work with DOT to achieve a mutual goal. He stated DOT envisions 10' for a driving lane and 5' for a bike lane. Mrs. Miller pointed out parking is permitted; what about motorists that want to park on the street? Mr. Dadras stated that would be an issue.

Mr. Budabin stated the parking removal issue in conjunction with PBL is important. Apparently, DOT has a minimum street width in order to maintain parking. They deem some too narrow. He understands many people do not want to have their street changed. He asked how everyone feels with motor vehicles dominating the mode of transportation in this community. They can be detrimental to the environment, our society and can make the cost of living very challenging. Our society is very reliant on motor vehicles. DOT is trying to build a network of connectivity for citizens' protection. Mr. Budabin does understand the concerns about danger; he does not understand the solution of keeping the problematic situation as is. Mr. Budabin feels that doing nothing does not make sense. This plan looks to change the culture. Mr. Dadras added that DOT is mandated to implement this plan.

Mr. Euler was recognized and asked if Corporal Kennedy Street between 35 and 41 Avenues was removed as we previously requested. The slide still shows a solid line in that area. Mr. Marziliano showed DOT's slide and stated they are proposing a shared lane at this location. Mr. Dadras said he had requested further detail about this but was told DOT did not have it.

Mr. Kelly said he agrees with Mr. Budabin. People get hurt on our streets and if we choose to do nothing, it will just continue to happen. He stated that a cyclist was hit on 33 Avenue and 215 Place. The plan continues to get whittled down. The plan that DOT presented is not a bike lane network. In response to Mrs. Miller, some cyclists will go out of their way to get to a PBL, others won't. If a good PBL network is implemented, there does not need to be a bike lane on every street. There is no PBL network on the table at the present time. The current proposal is two PBL running east/west and several fragments running north/south. There are many aggressive drivers. If we have other options where parking doesn't have to be removed, that would be great. Even though the presented plan is not perfect, Mr. Kelly supports it. If DOT does not implement something, there will be further injuries and fatalities.

Mr. Hadjiconstantinou spoke about the need for a better mass transit system in northeast Queens. Unless New York State and the Metropolitan Transit Authority meet the need through more funding, people will continue to use motor vehicles. We need a change in the way infrastructure is handled. A safe alternative needs to be provided. The status quo is not working. Ms. Scherer spoke about the proposal for 26 Avenue. It appears to be protected on both sides of the street. However, west of the CVE it appears to be only one PBL. Why both sides of the street east of the CVE? She also commented that the Clearview Senior Center is located on one of the corners where parking will be removed. She also stated that one side of the street has no sidewalks in this area (which is where Bay Terrace Shopping Center is located). Ms. Scherer feels one side of 26 Avenue is enough for a PBL. Mr. Dadras agreed.

Mr. Popa spoke to Mr. Hadjiconstantinou's comment and stated that this will interface with the Bus Redesign plan. He believes that bicycle racks should be installed at bus stops. He feels it is possible to do this at all stops in northeast Queens. Mr. Popa stated that CB11 needs to advocate for the Bus Redesign plan so that it can interface with the Bike Lane Network. He also suggested that 26 Avenue have a bike lane with both directions on one side to eliminate the need to remove parking. He suggested the northside of 26 Avenue as that runs adjacent to the shopping center. Regarding 56 Avenue, Mr. Popa thinks that the conversion of the sidewalk to a pedestrian and bicycle path (as was proposed for Northern Blvd. a few years back) would work. The extra 5' could be raised to sidewalk level. Raised crosswalks could be introduced for problematic intersections. This hybrid idea may be good for Bayside Hills. Mrs. Miller said the character of the neighborhood must be maintained. Mr. Turner stated that now is the time to think about our streets and make them more inclusive. One of the unfortunate by-products of the pandemic is the increased use of motor vehicles. This cannot be sustained; it is not good for anyone. Electric bikes are becoming more affordable. Bicycles and mass transit are the way to travel moving forward. CB11 needs to stand by their principles and make the streets safer for everyone.

Ms. Mayer said she feels this is an exciting opportunity and looks forward to hearing about the tools DOT will use for the design of 33 Avenue. She feels 33 Avenue can create the opportunity for safer streets for cyclists and pedestrians alike. She wonders why DOT did not extend Cloverdale Blvd. as another connection to Oakland Lake and Alley Pond Park. Mr. Dadras

replied that our proposal to DOT did include Cloverdale Blvd. He does not understand why it was removed.

Mr. DiBenedetto feels it is important that we move forward on this. This revision is not everything we asked for. But we can always request more. There is a mandate to expand bicycle lanes across the country. He expressed concern for what is being proposed for Corporal Kennedy Street and 33 Avenue. Aside from needing further information regarding those streets, he feels CB11 should move forward with this proposal. However, he did not feel he could vote on it without those clarifications.

At this point, Mr. Budabin said there are two options to move forward: one would be to vote the proposal up or down with the caveat of getting more information regarding the previously discussed streets or we could postpone our vote and ask DOT to attend another meeting and address the questions. More information is needed about the segments CB11 does not fully understand. Mr. Dadras did not want to vote the proposal up or down until further information is received. He wants further clarification from DOT and would like a to schedule a follow-up meeting in August prior to CB11's September Board Meeting. Mr. Kelly commented that many times, votes are taken without all the required information pertaining to an issue that is before the committee. He pointed out that he sent an email in June regarding additional suggestions since DOT removed some of the streets from their original proposal. He is concerned that these suggestions won't be addressed. Mr. Kelly asked that a formal request be made to DOT regarding who at their agency (and how) makes the decision regarding the width of the travel lanes and parking lanes. Is it a DOT policy? Does the City Council get involved? Mr. Kelly made a motion to request DOT advise how the width of traffic lanes are determined in New York City. Mr. Popa seconded the motion. Mr. Marziliano stated that Mr. Kelly is correct; many of the maps the CB11 Office do not correspond to the widths we were given by DOT. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Marziliano stated he will reach out to DOT about this via email.

Mr. Dadras suggests the third or fourth week of August for the next Transportation meeting and will request detailed information about the 33 Avenue corridor, Corporal Kennedy Street between 35 and 41 Avenues, the requests in the letter from John Kelly dated June 17, 2022, regarding additional PBL. Mr. Budabin suggested inviting Albert Silvestri, Deputy Borough Commissioner, Queens DOT, to the meeting. Mr. Dadras wholeheartedly agreed.

Mrs. Miller asked for clarification regarding the comment in the proposal that cyclists can become disoriented. Mr. Marziliano replied that this refers to locations where a bicycle lane ends abruptly. Mr. DiBenedetto reiterated that he was specifically opposed to a bicycle lane on Corporal Kennedy Street between 35 and 41 Avenues. Mr. Popa requested that the Bicycle Lane Network be integrated into the Bus Redesign at the August meeting. Mrs. Miller reminded Mr. Dadras to include the issue of the extension of the sound barriers along the westbound LIE.

The meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted 7-15-22