



Community Board No. 2

43-22 50th Street, 2nd Floor

Woodside, New York 11377

(718) 533-8773

Fax (718-533-8777

*Lisa Deller
Chairperson*

*Donovan Richards Email qn02@cb.nyc.gov Debra Markell Kleinert Queens Borough President
www.nyc.gov/queenscb 2 District Manager*

May 4, 2021

Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes

This meeting was teleconferenced on Zoom

Transportation Committee Members Present

Lisa Deller
Sheila Lewandowski
Thomas Mituzas
Osman Chowdhury
Jake DeGroot
Kristen McGowan
Steven Raga
*Laura Shepard

Transportation Committee Members Absent

Jordan Levine
Mary Torres
John Vaichunas

CB 2 Staff

Debra Markell Kleinert, District Manager

Elected Officials/Representatives

Aileen Sheil, Representing Council Member Van Bramer

108th Police Precinct

Sgt. Pak

NYC Department of Transportation

Gretha Suarez

“Serving the Communities of Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, and Maspeth”

Jason Banrey

Paul Schwartz

Joanne Kidder

Andrew Ronan

Nicholas Pettinati

Guests

Claudia Chan, Deputy Director of External Affairs, LaGuardia Community College

Makeda Walker, Student, LaGuardia Community College

Nicholas Russell, Student, LaGuardia Community College

Victoria Luong, Student, LaGuardia Community College

Nico Figueroa, Student, LaGuardia Community College

Lauren Neville, Student, LaGuardia Community College

Jennifer Guaraca, LaGuardia Community College

Joby Jacob, LaGuardia Community College

Ms. Lewandowski welcomed everyone to the meeting and announced that the meeting was teleconferenced using Zoom.

TRANSPORTATION

Department of Transportation provided the following update. It has been reported that majority of the DOT projects are on hold and will be revisited once the City and State reopen due to the COVID-1 Pandemic.

TRANSPORTATION PRESENTATION:

QUEENSBORO BRIDGE BRIEFING – South Outer Roadway Redesign

Shawn Macias, DOT, provided a presentation regarding the proposed South Outer Roadway Redesign which included background information and proposed safety designs:

Background Information - Proposed:

- East River Bridge Connections. Queensboro Bridge.
Bicycle Volumes on the East River Bridges.
Shared Use Path.

Background Information – Upcoming Bicycle Projects – Proposed:

- 61/62nd St. – DOT.
PBL's being installed.
Connects bridge path to East River and Central Park. Compliments the 2nd Ave. PBL Project.
- Northern Blvd. – DOT.

2021 Project will connect Central Queens to Queensboro Bridge with high quality protected bike lanes.

Enhance safety, and more.

Compliment recent Crescent Ave. PBL Project.

Proposed Project:

- South Outer Roadway: Proposed Conversion to Pedestrian Only Scope- Proposed North Outer Roadway to become a Bicyclist only path.
Proposed adding gates to both sides of bridge.
Proposed improve pedestrian connection to new path.
Proposed updates to wayfinding and signage.
Proposed traffic study to determine additional supportive changes to traffic patterns on the bridge or on bridge approaches.

Background information – Upper Level Re-Decking – Proposed:

- Proposed Project Overview:
Bridge is over 100 years old.
Bridge rating is 4.214 out of 7 as of 2018.
Since 2018 DOT has been working on repair project.

Proposed Project:

Proposed South Outer Roadway - Timeline:

- 2021 - Proposed:
Community Outreach.
LPC Approval.
Finalize change order.
Begin installing fence and gates.
Complete traffic study
- Proposed Late 2022 (Target):
Complete upper level construction.
Open SOB to pedestrian traffic.

Ms. Lewandowski thanked Mr. Macias for his informational and thorough proposal.

A discussion followed the presentation.

Ms. Lewandowski requested information regarding the process to incorporate netting.

Mr. Mituzas noted that there was fencing required on one side on the pedestrian way and was there anything needed between the roadway and the pedestrian way. The answer was none was anticipated at this time.

Ms. Shepard requested opening the bridge for the summer for community members. Ms. Lewandowski reiterated what can be done to begin making this bridge available for people in the short-term.

Mr. Schwartz stated that the DOT team would revisit the question of increased weight on the bridge with the Transportation Committee at a later date.

Ms. Suarez stated that this is a Landmark Bridge, and as such, there are requirements that need to be fulfilled.

Mr. Pettinati stated that DOT is taking all this into consideration with the Landmarks Preservation Commission and following all regulations and standards with that regard.

UPDATE BY 108TH POLICE PRECINCT ON TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

Sgt. Pak, 108th Pct., reported regarding the drag racing problem that this issue is not exclusive in the CB 2 area. It is an ongoing issue throughout the borough of Queens, and the entire city, as well. Sgt. Pak stated that the 108th Pct. has been constantly monitoring the 311 and 911 calls. In this regard:

To date, this year with the 311 calls, there were 10 calls as opposed to 3 last year when there was a COVID lockdown.

To date, this year with the 911 calls, there were 28, and there were 6 arrests made. The 108th Pct. has also confiscated stereos used in the noise part of the drag racing.

Mr. Mituzas reported that on “Inside City Hall with Errol Lewis”, the Mayor shared that he has been hearing increased concerns regarding drag racing, and that NYPD will now focus additional resources on this issue. In the next few weeks, a new initiative will be announced. Sgt. Pak elaborated on this, stating that the NYPD has been utilizing more customized units to combat the problem. Sgt. Pak stated that NCO Units and traffic teams have been working together and that thus far he is not aware of any other initiatives.

Ms. Suarez stated that many complaints have been received regarding the drag racing problem. DOT has requested a study be initiated for traffic calming measures such as the speed humps and traffic controls in the corridors and enhanced crosswalks at these locations. Ms. Suarez stated that DOT relies on P.D. enforcement at these locations, as well. DOT is also looking into an inter-agency approach requesting the help from DEP with the loud noise complaints that have been received. DOT is hoping to learn more as this summer approaches on the best way to tackle these issues.

Ms. Lewandowski followed up regarding the meeting held with the 108th Pct.:

- Conversion of 60th Street in the Hunters Point section between 48th Avenue and Borden Avenue was discussed. Sgt. Pak reported that a letter referencing this issue was provided, as requested. Receipt of a copy of that letter was requested by both CB 2 and DOT.
- A flashing-light and turning lane at the entrance to the BQE at Borden Ave. Sgt. Pak reported that enforcement is being provided at this location.

A request was made for enforcement regarding cars parked on the sidewalk double parking for hours by Lou Lodati Park mostly on weekends.

PRESENTATION BY DOT-ONENYC PLAZA EQUITY PROGRAM

Andrew Ronan, DOT, provided an overview and information regarding the proposed ONENYC PLAZA EQUITY PROGRAM-May 2021. He defined a Plaza as a pedestrian space that has been created on DOT property that is there to ease pedestrian movements and provide standardized space in a neighborhood by taking over and imagining underutilized street space.

A copy of the presentation is attached. See attached presentation – Attachment 1 – ONENYC PLAZA EQUITY PROGRAM – May 2021. 82 Plazas currently in development, 66 Plazas open to the public. He believes that this program would serve as a base, a model, for other programs that they are developing at this time or any being developed in the future including the development of Open Streets.

A discussion followed.

Mr. Mituzas stated that he believed that one of the three gateways between Brooklyn and Queens, the one that sits at the base of the Greenpoint Bridge in Blissville, would be very adaptable to a program of this type. He asked how one would explore this to find out more about such a Plaza as a possibility. Mr. Ronan stated that the first step would be to develop a Plaza Pilot and develop the idea from there.

The CB 2 area could certainly benefit from these prospective Plazas

Mr. Ronan stated that DOT is open and responsive to community requests with regard to the development and application for a Plaza. He stated that with their community partners, as in the Plaza in Jackson Heights and others, DOT works with this group as a partner. DOT also helps when a problem arises, and provides the daily maintenance services necessary to keep the Plaza up and running.

Ms. Lewandowski discussed several of the prospective suggestions for Plazas of high, medium and low needs from the Pedestrian Plazas map denoted in the Presentation. She inquired as to what are the specific steps to apply for a Plaza, a guidance as to how to become a part of the Plaza program. Mr. Ronan stated that the steps he will provide that information.

Ms. Lewandowski asked in regard to the Plaza Program:

- How long are the agreements?
- Are the agreements renewable?
- Minimum and maximum space required.
- Are the space materials, etc. provided by DOT?
- Where does the funding for the program come from?

Mr. Ronan provided information and insight as to how the program will work. Ms. Suarez provided additional information and feedback as well.

There was an inquiry as to whether the program was looking into Plaza improvements in Queens Plaza where the south outer roadway will let out. Ms. Suarez stated that the Plaza program was looking into pedestrian improvements and stability on to the bridge and not to the actual structure.

Ms. Lewandowski thanked the DOT Group for their thorough and informative presentation regarding the DOT Plaza Equity Program.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES – Follow up on DOT Issues.

Blissville

Veteran's Memorial (Blissville Flagpole) continue discussion – next steps.

- Ms. Suarez reported that the Parks Dept. was now getting involved in the solution to this problem.
- DOT Commissioner Garcia will now reach out to the Land Use Unit to review the process and help with the resolve.
- DOT is awaiting a response from the Parks Dept.

- Mr. Mituzas stated that the Transportation Committee will continue to explore moving this item to the Parks Dept. to resolve but will also continue to explore all other options and hopes to get the issue resolved and properly honor the Veterans of Blissville.
- Ms. Sheil stated that Council Member Van Bramer's Office has been following up on this issue as well and hopes to have a positive update to share.

Open Street

- CB 2 is Requesting an open street in Blissville at 37th Street between Review Ave. and Starr Avenue.
- Mr. Mituzas has submitted an application on behalf of Blissville Civic Association.

Also note: Mr. Mituzas says thank you everyone. The Open Street is working out real well for our little hamlet of Blissville. Open Street is happening every Saturday and the same street is being used for our Cultural Events, happening every other week from now until September.

The Blissville Greenway from K Bridge to G Bridge along Review Avenue connecting Laurel Hill and Blissville and the Boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens. Councilman Van Bramer has written a letter of support for this community inspired project that is also contained in the CB 2's "Top Ten" budget priorities. DOT-484255-K7Q6.

- Ms. Suarez reported that this is a complicated project but one that DOT is interested in, and DOT is awaiting an update on this project. A discussion occurred regarding options and the best treatment for this project.
- Mr. Banrey stated that this project will be kept in as one of the "Top Ten" budget priorities and that if it cannot be completed in this year it will be added to next year's implementation schedule. Ms. Lewandowski added that we need to try to find ways to move this bike project forward both safely and speedily.
- Ms. Suarez stated that DOT will continue to move this project forward and provide updates.

Discussion of wrong One-way conversion of 37th Street between Review Avenue and Bradley Avenue.

- Ms. Suarez reported that DOT is working on this issue. She requested that CB 2 provide a letter expressing specific traffic and safety concerns. The DOT Unit will then have a better understanding and will review and then take this into consideration and move this project forward.

Court Square

- Ramps Project (DOT Property)- DOT is awaiting an update.

With regard to this Ramp Project, Ms. Lewandowski stated that alternate side regulations at 23rd Street and Court Square under the #7 train line have become difficult. She requested feedback on how DOT and DOS can help the community deal with this issue.

No update was provided at this time.

Sunnyside

Ms. Lewandowski stated that there were two items regarding the Sunnyside location that needed attention:

- Ms. McGowan's request regarding no standing regulation signs on 43rd Street.

Ms. Suarez provided an update regarding this request.

- New traffic patterns on Barnett Avenue and 39th Avenue between 43 Avenue and Woodside Avenue.

Ms. Suarez reported that there was a proposal on 39th Avenue in Sunnyside to provide potential improvements in this corridor. DOT is taking this into consideration and looking to see what improvements can be initiated. A committee member asked if there was a timeline for more specific traffic calming on 39th Avenue. Ms. Suarez stated that DOT was hoping to provide more updates and a timeline at the June 2021 Transportation Committee Meeting.

Woodside

- One-way conversion of 59th Street from Roosevelt Avenue to 41st Avenue as part of the pedestrian safety improvements the area of Woodside Avenue and Roosevelt Avenue. CB 2 submitted letter. Please provide an additional update on conversion timing of the next construction season.

Ms. Suarez reported that DOT has been monitoring this area and signal planning on safety improvement mobility has been completed as of last week. The crosswalk is scheduled for implementation and will be installed and made safer for pedestrians in this area. This item can now be removed from the agenda.

- Request for signal at Woodside Avenue and 62nd Street (intersection near LIRR entrance) DOT438539-K3C0. According to DOT this signal investigation is on hold. Please provide an additional update? Traffic signals still on hold.

Ms. Suarez reported that this item is close to completion and CB 2 should be receiving a letter from DOT with update shortly.

- Request to DOT for a One-Way Street conversion on 51st Avenue between 65th Place and 61st Street. Provide an update. (DOT-464313-T7R8) Open and being evaluated, please provide an update?

This is still active. No update was provided at this time. Ms. Suarez will follow up.

- Request for feasibility study for a one-way conversion on 50th Avenue between 69th Street and 65th Place. (DOT-483019-P9P2)

This is still active. No update was provided at this time. Ms. Suarez will follow up.

- Request for traffic control study at 67th Street and Garfield Avenue.

Enhanced Crosswalks - Garfield Avenue and 67th Street (DOT-499828-Z0H6)

Speed Mobile Enforcement – Garfield Avenue and 67th Street (DOT-500207-P9J1)

Ms. Suarez reported that DOT is looking into this request. She will follow up and advise.

Woodside Speed Reducers

- Speed Cushion request on 58th Street from 39th Ave. to Woodside Ave. (DOT-433629-RSM3) – Please provide update DOT states this is still an active study.

This is still an active study. No update was provided at this time.

- Speed Cushion request on 58th Place between Laurel Hill Blvd. and 52nd Avenue (DOT-297802W3Y6) – This is Approved. (10/9 DOT informed CB 2 this is prioritized). Please provide installation date.

No update was provided at this time.

- Speed Reducer request on 50th Avenue between 46th and 47th Streets (DOT-427192-D0P9) (DOT430484—Z2V7). Approved (10/9 DOT informed CB 2 this is prioritized). Please provide installation date.

No update was provided at this time.

Ms. McGowan requested that a speed cushion be prioritized at 58th Street as there are two schools in this area.

Long Island City

- 11th Street and Borden Avenue under the Pulaski Bridge Entrance and Exit to Midtown Tunnel requesting a turn signal (DOT-497660-Z4G6).

Ms. Suarez reported that DOT received this request. Updates will be provided as they become available.

- Request for the return of parking spots on the south side of 48th Avenue between Vernon Blvd. and 11th Street – DOT442293J7J6. There is one “No Standing” sign up is this an error? CB 2 sent letter (DOT-487825-L9M1).

Ms. Suarez reported that while a response has not been issued as yet an order has been issued and has been approved and is expected to be completed shortly.

Ms. Lewandowski also acknowledged that the 4 way stop at the corner of 49th Avenue and 5th Street has been approved.

- 46th Road and Jackson Avenue – no left turn request (DOT 434607-G9J4). – Study due at the end of January. CB 2 sent a letter requesting a new study (DOT-487770-W4N0).

This is still an active study. No further update was provided at this time.

- Center Blvd. north of 49th Avenue transfer of property from State to City. Please continue to provide update.

No update was provided at this time.

- Provide an update on the Vernon Blvd. Bulkhead at 54th Avenue and Vernon Blvd.

Ms. Suarez reported that a walk through was conducted at this location recently to have a conversation and discuss construction. She shared that DOT and EDC are working and listening to understanding what is involved at this location.

Ms. Lewandowski stated that CB 2 and Council Member Van Bramer's Office have been requesting waterfront access to this area. This is in response to the concrete block wall that is being proposed at this location. Ms. Lewandowski voiced concerns once again that once the wall was constructed there would be no access to the waterfront.

Ms. Suarez stated that the main concern for DOT is to repair the wall and to insure that the area is safe so that the wall does not collapse.

Mr. Banrey stated that maintaining waterfront access is still being kept in consideration.

This issue is ongoing.

- Request for a one-way conversion on 31st Place between 47th Avenue and 48th Avenue (DOT497662-R8J2).

Ms. Suarez stated that the one-way conversion on 31st Place between 47th Avenue and 48th Avenue is newly submitted and is still open.

Long Island City Speed Reducers

- CB 2 sent a letter of request for a feasibility study for a slow zone sign and a speed reducer on 38th Street between 48th Avenue and Greenpoint Avenue (10/14/2020). Neighborhood slow zone (DOT-478719-Q9P4) Speed Reducer (DOT-478711-P8D2). Please provide an update.

This is a new request. No other update was provided.

CB 2 District Wide Initiatives

- CB 2 sent letter of support for the Queensboro bridge pedestrian cyclist lane. Please provide an update.

A presentation was provided on this initiative.

- Continue to follow-up requests to review regulation changes for all 12/14-hour meters to 4 hours within CB 2. (DOT-481113-J7B9).

Ms. Suarez stated that she would follow up with the parking unit on this issue to see where they are in their review.

- Continue to provide an update on the Open Streets.

Ms. Suarez stated that the Open Streets Program is reviewing changes. Discussions continue.

Mr. Ragu discussed DOT issuing notices that they planned to take down outdoor seating from small business owners on Roosevelt Avenue between 69th and 67th Streets and Woodside Avenue to do emergency pipe repair procedures at this location. He asked if DOT could delay the procedure until after the summer to allow the business owners to keep the outdoor seating through that time. National Grid was one agency trying to change the pipes on these three blocks and MTA was also involved in the repairs.

Ms. Suarez stated that DOT would look into this and advise as to what can be done.

Old Business/New Business

A presentation was provided by students of LaGuardia Community College. The group shared their vision plan for the open space and environment of 47th Avenue – The Inaccessible Waterways; The Access to the Newtown Creek; The Air Pollution from Transportation; The Land Insecurity from Agriculture; and Shoreline Restoration. See Attachment 2 – The LaGuardia Community Greenway: Transforming 29th St. & 30th St. along 47th Avenue with Open Space and Natural Elements.

A discussion of the proposal followed:

Ms. Lewandowski stated that one of the exciting elements in the proposal is the water use, the potential use of waterfront access. She questioned how this fits in with the cleanup of the area around Newtown Creek. Ms. Holly Porter Morgan, who runs the Environmental Science Program at LaGuardia Community College and is one of the mentors for this program, stated that access to the water is one of their longterm goals for this particular program. The street access and the Green Street would be the immediate short-term goal. At present at this site, there are two barges that would need to be removed, and their removal is something that is being worked on now, as well.

Ms. Lewandowski stated that one of the things on today's agenda was the Dutch Kills Loop. It had not been discussed at this meeting.

Ms. Lewandowski requested information regarding ownership of the LaGuardia Community College buildings and the buildings adjacent to the college. Mr. Joby Jacob, Professor – Natural Sciences, LaGuardia Community College, provided information regarding ownership.

Mr. Mituzas inquired if there was to be a project in the parking lot of the college run by the Federal Government to put in a combined sewer overflow tank under the parking lot, and if so, was there an opportunity to tie in with that project.

Ms. Holly Porter Morgan responded to Mr. Mituzas' question regarding Dutch Kills and stated that the college is working with Dutch Kills Coalition in the expansion of a piece of the Dutch Kills area.

Mr. DeGroot requested that there be a more detailed labeling on the diagrams shown in the presentation to get a better sense of the proposed development of the area.

(Notes from the discussion)

A motion was made to support a general letter of support for the President's Society Environment Initiative and for the LaGuardia Community Greenway Vision and we look forward to the group returning to the Transportation Committee to present more detailed plans in the future which could generate additional letters of support potentially for the specific elements and implementation details.

A motion was made to have the CB 2 Transportation Committee write a letter of support for the President's Society Environment Initiative and the vision for the LaGuardia Community Greenway Project. The motion was seconded in support of the letter.

In Favor: 5

Opposed: 0

Abstention: 0

Ms. Lewandowski thanked everyone for attending the Transportation Committee Meeting.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted by:

Joan Bergman/Debra Markell Kleinert

05042021TCMM

Attachment 1 – ONENYC PLAZA EQUITY PROGRAM – May 2021.

Attachment 2 – The LaGuardia Community Greenway: Transforming 29th St. and 30th St. Along 47th Avenue With Open Space and Natural Elements.