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The City of New York Manhattan Community Board 8

Transportation Committee

Wednesday, January 7, 2015
Lenox Hill Hospital
131 E. 76th St., Einhorn Auditorium
6:30 PM

Minutes

Present: Michele Birnbaum, A. Scott Falk, Craig Lader, Rita Popper, Charles Warren; David Menegon (Public Member)

Absent (Excused): Hedi White, Timothy Yeo

The Meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM.

1. Update on the East 81st Street Pedestrian Bridge. (*Joint item with Parks Committee*)

DDC had previously planned to return for this meeting to present the ADA ramp designs, but following the small working group meeting on December 17, DDC is awaiting community sign-off on the requested move of the ADA ramp to 82nd Street. The Committee co-chairs noted that there would be some additional discussion on this topic at the Parks Committee meeting the next night on 1/8/15, which was scheduled to take place at the same time the East 79th Street Neighborhood Association would be meeting to discuss some of the same issues.

2. A review of issues relating to the M79.

Following the Straphanger's Campaign declaring the M79 crosstown bus line the winner of the 2014 "Pokey Award" as slowest local bus route in the city, NYC Transit came to speak with the Committee about issues on that route. Marcus Book of NYC Transit reported that this route outperforms the Manhattan average for Wait Time Assessment (one of their standard metrics for reviewing routes).

Various residents of the Upper East Side reported on their issues with the M79. Multiple people suggested that the bus should stop and dwell at the first stop (at E. 79th St. & East End Avenue), even if no one is visibly waiting. NYC Transit reported that in July 2015 they plan to make some adjustments to the M79 schedule that will allow more time for the bus to reach the first stop after leaving the depot, to avoid having the bus start its route behind schedule; it was noted that these adjustments involve "shifting" the spacing of scheduled time between stops rather than adding time to the overall schedule.

Someone asked whether the M79 route would be extended in future to connect to either the 86th Street or 72nd Street station of the Second Avenue Subway. NYC Transit reported that no decisions

have been made, but that they are likely to consider such a connection when those subway stations open.

Other items mentioned were the potential for off-board fare collection, the number of schools whose students ride the M79, excessive headways between buses, the shelter location for the 80th & East End Avenue westbound stop (due to a sidewalk vault), and possible issues with dispatching.

The Committee asked NYC Transit to report back with a list of the traffic and enforcement issues that they have identified as frequently contributing to delays on the M79 route, for the Community Board to try and coordinate an interagency effort among Transit, DOT, and NYPD to try to resolve some of these issues.

There was also some brief discussion about some overcrowding issues on the M66 line. NYC Transit Bus Operations staff also noted that the low-floor buses cannot be used on the M66 line, due to height issues for bridges above the Central Park Transverse roads.

3. A request for a new Revocable Consent to install a fenced-in area at 117 East 83rd Street.

The petitioners came before the Transportation Committee meeting for the January 7 meeting, following two previous meetings at which they had not appeared.

Angelo Costa of Meltzer/Costa presented a request for a fenced-in area and plantings in front of a former carriage house being renovated at 117 East 83rd Street, between Park & Lexington Avenues. The two existing front entrances to this building are located 8 inches above the sidewalk, and there are sidewalk vaults beneath the front of the house that need to be removed and covered. The architect is proposing to raise the entrances, which could create a tripping hazard; in addition, there is a garage door located between these two entrances, which would require a ramp at the garage entrance. They are proposing to add a 3' 8"-tall fence in front of the entire length of the property (25'), along with plantings.

The Committee expressed several concerns, particularly regarding the footprint of the proposed fence and the impact on the pedestrian experience. The architect seemed willing to return with a design that eliminates the fence and perhaps scales back the planters.

The Committee passed the following unanimous resolution to **disapprove** the application:

WHEREAS David Edelstein has petitioned for a new revocable consent at 117 East 83rd Street to construct, maintain, and use a proposed fenced-in area; and

WHEREAS the proposed fence extends the entire 25-foot length of the property; and

WHEREAS this fenced-in area will negatively impact pedestrians passing in front of this property; and

WHEREAS the petitioner's architect has offered to submit a revised petition, without fencing along the length of the property and perhaps using scaled-back planters;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan **disapproves** the request for a revocable consent to construct, maintain, and use a proposed fenced-in area at 117 East 83rd Street; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan encourages the petitioner to submit a revised proposal.

*Approved: 5 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain, 0 not voting for cause, plus 1 Public Member voting Yes.
Yes: Birnbaum, Falk, Lader, Popper, Warren; Menegon (Public Member)*

4. A request for a new Revocable Consent to install a fenced-in area and steps at 112 East 96th Street.

A representative from John G. Waite Associates appeared before the Transportation Committee meeting on behalf of The New York Public Library, following one previous meeting at which they did not appear, to present a revocable consent petition as part of the façade restoration project at the 96th Street Branch Library.

The Committee passed the following resolution to approve the petition by a unanimous vote:

WHEREAS The New York Public Library (NYPL) has petitioned for a revocable consent to construct, maintain, and use two granite piers, a concrete fenced-in area, and steps to the basement at 112 East 96th Street; and

WHEREAS NYPL is currently restoring the façade of the 96th Street Branch Library; and

WHEREAS the 96th Street Branch Library is not a landmark building, but the proposed changes attempt to recreate elements of the historic façade that were previously altered;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan approves The New York Public Library's petition for a revocable consent to construct, maintain, and use two granite piers, a concrete fenced-in area, and steps to the basement at 112 East 96th Street, as presented.

*Approved: 5 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain, 0 not voting for cause, plus 1 Public Member voting Yes.
Yes: Birnbaum, Falk, Lader, Popper, Warren; Menegon (Public Member)*

5. Old Business.

There has been no response from DOT about the November 2014 request for leading pedestrian intervals at major intersections on Second Avenue within the Subway construction zone.

6. New Business.

There was no new business.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
A. Scott Falk and Charles Warren, Co-Chairs