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The City of New York Manhattan Community Board 8

Transportation Committee

Wednesday, February 5, 2014

MSK-Rockefeller Research Laboratories

430 East 67th Street (First-York) Room 103

6:30 PM

Minutes

Present: Lowell Barton, Michele Birnbaum, Lori Bores, A. Scott Falk, Lorance Hockert, Rita Popper, H. Barry Schneider, Judith Schneider, Charles Warren, Timothy Yeo; Michael Dillon & David Menegon (Public Members)

The Meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM. Prior to the first agenda item, there was some brief discussion of the Mayor's Vision Zero initiative and a list of serious crashes that occurred on the Upper East Side in January 2014.

1. Informational Presentation: Move NY's plan for funding the Metropolitan Region's transportation systems/roads/bridges.

Sam Schwartz presented a draft of the Move NY Fair Tolling & Transportation Reinvestment Plan, a grassroots campaign for a regional master transportation plan. This plan is intended to fund much-needed investments for maintaining and modernizing the city's mass transit system and road network; bring equity to the toll structure for residents, commuters, and businesses; and reduce traffic congestion in the city.

The plan's primary goals are to make travel faster, smarter, and safer; spread costs and benefits equitably; and be business-friendly. In addition, revenues need to be concrete, protected, and focused first on areas with transit gaps.

Mr. Schwartz explained some of the history leading to the current inequitable tolling schemes (for example, the Queensboro Bridge may be the only free East River crossing sandwiched between two tolled crossings, leading more drivers to favor the Queensboro Bridge instead of the RFK Triborough Bridge of the Queens Midtown Tunnel). Under the Move NY plan, some new tolls would be added, some crossings would have their tolls raised, and other tolls would be reduced. The plan would also include per-trip tolls for private vehicles crossing south of 60th Street in Manhattan; these tolls would be capped at the cost of a single round-trip for commercial vehicles, and taxis would have a surcharge for trips south of 96th Street in place of the 60th Street toll.

After some discussion, the Committee passed the following resolution:

WHEREAS, traffic congestion in the central business district of Manhattan has been increasing on a yearly basis with the result that it is very difficult to carry out business in the area, and
WHEREAS, the traffic congestion in the central business district of Manhattan has led to deteriorating air quality with an adverse impact on health and the environment, and
WHEREAS, traffic congestion in the central business district of Manhattan has led to traffic congestion on the Upper East Side, and
WHEREAS, the lack of tolls on the Queensboro Bridge has led to traffic congestion on the Upper East Side, and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to provide a continuing source of money for mass transit improvements in order to bolster the budget of the MTA, and
WHEREAS, the Move NY Fair Tolling & Transportation Reinvestment Plan would both decrease traffic congestion and provide funding for mass transit and roads, and
WHEREAS, in March 2008 Community Board 8M passed a resolution in support of congestion pricing by a vote of 27 in favor, 6 opposed, and 3 abstentions;
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan supports the draft Move NY Fair Tolling & Transportation Reinvestment Plan.

Approved: 9 Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstentions

Yes: Barton, Bores, Falk, Hockert, B. Schneider, J. Schneider, Popper, White, Yeo

Abstain: Birnbaum

Public Member Votes: 2 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions

Yes: Dillon, Menegon

2. Informational Presentation re: Via, a new smartphone-enabled transportation solution providing on-demand ridesharing for a flat fare.

Representatives from Via appeared before the Committee with a brief presentation regarding the beta test of their new ridesharing service, which dispatches shared vehicles during weekday rush hours for travel between the Upper East Side and Midtown East. Currently, Via is offering rides for \$4 per person using their iPhone app, with the following parameters:

- Weekday mornings, 7:00 to 9:30 AM, pickups on York and Second Avenues between 62nd & 92nd Streets, drop-offs in a limited zone in Midtown East.
- Weekday evenings from 5:30 to 8:00 PM, pickups on Park Avenue between 47th & 59th Streets, drop-offs on York between 62nd & 92nd Streets.

3. Continued discussion: Yorkville Senior Pedestrian Focus Area.

Jesse Mintz-Roth from NYC DOT's Office of Research, Implementation, & Safety returned for further discussion of the Department's recommendations for safety improvements within the Yorkville study area, which runs from East 72nd Street to East 91st Street, between York and Madison Avenues. DOT introduced the Safe Streets for Seniors initiative after identifying the fact that senior citizens make up a disproportionate share of the victims of pedestrian crashes, at a rate of roughly three times their share of the population.

DOT had looked at locations with incidences of senior pedestrian injuries, and proposed the following strategies for improvements, in four categories:

- Concrete neckdowns (permanent curb extensions) at the following two locations, to shorten crossing distances and to slow turning vehicles:
 - SE corner of E. 82nd St. & York Ave.
 - NE corner of E. 83rd St. & Third Ave.
- One Pedestrian Safety Island, to shorten crossing distances and to slow turning vehicles:
 - on E. 86th St. at 1st Ave., between the NE & SE corners
- New or changed Truck Loading Zones at the following four locations:
 - East side of Lexington Ave. between E. 83rd & E. 84th St. (Duane Reade & D'Agostino; extending existing hours to 1 PM instead of 10 AM)
 - West side of Third Ave. between E. 82nd & E. 83rd St. (Food Emporium)
 - East side of Third Ave. between E. 83rd & E. 84th St. (Duane Reade & delis)
 - West side of York Ave. between E. 79th St. & E. 80th St. (D'Agostino)
- Banning left turns from westbound E. 86th St. onto Lexington Ave. to eliminate pedestrian conflicts and improve traffic flow on E. 86th St.

An additional concrete neckdown that had been proposed at the southeast corner of E. 79th St. & York Ave. was removed from the plan following the original DOT presentation, and is not currently being considered.

DOT also detailed the following completed pedestrian improvements within Yorkville:

- 27 pedestrian safety islands on First Ave. between E. 72nd St. & E. 96th St.
- Painted neckdowns on the NW corners of Third Ave. at both E. 79th St. & E. 86th St.
- New 7-second leading pedestrian interval at 86th St. & Third Ave.
- Additional crossing time added at 21 crossing signals
- Modified 140 crossing signals to accommodate slower walking speeds
- Installed countdown times at 20 intersections, with 120 more underway
- Installed 2 CityBenches, with more senior-requested locations being investigated
- Repaired broken pedestrian ramps (curb cuts) at three locations
- Outreach to educate senior pedestrians

At a previous meeting, a representative from the East 79th Street Neighborhood Association had requested that the new loading zone on York Ave. between 79th & 80th St. should be in addition to the existing 80th St. loading zone (rather than replacing it).

There was some discussion of bike lanes in this neighborhood, and how senior pedestrians interact with the bike lanes and cyclists. A member of the public wondered whether the left-turn restriction at 86th Street might encourage vehicles to access Lexington north of 86th Street; there was some discussion about the existing traffic congestion on Lexington Avenue between 86th & 88th Streets, and what might be done to alleviate this, such as additional loading zones.

WHEREAS the New York City Department of Transportation's Safe Streets for Seniors initiative is designed to increase pedestrian safety in areas with many senior citizens; and

WHEREAS having the Safer Streets for Seniors improvements will decrease injuries not just for senior citizens, but for the entire community; and

WHEREAS NYC DOT has identified the area from East 72nd Street to East 91st Street, between York and Madison Avenues as the Yorkville Senior Pedestrian Focus Area; and

WHEREAS NYC DOT proposed the following four strategies for improvements in the Yorkville Senior Pedestrian Focus Area:

1. Concrete neckdowns (curb extensions) at the following locations:
 - a. SE corner of E. 82nd St. & York Ave.
 - b. NE corner of E. 83rd St. & Third Ave.
2. A pedestrian safety island E. 86th St. at 1st Ave., between the NE & SE corners
3. New or changed Truck Loading Zones at the following four locations:
 - a. East side of Lexington Ave. between E. 83rd & E. 84th St. (Duane Reade & D'Agostino; extending existing hours to 1 PM instead of 10 AM)
 - b. West side of Third Ave. between E. 82nd & E. 83rd St. (Food Emporium)
 - c. East side of Third Ave. between E. 83rd & E. 84th St. (Duane Reade & delis)
 - d. West side of York Ave. between E. 79th St. & E. 80th St. (D'Agostino)
4. A left-turn ban at Lexington Avenue for cars traveling west on East 86th Street; and

WHEREAS concrete neckdowns reduce crossing distances, increase pedestrian visibility, slow turning vehicles, and decrease sidewalk overcrowding, more with protection than painted neckdowns provide; and

WHEREAS a pedestrian safety island can reduce crossing distances and slow turning vehicles; and

WHEREAS loading zones can reduce congestion, avoid cars swerving around double-parked vehicles in the moving traffic lanes, and increase visibility between drivers and pedestrians; and

WHEREAS 19 pedestrians were struck while crossing at the intersection of East 86th Street & Lexington Avenue during the five years from 2007 to 2011, and

WHEREAS the intersection of East 86th Street & Lexington Avenue has very high pedestrian traffic, with subway entrances at all four corners, and several tourist and shopping destinations located nearby; and

WHEREAS the 86th Street 4/5/6 Station on the Lexington Avenue line is the 10th busiest subway station in Manhattan, with 63,550 riders on an average weekday in 2012; and

WHEREAS separated subway platforms, with no available transfer between the uptown and downtown platforms, result in all round-trip commuters needing to cross Lexington Avenue in one direction; and

WHEREAS there are nearly 10 times as many pedestrians crossing Lexington Avenue in the south side crosswalk on East 86th Street as there are cars turning left at that intersection; and

WHEREAS a ban on left turns onto Lexington Avenue for cars traveling westbound on East 86th St. eliminates conflicts between pedestrians and turning vehicles, and would better organize and improve traffic flow on East 86th Street;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan approves the Department of Transportation proposals for the Yorkville Senior Pedestrian Area, but requests that the proposed loading zone on the west side of York Avenue between 79th & 80th Streets be in addition to (not in place of) the current loading zone on the southern curb of East 80th Street west of York Avenue; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Board 8M requests dedicated traffic enforcement at the affected locations for the first six weeks after installation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan asks DOT to investigate coordination of staggered delivery schedules to allow for more efficient use of the loading zones.

Approved: 9 Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstentions

Yes: Barton, Bores, Falk, Hockert, B. Schneider, J. Schneider, Popper, White, Yeo

Abstain: Birnbaum

Public Member Votes: 2 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions

Yes: Dillon, Menegon

4. A request to change the parking on East 63rd Street between York and First Avenues from No Standing, 7AM to Midnight, all days to No Standing, 7AM to 7PM, except Sundays. (Requested by Ms. Siskind, resident)

Around the beginning of January, NYC DOT changed the parking regulations on the southern curb of East 63rd Street, reportedly in conjunction with the nighttime closure of the outer Queensbound lane on the Queensboro Bridge. The prior regulation had been *No Standing, 7 AM to 7 PM, Except Sundays*; the new regulation is *No Standing, 7 AM to Midnight, All Days*. In response to complaints regarding this change from residents, who have not observed any increase in traffic due to the change in bridge traffic patterns, Josh Orzeck of DOT indicated that they hope to be able to restore the prior regulations, but were waiting to finalize their observation of the traffic on this block.

After some brief discussion, the Committee passed the following unanimous resolution:

WHEREAS New York City Department of Transportation has recently changed the parking regulations on the southern curb of East 63rd Street, between York and First Avenues; and

WHEREAS the change in the nighttime traffic pattern on the Queensboro Bridge does not appear to have caused a noticeable increase in traffic on East 63rd Street sufficient to require additional parking restrictions between 7 PM and Midnight; and

WHEREAS the elimination of parking widens the available roadway in the evening and allows cars to speed down this block; and

WHEREAS NYC DOT is already looking to reverse this change in parking regulations;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 Manhattan strongly urges NYC DOT to restore the parking regulations on the southern curb of East 63rd Street, between York and First Avenue, to *No Standing, 7 AM to 7 PM, Except Sundays*.

Approved: 10 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions

Yes: Barton, Birnbaum, Bores, Falk, Hockert, B. Schneider, J. Schneider, Popper, White, Yeo

Public Member Votes: 2 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions

Yes: Dillon, Menegon

5.A request for a neckdown at the intersection of Third Avenue & East 62nd Street to prevent illegal truck traffic.

In response to repeated complaints that trucks are illegally traveling on East 62nd Street between Third and Second Avenues, which is in the Treadwell Farms Historic District and has a truck prohibition, the Committee discussed a suggestion for a concrete neckdown at the southeast corner of East 62nd Street & Third Avenue. A curb extension at that corner might discourage trucks from improperly turning onto East 62nd Street from Third Avenue.

All comments from the public and Committee members supported the proposal, and the following resolution passed unanimously:

WHEREAS the block of East 62nd Street between Second & Third Avenues is located within the Treadwell Farms Historic District, one of the oldest historic districts in New York City; and

WHEREAS trucks are prohibited from this block unless making a local delivery; and

WHEREAS there is a chronic problems of trucks illegally using this block as a through route; and

WHEREAS a concrete neckdown at the southeast corner of East 62nd Street & Third Avenue would discourage trucks from turning onto 62nd Street;

THEREFORE be it resolved that Community Board 8 Manhattan urges NYC DOT to install a concrete neckdown at the southeast corner of East 62nd Street & Third Avenue

Approved: 10 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions

Yes: Barton, Birnbaum, Bores, Falk, Hockert, B. Schneider, J. Schneider, Popper, White, Yeo

Public Member Votes: 2 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions

Yes: Dillon, Menegon

6. Old Business

The speedboard requested for East 60th Street between Second and Third Avenue, for vehicles coming off the Queensboro Bridge exit, has not yet been installed while DOT looks for a practical, safe place to put it.

7. New Business

There was no New Business.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A. Scott Falk and Charles Warren, Co-Chairs