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**The City of New York  
Community Board 8 Manhattan  
Transportation Committee**  
Wednesday June 5, 2019, 6:30 PM  
*New York Blood Center - Auditorium*

**Minutes**

*Present:* Lowell Barton, Michele Birnbaum, Alida Camp, Rebecca Dangoor, Paul Higgins, Craig Lader, Barry Schneider, Tricia Shimamura, Charles Warren, Peter Borock (public member), Jordan Wouk (public member)

*Absent (Excused):* Lori Bores, Billy Freeland, Rebecca Lamorte, Rita Popper, Valerie Mason

*Absent (Unexcused):* None

**Resolutions for Approval: None**

The meeting was called to order at 6:38 PM.

**Item 1 – Presentation by NYC Department of Transportation – Lexington Avenue Bus Lane Improvements between 60<sup>th</sup> and 96<sup>th</sup> Streets: Proposal for a 24-Hour Painted Bus Lane and Proposed Changes to Parking Regulations**

Kimberly Rancourt and Kyle Gebhart of New York City DOT presented a proposal to install a 24-hour painted bus lane on Lexington Avenue between 96<sup>th</sup> Street and 60<sup>th</sup> Street. The proposed bus lane is one of 24 priority projects identified in New York City's Better Buses Action Plan released in April 2019 that aims to increase bus speeds by 25% by 2020. This presentation was an update to the proposal originally presented at the May 2019 Transportation Committee meeting, with more detailed information regarding proposed changes to parking regulations that were requested by the Transportation Committee. The proposal was developed by NYCDOT staff based on traffic and planning studies performed internally.

Lexington Avenue was identified as a priority corridor due to a combination of slow bus speeds, unreliable buses and travel times, high ridership and a high volume of buses. Ridership on Lexington Avenue bus routes (M98, M101, M102 and M103) averages 44,000 daily total passengers; this accounts for between 24% and 30% of all people using Lexington Avenue. Buses are scheduled every 3 minutes during the AM and PM peaks. The average bus speed along Lexington Avenue is 5.0MPH in the AM and 3.9MPH in the PM, compared to a Manhattan average of 5.24MPH throughout the day. Traffic conditions contribute to slow travel times and poor reliability, as lanes are often blocked by double-parked vehicles blocking general lanes and curbside parking lanes.

The current configuration of Lexington Avenue features three general traffic lanes and curbside parking on both sides of the street; the west side curb lane serves as a bus lane between 7AM and 10AM. Current parking regulations are generally 10AM to 7PM on the west curb, and 7AM to 7PM on the east curb. The proposal,

according to NYCDOT, would improve bus speeds and reliability, enable loading during peak periods on the west curb, and improve curb access for local businesses.

According to DOT, the proposal would have generally minimal impacts on traffic flow; they presented a traffic analysis chart depicting existing and proposed “level of service” that was based on traffic modeling that incorporated proposed signal modifications, turn bays and parking modifications that the output showed would mitigate the impacts of the elimination of a general traffic lane. It showed some areas with improved traffic flow and some areas where delays would increase.

The details of the proposal are as follows:

- Installation of a 24-hour a day, 7 day a week bus lane. This bus lane would replace the traffic lane next to the existing bus lane in the current right-most general traffic lane. The bus lane would be able to be used by all buses, including those not operated by New York City Transit.
- Right turn bays at 86<sup>th</sup>, 79<sup>th</sup>, 72<sup>nd</sup>, 63<sup>rd</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> Streets, and related elimination of 3-5 parking spaces at each intersection;
- Left turn bays at 68<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> Street along with turn bays on the cross street, which would result in the removal of 3-4 parking spaces at each location;
- Changes in parking regulations based on land use and parking demand, including adding commercial meters to improve curb access and reduce double parking. The proposed regulations were developed based off of research conducted by DOT staff to determine the types of businesses on each block, along with in-person outreach to survey businesses along Lexington Ave. (performed by DOT staff assigned to their street ambassador program) to determine times at which deliveries were being performed by individual businesses. There were 3 primary categories of proposed parking:
  1. *Generic Commercial Parking – 3 hour commercial meters 7-10AM, 2 hour general meters 10AM-7PM, general overnight parking*
  2. *Small Stores/Restaurants – 2 hour commercial meters 7AM -4PM, 2 hour general meters 4PM – 7or 10PM, general overnight parking*
  3. *Large Retail Chain – 3 hour commercial meters 7AM to 7PM, general overnight parking*
- Potential installation of bus boarding platforms, similar to those at some Select Bus Service Stops, at M101 Limited Stops, initially at 79<sup>th</sup> and 72<sup>nd</sup> Streets in the 2019/2020 timeframe, and at a yet-to-be-determined future date at 96<sup>th</sup>, 86<sup>th</sup> and 68<sup>th</sup> Streets.
- Prioritized enforcement of the bus lane, with the Better Buses Action Plan dedicating a team of tow trucks to bus lane enforcement;
- The timeline for implementation of the Bus Lane and parking regulation changes is Summer 2019.
- NYCDOT will require one year to assess bus and traffic operations following implementation, but will be open to making changes earlier to parking if it is determined that the new regulations on certain blocks are not appropriate.

The majority of those who commented on the presentation were opposed to the loss of the traffic lane and/or concerned about the impacts that the parking regulation changes would have on small businesses. There were concerns expressed that there was not enough outreach performed, and that the outreach conducted by street ambassadors was not performed recently enough to be valid for current businesses. Some speakers voiced the opinion that even a 25% increase in speeds would save passengers little time, and thus didn't justify removing a lane of general traffic. The loss of a general traffic lane 24 hours a day, combined with other recent changes to signalization that have resulted in slower travel times for general vehicles, was also viewed as an issue by some speakers. There were many who feared that double parking would continue to create congestion, and one member raised the point that the City's stipulated fine program encourages double parking regardless of the enforcement efforts in place. The impending introduction of congestion pricing and the specter of increased traffic in areas bordering the congestion zone was also raised as a reason why the removal of a general traffic lane may be inadvisable.

There were also questions raised by members of the Committee regarding the accuracy of the graphic displaying “level of service”, both for the existing conditions and anticipated future conditions. There were also questions regarding why the proposed actions only end at 60<sup>th</sup> Street, since there are some dayparts in which the congestion is worse south of 60<sup>th</sup> Street than it is north of 60<sup>th</sup> Street.

There were once again suggestions that DOT consider adding dedicated drop-off zones for passenger drop-offs to further reduce the likelihood of double parking, and the need for vigorous enforcement of double parking was emphasized. Other suggestions included painting bus stops the same color as the bus lanes, new laws that would require vehicles illegally parked in a bus lane to be towed, and an assessment of whether 3-hour commercial loading zones are too lengthy and contribute to double parking. There were some specific suggestions for changes in parking regulations on some blocks and DOT was willing to look at those changes.

**Item 2: Updates from the New York City Department of Transportation**

There were no other updates provided by DOT.

**Item 3: Old Business**

There was no old business.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Charles Warren & Craig Lader, Co-Chairs