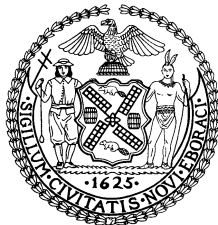


**Nicholas D. Viest**  
Chairman

**Latha Thompson**  
District Manager



**505 Park Avenue**  
**Suite 620**  
**New York, N.Y. 10022**  
(212) 758-4340  
(212) 758-4616 (Fax)  
[www.cb8m.com](http://www.cb8m.com) Website  
[info@cb8m.com](mailto:info@cb8m.com) - E-Mail

**The City of New York**  
**Manhattan Community Board 8**

**Parks Committee**  
**Ramaz School Auditorium,**  
**125 East 85<sup>th</sup> St.**  
**November 6, 2014, 6:30 PM**

CB8M Members in attendance: Elizabeth Ashby, Lowell Barton, Jim Clynes, Susan Evans, Scott Falk, Craig Lader, Sharon Pope, Rita Popper, Peggy Price, Barbara Rudder, Judy Schneider, Teri Slater

Excused: Sophia James, Barry Schneider

**1. Update on the Status of Work on the East River Esplanade**

Erik Linsalata and Alex Eng, Parks Dept. officials responsible for managing the rehabilitation of the East River Esplanade, provided an update on the status of this reconstruction work. Using the \$35 million that's been budgeted over three years for structural repairs, they said the Parks Dept. will tackle the most damaged sites first. In CB8M, these repair sites on the Esplanade include:

- E. 63-64 Sts., at a cost of \$4.5 million;
- E. 79-81 Sts., costing \$400,000;
- E. 88-90 Sts., costing \$1.5 million;
- E. 90-91 Sts., costing \$2.4 million.

Although major reconstruction is now occurring north of 96 St., most of the \$35 million is targeted for use in the CB8 district, Parks Dept. officials said.

Mr. Eng stated that he will send a presentation detailing the planned construction for use on CB8's website. In addition, he said that the CB8 board officials will be notified of closures on the Esplanade due to construction.

So far, funding for Esplanade improvements do not include irrigation. CB8 meeting attendees stressed the need for irrigation facilities, which should be included in the area's refurbishing.

The Parks Dept. does plan to hire a landscape architect for the project. However, CB8 attendees again pointed to the need for a master plan for the area. Such an overall plan could help maintain a consistent design to the Esplanade as repairs take place to individual sites.

## **2. Presentation and discussion: A City Council Bill That Would Ban Car Traffic on the Central Park Loop Drives Next Summer**—*a joint issue with the Landmarks and Transportation committees*

City Council Member Helen Rosenthal detailed provisions of her bill to ban car traffic on the Central Park loop drives from June 25<sup>th</sup> to September 24<sup>th</sup> next year. During that time, the City's Transportation Dept. would study the traffic impact of these road closures, especially on roads adjacent to Central Park. The proposal would not involve the park's east-west transverse roads.

Ms. Rosenthal said that, if implemented, the plan would likely have the biggest impact on Manhattan's East Side, i.e., the many afternoon commuters entering the park at 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and exiting at East 72<sup>nd</sup> St.

In December, the City Council's Transportation Committee is expected to hold the first of two hearings on this proposal, Ms. Rosenthal reported.

Although similar studies have been conducted before, Ms. Rosenthal said this one would include the period right after school resumes, when traffic usually picks up after the slower summer period.

Meeting attendees aired a wide range of views on the proposal—from enthusiastic support of it to suggestions of different dates for the study, to opposition to the plan.

Several proponents of the bill stressed the park's role as an urban oasis, which would be enhanced by reducing traffic in the park. Moreover, "Central Park was not designed as a transportation route," one attendee said. (In 2011, CB8M passed a resolution favoring a car-free trial period in Central Park.)

However, concerns were raised, especially about traffic conditions worsening on City streets if the loop drives were not accessible, and about dangerous cyclists in the park. To some attendees, wayward cycling is currently a bigger issue than car traffic and also warrants a study. And some noted that the City has already reduced car access to the park's loop roads.

Another point of debate: The best time to conduct such a study. Since car traffic tends to drop during the summertime, some attendees felt it instead should occur in the fall or the spring. Some also suggested extending the dates currently proposed for the study from late September to just before the New York City Marathon takes place.

Some members expressed hope that such a study would explore more than just the effect of a car ban on street traffic: They'd like it to reveal how a Central Park car ban would affect overall safety and enjoyment of the park.

Council Member Rosenthal expressed interest in the various ideas presented—especially the possibility of changing the dates of the traffic study. Thus, CB8 members opted to hold off on any resolution concerning her bill to see what, if any, changes to it are made.

**Margaret Price and Barbara Rudder**  
**Co-Chairs, Parks Committee**