

Russell Squire
Chair

Will Brightbill
District Manager



505 Park Avenue, Suite 620
New York, N.Y. 10022-1106
(212) 758-4340
(212) 758-4616 (Fax)
www.cb8m.com – Website
info@cb8m.com – E-Mail

The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Transportation Committee
Wednesday January 6, 2021, 6:30 PM
Conducted Remotely on Zoom

Minutes

Present: Lowell Barton, Michele Birnbaum, Lori Bores, Alida Camp, Rebecca Dangoor, Felice Farber, Billy Freeland, Craig Lader, Rebecca Lamorte, Valerie Mason, Rita Popper, Barry Schneider, Tricia Shimamura, Cos Spagnoletti, Marco Tamayo, Charles Warren, Peter Borock (public member)

Absent (Excused): Jordan Wouk (public member)

Resolutions for Approval: None

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 PM.

Item 1: 61st Street/62nd Street Temporary Bike Lanes - Continuing Discussion

In July 2020, New York City Department of Transportation installed temporary bike lanes along 61st and 62nd Streets. These bike lanes have resulted in significant feedback from residents and businesses of 61st and 62nd Streets, resulting in this matter being revisited.

The bike lanes were initially announced by NYCDOT in late June 2020. The following week, as part of a previously announced item regarding potential temporary bike lanes in response to increased biking resulting from Covid-19, NYCDOT provided a detailed presentation to Community Board 8 of their plan to implement the temporary lanes.

Since the lanes were installed, Community Board 8 has received a significant amount of complaints regarding increased traffic congestion along 61st and 62nd Streets, especially near the Queensboro Bridge, along with parking challenges, safety concerns and overall deterioration of quality of life. The minimal amount of advance notice of implementation and lack of engagement with local stakeholders was also noted. Speakers also noted their perception that these lanes are not being heavily utilized, and that there is a lack of enforcement of double parking and illegal parking in the bike lanes.

One of the most commonly raised concerns was the loss of access to the curbside, which hinders the ability for some people to safely or conveniently be dropped off in front of building entrances without entering the bike lane. This is especially impacting persons accessing the dialysis center on 62nd Street between 2nd and 1st Avenues, who primarily arrive by car and can be too weak to walk quickly or longer distances to avoid crossing the bike lanes. Colleen Chattergoon, NYCDOT Senior Planner and Liaison to CB8, did note that they have had dialogue with the dialysis center, and are working to try to find a solution to address their concerns.

There were also numerous speakers, including some who live along these corridors, who spoke in favor of the bike lanes, expressing how important these lanes are in providing a safe manner to traversing the East 60s. Some speakers spoke of their personal experiences of crossing the Queensboro bridge and the

critical connection these lanes provide between the Bridge and Central Park and the West Side. They emphasized that these lanes are also critical for calming traffic to make streets and intersections safer for cyclists and pedestrians, and provided their firsthand experiences of how the lanes are well utilized.

NYCDOT indicated that these temporary lanes are intended to be a precursor to permanent bike lanes, along 61st and 62nd Streets; they committed to returning to CB8 to present detailed plans and designs of any future permanent lanes prior to any capital construction projects being finalized and implemented. They also committed to providing data concerning the usage of the lanes since they have been implemented. (Note – in an email sent to CB8 after the meeting, NYCDOT has indicated that they are aiming to return to CB8 in March 2021 for further discussion).

Board Members were especially sensitive to the specific issue raised by the dialysis center. Some members expressed general opposition to bike lanes on 61st and 62nd Street; others strongly support these lanes and were interested in determining how they can be improved to address concerns of nearby residents and businesses as permanent lanes are being designed. Members discussed the need for more clarity and data to demonstrate of how 61st and 62nd streets were selected for bike lanes and whether they are the optimal streets for them to be situated over other nearby streets. The point was also raised that bike lanes fit into broader discussion of street design, and that many of the concerns expressed can potentially be mitigated in the permanent design by addressing broader issues regarding curbside use, such as addressing parking regulations and providing dedicated spaces for drop-off and pick-up of passengers and goods.

A member proposed a resolution for CB8 to oppose permanent bike lanes on 61st and 62nd Streets. The resolution failed by a vote of 3 Yes, 11 No, and 2 abstentions. The vote was as follows:

Yes (3+0): Birnbaum, Schneider, Tamayo

No (10+1): Barton, Bores, Farber, Freeland, Lader, Lamorte, Mason, Popper, Spagnoletti, Warren, Borock (Public Member)

Abstain (2+0): Dangoor, Shimamura

Item 2: Parking Placards - Addressing ongoing issues resulting from illegal/counterfeit placards and potential legislative remedies

In March 2019, CB8 passed a resolution supporting a proposed City Council legislative package regarding parking placard reform. This package of bills became law in November 2019, complementing other reforms that had been previously announced by the Mayor's office. Since the legislation was implemented, there have been many people who have spoken out at CB8 meetings about the ongoing illegal parking by vehicles with placards that are creating congestion and safety issues. Media reports have also highlighted the failure of these bills to produce meaningful improvements to illegal parking placards, and efforts to improve enforcement and implement electronic tracking systems have been stalled or defunded.

In an effort to synthesize the recent history of the subject matter over the past two years, a set of [briefing materials](#) was compiled by one of the Transportation Committee Co-Chairs that includes a synopsis of the recent City Council action and Mayor's Office initiatives, and media clippings. Since committee members wished to digest the information from the briefing materials to consider appropriate actions based on the current situation, it was determined that this item would be discussed in detail at the February 2021 Transportation Committee meeting, and that Committee members would be prepared to offer their suggestions for potential additional reforms and initiatives to address parking placard abuse and its impacts.

Item 3: A request to change parking regulations in front of 412/414 East 75th Street

This item was not discussed, as the constituent who requested this item was not present.

Item 4: NYCDOT Updates

Colleen Chattergoon, NYCDOT Senior Planner and Liaison to CB8, responded to a question regarding outdoor dining, and indicated that inspectors have found few compliance violations within Community District 8 and that they have not received any complaints from the public. Multiple board members raised concerns about outdoor dining structures that appear to be fully enclosed and permanent structures, and one member specified an example of one restaurant at 78th Street and 2nd Avenue.

Ms. Chattergoon also noted that NYCDOT is working with the Central Park Conservancy on a proposal to address safe biking through Central Park. Once a proposal is developed, NYCDOT will schedule a presentation for CB8 and CB7 to discuss next steps.

Item 5: New Business

A board member inquired about the suspension of penalties for unpaid parking of traffic camera summonses that began on March 22, 2020, and how traffic and parking enforcement can occur if penalties won't be incurred. It was determined that the Department of Finance would have to address this question.

Item 6: Old Business

There was no old business.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned 9:00 PM.

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