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**The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Transportation Committee**
Wednesday March 3, 2021, 6:30 PM
Conducted Remotely on Zoom

Minutes

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

Absent (Excused): None

Resolutions for Approval: None

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

Item 1: NYCDOT Presentation – Proposal for Permanent Protected Bike Lanes on East 61st and 62nd Streets

Officials from the New York City Department of Transportation provided a presentation on their proposal for permanent protected bike lanes on East 61st and East 62nd Streets. These streets first received temporary bike lanes in the August 2020 as part of NYCDOT efforts to expand the bike network as quickly as possible to accommodate the increases in biking due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The plan presented would result in the temporary markings, delineators and barriers used being upgraded, along with other changes to the physical configuration to these streets and their connections to other bike lanes that are in response to both community feedback and operational assessments of the temporary lanes.

Prior to the presentation, Councilman Ben Kallos provided comments supporting the expansion of New York City's bike network and the need to install protected bike lanes, including on 61st and 62nd Streets. This would make the streets safer for all users, including pedestrians and people in cars along with cyclists. He also noted his support for expanded bike parking.

NYCDOT Manhattan Borough Commissioner Ed Pincar opened the presentation and introduced his team: Kimberly Rancourt - Director of Special Projects, Ted Wright – Director of Bicycle and Greenway Programs, and Paula Rubira – Senior Project Manager. Ms. Rubira led the presentation, which is available on the CB8 Website. The presentation began with some background highlighting that crosstown bike lanes were both requested by Councilman Kallos and by Community Board 8 in 2015 which asked NYCDOT to provide a network of bicycle crosstown bicycle lanes on the Upper East Side using the safest appropriate design. Recent bike usage data indicates that biking has increased significantly in the past year, with the number of bike trips on the Queensboro Bridge rising over 25% to 6,267 per day, and the number of Citi Bike trips in Community District 8 increasing 12% to 408,028. Expansion of the bike network is also a broader initiative of NYC, as documented in its 2015 Green Wave report that called for 30 miles of protected bike lanes to be built out in addition to more recent efforts to respond to Covid-19.

The proposal presented by NYCDOT for permanent bike lanes continues to be for 61st and 62nd Streets, as this pair of streets was determined to be the best from network connectivity and operational standpoints. Ms. Rubira that it avoids 59th and 60th streets, which are designated as truck routes; it avoids 63rd and 64th Streets, which are

more heavily trafficked, it provides optimal connectivity to the Queensboro Bridge and between the East River Greenway and Central Park, and it has wider blocks east of 2nd Avenue that can better accommodate traffic. 61st and 62nd Streets are in the Vision Zero priority area, and are within the top 10% of corridors in Manhattan for fatalities or severely injured pedestrians.

The proposed design and configuration of the proposed permanent bike lanes on East 61st and 62nd Streets includes the following:

- Where street width is 30' (62nd St. between 2nd and 5th Avenues and 61st St. between 2nd and Lexington Avenues), there will be a 6' wide bike lane along the north curb, with a 5' striped buffer protecting separation from one 10' travel lane and one 9' parking lane along the south curbside;
- Where street width is 34' (61st Street between Lexington and 5th Ave.), there will be a 4' wide bike lane along the north curb, with a 3' striped buffer protecting separation from one 9' parking lane, one 10' travel lane and one 8' parking lane along the south curbside;
- On both 61st and 62nd Streets between 1st and 2nd Avenues, there will be a 6' wide bike lane along the north curb, with a 7' striped buffer protecting separation from one 10' travel lane and one 11' rush hour traffic lane along the south curbside that will be available for loading during off-peak hours;
- On 60th Street between York Ave. and 1st Ave., a bi-directional bike lane will be provided along the south curbside, with 4' provided per direction. A 3' striped buffer will provide separation from one 11' travel lane and one 12' rush hour traffic lane along the north curbside that will be available for loading during off-peak hours; 10' travel lane and one 8' parking lane along the south curbside; this will provide direct connectivity to the East River Greenway along the waterfront;
- The existing barriers and gates at the base of the Queensboro Bridge's north outer roadway will be removed, enabling cyclists to avoid having to exit onto 1st Avenue and circling back along 59th Street to reach 2nd Ave. and points west. The design is currently in development, but is expected to include an all-way stop sign, a new two-way bike path between 60th and 61st Streets, and bike stamps on the existing sidewalks connecting 61st and 62nd Streets in the alleyways along the upper roadway exit ramp;
- Intersection improvements to improve pedestrian safety and vehicle flow, including updated signal timing, turn lanes and offset crossings
- Curb management to improve curb access, including targeted regulations for specific uses and improved street cleaning and snow removal;
- Dedicated curbside ambulette parking in front of the dialysis center at 315 East 62nd St. and for other vehicles dropping off patients that preserves curb access for other vehicles conducting patient drop-offs and pick-ups. In such zones, there are typically breaks in the protected bike lane, and bikes are directed to an area where the striped buffer is located. NYCDOT has developed a conceptual plan, and intends to work with the dialysis center staff as the plan gets finalized.

Ms. Rubira described efforts to address some of the community concerns that have been raised regarding the existing temporary bike lanes:

- To improve conditions on the bike lanes for cyclists, the proposal includes fully protected bike lanes that provide better connectivity, especially coming off the Queensboro Bridge, and improved intersections that would provide additional safety benefits to bike lane users;
- To address concerns raised regarding curb access needs, the proposal aims to accommodate specific needs such as daycare centers, medical facilities, and emergency vehicles. Curbside regulations also will be adjusted to encourage higher turnover and improved curbside access;
- In response to many comments received in regard to traffic flow concerns and data showing that travel speeds on 61st and 62nd Streets the week after the temporary lanes were installed, the proposal ends the crosstown lanes on 1st Avenue rather than York Ave., it maintains two lanes of travel east of 2nd Avenue during peak periods and it includes intersection upgrades that will facilitate improved traffic flow and enforcement.

There were many comments provided by meeting attendees and CB8 members; there were approximately 50 speakers that provided comments or had questions; this discussion continued for nearly 3 hours. There was significant participation among those supportive of these bike lanes and those opposed because of specific concerns related to 61st and 62nd Streets; there were also general comments in opposition to bike lanes that were

not specific to 61st and 62nd Streets, mainly regarding pedestrian safety, enforcement and regulation. One member addressed labor and construction matters; another member spoke to the need to more comprehensively address parking and loading regulations in an integrated fashion with the installation of bike lanes. Another member highlighted the need to involve the disability community to ensure any impacts are sensitive to their needs.

The key areas of discussion that were specific to the 61st/62nd Street proposal are as follows:

Among bike lane supporters:

- The proposed opening of the barrier/gate at the base of the bridge and the direct connectivity between the bridge and 62nd Street will be a significant improvement to the bike network;
- The permanent treatments such as the green paint on the bike lanes and striping will discourage the bike lanes from being blocked by vehicles;
- The connectivity provided by the 61st/62nd Street lanes has exponentially improved conditions from cyclists traveling to/from Queens, and highlights why these are the best streets for the bike lanes to be situated in the low 60s;
- Prior to the temporary bike lanes, it was very dangerous to try to bike crosstown in the lower 60s; while the temporary lanes have been a significant improvement, the proposed improvements to the bike lanes and intersections across 61st/62nd St will make biking even safer;
- The bike lanes will make conditions safer for all users, not just cyclists, and could contribute to fewer cars using these streets and encourage more biking and its related environmental benefits
- Any perceived congestion issues can be mitigated by more enforcement of illegally parked or standing vehicles that block travel lanes and are the primary cause of congestion;

Among those opposed to the 61st/62nd St. Bike lanes or expressing concerns about components of the 61st/62nd street plan:

- Congestion is at a level along 61st and 62nd Streets that makes them inappropriate for bike lanes, especially due to their role in collecting traffic exiting the Queensboro Bridge;
- The removal of a travel lane to accommodate bike lanes on certain segments of 61st and 62nd Streets has adversely affected the traffic flow;
- The bike lanes are an inconvenience to residents who live along these corridors who have lost direct access to the curbside, and worry that emergency responders will have difficulty answering calls.
- The bike lanes prevent vehicles from accessing the curbside in front of the dialysis center;
- Stopped vehicles will create congestion even with 2 travel lanes during peak periods
- Residents on foot feel less safe with the bike lanes present;
- The extent of public outreach by NYCDOT has been insufficient, especially with the Dialysis Center, and there should have been a concrete plan in place to provide ambulette parking and targeted pick-up and drop-off locations across the corridor rather than an ambiguous promise to do so;
- The bike lanes would interfere with the open restaurant spaces that are providing a critical lifeline to restaurants dealing with indoor seating restrictions, and these businesses should be prioritized ahead of the lanes becoming permanent;
- The implementation of congestion pricing could further increase traffic in the blocks just north of the 60th Street boundary
- Bike lane enforcement has been lax, and these lanes require significant enforcement both to protect pedestrians from speeding cyclists and e-bikes and to prevent bike lanes from being blocked.

In response to the issues raised, NYCDOT noted that there they have successfully implemented crosstown protected bike lanes on various corridors throughout Manhattan with minimal impacts to residents and few complaints. In response to the issues with curbside access at the dialysis center, NYCDOT committed to continuing dialogue and updating the proposal with specific details that they believe will be satisfactory. While congestion is an issue on 61st and 62nd streets, travel speed data since the implementation of the temporary lanes shows that there have not been adverse impacts, and the trend lines when compared to neighboring 63rd and 64th Streets have all improved to a comparable degree between late 2019/early 2020 and late 2020/early 2021. Upon implementation, NYCDOT will work with NYPD to provide traffic agents at intersections with 2nd Avenue. In regard to open restaurants, the current temporary program is expected to evolve significantly as a permanent

program is implemented, and NYCDOT will be working with restaurants to try to accommodate their needs; while the current temporary program is in place, restaurants would be able to avail themselves of adjacent parking lanes even if a bike lane is present.

There is no final timeframe for implantation at this time; NYCDOT will be continuing to refine the proposal and meeting with constituents and stakeholders. Given the lack of final details on some components of the plan, especially the manner in which the issues faced by the dialysis center will be handled, the Committee held off on taking formal action. The Committee requested NYCDOT return to CB8's Transportation Committee in April with an updated presentation that further addresses pick-up and drop-off activities (including specific to the dialysis center), concerns raised by restaurants using curbside space while the pandemic is ongoing, questions raised by disability advocates and more data and details regarding questions about congestion. NYCDOT has committed to doing so, and to continuing community outreach in the interim.

Item 2: Bike Parking - Overview of NYCDOT Programs and Recently Announced Initiative to add 10,000 Bike Parking Racks in NYC

Due to the length of the 61st/62nd Street Bike Lane discussion, this item was deferred, and will be discussed at the April meeting of the Transportation Committee.

Item 3: Presentation from Sam Schwartz Engineering on the "Queens Ribbon," a pedestrian-bicycle bridge that would connect Queens to Midtown Manhattan

Due to the length of the 61st/62nd Street Bike Lane discussion, this item was deferred, and will be discussed at the June meeting of the Transportation Committee.

Item 4: NYCDOT Updates

There were no updates from NYCDOT unrelated to 61st/62nd Street bike lanes.

Item 5: New Business

A constituent requested CB8 address the issue of Dutch Express, Amazon and Fresh Direct conducting their truck unloading activities on public sidewalks and along curbsides on streets. CB8's District Manager requested such locations where this is occurring be sent to the District Office, but also noted that they shift their activities constantly once enforcement agents are made aware of activities in a location.

Item 6: Old Business

A member asked for an update on the Fairway Market parking regulations. CB8 received communications from Fairway's corporate office acknowledging awareness of our concerns; CB8 will be sending a letter to their CEO detailing the issues and asking commitments to do better, along with requesting their representatives participate in a meeting with the Committee.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:05 PM.

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