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**The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Transportation Committee**
Wednesday June 2, 2021, 6:30 PM
Conducted Remotely on Zoom

Please note: The resolutions contained in the committee minutes are recommendations submitted by the committee chair to the Community Board. At the monthly full board meeting, the resolutions are discussed and voted upon by all members of Community Board 8 Manhattan.

Minutes

Present: Lowell Barton, Michele Birnbaum, Lori Bores, Alida Camp, Rebecca Dangoor, Felice Farber, Craig Lader, Rita Popper, Barry Schneider, Cos Spagnoletti, Marco Tamayo, Charles Warren, Peter Borock (public member), Jordan Wouk (public member)

Absent (Excused): Billy Freeland, Rebecca Lamorte, Valerie Mason, Tricia Shimamura

Unanimous Resolutions for Approval:

Item 1: Concept for a “Queens Ribbon” Bike/Pedestrian Bridge to Manhattan

Item 3: Loading Zone Regulations in front of Fairway Market 86th Street

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 PM.

Item 1: Presentation from Sam Schwartz Engineering on the “Queens Ribbon,” a pedestrian-bicycle bridge that would connect Queens to Midtown Manhattan

Sam Schwartz, a transportation consultant and former NYC Traffic Commissioner, presented a concept to create a bike/pedestrian bridge connecting Queens and Roosevelt Island to Manhattan that he and an interdisciplinary team of professionals and graduate students developed.

The concept for a new bike/pedestrian bridge was developed in response to the growth in biking in recent years – since 2019, biking has increased 26% on weekdays and 57% on weekends in New York City. Cycling to work has increased 47% since 2012, a pace more than double compared to other large U.S. cities. CitiBike has also broken records, as recently as May 2021 when 2.7 million trips were performed. This has resulted in existing bike lanes on NYC bridges having nearly reached its capacity. NYCDOT, which is targeting 10% of all trips performed to be done by bikes by 2050, has recently announced initiatives to provide additional bike lanes on the Queensboro and Brooklyn Bridges. However, the additional capacity these lanes are expected to generate will be exhausted if the current rate of biking begins to reach the 10% target, which is what prompted Mr. Schwartz to think about innovative approaches to further increasing biking capacity across the East River. Additionally, other cities, including London and Paris, have built bike/pedestrian bridges that have become immensely popular and were relatively inexpensive to build compared to other transportation infrastructure.

The “Queens Ribbon” concept that is being proposed would be a 20 feet wide suspension bridge, with 10 feet dedicated to pedestrians and 10 feet dedicated to bikes (5 feet per direction). The lanes would be differentiated by

paint treatment. Although no specific location was proposed, Mr. Schwartz indicated that one approach could be to have it connect Long Island City to the East 50s over the southern portion of Roosevelt Island, which would allow it to land along the East Midtown Greenway now under construction; he noted that some of the piles used in a past FDR Drive project are still in place and can potentially be used for the Queens Ribbon. Another approach would be for the bridge to land at the location of the current FDR entrance at 49th Street that is unsafe and is a significant cause of traffic on the East Side. On the Queens side, various locations for the bridge landing are also under consideration, including near the Queensbridge Houses and the site where Amazon had previously planned on building a campus. The bridge would have a minimal impact on the viewscape due to its narrow width. It would dedicate space for seating or passive use. The bridge would be able to accommodate most emergency vehicles, though perhaps not full-size fire trucks.

The estimated cost of such a bridge would be approximately \$100-\$150 million, which could be funded through federal infrastructure legislation and programs. Before this concept could move forward, it would require planning and environmental study. With funding and regulatory hurdles to clear, and a projected 2 to 3 year construction timeline, the earliest this bridge would be able to be completed would be near the end of the 2020s.

There was strong support among committee members for the concept. There was particular interest in ensuring that Roosevelt Island would have a direct connection to the bridge, and Mr. Schwartz indicated that this was a priority, and that there were a variety of ways in which this would be potentially achieved. One member asked about the potential for an additional bike/pedestrian bridge in the future that would link the Halletts Point area of Queens with the northern tip of Roosevelt Island and either Carl Schurz Park or a repurposed East 91st St. Marine Transfer Station, which would create connections between 3 parks.

The following resolution was put forward by CB8:

WHEREAS; bike traffic has grown significantly in the past 10 years, especially since the onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic; and

WHEREAS; even with the anticipated expansion of bike/pedestrian lane availability on the Queensboro and Brooklyn Bridges, the current growth rate of biking would require additional capacity to meet projected demand; and

WHEREAS; an interdisciplinary team of planners, engineers and graduate students has developed a concept for a series of bike/pedestrian bridges connecting Manhattan's Central Business Districts to Brooklyn, Queens and New Jersey; and

WHEREAS; the Queens Ribbon is the proposed bike/pedestrian bridge concept that would connect the Long Island City area of Queens to the East Midtown Area of Manhattan; and

WHEREAS; the Queens Ribbon concept would likely cross over Roosevelt Island and could provide a significant connectivity improvement for Roosevelt Island residents and institutions traveling to Queens and Manhattan; and

WHEREAS; the anticipated cost of a Queens Ribbon would be relatively low compared to building vehicular bridges; and

WHEREAS; bike/pedestrian bridges built in other cities have proven to be immensely popular and well-utilized;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 Manhattan supports the concept of a Queens Ribbon bridge connecting Long Island City to East Midtown via Roosevelt Island; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 Manhattan requests that city and state transportation agencies commence planning and environmental studies required to establish feasibility and secure funding for potential construction, and that such studies include providing direct connectivity from the Bridge Deck to Roosevelt Island.

Yes (12+2): Barton, Birnbaum, Bores, Camp, Dangoor, Farber, Lader, Popper, Schneider, Spagnoletti, Tamayo, Warren, Borock (public member), Wouk (public member)

No (0): None

Item 2: NYCDOT Presentation - Neighborhood Loading Zone Program

In December 2019, NYCDOT provided a short presentation to CB8M on their Neighborhood Loading Zone (NLZ) program, which at that time was a demonstration program in select locations such as the Upper West Side and Chelsea. The program was developed to address double parking and aims to reduce double parking on narrow residential streets by providing space at the curb for activities such as package deliveries by commercial vehicles, taxi and car service pick-up and drop-off, and active loading and unloading of personal vehicles. The results from the demonstration program indicated that NLZs reduced double parking along corridors in which they were situated by 10-70%, and was particularly successful in narrow corridors where double parked trucks would otherwise block all moving traffic; there has also been strong use by people moving in and out of buildings where double parking is prevalent. The NLZ program is now being expanded, and will be introduced in the coming months to Community District 8 as part of a goal to double the number of NLZs citywide in response to community requests.

NYCDOT Freight Planner Matthew Roosa provided a presentation of the Neighborhood Loading Zone program and its next phase. He explained that the NLZ program is an element of a new NYCDOT Smart Truck Management Plan called “Delivering New York”, which aims to reduce truck congestion, expand curbside space for deliveries, promote cargo bikes, encourage the use of smaller & greener trucks, and improving the safety and efficiency of NYC’s truck routes and goods movement.

NLZs feature “No Parking” regulations weekdays 7AM to 7PM (though this can be adjusted for specific sites), and allow vehicles to conduct passenger pick-ups and drop-offs and goods delivery. It replaces alternate side parking regulations, and signage is installed to provide additional details of the program for those not familiar with its rules and regulations. There is no established time limit for vehicles stopped at these locations, though any loading that occurs is expected to allow for vehicle turnover. The zone is typically 40 feet in length to accommodate 2 passenger vehicles or one larger delivery truck (such as those used by UPS); they are located in front of residential buildings, either mid-block or near corners with retail activity. Siting criteria for new NLZs prioritize streets less than 35 feet wide with residential buildings with more than 15 units, and streets with bike lanes and bus routes. Corners are also being prioritized to facilitate deliveries to nearby retail outlets.

NYCDOT is conducting community outreach to obtain feedback on placement decisions for NLZs through their Projects and Initiatives Tool on their website. The tool allows users to identify desired locations for NLZs on a map; these suggested locations will be reviewed by NYCDOT, which will send finalized locations to CB8 for

review and further input before being installed on a rolling basis. The tool is currently active, and will accept feedback throughout June 2021. NYCDOT is also conducting outreach via palm cards and flyers. These links will also be available on the CB8M website.

There were numerous questions regarding the lack of a time limit, and concerns that there would be abuse of the loading zone without limits in place; NYCDOT indicated that there have been few issues throughout the demonstration program with vehicles using the spaces for long or unreasonable lengths of time, but would be open to considering time limits if a community district was interested. NYCDOT also said that the preferred 7AM to 7PM timeframe is also flexible, and in some areas has been adjusted to 8AM to 6PM. They noted the intent for NLZs to be able to accommodate a wide range of uses and purposes, but NYCDOT is open to additional discussions as to how to address ongoing issues regarding e-commerce truck activity such as Amazon and Fresh Direct that have been particularly problematic and disruptive on major avenues rather than more narrow streets. NYCDOT will look into how street cleaning will be able to occur in NLZs where street cleaning regulations will no longer be in effect, and provide an answer to CB8. One member suggested that NLZs be metered parking rather than free to use.

Item 3: Fairway Market 86th St. - Truck Loading Regulations

In May 2021, the representatives from Village Supermarket, Inc., owners of Fairway Market 86th Street, appeared before the Transportation Committee to discuss ongoing issues regarding the condition of the sidewalk and curbside in front of their storefront. This followed action taken by CB8 in February 2021 requesting that NYCDOT reduce the duration of the truck loading zone hours in front of Fairway Market on East 86th Street from 5AM to Midnight to 7:30AM to 9PM. NYCDOT indicated that they ordered the signage with the new loading zone hours, and that it would be ready for installation by July 31, 2021; which would allow Village Market, Inc. time to demonstrate their commitment to honoring CB8's requests to improve conditions. Unbeknownst to CB8 members, NYCDOT installed the new signage on May 6th, the day after the Transportation Committee acted.

Village Supermarket, Inc. General Council Dan McCarthy and Director of New York Operations Tom Santacrocce provided an update on the significant progress they made since the May 2021 meeting. These included:

- The number of forklifts in use has been reduced from 4 to 1;
- A counterbalance machine, which is a device that could eliminate the last forklift, was delivered on 6/1/21 and is being tested;
- The delivery from one of their major distributors that is responsible for about 1/3 of all deliveries has been shifted to a 5PM to 9PM window, when no other deliveries are taking place;
- Shopping carts have been removed from the outside of the store, and a new gatekeeper system that would lock carts and thus prevent them from leaving the indoor area has been ordered and is expected to be delivered mid-to late June (installation is dependent on NYC permitting);
- The number of storage bale positions has been reduced from 6 to 2, with more storage now available in the basement rather than on the street;
- New receiving staff has been hired to cover the 5AM to 2PM timeframe, when 2/3 of all product is delivered;
- The time to unload product from delivery trucks has been significantly reduced.

The Committee members expressed appreciation that Village Supermarket, Inc. was responsive and made clear progress, and described vastly improved conditions that they have witnessed since the May 2021 meeting. It was agreed that Village Supermarket would return to CB8M in July 2021 and provide a status update, and they offered to appear on a regular basis if warranted as they continue to work to further improve the street and sidewalk

conditions and activity. They also emphasized that the new parking regulations are a significant burden on their operations, and asked if the Committee would consider requesting they revert back to the original 5AM to Midnight Loading Zone hours. Committee members emphasized that the signs with the reduced loading zone hours could be reinstated if things did not keep improving as promised.

The following resolution was put forward by CB8:

WHEREAS, Village Supermarket, Inc. is the owner of Fairway Market 86th Street; and

WHEREAS, the sidewalk and curbside in front of Fairway Market 86th Street has regularly been overtaken by trucks, machinery and products, predating Village Supermarket, Inc. taking over the store in May 2020; and

WHEREAS, NYCDOT installed new signage in May 2021 reducing the hours of the loading zone in front of Fairway Market 86th Street in response to ongoing complaints and prior lack of responsiveness by Fairway Market 86th Street to address community concerns; and

WHEREAS, Village Supermarket, Inc, representatives met with Community Board 8 Manhattan in May 2021 and made a commitment to address conditions in front of Fairway Market 86th Street, and

WHEREAS, observed conditions in front of Fairway Market 86th Street have seen significant improvements to the sidewalk and curbside since May 2021; and

WHEREAS, Village Supermarket, Inc. has requested that loading zone hours be returned to their original 5AM to Midnight hours; and

WHEREAS, Village Supermarket has committed to continuing to provide updates and meet with Community Board 8 Manhattan as requested and to continue to commit to minimizing the amount of activity on the sidewalk and curbside in front of Fairway Market 86th Street;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 Manhattan requests that NYCDOT change the parking signage in front of Fairway Market 86th Street to the previous “Loading Zone 5AM to Midnight” regulations.

Yes (11+1): Barton, Birnbaum, Bores, Camp, Dangoor, Farber, Lader, Popper, Schneider, Spagnoletti, Warren, Borock (public member),

No (0): None

Item 4: Revocable Consent Request - Snowmelt System Under the Sidewalk of 172 East 73rd St.

This item was tabled due to the applicant not being a present participant at the meeting.

Item 5: NYCDOT Updates

Colleen Chattergoon reported that NYCDOT recently gave a presentation on the NYCDOT Master Plan to Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, and that this presentation will be given to Community Board 8 at a future meeting.

Item 6: New Business

A member asked if the Transportation Committee could discuss the issue of minibikes (mini gas-powered motorcycles that are unregulated and don't require registration or license plates) that have become more prevalent recently on NYC streets. Other members also noted the prevalence of bicycles and other motorized equipment being used on sidewalks. It was suggested that these issues be discussed at the July meeting when Traffic Enforcement is slated to attend and discuss bike enforcement issues.

Item 7: Old Business

A member asked if there was an update on the issue of open restaurant structure enforcement. There was nothing new to report at this time.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:31PM.

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