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

Minutes

Present: Lori Bores, Michele Birnbaum, Alida Camp, Rebecca Dangoor, Billy Freeland, Craig Lader, Sharon Marshall Pope, Valerie Mason, John Phillips, Rita Popper, Barbara Rudder, Barry Schneider, Tricia Shimamura, Cos Spagnoletti, Charles Warren, Elaine Walsh, Peter Borock (public member)

Absent (Excused): Rit Aggarwala, Rebecca Lamorte

Resolutions for Approval: None

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

Item 1: Discussion of Climate Change and Resiliency Issues Impacting Transportation within Community District 8 (Joint Item with Environment & Sanitation Committee)

Following recent severe weather events including Tropical Storms Henri and Ida, which resulted in major street and subway flooding, Community Board 8 has initiated an effort in which individual committees are holding discussions regarding climate change and resiliency. Each committee will be determining specific issues within their jurisdiction pertaining to Community District 8 which need to be addressed and prioritized for mitigation against extreme weather events that are now happening with increased frequency and being attributed to climate change. This effort is being led by the Environment and Sanitation Committee, which held an initial discussion at their October 2021 meeting, and is participating in all subsequent meetings held across the spectrum of CB8 committees.

The conversation began with the co-chairs providing a list of some potential discussion points, including:

- Issues regarding excessive rain/snow - maintaining public transportation during extreme weather events. This includes addressing subway station flooding and preventing service disruptions, as the subway system is currently only able to handle 1.5 inches of rain per hour, which is a rate that was exceeded both during Ida and Henri. Additional related issues include FDR Drive Flooding, Local Street Flooding and identification of specific problem locations, addressing issues following major winter events (impacts of deicing and salting of roads and sidewalks, pedestrian/biking challenges caused by ponding from snow melt, maintaining access to bus stops (especially for people who rely on wheelchairs or use walking aids);
- Issues regarding excessive heat/cold - dangers to pavement and potential roadway buckling/potholes, heat island impacts from roadway design/materials (i.e. permeability), the need for improved street design to promote increased tree coverage;
- Issues regarding excessive storm surges - FDR Drive and nearby low-lying locations, protecting NYC Ferry Piers;
- Policies regarding implementation of Electric Vehicles Charging Infrastructure (and ensuring that a massive disruption to the energy grid that could be caused by an extreme weather event doesn't bring our transportation network to a standstill);
- Sewage treatment plants that get shut down during excessive rain events, resulting in untreated sewage flowing into the Hudson and East Rivers. Although the city now requires separate sewage systems for both stormwater

and sanitary sewers, the majority of the existing sewers are combined stormwater/sanitary, which is a major source of pollution. This issue extends to transportation since much of the overflow is a result of stormwater collected from street run-off. One action that has been helpful was the Department of Buildings requiring the installation of backflow preventers in buildings to keep sewage from getting into buildings.

- The likelihood that we as a society both domestically and globally will be able to do enough to combat climate change in the timeframe needed to prevent the severe projections and impacts from occurring is low. There simply isn't being enough done currently to eliminate coal and fossil fuel use, and the political will does not seem to exist at this point.

Other points brought up by CB8 included the following:

- As more frequent rain and snow events necessitate more frequent street cleaning to prevent debris from clogging storm sewers and exacerbating flooding, it will require fewer New Yorkers to rely on on-street parking for 24/7 car storage.
- There is no one agency with overall responsibility for flooding in NYC. While there is a mayor's office of resilience, it focuses on long-term planning and does not have the budgetary authority necessary to create the kind of tactical changes needed.
- With the increased frequency of high-impact weather events, residents will need to anticipate more frequent instances where states of emergency that result in transit system shutdowns or driving restrictions for non-emergency vehicles are declared. During such times, it would be appropriate to ban restaurant deliveries to keep delivery workers safe.
- The NYC Panel on Climate Change (NPCC), which is the City's official climate change projection entity, has issued a report suggesting that under scenarios considered severe in 2019, the 79th Street area of the East Side is likely to experience regular monthly tidal flooding by 2050. The most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report from 2021 suggests that scenarios considered severe in 2019 are likely the ones that we should expect and plan for.
- New York City's greenhouse gas emissions have been basically the same since 2012.
- CB8 should consider initiatives to help buildings, especially those with co-op and condo boards, address the retrofits will be needed to comply with Local Law 97.
- We cannot say we are taking climate change seriously without moving to reduce car use, reduce parking, increase transit and cycling, and make walking safer and easier. In response to concerns frequently voiced at CB8 meetings regarding disruptions to daily life that result from attempting to move away from car usage, the collective disruptions all residents will face from not reducing car use would be far greater and will cost us billions of dollars and massive disruption both due to the weather events themselves and the construction that will be necessary to move infrastructure such as the FDR Drive out of the water's path.
- After transportation, buildings perhaps have the biggest impact on emissions in NYC. Local Law 97, enacted in 2019, will require most buildings over 25,000 square feet to meet new energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions limits by 2024, with stricter limits coming into effect in 2030, and sets a goal of reducing the emissions produced by the city's largest buildings 40 percent by 2030 and 80 percent by 2050. Failure to comply will result in very large fines for buildings.
- Frequent flooding on the FDR drive has been an ongoing problem over the years, and is becoming more of an issue with the higher frequency of extreme rain events. Specific locations noted were near 61st Street, 79th Street and from 90th to 93rd Streets.
- Puddling at intersections are a significant issue, especially for persons with disabilities, and will continue to be an issue as more frequent events occur
- There is a clear need to add more trees and plantings along streets and in parks which also helps to counter the urban heat island effect; there should be specific targets developed, along with identification of the types of trees that would be best suited for different locations; it was suggested that perhaps new developments should have specific requirements in place for new trees;
- The question was raised whether a portion of future revenues from Congestion Pricing should be earmarked for resiliency efforts;
- Unrelated to transportation but noted by speakers, the impacts of building heights, the need for green roofs, recent increases in population, and the impact of climate change on wildlife were also mentioned.

- Filters on sewage drains are required in association with building construction projects, but lack of enforcement is a major issue and contributes to flooding and ponding and run-off of sludge and sewage. Preventive enforcement is needed, and it was decided that a letter would be written to the Department of Buildings and Department of Transportation to ensure that laws requiring sewage drain filters and backflow preventers are being fully enforced.
- Reducing the amount of litter was identified as a measure that could help address some of the sewer issues. One member suggested that MTA revert back to policies restricting food consumption on Subways and at stations.
- Investigating opportunities to improve resiliency measures near ferry landings, including more plantings, oyster beds, or other approaches that could help fight flooding.

Possible future actions identified were as follows:

- Developing a CB8 Report or Policy Paper that lays out the Community's values and establishes specific goals and targets regarding resiliency and sustainability, and details specific locations or areas in which actions are necessary to address issues now being witnessed.
- Updating the district needs statement to incorporate a statement regarding climate change and resiliency
- Invite a speaker from Cornell Technion that may have expertise in addressing rainbursts, as has been done in the Negev Desert in Israel
- Invite the head of Columbia University's Sabin Center for Climate Change Law to discuss climate change issues in depth
- Invite a member of the NPCC to present their projections to us; their next report will be due in 2022.
- Invite NYCDOT to discuss best practices to address puddling and snow clearance at intersections, bus stops and bike lanes;
- Invite New York State DOT representatives to discuss issues pertaining to the FDR Drive.

Item 2: Continuing Discussion - Bike Registration/License Plates

In September 2021, the Committee held a discussion about bike safety that focused on the concepts of licensing of bicyclists and registration of bicycles. The conversation continued to further debate the merits of such potential policies and whether they should be supported by CB8. Most of the comments mirrored those made during the initial discussion - supporters of licensing and registration of bicycles spoke of feeling unsafe as pedestrians and being frustrated with lack of enforcement and any type of official identification that inhibits the ability for enforcement to occur; those opposed to licensing or registration believed that such measures would be a barrier to promoting modes of transportation that have seen rapid growth in NYC in recent years and are environmentally friendly, especially at a time when climate change and air quality issues and pandemic impacts have made some people wary of commuting in crowded trains and buses. In addition to licensing and registration, some members highlighted instances in which bikes are being illegally parked or used on sidewalks.

A member made a motion to support licensing of non-automotive vehicles, urging state lawmakers to write a law that would apply specifically to NYC using a population threshold. There was a request for a friendly amendment to limit a potential resolution to commercial bikes, but it was not accepted. Following further discussion and reiteration of a suggestion made in September that experts be brought in as a speaker at a future meeting to facts and case studies on how licensing and registration has been implemented elsewhere and if they have been successful, a member made a motion to table the discussion until February 2022 when an expert would present on the topic.

The motion to table passed by a vote of 12 yes, 3 no and 1 abstention. The vote tally was as follows:

Yes: Bores, Dangoor, Freeland, Lader, Marshall Pope, Mason, Phillips, Popper, Barbara Rudder, Schneider, Spagnoletti, Warren, Peter Borock (public member)

No: Birnbaum, Rudder, Walsh

Abstain: Camp

Item 3: NYCDOT Updates

There were no updates from NYCDOT.

Item 4: Old Business

A committee member requested that Revel be invited to a future meeting to discuss the issue of their customers using their vehicles illegally in bike lanes and the lack of a mechanism for people to be able to report such behaviors.

A committee member reported on a site visit by NYCDOT in response to an inquiry at the October 2021 meeting regarding unsafe conditions for pedestrians at the intersection of 72nd Street and 3rd Avenue that may have been impacted by unusual timing of pedestrian signal cycles. The site visit confirmed that the signals were not timed correctly, and that NYCDOT would look at remedies that could be implemented.

A member reported that they learned at an online DoITT presentation regarding Link5G that they are not planning on installing any new towers south of 96th Street, and that the new program is not dependent on advertising as a revenue source.

A member requested a letter to NYCDOT be written to request inspections of outdoor restaurant sheds be performed in a manner that allows agents to cover corridors rather than specific locations.

Item 5: New Business

A public participant requested an update of the status of the project to rehabilitate the East River Esplanade between 81st and 90th Streets and whether the public input process had been established. When presented to CB8 in June 2021 at the Parks and Waterfront Committee as a joint item with the Transportation Committee, NYCDOT indicated that by the end of 2021 a final design would be completed for the first phase of the project covering 81st to 84th Streets.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:42PM.

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