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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Transportation Committee
Wednesday June 1, 2022, 6:30 PM
Conducted Remotely on Zoom

Minutes

Present: Michele Birnbaum, Lori Bores, Lindsey Cormack, Rebecca Dangoor, Billy Freeland, Paul Krikler, Craig Lader, Rebecca Lamorte, Sharon Pope-Marshall, John McClement, Rita Popper, Barbara Rudder, Judy Schneider, Cos Spagnoletti, Marco Tamayo, Charles Warren, Stephanie Reckler (public member)

Absent (Excused): Valerie Mason, Peter Borock (public member)

Resolutions for Approval: None

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

Item 1: Public Discussion with Representatives from Extell Development and Hospital for Special Surgery regarding transportation related issues pertaining to the new development under construction at 403 East 79th Street (at First Avenue)

At the January 2022 Zoning and Development Committee meeting, executives from Extell Development and Hospital for Special Surgery presented plans for a new medical office tower at the northeast corner of 79th Street and 1st Avenue that will include a Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS) Musculoskeletal Ambulatory Care Center as the anchor tenant for the first eight floors (with the remainder of the building being other ambulatory medical office uses unassociated with HSS). The presentation raised many questions and concerns transportation issues such as concerns regarding the absence of new parking, availability of nearby street and garage parking, vehicular and pedestrian congestion, and bus stop relocations, and a request was made that a parking study be performed. During that meeting, one of the Transportation Co-Chairs invited the representatives to meet with the Transportation Committee to address the concerns and share any findings from any studies they would conduct.

Presenting to the Transportation Committee were Eli Kopciel, a Sr. Vice President – Development & Commercial Leasing for Extell Development, Michael Rawlings, a Sr. Vice President – Facilities, Construction and Support Services from Hospital for Special Surgery, and Philip Habib, a consult and traffic engineer who performed a parking study.

Mr. Kopciel provided updates to the building's construction timeframe. Excavation began on May 23rd, and work on the building foundation is expected to last through the end of 2022. The construction of the superstructure will then require 2 more years, with substantial completion expected in the 4th quarter of 2024. Tenants would likely require up to another year beyond completion to begin to see patients.

Mr. Rawlings presented renderings of the two entrances to the HSS facility – an internal entrance accessed via a circular driveway along 80th Street that would serve as a pick-up/drop-off area for ambulettes and for-hire vehicles, and a main pedestrian entrance located along 1st Avenue (a separate entrance would be provided for non-HSS floors). The internal driveway will be manned by HSS security staff to facilitate smooth operations, and will be wide enough to accommodate multiple vehicles and allow a vehicle that has completed its loading/unloading to pass a different vehicle. Mr. Habib depicted the location of bus stops along the 79th Street and 1st Avenue frontages as advantages for the site and contributing to more pedestrian activity than would be commonly found

on most blocks in the vicinity of the development, and why an internal driveway was needed for ambulette and for-hire vehicle activity.

In regards to parking availability, Mr. Habib presented a map showing all parking garages within ¼ mile of the site based on a survey performed in January 2022, including 5 garages near the intersections of 1st Avenue and 79th/80th Streets. The survey found 47 facilities with a total capacity of 4,356 spaces within this ¼ mile radius; 20 of these facilities are within two blocks of the development. These facilities were 76% utilized overnight, with 1,038 available spaces; at 10AM, they were 76% utilized with 1,038 available spaces; at 2PM, they were 66% utilized, with 1,500 available spaces. The utilization rates at the 20 closest facilities were similar to the rates in the broader area. Mr. Habib noted that most of the patients who would be visiting the facility are expected to be from Manhattan and will use public transportation or for-hire vehicles, and Mr. Rawlings indicated that the study's ultimate finding is that there is sufficient parking supply nearby to accommodate users of the building and not create further parking shortages.

Mr. Habib described the nearby land uses as it relates to parking and congestion concerns, stating that the nearby blocks predominantly feature residential and mixed-use buildings, along with the 190 student Caedmon School and St. Monica's Church adjacent to the site on 80th Street. The curb cut for the driveway will be about 185 feet from the school's entrance, and thus is not expected to present a conflict. According to traffic and pedestrian counts taken by Mr. Habib over 5 days in April 2022, vehicular traffic peaked in the 4PM hour, with 194 vehicles, roughly similar to the 3PM hour that coincided with dismissal times for elementary students; in comparison, there were 151 vehicles counted during the 12:15PM to 1:15PM timeframe, and 78 counted during the 9AM hour. The most pedestrians were counted during the 8AM hour coinciding with morning drop-offs with 330 people, and peaked again during the 3PM hour when dismissal occurred when 260 people were counted.

Given the pedestrian activity near the driveway, Mr. Habib indicated that pedestrian visibility could be an issue for vehicles exiting the driveway, as the building would obstruct the line of sight for drivers. He suggested to the developer that planters of about 5 or 6 feet in depth be installed (that will eventually require a revocable consent), which would enhance visibility of pedestrians crossing the driveway. Additionally, he recommends that audio/visual alerts for vehicles exiting the driveway be provided, along with enhanced sidewalk illumination.

The impacts to on-street parking alongside the site will be minimal. The only parking that will be affected is along 80th Street, where removal of spaces between the driveway and 1st Avenue is recommended for to address the previously mentioned line-of-sight issues, and some spaces will be removed to accommodate a loading zone for the building's loading bay east of the driveway; However, since it is also proposed that the hydrant currently located on the north side of 80th Street be relocated to the south side between 1st Avenue and the driveway to further prevent parking and open up the sightlines, some spaces will be reclaimed on the north side of 80th Street. In total, Mr. Habib said the result will be a net loss of about 4 on-street parking spaces.

Mr. Rawlings noted that it is expected that the facility would serve between 280 and 300 HSS patients on a typical day, mostly between the hours of 8AM and 4PM, and that most patients and about 250 employees would not be arriving by private vehicles. Most of the HSS deliveries of supplies would be delivered efficiently in a single daily drop-off, as most of the deliveries are first processed at their 74th Street warehouse facility before being brought over to 80th Street. He noted that they would work to coordinate deliveries to prevent double parking from occurring on 80th Street. There would be additional staff, patients and deliveries associated with non-HSS uses in the building, which encompasses about half of the building's square footage.

There were many questions and comments in regards to the presentation. After Mr. Habib said that he anticipated that there would be passengers dropped off by the 1st Avenue entrance, it was emphasized by multiple speakers that vehicles dropping off visitors should be directed towards the 80th Street driveway and that any drop off activity along 1st Avenue in the Bus Stop must be avoided to the fullest extent possible, and that the bus stops must be returned to their prior locations (which the MTA plans to do). There were speakers who continued to express concerns regarding the availability and expense of garage parking. Numerous speakers noted that additional vehicles on 80th Street may have larger impacts closer to East End Avenue since 80th Street is used by cars heading to the FDR Drive. There were comments suggesting accommodations for staff arriving by bike should be provided. In regards to the staging of the construction, the parking lane will be taken along the 3

frontages. In regards to questions about loading concerns and whether there will be future discussions needed regarding parking regulation changes, it will need to be revisited based on which tenant(s) occupy the remaining space in the building.

Item 2: Public Hearing: Revocable Consent application to construct, maintain, and use a stoop and fenced-in area at 890 Park Avenue

This hearing was postponed until the July 12th meeting of the Transportation Committee.

Item 3: NYCDOT Updates

There were no updates provided by NYCDOT.

Item 4: Old and New Business

A board member raised concerns regarding an honorary street naming that occurred without the request first going through the Transportation Committee. One of the Co-Chairs suggested that NYCDOT provide a response to address why the violation of protocol occurred.

A board member highlighted dark conditions and the need for better lighting along 2nd Avenue between 86th and 87th Streets on the east side of the street.

A constituent requested an update on the rehabilitation of the John Finley Walk section of the East River Esplanade, and in particular what the impacts will be on 81st Street during construction. He noted that it has been a year since NYCDOT appeared at CB8 when the project was originally announced.

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

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