

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
Tuesday July 12, 2022 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: Mohit Aggerwal, Michele Birnbaum, Lorraine Brown, Rebecca Dangoor, Billy Freeland, Craig Lader, Rebecca Lamorte, Addeson Lehv, Valerie Mason, John McClement, Rita Popper, Judy Schneider, Cos Spagnoletti, Charles Warren, Peter Borock (public member)

Absent (Excused): Lori Bores, Paul Krikler, Stephanie Reckler (public member)

Resolutions for Approval:

Item 2: Revocable Consent – 890 Park Ave.

Item 3: Revocable Consent – 26 East 78th St. (unanimous)

Item 4: Parking Regulation Change – East 82nd Street cul de sac east of East End Ave. (unanimous)

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

Item 1: NYCDOT/MTA Presentation - Proposed Changes to the 1st Avenue Bus Lane between 61st Street and 79th Street

Rachel Eisenberg and Kyle Gebhardt from New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) and Laura Azze-Singh and Marcus Book from New York City Transit presented a proposal to modify and enhance the bus lane on 1st Avenue between 61st and 79th Streets, and answered questions regarding the proposal.

The presentation described the M15, serving 1st and 2nd Avenues, as the busiest bus route in New York City, with pre-pandemic average daily ridership of approximately 48,000 passengers. With over 300 trips per day, buses arrive as frequently as every three minutes during the AM peak period. Currently along 1st Avenue, a full-time bus lane offset from the curb is used from Houston Street through 43rd Street, and from 79th Street to 125th Street; these segments have 3 general traffic lanes in addition to the bus lane, with either commercial or general parking available most hours of the day along the east curbside; between 43rd and 79th Streets, the bus lane is along the curbside and only in effect on weekdays from 7AM to 10AM and from 2PM to 7PM; this segment generally has 4 general traffic lanes with no parking permitted during hours in which the bus lane is in operation.

As calculated in October 2019, average speeds for the M15 along 1st Avenue varied widely by segment and by time of day as follows:

	AM Peak	Midday	PM Peak
57th to 61st St.	4.9 mph	3.9 mph	5.3 mph
61st to 67th St.	7.4 mph	5.2 mph	9.5 mph
67th to 79th St.	8.7 mph	7.8 mph	8.1 mph
79th to 86th St.	10.0 mph	9.9 mph	9.1 mph

86 th to 96 th St.	11.1 mph	10.6 mph	9.2 mph
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It was explained by the presenters that bus speeds are noticeably slower during all dayparts south of 79th Street where the bus lane is on the curbside, and especially during the midday period when the bus lane is not in effect; this is due to the bus lane often being blocked by commercial vehicles making deliveries and other double parking. This both results in slower speeds for all vehicles due to congestion, and buses being slowed as they attempt to maneuver around bus lane blockages into the general traffic lanes. This is further evidenced by data from automated bus lane enforcement (bus-mounted camera) violations, which showed a large concentration of violations occurred between 58th and 79th Streets, with three of the five highest violation locations for the entire M15 route in this segment (1st Avenue at 68th, 69th and 65th Streets). North of 79th Street, with a 24-hour bus lane and available parking on the east curbside, bus speeds were significantly higher and bus lanes were blocked less frequently.

The proposal for an enhanced bus lane on 1st Avenue between 61st and 79th Streets would convert the segment into a 24 hour offset bus lane, with a design emulating the existing bus lane north of 79th Street on 1st Avenue. This would allow buses to use the bus lane that is no longer impeded by parked or standing vehicles, and is expected to result in bus speeds increasing to levels similar to those north of 79th Street (it was noted that the most recent bus lane implemented in CB8 on Lexington Ave. resulted in about a 10% increase in bus speeds, but it is also recognized that Lexington Ave. is very different from 1st Avenue and results may not be similar). There is expected to be a minimal impact on traffic flow for the general traffic lanes. To further reduce conflicts between other vehicles and buses, there will be dedicated right turn lanes established at 72nd and 79th Streets, which will result in the removal of 6 parking spaces at each intersection. The work will not result in repaving, but will require restriping and repainting of lanes.

In regards to parking, the proposal would open up the lane adjacent to the east curb, where NYCDOT is proposing weekday commercial parking regulations between 9AM and 7PM which would result in 6 more hours of parking than is currently provided. No Standing regulations would remain in effect between 7AM and 9AM to facilitate bus activity during the busiest hours of the day, and nights and weekends would remain as general parking. Blocks characterized in which land use is most commonly small stores and restaurants and typically see smaller but more frequent deliveries will have 2-hour metered commercial parking; blocks with generic commercial land uses or with large retail chains will have 3-hour metered commercial parking. New parking signage will be installed to reflect these changes.

The project is expected to be implemented in autumn 2022, and the impacts of the changes will be monitored in the winter and spring of 2023.

It was noted that the team from NYCDOT and NYCT is planning on returning to CB8M in fall of 2022 with a separate proposal for enhancements to 3rd Avenue. The team has accepted an invitation for the fall of 2022 to present the impacts of the Lexington Avenue Bus Lane, as was requested in the CB8 resolution passed prior to it being implemented.

The feedback on the proposal from the public and CB8 members generally reflected skepticism in regards to the extent of the increases in bus speeds that will result. There was also skepticism that double parking would be alleviated, and that there would be a significant amount of travel time savings for bus passengers and that travel speeds in the general traffic lanes would not be adversely impacted. Some speakers suggested that there should be some general parking provided rather than all new parking being dedicated to commercial vehicles; the presenters requested feedback on specific blocks where customer parking for businesses may be warranted, and that the parking can easily be modified even after the bus lane project is completed. There was some confusion regarding whether buses would continue to pull over to the curbside, but it was strongly emphasized that this proposal maintains all bus stop locations and should facilitate improved access for buses to fully enter bus stops and pull up closely to the curbside as is required for buses to use their lifts to accommodate passengers with limited mobility and physical disabilities. One member requested permanent control traffic agents at 61st and 62nd Streets; NYCDOT is open to considering the request. There were also some comments emphasizing the importance of prioritizing faster buses as a critical policy initiative and the fact that the bus lane on 1st Avenue often moves more passengers in an hour than a general traffic lane.

There were also numerous comments and much frustration expressed in regards to the lack of a set of Select Bus Service (SBS) stops in both directions on the M15 at 72nd Street, which CB8 requested in a resolution in October 2016 and elected officials requested in a letter sent in February 2022. Mr. Book noted that the request was reviewed, and that no changes are planned at this time. He acknowledged increased ridership at the pair of 72nd Street bus stops in recent years, and also indicated that there may be an opportunity for SBS stops at 72nd Street in conjunction with the upcoming Manhattan Bus Redesign project (anticipated to begin once the Brooklyn Bus Redesign Project is complete) and once OMNY is fully implemented and MetroCard decommissioned in 2024 (the amount of time required to design and construct SBS stops with soon to be obsolete MetroCard vending machines that are in short supply limit what is feasible to change in the near-term). One of the Co-Chairs of the Transportation Committee requested NYCT provide ridership data for all bus stops within CB8's borders so we can independently analyze bus usage patterns and trends.

Note: When asked during the presentation, the Committee was told that a resolution wasn't needed for this item. Later, NYCDOT staff indicated that they were mistaken and did request that CB8 provide a resolution.

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

Shea Murdock, project architect for 890 Park Avenue, presented a revocable consent application request to construct, maintain, and use a stoop and fenced-in area at 890 Park Avenue. The building dates back to the mid-1800s, and was one of a group of townhouses; it is the only one that remains. It was originally built with a stoop, which was removed as part of a project to widen Park Avenue. This project proposes reintroducing a stoop, which requires a revocable consent. The project was approved by the Landmarks Preservation Commission and the Department of Buildings.

The proposed stoop would be 3 steps leading up to the building entrance at the parlor level, which previously was 3 steps leading down to a below-grade basement level; the steps would be just under 2 feet above ground level. The proposal also contains a replacement of existing sidewalk grates adjacent to the proposed stoop with a garden enclosed by a rod-iron railing that will surround a 43 inch deep window well; this will improve visibility from the street. The stoop and railing will extend just over 5 feet beyond the property line; the grate currently extends 5'6" beyond the property line. This would result in 9' 11" of remaining sidewalk space beyond the encroachment.

The only comment in regards to the proposal was made by one Committee Member who wanted it to be heard by the Landmarks Committee in its current form; although the building has received Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) approval, the architect said that there may have been modifications requested by the LPC that CB8's Landmarks Committee hadn't weighed in on. The proposed reintroduction of the stoop was originally presented as part of a complete renovation of the building original presented to the CB8 Landmarks Committee in August 2015; it was disapproved due to concerns regarding the penthouse and rear elevation changes being out of context, but no mention of any objections to the front elevation that included the stoop were included in the resolution.

The following resolution was then put forward by CB8:

WHEREAS; a revocable consent is requested by 890 Park Avenue to construct, maintain, and use a stoop and fenced-in area; and

WHEREAS; the building contained a stoop when originally build in the mid-1800s that was removed in conjunction with the widening of Park Avenue; and

WHEREAS; the proposed stoop will result include 3 steps and extend out just over 5 feet beyond the building line; and

WHEREAS; an existing sidewalk grate that will also extend just over 5 feet from the property line will be replaced by a garden area surrounding a window well to be enclosed by a rod-iron railing; and

WHEREAS; there is proposed to be 9'11" of sidewalk clearance remaining; and

WHEREAS; the project has received approvals from the Landmarks Preservation Commission and Department of Buildings;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 approves, as presented, the request by 890 Park Avenue for a revocable consent to construct, maintain, and use a stoop and fenced-in area.

Yes (8+1): Brown, Dangoor, Freeland, Lader, Lamorte, Lehv, Popper, Warren, Borock (public member)

No (1): Birnbaum

Abstain (0): None

Item 3: Public Hearing: Revocable Consent application to construct, maintain and use a fenced-in area including steps and accessible wheelchair lift at 26 East 78th Street.

Architect Leonardo Tamargo, representing 26 East 78th Street, presented a revocable consent application request to construct, maintain and use a fenced-in area including steps and accessible wheelchair lift. The building is being converted from a residential building to a commercial building with a gallery.

There was originally a front yard with stairs going down along with fencing; the project will extend the front yard by extending the stairs by 3' 6" to align with the neighboring properties; when added to the existing encroachment, the total encroachment of the sidewalk will be 5' ¼", leaving approximately 10' of sidewalk clearance. This change will also allow the building to more comfortably fit a wheelchair lift that is required under the Americans with Disabilities Act as a commercial building. The lift is foldable, and will sit folded up at the base of the stairs when not in use. The project has been approved by CB8's Landmarks Committee in February 2020, and has been presented to the Department of Buildings (awaiting a revocable consent).

The following resolution was then put forward by CB8:

WHEREAS; a revocable consent is requested by 26 East 78th St. to construct, maintain and use a fenced-in area including steps and accessible wheelchair lift; and

WHEREAS; 26 East 78th Street is being converted into a commercial building that must be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act; and

WHEREAS; the staircase is proposed to be extended by 3' 6" beyond the existing condition to accommodate a wheelchair lift, resulting in a 5' ¼' encroachment; and

WHEREAS; the staircase will be aligned with neighboring building lines and provide approximately 10' of sidewalk clearance; and

WHEREAS; the project has received approvals from Community Board 8's Landmarks Committee and the Landmarks Preservation Commission;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 approves, as presented, the request by 26 East 78th Street for a revocable consent to construct, maintain and use a fenced-in area including steps and accessible wheelchair lift.

Yes (7): Birnbaum, Brown, Dangoor, Lader, Lamorte, Popper, Warren

No (0): None

Abstain (0): None

Item 4: East 82nd Street Cul de Sac (east of East End Ave.) - Request for a change of parking regulations from "no parking" to "no standing".

Claudia Ullman & Tracy Thatcher, both residents of 605 East 82nd Street, presented a request for a change of parking regulations from No Parking to No Standing in front of 605 East 82nd Street. They described how 605 East 82nd Street is unique among buildings with entrances on the cul de sacs between 80th and 84th Streets, as theirs is the only one with a No Parking regulation while others have No Standing. They explained that the no parking signage often results in vehicles with various types of placards (both legal and illegal) in front of 605 East 82nd Street and in the cul de sac, making it difficult for emergency vehicles to gain speedy access to the building and preventing vehicles from turning around, especially during overnight hours. The request to change two spaces in front of 605 East 82nd Street to a more stringent No Standing regulation would aim to address these safety issues.

The issue generated a debate regarding whether changing the regulations would adversely impact persons with disabilities who would lose access to parking spaces they are able to use, and questioned whether the change would solve the underlying issue due to issues where people with some placards use no standing zones to park. One resident noted that parking garages also contribute to vehicles illegally parked on some of these streets. The issue was also identified by NYCDOT as an enforcement issue, and noted that cul de sacs are often not enforced to the same degree as thru-streets. There were also comments regarding general concerns regarding parking inventory, and the need for policymakers to better provide parking for people placards and license plates used by people with disabilities.

The Committee Co-Chairs agreed to perform a field visit to assess the situation, and to report back at the Full Board meeting.

The following resolution was then put forward by CB8:

WHEREAS; a request to change parking regulations in front of 605 East 82nd Street from No Parking Anytime to No Standing Anytime;; and

WHEREAS; vehicles with placards are often parked in front of 605 East 82nd Street, preventing emergency access to the building and making it difficult for vehicles to make a u-turn in the cul-de-sac; and

WHEREAS; parking enforcement on cul-de-sacs such as East 82nd Street east of East End Avenue is recognized as being less stringent than enforcement along thru-streets; and

WHEREAS; no standing regulations would limit the amount of vehicles that would be permitted to in front of 605 East 82nd Street and would discourage drivers from blocking the entrance;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 approves a request to convert two spaces in front of 605 East 82nd Street from No Parking Anytime to No Standing Anytime.

Yes (8): Birnbaum, Brown, Dangoor, Lader, Lamorte, Mason, Popper, Warren

No (0): None

Abstain (0): None

Item 5: NYCDOT Updates

- Collen Chattergoon, NYCDOT Senior Planner and Liaison to CB8, provided the following updates and responses to inquiries regarding old and new business: advised that the NYCDOT Summer Streets event will once again occur the first 3 Saturdays in August; NYCDOT will share a flyer with details regarding specific locations when the plans are finalized;
- Ms. Chattergoon responded to multiple members expressing concern about unsafe pedestrian conditions on portions of 72nd Street and 3rd Avenue in the 70s related to repaving, as portions of these streets were milled but remains unpaved; this was identified as an ongoing issue where streets remain unpaved for too long before paving occurs, and it was requested that NYCDOT discuss this general issue further at a future CB8 Transportation Committee meeting. Ms. Chattergoon noted that milling/paving advisories get provided to Community Board Offices a week in advance of the work occurring, and that the NYCDOT website includes a schedule. CB8 District Manager Will Brightbill indicated that he is reluctant to post info on the CB8 website due to the tendency for last minute schedule changes to occur due to inclement weather; it was suggested that the most recent schedules be included in week ending e-blasts, with a stipulation that they are subject to change.
- In response to a member noting a malfunctioning pedestrian signal at 72nd Street at Park Avenue, Ms. Chattergoon said it would be investigated.
- Ms. Chattergoon said she was unaware of an honorary street renaming that occurred without CB8 providing support; the issue was originally brought to the attention of the Transportation Committee in June 2022.
- In response to an update on the speed bump study on East 92nd Street, Ms. Chattergoon said the study is still pending, as it normally takes about 6-12 months to collect data and complete the study from the time it has been requested.
- A member asked if NYCDOT was familiar with a presentation made by the American Institute of Architects regarding design of outdoor seating areas and if NYCDOT participated in the webinar; Ms. Chattergoon said she would try to find more information.
- A constituent asked for an update on the request to change parking regulations in front of the former St. Elizabeth Church at 211 East 83rd Street; Ms. Chattergoon indicated that she would work on updating the regulations to make them consistent with the rest of that block.
- A constituent noted that the Barking Dog restaurant at the intersection of 94th Street/3rd Avenue has an open dining shed that is being used to store equipment; Ms. Chattergoon said that an inspector will be sent to the site to investigate.

Item 6: Old and New Business

- A member asked for more pedestrian crossing time at the intersections of 86th Street/3rd Avenue and 72nd Street/3rd Avenue;
- A member noted issues with accessibility from the sidewalk at the Trader Joe's Store under the Queensboro Bridge;

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

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