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

Resolutions for Approval:

Item 1: Impacts of “F” Train/63rd Street Tunnel Construction (unanimous)

Item 3: Use of Bus Stop at 5th Ave. bet. 61st/62nd Streets by Aurora Tourism Services (unanimous)

Item 5: Opposition to 5G Street Pole Attachments within 10 feet of adjacent buildings (unanimous)

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

Minutes

Present: Mohit Agrawal, Michele Birnbaum, Lori Bores, Lorraine Brown, Paul Krikler, Craig Lader, Rebecca Dangoor, Rebecca Lamorte, John McClement, Sharon Pope-Marshall, Rita Popper, Judy Schneider, Charles Warren, Peter Borock (public member),

Absent (Excused): Billy Freeland, Valerie Mason, Stephanie Reckler (public member)

Item 1: Presentation from the MTA/NYCT regarding the upcoming 63rd Street Line Direct Fixation Track Rehabilitation Project (Joint Item with the Roosevelt Island Committee)

Lucille Songhai and Joshua Rosenberg from New York City Transit presented an overview of the upcoming 63rd Street Line Direct Fixation Track Rehabilitation Project. The project will result in significant disruptions to train service along the “F” line between May and October 2023 and 5 additional weekends yet to be determined, directly impacting passengers who normally use the “F” train stations at 63rd/Lexington Ave., Roosevelt Island and 21st St./Queensbridge.

The project is to perform critical repairs to original track that was installed in the 1980s, and will improve reliability by repairing deterioration, mitigating leaks and extending the service life of the existing infrastructure. Due to the complexity of the project and the fact that the tracks on which the work is being done are embedded directly into the concrete tunnel, the project requires prolonged continuous full-time track closures rather than work being able to be confined to weekends and with service able to operate on weekdays. The project is anticipated to be substantially completed by December 2023 and fully completed in June 2024. There is a detailed outreach plan to inform passengers of the changes, including through signage, announcements, press releases and online social media.

During periods with track closures, passengers who normally use the three affected Manhattan-bound “F” train stations will need to backtrack and take a Queens-bound train to Steinway Street to transfer to Manhattan-bound trains; passengers requiring an accessible station will need to continue to Jackson Hts/Roosevelt Avenue where elevators are available. When Queens-bound track closures are in effect, passengers who normally use the 3 affected “F” train stations will need to backtrack and transfer to Queens-bound trains via the 63rd Street Tunnel at 57th Street/6th Avenue; passengers requiring an accessible station will need to continue to 47th-50th St/Rockefeller Center where elevators are available.

A summary of the work to be performed and the impacts to “F” train passengers who normally use the 63rd St./Lexington Ave., Roosevelt Island and Queensbridge are described in the below table:

Phase	Dates	Closure	Direction	Impacts to "F" train passengers at 63rd/Lexington, Roosevelt Island, Queensbridge
1	5/1/23 to 6/30/23	Queens-bound 63rd Street Tunnel Track Closure	To Queens	No "F" service anytime
			To Manhattan	Weekdays: "M" train replaces "F"
				Weeknights/Weekends: "F" train operates local
2	7/1/23 to 8/11/23	Track closure between 57th St/6th Ave. and 63rd St./Lexington Ave.	Both Directions	"R" Train replaces "F"
				Weekdays/Weekends: "R" Train replaces "F"
				Weekday Overnights: "E" train operates local (terminates at 34th St./Herald Sq.)
3	5/1/23 to 6/30/23	Manhattan-bound 63rd Street Tunnel Track Closure	To Queens	Weekdays: "M" train replaces "F"
			To Manhattan	Weeknights/Weekends: "F" train operates local
				No "F" service anytime
Other Weekends	4/28/23 to 4/30/23 plus 4 Additional Weekends	Full 63 rd Street Tunnel Closure	Both Directions	No Roosevelt Island Train Service. Free Shuttle Bus provided between Roosevelt Island and 21 st St./Queensbridge and Queensboro Plaza

When a track is out of service along the 63rd Street Tunnel, most passengers who use the Roosevelt Island station will require at least approximately 15 to 20 minutes of additional travel time; passengers with disabilities or unable to use stairs will need additional time due to the additional stops they must stay on the train to arrive at a fully accessible station to make their transfer.

In response to the presentation, there were numerous speakers from Roosevelt Island who were extremely concerned about the extent to which those who live and work on Roosevelt Island will be impacted, especially during the times in which one or both tracks of the 63rd Street tunnel will be shut down when it will be hugely disruptive. They expressed frustration that work can't be relegated to weekends, and to the extreme inconvenience they will face with significantly longer travel times to go in the opposite direction when a track is out of operation before backtracking to get to their final destination. They also noted the limitations of the other options they have when subway service is reduced or suspended, as the Roosevelt Island tram is subject to overcrowding and maintenance-related reduced operations, and the NYC Ferry Astoria Route, which is infrequent and doesn't offer free transfers to other public transportation modes. Some speakers spoke to the need for direct shuttle buses and Q102 service to both Queensboro Plaza and Manhattan not just when both directions of service are suspended, but also during Phases 1 and 3 when one direction of service is not operating.

Some speakers also expressed frustration that the Roosevelt Island Tram has yet to implement the MTA's OMNY fare payment system that has been rolled out on New York City Subways and Buses, and urged immediate

implementation so it is in place before Phase 1 of the 63rd Street Direct Fixation Track Project commences. The need for OMNY on the Tram is especially critical during this project, as it is likely that a significant portion of the 80-90% of Roosevelt Island residents that typically rely on the “F” train will use the Tram as an alternative transit method when one or both tracks is out of operation, and there is a history of frequent MetroCard machine outages and long lines to buy or add value to MetroCards at the Tram Stations. Furthermore, if a passenger were to transfer from a Subway/Bus to the Tram, using OMNY on the subway/bus would subject them to paying a second fare to board the Tram since OMNY is not yet accepted on the Tram. It was explained by one of the Co-Chairs that OMNY’s implantation on transit systems such as the Tram that are operated by agencies such as the Roosevelt Island Operating Corp. (RIOC), that are considered MetroCard Affiliates, can’t occur until the MTA provides RIOC with the legal agreement to purchase the OMNY equipment from the manufacturer and to begin the integration process; it was stated by Ms. Songhai that RIOC and the MTA have had a conversation, but no other details and no timeline were provided.

The following resolution was then put forward by Community Board 8:

WHEREAS; the MTA’s 63rd Street Line Direct Fixation Track Rehabilitation Project, impacting the F Line serving Queens, Roosevelt Island and Manhattan, is to be performed in the Spring, Summer and Autumn of 2023; and

WHEREAS; F train service will be significantly impacted by the 63rd Street Line Direct Fixation Track Rehabilitation Project, including two months apiece in phases 1 and 3 when trains will only operate in one direction, and on 5 weekends when both directions of service will be suspended; and;

WHEREAS; A large majority of Roosevelt Islanders use the F train as primary means of transit; and

WHEREAS; the F train is also a primary mode of transportation for visitors, students and workers who travel to Roosevelt Island; and

WHEREAS; Users of the Roosevelt Island F Train Station will be disproportionately impacted by the project, as they will face additional travel time required for Roosevelt Island subway passengers of at least 20 minutes in order to backtrack through Queens or Manhattan;

WHEREAS; Persons with disabilities and other passengers who rely on subway stations with elevators will require even more additional travel time, as they will have to travel 3 additional stops through Queens to Jackson Hts./Roosevelt Avenue when traveling through Queens since the closest available transfer at Steinway St. is not ADA accessible, and one additional stop through Manhattan to 47-50 St./Rockefeller Center as 57th St./6th Avenue is not ADA Accessible;

WHEREAS; Roosevelt Island is also served by the Roosevelt Island Tram and NYC Ferry’s Astoria Route, which are likely to see much more passenger activity throughout the track rehabilitation project; and

WHEREAS; even during times when F train service is operating normally, the Roosevelt Island Tram often encounters long lines and overcrowding, requiring passengers to wait for the next available tram during peak travel periods; and

WHEREAS; it is anticipated that Roosevelt Island Tram overcrowding will be exacerbated during the track rehabilitation project when many F train passengers will find the Tram as their fastest option, especially during warmer weather months when tourists flock to the Tram to visit Roosevelt Island; and

WHEREAS; the Roosevelt Island Tram has not yet been upgraded to the MTA’s OMNY fare payment system, and requires use of MetroCards in order to for passengers to obtain a free transfer to NYC Transit Subways and Buses; and

WHEREAS; NYC Ferry is not an affiliate agency of the MTA for fare payment, and thus doesn’t use MetroCard/OMNY and doesn’t allow free transfers to/from the Roosevelt Island Tram or NYC Transit Subways and Buses;

WHEREAS; no current timeline for OMNY to be installed for the Roosevelt Island Tram has been provided by the MTA; and

WHEREAS; Roosevelt Island F Train users who use the Tram as an alternative during the track rehabilitation project will need to revert to the antiquated MetroCard, losing the convenience, features and improved user experience that OMNY has provided;

WHEREAS; MetroCard Vending Machines located on Roosevelt Island have a history of being unreliable and are often out of service, and when operational often have long lines of both residents and visitors waiting to purchase a MetroCard or add value to their cards; and

WHEREAS; any potential maintenance on the Roosevelt Island Tram that may impact levels of service would further cause overcrowding while the track rehabilitation project is occurring;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 Manhattan requests that New York City Transit provide shuttle buses from Roosevelt Island to Queens and Manhattan for the entire duration of the MTA's 63rd Street Line Direct Fixation Track Rehabilitation Project;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan requests that New York City Transit should provide more frequent service on the Q102 bus route, linking Roosevelt Island to Queens, for the duration of the track rehabilitation project;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan requests that the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation ("RIOC") commit to operating the Roosevelt Island Tram at maximum levels of service for the duration of this rehabilitation work;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan requests that RIOC ensure that any essential maintenance of the Tram should be scheduled to avoid to the fullest extent possible the timeframe in which one direction of Roosevelt Island subway service is suspended;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan requests that MTA expeditiously address any MetroCard vending machine malfunctions or outages at both sides of the Roosevelt Island Tram and keep them in full working order for the duration at all times throughout the duration of the track rehabilitation project.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan requests that the MTA expedite the implementation of the MTA's OMNY Fare Payment System at both stations of the Roosevelt Island Tram, and that the MTA work with RIOC to formalize all agreements to enable this to occur before the beginning of Phase 1 of the Track Rehabilitation Project on May 1, 2023.

Yes (11+1): Agrawal, Birnbaum, Bores, Brown, Krikler, Lader, Lamorte, Pope-Marshall, Popper, Schneider, Warren, Borock (Public Member)

No (0): None

Abstain (0): None

Item 2: Update from the MTA/NYCT on the 68th Street Station Accessibility Upgrades Project Status

Joseph O'Donnell, Director of Public Affairs at MTA Construction & Development New York, along with New York City Transit Assistant Director of Government and Community Affairs Lucille Songhai, provided an update on the 68th Street/Hunter College Station Accessibility Project. Work began on the project on 12/30/21, and is expected to be completed substantially in December 2024.

Mr. O'Donnell described the scope of the project, which will result in the installation of 3 elevators – one between the street level and station mezzanine, and one between the mezzanine and each platform, along with 2 new stairwells (one at the NW corner of 69th Street/Lexington Ave., one midblock on Lexington Ave. between 68th and 69th Streets), and 2 redesigned existing entrances with widened staircases. The station mezzanine will also be expanded, and the station will be brought into a state of good repair.

Mr. O'Donnell explained that due to the extensive amount of activity that takes place in the vicinity of the station, the above ground work is restricted to overnights. The required relocation of utilities, spanning the entire length of the station and adjacent streets, accounts for the majority of the overnight work taking place.

The stairwell at the northwest corner of 68th Street/Lexington Avenue has already been completed and is open to the public, and the midblock staircase is expected to be opened later in March 2023. Also projected to be completed during the first quarter of 2023 are vent reconstruction and sidewalk restoration on the east side of Lexington Avenue. Utility relocation will be wrapping up closer to the end of the 2023; it is now about 60% done, and can only be done overnight. Track work and maintenance is expected to be completed in the 4th quarter of 2023, followed by the mezzanine in the first quarter of 2024, and then the remaining stairwells and elevators in the second half of 2024.

As 2023 progresses, the noise at street level will be less impactful, but Mr. O'Donnell indicated that there will be noise associated with the mezzanine work. It was acknowledged by Mr. O'Donnell that noise has been biggest source of complaints, which in part is exacerbated by the constraints that the MTA faces by having to do work only at night. Third party noise monitoring is being performed and measured hourly, and is reviewed daily by project staff, and has been found to be within permit compliance thresholds 90% of time. This was accomplished through the use of acoustic blankets to supplement existing sound barriers, using smaller chipping guns rather than jackhammers, putting mufflers on all equipment where possible to stifle noise (where safe), replacement of the back-up alarm on all excavation machines to use lower pitch sounds, welding of street plates every Friday to allow quieter traffic on weekends, and through work sequencing in which louder work is done between 10PM and Midnight so the 12AM to 5AM period is quieter. The project team also tried to move sidewalk and street demolition to daytime when possible, and reworked the schedule to stack necessary construction under the street in the 3rd quarter of 2023.

There is extensive community outreach associated with the project, including biweekly meetings with Hunter College representatives to coordinate with other construction; biweekly meetings with the General Manager of Imperial House, bi-weekly 2-week lookahead schedules distributed to Imperial House residents, elected officials and Community Board 8, communications with surrounding residential buildings regarding DEP water testing shutdowns; outreach to street level businesses. Anyone needing to communicate with the construction team may call the project hotline at 1 (800) 891-1679, and may also call 311.

Attendees asked a series of questions regarding the project. In response, the project team will look into the precise number of noise monitors, noted that there won't be any impacts to a nearby landmarked building, and indicated that there have not been any complaints about rats. They stated that once complete, elevators will be maintained by the stations team at NYCT, and follow regular cleaning schedules that at many stations take place three times per day.

Item 3: Public Hearing: Sightseeing bus company use of an Intercity Bus Stop request from Aurora Tourism Services on the west side of Fifth Avenue between East 61st and 62nd Streets

The President of Aurora Tourism Services, a black-owned business, presented a proposal to use the bus stop on 5th Avenue between 61st and 62nd Streets. The company provides double decker sightseeing bus trips serving 9 locations across Manhattan, and serves passengers that have booked reservations in advance. Buses operate once every two hours between 8AM and Midnight, and loading and exiting of passengers typically takes 2 to 3 minutes each time the bus makes a stop.

In response to questions, it was indicated that buses will not be laying over at this location, as the buses are stored on Staten Island and layover in lower Manhattan near South Street. The bus stop proposed for use is also used by 2 Bronx-Manhattan MTA express buses that only discharge passengers at this location, and Gray Line sightseeing buses that is not operating currently; NYCT buses use a separately signed bus stop that is immediately north of the bus stop closer to 62nd Street.

Colleen Chattergoon, NYCDOT Senior Borough Planner and Liaison to CB8, confirmed that if another bus operator were to start to use this stop in the future that those operators would be required to avoid conflicts with the times Aurora Tourism Services will be utilizing the stop. There were two comments referencing congestion in the area on the block south of the bus stop.

The following resolution was then put forward by Community Board 8:

WHEREAS; Aurora Tourism Services LLC has submitted an application to NYCDOT to use the bus stop on 5th Avenue just north of 61st Street for sightseeing trips; and

WHEREAS; Aurora Tourism Service LLC proposes using double decker buses that would serve the bus stop every two hours between 8AM and Midnight; and

WHEREAS; the bus stop at 5th Avenue and 61st street proposed for use by Aurora Tourism Services LLC is currently only used by MTA Bronx-Manhattan Express Buses for passenger drop-off only; and

WHEREAS; NYCDOT will ensure that any future services that may utilize this bus stop will not conflict with scheduled departure times for Aurora Tourism Services LLC buses;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 approves the use of the bus stop on 5th Avenue immediately north of 61st Street for use by Aurora Tourism Services LLC to operate sightseeing buses every two hours between 8AM and Midnight.

Yes (9): Agrawal, Birnbaum, Bores, Brown, Lader, Pope-Marshall, Popper, Schneider, Warren

No (0): None

Abstain (0): None

Item 4: Public Hearing: Parking regulations change request for 1289 Lexington Avenue. Request is to change metered parking on Lexington Avenue to No Parking

Representatives from 1289 Lexington Avenue, on the northeast corner of 86th Street, presented a request to change parking regulations on Lexington Avenue between their building entrance and 86th Street from metered parking to No Parking. It was explained that the area is a no passenger drop off location anywhere near this corner, which is the location of the only elevator serving the 4/5/6 subway line between 125th Street and 51st Street, resulting in double parking; there is also no drop-off area on East 86th Street in front of the elevator. The request would also benefit seniors and mobility-impaired residents of 1289 Lexington Avenue, as they don't currently have direct access to the sidewalk.

One public attendee spoke in favor the request, while multiple board members expressed opposition. It was pointed out that the Transportation Committee generally doesn't support building-specific requests for no parking regulations, and that no parking signage would be unlikely to keep the parking lane clear as it would still be legal for vehicles possessing handicap parking stickers or license plates. The decision was made to take no action on this request.

Item 5: Discussion of proposed "5G" Street Pole Attachments located within 10 feet of an adjacent building:

- a. East 60th Street between Madison and Fifth Avenues**
- b. East 65th Street between Madison and Fifth Avenues**
- c. East 74th Street between First and York Avenues**

This item was added at the last minute following receipt of letters from the NYC Office of Technology and Innovation (NYCOTI) notifying Community Board 8 of three locations where installation of 5G street pole attachments are proposed. These requests are made to NYCOTI by its mobile telecommunication franchisees, and require review from Community Boards only in situations in which the proposed street pole attachments to existing street lights are situated within 10 feet of adjacent buildings. The letters from NYCOTI included language requesting comments from CB8M within 15 days of receipt.

The street pole attachment being requested are the same type that have been installed outside of 520 East 90th Street, which generated publicity when it was installed on top of an existing street pole within 10' of the building without the required notifications being provided; a resident of 520 East 90th Street has spoken about this issue at past Transportation Committee meetings, and a photo of this 5G street pole attachment was displayed to meeting attendees.

The Co-Chairs clarified that these proposed street pole attachments are a separate issue from what was addressed by the Transportation Committee and CB8M in December 2022, at which time a resolution was passed opposing

installation of Link5G towers at various locations within Community District 8; although that resolution did include language requesting a “moratorium be placed on construction and planning of Link5G poles and devices in Community District 8”, the 5G street pole attachments are unrelated to the Link5G initiative.

Both Committee members and public attendees expressed strong opposition to these proposed street pole attachments, and viewed the issues and concerns similar to the comprehensive list of concerns identified during the Link 5G discussion regarding siting appropriateness, potential health impacts, lack of outreach, and visual impacts. The consensus was that any siting of 5G equipment should not be within 10’ of a building, and that the Board should make such a position clear.

The following resolution was then put forward by Community Board 8:

WHEREAS; the NYC Office of Technology and Innovation (NYCOTI) is required to inform Community Boards of proposed 5G street pole attachment locations only if they are proposed within 10 feet of nearby buildings; and

WHEREAS; NYCOTI has notified Community Board 8 of three locations where installation of 5G street pole attachments are proposed within 10 feet of nearby buildings, and provided 15 business days to be provided; and

WHEREAS; 15 business days to respond to such requests doesn’t allow for sufficient time for Community Boards to notify residents and other potentially impacted stakeholders of such proposals; and

WHEREAS; Residents of Community District 8 have previously raised concern about previously installed 5G street pole attachments without prior notification at locations such as at 520 East 90th Street; and

WHEREAS; the appropriateness of the siting of 5G infrastructure locations must be fully considered by Community Boards; and

WHEREAS; The size of the 5G street pole attachments are wide enough to have visual impacts; and

WHEREAS; Community Board 8 has taken a strong position against other 5G infrastructure being installed without proper notice and hearings; and

WHEREAS; 5G street pole attachments 10’ or less from nearby buildings is perceived as being too close, regardless of the proposed location; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 disapproves the NYCOTI proposed locations for 5G street pole attachments within 10 feet of buildings at the following locations:

- a. East 60th Street between Madison and Fifth Avenues
- b. East 65th Street between Madison and Fifth Avenues
- c. East 74th Street between First and York Avenues

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 opposes any location within 10’ of buildings that NYCOTI seeks to install 5G street pole attachments;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 requests that NYCOTI provide notification and the ability to comment on any proposed 5G street pole attachment location, regardless of its proximity to existing buildings.

Yes (10): Agrawal, Birnbaum, Bores, Brown, Lader, Pope-Marshall, Popper, Schneider, Warren

No (0): None

Abstain (0): None

Item 6: NYCDOT Updates

Colleen Chattergoon indicated that she didn't have any updates to report.

Item 7: Old and New Business

The following old and new business items were brought up:

- In response to an inquiry made at the February 2023 Transportation Committee meeting regarding construction staging at the Extell project at 79th Street & 1st Avenue, one of the co-chairs read a letter from Extell indicating that they had and continue to plan for the primary construction entrance to be on 1st Avenue, and that the current location of the staging is anticipated to shift from 79th Street to 1st Avenue at the end of March or beginning of April 2023, though it was noted that occasional use of 79th Street may continue to be required.
- A member described dark conditions on 91st Street between 2nd Avenue and 3rd Avenue, as the lights on eastern half of the block have yet to be replaced with LED lights that have been installed elsewhere on the block. The Committee will look into the issue and attempt to obtain additional information from NYCDOT, and will make an effort to see this work completed.
- A member reported that the z-bricks that were damaged on 91st Street between 2nd Avenue and 3rd Avenue have been replaced.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:46 PM.

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