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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Transportation Committee
Wednesday February 7, 2024 6:30 PM
Conducted Remotely on Zoom

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

Minutes

Present: Michele Birnbaum, Lori Bores, Juno Chowla-Song, Rebecca Dangoor, Paul Krikler, Craig Lader, John McClement, Rita Popper, Abraham Salcedo, Cos Spagnoletti, Charles Warren, Judith Berdy (Roosevelt Island Committee Public Member)

Absent: Billy Freeland, Rebecca Lamorte, Valerie Mason, Peter Borock (public member), Stephanie Reckler (public member)

Number of Attendees from the Public: Approximately 35

Resolutions to be voted on:

Item 2 (Unanimous) – Opposition to Queens Bus Redesign Recommendation to replace the Q102 route serving Roosevelt Island

Item 3 (Unanimous) – Approval of Revocable Consent Request for a snowmelt system at 20 East 78th St.
The meeting was called to order at 6:32 PM.

Item 1: Continued Discussion of Residential Parking Permits - Presentation on San Francisco's program by Raynell Cooper, Residential Parking Policy Manager, San Francisco MUNI (6:35PM)

At past CB8 Transportation Committee meetings, there has been interest expressed in New York City potentially developing a residential parking permit program. This interest has also been expressed at CB8 Congestion Pricing Task Force meetings, where there has been skepticism towards the finding in the Environmental Assessment for the Central Business District Tolling Program that concluded that Congestion Pricing would not increase demand for on-street parking north off the 60th Street toll boundary. To further explore the issue, a presentation of the residential parking program operating in San Francisco was provided by Raynell Cooper, Residential Parking Policy Manager for the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency.

In describing Residential Parking Programs (RPP) as a general policy, Mr. Cooper defined it as system of parking regulations granting parking privileges to some subset of drivers with a connection to the area. He noted that some nearby smaller cities including Jersey City and White Plains, along with 17 of the 20 largest cities in the USA have such programs, as do most major European cities. Mr. Cooper described the primary policy considerations for developing programs as follows:

- Who can buy permits?

- Who has the power to modify rules and geographies of zones?
- How many permits can a single household obtain?
- Should a city have a cap on the total amount of permits in circulation?
- How does a city handle new developments that may impact parking behavior?

Different permit cost structures that cities practice include:

- Free permits (such as in Boston, which Mr. Cooper discourages)
- Nominal costs
- Cost recovery where fees are based on covering the costs of implementing and operating the program
- Market rate (such as through auctions or based on off-street parking rates such as in Vancouver BC)
- Variable pricing based on targets that may include the number of permits, income-based with discounts offered to low-households, or based on availability as done in Toronto (which Mr. Cooper said is very difficult to administer).

Regulations of RPPs may include the following:

- Different types of limits (i.e. no visitor parking, not-to-exceed time limits)
- Hours of enforcement, such as 24/7, All-Day, overnight only (common in southern California, and prioritizes residents), working hours only, other (i.e. seasonal or for special events)

The costs of operating RPPs include various considerations, such as:

- Enforcement
- Permit Systems (i.e. front-end and back-end tracking systems)
- Planning Staff
- Signage/Parking Meters
- Labor (which is the biggest cost for the San Francisco RPP)

Mr. Cooper then provided an overview of the San Francisco program that has been in place since 1976:

- 32 zones, most less than 1 square mile; covering about 75,000 spaces and 50% of all households;
- About 60,000 annual permits sold (plus guest/visitor permits);
- Permits available for residents, businesses, teachers, in-home childcare providers, firefighters
- Resident driven program - communities drive process for zone creation and expansion through petition
- Program cost: about \$12.5 million per year (\$170 fee for each permit issued covers this program cost)
- Caps of 4 permits per household in most areas; some zones have a cap of 2 per household
- Most zones in effect from 8AM to 6PM; some are 9AM to 9PM Monday to Saturday, some with other specific hours;
- Many zones where parking permits are in effect allow non-permit parking for up to 2 hours;
- With the exception of students and diplomats, it requires the vehicle and insurance to match the existing address in order to prove residency and be eligible for a RPP
- After years of permits being in the form of stickers that would be placed on the bumper of a vehicle, there is now a virtual system in place where enforcement agents use scanners to match license plates with the permit, and will accommodate a monthly permit program that is soon to be introduced.

- There is a parking control enforcement division that has about 25 officers performing daily enforcement, though this number varies daily if there are other enforcement needs such as special events or road closures
- There are no waiting lists for permits (but the program is oversubscribed).

Mr. Cooper described the pros and cons of the San Francisco Program based on his 5-plus years of running the program. The pros he identified were that it is generally popular among those who use it, and that it may reduce congestion in some areas such as more outlying and mid-density areas. The addition of paid parking allows for a more popular way to raise revenue, and supports transit operations in San Francisco; it also establishes a framework for future policy-forward programs, like meeting climate and vision zero goals.

The cons of the program according to Mr. Cooper are that it not effective in vehicle-dense areas, which he described as neighborhoods that resemble the Upper East Side. The two-hour parking limit in many zones doesn't do a good job of keeping out visitors. The low cost of permits cover the cost of the program, but underprices parking (the current market rate of parking in San Francisco ranges from about \$400 per month in higher-density areas similar to the Upper East Side, to \$150 to \$200 per month in lower-density areas. The resident-driven process of developing zone geographies are difficult to manage and creates equity concerns, and the broader program creates a perception that residents of a specific area now have an entitlement for parking. He also said that the hardest part of his job is that administering the program requires his agency to pick winners and losers among groups that may wish to have their needs prioritized when determining program parameters (non-profits, multi-generational families, teachers, etc.). He also noted that San Francisco doesn't have a system similar to Community Boards that empower neighborhoods.

Mr. Cooper closed his presentation reviewing past and ongoing discussions of residential parking in New York City, dating back to the Bloomberg administration and including the discussion in the Congestion Pricing environmental review documents. He noted that CB7 expressed support for RPPs in 2019.

Looking forward as New York City considers the future, Mr. Cooper recommended that there be a data collection effort that includes parking utilization/occupancy, access, and registration of parked cars; that stakeholders work with responsible agencies to understand who would/could administer various aspects of the program and what the costs would be. He suggested that conversations be held at the neighborhood level about values and how to best craft a system that reflects those values, considering all tradeoffs and all community members, and trying to address the fundamental question of "what does the city owe to residents who park on the street"?

Item 2: Presentations by the MTA/NYC Transit on Proposed Bus Route Changes (7:40PM)

A team of representatives from New York City Transit presented a series of proposed bus route changes.

a. Queens Bus Redesign recommendation to replace the Q102 between S. Loop Rd. and Queens Plaza with Q104 service between the Roosevelt Island "F" station and Sunnyside via Broadway & 46th Street

The Queens Bus Redesign Project was presented, with a focus on the proposed changes to the impacts to bus service on Roosevelt Island. The project began in 2019, with an initial plan that was issued in 2020 and then withdrawn in 2021 after being poorly received by the public. The plan that was presented was initially drafted in 2022 and was received more positively, though there was no direct outreach on Roosevelt Island in the form of Community Board or other public meetings.

The NYCT team started by describing the background of the Queens Bus Redesign project along with the priorities that included reliable service, faster travel, better connections and simplified service, which would be accomplished through strategies including simplifying the network, enhancing connectivity, improving frequencies, bus stop balancing, expanding bus priority, improve transit equity, and improving accessibility. The Queens Bus Redesign also established a new “rush” service with frequent service to join local, limited and select routes, and identified 24 bus priority corridors including 21st Ave. where buses serving Roosevelt Island operate along certain segments.

The proposal impacting Roosevelt Island would eliminate the existing Q102 service between S. Loop Road and Queens Plaza in Long Island City. The existing Q104, which currently operates along 48th Street in Sunnyside and along Broadway in Astoria, would be extended to serve 21st Street and Roosevelt Island; it would terminate at the Roosevelt Island “F” station, and thus no longer serve the portion of the Q102 serving areas further south on the Island. It would have additional service to match the frequency of the existing Q102, and have longer hours of operation.

The future Q104 would provide connections to the 7 Train at the 46th Street Station, the M and R lines at Steinway St. or 46th Street, and the N train at Broadway. It was noted that these stations did not offer ADA compatibility at the current time, but were programmed to be upgraded at some point in the future. The purpose of the change which connects bus service on Roosevelt Island to Astoria and Sunnyside, according to NYCT, was to provide Roosevelt Island residents with opportunities to access all of the services that are offered along Broadway, including shopping and medical services, which are more prevalent along the Q104 than the existing Q102; it would also make bus trips to the Broadway corridor faster and more reliable, and provide more opportunities for easier transfers to other Queens bus routes.

It was also noted that some of the routes that operate over the Queensboro Bridge are slated to have minor changes in the Long Island City area, but are not proposed to change in Manhattan within Community District 8.

A public hearing for the Queens Bus Redesign will be scheduled for the second quarter of 2024, and will be in-person and hybrid; NYCT will also hold a meeting at Coler Hospital in the coming weeks. There is a future trip planner function on the Queens Bus Redesign website that allows passengers to test their future trips in the redesigned network; they can also use a program to compare existing and future routes. There is also a comment portal. Following public outreach, there will be a final plan addendum, if necessary, before the plan goes to the MTA Board for approval; barring any major delays, the plan is anticipated to be implemented in mid-2025.

The reaction to the proposed changes was universally negative, with everyone who commented expressing the sentiment that the existing Q102 should not be replaced and that Q102 service to Long Island City was preferable to service that would be offered by the Q104 into Astoria and Sunnyside. The lack of elevators and ADA accessibility at the stations that would connect to the Q104 was viewed as unacceptable, especially since there was no timeframe stated for the upgrades to these stations to be completed and could take more than a decade. This is a major problem given the relatively high percentage of older residents who reside on Roosevelt Island. Also, the extent to which Coler Hospital is a major trip generator for Roosevelt Island bus service is seen as an additional reason why transfer opportunities between the bus and subway lines in Queens is critical; these transfers can currently be performed at Queens Plaza. It was also noted that there are also many Coler employees who take the current Q102 from Queensbridge.

There were also concerns about the need for multiple bus/subway transfers for passengers as a direct result of a replacement of the Q102 with a Q104, though NYCT said any situations would be programmed to ensure that no one is charged a second fare if they need to make a second transfer as a result of the recommended changes, and that anyone who would face that scenario should inform NYCT of instances of this sort. There was also a comment highlighting the frequency in which the F train has a service disruption and the convenience of the Queens Plaza connections in such instances.

The one aspect of the Q104 service that was viewed in a positive light was that it would operate longer hours than the Q102, and provide better service in the late night hours to Coler Hospital that Community Board 8 has requested.

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

WHEREAS; the Q102 is the sole New York City Bus route that serves Roosevelt Island, having been in existence for many decades; and

WHEREAS; New York City Transit has published its draft final plan for their Queens Bus Redesign project, in which it is proposed that the Q102 service on Roosevelt Island be replaced with a redesigned Q104 route; and

WHEREAS; the proposed Q104 service to/from Roosevelt Island would serve the Broadway corridor in Astoria, resulting in the elimination of one-seat bus service between Roosevelt Island and Queens Plaza; and

WHEREAS; Roosevelt Island residents have expressed a strong preference to have direct access to Queens Plaza and Long Island City by bus over Sunnyside and Astoria; and

WHEREAS; the proposed Q104 service would connect Roosevelt Island to subway stations that are not currently ADA accessible and are not expected to be upgraded in the foreseeable future; and

WHEREAS; the Queens Plaza station that serves as the current transfer point between the Q102 and the E, M and R trains is fully accessible; and

WHEREAS; the older-skewing population of Roosevelt Island and the presence of Coler Hospital speak to the importance of maintaining bus to subway transfers that don't discriminate against persons with disabilities; and

WHEREAS; longer hours of service for any bus serving Coler Hospital are needed, as expressed in a recent Community Board 8 resolution;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 Manhattan requests the following in response to the recommendations of the Queens Bus Redesign:

1. The current routing of the Q102 Bus serving Roosevelt Island remain unchanged in Queens, thereby maintaining subway connections at stations that are fully ADA compliant;
2. The Q102 hours of service be extended, as previously requested in September 2023, to provide service at Coler Hospital at 1am to allow late night workers to transfer to other NYCT routes and subway stations;
3. Q102 service hours be increased on weekdays and weekends to achieve 20 minute headways;
4. The recommendation to replace the Q102 with Q104 service connecting Roosevelt Island to Astoria and Sunnyside not move forward;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 Manhattan opposes the Queens Bus Redesign recommendation to replace the Q102 service on Roosevelt Island connecting to Queens Plaza with Q104 service, due to the lack of ADA accessibility at subway transfer points along the proposed new route alignment and a preference among passengers to access Queensbridge and Long Island City over Astoria and Sunnyside; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the Q104 does replace the Q102, bus stop going north on Main Street be relocated to the Senior Center in lieu of the current stop at the Library.

Yes (10+1): Birnbaum, Bores, Chowla-Song, Dangoor, Krikler, Lader, Popper, Salcedo, Spagnoletti, Warren, Berdy (Roosevelt Island Committee Public Member)

No (0): None

Abstain (0): None

b. Proposed rerouting of the BxM10 Southbound from 5th Ave. to 2nd Ave. North of 86th Street, and addition of New BxM2 drop-off bus stops at 96th and 87th Streets

The BxM10 express bus, which operates between Manhattan and the Bronx, currently operates southbound along 5th Avenue. Based on passenger requests to facilitate transfers to the Q train and to improve running times, a rerouting of the BxM10 southbound to operate along 2nd Avenue between 125th Street and 86th Street is recommended. To accommodate this change, it is proposed that two new drop-off bus stops for the Bx10 be established at 96th and 87th Streets. These stops will share the same physical bus stop as the local M15 route, and signage will be added to indicate these will also serve as stops for the BxM10. There were no objections among Committee members.

c. Proposed elimination of southbound BxM2 bus stop at 5th Ave/94th Street

The BxM2 express bus, which operates between Manhattan and the Bronx, currently has southbound bus stops along 5th Avenue at 98th and 94th Streets. Typically, stop spacing for express buses are every ½ mile or every mile, as opposed to this pair of stops that is less than ¼ mile apart. Given the significantly higher passenger activity at the 98th Street adjacent to Mt. Sinai Hospital, the elimination of the stop at 94th Street is recommended. There were no objections among Committee members.

Item 3: Public Hearing: Revocable Consent Application to construct, maintain and use Snowmelt System at 20 East 78th Street (8:50PM)

Andrew Lyon, architect representing the owner of 20 East 78th Street, is requesting a Revocable Consent to construct, maintain and use a snowmelt system. The proposed system is on a single loop, reinforced with concrete, with access under the existing stairs and from inside the residence. The system would require the sidewalk to be torn up if it required repair, with the owner responsible for all costs. The system would automatically turn on when the outdoor temperature drops to 32 degrees.

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

WHEREAS; the owners of 20 East 78th Street are requesting a revocable consent for an electric snow melt system; and

WHEREAS; the system can be accessed from the basement of the home; and

WHEREAS; the owner will be responsible for any costs related to maintenance if the system needs to be repaired and require the sidewalk be ripped up; and

WHEREAS; the snow melt system benefits the public when operating as intended;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 Manhattan supports the revocable consent request for a snow melt system in front of 172 East 73rd Street.

Yes (10): Birnbaum, Bores, Chowla-Song, Dangoor, Krikler, Lader, Popper, Salcedo, Spagnoletti, Warren

No (0): None

Abstain (0): None

Item 4: NYCDOT Updates (8:55PM)

Colleen Chattergoon, NYCDOT Senior Borough Planner and Liaison to Community Board 8, reported that the rules for the new Dining Out NYC program have been issued, and are available on the NYCDOT website. She highlighted that the set up area must be located within the restaurant's frontage, the maximum length is 40' and the maximum width is 8'. Any existing and new roadway structures will be prohibited, though any existing structure that complies with the outgoing temporary Open Restaurants and properly registered will be allowed to remain in place until 8/3/24; any restaurant applying for the new program will then have to bring their setup in compliance with the new rules, and those that aren't applying will have to remove their no-longer legal structures by 8/3/24. NYCDOT is developing a presentation that they will present at Community Boards in the coming months. She noted in response to a question that NYCDOT now has a larger enforcement team that is being trained for the new permanent program. One member asked that NYCDOT share a list of restaurants that have grandfathered sidewalk cafes and those that were constructed under the temporary program and will need to be removed; NYCDOT said they will look into the viability of doing so.

Item 5: Old and New Business (9:00PM)

A member followed up on comments made at past meetings regarding what appeared to be an illegal enclosed sidewalk café at the new restaurant on the northwest corner of 2nd Avenue and 89th Street, which NYCDOT agreed looked to be non-compliant.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05PM.

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