

Valerie S. Mason  
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**  
Wednesday, April 2, 2025 6:30 PM  
*Conducted Remotely on Zoom*

*Please note: The resolutions 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.*

**Resolutions to be voted on:**

**Item 1: Improvements to Bus Stops and Pedestrian Infrastructure along M79-SBS Bus Route**

**Item 2: York Avenue Traffic Study - Traffic Data Collection Timeline between 59th and 66th St.**

**Item 5: Proposed NYCDOT Rule Change Regarding Pedestrian Plazas and Open Streets**

**MINUTES:**

*Present:* Michele Birnbaum, Alida Camp, Sebastian Hallum Clarke, Paul Krikler, Craig Lader, John McClement, Valerie Mason, Rita Popper, Judy Schneider, Todd Stein, Charles Warren

*Absent (excused):* Lori Bores

*Absent (unexcused):* John Philips

*Number of Attendees from the Public: Approximately 50*

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

**Item 1: NYCDOT Presentation - 79th Street Crosstown Select Bus Service Capital Project**

Alexander Altskan, Senior Capital Planner, Transit Development for NYCDOT, presented an upcoming capital project to upgrade the M79 Select Bus Service (SBS) corridor. The presentation focused on the proposed improvements within Community District 8; similar improvements proposed for the M79 SBS stops on the West Side are also included in the project. This project doesn't include any operational changes to bus lanes, the hours of the bus lanes, or the traffic signals along the corridor – it is focused on physical infrastructure related to bus stops and pedestrian safety along the corridor.

Mr. Altskan provided an overview of the M79 SBS route that was converted to an SBS route in 2017. It carries 13,000 daily passengers, making it one of the busiest bus routes in Manhattan, with one of the highest per-mile passenger rates. The corridor was upgraded to a SBS corridor in 2017, which included queue jumps, bus lanes, signal timing improvements, off-board fare payment, real-time passenger info, and upgraded bus stop amenities and street furniture. Mr. Altskan provided data showing reliability and speeds of the route improved following the SBS upgrades - bus bunching is down 6%, dwell times are down 21%, ridership increased 9% in the 1st year of the SBS, car travel times are down 4% to 8%, late buses are down 45%, bus speeds are up to 6.9 MPH in 2024 from 6.0 MPH, and on-time performance is 81.4% vs 69.5% for NYCT buses systemwide (2024).

The SBS upgrades and resulting traffic calming also benefitted safety - based on NYPD data comparing the 2017 - 2024 period with SBS versus the 2012 to 2016 period, pedestrian injuries decreased 63%, cyclist injuries decreased 17%, motor vehicle crashes decreased 62%, and total incidents decreased 57%. Although these improvements were strong, the corridor saw 26 people injured or killed between 2020 and 2024, which was among the top 33% of corridors in terms of the rate of injuries/fatalities per mile.

When the initial project was completed in 2017, there were certain upgrades that were not able to be completed or incorporated into the project – in some instances, work wasn't able to be done with in-house materials, or didn't use permanent materials. Since that time, the roadway condition along the route has deteriorated, with some sections of the roadway and sidewalk in need of capital improvements and repair. In some cases, intersections may not be in compliance with the ADA. There continues to be crowding at certain bus stops along with a lack of circulation space, while some bus operation issues continue such as illegal parking in bus stops and bus lanes.

The proposed capital project, encompassing both the East and West Sides, includes 15 bus stops to be upgraded, 14 bus pads to be installed, 9 new median tips/pedestrian refuges so they can be fully ADA compliant, 4 bus bulbs, 13 sidewalk extensions, 20+ street trees and landscaping, and infiltration basins that help with stormwater runoff. Benches will also be installed in certain locations, while new shelters are also being looked into for feasibility. The presentation by Mr. Altskan displayed detailed drawings depicting the proposed improvements at each bus stop and intersection. Highlights include a bus bulb at the eastbound Fifth Avenue stop, sidewalk extensions at Madison Ave., Lexington Avenue, First Avenue, York/79<sup>th</sup> St., and York/80<sup>th</sup> Street, ADA compliant median pedestrian refuges at First Ave., Second Ave. and Park Ave., and refurbished sidewalks at most intersections.

The timeline for the project includes a design phase that is ongoing and is expected to be completed in approximately November of 2025. There will then be a procurement process that will lead to an estimated start date in June 2026; at that time, the NYC Department of Design and Construction will provide notice to CB8M and assign a community liaison. As the project involves extensive utility, storm water, and sewer work, construction will likely require 3 years and be completed by fall 2029.

There was extensive discussion regarding the details of the plan, though there was overall support for the project. There were questions about the bus stop at First Avenue that has been temporarily relocated, with some disagreement as to whether the stop should be moved back to its permanent location as is intended once the ongoing construction project is completed. There was a request to expand signal priority for buses to all intersections and to link them to leading pedestrian intervals (LPI), though that would require queue jumps to ensure buses are able to take advantage of the LPI. There were questions about the locations of new trees proposed, which Mr. Altskan indicated is still in the planning phase. There was some concern raised about the cost of the project; it was explained that nearly half of the \$45 million project budget is related to the work being done by DEP or is related to general resurfacing of 79<sup>th</sup> Street and not to the specific M79 SBS aspects of the project. There were also some comments criticizing the extent of the improvements to bus speeds and the manner in which the data was presented, though others argued that even modest changes are worthwhile and beneficial to bus riders, and that the nature of a crosstown bus route is such that a large amount of time savings is not achievable unless the bus were running in an express fashion.

There were also comments and concerns regarding the pending end of fare payment using MetroCard, as it was stated in the presentation and confirmed by MTA staff who also supported the presentation that the SBS ticket machines were eventually going to be removed. This resulted in extensive discussion about the transition from MetroCard to OMNY and concerns about how reduced fare passengers were now being required to switch to OMNY.

The following resolution was then put forward by the Committee:

**WHEREAS;** NYCDOT is proposing a capital project to improve safety along the M79 Select Bus Service Corridor; and

**WHEREAS;** the M79 SBS is one of the busiest and most productive bus routes in Manhattan with about 13,000 daily passengers; and

**WHEREAS;** the 2017 upgrade to the M79 to convert it to an SBS route resulted in increased ridership, improved reliability, travel time savings, and improved safety resulting from traffic calming effects; and

**WHEREAS;** the 79<sup>th</sup> Street corridor continues to be among the top 33% of corridors in terms of the rate of injuries/fatalities per mile; and

**WHEREAS;** roadway conditions along the route have deteriorated, with some sections of the roadway and sidewalk in need of capital improvements and repair; and

**WHEREAS;** there were some upgrades that were not able to be completed or incorporated into the 2017 SBS project, including some non-permanent materials being used in some instances and leaving some intersections in non-compliance with the ADA; and

**WHEREAS;** there continues to be crowding at certain bus stops along with a lack of circulation space, while some bus operation issues continue such as illegal parking in bus stops and bus lanes; and

**WHEREAS;** the proposed project will add bus bulbs and curb extensions to reduce crossing distances and add sidewalk space; and

**WHEREAS;** upgraded bus stops and sidewalks will add environmental benefits including trees and landscaping, along with infiltration basins that help with stormwater runoff; and

**WHEREAS;** roadway resurfacing, installation of bus pads, and related utility and sewer work will provide long-term improvements;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that Community Board 8 Manhattan supports the proposed M79 SBS Capital Project to improve safety and upgrades bus stops, intersections and roadway conditions.

*Yes (7):* Hallum Clarke, Krikler, Lader, McClement, Pope Marshall, Popper, Schneider, Stein, Warren

*No (1):* Birnbaum

*Abstain (3):* Camp, Mason, Stein

## **Item 2: NYCDOT Presentation - York Avenue Transportation Study**

Kole Gjelaaj, Senior Project Manager for NYCDOT, presented on the recently initiated York Avenue Transportation Study. NYCDOT recently held a kickoff meeting with a technical advisory committee that was formed, which is comprised of various stakeholders. The project has been long requested by CB8M spanning over two decades, and a resolution was passed most recently in 2020 to assess the corridor between 59<sup>th</sup> and 79<sup>th</sup> Streets. NYCDOT decided to extend the study area north to 96<sup>th</sup> Street to account for FDR Drive access.

Mr. Gjelaaj discussed the goals and objectives of the Study, which include improving mobility and especially safety for all street users, including pedestrians, motorists, cyclists, and transit users. They will be evaluating existing and future conditions, conducting public outreach, developing measures to put in to generate

improvements over baseline conditions. There will be significant data collection related to traffic data, truck movements, loading, curb utilization, crash history, parking regulations, supply, and utilization, and public transit.

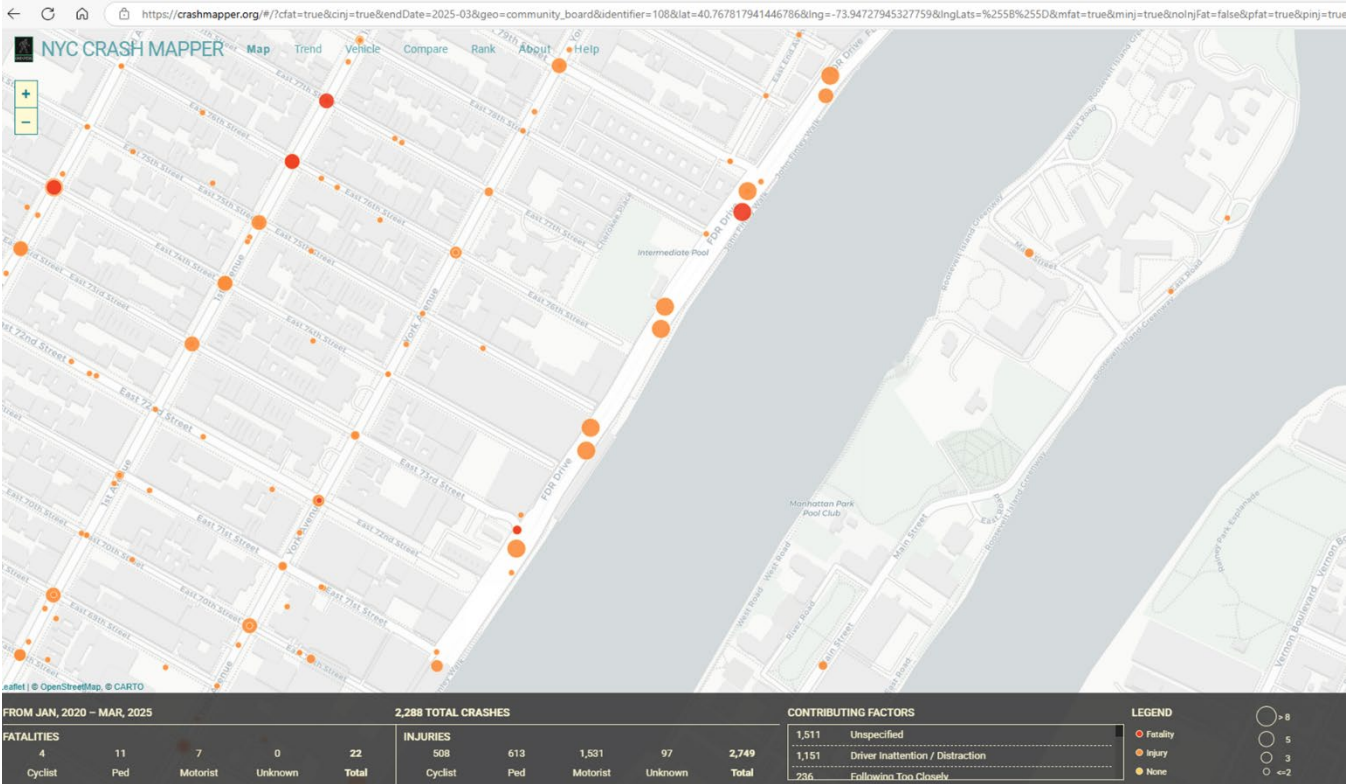
The study corridor contains 35 signalized intersections, with a typical cross section including 2 moving lanes in each direction and parking lanes on both sides of the street; south of 70<sup>th</sup> Street, the parking lane generally has “no standing” regulations in place. Blocks are 260’ in length. Over the last 5 years, 3 fatalities 18 severe injuries have occurred along the corridor, and there are particularly high injury rates in the 60s, especially between 61<sup>st</sup>, 62<sup>nd</sup> and 63<sup>rd</sup> Streets; fatalities occurred at 68th, 72nd, and 87<sup>th</sup> Streets.

It is anticipated that an existing conditions summary will be completed in the fall of 2025, which will lead into the process of NYCDOT considering improvements over the winter and spring of 2026. A draft final report is projected for spring/summer 2026, and the final report expected in the summer/fall 2026 timeframe.

NYCDOT will be adding this project to their projects and initiatives website, where the public may provide input. Once added, comments and suggestions will be able to be made at [www.nycdotfeedbackportals.nyc](http://www.nycdotfeedbackportals.nyc).

Comments from the public and board members were then accepted, and generally related to the importance of this project and to confirm that various data elements were going to be collected. One member expressed opposition to community input and asked NYCDOT to have enough staff to adequately conduct the study; another member pushed back and emphasized the importance of the public outreach process especially since it is the users of the corridor that can best identify where the most pressing safety issues exist.

One member expressed concern regarding the validity of any data collected in the lower 60s, which is still being impacted by the ongoing York Avenue Sewer and Water Main Replacement project that started in 2015 and is now projected to be completed in 2025 and continues to obstruct a lane of traffic. NYCDOT indicated a willingness to delay traffic collection until construction was complete and cleared from the worksite, but expressed similar concerns that it was not certain when the project would truly be completed.



The following resolution was then put forward by the Committee:

**WHEREAS;** NYCDOT has kicked off a York Avenue Transportation Study in March 2025; and

**WHEREAS;** NYCDOT will be conducting extensive data collection across the study corridor extending from 59<sup>th</sup> Street to 96<sup>th</sup> Street; and

**WHEREAS;** there is an ongoing sewer and water main replacement project in the low 60s that started in 2015 and has had significant impacts on traffic flow and safety due to lane closures and obstructions; and

**WHEREAS;** the completion date of the sewer and water main replacement project has been delayed on multiple occasions, and is now targeted for summer 2025 if no additional delays occur; and

**WHEREAS;** the ongoing impacts of construction continue to impact York Avenue; and

**WHEREAS;** any data collection for the York Avenue Transportation Study in the vicinity of the sewer and water main replacement construction before it is removed will be unreliable and not indicative of normal activity on York Avenue;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that Community Board 8 Manhattan requests that NYCDOT postpone data collection for the York Avenue Transportation Study in the segment between 59<sup>th</sup> and 66<sup>th</sup> Streets until the entire right-of-way of York Avenue is restored upon completion of the water main project and traffic conditions return to a normal state.

*Yes (8):* Birnbaum, Camp, Hallum Clarke, Krikler, Lader, McClement, Popper, Schneider,

*No (2):* Mason, Warren

*Abstain (0):* None

### **Item 3: Discussion of the need for an assessment of the FDR Drive between 59th and 96th Street that complements the NYCDOT York Avenue Transportation Study**

During the kickoff meeting for the Technical Advisory Committee for the York Avenue Transportation Study, concerns were raised by CB8M's Chair and one of the Transportation Committee Co-Chairs that the current scope of work for the project doesn't include a corresponding assessment of the FDR Drive, as its operations and conditions directly impact the conditions and traffic operations of York Avenue and any assessment wouldn't be fully accurate if it didn't include the FDR Drive. It couldn't be included in the York Avenue Transportation Study since much of the FDR Drive is under the jurisdiction of the New York State Department of Transportation, and there was interest expressed in requesting NYSDOT to conduct a separate corresponding study of the FDR Drive between 59<sup>th</sup> and 96<sup>th</sup> Street.

One particular area of concern related to the access to 73<sup>rd</sup> Street entrance and 71<sup>st</sup> Street exit, as this is a particularly dangerous location that includes a blind intersection for vehicles turning from East 73<sup>rd</sup> Street onto the FDR Drive Entrance Ramp where they can't see oncoming traffic; at one time, there was a mirror that allowed drivers to see exiting vehicles, but it is no longer present. One of the co-chairs shared public NYPD crash data from the website [crashmapper.org](http://crashmapper.org) and pointed out the disproportionately high amount of crashes on the FDR Drive compared to the local street grid, and showed how there were especially high concentrations of crashes near all of the entrances/exits to the FDR Drive in the district.

Mr. Gjelaaj said that NYCDOT will look at the situation at 71<sup>st</sup>/73<sup>rd</sup> Streets and also noted that there is an upcoming project to address some of the issues related to the northbound entrance at 96<sup>th</sup> Street, and that they do work with NYSDOT on issues of mutual interest.

NYCDOT indicated they would clarify the boundaries of the York Avenue Transportation Study area and whether they would allow any critical actions pertaining to the FDR Drive and its entrances that impact York Avenue to occur immediately or if they would require a separate assessment, and the item was ultimately tabled until such guidance from NYCDOT was obtained.

#### **Item 4: Update on the delayed implementation of the Queensboro Bridge South Outer Roadway Pedestrian Pathway**

Transportation Committee Co-Chair Craig Lader provided an update on the status of the implementation of the Queensboro Bridge South Outer Roadway Pedestrian Pathway, which news reports indicated would be opened in March 2025 but were subsequently postponed.

A brief history of CB8M's efforts and advocacy on this issue was provided, including an initial resolution passed in January 2020 to study the feasibility of a dedicated pedestrian pathway that NYCDOT announced in January 2021 would be constructed on the South Outer Roadway. At the time, a 2022 completion date was projected. CB8M was given a presentation by NYCDOT in April 2024 on the status of the project, at which time another resolution was passed by a 39-3 margin supporting the updated plans. In March 2025, news reports indicated that the pathway was about to open and a ribbon cutting was scheduled, as the bridge deck repair that caused the project to be delayed had been completed; this was abruptly cancelled after the Mayor's office stated that the Mayor and his new deputy mayor for operations, Jeffrey Roth, had not been properly briefed. Other articles then reported that the Mayor's office claimed there is no delay and that it was only the briefing that was needed, while NYCDOT claimed that there is still more construction work to do, and that they were without a "precise timeline". NYCDOT Commissioner Ydonis Rodriguez also gave conflicting responses when he was questioned about the timing for the walkway to be opened - at one point saying "this year", and at another point saying "very soon".

The timeline now extends into at least April 2025, which is the 6<sup>th</sup> delay of the scheduled opening. The existing shared bike/pedestrian pathway on the Outer North Roadway is perceived as dangerous and according to officials has had 19 crashes reported since 2022. Colleen Chattergoon, NYCDOT Senior Planner and outgoing liaison to CB8M, confirmed the details reported and indicated that the opening of the South Outer Roadway Pedestrian Pathway will "open soon" and there will be an announcement forthcoming, and that she would have an update the week of April 7<sup>th</sup>. Based on this update, the committee agreed that CB8M Chair Valerie Mason would write a letter on behalf of the Board to Mayor Adams addressing the concerns of the Board and the delayed opening.

#### **Item 5: Proposed NYCDOT Rule to allow for the designation of areas of NYCDOT pedestrian plazas and open streets for the exclusive use of private patrons subject to certain restrictions and the review and approval of NYCDOT**

NYCDOT will hold a public hearing on April 23<sup>rd</sup> on a proposal to amend title 34 of the Rules of the City of New York to allow for the designation of areas of DOT pedestrian plazas and open streets (proposal linked [here](#)) for the exclusive use of private patrons subject to certain restrictions and the review and approval of NYCDOT. Written comments are also being accepted through April 23<sup>rd</sup>. Ms. Chattergoon explained that the intent of the proposal is to allow restaurants to have tables/chairs on a pedestrian plaza, which would be for the exclusive use of patrons of those businesses. She further stated that revenues generated would be used for maintenance of the public plazas/open streets, and that the proposed rules keep a limit at the upper bound on how much space can be used while retaining the majority of the plazas/streets for public use.

There was mixed but generally negative reaction to the proposal. Those opposed to the proposal objected to private entities using public spaces for private use and profit, and overall policies related to reconstituting roadways to support other uses. Concerns were also raised about accessibility, lack of restrooms, and enforcement. Those who expressed support viewed this proposal as complementing policies related to

outdoor dining and supporting the mission of open streets and pedestrian plazas while providing a needed revenue source to support the sponsors for these spaces such as BIDs. A resolution in support of the proposed rules was put forward, followed by a substitute resolution opposing the proposed rules.

The following resolution was then put forward by the Committee:

**WHEREAS;** a proposed amendment to Title 34 of the Rules of the City of New York has been announced; and

**WHEREAS;** the proposed rule would allow for the designation of areas of NYCDOT pedestrian plazas and open streets for the exclusive use of private patrons, subject to certain restrictions and the review and approval of NYCDOT; and

**WHEREAS;** revenues generated by any use of pedestrian plazas and open streets by private businesses would be used to support maintenance of these spaces; and

**WHEREAS;** any restrictions to the use of public spaces are exclusionary and inappropriate; and

**WHEREAS;** the notion of reserving portions of public spaces for private use is antithetical to the purpose of reconstituting streets into public pedestrian plazas and open streets; and

**WHEREAS;** concerns have been raised regarding maintenance and enforcement of any carved out private spaces in a pedestrian plaza and open street;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that Community Board 8 Manhattan disapproves a proposed amendment of Title 34 of the Rules of the City of New York which would allow for designation of areas of NYCDOT pedestrian plazas and open streets for the exclusive use of private patrons.

*Yes (6):* Birnbaum, Camp, Mason, McClement, Popper, Warren

*No (3):* Hallum Clarke, Krikler, Lader

*Abstain (0):* None

#### **Item 6: NYCDOT Updates**

Ms. Chattergoon provided the following updates:

- The “no standing” parking regulations that CB8M had requested at Yorkville/Rupert Towers have been approved by NYCDOT; the request to create the new signs have been submitted to the NYCDOT sign shop;
- Rafael Escano will be the new NYCDOT liaison to CB8M. Ms. Chattergoon will remain with NYCDOT and serve in other capacities. The Co-Chairs and members of the Committee thanked her for her many years of service.
- Borough Commissioner Ed Pincar has taken a position as President of the Fifth Avenue Association and is no longer with NYCDOT.

#### **Item 7: Old Business**

- A public attendee asked about the status CB8M’s resolution from July 2023 requesting changes to parking regulations on Lexington Avenue between 59<sup>th</sup> and 96<sup>th</sup> Streets to allow for street cleaning to occur; NYCDOT mistakenly thought the resolution didn’t cover the entire length of the corridor within the

Community District, but it was confirmed that the resolution did do so; Ms. Chattergoon said that NYCDOT will coordinate with the Department of Sanitation to implement the requested change;

**Item 8: New Business**

- A member requested that NYCDOT put back into place the mirror that once was located on East 73<sup>rd</sup> Street by the FDR Drive;
- A member described an incident witnessed in which a carting truck was illegally using a bus lane and traveling quickly, creating a very dangerous situation;
- A public attendee brought to NYCDOT's attention an ongoing issue on Lexington Avenue near 93<sup>rd</sup> Street regarding the gas work being performed by ConEd, and the placement of plates in the bus lane of the roadway that are causing extremely loud noises when buses travel over them. The plates have been removed multiple times in the past, but have again been installed with ConEd saying the work will be continuing for 3 months. Ms. Chattergoon indicated that she will request another inspection and get ConEd to secure the plates.
- A public attendee asked about the status of the traffic signal timing changes recently implemented on Third Avenue; Ms. Chattergoon stated that the changes are permanent and will remain. She said that she thought a letter to Council Member Julie Menin had been sent in regards to this, but she would double check on the status of the letter.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:50PM.

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