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**The City of New York  
Community Board 8 Manhattan  
Transportation Committee**  
Wednesday, July 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.*

**Minutes**

*Present:* Michele Birnbaum, Lori Bores, Sebastian Hallum Clarke, DJ Falkson, Paul Krikler, Craig Lader, Valerie Mason, John McClement, Todd Stein, Charles Warren

*Absent (unexcused):* John Philips

*Approximate Number of Public Attendees:* 75

**Resolutions to be voted on:**

**Item 1: Birch Wathen Lenox School Open Street DOT Application (77th Street, Between Second & Third Avenue)**

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

**Item 1: PUBLIC HEARING: Open Street DOT Application for The Birch Wathen Lenox School, located on East 77th Street (Between Second and Third Avenues)**

Bill Kuhn, Birch Wathen Lenox School Head of School, presented a revised application for a school open street on 77th Street between Second and Third Avenues. Mr. Kuhn apologized for the school's original application falling short of expectations and for not conducting enough outreach to neighboring stakeholders, which resulted in a disapproval from CB8M in November 2024. That application was for an open street on all school days for 4 hours per day. He emphasized that the school appreciated the opportunity to revise the application and to make right the wrongs from before by committing to direct engagement and to maintain a dialogue with the community rather than assuming that this application is a fait accompli.

The revised application is for an open street 3 days per week for two hours per day to allow students to have additional recess space given limited a lack of a gym in the school building. Mr. Kuhn estimated that the school would need approximately half of the block for its open street and emphasized that each side of the open street would be staffed at all times to ensure that anyone requiring access to the block can do so, including emergency vehicles, Access-A-Ride vans, vehicles performing drop-offs and pick-ups, and deliveries. He stated that they made an effort to visit every business on the block and dropped off flyers and posted notices across the block.

Kyle Gorman, NYCDOT Assistant Director for Public Realm Partnerships and Programs, stated that all open streets must maintain an emergency lane at all times; they can be blocked with metal barriers, but it must be staffed at all times. He was asked about whether an open street can be seasonal in nature, and said that will often happen organically as the weather gets cold.

The majority of public speakers were opposed to the application, including the 77th Street Block Association. While they appreciated the scaled down proposal and increased outreach and communication, they continued to believe that 77th Street being an ambulance route for Lenox Hill Hospital makes it an inappropriate roadway for an open street, even for two hours a day for three days per week. They also disputed the suggestion that businesses wouldn't be inconvenienced from the street closure, even if access is still going to be provided for those who need it. Some speakers disputed their claims of expanded outreach, stating they didn't have personal contacts with school officials. There were also concerns raised about potential noise that would result, and overall impacts to the businesses along the street.

Though in the minority, there were numerous speakers in favor of the proposal. Those speakers were supportive of providing students with additional space, and lauded the proposed expanded use of the street's right of way while disagreeing with those who were concerned that it would adversely impact the character of the street or the ability for businesses and medical offices to operate as they currently do.

There were numerous questions about whether specific stakeholders were reached by school officials, including the nearby FDNY station and Wagner Middle School on East 75th Street, as those streets would bear the burden of additional through traffic at times when 77th Street would be an open street. Mr. Kuhn said he would submit to CB8M an update on the connections the school made and the conversations it had with the school and the fire house.

The following resolution was then put forward by the Committee:

**WHEREAS;** the Birch Wathen Lenox School has submitted an application to NYCDOT for an open street on East 77th Street between Second Avenue and Third Avenue; and

**WHEREAS;** a prior Birch Wathen Lenox School open street application was opposed by Community Board 8 Manhattan in November 2024 due to insufficient public outreach, and concerns that an open street for 4 hours a day 5 days a week would be too disruptive to residents and businesses on the block; and

**WHEREAS;** the Birch Wathen Lenox School has acknowledged their failure to conduct adequate public outreach and their insufficient effort at addressing community concerns that resulted in their original application being rejected by CB8M; and

**WHEREAS;** the revised Birch Wathen Lenox School Application is for an open street 3 days per week for 2 hours per day; and

**WHEREAS;** it is anticipated that the open street will only be needed in an area covering approximately half of the block; and

**WHEREAS;** the proposed open street will maintain an emergency lane at all times, in accordance with NYCDOT regulations; and

**WHEREAS;** the Birch Wathen Lenox School has committed to adhering to NYCDOT requirements that barriers at each side of the open street be staffed at all times to ensure access for any vehicle requiring entry or exit from the open street, including Access a Ride vans, ambulettes, vehicles conducting passenger pick-up and drop off and deliveries; and

**WHEREAS;** Birch Lenox Wathen School officials have promised to keep an open dialogue with its neighbors on the block to address any concerns that arise; and

**WHEREAS;** the open street permit is good for one year and then must be reviewed in order to be renewed;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that Community Board 8 Manhattan approves as presented the Birch Wathen Lenox School Open Street Application on East 77th Street between Second Avenue and Third Avenue.

*Yes (7):* Lori Bores, Sebastian Hallum Clarke, DJ Falkson, Paul Krikler, Craig Lader, TJ Stein, Charles Warren

*No (2):* Michele Birnbaum, John McClement

*Abstain (1):* Valerie Mason

## **Item 2: Updates from DOT on Third Avenue Signal Retiming between East 60th and East 96th Streets**

Carl Sundstrum, NYCDOT Chief of Cycling and Mobility, presented an update on the recent Third Avenue signal retiming between East 60th Street and East 96th Street. This presentation was a follow-up to the discussion that occurred at the Committee's June 2025 Transportation Committee Meeting, when it was requested that NYCDOT come back after they had more data points on the impacts of the changes.

Mr. Sundstrum began by discussing the broader changes that have been implemented on Third Avenue between 60th and 96th Streets in 2023 to convert it to a "complete street," which included the introduction of a bus lane, a bike lane utilizing new NYCDOT best practices bike lane that are wider than those on First and Second Avenues, and treatments that reduced exposure for pedestrians, improved visibility, hardened daylighting, tightened geometry, rubber speed humps, bike racks and delivery bike corrals. Since these features were installed, preliminary data shows 54% drop in pedestrian injuries and 33% drop in total injuries compared to the 2016-2020 timeframe.

Mr. Sundstrum then described the reasoning behind the further changes along the corridor to change the signal timing. He explained that NYCDOT had been hearing complaints about excessive bike speeds on Third Avenue, and seeing issues with yielding to pedestrians and signals being ignored by people on bikes. Data being collected depicted speeds of e-bikes and non-motorized bikes didn't have much variation, but that e-bikes were accelerating quickly. General traffic speeds were averaging about 15MPH, well below the 25MPH speed limit. Mr. Sundstrum explained that these conditions presented an opportunity for NYCDOT to use signal retiming as a tool to slow bike traffic and to reduce conflicts between bikes and pedestrians, as light cycles timed at 15MPH would mean that bikers would know they'll get greens going forward if they wait for 1 red light, but they would quickly hit a red light if they exceeded 15MPH. Bikers would also be less likely to accelerate and speed since they would soon hit another red light if they exceed the signal timing progression. The slower signal timing also is intended to reduce vehicular speeding overnight, which has been a longtime problem when the roadway is emptier.

It was also noted by Mr. Sundstrum that smaller traffic signals are now mounted at eye level for cyclists, which is an international best practice now being introduced domestically, with Third Avenue being the first deployment on a roadway in NYC. To further encourage compliance, ambassadors went out at the start of the project, and NYCDOT worked with NYPD to collaborate on education and messaging for cyclists to understand the changes. Signage has also been installed along the corridor to reduce the unexpectedness of the slower signal timing.

Mr. Sundstrum presented data from INRIX comparing May 2025 speeds to those in May 2023 and May 2024 that demonstrated that there was no discernable change to vehicular speeds in the general traffic lanes between 7AM and 7PM in 2025 with the new signal timing, with slower speeds in the late evening and overnight hours as was intended. In response to anecdotal complaints of slower speeds on First Avenue since the Third Avenue changes were implemented, he showed a graphic that speeds on First Avenue have not slowed between 2024 and 2025, and are faster than they were in 2023. Bus speeds have also not slowed on a year-to-year basis on Third Avenue with the new signal timing, except for during the overnight periods when the sample size was low due to the infrequency of bus operations during those hours.

Mr. Sundstrum emphasized that NYCDOT will continue to monitor, evaluate and make adjustments as needed to Third Avenue, with monitoring including changes to traffic patterns and behaviors of drivers and cyclists; they will also be looking at compliance and how cyclists arrive at intersections.

There was a mixture of comments from meeting participants who spoke on the topic. The majority of speakers from the public expressed opposition and skepticism towards the signal timing changes, and echoed comments

made previously regarding policy practices that deprioritize car travel by reducing general traffic lanes and now adjusting signal timing to what they perceived as the needs of bikes. These speakers didn't see any discernable improvements on Third Avenue, and continued to express the need for broader policy changes related to e-bikes and bike enforcement. There were some speakers from the public and a majority of CB8M members that spoke that were supportive of the changes, were pleased to see data confirming that the signal changes didn't impact general traffic speeds or bus speeds and expressed hope that the bike and pedestrian safety benefits would become apparent over time.

### **Item 3: NYCDOT Updates**

#### *A. Identifying Microhub Pilot Sites*

In September 2024, NYCDOT made a presentation on their Microhub Pilot program to the Transportation Committee. That presentation is available at [https://www.cb8m.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/MN-CB8-Presentation\\_9.4.24.pdf](https://www.cb8m.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/MN-CB8-Presentation_9.4.24.pdf), and a summary of that presentation is included as Item 1 of the September 2024 Transportation Committee meeting minutes (<https://www.cb8m.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/0924-September-2024-Transportation-Committee-Minutes.pdf>). Following up on that presentation, NYCDOT is now looking to identify locations within Community District 8 for microhubs to be installed as part of the first phase of this pilot program in which 20 microhubs will be introduced across NYC.

Catherine Ponte, NYCDOT Senior Freight Planner, noted the general interest expressed in the September 2024 meeting in microhubs and broader strategies to address frequent double parking by delivery trucks. She referenced a slide deck posted by CB8M for this agenda that included a refresher on microhubs, siting criteria, and locations that NYCDOT was soliciting feedback on that were identified as potential sites based on GIS analysis. This included locations (80 to 150 feet in length) as follows: East 89th Street at the northwest corner of First Avenue, the south side of 94th Street between First and Second Avenue, the north side of 86th Street between Second and Third Avenues, the north side of 87th Street between Third and Lexington Avenues, the north side of 59th Street between Third and Lexington Avenues, and the west side of Third Avenue between 84th and 85th Streets. The idea was that once such locations were identified, her team would do additional outreach and analysis to determine which may be best for inclusion in the pilot programs and that would be supported by neighbors and local businesses.

Nearly all of those who spoke on this topic opposed the location identified on 89th Street near First Avenue, including large numbers who resided at both 360 and 389 East 89th Street. They all had similar concerns about impacts to their block and the appropriateness of a microhub on an otherwise quiet residential block. Some speakers noted they aren't opposed to microhubs conceptually, but just that potential location; others objected to street space being given away to wealthy corporate interests or expressed concerns regarding impacts to quality of life and parking. There was little discussion about the other sites NYCDOT listed. There were also some siting locations mentioned, including First Avenue between 90th and 91st Street, 90th Street by the self-storage site between York and First Avenues, on 90th Street between York and East End Avenues adjacent to Asphalt Green, and as an alternate use for the East 91st Street Marine Transfer Station. A question was also asked about why the site originally discussed in September 2024 in front of C-Town on First Avenue between 89th and 90th Streets was not listed. Ms. Ponte indicated that she appreciated the comments on the 89th Street location and they would act on those comments.

#### *B. Other NYCDOT Updates*

Colleen Chattergoon, NYCDOT Senior Planner and prior liaison to CB8M, indicated that there were no other formal updates to report.

### **Item 4: Old Business**

- A member of the public asked about the removal of the BxM10 bus stops at 96th Street on Second Avenue southbound and Third Avenue northbound. It was suggested that the inquiry be sent to the CB8M office so they can follow up with NYCT.

- A member of the public asked for an update on the request by CB8M to restore street cleaning regulations on Lexington Ave. Ms. Chattergoon said that a pilot had been conducted, and that findings would be shared shortly.

#### **Item 5: New Business**

- A CB8M board member stated she is working with Council Member Julie Menin's office on the issue of dog waste and draft legislation that would require the Department of Sanitation to install and maintain dog waste bag dispensers on public litter baskets. She noted that NYCDOT has indicated that they are not supportive of these bags on street furniture, and asked what the specific concerns were and if there are potential alternative solutions. Ms. Chattergoon said that she would reach out to the member to further discuss the issue.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00PM.

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