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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Transportation Committee
Wednesday, October 8, 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 3: Lexington Avenue Bus Lane modifications between East 60th and East 52nd Streets

Item 4: Revocable Consent Request – 132 East 70th Street (Unanimous Disapproval)

Minutes:

Present: Elizabeth Ashby, Lori Bores, Alida Camp, DJ Falkson, Miles Fink, Sebastian Hallum Clarke, Paul Krikler, Craig Lader, John McClement, Judy Schneider, Todd Stein, Charles Warren

Absent (unexcused): Michele Birnbaum, Valerie Mason, John Philips

Approximate Number of Public Attendees: 38

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 PM.

Item 1: Presentation from the DOT regarding the modifications to Second Avenue and East 63rd Street that will install a south crosswalk, update markings, and retime the signals

New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) Planner Greg Haas presented a modification to the intersection of Second Avenue and East 63rd Street, which work started on this past summer. Mr. Haas described the project as “necessary work” to improve conditions along 63rd Street, where there is frequent congestion resulting from the convergence of traffic exiting the Queensboro Bridge and the nearby FDR Drive.

The first and already completed phase of the project involved the removal of the barriers that prevented pedestrians from crossing Second Avenue on the south side of the intersection, which Mr. Haas described as possible due to advancements in signal timing programming capabilities that will now allow pedestrians to be able to cross safely using a new crosswalk. The next phase will involve retiming the signals and converting the middle lane of westbound East 63rd Street to a left-turn-only lane, similar to the left-most lane, with the right-hand lane remaining a straight-only lane. The new signal timing will be in a split-phase, in which pedestrians crossing at the new crosswalk will have about 27 seconds of time to cross without any left turns being permitted. The remainder of the cycle will be for left-turning vehicles with a red pedestrian signal, along with vehicles continuing straight through the intersection. This is intended to both allow pedestrians to cross Second Avenue safely, while also allowing vehicles to turn without pedestrians interfering, and to mitigate the issue of non-complying pedestrians who were crossing even with the previous barriers in place. Mr. Haas said that signage would be installed to alert passengers to the changes.

Following a question by one of the Co-Chairs, Mr. Haas also acknowledged that there will be an additional change to Second Avenue between East 62nd Street and East 60th Street, in which a “cattle chute” will be installed to separate traffic heading onto the Queensboro Bridge from traffic continuing south on Second Avenue.

This is similar to the treatment on Third Avenue north of East 57th Street for traffic using East 60th Street to access the Bridge. The Co-Chair expressed frustration that this information was not included in the presentation itself.

There were some concerns raised by constituents and the Committee members regarding the likelihood that pedestrians would ignore the signals and cross against the red hand signal, defeating the purpose of this change. It was suggested that the additional presence of traffic agents would be essential, especially during the first six months of this change. There were also comments suggesting that this change would worsen traffic conditions on the upper-level Queensboro Bridge exit ramp.

Item 2: Presentation from the DOT addressing the high-crash location and potential modifications to the East 96th Street on-ramp to the FDR Drive

NYCDOT Planner Greg Haas presented an upcoming change to the northbound FDR Drive at East 96th Street that aims to address safety issues at an interchange with a very high crash rate, largely resulting from the short entrance ramp that doesn't meet Federal highway standards.

NYCDOT plans to convert the right-most lane approaching the East 96th Street exit to an exit-only lane, and to make the northbound entrance ramp from 96th an entrance-only lane. This will result in there being two thru-lanes on the Northbound FDR Drive for the segment between the exit and entrance ramps. As a result, vehicles entering the FDR Drive from East 96th Street will have a dedicated acceleration lane that will not have any oncoming traffic to merge with, as it will become the right-most lane for most of East 96th Street. Mr. Haas explained that this is a similar configuration to the northbound FDR Drive at Houston Street.

There was a mixture of reactions to the presentation and proposal. Some comments expressed strong support for this change, recognizing that this is a very dangerous interchange that would be improved with the dedicated entrance and exit lanes, and the possibility that addressing the northbound entrance could have beneficial impacts, mitigating congestion on the approaches to the ramp from East 96th Street, First Avenue, and York Avenue. There were also commenters expressing worry that the removal of a thru-lane on the FDR Drive will further exacerbate traffic, although Mr. Haas indicated that the data indicates that much of the traffic using the 3rd lane is exiting and entering at East 96th Street. A speaker made a suggestion that the signal timing at East 96th Street/First Avenue should also be looked at for potential improvements.

It was requested by multiple speakers that NYCDOT install a flexible or jersey barrier in the eliminated lane to ensure that vehicles don't "cheat" and drive in the new shoulder lane and endanger vehicles that will have the unimpeded entrance. Mr. Haas said that NYCDOT would look into this matter.

Item 3: Presentation from the DOT regarding the Lexington Avenue Bus Lane modifications on Lexington Avenue from East 60th to East 52nd Streets

Nolan Levenson from NYCDOT's Transit Development Unit presented a proposal to reconfigure Lexington Avenue between East 60th Street and East 52nd Street to create an offset bus lane to improve reliability along the corridor and to prevent the bus lane from being blocked. The proposal has also been presented previously to Community Boards 5 and 6.

Mr. Levenson said that the proposal would result in the same lane configuration that was implemented in 2019 along Lexington Avenue between East 96th Street and East 60th Street. This has resulted in bus speeds increasing by up to 26%, pedestrian injuries decreasing by 35%, and they are looking for additional consistency along the corridor. The proposal would thus create an offset bus lane where the right-most general traffic lane currently exists, allowing for the curbside to be made available for loading/unloading/parking purposes. This will result in 2 general lanes of traffic, 2 curb lanes, and the dedicated bus lane. The bus lane will be enforced by on-board bus cameras.

According to Mr. Levinson, there are 8 bus routes that traverse this segment of Lexington Avenue, including express buses, which serve in total about 71,000 passengers per day and 6,000 passengers within this segment between East 60th and East 52nd Streets. The average bus speeds on this segment currently average about 6 MPH, and as low as 5 MPH during peak hours. Blocked lanes are often an issue on the curbside existing bus lane, as buses compete with passenger drop-off and pick-ups, and delivery truck activity. The corridor also has high vehicular crash rates in the area of concern. The resulting lane configuration would lead to the elimination of one general traffic lane, which can be accommodated based on existing traffic levels that are down by 20% during the AM and PM peak since congestion pricing went into effect. Mr. Levinson also noted that there has been no increase in traffic north of East 60th Street along Lexington Avenue since the start of congestion pricing.

Mr. Levinson said that NYCDOT is aiming for fall 2025 or spring 2026 for implementation of the reconfigured lanes, and to then refine curb regulations in 2026 following initial observations of how the modified curb lane is being used.

There were multiple questions and comments regarding blocked lanes resulting from double parking, loading/unloading, and construction (including smokestacks in the roadway and building projects that extend into the roadway), and some skepticism that the offset bus lane will improve conditions without increasing congestion. There were also complaints about ongoing issues regarding trucks blocking lanes illegally and the lack of enforcement. Though it was pointed out by one of the Co-Chairs that New York City doesn't have the resources to perform such enforcement, and that NYCDOT initiatives such as this are intended to address such issues.

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

WHEREAS; New York City Department of Transportation is proposing the creation of an offset bus lane between East 60th Street and East 52nd Street; and

WHEREAS; the proposed offset bus lane would continue the lane configuration on Lexington Avenue that NYCDOT installed between East 96th Street and East 60th Street in 2019; and

WHEREAS; the offset bus lane will replace an existing curbside bus lane that is often blocked by vehicles conducting loading and unloading activity, and will free up the curbside for other essential uses; and

WHEREAS, the segment of Lexington Avenue between East 60th and East 52nd Streets has high rates of vehicular crashes and resulting injuries; and

WHEREAS; although there will be one less general traffic lane between 60th and 52nd Streets, the offsetting reduction in traffic that has resulted from Congestion Pricing implementation allows for sufficient lane capacity to allow the bus lane to be installed; and

WHEREAS; the proposed offset bus lane is expected to provide faster and more reliable bus service benefits for the 71,000 passengers that use the eight routes that operate along Lexington Avenue and the 6,000 passengers that ride through this segment; and

WHEREAS; buses operating along the Lexington Avenue Corridor are part of the MTA's Automated Camera Enforcement that will ticket vehicles blocking the bus lane; and

WHEREAS; NYCDOT will analyze the impacts of the changes to develop future potential changes to curbside parking regulations;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 Manhattan approves, as presented, the NYCDOT Proposal to install an offset bus lane on Lexington Avenue between East 60th Street and East 52nd Street.

Yes (11): Ashby, Bores, Camp, Hallum Clarke, Falkson, Fink, Krikler, Lader, McClement, Schneider, Stein, Warren

No (0): None

Abstain (1): Camp

Item 4: PUBLIC HEARING: DOT Revocable Consent Application to construct, maintain, and use a fenced-in area at 132 East 70th Street (Between Park and Lexington Avenues)

Architect Gary Eisner, representing the property owner of 132 East 70th Street, presented an application to construct, maintain, and use a fenced-in area. The proposed concrete curb and metal rail gate is intended to offer privacy, and would match the existing details of the house; it would be aligned with fences in front of the adjacent properties of neighbors on both sides.

The proposal would result in 11'4" between the fence and the curb, as the proposed fence would extend 4'4" from the home. Due to the presence of tree pits along the street, the effective clearance would result in 5'3" of sidewalk space along certain sections in front of the property, which is the same as the existing clearance in front of the neighboring properties.

There was strong opposition to this proposal, primarily due to the very narrow clearance that will result from a fence being added to this location and broader concerns that public space is being taken away and transferred to a property owner for private use.

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

WHEREAS; the property owner of 132 East 70th Street is seeking a revocable consent to construct, maintain and use a fenced-in area; and

WHEREAS; the proposed fenced-in area would extend 4'4" from the building; and

WHEREAS; due to the presence of tree pits, the resulting sidewalk clearance for pedestrians would be as little as 5'3"; and

WHEREAS; the proposed walled-in area was perceived as providing minimal public benefit and as a giveaway of public space to private interests;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 Manhattan **disapproves** a Revocable Consent Application to construct, maintain, and use a fenced-in area at 132 East 70th Street.

Yes (12): Ashby, Bores, Camp, Falkson, Fink, Hallum Clarke, Krikler, Lader, McClement, Schneider, Stein, Warren

No (0): None

Abstain (0): None

Item 5: Discussion on issues related to the accessibility of getting into taxis and black cars

This item was deferred until the November 2025 Transportation Committee meeting, at which time the Taxi and Limousine Commission has committed to attending to discuss this issue.

Item 6: NYCDOT Updates

Rafael Escano, NYCDOT liaison to CB8M, didn't have any additional formal updates.

Item 7: Old Business

- Multiple speakers raised concerns and opposition about the new Central Park Drive Lane configurations that were introduced earlier this year. Specifically, regarding speeding e-bikes that are causing dangerous conditions for pedestrians, which is the covering up and removal of pedestrian signals, and questioning whether this is a violation of ADA policies. Rafael Escano said he would escalate the concerns and information about a recent crash involving an e-bike that seriously injured a pedestrian. A Committee member also noted the need for traffic calming measures, which a Committee Co-Chair said had been requested when the Central Park Conservancy presented the proposal, which did include a discussion of potential raised crosswalks.
- A public attendee asked if there was an update on the timing of the expected presentation by NYCDOT to propose a bike lane on East 72nd Street. Rafael Escano said there was no date set yet, and he would let the Board office know once the timing for a presentation is determined.

Item 8: New Business

There was no new business.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

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