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**The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Transportation Committee**
Wednesday May 1, 2019, 6:30 PM
New York Blood Center – Auditorium

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

Minutes

Present: Michele Birnbaum, Lori Bores, Alida Camp, Billy Freeland, Craig Lader, David Menegon, Rebecca Lamorte, Rita Popper, Tricia Shimamura, Charles Warren, Peter Borock (public member), Jordan Wouk (public member), Judy Schneider (Parks & Waterfront Public Member)

Absent (Excused): None

Absent (Unexcused): None

Resolutions for Approval:

Item 1 – Extending the Astoria Ferry Line to East 90th Street.

Item 3 – Planters and Tree Bed Improvements to Bike and Pedestrian Lanes along Second Avenue in the East 90s (*Unanimous*)

The meeting was called to order at 6:36 PM.

Item 1: Presentation from the Durst Organization on a Proposal to Connect the Astoria Ferry Line in Queens to the 90th Street Ferry Terminal (Joint with Parks and Waterfront Committee)

Jordan Barowitz and Keith Dumanski of the Durst Organization presented a conceptual plan to extend the existing Astoria Route of NYC Ferry to East 90th Street. The distance between the Astoria and East 90th Street ferry landings is about ½ mile, and would create a 5 minute crossing time that would be added to the end of the Astoria Route. This would result in a one-seat ferry ride becoming available between the Upper East Side and Roosevelt Island, which is an existing stop along the Astoria Route and currently requires a transfer between ferry routes at 34th Street. The conceptual plan, which does not include any proposed changes to other ferry service at East 90th Street or the Astoria Route, would ultimately need to be formally incorporated into the future expansion plans of the New York City Economic Development Corporation, which has oversight of NYC Ferry; there is no indication that NYCEDC is actively considering implementing this concept, as it has already announced its expansion plans for 2020 and 2021.

The Durst Organization's interest in extending the Astoria Ferry route is due to the proximity of the Durst Organization's Halletts Point Development to the Astoria Ferry landing. With current travel times between the Halletts Point area and East 90th Street of 40-50 minutes by public transportation, Mr. Barowitz indicated that the 5-minute travel time proposed would clearly provide benefits to the Halletts Point Project, stakeholders and

residents, though there would also be benefits to all nearby residents including those living in the NYSHA Astoria Houses complex immediately adjacent to the ferry landing, who would have convenient access to the businesses and institutions located in Community Board 8 and other parts of Manhattan. CB8 residents also would have faster access to Astoria's cultural destinations and businesses, along with the improved access to Roosevelt Island.

The Durst Organization did not have a cost estimate for the proposed route extension, but noted that costs would likely be somewhat minimal, as it would only require the additional travel time and fuel needed to serve the new segment on the route. The NYC Ferry is subsidized by New York City to offer fare equity with NYC Transit Subways and Buses, though they use separate fare media and don't offer free transfers to NYC Subways/Buses (Community Board 8 is on record supporting a unified, single ticket system that would allow free transfers between of NYC Transit Subways/Buses and NYC Ferry). The Durst Organization concept did not include any financial support for the route extension or any other related subsidies, which would thus be absorbed by New York City as part of its overall ferry subsidy that supports the policy decision to maintain fares at the same price as a bus or subway ride.

Although support was largely expressed for the concept of an Astoria/East 90th Street ferry segment and the resulting one-seat ferry connection to Roosevelt Island (which had previously been formally requested by CB8 through a Parks and Waterfront Committee resolution passed in November 2018), there were strong reservations expressed by some board members and public attendees in regards to the Durst Organization promoting a service that would clearly benefit their company but would be operated at the expense of taxpayers. Those who expressed concern wished to see the Durst Organization make financial contributions to improving the ferry infrastructure at 90th street, provide subsidies to cover the budget impact of the service, or to subsidize ferry rides for NYCHA residents who live near the Astoria and East 90th Street ferry landings. Some objections also were raised regarding the general subsidies for the broader NYC Ferry network. Due to instances in past years where overcrowding has been a perpetual issue on NYC Ferry, there was an identified need to make sure that the proposed ferry connection would not further exacerbate the issue if large numbers of new riders were to be generated.

WHEREAS, the Durst Organization has proposed that NYC Ferry's Astoria Route of NYC Ferry be extended to terminate at East 90th Street;

WHEREAS, the East 90th Street Ferry Landing and Astoria Ferry Landing are separated by about ½ mile by water; and

WHEREAS, Roosevelt Island's ferry stop is served by the Astoria Route, which requires passengers traveling between Roosevelt Island and East 90th Street by ferry to transfer between routes at East 34th Street; and

WHEREAS, extending the Astoria Ferry route to East 90th Street would reduce the travel time between East 90th Street and Roosevelt Island via ferry from a minimum of 33 minutes to about 18 minutes and result in a 5 minute trip between Astoria and the Upper East Side; and

WHEREAS, extending the Astoria Ferry route to East 90th Street would support economic and recreational activities on both sides of the East River; and

WHEREAS, there is a history of a lack of capacity on some ferry trips operating out of Astoria and East 90th Street, which have resulted in passengers being unable to board vessels that are full;

WHEREAS, the Durst Organization, as developer of Halletts Point, will be a direct beneficiary of a ferry connection between Astoria and East 90th Street; and

WHEREAS, NYC Ferry is subsidized by the taxpayers of New York City to provide fare parity between NYC Ferry and NYC Transit; and

WHEREAS, NYC Ferry is a form of public transportation, and should not add service solely due to a request by a company or private entity that would directly benefit from that service without something in return being provided to support the public good;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 Manhattan supports an extension of the Astoria Ferry route to terminate at East 90th Street, thereby providing a one-seat ferry ride between East 90th Street and Roosevelt Island; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 Manhattan strongly urges NYCEDC to require the Durst Organization to provide monetary contributions to support upgrades to ferry infrastructure at the East 90th Street landing in anticipation of increased passenger activity and capacity requirements resulting from the expanded ferry service;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 Manhattan strongly urges NYCEDC to require the Durst Organization to fully subsidize NYC ferry trips for NYCHA residents of the Stanley Isaacs Houses, Holmes Towers and Astoria Houses.

Yes (8+3): Michele Birnbaum, Lori Bores, Billy Freeland, Craig Lader, David Menegon, Rita Popper, Tricia Shimamura, Charles Warren, Peter Borock (public member), Jordan Wouk (public member), Judy Schneider (Parks & Waterfront Public Member)

No (0): None

Abstain (1) Alida Camp

Item 2 – Presentation by NYC Department of Design and Construction on the Rehabilitation and Upgrading of Pedestrian Ramps

Eliana Parel-Gavina and Ashwin Patel of NYCDDC presented an overview of work about to commence on the rehabilitation and upgrading of existing pedestrian ramps. Within Community District 8, work will take place at various corners on 3rd Avenue between 65th and 90th Streets; Additional locations will be identified as the project progresses; initially identified locations include the following:

- 3rd Avenue at 65th Street (NE and SE Corners)
- 3rd Avenue at 70th Street (NE and NW Corners)
- 3rd Avenue at 71st Street (SE and NW Corners)
- 3rd Avenue at 81st Street (NE, SE, SW Corners)
- 3rd Avenue at 87th Street (SW Corner)
- 3rd Avenue at 90th Street (NW and SW Corners)

The purpose of the work is to improve accessibility for crossing streets and accessing sidewalks so they can meet ADA requirements. The work will include installation of concrete, steel-faced and granite curbs, pedestrian curbs, pedestrian ramps, concrete sidewalks and pavement key at pedestrian ramps. There will be restoration of roadway adjacent to newly constructed ramps; pruning and protection of trees when necessary in preparation for construction. There may be relocation or modification of drainage structures, hydrants, fire alarm facilities, street lighting and signal facilities if necessary.

Work is expected to commence within Community District 8 in June 2019. The work will take place on weekdays between 7AM and 6PM, with the exception of areas near schools where work hours will be from

9AM to 2PM. Pedestrian access will be maintained throughout construction at all intersections, though there may be temporary disruptions to sidewalk and/or loading dock access and parking during construction. Work at each corner is expected to take only a few days. 72 hours advance notice will be provided in advance of construction at each intersection.

Item 3 – Presentation by NYC Horticultural Society – Planters and Tree Bed Improvements to Bike and Pedestrian Islands along Second Avenue

Dave Snyder of the NYC Horticultural Society presented a proposal to place flower planters along 2nd Avenue between 89th and 96th Street. The Horticultural Society is partnering with the office of Council Member Ben Kallos on this effort.

The proposal calls for flower planters in the concrete pedestrian islands along 2nd Avenue at 95th Street, 93rd Street, 92nd Street and 91st Street. These locations were selected based on various considerations, including safety, visual impact and proximity to the planters and trees that line this portion of 2nd Avenue. The pedestrian islands in this area don't have tree beds due to utilities located below ground, and thus have been cemented over. The planters will not impede pedestrian flow or sewer access.

The planters are the standard design used by DOT and have been approved for use at these locations, and are a maximum of 42 inches wide by 33 inches in height; A variety of plants will be used, which will be seasonal in nature and will be appropriate in height to ensure visibility is not impacted for pedestrians or vehicles; pruning will be performed to further ensure safe visibilities are maintained. The planters are temporarily in nature, and thus can be removed at any time if necessary.

WHEREAS, the office of Council Member Ben Kallos has partnered with the NYC Horticultural Society to install planters on pedestrian islands at various intersections between 89th and 96th Streets; and

WHEREAS, planters beautify streetscapes that are otherwise barren where utilities prevent flowers and trees from being otherwise planted directly; and

WHEREAS, the proposed planters are approved for use by NYCDOT; and

WHEREAS, the proposed planters are not permanent features and can be removed at any time if necessary, including if visibility for pedestrian and vehicles is adversely impacted and causes safety concerns;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 Manhattan supports the installation of temporary planters in the pedestrian islands located at 91st, 92nd, 93rd and 95th Streets as presented by the NYC Horticultural Society.

(10+2): Michele Birnbaum, Lori Bores, Alida Camp, Billy Freeland, Craig Lader, Rebecca Lamorte, David Menegon, Rita Popper, Tricia Shimamura, Charles Warren, Peter Borock (public member), Jordan Wouk (public member)

No (0): None

Abstain (0) None

Item 4 – Presentation by NYC Department of Transportation – Lexington Avenue Bus Lane Improvements between 60th and 96th Streets

Kimberly Rancourt and Kyle Gebhart of New York City DOT presented a proposal to install a 24-hour painted bus lane on Lexington Avenue between 96th Street and 60th Street. The proposed bus lane is one of 24 priority projects identified in New York City's Better Buses Action Plan released in April 2019.

Lexington Avenue was identified as a priority corridor due to a combination of slow bus speeds, unreliable buses and travel times, high ridership and a high volume of buses. Ridership on Lexington Avenue bus routes (M98, M101, M102 and M103) averages 44,000 daily total passengers; this accounts for between 24% and 30% of all people using Lexington Avenue. Buses are scheduled every 3 minutes during the AM and PM peaks. The average bus speed along Lexington Avenue is 5.0MPH in the AM and 3.9MPH, compared to a Manhattan average of 5.24MPH throughout the day. Traffic conditions contribute to slow travel times and poor reliability, as lanes are often blocked by double-parked vehicles blocking general lanes and curbside parking lanes.

The current configuration of Lexington Avenue features three general traffic lanes and curbside parking on both sides of the street; the west side curb lane serves as a bus lane between 7AM and 10AM. Current parking regulations are generally 10AM to 7PM on the west curb, and 7AM to 7PM on the east curb. The proposal, according to NYCDOT, would improve bus speeds and reliability, enable loading during peak periods on the west curb, improve curb access for local businesses, and have minimal impacts on traffics. The proposal calls for the following:

- Installation of a 24-hour a day, 7 day a week bus lane that would replace the current right-most general traffic lane;
- Right turn bays at 86th, 79th, 72nd, 63rd and 60th Streets, and related elimination of 3-5 parking spaces at each intersection;
- Left turn bays at 68th and 60th Street along with turn bays on the cross street, which would result in the removal of 3-4 parking spaces at each location;
- Changes in parking regulations based on land use, including adding commercial meters to improve curb access and reduce double parking.
- Installation of bus boarding platforms at M101 Limited Stops, where deemed feasible;
- The timeline for implementation is summer 2019.

Due to insufficient neighborhood postings that did not specifically provide notice of the proposed removal of a general bus lane and the changes to parking regulations, it was determined that NYCDOT would come back in June to present the plan for potential approval, and it was requested that they return with detailed block-by-block proposed parking regulations. As a result, there was limited discussion, though it was recommended that DOT consider adding dedicated drop-off zones for passenger drop-offs to further reduce the likelihood of double parking, and emphasized that vigorous enforcement of double parking be performed. In addition to providing additional details on the specific proposed parking regulations, NYCDOT will conduct door-to-door outreach with businesses along Lexington Avenue to alert them to the proposal.

Item 5: Updates from the New York City Department of Transportation

a. 2nd Avenue Bike Lane Between 59th and 68th Streets – Status Update

Kimberly Rancourt, Director of Special Projects for the Manhattan Borough Commissioner’s Office of NYCDOT, provided an update on the status of the construction of the 2nd Avenue Bike Lane between 59th and 68th Streets. The proposal was previously endorsed by Community Board 8 Manhattan in July 2018.

Construction on the bike lane and infrastructure has begun, but the pedestrian improvements that would allow for crossing along the east side of Second Avenue at the Queensboro Bridge are unable to be installed at the current time due to the realization that DOT’s own work crews are unable to construct the ramps in an ADA accessible manner. DOT is fully committed to completing the pedestrian improvements, but it may need to be done as a separate capital project using outside firms, and thus the decision was made to complete the bike infrastructure now while the pedestrian improvements would be done at a later date.

Board members were interested in ensuring that pedestrians don't cross the Queensboro intersection and that signage was clear that the new crossing was for bikes only. DOT has committed to ensuring that markings clearly indicate that pedestrians should not currently cross at this location to ensure safety.

b. Other DOT Updates

There were no other updates provided by DOT.

Item 6: Old Business

A Board Member inquired about the impending cuts to bus service on the M31 and M72 routes and confirming the actual amount of time between trips versus the scheduled headways. NYC Transit will be asked to provide the information.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:53 PM.

Charles Warren & Craig Lader, Co-Chairs