

DePalma, Luke

From: Markowitz, Marty
Sent: Thursday, May 06, 2010 5:21 PM
To: DePalma, Luke
Cc: Scissura, Carlo
Subject: RE: Op Ed

please do not share your answers with my constituent.....this needs further review. I believe it's a responsible position for me to ask that this bike lane be deferred till the re-engineering of GAP is complete and evaluated.....marty

From: DePalma, Luke
Sent: Thu 5/6/2010 12:18 PM
To: Markowitz, Marty
Cc: Scissura, Carlo
Subject: RE: Op Ed

Hi Marty-

I'd like to contact Louise Hainline directly to discuss. She raises a lot of points and I comment on them below. Please read... my email is lengthy but it's my two-cents for you as your transportation policy coordinator:

1) I ran into Iris Weinshall in the elevator at 9 PPW today, and she says that "temporary" is bogus (which is what you said too).

DOT's original plan from 2009 was to install a full build-out of the PPW bike lane with raised concrete medians, etc. Because you raised issue with the plan, DOT pledged to hold off on the full build out of permanent structures until a "testing" period could elapse during the summer/ fall that would illustrate that the bike lane could work without incident. Weinshall's statement that this "temporary" installment is "bogus" is her opinion and I can't comment on it.

I'm not naïve- I realize that it is almost certain that DOT will make this bike lane permanent and that this "trial" period is intended to placate opposition but I believe that once in the ground, with the loading zones, etc- the dreaded traffic nightmare is unlikely to develop. I think the issue of double parking will be mostly solved by loading zones. However, I do see the biggest problem coming from the loss of 22-25 parking spots to make room for the loading zones. Parking is already difficult and this will make it worse, there's no question about it.

The point about just having a painted bike lane is that if the nightmare traffic scenario occurs, you can go all-out in your fight for the bike lane's removal. We will know for sure what the impacts are in June/ July/ August/ September.

2) She suggested that you, either alone or with the PB [sic] from Staten Island should write an Op Ed piece for the times arguing that bike lanes are more appropriate for some boroughs than others.

This is a bad idea. I can understand the BP of Staten Island writing such an op-ed but you are the BP of Brooklyn. Brooklyn is incredibly well suited for bike lanes. It has many narrow 19th Century streets, many wider streets with excess capacity (meaning room for bike lanes without much impact on cars), dense neighborhoods, and HIGH RATES of BIKE OWNERSHIP. It is fine and well that you oppose certain bike lane placements but opposing bike lanes more generally from a borough-wide context is bad policy and undermines your Greenway efforts.

3) She confirmed that neither of the streets around Central Park have bike lanes, on the west below 96th St. (what a surprise!). She is willing to review anything you write.

Incorrect- Central Park West has a bike lane for its entire length. It's one of the oldest. And Fifth Ave is slated for one, as is 110th Street and 59th Street. That means that Central Park will be completely wrapped in bike lanes. Also, this point is

Apples to Oranges. PPW is losing a lane of traffic because DOT has found that it has excess capacity (too much room) which leads to speeding.

Your position (as I understand it) has been essentially this: the extra space on PPW is needed because during the months that Prospect Park is most used (early spring to late fall... most of the year), there is a lot of double parking which reduces the actual capacity of the road. While it may seem that PPW has excess capacity, this width is absolutely necessary to access the park. Any reduction will result in deteriorating quality of life (noise pollution/ congestion) for residents on PPW. DOT's proposal to allow for loading zones at the expense of 22-25 parking spots is unacceptable in an area already strapped for parking with all the affluent 2-car families in those brownstones. Your point is valid. You've never raised any issue beyond that publicly (besides challenging Janette on her general policy points). Central Park is not the same thing as Prospect Park, so comparisons are not appropriate. Central Park's residential neighborhoods don't have high rates of car ownership like Park Slope does.

4) Some points I think that could be raised – we should determine the disposition of traffic flow on GAP before making a decision on this small piece; is there a plan to funnel into two lanes for PPW, rather than 3 there now?

DOT has studied the implications of this change on PPW to GAP and vice-versa. I am not an engineer and we have no capacity to do an alternative study to challenge DOT's results. So we're kind of beholden to their findings. You can dispute them, challenge them or disagree about their relevance but I'm not sure how we could counter them without doing our own traffic engineering study.

5) What about plans that I have also heard discussed in the context of the GAP problem of making PPW a two way street?

There is no such plan for a two-way PPW. This was proposed by Park Slope Neighbors (along with pairing the 2-way with 8th Ave). No one is planning to do this.

6) It's ironic that the B-69 bus is on the docket for being axed at the same time we are putting in bike lanes. Apparently, one of the responses about the loss of parking due to the bike lanes is that we can reclaim parking in the bus stops! Not everyone who lives in Brooklyn can get around by public transit or on bikes.

There's no link whatsoever between this loss of the B69 and the Bike Lane. Some residents on PPW have distributed fliers trying to conflate the two things but they are not related. It is just a tactic to rile people up.

7) It's ironic to see that the city is facing the lay off of 6700 teachers and we're putting a third of a million (wounds better than \$300,000) in a bike lane immediately next to a very large urban park.

I can't comment on how funding is allocated among city resources. I do know that most of these bike lanes involve painting the street and are not very expensive. However, added together they may cost a lot. I don't know. The Mayor would have to be challenged on his priorities since DOT is just running with the funds it gets (can you blame them?)

8) I don't know how you deal with the complaints of the S. Brooklyn folks that they should not expand bike lanes in the park itself, but it still seems weird to be putting a bike lane next to an large open spaces made for biking.

Again, this is a misunderstanding of DOT's plan. DOT's priority on PPW is to "clam traffic" by reducing capacity through the removal of a lane of traffic. It is going to use this new space on the road for the bike lane. Prospect Park was not designed for biking, though cyclists use it. And biking is only permitted in the park in one direction through the loop. It does not allow for a direct route for commuters on bikes. Although you've proposed putting a new bike lane within the park itself, such a suggestion will not change the fact that DOT still intends to remove a lane of traffic on PPW to reduce its capacity. Even if the bike lane was put in the park, PPW would still lose a lane of traffic in DOT's plan. This bike lane is secondary.

9) I also believe that the park is closed to traffic on the weekends, so recreational bikers do not need the bike lanes. Then there is the question of how valid the counts for non-Manhattan use and demand are, the luxurious width of the lovely sidewalks here that are never used to capacity (that was also an expensive project), etc. You probably have more, better arguments than these, as you know more about this.

See my comments above. PPW's bike lane is not for recreation but for COMMUTING. Brooklyn has a large share of bike commuters- people who actually take their bikes to and from school/ work/ and on errands. Also, the argument about

using the wide sidewalks for a new bike lane doesn't change the fact that the first goal of this plan is to remove a lane of traffic from PPW to calm the speeding.

10) I learned about this project late, so I'm not sure whether the alleged goal here is to help bicycle commuting, or slow down cars on PPW or push the PlanNYC in the outer boroughs, or something else, but a public analysis of all this might be helpful to change the conversation. But DOT state explicitly what the goal is would be helpful in knowing how to fight this better.

DOT's goal has already been made explicit. I am more than happy to share this with the constituent.

Luke DePalma
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From: Markowitz, Marty
Sent: Thursday, May 06, 2010 9:20 AM
To: DePalma, Luke; Scissura, Carlo
Subject: Fw: Op Ed

Please review this email and I agree....the bike lane should be deferred until we see the traffic flow from the re engineered GAP....and let's prepare letter to Sadik Khan with copies to Palmieri and Goldsmith...an op-ed is also a great idea. marty

From: Louise Hainline <LouiseH@brooklyn.cuny.edu>
To: Markowitz, Marty
Sent: Thu May 06 09:15:48 2010
Subject: Op Ed

I ran into Iris Weinshall in the elevator at 9 PPW today, and she says that "temporary" is bogus (which is what you said too). She suggested that you, either alone or with the PB from Staten Island should write an Op Ed piece for the times arguing that bike lanes are more appropriate for some boroughs than others. She confirmed that neither of the streets around Central Park have bike lanes, on the west below 96th St. (what a surprise!). She is willing to review anything you write.

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Brooklyn can get around by public transit or on bikes. It's ironic to see that the city is facing the lay off of 6700 teachers and we're putting a third of a million (wounds better than \$300,000) in a bike lane *immediately next to* a very large urban park. I don't know how you deal with the complaints of the S. Brooklyn folks that they should not expand bike lanes in the park itself, but it still seems weird to be putting a bike land next to an large open spaces made for biking. I also believe that the park is closed to traffic on the weekends, so recreational bikers do not need the bike lanes. Then there is the question of how valid the counts for non-Manhattan use and demand are, the luxurious width of the lovely sidewalks here that are never used to capacity (that was also an expensive project), etc. You probably have more, better arguments than these, as you know more about this.

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Are you willing?

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