

Transportation Committee
Thursday, January 9, 2014
MSK-Rockefeller Research Laboratories
430 East 67th Street (First-York) Room 101
6:30 PM

Minutes

Present: A. Scott Falk, Rita Popper, Judith Schneider, Timothy Yeo; Michael Dillon & David Menegon (Public Members)

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

1. Continued discussion of the East 60th Street and Third Avenue intersection:

Representatives from the Pedestrian Projects Group of the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) presented a proposal to improve pedestrian safety at the intersection of East 60th Street and Third Avenue, where there were two recent pedestrian fatalities (in 2010 and 2013), and which was the site of 12 pedestrian injuries and a total of 28 injuries in the five years from 2007 to 2011.

The most recent fatality at this intersection came the evening of July 31, 2013, when 16-year-old Renee Thompson was struck and killed in the crosswalk by a tractor trailer turning onto Third Avenue from East 60th Street. The previous victim was reportedly a 67-year-old man who was hit by a taxi on the afternoon of May 24, 2010, while crossing 60th Street.

DOT representatives had not been present at the October 2013 CB8M Transportation Committee meeting where this intersection was discussed, and therefore they were not aware of some of the Committee's concerns about how the Queensboro Bridge exit onto 60th Street at Second Avenue creates safety issues at both the Second and Third Avenue intersections with East 60th Street, as well as the block between these intersections.

DOT proposed to make the following changes at the intersection of East 60th Street and Third Avenue:

Install two painted neckdowns with flexible delineators at this intersection, to reduce the pedestrian crossing distance and to calm turning vehicles:

- A neckdown at the NW corner will reduce the distance to cross Third Avenue on the north side of the intersection from 65' to 53' (nearly 20%).
- A neckdown at the SW corner will reduce the distance to cross East 60th Street on the west side of the intersection from 35' to 25' (nearly 30%).

Add a new left-turn only lane on Third Avenue approaching East 60th Street, to clarify vehicular movements and to allow for the neckdown on the NW corner.

Extend the right-turn only lane on East 60th Street by 140', reducing congestion and "double turning."

Upgrade the pedestrian crosswalk striping and clarify lane assignments with additional markings and "peg-a-track" markings through the intersection.

Committee members expressed their belief that the problems of this intersection needed to be looked at in the context of the Queensboro Bridge exit at 60th Street and Second Avenue, and concerns about a number of safety issues on East 60th Street, including inadequate sidewalk space, a history of vehicles jumping the curbs, and cars and trucks traveling at extreme speeds.

Committee members suggested that a Speed Board should be placed in the area, as a temporary measure aimed at reducing the speed of vehicles exiting the bridge onto 60th Street; there was also a question as to whether cars exiting the bridge might be speeding up to make the green light at Second Avenue, and whether louvers on the traffic signals could help to alleviate that problem.

DOT representatives indicated that they would take a further look at the area, and that implementation of the proposals for the intersection at Third Avenue would not preclude further pedestrian improvements and traffic calming measures.

The Committee then passed the following unanimous resolution:

WHEREAS Community Board 8M is concerned about pedestrian safety along the corridor of East 60th Street from the Queensboro Bridge exit ramp at Second Avenue through the intersection of Third Avenue; and

WHEREAS both Third Avenue and East 60th Street are designated as truck routes; and

WHEREAS 16-year-old Renee Thompson died on July 31, 2013, after being struck by a tractor trailer while crossing Third Avenue at East 60th Street; and

WHEREAS a 67-year-old man died on May 24, 2010, after being hit by a taxi cab while crossing 60th Street at Third Avenue; and

WHEREAS in the five-year period from 2007 to 2011 there have been 28 injuries, including 12 pedestrian injuries, resulting from crashes at the intersections of East 60th Street & Third Avenue; and

WHEREAS vehicles exiting the Queensboro Bridge onto East 60th Street often travel at excessive speed as they approach Third Avenue; and

WHEREAS the intersection of East 60th Street & Third Avenue has very high pedestrian traffic, with entrances to a major subway station at all four corners and several tourist and shopping destinations located nearby; and

WHEREAS there is inadequate sidewalk space at several locations on 60th Street east of Third Avenue, due to enclosed and unclosed sidewalk cafes, tree pits, high pedestrian volumes, and other factors; and

WHEREAS neckdowns reduce crossing distances, increase pedestrian visibility, slow turning vehicles, and decrease sidewalk overcrowding; and

WHEREAS the Department of Transportation is proposing to designate the left lane of Third Avenue as a left-turn only lane approaching East 60th Street; and

WHEREAS the Department of Transportation proposes to install painted neckdowns at the north-west and south-west corners of East 60th Street & Third Avenue; and

WHEREAS the Department of Transportation proposes to extend by 140 feet the right-turn only lane on East 60th Street approaching Third Avenue, to reduce congestion and to prevent right turns from the middle lane; and

WHEREAS the Department of Transportation proposes to upgrade the pedestrian crosswalk striping and to clarify lane assignments with additional markings and with "peg-a-track" markings through the intersection; and

WHEREAS the Department of Transportation has agreed to continue to look at safety issues along East 60th Street and at its intersections with both Second and Third Avenues, as well as the Queensboro Bridge exit at Second Avenue near 60th Street, and to seek further measures to calm traffic and increase pedestrian safety through this corridor;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan approves the Department of Transportation proposal for the following pedestrian improvements at East 60th Street & Third Avenue:

1. Install two painted neckdowns with flexible delineators at this intersection, to reduce the pedestrian crossing distance and to calm turning vehicles:
 - a. A neckdown at the NW corner that will reduce the distance to cross Third Avenue on the north side of the intersection from 65' to 53' (nearly 20%), and
 - b. A neckdown at the SW corner that will reduce the distance to cross East 60th Street on the west side of the intersection from 35' to 25' (nearly 30%);
2. Add a new left-turn only lane on Third Avenue approaching East 60th Street, to clarify vehicular movements and to allow for the neckdown on the NW corner;
3. Extend the right-turn only lane on East 60th Street by 140', reducing congestion and "double turning"; and
4. Upgrade the pedestrian crosswalk striping and clarify lane assignments with additional markings and "peg-a-track" markings through the intersection; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Board 8M requests dedicated traffic enforcement for this intersection for the first six weeks after installation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Board 8M asks the Department of Transportation to return within six months with proposals for additional pedestrian safety improvements and traffic-calming measures for the following locations:

the Queensboro Bridge exit at Second Avenue near 60th Street;
 the intersection of East 60th Street and Second Avenue;
 the block of East 60th Street between Second & Third Avenues;
 and the intersection of East 60th Street and Third Avenue.

Approved: 4 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions
Yes: Falk, J. Schneider, Popper, Yeo

Public Member Votes: 2 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions
Yes: Dillon, Menegon

2. A request to review a modification of a Revocable Consent for a snowmelt system at 21 East 70th Street. (DOT Division of Franchises, Concessions and Consents):

Representatives for the Vilcek Foundation's construction project appeared to present a request to modify the Revocable Consent previously granted for a snowmelt system in front of the Foundation's property at 21 East 70th Street. The modification is to allow for an electrical outlet to be installed within the tree pit in front of the building.

The Committee passed the following unanimous resolution:

WHEREAS on April 17, 2013, Community Board 8M approved a Revocable Consent to install an electric snowmelt system at 21 East 70th Street, and DOT granted this revocable consent on July 1, 2013; and

WHEREAS the petitioner has applied to modify their revocable consent so as to construct, maintain, and use a weatherproof electrical duplex receptacle and conduit at the tree pit in front of 21 East 70th Street; and

WHEREAS the electrical receptacle and conduit will be located inside the tree guard surrounding the tree pit and should not present a hazard to pedestrians;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8M approves the modification to the Revocable Consent for the snowmelt system at 21 East 70th Street.

Approved: 4 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions
Yes: Falk, J. Schneider, Popper, Yeo

*Public Member Votes: 2 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions
Yes: Dillon, Menegon*

3. Old Business

Community Board 8M voted in October 2013 to request the relocation of the Lexington Avenue local bus stop near 64th Street. New York City Transit notified the Committee Chairs on October 24 that NYCT had approved the request and would submit the appropriate paperwork to NYC DOT, which would then have 45 days to implement this relocation. As of January 9, the bus stop had not been relocated; Josh Orzeck from DOT said he would investigate the status of this request.

4. New Business

There was no New Business.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
A. Scott Falk and Charles Warren, Co-Chairs