

## Traffic & Transportation Committee, Manhattan CB12 – April 2019

Committee Members Present: Nicholas Martinez (Interim Chair), James Berlin, Gerard Dengel, Bianca Guerrero, Danielle Jettoo, Bruce Robertson, Mary Anderson

Committee Members Absent: Robin Cruz (Excused)

Board Members Present: Richard Lewis, Richard Allman, Joseph Kalinsky

Public Members Present: Omar Tejada, Edith Prentiss

Public Members Absent: N/A

Public Attendees: Michael Hano, Nolan Edminson, Menajem Benchimol, Isaac Bendahan, Aharon Benchimal, Armando Charan Jon Greenfeld, Judith Desire, David Breen (Department of Transportation) Jennifer Sta. Ines, the new Deputy Manhattan Borough Commissioner (Manhattan Borough President's Office), Kianna Diaz, Jennifer Crewe

### 1. Call to Order

**Nick** welcomed everyone to the monthly Traffic and Transportation meeting and thanked Yeshiva University for hosting the meeting related to the Public Hearing on the Pedestrian Plaza on Amsterdam Avenue. Nick went through the process of speaking and emphasized Robert's rules of three allotted minutes dedicated to speaking and allowing for each person to get a turn. He then welcomed Jon Greenfeld to present an overview of the planned pedestrian plaza.

### 2. Public Hearing: Amsterdam Avenue Pedestrian Plaza

**Jon Greenfeld** presented on the Amsterdam Avenue Pedestrian Plaza. He went through a history of the plaza, as well as recent efforts, with recommendations from CB12, to reach out to the community. This resulted in an overall increase in the number of residents who were informed, engaged, and who participated in dialogue about the plaza. Overall, **Jon** expressed that Yeshiva had followed the directive of CB12 and worked to incorporate public knowledge, opinion, and input.

Once **Jon's** summary was complete, committee members could ask questions. **David Breen**, a representative from the Department of Transportation introduced himself and made himself available to any questions or comments related to the plaza. **Bruce** started the committee's round of questions by asking about improvements in outreach and what specific methods were used and what the increased statistics were related to the improvements. **Edith** followed up by asking about the price related to the cost of the Pedestrian Plaza and suggested a better transition surface for those who use wheelchairs.

**Nolan Edminson**, Student Body President at YU, started the general public commentary voicing support for the plaza. He emphasized the importance of plaza as a space for students to gather. **Michael Hano** was next to speak and brought up the issues of parking in the neighborhood and juxtaposed the process of designating the plaza against the process for a plaza on Haven Avenue. Michael emphasized the issue of parking as a reason why he was not in support of the plaza. **Menajem Benchimol** followed and expressed the importance of the plaza as a sign of Latino and Jewish unity in the neighborhood. **Issac Benclahan** followed and mentioned that the best universities in the city have the best plazas. He finished his comments by stating the improvement to the community represented the best of YU. **Anaron Benchinal** was next to speak as a member of Impacto Latino, a Latino org at YU. Anaron was in support of the plaza as a way to bring the Latino and Jewish communities together. **Armando Choron**, a native of Venezuela, spoke about the strife of his home country and the hope the plaza could bring to the community. **Rabbi Kalinski**, a member of CB12, also spoke in support of the plaza.

After the public speaking portion was complete, members of the board began their questions. **Bianca** asked a few questions focused on outreach. **Jon** responded, in kind, by mentioning information from the designation of the plaza to the design of the benches. **Jim** provided context related to the history of the street being shut down to traffic as a strategy to stop drive-by shootings in the area during the late 1980s and early 1990s. **Danielle** asked about initiatives related to sharing of information about the plaza. **Omar** commented about the dramatic improvements to the security area since park benches were added. **Kierra Diaz** wanted to clarify where funds were coming from the fix the pavement when maintenance would be necessary. **David Breen** explained that the funds would come from the city in order to maintain the plaza. **Michael Hano** wanted clarification on the plaza and whether it fell under different rules than other public spaces.

**David Breen** answered Michael's questions by explaining some of the rule changes related to plazas in New York City. **Kianna Diaz** was curious as to whether the formal plaza designation, which was historically peaceful, would change the character of the area. **Danielle** followed the comment about the character of the area and related it to the question as to whether there was a proper process for the dissemination of information. **David Breen** followed up with clarifying information related to the designation as a pedestrian plaza. Once it is designated as a plaza, it receives basic sanitation services.

After the commentary from the general public, **Bianca** moved to pass a resolution in favor of the improvement of the Plaza. **Bruce** seconded the resolution. The vote was as follows:

<u>T&amp;T Committee</u>	<u>CB Members</u>	<u>General Public</u>
Yes: 9	Yes: 2	Yes: 19
No: 0	No: 0	No: 1
Abstention: 0	Abstention: 1	Abstention: 0

### 3. ADA Accessibility- Subway Renovations

**Nick** presented a draft resolution authored by Richard Allman related to a recent court case that ruled that any and all renovations done to MTA subway stations, when feasible, must incorporate ADA accessibility in its scope of work. The case summary contained strong language in favor of ADA compliant accessibility.

**Bianca** and **Edith** both asked questions related to the definition of infeasibility as it relates to designating whether a subway station can incorporate ADA compliance. The consensus amongst board members was that the city's engineers are ultimately have the final say as to whether ADA compliance is feasible. **Danielle** emphasized that the language presented in the resolution should emphasize a view toward any station and not only the five stations as mentioned in the resolution. **Richard Allman** followed up with a suggestion to stick to the specific resolution as opposed to getting increasingly general in the resolution language.

The resolution was motioned by Bianca and seconded by Bruce with the understanding that the suggested changes to language would be incorporated.

<u>T&amp;T Committee</u>	<u>CB Members</u>	<u>General Public</u>
Yes: 9	Yes: 2	Yes: 3
No: 0	No: 0	No: 0
Abstention: 0	Abstention: 0	Abstention: 0

### 3. Old Business

**Bruce** asked for Richard Lewis to sign the resolution related to the Amtrak Billboard. Richard agreed to do so within the week. **Richard Allman** addressed the issue of the 168<sup>th</sup> Street bus stop renovation and the lack of bus service. **Edith** followed up with a comment about the need for multiple bus passes when transferring from the train caused by the 1 train elevator maintenance.

### 4. New Business

**Jennifer Crewe**, a resident of 157<sup>th</sup> Street and Riverside Drive, asked for advice about lowering the volume of Bx6 Select Bus automatic speaker that did a round-about at 790 Riverside Drive. Jennifer asked for advice as to how she should resolve the issue. The committee offered the advice of calling 511, 311, and adding it to the following month's agenda. (\*Update\*: The MTA tested the volume of the buses within the same week and decided the volume was too loud. The issue was resolved without having to be tabled for the next committee date.)

### 5. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned by Nick at 9:45.