

**Community Board 12, Manhattan**  
**Traffic & Transportation Committee Meeting: October 2, 2017**  
**CB12 Conference Room (530 W. 166<sup>th</sup> St., 6<sup>th</sup> fl., NYC 10032)**

**Committee Members Present:** Yahaira Alonzo (Chair), Debby Nabavian (Assistant Chair), Mary Anderson, Anita Barberis, Jim Berlin, Robin Cruz, Gerard Dengel, Yosef Kalinsky.

**Board Members Present:** Eli Bueno, Richard Lewis, Elizabeth Lorris Ritter, Maria Luna.

**Staff:** Ely Silvestre.

**Also Attending:** Jessica Cronstein, Bhanin Patel, Matt Lorenz, & Lyle Blackwood, NYC DOT; Steven Schneider; Katherine O'Sullivan; Jack Robbins; Timothy Frasca; Erick Arcement; Heidy Hernandez; Ingrid Amparo; Edith Prentiss; Alberto Ramirez; Rosa Magid; Ross Fromer, Patrick Burke, & Sandra Harris, Columbia U; Alexander Hofganter; Kayla McCormack; Rafael Figueroa; Laurie Tobias-Cohen, Cong. Espaillat; Angel Vasquez; Yahaira Mariano; José Vargas; Ronnie Arvedo; Michael DuBois; Rafael Duarte; Aaron Leibowitz; Ricardo Medina; Nancy Bruning; Leiry Tejada; Lori Spector; Mireya Vasquez; Janet Badia; Joanne Garcia; Ramona Ramirez.

7:10pm **#1: Welcome & Call to Order** by the Chair. There was a moment of silence observed for the 58 killed and 527 injured in a mass shooting in Las Vegas, NV last night.

7:12pm **#2: No Standing Sign at 281 Audubon Ave. (@ W. 179<sup>th</sup> St.)** As no one was in attendance from the Iglesia Pentecostal de Washington Heights, this item was tabled to next month.

7:14pm **#3: Haven Avenue Pedestrian Plaza** Presentation by Jessica Cronstein, NYC DOT, Sandra Harris & Patrick Burke, Columbia University.

DoT: There are 73 Street Plazas in NYC, of which 56 are open to the public and 17 still in development. These projects are application based, and generally placed in areas that are low- to moderate-income, near transit, and have fewer open spaces. We seek to create high-quality spaces in underused roadways. Starts with a One-Day Plaza events, then an interim plaza, then a permanent plaza. CU submitted in August 2016 and was approved in January 2017, with many letters of support from CBOs and key stakeholders (CB12, MoMAA, CHALK, CLoTH, Barnes & Noble, WH/I Chamber of Commerce, GrowNYC, etc.). We conducted several surveys, received more than 180 responses. We also had three successful one-day plaza events (6/14/16, 9/27/16, 9/18/17) and two one-day events (6/29/16, 6/26/17) with more than 3k attendees. The events featured art, music, dance, greenmarket, health & wellness programming. We held public workshops on June 13<sup>th</sup>, July 17<sup>th</sup>, and September 25<sup>th</sup> of this year, as well as this evening's meeting and a public workshop scheduled for next week (10/11/17).

The proposal is to close Haven Ave. from W. 169<sup>th</sup> St. to the curve of W. 168<sup>th</sup> St. @ Ft. Washington Ave., and reverse the direction of W. 169<sup>th</sup> St. between Ft. Washington & Haven Avenues from one-way westbound to one-way eastbound. The parking the west side of Haven below W. 169<sup>th</sup> and the south side of the street as it curves into W. 168 would be removed, a total of about 17 spots. We would be looking to an 8-block radius (W. 163<sup>rd</sup> to W. 172<sup>nd</sup> Streets, St. Nicholas Ave. to Riverside Drive) to see what could be done to restore parking elsewhere to pick up the lost spots, particularly overnight.

The original buildings on the street in questions (Rosenfield, Bard, Neurological Institute) are older buildings with different relationships to the street. Over time and with development and addition of the Health Sciences Building, Millstein, and Kolb, the relationship to the street has changed and we are looking to create a single plaza in and amongst all these buildings for the Medical Center community and the community at large to use. We will still maintain emergency access for FDNY/NYPD/EMS. There will be site lighting, an integrated landscape, flexible seating, plantings, and perhaps a terraced retaining wall with lawn and plantings. There will be flexible bollards at W. 168<sup>th</sup>/Haven.

## Q & A

Yahaira: What times were the one-day events? Seems like we will be losing more than 17 spaces? What about nighttime safety? A (Harris): The events were 9am-5pm or 9am-7pm. Yes, it is 17 spaces. Security will be provided at night by CU and PH Public Safety.

Gerard: Once parking is gone, it's gone for good. Has CU considered opening its parking overnight to residents? Will there be retail? In consideration of CU's expansion into public space and taking more than 10k square feet for free, why not pay a tax of some kind? A (Cronstein): There would have to be a concession agreement with the proceeds going to the public. A (Burke): there are no plans for retail except for the bookstore already in place. There is not retail in the plaza itself.

Jim: There will be a lane to get in and out of NI & Mailman. They will traverse the plaza? How will this work? A (Burke): The sponsor partnering with DoT becomes responsible to maintain and secure the space. There will be security personnel to ensure safety in the evening, and staffing during the day for pick-up and drop-off. Jim: can CU provide a golf cart from W. 169<sup>th</sup> Street to the building entrances? A (Harris): the hospital had a program a few years ago to allow the community to park in CU lots overnight at a reduced fee.

Liz: We'd need a written guarantee of 204' (or however many feet are being lost) of usable curb space in exchange. Additionally, can CU again provide deeply discounted overnight parking to community residents in its lots?

Maria: Something nice finally is coming to this community. We need this. We don't have nice spaces like this in our part of the neighborhood and this is great. Seats must be comfortable for seniors. We have a plaza like this at W. 175<sup>th</sup> St. & roadway and on W. 185<sup>th</sup> St. by Yeshiva; we need this here.

Ayisha: We're already in the negative for parking. We are suffering from the lack of parking.

Anita: I am a 50-year resident. PH & CU are taking more space and the plaza is not for us, it's for the CU students and their \$10 lattes. Don't take our streets; I am strongly opposed. (There was applause.)

Eli Bueno: For those of us on W. 181<sup>st</sup> St., this could be good: we can come together and make it ours.

Richard: What about truck deliveries to and garbage removal from the Starbucks? Also the trees are deciduous and shed leaves. What guarantee is there that CU won't build a building in the plaza? And how will you keep the homeless out of the plaza? A (Burke): The main loading dock is at the south end of NI, so they'd move off of Haven/168. Rosenfield's loading dock is on Riverside Dr., and is underutilized. Starbucks/Barnes & Noble don't currently use the Hammer HSB dock on W. 169, but they will move to that. Security and maintenance will be by CU as will the addition and ongoing maintenance of landscaping. A public plaza is still a mapped street and you can't build on a mapped street. But non-construction could be memorialized in a resolution. As for issues with the homeless, we are continuing to work with Project Renewal.

Yosef: If there is a commitment to replicate lost parking would people be OK with that?

Edith: Golf carts won't work for people in wheelchairs. What about Access-a-Ride? We are still having problems with the Armory buses. Car services idle on Haven. What about FedEx/UPS and other deliveries. Bollards are a problem for w/c users, as well as people with strollers or walkers. Also issues with street surfacing for people with disabilities. What happens in winter: who shovels? A (Cronstein): access must be maintained for PD/FD.

Paul: There's a lot of wind. And what about liveries? A (Cronstein): They can't park in the plaza.

Raul: CU is like Pac-Man: they keep taking from the neighborhood. We've lost a lot of parking and it creates congestion and increases double-parking. The W. 170<sup>th</sup> St. bike lane is a disaster.

Ronnie: Will there be commercial in the Plaza? A (Burke): No. What community support was there? Reversing traffic on W. 169<sup>th</sup>: there will be gridlock at Ft. Washington Ave, and it will be a problem with Armory buses, USPS, UPS, FedEx, cabs. How will this effect EMS response time? A (Cronstein): The intersection at FWA would be like at 170/FWA. And we would modify the signal timing. A (Harris): Long list of community supporters, not just what was on the slide. We will send a list.

Debby: Will these organization be doing programming? A (Harris): Yes: programming and events.

Michael Hannow: Lived on 170<sup>th</sup> for 23 years and grew up on 155<sup>th</sup>. This is not a good idea because of loss of parking, and traffic congestion. Also, it has been pushed forward and orchestrated. Concerned about the future development and retail. What else is planned? A (Burke): All sites are fully built out. There's no possibility for additional development except for Rosenfield which could be built out but it's so expensive as to be impracticable and we wouldn't be doing that. We will be upgrading the MRIs, but there will be no additional square footage. Also there will be no street-level retail (other than the existing bookstore). Q: if you google on the internet can see a plan from Perkins-Eastman Development to tear down Bard Hall. A: That was an old proposal, more than 10 years ago; it was too expensive so we will not be doing that. Q: CU is lying! What about parking on W. 169<sup>th</sup> Street: will that be lost? A: There is no plan to remove parking from W. 169<sup>th</sup> St.

Alberto Ramirez: Parking spaces on W. 169<sup>th</sup> St. will be lost. A (Burke): We will not be taking any of the parking from W. 169<sup>th</sup> St.

Gerard: We want to see you Master Plan for 10 years, 30 years, 50 years.

Nancy Bruning: Normally I would like this project because it is a good use of outdoor space. But who will control the space, and who will decide how the space can be used. Who else can provide programming? A (Harris): It will be a public plaza that everyone can use. There are NYC rules of conduct but there are many opportunities for programming. Q: Can these be posted? A (Cronstein): The rules of use are standard all over NYC, and signage from DoT (not from CU) will be posted. For public right-of-way use the process would go through the Mayor's Street Activities Permit Office (SAPO). Q: What if people just want to hang out? A: Yes, of course, that fine, that is the point.

Liz (Point of Clarification): Prior to W. 175<sup>th</sup> Street being turned into a Plaza, the seasonal Thursday Greenmarket and the daily vendor's market applied for their permits through SAPO; CB12 is used to working with this process.

Ayisha: What about the Bard Hall study to tear down Bard and rebuild? A (Burke): We did an analysis 1012 years ago but we don't plan to tear Bard down, rather to renovate. We are not doing that plan. Q: But the printout says 2016? A: That is a recent article about an old plan.

Rafael Figuero: I have lived here a long time. We don't have space for people to move down and hang out with their neighbors. I think this is needed. The whole community can use this, not just students. It is a good way for students to mix with the neighborhood. I do festivals on W. 175<sup>th</sup> Street. When I started there were 30 people and now there are 2,000 people.

Ayisha: There is a meeting next week so we should not do a resolution now.

Sandra: There will be another workshop on Wednesday, October 11<sup>th</sup> from 5:30-8, at 104 Haven Ave (@ W. 171<sup>st</sup> St.) in the Auditorium. Member of the public: Why so early, we can't get there at 5:30; that excludes working people. A: We made it an earlier start for seniors and parents with young children so that they can attend. We can also make a later end to accommodate working people. Q: 9? A: Yes, we can go until 9, we can go as late as people need.

Yahaira: We will do a reso next month. I encourage everyone to attend next Wednesday's meeting.

**9:10pm #5: Discussion of planned changes to Broadway between W. 155<sup>th</sup> & W. 170<sup>th</sup> Streets** (This item was moved up in the agenda to accommodate the presenter's schedule.) Richard: NYC DoT had a plan which was implemented based on CB12 approval which a Committee member states DoT did not in fact have. A (Lyle Blackwood): As explained in our previous presentation this is a high-priority area for Vision Zero. Richard: we dispute this; there was a distortion and this intersection is no worse than other intersections. You are just carrying out your own ideology. Why bother asking us at all? Yahaira: we included this in our reso. Debby: we asked these questions and DoT answered them and then you accuse them of lying because you don't like the answer. We were presented with real data about deaths, injuries, and conflicts. You can say you'd like more data but you don't speak for the Committee and you don't speak for me. Yahaira: We had questions, and DoT answered some but not all of them.

Lyle: We are testing it out in paint. Nothing is concrete (literally!) except for the pedestrian median at W. 169<sup>th</sup> & Broadway. Richard: There are problems with congestion. Vendors are complaining. No one consulted them. Lyle: We presented it twice. We consulted scores of vendors. We thought it was a good plan. Richard: We want a public meeting. There are no loading zones. Lyle: Everything is online. This is a temporary measure. Liz: Can you please print some copies of the plan and send to Board to make available to those without internet access/printers? Steve: Vision Zero is one of the most important initiatives in many years. It's a policy, not an "ideology"! If DoT is carrying out a positive ideology, that a good thing.

9:33pm **#6: Discussion of Bx6 Select Bus Service implementation** Item removed from agenda as MTA was not in attendance.

9:34pm **#7: Traffic Study for W. 219<sup>th</sup> & W. 220<sup>th</sup> Streets** At the request of NYC DoT, the Car Wash on W. 220<sup>th</sup> Street commissioned a traffic study to look at possible flow and conditions on these two streets, for which the Community Board recently passed a resolution asking DoT to make these two streets one-way west-bound and east-bound, respectively – they currently are two-way streets – to ease traffic flow around the car wash and the school at the corner of Ninth Ave. This request was initiated by the community and enjoyed overwhelming community support, and DoT is recommending to implement such a plan, but the business owner has lingering concerns.

Steve Schneider of Schneider Engineering (1 Comac Loops #14BB, Ronkonkoma, NY) gave a brief presentation of his findings:

- People don't like change; the DoT will be confusing, both for people who are not familiar with the area, and for those who are used to things the way they are.
- One-way streets are dangerous; continue with both streets being two-way.
- Eliminate parking in front of school.
- Put a signal at W. 219<sup>th</sup> St. & Broadway

Debby: we have a lot of people in NYC used to going around the block to get to a business. What's the problem with two-way streets? I know the school is in a bad location but we're stuck with it there. The community overwhelmingly supports this plan [to make the streets one-way]. A: we were asked to study the situation and provide feedback.

Jim: There are two lanes: one for oil change customers and one for car wash customers. By having two lanes to feed the facility there would be more cuing on Broadway. Having two cues on W. 220<sup>th</sup> Street will alleviate cuing on Broadway. We also are trying to reduce traffic by the school; one-way versus two way will achieve this. A: you'll still have issues by the school. Children should be dropped off by the sidewalk.

Yahaira: a lot of children walk, so "drop-off" isn't really the main issue.

Liz: your argument is inconsistent within your own study. You say that it's mostly locals who use these streets so they would be confused by the change, and you say that the change would be confusing for people unfamiliar with the area. Which is it? Also the comparison that you use for a "similar" street that was turned from a one-way to a two-way is in a high-traffic commercial area of downtown Minneapolis with ambient traffic conditions not at all like those of the study area so it is not an apt comparison.

Edith Prentiss: it's a dangerous spot for those getting off of the northbound Bx7. There are cars on the sidewalk which is broken-up and icy in the winter. Crossing the street to the Allen Pavilion is taking your

life in your hands. O think the safety of people's lives is more important than a business, and frankly I don't see what the issue is for the business anyway.

Gerard: regardless of what happens with any resolution, the car wash would do well to do a traffic plan to incorporate into its business plan. Also, why should teachers have preference for parking? People who live in the neighborhoods should be able to park there; there should be no preference to any particular occupation.

Paul Hintersteiner: can the bus stop be moved to the northeast corner of W. 220<sup>th</sup> & Broadway, not the southeast corner? Edith: it used to be there. Yahaira: I will reach out to the MTA.

Matt Lorenz, NYC DoT Traffic Engineering: the plan we presented at last month's Committee meeting was for a one-way couplet: 220<sup>th</sup> St. eastbound and 219<sup>th</sup> St. westbound. I looked at the "study", which was really more of an opinion piece; it has no data or diagrams to back it up. We do one-way street conversions and Manhattan is on a one-way grid. I encourage you to read his letter with that in mind. One-way streets have fewer conflict points. The street has to be safe for everyone: businesses, the school, and the general community. This is a problem that needs to be fixed. Bhavin Patel, DoT: In front of the school is already dedicated for school drop-off/pick-up. Parking loss would only be across the street for teachers. The street is only 40' wide and is not wide enough for two-way traffic with parking on both sides and two cues.

Richard: This was a thorough study by DoT and a good plan and DoT should move forward. One concern: s/bound traffic on Broadway won't be able to turn left onto W. 219<sup>th</sup> St. because it will become one-way westbound. A (DoT): in order to put in a light we need to do a signal warrant study. There isn't enough traffic making that turn. It is a difficult turn to make, but not that many people do it. Debby: once this change is put into effect can you reassess? A (DoT): yes.

Yahaira: do we need a resolution? Liz: no because the Board already passed a resolution. There is nothing being proposed that isn't already covered by that reso, so we can move the agenda.

**10:15pm #8: New Business: Discussion of Draft Work Scope for Inwood Rezoning Environmental Impact Study** Katherine O'Sullivan asked about the extent to which the concerns under the purview of the Traffic & Transportation Committee were included in the draft work scope for the Inwood Rezoning EIS. Following a brief discussion it was agreed that the strongest concerns in this area are traffic flow, road conditions, bus & subway capacity, and parking, and a full review of these must be included in the EIS.

[Note: the following was submitted to EDC & the Mayor's Office:

- 1) Traffic flow & conditions, both in general due to increased population, and during construction of projects pursuant to rezoning
- 2) Subsurface and surface infrastructure for roadways, sidewalks and other pathways, and bridges, as they relate to all forms of transportation.
- 3) Public transportation capacity (service, crowding, etc.)
- 4) Parking

For the most part these items are included in Task 14 ("Transportation") though it should be noted that:

- transportation infrastructure is mentioned more in the context of capacity than structural integrity.

Both are important and must be included in the work scope.

- the development scenario parameters beginning on p.32 note that parking facilities/spaces are not required for affordable units through MIH or any other program, and market rate units are only

required to include 1 space for every 5 units, with a waiver for any development that requires fewer than 15 spaces. Given the current dearth of parking in the target area, a thorough examination of the impact of any net increase in the car-to-available-space ratio must be included in the work scope.”]  
10:45pm

**#4: Riverside Drive new design proposal:** In consideration of the lateness of the hour and the lack of a time-sensitive deadline this item was deferred to next month’s agenda.

There was no discussion of the Capital & Expense Budget Priority Rankings.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at about 11pm.

**Respectfully submitted: Elizabeth Lorrin Ritter**