

CB12 Traffic and Transportation Committee Meeting

February 7, 2022, at 7:00 PM

Committee Members – Chair, Debby Nabavian; Assistant Chair, Leo Jimenez; Jim Berlin; Bruce Robertson; Jay Mazur; Mary Anderson; **Board Members** – Board Chair Eleazar Bueno; Maria Luna; Isidro Medina; Marielle Ali

Agencies – DOT: Kimberly Rancourt; Lyle Blackwood; Dustin Khuu; MTA: Jessica Spanton; NYCT: Joe Chiarmonte. **Public Official** – City Councilwoman Carmen De la Rosa. **Public** – Julio Batista; Mino Lora; Ray+; Allegra Legrande; Richard Kahn; Gabriela Biel; Dylan Mitchell; Brandon Tesh, Edgar Roman, Elizabeth ?, Ira Gershennhorn, Josh Goodman, Kit Fitzgerald, Lisa Brassell, Maria Ryden, Marshall Vanderpool, Maureen

1. Call to order 7:06 pm

2. Committee Chair does introductions and presents meeting agenda, including:

3. **DOT Presentation Update on 181st St Busway:** Kimberly Rancourt briefly introduces 181st St busway, which was implemented April 26, 2021. Introduces Dustin Khuu, Project Manager, to present data thusfar:

- o Better Buses Restart project focused on serving vulnerable populations, essential workers, and routes that served a high number of bus passengers daily. 10 busways & bus lanes that were selected were those that could be implemented quickly and improved geographic equity. 5 bus routes on 181st serve on average 68,000 passengers daily, and bus passengers comprise of 62-70% of roadway users. Pre-busway avg speed was 3.7mph.
- o DOT continues outreach with the community stakeholders and the community board to monitor, evaluate, and implement changes post-updates.
- o Camera enforcement began on July 17, 2021. Improvements and implementations include signal time changes along Broadway to help facilitate traffic flow, bus stop consolidation on 181st St/St. Nicholas Ave (added new leaning bar), and gantry signage installation.
- o Average bus speed for all routes increased at all times compared to pre-covid (2019). Greatest speeds gains were in the westbound direction over 30% faster. EB speed improvements were more modest due to heavier boardings by passengers in this direction. Recent survey shows bus speeds have remained relatively stable since the reopening of 181st 1 Station in December 2021.
- o On adjacent streets, traffic speeds and travel time had minor changes compared to 2020. W 178th St and W 179th St saw decreases in traffic speeds. While Amsterdam Ave and Ft Washington saw increases in traffic speeds and decreases in travel time. All side streets experience speed gains and travel time savings compared to pre-pandemic levels.
 - DN: Q/ When surveying the side streets why wasn't 182nd St and 183rd St considered?
DK A/ Aggregate software had data missing from 2019. Data was collected prior busway launch and as recent as January 2022. Monitor volume from vendor that monitors traffic counts and there wasn't any major change in traffic volumes. Also, have had some concerns that vehicles can't enter the busway at Broadway causing heavy traffic on Broadway on on 181st, but perhaps slightly better now. DM Ebenezer Smith has highlighted the need to match heavy incoming traffic from the Washington Bridge and wants to be sure that the heavy traffic turning south onto Amsterdam is accommodated (KR: DOT didn't assess travel times times in those corridors).

- LJ: Very concerned that there wasn't enough consideration and outreach to local businesses; the busway has caused a decrease in foot traffic due to loss of parking; further, there are serious issues with ability for trucks to unload and make deliveries. KR A/ Prior to busway launch DOT did outreach to each business in the corridors but will also consider further outreach as it is a continuous point of concern. Parking has been an ongoing issue, but the busway has removed very few parking spots. DOT will continue outreach for feedback with issues raised.
 - LJ: Reiterated that there must be more data collected from the side streets, particularly 182nd St and 183rd St, because of the schools in the area, where the increase rush hour traffic can pose a danger to students crossing. Also, need better traffic signals for cars coming from Bx at Amsterdam & W 181st St, currently one traffic light for three lanes. Recommends DOT reduce hours of the busway especially outside of rush hours. Last, when WB buses are turning on Wadsworth towards W 179th St, there is often backup now forcing bus passengers to wait 10-15 min to go a few blocks. JC A/ DOT/MTA will take a closer look at the bus patterns.
 - IM: Small businesses losing business due to loss of parking and accessibility. Busway enforcement hours are too long and unnecessary; recommends the busway program implements a two-day enforcement period with the current times.
 - JB: Reiterates the inconvenience of riding the bus and being stuck in traffic for a two block radius for 20 minutes, especially if the bus driver can let people off.
 - ML: Heavy congested traffic on Amsterdam Ave coming off the bridge. Suggests that the busway should allow cars to enter/exit through Audubon Ave alleviating the traffic on the side streets. Requests that there should be verbal warnings and not ticket enforcement until everyone understands the new rules of the busway (DK: There was a 60-day warning period at the launch of the busway. When enforcement started there were many thousands of tickets issued, but that has decreased substantially).
 - LJ Q/ asks if there are any signage in Spanish. DOT A / there are no signs in any other languages, but that they can circulate Spanish instructions, as previously done).
 - DN: Fake placards in some of the existing parking spots is particularly egregious given demand for parking.
 - Ray: Small business owner on W 181st St. Agrees that hours are too long, especially w/ decreased traffic after 7pm. Recommends traffic enforcement agent on the side streets helping alleviate congestions, particularly W 182nd St and W 183rd St. Need more boots on the ground to assess traffic patterns and conditions, not only rely on data. Clarifies that local carrier vans with delivery can't access busway.
 - A Legrande: Disappointed that the presentation didn't show simulations, only models based on the data gathered at certain times. KR A / Still collecting data, continue to analyze.
 - DN: Continue to gather more data and for consideration before this finalizes.
4. MTA update by Jessica Spanton, MTA Liaison, replaced Howie Levine. District project summary:
- o Dyckman 1 Train Station: Adding ADA on the northbound side of the station. Construction currently excavating to make a passageway for the elevator. Mid- to late Spring will install elevator shafts. During this time, there might also be change in service, but she will reach out to the board prior to notify the community.

- o 181st St escalators: Scheduled to commence Q3 2022 and completed Q2 2023.
- o 207th St Station: Elevators still on track to re-open in June, and the yard work is 90% complete, currently working on signal upgrades. Mainline yard work awarded Q4 2021, but no physical work as of yet.
- o DN: Previously mentioned Accessibility project of 181st St A Train Station, but no tentative date. (JS: Will find more information and update).
- o JB: When escalators are replaced on 181st St, will all escalators be worked on simultaneously or individually? JS A/ Will find out, and emphasize that it makes more sense to stagger.
- o ML: Does DOT or MTA assign benches and leaning bars at bus stops? On Broadway btwn W 157th & W 158th St (M4/M5) going SB needs a bench for senior citizens. KR clarifies its DOT. If need more documented support, she will reach out to CB12M.
- o DN: Flooding issues after storms on 157th St 1 Train Station, has been issue, let us know any plans to mitigate.
- o MA: Bench on 181st St near Wadsworth in very bad shape.
- o BR Q/ DOT installing foundations on W 157th St & Morgan Pl, is it traffic lights or light poles? KR/Lyle A/ will investigate it.
- o IM: Wadsworth & W 181st St (sw corner) previously mentioned accident and reported to 311 (referencing Mary Anderson's comment).
- o RK: W 181st St and Fort Washington – M4 bus making loud announcements about turns (but there is no bus turn at this location). JS A/ announcements over speaker are for hearing or visually impaired but will investigate it. BR: Similar situation happened with Bx6 on W 157th St, and MTA sent someone to adjust audio, and mitigated this issue.
- o GBiel: Issues of public safety on 168th St Station – NYPH staff assaulted. Station has mentally ill and EDP individuals roaming inside and around station. Requests increase in MTA Transit Police Officers. JS: Is there consistent and frequent enforcement? If there is an uptick in crime or general issues, they can request a solution for police presence).

5. W 168th St Station

- o Julio Batista introduces himself, and his team.
- o Addresses concerns of scaffolding surrounding the hospital on SW corner of W 168th St, with no lighting (dim lighting over the train station).
- o New York Presbyterian Hospital worker assaulted recently, several other community residents have had issues with EDP and mentally-ill people.
- o M. Ali, Mino Lora (on behalf of students traveling to Peoples Theater Project programs) and community residents raised concerns of safety at the entrances of the subway, and on the platform.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10PM.