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## COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

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September 18, 2020

Edward Pincar Jr.  
Manhattan Borough Commissioner  
Department of Transportation  
55 Water Street  
New York, NY 10041

Dear Commissioner Pincar:

At its Full Board meeting September 17, 2020, Community Board #2, adopted the following resolution:

**Resolution in response to proposal by NYC Dept. of Transportation (DOT) to reverse University Pl. to one-way southbound from 13th St. to 12th St.**

**Whereas** Community Board 2 Manhattan (CB2) thanks the NYC Dept. of Transportation (DOT) for presenting their proposal to reverse University Pl. to one-way southbound from 13th St. to 12th St. along with their overview of signal timing adjustments and pavement marking modifications at 5th Ave. and 13th St. that have been made to address turning conflicts and queue spillback, and for inviting comment and receiving input from the community; and

**Whereas** concerns about the impact of southbound traffic on University Pl. from 14th to 13th St. originated with the 14th St. Transit and Truck Priority Project's (TTP) requirement for vehicles (aside from buses and trucks) to make the next available right turn from 14th, with 14th to 13th reversed from north- to southbound at University. This led to vehicles heading east on 14th having to turn south on University with no option to continue heading east except to double back west on 13th and head further south on 5th Ave. (or on streets even farther back west) in search of an eastbound cross street, thereby adding extra vehicular mileage and movements on local streets in the area as well as congestion on 13th St.; and

**Whereas** DOT's proposal to extend University Pl. southbound one more block from 13th St. to 12th St. provides an option for eastbound traffic to continue heading east on 12th St.; and

**Whereas** community members have pointed out that 12th St. has several issues, including congestion, that would work against it being a desirable alternative route for eastbound traffic, among them:

- There is constant ambulance traffic on 12th St. from Lenox Health Greenwich Village on 7th Ave. to hospitals on the east side; 12th St. is the most direct access for this emergency activity.
- There's a police facility on 12th btw. University and Broadway where the police park not only NYPD vehicles but personal ones (using placards), both on the south side of the street and in the north side buffer (plus the sidewalk).

- 12th St. btw. University and Broadway is frequently closed to traffic when there are protest groups in Union Sq.
- 12th St. is often closed for street fairs btw. University and Broadway.
- Loading and unloading on 12th St in this area is heavily encumbered.; and

**Whereas** DOT installed signal timing adjustments in March 2020 on 13th St. and 5th Ave. that allow an additional 1 to 2 vehicles to proceed on 13th within a signal cycle, and in August 2020 changed pavement markings there that reduced the left-turn traffic calming wedge, giving room for through traffic to bypass the turning traffic; both actions were designed to ease congestion on 13th St. btw. University Pl. and 5th Ave.; and

**Whereas** the 12th St. issues the community voiced while also requesting improvements, such as wedge changes on Broadway and 12th St. and on University Pl. and 12th like the one on 5th Ave. and 13th St. to allow motorists going straight to pass turning vehicles and increase pedestrian safety by slowing up the turns, reveal that there are several ongoing conditions on 12th St. demanding attention that have little to do with University Pl.; and

**Whereas** a great many community members expressed their support of a shared street on University Pl. from 14th St. to W. 4th St. with many favoring a park-like Greenway type street there; a petition with 300 signatures from Transportation Alternatives supported a shared street on all of University; and

**Whereas** CB2 supported a shared Street on University Pl. all the way from 14th St. to W. 4th St. in its May 2019 resolution, describing shared streets being "set up to be used equitably and harmoniously by pedestrians, bicyclists and motor vehicles, with priority for pedestrians, through design, regulations, and signage that slow traffic and create a calm and safe environment," and pointing out that University Pl. "is a quiet street, oriented to the community and community life, and a shared street can enhance its neighborhood aspect."; and

**Whereas** the Open Street (similar to a shared street) that has been operating during the pandemic on University Pl. btw. 13th and W. 4th Sts. on Sundays, with weekdays recently added in some areas, demonstrates how well an extensive shared street works on University and has been well-received and supported by the surrounding community; and

**Whereas** a fully extended shared street on University Pl. would offer many exit points for vehicles, spreading out turning movements on several cross streets and eliminating the pressure that piles up on one or two streets alone; and

**Whereas** several people observed that University Pl. currently has very light traffic. Others noted that few motorists turn now from 14th St. onto University Pl., being aware of having to double back on 13th St., and they instead bypass University and head for 3rd or 2nd Ave. to make the required southbound turn for a more direct route east. This not only shows conditions favorable to a shared street on University Pl.; it also suggests changes happening on the TTP route, like added vehicular trips, with no significant impacts on busway efficiency, inviting further study and evaluation for potential modifications; and

**Whereas** DOT did data collection on weekdays and Saturdays, 7-9am, 12-2pm and 4-7pm, including turning movement counts and signal phase timing analysis, as well as observations of traffic conditions, but these were largely focused on 13th St. traffic activity;

**Therefore, be it resolved** that CB2 reiterates its support of a fully continuous shared street on University Pl. all the way from 14th St. to W. 4th St. and requests that it be installed as soon as feasible, taking into account provision for deliveries, drop-off/pickups, emergency and other necessary access; and

**Be it further resolved** that CB2 urges DOT to conduct a broader, more holistic study of CB2's streets surrounding and including the 14th St. TTP and how they relate to each other, including observations and analysis of traffic conditions, and examination of relevant examples in other cities (such as the bus lanes in Europe that are often shared with taxis and setting special hours for deliveries) plus traffic counts on Broadway and University Pl., with a comparison of current and pre-TTP counts on University, should previous counts exist; and

**Be it further resolved** that CB2 recognizes the improvements that the TTP busway has achieved in facilitating bus riders' trips and providing a vital and efficient transportation service that is sorely needed, but also observes that suitable adjustments here and there can balance the enhanced experience of both riders and the wider constituency, and encourages DOT to explore such alternative possibilities; and

**Be it finally resolved** that CB2 calls upon DOT to address the long-lived congestion problems on E. 12th St., focusing on 12th btw. Broadway and 5th Ave., identified as a problem area, with particular attention to resolving the placard parking abuses on 12th btw. University Pl. and Broadway, including firming up guidelines to implement restrictions when DOT issues placard parking permits and conferring with the NYPD concerning enforcement of the illegal placard parking, such as in the 12th St. buffer zone.

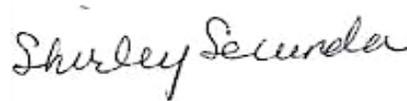
**Vote: Passed, with 45 Board Members in favor  
1 Against (R. Sanz)**

Please advise us of any decision or action taken in response to this resolution.

Sincerely,



Carter Booth, Chair  
Community Board #2, Manhattan



Shirley Secunda, Chair  
Traffic & Transportation Committee  
Community Board #2, Manhattan

CB/EM

c: Hon. Carolyn Maloney, Congresswoman  
Hon. Brad Hoylman, NY State Senator  
Hon. Deborah J. Glick, NY Assembly Member  
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Carlina Rivera, Council Member