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## COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

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### TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

**November 2020**

The Traffic and Transportation Committee of Community Board #2, Manhattan held its monthly meeting on Thursday, November 5, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. via Video Conference.

**Board Members Present:** Shirley Secunda (Chair), Ritu Chattree (Vice Chair), Joe Gallagher, Janet Liff, Ed Ma, Daniel Miller, Lois Rakoff, Antony Wong, Adam Zeldin.

**Board Members Absent with notification:**

**Board Members Absent:**

**Public Members Present:** Joseph Flahaven, George Haikalis.

**Public Members Absent with notification:**

**Public Members Absent:**

**Other Board Members Present:** Carter Booth (CB2 Chair), Michael Levine, Katy Bordonaro.

**Guests:** Aaron Sugiura, David Andrew, Lily Gordon-Koven, Avraham Metal, Kimberly Rancourt, Andrew Chang, Jake McNally, Evan Sweet, Jacob Priley, Matt Lorenz, Jerry Gluck, Lincoln Anderson, Emily Rogers, Joanne Schindelheim, Judy Pesin, Gail Fox, Andrew Gilbert, Hilary Ho, Kaiyu Li, Robin Mitnick, Leslie Boghosian Murphy, Wendy Shenfeld, Samir Lavingia, Alexander Marks, John Clem, Sean Scott.

#### MINUTES:

##### 1. 14th St. Busway Update by NYC Dept. of Transportation (DOT).

In response to CB2's request for an update on the 14th St. Busway (TTP - Transit Truck Priority project), DOT (which had not discussed the busway with CB2 since Jan. 2020, pre-Covid-19) asked CB2's Traffic & Transportation Committee to submit a list of questions that DOT would answer at the T&T Committee Nov. 5th meeting. DOT presented an overview addressing the submitted questions as follows:

1. **Q.** The 14th Street Busway was made permanent this past June. Prior to that, the busway (TTP) was a pilot project, scheduled to run for 18 months, with 13 months left to go. Has provision been made for monitoring, evaluation and remediation activities as well as reporting on the current operation of the busway like the monitoring activities that were being conducted during the cut-off pilot (which indicated there was additional work to do)? If so, please specify what these activities have been/are, what the results have been, and what has been done to resolve problems and make needed adjustments.  
**A.** The 14th St. Busway was made permanent to address the need for bus service, especially during the pandemic, and had a minimum negative impact. DOT will keep looking to make improvements, and is still monitoring conditions on the ground, just not with Sam Schwartz (who did the original monitoring). It didn't make sense to collect and analyze data because conditions were so changed with the pandemic.
2. **Q.** Why didn't DOT confer with the community before the 14th Street Busway was made permanent? (Done without the community's knowledge, input and consultation).  
**A.** DOT wanted to provide transportation options for people to get around in the pandemic, which the busway provides. They still do intend to monitor.
3. **Q.** If 14th Street is going to become permanently closed to car traffic beyond the restrictions that apply today, does DOT plan to embark on a comprehensive plan to mitigate traffic complications that result in the redirection of traffic into adjacent streets? For instance, a study may reveal minimal traffic northbound on University because there is no longer an outlet at 14th Street, and consider a pedestrian only zone for this retail corridor.  
**A.** DOT is aware of concern about the 12th and 13th Sts. area from the University Pl discussion and was happy to hear that CB2 is interested in more pedestrian accommodations on University Pl.
4. **Q.** If 14th Street is a temporary restricted thoroughfare, what is the timeline for renewal or dismissal of the restrictions?  
**A.** There are no plans to further restrict access on 14th St. or to reduce restrictions.
5. **Q.** As with any improvement/change in design, regulations and signalization of a street, there are always some further refinements that are necessary when actual operation takes place. How will the changes during actual operation be monitored and assessed, and how will necessary changes be made?  
**A.** DOT hasn't been doing ongoing monitoring (but said they are doing some), but is aware of some differences. There are no plans to do extensive monitoring.
6. **Q.** How do the numbers (usage) compare to other bus lines? In other words, counts are down all over and bus counts are down less. Has ridership here held up better than elsewhere, the same, less?  
**A.** No answers re bus ridership. No plans for monitoring extensively, but can continue to look at what's happening.
7. **Q.** How is the Busway enforced?  
**A.** They're using cameras in bus lanes at each intersection.

8. **Q.** Are turn counts being done, and on all the corners? Will they recommence once things settle down?  
**A.** Not now. See # 6.
9. **Q.** Concerns continue to be voiced about impacts on the streets adjoining the Busway; in CB2 this is particularly on 12th and on 13th Streets, both east and west. Are these streets still being monitored and modifications/improvements being studied? Will solutions be brought to CB2?  
**A.** DOT saw minimal impact on most side streets. Did do some signal timing and markings changes. DOT will consider adjustments to side streets; is committed to this area.
10. **Q.** Concerns have been voiced about a disproportionate amount of truck traffic entering the streets adjoining the Busway and the need to redirect this traffic to the Busway. Is provision being made to direct this truck traffic to the Busway by signage and through enforcement?  
**A.** Some trucks are allowed on side streets for local deliveries. The Busway is both transit and truck priority, so trucks are accommodated there. There can't be signage on every single street not a truck route, but signage in appropriate visible locations directing truck traffic to the busway could be considered. Also thinks CB2's suggestion to reach out to the trucking industry to educate truckers about the busway/truckway is a good one. (A community member noted that trucks travel down W. 13th St. because they can make a left turn on 7th Ave. heading to the Holland Tunnel, which they can't do on 14th St. until 9th Ave.).
11. **Q.** Has DOT and/or MTA NYCT done any origin-destination studies of where riders get on and off the buses?  
**A.** No. DOT might do travel time studies.

Some members of the T&T Committee pointed out that although there are very few yellow cabs right now, this can change once the pandemic eases, and asked whether there are any plans to include cabs on 14th St. to mitigate problems on the side streets (some T&T members favor keeping yellow cabs off 14th; others favor having them there). DOT indicated that they're not looking at this right now, but will monitor it.

Residents expressed their continued concern about increased traffic on 12th and 13th streets that is constantly backed up. One attendee said statistics indicate vehicle volumes are down, but it was pointed out that the residents themselves experience conditions continuously which statistics can't do, since they're based on limited data collection. DOT said they plan to address impacts.

Comments (**C.**) from community members and DOT responses (**R.**) also included:

**C.** What's being done to ensure pedestrian safety relative to cyclists? Often there are cyclists on 14th St. riding the wrong way, down the middle lane, criss-crossing and even on the sidewalks.

**R.** DOT can look on 14 St. to check conditions re bicycles.

**C.** Education is needed. It's not visible.

**R.** Details are on this website:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/html/brt/html/routes/14th-street.shtml>

**C.** It's cyclists who need education. They don't look on the website prior to getting on a bike.

**C.** 14th St. is practically a pedestrian walkway where you most often can cross without the light, while impacts continue on the side streets.

**R.** A committee member: There are 50,000-80,000 bus riders.

**C.** There are no signs on 14th St. saying vehicles must make the first right turn. Visitors from out of town have no idea they will get a ticket.

**R.** There is signage. DOT is trying to make this work, and could use input.

CB2 will follow up with requests to DOT to investigate (and install where needed) signage on 14th St. that indicates required turns and visible signage in other locations to direct trucks to the busway, as well as for outreach to the trucking industry to educate truckers that the busway serves trucks. Previous resolutions that address the issues brought up in the discussion will also be included. These requested actions as well as continuation of monitoring conditions can be done now, but because traffic patterns at present are expected to change once the pandemic ceases, these patterns will need to be thoroughly analyzed at a later date, which CB2 will ask DOT to do and to report back their findings with proposed actions.

## **2. Citi Bike Infill Updates by NYC Dept. of Transportation (DOT).**

DOT has been working on Citi Bike expansions and infill, to add more capacity in CB2 and other areas in response to demand. To date (after 7 years) there have been almost 109 million Citibike trips citywide, most by annual members + visitors and tourists. During Covid-19, DOT (which does planning, outreach and oversight) and Lyft (which manages day-to-day operations, equipment and maintenance) have been cleaning high-contact areas on bikes returned to depot, disinfecting bikes docked at high-use stations near hospitals, and practicing social distancing in the field when handling bikes, as well as providing free membership to essential workers.

Phase 3 (2019-2024) expansion is bringing Citi Bike to new parts of NYC and adding new capacity (infill) to the existing service area. This will bring many more bicycles to the core to accommodate rider "gravity" (bikes typically moving toward the CBD) and meet increased and existing demand (when riders can't find a bike or dock). It also should improve rebalancing and overall system operations. Areas of highest demand will receive the most docks. To increase capacity, there will be new stations, expanded stations, and creative design solutions such as 3-D Bridging (combining Citi Bike accommodations on both the sidewalk and the roadbed). The planning process includes community feedback (online, requests from riders and stakeholders), station siting (based on ridership data and technical criteria) community notification (CBs, property owners, key stakeholders), installations, and then, ongoing monitoring.

DOT presented an overview of 10 new stations for CB2:

- Thompson St. & Bleecker St., East roadbed (SE)
- Bleecker St. & Lafayette St., North roadbed (NW)
- Morton St. & Washington St., North roadbed (NE)
- King St. & Varick St., North roadbed (NE)
- Spring St. & Hudson St., South roadbed (SW)

- 10th Ave. & W. 13th St., East roadbed (NE)
- Hudson St. & W. 13th St., East roadbed (NE)
- Greenwich St. & Perry St., West roadbed (SW)
- W. 10th St. & Washington St., North roadbed (NE)
- Washington St. & Barrow St., East roadbed (NE)

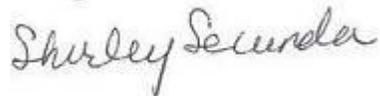
Plans for Citi Bike expansion and infill were enthusiastically received by the community. One person indicated that during the pandemic, she and numerous neighbors have been relying on Citi Bike rather than the subway and other modes of transportation, and the constant complaint is not enough full docks in the neighborhood. (DOT agreed that they're seeing changes from other modes of transportation to bicycling). A committee member noted that the West Village gets "dock-blocked" on weekends in particular, and others agreed that the neighborhood is a destination where people arrive on Citi Bike and take other modes of transportation home, and that it's difficult to find open docks on weekends and at night there. People emphasized the importance of doing adequate rebalancing to assure having full enough docks.

When asked why the Thompson/Bleecker location was chosen, DOT responded that it would help fill in the network in that area, it has a parking lane wide enough to accommodate the station, and it doesn't conflict with Open Restaurants. DOT answered No when was asked if there have been any complaints about noise at docking stations. When asked if any place that was underutilized by Citi Bike could be shrunk so as to make room for installations at other locations where demand is greater, DOT indicated they're eager to make sure that Lyft optimizes use and if places have lower utilization, will move docks.

DOT also discussed the "Lift Up" program which is free for young people if they are at least 16 years old, which is the required age to ride a Citi Bike, in response to a question about whether Citi Bike is expanded for students who live in NYCHA buildings, and also indicated that there's a discounted program with \$5 membership for anyone who lives in a NYCHA building.

The full presentation on Citi Bike expansions and infill can be accessed at:  
[https://nycdotbikeshare.info/sites/default/files/2020-11/MNCB2\\_2020Infill.pdf](https://nycdotbikeshare.info/sites/default/files/2020-11/MNCB2_2020Infill.pdf)

Respectfully submitted,



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