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## COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

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October 25, 2021

Adam S. Levine, P.E., AICP  
Traffic Safety and Mobility Director  
NYS Department of Transportation  
New York City Region  
47-40 21<sup>st</sup> Street  
Long Island City, NY 11101

Thomas G. Bayer, P.E.  
Assistant to the Regional Director  
NYS Department of Transportation  
New York City Region  
47-40 21<sup>st</sup> Street  
Long Island City, NY 11101

Edward Pincar Jr.  
Manhattan Borough Commissioner  
NYC Department of Transportation  
59 Maiden Lane  
New York, NY 10038

Dear Mr. Levine, Mr. Bayer and Commissioner Pincar:

At its Full Board meeting October 21, 2021, Community Board #2, adopted the following resolution:

### **Resolution in response to discussion with the New York State Department of Transportation and the New York City Department of Transportation on anticipated crosswalk to be installed on West St. just north of Charlton St.**

**Whereas** representatives of the New York State Dept. of Transportation (NYS DOT) and the New York City Dept. of Transportation (NYC DOT) attended the Community Board 2 Manhattan (CB2) Traffic and Transportation Committee's (T&T) Oct. 7, 2021 meeting to give input and details and answer questions on the crosswalk that is planned to be installed, in conjunction with and by the developers of the 550 Washington St. development, across West St. just north of Charlton St. (i.e. where Charlton St. would be located if it extended to West St.), going from the eastern curb to the Hudson River Park (HRP) (and CB2 thanks NYS DOT and NYC DOT for their attendance and for their very helpful clarification of this project); and

**Whereas** the T&T meeting was in follow-up to a presentation of the plan for the crosswalk at CB2's Parks & Waterfront Committee meeting on Oct. 6, 2021 by Oxford Properties (developers), Cook Fox (architects), Philip Habib & Associates (transportation planning and engineering), and Mathews Nielsen (landscape architects); and

**Whereas** currently there's no West St. crosswalk after Canal St. going north all the way to Houston St., hence no safe crossing for several blocks for anyone going to or from the HRP; and

**Whereas** the new crosswalk will be 60 ft. north of the Charlton St. location (i.e., where Charlton St. would run if it didn't terminate at the UPS building on Greenwich St.) and will have a traffic signal; and

**Whereas** with users of the HRP constantly increasing and with new development and improvements in the area that are transforming and will further transform this West St. vicinity to a well-used community place, along with the vastly increased population from Google's occupation of 550 Washington, not to mention the increased numbers of both pedestrians and bicyclists that will be there once they become aware of the new crossing, including the many children who will be crossing back and forth during hours of after-school activities at Pier 40, where as many as 20 different youth activity programs are held at one time, including parents and others, at many different times, there will be highly increased pedestrian activity, and bicycles too, on the West St. eastern sidewalk at this location; and

**Whereas** NYS DOT has indicated that the West St. eastern sidewalk at this location is expected to be 10 ft. wide. Currently, the traffic lane adjacent to the eastern curb is taken up with construction staging equipment and scaffolding, with no adverse impacts on the West St. traffic flow. The plan calls for an 8 ft. bump out at the crosswalk to shorten the crossing, although a sidewalk widening could serve to both shorten the crossing and at the same time accommodate the increased numbers of pedestrians and cyclists that are expected, without hindering vehicular movement; and

**Whereas** the increased numbers of expected pedestrians and bicyclists also may necessitate a wider crosswalk to accommodate them safely and comfortably and avoid conflicts between them crossing concurrently. The current crosswalk width, as cited in the plans, is 15 ft., but NYS DOT believes it will be 20 ft. wide, in keeping with the width of other of the West St. crosswalks. The planners for Oxford Properties indicate that, if needed for conditional approval, the designs can be adjusted to make the crosswalk 20 ft. wide; and

**Whereas** it has been suggested that traffic managers, similar to the Pedestrian Safety Managers successfully employed by the Hudson Square BID to ensure that pedestrians have safe open crosswalks, be retained to help avoid pedestrian/cyclist conflicts in the crosswalk; and

**Whereas** it was indicated that the average pedestrian crosses at 5-6 ft. per second, while the slowest one would cross at approximately 3 ft. per second, although some studies have shown that people with mobility issues are only able to cross at no more than 2 ft. per second.<sup>1, 2, 3</sup> Given the full crossing length of 98 ft. from the proposed bump out to the HRP Esplanade, based on the 3 ft. per second figure, a slow crossing would take about 33 seconds; at 2 ft. per second, it would take about 49 seconds. NYC DOT has specified that the traffic signal allows 37 seconds in the crossing phase. A few more seconds for crossing could better accommodate variations in physical disabilities and capacities; and

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<sup>1</sup> Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways, Federal Highway Administration. 2009 Edition including Revision 2 dated May 2012. 4E.06 Pedestrian Intervals and Signal Phases, Paragraph 10, Page 98. <https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2009r1r2/mutcd2009r1r2edition.pdf>

"Where pedestrians who walk slower than 3.5 feet per second, or pedestrians who use wheelchairs, routinely use the crosswalk, **a walking speed of less than 3.5 feet per second should be considered** in determining the pedestrian clearance time."

<sup>2</sup> Federal Highway Administration University Course on Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation. LESSON 8: PEDESTRIAN CHARACTERISTICS. Section 8.4. July 2006.

<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/pedbike/05085/chapt8.cfm>

*By definition, about half of all pedestrians travel at a slower pace than the average walking speed. These slower walking pedestrians include older pedestrians, people with disabilities, and people pushing a baby stroller and/or paying attention to younger children walking alongside (see figure 8-1). Therefore, the slower walking speeds of these groups should be considered when designing pedestrian facilities such as crossing times at intersections.*

<sup>3</sup> New York HIGHWAY DESIGN MANUAL. Department of Transportation. April 26, 2017.

<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/pedbike/05085/chapt8.cfm> 18.7.1.2 Pedestrian Crossing Speed

**Whereas** NYC DOT has asserted that the MUTCD (Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices) which is customarily followed for traffic signal guidance, leans in favor of a minimum requirement for pedestrian crossing time (and giving more time to motor vehicles) to avoid vehicular traffic backups, although it may not be pedestrian friendly; and

**Whereas** NYC DOT has indicated that it's possible to do a minimum 40 seconds crossing time and still coordinate with other West St. signals, and if there's a need for more time for pedestrians and bicycles, it is open to examining this possibility; and

**Whereas** a passageway with plantings that appears to be 50 ft. wide (currently referred to as Charlton Garden Alley) is planned to be created between the north side of the Dept. of Sanitation (DSNY) building (353 Spring St.) and the south side of 550 Washington St to provide a pedestrian connection from Washington St. to West St. by removing a previously built-up wall and tower area that blocked east-west/west-east access. Users will need to be made aware of and directed to this new passageway that is expected to always be open to the public for pedestrians and cyclists (no cars, except for drop-offs, no parking, no deliveries); and

**Whereas** the Hudson Square BID has recommended incorporating art and wayfinding to direct people to the Charlton Garden Alley passageway including use of the Spring St. DSNY Building's wall as a canvas for directional art and lighting. The NYC DOT will check its wayfinding team to see if a wayfinding plan can be developed; and

**Whereas** there's considerable concern that increasingly rampant speeding by cyclists and (illegal) electric motored transportation on the HRP bikeway could seriously endanger pedestrians entering the HRP from the crosswalk. A flashing amber light is planned south of the crosswalk there to alert cyclists to pedestrians. If necessary, NYS DOT would assess whether to make it a three-color signal, but would need to consider the potential for enforcement; and

**Whereas** the NYS DOT has indicated that no decision has yet been made, since the final plan has not yet been submitted, and there's still opportunity for adjustments;

**Therefore, be it resolved** that CB2 believes that the new crosswalk will be a very welcome haven for crossing West St. after so many blocks without the opportunity for a safe crossing for pedestrians and bicyclists and is looking forward to its installation; and

**Be it further resolved** that CB2 requests that NYS DOT and NYCDOT (in concert with the developers, architects and engineers of the crosswalk plan) re-examine estimates of pedestrian and bicycle usage in view of the continuing growth of the total walking and bicycling population (residents, workers, visitors, park users, etc) in the area right now and expected in the future; and

**Be it further resolved** that CB2 asks that consideration be given to widening the West St. eastern sidewalk adjoining the proposed crosswalk by incorporating the 8 ft. road lane adjacent to the eastern curb as part of the sidewalk. This would provide an approximately 18 ft. wide sidewalk, less than the over 20 ft. sidewalk in front of the West St. facade of the neighboring DSNY building directly south of 550 Washington St., but providing at least some additional needed space for the expected increase in pedestrian and biking activity; and

**Be it further resolved** that CB2 urges that the width of the new crosswalk be at least 20 ft. wide; and

**Be it further resolved** that CB2 recommends that pedestrian safety managers be employed by Google to manage the crosswalk activity, who, although they'd be unable to issue tickets (as do NYPD traffic enforcement agents, who would not be available), could signal to stop and/or slow traffic, mediate pedestrian/cyclist conflicts and

direct use and actions in the crosswalk; and

**Be it further resolved** that CB2 strongly supports increasing crossing time to at least 40 seconds (preferably more, if possible) for those using the new West St. crosswalk to enable a safe and comfortable crossing for all, including those with highly challenging mobility impairments, and urges NYC DOT to provide this extra time in the crossing phase; and

**Be it further resolved** that CB2 welcomes the prospect of the new Charlton Garden Alley passageway; and

**Be it further resolved** that CB2 encourages NYC DOT to develop a wayfinding plan to clearly direct people to the Charlton Garden Alley passageway to access the new West St. crosswalk, including signage that identifies the entrances to the passageway, and to consult with the Hudson Square BID in developing the wayfinding plan as well as with DSNY about using the DSNY Spring St. facility's wall for displaying wayfinding directions; and

**Be it further resolved** that CB2 appreciates possible NYS DOT evaluation to determine the need for a three-color signal where the HRP bikeway interfaces with the new West St. crosswalk; and

**Be it finally resolved** that CB2 asks for an opportunity to review plan revisions before NYS DOT's final approval.

**Vote:** Unanimous, with 42 Board Members in favor.

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

Sincerely,



Jeannine Kiely, Chair  
Community Board #2, Manhattan



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

JK/EM

c: Hon. Jerrold L. Nadler, Congressman  
Hon. Brad Hoylman, NY State Senator  
Hon. Deborah J. Glick, NY Assembly Member  
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Corey Johnson, Council Speaker  
Noreen Doyle, Hudson River Park Trust  
Dean Shapiro, Oxford Properties  
Rick Cook, Cook Fox Architects  
Philip Habib, Philip Habib Traffic Engineering  
Signe Nielsen, Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architecture  
Angela Pinsky, Google  
Ellen Baer, Hudson Sq. BID  
Jeffrey LeFrancois, Meatpacking DMA/HRPTAC  
Omar Toro-Vaca, Kasirer  
Steven Thomson, Kasirer