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PARKS & WATERFRONT COMMITTEE MEETING

July 6, 2022

The Parks & Waterfront Committee of Community Board #2, Manhattan, held its monthly meeting on Wednesday, July 6, 2022 at 6:30 via Zoom.

The meeting covered one topic: Update on plans for the proposed 550 Washington Street crosswalk across West Street to the Hudson River Park and repairs to the Tennis Courts, as well as general announcements by the Hudson River Park Trust.

Board Members Present: Rich Caccappolo (Chair); Susanna Aaron (Vice Chair); Chris Dignes; Matthew Metzger Shirley Secunda; Frederica Sigel

Board Members Absent with Notice: Kristin Shea

Public Members Present: Coral Dawson; Elizabeth Gilmore; Sharon Woolums

Other Board Members Present: Jeannine Kiely (CB2 Chair); Carter Booth; Michael Levine; Daniel Miller

In total, approximately 23 people attended the meeting.

There were no resolutions resulting from this meeting.

MINUTES

Update on plans for the proposed 550 Washington Street crosswalk across West Street to the Hudson River Park (HRP) and repairs to the Tennis Courts, as well as general announcements by the Hudson River Park Trust (HRPT):

A new crosswalk will be installed connecting the Park and the sidewalk on the east side of West St next to the new building at 550 Washington St. Implementation of this new entry point just south of Pier 40 and north of the tennis courts will bring about some changes in that section of the Hudson River Park, including moving the existing bike rack space, which is currently adjacent to the north edge of the tennis courts, to a location closer to the southern edge of the Pier 40 driveway. HRPT is pleased to move the existing bike rack and combine it with a pedestrian plaza; they state that doing so will maximize green space and lawn areas as well as address safety concerns involving exit and entry of the station in the current location – this station will be more visible to bikers. Though a few attendees questioned these benefits, the HRPT representatives defended the value of this new, soon to be implemented design.

Robert Atterbury, EVP, Parks Relationships and Programs, for HRPT, and his colleague, Kate O'Malley, AVP, Projects, discussed the significant landscaping design that has been done by Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects and will be implemented, including both the new, moved, expanded bike plaza as well as for the greening over of its' former location, featuring new oak trees that will be planted to replace the 3 trees that will have to be removed, new shrubs and many other plants with better improved irrigation and new boulders.

When completed, this section of HRP will look like this:



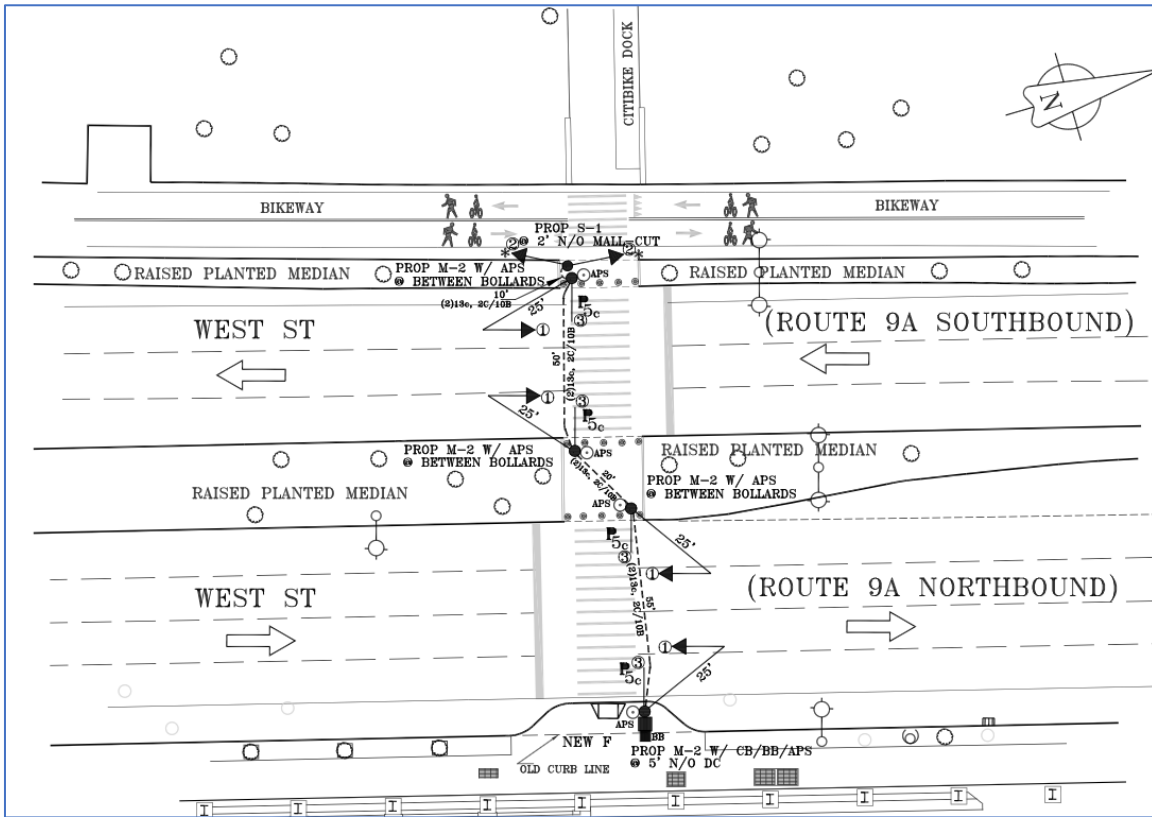
Construction is expected to run from August 15 to December 31, 2022. The first phase will focus on the most northern section and will run through early September. During this phase, the lawn area to the south will stay open. Then, after working on the tennis courts (see below for more details) for a few weeks, the southern half will be constructed starting in mid-October. During construction, attempts will be made to man the bike path next to the area with flag bearers.

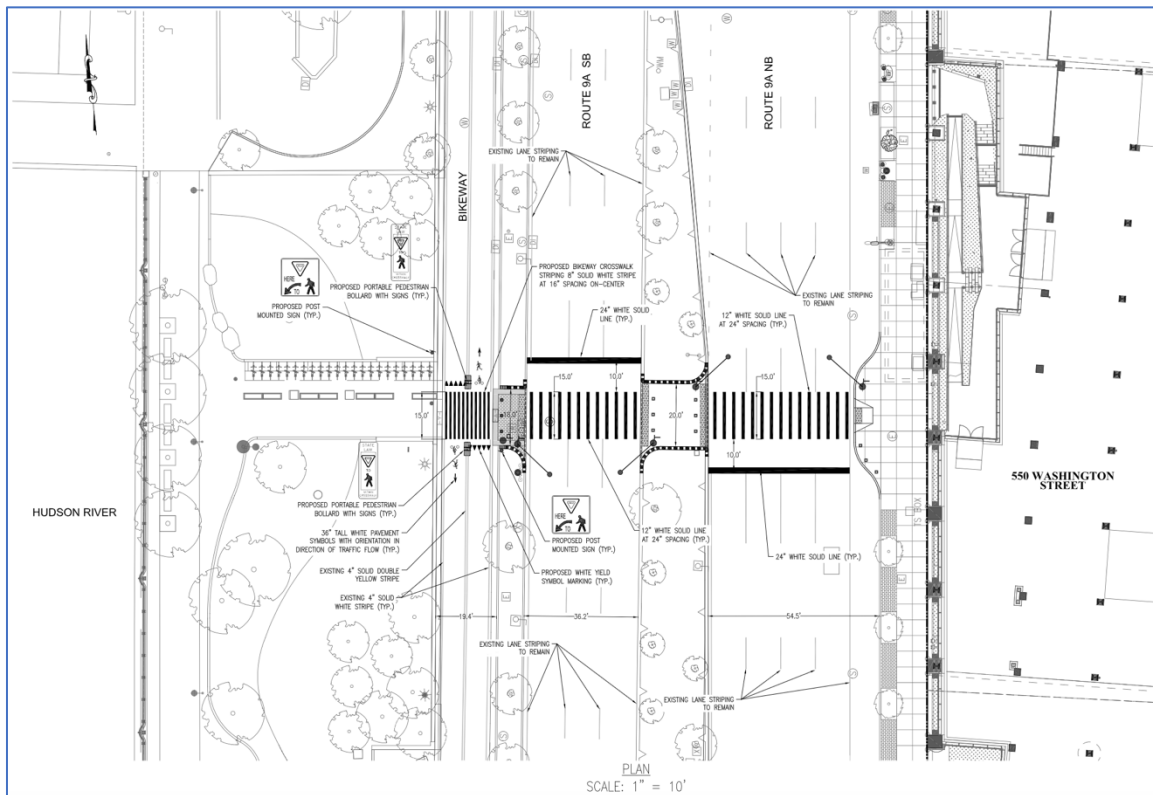
Note: the crosswalk will be installed in September and October but access to pedestrians will be blocked until the work in the park is complete.

The HRPT representatives answered questions on the plans and status of the changes to the Park. However, our committee asked them a series of questions about the crosswalk itself - information that we listed in our resolution back in October, 2021, which they, understandably, did not know or feel in a position to answer them, e.g., exact location of the crosswalk, questions about the width of it (15 ft or 20 ft), the position and size of the waiting areas, whether there will be an amber light at the crossing of the bike path, etc.

I pledged to the committee to follow up with the engineering team that initially presented to us to confirm the design and the schedule. I did contact them and they shared these drawings (below) which confirm that the crosswalk will be 15 ft wide in the road, with a 20 ft wide waiting area in the median that separates the northbound and southbound vehicle traffic lanes of Route 9A (West St.). Also, a new stop light will be installed at this crossing which will be synced / coordinated with other lights north and south on West St. It is not clear yet if the pedestrian crossing time will be 37 seconds and whether that will be sufficient for pedestrians to safely cross the estimated 98 ft of the highway. Also, not clear if an amber light will be installed in the bike lane to warn bikers and pedestrians.

Please see two shared diagrams below:





Mr. Atterbury also discussed other HRP projects and events including:

- Tennis courts: were created in 2000, resurfaced in 2015 and all three have significant cracking, resolution of which requires complete replacement of the asphalt. The work for this project work will take three months. It is planned to run from Labor Day through December (2022). This work cannot be done in winter and many schools use these courts in the spring so HRPT wants to get the work done this fall.
- Pride Weekend had nearly 10,000 visitors to Piers 45 and 46, Mr. Atterbury said it went well and HRP brought in port-a-pottys and water fountains. He noted that crowd management is required in case issues arise that cause all attendees to leave the piers at the same time through the one exit that is the juncture with the Park to the east.
- Fourth of July went well, too. NYC Fireworks were over the East River this year, but crowds still came to HRP to see NJ displays
- Chris McGann, HRPT Senior Director, Public Safety told our committee about the fatal stabbing that took place in HRP near Christopher St, during the early hours of July 5th. The murdered man was attacked by an unknown person for unknown reasons. At the time of our meeting no arrests had been made and an investigation was underway. NYPD announced the arrest of a suspect on July 13th.

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Caccappolo,
 Chair, Parks & Waterfront Committee
 Community Board 2, Manhattan