

Brad Hoylman, *Chair*
Jo Hamilton, *First Vice Chair*
Bo Riccobono, *Second Vice Chair*
Bob Gormley, *District Manager*



Sheelah Feinberg, *Treasurer*
Susan Kent, *Secretary*
Elaine Young, *Assistant Secretary*

COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

3 WASHINGTON SQUARE VILLAGE

NEW YORK, NY 10012-1899

www.cb2manhattan.org

P: 212-979-2272 F: 212-254-5102 E: info@cb2manhattan.org

Greenwich Village • Little Italy • SoHo • NoHo • Hudson Square • Chinatown • Gansevoort Market

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

November 2008

The Traffic and Transportation Committee of Community Board #2, Manhattan, held its regularly scheduled monthly meeting on Thursday, November 6, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. at NYU Silver Building, 32 Waverly Pl., Room 408.

Board Members Present: Shirley Secunda (Chair), Ian Dutton (Vice Chair), Sigrid Burton, Jane McCarthy, Wendy Schlazer, Annie Washburn.

Board Members Excused: Amanda Kahn Fried.

Board Members Absent: Renee Kaufman.

Public Members Present: Joseph Flahaven, Richard Lehrer, Florent Morellet.

Public Members Excused: George Haikalis.

Public Members Absent:

Other Board Members Present: Zella Jones, Richard Stewart.

Guests: Jeff Alexander, Tim Koelle, Adrienne Taub, Larry Kallman (Sam Schwartz), Angelica Crane (Manhattan B.P.), Jen Hong (Manhattan B.P.), Damu Radheshwar (Polshek Partnership), Ronald Caldwell, Paul J. Proulx, Jeanne Wilcke, Walter J. Thompson (FKC Engineers), Charles John Cafiero, Debbie Ciraolo, Kevin Baxter (Polshek), Shea Hovey, Gary Tomei, Carol Conway, Andy Fisher, Stan Ries, Adrienne Dobsovits (Public Theater), Noah Matakya (Pub. Theat.), Andy Hamingson (Pub. Theat.), Julia Lisowski, Kate Mikuliak (Councilmember Mendez), Damian Hazard (Polshek), Rick Rofihe.

MINUTES

Proposal for a Sidewalk Extension plus addition of a stoop, billboard signage, and lighting in front of Public Theater, 425 Lafayette St.

1. Representatives from the Public Theater, with their team of architects from the Polshek Partnership and transportation planners from Sam Schwartz Engineering, presented their plan for altering the sidewalk, constructing a stoop, and installing signage and lighting (to increase street visibility, establish an institutional identity, and provide protection from the weather with a canopy for people standing outside, they said) as part of their renovations of the theater that include expanded lobby space, a new mezzanine, new restrooms, amenities, etc.
2. They cited historical precedent: The original Astor Library (in the Public Theater Building) had a frontal stoop taking about ½ of the sidewalk width leaving an approximately 9 ft. path, and had a visible light well in the basement, now closed up.

Proposal

1. They propose bringing the stoop back with a stairway all around (3 sides) and symmetrical ADA ramps on both sides. New stoop: 18 ft. deep, 75 ft. wide on a 21 ft. deep sidewalk which would be bumped out into the current street loading lane an additional 11 ft. (10 ft. + 1 ft. clearance), providing a 13 ft. deep sidewalk access from the edge of the stoop's stairway. A taxi dropoff is planned on each side of the bumpout in what would be a No Standing zone. Stoop landing: approximately 30 ft. x 13 ft. Cooper Union Foundation Building stoop with stairway is the closest one in the area to the sort that's proposed for the Public Theater. *Stoop height needs to be ascertained.*
2. Six free-standing poster boxes (3 on each side) are proposed, with room on both sides for pedestrian passage, to create awareness of Public Theater activity. Width: 4ft. Height: 10 ft.
3. They're restoring five banner poles.
4. The proposal also restores the scale of the original front doors.
5. Subtle "uplights" are planned to light the front of the staircase and to demarcate the curbline.
6. There might be as many as 700 people at once, although there's a much bigger clientele (all shows don't start at the same time).

Report on Sidewalk Extension and Street Conditions

1. The current lane adjoining the sidewalk (where the bumpout would be made) is a loading zone from 6 am to 7 pm and a No Standing zone from 7 pm to 6 am, therefore it's a non-moving lane.
2. Pedestrian observations were done from 7 am to 11 pm to determine pedestrian level of service. Existing conditions showed free flow.
3. The two moving lanes that currently exist would remain. These two lanes show excess capacity.
4. The curb occupancy study showed sufficient capacity to handle truck loading and unloading, but could use enforcement. There's a great deal of traffic there now that's against the regulations.
5. The traffic team met with DOT to show their study results, and DOT agreed with their findings - these were similar to their own studies.
6. DOT is aware that this project is being proposed in the same area as the Astor Pl. project.

Community Commentary

1. Several members of the local community attended the presentation, including representatives of the NoHo Neighborhood Association, the Friends of NoHo, NoHo

Manhattan, and businesses such as Astor Wines, all of who voiced their strong support for the Joseph Papp Public Theater, for its well-being and continued success.

2. Concerns were voiced about the scale of the design: the size of the proposed stoop, so much bigger than the 6 to 8 ft. that the original stoop was thought to be, and the crowds it would accommodate (and the noise they'd bring); the large poster boxes, that, when freestanding, typically occur in plazas like Lincoln Center's, very different environments from Lafayette St.; the sidewalk protruding into the street, where taxicabs might pull up, blocking moving traffic. Opinion was that the large scale would be at odds with the rest of the landmarked buildings along Lafayette St. and might set a precedent that others would follow.
3. Safety issues with the 3-sided stairway were raised.
4. It was pointed out that there are many residents in the immediate area, e.g., the Colonnades across the street with 50 families, that need to be considered in planning the type, amount and timing of lighting.
5. Appropriate access for pedestrians, wheelchairs and strollers was also brought up.
6. Another concern was for possible conflicts with the traffic pattern changes coming from the Astor Place plan and with increasing transient traffic, as well as for accommodating the rise in traffic from new hotels and other new development.

Followup

The item was tabled for further discussion when Manhattan Borough President Stringer's and Councilperson Mendez's representatives confirmed that once the proposal is reviewed by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, its sponsors must apply for a revocable consent from DOT and return to Community Board 2 Manhattan concerning the structures that will occupy public space.

RESOLUTIONS

1. Resolution in response to MTA NYC Transit update on Bleecker St./Broadway-Lafayette station rehabilitation project.

Whereas MTA NYC Transit (NYCT) has presented updated plans to renovate the Bleecker St./Broadway-Lafayette subway stations, including installation of five elevators and an escalator for disabled access, platform widening and lengthening, free connection between the two stations, public art, and opening a presently closed mezzanine, sidewalk entrance and stairway; and

Whereas the project will last 40 months (commencing January 2009), covers a work area from Houston to Bleecker Sts. between Crosby and Mott Sts, and entails re-digging up the street, sidewalk and planted medians there just being completed in the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) Houston St. Reconstruction Project, revealing a disturbing lack of coordination between NYCT and DOT, a waste of public funds, and an otherwise avoidable prolongation of dangerous walking and driving conditions; and

Whereas the existing heavily-traveled bicycle lane segment on Lafayette St. between Houston and Bleecker Sts. will be suspended from January 2009 to 2011, with no provision for alternative bicycle access, thereby endangering bicyclists; and

Whereas NYCT's planned reopening of a stairway entrance on the south sidewalk of Houston St. between Lafayette St. and Mulberry St., in front of the Puck Building, is generally welcomed, this sidewalk is already of insufficient width to carry current pedestrian volumes even before the anticipated removal of as much as 75% of its width to accommodate the stairway, while, at the same time, the three lanes of through traffic on Houston St. are in a roadbed wide enough for 4-1/2 lanes; and

Whereas the community is concerned that the project will hinder the conduct of local businesses, kindle a proliferation of vermin, and compromise residents' access, safety and general quality of life; and

Whereas NYCT has offered its assurance that it has been working and will continue to work throughout the project with local residents, businesses and property owners to address their needs, such as installing signage for business visibility and keeping the community informed, and that it will conduct a regular vermin control program;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Community Board 2 Manhattan (CB2) supports this long-awaited rehabilitation of the Bleecker St./Broadway-Lafayette subway stations that will benefit subway riders; and

Be It Further Resolved that CB2 urges NYCT and DOT to work closely in coordinating street level work to ensure the safe and comfortable access of pedestrians and vehicles both above- and below-ground and to avoid intrusions on the life of the community; and

Be It Further Resolved that CB2 urges that all efforts be made to accommodate the existing bicycle lane on Lafayette St. throughout the construction period, but should it be determined that there is no possible way to accommodate said bicycle lane, CB2 urges NYCT to coordinate with DOT to establish an alternative safe route for cyclists, including signage and surface markings to indicate such route; and

Be It Further Resolved that in order to accommodate the reopened stairway on Houston St. between Lafayette St. and Mulberry St., CB2 urges NYCT and DOT to widen the sidewalk into the roadbed to at least maintain the sidewalk's current insufficient width, and asks that NYCT and DOT work with this Board and local residents to reach a final design that provides adequate pedestrian passage; and

Be It Finally Resolved that CB2 urges NYCT to work together with the local community throughout the project to mitigate to the fullest extent any negative construction impacts.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

- 2. Resolution requesting a parking regulations change from 'No Standing Except Trucks Loading and Unloading 8am-4pm Monday thru Friday' to 'No Standing Except Trucks Loading and Unloading Anytime' at 39 Clarkson St. and 20 feet to the east.**

Whereas Koppers Chocolate has run its chocolate manufacturing business for many years at 39 Clarkson St., a six-story building it owns between Greenwich and Hudson Sts., in an operation where truck loading and unloading activities to deliver ingredients and pick up goods is essential; and

Whereas Koppers is located in an M1-5 zone, but as the area around it has gentrified, cars increasingly park in front of the firm's building, right in its loading zone both day and night, preventing its trucks from coming in to load and unload and obstructing the crucial conduct of its business; and

Whereas Koppers often operates beyond its normal hours of 8 am to 6 pm into the weekends and on night shifts; and

Whereas trucks have to angle to the loading dock from the east so as not to block the street during loading and unloading;

Whereas Community Board 2 Manhattan (CB2) fully recognizes the importance of preserving manufacturing businesses and jobs in New York City, recently supported zoning to maintain manufacturing uses in our community, and is in favor of facilitating these activities; and

Whereas CB2 received several letters, including ones from the Carmine Street Block Association, the Greenwich Village Community Task Force and the New York Industrial Retention Network, all supporting Koppers Chocolate's requested parking change from 'No Standing Except Trucks Loading and Unloading 8am-4pm Monday thru Friday' to 'No Standing Except Trucks Loading and Unloading Anytime' at 39 Clarkson St. and 20 feet to the east;

Therefore Be It Resolved that CB2 strongly supports a parking regulations change from 'No Standing Except Trucks Loading and Unloading 8am-4pm Monday thru Friday' to 'No Standing Except Trucks Loading and Unloading Anytime' at 39 Clarkson St. and 20 feet to the east and urges the NYC Department of Transportation to implement this change as soon as possible.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

3. Resolution requesting installation of two speed humps on W. 13th St. bet. Ave. of the Americas (6th Ave.) and 7th Ave.

Whereas motorists speed down W. 13th St. between Ave. of the Americas (6th Ave.) and 7th Ave. jamming on their brakes at the end of the block, thereby undermining pedestrian safety and creating noise disturbances on a predominantly residential block with small businesses and a school; and

Whereas the W. 13th St. 100 Block Association, which represents this stretch, passed a resolution to request two speed humps on the block to slow down traffic and increase

pedestrian safety and asks that they be installed before City and Country School and a short distance after it; and

Whereas a speed hump has been installed on the next block, W. 13th St. between 7th and 8th Aves., a street that is the same width as W. 13th between 6th and 7th, and residents there report that the speed hump has helped slow down traffic and enhance pedestrian safety; and

Whereas examples in other cities have shown that installing two speed humps on a block helps sustain a steady slow speed in motor vehicles that otherwise go full speed ahead once going over a single speed hump;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Community Board 2 Manhattan requests that the NYC Department of Transportation install two speed humps on W. 13th St. between Ave. of the Americas (6th Ave.) and 7th Ave.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

4. Resolution requesting removal and/or reduction of signs and sign poles/staffs around the Sheridan Sq. Viewing Garden.

Whereas the streets and sidewalks around the Sheridan Sq. Viewing Garden, between W. 4th St., Washington Pl. and Barrow St., are cluttered with multiple unattractive and redundant signs and poles/staffs that obstruct people's view and detract from their enjoyment of the garden, as well as causing confusion for both pedestrians and drivers; and

Whereas in many cases one staff or pole can accommodate more than one sign and work just as efficiently as one staff or pole with one sign, and one street sign at an intersection (often occurring in NYC, and sometimes there are none), especially at a small crossing, can be more visible and less distracting than two;

Therefore Be It Resolved that Community Board 2 Manhattan (CB2) requests the following changes in street sign placements around the Sheridan Sq. Viewing Garden:

- Remove the staff holding the "No Standing Any Time" sign on the Washington Place side of the garden, and place this sign on the staff holding the children's sign a few feet away to avoid having two staffs there.
- Install reflectors embedded in the curb at the apex of the garden that would light up as cars round the bend to alert drivers of the fork in the road where it divides into W. 4th St. and Washington Place, in place of the multi-staffs and signs there now. If signs are preferable, remove at least two of the staffs at the apex of the garden, and place the signs currently on them all on one staff.
- Remove the street sign post next to the old-fashioned lamppost on the W. 4th Street side of the garden (there's an identical street sign post diagonally across the street).

- Remove the staffs with "No Parking Any Time" and "No Standing Any Time" signs and place these signs (with appropriately pointing arrows) on the staffs holding the "Stop" signs (or on taller staffs if necessary).

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shirley Secunda".

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