

June 15, 2009

Good Evening:

The Traffic and Transportation committee met in quorum on June 10, 2009 in the district office. Present were DM Beckmann, representatives from Assembly person Hyer-Spencer's office, Council member Gentile's office and Harold Fink from NYS DOT along with design experts and consultants.

We received a presentation concerning the Gowanus Expressway Project which will effect the expressway from 6th Avenue at 65th Street to approximately 3rd Avenue and 53rd Street. A portion of the proposed project is in CB 7 while vital portions of the Gowanus Expressway CB 10 will be affected. The project, known as PIN X730.81, will affect the Shore Parkway (connecting the Belt Parkway and the Gowanus Expressway), the Third Avenue entrance ramp (located at 3rd Avenue and 66th Street), the 6th Avenue/65th Street intersection, the 6th Avenue exit ramp and landscaping at Third Avenue and 64th street. The work includes repairs to structural steel, deck replacement, widening, painting, drainage improvements to lanes, and improvement to the HOV/Bus lane. This work is scheduled to begin in 2010 and continue for approximately 5 years. The work is described as "interim" work, however, there are substantial changes and upgrades included in this 240 million dollar "shovel ready" project. The work will eliminate 16 parking spaces by the automobile dealership on 66th street between 5th and 6th Avenues due to the widening of the 6th Avenue exit ramp. The ramp will be doubled in width. Most of the spaces which will be lost are utilized by the dealership's service department at the present time. That exit ramp will be widened to reduce congestion on the highway from exiting traffic. The majority of the exiting traffic turns left on 6th Avenue and then makes an abrupt right turn from 6th Avenue unto 65th Street to travel toward Bensonhurst. The widened ramp will have a left turn lane, a right turn lane and a shared lane. The NYS DOT has conducted studies and will put dedicated turn signals at the end of the exit ramp and the left turn signal will be timed so that traffic which exits will have a chance to make the left turn on 6th Ave. and the right turn unto 65th St. without blocking the intersection.

There will be an upgrade to Gowanus Expressway median which separates converging (Manhattan bound from Shore Parkway and the Manhattan bound from the VNB) traffic near Third Avenue and 66th Street. It will be converted into a reversible extra wide HOV/Bus lane around the the area of the 3rd Avenue/66th Street entrance ramp. This "fly over" lane will necessitate a reconfiguration of the lanes but will eliminate the weaving of inbound (Manhattan) bus/HOV traffic with Shore Parkway traffic. It will alternate inbound and outbound direction during peak hours. The work will necessitate a two month closure of the 3rd Avenue entrance ramp at 66th Street.

In addition a triangular patch of grass and stone between 3rd Avenue and 64th Street will be beautified and landscaped in order to improve the area. The lawn will be replanted ornamental plants in granite planters added and benches will be installed along with a

colored concrete walkway to facilitate foot traffic through the pocket park. This park will be wheelchair accessible.

The benefits realized will be a reduction in vehicle backups at the 6th Avenue exit ramp. There will be less delay on 6th Avenue and 65th Street due to signal control improvements. In addition, the construction at the 3rd Avenue entrance ramp and the addition of the reversible median HOV/Bus lane will improve safety and traffic flow at that location. Overall, this project will eliminate the need for many smaller emergency repairs which lead to traffic congestion.

When the 3rd Avenue entrance ramp is closed NYS DOT proposed two options to divert traffic toward the Leif Ericson Drive entrance ramp near Owls Head Park. The committee approved "option one" as the preferable option when that ramp is closed for two months. This option will send the express buses which pick up at 66th St. and 3rd Ave. onto 3rd Avenue and to Manhattan via the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel. The other vehicle traffic will be sent via Bayridge Parkway and Bayridge Avenue towards Shore Road and onto the Leif Ericson Drive entrance ramp of the Expressway. This would effect, during AM peak hours from 7am to 9am, approximately 200 vehicles. The project calls for a low bid contractor to perform the DOT designed project. The project could include a bonus incentive for early completion or a penalty for untimely completion. The construction equipment is anticipated to be kept in the CB 7 area of the project under 3rd Avenue. The budget includes funding for DOT Enforcement agents to control traffic in the areas under construction during the construction.

This project will coincide with a separate and different project that T and T Committee reported about to the Community Board 10 previously. This different project, the repair and rehabilitation project of the 4th Avenue bridge over the Belt Parkway which is scheduled to begin in 2011, will cause a complete closure of that eastbound entrance ramp to the Belt Parkway. The committee believed that it is vitally important that this entrance ramp must remain open during the repairs ramp especially since there will be extensive construction work being done on the Gowanus Expressway simultaneously.

Alan Bortnick vehemently opposed the widening of the 6th Avenue exit ramp. He believes that the proposed work is insufficient and poorly planned. Robert Cassara reiterated his belief that the 6th Avenue ramp should be designed so exiting traffic transitions onto 65th street directly instead of onto 6th Avenue. Harold Fink stated that after much study the suggestions were not practical due to design difficulties and the increased cost. The Committee will receive more information and report back to the Community Board for action. The Committee believed that a letter to NYS DOT from our elected officials demanding a bonus/penalty clause in the proposed contract would be a desirable action to take at this time.

The committee voted to add an item to the committee agenda concerning sidewalk parking violations enforcement. The committee recommended that the Community Board 10 send a letter with details for a protocol for DM Beckman to to contact CO

*2 lanes
left
right*

Rodriguez of the 68th Precinct to ensure specific enforcement from the NYPD for sidewalk parking when it comes to the attention of the district office. The Committee felt the community board needs to have the assurance from the CO that when the DM contacts the precinct about a specific problem that a summons will be issued by the a precinct officer and upon notification of a repeat offense that the precinct will arrange to have the vehicle ticketed again and towed away. Therefore I ask the board to vote to send a letter to CO Rodriguez which would detail an appropriate protocol to eliminate sidewalk parking infractions at some of our recognized "hot spots".

I am sorry that professional obligations prevented me from being here tonight, and I want to thank all the T & T committee members for their hard work during the course of this year. Thanks to the entire board and our wonderful district office staff. Have a wonderful summer.

Respectfully Submitted,



Brian Kieran

