

CITY OF NEW YORK
BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN
COMMUNITY BOARD TEN

621 86th Street
Brooklyn NY 11209
(718)745-6827

REPORT OF THE TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Monday, May 17, 1999

During the evening of Monday, April 26, 1999, the Traffic and Transportation Committee met at District Headquarters. The purpose of the meeting was to revisit and reexamine the Project 2000 Parking and Congestion Mitigation Plan which included the conversion of 3rd and 5th Avenue to one way traffic. Mr. John Logue of the Voice of Bay Ridge Business had presented the plan before the previous committee meeting on April 14, 1999. The committee had convened April 14 meeting at the request of Council Member Marty Golden.

Mr. Logue underscored that he had initiated the plan because he wanted to restore the "small town" feeling to Bay Ridge which he remembered while growing up. He proceeded to contravene the presentation made by NYC-DOT Brooklyn Borough Commissioner Kathy Keegan, P.E. at the April 14 meeting [Commissioner Keegan was not present at the April 26 meeting.] The Chair noted that the 5th Avenue Reconstruction project is nearing the completion of Preliminary design and it is not already completed as Mr. Logue asserted at the April 14 meeting. Several committee members and an elected official spoke in favor of the one-way avenue scheme:

- Mr. Capetenakis complained that business associates coming to meetings cannot find parking spaces and emphasized that one-way avenues will improve traffic flow.
- Mr. Otey cited how dangerous it has become navigating bicycles on 3rd and 5th Avenues and one-way avenues will relieve the situation.
- Council Member Marty Golden, who attended this meeting, reported he had met with Peter King of NYS-DOT and Mr. King fully supported the one-way plan especially with regard to the upcoming Gowanus Expressway reconstruction.

Others were not so sure:

- Mr. Cohen felt one way streets are more indicative of big cities than small towns.
- Mr. DeMartini questioned the desirability and feasibility of rerouting more bus routes onto narrow Bay Ridge Avenue (69th Street).

The committee reviewed the other provisions of the plan and voted as follows:

Group 1

- Convert 5th Avenue to one-way southbound traffic from Bay Ridge Avenue(69th Street) to 94th Street and 3rd Avenue to one-way traffic northbound from Shore Road to Bay Ridge Avenue(69th Street);
- Establishment of a shopper's shuttle bus loop (a potential operator has been identified);
- Sidewalk reduction of 36 inches and "bumpouts" at corners as part of the 5th Avenue reconstruction.

VOTE: 5-4 Affirmative with the Chair casting a "No" vote.

Group 2

- Reduction in bus stop size;
- Placement of fire hydrants at bus stops on 5th Avenue as part of the reconstruction.

VOTE: Unanimous

Group 3

- Introduction of new style Multi-meters;
- Introduction of "Red" meters for 10 minute paid (and not free) parking.

VOTE: Unanimous with one (1) abstention.

The following text is for information only; the opinions are the Chair's and not the Subsequent to the April 26 meeting, we have learned that NYS-DOT has indicated that while, in committee general, they support one-way traffic patterns *conceptually*, they could not comment specifically on the Bay Ridge situation because it has not been studied and that local traffic patterns are not in their jurisdiction. The District office has received a steady stream of calls, letters and petitions in favor of retention of two-way traffic on 3rd and 5th Avenues. The Transit Authority has disclosed their opposition to the altering of the B37 and B63 bus routes; such drastic changes to the transit franchises would require high level review and approval on part of MTA-NYC Transit. I might add that the TWU will not be keen to establishment of rival transit service in Bay Ridge.

At the Parking Expo 99, sponsored by the Bay Ridge Development Corporation on April 29, 1999, the presentation by Konheim & Ketcham, traffic engineers, revealed most shoppers walk to the shopping avenues and that merchants and their employees use 60% of available parking spaces. Among the elected officials who spoke at Expo 99, State Senator Gentile, Assemblyman Abbatte and Assemblywomen Millman and Cohen registered their opposition to one-way 3rd and 5th Avenues as did the Alliance of Bay Ridge Block Associations; only Council Member Golden spoke in favor.

Given the undue haste with which the plan was brought to the committee, the considerable opposition the one-way avenue concept has engendered and the faulty information that factored into the decision, I move that the board send a letter to the NYC-DOT Brooklyn Borough Planner that will report the votes of the committee and the circumstances which lead to them. The letter will ask NYC-DOT to take the votes under advisement and will invite that agency to initiate a comprehensive traffic and parking plan for Bay Ridge. This plan must be capable of implementation. It may be dovetailed into studies already underway and may also resource the findings of Project 2000. NYC-DOT informed us that such a plan would not preclude one-way traffic patterns if traffic volumes so warrant it, in say, five years time.

Let us remember, the reconstruction of 5th Avenue is the top Capital priority for CB10. Both the NYC Department of Design and Construction and NYC-DOT have warned that any debate on the design now will result in delays of one year or more. The poor condition of the infrastructure beneath the busy avenue necessitates action and non-equivocation our part.

Respectfully submitted,


Lawrence Stelter
Chair, Traffic and Transportation Committee