

Ms Margaret Forgione,
Manhattan Borough Commissioner
New York City Department of Transportation
33 Maiden Lane,
New York NY, 10007

June 14, 2011

RE: Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Transportation Study, Fifth Project Advisory Committee

We wish to thank you and Andrew Lenton for a very productive meeting on May 31st, 2011. We are encouraged by the progress of the study and the commitment that, after a long delay, the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) will complete the study by the end of 2011. The next step is a Public Meeting to share the draft conclusions with the community at large. This will be held in September with a date to be finalized this week.

We also appreciate that you agreed to make the project team available to our technical advisors, Sam Schwartz Engineering, to help us understand how the traffic analysis and simulation model captures the existing gridlock conditions and other complexities.

The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) members were pleased to learn that many of the possible solutions have been simulated in the software model and that each group of scenarios below seems to have limited effect on traffic flow.

- Signaling at Ramp C,
- Banning left turn movement from 37th Street to Ramp C,
 - The ban should be implemented 24/7, as the high turning speeds are dangerous to pedestrians and happen mostly outside of the PM peak hours. A young woman was killed there under those very circumstances.
 - Signage and a median with pedestrian refuge will be critical to delineate clearly for drivers and pedestrians the segments with and without turning movements.
- Protecting 16 pedestrian crossings with signal timing changes (Lead Pedestrian Intervals, LPIs, or Split Phases) in addition to the 6 already implemented.

- The complexity of how to make the intersection of 42nd Street and 9th Avenue safer was a real eye opener.
 - We applaud the solution of banning all left turns for the westbound traffic at 42nd Street, 24/7, and using a contra-flow lane on Dyer Avenue for buses except in the AM peak hours where the incoming volume is heavy. All other types of vehicles would be directed to 11th Avenue.
 - The alternative is unsatisfactory as presented: the west-bound left turn phase on 42nd street would be moved from a leading phase to a lagging phase, but vehicles would still be able to turn left on the green-ball. This results in a conflicting movement with pedestrians crossing 9th Avenue and we would like to restrict left-turns to the protected phase only. We understand the impact on traffic flow, but this cannot take priority over pedestrian safety at this intersection, the second most dangerous in New York City. (DOT)
 - In conjunction with these measures, right turns from 9th Avenue onto 41st Street must be banned 24/7 for all vehicles, so that the tunnel entrance at 41st Street is reserved for high occupancy traffic coming from the Port Authority or thru 41st Street. Without such a ban, *and given the no left turn option above*, 42nd Street traffic headed for the tunnel will use 43rd Street (school) and 9th Avenue as a detour to get on the 41st Street entrance, thus moving the problem one block north.
 - In addition, the other alternatives to encourage buses to use other routes must all be part of the solution to disperse traffic and reduce the chances that one intersection or another becomes overburdened with bus traffic.

The team shared with us the other measures that are being analyzed:

- Making 11th Avenue one-way southbound from 45th to 50th Streets and providing a transition from 50th to 55th Street.
 - The community has asked that pedestrian refuges be installed between 50th and 55th Streets to facilitate the crossing of the avenue by seniors and children. There are multiple schools and a park in this area.
- Closing Northbound Dyer Avenue from 34th to 35th Streets.

We remind the project team of the following items that have been part of the scope and remain to be analyzed. Please include these items in the report, even if there are no resulting traffic flow impacts.

- Rerouting all ramp Ramp C traffic to entrances further south (35th, 33rd or 31st Streets) as requested by Manhattan Community Board 4, combined with the assumption that the 37th Street left turn on to ramp C is will be banned onto 9th Avenue and the 41st Street right turn will be banned from 9th Avenue. Note that the Port Authority had agreed to study this option. This would allow enlarging significantly the green space/plazas included in the goals of the study (the "canoe").
- A bike lane network. Extension of the 8th and 9th Avenue protected bike lanes up to 59th Street and cross streets as proposed by the PAC. The impact of including LPIs or Split Phases along the bike paths should also be studied and reported.
- Small plaza at 41st and 9th Avenue.
- Locations of way- finding signage for tunnel- bound truck, buses and car traffic without which the improvements will not work. For example, a sign was requested at 57th street to direct tunnel-bound truck and bus traffic to 11th Avenue.
- Dedicated bus lanes for 9th and 10th Avenues from 14th Street to 59th Street, at least during peak hours, to prevent the M11 buses from being stuck in the Lincoln Tunnel gridlock, including the line up of NJ transit buses waiting to enter the Port Authority Bus Terminal (on 10th Avenue). Local mass transit users should be given higher priority over Lincoln Tunnel users.

Again please share with the team, our appreciation for the excellent job they are doing. We look forward to our next meeting in the fall.



Christine Berthet
Chair, Project Advisory Committee

Cc: Project Advisory Committee Members.
Cc: Andrew Lenton