



Chairman Nicholas Himidian Jr. - District Manager William Rivera

Public Safety & Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes

Committee Chair: Brandon Ganaishlal

Vice-Chair: Dwayne Gathers

October 5, 2017

Meeting Location: BRONX CB9 OFFICE

Meeting Start Time: 7:00 PM

Board Members Present: Chairman Nicholas Himidian, Juan Torres, Jennifer Ellison Lackard, Isabelo Adames, Cleneth Dais

Board Members Absent: Brandon Ganaishlal, Dwayne Gathers

Board Members Excused: Henry Pelayo Jr.

Introduction

A. Committee Chair, Board Members & Guest

B. Committee Description: The public safety & transportation committee represents the community's interests with regards to sanitation, crime, fire-ems, quality of life, NYS liquor license application recommendations, street activity permit applications, street re-naming application, transportation and acts as a liaison between community members and the New York Police Department & Fire Departments, NYC Department of Environmental Protection, NYC Department of Sanitation, NYC Department of Transportation, NYC Department of Sanitation & NYS Liquor Authority.

DOT Presentation

- A.** DOT presentation was led by Eric Costo, Project Director for the Hunts Point Interstate Axis Improvement Project
- B.** As per Mr. Costo, there were two scoping meetings, one in July and one in September. This is a Federal A Project. The location is along the Bruckner Expressway. This is going to be an environmental impact study, the FHWA is the lead agency. New York State DOT is the co-ed agency. The EIS has not been started yet, scoping phase is still in progress. Sometime in the fall we plan on releasing a public scoping document. Then next year we will have a public hearing around May or June. After that a record decision will be made in late summer of 2018. Finally construction is expected to start in 2019.
- C.** The project purpose is to improve access points to the Hunts Point Peninsula. There are very few entrances and exit ramps. The idea is for trucks to have an easier access point from the

Sheridan to the Peninsula so they can get to the commercial businesses there like the Hunts Point Market. In addition the structure is getting old and the deck needs to be replaced among other things that need to be addressed.

Nicholas: Are you going to replace those? (referencing to the picture of the of steel stringers)

Eric: It may be replaced. But the deck will definitely be replaced.

Nicholas: The substructure is really bad. If you turn from Hunts Points and into our neighborhood. The steel columns are chipping away from all the traffic that's up there which is frightening.

Eric: The project will address all these issues.

Nicholas: What will the traffic impact be like for our neighborhood?-Since that is a very busy corridor.

Eric: When I go through the concepts you will get a better understanding of the project.

Adding the exits will move a lot of the traffic.

Nicholas: That's first, that's before the major construction?

Eric: Depending on which concept will be chosen. Most likely it will be the entrances and exits ramps since that has the greatest benefit. This will most likely be a series of contracts, possibly 2 or 3 contracts since it is a very large project.

- D.** There are 2 concepts. One is the Edgewater Leggett and the other is called O Point Avenue. For Leggett Avenue the southern end, we are proposing to put an entrance and exit ramp on the southbound or westbound Bruckner. This will add an entrance to the RFK bridge. Moving to the north, we are planning to add three lanes to the Bruckner. In both directions of the Bruckner there will be three lanes, each in the middle. Also, closing the entrance ramp in Hunts Point Ave, where you can take it to the Sheridan northbound, will improve the pedestrian crossing and in the future this is where there will be the Metro North station.

Nicholas: Where are you going to put the ramp? Are you going to remove it completely?

Eric: We are still considering. We have been listening to the community's comments whether it should be removed fully or utilize for something else.

Nicholas: There is an island in the traffic turn and it's really bad. It's a really bad intersection.

Eric: Under this option that ramp will be closed and that space will be used for pedestrian crossing.

Nicholas: Or maybe you guys can leave it open for the police and fire departments.

Participant 1: Another thing to consider is to use the space for the community.

Jennifer: Are you saying if you go under the Bruckner, that ramp that you go up, your closing that ramp?

Eric: Right.

Jennifer: So if someone is below, let's say if they're trying to get to 174 on that side of town, how will they will they get there? Will they have to go through Hunts Point?

Eric: There is a portion of the Sheridan Project where people will be allowed to make a turn on Edgewater and head south. They could also take the Westchester Avenue ramp. Otherwise it will be a difficult turn.

- E.** Common to all concepts, is the replacement of the Byrant Avenue pedestrian bridge. We will be putting ADA accessible ramps.

F. On the Sheridan in both directions you can take the Edgewater exit ramp and come down onto Edgewater Avenue. You can also get onto the Edgewater ramp and you can continue north on the Sheridan. If you are on the Bruckner, we added an additional ramp where you can make a turn and join into the Edgewater ramp and come down on Edgewater Avenue. It will cross the Amtrak CSS tracks, it will also cross the Bruckner Expressway. There are a couple of properties that may be impacted by this concept.

Nicholas: What's the impact?

Eric: On the U-haul we will probably have an aerial assessment, there will be a temporary assessment on construction. As far as impact, the building will be impacted as the ramp will have to go right through the building. The auto repair store will also be cut off by access because the ramp will touch down around there.

Participant 2: The existing Sheridan, what will be happening with that one?

Eric: That will be shown in the other presentation.

G. (Eric is showing everyone what the project will possibly look like.)

Nicholas: The entrance ramp to the BP station, will that be expanded?

Eric: Yes.

H. If you want to go eastbound on the Bruckner, a lot of people will have to circle around to get on the entrance ramp. What we are proposing to do under this project is we are going to relocate that ramp further east. That should relieve the Bronx River Avenue intersection.

I. Concept 2. We are going to have a series of flyovers, over the CSXER to get down to O point Avenue. It will take care of the eastbound Bruckner. Some of the CXX tracks might have to be removed.

J. Alternatives:

- Underpass going under the Bruckner. There is a CSX crate line that goes to the Hunts Point market and the baskio bridge, there is a little space for an underpass.
- Pedestrian bridge-over.
- Waterfront option. Go under baskio bridge and come around onto the other side.

Nicholas: I have a question about the underpass. How is that going to affect the track?

Eric: The one under the Bruckner will be on the river side track. There will have to be a track crossing at some point. The only way to eliminate the track crossing is to have a ramp structure that climbs up the Bruckner.

Nicholas: Will there be lighting in the underpass?

Eric: Yes.

K. Garrison Park will become more of a passive park where you can walk through. This is not detailed, only a concept phase. None of this is officially approved.

Angela: When you're redoing the whole Hunts Point section, there isn't going to be any closure?

Eric: There will have to be a whole construction phasing and concepts on how we are going to do that. We are still in the scoping phase.

Jennifer: What will the impact be for the Bruckner, if any? Coming from the RFK to the Bronx River Parkway is a complete nightmare, going in both directions.

Eric: This should improve with the three lanes going through the inner change.

Jennifer: That would be impacted for how many years? Cause it's already bad.

Eric: The Edgewater, it will probably be for five years. It won't be in one particular spot.

Jennifer: How will it be different once all the improvements will be made?

Eric: One of the things that will happen to the Bruckner is we're going to put shoulders on the Bruckner. Since there isn't any shoulders.

Nicholas: The overpass under the Bruckner have these columns that are deteriorating badly. What is the proposed project to rehabilitate?

Eric: Those will be rehabilitated under this contract.

Nicholas: Is that something that will be happening first, during, or after?

Participant 3: We do inspections every year. We ensure the safety, we know that it looks bad but it's safe. When we see loose concrete we call one of our contractors to remove it. We have netting under the Bruckner just for that reason. We also have a contractor that is going to do some construction by the RFK Bridge, that is starting next year.

Nicholas: What are they going to do there?

Participant 3: They are going to replace the deck and do some repairs and permanent repairs.

Jennifer: If I'm coming from Manhattan and I've come up the FDR and I cross Willis Avenue Bridge, will there be an access ramp for you to get on instead of waiting to get all the way to the end before you go up? Cause that is a horrible intersection.

Eric: No, not under this project.

Participant 4: We need a bridge on Zerega. Is there any way to get state funds for that? What would the process be to have state funds?

Participant 3: Normally the community board will write a letter and we consider it. We can't guarantee it's going to happen. If you have a concern like that you can write a letter to the community board.

- L. Moving on to the Sheridan Expressway. Some of the objectives that we have for the Sheridan project is to improve pedestrian access between the park and the Bronx River. Nobody can cross the Sheridan. If we want to make this into a boulevard we have to change the look, reduce some of the speeds, make sure the crossing is safe for pedestrians. Also to try to improve the Westchester Avenue ramp.
- M. What we are proposing is, three at grade intersections. This will no longer be an expressway it will be a boulevard. There will be a crossing at Jennings, one at 172nd, and 173rd. The southbound Sheridan will be three lanes and a two lane exit to Westchester Ave. So we will widen the exit ramp so there will be at least two lanes. It doesn't mean you still won't get stuck at the Westchester red light but the exit ramp will be there. Northbound will be two lanes and there will be parking on the northbound side by the park and Edgewater. West Farms Road is right now two ways, as we will change this into a boulevard, we will make West Farms one way south for two blocks between 173 and Jennings, it will be southbound. On the northbound side, Edgewater, it will be northbound. It will also be one way instead of being two ways.
- N. If you are on Edgewater you will be allowed to make a turn and go south on the Sheridan. Same thing at 172nd street, there will be a signal and you will be able to make a turn and go south. Something that is new is a two way by **bedbath** that will connect to this new public plaza area we're proposing and connect to the starlight park. As per the pedestrian bridge, we will build this bridge across the Bronx River, connecting starlight park to the next phase of starlight park.

Jennifer: Ok so, if you're at Westchester under the L and you're trying to get on the Sheridan and you're trying to get on the Cross Bronx...

Eric: that will be a little slip ramp.

Jennifer: So there's a little turnabout now in that section?

Eric: Yes, that turnaround will be gone.

Jennifer: Will there be a light there?

Eric: Yes, because what's happening is you have the pedestrians crossing the Sheridan, so we will have a signal. You will need a signal for this u-turn traffic and you will also need a signal for the bicyclist in order for them to continue.

Jennifer: So, could you actually be at Westchester make that right, go past the motel, get to that light and you can go straight and get on the Cross Bronx. Or you can make a left and go southbound on the Sheridan?

Eric: Yes.

- O.** There will be a lot of landscaping. We are going to put a landscape median that's about sixteen foot wide, with a refuge in the middle.

Nicholas: Who's responsible for that maintenance of the medians?

Eric: We're still working with that.

Nicholas: We've experienced that back and forth. The state telling us to go the city then the city telling us to go back to the state. We would like to know who will be responsible for that.

Eric: We are having all those discussions, street lighting, medians, drainage, all those discussions are now starting with the city to finish the design project.

- P.** There is a potential to have an entrance at the starlight park at 173rd, so you won't have to walk all the way down and walk all the way back.

Jennifer: Parking on the intersection can be dangerous.

Nicholas: It can be confusing too.

Eric: It's a wider lane.

Jennifer: What's the point of that if you have parking on Edgewater?

Eric: Well we did lose a lot of parking on Edgewater. So, some of this will compensate for the little parking on Edgewater. It's also to calm some of the traffic because right now it's an expressway.

Jennifer: Parking in the center is dangerous.

Eric: Ok I will look into that.

- Q.** The design should be done in the spring. The contractor warding will be in the summer and it will begin in the fall. It will be about one year construction period.

Nicholas: And this project will be before the other project?

Eric: Yes

Old Business

- A.** Angela: What's the DOT status on the fixing they need to do, because it's already October?

Nicholas: We need to get an email out to DOT because there supposed to the studies for us

Angela: They need to change the markings on Castle Hill.

Nicholas: Will and I talked about that and we also spoke about Bronx River. We want to put a traffic camera for the morning. DOT said they will come out and do the counter and a study right by where Bronx River turns and going up to Bruckner Boulevard. They wanted to do it

in the summertime but we said “no that makes no sense.” Since school is out of session and people are on vacation. We need it to be done now. We asked for a traffic camera because people bust the light and they mess the traffic up.

Jennifer: They bust the light because the first traffic lights doesn't match up with the second one.

- B. Aurora: How about the cars that are parked alongside White Plains Rd between Bruckner and Story Avenue?

Jennifer: They are supposed to fix White Plains Rd, the whole thing. It's been like that for about 2 years. Castle Hill is a disaster. Now they are working on East Tremont and I'm still not convinced that whatever they're doing was approved. When are they going to fix the markings on Castle Hill?

- C. Aurora: When the stores are going to be opened (1967 Turnbull Ave) the traffic is going to be terrible. It's only one lane there used to be two lanes. There doesn't need to be parking there because there is the parking lot and the underground parking lot.

Nicholas: It's also going to be an issue when the school opens. In the morning already. We need to get the letter to DOT to do the studies

Jennifer: Can we also make sure the Bronx River Parkway coming off the Bruckner is included.

- D. There will be a 'Over 40 Dance' at the Kips Bay Boys and Girls club Friday, October 20 from 7 to 11pm. It's a free dance that is for the community.
- E. Participant 5: There has been Asians beaten the last few days, South Asians and I wanted to know what were the actions taken?
Officer: Some of the assaults were Asian on Asian or Bengali on Bengali. The perpetrator was Bengali and the victim was Bengali. So when word gets out to the community we have to make sure to differentiate between what's exactly going on.
- F. Nicholas: Going back to what we were saying earlier for now 2 years there has been the intent to move that parking space in front of the old Jimmy's. DOT keeps saying, “We're doing it' but they're not doing it. It could be a longer term process. So keep coming to the meetings and keeping reminding me.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:22 PM

Minutes created by CB9 Office Staff

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