

Questions and issues involving the Far Rockaway redesign plan.

Note:

Original text (questions) are in black.

DOT responses are in red.

My comments on the DOT responses are in blue.

My comments are not yet complete because I have not been able to contact all of the emergency service providers yet. Neither the local NYPD precinct, nor EMS was contacted.

- 1) Pedestrian Safety is an important consideration.
 - a) Is this more important than traffic flow? **We strive for a balanced approach when it comes to traffic congestion and pedestrian safety concerns.**
 - b) How many pedestrian deaths were there in the study area in each of the past ten years? **From 2009-2016, there was one pedestrian fatality in the immediate area. Note, per DOT's Queens Borough Pedestrian Safety Action Plan, which was released as part of Vision Zero, Mott Avenue and Beach Channel Drive is a Vision Zero priority intersection. Please see attached for injury data, per the Vision Zero View database. If the intersection is so important, (1) why wasn't the right turn lane from Beach Channel Drive southbound to Mott Avenue promised by Maura McCarthy implemented? (2) Why are there unlawful traffic control devices (lane markings on the pavement without signs) installed? (3) Why was a bus stop installed on Mott Avenue, adjacent to McDonald's, on a one lane road where traffic back up into the intersection unless vehicles go into the opposing traffic lane to pass stopped buses?**
 - c) How many pedestrian injuries were there in the study area in each of the past ten years? **See attached.**
 - d) Of the injuries, how many were serious? **See attached.** Were the incidents spread all over the study area, or only at a few or only one location? **See attached for geographic locations.**
 - e) Were MUTCD traffic control devices in effect at the location (e.g., traffic control devices at the Mott Avenue / Beach Channel Drive intersection are not NYS MUTCD compliant – the state MUTCD Supplement prohibits lane markings absent signs). **DOT uses a detailed process called an intersection control study to determine if traffic signals or multi-way stop signs are appropriate for a location. DOT collects data and compares it to nationally recognized standards to determine if it is appropriate to install a traffic signal or a multi-way stop. If the data does not meet the criteria, DOT will not install a traffic signal or multi-way stop. In these instances, DOT frequently finds other ways to improve traffic conditions. This is not responsive. DOT's analysis methodology is not relevant to the results. Why are so many of the traffic control devices unlawful (i.e., not MUTCD + NYS Supplement compliant)? See www.solutionsny.nyc/, particularly <http://solutionsny.nyc/signs.html>.**

- 2) What plans are under consideration to link the subway and LIRR tracks, as they were linked in the past? **NYC DOT is not aware of plans. We advise contacting MTA.**
- 3) How is it possible to widen the sidewalk and simultaneously maintain or increase the number of traffic lanes? **Due to changes in state and federal regulations we are able to reduce the width of travel lanes to accommodate expanded sidewalk dimension without the need for additional right-of-way. The proposed travel lanes are consistent with local residential and commercial streets. So when the existing streets were constructed (1898 – 1950) regulations required wider streets than today? How wide are existing traffic lanes vs. what is being proposed?**
- 4) Will all traffic control devices be MUTCD (federal and state) compliant (unlike the current situation)? **It is NYC DOT practice to follow MUTCD guidelines in its work. The NYS Vehicle and Traffic Law, section 1680, requires all traffic control devices installed in the state to comply with the US MUTCD + the NYS Supplement. Installing non-compliant devices is a traffic infraction. These are not “guidelines.”**
- 5) Will there be NYC Administrative Code compliant pedestrian ramps at all intersections? **Yes, all ramps will be construction in accordance with the current regulations under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Again, this is not responsive. The Administrative Code requirements are in addition to the ADA. Will Administrative Code compliant ramps be installed (unlike on other DDC projects)?**
 - a) Indicate those crosswalks where there will not be a separate pedestrian ramp to each crosswalk. **No crosswalk will be installed without a pedestrian ramp.**
- 6) What is the advantage of moving busses from a parking lot onto the street? **This is based on community request due to the current conditions of the MTA bus turnaround. People feel more comfortable on the sidewalk along Beach 21st Street. Can you identify the “community request”? Even if the bus stop is on the street, why can’t the layover area be off street?**
 - a) If this is a good idea, when will it be implemented in other areas, such as Parsons Boulevard in Jamaica? **DOT is open to having similar conversations with other local communities as we did with the Far Rockaway community. Can you really find a PE who will say that it is a good idea?**
 - b) Won’t this reduce the number of parking spaces? **New on-street parking on the west side of Beach 21st Street will be installed to mitigate loss to parking along the east side of Beach 21st Street. The bus facility will also be signed to allow for parking during offpeak hours. If parking is ok on the west side of Beach 21 Street when DOT wants to recover from a bus stop move, why shouldn’t it be permitted today?**
- 7) Public Safety issues.
 - a) Have the commander and executive officer of the 101st police precinct been consulted about the plans? **See below. Discussions with both indicate that they have not been consulted.**

- b) What is their opinion? DOT's Queens Borough Commissioner's Office has been in regular contact with the 101st Precinct about crash-prone locations in their command. As you know, DOT and NYPD work closely on achieving our shared goals of street safety for all street users under Vision Zero. No, I don't know that at all. Who has DOT consulted at the 101 precinct?
 - c) Has the FDNY EMS chief for the 47th battalion been consulted? DOT's practice is to review projects with FDNY; we will follow-up with additional meetings as we move ahead with final design. Again, who has DOT consulted at FDNY?
 - d) What is his opinion? Again, DOT and its agency partners, including NYPD and FDNY work closely to achieve our shared goals for enhancing safety for roadway users. Again, who has DOT consulted at FDNY?
 - e) Have the captains of the FDNY companies located on Central Avenue been consulted? All street geometry changes are reviewed by FDNY. The local companies have the opportunity to weigh in on concerns. We will ensure that Engine 328 and Ladder 134 are briefed on this project. Again, who? What about Engine 264?
 - f) What is their opinion? To date, we have not heard of any concerns. Who have you made aware of your plans?
- 8) Lighting.
- a) The presentation said that the latest LED lighting would be installed.
 - b) What will the lighting level directly under the luminaries vs. midway between them: i) On the near sidewalk?
 - ii) In each lane of the roadway? iii) On the far sidewalk? iv) How do the above values compare to the existing high pressure sodium lighting?
 - v) At other LED lighting installations, there are wide differences in lighting levels directly under the luminaires vs. midway between them. Will this be the case with the new lighting?

New York City is a densely-populated urban city and therefore, lighting standards are designed to provide adequate lighting for both motorists and pedestrians. Current lighting design is based on the standards recommended by the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA), which has provided lighting standards since 1906. These standards are widely utilized by major cities worldwide.

In 2009, the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) partnered with the United States Department of Energy (USDOE) and the Climate Group as part of a global study to evaluate the benefits of LEDs in a city environment. Separate studies were conducted to collect data on the performance of LEDs installed under pilot programs on

both the FDR Drive and Central Park. These tests measured factors such as illumination, color, energy consumption and other factors.

Based on the results of these pilots (and other tests completed by USDOE), our technical staff developed LED specifications that conform to the standards of the IESNA, the USDOE, and the Municipal Solid-State Street Lighting Consortium. These specifications, which have been widely accepted by major cities and utilities, provide increased visibility and safety, and result in reduced energy and cost, reduced maintenance, and environmental improvements. The LED lights have a life expectancy of 20 years. The specified color temperature, 4000K, is a natural white (neutral) color that is more efficient than warmer colors and is installed by many major cities around the world. DOT's goal is to upgrade street lighting borough wide with LEDs in the next year.

Could you please address the specific questions that were asked? It is well documented that the human eye does not adapt quickly to sudden changes in illumination levels such as those that typically result from DOT's LED lighting installations.

- 9) How much of the funding is from federal sources? **We have a total of 1.9M FHWA funding.**
 - b) How much of the funding requires certification of compliance with the federal MUTCD? **The entire project will be compliant.** Unlike existing Far Rockaway traffic control devices?
 - c) Who will certify compliance? **NYSDOT.**
 - d) Is this person a NYS licensed Professional Engineer who is qualified to so certify? **Yes.**
 - e) Is this person aware of 18 U.S. Code 1001? **Yes** Who is this person?
 - f) What will happen if the federal funding does not materialize or is withdrawn? **It is an earmark specific for this project.** Federal funding is always (pursuant to law) contingent on MUTCD compliance. Earmark or not, failure to comply must result in loss of funding or "clawback."
- 10) What studies are available of air quality both prior to DOT's modification of the Henry Barnes era traffic controls, current traffic controls, and traffic controls that are expected under the proposal? **Under the National Environmental Policy Act, we are required to complete Air Quality analysis. This document is under review at NYSDOT.**
 - b) What plans are there to remediate the situation if air quality becomes worse? **Under NEPA if air quality thresholds are exceeded, we would be required to provide mitigations. We do not anticipated that this project will cause a change to current air quality of the area. Again, what of air pollution becomes worse, even though NEPA thresholds are not exceeded?**
- 11) Trees.

- b) What kinds of “trees” or bushes will be planted? **This will be refined in final design. We have licensed landscape architects in NYS preparing plans for the project. As the design progresses we will be back in the community to share details on planting.**
- c) Will there be a variety of species? **Yes.**
- d) Will there be a variety of heights (e.g., oaks, maples, fruit trees)? **Yes.**

12) Parking.

- b) How many parking spaces are there currently on the street? **209 within the project area.**
- c) How many parking spaces will there be under the proposed plan? **216 full time, + an additional 21 spaces that will be available during off-peak hours throughout the district.**
- d) How many spaces will there be in public lots? **There will be a reduction of 12 spaces under the project in the DOT municipal lot.**
- e) How many spaces will be available in private lots? **Unclear. NYC DOT does not have jurisdiction on private property.**
- f) In view of the project costs, has the use of eminent domain been considered to make private lots available to the public? **No.**
- g) Will the public lots be maintained (cleaned regularly, paving repaired, etc.)? **That is a separate operational effort not related to the capital project.**
- h) Will the public parking under the subway tracks be reclaimed from the Transit Authority? **Not under this effort.**
- i) What will be done to insure that commuter vans do not usurp parking or roadway spaces? **Commuter vans will have designated locations on Beach 22nd and Redfern Ave for pickup/drop-off and layover. And if they choose to continue their use of Mott Avenue, what will you do?**
- j) What will be done to insure that municipal employees (NYPD, FDNY) comply with parking regulations? **We are coordinating with NYC agencies on the changes.**
- k) Will parking meters be operated at cost? **Yes.**
- l) What is the cost of operating parking meters?

i) Parking rates for vary across the five boroughs. Parking rates are posted on each parking meter, and the legal parking duration is posted in the top left hand corner of the green meter signs. Legal parking durations vary from 1 hour to 12 hours. Parking meters do not have to be paid on Sundays. New York City uses some of the most sophisticated parking equipment available today. All meters accept coin payment. Select meters accept credit cards. Many meters allow you to pre-pay for parking using the NYC Parking Card, which you can purchase online.

Again, what is the cost of operating parking meters? Regardless of the sophistication of the meters, is it more expensive to collect parking meter fees in some areas than

others? If not, why are the rates different in different locations? Are the parking meters an unlawful charge for the use of public streets, rather than a method to regulate how long people park?

m) Will DOT sell or abandon any additional parking as it abandoned the Beach 19th Street lot? **No** This statement appears to be contrary to the Draft Plan. ___

13) Bike lanes.

b) Will there be any other bike lanes beside Beach 20th Street? **No. The bikeway will only be on Beach 20th and Central Ave.**

c) How will bike riders get to and from the Beach 20th Street bike lanes? **Through the Access to Opportunity study, we are currently reviewing possible connections and will work closely with the Community Board and other local stakeholders and groups to discuss potential planning to connect to Downtown Far Rockaway area. Is this study available for review? If so, where? If there are no bike lanes added to other streets, will the bike riders just ride in regular vehicle lanes?**

d) Will bike lanes on Beach Channel Drive be removed? **No. They will remain in a new shared configuration through the intersection of Mott Avenue and Beach Channel Drive.**

14) Will Beach Channel Drive at the NYC / Nassau County line be regraded so that it is passible at high tide in a rain? **Outside of the limits for this project.**

15) Will the public park between the library and the firehouse be reclaimed? **We are currently investigating the ownership of the parcel.**

b) If it is allowed to remain (unlawfully) as a parking lot, will it be available to the public? **Unclear.**