

Summary

The final Public Presentation for the Jackson Heights Neighborhood Transportation Study was held on Saturday, February 12, 2011. The study team held two sessions for the public to learn about and comment on the proposed treatments for the study area. 184 attendees offered their thoughts on these treatments. This summary provides an overview of their comments both in terms of the general treatments offered as well as the specific streets and intersections discussed by the project team.

Key Themes/Comments

Bicycle Lanes

The bike lanes seemed to generate the most negative feedback of all the proposed treatments, although there was a vocal minority who very much appreciated the idea. Even with those individuals, however, there was significant concern about the location of the bike lane on 82nd Street, which was deemed too congested to accommodate a bike lane safely.

- “74th Street is too narrow for bicycles.”
- New southbound bike route on 75th Street would be great.
- “Bike lanes on 82nd Street seem counterintuitive.”
- Bike lanes on 82nd Street will be too tight
- The idea of a bike lane is a good one, but 82nd Street is not appropriate. It’s too congested. Maybe 80th Street is a better idea.
- “It isn’t realistic to push for bike lanes when there are so many seniors in the area.”
- Bicycles are a hindrance to drivers
- Adding a bike lane is dangerous
- Bike lanes will be the biggest problem
- “I would prefer a widened sidewalk to a bicycle lane.”
- “If you are implementing bike lanes, outreach to commercial businesses needs to begin as soon as possible.”
- “The bike lanes may not be popular with everyone, but I think they are long overdue and a great idea.”
- How can you coordinate this with the NYC Master Plan?
- “Are the bike lanes meant to help cyclists or take parking?”
- “Just one block of bike lane is not helpful.”

Pedestrian Traffic

The attendees responded positively to most of the proposed treatments for the improvement of pedestrian traffic in the study area. In particular, the widening of the crosswalks was well-received.

- There needs to be additional pedestrian time to cross Roosevelt Avenue.
- “The crossings at Broadway and 74th Street at Roosevelt is poorly programmed, so addressing this is necessary. You get stuck in the middle.”
- “Retiming the lights for pedestrians at Broadway and Roosevelt Avenue is a great idea.”
- “It is a problem from subways to bus stops; these improvements seem to address that.”
- “The pedestrian improvements are wonderful.”
- Countdown signals are a great idea. How soon can they be implemented?

Concerns about Bus Routing

There were some concerns about the routing of the bus to 75th Street, but most comments were generally positive and much of the feedback offered similar suggestions directing the bus down 75th Street from Northern Boulevard.

- 73rd Street is “a mess,” so most people like moving the bus to 75th Street; they do want to keep it on Northern Boulevard or 35th Avenue.
- The congestion on 73rd Street is terrible – moving the bus makes sense so it has direct access to the Arcade.
- The proposals should reinstate 37th Avenue bus stop.
- The bus should come down 75th Street from Northern Boulevard: people are otherwise okay with changing direction of 75th Street.
- Concerns about combining the Q47/Q49 bus routes
- The bus turning onto 37th Avenue is very tight – concerns about hitting cars.
- What about the school bus stop? How will staff at the school monitor the students if it is moved two blocks from the school? Several people raised this issue.
- Moving the bus route off 73rd Street should be “paramount. Hundreds of people would agree with this idea.”
- “Has the impact of not having the bus on 73rd Street been studied in terms of access to the businesses?”
- What about the people living on 75th Street? Have they been contacted?
- Some concerns that moving the bus may ruin property values from 31st to 35th Avenue.
- Empty buses leaving the terminal should be using Broadway when returning, but are instead using 74th Street, adding to the congestion there.
- Moving the bus route is a good idea.
- Moving the bus is a good idea, but there also needs to be more of them to accommodate demand.
- There are major issues concerning disability boarding that have not been considered and terminals that cannot accommodate large numbers of passengers.
- There needs to be extensive outreach to the communities if these changes are implemented.

Parking:

Reactions to changes in parking were mixed overall, with many people commenting more on how such treatments would be enforced rather than the proposed treatments themselves: enforcement was a common theme in almost all discussion groups.

Commercial Parking/Loading Zones:

- 73rd Street between 37th Avenue & 37th Road – Add loading/unloading zones on both sides of street at midblock
- 37th Road and 76th Street – is this an unenforced loading zone?
- 37th Road and 75th Street – “Trade Fair” More loading space
- “Are the merchants ok losing their parking spots on 72nd Street?”
- Congestion will still occur with “commercial zones”, why not consider side streets?
- How are loading/unloading zones going to be enforced?
- Can we make the delivery times earlier?
- Twenty-four hour commercial zones may not be necessary.
- Not having loading zones on transit streets is a great idea.
- Skepticism about the validity of merchant data for early-morning delivery zones.
- Can we regulate the size of the trucks using the commercial loading zone spaces? Large trucks take up too much room.
- There are not enough specifics with the proposed treatments to make a good decision about the loading zones.
- Concerns about people who use loading zones overnight needing to vacate those spots by 8am.

Park Smart Plan:

- More data about the Park Smart Program was requested, particularly as it applies to commercial parking implementation.
- Are you considering allowing double-parking? Was this allowed in Park Slope's program?

Enforcement:

- "Emergency vehicles often double park, and you can't really enforce that."
- Enforcement is needed, not change to the current parking plans.
- Too many people are parking at the fire hydrants – does your plan address this?
- Concerns regarding parking in crosswalks and lack of enforcement
- People currently don't know where they can and can't park – a low-tech solution might involve using yellow paint to designate illegal spots to help motorists.

82nd Street:

- Why is there no parking on 82nd Street after 37th Avenue?
- North of 37th Ave – Why not weekday parking?
- 82nd Street north of 35th Avenue – Why no parking on Saturday on west side of street?
- 82nd between 35th & 37th Avenue – Keep Stub parking, no meters
- Several people mentioned concerns about 82nd Street loading zones and how they could be accommodated without taking away parking overall.
- The parking restrictions on this street are too severe.

69th Street:

- Parking on 69th Street would cause more people to be around that area which creates more congestion.
- Most people agreed that long-term parking and closing the "island" is a good idea: it generates more room for traffic and prevents double-parking.

General Comments/Suggestions:

- No parking on 77th Street in the morning should be allowed.
- Remove parking on 74th Street in afternoon.
- 37th Avenue with 73rd and 74th Streets – Don't Block the Box
- 75th Street at 37th Avenue – "Trade Fair" Bus vs. Loading Zone, Truck Access from the north
- 75th Street between 37th Road & 37th Avenue (West side) – Add parking lot in empty space near midblock, remove on street parallel parking? Make only southbound one-way?
- 37th Road & 74th Street – Bus drop-off?
- Metered parking should be explored on 73rd Street.
- "Most of the AM parkers currently are outsiders who use the spots all day."
- Were sanitation trucks considered in terms of parking and access?
- The parking meters currently run until 10pm in some areas – this should be reduced.
- How about a 15-minute loading zone for passenger parking?
- Great ideas overall, but now we need to promote them.
- There is simply not enough parking, no matter how you look at it.
- Resident permits were advocated for by many participants.
- During snow storms, metered parking should be suspended.

The Individual Intersections/Streets

The following are comments about the individual intersections and streets that were not already addressed in the general comments above.

69th Street:

- The stop signs are a good idea, but what about a traffic light?
- Great idea to reduce width of street.
- 37th Ave and Broadway – Review timing plans for pedestrians, no U-turns on 37th Ave
- 69th Street/70th St/35th Avenue – Could we close small sections of road?

37th Street Public Space:

- Will there be a maintenance partner? Liability issues need to be taken into account mainly because the maintenance cost in Jackson Heights may prevent people from joining into this project.
- Security concerns regarding opening new “green public space”. This might create a haven for homeless people and crime. The community would have to dedicate a lot of time and money to securing/maintaining the space.
- Bike lock-up areas bring concerns of liability (who will be liable?).
- Vandalism concerns: how will it be prevented?
- Public space is a great idea in theory, but we need more details on how it will be maintained.
- Serious concern that vendors will take over the plaza, generating more garbage. Many people were adamant about not wanting shopping in a public place.
- “This is a fantastic idea!”
- Community space is an efficient use here if you can get the right partners to agree to monitor and enforce regulations.

82nd Street:

- Between 37th Street and Roosevelt Avenue – Add bike parking on both sides of the street.
- Bike parking at 82nd Street Subway station.
- Bus congestion is still a concern.

Intersection of Broadway and Roosevelt Avenue:

- Closing 73rd Street to anything but right-hand turns is a great idea.
- 37th Road between 74th and 75th Streets – Bike lanes might become defacto loading zones
- Remove parking on 75th Street: this could be an alternative to closing the island
- The overall plan of turn-restrictions was received very positively by most groups.
- These plans are good, now how soon can we implement them?

74th to 77th Streets:

- There were earlier studies of reversing 74th and 75th Streets – were these implemented in your plans?
- 75th Street north of 37th Avenue – Two-way travel?
- 75th Street & 37th Avenue – northbound turn problem
- 75th Street between 37th Avenue & 37th Road – Back up problem from queue into parking lot

Miscellaneous Comments:

The following are miscellaneous comments about general issues that were not already addressed in the comments above.

- Enforcement of many of the treatments was a topic that was raised over and over again, i.e., how will the city enforce new parking plans, or the maintenance of open spaces, or the “No Honking” laws. More than one person commented that the ideas look good on paper, but putting them in action may be problematic. A few people commented that the police need to be more involved with enforcement.

- The southern part of study is generally agreed upon; however, a traffic study to the north of 35th Avenue is needed. There were a number of people who commented on expanding the study area overall.
- Many people commented that more outreach needs to be conducted to those outside the project area impacted by these changes. Some specifically mentioned the relocation of the bus, and others made general comments about better contact with the community boards being required.
- Would like to see entrance to the subways on 37th Street fixed up because it is currently in poor condition
- The Victor Moore Arcade is also in poor shape; would like to see more commercial development which could help enhance it.
- More than one person wanted to see better plans for dealing with pigeon waste, especially at the bus terminals.
- Several people commented on the vendors throughout the study area, many stating that they should not be accommodated any further than they already are. The vendors were generally seen as a nuisance.
- The idea of a livery service was received positively overall, and Victor Moore Arcade was the most promoted location for this service, with some people also advocating for a location on Broadway at 73rd Street.
- There were suggestions to add wayfinding signs for the public to demonstrate where passenger parking is.
- “We need more trash cans in the area.”
- There were requests to add more buses to the Q47 line (there have also been emails requesting this service received after the presentation).
- Many people responded positively to the process overall – this study was conducted in a much better fashion than earlier studies, and this is appreciated. One participant commented that this was the third study he had seen conducted in the area since the 1980s and it was by far the most intelligent.
- Implementation dates were requested frequently – most residents would like to see the changes put into place as soon as possible.
- DOT is “thinking outside the box. This sounds great.”