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Comments on the Downtown Brooklyn Traffic Calming Study Final Report

Transportation Alternatives (T.A.) was involved in the development of the Downtown Brooklyn Traffic Calming from the on-set. During the course of the project T.A. wrote numerous letters and comments on its progress. Some of those comments are attached, as are some documents about traffic calming in New York City.

On the whole, T.A. was very disappointed with the course the traffic calming study took. In our view, the study failed to:

1. Produce recommendations which will reduce traffic in the study area;
2. Develop standards for traffic calming methods in NYC, including raised crosswalks and speed tables which already exist here.
3. Test many traffic calming techniques already used elsewhere in New York City — particularly raised crosswalks and raised intersections.
4. Test combinations of common traffic calming techniques: for instance a “gateway treatment” using sidewalk extensions and a raised crosswalk would work well on many Brooklyn streets.
5. Educate the public about the benefits of the array of traffic calming devices individually and used in various combinations.

This said, the consultant, Arup, did exhibit skill and professionalism and did develop many insightful recommendations, which we highlight in our comments below. **Unfortunately, the bulk of the consultants recommendations — and proposed capital expenditures — revolve around building “neckdowns,” or sidewalk extensions. This device is very effective at reducing the number of motor vehicles turning into pedestrians. However, neckdowns do not reduce through traffic and do little to reduce speeding.**

The limited nature of many of the recommendations is the fault of the NYC Department of Transportation, not the consultant. It is clear that the DOT traffic engineers disliked this project and acted to undermine the consultant and project. Significantly, DOT vetoed the use of the majority of traffic calming devices, the list of prohibited devices is itemized in the consultant’s report and includes: raised crosswalks, raised intersections, street closings, chicanes, speed humps, speed cushions and diagonal diverters.

Judging from the consultant’s report, the DOT also had the consultant spend a substantial amount of time and money attempting to maximize traffic flow on major arterial streets; this time spent tweaking traffic lights was time away from working on pedestrian safety and neighborhood quality of life.

DOT: No Net Reduction in Traffic Capacity

The DOT’s car-first philosophy is written all over the consultant’s report. In particular, its philosophy is apparent in the agency’s insistence that the goal of the project was to reduce the effects of traffic, not to reduce the volume of traffic. The political impetus and community goal for the project, on the other hand,

was to reduce the number of cars in the neighborhoods surrounding Downtown. This fundamental disagreement about the purpose of the project is at the root of its problems. While the community wanted a net reduction in traffic, the DOT sought only to shift traffic from small streets to big streets. Remarkably, a perfect opportunity to observe the effects of closing streets in the project area presented itself when Clinton Street, a busy, middle-size street, was torn up completely for replacing giant water and drainage pipes. Traffic counts showed that some traffic diverted to adjacent streets, but that, overall, traffic declined. This confirms, yet again, the findings of a huge 1998 British government study which surveyed 50 major road and bridge closings around the world, including in NYC, and found that, in 49 of the cases, overall traffic declined. Unfortunately, the DOT and the consultant did not seem to understand what they saw on Clinton Street. The groups believed that every car taken off a small residential street would appear on a major street; hence, the huge amount of work spent retiming traffic signals.

The Consultant's Report

Ultimately, with their options severely limited by the DOT, Arup recommended that the agency install numerous neckdowns (extensions of the sidewalk at corners) throughout Downtown neighborhoods. Neckdowns narrow the crossing distance for pedestrians and slow turning cars, thus helping to reduce the number of pedestrians struck by turning drivers. However, neckdowns do not reduce vehicle speeds or discourage vehicles from using small, neighborhood streets. If the DOT actually spends \$3.6 million to build traffic calming improvements in 2009, it should spend it on more than neckdowns. These neighborhoods need real relief from traffic, a need that has only grown since the City announced that Downtown Brooklyn would be rezoned to encourage massive new office buildings.

Page by Page Assessment

Report text is in courier, T.A. comments, in Times Roman.

INTRODUCTION

p. 4 "...both the Downtown Brooklyn community and New York City administration see this project as signaling a new direction for managing traffic in the city."

Not true. Public comments by our group and key stakeholders, including those to newspapers, clearly show that the Downtown Brooklyn community was dismayed by the outcome of this report and project. If anything, our groups saw the DOT at its worst, undercutting a solid consultant and an enthusiastic public seeking real solutions.

p. 5 The original project budget was \$6M, \$1.2M for the study and pilot project, \$4.8 for implementation. Bklyn BP Golden, Council Fisher & Assemblyperson Millman provided funding for the project and reserved a place for the community at the selection table.

Yet the judge and jury for the study and implementation reverted to DOT. It is as if the politicians got DOT to hire Arup, and then bet that Arup could win over DOT, a process that was doomed to fail. For if DOT said no, then to who would Arup petition? The funders of the project should also have a place at the study and implementation table.

TRAFFIC ANALYSIS

p. 11 "...the congestion at the 3rd Avenue/Atlantic Avenue intersection has been addressed through imposition of a left turn ban from 3rd

Avenue northbound into Atlantic Avenue westbound. This movement is important at this intersection (not least because both 3rd Avenue and Atlantic Avenue are truck routes) and so this turn ban exacerbates the problem of traffic intrusion into surrounding streets."

Good point.

p. 11 "Bond Street provides an important northbound connection into the commercial core that avoids the heaviest congestion in the area."

Yet the negative impacts of this are not studied. While parts of Bond St. are industrial and are well suited to higher traffic, other parts are purely residential. In fact Bond St. through Boerum Hill was the site of many of the protests which lead to this project.

p. 12

The A.M. Peak Travel Time to Manhattan map is interesting as a study piece, but begs the question: why are we concerned with travel times to Manhattan? It seems that driving times into Manhattan are at best tertiary to this study. In fact the negative impacts of through traffic are the underpinnings of the study.

p. 13 "The shortage of parking is an important issue throughout the study area."

This is simply not true. A number of studies have shown that the areas overall parking supply is adequate. On-street parking is in short supply because so many public employees have parking permits entitling them to free parking.

WHAT IS TRAFFIC CALMING?

p. 16 "The adaptability of networks is well known to traffic engineers. It is no coincidence that average travel times from Hamilton Avenue (in the south of the study area) to the Brooklyn Bridge approaches (in the north) during the morning commuter peak are approximately the same by all routes. ... Drivers learn how to travel through an area as quickly as possible and experienced drivers quickly exploit a perceived shortcut so that an area's traffic demand is typically in equilibrium. Any change to traffic conditions modifies this equilibrium point, but not the certainty that equilibrium will occur. Accordingly, implementation of an isolated traffic calming treatment will act to alter traffic patterns; traffic volumes may diminish in the vicinity of the treatment, but only at the expense of streets that provide alternative routes."

The closing of Clinton Street (due to water main construction) during the study period proved this not to be the case. Traffic did not increase on parallel streets as much as it decreased on Clinton; there was a net drop in traffic. Given the abundance of travel options in the area (subway, bus, express bus, bike, toll bridge, free bridge, ferry) it is not surprising. What is surprising is that (most) traffic engineers refuse to accept that traffic rises and falls with the availability of road space. NYC DOT traffic counts conducted during the mid 1990s to determine the displacement caused by the installation of speed humps found minor increases in traffic on adjacent streets and a net reduction in traffic.

p. 18

A neckdown is described as 7-8' wide. This is inconsistent with the NYCDOT standard neckdown which is 6' wide (8' parking lane minus 2').

p. 18

A bus bulb is described as 50-60' long. In fact the bulb only needs to be as long as to the rear door of the bus, about 30' (for a 40' long bus). This means that less parking will be removed for the bulb.

p. 18

A pedestrian refuge is described as 4' min. width. This should be 6' (the length of a bicycle or a person pushing a stroller).

p.19 "For **bicycle lanes**...the Federal Highway Administration permits a minimum width of five feet..."

The FHWA does not issue regulations for bike lane width. AASHTO does and recommends five foot minimum for lanes adjacent to parked cars.

p. 19

A speed hump/table is described as 12-22' long. This is inconsistent with the NYCDOT standard speed table which is 20-30' long.

p. 19

A raised crosswalk is described as 2-4" high. As shown in the pilot program 2" is too low. The international standard for raised crosswalks is 4-6" high — which is also the height recommended by the Institute for Transportation Engineers. (ITE)

p. 20

A median is described as 4' wide min. This is too narrow. This should be 6' (the length of a bicycle or a person pushing a stroller).

p. 22

Speed cushions are listed as not suitable for Downtown Brooklyn, yet no justification is offered. Speed cushions are used extensively in the Moabit neighborhood of Berlin, which is similar to this area. Speed cushions are also used to allow busses and trucks smoother passage, something that would be use on the many streets in the neighborhood with busses and high speeds.

p. 22

Surface Texture is described as encompassing an entire street, such as the cobblestone streets in Tribeca. Yet in the study surface texture appears constantly as textured crosswalks. There is a long history of textured crosswalks and intersections in NYC. They are maintenance headaches. More importantly though they should not be considered traffic calming devices, for they do not physically slow a vehicle. Textured crosswalks look pretty, and nothing else.

p. 22

Chicanes are listed as not suitable for Downtown Brooklyn, yet no justification is offered. The pilot pedestrian refuge on Atlantic Avenue at Bond Street was a chicane that failed. Is this the justification? Chicanes were in the draft study on Baltic Street, but did not make the final cut.

p. 22

Diagonal Diverters are listed as not suitable for Downtown Brooklyn, yet no justification is offered. There are certainly some intersections in the study area physically wide enough for diagonal diverters.

p. 22

Street Closures are listed as not suitable for Downtown Brooklyn, yet no justification is offered. There is already a history of street closures in Downtown Brooklyn, from Metro Tech to Atlantic Center to Pineapple Walk to the many streets closed as part of housing projects. Why is it so unacceptable to speak of more closings?

p. 22

Median Barriers are listed as not suitable for Downtown Brooklyn, yet no justification is offered. Median barriers are often used to reduce cut-through traffic. Presently there is a median barrier on Adams Street at Johnson Street. The proposals to restrict turns on Fourth Avenue would essentially be median barriers. Median barriers also improve safety and traffic flow on “travel streets” as they eliminate turns.

p. 22

To call “Educational Measures” traffic calming, especially methods such as “MUTCD-compliant Warning Signs”, “Road Safety Programs”, “Speed Watch Programs”, and “School Safety Programs” is ludicrous. These signage based programs are not traffic calming, have no demonstrated efficacy and are neither new, innovative nor remotely successful.

APPROACH

p.23 “throughout the study, many of those actively involved expressed the need to reduce traffic as an objective in its own right. However, this study has maintained a focus on reducing the *effects* of traffic on the environment of Downtown Brooklyn’s streets as its key objective.”

Einstein once said that 95% of the work was in defining the problem. Perhaps the community is right, and the study focused on the wrong problem. Reducing traffic volumes would indisputably reduce the negative effects of traffic on the community.

p.26 "It should be recognized that some streets do not fit perfectly into any of the three categories, and some streets fulfill different types of functions at different times of day (Smith Street, which functions like a community street at all times except the a.m. peak hour, is a good example)."

The use of street hierarchy is a useful planning tool and forces the community to decide on which street will the existing traffic will travel. (Given the studies assumption that there will be no reduction in traffic volumes).

However, there are three issues that undermine its usefulness:

- 1.) The three categories are fairly broad and do not account for subtle differences along a street – for example the varying widths and uses along 3rd Avenue or Columbia Street.
- 2.) The existing network is not 100% complete – all travel streets do not lead to other travel streets, such as Tillary Street west of Adams Street.
- 3.) The network system is fundamentally foreign to the grid system and transit system of Brooklyn – for example 4th Avenue is wide and carries a high volume of vehicles, but also has a multitude of subways running underneath. If the current rezoning is carried out and high-rise apartment buildings are built, there will be more and more conflicts between pedestrians and cars given that it is "travel" street.

p. 35 "However, when the limited scope of the proposed pilot program was discussed, Task Force members indicated they had expected something more substantial. NYCDOT consulted with the other funders of the study and agreed to expand the funding and scope of the pilot program."

Here, negative community reaction forced a change in the project. Could this happen again for the implementation phase?

PILOT PROGRAM

p. 37 "An illustration of the benefits of the pilot program was the changing position of Community Board 6. The Board initially rejected several pilot program treatments based on perceived safety and parking loss concerns, yet eighteen months later, after pilot program implementation, the Board was willing to approve a much more comprehensive set of measures for inclusion in the broad strategy."

This emphasizes the huge opportunity to educate the public which was lost because the DOT refused to try out standard raised crosswalks, speed tables, speed cushions, diagonal diverters, chicanes, street closings and the full range of traffic calming techniques in various combinations.

p.40 There were 10 categories of devices used in the pilot program:

1. All pedestrian phase
2. High-visibility on-street cycling lane
3. Leading Pedestrian Interval
4. Curb Extensions

5. Pedestrian island
6. Remove morning peak parking restrictions
7. Road closure (part of reconstruction of water main)
8. Slower signal progression
9. Speed table
10. Widen pedestrian island

Of these, only one is new and innovative to NYC: the high-visibility on-street cycling lane. The other nine are already on NYC streets:

- All Pedestrian Phases are in place at tens of T-intersections in NYC. A routine LOS analysis could have shown that the APP at Court and Remsen would be a success.
- Leading Pedestrian Intervals have been used routinely in the city since the mid-1970's.
- Curb extensions exist at many locations in the city and DOT wrote a curb extension (neckdown) policy in 1998.
- Removing morning peak parking restrictions is done routinely in the city.
- Roads are closed every year for major utility construction projects.
- Slowing signal progression is done routinely in the city, most notably on Queens Blvd. and the Grand Concourse.
- There has been a speed table / raised intersection at the intersection of Slocum Place and Stratford Road in Prospect Park South, Brooklyn, since 1997. (See attached document.)
- Widening the median (pedestrian island) on Tillary west of Adams Street is merely reclaiming unused road space.

p. 42 "The installation of traffic calming devices must follow a set of guidelines called the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) to determine the appropriate use of traffic devices."

This is not true. The MUTCD contains standards for the signing and marking of some traffic calming devices, but not all. Where it is silent there is no obligation. Regardless, traffic calming devices are not "traffic control" devices; a driver cannot receive a ticket for disobeying a speed hump.

p.44 Footnote #6 "Data on traffic volume throughout the northbound corridor between the BQE and Fourth Avenue was collected to monitor the extent to which traffic unable to use Clinton Street either changed to parallel routes, or stopped driving through Downtown Brooklyn altogether. These data are presented in *Appendix C*."

Why is this critical information not discussed within the report? The data seems to indicate that the net amount of traffic declined when Clinton Street was closed, and rose only moderately on adjoining streets.

p.47 "The all-pedestrian phase was designed to regularize pedestrian crossing at an extremely busy crosswalk with a chronic jaywalking problem."

To describe the intersection of Court and Remsen Streets as one with a chronic jaywalking problem misstates the fundamental problem. This intersection sees constant violation of the

crosswalk area and intersection proper by drivers caught by the light. It is a T-intersection with little cross traffic, but an overly long signal phase. Once the traffic clears, people walk.

p.49 "This is evident in video surveys that show rampant jaywalking against "Don't Walk" indications, causing dangerous conflicts with traffic on both Court Street and Remsen Street."

This assessment would be more believable if supported by crash data. According to Figure 5.2, the community did not identify this intersection as particularly problematic.

p.49 "For test purposes, DOT determined that two inches was appropriate."

p.51 "Finally, DOT should consider allowing a higher raised intersection... [to the] international standard of 4"..."

The fact that DOT forced the consultant to use a substandard 2" raised intersection at Hicks and Pierrepont Streets rather than standard 4" raised intersection recommended by the consultant and concern citizen groups (like ours) suggests DOT was not serious about traffic calming. It is extensively documented that a 2" high vertical deflection is useless. This was once again, at NYC tax payers expense, borne out by the before-after evaluations here.

In this section the consultant criticizes DOT's for undermining the test of various traffic calming techniques.

p.51 "After the neckdown was installed [at Atlantic Avenue and Hicks Street] in September 2001, DOT chose not to proceed with the raised crosswalk."

Why not? Again, this suggests that DOT does not want the traffic calming tests to work.

p.58 "In keeping with DOT policy, the taper was designed to comply with the 85th percentile observed speed on Atlantic Avenue, which in 2000 was 38 mph."

After the refuge island on Atlantic Avenue and Bond Street was installed the 85th percentile speed dropped to 33 mph. Accordingly the road should have been restriped. In any event, why is DOT designing streets to accommodate speeding and dangerous driving?

p.60 "Moreover, the loss of parking and the bus stop made the blocks adjacent to Atlantic Avenue and Bond Street less accessible, creating concern among the local merchants."

If this refuge island had been placed in the center like standard "traffic calming" refuge islands, and the striping calculated according to the predicted (and desired) speed, then there would be fewer parking spaces lost on the avenue. Similarly curb extensions with bollards could have made the sidewalks safer. The idea of a pedestrian refuge island is good for Atlantic Avenue, the execution of this pilot was not.

p.60 "However, a week after it was installed, the raised crosswalk was inadvertently paved over by an NYCDOT road maintenance crew resurfacing South Oxford Street."

The fact that the raised crosswalk was not rebuilt after this paving mistake suggests DOT was not interested in seeing this test work.

p.61 "Fulton Street presents a special challenge because it runs diagonally across the Fort Greene street grid, creating awkward intersections, many of which have more than four approaches. The existing curb lines leave a great deal of road space that could be reclaimed for pedestrians."

Very good point. Why aren't there any concrete recommendations to this effect in the report?

p.64 "DeKalb Avenue east of Clermont Avenue is still timed to allow 38 mph travel..."

How widely known is this fact? Should the public be distressed that the DOT is encouraging speeding here?

p.70 "For instance, NYCDOT required that all raised pavement treatments retain a two inch height differential between road pavement and sidewalk... With this in mind, NYCDOT should review its standard to allow raised pavement all the way to curb level, provided some combination of the aforementioned delineation measure are installed."

Well put.

THIRD AVENUE

p.77 "Community Board 6 preferred the painted buffer [on Third Avenue] to another option suggested for the segment south of Carroll Street involving a raised median, which would have slowed traffic but provided little benefit for pedestrians."

The board was misled. Medians benefit pedestrians by slowing traffic (thus reducing injury severity), keeping drivers on their side of the road (thus minimizing illegal passing, a typical occurrence on Third Av.), slowing turns at intersections, and providing a safe haven even if they do not extend into the crosswalks. Medians could easily be extended into the crosswalks given the width of this street, especially on the intersection legs where there is no turning traffic.

The other recommendations make sense.

FOURTH AVENUE

p. 80 "4th Avenue is a major north-south artery that forms the eastern boundary of the primary study area. It carries 17,800 vehicles per day (vpd) in the peak northbound direction. Due to its width it acts as a barrier for east-west movement, particularly by pedestrians. Accordingly, the strategy for this corridor is to improve conditions for pedestrians crossing 4th Avenue without compromising its traffic-carrying capacity."

The notion that Fourth Avenue should continue to pump 17,800 cars per day into the intersection at Flatbush (where Fourth terminates) has to be seriously questioned. The rule of thumb for capacity per lane of traffic is 10,000 vehicles per day. Accordingly, Fourth Avenue could handle this traffic in two lanes. Fourth Avenue has one of the higher fatality rates in the city, most likely due to high speeds, which these recommendations do not address. The rezoning of Fourth Avenue to high-rise residential means that the gas stations are going to be replaced by thousands of pedestrians. This will only exacerbate the issues already present. LPIs and curb extensions will be fine, but they don't address the root issues.

ADAMS STREET

p. 83 "In particular, residents of Concord Village...remained unconvinced by the draft ideas presented for [the Tillary Street/Adams Street intersection]. These ideas included retrieval of road space, simplification of the effort needed to cross Adams Street and improvement to its traffic operations."

It would be useful to have their objections explained, given the positive aspects of the proposal.

p. 83 "...a signalized pedestrian crossing north of the Tillary Street/Adams Street intersection [has] serious safety concerns related to the need to provide adequate stopping sight distance for southbound traffic exiting the Brooklyn Bridge between the curve at the end of the bridge and any new pedestrian crossing that might be constructed."

This analysis is questionable. There is adequate stopping sight distance (SSD) given that higher speeds are associated with lower volumes, shorter queues and hence more SSD. Similarly the congestion at the exit ramp of the bridge to the BQE affects speeds during high volume period, thus lowering SSD requirements. It would serve the public if this discussion were aired in public.

ATLANTIC AVENUE

The recommendations (curb extensions, LPIs, refuge islands, gateways) are all fine. Yet the notion that east-bound Atlantic Avenue must remain three lanes in the PM peak is contrary to the idea of a high-quality main street. Unfortunately the time to implement any changes would have been directly following the sewer reconstruction. Now that the sidewalks have been rebuilt it will be almost impossible to make changes within the next decade.

CADMAN PLAZA WEST

The recommendations are quite sensible with this exception - nothing addresses the serious street crossing issues along the east side of Cadman Plaza West and the Brooklyn Bridge exit ramp.

FLATBUSH AVENUE

p. 91 "[Flatbush Avenue's] lack of consistent and high quality urban

design elements and its high traffic volumes make for an overall suboptimal pedestrian experience."

And yet this section of Flatbush Avenue saw zero pedestrian fatalities in the three year period following the installation of curb extensions and other urban design treatments in 1991. Compared to Fourth Avenue, Atlantic Avenue and Adams Street (all of which routinely see pedestrian fatalities), Flatbush is a walker's delight. This is most like due to the congestion and low speeds on Flatbush. It is somewhat disappointing that the DBTCS did not better appreciate these positive aspects.

p. 93 "Some of the operational problems at [the Flatbush Avenue / Fulton Street] intersection result from poor crossing discipline by pedestrians, a problem exacerbated by the pedestrian crossing immediately to its south, which encourages pedestrians to use all road space between Fulton Street and the pedestrian crossing as an active crossing area. Extension of the pedestrian fencing at this location is suggested to encourage pedestrians to cross at appropriate locations."

Realistically the intersection includes Flatbush Avenue, Fulton Street, Nevins Street and the plaza at the southwest corner of Flatbush and Fulton. Seen this way one could design a singular signal system that clears vehicles from the intersection and allows pedestrians free passage. This would be much closer to the true intentions of traffic calming than an "extension of the pedestrian fencing." Pedestrian fencing is a symptom of failing to understand how people travel.

Most of the other recommendations seem quite reasonable, especially the changes proposed for the Tillary/Flatbush intersection and the mid-block crossings. It is troubling though that there is no median recommended for Flatbush between Lafayette and Fulton. It may be better to narrow lane widths and/or the sidewalks so that a 6-foot median can be introduced.

FURMAN STREET

p. 97 "Returning Furman Street to its original two-way operation is an important element of the Travel Street strategy for the area. A two-way Furman Street would improve the movement options around the area and, provided the streets are designed and managed appropriately, this improved accessibility could be achieved without significant adverse impact on the surrounding street environment."

Agreed. Even with the future Brooklyn Bridge Park this street should be two-way, for as a one-way street it has no natural pair.

HAMILTON AVENUE

The recommendations seem fine, although it is disappointing that no mention was made of the extremely poor condition of the pedestrian bridge at Henry Street. That more attention was paid to the exit ramp issue at Hicks Street is telling.

TILLARY STREET

These are good recommendations with the following exception:

Tillary Street west of the Adams Street does not need three eastbound travel lanes, for it only carries traffic from Clinton Street, which has only one lane.

p.101 "The width of Tillary Street west of Adams Street is much wider than is required for traffic - particularly westbound traffic - and New York City Transit bus staging, which occurs on the south side of this section of Tillary Street. Accordingly, the northern curb line can be moved as far as two lanes south without adversely affecting traffic operations. It is proposed that this space be turned over in part to an off street bike lane that links the bike lane on Clinton Street and the bike path to and across the Brooklyn Bridge in the median of Adams Street north of Tillary Street."

This is an ingenious solution. We hope DOT implements it.

p. 101-102 "Just west of its intersection with Flatbush Avenue, a number of students cross Tillary Street midblock while walking between the school on the Flatbush Avenue extension and the downtown area. This is an illegal activity that many in the community want to discourage."

There are a few items that make this statement troubling. First, a crosswalk in NYC is defined as the extension of a sidewalk across a street. At this supposed "midblock" location, Bridge Street forms a T-intersection with Tillary, so there is technically a crosswalk. Crossing a street between two intersections where only one is signalized is perfectly legal in NYC. To call these students' walking patterns illegal is simply not true.

Second, exactly which community wants to discourage students crossing the street here? Is this a racial or socio-economic issue?

Third, anyone who has ever tried to cross Tillary Street at Flatbush Avenue knows they are taking their life in their own hands. So to cross midblock seems not only sensible, but probably safer. It seems that a signalized midblock crossing would be more in keeping with the "community's" (those who are actually walking here) wishes.

COURT STREET

The bus bulb solution, and traffic analysis to get there is very smart.

The myopia shown by the community in rejection the curb extensions, even the testing thereof is extremely disappointing. It is telling that the curb extensions on Lafayette (in a different Community Board) were not rejected. Court Street is a classic "main street" like so many others in America, most of which have or are planning to add curb extensions. The net gain for Court Street are bus bulbs and textured crosswalks; hardly worth the effort.

DEKALB AVENUE

These recommendation (bus bulbs, bike lane, curb extensions on some cross streets, 25 mph signal progression, so far, are the best of the lot. In addition, there is no reason (except cost) why curb extensions at most intersections could not be added. The slower signal progressions could be also be used elsewhere, such as Court, Lafayette and Smith Streets.

FULTON STREET

The recommendations to reorganize the angled intersections are most useful.

JAY STREET

Listed are two recommendations: 1.) a median, and 2.) a bike lane and a daytime bus lane (hence no daytime parking). The latter was advanced by the consultant, DOT and the MTA, but vetoed by the community board. The median idea is not articulated, so it is impossible to critique. The study also does not address the issue of bike access to the Manhattan Bridge from Jay Street.

LAFAYETTE AVENUE

The recommendations to add gateway treatments, bus bulbs, LPIs and 25 mph signal progression are all worthwhile.

LIVINGSTON AVENUE

While the recommendations to add an LPI at the intersection with Smith Street and signalize the intersections with Elm Place and Hanover Place are good, there is a disconnect in the rationale. The study states the “main issue to address is that of high vehicle speeds prompted by its long, uninterrupted blocks.” Yet new signals in and of themselves will not address this issue. Considering that this street is the transit pair to Fulton Street, more effort could have been made.

MONTAGUE STREET

The recommendations (curb extensions and LPIs) will all be appreciated by the walking public. The textured crosswalks and intersections serve not real traffic calming purpose and create a maintenance headache.

MYRTLE AVENUE

The recommendations (curb extensions, bike lane, mid-block signals and removing the free turn lane at Carlton Avenue) all make sense. LPIs could also be added.

OLD FULTON STREET

The recommendations to rationalize the vehicular space on this street are worthwhile. The redesign of the intersection with Hicks Street, with only one westbound lane on the west side is quite nice. The one question is where the bike lane goes east of Front Street. There is a need to connect directly to both the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges, and to continue along the waterfront.

SCHERMERHORN STREET

The only recommendation is to add curb extensions, which are always appreciated. The idea to somehow use this as the Atlantic Avenue relief valve has merit, but may make less sense as this part of downtown becomes more developed.

SMITH STREET

The recommendation to add a bike lane, allow morning peak parking on one side and use the other parking lane for morning peak traffic is a good one, although the bike lane could be extended all the way to Hamilton Avenue. The recommendation is superior to the 3 lanes and no parking or striping currently in existence during the AM peak. The other recommendations (curb extensions, gateways) are all useful, with the exception of the textured crosswalks. There is no evidence that textured crossings reduce speeding or increase the respect of motorists for crossing pedestrians. Also, the textured crosswalks are costly and difficult to maintain. We recommend against using them. Leading Pedestrian Intervals are not mentioned, but could be easily included. There is also room to add more curb extensions, for example at the T-intersection with First Place. Likewise the crosswalks at the intersection with President Street should be placed more in accordance with pedestrian desire lines.

The consultants proposed redesign (one-way northbound) north of Atlantic Avenue is very, very smart. It should be implemented.

WILLOUGHBY STREET

p.128 "Willoughby Street necessarily acts as the final distributor of truck trips among the various loading areas in the CBD and many parts of MetroTech."

The recommended curb extensions will not solve the real problems of Willoughby Street, which acts as a pedestrian mall in much the same way as MetroTech to the north and Fulton Mall to the south. This is especially true towards Adams Street and around the N/M/R subway stations. To that end, the street could be treated as a driveway for trucks and vehicle parking. This would eliminate through traffic and cruising livery cars and could work in tandem with the security-related closings of the street in MetroTech. The "driveway" would be one way with parking on both sides and have wider sidewalks and curb extensions.

THIRD STREET

p.130 "A strong gateway treatment has been defined for the western side of the 3rd Street/Bond Street intersection to signal to westbound traffic that this section of the street has a primarily residential nature. Trucks would be directed to use 4th Street east to Hoyt Street, then Hoyt Street one block north to 3rd Street for access to the industrial areas."

This does not make any sense given the street directions. If a gateway is created at Third and Bond Streets, then Bond Street to the south and Fourth Street need to be two-way. The west bound bike lane is nice, but it should continue to Fourth Avenue. There should be a Class II bike lane eastbound on Third Street from Smith Street to Prospect

ASHLAND PLACE

This street seems misclassified. Coupled with Navy, Sands and Nassau Streets it presently serves as a relief valve for traffic on Flatbush and Fourth Avenues headed toward the Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridges. In that there is limited commercial or residential use fronting onto the street, it makes a good traffic conduit, even with the bike lanes recommended.

PACIFIC, DEAN AND BERGEN STREETS

p. 133 "In a situation such as this, where the street network provides an opportunity for drivers to use Living Streets as through routes, consideration may be given to very restrictive measures to prevent this traffic intrusion."

True indeed. Yet the measures proposed (one raised intersection per street and a high visibility bike lane) will do nothing to reduce through traffic. The six blocks on Pacific, Dean and Bergen Streets between Smith Street and Fourth Avenue each would need one or two speed humps, or raised crosswalk, each, plus raising the intersections with Hoyt, Bond and Nevins Streets.

BOERUM PLACE (south of Atlantic)

The recommendations (gateway, bike lane and no peak hour parking ban) all make sense. The gateway treatment should be more substantial, perhaps with a raised crosswalk. Neckdowns by themselves do not deter through traffic. For example, see West 93rd (95th?) street between Columbus Avenue and Central Park West, which has neckdowns, mid-block narrowings and brick crosswalks, yet carries a high volume of traffic.

CLINTON STREET

The recommendations (slower signal progression, bike lane, curb extensions and redesigned intersections at Hamilton and Tillary Avenues) will not deter through traffic. It seems that no lessons were drawn from the closing of Clinton Street during the water main construction project.

p.136 "Those who live and travel in the area value this connection, both when they are driving and because it encourages use of the street by taxis; surveys revealed a number of people that found it useful to know that northbound taxis could generally be found on Clinton Street."

Does this mean these recommendations are driven by where one can hail a cab.

p.136 "...the focus in managing Clinton Street is...to end the rewards further north for those commuting into the area by car."

Poetic.

HENRY STREET

Again, the recommendations (bike lane and curb extensions) are fine, but will not reduce through traffic. The travel route between the Brooklyn Bridge and Henry Street via Middagh Street would have to be rethought before that can happen. This does not seem to have occurred.

p. 139 "clear signage informing motorists that cyclists have equal rights to use the travel lane are recommended."

The correlation between these signs and reduced road rage has not been demonstrated. However, "Denver lane" style thermo-plastic markings on the roadway have been shown to reduce bicycle and motorist conflict. This would be a good place to try them.

HICKS STREET

The recommendations (raised intersection, curb extensions, LPIs, slower signal progression) will all help to calm traffic and improve pedestrian safety.

p. 141 "...the community indicated that the more restrictive option for managing the Hamilton Avenue/BQE/Hicks Street off-ramps was too intrusive..."

Thus, Hicks Street will remain plagued by heavy through traffic. Raised intersections, crosswalks or speed humps could be added south of Atlantic Avenue, especially at the intersection with Summit Street where there is a pedestrian bridge over the BQE trench.

JORALEMON STREET

Squaring off the intersection with Furman Street is a good idea.

UNION STREET

The recommendations to make the bike lane high-visibility and redesign the intersection with Third Avenue are good ones.

PRINCE AND GOLD STREETS

The recommended street reversals on Prince and Gold Streets will only serve to move cut through traffic from Prince to Gold Street in front of the police station. The benefits of this scheme are questionable.

ADELPHI STREET and CLERMONT AVENUE

p.146 "...it is recommended that neckdowns and controlled mid-block crossings adjacent to schools and residential buildings be introduced. These treatments will control through travel speeds..."

No they will not. Curb extensions (neckdowns) have little effect on vehicle speeds except for turns. A controlled midblock crossing means a signal, at least half of which time will be green. The proven way to reduce speeding is to install speed humps throughout, raised crosswalks at the schools and raised intersections where appropriate.

CARLTON AVENUE

The midblock crossings aligned with the footpaths in the housing development is a very good idea. If the crossings were raised it would calm traffic and add to pedestrian safety even more.

BALTIC and WYCKOFF STREETS

The diagonal parking and midblock crossings will reduce vehicle speeds, but would be enhanced by a raised crosswalk.

OTHER AREAS

p. 149 "The consultants and NYCDOT staff spent considerable effort seeking a low-cost traffic management solution to this congestion [at Flatbush / Fourth / Atlantic Avenues]."

It is troubling that so much unsuccessful time and effort was spent here. While it is true this intersection is an important one, the solution is probably beyond the scope of a "traffic calming" project. One wonders if DOT used this contract to obtain traditional traffic engineering services instead.

p. 158

The study has a inventive phasing plan which would be useful in establishing early success and raising later money. For example the cost for Phase I is \$1.9M - \$3.2M, less than the \$4.8M supposedly already dedicated to the project.

p. 161 "Since making Court Street two-way would reduce southbound capacity in the study area, it would lead to further intrusion into Living Streets like Henry, Nevins and Hoyt Streets."

The origin-destination patterns on Hoyt and Nevins Streets are dissimilar to that of Court Street. Hoyt essentially ends at 3rd Street and Nevins ends at Carroll St. Hoyt is also very narrow south of DeGraw thus making it unappealing to through traffic.

The curt dismissal of a two-way Court St. is surprising giving how often this solution is used in other parts of the U.S. Perhaps this is a reflection of the DOT's insistence on maintaining traffic flows.

IMPLEMENTATION

p. 162 "This project has helped to break down some of the barriers of distrust that were erected many years ago and that have provided the framework for conflict ever since. It would be easy but counterproductive for stakeholders to raise these barriers again."

Sadly, the DOT's refusal to consider most traffic calming measures and obstinate refusal to seek to reduce traffic in Downtown Brooklyn neighborhoods severely undermined the Downtown Brooklyn Traffic Calming Project. Despite some gifted thinking by the project consultant, there is only so much that neckdowns by themselves can accomplish.

p. 163 "The best means of maintaining drive in implementing this traffic calming program must be determined by the community and NYCDOT. A small joint committee with a representative from each of NYCDOT, the office of the Brooklyn Borough President, and Community Boards 2, 6, and 8 could adopt responsibility for ensuring that implementation proceeds."

Unfortunately, this recommendation completely ignores the key role that local civic and neighborhood groups and their elected officials played in getting this traffic calming project started. It was these groups, whose members are not appointed by elected officials, not the community boards which conceived of and successfully fought for the project. This fact is reflected by the historic appointment of representatives of these groups to the consultant selection committee, and as core stakeholders in the project. Also missing is the City Councilmembers and other elected officials (including State Assemblymember Joan Millman) who funded the project. All of these elected officials and civic groups should be fully represented in any body gathered to implement these recommendations.