



## ***Land Use-Urban Redevelopment Committee – Board of Representatives***

Virgil de la Cruz, Co-Chair

Bradley Michelson, Co-Chair

# **Committee Report**

**Date:** Wednesday, April 29 , 2020  
**Time:** 7:00 p.m.  
**Place:** **Held Remotely**

The Land Use-Urban Redevelopment Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Co-Chairs Michelson and de la Cruz; and Committee Member Reps. Cottrell, Florio, Graziosi, Lee, Lion and Sherwood. Rep. Summerville was excused. Also present were Reps. Adams, Coleman, Di Costanzo, Giordano, McMullen, Morson and Zelinsky; Kathryn Emmett and Cynthia Anger, Law Department; Jim Travers and Garrett Bolella, and Luke Bittenwieser, Traffic, Transportation and Parking; Thomas Madden, Economic Development; and Mark Vertucci, Fuss & O'Neill.

Co-Chair Michelson called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Committee Action</b>
<b><i>Possibly in Executive Session:</i></b>		
1. <a href="#">LU30.040</a>	RESOLUTION <u>and approval of public hearing</u> ; To Authorize the Acquisition by Negotiated Agreement or Eminent Domain Of Property Located at 4 Pulaski Street, 21 Pulaski Street, 256 Washington Blvd., and 274 Washington Blvd.in Connection with the Washington Blvd. and Pulaski Street Widening Project ( <a href="#">See LU30.032</a> ). 04/08/20 – Submitted by Mayor Martin 04/07/20 – Held by Board of Finance 04/08/20 – Approved by <a href="#">Planning Board</a>	<b>Approved by Committee 6-1-1</b>

Mr. Travers explained that in prior meetings people expressed concerns that the State was not planning to close South State Street. The State has given the City an extension of 30 days for the closure of South State Street, from April 2021 until May 2021, but will not give a further extension without a specific plan from the City. He will provide the email from the State confirming this.

Mr. Travers also noted that there had been concerns expressed about the traffic issues projected by his department as a result of the closure of South State Street. The City therefore hired Fuss & O'Neill to run a simulation of the traffic situation created by such closure without the Washington Boulevard and Pulaski Street widening. This traffic simulation will be provided to the Board if it can be made a shareable file. The assumptions for traffic movement with the closure of South State Street included: the vehicles approaching Washington Boulevard on S. State Street which continuing straight or turning right onto Washington Boulevard would be exiting the highway and turning right onto Greenwich and turning left onto Pulaski and turning left onto Washington. In the pm rush hour this resulted in gridlock with traffic backup up to the highway. This traffic backup would also make the construction of the roundabout difficult.

Mr. Vertucci of Fuss & O'Neill explained that the traffic simulation looked at the impact of the closure of South State Street. There will be a substantial increase in traffic from the northbound 95 off ramp there will be a substantial increase in traffic – an additional 400 vehicles making right turn south onto Greenwich and then the left onto Pulaski and left onto Washington. The model showed Greenwich Ave southbound and Pulaski eastbound will become bumper-to-bumper; this will also result in traffic on Greenwich Ave into Waterside. It will also block the right turn lane from Pulaski onto southbound. The widening of Pulaski or extension of the left turn lane would help improve this situation.

In response to questions from Committee members Mr. Travers and Mr. Vertucci noted the following:

- The assumptions are based on where the cars are going
- 700 vehicles would have to go left to Richmond Hill
- The 1000-1100 cars would have to go in different directions – most will go in the direction they are aiming
- Traffic will not be forced to go in any direction, the options to go left or right will be available – neither option can handle 1000-1100 per hour
- There will be a detour route to the north, but people may self-direct; people who don't know the area as well will rely on GPS
- The bridge rehabilitation will begin in May 2021

Ms. Anger stated that the City has continued to engage with property owners and reach a negotiated agreement. As noted in the [attached memo](#), with respect to 21 Pulaski Street, they have had communications on 22 separate days and the owner is not moving off of his number. The City received 2<sup>nd</sup> appraisals on all of the properties and have made an offer to the representative for 274 Washington Boulevard. They are still talking to that individual. At the moment they are not interested.

Mr. Madden noted that the City has been speaking to the employers downtown, many of whom are looking to expand but are waiting because of the traffic congestion issues. This traffic also impedes the ability of residents to reach businesses in this area. The City has also had inquiries from companies thinking about leaving NYC in light of the current virus.

Committee members continued to discuss this with invited guests as follows:

- Rep. de la Cruz noted that he has had similar concerns expressed by his constituents; they are losing expansion and employment opportunities in the district. The Bel Point and Stamford Landing projects were approved with the understanding that the traffic would be addressed
- Constituents will be on the hook for these funds if the City does not proceed with this
- The City can't make rush hour disappear, but can try to reduce problems and make it safer for residents
- Reducing traffic also improves air quality

Ms. Rosenson described the process that has been used for public hearings while meetings are being conducted remotely. The Board has successfully used Google Forms for the Budget hearing – 46 people submitted comments through the online form. For the Parks & Recreation Committee hearing, the link to the form as well as how to contact the Board office was included in the printed public hearing notice as well as on the website and on the agenda. People also have the ability to call or email or mail items to the Board office. People who call in and have difficulties would have the same IT support that the Board members have.

Committee members continued to discuss this with invited guests as follows:

- This is a long term solution; the current traffic reduction due to the virus will not be a long term situation
- Most of the companies downtown are not able to stagger the hours of their workforces
- Should notice of the public hearing be mailed to all residents in the area?
- Representatives in the districts can let their constituents know about the public hearing.

A motion to approve the resolution for public hearing was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 6-1-1 (Reps. Michelson, de la Cruz, Florio, Graziosi, Lee and Lion in favor; Rep. Sherwood opposed; Rep. Cottrell abstaining).

Co-Chair Michelson adjourned the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bradley Michelson, Co-Chair

This meeting is on [video](#).