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### **OANA Special Meeting with the MTA January 30 2019 [transcription]**

Richard Khuzami: Thank you for joining us in our special meeting of the Old Astoria Neighborhood Association. This meeting will be featuring a presentation by the MTA concerning the renovations that are taking place on the N/W line at the Astoria Boulevard stop. This is something that's going to affect everyone in the neighborhood in many many ways. So this should be a very interesting presentation. Before we get started I'd like to thank the Family Church which has this beautiful facility and for inviting us to come down. I'd like to thank Lucas the pastor of this church.

And also we have Victor and Eric back in the video booth helping us out. So we appreciate it. We'd also like to thank the 114th Precinct for coming down: as always they are great supporters of us and we really appreciate it. And I want to mention a few people (if I miss somebody don't get mad at me), but I'd like to thank Monty from City Planning. Okay, we have Jorge Rivera, an upstanding community member, Kevin Hernandez, vice president of the Old Astoria Neighborhood Association. He's back there. Okay. Also, Joe Vaccaro and mayor of Newtown Avenue between 31st and 32nd Street. Okay, and okay, so there's one thing I wanted to mention.

We've been in existence for five years and our mission statement--our mandate is to try and not only to promote cultural economic growth in the area down here. We're trying to with the help of the city, do everything we can do affect the quality of life in a positive way here and part of that is also economic development and towards that end and we've been helped by a grant from our councilman Costa Constantinides. We are developing on our website a searchable business directory for the area. So we've just got it up and if you can slide that down, okay, you're going to see that. There's the OANA business directory if you click on that.

Okay, if you slide down, okay, so there's some examples of different companies that have listed so far also on this site, if you go to our home page and you do click on that, you're going to have an actual form to fill out with all the information that you'd like to have about your company. We're looking for companies not only that exist here but also companies that do business here. They don't have to be based here. But we want to create something that everybody can use. We're not only looking for retail, but also business to business. So if you're a developer and you're looking for brick or you're looking for



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some materials like that, we'd like to see if you can buy local. That's one of the things that we really want to try and do is, you know, almost create a self-sufficient neighborhood, you know, everybody supporting everybody else.

So if you have further questions about it, you know, you have our email on the website. If you look on your agendas, you'll see that the email and the contact information is all on there. Please let your friends and neighbors know and also that it is free to sign up. We would appreciate a donation if you can do it. And also if you do sign up with a \$50 donation, we do have T-shirts. So you just let us know what size you are we can get you that t-shirt. Any questions about this?

Okay, thanks. So, I think it's been a very interesting couple of days. It's been an issue locally about the renovations of all these stations on the N line. As you know, there have been issues as to accessibility. We work closely with a group called UpStand who's been advocating for accessibility and it recent events have actually made that more and more important more of an emphasis like the recent accident that happened on 53rd Street and we know was all on our minds but you know when we have situations like what's happening here on Astoria Boulevard when it's fully explained. This is the remedy: we're so glad that we're having this facility built with the proper ADA accessibility. So I think there will be a lot of inconvenience but I think that our thoughts are in the long run that is going to be worth it. So without further ado, I'd like to turn it over to the MTA.

So I'll just say a few words before I turn it over. My name is Howie Levine. I'm in government and community relations for the MTA and responsible for the Astoria line and everything else in Community Board 1. So we're here tonight just to talk about our plan for Astoria Boulevard. And so I'm just going to turn it over to our project manager Vic Wha who's here along with Benny who is our construction manager for the project? We're going to talk about Astoria Boulevard. And then also some track work. We have coming to the Astoria line as part of a broader kind of reconstruction and renewal of the entire line in Astoria, and I know that a lot some parts that have been completed and some parts are yet to come, so I'm going to turn it over to Vic. We're going to go through the presentation. Thanks.

Thanks Howie.



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I think Rich made a great introduction and some positive things about the project and we can go through some of the slides.

So the major scope of work is to replace street and platform stairs. We have four stairs from street to platform. From street to mezzanine and from mezzanine to the platform, a total of eight stairs are going to be replaced. We will install for elevators to from Street to mezzanine and to from mezzanine to platform. So with that station will be ADA Compliant.

We'll have to demolish the entire mezzanine area and rebuild it. As you all know, there's a vertical clearance issue under that area when vehicles come off of Hoyt Avenue South and you must have seen there are several hits to the structure. This project will alleviate that situation by rebuilding a shallower mezzanine structure and also lowering the street by a few inches. So we'll end up with bigger vertical clearance for the vehicles.

We're also going to reinforce the street columns that support the mezzanine area because we're adding a significant load of two elevators in that area and the foundations of those columns will be strengthened. We will replace the entire platform roofs as well as the both walkway roofs Eastern West walkway.

Next please. So looking little more into details. Yes. So, if we look at the Columbus triangle area, as you can see the arrow points to where the new street elevator is going to be the green shaded area will be the reconstruction of the sidewalk area in that portion of the Columbus triangle.

Next, so looking at the overall view you can see, the Columbus triangle-this is where the new elevator will go and the new stairs.



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Now if we look diagonally across by HByt playground where the stairs used to be is where now the new elevator is going to be constructed. This is the fence of the Hoyt playground and so because of that we'll have new stairs going on the sidewalk along Hoyt Avenue North and that will connect to the West walkway.

Here again that shows that layout the stairs are not going to be along here and the new elevator. So in this view also, you can see where the stairs come down. That's where the elevator will be and the stairs will be along here.

Next these are the typical stairs that go from mezzanine to the platform level when we demolish the mezzanine floor. These stairs will also be demolished and reconstructed next.

As we all know the walkway surfaces are in the--let's put it this way that they need repairs. So those repairs will be careful. They have been carefully planned and they will be staged and will be done.

The supporting steel a lot of it you don't even see but it needs some work and that's going to be done by putting shields underneath temporary shielding for access and under the platform as well as the walkway girder-related repairs will be done.

Now there are certain sections of the walkways that we're going to replace the girders that support those walkways, especially on Hoyt Avenue North this span and this span of the walkway both East and West we're going to replace these main girders and connect to the existing structure to basically rehabilitate that entire structure the billboards have to come down. So we have to coordinate that work during construction and then put them back at an appropriate time.

There's going to be some artwork as part of enhancing the whole station experience. So on the west elevation, you can see this particular span on high dive New South and this particular span on wide Avenue again, both areas will receive at the walkway right now where you see open areas between the



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columns as you walk through that's where the art glass will be installed that design is being worked on in terms of what sort of art that will go in and on the other face again right over the Grand Central Parkway spans right here. There will be art glass installation.

Okay. Now the scope of work at the platform level there will be a de-boarding zone that will be created. The platform plan planks are precast plank, so they will be raised so that wheelchairs can easily get into the cars. New platform edges will be constructed damaged platform Precast panels and the supporting members. They will all be rehabbed [and we will] repair the damage Steel.

The existing platform canopies that were damaged during Hurricane Sandy. They will be completely replaced. In fact, some of the work has been done already: some asbestos remediation in the roof had to be done. We took care of it already and once the station shutdown period begins these roofs will be replaced.

Then there are other enhancements such as replace existing stair enclosures with new glass enclosures. Again, there will be some art element associated with that replace platform light post signs, gates, railings, benches, sandboxes and refuse bins.

So that would be the amount of work at the platform level what we don't see again. I guess you see it from one platform. When you look at the other platform some of the deterioration that has occurred underneath those platforms slabs. So we'll have to repair those conditions [and] also in some cases replace some of the elements next. So in cross-section, we look at the overall station. You can see the street level. This is the mezzanine. So the columns that support as I mentioned will be strengthened with their foundation. This is the new mezzanine that would be shallower and the street will be level giving you adequate vertical clearance in that area.

The new canopies at the platform level the new elevators that would go from mezzanine up to the platform.



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So the phase one part of the project has begun since Fall of 2018 and will continue through March before the next phase begins in that portion. We are protecting trees in the Columbus triangle area, plus near Hoyt playground. We removed the bus shelters and relocated them as you know in one in front of the Starbucks and the other one stays on Hoyt Avenue North but it's further towards the bridge relocated that was to create room to work and take out these two diagonally opposite stairs. So those stairs are already been removed as you know,

Next thing is we have to do some foundation work so we can install elevators from Street to mezzanine. We can install new stairs. We also have to install some piles for these column lines to strengthen those foundations. So that work will begin shortly.

Back up for a minute.

And there is a street work where we're adding new drainage catch basins and pipes to facilitate that drainage work. There is a next element in the later phase where we're going to do street resurfacing that would come towards the end after the station is fixed and final thing would be to do that and do some new bus pad new lighting new signage at the street level.

Okay next.

So in March when the station shutdown begins for [a] 9 month period the trains will bypass through and to facilitate the movement.

We will have traffic agents at the intersections [of Hoyt] in north and 31st right on it south and 31st and Astoria Boulevard and 31st. And here the timings given for the contractors' work hours Monday through Friday during the daytime and Saturday Sunday 7:00 a.m. to 8 p.m. There are weekends where the contractor will have to work throughout the weekend from Friday night to Monday morning during that time. There are about estimated to be 20 instances where entire intersection will be closed and they will



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be traffic detours provided during that time. And as I mentioned we have to tear down the entire mezzanine floor, you cannot do that by partially closing certain Lanes, you have to close the entire and they have to rebuild all the steel framing and other things.

So those are the instances where we have to close the intersections, but the principal during the rest of the period is going to be travel lanes minimum one in each Direction during work hours on 31st Street that's during daytime and two lanes in each direction during non-working [00 hours when I say non-working contractors not working wide Avenue North for travel lanes and one bus lane at all times and [at] Hoyt Avenue South five travel Lanes at all times. So that's the basic fundamental principle on which all the traffic schemes are going to be based at different times. And if you'll see different lanes closed for a reason to gain access and to facilitate construction.

Next. So that would be the intersection closure that I talked about. We also have to not only rebuild the mezzanine but install new elevators through the mezzanine.

And I already talked about signage and traffic enforcement next.

So Jen, there's a plan of general circulation of traffic as we get closer. We'll get into those details, but just fundamentally from between 31st Street and 21st Street is how that circulation will happen so that when the intersection is closed we can get the traffic around it next.

So if you look at the three stations and the current status [of] 39th Avenue/Dutch Kills and Broadway, it reopened in January of this year. The work will be finished by June [at] Ditmars. Major work is already complete [or] by end of March will be complete and the rest of the plan will be finished by June and for Astoria Boulevard [we] will be closing the station in March of this year and it will reopen in December in nine months. The elevators new elevators will be operational by August of 2020 and the entire project will be finished by November of 2020.



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Next: so the train service during closure nine months of full closure during closure Ditmars and 30 30th Avenue will provide alternate subway service during 13 weekends where we will have all track closures at the station. The service will not run through North of Queensboro Plaza during that time shuttle buses will be provided for those weekends and all track closures right now. If we go up to June are listed here starting from March 16th. So those weekend's is when service will be disrupted.

I will let Howie talk about the track work.

Howie: Thanks Vic. So in addition to the Astoria Boulevard work that Vic's talked about we wanted to highlight some other work. We're going to be having on the Astoria line at the same partially on the same time. So in general track work is replacing the elevated track panels that kind of make up a track on an elevated line like the storyline. And so what that means is that as you can see kind of a bit in the picture that the track and elevated lines is actually all attached to one piece. It's about a 39-foot piece of track that you literally take out and then put a new one in almost like it's a Lego piece. It's a pretty unique thing and it's interesting to watch but so as part of kind of the whole renewal of the Astoria line, we're doing the station work. We're also doing the track work which will increase the reliability of the service on the line as we replace the track. There's some signal equipment on the track as well. And so that can make the line more reliable when it's brand-new.

And so that means fewer delays for customers. And so since 2007 we've already done some replacement of the track work as you guys are probably aware. We did [it] in two sections. We did the curve between Queensboro Plaza and 39th Ave/Dutch Kills. We also did some track work between Ditmars and Astoria Boulevard. In addition. We also did Trent ends track switches which helped the train switch between tracks which is especially important at Ditmars Boulevard when the train switch between tracks is they come in and out of the Terminus additionally the new track helps us to maintain those ADA Compliant platform Gap. So when we have new track we can make sure we have the ADA Compliant platform and we put the track and we kind of a line that so that when in a particular portion of the track is generally right in the middle where the conductor is the gap between the train and the platform is very narrow and ADA-compliant.





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So it's as safe as possible for people in wheelchairs [or with] walkers, canes, etc. Next please: so as part of the next phase of trackwork replacing the Northbound track on the local. So on the outside on the east side of the street, we're going to replace nearly 5,000 feet of track between 36th Ave and 30th Ave: this section of track is over 35 years old, which if it doesn't sound old already. I know we think about how you know, we think about how often we have to do this. It's you know, we pave our streets much more often than every 35 years because they have large vehicles going over them and it's the same for these track panels that need to be replaced. And so when we do this work when we have those shutdowns for Astoria Boulevard worth it Vic mentioned will also be doing this track work to minimize kind of the inconvenience of this work as a project by itself. So whenever we do other work on the line whenever

So there are a number of weeks--and I'll be on the next slide--where you know, there's just so much work. We can't have it all overlap with additional station work and additional station closure. What will happen is the trains running Northbound will run express from Queensboro Plaza first to Astoria Boulevard, and then after Astoria Boulevard closes, they'll run all the way express to Ditmars Boulevard, and so riders will need to come back from Ditmars to access Broadway, 39<sup>th</sup> [Avenue], 30th [Avenue], and 36 [Avenue].

So here's the hours of that work. So in addition, the last [slide], I was going to say is that that work we strive to do it at the least inconvenience time as possible. So we do in the midday between the morning and evening rush hours. So it won't be until 9:45 and it will end at 3:30 before the evening rush starts [and] that will just be Monday through Friday. So Monday through Friday except President's Day and then two weekends we have scheduled right now, which are March 9th to 10th and March 30th to April 1st.

So as I outlined the service plan additionally one thing that I didn't mention is that the W will run on the Q [line] when this happens--and yeah, the other one more thing is that that that panel work is very weather dependent because we're lifting 39-foot panels of track we can't do it when the winds are too high. We can't do it with any form of precipitation. So while we have it scheduled for every day every week day if it's raining [or] if there's high winds it won't be happening. So make sure to check our website check the app. You can see if it's going to be operating on a given day or not.



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So next so just--and I can bring this back up but these are just some pictures of the work performed at Astoria Boulevard. Most of which you just went over. So as Vic mentioned, removing the asbestos from the roofs--this took place in the fall when the train line was otherwise closed for other work on the 39th [stop] and on Broadway and there were no customers in the stations and everything was contained and signs were also up about that.

Next as mentioned [we] relocated the bus stops and detoured some of the walkways around the work.

Next. Removed one staircase at Hoyt playground as you can see, it's just not there.

The other bus stop relocated.

And the other currently removed stair as you're well aware. And then lastly the last thing I wanted to end with is that as part of all of this work on the Astoria line that has happened already and is going to continue happening. We've created a new web page that's dedicated to this work and it's actually it's on the bottom of your agendas tonight as well. Thank you, Richard. And so at this website this goes through all the work and about the same level of detail as we went through it. So people who aren't here tonight can see that can understand a little bit better. We've also produced about a two and a half minute video just giving people a little bit of a summary about the work and why it's to be done. I encourage you all to go watch it after the meeting we've gone into a lot more detail on the work than that video does but it you know gives a sense of the work for people who aren't here tonight. And so that's a place where you can go in addition to our normal channels on our website on our My MTA app and check for service updates as well. Yeah. So with that Rich, I think the idea is we'll take questions.

Thanks for being such a polite audience. And yeah, so we'll open it for questions.

[Attendee]: I have a couple questions quickly: one thing. I'd like to know these switches that you're putting in, are they the new digital signals that are going in or is this replacing the mechanical ones?



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No, no, it's not. It's not anything. It's not to be TC. It's nothing of that nature. Unfortunately. Yeah, it's nothing like that. It's just when we when we replace the track, there's signal equipment on the track that says when a train goes by and I don't like that. Yeah. Okay.

Could you tell us if there's anything in the works along those lines because I know that greatly-that's you get a lot more use out of each foot of track.

I don't know if you have the new Earth signals. I'll get back to you on that Richard. I can check but I don't believe so. Okay. Okay. If you have questions, please we are taking minutes. So if you could give us your name, okay before you ask the question.

Hi, I'm -- Greenberg. I was just curious as to when you're going to post signs on the station's to let people know how it's going to be publicized since it's coming up real fast. Yeah, absolutely. So we strive to post signs for any closure like this at least 30 days in advance and that's still our plan here. I mean, we're of course here, you know far more than 30 days in advance to publicize this and get the word out and putting the website up and pushing the video out. So people know it's coming but in terms of specific signs at the at the station will be more at least 30 days ahead of time.

Lisa: again because February 4th is in like a minute [away].

Our signs are a posted for the work hours. They're going to be doing the 9:45 to 3:30, etc. For the track work. I'd have to double-check, but I just encourage you to because that that is still technically like when a lot of people are going to work because that's when I go to work and I see a lot of people at the station still so just some signs would be good. Appreciate it or definitely conscious that we're not, you know, we're not avoiding everyone's commute with that timeline, but we try and do our best. Thank you.



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Neil Herdan: local resident. I just want to get some clarification--you're not doing any major work on the Ditmars Boulevard station. No escalators. No major work, is that correct? What we're talking about Astoria Boulevard. But what about the final stop Ditmars Boulevard station? Is there any work planned on significant work plan on Ditmars?

Actually, there's a lot of major work [that has] been done on Ditmars Boulevard. We replace the quite a bit of Steel. We've also replaced the canopy new mezzanine relocation of the booth. So it's quite a bit of major work that still no elevator and no escalate at that station.

Yeah, we yeah, we'd like to replace we'd like to add elevators to every station. Unfortunately. We have some serious funding constraints is everyone I think is unfortunately aware of so, you know, and that's been true at all the stations. We've worked on the line that we'd like to replace at elevators to every station if we could we're hoping to add elevators [at] 250 new stations within the next five years as part of our Fast Forward plan that that we were in Albany today earlier this morning to try and get funding for and

And we'll continue to do that.

Hi, I'm Charles Eccleston. I'm wonder if it's possible to get the bus to stop at Hoyt Avenue North right now. It means a walk either up or down 15 minutes to access Queensboro Plaza. And right now I find it very upsetting that announcements are made at the Astoria station that the Q102 operates and they [announce it] as an alternative when the Q102 does not stop at Astoria Boulevard. Thank you.

Howie: We can definitely look into that.

Yes, hi. My name is Irene ---. I'm really concerned about the issue with the elevators, especially in light of what happened yesterday. I really want to know how does the MTA decide which station gets an elevator and does the public have any input into that?



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Yeah, so what I can say about that is actually next it's February 6, so I believe that's next Wednesday. We're actually having a public meeting at to Broadway MTA headquarters that's open to the public for the public specifically to come and give us their suggestions for where they'd like to see elevators in the system. So that's the six o'clock at to Broadway, but that specifically the purpose of the meeting and I know a flyer went out yesterday. And so that's you know, we are searching seeking out more public input to how we decide which stations get elevators.

Hi, good evening. My name is Marcia Henry, local resident, and I have a few questions sure. Mostly related to the M60 because my family relies heavily on the M60. I have both kids who attend school in the city right now. There's like a half an hour period between 6:45 and 7:15 where the buses are quite delayed and so I'm really concerned when the subway actually shuts down whether there's going to be any additional M60 service going in because I anticipate they're probably a lot of people who default to take in the M60. It's already quite crowded in the mornings. I also have a current question about safety and the M60. I know that you relocated the bus stop from the Columbus area to Starbucks and there is a gas station close to the box, which we use we have to walk by and it's not really a sidewalk there because what tends to happen is that the car is going to the gas station drive on the sidewalk park on the sidewalk and when I come off with my two kids, it's a little bit challenging to make sure I'm ensuring their safety when we have to walk along that route. And I know maybe we could try to cross a street during the heavy traffic but I think if there's something that could be done to kind of make it a little bit more safe and actually make it a designated sidewalk area for the gas station instead of having cars and people kind of struggling for that space?

Sure--in terms of the sidewalk that would be an issue for the city's Department of Transportation. I'm happy to forward your concerns to them but it's not something we have any jurisdiction over. Actually even bus shelters are the city's Department of Transportation. We asked for them to put them places and they do but it's not us it's them in terms of ridership on the

I'm trying to picture the 16s route and how riders would take that instead of going north east west 60 route instead of going north south on the NW line and why that would go well because a lot of people get off when they take the NW--get off at the 6 train you can take the 62 the 6 train we do the m62 the



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M15 that is I got another alternative some time to take the M60 because my son goes to school close to Columbus.

So that's something I will I can take back I think as this shutdown happens, we will continue to monitor crowds on the M60 and if we see that it is too crowded we would try and add more buses and make sure that there's enough bus service for the people that are trying to use it.

Good evening. My name is Alan, you guys stated that on 20 occasions, the whole intersection will be shut down. Is that correct? Yes, and you guys know the duration of each time. It will be shut down. How long will be?

Yes. I apologize. So if that wasn't clear so the 20 weekends that there would be shut down. Yes, so to speak to them not sure if it's been determined yet exactly what the time would--typically would be Friday night to Monday early morning.

So and how do you guys plan on rerouting Hoyt Avenue South? Is it going to go on 29th Street?

So we can if you want we can go back to the map go back to those detour map that was put up on the screen. Actually. That was something I wanted to go over that. This is one of the very important aspect that I think that maybe you need to explain one more time. So everybody has a firmer handle on it. Also is this information available online?

Okay, so the next light.

Back back. Can you speak into the mic? Yeah that one.



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So for Hoyt Avenue South, as you can see you turn on 29th, and then go along Columbus and then back on 25th street. That would be the loop around that that's going to be a mess. It is going to it is not going to be easy.

Yeah.

Hoyt Avenue North really is not impacted because that closure stops right at the face of Hoyt Avenue North so that side is open.

In the first couple of intersection closures we're going to have a lot of traffic agents [who] will be watching how the traffic is moving or not moving and we'll maybe-- we'll tweak those things as we go forward to facilitate that.

Hello. My name is Kevin Hernandez. Would you be removing the parked cars from Astoria Boulevard there and stuff so we can get better flow. I think the enforcement will be stricter during that time.

Hi, my name is Jo Calhoun, I have a question. My understanding was the traffic coming off the bridge is going to be divided up to 30th Street all the way up to 30th Avenue. Is that the case because we [saw] on 30th Avenue and 30th Street, they were putting up several brand new post for new traffic lights and we were told that that work was being done because of your work.

That--all that traffic coming off the bridge is going to be diverted all the way up to 30th Avenue. That wasn't what the way we see it is wide Avenues out turning on 29th going along Columbus. We were told that that's what was going to happen. That's not the case. I'm not sure who told you that but we'll look into that. All right. Thank you. Can I ask you um, are you going to need a copy of this? A lot of questions are being asked and I know that you going to would like copies of these questions so you can follow up. So I guess you want us to get these to you or that'd be great. Yeah. Okay, and I just wanted to follow up on this plan. So this is all vetted by [the body] who does all of the traffic planning for the city. And so this



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is a plan that went through there went through them. And this is what they came to as the best detour in the solution and I'm unfortunately I'm not sure about that intersection and what those traffic-- it already happened. It was probably for a different project because anything for this detour wouldn't be for.

Yeah, as we mentioned the New York City agency called OEMC, they approve all the planned lane closures are major closures. So during the design phase all of this was submitted through and the permits were obtained to do this work and when they look at any application, they look at the consequences of shedding the lanes down or shedding streets down and approve the best possible mitigation measure and that's what we have. And as I mentioned we will be watching and tweaking this as we go through just a point of clarification.

Attendee: I don't know if I heard you correctly earlier, but you mentioned something about the W or the Q train stopping at 96 is that I guess I want to understand how that works. And that's during the closure. Are you having it? Is it traveling from Ditmars to 96 and what station at 97?

Just answer let me clarify. So it's not for the closure of Astoria Boulevard. It's for that track work on the-- which I mentioned at the end there the track work we have were placing the track panels on the Northern on the Northbound track during that the W will run normally except from 57<sup>th</sup> [St] & Seventh Avenue. It will run up to 96 Street along the Q line when that's happening. So that'll be those. Midday those that midday work.

Correct. Yeah, but they'll still be entering service running Express Northbound and running normally southbound.

Hi Blake Monteith, speaking as a resident tonight. So I take the M60 somewhat often and the stop has been relocated. There's already quite significant delays because Astoria Boulevard, it has such heavy traffic. So I'm you know, I'm hearing that there may be some, you know, some people in the area that would that would help with this flow. But could you release a more detailed plan in terms of how you





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know, the M60 s delays could be managed and because ultimately the M60 is as a bus that's managed by your agency, correct?

Absolutely. When you say people that would help you mean traffic agents things like that. Yeah, so we will bring the M60 issues back to our bus team and see what they can work out and what they can do to improve those delays for sure. And additionally we do have a more detailed plan in terms of where traffic agents will be posted all of the signs that are going to be posted for this detour. It's pretty complicated and hard to look at and not great for PowerPoint, but we're happy to share it if anyone wants to see it. Yeah.

And developing-- there will be many traffic agents around helping to direct traffic when the full intersection is closed.

Hey, I'm Emmett, a resident. And also I'm with OANA. I also--when the N/W is not running I wind up going down to the F [train]. Have you guys--is there any concern that they're going to be dual closures at the same time? Because I'm a little bit worried that I'm going to have both my options cut off from under me. Some weekends got it.

That's something we can definitely look into. I know our track access [team] who manages all of the closures citywide [is] trying to avoid things like that. I can't speak. I don't know all the F closures off the top of my head, but it's something we'll definitely consider. Yeah.

As usual I feel like a game show host.

Hi, my name is Brianna Sharpsburg. Resident. A couple questions first is a communication one. When you say you're going to get back to people. What do you mean by that? Are you going to be emailing all of us? I would just like more clarification. I work in PR so I understand your perspective but a little detail will be helpful sure.



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Oh so so if Richard—yes, is going to provide us with a copy of the questions that were asked here tonight, which were graciously had greatly appreciate then we'd be happy to respond to those concerns and send it back to Richard who can hopefully email it out to attendees who are here tonight through the sign-in list.

We'll end up doing probably it's putting it by foot the answers online source.

Okay, great and will the PowerPoint be online as well? So the PowerPoint actually there's an older version of this PowerPoint already online that we gave to the community board earlier this month. It's on the website that I that is on the agenda and that was listed at the last slide, but then we're going to be replacing it with this because this is a little more updated.

I actually had kind of a similar question to Richard. Okay, the signal the that is one of the most common issues with the transit. It's just signal problems and like majority of the train doesn't know what that means. So could you just clarify what that means when there's a signal problem and how that's going to be improved and why the choice was made to not use the digital technology sure. So--I'm sorry. I don't have a video that's much easier to demonstrate this but the old signal system that most of the trains run on rely on a system where basically a train goes past a thing a block the and maybe Benny's better to explain this.

So the train passes a block the block registers a train went by and it doesn't let any other train go past that block for it's on a timer so literally it would be like say two minutes that no train can go past that so now if that malfunctions and say the timer malfunctions and actually it's stuck and it won't let any trains pass. Then you have a delay you have a problem that needs to be fixed and that's where a signal problem can happen. That's one way they happen. There are a number of ways they happen unfortunately and so with CVTC computer-based Train control, we change that it's all computerized. Basically, there's we don't use that block system. And so it's a lot more streamlined. We can fit more trains on the same amount of track. And so we have that right now on the L and newly now on the seven as well. And so it's very expensive. It's this piece of our fast forward plan which has a tentative



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price tag of 40 billion dollars. So it's not something that we add two lines lightly and uncertain lines. There are other constraints that even if we added that signal system, we couldn't necessarily add more trains because there's other issues or other problems that need to be worked out and the biggest issue and there's a map that is published as part of the fast food plan that has in the first if we were to fund this plan, then there would be which lines we try and work on the first five years and then the second five years after that and it prioritizes mostly Manhattan because more trains are running on those lines as for example in a story that you going to Manhattan then the R comes in so there's more trains on that section of track and for example, yesterday's issues were actually a signal problem in Manhattan, but had huge consequences for Astoria. And so that's why we prioritize that section of track before maybe Astoria.

That is the question.

This is just the pieces that are part of the old block section of track deal system block system. So I've heard many--there's a mic there Benny. Let me just explain to you the way it goes down. There we go. Let's go back 40 years-- 40 years ago. We had we had switches where you actually someone literally was in a tower and they pull the switch. So we fast forward to what we did next. We did electrical work for a while. Now, we're looking at the signaling system that we have now and computer-based. It would be actually the best but imagine we have over seven hundred and Twenty-One miles of track. I don't know how many thousands of switches we have. So it's going to take time and how we mention a price tag of 40 billion dollars. So imagine trying to do--let's- just a number off the top of my head since we have 721 miles of track every what is this between 50 and 100 feet there is

A switch [has] a ball that comes up now that ball stops the train from actually rearing and rear-ending another train. So imagine every 50 feet where that ball at a signal is it comes up now, imagine trying to replace 721 miles every 50 feet that's going to take some time. So I we understand your dilemma of how it affects everyone's travel: remember it affects us too because we use the train as well as you all do but we're in the process of trying to do whatever we can to minimize any type of signal problems or switch problems for that matter on the Astoria line. They've replaced quite a few switches thus far they haven't exactly put the computer base signaling system in place yet, but that's not to say it will never happen. The goal is to bring our entire out entire system up to an elevated level. So we want to modernize entire system. That is to



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So for now though, we've done the best we can and working with what we have in the areas where its most I guess used. I'm going to say most important but where the trains the most flood flooded out or meaning tons and tons of trains come in and into that on that track are utilizing that switch so it's going to take some time but that is the goal. Yeah. Thank you and just to add to what many sets for example replacing the track adding cvtc to the Manhattan section of track would actually benefit writers in a story of more than replacing the Astoria line track with CBTC.

Clare Doyle: A very interesting presentation. Thank you, a quick question about the public meeting to suggest stations that would benefit from elevators. Last year at an advocacy rally for increased accessibility story of stations, we were told that not every station--and I think you alluded to this-- not every station is physically suitable for elevators. F r instance the Broadway Station on the NW which just reopened--and I believe is close to a hundred years old and we were told I think that it was too that's just it physically it's too narrow. Is that true? Is there any point in suggesting the Broadway Station if the MTA already has it on a "do not even think about adding elevators to the station" list.

So I would say that o all of the stations and the line here in Astoria is actually a hundred and two years old. So just keep that in mind as we replace. We really need to do some serious work here. Absolutely in terms of physical constraints with older stations and things like that, I don't think we have a list of stations that are you know, do not replace elevators. At least. I certainly hope not you know, our goal is to have every station be accessible. You know, we're doing that piece by piece were hoping 50 accessible stations in the next 50 in the next five years and many more to come after that. But yeah, definitely do suggest any station that you feel there's a big need [there].

Hi, I'm Adam F. I'm a resident. I know I recognize this as more the devotees purview, but you're here. So I'm a little concerned that the detour we're talking about from Hoyt Avenue south on t29th, Astoria Boulevard to be focusing like exclusively on moving the cars through here. We're given that the station will be closed [and] bus options are going to be important. Is there-- was there any consideration or conversation around things such as removing parking on that block adding a temporary bustling things like that that make sure the Q 19 and M60 can continue through there even if car traffic is highly congested?



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We'll have to get back to you on that. Okay? Thank you.

Good evening. Tony Mazzara. The question is from two of our members. Are there--you just mentioned that you send out a flyer or how we going to get this flyer regarding the meeting that we can also give it to our members for February 6th. I just found out now because you mentioned before oh, sorry, the accessibility.

Find me after the meeting.

Okay, it's a quick follow-up just on what he said earlier as an alternative to the M60 congestion issue when there's a closed out when there's a shutdown. I know this is probably not your area either but if there's a way to coordinate with the ferry system to have that as an alternative for people to get within the city I was told earlier that is not you--but it would be nice if you guys could coordinate that to kind of increase the amount of theories that are there that especially throughout the summer months.

We'd also love transfers. But yeah the ferry system is run by the City, by the Economic Development Corporation. Our hope is that by, you know, when we have the dates finalized for these detours that there will be you know, people will see them people will make alternate travel options though either not drive near Astoria Boulevard, they'll either bike [or] they'll take other options. They'll take the shuttle buses depending on what the different and that's part of why we have the website. That's why we're trying [to get] that out as much as possible? So people are aware of the closures and the different service plans ahead of time and can plan accordingly.

Have you guys thought about maybe implementing solar panels to offset the cost of the electric for lighting installations?



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There's something I have to get back to you on. Yeah, I don't that's something I haven't seen it other stations. I'm not sure. I know we have a bus depot that has solar panels and things like that, but I'm not sure about the constraints of putting it on top of a station. I imagine it adds another layer of complexity. It needs to be maintained [and] if need to something went wrong that would maybe impact train service somehow we'd want to avoid that as much as possible, but I'd have to get back to you on a firm answer.

Any other questions out there?

Jorge Rivera upstanding citizen of Astoria nice to meet you George likewise question in regards for the removal of the Billboards. How long is that?

Actual removal is going to happen very quickly. But the duration is going to be about close to four months from the time. We take it down then we do our work and then the boards will be installed again. So the dismantling of the board will be required with cranes. Yes. Yes also regards for which you said you were going to lower the actual street level.

How exactly does I mean I saw it there, but I'm trying to envision--is this going to have like a dip of some sort that you wouldn't notice that I wouldn't notice.

Yeah, we're talking about gradual transition. So that right under the mezzanine area. We get about 5 to 6 inches of additional clearance, right? Okay, and also being that you can have closures on either the South Side southbound side or the Northbound side has any of this stuff been?

Bring attention to Skanska that's doing the work at the LaGuardia Airport and we got for work performance because it can order a coordinated effort between traffic patterns because what happens is basically by LaGuardia Airport, you've got a lot of backed up traffic and the contribution of this going on. It's going to create chaos. So at this time as any of your work based on their schedule as well right now it we haven't done that but I think the Grand Central Parkway traffic is not really going to be



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impacted by the intersection closure per se. Well, the exit itself will--what happens is actually spills from the exit from the BQE and then towards LaGuardia Airport. So we have a problem now what's going to happen when this is going on we'll look into it and we'll get the what I understand. It's you know, it's an issue, right? But, you know, I guess maybe based on the amount of work when you guys are working.

And what's gas is doing on the parkway itself for their Bridges or they're still work that they're doing. It's just going to create I understand typically OCM, the City agency who gives the permits out. They look at the regional impact of different construction activities happening at the same time, but your point is well-taken. We're going to coordinate with OCMC and we'll get back to you on that and just to follow up that way. So we're not doing anything to the off ramp coming from LaGuardia. So it wouldn't this work wouldn't have any change on traffic on the Grand Central Parkway coming from LaGuardia into Manhattan. Well, when you have the removal of the billboard it will because of the exit of the but that happens over a weekend one car still drive on weekends to one night and we're going to have you have four/five lanes on how I die Avenue North it's split into two spans. So we're going to close two lanes on one side right under the billboard area and

Take the billboard iron. You still have traffic running on the rest of the lanes. Okay. Thank you. Yeah.

[Will] you have LED lighting at the stations.

I have to get back to you on that.

Richard: I have a question. Actually, I want to bring up this is not been touched upon but it's important and this goes along with one of our missions for economic development in the area. Recently. I was saying the last five to ten years, there's been really a wonderful increase in the quantity and quality of retail along Astoria Boulevard, but it's not very mature. Okay, it's all very recent. So I'm really concerned that this development and lack of passenger traffic foot traffic and things like that is going to negatively affect it more than the more mature areas like 30th Avenue and Broadway, it could be devastating. So I really would like to know what kind of programs what kind of incentives you can provide. I know that



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during the I think during the 90s or mm Bloomberg actually gave some tax and breaks to some businesses that were [hurt] by this kind of construction this mayor has not done that but

This is a huge problem, you know, so I don't know what you can do in terms of wayfaring in terms of somehow providing trying to keep that foot traffic from disappearing. If you have any ideas along those lines, I know that it's going to be coming up I think because of the weather a lot of the business owners did not come today, but I know that if and when we repeat this it's going to be a major topic of conversation.

Yeah, so that's something that's always a concern and always something, you know, we're concerned about so initially. So for example here, the main thing that I've we've done so far is that I actually want to round to most of the businesses nearby we talked about this in December to give them notice that this was happening so they can hopefully, you know plan ahead save some money from the holidays so they can you know, whether this if their business is going to decline because the station is closed and letting them know is ahead of time letting them plan ahead and just know that with as much notice as possible is probably one of the best things we can do in terms of other programs other incentives. I think there are some issues with city and state cooperation there, but it's something that if you have some ideas that you want to pursue and you want to bring to us, we're happy to consider it.

Okay, and by the same token, if you guys have any ideas along these lines, let me know to let them know. Okay, that's very important because this is this is a big issue. So

Wait, wait, Joe. Got to record you. Yep. Yeah downstairs.

Joe Vaccaro: You know the Dunkin Donuts on 30th Avenue was actually losing between 50 and 60 percent of his regular Revenue when you shut down 30th Avenue and that's a Dunkin Donuts--forget about all the other little mom-and-pop shops. So it would be nice to have someone somewhere came up with an idea. So as he says these businesses that are recently opened unless 6 to 12 months don't end up closing down.





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Any other questions?

Good. Well, first of all I'd like to thank all of you for attending in this very very frigid night. Thanks so much for coming down and I want to appreciate the presenters coming down. Thank you so much. Let's give them a big hand.

I think what I'd like to do, if you don't mind this I could actually quickly just email you the audio file to this if you like.

And Howard Levine thanks for having us and coming out on such a cold night as Richard said and listen obvious. Seriously, if you have ideas, you know get back to us as an association, you know, we can relate this information and follow up and make sure these things are answered. I'm not sure at this point whether we're going to have a February meeting. We're debating that right now, but we'll be sending out notices. Please go to the website. Tell your friends about the business directory. We put together we want to see it build and grow as much as possible. And again thanks to everyone for their support and I'll see you soon.

Oh and again, wait, I want to thank the Family Church. It's a wonderful facility and [thanks to} Lucas, Victor, Eric. Thanks so much guys.