



Old Astoria Neighborhood Association (OANA)
www.OANA-NY.org

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Single lane of through traffic proposed on 21st st

[The NYC DOT and the MTA jointly proposed Bus lanes on 21st st which would result in a single lane of through traffic from Hoyt Ave South to Queensborough Plaza.](#)

Of the original 3 options that DOT proposed, they have decided to implement option 2. (For further info on the options, see OANA Created survey link below: This also includes OANA proposed Option 4)

The Proposal would also eliminate left hand turns on most intersections. Left hand turn lanes at select intersections would be provided.

They would also create Neighborhood Loading Zones, TBD.

The Bus Lanes will be offset, with pedestrian “Bulbs” and curb extensions. (May be concrete or plastic). Most parking would not be eliminated.

Also proposed are Pedestrian Islands in certain intersections.

They also proposed a “Modification” period when they would implement any changes to their original plan in Fall 2022. OANA feels this is premature, as traffic on 21st st is greatly diminished because of the 2-year construction project on the Queensborough Bridge. We ask that this modification study only be done when all traffic patterns are back to normal.

[The Old Astoria Neighborhood Association \(OANA\) created a survey](#) asking local residents and businesses whether they were in favor of bus lanes, and if yes which of DOT/MTA’s 3 initial bus lane options they preferred. OANA also added an option “4”. The DOT also did a survey, however it was specifically located at Bus Stops, so its reach into the community is extremely limited, and skewed towards current Bus users. OANA used physical flyers covering all of Old Astoria on the entire route and surrounding streets, Social Media, and email blasts, covering all local demographics.

[We had almost 700 responses, with a majority against the creation of bus lanes \(56.6%\).](#)

Only 35.1% supported the bus lanes with no conditions.

Of those who said yes and designated a bus lane option, option # 3 was preferred. Only 23% supported DOT’s preferred Option 2.

Random sampling of those who voted “no” indicated that a large majority would have voted for option 4 if they had to choose one (Not reflected in the summation of the survey)



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Over 90% of respondents advised they lived or worked in the neighborhood.

Therefore, OANA is against DOT/MTA's proposal.

Unless the following issues are addressed:

Bus lanes properly configured so they integrated with everyone's lifestyles, and not discriminate against any group of people. 21st street has seen a major increase in residential buildings, with some of the highest zoning in our Community. A series of hi rise buildings are going up, especially from Hoyt Ave to 31st avenue. Giving these new residents better public transit options should be a goal.

To this end, we proposed "Option "4" in our survey. Basically, have curbside bus lanes operational only during rush hours. This would help mitigate the parking removal that may be required. This is the same configuration used for many years in Manhattan Avenues. We would reconsider our opposition should this be instituted

Remember, these bus lanes cannot be at the expense our economic health. And many residents depend on automobiles or trucks for local household use.

Along with instituting Option "4", the following issues must be addressed:

1. Parking should be metered during daytime hours, especially near commercial and retail, to help incentivize removal of cars when required. This also helps business with turnover for deliveries and customer parking. (There is much commercial and retail space being created, and we need to promote a healthy business environment).
2. Bus Only traffic signals should be used, set to give the buses a jump ahead of regular traffic to help them avoid congestion.
3. For our Small Business, Tradesmen, taxi, etc. TIME IS MONEY. You will put them at a tremendous disadvantage with single lane. They often have to carry their tools with them and go to the different job sites. You would be expanding the cost of doing business, costing us jobs and economic activity.
4. Also, we have a vibrant service sector for the Taxi industry, an essential employer of immigrants and economically insecure residents. If these bus lanes in any way negatively affect this industry, steps must be taken to compensate anyone negatively affected.
5. Left hand Turns: In those intersections where a left-hand turn is prohibited, you would be forcing a right, then 2 lefts in order to "Make the Left" (Sort of a "Jersey" turn). We think it is imperative that an impact study be done on each of these intersections to determine if the directions of these generally one-



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way streets need be changes, and if traffic controls are adequate. Also, signage must be provided to guide drivers how to make this turn to access a specific avenue.

6. Important also is making sure that Trucks are not obstructed. Especially on the “Jersey” turns. We need to keep 21st street as a corridor for business and distribution for the health of not only our community, but all of New York City. I think the recent lessons we are learning as a nation on the importance of the supply chain are all we need to know!

7. Climate: Will the cure be worse than the disease? Will the inevitable traffic tie ups cause more air pollution throughout the neighborhoods, including where traffic is forced down side streets?

8. Also, we would hope that the bus lanes start southbound at Astoria Blvd, not Hoyt Ave South. Because of the tremendous volume of traffic coming from the RFK bridge and BQE, thinking you can funnel this traffic into one lane safely without tremendous backups at Hoyt ave South would is a fantasy. Also, this would force many cars down Astoria Park South, creating a hazard for the many pedestrians, bicyclist, scooter, and skateboarders using Astoria Park, also forcing traffic into the small residential streets of Old Astoria, all the way to Vernon Blvd.

9. Putting left turn lanes both north and southbound on 21st street at Astoria Blvd also makes sense, given the amount of traffic and that these are access points to both Hallets Peninsula, and the BQE, Grand Central Parkway. Astoria Blvd is a growing commercial district, and we should do all we can to make access seamless.

10. Plan to build out the sidewalk on the west side of 21st street between Astoria Blvd and 27th avenue. While it makes sense to provide a pedestrian island there to facilitate crossing, there will be a major issue with parking for the mosque, especially for Friday prayers. While we know that the parking currently is not legal, the city has a history of accepting such arrangements for religious institutions. This might set a contentious precedent.

11. We also would like to see pedestrian crosswalks with signals in between long blocks, not only increasing safety and limiting jaywalking, it will also help control vehicle speed.

12. The MTA is proposing to eliminate many bus stops to create efficiency. However, many of our neighbors who utilize the buses are extremely upset. They don't want to trade efficiency in their personal lives (Losing stops easily accessed for more remote ones) just to create less work for the MTA. And they say speed would not be greatly affected, as buses only stop when there are riders waiting to get on or off.

Much was made by a meeting participant (Not with the govt) that, according to the US Census, only 20% of individual residents used cars to go to work. However, we feel this is misleading. It is not clear what geographic area he was referring to, as the Census does not drill down specifically to Western Queens.



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And it should be based on households, not individuals. You can have a family car, used for family business, school, and other Intra borough uses (Shopping, recreations, medical, etc.). If there is a family of 5, with one car, individually it is only 20%. But all 5 members actually use it, and could be considered 100%.

It was made clear by the DOT/MTA that we should expect chaos if their proposal is initiated. They expect 3 possible results.

1. They will make owning a car so onerous that people will get rid of them. As stated above, we feel this will hurt all aspects of quality of life and work, particularly outside of Manhattan destinations.

Or

2. They will use alternate routes. We feel that, with Crescent Street already compromised, and 31st street quite congested, this will push traffic on Vernon, and it will exceed its safety and operational capabilities.

Or

3. Travel off peak hours: This would be difficult, as it would require societal changes over and above just transit. Work and school hours, Business openings, etc would all effect feasibility

What we find most interesting is that they freely admit that their long-term goal is to make driving a car in NYC almost impossible.... Making it difficult for people to shop in bulk and create car pools, access destinations in the outer boroughs and away from affordable public transit.

The disabled and older residents may be affected, as their use of alternate transit such as scooters, bicycles, etc. can be limited. Also, public transit might be off limits to many disabled. Ride shares are often beyond their budgets. This is discriminatory against a significant portion of our population.

While public transit options into Manhattan are significant, they are sparse indeed outside to the outer boroughs, tri state, and the rest of the country. And with more and more people working from home, transit to Manhattan is becoming less significant.

Richard Khuzami, President