



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

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Position on the 31st Street Bike Lane Proposal – Astoria

The Old Astoria Neighborhood Association (OANA) supports the 31st Street bike lane proposal based on the following stipulations. Our approval is conditional on the full implementation of these requirements, including—but not limited to—DOT’s commitment to implement integrated, timed traffic controls for all users: cars and trucks, bicycles and micromobility, and pedestrians. These controls must be designed to reduce conflicts and improve safety at all intersections along the corridor.

Each of the conditions outlined below is essential, and OANA’s support is contingent on their collective implementation.

OANA’s position reflects a range of perspectives within its board. These include support contingent on traffic controls, concerns regarding enforcement and accountability, and differing views related to emergency response and firefighter operations. Rather than attempting to resolve these differences in advance, this position establishes a framework in which real-world performance can help determine long-term outcomes.

OANA also recognizes that the proposal has received support from the local community board, elected officials, and many residents and businesses along the corridor. DOT has advised that extensive outreach was conducted throughout the project area, including engagement with local businesses and coordination with multiple city agencies and emergency service entities during the review process. DOT has also stated that feedback gathered from businesses along the corridor was incorporated into revisions to the updated proposal.

31st Street presents unique challenges, including constrained sightlines from elevated infrastructure, heavy pedestrian activity, and overlapping use by multiple transportation modes. These conditions require more than physical separation. They require coordinated management.

The proposed traffic control system must function as an integrated system across all modes. These controls are not optional enhancements—they are essential to safe operation. They must apply consistently to vehicles, bicycles, micromobility, and pedestrians in order to ensure predictable and enforceable behavior.

Enforcement is equally critical. Without enforcement, even well-designed systems fail. This must include visible NYPD presence at major intersections during peak periods, along with long-



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term accountability through registration and identification of bikes and micromobility devices, enabling camera-based enforcement similar to that used for motor vehicles.

It is not realistic to assume that compliance will occur without both on-the-ground enforcement and technological accountability.

Given the expanded scope of the project, OANA considers this implementation to be probationary approval pending real-world validation. A formal public review should be conducted after one year, with data collected on safety, congestion, enforcement, and operational performance. Based on these findings, a determination should then be made regarding continuation, modification, or removal of elements of the design.

This approach is feasible because the project relies largely on paint and delineators, with limited permanent infrastructure. Adjustments can therefore be made without significant reconstruction if conditions warrant. DOT has also advised that the project utilizes design elements commonly used elsewhere in New York City and designed to comply with applicable accessibility and roadway standards.

At locations such as PS 85, where student loading continues along 31st Street, the current design creates a direct and predictable conflict between students and through-moving bike and micromobility traffic. Speed limits alone are not sufficient to address this condition.

Dismount requirements for bikes and micromobility during active loading periods should be implemented, or alternative operational controls that provide equivalent protection must be put in place.

Coordination with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is also necessary given the corridor's location beneath active elevated infrastructure. This includes ensuring continued access for inspection, maintenance, and repair operations.

Emergency response remains a significant issue.

While FDNY engineering leadership, representatives from local firehouses, and other city agencies have approved the design through the agency review process, concerns have nevertheless been raised by some local firehouse personnel regarding impacts on emergency operations, including ladder access and response capability. Similar concerns contributed to prior legal challenges involving earlier versions of this project.

This difference in professional opinion must be taken seriously.



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Emergency response performance—including access, response times, and ladder operations—should be closely monitored during the probationary period. Any issues identified by FDNY personnel in the field should be formally documented and addressed.

Where significant differences in professional opinion remain unresolved, OANA believes there should be the option of review by an agreed-upon independent and accredited third-party professional organization capable of evaluating emergency access and operational impacts on city service agencies, including FDNY operations. Such review could provide an objective basis for determining whether the design functions safely under real-world conditions.

When differing professional opinions exist and no accepted arbiter is available, the appropriate course is to evaluate real-world outcomes over time. All parties should remain willing to review results objectively and adjust their positions if conditions on the ground warrant it. The willingness to change position based on evidence is a sign of strength, not weakness.

OANA supports moving forward with the 31st Street bike lane proposal based on the stipulations outlined above.

The success of this corridor will not be determined by design alone, but by how effectively it is controlled, enforced, and evaluated in practice.

Richard Khuzami. President