



The City of New York

Queens Community Board 11

Serving the Communities of Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston, Hollis Hills
Little Neck and Oakland Gardens

Christine L. Haider Chairperson

July 20, 2017

Nicole Garcia
NYC Department of Transportation
120-55 Queens Blvd.
Kew Gardens, NY 11424

RE: Bicycle Lane Plan

Dear Borough Commissioner Garcia:

The process of presenting the "Bicycle Lane Plan" on May 17, 2017 to the Community Board Transportation Committee and then having a Public Hearing on June 5, 2017 was, in retrospect, a poor one. The issues and alternatives were not well thought out. The process was too quick and lacked complete community input. Most of the Board Members saw the DOT proposal for the first time at the hearing. They had no time to study the details before their vote.

At the Public Hearing on June 5, 2017, the vote to approve passed. At the hearing, Bernard Haber, P.E., a Board Member, asked if DOT had considered using the 15-foot sidewalk as a shared pedestrian/bike lane. He was told that it is too expensive, would have to be a capital project and that the Alley Creek Bridge is a major obstacle. Mr. Haber told DOT that he would make a feasibility study and present it to DOT. On July 17, the CB 11 Transportation Committee met to review Mr. Haber's promised sidewalk pedestrian/bicycle lane proposal. New additional information was presented to the committee, who did not challenge. We believe this proposed plan is paramount to the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. The Committee voted to approve the submission of the proposal to DOT for consideration and development.

We strongly urge the Department of Transportation to consider this proposed, safer plan. There are many factors that impact on the proposal that have not been clearly studied to our satisfaction and before any finalization of the plan, we asked that you consider the following issues that have not been addressed.

1) Most critical is DOT's extremely dangerous proposal to carry the bicycle lane past the entry and exit points of the three ramp intersections where vehicles are turning either into or out of a Cross Island Parkway (CIP) ramp. Only the northbound CIP entry ramp is signalized. The red signal stops vehicles turning north bound for a short period but when

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green, drivers enter the ramp at 25 to 30 mph. Cyclists who are at the same pavement grade as the vehicles have no barrier protection. This is terribly dangerous with cyclists coming from two directions. Who has the right-of way (ROW)? At the two CIP exit ramps, drivers are looking over their shoulder to the left while accelerating into a clear space and can't simultaneously see the cyclist approaching from the right. This design will produce many injuries and possible fatalities. One solution is to stop the bicycle lane at Joe Michael's Mile and avoid the CIP ramps.

2) Northern Boulevard (NB) is one of three arteries and one of two commercial truck arteries that cross the CIP which divides northeast Queens. There are no other crossings in the two mile north-south corridor. More than 20,000 westbound vehicles pass on NB daily between 223 Street and Douglaston Parkway. DOT estimates 50 weekday and 160 weekend recreational cyclists use the same limits daily. Pedestrian traffic is negligible. Removing one lane out of three westbound lanes reduces capacity by 33% and removes one of six available truck lanes in the westbound corridor. That is too great an impact for commercial and passenger traffic and will result in major congestion.

3) The pictures that we have enclosed show that substantial off-peak parking exists on the north side of NB. This parking is the overflow from the commercial and residential developments on the south side of NB between Alley Creek and Douglaston Parkway. North side parking would have to be eliminated with the DOT plan. There are three large properties, two that are currently empty (one is a temporary church) that will be developed in the near future creating more traffic and the need for more off-peak parking. Further, the DPR Golf Driving Range is being used as a major golf facility due to the recent expansion that provided a major restaurant, more golf driving pads, an expanded miniature golf course and additional maintenance facilities all with minimal expansion of the parking lot. This, and the additional patrons attracted to the facility, has created more parking on the north side of NB and additional impacts on the traffic flow on NB both east and westbound because of the patron's turning movements entering the facility.

4) The DOT bicycle lane plan did not consider the AM cuing at the northbound entry to the CIP from westbound traffic because of the restrictive entry caused by the LIRR Bridge over the CIP. This cuing traffic backs up to the Alley Creek Bridge and creates obstructions to westbound traffic during AM peak hours. With DOT's plan, there would be only one usable through lane at the overflow cuing.

5) There are approximately six locations and the CIP ramps where the barrier will have to be opened to service businesses, DEP facilities and bus stops (two). At these openings, costly impact attenuators are required to prevent injuries to drivers. In addition, the crosswalk at Alameda Avenue will have to interrupt the barrier for pedestrians

6) There are a number of sidewalk gas and water department manholes, Traffic Department and Con Edison vaults, etc. in the four-foot sidewalk curb strips along NB. How will they be serviced from behind the barrier?

We asked the DOT if they had studied using the existing north sidewalk as a shared bicycle lane and pedestrian sidewalk, taking full advantage of the 100-foot ROW DOT owns. The response was less than convincing and in conflict with our analysis as follows:

SHARED SIDEWALK PEDESTRIAN/BIKE LANE PROPOSAL

This proposal provides a safer, wider shared pedestrian/bicycle lane with less obstructions, (bus stops, driveways, service utilities, etc.). It is safer at the CIP ramp intersections. It retains north side parking and three lanes westbound on NB. The current north sidewalk is encroached upon by the Parks Department's fence and posts, five to seven feet east of Alley Creek and two to three feet west of Alley creek. We believe that the cost differential using the north sidewalk and constructing a shared facility compared to DOT Bicycle Lane Barrier proposal is minimal. We enclose an engineering budget estimate for both plans based on current Region 11, New York State weighted average bid prices. The shared sidewalk plan has many advantages over the DOT Plan. It eliminates the objections mentioned herein. The DOT Plan cannot easily be reversed once installed.

1) Move the sidewalk fence and stanchions to the DOT's ROW line creating a 15-ft. wide sidewalk. Keep the four-foot curb buffer strip for trees, lamp posts, fire hydrants, etc. Pave 11 ft. for the shared facility. Partial paving is required to be added to existing sidewalk paving. Repair paving as necessary. NOTE: Pedestrian traffic is minimal, cycling is recreational.

2) There are five obstructions in one-half mile: Alley Creek Bridge, three poles, one vault.
Use cautionary signing* for all obstructions.

- a) Move the two light poles on the bridge, east and west for additional clearance to seven ft. (Estimated cost = \$15,000 -20,000. The move is about three to four ft. east and west.)
- b) DEP vault reduces clearance to 9 ft. + 4 ft. buffer. Can't be moved.
- c) Utility pole reduces clearance to 7 ft. + 4 ft. buffer. Can't be moved.

OPTION at Bridge (Requires Cautionary Signing)

1) Widen bridge sidewalk three ft., from seven to 10 ft. Reduce median by three ft. for the 260' +/- bridge length. Stripe the westbound lanes to a smooth transition geometrically on both sides of the bridge. Estimated cost = \$30,000. +/-.

2) Remove shrubs and scrub trees and clear approximately four to six ft. behind the fence to the ROW line. Move fences and stanchions. Excavate and grade before placing sidewalk. Repair existing sidewalk as necessary.

3) There are seven to eight mature trees in the 15-ft. sidewalk ROW that have to be cut down. They will be replaced by new trees (8 to 1 ratio ?? established by DPR) beautifying Northern Boulevard and helping the environment.

BUDGET ESTIMATE OF COST (details attached)

DOT's Bike Lane at roadway grade = \$460,000.

CB 11 Shared Sidewalk Pedestrian/Bike lane = \$485,000.

***Joe Michaels Mile**

- Restrictions at LIRR Bridge over CIP = 8 - 10 +/- ft. width
- Restrictions around pedestrian bridges over CIP at Crocheron Park and 28th Ave.
- Restrictions at Bayside Marina Parking Lot = six to eight ft. (**Signed**)
(Bikers use parking lot – **very dangerous**)

ALL OSBSTRUCTIONS LISTED IN “2)” ON PREVIOUS PAGE SHOULD HAVE CAUTIONARY SIGNS

A legal issue has to be resolved. In checking with State DOT in Albany, NB is State Route 25A. As such, I am told a State Route cannot be altered in its configuration of the lanes, curb to curb, either adding or reducing. This may affect NYCDOT’s proposal as well as the Optional Bridge Widening. DOT should confer with their legal staff.

We ask that our proposal be fully developed and implemented to provide a safe, shared cyclist/pedestrian lane on the existing sidewalk ROW while maintaining existing commercial and passenger traffic on Northern Boulevard. We cannot accept the permanent reduction in the westbound truck and passenger vehicle lanes on Northern Boulevard. The impact on the residents of Little Neck and Douglaston is too great.

Sincerely,



Christine L. Haider
Chair

cc: Albert Silvestri, Deputy Queens Borough Commissioner
Hon. Melinda Katz, Queens Borough President
Hon. Paul Vallone, 19th Council District
Hon. Barry Grodenchik, 23rd Council District
Hon. Peter Koo, 20th Council District
Hon. Edward Braunstein, 26th Assembly District
Hon. David Weprin, 24th Assembly District
Hon. Nily Rozic, 25th Assembly District
Hon. Tony Avella, 11th State Senatorial District
Hon. Grace Meng, 6th Congressional District
Douglas Manor Association
Douglaston Civic Association

BICYCLE LANE BUDGET ESTIMATE

*Unit prices are based on current Region 11, NYSDOT Weighted Average Bid Prices

Estimate for SHARED SIDEWALK cyclists and pedestrian;

*Concrete for sidewalk with mesh = \$800./CY; 4" sidewalk = \$9.87/ SF

*Excavation assume 1 foot: = \$172/CY ; 1 foot = \$6.37/SF

*Fill and Grading, assume 2 feet = \$ 65/CY ; 2 feet = \$4.82/SF

Estimate for Clearing an Grubbing = \$5.00/SF
SUBTOTAL say \$26.10

Length = one half mile +/-, say 2500 LF, Width = 6 Feet = 15,000 SF

Cost of Sidewalk = 15,000 X \$26.10 = \$391,500.-

**Alley Creek Bridge SW widening = \$ 30,000.-

15% contingency [Includes moving 2 light poles] = \$63,000.-

TOTAL BUDGET ESTIMATE = **\$485,000.-**

This is high because the sidewalk at the Golf Driving Range may be the responsibility of the Lessee. And the additional sidewalk required at the DEP facility is less than 6 feet.

****At Alley Creek Bridge** there are two solutions. One is cautionary signing on the bridge approaches and the other is to widen the north sidewalk 3 feet taking the 3 ft. out of the median and stripping the westbound lanes on each side of the bridge to a smooth geometric transition. The cost we estimate will be **750 SF X \$40/SF = \$30,000.and moving 2 light poles [est. \$15-20,000]**. We believe the signing and moving the light poles is the most practical way to go for recreational cyclists. The bridge sidewalk is being used now without signing. There is also a concrete box and utility pole west the bridge which encroaches on the sidewalk width. It can not be moved. It will need caution signs.

NYCDOT BICYCLE LANE PROPOSAL

* Jersey Type Barrier [straight sides = \$160./LF; Both sides curved = \$200./LF]
[Assume NYCDOT will use the less expensive barrier]

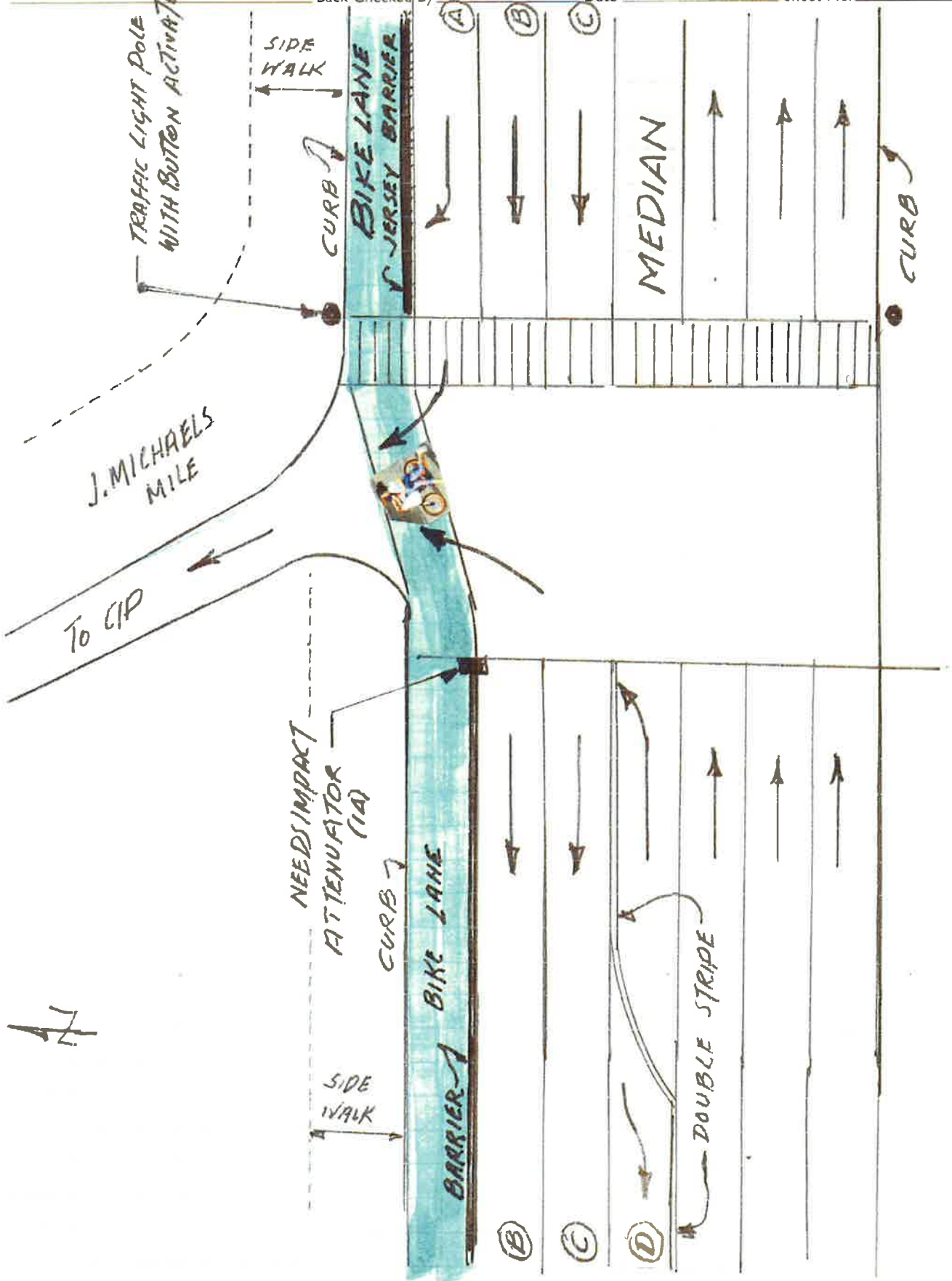
\$160./LF X 2500 LF = \$400,000.-

15% Contingency for excavation, stripping,
Impact attenuators, etc \$ 60,000.-

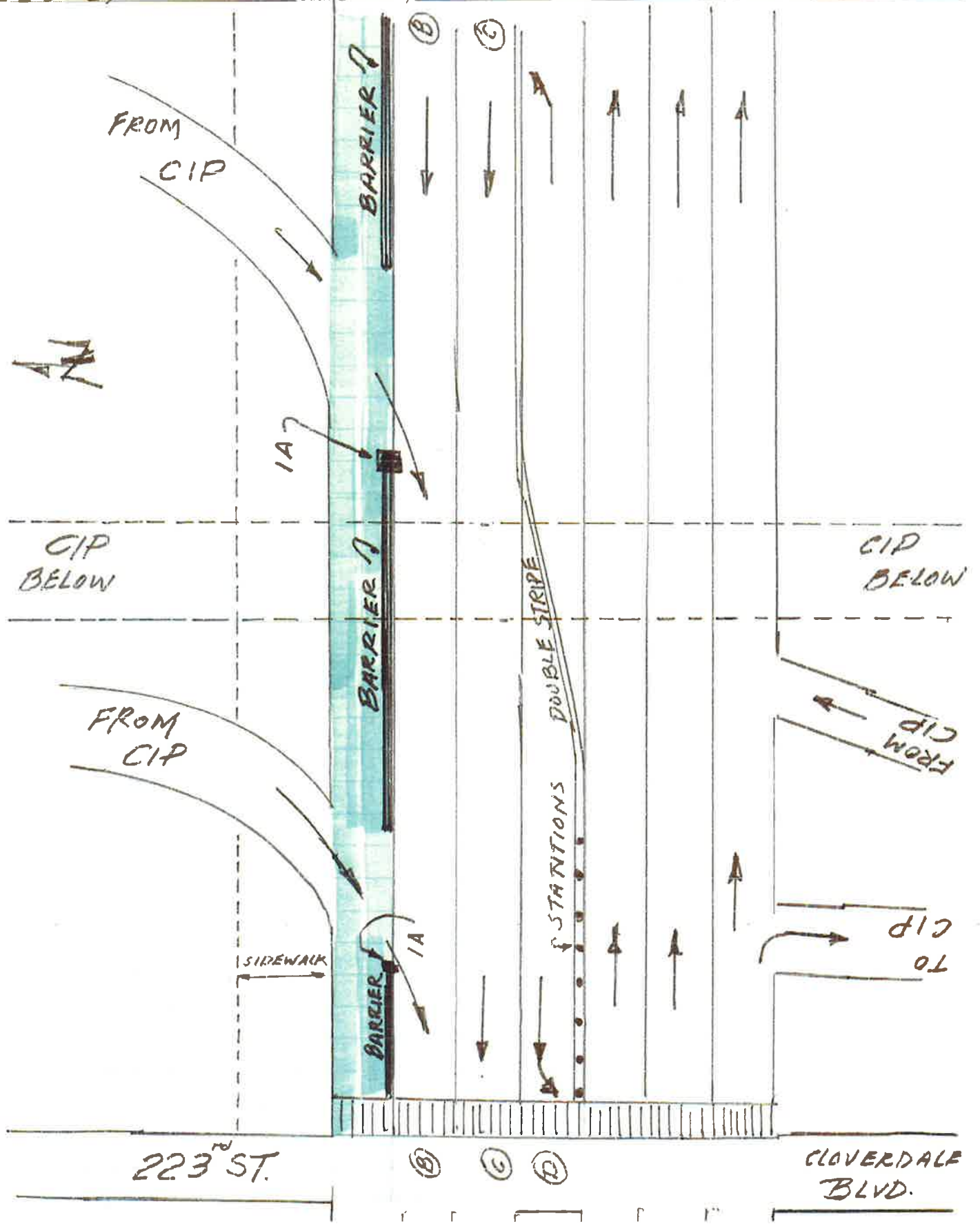
TOTAL BUDGET ESTIMATE = **\$460,000.-**

WE BELIEVE THE COST OF BOTH PROPOSALS IS ESSENTIALLY THE SAME.
THE SHARED SIDEWALK PROPOSAL HAS THE LEAST IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY AND THE TRAVELING PUBLIC. WE RECOMMEND IT.

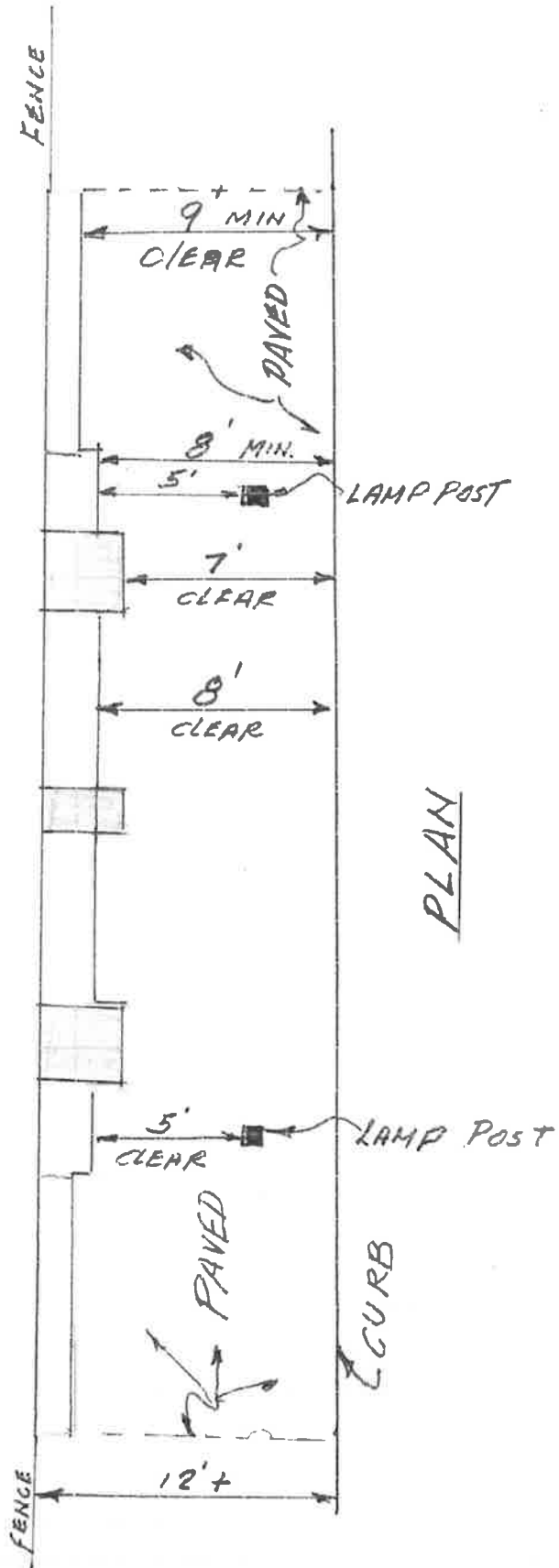
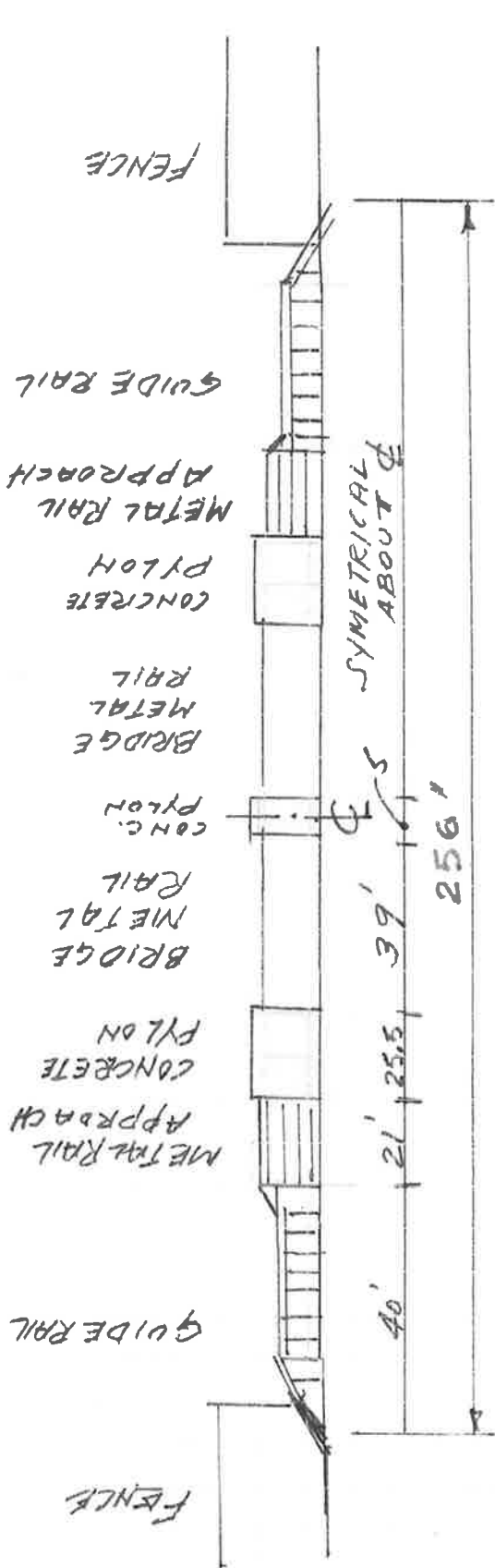
Computations For NB CIP Made By BH Date 7/15/17 Job No. _____
ENTRANCE RAMP Checked By _____ Date _____ Sec. No. _____
Back Checked By _____ Date _____ Sheet No. _____



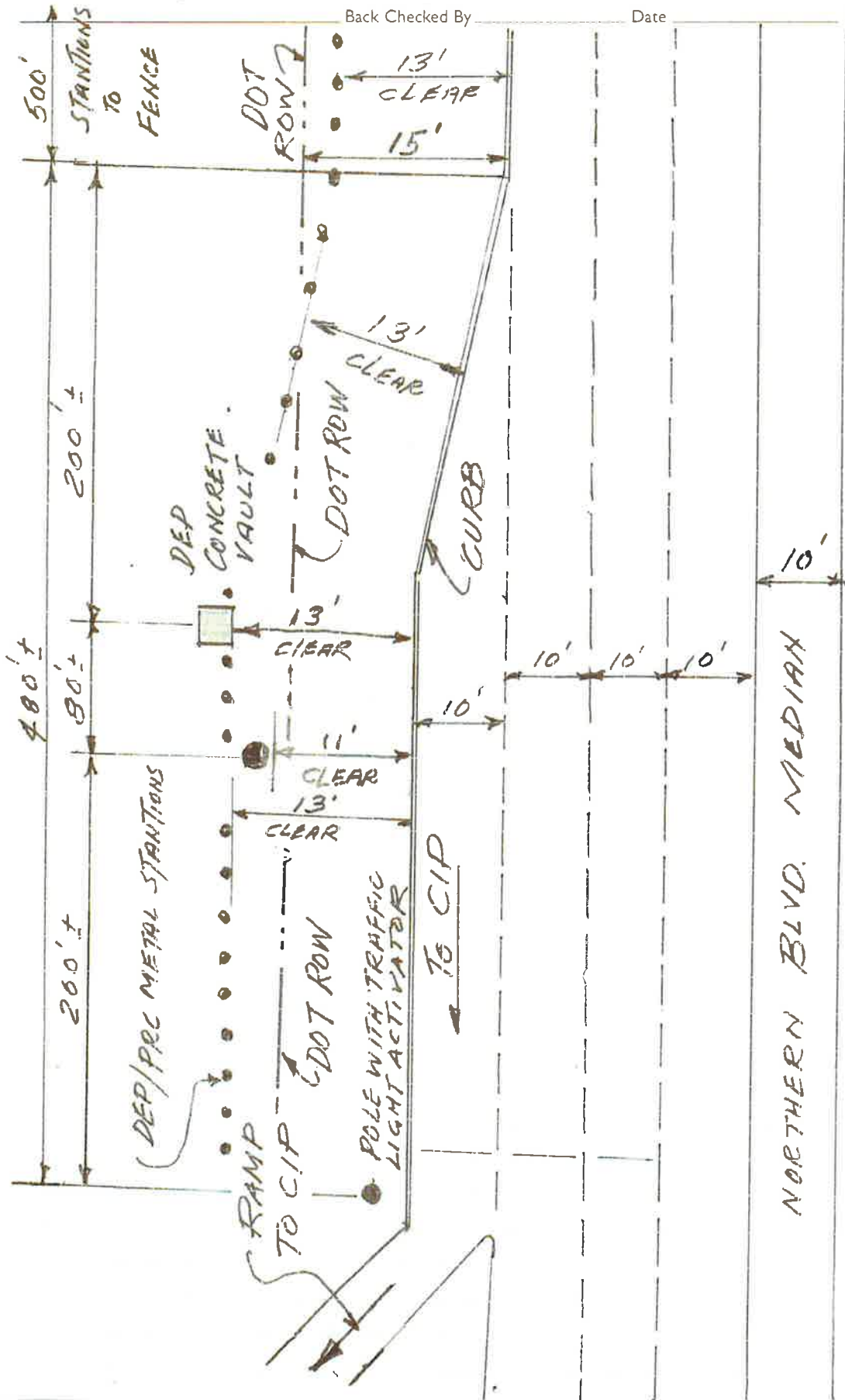
Computations For CIP Made By BA Date 7/13/17 Job No. _____
INTERCHANGE & Checked By _____ Date _____ Sec. No. _____
223rd ST Back Checked By _____ Date _____ Sheet No. _____



Computations For BRIDGE Made By BA Date 7/19/17 Job No. _____
OVER ALLEY CREEK Checked By NO SCALE Date _____ Sec. No. _____
 Back Checked By _____ Date _____ Sheet No. _____



Computations For NB from DOUGLSTON PKW TO CIP Made By RH Date 7/14/17 Job No. _____
 Checked By NO SCALE Date _____ Sec. No. _____
 Back Checked By _____ Date _____ Sheet No. _____



ABOUT 1000'± OF PIPE STATIONS FROM CIP RAMP THEN
 FENCE - BRIDGE (25%) - FENCE FOR 500' TO GOLF DRIVING RANGE
 THEN FENCING FOR 1000' TO DOUGLSTON PARKWAY

PARKING
OFF PEAK
NORTH CURB



15' DOT ROW
FROM CURB

TO
FENCE



OVERFLOW PARKING AT GOLF DRIVING RANGE
6pm - 7/15/17



MOVE POST
FOR MORE
CLEARANCE

SAME ON WEST END

DEP
VAULT
ENCROACHES
ON SW

2
13' CLEAR TO CURB
WEST OF
BRIDGE

STANCHIONS
13' CLEAR
TO CURB

