Working Document for Prospect Lefferts Gardens Traffic Calming
March 2008

This document describes what can be done in the Prospect Lefferts Gardens neighborhood to improve the safety and comfort of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists in the immediate and near future. ~~At several locations, prioritized for improvements by local residents and crash data, more specific traffic calming remedies are recommended. Elsewhere, recommendations are more broadly described because further field work must be completed.~~ This language can be turned into a petition and sign-on letter gathering support from local elected officials, community groups, neighbors, businesses, schools, churches, and others to urge DOT to implement immediate traffic calming measures that will improve safety for all street users.

Rogers Avenue

Speeding on Rogers Avenue is a commonly cited traffic safety concern in Prospect Lefferts Gardens. The excessive street width, the synchronized traffic lights, the lack of bicycling facilities and the basic pedestrian facilities make this a dangerous corridor for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. Many feel that the recent resurfacing of Rogers Avenue has also contributed to increased and heightened speeding.

Rogers Avenue is a DOT designated local truck route and a northbound route for the B49 bus. At 45 feet, the width of the street is much wider than necessary to accommodate two northbound traffic lanes and two curbside parking lanes.

The recommendations are as follows:

Short term: Immediately

1. Improve visibility and communication between motorists, cyclists and pedestrians: One or more parking spots should be removed from each corner of each intersection along Rogers Avenue. This traffic calming measure is called daylighting, and it is used to greatly increase the visibility between all street users. Where each parking spot used to be, flexible bollards should be considered for installation around the outline of what would be a parked car to ensure that motorists make turns at the appropriate angle rather than cutting the corner short. Flexible bollards come in a variety of colors and styles and would have a retro-reflective ribbon at the top so people could see them at night.

2. Give priority to pedestrians: There are three main ways to improve pedestrian safety in the short term ~~by giving priority of street use to people over motorists~~. First, all crosswalks should be clearly marked. Old crosswalks should be re-striped and new crosswalks should be added for continuous traffic calming throughout the corridor. Second, the lights for motorists need to be retimed to force people to drive at and below the speed limit. The current synchronization, an all green phase through the entire corridor simultaneously, creates and encourages a speed zone. Staggering the lights would help this situation. Finally, pedestrians should be given the priority over motorists at every crossing by lengthening the crossing time for pedestrians and timing the first 5-10 seconds of the crossing as an “all ped” phase or lead pedestrian interval. In this

manner, vehicles must wait to begin their turning movements for 5-10 seconds, allowing pedestrians to establish themselves in the crosswalk. This is particularly important for children and senior citizens.

Medium-Term: [Summer/Fall 2008]

1. Improve visibility and communication between motorists, cyclists and pedestrians: ~~Daylighting Rogers Avenue can serve as an initial pilot to the medium term, and more significant build out of curbs to create safe refuges at every block.~~ h former parking spot that was vacated for daylighting can now be permanently filled in, extending the curb into the crosswalk and main road. Similar curb extensions can be installed at the other corners of each intersection. These curb extensions can be lined with non-flexible, steel posted fixed bollards to ensure safety. ~~This traffic calming measure has been proven in NYC to save lives.~~

2. Reduce street width: ~~One of the best ways to control speed is through the width of the street.~~ Narrowing the driving lanes encourages drivers to go slower. The best and least expensive way to narrow Rogers Avenue is with a bicycling lane. Installing a protected bicycle lane on the left hand side of the street would accomplish the goal of taking away ten feet from motorists and provide a safe place for people to ride along Rogers Avenue.

Other potential improvements:

1. Restore two-way traffic flow: One-way streets tend to encourage speeding and decrease pedestrian safety. Returning ~~Skillman~~ enue to its original two-way configuration, in combination with the other enhancements described above, would have the opposite effect.

2. Create A Complete Street: The goal of modifying Rogers Avenue is to create a complete street, ~~which~~ safe and comfortable for pedestrians, cyclists and ~~all people to use~~ Having public spaces where people can interact without the fear of getting run over is not only important for the safety of the community, but for the community's enjoyment ~~of life around the street.~~ This is done by installing the traffic calming measures listed above as well as making each intersection stand out with various paving materials, pedestrian scale lighting, and other amenities that beautify the street.

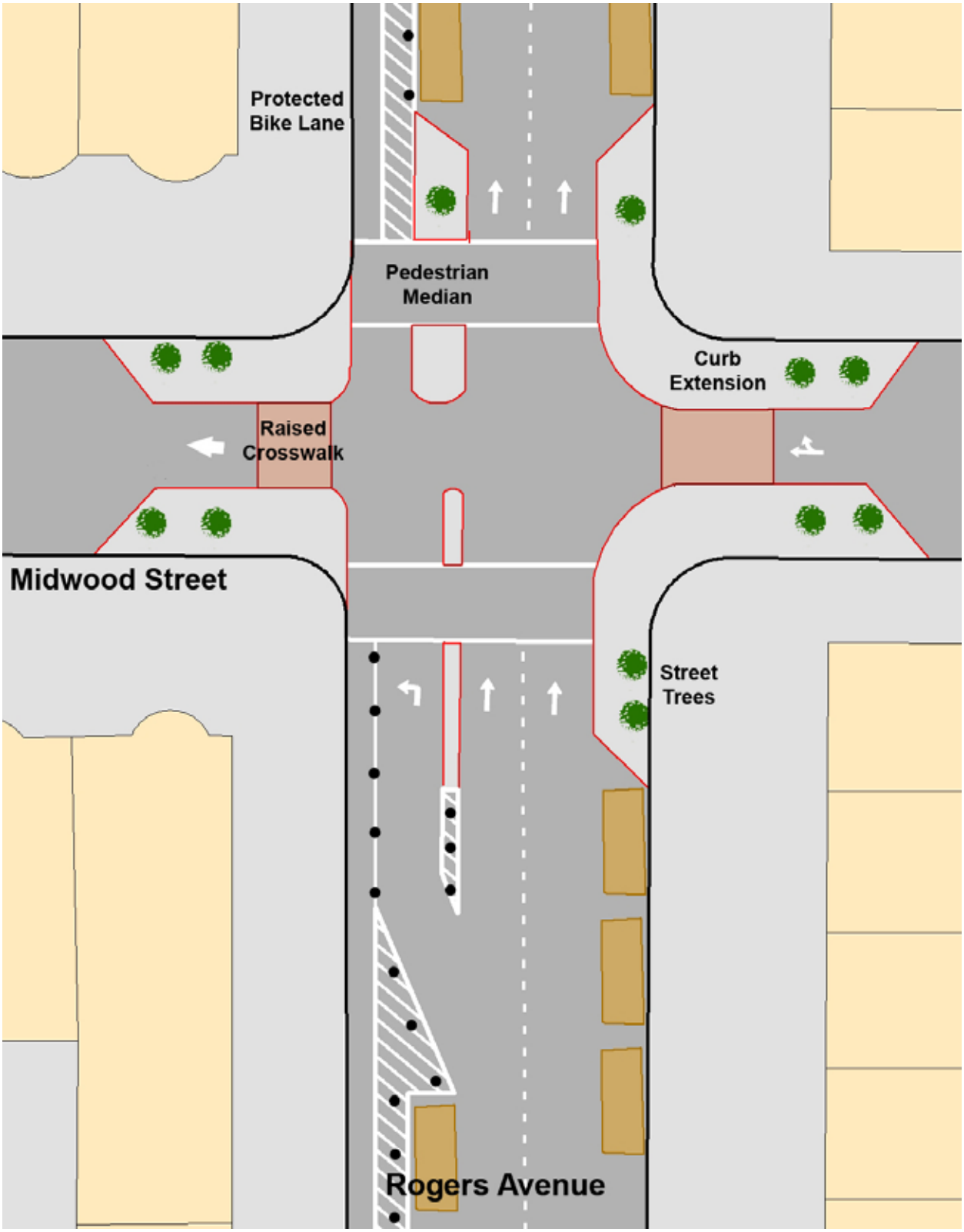

Figure 1. Drawing of Rogers Avenue with a parking protected bicycle lane, curb extensions and raised crosswalks

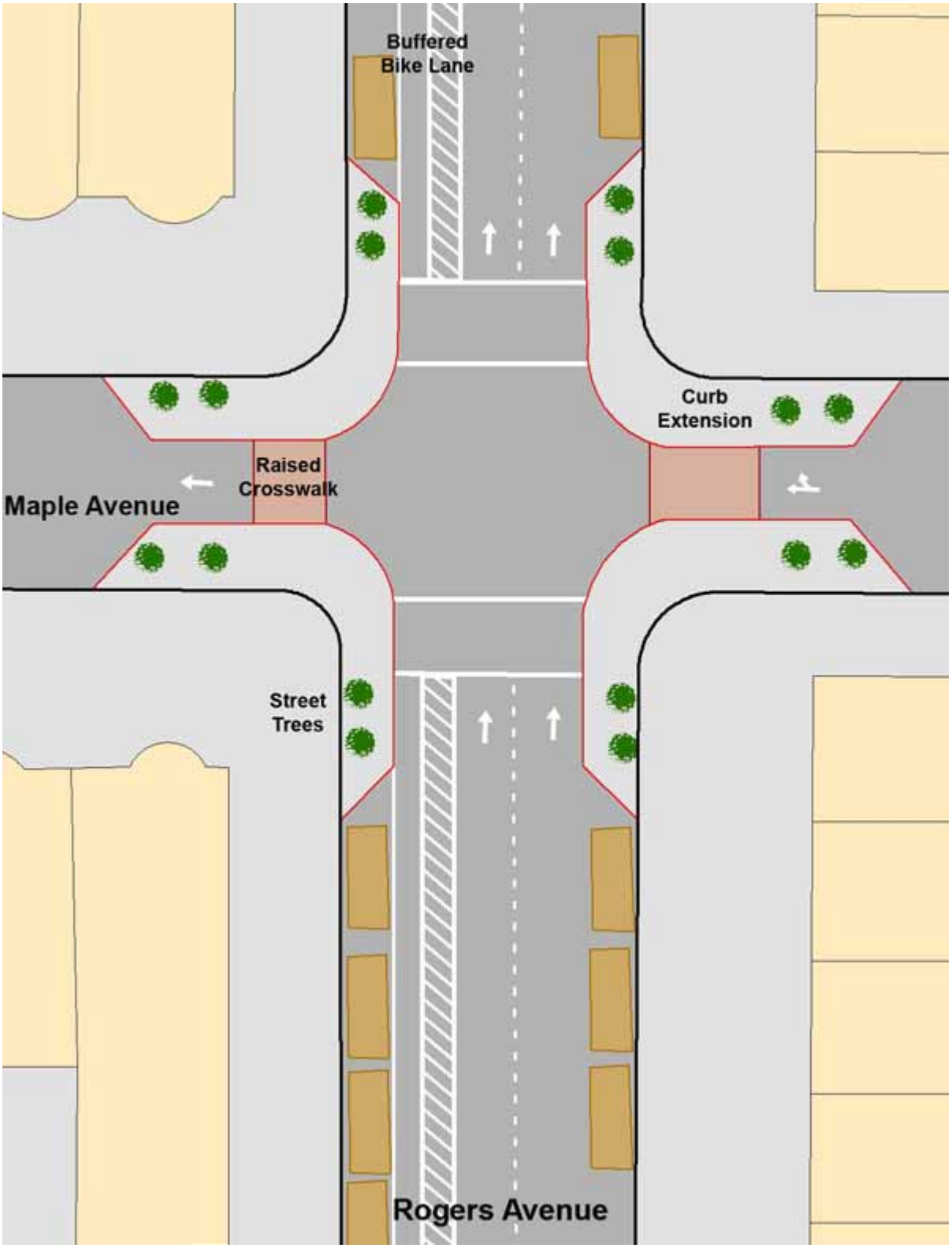

Figure 2. Drawing of Rogers Avenue with a buffered bicycle lane, curb extensions and raised crosswalks

Intersection of Ocean Avenue and Parkside Avenue

The intersection of Ocean Avenue and Parkside Avenue is one of the busiest in Prospect Lefferts Gardens. This five-way pedestrian crossing includes the Pergola Entrance to Prospect Park as well as several public transit stops. The Q train stops inside the Parkside Avenue subway station, the B16 bus runs towards Fort Hamilton and the B12 bus towards East New York. Since most streets running east or west in Prospect Lefferts Garden dead-end off of Flatbush Avenue, this is a main connection to Prospect Park for pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles. Between 1995 and 2005, 22 pedestrians and 18 bicyclists were struck and injured by cars, making it one of the most dangerous intersections for bicyclists in all of Brooklyn.

In 2004, the T.A. Brooklyn Committee began gathering signatures to petition DOT to study the intersection and make changes. T.A. members and residents sent over 400 signatures to then Council Member Yvette Clarke, with a letter asking that she communicate these traffic safety concerns to the City Department of Transportation. DOT responded by making “some improvements like dedicated right and left turns, a parking ban, and the refurbishment of road directional signs. All to be completed by the end of Spring 2005." However, traffic safety continues to concern people at this intersection, where the excessively wide crossings allow drivers to speed through the intersection and turns.

The recommendations are as follows:

Short term: Immediately

1. Improve visibility and communication between motorists, cyclists and pedestrians: “Daylighting” or removing one or more parking spots from each corner of the Ocean Avenue and Parkside Avenue intersection would ~~greatly~~ increase visibility among all street users. ~~Where each parking spot used to be,~~ flexible bollards should be considered ~~for installation around the outline of what would be a parked car~~ to ensure that motorists make turns at the appropriate angle rather than cutting the corner short.

2. Give priority to pedestrians: The Pergola entrance to Prospect Park is a high[illegible]fic entrance to Prospect Park so it is even more important that pedestrians are safe while accessing it. Faded crosswalks should be re-striped and pedestrians should be given priority over motorists at each crossing by lengthening the crossing time for pedestrians and timing the first 5-10 seconds of the crossing as an “all ped” phase. In this manner, vehicles must wait to begin their turning movements for 5-10 seconds, allowing pedestrians to establish themselves in the crosswalk. This is especially important for children and senior citizens.

Medium-Term: [Summer/Fall 2008]

3. Improve visibility and communication between motorists, cyclists and pedestrians: ~~Daylighting at the intersection of Ocean Avenue and Parkside Avenue can serve as an initial pilot to the medium term, and more significant build out of curbs to create safe refuges on each corner.~~ The former parking spots vacated for daylighting can be permanently filled in, extending the curb into the crosswalk and main road. To reinforce

pedestrian safety at the intersection, the curb extensions should be lined with non-flexible, steel posted fixed bollards, which are proven in NYC to save lives. These fixed post bollards could ~~use existing designs to~~ match the design of other Prospect Park gateways.

4. Reduce street width: While turning through the intersection, drivers are frequently observed cutting into adjacent and oncoming traffic lanes to make high speed turns or squeeze around pedestrians instead of properly yielding. Installing a raised median or pedestrian refuge island would force drivers to make safe, slower and more deliberate turns. A pedestrian refuge island is typically wider than a raised median and offers people a safe place to wait while crossing the street. This is particularly important for children and seniors.

5. Improve Safe Access to Prospect Park: ~~Prospect Park provides a safe, traffic-free refuge for a million people every year, and it is critical that people are protected from unnecessary traffic dangers while accessing and using it.~~ As motorists use the Pergola entrance to enter the park, even during car-free hours, it is crucial that changes be made to slow these drivers. Curb extensions and fixed post bollards would improve the visibility of pedestrians and cyclists around the intersection and encourage drivers to make slower, more careful turns into the park. Bollards and curb extensions could also be used to narrow the driveway and encourage slower speeds. Additionally, replaced the worn striped lines of the driveway crosswalk with a raised crosswalk would more effectively calm traffic entering the park and communicate to them that they are entering an area primarily for pedestrians and cyclists.

Other potential improvements:

6. Create a Complete Street: The goal of modifying the intersection of Parkside Avenue and Ocean Avenue is to create a complete street~~, which is safe and comfortable for pedestrians, cyclists and all people to use.~~ Through various paving materials, pedestrian scale lighting, and other amenities that beautify the street, the traffic calming methods listed above could be made to not only protect this space, but further encourage community life and complement the existing features of the intersection, such as the Pergola entrance to Prospect Park and access to the subway and buses.

7. Create a Roundabout: ~~Aside from the traffic calming methods outlined,~~ the intersection of Parkside and Ocean Avenue could be considered for a traffic circle or roundabout, similar to other Prospect Park entrances at Grand Army Plaza, Prospect Park West, and Park Circle. A roundabout would have the benefit of calming all traffic passing around the circle, and reclaiming unnecessary street space for more valuable public uses.

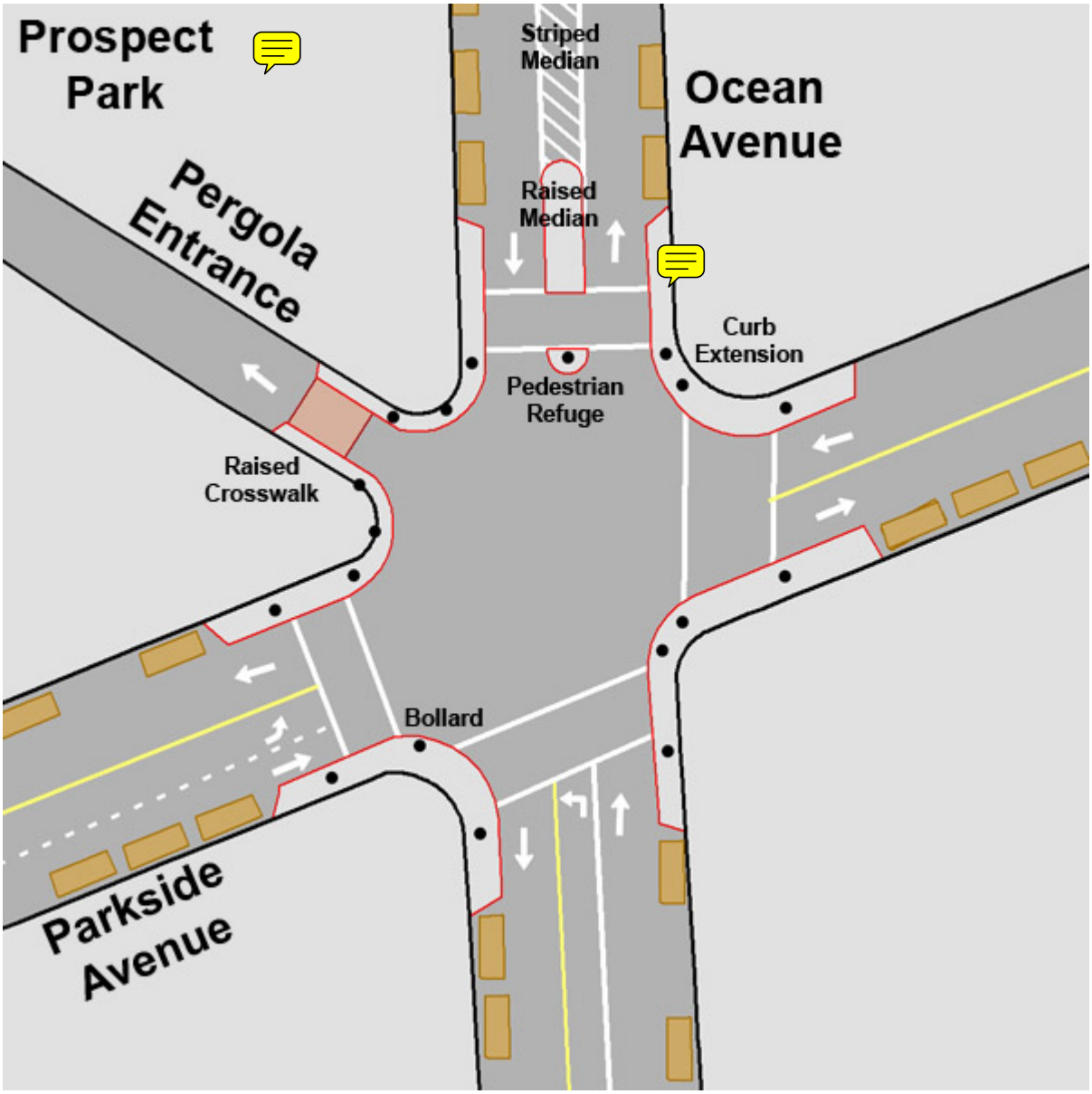

Figure 3. Drawing of Parkside Avenue and Ocean Avenue intersection with curb extensions, raised crosswalk, raised median, pedestrian refuge and bollards

Figure 4. Drawing of Ocean Avenue at Parkside Avenue with curb extensions, raised median, pedestrian refuge, and bollards to calm traffic, shorten crossing distance and protect pedestrians

Intersection of Empire Avenue, Flatbush Avenue and Ocean Avenue

The intersection of Empire Avenue, Flatbush Avenue and Ocean Avenue lies between Prospect Park and the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Two local truck routes cross this intersection, intensifying the already heavy volume of vehicular traffic.

Between 1995 and 2005, 29 pedestrians and 8 cyclists were struck and injured by motorists at this intersection. The excessive width of the street encourages speeding and fast, unpredictable turning movements. This is especially dangerous for pedestrians who have little time to cross the wide crosswalk. Narrowing the intersection would benefit pedestrian safety and slow speeding motorists driving south on Flatbush Avenue and west on Empire Avenue.

Short Term: Immediately

1. Improve visibility and communication between motorists, cyclists and pedestrians: No parking exists adjacent to the intersection. Flexible bollards should be considered for installation around the edge of the parking lane to ensure that motorists make turns at the appropriate angle rather than cutting the corner short.

2. Give priority to pedestrians: Pedestrians should be given the priority over motorists at every crossing by lengthening the crossing time for pedestrians and timing the first 5-10 seconds of the crossing as an "all ped" phase or lead pedestrian interval. In this manner, vehicles must wait to begin their turning movements for 5-10 seconds, allowing pedestrians to establish themselves in the crosswalk. This is especially important for children and senior citizens.

Medium-Term: [Summer/Fall 2008]

3. Improve visibility and communication between motorists, cyclists and pedestrians: ~~The immediate installation of flexible bollards, marking out a curb extension, can serve as an initial pilot to the medium term, and more significant build out of curbs to create safe refuges on each corner. These areas~~ can be permanently filled in, extending the curb into the crosswalk and main road. To reinforce pedestrian safety at the intersection, the curb extensions should be lined with non-flexible, steel posted fixed bollards, ~~which are proven in NYC to save lives.~~ These fixed post bollards could use existing designs to fit with the look and feel of other Prospect Park gateways. Bus bulbs should also be considered to calm traffic and improve efficiency of buses because they do not have to pull into and out of traffic.

4. Reduce street width: ~~Observations show that~~ drivers turning through the intersection frequently cut in to adjacent and oncoming lanes. Installing a raised median or pedestrian refuge island would encourage all drivers to slow down. Most importantly, it would prevent ~~turning~~ drivers from cutting through adjacent and oncoming lanes during their turn. A pedestrian refuge island is typically wider than a raised median and offers people a safe place to wait while crossing the street. These could be installed in the buffered median on Flatbush Ave. Additionally, on Empire Ave, the buffered median could be

extended to Flatbush Ave and built up as protected median for people crossing the street. This is particularly important for children and seniors.

Other Potential Improvements:

5. Create a Complete Street: The goal of modifying the intersection of Flatbush Avenue, Ocean Avenue and Empire Avenue is to create a complete street, ~~which is safe and comfortable for pedestrians, cyclists and all people to use~~. Through various paving materials, pedestrian scale lighting, and other amenities that beautify the street, the traffic calming methods listed above could be made to not only protect this space, but create a more comfortable physical connection between the neighborhood ~~t~~ Prospect Park and the Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

Figure 5. Drawing of Flatbush Ave. at Empire Ave. and Ocean Ave. with raised median, pedestrian refuge, bus bulb, and bollards

Figure 6. Drawing of Empire Avenue with raised median and pedestrian refuge

General Traffic Calming Recommendations for Prospect Lefferts Gardens

Short Term: Immediately

1. Improve visibility and communication between motorists, cyclists and pedestrians: Daylight intersections with flexible bollards to increase visibility, narrow pedestrian crossings and encourage drivers to make controlled turns without cutting corner

2. Give priority to pedestrians: Increase pedestrian crossing time with lead pedestrian interval to give pedestrians time to establish themselves in crosswalk before drivers begin turning. Retime current traffic light synchronization, an all green phase down the entire street, to force people to drive at and below the speed limit.

Medium-Term: [Summer/Fall 2008]

3. Improve visibility and communication between motorists, cyclists and pedestrians: After daylighting, replace flexible bollards with fixed metal bollards and/or concrete curb extensions to protect pedestrians and narrow crossings.

4. Slow and smooth traffic: Replace painted crosswalks alongside avenues with raised crosswalks to slow and control turning movements. These will also help discourage unnecessary cut-through traffic including illegal truck traffic. Install mid-block speed humps to slow and smooth traffic.

5. Reduce street width: Narrow excessively wide streets with protected or buffered bike lanes to further discourage speeding and encourage cycling.

~~Other Potential Improvements:~~

~~3. Create A Complete Street: Install the traffic calming measures listed above as well as make each intersection stand out with various paving materials, pedestrian scale lighting, and other amenities that beautify the street.~~

Figure 7. Drawing of Maple Avenue at Flatbush Avenue with curb extensions, raised median and bollards

Figure 8. Photograph of speed hump on Lincoln Road

Figure 9. Photograph of speed hump on Lincoln Road