

# Lakeside Center Traffic Calming Proposal

## June 2008

**Presented by PLG Public Works,  
Sustainable Flatbush,  
and Transportation Alternatives**

The Prospect Park Alliance, in conjunction with the Department of Transportation (DOT), is currently studying the intersections of Ocean Avenue & Parkside Avenue, and Ocean Avenue & Lincoln Road as part of the Park's planned Lakeside Center development. As residents of Flatbush, we are excited about the Lakeside project and look forward to all of the new amenities for the park. However, we wish to express our concerns about the existing transportation network, the affected intersections, and the new additional burdens placed on the system. We hope that the new designs and plans for the park will improve the safety and comfort of all park users but, in particular, pedestrians and cyclists using the park.

### **OCEAN AVENUE AND PARKSIDE AVENUE INTERSECTION**

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 at the Parkside Avenue subway station, the B16 bus runs towards Fort Hamilton and the B12 bus towards East New York. This is the main connection to Prospect Park for pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles in PLG and greater Flatbush. Between 1995 and 2005, more than 22 pedestrians and 18 bicyclists were struck and injured by cars. *According to Crashstat.org, it is one the most dangerous intersections for cyclists in Brooklyn.*

In 2004, the DOT responded to a request from Transportation Alternatives and local residents to improve safety at the intersection by making some improvements, such as refurbishing road directional signs. However, traffic safety continues to be a major concern at this intersection, where the excessively wide crossings allow drivers to speed through the intersection and turns.

### **Changes ahead**

Cars are currently allowed to enter the Park via the Pergola 24/7 in order to access the Wollman Rink parking lot. As part of the Lakeside Center project, the Prospect Park Alliance plans to move the parking lot to nearby Breeze Hill. Cars headed for the lot will then enter and exit via Lincoln Road, and the Ocean & Parkside entrance will be closed to cars, except

during the morning rush-hour commute. While we support these changes, more needs to be done to insure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists entering and exiting the park here.

The recommendations are as follows:

**Give priority to pedestrians:** The Pergola entrance to Prospect Park is a high-traffic walkway so it is crucial for pedestrians to feel safe while accessing it.

- Pedestrians should be given priority over motorists at each crossing by 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.

*To illustrate the importance of this changes, we’ve created a video showing what it’s like for pedestrians to cross Ocean Avenue on an average weekday afternoon. See: [www.hawthornestreet.com/2008/05/video-a-closer.html](http://www.hawthornestreet.com/2008/05/video-a-closer.html)*

- One of the key conflicts is from drivers heading east on Parkside turning left onto Ocean. A left turn signal would benefit all users, and especially pedestrians crossing in and out of the park.
- Faded crosswalks should be re-striped or otherwise made more visible.
- Each intersection should have stop lines in advance of the crosswalks.

**Reduce street width:** While turning through the intersection, drivers are frequently observed cutting into adjacent and oncoming traffic lanes to make high



**Potential conflicts at Ocean Avenue & Parkside Avenue. According to Crashstat.org, the intersection is one of the most dangerous in Brooklyn.**

speed turns or squeeze around pedestrians instead of properly yielding. Installing a raised median or pedestrian refuge island would force drivers to make safer, 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, seniors, and people crossing at night.

**Traffic Calming Design at The Pergola:** As motorists use the Pergola entrance to enter the park, 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. Additionally, replacing the worn striped lines of the driveway crosswalk with a raised crosswalk would more effectively calm traffic entering the park and communicate that they are entering an area primarily for pedestrians and cyclists.

**Improve Bicycle Access at The Pergola.** Currently, bicyclists exiting the park from the East Drive to the Pergola must make an 135 degree turn and ride contraflow down the one-way street entrance. A well-designed Class 1 or Class 2 bicycle facility will lower the number of conflicts between bikes, cars and pedestrians and encourage all users to ride and drive more consistently. Bike boxes could help push vehicles back from the crosswalk and improve safety for pedestrians as well.

#### **Other potential improvements:**

**Create a Complete Street:** The goal of modifying the intersection of Parkside Avenue and Ocean Avenue is to create a complete street. 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.

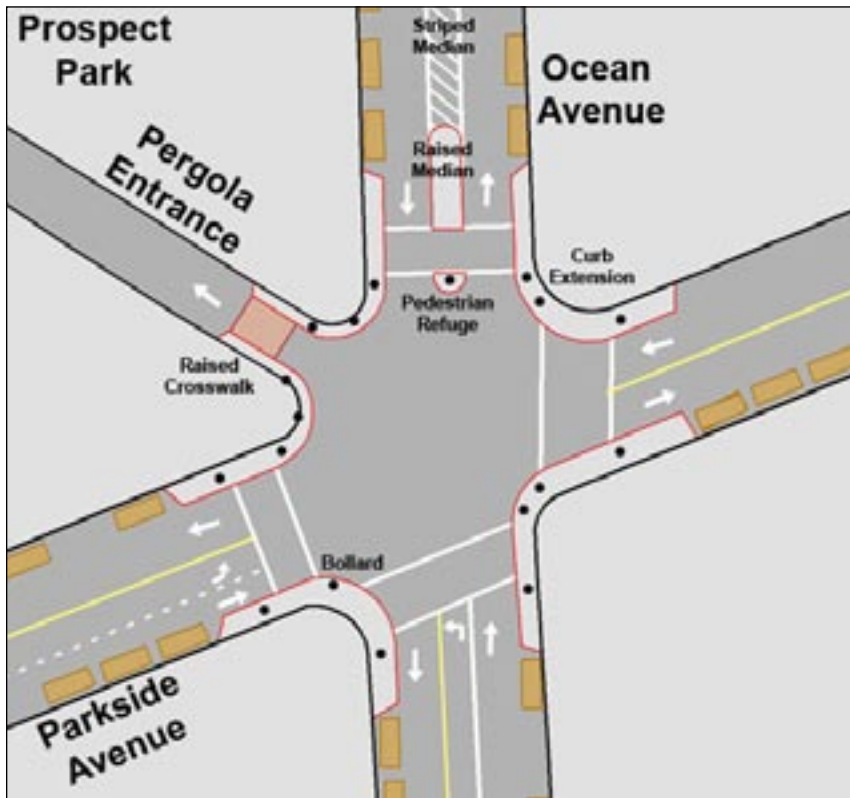


Figure 1. Parkside Avenue and Ocean Avenue intersection with curb extensions, raised crosswalk, raised median, pedestrian refuge and bollards.

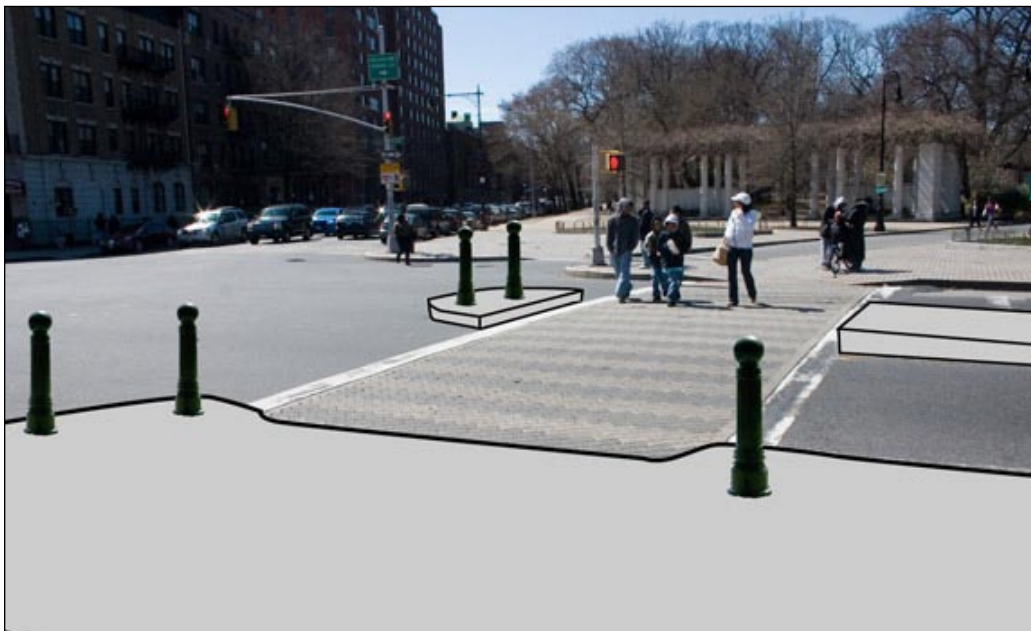


Figure 2. Ocean Avenue at Parkside Avenue with curb extensions, raised median, pedestrian refuge, and bollards to calm traffic, shorten crossing distance and protect pedestrians.

## Ocean Avenue and Lincoln Road Intersection

This intersection is currently the exit for cars leaving Wollman Rink in Prospect Park. Under the Park's new plan, this intersection will be both an entrance and an exit for cars.

Changes to this area, currently the subject of a DOT study, are bound to be substantial. With this in mind, we include here only a couple of very general recommendations at this time:

**Lead Pedestrian Interval.** Pedestrians face a similar problem here that they do at the Parkside intersection: cars given the green light often turn as quickly as possible onto Ocean in order to “beat” pedestrians crossing the street, effectively trapping them in the road and creating a dangerous situation. As recommended previously, pedestrians should be given a 5–10 second “head start” at the crossing, as an “all ped” phase. In this manner, vehicles must wait to begin turning, allowing pedestrians to establish themselves in the crosswalk. This is especially important for children, senior citizens, and people using the park at night.



**A lead pedestrian interval at the Lincoln Road entrance to Prospect Park would allow parents using the playground to start crossing before cars “beat” them into the crosswalk.**

**Improve Bicycle Access.** Well-designed, clearly marked bike lanes are needed both inside the park and on Lincoln Road.

**Safe playground.** The Lincoln Road entrance is next to a playground. The Prospect Park Alliance and the DOT should implement traffic calming techniques and insure that the increased car traffic doesn't jeopardize the safety, health, and pleasure of children using the playground.



**Bike lanes on Lincoln Road need to be dedicated and clearly marked.**