

OFFICE OF THE BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT
THE BRONX COUNTY BUILDING
851 GRAND CONCOURSE
BRONX, NEW YORK 10451

RUBEN DIAZ JR.
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

TEL. 718-590-3500
FAX. 718-590-3537
E-MAIL: rdiazjr@bronxbp.nyc.gov

**Office of the Bronx Borough President
Ruben Diaz Jr.
Testimony
The New York City Council
Committee on Transportation**

Re: Resolution No. 15

Good afternoon Chairperson Rodriguez and members of the Committee on Transportation. I am here today to present testimony on behalf of Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. in support of Resolution No. 15.

Since the award of a federal grant from the United States Department of Transportation in 2010, the South Bronx community has worked intensively with city agencies, including our office, to develop a vision for the Sheridan Expressway and surrounding neighborhoods. The Sheridan Hunts Point Land Use and Transportation Study was pursued in response to community calls for new development opportunities, better access to the Bronx River waterfront and safer, more livable streets.

Following numerous public meetings and a comprehensive discussion with all local community interests, including those affiliated with the Hunts Point Market, a vision for the Bruckner and Sheridan Expressways was achieved in the spring of 2013. The highlights of this vision include:

- Decommissioning the Sheridan Expressway where this expressway is at grade level and reconstruct this section based on a boulevard design, (Sheridan Boulevard)
- Install a pedestrian crossings along the Sheridan Boulevard offering improved access to the Bronx River and Starlight Park
- Construct access ramps to the Bruckner Expressway at Oak Point Avenue, offering improved access to the Hunts Point Market while reducing such traffic on local streets.

The New York City Department of Transportation's extensive modeling has shown that these benefits could be realized with no negative impact on regional travel. The model shows that travel time for most drivers in the study area would improve with these changes, and that there would be no backup onto the Cross Bronx Expressway, the area's most congested roadway.

The changes have the possibility of transforming the South Bronx by opening up new development opportunities and greatly improving quality of life and business climate. After over two decades of discussing the future of this highway, the time has come to take action. I look forward to working with the City Council pursuant to Reso No. 15 to implement these study recommendations.



We Stay / Nos Quedamos Committee, Inc.

754 Melrose Avenue, Bronx, NY 10451

Phone: (718) 585-2323 / Fax: (718) 585-8628

E-mail: info@nosquedamos.org

Website: www.nosquedamos.org

A Coalition of Homeowners, Tenants, Property Owners, Institutions, and Business Persons Who are Resolved to remain a Part of The Melrose Community and Become Equal Partners With the City of New York in Our Community's Redevelopment.

Statement by: Ana Melendez, We Stay Nos Quedamos/SBRWA

Good afternoon, my name is Ana Melendez, I am the Program Manager at We Stay Nos Quedamos. First I would like to thank you for your time in reviewing Resolution 15 and hearing our testimonies today.

We Stay Nos Quedamos has been a member of the Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance for over 10 years. Our organization has improved the quality of life for the South Bronx community through the development of green and healthy affordable housing and communities. We participated in early air quality studies and are well aware of the correlation between poor land use and housing as a contributing factor to poor health. The transportation network and highway infrastructure of the South Bronx have produced negative health, safety and economic outcomes for residents and has contributed to some of the highest asthma rates in the United States.

The recommendations from the Sheridan Expressway-Hunts Point Transportation and Land Use Study (SEHP Study) mirror long-standing community priorities for the area which includes years of striving for a safer, more sustainable community that address critical issues of affordable housing, healthy living, and safer communities.

The City recommendations revolve around three large-scale improvements:

- Construction of ramps for direct access from the Bruckner Expressway to the Hunts Point peninsula,
- Closure of two Sheridan ramps that pour truck traffic into busy pedestrian intersections; Hunts Point Avenue/Bruckner Boulevard and Westchester/Whitlock Avenues,
- Conversion of the Sheridan Expressway into a boulevard that calms traffic and implements extensive pedestrian safety improvements near the Bronx River waterfront.

These changes would make way for new development in the South Bronx, which may include new opportunities for affordable housing, open space and possibly new business as well.

We ask that you support New York City Council Resolution 0015-2014 (Resolution 15) which has been a community priority and we see this resolution as an opportunity to move the pendulum forward. If implemented, these recommendations will dramatically improve resident health and pedestrian safety.

Thank you!

TRI-STATE TRANSPORTATION CAMPAIGN



Testimony of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign on Resolution 0015-2014

My name is Vincent Pellecchia, and I am the General Counsel for the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, a non-profit organization working toward a more balanced, transit-friendly and equitable transportation system in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. Tri-State is one of seven member organizations comprising the Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance, created in 1998 to advocate for the advancement of a community-based transportation and land use plan for social and environmental justice in the South Bronx. The six other Alliance members are Mothers on the Move, Nos Quedamos, Pratt Center for Community Development, The POINT CDC and Sustainable South Bronx.

Tri-State supports Resolution 15 and strongly encourages each member of the Committee to vote in favor of Resolution 15. The current moment of consensus in the community for making these changes must not be squandered. Resolution 15 will go a long way towards showing Albany that it should prioritize bringing health, safety and economic improvements to a community that has endured the burdens of the current highway network for too long.

For over six decades, the transportation network of the South Bronx has produced negative health, safety and economic outcomes for residents and businesses. The Hunts Point Peninsula is home to many industries, including the largest food distribution center in the nation. Yet for the thousands of daily truck trips going to and from these businesses, there is no direction connection from any highway. Rather, all vehicles including large trucks must exit the highway system and traverse local streets – in some cases for up to two miles – when entering and exiting the peninsula.

Forcing trucks onto local streets causes all sorts of problems in the South Bronx, from health and safety issues for residents, to aggravation for truck drivers and lost productivity for local businesses. In addition to severely compromising pedestrian safety, particularly around the Bruckner and Sheridan expressways, the current roadway configuration contributes to asthma rates in the South Bronx that are some of the highest in the nation.

In December 2013, the NYC Department of Transportation and the NYC Department of City Planning completed The Sheridan Expressway-Hunts Point Transportation and Land Use Study (Sheridan Study). The recommendations from the Sheridan Study largely mirror long-standing community priorities for the area and, if implemented, will dramatically improve business efficiency, resident health and pedestrian safety.

One of the Sheridan Study's three large-scale recommendations is the subject of this Resolution 15, namely, construct ramps that provide direct vehicular access from the Bruckner Expressway into the Hunts Point Peninsula.

These ramps would produce many clear benefits for the South Bronx, including:

- Increase efficiency for Hunts Point Peninsula businesses by allowing trucks entering and exiting the peninsula which saves time over weaving through local streets.
- Create safer conditions for pedestrians by moving trucks off local streets. A critical goal in and of itself, creating safer pedestrian conditions also clearly comports with Mayor de Blasio's Vision Zero plan.
- Lay the groundwork for ensuring safer conditions for expected pedestrian increases related to the upgrade of the Hunts Point number 6 subway line station, the creation of the Hunts Point Metro North station at Bruckner Boulevard and the planned and anticipated development near the Sheridan Expressway.
- Complement the Sheridan Study's recommendation to convert the Sheridan Expressway to a neighborhood-friendly boulevard.

Tri-State supports this effort and we urge you to pass Resolution 15.

Thank you.



**Advancing the Community Plan to Transform the Sheridan Expressway Corridor
In Support of Resolution 15
Testimony to Transportation Committee, City Council
Chair, Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez**

**Elena Conte, Senior Organizer for Planning and Policy
March 25, 2014**

On behalf of Pratt Center for Community Development, a proud member of the Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance (SBRWA or “the Alliance”), it is my extreme pleasure to testify before you today in support of Resolution 15; calling on the State and the City to partner closely together, with local communities, to advance the recommendations of the City’s Sheridan Expressway Hunts Point (SEHP) Land Use and Transportation Study. The Study is otherwise known as the TIGER study, because of its federal funding source. Yet as catchy as both those names are, we prefer to use the name common among the Alliance and in the South Bronx; the plan to transform the Sheridan corridor that the City’s recommendations largely reflect, is known as the Community Plan.

Fifteen years ago, the local environmental justice and community development organizations in the South Bronx that form the Alliance partnered with technical assistance groups, including Pratt Center, to craft a plan that would address dangerous air quality, deadly streets, divided communities, lack of open space and waterfront access, lack of access to quality jobs and badly needed affordable housing, while making it safer and easier for commercial vehicles to access the Hunts Point Food Distribution Center. The answer was found in undoing the legacy of Robert Moses’ incomplete and ineffective Sheridan Expressway and in reconfiguring the transportation network into a safe and efficient set of connections that serves all users better.

Years of community meetings, neighborhood organizing, visioning, strategizing, modeling, improving the plan, coalition building and advocacy, led by the Alliance, created the Community Plan. The unified support we built with our local elected officials and their strong efforts also created the political opportunity to conduct a formal hard look at the issues. Major portions of the Community Plan were finally codified through a City-led process funded by US DOT that, for the first time, did what community residents had been calling for in a planning approach – it looked at the relationship between the transportation network, land use and the lives of those land users, in a simultaneous and interconnected way.

The result of the two year process is a set of consensus recommendations that enjoys broad support across multiple neighborhoods and interests and that, when implemented, will do no less than be the most singularly transformative project the South Bronx will see – improving the health and quality of life for

existing residents who are overwhelmingly low income and people of color, while improving their access to economic opportunity and safe, decent affordable housing. It will also support the regional economy by creating safe pedestrian access for transit at Hunts Point Avenue – the existing 6 train, which serves more than 60,000 riders daily and the future MetroNorth Station; by improving the network links at the interchange of the Bruckner and Sheridan Expressways, and by creating direct vehicle access from the Bruckner Expressway into the Hunts Point peninsula, supporting the Food Distribution Center and other commerce in the area.

It will do this while closing dangerous and unnecessary exit and entrance ramps, removing trucks from local streets. By transforming the on-grade portion of the Sheridan into a boulevard and by shifting its footprint, a literal and figurative barrier to the parks, the waterfront and to the development of new affordable housing will be removed. Cross-walks across the Sheridan will prevent the life-risking mad-dash across a highway that young residents regularly make in order to get to Starlight Park, saving lives and dramatically improving the environmental quality of the area.

The Community Plan, when implemented, will improve the lives of South Bronx residents, and it will be a shining example of national significance of the power of community-based planning to solve issues that government cannot tackle alone.

We have described – and the appendix materials illustrate – the major features of an extensive plan. Yet as inspiring as these major elements are, the strength of the Plan is that it contains hundreds of recommendations, touching the neighborhoods of West Farms, Crotona Park East, Longwood, Hunts Point, and Bronx River that can be commenced immediately. Local residents can begin experiencing relief from the legacy of top-down, racist planning in the South Bronx *tomorrow*.

All that is needed is a proactive and cooperative partnership between the State, the City and the local community. That is what Resolution 15 calls for and that is why we are here to enthusiastically support its passage. We thank the Council for its efforts introducing it. We look forward to continuing to work with all our partners in the South Bronx and with you, Mayor de Blasio, and Governor Cuomo and all his agencies to make this historic plan a reality.

NOTE: This testimony was prepared by the Pratt Center for Community Development. It does not necessarily reflect the official position of Pratt Institute.



**Testimony from Angela Tovar, Director of Policy and Research, SSBX
City Council Transportation Committee Hearing on Resolution 15
March 25, 2014**

My name is Angela Tovar; I am the Director of Policy and Research at Sustainable South Bronx, a nonprofit and environmental justice organization located on the Hunts Point Peninsula. We are also one of 7 member organizations of the Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance.

I want to begin by thanking Chairperson Rodriguez and the Transportation Committee for the opportunity to testify. I am here to urge the passage of Resolution 15, which calls upon the State to implement the recommendations of the Sheridan Expressway-Hunts Point Transportation and Land Use Study.

The Sheridan Expressway corridor is overburdened with disproportionate levels of commercial traffic, heavy industry and noxious land uses that have resulted in health and quality of life issues for its residents. Hunts Point in particular hosts 15 waste transfer stations, a sewage treatment plant, four power plants and dozens of scrap metal and auto yards. Hunts Point also is host to the Hunts Point Food Distribution Center, the largest food distribution center in the nation. It is estimated that cumulatively these industries bring 15,000 diesel truck trips to the area each day. Even worse, because of the current configuration of the transportation network, commercial vehicles travel over a mile on local streets to reach Hunts Point coming either from 138th to the South or Westchester and Whitlock to the North to access Hunts Point. As a result, local residents are directly impacted by diesel emissions. The roadway configuration contributes to some of the highest asthma rates in the United States 8 times higher than the national average and severely compromises pedestrian safety, particularly around the Bruckner and Sheridan expressways.

In June 2013, the city concluded the Sheridan Expressway-Hunts Point Land Use Study a two year, \$1.5 million effort for which the Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance advocated. And as a community and an Alliance, we feel that the final recommendations produced by the study align with community priorities present a good foundation on which to realize positive transformation in the South Bronx.

These include:

- **Creating Direct Access from the Bruckner Expressway to the Hunts Point Peninsula** – This alleviates traffic from local streets, supports economic development in the area and shifts traffic from Hunts Point Ave making crossing safer for pedestrians and transit riders.



- **Creating New Developable Land for Community Uses:** This land can be redeveloped to meet community needs for affordable house, local jobs, new greenspace and community waterfront access.
- **Pedestrian Access to the Bronx River:** Starlight Park and other waterfront destinations are currently extremely difficult to access the community awaits the design of new crosswalks and an impact analysis of the crosswalks.
- **Closure of the southbound Sheridan off-ramp at Westchester Ave and shifting the on-ramp away from Hunts Point Ave and Bruckner –** These changes would dramatically reduce truck traffic on local streets and will increase pedestrian safety at the two intersections that are amongst the most dangerous in the Bronx.

We stand here before you to express our support for a plan that is mutually beneficial for the local businesses and the community residents. We strongly urge you to pass Reso. 15 not only to send a strong message to the Governor and our State Legislators about the critical nature of this project, but also to symbolize the Mayor's and Councils commitment to safer streets, vibrant communities and the transformation of the South Bronx.

FOR THE RECORD



**Testimony of Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice
(a member organization of the Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance)
City Council Transportation Committee Hearing on Resolution 15
March 25, 2014**

My name is David Shuffler and I am the Executive Director of Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice. Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice is a non-profit organization dedicated to the positive transformation of impoverished neighborhoods. We work to attain this through our mission to re-imagine and rebuild the Bronx River and Soundview/Bruckner neighborhoods. We conduct our work through a three-pronged transformative approach: Transforming People, Transforming Systems, and Transforming Infrastructure.

As a member organization of the Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance, we have a shared mission to advance a community-based transportation and land use plan for social and environmental justice in the South Bronx.

We are excited to be testifying before the Transportation Committee today on the subject of Resolution 15, which calls upon on the State to implement the recommendations of the Sheridan Expressway-Hunts Point Transportation and Land Use Study. We would like to thank Council Member Rodriguez for bringing this resolution to a hearing, as well as Council Members Vacca, Reynoso and Levin for their co-sponsorship of the measure. Last but certainly not least we want to thank Council Members Arroyo and Palma whose leadership on this issue led to the drafting and introduction of the resolution.

For over six decades, the transportation network and highway infrastructure of the South Bronx have produced negative health, safety and economic outcomes for residents. The South Bronx is host to the Hunts Point Food Distribution Center, the largest food distribution center in the nation. With no direct connection to any highway, the 15,000+ daily truck trips associated with the Center must use neighborhood streets to enter and exit Hunts Point, causing health and safety issues for residents, aggravation for truck drivers and lost productivity for local businesses. The current roadway configuration contributes to some of the highest asthma rates in the United States and severely compromises pedestrian safety, particularly around the Bruckner and Sheridan expressways.

In 2006, the Alliance convened a series of neighborhood-based charrettes to address the these issues, immersing with a series of transportation and land use priorities which came to be known as the Community Plan. In December 2013, the NYC Dept. of Transportation and the NYC Dept. of City Planning completed The Sheridan Expressway-Hunts Point Transportation and Land Use Study (SEHP Study). The recommendations from the SEHP Study largely mirror long-standing community priorities for the area. If implemented, these recommendations will dramatically improve resident health and pedestrian safety.

Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice
NYC City Council - Transportation Committee
March 25, 2014

The City recommendations revolve around three large-scale improvements:

- Construction of ramps for direct vehicular access from the Bruckner Expressway to the Hunts Point peninsula, home to the Food Distribution Center and other businesses (**slide 1**),
- Closure of two Sheridan ramps that pour truck traffic into busy pedestrian intersections; Hunts Point Avenue/Bruckner Boulevard and Westchester/Whitlock Avenues (**slide 2**),
- Conversion of the Sheridan Expressway – an incomplete Robert Moses-era highway – into a boulevard that calms traffic and creates access to the parks along the Bronx River waterfront (**slides 3 and 4**).

These and the other changes recommended by the SEHP Study team would take thousands of commercial vehicles off of local streets, increase pedestrian safety, create better access to green spaces and create the potential for affordable housing and local economic development – all of which are desperately needed in the South Bronx.

However, there are no guarantees that the recommendations will be implemented. Implementation requires commitments from both the City and the State.

Constructing ramps from the highway directly into the Hunts Point peninsula will get trucks off local streets, where they create a physical threat to pedestrians. No place is this clearer than at the intersection of Hunts Point Avenue and Bruckner Boulevard, current site of the Hunts Point Avenue subway station and future site of the Metro North train station. This intersection has seen almost 100 pedestrian and bicycle crashes since 1995, including several fatalities.

With a car ownership rate of well under 30%, the South Bronx is first and foremost a pedestrian community, yet our streets are among the most dangerous for pedestrians in the City. Injuries and deaths in the area are preventable, especially if the City implements recommendations to convert the Sheridan to a boulevard and works with the State to build the ramps into Hunts Point.

We are hopeful that Resolution 15 will be passed at tomorrow's full City Council stated meeting, not only to send a strong message to Albany about the urgency of this project but also because passage will indicate the commitment of the New York City Council to do its part in transforming the South Bronx. We look forward to working with Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Mark-Viverito and the entire City Council to implement these critical improvements, which are fully in line with the Vision Zero Action Plan and which begin to address the inequality in the built environment that is the result of decades of environmental racism and poor transportation planning. We must together seize the current moment in which Hunts Point businesses, South Bronx community groups and elected officials have forged consensus, in order to bring health, safety and economic opportunity to our communities for whom it has been deferred for far too long.

###



FOR THE RECORD

New York City Environmental Justice Alliance
166A 22nd Street
Brooklyn, NY 11232
347-841-4410
eddie@nyc-eja.org
www.NYC-EJA.org

March 25, 2014

Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez
New York City Councilmember
Transportation Committee Chair
250 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

Re: City Council Transportation Hearing on Resolution 15 Statement Of Support

Dear Chair Rodriguez:

Founded in 1991, the NYC Environmental Justice Alliance (NYC-EJA) is a 501(c)3 non-profit citywide network linking grassroots organizations from low-income communities of color in their struggle for environmental justice. NYC-EJA coalesces its member organizations around common issues to advocate for improved environmental conditions and against inequitable burdens by coordinating campaigns designed to inform City and State policies.

We are supporters of the Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance (SBRWA), which for 15 years has led the campaign to transform the highways that burden the South Bronx. Several NYC-EJA member organizations participate directly as active partners.

I write to ask for your support in the passage of Resolution 15, which was introduced last month and referred to the Transportation Committee. Resolution 15 calls on the State to implement recommendations from the Sheridan Expressway-Hunts Point Transportation and Land Use Study (SEHP Study), which was completed in December by the NYC Dept. of Transportation and the NYC Dept. of City Planning. The recommendations from the SEHP Study mirror a long-standing community agenda to address resident health and pedestrian safety issues.

The recommendations revolve around three large-scale improvements all of which are in line with the goals of **Vision Zero**. These include:

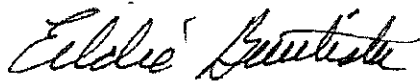
- Construction of ramps for direct vehicular access from the Bruckner Expressway to the Hunts Point peninsula, home to the Food Distribution Center and other businesses,
- Closure of two Sheridan ramps that pour truck traffic into busy pedestrian intersections; Hunts Point Avenue/Bruckner Boulevard and Westchester/Whitlock Avenues,

- Conversion of the Sheridan Expressway into a boulevard with extensive pedestrian safety improvements near the Bronx River waterfront.

In addition to supporting the passage of Resolution 15, we hope you will join us for a press conference on the steps of City Hall to deliver a strong message to Albany for implementation of health and safety measures on some of New York City's most dangerous and polluted streets.

If you have questions or require any additional information, please contact me at eddie@nyc-eja.org and (347) 841-4410 or Dave Powell at the Alliance, dave.sbrwa@gmail.com, (718) 328-5622 x17.

With best regards,



Eddie Bautista
Executive Director
NYC Environmental Justice Alliance (NYC-EJA)

CC:
c/o Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance
Office of Council Member Annabel Palma
Office of Council Member Maria de la Carmen Arroyo

March 25, 2014



Honorable Ydanis Rodriguez
Chairperson, City Council Committee on Transportation
New York City Council
250 Broadway, Suite 1731
New York, NY 10007

Re: Support for Resolution 0015-2014

Dear Council Member Rodriguez and Transportation Committee Members:

I am writing to express my support for New York City Council Resolution 0015-2014 (Resolution 15). Introduced last month and currently referred to the Transportation Committee, Resolution 15 calls on Governor Cuomo and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) to implement recommendations from the Sheridan Expressway-Hunts Point Transportation and Land Use Study (SEHP Study). The SEHP Study was a multi-agency study of changes to the South Bronx highway system that could vastly improve both environmental and economic conditions in the area. The SEHP Study recommendations issued at the end of last year mirror a long-standing community agenda to address resident health and pedestrian safety issues in the South Bronx, as well as improve efficiency and economic conditions for South Bronx/Hunts Point-based businesses.

The recommendations revolve around three large-scale improvements that not only provide environmental and economic improvements but also align with the goals of **Vision Zero**. These include:

- Construction of ramps for direct vehicular access from the Bruckner Expressway to the Hunts Point peninsula, home to the Food Distribution Center and other businesses,
- Closure of two Sheridan ramps that pour truck traffic into busy pedestrian intersections – Hunts Point Avenue/Bruckner Boulevard and Westchester/Whitlock Avenues,
- Conversion of the Sheridan Expressway into a boulevard with extensive pedestrian safety improvements providing residents direct access to the Bronx River waterfront.

Although the SEHP Study concluded in December upon issuance of a report detailing the recommended improvements, no changes will be made unless the Governor and NYSDOT move the ball forward. Resolution 15 calls on them to take this vital next step towards improving the economic, environmental and safety conditions in the South Bronx.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda R. Cox".

Linda R. Cox, Executive Director

cc:

Office of Council Member Annabel Palma
Office of Council Member Maria de la Carmen Arroyo



OLIN

Honorable Ydanis Rodriquez
Chairperson, City Council Committee on Transportation
New York City Council
250 Broadway, Suite 1731
New York, NY 10007

SUBJECT: **Support for Resolution 0015-2014**

25 March 2014

Dear Council Member Rodriguez and Transportation Committee Members:

For the past nine months our firm has been working with the Hunts Point community as part of the landmark federal initiative Rebuild by Design. Our study of vulnerability in the region in the wake of Hurricane Sandy led us to develop a resilience plan for the Food Distribution Center and the underserved neighborhood it shares its borders with. With 20,000 trucks a week passing through these community streets and the attendant difficulties crossing the Bruckner at almost any hour of the day, it is clear that the Oak Point traffic routes would improve safety in the community and efficiency in the food market supply chain.

I am writing to express my support for New York City Council Resolution 0015-2014 (Resolution 15). Introduced last month and currently referred to the Transportation Committee, Resolution 15 calls on Governor Cuomo and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) to implement recommendations from the Sheridan Expressway-Hunts Point Transportation and Land Use Study (SEHP Study). The SEHP Study was a multi-agency study of changes to the South Bronx highway system that could vastly improve both environmental and economic conditions in the area.

The recommendations revolve around three large-scale improvements that not only provide environmental and economic improvements but also align with the goals of **Vision Zero**. These include:

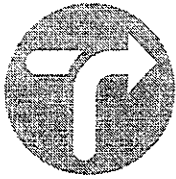
- Construction of ramps for direct vehicular access from the Bruckner Expressway to the Hunts Point peninsula, home to the Food Distribution Center and other businesses,
- Closure of two Sheridan ramps that pour truck traffic into busy pedestrian intersections – Hunts Point Avenue/Bruckner Boulevard and Westchester/Whitlock Avenues,
- Conversion of the Sheridan Expressway into a boulevard with extensive pedestrian safety improvements providing residents direct access to the Bronx River waterfront.

Thank you for your time and consideration in moving forward this critically important initiative for transit improvements at the locus of New York's food hub.

Sincerely,

Richard R. Roark, RLA, ASLA, LEED AP
Partner

cc: Office of Council Member Annabel Palma
Office of Council Member Maria de la Carmen Arroyo



TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

127 West 26th Street, Suite 1002
New York, NY 10001
Tel 212 629-8080
Fax 212 629-8334

transalt.org

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Paul S. White

March 24, 2014

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Curtis Archer
George Beane
Colin Beavan
Christine Berthet
Ken Coughlin
Michael Epstein
Steve Hindy
Daniel Kaizer
Mary Beth Kelly
Laurence Levi
Richard B. Miller
Neysa Pranger
Jeff Prant
Lela Rose
Mark Seaman
Gorden Travers
Shin-Pei Tsay
Susi Wunsch
Howard Yaruss

Honorable Ydani Rodriguez
Chairperson, City Council Committee on Transportation
New York City Council
250 Broadway, Suite 1731
New York, NY 10007

Re: Support for Resolution 0015-2014

Dear Council Member Rodriguez and Transportation Committee Members:

I am writing to express Transportation Alternatives' support for New York City Council Resolution 0015-2014 (Resolution 15). Introduced last month and currently referred to the Transportation Committee, Resolution 15 calls on the State of New York to implement recommendations from the Sheridan Expressway-Hunts Point Transportation and Land Use Study (SEHP Study). The SEHP Study was a multi-agency study of changes to the South Bronx highway system that could vastly improve the environmental and safety conditions in the area. The SEHP Study recommendations issued at the end of last year mirror a long-standing community agenda to address resident health and pedestrian safety issues in the South Bronx, as well as improve efficiency and economic conditions for South Bronx/Hunts Point-based businesses.

The recommendations revolve around three large-scale improvements that also align with the goals of Vision Zero. These include:

- Construction of ramps for direct vehicular access from the Bruckner Expressway to the Hunts Point peninsula, home to the Food Distribution Center and other businesses,
- Closure of two Sheridan ramps that pour truck traffic into busy pedestrian intersections – Hunts Point Avenue/Bruckner Boulevard and Westchester/Whitlock Avenues,
- Conversion of the Sheridan Expressway into a boulevard with extensive pedestrian safety improvements providing residents direct access to the Bronx River waterfront.

The SEHP Study concluded in December, and it is now up to the state to act on it. Resolution 15 calls on them to take this vital next step towards improving the economic, environmental and safety conditions in the South Bronx.

Sincerely,

Noah Budnick
Deputy Director

cc:

Office of Council Member Annabel Palma
Office of Council Member Maria de la Carmen Arroyo

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Marc Agger
Thursten Bannister
George Beane
David Byrne
Majora Carter
Joshua David
Paul Gertner
Mark Gorton
Alex Herzan
Karen Karp
Rich Kassel
Mary Beth Kelly
Robert Kotch
Janet Liff
Stephen Lyle
Adam Mansky
Matthew Modine
Linda Prine
Henry Rinehart
Lisa Sladkus
Michael Smith
Steve Vaccaro
Lloyd Westerman
Adam Wolfensohn

Mothers on the Move/Madres en Movimiento

928 Intervale Avenue • Bronx, NY 10459

Phone (718) 842-2224 • Fax (718) 842-2665 • www.mothersonthemove.org



Testimony of the Mothers on the Move City Council Transportation Committee Hearing on Resolution 15 March 25, 2014

I am Wanda Salaman, Executive Director of Mothers on the Move, a Social Justice Organization in The South Bronx, that works with community residents regarding issues that affects our daily lives such as Housing, Environmental Justice and Youth Organizing. MOM is a 22 year-old organization that is a member of the Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance, which for 15 years has led the campaign to transform the highways that burden the South Bronx.

I am writing to ask for your support in the passage of New York City Council Resolution 0015-2014 (Resolution 15). Introduced last month and currently referred to the Transportation Committee, Resolution 15 calls on Governor Cuomo and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) to implement recommendations from the Sheridan Expressway-Hunts Point Transportation and Land Use Study (SEHP Study). The SEHP Study was a multi-agency study of changes to the South Bronx highway system that could vastly improve both environmental and economic conditions in the area. The SEHP Study recommendations issued at the end of last year were heavily influenced and mirror a long-standing community agenda to address resident health and pedestrian safety issues in the South Bronx, as well as improve efficiency and economic conditions for South Bronx/Hunts Point-based businesses. The recommendations revolve around three large-scale improvements that not only provide environmental and economic improvements but also align with the goals of **Vision Zero**. These include:

- Construction of ramps for direct vehicular access from the Bruckner Expressway to the Hunts Point peninsula, home to the Food Distribution Center and other businesses,
- Closure of two Sheridan ramps that pour truck traffic into busy pedestrian intersections – Hunts Point Avenue/Bruckner Boulevard and Westchester/Whitlock Avenues,
- Conversion of the Sheridan Expressway into a boulevard with extensive pedestrian safety improvements providing residents direct access to the Bronx River waterfront.

Although the SEHP Study concluded in December upon issuance of a report detailing the recommended improvements, no changes will be made unless the Governor and NYSDOT move the ball forward. Resolution 15 calls on them to take this vital next step towards improving the economic, environmental and safety conditions in the South Bronx.

We hope you will support the passage of Resolution 15 to deliver a strong message to Albany that the residents and businesses of the South Bronx are united in their call for these changes to be made as quickly as possible.

Thank you.

FOR THE RECORD

Real People Making Real Change... Gente Real Haciendo Cambios Reales



FOR THE RECORD

WHERE COMMUNITY AND CREATIVITY CONNECT.

940 GARRISON AVENUE · THE BRONX, NY 10474 · (718) 542-4139 FAX (718) 542-4988 www.thepoint.org

March 24, 2014

Comments prepared by
THE POINT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Department of Transportation Hearing Regarding Resolution 0015-2014

Dear Honorable Ydanis Rodriguez and esteemed members of the City Council Committee Transportation, my name is Kellie Terry and as Executive Director of THE POINT Community Development Corporation, I am writing to express my support for New York City Council Resolution 0015-2014 (Resolution 15). Introduced last month and currently referred to the Transportation Committee, Resolution 15 calls on Governor Cuomo and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) to implement recommendations from the Sheridan Expressway-Hunts Point Transportation and Land Use Study (SEHP Study). The SEHP Study was a multi-agency study of changes to the South Bronx highway system that could vastly improve both environmental and economic conditions in the area. The SEHP Study recommendations issued at the end of last year mirror a long-standing community agenda to address resident health and pedestrian safety issues in the South Bronx, as well as improve efficiency and economic conditions for South Bronx/Hunts Point-based businesses.

THE POINT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION is a nonprofit organization dedicated to youth development and the cultural and economic revitalization of the Hunts Point section of the South Bronx. We believe the area's residents, their talents and aspirations, are The Point's greatest assets. Our mission is to encourage the arts, local enterprise, responsible ecology, and self-investment in the Hunts Point community. The POINT is a member of the Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance, The New York City Environmental Justice Alliance, Organizations for Waterfront Neighborhoods, and community partners in The South Bronx Greenway Plan. In our role as a community development agency, we strive to represent the voices of our communities and communicate needs and solutions that will improve the overall quality of life of our neighbors.

In 2006, the Alliance convened a series of neighborhood-based charrettes to address these issues, immersing with a series of transportation and land use priorities which came to be known as the Community Plan. In December 2013, the NYC Dept. of Transportation and the NYC Dept. of City Planning completed The Sheridan Expressway-Hunts Point Transportation and Land Use Study (SEHP Study). The recommendations from the SEHP Study largely mirror long-standing community priorities for the area. If implemented, these recommendations will dramatically improve resident health and pedestrian safety.

The City recommendations revolve around three large-scale improvements:

- Construction of ramps for direct vehicular access from the Bruckner Expressway to the Hunts Point peninsula, home to the Food Distribution Center and other businesses (**slide 1**),

- Closure of two Sheridan ramps that pour truck traffic into busy pedestrian intersections; Hunts Point Avenue/Bruckner Boulevard and Westchester/Whitlock Avenues (**slide 2**),
- Conversion of the Sheridan Expressway – an incomplete Robert Moses-era highway – into a boulevard that calms traffic and implements extensive pedestrian safety improvements near the Bronx River waterfront.

In very real terms, Hunts Point forms a portrait of environmental racism. The peninsula bears a disproportionate amount of the region's industrial infrastructure, with the majority of land zoned for heavy industrial use. Hunts Point has one of the highest concentrations of truck traffic in New York City. Already home to the largest produce market in the country, Hunts Point recently became the new location for the Fulton Fish Market, increasing daily truck traffic to upwards of 20,000 per day. There are 9 waste transfer stations in the South Bronx permitted to handle nearly 12,000 tons of waste each day. On a typical day, nearly 6,000 tons is hauled in and out of the South Bronx requiring about 1400 diesel truck trips. As a result, asthma rates in the South Bronx are sky high – eight times the national average. **In his 2004 State of the Borough Address, Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrion, Jr. stated the South Bronx has the highest obesity and diabetes rates in New York City. According to the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), 20 - 30% of school-aged children in the South Bronx have asthma, a rate twice as high as the New York City average.** According to New York University's 2006 South Bronx Environmental Health and Policy Study, high asthma rates in the Bronx can be attributed to air pollution caused by truck traffic and industry in this area. Studies by the DOHMH also indicate a strong association between asthma hospitalization and socioeconomic conditions demonstrated by higher rates of asthma hospitalization among residents of low-income areas compared to residents of high-income areas. This status quo reflects a matter of life and death and it is this status quo that is unacceptable to maintain for our communities.

Until recently Hunts Point had one of the smallest resident-to-parkland ratios while being surrounded by three major highway arteries - The Bruckner Expressway, the Cross Bronx Expressway and the Sheridan Expressway. For over six decades, the transportation network and highway infrastructure of the South Bronx have produced negative health, safety and economic outcomes for residents. As we have mentioned we host the Hunts Point Food Distribution Center, the largest food distribution center in the nation. With no direct connection to any highway, the 15,000+ daily truck trips associated with the Center must use neighborhood streets to enter and exit Hunts Point, causing health and safety issues for residents, aggravation for truck drivers and lost productivity for local businesses. The current roadway configuration contributes to some of the highest asthma rates in the United States and severely compromises pedestrian safety, particularly around the Bruckner and Sheridan expressways.

Each and every day residents, mothers pushing baby strollers and the elderly alike, have to traverse one of the deadliest intersections just to conduct the daily business of life. Change must occur now and we must not waste the momentum and the leverage we have worked as a community to gain around this issue. For Mayor de Blasio and the City Council, these recommendations provide a clear blueprint for implementing Vision Zero in the South Bronx. Constructing ramps from the highway directly into the Hunts Point peninsula will get trucks off local streets, where they create a physical threat to pedestrians. No place is this clearer than at the intersection of Hunts Point Avenue and Bruckner Boulevard, current site of the Hunts Point Avenue subway station and future site of the Metro North train station. This intersection has seen almost 100 pedestrian and bicycle crashes since 1995, including several fatalities. Furthermore, with a car ownership rate of well under 30%, the South Bronx is first and foremost a pedestrian community, yet our streets are among the most dangerous for pedestrians in the City. Injuries

and deaths in the area are preventable, especially if the City implements recommendations to convert the Sheridan to a boulevard and push the State to build the ramps into Hunts Point.

We are here as members of the Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance today to continue our mission in advancing a community-based transportation and land use plan for social and environmental justice in the South Bronx. The aforementioned recommendations and the other transformative changes proposed by the SEHP Study team would take thousands of commercial vehicles off of local streets, increase pedestrian safety, create better access to green spaces and create the potential for affordable housing and local economic development – all of which are desperately needed in the South Bronx. However, there are no guarantees that the recommendations will be implemented. Implementation requires commitments from both the Mayor de Blasio and Governor Cuomo.

We are resolution has been referred to the Transportation Committee and we are hopeful that it will be passed quickly and unanimously to send a strong message to Albany that the New York City Council wants expeditious implementation of pedestrian safety measures on some of New York City's most dangerous streets.

We look forward to working with Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Mark-Viverito and the entire City Council to implement these critical improvements for the South Bronx, which are fully in line with the Vision Zero Action Plan. We must together seize the current moment in which Hunts Point businesses, South Bronx community groups and elected officials have forged consensus, in order to bring pedestrian safety to communities for whom it has been deferred for far too long.

###

Respectfully,

Kellie Terry
Executive Director
THE POINT CDC



**SOUTHERN BRONX RIVER
WATERSHED ALLIANCE**
and a New Vision for the South Bronx

**Testimony of the Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance
City Council Transportation Committee Hearing on Resolution 15
March 25, 2014**

My name is Dave Powell and I am the Coordinator of the Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance. Our member organizations are Mothers on the Move, Nos Quedamos, Pratt Center for Community Development, The POINT CDC, Sustainable South Bronx, Tri-State Transportation Campaign and Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice. Our mission is to advance a community-based transportation and land use plan for social and environmental justice in the South Bronx.

We are excited to be testifying before the Transportation Committee today on the subject of Resolution 15, which calls upon on the State to implement the recommendations of the Sheridan Expressway-Hunts Point Transportation and Land Use Study. We would like to thank Council Member Rodriguez for bringing this resolution to a hearing, as well as Council Members Vacca, Reynoso and Levin for their co-sponsorship of the measure. Last but certainly not least we want to thank Council Members Arroyo and Palma whose leadership on this issue led to the drafting and introduction of the resolution.

For over six decades, the transportation network and highway infrastructure of the South Bronx have produced negative health, safety and economic outcomes for residents. The South Bronx is host to the Hunts Point Food Distribution Center, the largest food distribution center in the nation. With no direct connection to any highway, the 15,000+ daily truck trips associated with the Center must use neighborhood streets to enter and exit Hunts Point, causing health and safety issues for residents, aggravation for truck drivers and lost productivity for local businesses. The current roadway configuration contributes to some of the highest asthma rates in the United States and severely compromises pedestrian safety, particularly around the Bruckner and Sheridan expressways.

In 2006, the Alliance convened a series of neighborhood-based charrettes to address these issues, immersing with a series of transportation and land use priorities which came to be known as the Community Plan. In December 2013, the NYC Dept. of Transportation and the NYC Dept. of City Planning completed The Sheridan Expressway-Hunts Point Transportation and Land Use Study (SEHP Study). The recommendations from the SEHP Study largely mirror long-standing community priorities for the area. If implemented, these recommendations will dramatically improve resident health and pedestrian safety.

The City recommendations revolve around three large-scale improvements:

- Construction of ramps for direct vehicular access from the Bruckner Expressway to the Hunts Point peninsula, home to the Food Distribution Center and other businesses (**slide 1**),
- Closure of two Sheridan ramps that pour truck traffic into busy pedestrian intersections; Hunts Point Avenue/Bruckner Boulevard and Westchester/Whitlock Avenues (**slide 2**),



**SOUTHERN BRONX RIVER
WATERSHED ALLIANCE**
and a New Vision for the South Bronx

- Conversion of the Sheridan Expressway – an incomplete Robert Moses-era highway – into a boulevard that calms traffic and creates access to the parks along the Bronx River waterfront (slides 3 and 4).

These and the other changes recommended by the SEHP Study team would take thousands of commercial vehicles off of local streets, increase pedestrian safety, create better access to green spaces and create the potential for affordable housing and local economic development – all of which are desperately needed in the South Bronx.

Additionally, the creation of a direct highway link into Hunts Point is a long overdue food security measure. The Food Distribution Center, which distributes well over 50% of all the produce, meat and fish in the New York metropolitan area, sits in a floodplain on a peninsula. When a super storm such as Sandy hits Hunts Point at high tide the results will be disastrous for the entire region, which will experience a seizure in the single biggest link of the food distribution network that we all rely on. Creating elevated highway access in and out of the peninsula is an essential and urgent resiliency measure that must be taken to meet the challenges that climate change poses to our region. This is widely understood by environmental justice advocates, urban planners and climate change experts. For example, the architects and engineers at the Olin firm have included ramps from the Bruckner as a key measure in their resiliency plan for Hunts Point, which is part of the HUD-sponsored Rebuild by Design competition. Today we will be submitting a letter of support for Resolution 15 from the Olin firm along with letters of support from the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance, The Bronx River Alliance and Transportation Alternatives.

Despite the importance of this project there are no guarantees that the recommendations will be implemented. Implementation requires commitments from both the City and the State.

For Mayor de Blasio and the City Council, these recommendations provide a clear blueprint for implementing Vision Zero in the South Bronx. Constructing ramps from the highway directly into the Hunts Point peninsula will get trucks off local streets, where they create a physical threat to pedestrians. No place is this clearer than at the intersection of Hunts Point Avenue and Bruckner Boulevard, current site of the Hunts Point Avenue subway station and future site of the Metro North train station. This intersection has seen almost 100 pedestrian and bicycle crashes since 1995, including several fatalities.

With a car ownership rate of well under 30%, the South Bronx is first and foremost a pedestrian community, yet our streets are among the most dangerous for pedestrians in the City. Injuries and deaths in the area are preventable, especially if the City implements recommendations to convert the Sheridan to a boulevard and works with the State to build the ramps into Hunts Point.



**SOUTHERN BRONX RIVER
WATERSHED ALLIANCE**
and a New Vision for the South Bronx

We are hopeful that Resolution 15 will be passed at tomorrow's full City Council stated meeting, not only to send a strong message to Albany about the urgency of this project but also because passage will indicate the commitment of the New York City Council to do its part in transforming the South Bronx. We look forward to working with Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Mark-Viverito and the entire City Council to implement these critical improvements, which are fully in line with the Vision Zero Action Plan and which begin to address the inequality in the built environment that is the result of decades of environmental racism and poor transportation planning. We must together seize the current moment in which Hunts Point businesses, South Bronx community groups and elected officials have forged consensus, in order to bring health, safety and economic opportunity to our communities for whom it has been deferred for far too long.

###

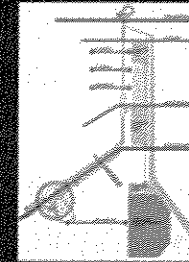
City Recommendation: Direct Access

RE-DESIGNING THE SHERIDAN EXPRESSWAY

Ramps at Oak Point

Set the stage for changes to the Sheridan by constructing new ramps to/from the Bruckner Expressway providing direct vehicle access to the Hunts Point peninsula

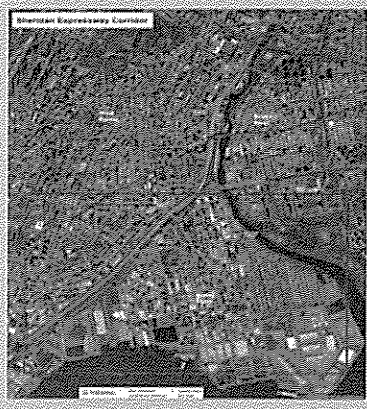
- Construct a full interchange with east bound on/off ramps being a priority for changes to the Sheridan Expressway



ALTERNATIVE 1E/2D
SECTION 4
0 10 20 30 40 50 ft
SCALE 1" = 100'
DATE 1/13

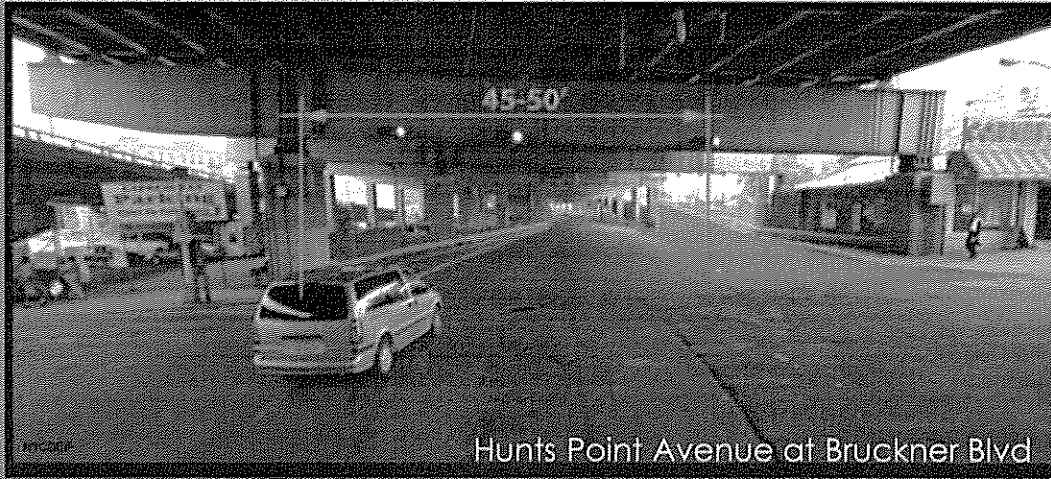
W5007

Sheridan Expressway - Hunts Point Land Use and Transportation Study - 02/13



SOUTHERN BRONX RIVER
WATERSHED ALLIANCE
and a New Vision for the South Bronx

City Recommendation: Close Ramps



Hunts Point Avenue at Bruckner Blvd

New ramps from the Bruckner to HP will facilitate the closure of two Sheridan Expressway ramps



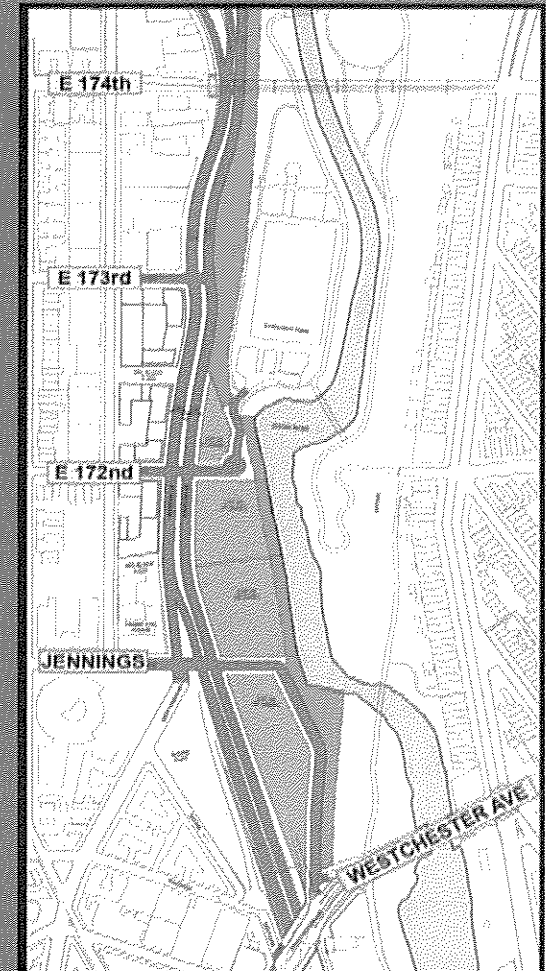
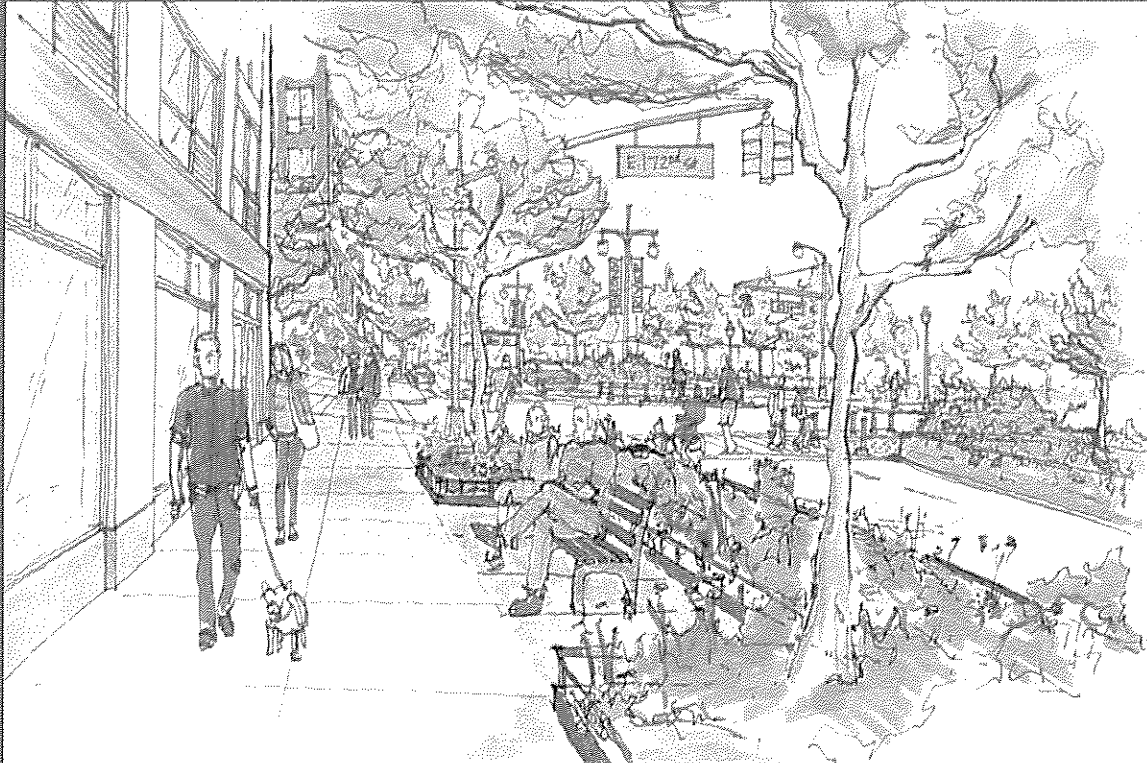
Whitlock Avenue at Westchester

NYC DCP

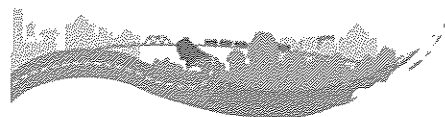


SOUTHERN BRONX RIVER
WATERSHED ALLIANCE
and a New Vision for the South Bronx

City Rec: crosswalks on the Sheridan

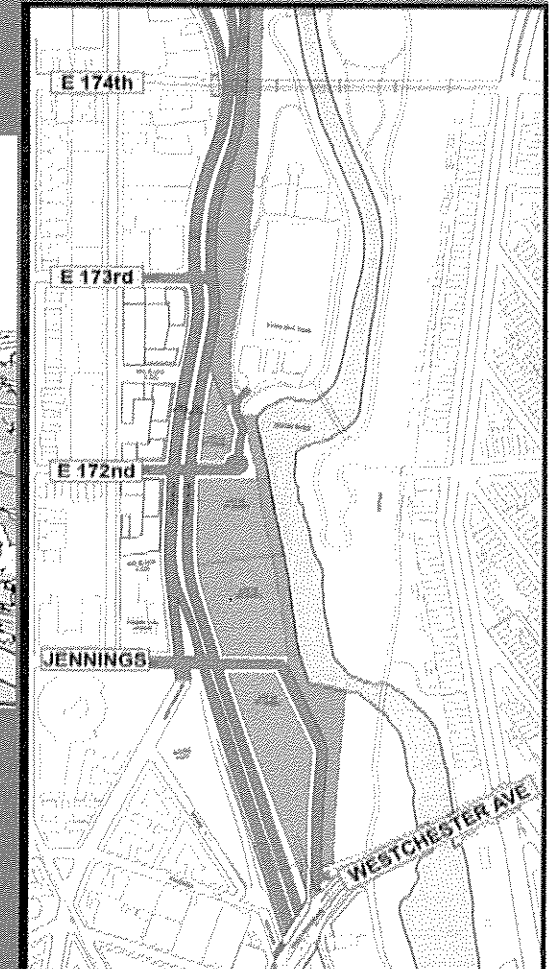
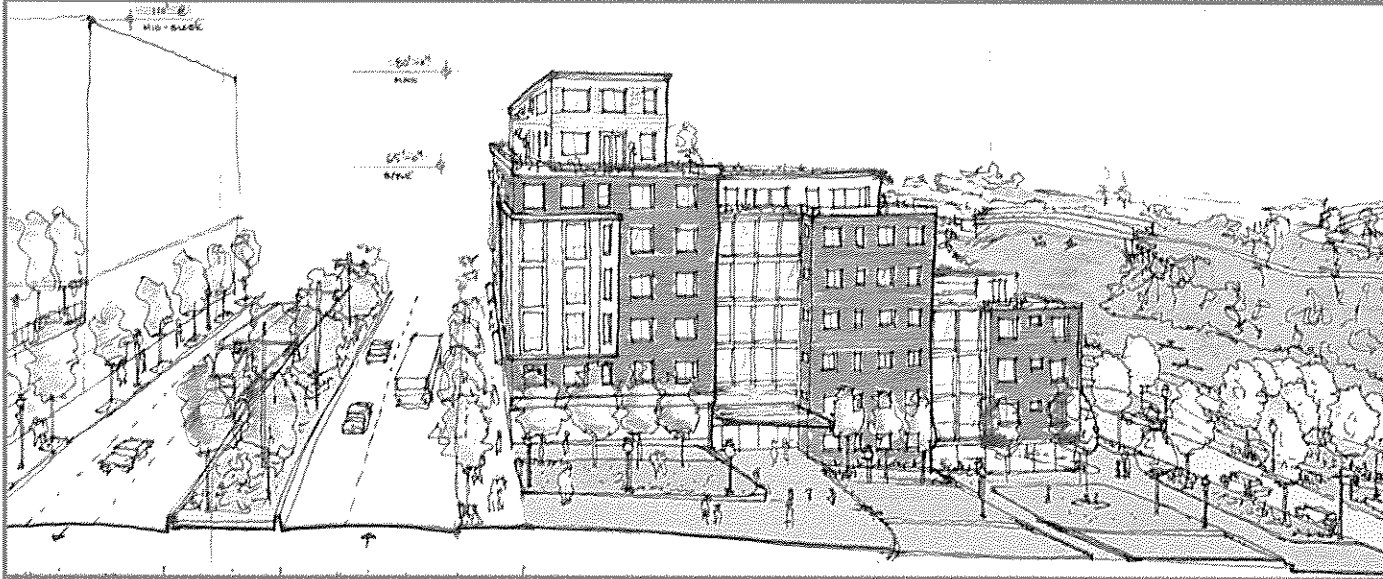


At grade portion of the Sheridan,
between E 173rd St and Jennings Ave

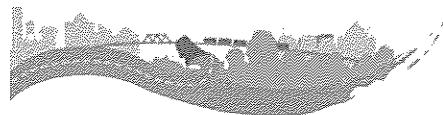
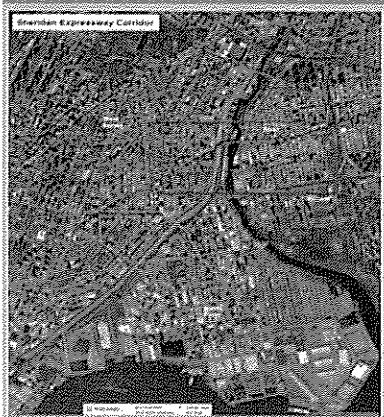


SOUTHERN BRONX RIVER
WATERSHED ALLIANCE
and a New Vision for the South Bronx

City Rec: new developable land



At grade portion of the Sheridan,
between E 173rd St and Westchester Ave



SOUTHERN BRONX RIVER
WATERSHED ALLIANCE
and a New Vision for the South Bronx

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Ana Melendez We Stay
(PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 754 Melrose Ave Bx

I represent: We Stay / SBRWA

Address: 754 Melrose Ave

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: DAVID SHIFFER
(PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 1384 STRATFORD AVE

I represent: YOUTH Ministries FOR PEACE JUSTICE

Address: 1384 "Some Above"

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Dave Powell
(PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: Southern Bronx River

Address: Watershed Alliance

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 15

in favor in opposition

Date: 03-25-13

Name: Angela TOURÉ (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 1231 Lafayette Ave

I represent: Sustainable South Bronx

Address: 1231 Lafayette Ave

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/25/14

Name: Kellie Jany (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: THE POINT Southern Bronx Waterfed Alliance

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 15

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/25/14

Name: Elena Conte (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 220 Willoughby Ave. Bk NY 11205

I represent: Pratt Center for Community Development

Address: _____

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 15

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/25/14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Thomas Lucania

Address: _____

I represent: Bronx Borough President

Address: Ruben Diaz Jr

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 0015

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/25/14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Vincent Pellecchia

Address: 350 W 31st Street Rm 802 NY, NY 10001

I represent: Tristate Transportation Campaign

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms