



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

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
June 8, 2012

**Community Members and Elected Officials Push Back; Urge City to Reconsider Sheridan Expressway Removal Option**

BRONX, NY– Community residents and activists are speaking out in opposition to the city's decision to radically alter its work-plan and omit the "Sheridan removal" option from consideration in the Sheridan-Hunts Point Land Use and Transportation Study (SEHP).

In 2010 New York City received a \$1.5 million USDOT TIGER II planning grant to take an in-depth look at how changes to the South Bronx's transportation infrastructure can make the region more livable and sustainable through improvements to housing, land-use and zoning. At its most recent presentation in May, the city's Interagency Committee conducting the analysis unexpectedly announced its decision to stop studying the option that would remove the Sheridan Expressway and add ramps to connect the Bruckner Expressway to Hunts Point.

However, in making its decision, the city did not conduct the in-depth analysis promised through the TIGER II grant, such as considering future traffic patterns. For instance, the option to remove the Sheridan Expressway also includes the reconnection of many streets crossing Bruckner Boulevard as well as the addition of flyover ramps at Oak Point Avenue that would improve access to Hunts Point Market.

"When the study began, we had high hopes that the South Bronx would finally be getting the attention it has long been deprived from the City with a thorough analysis and inclusive process that was fairly done and appropriately communicated," said **New York City Councilwoman Maria Del Carmen Arroyo**. "Instead, with no discussion and no notice, the City announces it wants to remove the linchpin of the study from consideration. This is grossly premature and unjustified, and I'm calling on the City to continue studying the Sheridan removal options."

The removal of the Sheridan would make room for more than 30 acres of affordable housing, parks, commercial space and community facilities that will bring hundreds of jobs to the South Bronx.

"What is clear is that no matter what, the status quo is unacceptable and we need to hold the city accountable to doing everything in their power to make real change that serves everyone in our community. Continuing to force our communities to live like second class citizens, endangering our families with unsafe roads and intersections, skyrocketing asthma and air pollution, poor truck routing and blocked access to the Bronx River is not how we expect to be treated by our city government. The fatal flaw here is how we're being forced to live, and the least we deserve from the City is a full and honest analysis of all the options in front of us, including the community plan, in order to truly correct these long term issues, not only for us but for future generations to come," said **Kellie Terry-Sepulveda, Executive Director The POINT CDC, an Alliance member**.

“We challenge the traffic assumptions underlying this decision. Traffic models provide projections based on a set of variables. How were the set of variables determined? Were improvements to the existing highway bottlenecks, which would help improve traffic flow on the existing highway network and keep trucks off local streets, factored in? We don’t know because this information has not been shared with the community working group. This decision falls short of the comprehensive analysis promised as part of this TIGER II study,” said **Vincent Pellecchia of Tri-State Transportation Campaign, an Alliance member.**

As part of the ongoing Sheridan-Hunts Point Land Use and Transportation Study, the city formed a Community Working Group last year as a way to work closely with local residents and elected officials to come up with a solution that benefits the entire community. The working group includes a diverse group of stakeholders, including residents, business and property owners, advocates, city agencies and elected officials.

While the city committed to a transparent process, it failed to consult the working group before making the decision to eliminate the removal option and did not provide working group members with the data it was using in its analysis until two days before its May presentation.

“Transparency and thoroughness is critical in order for this process to be successful,” said **Elizabeth Ortega, a local community resident and member of the Alliance’s community council.** “The city has an opportunity to transform the Bronx for the better with an updated transportation network that benefits local residents and provides direct access to Hunts Point market – but this is only possible if the city conducts the analysis it promised.”

“The city’s study so far falls extremely short of the purpose of this grant and it cannot prematurely remove options from the table before completing the comprehensive analysis,” said **Jessica Clemente, Executive Director We Stay/Nos Quedamos, an Alliance member.** “Reconsidering the option to remove the Sheridan Expressway will help the city ensure that the Hunts Point market – and local economy – continues to thrive and South Bronx residents can enjoy a safer, more vibrant community.”

Despite the setback, community residents are optimistic and are pressing the city to re-consider its decision. “There is a vision for the South Bronx that cannot be denied – a healthy and safe community that provides clean air and a transportation system that works for all, spaces for growing businesses, community facilities and affordable housing. The vision we have can no longer just be an option it needs to be a reality and the City needs to understand this. We’re calling on them to make the right choice.” said **David Shuffler, Executive Director of Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice, lifelong community resident and homeowner.**

The city will reconvene the CWG for a meeting on **June 28, 2012.**

**For more information about the Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance or the community response to the city’s decision, please contact Angela Tovar, at 646.400.5432 or [info.sbrwa@gmail.com](mailto:info.sbrwa@gmail.com).**

*The Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance (SBRWA) is a coalition of community-based and city-wide organizations who wish to see a vibrant community in the place of the Sheridan. Member organizations include We Stay/Nos Quedamos, Mothers on The Move, Pratt Center for Community Development, The Point CDC, Sustainable South Bronx, Tri-State Transportation Campaign and Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice.*