



**\*\* Media Release  
For Immediate Release \*\***

Wednesday, May 22, 2013

**Contacts:**

Dave Powell, (SBRWA) 347-683-2639

David Shuffler (YMPJ): 347-231-0169

Elena Conte (PCCD): 646-596-2563

**Future of the South Bronx:  
South Bronx Communities Respond to City Proposals for Sheridan Expressway;  
Call on City and State to Take Action**

**Bronx, N.Y.** – South Bronx residents and community groups gathered this morning in a call for action to address dangerous neighborhood conditions and to present their response to City proposals for the Sheridan Expressway. Residents of the predominantly low-income, communities of color along the Expressway have long organized for comprehensive action in the area, citing dangerous streets, poor air quality, divided neighborhoods and inefficient roadways.

The event, called by the Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance (SBRWA), comes one day after a public meeting where the City’s inter-agency team presented draft recommendations for the future of the Sheridan Expressway and the surrounding neighborhoods, as part of a two-year, \$1.5 million study that will culminate with final recommendations released in June.

In 2006, the SBRWA created its own Community Plan to bring safer and healthier streets, new parks, access to the Bronx River, affordable housing and economic development to the area. This vision recommended fixes to the transportation network and the recapturing of land for community benefit.

“Major elements of the City’s draft recommendations echo ideas first advanced by our campaign,” said Kellie Terry Sepulveda of SBRWA member organization The Point CDC. “While the City’s study missed an opportunity to look at the most comprehensive way improve the area, we are encouraged to see so many pieces of our vision incorporated into the recommendations and are hopeful that from this starting point, we can go further to fully realize our vision for environmental justice.”

A critical part of the SBRWA’s Community Plan for moving trucks off of local streets is the creation of a direct connection into and out of the Hunts Point Peninsula from the elevated Bruckner Expressway through the construction of four-way ramps. The City, however, has only recommended the creation two ramps that connect to the east, failing to study the full four-way access called for by the SBRWA. The City also recommended closure of the Sheridan entrance at Hunts Point Avenue and the southbound exit at Whitlock Avenue, but did not make a recommendation for closure at

northbound exit Westchester Avenue. The SBRWA has called for the closure of all three ramps.

“The key to transforming this area is to move trucks off of local streets and to support Bronx businesses by creating direct access ramps from the Bruckner into Hunts Point,” said Elena Conte of SBRWA member organization Pratt Center for Community Development. “With that direct access, the three Sheridan ramps that draw traffic into the treacherous intersections at Whitlock, Westchester and Hunts Point Avenues can and must be closed, finally making them safe for thousands of pedestrians.”

For the Sheridan itself, at the on-grade portion between the Cross Bronx Expressway and Westchester Avenue, near the newly opened Starlight Park, the City recommended shifting the roadway to combine it with a redesigned and landscaped West Farms Road. This change would create crosswalks to Starlight Park and open up new space for development along the Bronx River. “The City’s recommendation to shift the Sheridan roadway presents the potential to generate the local jobs, affordable housing and new green space for which we have advocated for 13 years. It will be critical, however, for any future development to be held accountable to community needs through a transparent, public process,” said David Shuffler of SBRWA member organization Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice.

After the City formally releases its recommendations in June, implementation will require an environmental review of any impacts that might be caused by the creation of Hunts Point direct-access ramps by the New York State Department of Transportation, as well as the cooperation of the next New York City mayor.

“The South Bronx has spoken loud and clear about what we need. This substantial two-year effort by the City, while flawed, makes major strides toward realizing long-term community priorities. It provides a clear mandate to Governor and the State Department of Transportation to take action,” said Angela Tovar of SBRWA member organization Sustainable South Bronx.

“From the beginning, the community has been clear in their desire for positive changes going forward for the Sheridan Expressway,” said Congressman José E. Serrano, who helped obtain funding for the study. “While the study was not perfect, I stand with the community in saying that some positive aspects have come out of this re-visioning and process. We know that all stakeholders agree that any changes must help pedestrians, must reduce truck traffic, and must increase community access to new and existing green spaces. I applaud the dedication of so many groups and individuals who believe that a better Bronx is possible and do not accept the status quo.”

~

The Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance consists of Mothers on the Move, The Point CDC, Pratt Center for Community Development, Sustainable South Bronx, Tri-State Transportation Campaign, We Stay/Nos Quedamos, Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice, and was founded in 1999 to advance community-led solutions to the legacy of poor land-use and transportation planning and its negative impacts upon South Bronx communities.