

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 10, 2013

CONTACTS:

Seth Solomonow/Scott Gastel (DOT) (212) 839-4850

Rachaele Raynoff/Michael Shilstone (DCP) (212) 720-3471

CITY RELEASES FINAL REPORT ON PROPOSALS TO TRANSFORM THE SHERIDAN EXPRESSWAY AND RECONNECT SOUTH BRONX NEIGHBORHOODS

Report details opportunities for the City to revitalize and reconnect neighborhoods by enhancing transportation access and pedestrian safety, and creating housing and jobs

Report lays the foundation for officials and stakeholders to work with New York State on advancing major transportation projects

December 10, 2013 - The New York City Department of Transportation (DOT), New York City Department of City Planning (DCP), Economic Development Corporation (EDC), Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), the Mayor's Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability (OLTPS), and Deputy Mayor for Economic Development Robert Steel today released *The Sheridan Expressway Study: Reconnecting the Neighborhoods Around the Sheridan Expressway and Improving Access to Hunts Point*, a report documenting sweeping transportation and land use recommendations for greatly improving quality of life in the South Bronx. The report details a comprehensive planning and policy framework which includes transforming the northern half of the Sheridan Expressway into a local boulevard, improving pedestrian access to the Greenway and Starlight and Concrete Plant parks along the Bronx River, and reducing truck traffic and emissions on local roads. At the same time, the report recommends improving truck access to the businesses of Hunts Point by providing direct ramp access from the Sheridan Expressway to the Hunts Point industrial area. The study's framework also details opportunities to strengthen the community with new retail and mixed-income housing and job opportunities through strategic rezoning. The final report, found on the [DCP website](#), is the culmination of a two year interdisciplinary community planning process.

"This comprehensive study, which draws on the input of many stakeholders and community members, is a critical step towards real improvements that will strengthen these neighborhoods in the South Bronx," said Deputy Mayor for Economic Development Robert K. Steel. "The recommendations outline a clear vision for change, and we are hopeful future City leaders will use this vision to enact policies that will positively impact the Bronx and our entire City for generations."

"This report is a critical step in designing a safer, more vibrant and more accessible future for the South Bronx," said DOT Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan. "Backed by years of extraordinary community participation, we now have an historic opportunity to reimagine this four-lane eyesore as a neighborhood street that serves the community and the local economy."

City Planning Commissioner Amanda M. Burden said, "This report represents over two years of monumental collaboration among city agencies, communities and elected officials to arrive at a consensus for the future of the Sheridan Expressway and the neighborhoods in this area of the South Bronx. It provides thorough transportation, land use, sustainability and economic analyses and presents a comprehensive planning framework to move forward with improvements to local streets, reconfigured expressway ramps, new connections to the waterfront, as well as new affordable housing, open space, improved pedestrian amenities, and strengthened commercial corridors. This is a tremendous achievement that sets the stage for future efforts in this area and will surely be an invaluable guide to the next administration."

"The Sheridan Hunts Point Land Use and Transportation Study deeply embodies the aspirations of the community and the elected officials representing the area. I have taken every opportunity to articulate the recommendations of this study, including outreach to the Governor and the state Department of Transportation. I strongly support the recommendation for a narrower boulevard and creating new off ramps into the Hunts Point Peninsula. This would take trucks off local streets and provide a more direct route to the Hunt Point Market, improving air quality and pedestrian safety. The development of three new crosswalks would also open access to waterfront parkland for thousands of West Farms residents, and spark new residential and commercial development opportunities. This study provided a transformative vision, and should be seized upon by both the city and the state without further delay," said Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.

"As we move the discussion regarding the future of the Sheridan Express forward, we must ensure that all government entities understand that we cannot allow the tremendous effort invested, by so many, to languish on a shelf. The State and our next mayor need to invest capital funding to execute the proposed plan, which must also

include an added component of four-way ramps,” said Council Member Maria del Carmen Arroyo.

“This plan is the product of an intense and collaborative effort by the City, area businesses and community members. It presents a bold vision for improving the negative health, economic and social effects of a dysfunctional transportation network. I urge the City and State to move quickly to adopt the recommendations. Bronx residents cannot afford inaction” said Council Member Annabel Palma.

“We look forward to working with the new Mayor and with the Governor on implementing these critical recommendations.” said Vincent Pellicchia of The Tri-State Transportation Campaign, a member of the Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance “The health of South Bronx residents and the economic vitality of the City and the region cannot wait any longer.”

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

The Sheridan Expressway Study: Reconnecting the Neighborhoods Around the Sheridan Expressway and Improving Access to Hunts Point, developed as part of the Sheridan Expressway – Hunts Point Land Use and Transportation Study, builds upon decades of efforts to revitalize this section of the South Bronx. The report released today, the product of 10 community working-group meetings and dozens of additional meetings with stakeholders, documents the comprehensive transportation, land use, and economic analysis undertaken as part of the study, as well as input received from elected officials, community organizations, and other stakeholders. The recommendations enjoy broad agreement from elected officials, community boards, area businesses and other local groups.

The transportation recommendations include removal of fences, guardrails and median barriers to join the northern section of the Sheridan with existing service roads, while establishing three traffic-signal-controlled crosswalks at Jennings, 172nd and 173rd streets to allow pedestrians to cross, transforming this section of the Expressway into a boulevard. When implemented, two of these crossings would provide direct access to new riverfront parks that today are not easily accessible by pedestrians from the west side of the Expressway. The proposed access ramps into the Hunts Point business area at Oak Point and Leggett avenues would encourage truck drivers to use the Sheridan instead of taking routes through residential streets to reach their destinations as they do today. This is a critical step to greatly improve access to the Hunts Point Food Distribution Center and adjacent industrial businesses, while minimizing the impact of truck traffic on the surrounding community. NYCDOT has already begun work to improve pedestrian safety and access by adding new signals and crosswalks at strategic locations leading to the Bronx River such as Westchester Avenue, Whitlock Avenue and Edgewater Road, a key entry route to Starlight Park. These improvements along with others already outlined in DOT’s capital plan are moving the community toward a more connected and accessible waterfront.

During the study, the City built consensus around areas of opportunity for potential land use changes, identified local priorities for rezoning, and developed recommendations for future initiatives in targeted areas along Southern Boulevard, Westchester Avenue, and the Bronx River waterfront. DCP will work to engage the local community and elected representatives to propose specific rezoning initiatives that would allow housing with ground floor retail to create active streetscapes, focus new growth and job opportunities along transit rich corridors, and reinforce the character of adjacent residential areas with proposed zoning tailored to the context of each neighborhood.

DOT will continue to work with partner agencies to implement pedestrian safety improvements. The major highway and street improvements require funding and approval from state and other authorities. Any zoning and land use change will require community engagement, environmental analysis, and full public review under ULURP.

Department of City Planning

The Department of City Planning (DCP) promotes strategic growth, transit-oriented development, and sustainable communities in the City, in part by initiating comprehensive, consensus-based planning and zoning changes for individual neighborhoods and business districts, as well as establishing policies and zoning regulations applicable citywide. It supports the City Planning Commission and each year reviews more than 500 land use applications for actions such as zoning changes and disposition of City property. The Department assists both government agencies and the public by providing policy analysis and technical assistance relating to housing, transportation, community facilities, demography, waterfront and public space.