



For Immediate Release

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New York State Budget Includes Funding for Conversion of South Bronx Sheridan Expressway into Boulevard

Statement from Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance on the inclusion of \$97 million in the NYS budget to convert a portion of the Sheridan Expressway into a boulevard:

“After advocacy led by the Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance (SBRWA), the final 2016-2017 New York State Budget includes \$97 million to convert the at-grade portion of the 1.5 mile Sheridan Expressway into a boulevard. The funding is a huge victory in a 17-year community-led campaign to transform the arterial eyesore into an asset.

The SBRWA has worked closely with elected officials to transform the Sheridan and especially thanks Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, Senator Jeffrey Klein, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie and Assembly Member Marcos Crespo for championing the project and calling for funding in the state budget.

In 2013, New York City completed a comprehensive study made possible by federal funding championed by Congressman Jose Serrano by releasing a series of recommendations heavily influenced by years of community advocacy and visioning showing how converting this badly-designed highway as a neighborhood-friendly boulevard could transform the South Bronx communities around it. Following the city’s endorsement of the conversion, the New York City Council passed a resolution in support of the conversion in 2014. Then in 2015, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. in his State of the Borough and

Mayor de Blasio in OneNYC both called for converting the Sheridan into a boulevard.

With these funds, the New York State Department of Transportation will advance the conversion of the Sheridan from concept to reality. This project will be transformative for the residents of the South Bronx, with quality of life being first and foremost. The Sheridan completely disconnects the Bronx River – NYC’s only freshwater river – the South Bronx Greenway, Starlight and Concrete Parks from the surrounding neighborhoods. After conversion, residents and visitors will have easier access to these great amenities, similar to the West Side Highway in lower Manhattan today. Conversion is also an economic development project that will reinvigorate the community with new housing, safer streets, less pollution, more jobs, and new commercial opportunities that benefit businesses and residents alike.

The budget also includes \$288 million for a multi-phased rehabilitation of the Bruckner Expressway viaduct. The SBRWA hopes a portion of this funding will support ramps from the Bruckner into and out of the Hunts Point peninsula, which supports the \$5 billion in annual economic activity at the Food Distribution Center. The ramps, which were also included in the City’s 2013 recommendations, are important to sustain growth at the Center, ensure resiliency in the community and keep trucks out of residential neighborhoods.

Highway to boulevard conversion projects are advancing in upstate New York. We applaud and thank Governor Cuomo for acknowledging the importance of this project to the South Bronx, which has been impacted by health, environmental and economic challenges for decades.

We look forward to partnering with the New York State Department of Transportation and our elected officials on a project timeline and outreach plan.”

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The SBRWA is a collaboration among four community-based – Mothers on the Move, The POINT CDC, Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice, We Stay/Nos Quedamos – and two city-wide organizations – Pratt Center for Community Development and Tri-State Transportation Campaign. Through consensus building among community stakeholders, SBRWA works toward a vision of the southern Bronx River watershed that includes a healthy environment, a prolific economy and a community that reaps the benefits of the river as a rich natural resource.
