

PLANNING

NYC Considers Razing Bronx Highway

A coalition in the South Bronx is gaining momentum in its effort to remove one of its neighborhood's most visible landmarks: the Robert Moses-built Sheridan Expressway, which runs 1.25 miles along the Bronx River. A \$1.5 million TIGER II grant is funding a patchwork of agencies, led by the New York City Department of City Planning and the city's transportation department, to examine options for the roadway's future. The plan under consideration calls for the highway to be replaced with green space and a local development zone.

The expressway traverses several of the borough's poorest neighborhoods. Some locals consider it to be a barrier to economic growth and a redundant, underused bit of infrastructure. "You can sit down and have a picnic on it—that's how few cars use it," says Majora Carter, founder of Sustainable South Bronx. "It literally separates my neighborhood from itself."

A central concern is the expressway's benefit to local commerce, namely the massive food distribution center in the peninsular neighborhood of Hunts Point, which generates 12,000 trips a day. "The Sheridan Expressway is a vital connection between the Cross Bronx and Bruckner Expressways," notes Josephine Infante, executive director for the Hunts Point Economic Development Corporation.

On the other side of the issue, Joan Byron, an urban planner at the Pratt Center for Community Development, says that the plan created by a neighborhood coalition would streamline truck traffic with the installation of elevated ramps feeding directly into the market from Interstate 87. "This plan will actually improve trucking access and the health and quality of life of low-income neighborhoods," she says.

—Spencer Woodman

Woodman is a freelance writer based in New York City.

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Removing the expressway, supporters say, would open up a 15-acre, but mostly inaccessible, green space—currently being developed as a park—along the Bronx River.