



Map highlighting isolation concerns

## CREATING CONNECTIONS

### Issues

Hunts Point is in close proximity to the highway system, near a thriving residential neighborhood, and home to an active industrial park. However, the connections to and from these areas are insufficient to promote new growth and community vibrancy. The lack of connections—or isolation—of Hunts Point was a recurring topic of concern for the Task Force.

### Inadequate Transit Access

Typically, traffic planners estimate that a subway stop serves people who live within a ¼ mile of the stop. Any distance beyond ¼ mile is considered too far to walk. As shown in the figure above, the vast majority of the peninsula is not directly served by subway service. The bus has severe limitations. The Bx6 bus, the only bus serving Hunts Point, runs along Hunts Point Avenue, Halleck Street and Food Center Drive, but the entire area west of Hunts Point Avenue lacks bus

service. The lack of adequate public transportation was raised as a significant issue in attracting and retaining workers.

### The Bruckner Expressway

The Bruckner Expressway divides the peninsula from the rest of the Bronx. Making connections between and through the highway infrastructure is an issue for both vehicles and pedestrians:

- **Vehicular.** Passage into and out of the peninsula is dependent on the Bruckner Expressway. Trucks serving the Food Distribution Center, coming from the West, the Midwest and across the region must enter the Peninsula via Bruckner Boulevard. The connections to the Bruckner and Sheridan expressways are indirect and poorly marked. As a consequence, trucks travel a circuitous route on local roads to get to the markets or back onto the highway, often ending up on residential streets.



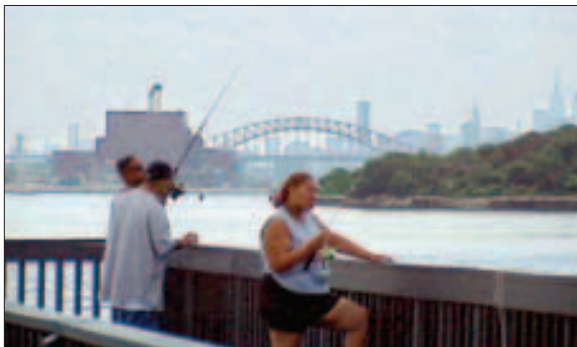
Industrial use along waterfront



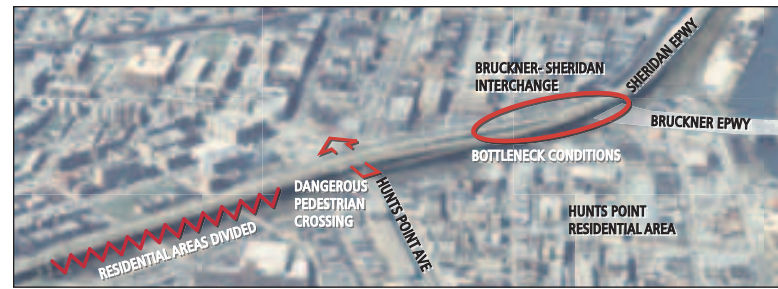
Waterfront at foot of Farragut Street



Tiffany Street Pier



People fishing off of Tiffany Street Pier



Bruckner Expressway

In addition, the design of the roadway at the Bruckner-Sheridan interchange leads to bottleneck conditions and compromises safety. There is a severe grade-change at the same point that there is a sharp curve, and the expressway narrows from three lanes to two lanes in both directions.

- **Pedestrian Concerns.** The Bruckner and Sheridan expressways separate Hunts Point from nearby residential and retail areas, creating a difficult and often dangerous crossing at Hunts Point Avenue and Bruckner Boulevard. In addition, the current configuration of the Bruckner Expressway prevents the future Bronx River Greenway from continuing directly south into Hunts Point along the Bronx River.

### Rail Tracks

A major rail corridor, serving both nationwide passenger service (Amtrak) and freight rail (CSX Corporation), runs parallel to Bruckner Boulevard. This rail corridor provides the opportunity for increased freight rail service into and out of Hunts Point. Today, the one existing rail link to Hunts Point services approximately 3,100 trains a year. The trains primarily serve the Produce Market, with some service to A&P and Krasdale. One of the Task Force's objectives was to identify ways to improve freight rail use in order to decrease dependence on trucks and improve air quality.

At the same time, the rail corridor exaggerates the barrier created by the Bruckner Expressway, creating a moat of sorts that must be transversed by one of the eight bridges into Hunts Point. This barrier contributes to the separation of Hunts Point from the rest of the Bronx. In addition, the rail freight line hugs the waterfront along the Bronx River, making waterfront access difficult.

### Waterfront Access

The freight rail lines, the Marine Transfer Station, the prison barge, the Hunts Point Water Pollution Control Plant, the Food Distribution Center uses and other privately owned industrial properties dominate the waterfront in Hunts Point, making it difficult to provide continuous waterfront access.

Today, the only official access to the waterfront is at the Tiffany Street pier. Within the next year, two new parks will be built—at Barretto Point Park and the end of Lafayette Street (Riverside Park)—that will more than triple the amount of legally accessible waterfront. These parks will be, however, difficult to reach from the residential community. For instance, the to-be-constructed Barretto Point Park is nearly half a mile from the residential area. To reach Riverside Park, one must cross a challenging intersection. Exacerbating these issues, the streets from the residential community to the new parks lack pedestrian-friendly streetscapes and sidewalks.

Short-Term Approaches

Implement Commuter Van Services

As part of the Bronx Borough President's Clean Commuter Van Program, the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (BOEDC) has identified options for a new employee shuttle service for Hunts Point to improve connections to jobs. The goal of the program is to provide employees with safe, reliable service from local subway stops to employer locations on the peninsula. A business plan, which will provide details for the service, will be completed in Fall 2004.

The Clean Commuter Van Program will utilize zero emission vehicles. Funds from an initiative established by the Borough President, the Bronx Initiative for Energy and the Environment (BIEE), will be used to purchase the vehicles. Matching funds for the project have been set aside by Clean Air Communities and New York Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA).

Secure Public Bus Service

The MTA has conducted surveys and is aware of the desire for additional bus service on the Hunts Point peninsula. From a transit planning point of view, a new bus route is warranted to serve the western half of the peninsula. The most immediate solution, diverting service from existing routes, would severely compromise the existing routes. In order to initiate new bus service, the MTA needs to have the appropriate funding dedicated to the route. The City, through its appointments to the MTA Board, will work with the MTA to have this service added as part of the MTA's 2005-2009 Operating Plan.

Establish Gateways

Gateways with signage and streetscape improvements will be established at the key entry points into the peninsula. They will provide a sense of arrival and will aid in wayfinding whether people are traveling by vehicle or by foot. Gateways will also be designed to direct trucks to the Food Distribution Center and the industrial core. The Task Force has identified priority locations for gateways:

- Hunts Point Avenue and Bruckner Boulevard;
- Bruckner and Tiffany Avenue;
- Bruckner and Leggett Avenue; and
- Halleck Street and Food Center Drive.

The gateways will reflect a unifying theme and create a vibrant and recognizable identity for Hunts Point. At the same time, the unifying theme will be flexible enough to allow for each gateway to be tailored to reflect the uniqueness of each area, whether it be the residential neighborhood, the industrial area or the Food Distribution Center.



Short-term approaches to creating and enhancing connections on Hunts Point



Current conditions at the entrance to the Food Distribution Center. The Vision Plan recommends a new gateway entrance at this intersection to let visitors know that they are entering the Food Distribution Center.



Sketch of proposed Hunts Point Avenue residential gateway



Beautify the Waterfront

Providing continuous waterfront access around the Hunts Point peninsula is a long-range goal that requires overcoming many obstacles. Given that, the Task Force suggested that priority be given to short-term improvements that will build strategically toward the implementation of the longer-term vision for the waterfront.

The City has committed to establishing a minimum of a 30-foot setback for all properties within the Hunts Point Food Distribution Center as a condition to any new or renegotiated leasehold. Covering over one-third of the peninsula's waterfront, these setbacks will ultimately allow for public enjoyment and spectacular views of the convergence of the Bronx River, Long Island Sound and East River.

In the near-term, the City will work with others to secure funding to create critical access points at the waterfront parcels not presently encumbered by existing leaseholds. Access to these locations would primarily be via an enhanced Food Center Drive. Initial access points have been identified for:

- Farragut Street.** Farragut is one of the few streets that terminate at the water's edge. Although it lies within the Food Distribution Center and requires significant bulkhead rehabilitation, this street-end serves as an unofficial fishing spot for the local community
- Fulton Fish Market at Hunts Point.** As part of the construction of the new Fish Market facility, the site plan provides for a 50-foot setback from the market facilities. Bulkhead reconstruction and an esplanade are planned at the shoreline of the Fulton Fish Market. In addition, DOC has agreed to work with NYCEDC and the community to possibly move the prison barge fence to accommodate a connection to the waterfront.



Sketch of possible waterfront improvement near Fulton Fish Market at Hunts Point

Create New Parks

The proposed Barretto Point Park, at the southern end of Tiffany Street and the western end of Ryawa Avenue, will provide waterfront access for the western shore of the Hunts Point Peninsula. This five-acre park will provide both active and passive recreational facilities. Remediation and construction are estimated to take 18 months and begin in Fall 2004.

This July, City Parks began renovations of Riverside Park, a green extension linking Lafayette Avenue to the Bronx River. It will provide the southernmost link to the Bronx River Greenway, and it will include a kayak launch.

Link Public Spaces

Manida Ballfields, on the corner of Manida Street and Lafayette Avenue, is a park in the heart of the residential community. It is recommended that it act as a fulcrum between Barretto Point Park, Riverside Park and the existing Drake Park. To provide clear and safe connections between these destinations, both pedestrian and bikeway improvements are identified for Hunts Point and Lafayette avenues. In addition, a bike/pedestrian path will be created on Food Center Drive as part of the Food Center Drive industrial circulation improvements (see page 21). These improvements will provide the critical upland links that should eventually tie in to the peninsula's outer edge.

Enhance Streetscapes

Greening the environment, increasing lighting and improving sidewalk surfaces will make avenues and streets more inviting to pedestrians. Through the Streetscape Improvement Project, which is being conducted in coordination with HPEDC and Greening for Breathing, NYCEDC will develop streetscape improvements along specified priority segments of the residential community, including Crames Square, Hunts Point Avenue, Lafayette Avenue and Spofford Avenue. In addition, City Parks has planned an extensive street tree planting program that will make a significant difference in air quality and create green connections between the residential community and the waterfront.



Streetscape improvements linking current and future public parks and open spaces

Long-Term Approaches

South Bronx Greenway

NYCEDC, in coordination with Sustainable South Bronx and the Point Community Development Corporation, has retained a consultant team to identify both inland and waterfront routes for establishing a greenway connection—the South Bronx Greenway—between the Bronx River Greenway and Randall’s Island Park. The consultant will work closely with the local community and regulating agencies to identify the specific route. Some links will require short- and long-term routes, and some may require deviating from the water’s edge. The long-term objective of the Task Force is to implement the full South Bronx Greenway plan, providing continuous waterfront access wherever it is feasible.

Implement New Bruckner / Sheridan Expressway Interchange

The ultimate solution to the transportation problems in Hunts Point is the construction of direct access from the Bruckner Expressway into the peninsula. The project is being developed through a Preliminary Engineering/ Environmental Impact Statement by NYSDOT, which is currently analyzing the feasibility of five different alternatives for improvements. This critical project provides the opportunity to dramatically improve truck access into and out of the peninsula and mitigate the truck and pedestrian conflicts within the heart of the residential community. Additionally, it is expected that the Bruckner-Sheridan improvements will decrease truck idling because the reconfiguration of the highway interchange will resolve bottlenecks. The improvements would also decrease the number of miles traveled by trucks because their access to the markets would be more direct. Finally, the redesign would enable better waterfront access. In all, the preferred solution would benefit environmental quality and economic development.

Specifically, the Task Force supports an alternative that:

- Creates a direct on/off connection between the markets and highway;
- Improves waterfront access along the Bronx River, including a direct waterfront connection to the Bronx River Greenway;
- Encourages safe pedestrian access to open space resources;and
- Can be implemented in a timely fashion.

The idea of the Bruckner-Sheridan interchange improvements has been proposed for many years; perhaps the most important recommendation from the Task Force is to continue support for the project’s implementation and to ensure that capital dollars are committed to its construction.



The long-term objective is to connect the existing points of waterfront access with a continuous waterfront greenway wherever feasible