

IMPROVING TRAFFIC SAFETY & EFFICIENCY

Issues

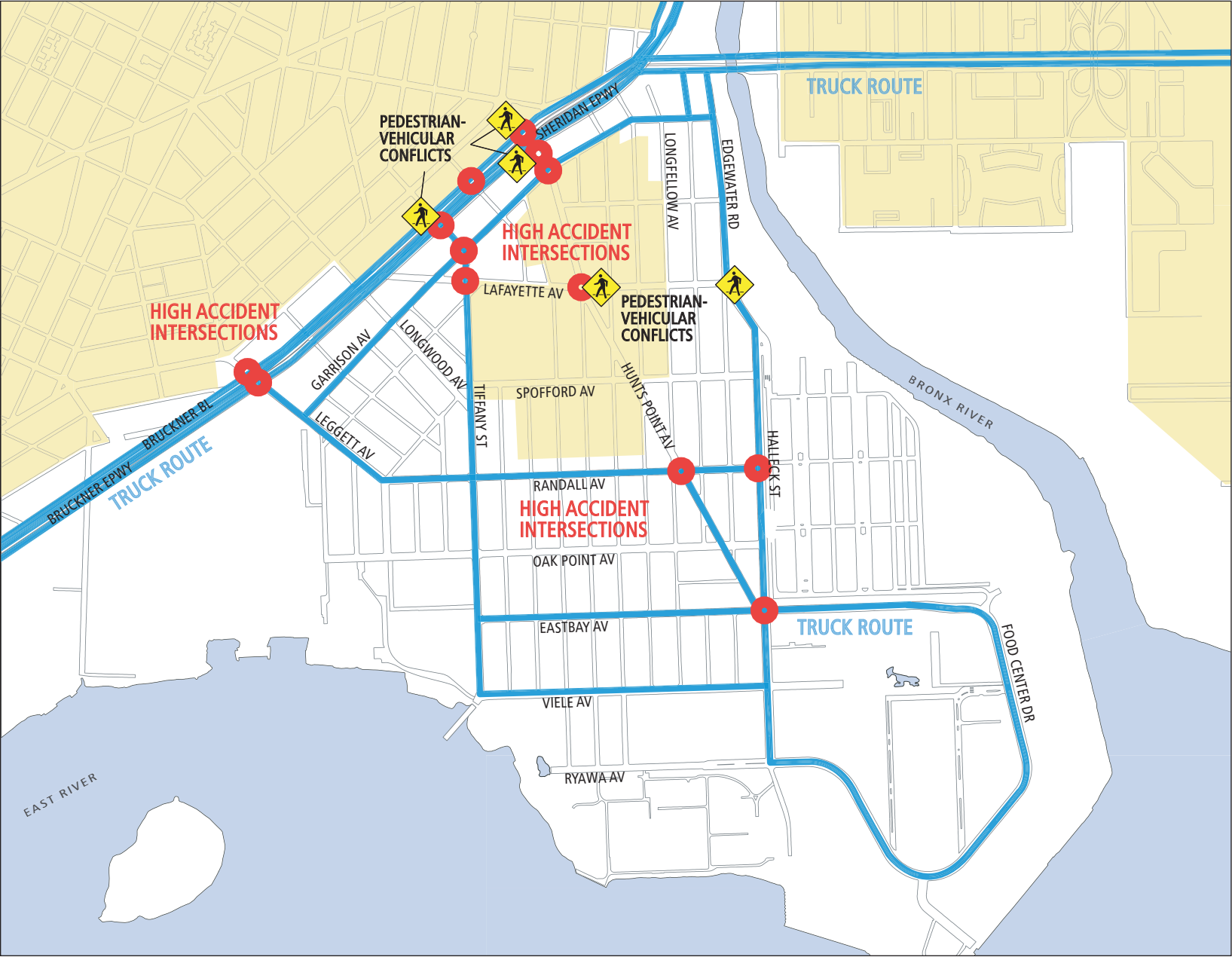
Diesel Truck Emissions

Diesel truck emissions are a contributing factor to poor quality of life for the residents and workers in the Hunts Point area. Diesel emissions are considered carcinogenic and exacerbate health conditions such as asthma, emphysema and heart disease.

Pedestrian / Vehicular Conflicts

A key concern of the Task Force was the issue of pedestrian/vehicular conflicts and high accident locations. To assess these issues, NYCEDC examined locations

where the conflicts actually occurred and developed approaches to address the conflicts. The results of the data gathering highlight that the percentage of accidents involving trucks was four times higher in Hunts Point (12 percent) than for the Bronx overall (3 percent). Similarly, the proportion of accidents involving injuries is significantly higher in Hunts Point than for the Bronx overall, most likely due to the higher number of collisions involving trucks. Most of the high-accident locations are on or close to Bruckner Boulevard and along other major truck routes such as Randall Avenue, Tiffany Street and Halleck Street. A few high-accident locations also exist along non-truck routes, such as at the intersection of Hunts Point Avenue and Lafayette Avenue.



Map highlighting traffic issues and truck routes prior to Summer 2004

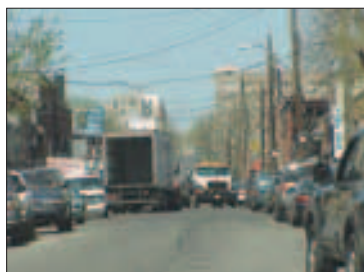
Truck Route Concerns

How trucks get into and out of Hunts Point is a significant and ongoing concern. As home to the nation's largest food distribution center, Hunts Point experiences a significant amount of truck traffic—15,000 trucks per day—that enter and leave the peninsula via a limited number of access and egress points with no direct connection to the area's highway system. This situation is further exacerbated by the fact that signage directing trucks from designated truck routes to the industrial zoned areas is limited. This can result in intrusion of truck traffic into the residential areas of Hunts Point. Members of the Hunts Point Task Force recognized, however, that the Hunts Point Market and other industrial uses are important to the economic vitality to the peninsula and stressed the importance of developing solutions that would allow residents and businesses to co-exist successfully.

In addition, many businesses use the industrial streets for double-parking, unloading or staging of materials. This creates bottlenecks on the streets and unsafe conditions for drivers, who often resort to crossing over the double yellow line to get through. Members of the Task Force suggested that a more rational system of signage and routing was needed to resolve the truck traffic issues.



The truck on the left has crossed over the double yellow line into oncoming traffic because of obstructions in other lanes.



Street obstruction on Coster Street

Rail Freight Constraints

Freight rail offers an opportunity to decrease the City's dependence on trucks for transporting goods. Hunts Point is particularly well-positioned for freight rail delivery and currently is one of the largest users of freight rail in the City. Unfortunately, the City's ability to encourage additional rail freight deliveries to the Food Distribution Center is limited by the existing configuration of the tracks, especially within the Produce Market. Freight rail service is further constrained by the fact that freight trains must share operating rights with passenger rail service (Metro-North and Amtrak) in order to access the peninsula. In addition to the limited freight rail operating window, height constraints along the Hudson River restrict the size of the freight rail cars.

Short-Term Approaches

Offer Clean Diesel Fuels and Alternative Fuels

- **Encourage the Use of Particulate Filters.** It is recommended that within a two-year timeframe, the City work with businesses to encourage as many fleets as possible to utilize diesel particulate filters. Diesel particulate filters reduce the amount of black smoke coming from the truck tailpipe by capturing the unburned particles before release.
- **Lower the Sulfur Content of Diesel.** The federal government has issued regulations that will decrease the sulfur content of diesel fuel to 15 parts per

million or less by 2007. Limiting the amount of sulfur will allow truckers to use more advanced filter technology. The City should encourage the use of biodiesel and/or ultra low sulfur diesel in Hunts Point by or before the expected federal implementation date of 2007.

- **Develop a Service Station with Clean Fuel Technologies.** Within a five-year time-frame, through reclamation of a brownfield site identified in Hunts Point, a full-service fueling facility offering a variety of clean fuel—electric fast-charging, compressed natural gas and renewable fuels such as ethanol blends and biodiesel blends including ultra-low-sulfur diesel—should be developed. This facility could support a 'clean' diesel fleet until such time as the old fleets are turned over to cleaner vehicles. The City and State would also encourage the purchase of alternative-fueled vehicles as part of the standard replacement cycle by offering grant funds to help offset additional costs.

Implement New Truck Access Routes

New truck routes were proposed by NYCDOT to separate, as much as possible, truck traffic destined for the Food Distribution Center and other industrial areas of the Peninsula from the residential community. Based on analysis and community consultation, the proposed truck route changes were first published on August 15, 2003, and a public hearing was conducted in Hunts Point on September 15, 2003. The proposed truck routes were further adjusted based on comments from stakeholders in the community, and the final route changes were published in the City Record on June 21, 2004. The route changes took effect on July 21, 2004.

The following streets were added as truck routes to discourage commercial vehicles from unnecessarily using residential corridors:

- Oak Point Avenue between Barry Street and Halleck Street;
- Barry Street between Leggett Avenue and Oak Point Avenue;
- Dupont Street between Leggett Avenue and Oak Point Avenue;
- Truxton Street between Leggett Avenue and Oak Point Avenue; and
- Bryant Avenue between Garrison Avenue and Bruckner Boulevard.

The following truck routes were removed on July 21st:

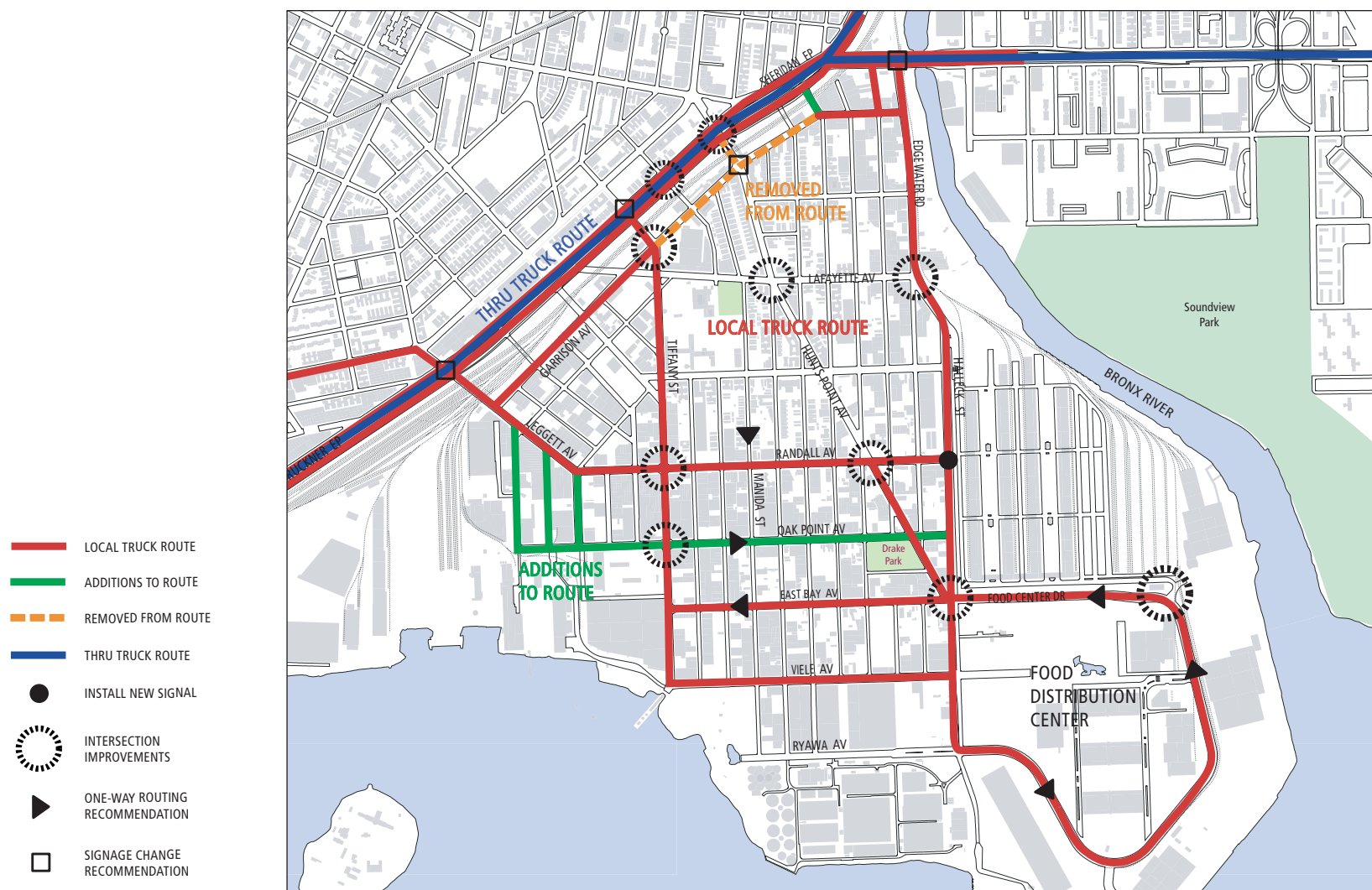
- Garrison Avenue between Tiffany Street and Bryant Avenue; and
- Hunts Point Avenue between Bruckner Boulevard and Garrison Avenue

(See map on page 21 with the new truck routes.)

NYCDOT, in coordination with NYCEDC, has conducted outreach to educate businesses and truckers about the new truck routes. NYCDOT will also monitor the truck route changes, and NYPD will enforce the new truck route following its implementation on July 21, 2004.



Truck exiting the Meat Market



Truck route revisions and short-term traffic improvements

Increase Signage in Industrial Areas

One of the most pressing area-wide needs is a comprehensive signage and wayfinding program for trucks and other vehicles entering, leaving and circulating within the peninsula. NYCEDC, NYCDOT and HPEDC have initiated the Streetscape Project to address these issues. The first phase of the project is to design wayfinding signs, identify key locations for sign placement and begin installation of the signs. Additional federal funding is being requested to undertake Phase Two of the project, full installation of the signage program.

Develop One-way Circulation Pattern in Industrial Areas

To maximize capacity along the designated truck routes, decrease travel times for trucks and discourage trucks from traveling within or near the residential areas, it is recommended that Oak Point Avenue and East Bay Avenue be converted to a one-way pair with Oak Point as one-way eastbound and East Bay as one-way westbound. Each road would have two travel lanes and angle parking on both sides. The lack of opposing flow on the one-way pair would result in fewer turning movement conflicts at intersections. The one-way pair will be implemented by Spring 2005.

Reconfigure Food Center Drive

From a traffic operations standpoint, Food Center Drive has adequate capacity to handle existing and projected traffic volumes. Food Center Drive currently provides three travel lanes in each direction and accommodates approximately 14,700 vehicles on a typical weekday in both directions. The predominant direction of traffic flow along Food Center Drive is in the counter-clockwise direction, accounting for about 70 percent of the daily peak period traffic. After consideration of several options, it was recommended that Food Center Drive be reconfigured to allow for vehicular traffic in one direction and to accommodate a pedestrian/bike route.

Additional evaluation and engineering is required to determine potential safety impacts; complete outreach to the businesses along Food Center Drive; identify any conflicts between vehicular, freight rail and greenway traffic; and refine cost estimates.

Implement Safety Improvements

Based on the data gathered and the discussion with the Task Force, a series of location-specific improvements were identified. These improvements will be completed by Spring 2005. The recommendations, which are included in the table below, were developed based on the following guiding principles:

- Eliminate or discourage truck traffic from residential and pedestrian-sensitive areas;
- Improve access to the peninsula from Bruckner Boulevard;
- Facilitate and enhance access, mobility and circulation for pedestrians and bicyclists;
- Improve safety for all road users, including pedestrians, vehicles and bicycles;
- Maximize the capacity of truck routes; and
- Improve the geometry and traffic control along truck routes and other major vehicular routes in the peninsula.

LOCATION SPECIFIC ISSUES & PROPOSED SHORT-TERM IMPROVEMENTS

| | LOCATION | ISSUE | PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT |
|-----|--|---|--|
| 1. | Oak Point, East Bay and Randall Avenues | Ninety-degree parking and double parking on two-way streets reduces capacity and compromises safety. | Convert Oak Point Avenue from two-way to one-way eastbound (between Tiffany and Halleck Streets) and East Bay Avenue from two-way to one-way westbound (between Halleck and Tiffany Streets) as a signed truck route pair. Stripe and provide signage for 60-degree "back-in" parking on both sides of Oak Point Avenue and the south side of East Bay Avenue. |
| 2. | a. Food Center Drive | Not utilized efficiently; storage and congestion problems for trucks during certain time periods. | Convert Food Center Drive to one-way counterclockwise. Use existing median to separate traffic by access point. Provide bike lane. Provide sidewalk on south side of Food Center Drive between East Bay Avenue and A&P. |
| | b. Food Center Drive/Produce Market Exit/Bazzini entrance and exit | No traffic control, inadequate turning radius for exiting vehicles. | Reduce conflicts between right-turn exiting vehicles and counterclockwise through vehicles by channelizing exiting Meat Market traffic to inside lanes. Improve turning radius. |
| | c. Food Center Drive/Halleck Street/ East Bay Avenue | Shared through/right-turn lane with exclusive right-turn phase at westbound approach, inadequate turning radius for trucks. | Shift traffic lanes to the south to allow larger turning radius. Provide two right-turn lanes, one through lane and 1 through/ left-turn lane at westbound approach. |
| 3. | Randall Avenue/Hunts Point Avenue | High accident location. Five-legged intersection with multiple conflicts. | Provide stop bar and signage for eastbound approach. Shift west crosswalk to west side of Longfellow Avenue. Extend curb at northwest corner. Convert Longfellow Avenue from two-way to one-way southbound from Randall Avenue to Oak Point Avenue. |
| 4. | Randall Avenue/Halleck Street | High accident location; heavy truck volumes at unsignalized intersection. | Signal is warranted and will be installed by November 30, 2004. Install signage and lane markings. |
| 5. | Manida Street between Randall Avenue and Garrison Avenue | Outbound trucks use this residential street as a short cut to exit the peninsula. | Convert Manida Street from one-way northbound to one-way southbound from Spofford Avenue to Randall Avenue. Install signs. |
| 6. | Lafayette Avenue/Edgewater Road/ Drake Street | Future park needs safe and pedestrian-friendly access. | NYCDOT has redesigned this intersection to provide crosswalks and pedestrian amenities, such as raised medians. |
| 7. | Hunts Point Avenue/Lafayette Avenue/ Coster Street | High accident location; traffic operational problems. | Left-turn bays will be installed at eastbound and westbound approaches. Install guard rail and quick-curb to channel all northbound traffic from Coster Street onto southbound Hunts Point Avenue. Extend curb for long-term improvement. |
| 8. | Tiffany Street/Lafayette Avenue | High accident location. | Install signal if warrants are met, or reverse Stop sign locations. |
| 9. | Tiffany Street/Garrison Avenue | High accident location. | Install signal if warrants are met. Provide crosswalks and peg-a-trac. NYCDOT is investigating daylighting at all approaches. Stripe all approaches. NYCDOT is considering narrowing Garrison Avenue. |
| 10. | Tiffany Street/Bruckner Boulevard | High accident location. Inappropriate signal hardware to prevent westbound left turns when they are not permitted. No clearance interval for westbound phase. | Provide new signal head to include red, yellow and green left arrows for westbound Bruckner Boulevard main road approach. Adjust signal timing to provide westbound clearance time between Bruckner Boulevard westbound left and eastbound through traffic. |
| 11. | Barretto Street/Bruckner Boulevard | High accident location. | Convert middle lane of westbound Bruckner Boulevard main road approach from shared left/through to through only. |
| 12. | Hunts Point Avenue/Garrison Avenue | Incorrect or missing signage for trucks. | NYCDOT has removed signage to discourage trucks from traveling on future non-truck routes. |
| 13. | a. Hunts Point Avenue/Bruckner Boulevard | High accident location. Ball green signal head on main road westbound approach sends message to drivers that left turn is legal. | Signal head for westbound Bruckner Boulevard main road approach (located on median) will be changed from ball green to green through arrow. |
| | b. Hunts Point Avenue/Bruckner Boulevard | High accident location. No signage or lane markings to guide drivers through intersection on southbound Hunts Point Avenue approach. | Provide lane markings and lane usage signs. |
| 14. | Outbound exit points at Bruckner Boulevard | Lack of guide signs to direct drivers onto major highways. | Provide guide signs on outbound truck routes at Bruckner Boulevard to direct drivers onto major highways. |
| 15. | Leggett Avenue between Bruckner and Southern Boulevard | Anticipated traffic increases associated with the Fulton Fish Market relocation require reductions in intersection conflicts. | NYCDOT is converting Leggett Avenue to a one-way westbound roadway (towards Southern Boulevard). Install appropriate pavement markings and signage. Install angle parking on the south side of Leggett Avenue. |

Continue to Facilitate Short-Term Freight Rail Improvements

NYCEDC has invested over \$5 million in upgrades to the freight rail lines in the Food Distribution Center over the past five years, substantially improving the markets' ability to receive rail shipments. The upgrades in turn allow for NYCEDC to encourage new freight rail service, as was done with A&P, which now receives at least two freight trains each week. In addition, NYCEDC is participating with the Produce Market and NYSDOT in a NYSERDA-sponsored study to identify short-term rail circulation improvements within the Produce Market.

Long-Term Approaches

Improve Rail Access to the Produce Market

To improve rail freight service to Hunts Point in the long term, significant investments would need to be made outside of Hunts Point: two important initiatives include improving freight rail operations on the Metro-North Hudson Line and upgrading the tracks and switches at Oak Point Yard (the route leading to Hunts Point).

Within Hunts Point, the future of rail freight depends in part on how the Hunts Point Produce Market is redeveloped. The current infrastructure at the Market includes rail tracks that run parallel to the Produce Market buildings. These rail tracks are not fully utilized. This is partly due to the fact that tenants of the market must use refrigerated trucks, which straddle the tracks, for additional storage. As the Produce Market, in conjunction with NYCEDC, undertakes its master planning initiative for redevelopment, an operational plan that considers rail freight needs will be critical to attracting additional rail freight service to Hunts Point.

Construct Bruckner Expressway Improvements

As noted above, constructing an alignment that provides direct access to the peninsula from the Bruckner/Sheridan Expressways is key to improving circulation within the peninsula. The Task Force is committed to working with NYSDOT and the Federal Highway Administration to identify the most feasible alignment and identify potential funding sources to ensure the alignment is constructed.

Bruckner Expressway Improvement Options

NYSDOT is evaluating several "packages" of alternative improvements. The figures below, courtesy of NYSDOT, illustrate several of the possible improvements under consideration.



Illustration of a portion of Package 1A

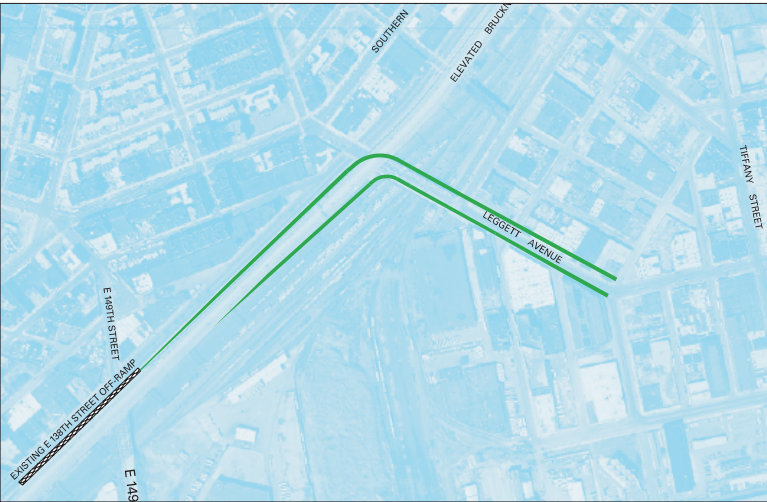


Illustration of a portion of Package 1B



Illustration of a portion of Package 2C