

Dauids Island project moves slowly forward

The proposed billion dollar Davids Island development has been moving ahead slowly in Westchester although its scale has been reduced by its backers.

There has been little intervention in the project by New York City or the Bronx but Rep. Eliot Engel did testify at a hearing in late April in New Rochelle, stating his concerns. Another Co-op City resident, Jorge Santiago, has urged that the state Department of Traffic "conduct a full review of (a) traffic analysis," which he considers outdated and misleading.

Engel testified at a state Department of Environmental Conservation hearing. He said that although his district does not include New Rochelle or Davids Island, he noted that residents of his district, including City Island, Co-op City, Pelham Bay and Throgs Neck, had expressed concern over the development's impact.

"My major concern with this project," Engel said, "is with its impact on the environment. If this proposal is to become reality, the highest and strictest environmental

standards must be adhered to during every step of the project. We must remember at all times that impacts to the environment do not stop at man-made borders."

Engel recognized that the development would "generate jobs and attract new residents, but it must also be a project that protects nature and allows its neighbors to maintain a livable human environment."

Santiago, a member of the Co-op City Nature/Garden Club and of the Bronx Council for Environmental Quality, wrote to Gary Kassof of the Coast Guard who compiled the original environmental impact statement in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Santiago contends the traffic impact would be much worse on local roads than the developer has said. Saying that the developer has misinterpreted the traffic analysis report, Santiago said "the figures show that traffic generated from the Davids Island project will cause severe traffic congestion in Pel-

ham Bay Park. Besides that, he said, "the figures in the report are already four years old; the traffic generated from the New Rochelle Mall was not figured into the report." The latter could add a significant traffic load to Shore Road, Santiago said.

Because the figures are four

years old, Santiago said they had to be validated. He pointed out that New York City does not accept traffic figures more than three years old.

He also said there were major inaccuracies in the analysis, especially at certain intersections. The volume of traffic on Shore Road

also was called underestimated and that correct figures would show the level to be unacceptable.

The once 50-story towers and the 2,000 residents have been trimmed to 30-story buildings and 1,750 residents. The island consists of the ruins of an old army camp and is inhabited by wildlife.