



Press Release

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What: Rally to Demand Pedestrian and Bicycle Access on the NYS Depot Place Bridge

When: Saturday, March 20, 2021 11:20 AM

Where: Sedgwick Avenue at the Corner of Depot Place Bridge (just North of 167th Street)

On Saturday at 11 AM, over 100 youth and adult residents and community leaders from Highbridge and the Bronx will join activists and representatives from the Harlem River Working Group, the Bronx Council for Environmental Quality, Transportation Alternatives, Bike New York, Boogie Down Rides, and local elected officials to call on the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) to lead a bike and walk from the High Bridge at 170th & University Avenue to Roberto Clemente State Park and hold a press conference to call on the NYS Department of Transportation to make appropriate space on the Depot Place Bridge renovation for bicycle and pedestrian access.

The Depot Place Bridge is the only southern access point to the Harlem River Greenway, Bridge Park South, Bridge Park North, and Roberto Clemente State Park. Yet NYSDOT is planning to remove one of the existing sidewalks, to provide parking for police vehicles, near the on-ramp to I-87 South (the Deegan Expressway), leaving bicycles and pedestrians to share a completely inadequate five-foot-sidewalk.

This press conference will be the third public action our coalition has organized in support of this plan (the first event was a walkthrough with elected officials in November 2019). Despite the many requests from local residents for improved safety and better access, NYSDOT is still moving forward with a design that will utilize half the width of the bridge to provide perpendicular parking for 16 NYPD vans, while providing almost no safe access for people walking and biking.

Together, we want to join with our elected officials to address our community concerns and to make safer pedestrian and bicycle access a reality. Elected officials signed a joint letter calling for the NYS Department of Transportation to put people before parking.

Conference attendees will tour the Greenway from the High Bridge to Roberto Clemente State Park, after stopping and holding a press conference at Depot Place and hear from concerned residents, representatives from different organizations, and elected officials. Safe Social Distancing will be observed. Residents without bicycles will be able to use 40 Citibikes that have been donated for the day's event with the support of Lyft and Transportation Alternatives.

Quotes from elected officials and supporters:

"Thousands of Bronx families have one of New York's most beautiful waterfronts just a short walk from their homes but the Major Deegan Expressway has long served as a "barrier that limits safe access to this extraordinary resource," Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner (D-Bronx, 77th AD) said. "Together with my constituents from the Highbridge community, I urge that access to the Harlem River be unlocked by installing the necessary safety enhancements along the Deegan so that local families can safely enjoy the riverfront we all share."

"During the COVID-19 pandemic, our waterfront parks and greenways have served as a much needed haven for Bronx families. They provide a safe and healthy way for local residents to recreate, and we



should do all we can to increase access to these green spaces. Safe pedestrian and bicycle access from Depot Place Bridge to the waterfront is an important step toward ensuring greater parks-equity for our community, while addressing local health disparities.”

- **Senator Jose M. Serrano**

“The Depot Place Bridge is a major thoroughway for thousands of Bronxites and it is our responsibility to ensure their safety as they travel to their destination. I join with my colleagues in government and the advocates in urging the New York State Department of Transportation to make appropriate space on the Depot Place Bridge renovation for bicycle and pedestrian access. We cannot risk putting New Yorkers’ lives in danger and Bronx residents deserve the right to safely access parks along the Harlem River.”

- **Council Member Vanessa Gibson**

“As we’ve seen on other bridges in New York City, forcing pedestrians and bicyclists to share a narrow right-of-way often has disastrous consequences,” said **Transportation Alternatives Director of Organizing Erwin Figueroa**. “Time and time again, transportation agencies have given too much space to motorized vehicles, while shortchanging the safety and comfort of people walking and biking.”

“It is outrageous that NYSDOT will not listen to our community. They are literally telling the Bronx that the State DOT cares more about providing parking vehicles for NYPD than protecting the lives of the children and family members that use parks along the Harlem River in the Bronx.”

- **Anita Antonetty, BCEQ Board Member, and Highbridge Resident of 50 years**

“Why when New York City has just spent tens of millions of dollars renovating the High Bridge, the High Bridge Step Streets, Bridge Park North, Bridge Park South, and the Harlem River Greenway and New York State has invested over twenty million dollars in renovating Roberto Clemente State Park can’t the State Department of Transportation work with New York City Parks and New York City Department of Transportation to allow community members to safely access these parks? It doesn’t make any sense!”

- **Chauncy Young, Harlem River Working Group/BCEQ**

“It is hard to understand why the State DOT wants to kill our greenway. Between the railroad, the highway system, and the MTA train car cleaning facility, the people already have limited access. As with other EJ areas, this is not just a transportation corridor; people have a right to this waterfront. A Greenway is not a Greenway without access.”

- **Dr. Robert Fanuzzi, BCEQ President**