

COMMUNITY BOARD TEN
Traffic & Transportation Committee Report
January 28, 2008

Good Evening:

The Traffic and Transportation Committee met in quorum on Wednesday, January 16, 2008 at CB 10's District Office with Chairman Rasinya present. Larry Stelter very graciously arranged for a presentation of a "conceptual plan" to revitalize the Gowanus Expressway corridor from Glen Cutrona, a past president of the Brooklyn Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. The AIA is a national professional organization of architects. Michael Cairl of Project Span Services was also in attendance. The proposal includes a "Skyway" or a six-lane cable suspension roadway above 1st Avenue from 16th Street to 64th Street. The conceptual plan is very detailed with maps and visual representations of what the Skyway could look like. It includes a location for a deep water container port between 39th Street and 52nd Street as well as dedicated exits for the existing manufacturing facilities located there and parkland. A redesign of Third Avenue with a great deal of greenery, wide sidewalks and a bicycle path after the Gowanus Expressway is removed is included. The Avenue would accommodate six lanes of traffic.

As all of us are aware, there are current proposals to replace the Gowanus Expressway under consideration. The AIA is celebrating its sesquicentennial and every chapter developed a proposal for their community as a blueprint for America. The Brooklyn chapter worked a year and a half year to prepare this conceptual plan. As explained by Mr. Cutrona, this concept was meant to be a gift to the community of a plan for revitalization which excludes any high rise development. The group has no client, no budget, or plan for actual development. This concept of the AIA to improve and revitalize the 3-mile stretch of elevated highway is not actually located in CB 10 and would be practical only if a cross harbor freight railroad tunnel plan was implemented as well. The conceptual plan has no information about cost or parking or traffic flow. The idea of replacing the expressway over Third Avenue with a cable stay suspension roadway over First Avenue has value since interesting and unique details were considered and incorporated by AIA. Before any final plan is made by NYS DOT to replace the Gowanus Expressway some of this information could have a beneficial effect on a final plan. This is truly a generous gift from AIA to all the communities located around the Gowanus Expressway. I would like to thank Mr. Cutrona and the AIA for their unselfish hard work. A sincere thank you to Larry Stelter for arranging the informational presentation.

The Committee raised very real concerns about the concept. Member Kassenbrock pointed out security problems of a cable stay suspension viaduct which would be vulnerable to terrorist attacks. Member Cassara reminded the Committee that without real information about expenses and land use the concept had little practical application. Member Bortnick echoed the need for a "real" plan and pointed out that the Gowanus Expressway is a vital and efficient arterial highway that serves Brooklyn as it stands. The higher cost of maintenance the Skyway as opposed to the proposed tunnel alternative to the Gowanus Expressway was discussed. The Committee voted to submit an informational report about the AIA concept to the full board however Member Harrison made a friendly motion to amend the report to include a proposal for action. After discussion, the committee voted unanimously to make a proposal appropriate for the conceptual nature of the presentation.

In addition, a proposal to appoint a liaison between the T&T Committee and the Brooklyn AIA

was discussed and that idea will be submitted to Chairman Rasinya for further consideration.

The Committee also discussed and proposed to send a letter to NYS DOT requesting a presentation on the feasibility of adding an extra surface lane to the exit ramp located on the north side of the westbound Belt Parkway which feeds the Staten Island bound traffic unto the Verrazano Narrows Bridge. This would effectively widen the parkway unto the existing shoulder which borders the Ft. Hamilton army base (the property is owned by NYC Parks Dept.). The idea has been discussed by the board previously but we do not have a definitive answer if and when this improvement could be accomplished. The Committee voted unanimously to propose that a letter be sent to NYS DOT to conduct a feasibility study for that extra lane.

Respectfully submitted


Brian Kieran

The T&T Committee proposes that CB 10 send a letter to District Managers for CB 7 and CB 6, to our elected officials and NYS DOT which requests them to review the AIA concept for feasibility in any plan for revitalization of the Gowanus Expressway corridor.

I ask for a motion from the floor

The T&T Committee proposes that CB 10 send a letter to the Commissioner of NYS DOT requesting a feasibility study for widening the surface ramp of the westbound Belt Parkway for Staten Island bound VNB traffic by one lane.

I ask for a motion from the floor