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## NEIGHBORHOOD REPORT: BRONX UP CLOSE; Sheridan's Fork in the Road: Either Fix It or Kill It

By JIM O'GRADY (NYT)

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The Sheridan Expressway, the 1.25-mile roadway that links the Bruckner and Cross Bronx Expressways, is the ugly duckling of Bronx highways. Drivers tend to avoid the Sheridan because it is hard to get to from other roads. South Bronx residents say it cuts them off from the gradually greening banks of the Bronx River.

The State Department of Transportation and community groups agree that the expressway is a key to easing the woeful traffic flow in the South Bronx. But they differ on how to do this.

Department engineers are studying ways to make the road more efficient, especially where it meets the Bruckner Expressway, an intersection that is frequently bottlenecked. A coalition of local groups has come up with a proposal to improve traffic flow in the area while adding parkland to Hunts Point.

First, they say, get rid of the Sheridan Expressway.

"You'd be eliminating a massive and blighted structure that separates Hunts Point from the rest of the world," said Joan Byron, architectural director at the Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development, an organization in the coalition. In addition, she said, the expressway is made unnecessary by the southern end of the Bronx River Parkway, which parallels it to the east.

About 37,000 cars a day use the expressway, while 60,000 to 100,000 cars a day take the parkway, the State Department of Transportation says.

The state considers the expressway underused, but Jennifer Nelson, a department spokeswoman, said that removing it would force thousands of vehicles -- primarily trucks heading to and from the Hunts Point markets -- onto local streets in Hunts Point and Crotona Park East.

Paul Lipson, executive director of the Point Community Development Corporation, said the coalition's plan addresses that problem. Under the plan, new exits and entrances connecting the Bruckner Expressway to the Hunts Point market would be added for truckers.

Currently, trucks heading east to the market generally take the Cross Bronx to the Sheridan. But these changes would steer them away from the Sheridan, Mr. Lipson said, making it obsolete.

The changes would also allow truckers to avoid the usually jam-packed Cross Bronx, which Mr. Lipson called the "worst road in America."

Under the new plan, eastbound trucks could take the Deegan Expressway south to the Bruckner, and enter and exit the market from the southern end of Hunts Point. JIM O'GRADY