



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

July 27, 2011/Calendar No.2

C 100385MMM

IN THE MATTER OF an application, submitted by the Department of Transportation and the Department of Small Business Services, pursuant to Sections 1302, 197-c and 199 of the New York City Charter, and Section 5-430 et seq., of the New York City Administrative Code for an amendment to the City Map involving:

- the modification of the lines and grades of the Willis Avenue Bridge, Harlem River Drive, and Marginal Street, Wharf or Place*;
- The elimination of an elevated public highway; and
- The delineation of bridge approach ramps,

in Community District 11, Borough of Manhattan, in accordance with Map No. 30216 dated January 24, 2011 and signed by the Borough President.

*This change to Marginal Street, Wharf or Place, where such Marginal Street, Wharf or Place is shown on any existing plans for the water front or portion thereof, shall be incorporated into the City Map.

The application (C100385MMM) for an amendment to the City Map involving: the modification of the lines and grades of the Willis Avenue Bridge, Harlem River Drive, and Marginal Street, Wharf, or Place; elimination of an elevated public highway; and the delineation of bridge approach ramps was filed by the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) and the NYC Department of Small Business Services (DSBS) on May 11, 2010.

BACKGROUND

The Department of Transportation and the Department of Small Business Services are requesting an amendment to the City Map involving the modification of the lines and grades of the Willis Avenue Bridge, Harlem River Drive, and Marginal Street, Wharf, or Place; elimination of an elevated public highway; and the delineation of bridge approach ramps, in order to facilitate the replacement of the Willis Avenue Bridge over the Harlem River and to provide a maintenance and emergency access area for both the Willis Avenue and JFK bridges, in the East Harlem neighborhood of Community District 11, Borough of Manhattan.

Changes to the City Map required to facilitate the replacement of the bridge on the Bronx side were the subject of a previous application, (C030028MMX), which was approved by the City Planning Commission on May 10, 2006 (Calendar No. 15).

The Willis Avenue Bridge, a swing type, movable bridge, spans the Harlem River and connects First Avenue, East 125th Street, and the FDR Drive in Manhattan with Willis Avenue at East 132nd Street and Bruckner Boulevard in the Bronx. It is a principal northbound route from Manhattan to the Bronx, carrying more than 70,000 vehicles daily, and together with the southbound Third Avenue Bridge, provides a toll-free alternative to the Robert F. Kennedy (RFK) Bridge (a.k.a. Triborough Bridge). The bridge carries four lanes of traffic and also provides pedestrian and bicycle access between Manhattan and the Bronx. The swing span permits the passage of tall vessels on the Harlem River. The bridge is easily reached from the local Manhattan street network, via First Avenue at East 125th Street, as well as from the northbound FDR Drive via ramp structures. In the Bronx, the bridge connects to Willis Avenue, where there is access to a northbound entrance ramp to the Major Deegan Expressway at E. 135th Street, and connects to Bruckner Boulevard via a ramp structure.

In August 2007, construction began to replace the Willis Avenue Bridge with a new structure along a new alignment immediately south and slightly skewed to the old bridge. The old bridge structure was over one hundred years old and had outlived its useful lifespan. It did not meet current structural and seismic requirements or current geometric design standards. The poor horizontal geometry of the bridge could not be fully corrected without major changes to the bridge alignment. The construction of the replacement bridge south of and adjacent to the old bridge allows for correction of non-standard geometry and facilitates the maintenance of vehicular and maritime traffic during construction.

The construction project includes complete replacement of the entire bridge structure (bridge swing span, flanking bowstring span and girder span), spanning the river with a new center bridge swing span and a flanking girder span on each side on a new alignment, a new pivot pier and end support piers, and all new steel approaches and ramps, designed according to current

standards, which transition back to existing connections with the street and arterial highway networks.

The main structure of the new bridge (over the river) provides four traffic lanes, similar to the old bridge, but is wider, 71.6 feet compared to 66.5 feet, in order to accommodate standard 12-foot wide lanes and two 4-foot wide shoulders, compared to the prior 10-foot wide lanes without shoulders. The new bridge also has a single standard 12-foot wide combined pedestrian/bicycle path on its north side, with new stairs and ADA-compliant ramps providing connections to the Manhattan waterfront and Bronx bicycle network. The old walkways/bikeways were located on both sides of the bridge and varied from a maximum 8 feet wide to as low as 5 feet and often contained multiple obstacles within the walkway reducing its effective width and creating unsafe conditions for both pedestrians and bicyclists. All features of the new bridge and approach ramps are as per current design standards with the exception of the non-standard lane width and lateral clearance on a portion of the FDR Drive approach ramp due to physical constraints as it threads through the existing RFK Bridge columns. These design improvements are expected to substantially reduce the accident rate on the bridge and approaches. As all substructures would be completely replaced, all current seismic design criteria would be met.

In Manhattan, the First Avenue approach and FDR Drive ramp have been replaced on new alignments with standard radius curves and the mainline center swing span and flanking girder spans are in place. The new pivot pier for the swing bridge is located 118 feet east of the existing pier, but still provides two 109-foot wide channels, as did the old pier. The new pier was shifted to the east, closer to the center of the channel, to facilitate construction of a wider curve alignment on the FDR approach ramp to the bridge. The old swing bridge, which opened for tall vessels, had a vertical clearance of 24 feet above Mean High Water Level (MHWL) when closed. The new swing bridge when closed has a 25 foot clearance above the Mean High Water Line which makes it consistent with other bridges along the river.

The majority of the bridge and ramp construction work has already been completed: the new swing span was installed in August 2010 and all construction necessary to safely open the new bridge to traffic from both the FDR Drive (NB) and First Avenue in Manhattan to Bruckner

Boulevard and Willis Avenue in the Bronx was completed in September 2010. On October 2, 2010 traffic was successfully diverted from the old bridge to the new bridge. Completion of the entire bridge replacement project including remaining work on ramps, piers and abutments, utility work, and further testing of bridge mechanical, electrical and hydraulic systems is anticipated to be in December 2012.

An access area will be provided from the local street grid system, entering from approximately E. 127th St., to the new Willis Avenue Bridge and RFK Bridge for the purpose of inspection, maintenance, and repair, both on scheduled and emergency basis and to provide emergency access to both bridges for the Fire Department (FDNY). A portion of Marginal Street, Wharf or Place will be eliminated from the City Map from E. 127th to E. 125th streets and established as part of The Harlem River Drive to provide for this access area which will encompass the new bridge alignment, as well as the bridge columns and foundations, plus an additional width required for access and maintenance of those structures. This area will remain unobstructed and will be available for shared use by pedestrians and bicyclists accessing the waterfront from E. 127th Street or from Harlem River Park located to the north once all DOT construction in the area is completed, including future reconstruction of the E. 127th Street viaduct scheduled to begin in 2013 and ending in 2015. A collapsed portion of the bulkhead area (existing condition) was also restored, providing for a wider access area under the new Willis Avenue Bridge.

The project site lies within M1-1, M1-2, M2-2 and R7-2 zoning districts in Manhattan. The surrounding area is developed with a mixture of low, medium and high-rise residential buildings and commercial uses. There are numerous vacant lots along Second Avenue. A NYC Transit Authority Bus Depot occupies the entire block bounded by First and Second avenues and 126th and 127th streets. The Bus Depot was constructed over the site of the former Elmendorf Reformed Church Cemetery, where enslaved and free Africans were interred. A community task force has plans to erect a memorial, possibly in Harlem River Park, to commemorate the site as the Harlem African Burial Ground. A bus parking lot is directly across from the bus depot on Second Avenue, and a salt storage facility operated by the Department of Sanitation is located west of the Harlem River Drive at E. 125th Street.

The affected agencies and utilities were polled on June 4, 2010. No agencies expressed any objections to the proposal.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This application (C100385MMM) was reviewed pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), and the SEQRA regulations set forth in Volume 6 of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations, Section 617.00 *et seq.*, and the City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Rules of Procedure of 1991 and Executive Order No. 91 of 1977. The designated CEQR No. is 06DOT003X. The lead agency is the Department of Transportation.

After a study of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action, it was determined that the proposed action may have a significant effect on the environment, and that an environmental impact statement would be required for the following reason:

The action may result in significant effects on historic resources, noise, natural resources, hydrology, and construction related impacts in the vicinity of the affected area.

The environmental review process for the Willis Avenue Bridge reconstruction project was initiated on November 3, 1999 with the publication of a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register notifying the public that the project was being developed and that a DEIS would be prepared to assess and disclose its environmental impacts. A public scoping meeting was held on the Draft Scope of Work on December 2, 1999 and a Final Scope of Work was issued on July 11, 2000.

The applicant prepared a DEIS and issued a Notice of Completion on August 17, 2005 pursuant to the SEQR regulations and the CEQR Rules of Procedures. A public hearing was held on October 17, 2005, at the East Harlem Center for Community Improvement in Manhattan in order to receive comments on the information and analyses contained in the DEIS.

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was completed, and a Notice of Completion of the FEIS was issued by DOT on December 27, 2005. The Notice of Completion for the FEIS identified the following significant impacts and proposed mitigation measures:

Impacts:

1. Historic Resources: As the existing Willis Avenue Bridge would be demolished, the project would adversely impact this historic resource.
2. Noise: Analysis of the proposed project (Off-Line Replacement) predicted future noise would be within approximately 2 dBA of existing noise levels and would not substantially exceed existing noise levels. However, with the exception of one receptor site (which has commercial or office land uses), predicted future noise levels at the eight remaining receptor sites (which are locations with residential, industrial, school, and/or park land uses) with the Off-Line Replacement would exceed the FHWA established NACs, and therefore result in noise impacts at those locations.
3. Natural Resources: Off-line replacement of the bridge would result in potential adverse impacts to natural resources due to in-water construction activities, such as dredging to create a trench for submarine cables for operation of the new bridge, demolition of the existing bridge, installation of the new bridge, and extension into the river of the existing relieving platform on the Manhattan side.
4. Hydrology: Temporary increases in currents near the existing structures may result in scour of the channel bottom.
5. Construction Related Impacts: At some locations adjacent to the FDR Drive feeder ramps to the bridge pile driving would take place at night. These operations would be noisy and intrusive, and would also result in short term noise impacts. In general, the locations where the large increases in noise levels would occur do not have residential land uses, and the increases would occur for limited time periods, primarily when impact equipment is being used (i.e. during pile driving, installation of sheet piling, and demolition operations). Demolition work on the

existing bridge would have the potential to disturb suspect asbestos containing material, pigeon waste and lead paint. There would also be some subsurface work in areas that have a history of petroleum spills creating the potential for exposure to contaminated soil or groundwater.

Mitigation:

1. Historic Resources: A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was executed by SHPO, NYSDOT, NYCDOT, FHWA and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. As stipulated in the MOA, mitigation measures will include: a) photographic and historic documentation of the bridge according to Historic American Engineering Record standards; b) preservation within the new bridge right-of-way of the easternmost historic granite pier (Pier 17) located in the Harlem River Yard; c) design of the new swing span as a through truss type that recognizes the truss forms of the existing bridge; d) development of a plan to offer the existing Swing and Through Truss Spans for reuse; e) development of an interpretive plaque or other device to interpret the existing bridge's history, which will be installed as part of the project; and f) a letter offering the stone masonry from the existing piers and abutments for reuse by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.

2. Natural Resources: Mitigation measures are available to address temporary construction-period impacts on natural resources, including turbidity curtains, sheet pile cofferdams, silt barriers, and seasonal restrictions. Mitigation may also be required for the loss of littoral zone and/or other aquatic habitats for the new piers and fender system, and utility cable installation. Mitigation for any shading impacts associated with the increased relieving platform coverage would be coordinated with USACE and NYSDEC as part of the permitting process. With the appropriate mitigation measures employed, no long-term adverse impacts to natural resources would be expected to occur.

3. Hydrology: To address potential scouring of the channel bottom, a scour monitoring program would be implemented to identify and correct scour areas using localized riprap placements to minimize disturbances. Mitigation measures would be employed to address water quality construction-period impacts, including silt curtains, sheet pile cofferdams, and booms around dewatering activities, time-of-year restrictions on construction activities, and other

protective measures to be determined in conjunction with NYSDEC and/or other regulatory agencies. Measures will be employed to ensure proper disposal of dredged material. State and Federal permits would be required since extensive work would be completed in the river.

4. Construction Related Impacts: No specific construction noise abatement measures are proposed. However, during final design NYS DOT will examine whether there are cost effective and feasible measures that can be incorporated into the project plans and specifications (e.g. construction scheduling, equipment noise abatement requirements, use of quieter construction techniques, etc.) to reduce construction noise levels. A site-specific environmental health and safety plan will be developed that would be closely followed during construction activities to protect workers and the public from exposure to hazardous materials.

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW

This application (C100385MMM) was certified as complete by the Department of City Planning on February 28, 2011, and was duly referred to Community Board 11 and the Borough President of Manhattan, in accordance with Title 62 of the Rules of the City of New York, Section 2-02(b).

COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Community Board 11 held a public hearing on this application (C100385MMM) on April 19, 2011, and on that day, by a vote of 38 to 0, with 0 abstentions, adopted a resolution recommending approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That the proposed city map change will not interfere with future plans to incorporate a memorial, park or some such entity recognizing the presence of the historic Harlem African Burial Ground; and
2. That the proposed city map change will not interfere with the transfer of existing Marginal Street from 125th to 132nd streets to the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation for completion of the planned Harlem River Park; an

uninterrupted pedestrian promenade along Manhattan's Harlem waterfront from 125th to 145th streets.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT RECOMMENDATION

This application (C100385MMM) was considered by the Borough President of Manhattan who, on June 8, 2011, issued a recommendation to approve the application.

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING

On June 7, 2011 (Calendar No. 1), the City Planning Commission scheduled June 22, 2011 for a public hearing on this application (C100385MMM). The hearing was duly held on June 22, 2011 (Calendar No. 28).

There were three speakers in favor and none in opposition to this application. Two speakers, DOT's project engineer, and a DOT consultant, described the City Map change, bridge and approach ramp construction project and details of the access corridor area. The third speaker, the Director of Parklands from the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), described the future plans to develop the area between E. 125th and E. 132nd streets as part of a greenway and open space network which will connect at E. 132nd Street to the portion of Harlem River Park which is built between E. 132nd and 145th streets. All speakers reiterated that they have worked cooperatively throughout this process and that the proposed changes to the City Map will not diminish the City's ability to establish public access along the Harlem River Waterfront.

There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM CONSISTENCY REVIEW

This application (C100385MMM) was reviewed by the Department of City Planning for consistency with the policies of the New York City Waterfront Revitalization Program (WRP), as amended, approved by the New York City Council on October 13, 1999 and by the New York State Department of State on May 28, 2002, pursuant to the New York State Waterfront

Revitalization and Coastal Resources Act of 1981, (New York State Executive Law, Section 910 *et seq.*) The designated WRP number is 05-090.

This action was determined to be consistent with the policies of the New York City Waterfront Revitalization Program.

CONSIDERATION

The City Planning Commission believes that this amendment to the City Map is appropriate.

The City Planning Commission notes that the old Willis Avenue Bridge was over one hundred years old and did not meet current structural and seismic requirements or geometric design standards. The Commission believes that the poor horizontal geometry of the bridge could not be fully corrected without major changes to the bridge alignment. The construction of the replacement bridge south of and adjacent to the old bridge allows for correction of sharp substandard curves on the bridge ramps and also facilitates the maintenance of vehicular and maritime traffic during construction. The Commission believes that the proposed design improvements would improve traffic flow and driver safety and could substantially reduce the accident rate on the bridge and its approaches. The Commission also notes that improvements will be made to pedestrian and bicycle access linking Manhattan at 125th Street and the Manhattan waterfront to the Bronx and Bronx bicycle network.

The City Planning Commission acknowledges the concerns of Community Board 11 with respect to the historic Harlem African Burial Ground and that the proposed city map change will not interfere with the transfer of existing Marginal Street from 125th to 132nd streets to the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation for completion of the planned Harlem River Park. In that regard, the Commission received a letter from DOT, dated June 7, 2011, stating that the proposed city map change will not interfere with future plans to incorporate a memorial park, or some other memorial, within Harlem River Park to recognize the presence of the historic African Burial Ground located at First Avenue and 126th Street. DOT also stated that, although a portion of Marginal Street, between the RFK Bridge at E. 125th and the underpass at E. 127th street will be mapped as part of the Harlem

River Drive (HRD), it will remain unobstructed at all times and could be used both by pedestrians to walk along the waterfront and to provide an emergency access corridor to allow inspection, maintenance and repairs to the RFK and Willis Avenue bridges. In addition, the proposed city map change would permit the transfer of the remaining portion of Marginal Street, which is not being mapped as part of the Harlem River Drive, to DPR for completion of the planned Harlem River Park.

The City Planning Commission also received correspondence from the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) dated July 7, 2011 which reiterated DPR's conviction that the proposed changes to the City Map will not diminish the City's ability to establish public access along the Harlem River Waterfront. DPR further stated that, once the Willis Avenue Bridge and E. 127th Street viaduct projects are complete and sufficient funds are secured, it could carry forward a capital project to implement a greenway and public open space. In addition, DPR and DOT are in agreement that the area currently mapped as Marginal Street, Wharf or Place and proposed to be added to the Harlem River Drive can be used for emergency access for bridge maintenance as well as for pedestrian and bicycle access; and can be formalized as part of the City's greenway network. DPR will work with DOT to develop a greenway through this area that will link with other open space areas along the Harlem River waterfront north of the RFK Bridge that will be assigned to Parks. DPR also stated that they are in the process of requesting that DCAS place holds on the waterfront properties between the RFK Bridge and E. 132nd Street (such holds already exist for the Marginal Street areas between E. 127th to E. 132nd streets).

RESOLUTION

Therefore, the City Planning Commission, deeming the proposed amendment to the City map and any related acquisition or disposition to be appropriate, adopts the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that having considered the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), for which a notice of completion was issued on December 27, 2005, with respect to this application (CEQR No. 06DOT003X), the City Planning Commission finds that the requirements of the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act and regulations, have been met and that, consistent with social, economic and other essential considerations:

1. From among the reasonable alternatives thereto, the actions to be approved are ones which minimize or avoid adverse environmental impacts to the maximum extent practicable; and
2. The adverse environmental impacts revealed in the final environmental impact statement will be minimized or avoided to the maximum extent practicable by incorporating as conditions to this approval those mitigative measures that were identified as practicable.

The report of the City Planning Commission, together with the FEIS, constitutes the written statement of facts, and of social, economic and other factors and standards, that form the basis of the decision, pursuant to Section 617.11(d) of the SEQRA regulations; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the City Planning Commission, in its capacity as the City Coastal Commission, has reviewed the waterfront aspects of this application and finds that the proposed action is consistent with WRP policies; and be it further

RESOLVED, by the City Planning Commission, pursuant to Sections 197-c and 199 of the New York City Charter, that based on the environmental determination and the consideration described in this report, the application (C100385MMM) for the amendment to the City Map involving:

- the modification of the lines and grades of the Willis Avenue Bridge, Harlem River Drive, and Marginal Street, Wharf or Place (such Marginal Street, Wharf or Place, where the same is shown on any existing plans for the waterfront or portion thereof, shall be incorporated, as modified herein, into the City Map, in accordance with Section 1302(a) of the New York City Charter);
- The elimination of an elevated public highway; and
- The delineation of bridge approach ramps,

in Community District 11, Borough of Manhattan, in accordance with Map No. 30216 dated January 24, 2011 and signed by the Borough President, is approved; and be it further

RESOLVED that, all such approvals being subject to the following condition:

The subject amendment to the City Map shall take effect on the day following the day on which certified counterparts of Map No. 30216 are filed with the appropriate agencies in accordance with Section 198 subsection c of the New York City Charter.

The above resolution, duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on July 27, 2011 (Calendar No. 2), is filed with the Office of the Speaker, City Council and the Borough President, in accordance with the requirements of Section 197-d of the New York City Charter.

AMANDA M. BURDEN, *FAICP, Chair*

KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, ESQ., *Vice Chairman*

IRWIN G. CANTOR, P.E.,

ALFRED C. CERULLO, III, BETTY Y. CHEN, MARIA M. DEL TORO,

RICHARD W. EADDY, NATHAN LEVENTHAL, ANNA HAYES LEVIN,

SHIRLEY A. MCRAE, *Commissioners*



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

SCOTT M. STRINGER
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

June 8, 2011

Recommendation on
ULURP Application No. C 100385 MMM – Willis Avenue Bridge
by the New York City Department of Transportation and
the New York City Department of Small Business Services

PROPOSED ACTION

The New York City Department of Transportation (“DOT”) and the New York City Department of Small Business Services (“SBS”) propose a **change to the City Map**, pursuant to Sections 1302, 197-c and 199 of the New York City Charter and Section 5-430 et seq. of the New York City Administrative Code. DOT and SBS propose to modify the lines and grades of the Willis Avenue Bridge, Harlem River Drive, and Marginal Street, Wharf or Place; demap the approach ramps for the former bridge; and delineate the new bridge approach ramps.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

DOT and SBS seek approval for a City Map amendment to reflect the replacement of the Willis Avenue Bridge over the Harlem River with a new structure along a new alignment. The proposed actions include demapping a portion of Marginal Street, which would then be mapped as an extension of Harlem River Drive. Marginal Street is currently owned by SBS and managed by the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services. The street mapping action would result in transfer of ownership of that portion of the street to DOT. The proposed actions also include demapping the elevated ramp from Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) Drive and mapping the new approach ramps in Manhattan for Willis Avenue Bridge.¹

¹ The Willis Avenue Bridge ULURP application originally began as a single application in 2002. Issues pertaining to the jurisdiction of City-owned parcels near the project site in Manhattan delayed the project. The ULURP was divided by borough and a City Map amendment for the portion of the bridge located in the Bronx was approved in a separate ULURP application (ULURP No. C 030028 MMX) in 2006.

Willis Avenue Bridge is located between the Triborough and Third Avenue bridges in Manhattan Community District 11 and Bronx Community District 1. The bridge extends from First Avenue and East 124th Street in Manhattan to Willis Avenue and East 134th Street in the Bronx.

Willis Avenue Bridge provides one-way Bronx-bound vehicular travel for over 70,000 vehicles daily. The bridge has four northbound traffic lanes, flanked by bicycle and pedestrian lanes, that link arterial streets and highways in Manhattan and the Bronx; it connects the northbound FDR Drive to the Major Deegan Expressway and Bruckner Boulevard in the Bronx. The bridge is 304 feet long and has a swing span that can pivot to allow for sea vessels to pass through on the Harlem River.

There are two approach ramps for the Willis Avenue Bridge in Manhattan: one at the intersection of First Avenue and East 125th Street and one from the northbound lanes of FDR Drive. The First Avenue ramp channels traffic into the two northernmost lanes of the bridge, and the FDR Drive ramp curves sharply west before feeding traffic into the two southernmost lanes of the bridge. The two approaches, initially separated by a median barrier, open onto a four-lane weaving section where cars change lanes to select one of three routes to the Bronx. In the Bronx, vehicles can exit onto Bruckner Boulevard or onto Willis Avenue to a signalized intersection at 135th Street or to an entrance ramp from the Major Deegan Expressway.

The 110 year-old bridge is seismically insecure and often has mechanical malfunctions. In addition, several of the non-standard features on the bridge result in unsafe traffic conditions. The bridge approach ramps are below the 14-foot clearance requirement and do not meet requirements for lane widths. The current lane widths on both the bridge and the approaches range from 10 to 12 feet, resulting in some portions being below the New York State Department of Transportation minimum required lane width of 10.8 feet. The reverse curve on the FDR approach forces drivers to slow down suddenly, reducing bridge capacity and creating dangerous driving conditions. Further, there is insufficient distance in the weaving section to allow vehicles to cross to other lanes. The short weaving section, when combined with the reverse curve approach and a slippery open grate roadway surface on the bridge span, results in unsafe traffic conditions. According to the applicant's Environmental Impact Statement, the weaving section and the narrow lane widths led to a substantial number of accidents on the bridge span. A total of 809 accidents were reported over a three year period (1992-1994), resulting in an average of 270 accidents annually.

In addition to significant vehicular use issues, the bridge has several bicycle and pedestrian safety issues. The pedestrian/bicycle pathways are currently eight feet wide, but obstructions such as light poles reduce the lanes' usable areas. The lanes are unsafe for two-way bicycle and pedestrian traffic. For Bronx-bound pedestrian traffic, there are no established pedestrian routes after the sidewalk terminates at 134th Street, leaving pedestrians with no safe options for exiting the bridge. In addition, only three of the six pedestrian access points are ADA compliant.

In order address structural and safety issues with the bridge, DOT began construction of a new 350-foot bridge located just south of the existing bridge in 2007. The new bridge was constructed as an off-line replacement, meaning that the existing bridge remained in use during construction of the new bridge. During construction, DOT built a temporary loop to allow

drivers to access the bridge from the FDR drive and also created a temporary pedestrian route. The bridge is nearly complete aside from remaining work on the ramps, bridge pivot points, and restoration landscaping work along the portions of East River Park where there was bridge construction work. It is expected to be finished in early 2012, which is ahead of the projected December 2012 completion date.

The new bridge was constructed with minimal traffic disruption. The new swing span was floated up the Hudson River in July of 2010. Portions of the old bridge were used as benches in the nearby park, and DOT is currently landscaping the areas where there was construction and at East River Park.

The bridge is surrounded by a variety of land uses, including a number of public facilities. A portion of land between the Willis Avenue Bridge and the Triborough Bridge is currently used by the New York City Department of Sanitation for salt storage, which is anticipated to be relocated in the future. West of the bridge, under the FDR Drive approach is Louis Cuvillier Park, a 2.75-acre New York City public park.

In addition, immediately south of the site at East 126th Street and First Avenue is the Metropolitan Transit Authority's 126th Street Bus Depot. The depot is located on the site of the former Elmendorf Reformed Church Cemetery where enslaved and free Africans were interred. Remains have been found at this site, and a community taskforce has plans to erect a memorial to commemorate the Harlem African Burial Ground. Historical maps indicate that the cemetery is outside of the Willis Avenue Bridge construction zone. The New York State Historic Preservation Office has confirmed that the construction is unlikely to disturb the burial ground, but recommended that DOT develop a protocol in the event that excavation revealed any historically relevant artifacts.

COMMUNITY BOARD'S RECOMMENDATION

At a full board meeting on April 19, 2011, Manhattan Community Board 11 voted to conditionally approve the application, with a unanimous vote of 38 in favor.

The community board requested that the proposed City Map change not interfere with future plans to create a memorial or park recognizing the presence of a historic Harlem African Burial Ground. The community board also requested that the proposed City Map change not interfere with the transfer of existing Marginal Street between 125th Street and 132nd Street to the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation for completion of the planned Harlem River Park – an uninterrupted pedestrian promenade along Manhattan's Harlem River waterfront from 125th Street to 145th Street.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Of all the challenges facing New York and the nation, few are as pressing as the dire condition of our roads, bridges, and other transportation infrastructure. According to the New York State Department of Transportation, 79% of Manhattan's bridges are "functionally obsolete and 12%

are structurally deficient.”² The former Willis Avenue Bridge had unsafe conditions and an antiquated design.

The Willis Avenue Bridge serves 70,000 vehicles daily allowing residents, commuters, and tourists to travel in and out of Manhattan. Its replacement is a critical step to improving Manhattan’s bridge network, which is essential to ensuring that Manhattan can continue to function as the center of the region’s economy.

The new Willis Avenue Bridge is structurally sound and built to current design standards. In particular, the non-standard, tight curves were eliminated; the weaving section is longer; the travel lanes are wider with shoulders; and the new, single pedestrian/bicycle pathway is wider and protected from vehicle traffic. In addition, the structure has a new ADA accessible ramp on the Manhattan side. Further, the swing span portion of the bridge is a solid surface instead of the open grate roadway, which allows for safer traffic conditions during inclement weather. The bridge also includes new ramps for FDR Drive and Bruckner Boulevard.

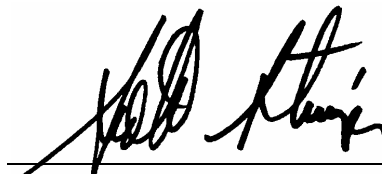
The off-line replacement for the Willis Avenue Bridge has resulted in improved vehicular access from Manhattan to the Bronx while maintaining the existing connections to adjacent roadways. The new bridge is a safer and more efficient alternative than the old bridge. Pedestrian and bicycle conditions will also be improved by the creation of wider lanes and an ADA compliant ramp. Finally, the modifications of the lines for a portion of Marginal Street and Harlem River Drive will allow the space to be used for emergency vehicle access. The proposed mapping action will reflect the positive changes to the bridge’s geometry and warrants approval.

In addition, DOT has indicated that it will meet Community Board 11’s requests that construction not disturb the area adjacent to the Elmendorf Cemetery site or the planned pedestrian promenade, which will be codified in a letter to the community board. In addition, DOT will have an archeologist on site and has protocols in place should construction reveal any historically relevant artifacts.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT’S RECOMMENDATION

The application addresses important upgrades of aging infrastructure that results in safer transportation and has the support of the local community.

Therefore, the Manhattan Borough President recommends approval of ULURP Application No. C 100385 MMM.



Scott M. Stringer
Manhattan Borough President

² Office Of The Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer. "Banking on the Future: a New Paradigm for Rebuilding Our Nation’s Infrastructure." Spring 2011.

Application #: C 100385 MMM	Project Name: Willis Avenue Bridge
CEQR Number: 06DOT003X	Borough: Manhattan Community District Number: 11

Please use the above application number on all correspondence concerning this application

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

- Complete this form and return to the Department of City Planning by one of the following options:
 - EMAIL (recommended):** Send email to CalendarOffice@planning.nyc.gov and include the following subject line: (CB or BP) Recommendation + (6-digit application number), e.g., "CB Recommendation #C10000ZSQ"
 - MAIL:** Calendar Information Office, City Planning Commission, Room 2E, 22 Reade Street, New York, NY 10007
 - FAX:** (212) 720-3356 and note "Attention of the Calendar Office"
- Send one copy of the completed form with any attachments to the applicant's representative at the address listed below, one copy to the Borough President, and one copy to the Borough Board, when applicable.

Docket Description:

IN THE MATTER OF an application, submitted by the Department of Transportation and the Department of Small Business Services, pursuant to Sections 1302, 197-c and 199 of the New York City Charter, and Section 5-430 et seq., of the New York City Administrative Code, for an amendment to the City Map involving:

- The modification of the lines and grades of the Willis Avenue Bridge, Harlem River Drive, and Marginal Street, Wharf or Place*;
- The elimination of an elevated public highway; and
- The delineation of bridge approach ramps,

generally bounded by East 122nd Street, East 128th Street, the westerly line of First Avenue, and the dividing borough line between Manhattan and the Bronx, in Community District 11, Borough of Manhattan, in accordance with Map No. 30216 dated January 24, 2011 and signed by the Borough President.

*This change to Marginal Street, Wharf or Place, where such Marginal Street, Wharf or Place is shown on any existing plans for the water front or portion thereof, shall be incorporated into the City Map.

Applicant(s): Department of Transportation 55 Water Street, New York, NY 10041	Applicant's Representative: DOT, Division of Movable Bridges Simona Finkelstein (212) 839-4088
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Recommendation submitted by: **Manhattan** Community Board 11

Date of public hearing: April 19, 2011 Location: **Mt. Sinai Medical Center, 1425 Madison Ave**

Was a quorum present? YES NO *A public hearing requires a quorum of 20% of the appointed members of the board, but in no event fewer than seven such members.*

Date of Vote: April 19, 2011 Location: **Mt. Sinai Medical Center, 1425 Madison Ave**

RECOMMENDATION

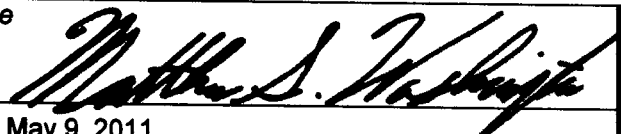
Approve Approve With Modifications/Conditions

Disapprove Disapprove With Modifications/Conditions

Please attach any further explanation of the recommendation on additional sheets, as necessary. – See Attached

Voting

In Favor: 38 # Against: 0 # Abstaining: 0 Total members appointed to the board: 50

Name 	Title CHAIR
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Date May 9, 2011

Application #: **C 100385 MMM**

Project Name: **Willis Avenue Bridge**

CEQR Number: **06DOT003X**

Borough: **Manhattan**

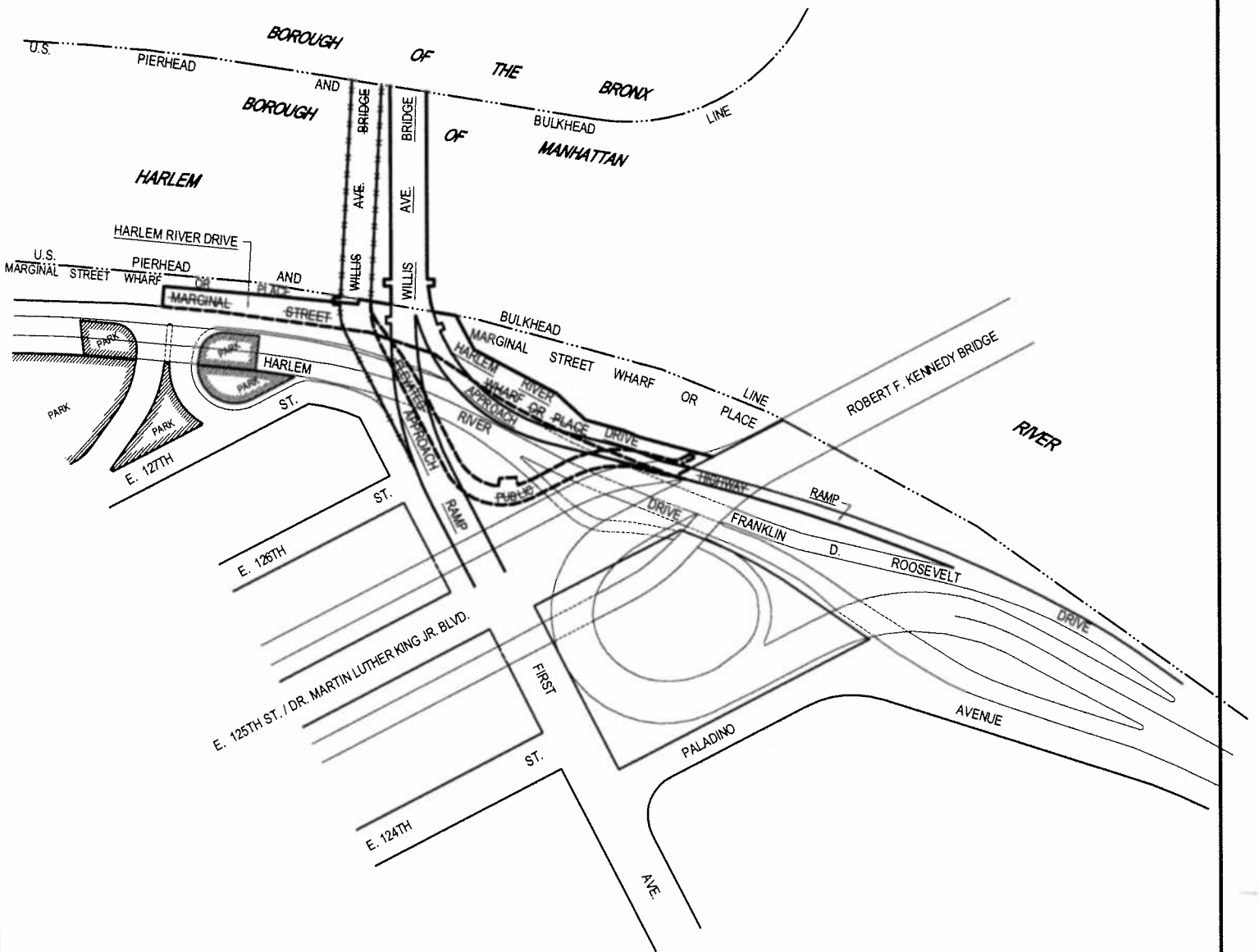
Community District Number: **11**

Please use the above application number on all correspondence concerning this application

RECOMMENDATION: Approve with the following conditions:

The proposed city map change will not interfere with future plans to incorporate a memorial, park or some such entity recognizing the presence of the historic Harlem African Burial Ground.

The proposed city map change will not interfere with the transfer of existing Marginal Street from 125th to 132nd streets to the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation for completion of the planned Harlem River Park; an uninterrupted pedestrian promenade along Manhattan's Harlem River waterfront from 125th to 145th streets.



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF NEW YORK
DIAGRAM SHOWING PROPOSED
MAP CHANGE
ON SECTIONAL MAP

6b

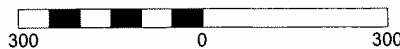
BOROUGH OF
MANHATTAN



New York, Certification Date
February 28, 2011

Irene Sadko, P.E.
I. Sadko, P.E.
Chief Engineer

SCALE IN FEET



NOTE:

- Indicates line of street legally adopted.
- Indicates line of street proposed to be established.
- - - - - Indicates line of street proposed to be eliminated.
- Indicates line of bridge approach ramp proposed to be delineated.
- ××××× Indicates line of bridge approach ramp proposed to be extinguished.
- /////// Indicates Park line heretofore established and hereby retained.

THIS DIAGRAM IS FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY.