

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

ULURP APPLICATION NO: C 160200 MMX

Unionport Bridge Replacement

DOCKET DESCRIPTION

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by the New York City Department of Transportation, Division of Bridges, Movable Bridge Group pursuant to Section 197-c and 199 of the New York City Charter for an amendment to the City Map involving:

- the modification of legal grades in Bruckner Boulevard between Zerega Avenue and Brush Avenue

in Community Districts #9 and #10, Borough of The Bronx, in accordance with Map No. 13138 dated December 1, 2016, and signed by the Borough President.

BACKGROUND

This application would facilitate the replacement of a mapped bridge and the approaches constructed in 1953. The current four-lane double-leaf trunnion bascule bridge provides an east-west linkage over the Westchester Creek, connecting Brush Avenue on the east with Zerega Avenue on the west, at Bruckner Boulevard.

The Department of Transportation has budgeted \$200 Million to construct two parallel, single leaf bascule bridges with three 12-foot travel lanes in each direction.

In addition to three vehicular lanes in each direction, the following elements would be included in the project: an eight-foot sidewalk on the south side; a 12-foot shared pedestrian and bicycle lane on the north side; a control house; new utilities; machinery and electrical systems; fender system and dolphins (man-made marine structure which extends above water level, not connected to the shore); a generator house; new street lighting; and traffic lights. At the final configuration, the ramps at the intersections with Zerega Avenue and Brush Avenue would be widened and additional standard width turning lanes will be provided.

The existing bridge would be demolished in stages, and a Maintenance and Protection of Traffic Plan will be adopted to accommodate automobile, pedestrian and vessel use. Two lanes of traffic in each direction and a five-foot wide pedestrian crossing over the bridge would be maintained during construction. The temporary impacts on the public include extended travel times and reduced speeds. Two temporary bridges would be in place during 60-day, 21-foot height

restriction period. Overall, it is anticipated the construction of the proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts on transportation services as per the EIS.

Construction is expected to commence in summer 2017 and requires 48 months for completion. The proposed project would restore structural integrity and improve overall traffic conditions without adding roadway capacity by using cost effective methods to reduce delay and to provide an acceptable level of service. Non-standard features would be eliminated to improve vehicular and pedestrian traffic flow. Overall, the project would enhance safety and increase reliability of the bridge and surrounding roadways.

To accommodate the traffic lanes, sidewalks and bicycle lanes, the Department of Transportation proposes to modify the existing mapped street treatment lines and grades on Bruckner Boulevard. A small portion (approximately 650 square feet) of the northwest edge of the project would require building a combined bicycle/pedestrian path on property that is under the jurisdiction of New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYCDPR) and owned by the City. Minimal impact has been agreed to by NYCDPR and concurred with by FHWA, therefore, alienation is not required.

The specific measurements of the new bascules are:

Total length from the Zerega Avenue to Brush Avenue	750 feet
Total length of each bascule	124 feet
Roadway width	72 feet
Sidewalk on the south side of the bridge	8 feet
Pedestrian/Bicycle shared path on the north side of the bridge	12 feet
Clearance above mean high water	14 feet

This project would involve a significant redesign of the Bruckner Boulevard intersections at Zerega Avenue and Brush Avenue. The existing intersection of Bruckner Boulevard and Brush Avenue is approximately 35 feet wide for the westbound direction and approximately 40 feet wide for the eastbound direction. The proposed width at this intersection for westbound lanes is approximately 55 feet and approximately 50 feet at eastbound. The existing width of the intersection of Ramp A and Zerega Avenue is approximately 25 feet and the proposed width is 30 feet. The existing width of the intersection of Ramp B and Zerega Avenue is approximately 30 feet and the proposed width is approximately 35 feet.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND ULURP CERTIFICATION

This application has been reviewed pursuant to SEQR and CEQR and received a Negative Declaration. The City Planning Commission certified this application as complete on December 12, 2016.

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

Bronx Community Board #9 held a public hearing on this application on February 16, 2017. A vote recommending approval was, 25 in favor, zero against, and zero abstaining.

Bronx Community Board #10 held a public hearing on this application on January 19, 2017. A vote recommending approval was, 28 in favor, zero against, and one abstaining.

BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PUBLIC HEARING

The Bronx Borough President convened a public hearing on March 9, 2017.

Representatives of the applicant were present and spoke in favor of this application. An owner of a nearby lumber yard expressed concerns about the proposal to allow Brush Avenue to go from two lanes in each direction, to one northbound lane, two northbound turning lanes, and one southbound lane. He noted concern about trucks being able to effectively make a turn into the southbound lane as cars in the northbound lane encroach into the box. He requested that an additional traffic light be installed at the stop line.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

I am pleased with the overall design and vision this new Unionport Bridge will offer Bronx residents, businesses and visitors. This wider bridge will enhance safety and increase reliability of the draw bridge for vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists and vessels. It would serve to dramatically improve east-west vehicular traffic flow on the Bruckner Boulevard connecting both sides of Westchester Creek while also offering dedicated sidewalks and bicycle lane.

I do recommend the following:

All measures should be implemented to expedite the construction and minimize noise, debris, dust and other negative impact on local traffic and surrounding communities.

The staging area during construction should be cleaned and landscaped after completion. The Department of Parks and Recreation should participate in the design, implementation and the maintenance of the pedestrian/bicycle shared lanes at the intersection of Ramp B and Zerega Avenue.

All street lighting incorporated into the bridge design should be extended to Zerega Avenue and Brush Avenue at the intersections.

The appropriate city agencies should work with businesses to minimize the impact of vessel traffic during the 60-day 21-foot height restriction period.

I also urge the City to explore an additional northbound traffic light to be located at the stop line along Brush Avenue to prevent intersection encroachment.

With these modifications included, I am pleased to support this project and recommend approval of this application.