



BRONX

Yankee Stadium Update

The City Council has approved the Yankee's land use application for the redevelopment of the team's new stadium in the community of High Bridge in the Bronx. Recently some welcome changes were made to the proposal including the addition of a Metro-North stop for the stadium (although the funding source remains unclear). Nevertheless, opposition to the project continues amongst park, transport and community advocates. The addition of four new parking garages, that will worsen the already bad congestion and pollution in the area is especially controversial. The stadium is surrounded by neighborhoods that have some of the highest rates of obesity and childhood asthma in the City. "There's no other area in the city where someone could propose something like this and get away with it," says Council Member Helen Foster, who represents the neighborhood around the stadium.

Bronx advocacy organizations say the stadium plan is adding thousands of new parking spaces without a demonstrable need for them. The City has justified the increase as a way to prevent baseball fans from parking in neighborhoods. The City has yet to provide information about how it will address the problem of the additional traffic this 75% increase in parking will eventually attract.

tstc.org, nytimes.com, gothamgazette.com

BRONX

Proposal to Demap the Sheridan Expressway Under State Review

Community members, along with environment and parks advocates, have long urged that the little-used and redundant Sheridan Expressway be removed in favor of better Bronx River waterfront uses. Their efforts are now bearing fruit—demapping is one alternative under study in the NY State Department of Transportation's (NYSDOT) Bruckner-Sheridan Interchange Project's Environmental Impact Study. This would create additional space for parkland and a proposed Bronx River Greenway and pedestrian path and improve community access to the waterfront.

The Sheridan contributes very little to the region's mobility. It carries less traffic than most nearby local streets, according to the

NYSDOT's own studies. Only 2 miles long, the expressway travels along the Bronx River to connect the Cross Bronx and Bruckner Expressways. NYSDOT originally proposed to expand the interchange between the Bruckner and the Sheridan, and to extend the Sheridan along Edgewater Road in Hunts Point.

*tstc.org,
www.southbronxvision.org*



NEW YORK

Limited Access to Exercise Facilities Fueling Childhood Obesity Epidemic

Lack of access to exercise facilities, particularly in low-income areas, is one important force that is driving the obesity epidemic that's endangering America's children. This is the conclusion of a study that appeared in the February issue of *Pediatrics*. "Our country faces a serious obesity problem—one that disproportionately impacts poor, minority individuals and communities," said Penny Gordon-Larsen, an assistant professor of nutrition at the University of North Carolina's School of Public Health and Medicine, and the author of the physical activity study. "Our research suggests that perhaps one way to address this would be to argue for greater opportunities for exercise in disadvantaged communities." The number of overweight American children has more than doubled in the past 20 years.

The study included geographic and socioeconomic information from across the country. The researchers also gathered statistics on the number of physical-activity facilities and the rate of overweight and average physical activity levels for each area. Physical-activity facilities included schools, public recreation facilities, parks and YMCAs, as well as dance studios and private gyms.

"We found that more disadvantaged com-

munities have a great deficiency in terms of the number and types of exercise facilities available. Working class, minority communities get a double whammy—they are at greatest disadvantage in terms of exercise facilities and opportunities," Gordon-Larsen said.

Not surprisingly, the lack of places to exercise had an effect on both activity levels and the prevalence of overweight.

Dr. Adam Aponte is a pediatrician and medical director at North General Diagnostic and Treatment Center in New York City who said he wasn't surprised by either finding. Childhood obesity is a problem that needs to be dealt with on many levels—at home, in school and around the community, he said.

In the area he serves in New York City, safety and access to physical-activity facilities are often issues.

"The key is prevention. With children, the younger you start developing healthy lifestyle habits, the easier it is to keep them in good shape," Aponte said.

beattheday.com

NEW JERSEY

New Jersey Gets Traffic Scofflaw as AG

New Jersey Governor Corzine nominated and the state senate recently confirmed Zulima Farber as state attorney general. During Farber's initial confirmation hearing State Senators queried her about the 12 speeding tickets she has received, and the various driver license suspensions imposed on her after failure to appear in court after some of the speeding citations.

Farber's confirmation is a troubling sign of the low regard driving laws are accorded and the extent to which anti-social behavior at the wheel is seen as normal throughout U.S. society. While other types of crime are addressed obsessively by politicians and press, dangerous, often deadly, driving behavior is generally winked at by opinion makers (witness wide NJ editorial support for Farber) and broadly tolerated by the legal system, and the problem seems to be getting worse.

Since the Tri-State Transportation Campaign has tracked traffic deaths across New Jersey, beginning in the early 1990s, there has been little improvement. Statewide traffic deaths predictably exceed 730 per year. The Campaign recently called on officials across the region to find ways to apply a "broken window theory" to traffic crime where zero tolerance for basic infractions can help reduce the dangerous driving that takes such a high death and injury toll across the region. Placing a habitual speeder in the state's top law enforcement position hardly seems the place to start.

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