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Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance Statement on New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio’s Call for Action in the OneNYC Plan

“The Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance applauds Mayor de Blasio’s promise to redesign the Sheridan Expressway during yesterday’s release of OneNYC. The redesign plan, called the ‘Modified-Combined Scenario,’ was one of two primary recommendations in the City’s 2013 Sheridan Expressway-Hunts Point Land Use and Transportation Study (SEHP Study). The Mayor’s pledge embodies what the Alliance has been saying for years: redevelopment of the Sheridan Expressway as a neighborhood-friendly boulevard will benefit all neighborhood stakeholders and must be implemented.

The Mayor also called on the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) to implement the second major SEHP Study recommendation: construction of exit ramps that would provide a direct connection for commercial traffic from the Bruckner Expressway into the Hunts Point Peninsula, alleviating truck traffic on local streets. Despite support from city, state and federal elected officials, no progress has been made on this aspect of the SEHP Study. The Mayor’s request, an Environmental Impact Statement study, is a relatively inexpensive next step forward for a project that would provide many benefits, including efficiency and resiliency for Hunts Point-based businesses and safety improvements for pedestrians. The Alliance is hopeful that the Mayor’s call will be heard and NYSDOT and the Governor will take this next step towards making this project a reality.

The redevelopment of the Sheridan Corridor will provide a host of benefits for the community including space for affordable housing development, pedestrian safety improvements and access to the Bronx River waterfront. Starting with his campaign up through yesterday’s release, the Mayor has recognized that New York’s history is a tale of two cities. Through the OneNYC Plan’s call to revitalize the Sheridan neighborhood, we can take a large step towards reversing a decades-long trend of environmental injustice in the South Bronx. Community residents and businesses can no longer be denied the benefits of the plan.

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The mission of the Alliance is to advance a socially and environmentally just transportation and land use plan in the South Bronx. Our focus is on transforming the transportation network in the Sheridan Expressway corridor and Hunts Point area, with redevelopment opportunities for affordable housing, economic development, and open spaces. The Alliance is: Mothers on the Move, Nos Quedamos, Pratt Center for Community Development, The POINT CDC, Tri-State Transportation Campaign and Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice.