

DOT Paves the Way for New Street Construction



New York City Department of Transportation Director of Engineering Barney LaGrecia addresses the Community Board 6 Transportation Committee at a March meeting.



CB6 Transportation Committee Chair David Wynyard looks on as Buchin fields questions.

By Craig McGuire
As the long-awaited reconstruction of Smith Street, from Hamilton Avenue to Fulton Street, slowly becomes reality, the New York City Department of Transportation has opened the lines of communications to residents and store owners.

At a March meeting of the Community Board 6 Transportation Committee, DOT officials met with board members, residents, and store owners to provide information and answer questions.

"This project is going to happen, and the money is there for it," explained DOT Director of Engineering Barney LaGrecia, referring to a project that was originally proposed over nine years ago.

While the date for the groundbreaking has yet to be set, a DOT source anticipated it sometime this spring, perhaps as early as mid-May.

According to LaGrecia, \$10 million was allocated for the project, which will span two and one-half construction seasons. A construction season begins in February and runs through November.

Concern was raised over the possibility of a weather-related delay, even

though the project will sidestep the bulk of the winter.

CB 6 member Celia Caccace asked, "Let's say you have another winter as we've had this year. Have you prepared for it in your consultations?"

"Let's assume it is an even worse winter. We will restore the site, fill in the holes, and remove the barriers," said Frank Panico, the contractor selected for the

construction will be performed on a "floating segment" design.

"We will work two blocks at a time, completing one phase of the project. Which means, first we'll replace the water mains down the whole of Smith, then we will remove the trolley tracks, and so on," explained Panico.

DOT Bureau of Highways engineer Evans Dolyres said, "The reason we

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reconstruction.

The project includes the reconstruction of the entire infrastructure of Smith Street, both surface and sub-surface.

That includes the removal and replacement of water mains, the sewer system, curbs, sidewalks, the roadway, lighting, traffic signals, and signage.

Also incorporated into the project will be the removal of the trolley tracks, and the demolition and filling in of most of the existing 143 underground vaults.

According to Panico,

do it in stages is to allow us to maintain pedestrian and vehicular traffic to flow. If we were to do all at once, we would have to shut down the area."

DOT officials repeatedly emphasized the inclusion of the community in the entire process of the reconstruction.

"On this project we are providing a new service, which is a community liaison officer dedicated to working with you," said LaGrecia. "He will be the first line of communication for both the community and

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