

# Pedestrians Kicked Off Ocean Pkwy.

By Craig McGuire

Residents along Ocean Parkway are planning a massive demonstration to protest a scheduled New York City Department of Transportation project designed to ease traffic congestion along the strip.

The major feature of the project is the addition of two more lanes of traffic, which will replace the existing pedestrian islands which run parallel to the roadway on opposite sides of the street.

"We need more trees in Brooklyn, not fewer," said Community Board 14 District Manager Terry Rodeo. "They're trying to pull the grass right out from beneath us, but we've got news for them."

Elderly residents who congregate on the benches are growing restless as the project grows closer to its mid-summer groundbreaking.

"The loss of these islands will be a great blow to the elderly along Ocean Parkway," said Lenor Freedmen, Director of the Senior League of Flatbush, 550 Ocean Parkway. "For many of them, this is the one place where they are physically able to go, and meet their friends, and enjoy the nice weather."

According to Ely Buechen, Director of the Mayor's Transportation

Freedmen. So far, 2,000 people have pledged to take this issue lying down.

"This will be an unauthorized protest, so the city won't close the street off," said Noah Dear, chairman of the City Council's Transportation Committee. "I would come down and support, but really, lying down in the street?"

"However, if you want to call and complain I will be establishing a 1-900 number for my constituency," said Dear. At press time, Dear was in the process of setting up the line. In the meantime, Dear asked residents to call his office at 633-9400.

While there is no charge to call the Councilman's office, his "Ocean Parkway Complaint Hotline," will cost \$5 per minute. Revenues will go to the Dear for Council '95 Fund.

Residents are already anticipating inconveniences.

"Where the hell am I gonna rollerblade?" wondered 72-year-old Hershel Horowitz, who lives along Ocean Parkway between Ditmas Avenue and Cortelyou Road. "In the summertime, these benches are better than bingo to meet women."

The removal of the islands is not the only issue

that has residents concerned.

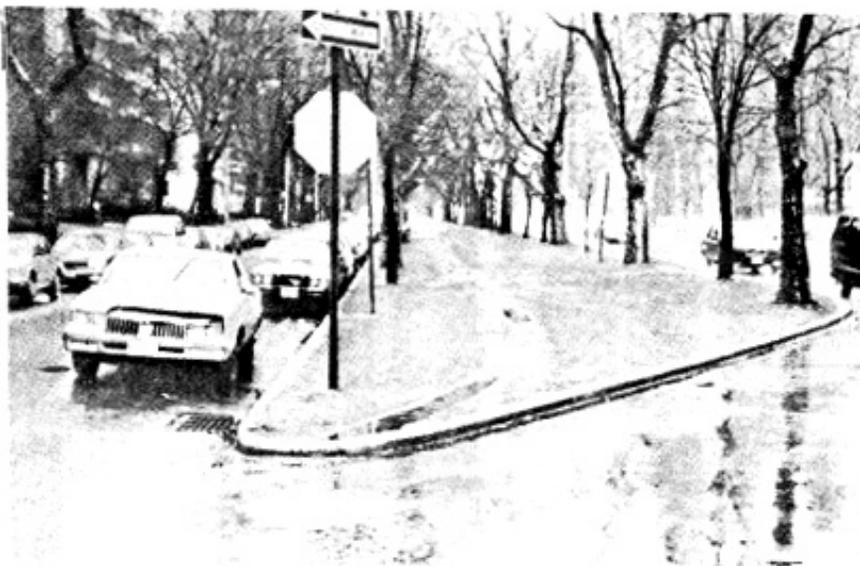
"As it is now, residents have difficulty crossing the street in time. By making the street wider you are just inviting disaster," said Freedmen.

"For a long time we recognized the dangers posed by Ocean Parkway to area residents," said City Councilman Howard Lasher. "That's why we have been training residents in pedestrian skills."

"You know, now that you mention it, I have seen more and more groups of people sprinting back and forth across the street," said John Packer, who drives the B1 bus down Ocean Parkway every day. "It really is a shame, when the light changes many drivers will gun their engines to see how fast these poor people can run."

"My office offers a weekly class on pedestrian safety tips, free and open to all members of the community," said Lasher. The course includes training in sprinting across Ocean Parkway, and effectively timed jaywalking.

To register for the course, contact the councilman's office at 646-5550, or register in person at 2971 Ocean Parkway.



Good times and relaxing sitting will be a thing of the past along Ocean Pkwy.



All of the Ocean Pkwy. pedestrian malls will be torn up and replaced with traffic lanes.