



**THE CITY OF NEW YORK
BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 6**

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Honorable Vanessa L. Gibson, Bronx Borough President

Honorable Oswald Feliz, New York City Council Member

EVONNE CAPERS
Board Chairperson

RAFAEL MOURE-PUNNETT, MPA
District Manager

Health and Human Services Committee Meeting Minutes

Kristine Rivera, Health and Human Services Committee Chairperson

Thursday, December 11, 2025

The Health and Human Services Committee met on Thursday, December 11, 2025 in-person at the district office and on Zoom Video Communications. The following board members attended the Health and Human Services Meeting: Nicole Carter (Virtual), Jessii Parham, Magdamary Marcano, Kristine Rivera, Hoshi Salcedo, Lisa Sanchez (Virtual), and Porscha Wilson (Virtual).

The Health and Human Services Committee and Transportation Committee held a joint meeting to discuss the following:

- **Discussion on the Environmental Assessment for the Cross Bronx Expressway 5 Bridges Project**

The District Manager, Rafael Moure-Punnett, provided an overview of the status of the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) project to rehabilitate the 75-year-old Cross Bronx Expressway (CBE). The project involves rebuilding the five bridges that pass over train tracks, the Bronx River, and Starlight Park. NYSDOT estimates that the cost to replace the bridges and fix the pylons is \$750 million, and also sought \$150 million in federal money to build a community connector to link people on either side of the Bronx River. Under the current project timeline, NYSDOT anticipates construction will start at the end of 2026 and run until 2032.

District Manager Moure-Punnett explained that NYSDOT declined an invitation to present on project's Environmental Assessment (EA) to the committee, however, he referenced the presentation slides used by NYSDOT during recent public hearings and relayed key points made by advocacy groups. The 6,000-page EA was released a few days before Thanksgiving and comments are due by January 9th, 2026. NYSDOT held public hearings about the EA but there was little community turnout. Advocacy groups like the Bronx River Alliance, Regional Plan Association, Transportation Alternatives, and the Bronx Council for Environmental Equity have started a petition for a 60-day extension to push the deadline to submit comments to March of 2026.

All three options - A, B, and C – entail widening the highway to include building a shoulder (breakdown lane) and widening individual lanes. Advocacy groups have noted that widening the highway means adding more impervious pavement, which could lead to increased flooding of the Bronx River. The lane expansion could lead to induced demand, where a wider roadway might encourage more people to drive. All options also include the construction of a ramp from the Bronx River Parkway to the CBE to divert traffic off local roads. The project will require tearing down an acre

of trees at Starlight Park to use the land as a construction parking lot, rather than use an existing NYSDOT staging site nearby or negotiating with the MTA for access to their two parking depots. The community would lose park land and biomass for the temporary easement. NYSDOT will not do a 1-for-1 replanting of trees and claims the agency has no obligation to do so because the park land is state-owned. Concerns were raised about the lack of accountability by the NYSDOT in previous projects. In the past, NYSDOT had left temporary easements with far less trees and a hired contractor that dumped concrete into the Bronx River was cleared of any wrongdoing despite evidence.

Option A includes a shared-use path (SUP) for pedestrians and bicyclists, starting at West Farms Road, snaking under the highway, and going up alongside the CBE. The pathway would require people to walk up a long ramp to get 80 feet in the air, alongside the busiest highway in the Bronx. The environmental assessment says there will not be an increase in asthma exposure and pollutant exposure, but environmental groups raise concerns about the SUP putting people next to the highway's pollutants. Option B includes the shared-use path from Option A, but also adds a loop that connects to Starlight Park. This option is designed to make it easier for bicyclists and pedestrians to access the park. Option C simply fixes the bridges and roadway elements, but does not include any pedestrian pathway, meaning the \$150 million for the connector is likely not spent.

NYSDOT excluded improvements to East 174th Street and East 177th Street from their considerations, even though improving the 174th Street Bridge could be an alternative way to connect the community. The committee expressed their support for the NYSDOT to reallocate the \$150 million in federal funding for these improvements by allowing the city DOT to apply for a grant. The project timeline is also seen as problematic because it is running concurrently with a New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) study on potentially capping the Cross Bronx Expressway, which could be disrupted by the NYSDOT project.

The project will potentially widen the CBE through the addition of shoulders, SUP, and wider lanes. NYSDOT has not addressed how the widening aligns with federal standards, nor was the plan to widen the bridge included in the executive summary. By widening the bridge that then narrows for divers to get onto highway, it may create pinch points that will slow down traffic. Since NYSDOT reported that limiting the bridge to two lanes will not slow down traffic, it seems that foregoing a third lane and shoulder may be a viable option. Community groups have also suggested building only one shoulder instead of two, to reduce the damage to Starlight Park.

After discussing the outstanding questions that were not addressed by the EA, the committees agreed that the EA was improper and warrants an Environmental Impact Statement. A motion to write a letter to the NYSDOT with the Board's official comments and send the letter to all elected officials for their support was made by Kristine Rivera, and seconded by Magdamary Marcano. The committee also asked the District Manager to coordinate a walking tour with the incoming Mayor on January 2, 2026.

- **Other business**

- **Recap of the Tremont Busway Discussion**

District Manager, Rafael Moure-Punnett, recapped the discussion of the Tremont Busway during the Economic Development Committee Meeting on Wednesday, December 10th. The Economic Development Committee reviewed testimony from business owners in Jamaica Avenue, Queens where a busway was implemented. The business owners' complaints included customers getting numerous, high-fine tickets for driving down the busway, which discouraged them from returning to the businesses. It was unclear whether the busway is the primary reason for the loss of customers at small and medium-sized businesses, or if the decrease in customers is attributable to a consumer preference for online shopping.

- **Bronx Community Board 6 Winter Wonderland Toy Giveaway Event**

The District Manager reminded committee members of the toy giveaway happening on Saturday, December 13th at 2:00 P.M., followed by the annual holiday party for Board Members. Committee members planned to begin setting up the event space at BRAC at 12:00 P.M. on Saturday.

