

District 5: Garbage Stations, Water Tunnel Shaft, and Affordable Housing

by Jessica Lappin

Monday, January 09, 2006 12:00 AM -



The issues facing Manhattan's [5th City Council district](#) are the same that residents face all across this city: the lack of affordable housing, concerns about education, access to public transportation, and the protection of our parks, libraries, and cultural institutions.

However, there are some specific issues facing this district that are critical to those who live on the Upper East Side and Roosevelt Island, including: the mayor's plan to reopen the 91st Street garbage station, the location of Water Shaft 33B to City Water Tunnel Number 3, and the loss of Mitchell-Lama housing on Roosevelt Island.

GARBAGE TRANSFER STATIONS

In 2006, the New York City Council must renew its commitment to passing a comprehensive long-term Solid Waste Management plan to deal with the 50,000 tons of garbage the city produces each day.

I believe that any sensible long-term plan must aim to reduce the amount of trash we produce, expand recycling, lower export costs, and address the harmful environmental effects of the current system. Reducing our reliance on trucks by transporting garbage by barge and rail is also a step in the right direction. This would lessen the adverse environmental impacts of traffic, noise, and pollution.

However, I have serious concerns about Mayor Michael Bloomberg's plan to build and expand marine transfer stations "facilities where sanitation trucks dump garbage onto barges that is then shipped out of state - in densely populated residential neighborhoods.

The mayor's proposal to reopen the East 91st Street Marine Transfer Station for commercial

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and residential waste is a mistake. This site is not only situated in the heart of a residential community, but also is adjacent to Asphalt Green - a recreational facility that sees 675,000 visits a year - and serves public school children from all over the city.

The City Council must work towards finding a more sensible solution. With a lawsuit pending over the 91st Street site and opposition to other proposed sites on the West Side, the city needs to go back to the drawing board and fashion a more sensible and realistic plan.

Obviously, more appropriate alternatives exist for dealing with Manhattan's trash, and the final Solid Waste Management Plan must reflect that.

WATER TUNNEL SHAFT

Another issue of great concern to our community is the Department of Environmental Protection's proposed plan to dig a water supply shaft, known as [Shaft 33B](#), that will connect the East Side of Manhattan to the city's [new third water tunnel](#)

There are a number of alternative locations where Shaft 33B can be built. The construction of it and the adjoining water main route will impact our community for years to come.

The selection of the shaft site and water main route must be done carefully, with a thorough review of potentially adverse impacts, mitigation factors and alternative proposals, and with input from the community every step of the way.

At the present time, The [Department of Environmental Protection](#) considers 59th Street and 1st Avenue to be the preferred location for this project. Throughout the environmental review process, local residents have spoken out and raised serious and legitimate concerns regarding the placement of this site and the connecting water mains.

I have been meeting with other local elected officials and with community leaders to try to address some of these concerns. In the months ahead, I will continue to work with the

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community and advocate for local residents. The city must take the neighborhood's concerns seriously, respond to their questions in a timely manner, and take a holistic approach to this project. When selecting a final shaft site, Department of Environmental Protection should take the water main route into account. And, the administration should work to ensure that the ultimate site selection impacts the fewest number of residents possible and creates the least amount of disruption to the surrounding community.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING ON ROOSEVELT ISLAND

On Roosevelt Island, which is located in the East River between Manhattan and Queens, residents are facing an affordable housing crisis. Two middle-income developments, Island House and Westview, are in the process of coming out of the [Mitchell-Lama program](#), and residents in Rivercross are considering privatization as well.

With the potential loss of existing affordable housing, and the new development of market rate buildings, many island residents are questioning the future and fate of the place they call home. As residents negotiate with the [Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation](#), and with the buildings' owners, the city should do all that it can to save and promote the island's affordable units. We should consider extending existing tax breaks and offering low interest loans as ways to encourage the retention of affordable housing on the island.

While progress and change are inevitable, I hope that Roosevelt Island remains a place for people of all means and all ethnic backgrounds; a melting pot that truly represents the special and wonderful character of this great city.

Jessica Lappin represents City Council district 5, which includes Roosevelt Island and the Upper East Side.

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