

DOT announces early completion of Bruckner Interchange work

The early completion of all major road and ramp construction as part of the Bruckner Interchange Reconstruction Project, which began in May 1999, was announced last week. All lanes on the roadways, ramps and bridges included in the project were fully reconstructed and reopened to traffic on December 18, a full year and a half ahead of schedule.

The accomplishment was marked with a special ribbon-cutting ceremony on Tuesday, December 18, on the newly reconstructed and reopened ramp from the eastbound Cross Bronx Expressway to the southbound Hutchinson River Expressway (to Whitestone Bridge). New York State Department of Transportation was joined by various state and local community leaders including Senator Guy Velella, Assemblyman Stephen Kaufman and Councilwoman Madeline Provenzano to celebrate the event.

The Bruckner Interchange Reconstruction Project, one of the largest construction undertakings in NYSDOT history, was a comprehensive \$200 million project to reconstruct the Bruckner Interchange's three level, multi-span complex of twisting ramps and elevated expressway roadways as well as major portions of the highways that connect the interchange.

"Thanks to Governor George Pataki's strong leadership when it comes to smarter, faster and innovative construction technology, we were able to say this is a great project for the people of New York City and for all those who traverse the Bronx and use the Bruckner Interchange," said NYSDOT Commissioner Joseph Boardman. "It is this kind of transportation initiative that this department is committed to bringing to the people of the State of New York and we remain

committed to working hand-in-hand with our constituents to bring about the best possible solution to serve their traveling needs."

Douglas A. Currey, NYSDOT Region II (NYC) director, said, "We are very proud of this accomplishment. The Bruckner Interchange Reconstruction Project was a daunting task due to the large scale and complexity of work involved while meeting the challenge of maintaining the high volume of traffic through the corridor daily. This early completion, about 1 1/2 years head of schedule, means DOT is able to return all travel lanes to full service much sooner than anticipated, which should ease congestion especially now that we're in the holiday season. I like to think of this as a Christmas present for New Yorkers!"

As part of DOT's efforts to speed construction, incentive/disincentive clauses were used on this project, totaling \$8.5 million. In incentive/disincentive bidding, the contractor submits a bid that includes a schedule to complete certain portions on the contract by a certain date. If the contractor completes the portions sooner than he bid, a bonus is awarded. If the work finishes later than the contractor bid, he is penalized. Currey pointed out, "This project is a prime example of the successful partnership between the state, NYCDOT and the contractor, DeFoe Corporation, and demonstrates the great benefits of incentive/disincentive

bidding; it can act as a real motivator for contractors and really help speed the project along."

This transportation corridor carries approximately 250,000 vehicles daily and these improvements will ensure the safe sustained movement of people and goods that is so vital to the economy for the entire region. The highway portion of work, including the Hutchinson River Expressway,

The \$200 million project involves the reconstruction of the interchange's three-level, multi-span complex of twisting ramps and elevated expressway roadways.

Bruckner Expressway, Cross Bronx Expressway and Throgs Neck Expressway received a combined total of over four miles of new roadway pavement and other improvements including the installation of new streetlights and various drainage improvements. This highway (on-grade) work began

in August 1999 and was completed by May 2000, over one year ahead of schedule. In all, the interchange boasts 14 ramp and bridge structures that received over one million square feet of new reinforced concrete bridge deck and 2,000 tons of steel. For the complete reconstruction of the interchange and the various approach expressways, over 15,425 cubic meters of concrete and 86,708 metric tons of asphalt were used throughout the entire project.

NYSDOT also constructed three new ramps as part of the project. These three ramps, including the new entrance ramp onto the northbound Bruckner Expressway at Havemeyer Avenue, and the new relocated entrance and exit ramps on the northbound

Hutchinson River Expressway at the Whitestone Bridge Toll Plaza, were not parts of the original contract. However, at the request of the local community, NYSDOT constructed the ramps to help ease overall traffic congestion.

In addition, various safety improvements were made within the interchange structure including improved horizontal/vertical stopping sight distances along all roadways and ramps, the elimination of all center lane merges, the installation of flush roadway shoulders, new and improved highway overhead streetlights, the upgrade of all drainage systems and the addition of an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS). An ITS is a system that uses non-intrusive traffic without expanding the existing roadway. This includes installing Closed-Circuit TV cameras (CCTV) to monitor traffic conditions on a real-time basis resulting in faster incident detection and emergency service response times. Strategically-located electronic Variable Message Signs (VMS) allow NYSDOT to provide motorists with information on traffic and roadway conditions so they can better plan their travel.

NYSDOT also made numerous landscaping improvements throughout the corridor including planting 800 new trees and 500 new shrubs along various locations in which the roadways come in proximity to residential areas. These new trees and shrubs will act as buffers for the local communities and help prevent soil erosion and create cleaner air for future generations. Plantings include 11 different tree species and five different shrub species. The tree and shrub species are natural to the New York City area and include the Willow Oak, Common Bold Cypress, Eastern Red Bud, Red Stem Dogwood and Emerald Sea Juniper.