

Are Blockbusters Winning E. New York?

By LEE TOWNSEND

Fears were mounting today that unless there is a dramatic turn of events soon, real estate speculators will go unchecked in their attempts to nail a "For Sale" sign on East New York.

There were high hopes last fall that a city neighborhood campaign would stop blockbusting and the panic-sale of homes in the residential, middle income community.

But a new Brooklyn World-Telegram study of the situation shows that November's air of hope has given way to April's cloud of doubt for these reasons:

White residents have been reported selling their homes and leaving the community in large numbers since the Commission on Human Rights held its last public hearing on blockbusting last November.

A rising number of clashes have taken place between minority group teen-agers who have recently

moved into the community and white youths from older East New York families.

The anti-blockbusting bill introduced in February by City Council President Paul R. Screvane is still in committee and there is no clear indication of when it will get out.

The Human Rights Commission has taken no action to follow up the findings at its three public hearings on the problem—findings that indicated speculators were reaping large profits by frightening whites into selling homes at a loss on the strength of rumors that non-whites were moving to the neighborhood.

There have been at least a half-dozen muggings in East New York since the beginning of the year, a number of instances of vandalism, and a sharp rise in auto thefts.

East New York residents again are getting post

cards and phone calls from real estate operators trying to entice them into selling their houses. Homes sold in this manner often are resold to non-whites at high prices.

These developments have caused great concern among leaders of the anti-blockbusting fight. It was known from the time the battle started last summer that victory was contingent on acceptance in the community of those non-whites who had already bought or rented homes from speculators, and on prompt passage of strong legislation to make the encouragement of panic selling a crime.

Unless this was done before the racial balance was ruined in the once happily-integrated community, East New York could become a ghetto, it had been argued.

A spokesman for Madison Jones, executive director of the Human Rights Commission, told this newspaper that the commission had not followed up on its

hearings yet because the commissioners had been waiting for a report of the sessions to be printed. The hearings ended five months ago.

Report Now Ready

The spokesman said that the report is now ready, but the commissioners have not studied it yet.

Screvane said his anti-blockbusting bill—introduced after the hearings and after a series of stories by this newspaper on the East New York problem—was still in the General Welfare Committee of the City Council. The bill would make blockbusting punishable by a \$1000 fine and/or a year in jail.

He said, "The committee unfortunately has not been able to hold hearings as quickly as it would have liked because of intervening pressures of the delibera-

Continued on Page B2



Artist's conception of road system at Brooklyn end of Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, looking down from the bridge tower.

Photo by Higgins

New Span Is a Bridge of Sighs for Bay Ridge

It's the world's biggest bridge to the proud men who are building it, but it's the borough's biggest headache to the worried Brooklyn families who live in its shadow.

And day by day, as the builders spin more cables for the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, the worries of Bay Ridge and Fort Hamilton people loom larger and larger.

In only 20 months, by January, 1965, millions of cars and trucks will begin rolling across the bridge and into the lives of these Brooklyn families.

They are looking forward—with dread—to traffic jams, clouds of exhaust fumes, honking, angry claxons, parking problems, more subway congestion, even an invasion of Staten Island buses.

Barnes Agrees

Some of these fears have been backed by the city's top traffic expert, Commissioner Henry A. Barnes. Said Barnes: "Right now the traffic situation looks pretty hopeless. A solution to the traffic problems should have been thought of when the bridge was in the thinking and designing stages."

Community leaders couldn't agree more: "There will be no easy way for trucks to get to east Brooklyn and Long Island. Trucks will be wandering through the streets of Dyker Heights, Borough Park and Bensonhurst," said Vincent Kassenbrock, secretary of the Bay Ridge Community Council.

Already Murder

"I don't know what is going to happen if motorists coming off the bridge try to park their cars in Bay Ridge. The parking situation is murder now," said H. Al Roth, secretary of the 86th St. Board of Trade.

An invasion by motorists isn't all that community leaders are apprehensive about. They are also worrying about pedestrians.

"We have heard rumors that the city is going to build a bus terminal here so Staten Island commuters can take the Fourth Ave. BMT to work. Even without Staten Islanders, the line is overcrowded," said Armand Starace, Republican leader of the Ninth Assembly District in Bay Ridge.

Last year 2,450,860 passengers traveled between Bay Ridge and Staten Island on 69th St. ferries. Starace believes this number will increase after the bridge is up.

A Lot of Traffic

The ferries also carried 2,598,815 cars and 234,453

trucks across. Sixteen million vehicles are expected to use the new bridge. Any way it's put, it sounds like a lot of traffic to the people of Brooklyn.

One irritating aspect to the glut traffic predictions for many Brooklynites is that so little of the traffic will originate in Brooklyn. The bridge is primarily an escape route for Long Islanders and New Jerseyites wanting to bypass the madcap congestion of Manhattan.

The Shore Parkway, already heavily traveled, will get much of the bridge traffic. And, except for those motorists who will drive off into local streets at the bridge's 92nd St. ramp, the new Gowanus Expressway will get the rest.

Commissioner Barnes' comment on both roadways was simply, "They will be equally rough." His thoughts about what would happen to trucks coming off the Bridge into Brooklyn were more detailed but just as terse.

Jammed Now

"Trucks can use the Gowanus Expressway . . . but the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway is already jammed. Trucks going east have only the Long Island Expressway and you know what that's like," he said.

To avoid expressway jams, Bay Ridge people fear that the truckers will detour right through the local streets.

How many of the cars crossing the bridge will be commuters driving over during the peak rush hours is

another question worrying Brooklynites. Some think there will be many persons who will drive their cars across the bridge to get to work.

Arthur S. Hodgkiss, assistant general manager of the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, doesn't think so.

"I think there will be very little commuter traffic using the bridge," he said. "Commuters going to and from Downtown Brooklyn and Manhattan are likely to stick with the Manhattan ferry."

Wild Scramble

If he is wrong, there may be a wild scramble for parking spaces in Bay Ridge by commuters who want to park their cars and take the subway to work. There are few

private parking lots in the area and most of them are small. No public lot near the bridge is planned by the TBTA.

Hodgkiss said he did not think Bay Ridge residents would have to worry about fighting with commuters to hold onto precious parking spaces.

"I doubt that there will be many people who will pay 50 cents toll on the bridge both ways and then also pay subway fares . . . these people would be more likely to take their cars directly to their destination," he said.

If he is wrong on this point, community leaders feel parking spaces aren't the only things Bay Ridge residents will have to fight for. They will also have trouble holding onto their subway seats—or straps.

No Head Space

"The Fourth Ave. line is now so jammed during rush hours," political leader Starace warned, "that there is no head space to run additional trains."

A Transit Authority spokesman's reply to this was: "We do know that some sort of solution to so-called impossible problems can always be provided . . . congestion is a matter of degree."

The TA is involved with another question concerning the new bridge—transporting non-motorists across. The authority has been studying the problem for the last six months, but no decision has been made. Most observers believe that the TA will be forced to run buses over the bridge.

Aware of Problem

"We are aware of the problem in general of transporting people to and from Brook-

Continued on Page B2

Traffic Jam Here—Before the Bridge

Up and down the Gowanus Parkway motorists are cursing the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, and it isn't even built yet.

The reason for all the harsh words being spoken about the world's longest suspension span is the traffic jams it is causing today on the parkway—20 months before the bridge is scheduled for completion.

The traffic jamup is the result of a widening project now under way on the four-lane parkway. When the job is finished, the parkway will be six lanes wide and ready to become part of the new Gowanus Expressway, Brooklyn's new main link with the bridge.

In the meantime, however, six lanes of traffic must be crammed through three lanes at the biggest bottleneck in the area: where the Prospect Expressway merges—or used

to merge—with the parkway. Connecting roads are now being built between the two roadways which will eventually link them into one eight-lane approach to the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway.

Stop and Start

While the construction is going on, many motorists coming from Long Island on the Shore Parkway are bypassing the bottleneck by taking local streets to Downtown Brooklyn. Those drivers who are sticking with the Gowanus Parkway merely simmer as they stop, start and inch along.

A spokesman for Robert Moses, the Mayor's coordinator for all arterial roads being built in the city with federal and state money, said that drivers will have clear sailing on the parkway again in about six months.

is finished, construction men will still be working on the rest of the new expressway: from the southern tip of the Gowanus Parkway down to the 92nd St. approach to the bridge.

The entire project should be completed by October or November of next year. That gives the road builders one, or at the most, two months lead time before the bridge opening, now set for Jan. 1, 1965.

How It'll Work

For drivers who will use the bridge, here is how it will work:

As the bridge dips into Brooklyn at Fort Hamilton, there will be an interchange with Shore Parkway. This link will provide direct access for cars heading west on Shore Parkway wanting to get on the bridge and for bridge traffic wanting to go east on the parkway.

Coney Island Projects Will Be Modified

By ED EDELSON and MARIANNE COLE

There will be cheers instead of jeers from Coney Island merchants tomorrow when the Board of Estimate holds a public hearing on two housing projects planned for the area.

The merchants had planned a mass appearance at the hearing to protest the Housing Authority's plans for the projects. The store owners said the original proposals would have brought an over-concentration of low-income housing to Coney Island and cut the heart out of the Mermaid Ave. shopping area.

The protest was canceled after Housing Authority Chairman William Reid told leaders of the Coney Island Community Council Friday that the authority would change features of the housing plan the leaders don't like.

The authority originally planned to raze two blocks of stores on one side of Mermaid Ave., from W. 22nd to W. 24th St. to build a 565-unit development bounded by Neptune Ave., W. 23rd St., Surf Ave. and W. 24th St.

Another three blocks of stores, on Mermaid Ave. between W. 31st and W. 33rd St. would have been torn down for a 741-unit development.

Al Sinrod, president of the Coney Island Board of Trade, said the plan "would ruin the continuity of a street lined with merchants who have long held the fort in hopes of area rehabilitation."

Closing Avoided

The authority has agreed to let merchants stay if they rebuild their stores to conform with the authority's requirements. The agreement ended plans for a 15-minute protest closing of Coney Island stores tomorrow morning.

"We're all very happy the Housing Authority has done this for the merchants," said Louis W. Powsner, speaking for area merchants.

Reid also told the community council Friday that the percentage of low-income housing in the two projects would be lowered. Coney Island leaders had expressed the fear that a heavy concentration of low-income housing would drive private builders away from the area.

Coney Island already has the low-income Gravesend Houses. Another low-income project, Bernard Haber Houses

Continued on Page B2

More Space Called Vital By B.C. Head

Brooklyn College is far behind schedule in its building program, its president, Harry D. Gideonse, today told his staff.

"Our immediate problem is space," Gideonse said in answer to a flood of inquiries following the school's announcement that it was raising its average for admission in September to 87 percent, two percent more than the other colleges in the City University system.

"We are years behind in the execution of our building program," he said. "Today we do not even have complete architect's drawings for new buildings. We are not restricting enrollment. It has been growing every year, but our space has not increased."

For New College

Gideonse called for construction of a new community college in Brooklyn to take the pressure off Brooklyn College. Plans for another community college have been bogged down in site selection.

Gideonse said Brooklyn College's most acute needs are a new classroom and staff office building and an expansion of its science building.

Plans for these structures have been made public but construction has not been started.

"Together these buildings could permit a reasonable expansion in enrollment," Gideonse said. "For years we have drawn attention to the fact that progress toward actual construction is exasperatingly slow."

Predicts 'Storm'

He predicted an overcrowding "storm" in the immediate future if building work does not start.

In his discussion of the rise in admission average to 87, Gideonse said some students turned away from Brooklyn College will be able to go to City, Queens and Hunter Colleges, where the average remains 85.

"Even with an 87 percent average, there will be an increase of 300 students in the total enrollment at Brooklyn College in the fall," he said. "If the average had remained at 85 percent the increase would have grown to 750."

Child Killed Crossing Street

Michael Goldsberry, 5, of 1257 Loring Ave., East New York, was killed by a car last night as he was crossing Loring Ave. near his home.

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