

TRI-STATE TRANSPORTATION CAMPAIGN



My name is Veronica Vanterpool and I am the associate director of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign (TSTC), a non-profit advocacy organization advancing sustainable transportation policies and livable communities throughout New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. TSTC urges the New York City Industrial Agency to consider the potential environmental and safety impacts to the South Bronx from increased truck traffic resulting from the relocation and expansion of Fresh Direct to the Harlem Rail Yards and to work with the company to mitigate the impacts of increased vehicle exhaust and potential safety hazards to pedestrians and bicyclists from increased truck traffic.

For years, TSTC has worked with community residents and leaders to mitigate the impacts of increased vehicular and truck traffic throughout residential neighborhoods. TSTC is also a member of the Southern Bronx River Watershed Alliance, a coalition of seven groups including five South Bronx community based organizations, working to transform the Hunts Point community into a healthier, greener, more economically vibrant area. As such, TSTC is concerned with Fresh Direct's lack of commitment to use rail infrastructure in the Harlem Rail Yard to expand to new markets in New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. According to The Galeesi Group, "This [Harlem Rail Yard] state-of-the-art multimodal transportation hub is situated on approximately 104 acres and provides warehousing, distribution and related freight services to businesses in New York City and across the East Coast." With high rates of asthma and the already existing high concentration of highway infrastructure and waste transfer facilities throughout the South Bronx community, Fresh Direct's expansion absent a solid, stated commitment to utilizing rail is extremely short-sighted. This site is a tremendously valuable transportation asset and IDA should work with Fresh Direct and its other city and state partners to ensure this Bronx intermodal asset is fully capitalized. According to CSX, a single train carries the same load as 280 trucks. That means fewer trucks spewing pollutants from diesel exhaust. If Fresh Direct wants to be a good community partner in the South Bronx, it should commit to using a portion of its \$112.6 million construction budget to integrate rail infrastructure into its expansion plans.

Additionally, we are concerned that the increase in truck traffic will pose safety concerns for community residents and pedestrians. Incessant truck idling, illegal parking and resting, illegal truck routing, and dangerous truck speeds remain pervasive issues throughout the community. We urge IDA, the New York Police Department, New York City Department of Transportation and the New York City Sanitation Department (which is authorized to issue tickets for illegal idling) to work together to promote the safety of pedestrians around the Fresh Direct facility with improved pedestrian and transportation infrastructure (pavement markings, sidewalks, crosswalks, signals, truck wayfinding signage, etc.)

Lastly, Fresh Direct expansion plans should not preempt the proposal to connect South Bronx residents to Randall's Island via a connector over the Bronx Kill. For years, community residents and leaders have worked to provide bike and pedestrian access to this valuable green recreational space that is separated from the South Bronx by a narrow waterway. The connector would provide access from the South Bronx to Randall's Island using land at the Harlem River Yards.

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Economic development is welcome in the Bronx but it needs to address the pervasive environmental, health, and transportation problems enduring throughout the borough and concentrated in the South Bronx. We urge the Industrial Development Agency to work with its community, city, state, and business partners to address these issues and concerns. Thank you.