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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NYS DOT DROPS THE BALL IN BRIARWOOD:
Poor Planning Mars NYS DOT Van Wyck Project**

The Briarwood component of NYS DOT's Kew Gardens Interchange project has been plagued by poor planning, sloppy implementation, and lousy communication with the Queens neighborhood. DOT's construction project to improve traffic flow on the Van Wyck Expressway has meant radical changes along Queens Boulevard for this quiet, residential community of low-rise apartment buildings and one & two-family houses.

The initial impact was felt in November, 2010 when the primary entrance to the Briarwood-Van Wyck subway stop on the north side of Queens Boulevard was closed. On August 17th, another entrance on the south side of Queens Boulevard was permanently closed. At the same time, a new entrance along the Van Wyck Expressway service road, originally scheduled to start operating in January, 2012, finally opened this past Thursday, August 16th but without the traffic lights, signage or police participation that neighborhood residents have been requesting for almost a year.

"The NYS DOT and its partner agencies, including the NYC Transit, made commitments to this community about safety they haven't kept," says Briarwood Action Network president, Aida Vernon. "Changes in the traffic pattern along Queens Boulevard because of construction have endangered pedestrians and motorists alike. These agencies have been aware since last year of the community's concern about crossing at the intersection of the "Boulevard of Death" & the Van Wyck, just to catch the subway to get to work."

At a public hearing sponsored by the Briarwood Action Network and held at Queens Borough Hall in October, 2011, representatives from NYS DOT and NYC Transit, and elected officials, fielded the neighborhood's concerns about the subway entrance, especially traffic safety since the new entrance is in a remote area where Queens Boulevard intersects with the Van Wyck Expressway. Residents were promised ongoing updates from the agencies involved about the construction and had expected that traffic safety, lighting issues and sanitation would be addressed.

"Inadequate traffic lights, poor-to-zero signage and a confusing, new traffic pattern are some of the problems along Queens Boulevard. This Saturday, we observed several cars and a bus travelling on the wrong side of the road," Vernon added.

The Briarwood Action Network will sponsor a rally at the new Briarwood-Van Wyck entrance on Saturday, August 25th (11:00 am) to protest the lack of response by the NYS DOT, NYC DOT and NYC Transit to the community's long-standing concerns. Vernon says, "We've got to have a better agency communication and project implementation before the entrance on the north side of Queens Boulevard re-opens."

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