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Friday, February 13, 2004
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Downtown Residents Blast Plan To Bury Part Of West Street

NOVEMBER 19TH, 2003

At a public hearing Wednesday, dozens of Downtown residents blasted plans to turn a portion of West Street into a tunnel.

The \$860 million project would bury four lanes of traffic next to the World Trade Center site, leaving four more lanes at street level. Officials are also considering leaving West Street at ground level but expanding the number of lanes, and a third option is to just leave everything the way it is now.

Governor George Pataki has said he prefers building the tunnel, but critics say it's not worth the money.

"As has been pointed out by many speakers this afternoon, it's just a terrible waste of money," said Bill Love of the Coalition to Save West Street. "We're talking about a total of something like a billion dollars on a four-block tunnel that nobody down here wants."

"If you're talking about decreasing traffic," said Helene Seeman of Battery Park City United, "which is what we should be talking about, then you don't build a tunnel. We have to think out of the box and we need to be a model city. Let's decrease traffic in Lower Manhattan."

Officials say a final decision won't be made until the middle of next year.

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