

\$2-Million Lost in 'Death' of Road Here

By JOSEPH C. INGRAHAM

When the Board of Estimate killed the Lower Manhattan Expressway last month it also "buried" \$2,070,000 of state and Federal funds and a 156-foot segment of the route—the only part ever constructed.

Although the expressway, which would have connected the Williamsburg and Manhattan Bridges and the Holland Tunnel, has officially been "de-mapped" by the city, it still is on the Interstate System and it will take an act of the Legislature to remove it.

Meanwhile, \$150-million of Government money (90 per cent in Federal funds and 10 per cent in state funds) is frozen. Whether the state will eventually choose to use the money for another interstate route is uncertain, according to officials of the State Transportation Department.

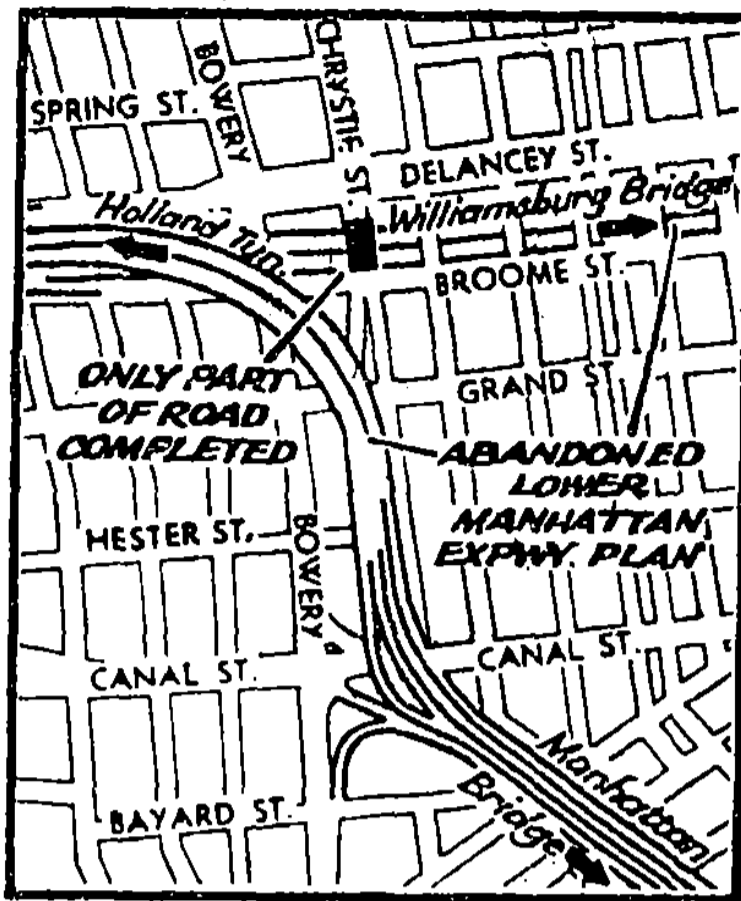
They noted that several up-state communities had indicated an interest in more interstate roads that would materially help the economy there as well as provide work for the heavy construction industry.

Another Project Killed

Also in limbo is \$250-million of Government funds for the aborted Cross-Brooklyn Expressway, also killed by the Lindsay administration, but still on the Interstate system map, too.

Construction of the first and only tiny segment of the Lower Manhattan Expressway was completed in 1963 and admittedly was an effort to prod the city into action.

The work consisted of abutments, piers and counter-bouy-



The New York Times

Sept. 26, 1969

ancy slabs for the expressway foundation to support the Chrystie Street subway. The section was to be an approach to the six lane crosstown artery leading to the Williamsburg Bridge.

George E. Toth, director of arterial highway planning for the city Department of Highways, like officials of the State Transportation agency, was philosophical about the "lost" money.

"It was good planning," Mr. Toth said. "The subway structure was about to start and if this small section was not built before the subway it would have been extremely costly to return at a later date and construct this section of highway by underpinning the new subway structures."

After the little bit of expressway was completed, earth fill was placed around it, to be uncovered at a later date when full expressway construction was to take place.

"Now all we have is a cov-

ered hole in the ground and it might be of interest to archeologists of the future," he added.

The Chrystie Street subway additions were part of the over-all master plan for the recent citywide rerouting to increase subway capacity. The fragment of expressway cost \$941,000, according to the State Transportation agency that handled the contract. Studies, surveys, restudies, alteration of plans and the like for the expressway cost the Federal Government \$1,013,000 and the state \$116,255.

"We still have all the plans and detailed drawings for the expressway," Burton E. Hughes, deputy transportation commissioner, noted. "Maybe it will be reactivated," he added wistfully.

The controversial crosstown route, which started life as an elevated highway and then was redesigned as a depressed roadway, was the victim of "political cowardice," according to proponents of the route.

About 2,200 families, 365 retail stores and 480 non-retail establishments were in the path of the road. It was a nightmare to thousands of downtown residents for years and the dream of city planners.

The death of the Lower Manhattan Expressway last month was the second time the grandiose project was killed.

In the administration of former Mayor Robert F. Wagner the road plan died once before. Then it was revived by Mayor Lindsay with the alteration that air rights for housing and schools be incorporated.

Business groups favored the plan to provide quick access across lower Manhattan. The Automobile Club of New York also supported it, but neighborhood groups, with the backing of political leaders, saw only more blight, congestion and air pollution in the expressway scheme.