

Atlantic Avenue 'Development'

There is a fair-sized communications gap between New York and Albany, and it isn't going to be helped by the bill that would create an Atlantic Avenue Development Authority. This legislative sleeper, which breezed through the Senate and is due for consideration by the Assembly tomorrow, came as an unwelcome surprise to city officials, planners and local communities.

The bill is surpassingly ill-conceived. It would set up a development authority with sweeping powers for a totally unspecified kind of renewal in a "project area" cutting a five-mile swath across Brooklyn along Atlantic Avenue. Its path bowls through two landmark districts, Brooklyn Heights and Cobble Hill, the Atlantic Avenue renewal and Bedford-Stuyvesant model cities areas, and touches on the downtown Brooklyn business district.

The only thing that seems clear is that the project route, as proposed, connects the Interboro and Brooklyn-Queens Expressways, which would make a perfect link in the Interstate highway system, eligible for 90 per cent Federal funds. One of the bill's sponsors sees "rehabilitation of a blighted area with a beautiful highway leading to Queens with esplanades and malls." But neither blacks nor whites along the route see it that way at all. They see "highway removal" of property and homes.

Unfortunately, although they deny highway plans, the bill's sponsors are unable to reassure anyone, since the legislation contains carte blanche authorization for anything at all. It gives power for construction of vague "works or improvements" for an as yet non-existent proposal. Nothing could be more ill-planned or perilous.

No one opposes help for Bedford-Stuyvesant, but this is not the way to give it. There is only one real issue here—an ill-considered and potentially harmful bill that should not be passed.