



December 3, 2013

Honorable Steve Bellone
100 Veterans Memorial Hwy P.O. Box 6100
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Re: Transportation Priorities in 2014

Dear County Executive Bellone,

As you begin the second half of your first term, Tri-State Transportation Campaign looks forward to working with you to promote a more sustainable transportation system and more livable, smart growth communities throughout Suffolk County. To build on the success of the first two years of your term, we encourage you to:

- *Advocate for Increased State Funding for Suffolk County Transit:* Your administration has been a true champion for bus service in Suffolk County, and has proven that if provided with state resources, those dollars will go to expanded service, like the Sunday service set to begin on ten routes this coming January. Unfortunately, Suffolk County receives far less in state support for its transit system, as a percentage, than neighboring Nassau County. New York State funding contributions make up over 50 percent of NICE bus' operating budget while only comprising roughly 30 percent of Suffolk County Transit's operating budget. Given Suffolk County's strong precedent that additional state funding will go towards its intended purpose—additional service—we urge you to encourage the County's state elected delegation to do even more to secure additional dollars for the expansion of service to the remaining Sunday routes and further into the evening hours.
- *Help fund Complete Streets Improvements:* We applaud and thank you for your leadership in adopting a Complete Streets law for Suffolk County in 2012. Roads in Suffolk County are routinely listed as the most deadly for pedestrians and cyclists in the region. This is particularly the case around transit locations. We urge your administration to partner with the New York State Department of Transportation to create a Safe Routes to Transit program. Such a program could improve safety for existing SCT riders and attract new ridership by putting aside funds for pedestrian crossing islands, sidewalks, curb extensions and/or bus pullouts. Adopting an amendment to the County's Capital Program to create a Complete Streets implementation fund would also help pay for safety improvements that benefit all users of Suffolk County's roadways.
- *Enact Commuter Benefits Legislation:* This bill would require businesses of a certain size (e.g. with 50 or more employees) to offer pre-tax transit benefit plans to employees. A similar ordinance has been adopted in San Francisco and according to the City of San Francisco's

Department of the Environment; employees can save between \$200 and \$1,000 annually. Businesses also benefit through a reduction in payroll taxes, which was the key component in securing business support in San Francisco. A similar bill is being pursued in New York City, but Suffolk County could lead the way for county governments nationwide by enacting this legislation.

- *Continue to incentivize Transit Oriented Development and Smart Growth:* Suffolk County has little say over how municipalities develop, but the County has done well to incentivize certain types of development and land use through various grant programs. A way to further incentivize sensible development projects would be to create a program that supports the necessary infrastructure investment to support TOD, such as sewers, and funding to enact zoning changes. Alternatively, Suffolk County can formally incorporate TOD criteria into its existing grant disbursements. A similar effort undertaken by the State of Connecticut's Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development now includes a TOD priority criterion when reviewing and disbursing grant requests.

We request a meeting to discuss these issues. We look forward to working with you during the New Year to advance these and other transportation and livability initiatives that will catalyze economic development, protect our environment and improve Suffolk County's quality of life. Please contact us at 212.268.7474 or rlynch@tstc.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Veronica Vanterpool
Executive Director

Ryan Lynch
Associate Director