

CITY OF NEW YORK
Community Board No. 2

350 JAY STREET - 8TH FL.
BROOKLYN, N.Y. 11201

(718) 596-5410 FAX (718) 852-1461
cb2k@nyc.rr.com

MARTY MARKOWITZ
Borough President

JOHN DEW
Chairperson

ROBERT PERRIS
District Manager

March 7, 2012

Phillip Eng P.E., Regional Director, Region 11
New York State Department of Transportation
Hunters Point Plaza
47-40 21st Street
Long Island City, New York 11101

Dear Mr. Eng:

I am writing to request that the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) meet with the Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) convened relative to the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway (Interstate 278) Triple Cantilever Viaduct Reconstruction Project, NYSDOT Project Identification Number X73056. The transportation committee of Brooklyn Community Board 2 voted unanimously to suggest such a meeting and I am following up on that sagacious recommendation.

Eight stakeholder meetings and a workshop were held in connection with the project and the members of the advisory committee took their attendance and participation seriously, several times completing assignments between sessions. The stakeholders deserve, out of respect for their two-year commitment, more closure to the project than an e-mail from Sam Schwartz Engineering, the consultant hired to coordinate community participation, stating that the project is not moving forward. I have copied many of the stakeholders on this letter.

Furthermore, the SAC deserves to better understand what to expect in lieu of the reconstruction project. At the beginning of the environmental review, NYSDOT staff stated that while the triple cantilever remained safe to drive on, the structure is nearing the end of its expected engineered life. It was also impressed upon the committee that the duration of the reconstruction project would be long and therefore it was imperative to begin the process. The environmental review and selection of a preferred design solution alone were scheduled to take seven years, until the middle of 2015, with design, contract bidding and registration, and construction to follow.

Some questions that remain unanswered are:

- What is the current condition of the triple cantilever?
- What maintenance program is planned and how will it extend the life of the viaduct?
- What is the currently anticipated useful life of the structure?

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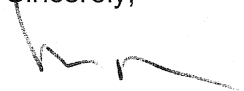
- What is the shortest period of time in which the cantilever could be reconstructed or an alternative built, inclusive of all steps?
- What is NYSDOT's contingency plan should part or all of the viaduct need to be closed?

The Brooklyn-Queens Expressway passes through densely populated neighborhoods, including several in Brooklyn Community District 2. Should some or all of the triple cantilever need to be closed because it was found to be unsound, traffic would be diverted to local streets, not just in Community District 2 but throughout Brooklyn. This would be an unacceptable consequence. Movement of goods and people would be severely compromised; driver, cyclist and pedestrian safety would be put at risk; air quality would be greatly diminished.

I am not asking that NYSDOT hold a public meeting. The department and Sam Schwartz Engineering were wise to open up the stakeholder meetings to all interested parties in 2009-2011. However, I can anticipate some reasons why NYSDOT might want to update the SAC in a more focused setting. The department could make its invitations based on the stakeholders identified in 2008 and the sign-in sheets from the stakeholder meetings.

Please let me know if a briefing to the advisory committee is possible and if so, when that might be scheduled for at the earliest. I would also like to learn the format that such a meeting might take and, in particular, whether or not NYSDOT would be willing to answer questions submitted in advance by the committee members. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



John Dew

cc: Hon. Andrew Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York
Hon. Nydia Velazquez, United States Congress
Hon. Marty Markowitz, Brooklyn Borough President
Hon. Daniel Squadron, New York State Senate
Hon. Joan Millman, New York State Assembly
Hon. Stephen Levin, New York City Council
Commissioner Joan McDonald, New York State Department of Transportation
Commissioner Janette Sadik Kahn, New York City Department of Transportation
Borough Commissioner Joseph Palmieri, New York City Department of Transportation
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Commissioner Janette Sadik Kahn, New York City Department of Transportation
Borough Commissioner Joseph Palmieri, New York City Department of Transportation
Adam Levine, Region 11 Public Information Officer, NYS Department of Transportation
Daniel M. Kummer, Chairperson; Brooklyn Community Board 6
Jee Mee Kim, VP and Director of Planning and Design; Sam Schwartz Engineering
Sandy Balboza, President; Atlantic Avenue Betterment Association
Sarah Michelson, Executive Director; Atlantic Avenue Local Development Corporation
Howard Kolins, President; Boerum Hill Association
Nancy Webster, Executive Director; Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy
Jane McGroarty, President; Brooklyn Heights Association
Maria Pagano, President; Carroll Gardens Neighborhood Association
Roy Sloane, President; Cobble Hill Association
Tucker Reed, President; Downtown Brooklyn Partnership
Alexandria Sica, Executive Director; DUMBO District Management Association
Mary Andrews, President; Farragut Tenants Association
Joan Zimmerman, President; Fulton Ferry Landing Association
Natasha Burke, Director of Community Affairs; University Hospital of Brooklyn at LICH
Brigit Pinnell, Executive Director; Montague Street District Management Association
William Ringler, President; Riverside Tenants Association
Paul Steely White, Executive Director; Transportation Alternatives
Kate Slevin, Executive Director; Tri-State Transportation Campaign
Craig Bickerstaff, President; Willowtown Association

JD:RP