



May 29, 2013

Via U.S. Mail

Ms. Diane Arneth, Board Chair
Staten Island Partnership for Community Wellness
900 South Avenue
Suite 58-59
Staten Island, New York 10314

Re: Ferry Terminal West Side Lower Level Bicycle Access, Letter Dated May 2013

Dear Ms. Arneth:

We have received the above-referenced letter and, although we appreciate your willingness to work with us and our regulatory oversights to try and facilitate lower level access to and from what we refer to as the north side of the St. George Ferry Terminal, there are some absolutes in terms of security that must be satisfied and there is always the matter of cost.

By way of background, the Code of Federal Regulations (33 CFR) specifies, among other things, that embarking passengers must be kept segregated from disembarking passengers, and that access to the facility must be controlled. Essentially, these two requirements are statutory in nature and dictate our security posture in this regard. The local U.S. Coast Guard, which is part of the Department of Homeland Security, does not have the authority to relax, amend or otherwise change these specific requirements.

In addition, there is the matter of cost. Although we have been very fortunate to receive significant capital funding from the federal government for our security infrastructure, there is minimal expense funding available. Therefore, ongoing security operations are funded almost entirely through the City's expense budget. Our annual security costs are now about the same percentage of our budget as fuel, so the suggestion of applying the same security regime to the north side as we now have in place on the south side would be a very tough sell with the City Office of Management and Budget.

In addition to all of this, there is the retail and hotel development which is planned for the north parking lots. During the construction phase of this project, I think it would be safe to

NYC Department of Transportation

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assume that access to and from the north side of the terminal will be limited. As for the completed project, we understand there may be a waterfront pedestrian plaza in this area.

We certainly understand your motivation; however, this matter is complicated by regulatory mandates as well as budget issues. Nevertheless, our Executive Director of Safety and Security, Margaret Gordon, is more than willing to meet with you and discuss this matter. She can be reached at 718-876-6332 and I would suggest you contact her directly to arrange a meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James C. DeSimone".

James C. DeSimone
Chief Operating Officer

cc: Miller Nuttle, Transportation Alternatives
Nicholas Zvegintzov, Ferry Riders
Paul Gertner, Harbor Ring
Margaret Gordon, NYCDOT
Desiree Mercado, NYCDOT



May 2013

Captain James DeSimone
Chief Operating Officer, Staten Island Ferry
1 Ferry Terminal Drive
Staten Island, NY 10301

Re: Ferry Terminal West Side Lower Level Bicycle Access

Dear Captain DeSimone,

We write to ask you to help convene a working group session with the undersigned parties in regards to facilitating access through the St George Ferry Terminal lower level west gate for bicyclists and persons with disabilities. We understand that the SI Ferry Terminal is subject to Coast Guard rules and regulations, but would like to find a common solution that involves applying similar security measures currently functioning on the east side lower level entrance. We would welcome working with Coast Guard and Homeland Security personnel as well as the DOT to determine an ideal solution that allows for safer, greater access while maintaining a comparable level of facility security.

There is currently no direct connectivity for bicyclists or persons in wheelchairs from Bank Street to the ferry. Bicyclists traveling eastbound to the ferry and arriving via the designated greenway on Bank Street must carry their bicycles up a flight of stairs, walk them across the terminal and then carry them down another flight of stairs to access the ferry terminal's bicycle waiting area. The only other route to the ferry terminal's bicycle waiting area is to travel east on Richmond Terrace, which can be a dangerous experience, as squad car parking from the 120th precinct often limits travel to one lane, and forces bicyclists share one lane of traffic with buses and cars.

While the DOT's bicycle traffic screenline counts have not yet been released for the 2012 calendar year, it is undeniable that bicycle travel has increased dramatically in the past five years in New York City. It is a healthy, affordable way to travel for thousands of New Yorkers, and as an active design best practice in PlaNYC 2030, it should be encouraged, not hindered. Hundreds of passengers commute to the SI Ferry by bicycle, and many more visitors from other boroughs enjoy visiting Staten Island by bicycle.

We ask that you consider permitting access to bicyclists through the west side lower level fence when both entering and exiting, and as a security measure, apply similar screening that is currently applied to those entering on the east side. This would:

- Increase the utilization of Bank Street as a viable and safer commuting and recreational route
- Allow disabled passengers easier access to their vehicles parked in the west lot
- Relieve parking lot overcrowding by making it easier and safer to commute by bicycle
- Allow visitors arriving by bicycle easier, safer, and quicker access to the forthcoming New York Wheel and Harbor Commons Shopping Center.



We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to working with you and your associates to find common ground on this issue for a safer, healthier Ferry and Staten Island.

Signed,

Diane Arneth

Diane Arneth
Board Chair, SI Partnership for Community Wellness

Miller Nuttle

Miller Nuttle
Transportation Alternatives
Manager of Campaigns and Organizing

Nicholas Zvegintzov

Nicholas Zvegintzov
Ferry Riders Committee

Paul Gertner

Paul Gertner
Harbor Ring