

TRI-STATE TRANSPORTATION CAMPAIGN



December 22, 2010

Hon. Andrew Cuomo
Governor-Elect
Church Street Station
P.O. Box 683
New York, NY 10008

Re: Transportation priorities

Dear Governor-Elect Cuomo:

Congratulations on your victory. The Tri-State Transportation Campaign (TSTC), a non-profit policy organization working for a more sustainable transportation network in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, looks forward to working with you. Over 15 years, we have helped elected officials and transportation departments direct spending toward transit, cycling, walking, and infrastructure repair projects and away from sprawl inducing highway expansion.

As you consider policy and staffing for your Administration, we offer the recommendations below.

Turn NYS DOT into a smart growth leader. Appoint a reformer to run the agency and direct her or him to implement the Smart Growth Infrastructure bill passed last year. To do this, the agency should:

- Make sustainability programs that connect land use and transportation - such as NYS DOT's GreenLITES and PennDOT's Smart Transportation program - the norm for project selection rather than independent programs. Ensure the vast majority of transportation resources are directed to towns working toward smart growth visions;
- Report to you, the State Legislature, and the public quarterly on performance measures including road, bridge and transit conditions, vehicle miles traveled, greenhouse gas emissions, and road safety. A good model is Washington State Department of Transportation's Gray Notebook which is easy to read and available online;
- Redo the state's street design criteria using NYC Department of Transportation's *Street Design Manual* and the Institute for Transportation Engineers and the Congress for the New Urbanism's manual, *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares*, as models.
- Take control of NYS DOT regional offices to ensure that a cohesive transportation vision is being implemented. The eleven regional offices of NYSDOT function with their own institutional culture and policy focus. Streamlining these offices and ensuring they are following the direction

of headquarters in Albany is critical to realizing a 21st century transportation policy across the state.

Support innovative projects such as the transformation of the Sheridan Expressway in the South Bronx into parks and housing. The underused 1.25 mile highway was never completed and remains a stub bisecting an environmental justice community in the Bronx. A coalition of groups, including TSTC, has been urging the NYS DOT to remove the highway as part of the Sheridan Bruckner Sheridan Environmental Impact Study (PIN X730.39) and replace it with more appropriate urban uses. Such a move could become a model of smart growth investment for the state and nation. NYC DOT recently won a TIGER II award to study potential uses of the roadway but the City requires state cooperation.

Stop the diversion of transit dollars. New York State has redirected hundreds of millions of dollars in dedicated transit funding resulting in fare increases, cuts to dozens of bus routes, and the elimination of two NYC subway lines. Transit funding should be increased, not decreased. We urge you to retain transit funding in your Executive budgets.

Increase support for transit operations and capital projects and consider a NYC congestion pricing program as a possible funding stream. The state's economy is dependent on reliable transit service yet both MTA and non-MTA systems face drastic funding challenges in coming years. The MTA's capital program deficit is \$10B of a \$25B program. New revenue sources will be necessary to stop the system from becoming unsafe and unreliable. An NYC congestion pricing program would align with state goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create more transportation choices.

Appoint MTA board members who ride public transportation and reflect the diversity of transit riders. As Governor, you appoint the MTA's 17 member board with six members being under your direct control. We urge you to recommend effective, diverse, and qualified representatives who represent riders.

Improve suburban transit, especially for bus riders, and consider scaling down the Tappan Zee Bridge project. Nassau County's Long Island Bus is facing cuts that could destroy the system and Westchester's Bee-Line Bus cut service this spring. A new funding agreement between Nassau County and the MTA, along with more state support for all county systems, could offer cost savings and protect service for riders.

On the capital side, the next Governor should also support the LIRR third track project (key for Long Islanders to reap the benefits of East Side Access) and plans for bus rapid transit in the Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 corridor. Additionally, plans for Tappan Zee Bridge replacement could be scaled down and proceed without the commuter rail connection from Rockland to NYC. Most commuters using the Tappan Zee are travelling to suburban destinations, not ending their trips in Manhattan, so the bus rapid transit connection, which provides much greater utility at the most affordable cost, should be retained.

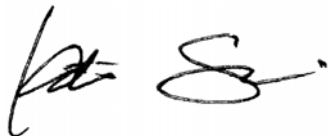
Redirect Port Authority ARC funds to projects that improve bus service between New Jersey and NYC. NYC and New Jersey both benefit from strong transit connections across the Hudson River. Governor Christie's killing of the ARC tunnel project increases the urgency of improvements for cross-Hudson commuters. While NYC investigates a possible #7 extension to NJ, there remain important

improvements for the 192,000 bus users each day. Bus improvements are the most affordable and fastest method to reduce commute times, alleviate congestion, and provide better transit service. We urge you to redirect the Port Authority's \$3 billion contribution to ARC to projects that would benefit cross Hudson commuters. These include a second Manhattan-bound bus lane through the Lincoln Tunnel in the morning, a westbound bus lane during evening rush hours, additional NJ TRANSIT buses, a bus garage on the West Side of Manhattan, and a reconstructed Lincoln Tunnel helix.

Make roads safer, adopt a complete streets policy, and recommend speed enforcement cameras in your first executive budget. Each year, roughly 1,200 people die in traffic accidents in New York State, 300 of them while walking. Traffic calming offers tremendous safety enhancements on dangerous roadways for limited capital investment. We strongly urge you to support complete streets legislation (A8587-B/SB5711-B) that passed the Senate earlier this year, use federal dollars to fix the state's most dangerous roads for walking, expand affordable and effective programs like the NYS DOT's Local Safe Streets and Traffic Calming Grant and SafeSeniors programs and start a new statewide Safe Routes to Transit program. Also, speed enforcement cameras can improve safety on highways and in urban areas while raising revenue.

Retain Port Authority Executive Director Chris Ward and MTA CEO Jay Walder, both innovative leaders who have proven themselves as adept and highly capable leaders during challenging times.

Sincerely,



Kate Slevin
Executive Director



Veronica Vanterpool
Associate Director