

Olivencia, Mildred

From: cyndi.steiner@njbwc.org
Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2015 8:24 AM
To: Olivencia, Mildred
Cc: Torres-Rojas, Genara; Van Duyne, Sheree; Ng, Danny
Subject: Freedom of Information Online Request Form

Information:

First Name: Cyndi
Last Name: Steiner
Company: New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition
Mailing Address 1: 551 Valley Road, PMB 140
Mailing Address 2: PMB 140
City: Montclair
State: NJ
Zip Code: 07043
Email Address: cyndi.steiner@njbwc.org
Phone: 9738864142
Required copies of the records: No

List of specific record(s):

Please provide me the letter dated April 24, 2015 that was sent to Philip Santora - NY Road Runners club.
Thank you

THE PORT AUTHORITY OF NY & NJ

FOI Administrator

July 10, 2015

Ms. Cyndi Steiner
New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition
551 Valley Road, PMB 140
Montclair, NJ 07043

Re: Freedom of Information Reference No. 16012

Dear Ms. Steiner:

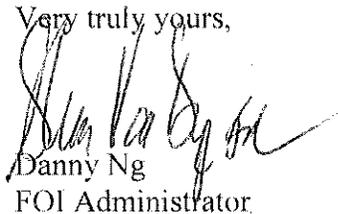
This is in response to your May 12, 2015 request, which has been processed under the Port Authority's Freedom of Information Code (the "Code", copy enclosed) for a copy of the letter dated April 24, 2015 that was sent to Philip Santora - NY Road Runners club.

Material responsive to your request and available under the Code can be found on the Port Authority's website at <http://www.panynj.gov/corporate-information/foi/16012-O.pdf>. Paper copies of the available records are available upon request.

Pursuant to the Code, certain portions of the material responsive to your request are exempt from disclosure as, among other classifications, personal privacy.

Please refer to the above FOI reference number in any future correspondence relating to your request.

Very truly yours,



Danny Ng
FOI Administrator

Enclosure

*4 World Trade Center, 18th Floor
150 Greenwich Street
New York, NY 10007
T: 212 435 7348 F: 212 435 7555*

THE PORT AUTHORITY OF NY & NJ

Cedrick T. Fulton
Director
Tunnels, Bridges & Terminals

April 24, 2015

Mr. Philip Santora
Director, Volunteer & Community Strategies
New York Road Runners
9 East 89th Street
New York, NY 10128

Dear Mr. Santora:

Your letter to the Chairman and Executive Director of The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey has been referred to me for response. As Director of the Tunnels, Bridges and Terminals Department at The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, I am responsible for the operation and investment program for the tunnels and bridges that connect New York City and New Jersey, including the George Washington Bridge (GWB). I welcome the opportunity to address your concerns.

In your letter, you expressed support of the Cyclist Proposal for the George Washington Bridge, which was previously presented to the Port Authority Board of Commissioners by public speaker Neile Weissman in December 2014. Following his presentation, senior Port Authority engineering and project management staff conducted a detailed review of this proposal and met with Mr. Weissman to discuss the results of the review. In this discussion, Port Authority staff explained that this proposal was not feasible due to a number of technical, safety/security, and cost issues that were not accounted for.

The Port Authority's planned improvements will provide users with unencumbered access and improve the experience to the main span sidewalks on the GWB. Upon completion of the Suspender Rope Replacement and Sidewalk Replacement in 2024, we intend to open and operate both sidewalks simultaneously – with pedestrians and users requiring ADA access on the south sidewalk and bicyclists on the north sidewalk. Separating the two user groups will enhance the current operation by eliminating conflicts between pedestrians and bicycles. We advised Mr. Weissman that the improvements would not preclude the Port Authority from widening the sidewalks in the future, once other higher priority state of good repair projects are complete and funding is available.

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THE PORT AUTHORITY OF NY & NJ

-2-

Please know that the Port Authority is committed to providing safe bicycle and pedestrian access at our bridges. In fact, the Port Authority also formed a working group, which included several bicycle advocacy groups who have voiced their support for our GWB Sidewalk Replacement Program. In addition to that program, the Port Authority has also planned to provide bicycle and pedestrian access on the new Goethals Bridge and Bayonne Bridge, representing a total commitment of over \$275 million for bicycle and pedestrian projects in our capital program.

We will be happy to keep you apprised of progress on these significant capital projects and also to include the New York Road Runners in any future conversations.

Thank you for writing.

Sincerely,


Cedrick T. Fulton

cc: John J. Degnan
Chairman, The Port Authority of NY & NJ

Patrick J. Foye
Executive Director, The Port Authority of NY & NJ

Neile Weissman
President, New York Cycle Club



April 8, 2015

John Degnan, Chairman
Patrick Foye, Executive Director
The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
Corporate Offices

Dear Sirs,

On behalf of New York Road Runners (NYRR), I would like to express our support of the Cyclist Proposal for George Washington Bridge renovation plan to widen the runner/pedestrian/cyclist paths. We believe that the path footprints of the Port Authority (PA) plan will result in overcrowding and possible safety issues for cyclists, runners and pedestrians.

The PA plan will not accommodate projected usage increase by future cyclists, runners and pedestrians. (1) 6.75' path for pedestrians and runners and (1) 6.75' path for cyclists, will inevitably cause runners to move to the cyclist paths. Therefore we agree that (2) 10' paths for cyclists and (2) 6.75' paths for pedestrians-runners is necessary to sustain bridge patrons.

We encourage Port Authority to consider the future of the GWB as a high use facility, and provide the next generation of cyclists, runners and pedestrians adequate accommodation for travel and health regimens.

I have enclosed the Cyclist Proposal for review, and will attend the PA meeting of April 30 to address our support. Thank you for your consideration.

Philip Santora

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Santora", written over a faint dotted line.

Director, Volunteer & Community Strategies
psantora@nyrr.org
212-423-2211

cc: Mary Wittenberg
Peter Ciaccia

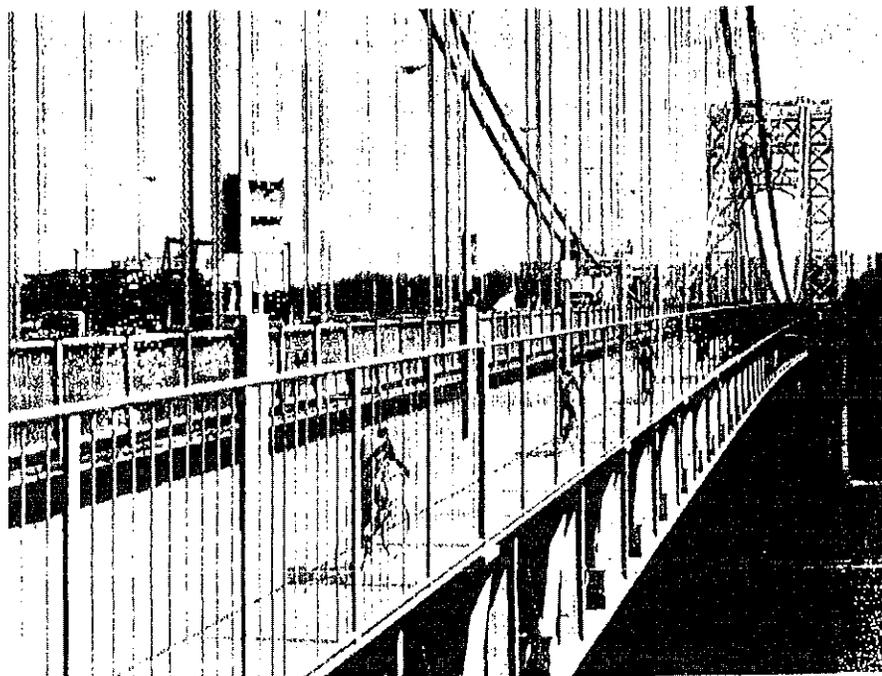
completegeorge.org

15/02 – Cyclists' Proposal

At the December, 2014 Port Authority Board meeting, the Commissioners were presented with a **Cyclists' Proposal** for the George Washington Bridge bike/ped paths.

This Proposal augments the two existing 6.75' pedestrian paths with two 10' bikeways. It features anti-suicide barriers and upgraded approaches to the GWB from east and west.

Cyclists' Proposal envisions the facility conforming to national guidelines for high-use, and capable of accommodating increased demand through much of the 21st Century.

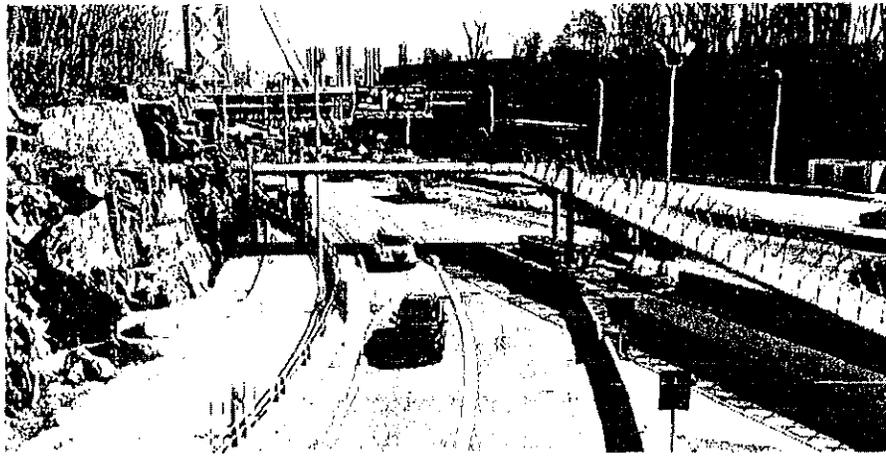


*Cyclists' Proposal: (2) 10' paths for cyclists plus (2) 6.75' paths for pedestrians-runners.
Artist's rendering of bikeway below existing pedestrian path.*

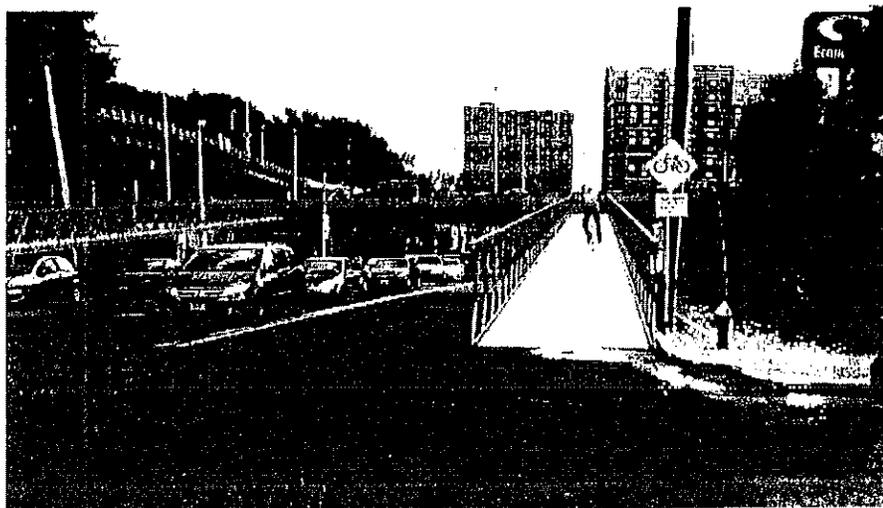
Benefits

- Ensures separate paths for pedestrians, runners and cyclists, sharply reducing conflicts between the users
- Incorporates a 9' high anti-suicide barrier while maintaining unobstructed views from the pedestrian path
- Creates a second path through the towers to spare cyclists from negotiating the blind turns that already cause many conflicts
- Bikeways will be strong and wide enough to provide access to maintenance and emergency vehicles.
- Without obstructions from cables, bikeways can be snowplowed to their full width.
- Affords contingent space for civil emergencies as well as single-side closure during maintenance and repainting.

- Permanent supports for the bikeways could serve as the basis for temporary catwalks during the recabing
- Utilizes prefabricated aluminum structures that already match the color of the GWB and will never need painting
- Substantially reduces the time to fabricate and install the NY-NJ approaches. Could be accomplished in months, vs. years under the PA's plan
- Complies with AASHTO standards for high-use facilities
- Provides acceptable levels of service, as per FHWA criteria, for decades to come
- Is fully consistent with US DOT guidance to local transportation agencies on their responsibility to upgrade non-motorized facilities concurrent with major repairs.



Cyclists' Proposal: Artist's rendering of the North Path ramp across the Palisades Interstate Parkway (looking east).



Cyclists' Proposal: Artist's rendering of the approach from Hudson Terrace to the North Path (looking south).

The Cyclists' Proposal was issued in response to the **Port Authority's Plan** for rehabilitating the bridge paths announced in March, 2014. The PA Plan bypasses the existing stairs on the North Path; upgrades the NY-NJ approaches and adds anti-suicide barriers.

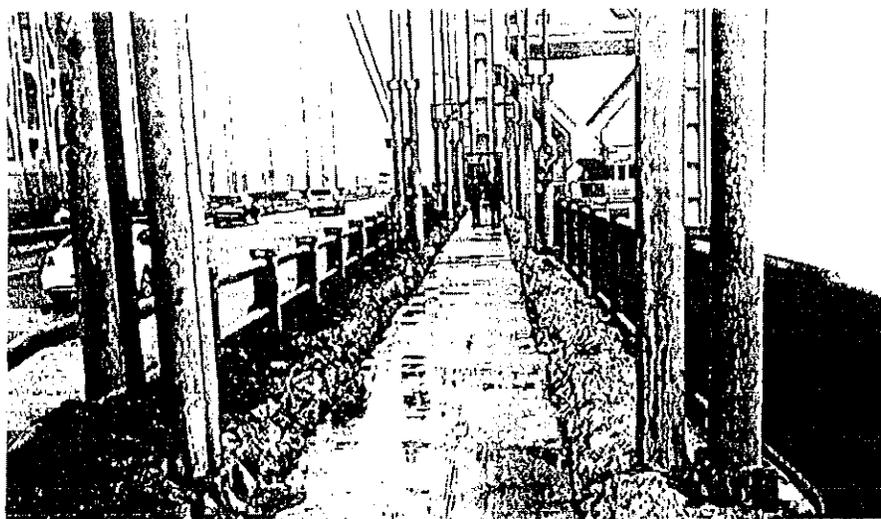
But it does not widen the main spans beyond their current 6.75'; nor does it remedy the blind turns through the towers — arguably the most dangerous sections of the existing pathways.

Moreover, the current GWB paths cannot be plowed to their full width due to the presence of cables. As a result, the unplowed snow ice melts and refreezes across path surface. This problem will not be corrected by PA's Plan.

The PA Plan also refers to the paths as "sidewalks" — indicating a belief that their main function is for pedestrian traffic.



Port Authority's Plan. (1) 6.75' path for pedestrians and runners (shown in artist's rendering) and (1) 6.75' path for cyclists.



Under Port Authority's Plan, bike paths would still not be plowed to full width.



Port Authority's Plan will not remedy the paths' blind turns, a source of user conflicts.

Comparing Costs

The Port Authority has projected costs for the upgraded approaches and the new anti-suicide barriers at \$80 million (including nearly \$50M for the barriers). Third parties have put PA's cost of widening the main spans at an additional \$90M, but PA itself has declined to release an actual breakout.

Cyclists' Proposal cost estimate for prefabricated aluminum bikeways w/anti-suicide barriers, for the approaches and main spans on both sides, at \$14M.

That estimate does not include installation of cantilevers below the support cables every 63'; modifications to the towers to accommodate the second path; the foundations for the approaches; nor related soft costs. But without access to PA's own cost and engineering studies, these elements cannot be quantified.

Potential savings from the Cyclists' Proposal include:

- Direct savings from the reduced weight and ease of installation of prefabricated aluminum structures relative to a conventional solution.
- Secondary savings in supports and foundations due to reduced dead loads.
- That the permanent supports for the bikeway can also provide the foundation for temporary structures (catwalks) needed to service the re-cabling.

Again, without access to PA's studies, neither can the savings be quantified.

Feedback from Port Authority

The Cyclists' Proposal was presented to Port Authority's Board of Directors at their December, 2014 public session. Following which, Commissioners Schuber, Lynford and Moerdler asked that the proposal be vetted by GWB engineers. On January 30, 2015, cyclists met with PA engineers.

- PA's engineers never questioned the purported benefits of the Cyclists' Proposal's. Nor were any elements were deemed technically unfeasible.

- Engineers expressed concern that the lowered bikeways could pose a safety problem since Port Authority Police could not monitor activities from the roadway. This, however, could be addressed by the installation of security cameras.

- PA's own plans for the east-west approaches mirrored, and in some cases exceeded, concepts advanced by cyclists.

- Modifications to the towers to create space for the second path were not "off the table".

- PA's engineers affirmed that the Authority could widen the bridge paths at any time, but that other projects required funds.

Cyclists' Comment

That last point begs the question: When will come a time that other projects don't require funds? (The engineers declined to specify a level of demand that would trigger a bulldout.)

In the meantime, peak use on the GWB paths is already double the AASHTO threshold for high use. With usage growing at 5% per year, it will reach AASHTO-times-four by 2028, or even sooner, if the upgraded facility generates increased demand as is expected.

Neile Weissman, 2015 Cyclist Proposal renderings by Joe Lertola.

Cyclists' Proposal Addendum/Additional Images