Letter to NYS DOT on Route 9A

SENATOR BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL AND WEST SIDE ELECTED OFFICALS   November 8, 2024

| ISSUE: **ROUTE 9A**, **RESILIENCY**, **HUDSON RIVER PARK**

November 4, 2024

Dear Commissioner Dominguez:

Thank you for the October 23 stakeholder engagement briefing surrounding the study of "potential enhancements" on Route 9A between the Battery and West 59th Street. As elected officials that represent Manhattan's West Side, we urge you to prioritize long-term resiliency planning and expanded pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure in your study.

We have long advocated for safety improvements along the Hudson River in concert with our constituents. In 2019, the New York State Department of Transportation ("NYSDOT") conducted a limited study and lowered the speed limit on the road from 35 mph to 30 mph, after a letter by local elected officials.

One year later, Manhattan Community Boards 1, 2, and 4, and the Hudson River Park Advisory Council, requested the Hudson River Greenway be expanded to include a western lane of Route 9A. That same year, the Manhattan Borough President proposed replacing a lane of traffic on 9A with a dedicated bike lane from 57th Street to Chambers Street. In 2023, the State Legislature introduced legislation (S7202/A7682) to order a study on safety improvements along 9A and the Hudson River Greenway.

The need for expanded pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure is clear. Since New York City committed to building a robust network of protected bike lanes in the mid-aughts, the bicycle has become a popular, convenient, and comfortable form of daily transportation for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. Between 2009 and 2019, the city experienced a 116% growth in daily cycling. On June 1st, 2024, Citibike reached its daily ridership record, with 177,319 rides—surpassing the average weekday ridership of the PATH train. This is in addition to the 17 million annual visits Hudson River Park recorded in 2022.

Climate change has also created new vulnerabilities along Manhattan's West Side. With the likelihood of climate-related disasters increasing every year, it is imperative New York State do all it can to protect at-risk communities. However, resiliency projects along the Hudson have struggled to advance. During Superstorm Sandy, severe flooding took place as far north

as W. 34th Street, yet efforts to protect lives, infrastructure, and property have only advanced to Chambers Street.
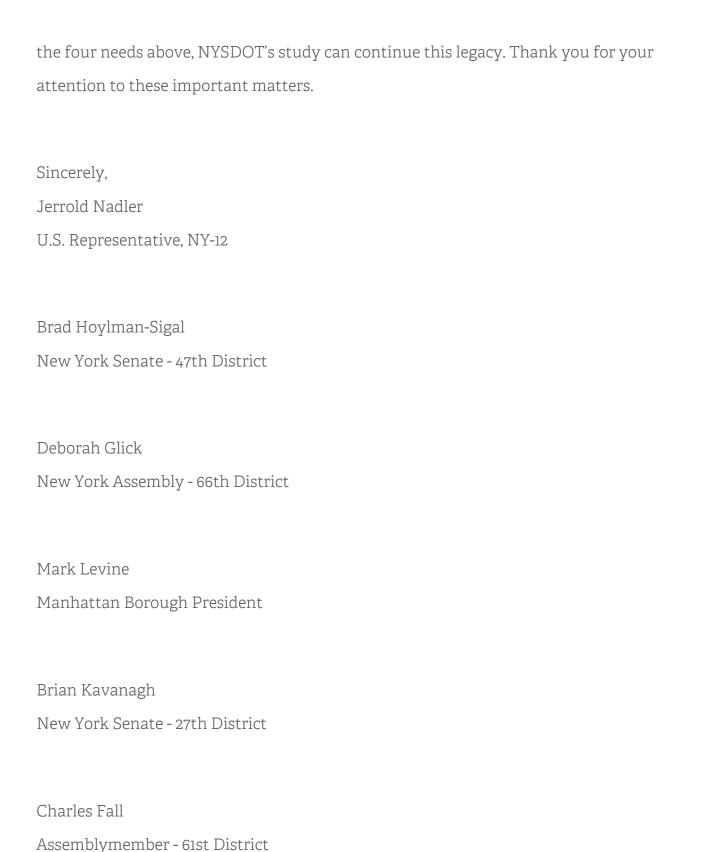
Route 9A and Hudson River Park were planned in alignment and together form the land between our communities and rising waters. NYSDOT, in collaboration with stakeholders, has an obligation to examine resiliency efforts along this corridor in a manner that is sensitive to its impacts on surrounding neighborhoods, the Park, and the river.

In light of these challenges, we urge NYSDOT to ensure its study prioritizes:

1) Comprehensive, long-term resiliency and storm-protection planning that is not limited solely to recreational and transportation infrastructure;

2) Safety upgrades for pedestrian crossings and intersections, including pedestrian plazas, additional crosswalks, and curb extensions;

3) Additional north/south transit options, including a potential bus lane and the feasibility of an added public bus route; and

4) Substantially expanded protected bike lanes along the Hudson River Greenway.

We also urge NYSDOT to provide a list in writing of those individuals and entities participating in the Transportation Partnering Committee (TPC.) An endeavor of this scope requires transparency and robust community engagement, and we look forward to seeing that information shared publicly as soon as possible.

In 1998, the State Legislature passed the Hudson River Park Act, transforming the Manhattan waterfront from abandoned, dilapidated piers to lush greenspace. By focusing on

the four needs above, NYSDOT's study can continue this legacy. Thank you for your attention to these important matters.

Sincerely,

Jerrold Nadler

U.S. Representative, NY-12

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

New York Senate - 47th District

Deborah Glick

New York Assembly - 66th District

Mark Levine

Manhattan Borough President

Brian Kavanagh

New York Senate - 27th District

Charles Fall

Assemblymember - 61st District

Tony Simone

New York Assembly – 75th District

Linda Rosenthal

New York Assembly - 67th District

Erik Bottcher

Councilmember - District 3

Gale A. Brewer

Councilmember - District 6

Chris Marte

Councilmember - District 1