



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian Kavanagh

NYC Should Install 'Gowanus Connector' Segment of Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway

BRIAN KAVANAGH May 15, 2020

| ISSUE: **BICYCLE SAFETY, BROOKLYN, BROOKLYN GREENWAY INITIATIVE, NYC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**



On May 15, Senator Kavanagh joined Brooklyn Greenway, community advocates, and fellow elected officials to call on the New York City Department of Transportation to prioritize installation of the Gowanus Connector, a vital piece of the greenway network. The Gowanus Connector will connect busy bicycle corridors heading to all corners of Brooklyn and beyond and help New Yorkers travel safely. The text of the letter to the NYC DOT is below; the original may be viewed via the link above.

May 15, 2020

Polly Trottenberg

Commissioner, NYC Department of Transportation

55 Water Street

New York, NY 10041

Dear Commissioner Trottenberg:

Thank you for your leadership during this important and challenging time. We write today to update and amplify our request for NYC Department of Transportation to install the “Gowanus Connector” segment of the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway as part of NYC’s Open Streets program to help New Yorkers safely get back to work and maintain physical distancing guidelines as we move through this pandemic and get our city moving again over the coming months.

The Gowanus Connector is at a major crossroad of South, Central and Downtown Brooklyn neighborhoods and directly serves Red Hook, Gowanus, Carroll Gardens, and Sunset Park. This Greenway segment will connect busy bicycle corridors heading to all corners of our city at a vital intersection with the Smith Street corridor leading to Downtown Brooklyn and the bridges over the East River to and from Manhattan, as well as the 4th Avenue corridor through Sunset Park and further into South Brooklyn. This corridor over Hamilton Avenue will get New Yorkers safely to work while minimizing conflict with trucks and industrial businesses, and relieving congestion once Superfund dredging begins this summer with other Gowanus bridges opening more frequently.

Planning and traffic engineering for the Gowanus Connector have already been completed by the Department, capital funding is secured, and construction was scheduled for ground-breaking this spring. But with a need to get our city moving again now – not to mention any potential delays with capital projects due to the pandemic – New Yorkers do not have time for the two-year capital construction. We need to implement it now.

Installing the Gowanus Connector with jersey barriers or similarly sturdy temporary materials instead of plastic barrels or cones will minimize ongoing maintenance requirements and provide increased protection through the busy intersection of Hamilton and 3rd Avenues. Brooklyn Greenway Initiative (BGI) and the undersigned elected officials, community organizations, and private sector partners stand ready to leverage political support and private sector resources as needed to help implement this essential protected lane in partnership with the Department.

There is no question that transportation by bicycle in the year ahead is expected to far outpace the last few years. We also expect that more New Yorkers will turn to our outdoor public spaces for healthful recreation and exercise as an alternative to crowded gyms or group activities. As the backbone of our bicycle network that serves the broadest audience of pedestrians and cyclists of all ages and abilities, our greenways provide vital safe routes for people commuting as well as healthful recreation. The Gowanus Connector is the most pressing of the greenway gaps in Brooklyn that must be filled now, before the busiest summer months ahead.

We call on the Department to prioritize installation of the Gowanus Connector as a vital piece in the greenway network in the coming months before the highest use volumes are expected when New Yorkers go back to work.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership,

Terri Carta

Executive Director, Brooklyn Greenway Initiative

Together With:

Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams

Council Member Brad Lander, NYC Council District 39

Council Member Carlos Menchaca, NYC Council District 38

Council Member Antonio Reynoso, NYC Council District 34

Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon, NY Assembly District 52

Assemblymember Félix W. Ortiz, NY Assembly District 51

Assemblymember Joseph R. Lentol, NY Assembly District 50

Senator Andrew Gounardes, NY Senate District 22

Senator Brian Kavanaugh, NY Senate District 26

Senator Velmanette Montgomery, NY Senate District 25

Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez

Bike New York

Bike South Brooklyn

CitiBike

Downtown Brooklyn Partnership

Gowanus Canal Conservancy

Gowanus Dredgers Canoe Club

Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation

Transportation Alternatives

Chris Papamichael, Co-CEO, The Domain Companies

Richard Lam, Partner, Property Markets Group

cc: Eric Beaton, Deputy Commissioner, Transportation Planning and Management, NYC

DOT

Keith Bray, Brooklyn Borough Commissioner, NYC DOT

Sean Quinn, Assistant Commissioner, Street Improvement Programs, NYC DOT

Ted Wright, Director, Bike and Greenways Program, NYC Department of Transportation