



THE COUNCIL OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

February 3, 2022

Ydanis Rodriguez, Commissioner
New York City Department of Transportation
55 Water Street, New York, NY 10038

Dear Commissioner Rodriguez,

We write jointly as the Council Members who represent the constituencies on both sides of the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge. Our districts encompass the bridge's termini and many of our constituents use the bridge every day for both commuting and recreation. We are concerned about the timeline of the newly proposed Department of Transportation (DOT) plans to renovate the bridge and are writing to request a meeting with you to discuss this further.

The DOT has announced that critical repair work on the Upper Deck is beginning this month and is slated for completion in December of 2023. This repair work is necessary for the bridge and its long-term health. However, this delayed and prolonged timeline presents grave concerns for our constituents.

During these two years of construction, at least one lane on the Upper Deck will be closed at all times, even during peak hours. In addition, the bridge will have two lanes closed during off-peak periods. The Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge is the busiest of the four NYC DOT East River crossings with a daily traffic volume of around 170,000 vehicles. These sort of sustained lane closures could create an extremely problematic traffic situation causing arduous delays and spilling over to the local streets in both Manhattan and Queens. With sustained closures like this, we want to understand the mitigation plans that DOT has in place and ensure that the DOT has done everything in its power to expedite this timeline.

This prolonged construction also means that pedestrians and bikes will have to continue to share space on the north outer roadway to cross the bridge until at least 2024. The Queensboro Bridge joint bike path is an important artery in our city's bike infrastructure as in some of the warmer months over 150,000 bike trips are taken across the span. This current situation is quite treacherous already as pedestrians and bikes cross the bridge together in a narrow space on the north outer roadway. It is urgent that the City convert the south outer roadway into a pedestrian-only path and the north outer roadway into a bicycle-only path to create more space and remedy the safety concern. However, it is infeasible to remove cars from the south outer roadway until the construction is finished given the lane closures required. At least two more years of a shared pedestrian and bike path is not the best outcome for our constituents.

Our constituencies are both concerned about the increased traffic congestion and the safety conditions for bikers and pedestrians during this construction timeline. Given this, we are requesting a meeting to discuss mitigation plans and ways which we can work to expedite this construction to cause the least possible disruption. We need a shorter timeline to better serve New Yorkers. We look forward to hearing back from you and working together to make New York City's roads and bridges safer.



Council Member Julie Menin
5th District
New York City Council



Council Member Julie Won
26th District
New York City Council

CC: Manhattan Borough Commissioner Ed Pincar
CC: Queens Borough Commissioner Nicole Garcia