



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
**OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER**  
SCOTT M. STRINGER

December 17, 2018

Polly Trottenberg  
Commissioner  
NYC Department of Transportation  
55 Water Street  
New York, NY 10041

Re: Belmont Park Redevelopment Project

Dear Commissioner Trottenberg:

We are writing to you in regard to the proposed Belmont Park Redevelopment Project on the Queens County-Nassau County border. As you know, the Empire State Development (ESD) plan would bring a new stadium, shopping center, hotel, and office building to a 43 acre site adjacent to Queens Village and Cambria Heights. A project of this magnitude will have far ranging impacts on these neighborhoods, with the potential to significantly increase congestion. As approvals for this project could be granted as soon as the second quarter of 2019, we urge the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) to undertake a proactive study of potential impacts and consider appropriate mitigation expeditiously.

The proposed development site already houses Belmont Park, the largest Thoroughbred racing facility in the country. While average daily attendance is approximately 3,000 visitors during most of the year, attendance can reach between 60,000 and 100,000 visitors in peak periods. Additionally, the proposal calls for a 19,000-seat arena which will host between 44 and 60 New York Islanders home games each year and 145 non-NHL events. The development will also include 435,000 square feet of retail space, restaurants, a movie theater, a 250-room hotel, 30,000 square feet of office space, 10,000 square feet of community and innovation space, 5.75 acres of public open space, and more than 7,000 parking spots. The interplay between the redevelopment plan and the existing facility will undoubtedly affect not only the Nassau County region, but Queens communities as well.

As part of its Environmental Impact Statement, the ESD commissioned a traffic study of 35 intersections in the Belmont area. Only six, however, were located in Queens – Jamaica Avenue and 212<sup>th</sup> Place/Hempstead Avenue, Jamaica Avenue and 213<sup>th</sup> Street/Hempstead Avenue, Jamaica Avenue and Springfield Boulevard, Hempstead Avenue and Springfield Boulevard, Hempstead Avenue and 224<sup>th</sup> Street, and Hempstead Avenue and 225<sup>th</sup> Street. These intersections are all within a small triangle bordered by Hempstead Avenue, Jamaica Avenue, and the Cross Island Parkway. Not only are these six intersections insufficient to gauge the impact of this project on Queens neighborhoods, they are also largely under the jurisdiction of DOT, not the State.

While New York State is controlling this process, it is incumbent as a city that we get prepared for the worst-case development scenario. As such, we ask that DOT review the DEIS's assumptions regarding peak trip times, modal share between mass transit and vehicular usage, and analyzed intersections to provide an independent review of ESDC's methodologies. If any discrepancies are found between DOT's standards and those used by the ESDC, it is imperative that the City issue comments on the DEIS before the State makes their final decision.

Further, we would ask the Administration to take additional steps to study and mitigate the potential impacts of this proposed development. For instance, if ESDC is unwilling, DOT should independently study the potential impacts on the New York City street and mass transit system to understand if additional traffic mitigation measures are needed throughout Queens.

This is also an opportunity for DOT to consider innovative traffic and parking mitigation. DOT representatives have previously stated that neighborhoods adjoining and surrounding stadiums are well suited for a Residential Parking Permit program, whereby curbside parking is restricted to local residents during appointed hours of the day. This system has been considered by the DOT at both Yankee Stadium and the Barclays Center and should be examined in the context of the Belmont Park Redevelopment Project, along with a larger traffic study.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to seeing DOT take affirmative steps in the near future and would appreciate a response to this letter that details those actions.

Sincerely,



Scott M. Stringer  
New York City Comptroller



Barry Grodenchik  
New York City Council Member

c: Clive Williams, Chair, Community Board 13  
Mark McMillan, District Manager, Community Board 13  
Rene Hill, Chair, Community Board 12  
Yvonne Reddick, District Manager, Community Board 12  
Jeffrey Connors, President, North Bellerose Civic Association  
Mohamood Ishmael, President, Queens Village Civic Association  
Gerald Wind, President, Bellerose Hillside Civic Association  
Michael O'Keeffe, President, Creedmoor Civic Association  
Angela Augugliaro, President, Queens Colony Civic Association  
Oster G. Bryan, President, Saint Albans Civic Association  
Robert Glover, President, Federated Blocks of Laurelton  
Lourdes Hartrick, President, Bellerose Commonwealth Civic Association  
Bryan Block, President, Cambria Heights Civic Association  
Michael Castellano, President, Lost Community Civic Association  
Rhonda Kontner, President, Royal Ranch Civic Association  
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