



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

August 29, 2019

Hon. Polly Trottenberg  
Commissioner  
New York City Department of Transportation  
55 Water St.  
New York, NY 10041

Re: Safety of Cyclists and Pedestrians on Kosciuszko Bridge

Dear Commissioner Trottenberg,

I am writing to inquire about the second span of New York State's revitalized Kosciuszko Bridge connecting Brooklyn and Queens along the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway (BQE), which was opened for public use on Thursday, August 29th.

This bridge is, of course, a critical artery in the city's transportation infrastructure. And while I am encouraged by the inclusion of a 20-foot-wide walking and cycling path, any bike lane is only as good as its surrounding network. Without protected bike lanes, sufficient lighting, and high-quality signage in the immediate vicinity, bicycle riders and pedestrians could be placed in harm's way.

The city has lost 19 cyclists on its roadways this year, nearly twice the 10 deaths in all of 2018. According to your office, these incidents have disproportionately taken place in primarily industrial areas that have experienced an increase in their residential population—including Greenpoint and Maspeth on either side of the new bridge. We cannot allow this trend to continue unabated, especially given the City's commitment to zero bicycle and pedestrian deaths.

It is imperative that the New York City Department of Transportation ensure a safe passage for these riders by introducing protected bike lanes on those streets leading up to the Kosciuszko Bridge, as well as traffic calming measures to reduce motor vehicle speeds. Given the high volume of large trucks within the surrounding neighborhoods, sharrows and other half measures will simply not be sufficient.

I am requesting further information on the infrastructure build-out and mitigation measures that NYC DOT plans to implement to protect the safety of cyclists and pedestrians on and around the newly opened Kosciuszko Bridge. I am also requesting a full accounting of why upgraded bike and pedestrian infrastructure was not ready on opening day of the new bridge. Just as no transportation department would open up a highway before constructing the on- and off-ramps, I am confused as to how a new bike and pedestrian path could be introduced without sufficient connecting infrastructure on Day One. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your timely response by September 13, 2019.

Sincerely,

Scott M. Stringer  
New York City Comptroller