



The Honorable Michael R. Bloomberg  
City Hall  
New York, New York 10007

November 29, 2010

Dear Mayor Bloomberg:

On behalf of the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce, our 900 members and their 20,000 employees, I am writing in regard to the idea you proposed to use the Access to the Region's Core (ARC) funds to pay for an extension of the number 7 subway line to Secaucus, NJ. I realize that you are attempting to salvage a significant PlaNYC transportation project, however, I urge you to seek a more equitable distribution of these funds that would still accomplish the PlaNYC goals of providing new commuter rail access to Manhattan and expanding transit access to underserved areas while also providing much needed transportation options to the outer boroughs.

To that end, I suggest that a fraction of the money be spent on a mass transit solution for the North Shore of Staten Island. Providing an alternative transportation option on the North Shore would accomplish both of these PlaNYC goals. It would provide transit access to Staten Island's North Shore, an area that is critically underserved and in need of an inexpensive transit alternative. Additionally, if the transit solution were to extend over the Bayonne Bridge and connect to the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail this would provide Staten Islanders with commuter rail access to Manhattan via the PATH train.

My understanding is that an extension of the 7 line would require a significant amount of study. Studies of the North Shore, on the other hand, have reached a critical stage. The MTA is scheduled to finalize its Alternative Analysis (AA) study by the end of the year and then begin working on an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) in early 2011. Concurrently, the Port Authority is looking at raising or replacing the Bayonne Bridge by 2014. A North Shore mass transit option has been a priority of our Borough President who has worked tirelessly to finance the initial feasibility study, the AA and the EIS. Mayoral support and a dedicated source of funds at this stage would show prospective investors that the City is serious about redeveloping the North Shore and encourage early development in the region, bringing in new businesses, new jobs and additional tax revenue.

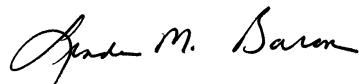
Much of Staten Island's difficulty attracting businesses and quality workers stems from our lack of transportation infrastructure. Staten Island is the only region within a 50 miles radius that does not have a rail link to Manhattan. The majority of residents cannot travel to any of the major transportation hubs, including Newark Airport, Metropark, Penn Station, JFK Airport and LaGuardia Airport, without driving. To add insult to injury, Staten Islanders face some of the longest commute times in the nation and pay the highest tolls. These are serious quality of life issues that affect tens of thousands of Staten Island residents every day.

Staten Island, which comprises nearly one-fifth of New York City's land and is consistently one of the fastest growing counties in the state, has just one rail line that services only the easternmost portion of the Island. By comparison, the Bronx has six subway lines, Queens has 15, Brooklyn has 17 and Manhattan has 22. If this administration is serious about improving transit access to underserved areas, there is no better place to accomplish this than the North Shore of Staten Island.

Finally, the return on investment for a North Shore mass transportation solution would be significant. The estimated cost of putting heavy rail along the North Shore, the most expensive of several options currently under consideration, is \$377 million (only about 12.5% of the \$3 billion allocated to the ARC project), however the benefits would be substantial. It would allow the 2 million tourists who ride Staten Island Ferry annually to reach Snug Harbor, the Port Richmond shopping district and other points of interest, revitalizing the entire area with an influx of tourism dollars. Further, it would provide North Shore residents with quick access to both the Ferry Terminal and the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail, significantly increasing their transportation options and making the North Shore a much more attractive location for both prospective residents and businesses. With an estimated daily ridership of up to 15,600 by 2015, a North Shore mass transit system would remove cars from the road, reduce congestion and shrink the City's carbon footprint.

I am confident that similar, smaller-scale projects exist in the outer boroughs that would be a significant boon to those neighborhoods. Just a fraction of these funds could help rejuvenate an underserved area and pay long-term dividends well into the future. I hope you will strongly consider supporting our efforts to strengthen Staten Island's North Shore. If you would like to speak further about this issue, please don't hesitate to contact me or my Government Affairs Director, Geoff Kravitz.

Sincerely,



Linda M. Baran  
President & CEO

Cc:

Senator Charles E. Schumer  
Senator Kirsten Gillibrand  
Congressman Michael E. McMahon  
Congressman-elect Michael Grimm  
Federal Transit Administration Regional Administrator, Brigid Hynes-Cherin  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority Chairman & CEO Jay H. Walder  
Deputy Mayor Stephen Goldsmith  
Deputy Mayor Robert Steel  
Borough President James P. Molinaro  
NYS Senator Andrew Lanza  
NYS Senator Diane J. Savino  
NYS Assembly Member Michael Cusick  
NYS Assembly Member Matthew Titone  
NYS Assembly Member Lou Tobacco  
NYS Assembly Member Janele Hyer-Spencer  
NYS Assembly Member-elect Nicole Malliotakis  
Council Member Vincent Ignizio  
Council Member James S. Oddo  
Council Member Debi Rose