



NYC Parks

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February 9, 2016

Hon. James S. Oddo
Staten Island Borough President
10 Richmond Terrace
Borough Hall, Room 120
Staten Island, NY 10301

Dear Borough President Oddo:

Thank you for your letter of January 25, 2016 and for sharing your thoughts regarding the projects at Freshkills Park. I appreciate your encouragement regarding park development and active recreation and am glad that we have been able to work with you and your staff on publicizing the RFEI and advocating for the roads project. We are anxious to move the road development forward and continue the work necessary to bring the preliminary design to completion. The road will clearly have an important role to play in traffic alleviation, as well as serve as the main entry to the park and a key route for future public and private development.

Specific to your concerns about the East Park project, we appreciate the importance of ensuring that the public using East Park understands that the Yukon Crossing is the location of the future cross-park roadway. I'm confident that we can develop a strategy to incorporate the roadway into every aspect of public discussion about the park's development to ensure that signage and path configurations protect the future road as the portions of park are made available for public access.

I have appreciated your support as the Parks Department has worked to reduce the timeline on our capital projects and make the process more transparent to both elected officials and the public. One result of that effort is the recognition that the reallocation of funding from projects which have already begun should only be considered in the event of significant safety concerns to avoid further delays. The East Park project is currently in design, as has been discussed in recent briefings presented to you by our staff, with a budget of \$4.1 million, including \$3.5 million in City funds. Funding in the amount of \$590,000 was obtained from a state grant to be specifically used for the Kayak launch and wetland boardwalk. That grant funding will be lost if the East Park project does not continue moving forward. Further, we have engaged an engineering firm under a \$500,000 contract for the necessary testing and geotechnical work that is required for design.

I appreciate your support for active recreation spaces and ballfields in Staten Island and would like to work with you to build and renovate more fields for active use wherever the opportunity may occur. The 482-acre East Park project is also geared toward open space active recreation including kayaking, biking, and running, as it takes advantage of the waterways, the paved roads and the gravel paths already built by Sanitation. East Park will be the first section of the park to be opened for public use that will present real opportunities for varieties of concession development anticipated in the RFEI. We believe the East Park project will make a strong public statement about the massive potential of Freshkills Park for a relatively moderate investment.

As always, my staff and I are available to discuss this topic further at your convenience. Thank you for your continuing partnership and for being a strong advocate for all of Staten Island's parks.

Best,

Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP