

April 6, 2019

The Honorable Bill de Blasio
Mayor
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: One Thousand Days

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

King Henry VIII: In these last days Your Grace, I have been thinking a great deal about loss. What loss Your Grace, is to man most irrecoverable?

Charles Brandon, 1st Duke of Suffolk: His virtue.

Henry: No, for by his actions, he may redeem his virtue.

Brandon: Then his honor.

Henry: No, for again he may find the means to recover it. Even if some man recovers his fortune he is lost.

Brandon: Then I cannot say, Your Majesty.

Henry: Time, Your Grace. Of all losses, time is the most irrecuperable, for it could never be redeemed.

[from the Showtime series: The Tudors]

Benjamin Franklin: Lost time is never found again.

I have done one of these letters before, in partnership with our former colleague Councilman Vinny Ignizio. In 2007, we sent Mayor Michael Bloomberg a missive imploring him to collaborate with us during the final one thousand days of our tenure in the City Council, so that we might leave Staten Island as much improved as possible. The irony of the timing of that letter is no doubt evident: as it turned out we had thousand days plus four additional years.

But here I am again, although in this case the thousand days I reference is not only for this particular term - but in my career as an elected official representing my home borough.



Needless to say, as a guy who always had a cocktail consisting of equal parts urgency and impatience pulsing through my veins, I am very much in the moment and want to ensure each day is spent focused on issues that will help Staten Islanders in ways both simple and profound.

It is with appreciation for all we have done together to date, respect for the fact that only you as Mayor can help deliver these asks, recognition that agencies will always honor the status quo more than the request of an elected official, and a reverent desire – fueled by an admitted dash of ego – to enhance and assure a legacy worthy of my father’s name, that I ask you to consider these issues, to help me and my team make them a reality, and to be the champion only the Mayor of the City of New York can be.

My list:

- **Put an end to “tear downs” and curb irrational development**
I first wrote to you on this issue in October of 2017. We then revisited it during our dinner in January of 2018, when I was contemplating whether to run for a Surrogate Court judgeship. We then publicly announced an effort during “City Hall in Your Borough” in July of 2018. However, to this point the agencies have wasted months without ever meeting with me or seriously undertaking any analysis on its own. It is a strong disservice to Staten Island when multiple homes are dropped where a single home once stood. In fact, irrational development worsens all of our existing infrastructure challenges, including traffic and transit, and crowded classrooms.
- **Identify a location for and subsequently implement a second fast ferry**
Adding Staten Island to an existing Brooklyn route is still a priority, perhaps connecting at Stapleton. Further, as Congressman Max Rose and I continue to creatively seek a potential Mid-Island location, I ask that you remain open-minded and ready to act if our collective efforts produce a viable site.
- **Establish a state-of-the-art Medical Fitness Center at the Sea View Campus**
- **Re-purpose funding for the Indoor Aquatic Center to a state-of-the-art Diabetes Center**
A \$120M-\$150M Indoor Aquatic Center is simply untenable. So as important as this facility was to me and would be to Staten island, I now believe we should pivot and use these resources to create a facility that is even more needed, and will impact even more Islanders in a much more profound way. The diabetes epidemic across America is real, tragic and Staten Island is far from immune to it. A collaboration with a non-city entity can result in a life-changing institution, which combined with our efforts to secure a Medical Fitness Center, jump starts our long held vision of turning the Sea View campus into a genuine Health & Wellness hub – a hub that will improve the lives of the vast majority of the 480,000 residents of this borough.
- **Complete the funding to commence construction on a new Meals on Wheels complex**
A small portion of the previously allocated indoor pool funding can be used to begin constructing a new Meals On Wheels (MOW) facility on the Sea View Campus. This will add yet another dimension to our Health & Wellness hub vision. MOW is committed to

working with us on a Food As Medicine initiative to further improve the health and well-being of Staten Island's seniors.

- **Protect the integrity of the city map by requiring that all proposed streets be duly placed on the city map as per General City Law 36(2).**
This requirement may only be waived under circumstances of real and unavoidable hardship.
- **Establish Staten Island's first Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH)**
- **Establish a Staten Island Community Justice Center**
This would be modeled after the Community Justice Center in Red Hook
- **Assist with the re-design of the Hugh Carey Tunnel approach, which would finally address the infamous West Street service lane/West Street merge**
A re-design would make the traffic paradigm in this congested corridor much more rational, while continuing to protect local residents and pedestrians. The NYPD has devised a plan we heartily support.
- **Establish a multi-school pilot for the SPARK program**
Daily aerobic exercise is clinically proven to facilitate better academic achievement.
- **Expand our anti-drug efforts in schools with Too Good for Drugs and PAX Good Behavior programs**
We must consider expanding the grade levels receiving these widely acclaimed programs so that ALL students, K through 12, are exposed to these potentially life-saving programs.
- **Facilitate progress on our Back Roads and Open Spaces project encompassing Rockland Avenue and connecting Greenbelt networks**
Provide funding for the further study of design alternatives for 1) the Southern Sector (Nadine Bypass) and attendant connections to Amboy and Richmond Roads, and 2) a potential future multi-purpose path adjoining Rockland Avenue pursuant to SIBP & NYSDOT conceptual plans.
- **Pilot high-tech enforcement of HOV lanes**
The pilot would test the efficacy of the technology. During the pilot program, no summonses would be issued.
- **Pilot a study of later school start times at one Staten Island High School**
- **New site for PS 25 Annex/Creation of an Alternate Learning Center on the North Shore**
This is a potential win/win situation for Staten Island and the DOE. The PS 25 Annex has received negative media attention for its less-than-ideal conditions for this D75 school. While the DOE has addressed some of the facilities-related issues, this still remains an inappropriate setting for long-term learning. Once a new site is obtained for the P25 Annex, an Alternate Learning Center (ALC) can be created at the former Annex site.

Currently, there is only one middle school ALC on the far southern tip of Staten Island. Because of the lack of a second site, middle school students are frequently sent to other boroughs to serve their suspension. Having a second ALC on the North Shore would greatly help our students and increase their access to instruction. This site is far more suitable for short-term student attendance.

- **District 31 School Food Initiative: “Grab & Go” pilot program**
Café-style conversions for our school cafeterias are extremely desirable and have shown to contribute to less waste and more nutritious habits among our students. However, the money needed to convert school cafeterias is extremely cost prohibitive. We are proposing a modified plan whereby schools can be outfitted with “Grab & Go” stations which could include counters/refrigerators to provide healthy and nutritious lunches including salads, fruits, vegetables, wraps, etc.
- **Ensure that the new commission on real estate taxes does not worsen the tax burden of Class 1 property owners**
Class 1 homeowners must be “held harmless” in order to maintain affordability and deter migration to lower tax municipalities and states.
- **Increase deer population control with a highly supervised bow and arrow cull focused on does**
- **Establish a “Food as Medicine” pilot program at local food pantries**
Eliminate unhealthy choices as much as possible.
- **Fund Child Mind Institute Mental Health pilot**
Without funding, the Child Mind Institute cannot provide services to Staten Islanders beyond May of 2020.
- **Hypertension**
It is time for us to finally allow the expansion of Dr. Joseph Ravenell’s work to include some number of Staten Island barbershops. The need for heightened awareness of hypertension in our borough is as acute as anywhere else in the city.
- **Integration of Senior Playgrounds – Intergenerational and Stand Alone**
Provide capital funding for the design of prototypical senior playgrounds to be constructed in all existing borough parks facilities and waterfront promenades.
<https://www.upworthy.com/playgrounds-for-senior-citizens-genius-idea>
- **Establish an Impartial Hearing Office at District 31 Borough Office**
Currently, families must travel to Brooklyn to participate in a hearing; which many times is directly related to obtaining Special Education services for children. Therefore, we propose siting an Impartial Hearing Office at the D31 Borough Office at the Petrides School in order to provide equitable access for Staten Island families.

- **Provide a commitment to extend “Pave Baby Pave” to the end of our respective terms**
It can be argued the Pave Baby Pave program has been the most impactful program to come out of the collaborative relationship between City Hall and Borough Hall. Re-committing to this level of spending and lane-mile resurfacing will ensure that our streets and highways will be in much better condition when we leave office than the day we started.
- **Commit to cracking down on unacceptable street cut restorations**
With the leadership of Deputy Mayor Laura Anglin, we have made progress on this front, but we certainly have more to do. We must fundamentally change the rules on temporary restorations so that Staten Island streets undergoing years of sewer and water main work do not remain in a dangerous substandard condition as a result of contractors hiding behind the current “temporary” conditions rules.
- **Capital Road Improvements**
 - Todt Hill Road Widening: Ocean Terrace to Circle Road, including intersection at Ocean Terrace, unsafe roadway configuration at Coptic Orthodox Patri (B908, L250) and new turning lane at Circle Road.
 - Brielle Avenue Widening: Rockland Avenue to Bradley Avenue, including planting medians, dedicated turning lanes, traffic calming devices and connectivity to all existing and future development sites.
 - Hannah Street Bridge Widening and Realignment: including intersection at Murray Hulbert Street, alignment issues at Front Street and improved pedestrian access to Tompkinsville Promenade.
 - Clove Road Widening: Narrows Road North to Howard Avenue, including transition from service road.
 - Edgewater Street Streetscape Initiative: Front Street to Hylan Boulevard, including pedestrian and biking concourse from New Stapleton Waterfront to Buono Beach and Alice Austin House.
 - Front Street Realignment: from Stapleton Waterfront Park to Bay Street, including redesign of existing intersection with Bay Street and Edgewater Street .
 - Arthur Kill Road Widening: Clarke Avenue to Tottenville.
 - Pedestrian Flyover Structure: New Dorp Lane and Hylan Boulevard
- **Preservation of Goodhue Park and Services**
Provide capital funding to 1) construct and program new park facilities, and 2) to construct a seasonal air-supported structure over existing outdoor pool facility, which will be renovated by The Children’s Aid Society
- **New Police Headquarters for 120th Precinct**
Commence site selection process for a new location for 120th Precinct in Stapleton.
- **Provide capital construction funds for a new South Shore public high school**
- **Provide capital funding for any required improvements to Tottenville HS , which is currently at 108% capacity**

- **Establish a Staten Island Arts District**
 It is our desire to create a true Arts District for Staten Island along Port Richmond Avenue that would dovetail ideally with resurgence of the corridor from Richmond Terrace to Post Avenue. Our office will work closely with NYCEDC and the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce to make this corridor the next candidate for a Neighborhood 360 grant. This initiative can focus on cleaning up the neighborhood, uniting small business owners and the community, and leasing/purchasing available space to art galleries.
- **Design and Build the North Shore Esplanade**
 The city should finally design and build a pedestrian walkway from the Staten Island Ferry Terminal to Lighthouse Pointe and on to the North Shore Esplanade. This will integrate tourism with public safety for pedestrians.
- **Petrides Complex Parking**
 This campus is growing and is about to add new facilities/students/staff, yet the parking lot is continuously full. Future planning dictates a parking lot structure of at least one additional level to avoid future chaos.
- **The New York Wheel Site**
 Perhaps the final chapters of this book have not yet been written - we shall see. But if the book is indeed closed, I am asking for an assurance from you that the administration will work with our office in structuring an RFEI that is mutually agreed upon, so that we can pursue projects at the site that benefit Staten Island and are supported by Staten Islanders.
- **Landmark Colony Senior Housing**
 I spent my entire City Council career, except for a single month, on bringing the Farm Colony back to life. We want to see this project finally come to fruition. We want to work with the administration to find an approval process that acknowledges the unique nature of this project, but at the same time respects an accurate reading and strict adherence to the plain language of the text of General City Law 36.
- **The Tommy Monahan Animal Shelter**
 Mayoral intervention is necessary to complete this project. Certainly there are funding and other issues, but at this point let's just get the project done. After all, this shelter serves Staten Island and takes in over 2,500 cats and dogs annually, as well as other animals. The image of Tommy Monahan, the 9-year-old boy who died while attempting to rescue his pet from a fire, gives this project added poignancy.
- **Wayfinding**
 There is wayfinding signage from the ferry into our downtown neighborhood. Whether its WALK NYC or simple maps posted and maintained by DOT, Wayfinding would be a huge bonus to helping visitors and residents alike access our cultural organizations, shopping districts and restaurants.
- **Bring professional rugby to the Richmond County Bank Ballpark**

- **Honor New Yorker Alan Alda with the Key to the City**

The award-winning actor has for decades focused on improving people's ability to connect and communicate, and was the driving force behind the creation of the Center for Communicating Science at Stonybrook University.

While I am aware that this list might seem exhausting, in no way is it exhaustive.

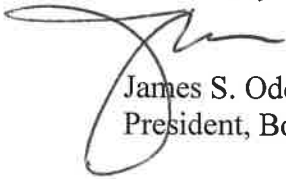
Let me close with a quote from what, in my estimation, is the television series that showed public service in its brightest light: *The West Wing*.

“We came here to put the job first. To spend our lives for something that would outlast us.” -- *President Josiah Bartlet*

Mr. Mayor, I want to spend these final one thousand days working with you to focus on securing good things for my borough - things that will “outlast us.”

With gratitude, I remain,

Sincerely,



James S. Oddo
President, Borough of Staten Island