

February 4, 2019

Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver
New York City Department of Parks & Recreation
830 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY, 10065

Re: Widening of Arthur Kill Road

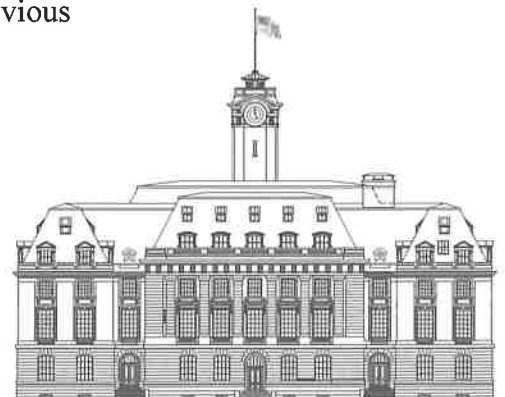
Dear Commissioner Silver:

We hope this letter finds you well.

In a recent meeting with the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Department of Design and Construction (DDC), we discussed the widening of Arthur Kill Road between Clark Avenue and Richmond Avenue. As you know, a large portion of the widening will take place adjacent to Brookfield Park, and will require the removal of curb trees planted by the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). The trees were planted sometime after the announcement that the widening project would be initiated much sooner than originally scheduled. Construction is now scheduled to begin in the fall of 2021.

In a January, 2014 letter to Mayor Bill de Blasio, former Council Member Vinny Ignizio and Borough President Oddo requested that the capital funding for this project be moved from Fiscal Year 2024 to Fiscal Year 2016. In May of 2015 Mayor de Blasio agreed, and with great fanfare the news was announced. The story was covered by traditional media and we prominently featured it on our various social media platforms; it became common knowledge to all stakeholders, including DPR. Arthur Kill Road is built only to a width of forty feet, yet it is mapped to a width of ninety feet - we would now be able to access that additional width and deliver a safer, more efficient corridor for motorists and local residents.

However, subsequent to this announcement DPR mysteriously decided to install trees and a fence within the clearly designated and established widening. We naturally raised vociferous objections, and we were given immediate and total assurance by DPR that there would be no issues with the removal of the trees and fence at the commencement of this capital project. That the planting of those trees was ill-timed was obvious to everyone aware of the project, including DPR.

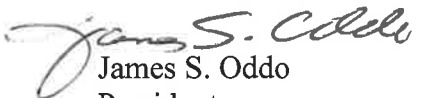



We are writing today to ensure that there will be no issue regarding financial restitution when said removal takes place. Ultimately, we believe, requesting restitution of any kind would be placing an unfair burden on taxpayers. Our constituents, while aware of the importance of maintaining our rich natural resources, also have an expectation that their tax dollars will not be spent providing restitution for trees that should never have been planted in the first place, given that there was prior knowledge of the widening project.

We are confident that you will agree with us regarding this common-sense matter. Please do not hesitate to contact either or both of us if you have any questions or comments.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,


James S. Oddo
President
Borough of Staten Island


Joseph Borelli
Council Member
51st Council District