



May 7, 2018

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

On behalf of Transportation Alternatives -- New York City's leading advocate for walking, bicycling and public transit, with more than 130,000 supporters in all five boroughs -- I am writing today to express our continued outrage at the crude, temporary security measures currently in place on the Hudson River Greenway. It is unacceptable that there are still no plans for permanent, effective, and sophisticated security measures on the greenway more than seven months after a truck driver took the lives of eight people and injured twelve more. We call on the city and state to work together to immediately install a permanent solution that balances pedestrian and bicyclist safety with the need to keep vehicles off of the greenway.

The Hudson River Greenway is the busiest pedestrian and bicycle path in North America, used by hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers and visitors every year. Summer is the greenway's busiest season: between May and September, nearly 6,400 cyclists use the greenway between 59th Street and The Battery every day. Last November, several days after the attack on the greenway, the New York State Department of Transportation (NYS DOT) dropped long concrete barriers at dangerous angles at 31 greenway access points. Under the guise of security, these barriers instead created pinch points and conditions ripe for collisions.

Now, over seven months after the attack, these so-called temporary barriers remain, obstructing commutes and endangering pedestrians and bicyclists. The installation of these dangerous barriers was a crude, short-term solution to a critical long-term security and safety problem. In the aftermath of the attack, our elected leaders should be actively reassuring New Yorkers that it is safe to ride and walk on the greenway. Instead, NYS DOT and the NYPD created another safety hazard which actively discourages people from using one of the city's vibrant public spaces. We must protect our public spaces without making them uninviting, dangerous, and difficult to use.

As summer rapidly approaches, NYS DOT must implement immediate short-term fixes to ensure safety and mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists on the Hudson River Greenway. The first step should be to immediately realign and reduce the total quantity of barriers, in order to allow more space for people walking and riding in the same direction. Then, the relevant agencies must establish a timetable for the removal of these barriers, and for the implementation of more thoughtful, permanent solutions that maintain the safety and integrity of the greenway.



We are concerned that any long-term plan for hardening the greenway will endanger bicyclists and pedestrians if the permanent barricades or bollards used are spaced too closely together. Many of the temporary barriers in place on the greenway are roughly five feet apart. This placement may be aligned with guidance from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), which has cited five feet as a desirable clear width between bollards on shared-use paths.<sup>2</sup> Spacing protective bollards any more closely together is not an acceptable solution. For example, the clear width between bollards where the greenway intersects Murray Street and Vesey Street is roughly four feet. These closely-spaced bollards create a great deal of friction when path usage is high.

Through conversations with experts in design and security, we have become aware of solutions that could protect greenway users while still allowing adequate width for safe passage. We believe there is a way to insulate the path's users from the risk posed by motorized vehicles without increasing the risk of injury to greenway users, or ensuing litigation against the greenway's designers. Also, bollards spaced more closely than five feet would interfere with first responders if they are not designed to be retractable or removable in emergency situations, and could also pose challenges to path maintenance.

New Yorkers have the right to bicycle, walk, and commute safely and without fear of traffic violence. There are smart policies we can implement on the greenway that will largely and inexpensively eliminate the risk from cars, without compromising the safe flow of pedestrians and bicyclists. We urge city, state and federal agencies to work together to improve conditions on the Hudson River Greenway, with an urgency befitting the threat.

Sincerely,

Paul Steely White  
Executive Director  
Transportation Alternatives

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