

RESOLUTION CALLING UPON THE PORT AUTHORITY OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY TO WIDEN THE GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE'S SIDEWALKS

WHEREAS, The George Washington Bridge's Sidewalks are the only connection across the Hudson River between New York City and New Jersey for pedestrians, runners, and bicyclists; and

WHEREAS, the paths are heavily used, with an average of 1,700 cyclists and 900 pedestrians crossing each day; and

WHEREAS, the sidewalks are ten feet wide, except where the bridge's suspender ropes pass through, where they are less than seven feet wide; and

WHEREAS, according to Federal Highway Administration guidelines, shared-use paths should be at least ten feet wide and up to fourteen feet wide, if they are heavily used; and

WHEREAS, The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey is planning an extensive renovation that will replace all of the bridge's suspender ropes, beginning in 2018 and lasting until 2025; and

WHEREAS, as part of the project, the sidewalks will be replaced and new ramps that will provide access to the sidewalks will be constructed, but the sidewalks will not be widened; and

WHEREAS, New York City has made efforts in recent years to make its roadways safer and more convenient for pedestrians and bicyclists, particularly through the Vision Zero street safety initiative and the expansion of the bicycle lane network; and

WHEREAS, The Port Authority's own Bicycle Policy states that its goals are to integrate, improve bicycle access and safe bicycle lanes, and to promote the safe, existence of motor vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians at its facilities; and

WHEREAS, the width of the Bridge's sidewalks do not meet Federal Standards for high-use pedestrian and bicycle paths; and

WHEREAS, the planned renovation project presents a unique opportunity to build sidewalks that would be able to safely and comfortably accommodate the increasing number of pedestrians and bicyclists expected to use the bridge in the decades to come; and

WHEREAS, there is a significant chance the Hudson Rail Tunnels will need to be closed for extensive repairs before new tunnels can be completed, significantly affecting mass transit throughout the region, and that a George Washington Bridge with widened paths could safely support tens of thousands of bike commuters per day; and

WHEREAS, this matter was discussed by the Freeholders of the Planning and Economic Development Committee, who are recommending this Resolution for approval;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Passaic recognizes the importance of widening The George Washington Bride's Sidewalks and it hereby supports same and calls upon the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to Widen The George Washington Bridge's Sidewalks; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk to the Board is hereby authorized to forward a certified copy of this Resolution to The Executive Director and the Commissioners of The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, on behalf of the Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

August 14, 2018