



STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
REGION ONE
ALBANY, NY 12232
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SAM ZHOU, P.E.
ACTING REGIONAL DIRECTOR

JOAN McDONALD
COMMISSIONER

December 6, 2013

Mr. David A. Giacalone
16 Washington Ave. #3
Schenectady, NY 12305

Dear Mr. Giacalone:

Thank you for your recent letter to the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) concerning the Western Gateway Bridge project. Senator Hugh Farley also shared correspondence you shared with him regarding this matter.

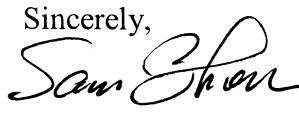
The project to replace the driving surface of the Western Gateway Bridge is one of great importance to the NYSDOT and for all users of this vital link between Schenectady and Scotia. This rehabilitation work will better preserve an important element of New York State's infrastructure and guard against the need for more costly, in-depth construction in the future. Furthermore, this enhanced multi-modal structure will improve safety for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

The project includes the construction of a new, multi-use, shared lane across the bridge to connect bicycle and pedestrian pathways on both sides of the Mohawk River. In response to comments and concerns from the public and from local elected officials, NYSDOT modified earlier plans to add this multi-use lane. This addition will augment a direct bicycle and pedestrian link between two active neighborhoods. It will also provide safer commuting options and encourage recreational and sustainable travel by connecting existing paths on both sides of the river and further link Schenectady's downtown area and Schenectady Community College with Scotia's parks and other amenities. It also is consistent with the City of Schenectady Urban Bike Route Master Plan, created in 2001.

In conjunction with the change to add the new, multi-use shared lane, the decision was made to make the barrier on the eastbound side of the bridge decorative, rather than using the standard four-beam steel bridge railing. The decorative railing on this side of the bridge will still afford pedestrians a view of the Mohawk River, as will the modified steel barrier on the westbound side of the bridge.

In response to your concerns about the safety of users of the sidewalk, I want to assure you that safety is the top priority of the Department of Transportation. A six-inch granite curb will separate sidewalk users from vehicular traffic, which is the standard on many bridges and is also used along roads with sidewalks throughout the nation. The curbs are six inches high and are designed to withstand a sideswipe by a tire's sidewall, preventing a car from "jumping" the curb. It is no different than a curb along a street, which also functions without fencing between the sidewalk and roadway.

Thank you again for your correspondence. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Sam Zhou, P.E.
Acting Regional Director

cc: Senator Hugh T. Farley, NYS Senate