

# **Resolution in Support of Continuing Accessibility of GWB Pedestrian Path during Bridge Renovation**

## **Traffic and Transportation Committee**

**February 4, 2013**

Whereas: The George Washington Bridge (GWB), spanning the Hudson River between Fort Lee, New Jersey and Washington Heights in New York City, is over 80 years old and the busiest motor vehicle bridge in the world; and,

Whereas: The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) has developed a plan to completely renovate the span, while maintaining full service throughout the construction period; and,

Whereas: Phase 1 of the reconstruction entails replacing all of the vertical suspender cables and will last for 8 years; and,

Whereas: The GWB offers public sidewalks, called Bridgewalks, on its north and south edges that are relied upon to cross the Hudson by over half a million pedestrians a year, and the current plans of the PANYNJ are to close one sidewalk at a time for 4 years during the construction period; and,

Whereas: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is comprehensive Federal civil rights legislation adopted to prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities; and,

Whereas: The south side's Bridgewalk has no stairs but the north side Bridgewalk has dozens upon dozens of stairs; and, while neither the north nor the south walk is fully compliant with Federal ADA Accessibility Laws, more of the south walk is compliant and thus sees almost all foot, wheelchair and bike traffic over the Bridge; and,

Whereas: Community Board 12 Manhattan (CB12M) recognizes the critical need for these renovations, it also wishes to stress the continuing need for people of all abilities to cross the River using the public sidewalks which are available at no expense to their users.

Therefore, Be it Resolved:

That CB12M asks PANYNJ to design ADA Compliant pedestrian access into all phases of the bridge renovations, and into its final reconstruction plan; and be it further

Resolved: That ADA compliant pedestrian access be maintained at all times throughout the renovation process, or if this is not feasible, cost free alternative ADA compliant transportation for all pedestrians and bicycles be provided during the normal hours of operations that are currently in force for the Bridgewalks.

Committee Vote: 7-0-0

Board member Vote: 3-0-0

Community Vote: 6-0-0