



THE COUNCIL  
OF  
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STEVEN MATTEO  
Minority Leader

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## **MATTEO AND THE MAYOR'S OFFICE PARTNER TO MAKE STATEN ISLAND MORE RESILIENT TO FLOODING**

**Staten Island, NY** –Minority Leader Steven Matteo and Daniel Zarrilli, Director of the Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency (ORR) announced today that the City would launch a study to evaluate potential solutions to persistent flooding on Travis Avenue between Victory Boulevard and Mulberry Avenue. This effort is part of the City's multilayered resiliency program to ensure New York City's neighborhoods, economy and public services will be ready to withstand and emerge stronger from the impacts of climate change.

"For years I have been seeking solutions for the frequent flooding on Travis Avenue, which is often so inundated during heavy rains that it has to be closed. As a result of the damage this flooding causes, I have worked with the Department of Transportation to resurface the street numerous times a year. However, these frequent and costly repairs are not a long-term solution to ensure this vital thoroughfare remains passable," said **Minority Leader Steven Matteo**. "I am looking forward to working with the City to find a long-term solution, whether it be elevation or other mitigation measures, and to saving the city millions of dollars on annual repairs. Thank you to Mayor de Blasio and Daniel Zarrilli at the Office of Recovery and Resiliency for prioritizing and funding this project."

Travis Avenue, which connects two major arteries in the West Shore, has an extensive history of flooding problems. Nearly a mile of the roadway, between Victory Boulevard and Mulberry Avenue, runs through the William T. Davis Wildlife Refuge, a 375-acre sanctuary, whose wetlands also serve as an important natural flood control system for the surrounding communities. During heavy rain events and tidal surges, water from these wetlands frequently collects on the roadway, causing potholes and other road damage, which often makes the road impassable. Consequently, New York City's Department of Transportation has made regular repairs to the road over the last few years.

"Three years ago, Hurricane Sandy devastated Staten Island and other parts of the city, highlighting a growing vulnerability across our shoreline to storms and the growing impacts of climate change," said **Daniel Zarrilli, Director of the Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency**. "That's why we are continuing to make Staten Island safer with resiliency investments in coastal defenses, infrastructure, and neighborhoods. This study is a critical next step in a plan to deal with the impacts of sea level rise and regular flooding on Travis Avenue in a way that benefits the surrounding communities and protects the natural environment. I applaud Minority Leader Matteo for his commitment to enhancing the resiliency of Staten Island."

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As part of its comprehensive resiliency plan to strengthen shorelines vulnerable to flooding and storm surge, the City has allocated significant funds to ensure the recovery and long-term resiliency of Staten Island. For example:

- In 2014, the City awarded \$28 million to Staten Island University Hospital to ensure that its comprehensive resiliency program could move forward.
- The City is partnering with the USACE to invest \$580 million in an armored levee on the East Shore of Staten Island, providing almost \$60 million in locally matched funds to that project.
- On the West Shore of Staten Island, the City is restoring and reestablishing 68 acres of degraded wetlands and piloting an innovative mitigation banking proposal at Saw Mill Creek.
- In Midland Beach, the City just broke ground on a \$22 million Bluebelt project to reduce local flooding.

Since taking office in January 2014, Minority Leader Steven Matteo has been a successful advocate for a more resilient Staten Island. As an active member of the City Council's Recovery and Resiliency Committee, he has provided crucial oversight to the de Blasio Administration's efforts to adapt New York City to challenges posed by future storms and climate change.

Minority Leader Matteo has also been effectively working with the de Blasio Administration on behalf of Staten Island communities to draw attention to the impacts of flooding on Travis Avenue. In partnership with Minority Leader Matteo, the City will initiate a study that will consider the feasibility of flood mitigation strategies that are sensitive to both a nearby State-protected tidal wetlands and wildlife refuge as well as other ongoing City transportation projects in the area.

Working closely with the Department of Transportation, the Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency and the New York City Economic Development Corporation will begin a study of Travis Avenue in January 2016.

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