



## Community Board 12 - Manhattan Washington Heights & Inwood

530 West 166<sup>th</sup> St. 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10032

Phone: (212) 568-8500, Fax: (212) 740-8197

Website: [www.nyc.gov/mcb12](http://www.nyc.gov/mcb12)

Shahabuddeen A. Ally, Esq., Chairperson  
Ebenezer Smith, District Manager

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November 29, 2017

Hon. Kevin J. O'Toole  
Chairman  
The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey  
4 World Trade Center  
150 Greenwich Street  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chairman O'Toole:

At our General Meeting on November 28, 2017, Community Board 12 - Manhattan passed the following resolution by a vote of 35-0-0 calling upon the Port Authority of NY/NJ to act again with urgency to install both temporary and permanent safety fencing on the George Washington Bridge to prevent the unfortunately large number of suicides from continuing to occur there and to fast track all construction projects so that they are completed much earlier than the anticipated 2026 end date.

The resolution was approved in response to your agency's request to review and comment on the \$3.4 billion FY2018 Capital Budget released for public review and comment that aligns with your previously published \$32 billion 10-year, 2017-2026 Capital Plan and further invests in critical NYC regional transportation projects such as the "Restoring the George" project.

The resolution also calls upon the Port Authority to review the proposed design of the permanent safety fence, namely the continuous series of closely spaced 11-foot-high steel vertical bars to be constructed along the outer edges of the bridge walkways, to improve its aesthetic quality without delaying this project and requests that the revised plan be presented to this board for community review.

**Whereas:** Community Board 12-Manhattan has previously requested that the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey respond effectively and immediately to reduce the public health hazard of self-harm and lessen public safety concerns by installing physical barriers for suicide prevention at the George Washington Bridge (GWB); and

**Whereas:** Community Board 12-Manhattan at our General Meeting on December 20, 2016, unanimously passed a resolution calling upon the Port Authority to act with urgency to install safety fencing on the GWB to prevent the unfortunately large number of suicides from continuing to occur there; and

**Whereas:** The Port Authority recently released a proposed \$3.4 billion FY 2018 Capital Budget for public review and comment that aligns with its \$32 billion 10-year, 2017-2026 Capital Plan and further invests in critical NYC regional transportation projects such as the "Restoring the George" project; and

**Whereas:** This proposed FY 2018 budget includes a total of \$113,778,000 for the design, planning and construction of several GWB projects, including but not limited to \$703,000 for the Phase 1 installation of the pedestrian safety fencing, \$98,554,000 for the overall "Restoring the George" rehabilitation program and

\$1,135,000 for the Phase 1 rehabilitation of Trans Manhattan Expressway, which needs to be coordinated with the NYC Department of Transportation; and

**Whereas:** The Port Authority recently made a presentation to the Community Board concerning these projects and reported that temporary safety fencing is finally being installed on the walkway on the south side of the GWB; and

**Whereas:** A man was still able to jump off the bridge on November 8, the 13<sup>th</sup> such suicide this year, tragically adding to an estimated 1,200 suicides that have occurred over the 86-year history of the bridge and reinforcing the pressing need for the safety fencing; now, therefore, be it

**Resolved:** Community Board 12-Manhattan once again calls upon the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to act with the urgency that this situation demands and complete the installation of the temporary and permanent safety fencing on an expedited basis in order to save as many lives as possible; and be it further

**Resolved:** Community Board 12-Manhattan calls upon the Port Authority to review the proposed design of the permanent safety fence, namely the continuous series of closely spaced 11-foot-high steel vertical bars to be constructed along the outer edges of the bridge walkways, to improve its aesthetic quality without delaying this project; and be it further

**Resolved:** Community Board 12-Manhattan requests that the revised plan be presented to this board for community review; and finally be it further

**Resolved:** Community Board 12-Manhattan urges that the "Restoring the George" and its associated projects, especially the installation of the safety fencing, be fast tracked to shorten significantly the timetable so that they are completed much earlier than the anticipated 2026 end date.

We look forward to your favorable consideration of this resolution and given the urgency we would appreciate from you shortly.

Sincerely,



Shahabuddeen A. Ally, Esq.  
Chairperson

cc: Hon. Andrew Cuomo, Governor  
Hon. Richard Cotton, Executive Director  
Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor  
Hon. Letitia James, Public Advocate  
Hon. Scott Stringer, Comptroller  
Hon. Gale Brewer, Borough President  
Hon. Richard H. Bagger, Commissioner  
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, Congressman  
Hon. Brian Benjamin, State Senator  
Hon. Marisol Alcantara, State Senator  
71<sup>st</sup> Assembly District Office  
Hon. Carmen de la Rosa, Assembly Member  
Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez, Council Member  
Hon. Mark Levine, Council Member  
Veronica G. Smith, Manager/Community Relations