

January 17, 2018

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

We sincerely appreciate the Thruway Authority providing a Shared Use Path (SUP) on the Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge. It can be an important transportation, tourism and recreation resource for the region and the nation. However, there are two main challenges to that goal we hope you'll help overcome.

First, the SUP must be open and usable at all hours. Any other policy means the State would be making choices for people on when, how, and even if, they can travel — hampering economic opportunities, traffic safety and environmental justice.

Second, non-standard designs are proposed around the Path's western terminus. The plans create safety and accessibility issues which both pose liabilities to the Authority and diminish the Path's usability.

Details of these problems, recommended solutions and resources are addressed in the attached pages.

We trust you will take the steps necessary to ensure the local and national active transportation and disability communities can praise the Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge as an example to the nation that you produce first class, safe infrastructure.

Please let us know the status of these issues by January 31 so we can relay that information to our membership.

Sincerely,



Daniel Convisor
[Bike Tarrytown](#)



Ken McLeod
[League of American Bicyclists](#)



Virginia Sullivan
[Adventure Cycling Association](#)



Ed Sobin
[Appalachian Mountain Club NY / NJ](#)



Cyndi Steiner
[New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition](#)



James Weisman
[United Spinal](#)



Stephen Brehl
[Rockland Bicycle Club](#)



Michael Reade
[Wallkill Valley Rail Trail Association](#)



Emily Flynn
[Bike Friendly Kingston](#)



Rona Shapiro
[Yonkers Bike Club](#)



Dave Zornow
[Bike Nyack](#)



Ian Thomas
[America Walks](#)



Kenneth Podziba
[Bike New York](#)



Christy Guzzetta
[New York Cycle Club](#)



Steve Vaccaro
[Five Boro Bicycle Club](#)



Edith M Prentiss
[Disabled In Action of Metro NY](#)



Bob Hermann
[Westchester Cycle Club](#)



Marc Soloff
[Bicycle Touring Club of North Jersey](#)



David Gordon
[Mid Hudson Bicycle Club](#)

Hours

Bridges operated by New York City and the MTA are open overnight, without incident or disruption to local residents. The same is true the world over where governments value the liberty bicycles offer citizens.

Villages on both sides of the river are planning networks of safe infrastructure for people walking and biking. This will result in normal people using their feet and bikes for getting to work, school, friends, shopping, restaurants. Such trips will be made at all hours of the day and night, just like people driving do.

Most notably, there will be a strong constituency of Rockland County residents cycling to Tarrytown's Metro-North station. Trains stop there 22 hours per day. Off-hour commutes are prime for cycling because bus service either isn't available or infrequent.

Both the bike infrastructure network and improved Metro North access open up job opportunities for people who don't drive cars.

Naturally, there will occasionally be times when maintenance operations require closing the SUP. During those periods, a shuttle service is a reasonable alternative.

Yielding

Bicycle dismount signs are planned in two locations. Current standards do not use such signs. They're not even specified in the [Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices](#) (MUTCD).

Requiring people riding bikes to dismount is a non-standard practice. [It introduces unnecessary risks](#). Current techniques call for the use of bicycle yield to pedestrian signs (MUTCD R9-6).

Intersection Safety

The current proposal places gates across the Path and the Esposito Trail where they reach the South Franklin St / Clinton Ave intersection. People would have to push through crossbars 30" above the ground. That concept has a variety of problems.

Several nationally recognized active transportation professionals we reached out to said they knew of no guidelines supporting gates, nor of similar precedents. They raised concerns about the gates being onerous and prohibitive, especially for the less physically able.

See the attached photos for examples of people who would be limited by these gates. Please also examine [A Guide to Inclusive Cycling](#), an excellent resource on the topic of designing paths for full accessibility.

Given the volume of people that will be using the SUP, some of whom will come in large groups, the gates will result in queues that back up into the street.

If safety is the motivating factor for the gates, plans for the intersection would realize that people using the paths still need to cross Clinton Ave and/or South Franklin St whether or not gates are installed.

This intersection includes an exit from the Thruway. People driving off highways are both prone to speeding due to velocitization, and they're desensitized to the presence of people biking and walking. And there will be thousands of people walking and cycling here each day. Thus it's essential to use strong traffic calming and signage techniques:

- raised intersection (see photo)
- leading pedestrian intervals
- bikes use pedestrian signal signs (MUTCD R9-5)
- turning vehicle yield signs (see photo)
- no turn on red signs
- pedestrian / bicycle crossing signs (MUTCD W11-15) (see photo)
- bikes yield to pedestrian signs (MUTCD R9-6) (see photo)
- narrow lane assembly signs (required by NYSDOT [TSMI 13-07](#) when sharrows are implemented) (see photo)
- significant street lighting to promote visibility
- a bollard to keep people from driving onto the SUP

Legal

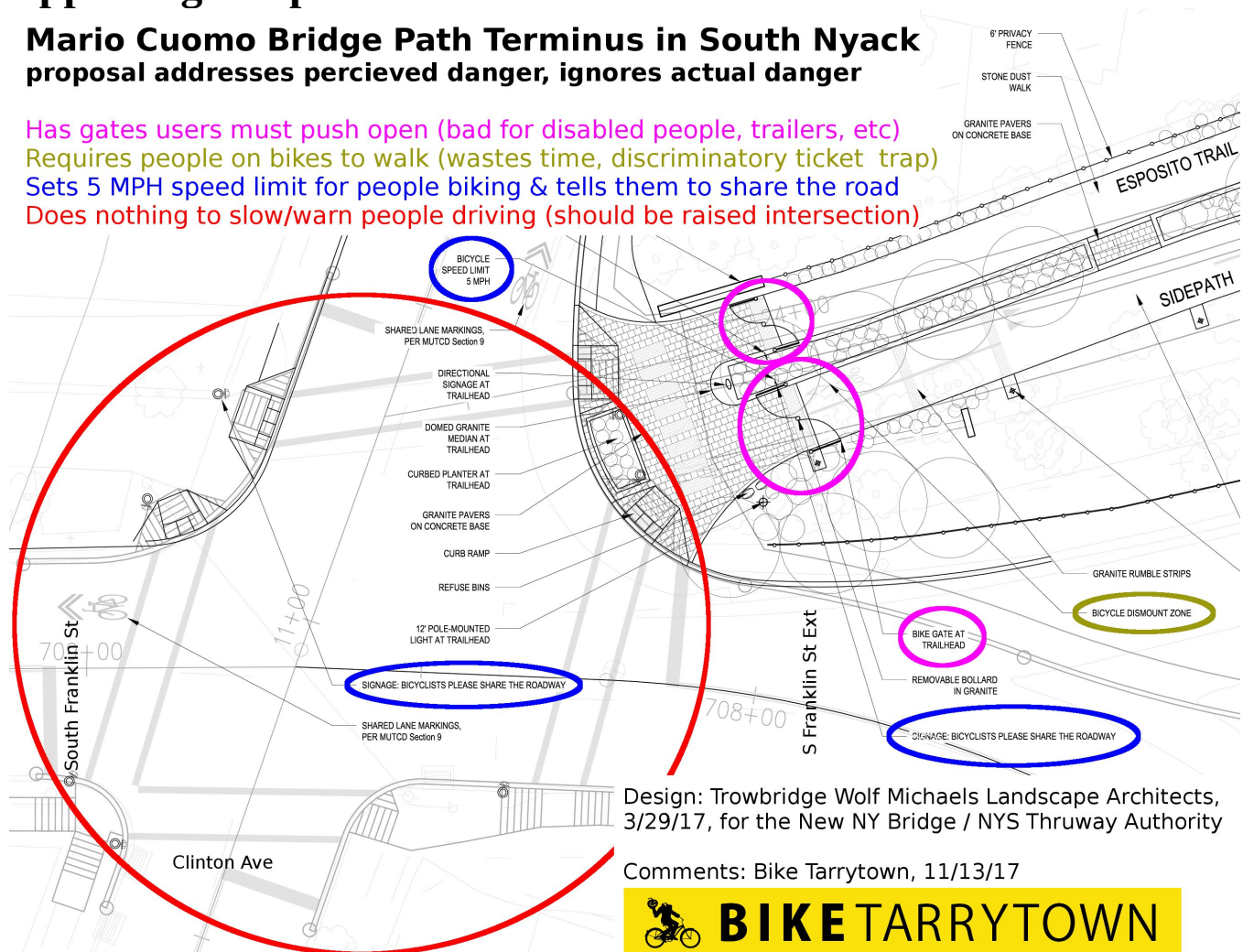
The unusual design choices on the trail and the lack of traffic calming on the roads opens the Authority, State and South Nyack to safety liabilities affirmed by [Turturro v. City of New York](#) (NYS Court of Appeals, No. 196, 2016).

The decisions and the process of making them could present grounds for Article 78 proceedings.

Supporting Graphics

Mario Cuomo Bridge Path Terminus in South Nyack proposal addresses perceived danger, ignores actual danger

Has gates users must push open (bad for disabled people, trailers, etc)
Requires people on bikes to walk (wastes time, discriminatory ticket trap)
Sets 5 MPH speed limit for people biking & tells them to share the road
Does nothing to slow/warn people driving (should be raised intersection)



Design: Trowbridge Wolf Michaels Landscape Architects, 3/29/17, for the New NY Bridge / NYS Thruway Authority

Comments: Bike Tarrytown, 11/13/17



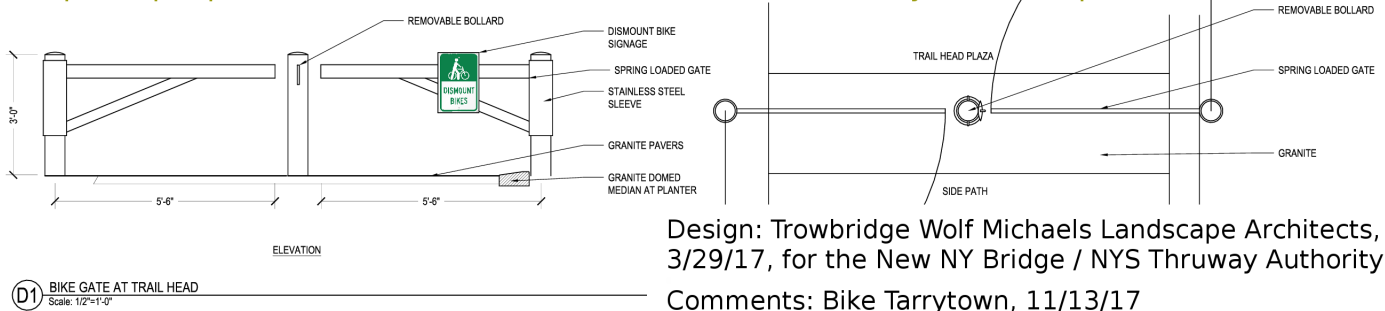
BIKE TARRYTOWN

Trail head.

Mario Cuomo Bridge Path Terminus in South Nyack

Has gates users must push open (bad for disabled people, trailers, etc)

Requires people on bikes to walk (wastes time, discriminatory ticket trap)



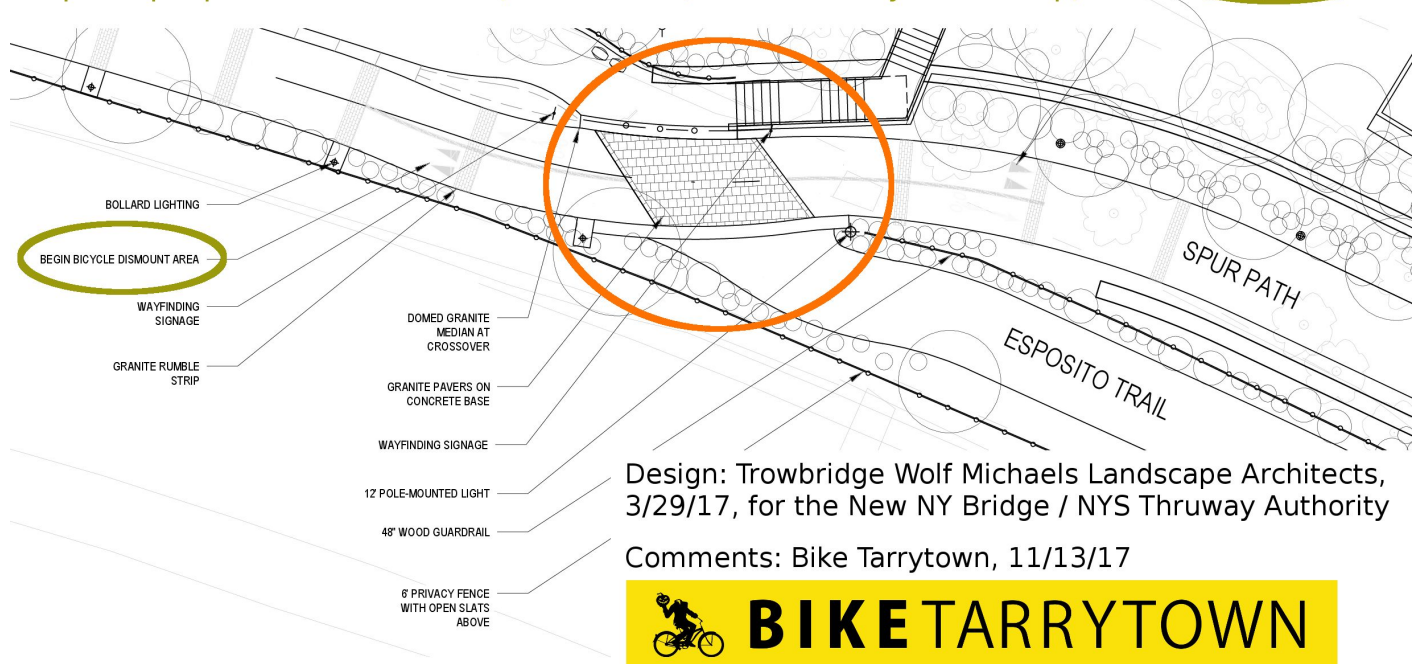
BIKE TARRYTOWN

Gate detail.

Mario Cuomo Bridge Path Terminus in South Nyack

Intentionally creates conflict point

Requires people on bikes to walk (wastes time, discriminatory ticket trap)



BIKE TARRYTOWN

Where Side Path & Trail cross.



Hand crank cycle ([New Mobility](#))



A "long john" bike with kids in it ([hooplakids.nz](#))



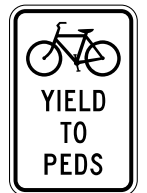
Bike trailer with tall cargo



Raised intersection (FHWA)



Pedestrian / bicycle crossing sign (MUTCD W11-15)



Bikes yield to pedestrian signs (MUTCD R9-6)



Turning vehicle yield sign ([Flat Iron Bike](#))



Narrow Lane Assembly (NYSDOT)