

SUSPENSION



COUNTY OF ERIE

MARK C. POLONCARZ

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

May 26, 2015

Frederick J. Piasecki, Jr., President
Town Highway Superintendents Association of Erie County, Inc.
c/o Town of Orchard Park Highway Department
4350 South Taylor Road
Orchard Park, New York 14127

Re: Erie County Bridge Road and Infrastructure Advisory Board

Dear Superintendent Piasecki:

I am writing in regard to your April 28, 2015 letter to Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz concerning the Erie County Legislature's Bridge Road and Infrastructure Advisory Board ("Board"). Thank you for taking the time to write and your invitation for the County Executive to name a representative to the Board.

As you know, under Section 2504 of the Erie County Charter, the County has a Capital Projects Committee ("Committee") whose mission is to review and evaluate potential road and bridge projects, among other capital needs. Since this process is already well-established and is Charter-mandated, I respectfully decline your invitation to participate in the Board.

The County Legislature created the new Board in 2014 and under the terms of the legislative resolution, suburban and non-County officials make up nine out of eleven of the representatives of the Board. In contrast, the Charter-mandated Committee advises and recommends highway, bridge and related projects to the County Executive and the Erie County Legislature. This panel includes three members from the Legislature, including Chairman John Mills, Majority Leader Joseph Lorigo and Minority Leader Betty Jean Grant, as well as the Erie County Comptroller. The Committee meets repeatedly during the year to review, question, and recommend capital projects for the rehabilitation, reconstruction and repair of the County's 2,400 lane miles of roads, as well as bridges, culverts and dams. For instance, the Committee is holding meetings over the next month to review and consider 2016 projects and requests.

If you would like to provide input or feedback to the Committee, I encourage you to contact me or Deputy Budget Director Timothy Callan, who serves as secretary and staff for the Committee and we would be happy to speak with you.

SUSPENSION

As Commissioner of Public Works, I take the condition of the County's infrastructure very seriously; this is why since taking office, County Executive Poloncarz has significantly increased funding for roads and bridges, including capital projects and annual maintenance needs.

The fundamental problem with maintaining the County's infrastructure is not "what to do" but rather, funding. The conundrum that the County faces, as does every town, village and city in Erie County, is how to maintain our respective highway systems with funding constraints. This problem is being exacerbated by federal funding reductions and new state mandates or requirements.

As you know, Deputy Commissioner of Public Works-Highways William Geary attends monthly meetings of the Town Highway Superintendents Association of Erie County, and myself and Senior Civil Engineer Charles Sickler are in constant contact with town highway superintendents and others concerning infrastructure issues. We also routinely travel to meet with town and local officials. We believe that this regular and daily direct contact between the Erie County Department of Public Works and local officials, as well as the comprehensive and thorough review conducted by the Committee, provides the best and most fruitful method for working together collaboratively.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely yours,



John C. Loffredo, PE
Commissioner of Public Works

cc: Michael C. Kasprzyk, President, Association of Erie County Governments
Erie County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz
Erie County Legislature