

From: janet.l.falk@gmail.com
Subject: Feedback on Roosevelt Island RI Sculpture and Way-finding Signage
Date: November 7, 2018 at 9:21 AM
To: Rosenthal, Susan (RIOC) Susan.Rosenthal@rioc.ny.gov, Robertson, Alonza (RIOC) alonza.robertson@rioc.ny.gov
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JF

Susan and Alonza,
At the ceremony for the new RI sculpture, you asked for feedback on the sculpture. Here are my thoughts.

Please convey them to the appropriate contacts within RIOC and Hudson Related.

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With any worthwhile project, you ideally start with the goal, then work to achieve it.

If RIOC's stated goal is to welcome visitors and have people take photos of Roosevelt Island, then the merit of the RI sculpture is unfortunately low, because the goal is not worthy of an investment of \$130,000.

Perhaps a secondary goal is the photos will be posted on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, by persons unknown and unreliable, who, through *Random Acts of Social Media*, will make Roosevelt Island go viral. Fat chance.

If RIOC's goal is to attract tourists to Roosevelt Island and when they arrive, they take a photo, notice the directional signage, explore the Island and spend a few dollars in the local restaurants and shops, then the RI sculpture is inadequate. (Note: the new wayfinding signage is 12 feet away from the sculpture and the sign across the street is obscured by a leafy tree.)

With a focus on welcoming visitors, RIOC apparently has no goal for the RI sculpture *to benefit the residents and local businesses*, which makes the RI sculpture a failure. The Roosevelt Island Residents Association voted a resolution against the sculpture, yet RIOC proceeded with its cockamamie plan. (Note the sculpture is more orange than the promised fire-engine red.)

How will tourists even know there is a Roosevelt Island when RIOC does not promote it as a destination?

As I have noted in the past, when visitors arrive at Tram Plaza on the Manhattan side, they have no way of learning there are eight restaurants, an art gallery and spectacular views of the Manhattan skyline when they arrive on Roosevelt Island. No wonder they land and immediately re-board the tram.

Recently, before the directional signs were erected, I saw a tourist with two teenagers standing by Firefighters Field, staring at her phone. I asked if she needed information. Upon hearing that she wanted a coffee, I directed her to a local

information. Upon hearing that she wanted a coffee, I directed her to a local restaurant. There was nowhere for her to learn that location.

Even with the directional signs, there is no indication where a restaurant is located. The catchy phrase *Shops on Main* does not convey that there are food establishments there.

Has RIOC printed rack cards (a standard promotional item) and distributed them to the tourist information carts parked in heavily trafficked locations, in addition to the inaccurate brochure supplied to the NYC Visitor Center on Seventh Avenue? Erica Spencer-EL previously said the brochures are now available at the tram stations. Really?

They are NOT on the Manhattan side. Have the brochures been revised? (see *The Main Street WIRE*, January 22, 2018 for a [review](#).)

Why is there NO signage on the Manhattan tram station alerting visitors to the pleasures of the Island? Why is there no MAP, whether a sign or a brochure? Brochures at the tram station are a positive step, but by then it is almost too late. RIOC has to connect with visitors BEFORE they get on the tram to spark an interest in taking the tram in the first place.

If you build an RI sign, visitors won't come unless you promote it. I anticipate that tourists may stumble upon the RI sign when they arrive, take a photo and get back on the tram, as in the past, without spending a dime here.

I generally ride the tram during non-commuting times, in other words, when there are more tourists than residents on the tram. In the past month, I have seen TWO instances of people taking photos of the RI sign.

People may talk about the Robert Indiana LOVE sculpture on Sixth Avenue and West 55. How many have seen the HOPE sculpture by the same artist at Seventh Avenue and West 53, only a few blocks away?

All in all, I do not see the sculpture as a positive for the Island. The money invested in this project would be better spent on promotion of the Island as a tourist destination, and signage or brochures on the Manhattan side of the tram so tourists will know what to do when they arrive here.