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BROOKLYN ELECTEDS CALL ON DEVELOPERS AND DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING TO END PARKING REQUIREMENTS IN NEW REZONINGS

A SENSIBLE POLICY SHIFT TO REDUCE CAR OWNERSHIP IN TRANSIT RICH AREAS

Brooklyn, NY (February 28, 2022) -- Council Member Lincoln Restler, Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso and other Brooklyn elected officials today called on developers and the Department of City Planning (DCP) to eliminate requirements for off street parking in new construction in transit rich Brooklyn neighborhoods, and instead prioritize a livable, walkable city with more affordable housing. The request was explained to DCP in a letter signed by Brooklyn elected officials. The letter supporters are calling on DCP to ask all residential developers to add special permits that would fully waive parking requirements for any rezoning projects in transit rich areas as a measure to reduce car use and ownership.

“Right now, we need to be laser focused on tackling the climate crisis and creating affordable housing for our neighbors,” said **Council Member Lincoln Restler**. “We are leveraging the collective power of elected officials in the land use process to eliminate construction of new parking spots on top of subway stations.”

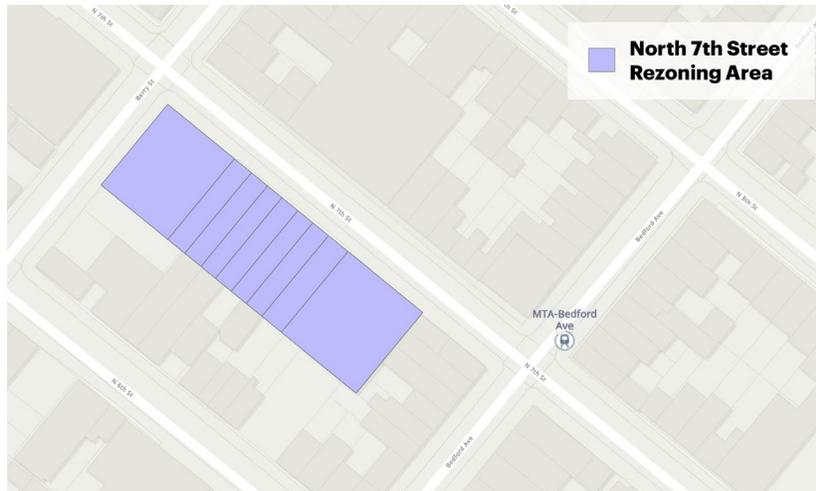
“Discouraging car ownership in transit-rich neighborhoods will provide more public benefits in the realm of climate change and affordable housing development than personal inconvenience,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso**. “We thank Council Member Restler for leading the advocacy to have the Brooklyn Department of City Planning act on the right side of the issue and eliminate residential off-street parking requirements in these areas. I look forward to our continued work making sure that development in Brooklyn is equitable and sustainable.”

In total, the Borough President and nine Brooklyn Council Members have embraced this new approach: Council Member Lincoln Restler (District 33), Council Member Jennifer Gutierrez (District 34), Council Member Crystal Hudson (District 35), Council Member Chi Osse (District 36), Council Member Sandy Nurse (District 37), Council Member Alexa Avilés (District 38), Council Member Shahana Hanif (District 39), Council Member Rita Joseph (District 40), and Council Member Farrah Louis (District 45).

Currently, most new residential development in Brooklyn requires developers to build off-street parking in both as-of-right and rezoned development sites. The elected officials expressed support for ending parking minimums in a comprehensive text amendment. Until that happens, DCP can join elected officials in encouraging all developers to include special permit applications to waive parking requirements for any residential projects subject to rezoning. The

letter outlines how this additional parking currently required disrupts Brooklyn's urban fabric, makes our City less walkable, and further incentivizes car use.

The map below depicts a proposed development site at North 7th Street and Bedford, just feet from the Bedford L train station in Williamsburg. The 28-unit project includes 14 parking spots in the cellar because a rezoning of the site imposes requirements of new parking spaces for no less than 50% of the market-rate units in the building.



In cases like this one, developers are forced to spend excessive amounts of money on below-grade parking facilities, ultimately preventing much needed housing from being built. The cost of building housing in New York is already substantially higher than comparable cities.

"The need to waive required parking minimums for new developments is long overdue," said **Council Member Crystal Hudson**. "When we take into consideration the negative effects of displacement, gentrification, and environmental racism on the Black and brown residents of both my district and New York City as a whole, the need for this common sense reform couldn't be more clear: eliminate the onerous parking construction costs that raise prices for renters and first-time home buyers, and reduce carbon emissions and pollution in the communities long plagued by the effects of environmental racism. It's past time we build deeply affordable, low- and moderate-income housing for the people who need it most, and eliminating the archaic parking requirement brings us one step in that direction."

"Our city needs to get real about affordable housing and climate change," said **Council Member Alexa Avilés**. "On the one hand, we know New Yorkers spend an unacceptably high percentage of their income on housing, and we know that our coastlines are disappearing due to climate change, yet on the other hand we continue to drive up the scarcity of land by incentivizing car ownership through parking requirements. Let's make the right choices, the common sense choices, by doing away with parking minimums required of new developments



in transit accessible areas, and improving our transportation system to make it not only climate ready, but accessible to all.”

“I’m proud to take a proactive stand with BP Reynoso, CM Restler, and my Brooklyn colleagues to address our City’s car problem in transit hub neighborhoods — removing accessory parking in new development is long overdue in our City and doing so during this global pandemic is a must. DCP should take our concerns seriously and do right by New Yorkers who deserve affordable housing, parks, and other public amenities, not parking,” said **Council Member Shahana Hanif**.

“Parking minimums lead to more congestion and pollution, while making it more expensive to build housing and live in New York City,” said **Danny Harris, Executive Director of Transportation Alternatives**. “Instead of mandating space for storing private cars, we should be making it easier to walk, bike, and take transit by reclaiming space from cars. This is the goal of our NYC 25x25 vision and we applaud Borough President Reynoso and Council Member Restler for urging an end to parking minimums in many Brooklyn rezonings. Their blueprint is an important first step and should be followed and expanded upon across the other four boroughs as well.”

“Minimum parking requirements are a 20th century relic that have no place in a 21st century city, especially in neighborhoods that are easily accessible by subway and bus,” said **Eric McClure, President of StreetsPAC**. “They make it more expensive to build housing, and create a perverse incentive to fill parking garages, leading to more cars and more congestion. We applaud Borough President Reynoso and Council Member Restler for their forward thinking on eliminating parking minimums, and urge the Department of City Planning to heed their call – and their colleagues to follow suit.”

“Parking minimums incentivize people to own and drive cars,” said **Sara Lind, Director of Policy at Open Plans**. “In the face of a climate crisis, an epidemic of traffic violence causing death and carnage on our streets, and a crippling lack of affordable housing, parking minimums are the exact wrong policy. New York City should be doing everything we can to encourage people to use sustainable modes of transportation and to lower housing costs. Eliminating parking minimums is a critical step towards those goals.”

“The affordability crisis demands that we do everything within our power to lower housing costs for New Yorkers, and we know that parking mandates make new housing more expensive for both renters and prospective buyers,” said **Will Thomas, Executive Director at Open New York**. “Allowing homebuilders the chance to provide more housing and less parking, especially close to transit, is a clear step in the right direction for housing affordability and more sustainable living—and we hope these sorts of reforms can ultimately be expanded across the entire city.”



Lincoln Restler
COUNCIL MEMBER DISTRICT 33

Policies like the one Council Member Restler and Borough President Reynoso are advocating for help implement climate-focused decisions that reduce construction costs and carbon emissions while addressing the City's housing crisis with more truly affordable housing. Furthermore, because below grade parking is so expensive to construct, many developments across the city locate their parking facilities on the ground-floor, leading to drab, dark, lifeless streets rather than dynamic ground floor retail and community facility spaces that generate jobs and fulfill critical neighborhoods needs. Simply put, the current parking requirements prevent our City from becoming a walkable, accessible, and affordable city for all.

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