



**THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS**

CITY HALL
NEW YORK, NY 10007
(212) 788-7116

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

July 29, 2009

Contact: 212-788-7116
Release# 075-2009

**PROMOTING A MORE SUSTAINABLE CITY, COUNCIL VOTES TO IMPROVE
BICYCLE ACCESS AND PARKING OPTIONS IN THE FIVE BOROUGHES**

Bills will improve bicycle access in commercial buildings and create thousands of bicycle parking spaces in city garages and parking lots

City Hall, July 29, 2009 – Encouraging more New Yorkers to bike to work, the City Council will vote on the Bicycle Access Bill which would require certain office buildings to allow tenants to bring their bicycles into work. The Council will also vote on a corresponding piece of legislation that would require the creation of thousands of bicycle parking spaces in city lots and garages.

In addition to these bicycle bills, the Council will also vote on important legislation to:

- Revitalize and rezone the historic Coney Island amusement area;
- Prohibit smoking around the entrances and exits of hospitals;
- License and regulate pedicabs; and
- Override a Mayoral veto to allow city employees to move outside of New York City after 2 years of service.

Lastly, the Council will also vote on a two resolutions calling on the State to support legislation that would encourage small businesses as well as minority and women-owned businesses to enter the competitive bidding process for city contracts.

BICYCLE ACCESS BILL

Making it easier for bicyclists who cycle to work, the Council will vote to require commercial building companies to allow for bicycle entry by employees of building tenants. The legislation will dramatically improve public health, reduce carbon emissions, lead to a more sustainable transportation infrastructure, and provide substantial economic benefits for people who would now be able to get to work for free. Currently, one of the main obstacles to bicycle commuting is the inability to park bicycles in a secure location near the workplace.

“As more and more New Yorkers choose to cycle to work, they are often confronted with the problem of where to securely park their bikes,” said **Speaker Quinn**. “As we work together towards a greener and healthier city, these bicycle bills will make it easier for cyclists to park and store their bikes and will encourage even more New Yorkers to commute on bike.”

“In a city in which one in eight kids has asthma, this bill is a long overdue step towards reducing carbon emissions, improving public health, and building a sustainable transportation infrastructure,” said **Council**

(over)

Member Yassky. "I look forward to the Council passing this bill tomorrow so that we can begin the implementation of this important piece of progressive legislation."

Transportation Committee Chairperson John Liu stated, "With both substantive corrections in place, this bill is now equipped to actually achieve the original objectives of the legislation. Bicycle access will finally be required in many office buildings to which New Yorkers would like to commute on two wheels. This is an important milestone in the series of efforts to encourage alternative transportation and especially to wean people out of individual automobiles."

"More people will use their bicycles to go to and from work and to shop if they can safely store it," said **Council Member Gale A. Brewer.** "This legislation is a very exciting step towards 'greening' our City in a sustainable way. Congratulations to Council Member Yassky."

The bill will also create bicycle commuting task force to examine ways to partner with private entities to create sheltered bicycle parking in public and private spaces. The task force would issue its report by December 31, 2010.

BICYCLE PARKING BILL

In conjunction with the Bicycle Access Bill, the Council will vote to require that parking garages and lots which have 100 or more parking spaces also provide parking for bicycles. This legislation, which would create thousands of bicycle parking spaces, requires parking facilities to provide one bike parking space for every ten vehicle parking spaces, up to 200 car parking spaces. These bicycle parking spaces must be easily accessible and secure.

"Bicycle commuters are rapidly becoming a major proportion of the commuting population, accounting for more than 40,000 trips per day," said **Council Member Oliver Koppell.** "By encouraging New York City residents to use cycling as a means to commute to work through providing increased opportunities to safely park bicycles, New York City is making an important step towards increasing the wellbeing of its citizens. With obesity becoming an epidemic cycling is not only a cost efficient and environmentally friendly form of transportation but also a much healthier way of traveling. I look forward to the Mayor signing this legislation into law."

CONEY ISLAND REZONING

Today, the Council will vote to rezone Brooklyn's historic Coney Island. Under the rezoning, 35 percent of new housing will be designated as affordable. Coney Island residents will have access to year-round jobs that pay livable wages. Abe Stark Rink will remain open, with schedules for ice hockey leagues and open skating uninterrupted until a new replacement rink is built. A new gym will be constructed for P.S. 188. The commitment has been made for reconstruction of the boardwalk. And working in conjunction with Kingsborough Community college, a work force training program will be set up to serve 400 area residents.

"For too long, New York's most historic and exciting neighborhood has been a shadow of the glory and glamour it once held," said **Council Member Domenic M. Recchia, Jr.** "While New Yorkers and tourists still flock to Coney Island during the summer, the winter months are harsh. By working together with Mayor Bloomberg, his administration and the community, we were able to develop a rezoning plan that will usher in a new era for this iconic neighborhood."

"With this plan, we will finally press the accelerator on returning one of the city's most historic and treasured destinations to full speed," said **Land Use Committee Chair Melinda Katz.** "With all of the stakeholders coming together to negotiate, we arrived at a plan that best benefits this community. Not only will Coney Island have year-round amusements that restore its past grandeur, but it will have the affordable housing, jobs, retail development and other amenities it has long sought."

PROHIBITING SMOKING NEAR HOSPITALS

Improving air quality around city hospitals, the Council will vote to prohibit smoking on a hospital's outdoor grounds as well as within 15 feet of an entrance or exit to the grounds or to the hospital building. This legislation would apply to general hospitals, diagnostic and treatment centers and residential health care facilities.

"Entrances, exits, and outdoor spaces of hospitals are places where a patient goes to get better," said **Speaker Quinn**. "These should not be places where a patient's health is jeopardized as they walk through plumes of cigarette smoke on their way to seeing their doctor. Keeping the areas around our city's healthcare facilities smoke-free is a common-sense way to improve air quality and keep New Yorkers healthier."

"New York City's hospitals should be oases of health and well being," said **Council Member Inez Dickens**, the prime sponsor of the bill. "When people are on the way to treatments, appointments, visits or other business at a New York City hospital they should not be forced to breathe toxic second hand smoke to get into the building. This does not promote good health or wellness. This ban is a measure that will prevent bad habits from impacting on the health of those who are entering a hospital to improve their own well being."

PEDICAB LICENSING LEGISLATION

To improve transportation safety and reduce congestion, especially in the Midtown area where hundreds of pedicabs operate without any regulations or safety measures, the Council will vote on legislation to regulate and license pedicabs.

"Those who have been to Times Square or Midtown lately know that pedicabs have become a flourishing mode of transportation in our city," said **Speaker Quinn**. "While we want to promote and support greener transit options, we need to make sure that businesses like the pedicab industry are operating as safely and responsibly as possible. This legislation strikes a balance that makes our streets safer and greener."

"On Central Park South and in Midtown Manhattan, pedicabs operate without any rules whatsoever -- it's like the Wild West," said **Council Member Dan Garodnick**. "Because pedicabs are not licensed, it's impossible to regulate the behavior of their drivers and owners in any meaningful way. No licenses means no consequences -- and that poses an unacceptable level of risk when you're talking about being out in the middle of New York City traffic. It's time to finally correct this."

Key features of the bill include:

- Creating a 60 day licensing period for owners to apply for pedicab business licenses and registration plates;
- Limiting business owners from operating more than 30 pedicabs at one time;
- Requiring pedicab businesses to provide safety training for pedicab drivers;
- Increases penalties for pedicab drivers who do not obtain proper licensing from the Department of Consumer Affairs.

This legislation will increase safety by prohibiting pedicabs from operating in pedestrian plazas and by holding pedicab business owners responsible for the actions of the drivers they employ. Additionally, a pedicab business can lose its license if its drivers fail to obey the law or it operates pedicabs that have not been inspected by the Department of Consumer Affairs. All pedicabs must be properly insured, and pass an inspection conducted by the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) before they will be permitted to operate.

CHANGES TO RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR CITY EMPLOYEES

The City Council will vote to override a Mayoral veto to allow city employees to reside outside of New York City if they have completed more than two years of city service. This legislative change will allow any city employee to reside in Nassau, Westchester, Suffolk, Orange, Rockland and Putnam counties after completing two years of city employment. Currently there are approximately 300,000 city employees.

“I am proud that today the Council is taking this action to ensure that City workers will be given greater flexibility in choosing where they live. This legislation will give thousands of municipal employees expanded living options and help our City maintain a dedicated work force to keep New York running smoothly. These workers deserve the right to make their own decisions about where they live based on what is best for them and their families,” said **Council member Bill de Blasio**.

Additionally, this bill would allow elected officials, such as the Mayor, Council Speaker, Borough Presidents, and Comptroller, to require their high-level appointees to complete more than two years of city service before moving outside of the City.

LOCAL SMALL BUSINESS CONTRACT PROCUREMENT RESOLUTION

The Council will vote on a resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass legislation that will allow the city to award competitively bid contracts to businesses that participate in programs designed to foster participation by small local businesses in public procurement at a cost premium not to exceed ten percent of the lowest bid.

Currently, the City is required to award competitively bid contracts to the lowest responsible bidder pursuant to State law and prohibits the City from any flexibility in the award of such contracts. As the current economic climate is having a devastating effect on small local businesses, a change in the State law is needed to provide them with a small price preference in the City’s procurement.

MINORITY AND WOMEN-OWNED BUSSINESS CONTRACT PROCUREMENT RESOLUTION

In conjunction with the small business contract procurement resolution, the Council will vote on a resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass legislation that would allow the city to award competitively bid contracts to businesses that participate in programs designed to foster participation by minority and women owned businesses in public procurement contracts at a cost premium not to exceed ten percent of the lowest bid.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE WORKERS AT STELLA D’ORO IN THE BRONX

The Council will vote on a resolution in support of 130 workers at the Stella D’Oro Biscuit Company in the Bronx who face threats of unemployment as Brynwood Partners, owners of Stella D’Oro, plan to close the factory in October.

In August of 2008, these workers went on an 11-month strike after company officials tried to force workers to accept a 20% pay cut, elimination of sick days and overtime and other cutbacks. The employees returned to their jobs on July 7, 2009, a week after an Administrative Law Judge with the National Labor Relations Board ordered Brynwood Partners, the current owner of Stella D’Oro, to reinstate and pay back wages to the striking workers, finding that the company had engaged in unfair labor practices. Now the workers are facing the permanent loss of their jobs should the Bronx factory be closed as threatened by Brynwood Partners.

###