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DISABILITY SERVICES

July 27, 2008

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor Bloomberg:

We are writing to inform you and your administration of our support for the implementation of a bicycle lane, one that is practical and safe for bicyclists, motorists and pedestrians alike, along the length of Queens Boulevard, one of the widest and longest east-west thoroughfares in the borough.

On February 28, 2008, Councilman Gennaro's constituent, Asif Rahman of Jamaica Estates, died instantly upon being struck by a truck as he biked along Queens Boulevard on his way home from work. Asif, who was 22 years old, had a bright future ahead of him and a reckless driver tragically cut his life short. This type of tragedy has become all too common, especially as bike ridership has increased 77 percent in New York City since 2000, according to the Department of Transportation. We as a City owe cyclists like Asif, who contribute to a healthier environment by not driving automobiles, a better infrastructure of protection as they try to traverse the length of the Borough.

We commend your actions over the last few years to improve safety for bicyclists, motorists and pedestrians by implementing dedicated bicycle lanes throughout the five boroughs. Despite these diligent efforts, however, cyclists who attempt to ride down Queens Boulevard continue to do so at great risk for themselves and those around them. The lack of dedicated bike lanes on Queens Boulevard leaves cyclists without a safe path to travel, and leaves motorists and pedestrians without the adequate separation they need to avoid collisions.

We have, however, serious concerns about a bicycle lane's effect on drivers and pedestrians, as do most people who care about safety and convenience for all New Yorkers. It is critical, for example, that as few as possible of the Boulevard's precious parking spots are eliminated and

that auto traffic flow is not affected in such a way so as to increase congestion. It is also critical that any alterations to Queens Boulevard enhance safety for pedestrians rather than lessen it.

We have as a society protected pedestrians from motorists by building sidewalks, and have protected pedestrians further by banning bicyclists from those sidewalks. We have protected pedestrians and motorists from the dangers they pose to each other with an elaborate system of signals and signage. Now, as New York City's bicycle-riding population grows at an explosive rate, we must take that mode of transportation into account as well. Rather than treat those who walk, those who ride bicycles and those who drive cars as different classes of citizens, we should treat them as they really are – all fellow New Yorkers with the same expectations and rights with regards to personal safety and convenience – and give all of them the same level of attention and protection.

As elected officials who represent various parts of Queens Boulevard, we are eager to work with you and your Administration to help make the Boulevard safer by means of a proper bicycle lane and any accompanying features necessary to ensure the safety and convenience of bicyclists, motorists and pedestrians alike. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



JAMES F. GENNARO  
Chair, Committee on Environmental Protection



JOHN C. LIU  
Chair, Committee on Transportation



ERIC N. GIOIA  
Chair, Committee on Oversight & Investigations

Cc: Commissioner Jeanette Sadik-Khan, Dept. of Transportation  
Queens Commissioner Maura McCarthy, Dept. of Transportation  
Borough President Helen Marshall  
NYS Senators Shirley Huntley, George Onorato & Toby Ann Stavisky  
NYS Assembly Members Jeffrion Aubry, Andrew Hevesi, Ivan Lafayette,  
Margarette Markey & Cathy Nolan  
NYC Council Members Helen Sears and Melinda Katz  
Paul Steely White, Transportation Alternatives  
Lizi Rahman