

August 12, 2008

Honorable Michael Bloomberg
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor Bloomberg,

As Brooklyn representatives, we ask you to make one simple and inexpensive policy change to greatly improve the lives of our constituents – make Prospect Park car-free. We call upon your office, the New York City Department of Transportation and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation to implement a three-month pilot program to close the Prospect Park drives to vehicular traffic and to study the effect of this policy on park use and traffic on local streets.

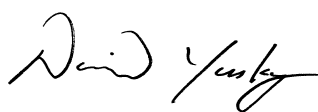
Prospect Park is the lifeblood of the communities we represent. It is their place to exercise, to escape the heat of a hot apartment, to celebrate a birthday party, to barbeque, to listen to great music and to play with their kids. Just being in Prospect Park and enjoying all it has to offer makes life better.

Because Prospect Park is such a popular destination for our constituents, it is busy. From morning till night, the loop drive is packed with people walking, running, and riding bikes. When cars are permitted to drive through the park, these people are put in danger. A recent speeding survey found that over 90% of cars travelling through the park were going way beyond the posted speed limit—up to 50 mph. Runners and cyclists recreate just feet from this traffic and have no barrier to protect them from deadly collision.

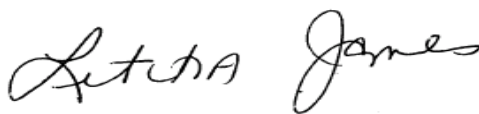
The dangerous and unhealthy environment created by this traffic scares people away. A 2006 survey of 450 park users found that 4 out of 5 people would use the park more often if cars were banned. This survey also found a 40% drop in people entering the park when cars are permitted. As our city struggles to fight a rise in obesity, asthma and diabetes, this is unacceptable.

Parks are the very foundation of a healthy population. As public leaders, we need to do everything in our power to make our public parks and recreational areas as safe and inviting as possible. As PlaNYC aptly points out, “we have to do better.” Mayor Bloomberg, this is our opportunity.

Sincerely,



David Yassky
Member of the City Council



Letitia James
Member of the City Council