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FROM COUNCIL MEMBER

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JANUARY 2010 COMMUNITY BULLETIN

A New Year and a New Term

Happy New Year!

On January 6, I was honored to take the oath of office in City Hall and officially begin my second term representing the Upper East Side and Roosevelt Island in the City Council. There are many challenges ahead, to be sure, but I know that working together we can make our city stronger, more livable, and more sustainable.

If you have any suggestions, new ideas, or issues with which you need assistance, please don't hesitate to contact my office by calling (212) 980-1808 or e-mailing lappin@council.nyc.gov. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Jessica Lappin

Council Proposes Alternative to MTA "Doomsday" Cuts

Mass transit is the backbone of our city's infrastructure and economy. And we've seen what happens when we walk away from public transportation. It has a devastating impact on our city.

The latest round of MTA "doomsday" cuts would, among other things, reduce and then eliminate the free MetroCards for students and abandon door to door services for the disabled. The proposed cuts will impact nearly every bus and subway rider in our city, but will fall hardest on our children and the disabled. That is unfair and unacceptable.

New York State recently enacted a metropolitan commuter mobility tax and increased taxi fares by 50 cents. I supported these tough measures. But I did so with the understanding that these revenue generators were adopted to avoid these kinds of cuts.

The City Council has been working with the Straphangers Campaign to avoid the cuts the MTA has proposed to adopt. The Council has proposed that the MTA reallocate \$140

million of capital funds to temporarily close an unexpected gap in its operating budget. This alternative to the MTA's "doomsday" cuts would close the fiscal gap that we're seeing now. We are also gathering petitions demanding that the MTA hold public hearings on any proposed cuts before they are implemented. If you would like to be added to the petition, please e-mail me at lappin@council.nyc.gov with the subject line "I oppose the MTA doomsday cuts." Be sure to include your home address. Also, PLEASE FORWARD THIS TO ANYONE ELSE YOU THINK MAY BE INTERESTED so we can gather as many names on our petition as possible. You can learn more about our efforts by visiting the Council Action Center at: http://council.nyc.gov/html/action_center/mta.shtml.

Judge Rules Against MTS Appeal

As you know, we have been fighting the 91st Street MTS in the courts with several lawsuits. In one of our cases, the community and plaintiffs argued that Asphalt Green and the Bobby Wagner Walk are parks and, as such, the city needed to seek state approval to build an access ramp for the MTS. Supreme Court Justice Michael Stallman rejected this argument.

I am guessing the Judge has never seen Bobby Wagner Walk, because it's hard for me to understand how he could state in his decision that Asphalt Green and the Bobby Wagner Walk are not parks. To paraphrase an old adage, if it looks like a park and is used like a park, then it's a park. The plaintiffs plan to appeal this decision and make our case again.

The fight against the MTS continues on other fronts as well. The decision by the NY State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to issue permits for the MTS is on appeal. Assembly Member Kellner's legislation that would prohibit the siting of a MTS within 800 feet of a public housing project is still pending. And, as you know, the Administration has pushed the project back to 2011 and increased the cost.

In these tough economic times, spending money on an ill-conceived garbage plan makes no sense. I will continue to make this case to the Administration, particularly as we begin negotiations on the 2011 budget in the next few months.

Lappin Organizes Horn Honking Sting

One of the continual frustrations of city living is the endless horn honking that takes place on our streets. In order to help combat this problem, I worked with officers from the 19th Precinct to organize a horn honking sting in our neighborhood. On the evening of December 10 officers staked out the intersection of 63rd and York, a location that is the source of frequent complaints to my office. During the three hours they were there, the officers issued 22 summonses, which they consider to be a good result. Obviously, this does not mean that the problem is solved, but in the coming months the precinct will be conducting other horn honking stings in other parts of our neighborhood. I want to extend a big thank you to Inspector James Murtagh and his officers for their efforts as we tackle this frustrating quality of life concern.

Join Your Local Community Board

Are you interested in joining your local community board? Would you like to take part in making the decisions that affect our neighborhood? If so, now is the time to act. The application for members is Friday, January 15th. For more information on how to join your community board, visit http://www.mbpo.org/free_details.asp?id=64 or e-mail me at lappin@council.nyc.gov.