



April 20, 2023

Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez  
New York City Department of Transportation  
55 Water Street, 9th Floor  
New York, NY 10041

Commissioner,

North Brooklyn Neighbors (NBN) strives to advance community-based solutions on issues of public space and the environment – through activism, education, and collaboration – to create a more just, healthy, and safe place to live and work.

With that in mind, we commend the grassroots work by Make McGuinness Safe and all of their outreach efforts to members of the North Brooklyn community. They have turned the unnecessary death of Matthew Jensen, a beloved teacher at PS 110, into a meaningful call for change that will benefit the entirety of the community.

NBN began as Neighbors Against Garbage (NAG) in 1994. Among other efforts, we fought a proposed waste transfer station that would have processed 8,000 tons of garbage per day and had long-lasting and severe negative health and environmental impacts for community members already overburdened with waste facilities. NAG recently merged with GWAPP, in their founding known as Greenpoint Williamsburg Against the Power Plant. That coalition successfully fought two separate power plant projects that were to be sited along the waterfront in Greenpoint and Williamsburg.

Despite these victories, our community has not defeated every proposed large scale piece of infrastructure that has negative health and environmental impacts. We have seen the long-term negative impacts of poor environmental stewardship in legacy toxins in our soil and drinking water, multiple state and federal Superfund sites, and a rezoning that defied the will of much of the community.



We continue the work to right these wrongs and Make McGuinness Safe embodies that legacy in trying to right the wrongs of McGuinness Boulevard. These wrongs are many: the razing of buildings and ensuing displacement of community members to construct the roadway, the loss of lives of people walking, biking, and traveling by car, the removal of valuable public space in a neighborhood that desperately needs more of it, the damage done to community connectivity, and the negative impact of poor air quality on neighborhood residents. The boulevard was constructed during the urban renewal era, and, just like the highways and expressways built throughout the city during this time, it continues to threaten the very future of our community as fossil fuels continue to push us towards climate instability.

We know that redesigns like those proposed by Make McGuinness Safe make our public spaces, our streets and sidewalks, safer. We know that they contribute to better air quality. We know that they allow more uses of alternate modes of transportation.

We support the Make McGuinness Safe proposal as do over 4,000 community members, with the vast majority of them living in the immediate McGuinness vicinity. We join over 100 businesses and organizations as well as Councilmember Lincoln Reslter, Assemblymember Emily Gallagher, Congressmember Nydia Velázquez, Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso, and State Senator Kristen Gonzales in supporting the Make McGuinness Safe campaign. We urge the New York City Department of Transportation to move quickly to center community health and safety in fixing this dangerous roadway that has divided and threatened the health of our community for over a half century.

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