

March 7, 2019

Mark Lacher
Koeppel Mazda
7712 Northern Blvd
Jackson Heights, NY 11372

Dear Mr. Lacher,

As members of the Jackson Heights community, we are writing to urgently request that you immediately remove the service entrance for your new car dealership from the Travers Park area, where the children of our neighborhood play. We ask that you close this service entrance, abandon your efforts to politically influence city agencies to derail the park expansion, and instead use your existing car service entrances on both 77th Street and Northern Blvd.

Our community suffers from having the least amount of open space per capita in New York City as well as a high rate of pedestrian fatalities, in particular on Northern Boulevard. For the past ten years, we have been working closely with Council Member Dromm and city agencies to permanently close 78th Street between Northern Blvd and 34th Avenue to all vehicular traffic to facilitate expanding Travers Park. Led by the Jackson Heights Green Alliance and the Jackson Heights Beautification Group, it has been a grassroots effort arising from the need for both more open space for families and seniors and a desire to create a respite from the overwhelming amount of traffic congestion in the area.

The neighborhood initiative to close 78th Street to motor vehicles, emerging from sustained advocacy since 2009, effectively addresses both of these community concerns. Not only will it provide our community with more desperately needed open space, but it also serves as a critical traffic-calming measure to protect pedestrians--especially children and seniors--in Jackson Heights.

Your service entrance within the redesigned park's boundaries will endanger this vitally important community plan to expand open space, combat climate change, and protect the park-goers from conflicts with dangerous motor vehicles. Furthermore, it appears that you recently leased the property on Northern Blvd between 77th and 78th street to sell motor vehicles and renovated the building without consulting the community or elected officials about the already-underway park renovations which are publicly funded with over \$10 million dollars in capital improvements. Our community should not have to bear the consequences of these actions.

Your service entrance within the Travers Park footprint jeopardizes the park redesign and alienates the community's wishes. And, it will endanger lives. Northern Boulevard has seen multiple pedestrian deaths at the hands of motor vehicles within the past few years alone. Our community has worked hard to expand car-free spaces at Travers Park to keep our families and seniors safe.

We respectfully request that you immediately close the car service entrance on the Travers Park side and that you work with us to keep our community safe and ensure that our park redesign, years in the making, is a success.

Respectfully,

Dudley Stewart, Jackson Heights Green Alliance

Cristina Furlong, Makes Queens Safer

Shekar Krisnan, Friends of Diversity Plaza

Tammy Rose, Jackson Heights Early Learning Center

Javier Valdes, Make the Road New York

Juan Restrepo, Transportation Alternatives

cc: Mayor Bill de Blasio
Public Advocate Jumaane Williams
Comptroller Scott Stringer
Queens Borough President Melinda Katz
Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
State Senator Jessica Ramos
State Assembly Member Michael Den Dekker
State Assembly Member Catalina Cruz
City Council Member Daniel Dromm
Mitchell Silver, Department of Parks and Recreation
Polly Trottenberg, Department of Transportation
Giovanni Reid, Queens Community Board 3