



EMILY GALLAGHER  
Assembly Member 50<sup>th</sup> District

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STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

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May 14, 2021

Patrick J. Foye, Chair  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
2 Broadway  
New York, NY 10004

MTA Board  
2 Broadway  
New York, NY 10004

Chairman Foye and Members of the MTA Board:

I write to express concern regarding an active Request for Proposal (RFP) for a private company to lease or purchase MTA-owned property at 40 Quay St in Greenpoint, Brooklyn for the purposes of constructing a residential and/or commercial development. It is our understanding that the MTA Board will soon consider a respondent to this RFP. I urge you to consider the following issues and meaningfully engage with community stakeholders before taking any action.

First, I want to share how sensitive I am to the funding needs of the MTA. Securing sustainable resources for mass transit has been a top priority in my brief time in office. In March, I organized a letter of nearly two dozen state legislators calling on the Biden Administration to rapidly approve New York's Congestion Pricing Plan. I fought to protect dedicated MTA funds from being repurposed in the recently adopted state budget. And as we move toward a full reopening, I will work tirelessly to get New Yorkers back on the subways and buses that are the lifeblood of our great city. But a one-time infusion of money, at great cost to the neighboring community and the environment, is the wrong path.

In 2005, the City rezoned nearly all of the Williamsburg and Greenpoint waterfront, resulting in a curtain of new high-rise towers and a population increase of more than 40%—with still more development underway. Meanwhile, North Brooklyn suffers from some of the least open space in the city. Brooklyn Community District 1, which encompasses this area, ranks 48th out of 59 for percent of parkland, with 0.6 park acres per 1,000 residents (the city average is 1.8). The 27-acre Bushwick Inlet Park that was promised along with the 2005 rezoning remains far from complete.

While 40 Quay St was not part of the initial plans for Bushwick Inlet Park, the site is crucial to its future. This stretch of land sits adjacent to the narrowest part of the future park, with only 50 feet separating the edge of the property from the Inlet itself. A high-density structure would bear down on this precious open space on the Inlet, threatening to wall off the Greenpoint neighborhood from

the park it has worked so hard to create. Another massive development project underway just to the north of the parcel will already block sightlines of the river from the park; another similar project at 40 Quay St would completely obscure the Inlet looking south from West Street. Even more concerning, 40 Quay Street sits on landfill in a flood zone. With climate change bearing down on us, development of this site could exacerbate flooding for generations to come. Instead, we can use the land to prepare for this eventuality.

In November 2019, Brooklyn Community Board 1 unanimously adopted a resolution calling for the withdrawal or suspension of the RFP. A few months later, our neighbors' hopes were raised by the passage of the "Restore Mother Nature Bond Act," which local reporting indicated could raise enough revenue to acquire 40 Quay St. from the MTA to add to Bushwick Inlet Park. While Governor Cuomo soon after exercised his emergency powers to cancel the act before it reached voters, many in our community believed the RFP was at least temporarily on hold. We were alarmed to learn only recently that the MTA has forged ahead and plans to award a respondent soon.

I am absolutely committed to working with fellow elected officials to identify and secure whatever funds are necessary to acquire this land from the MTA, relocate the Mobile Wash Unit that currently occupies the site, and add this ecologically-delicate parcel to Bushwick Inlet Park for generations of New Yorkers to enjoy. I respectfully request that you suspend the RFP while we pursue this effort.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emily Gallagher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Assemblymember Emily Gallagher  
50<sup>th</sup> District