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Honorable Eric L. Adams
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

November 4, 2023

Dear Mayor Adams:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity proposals. We recognize that the economic realities of the past few decades, coupled with current city policies, have worsened the shortage of affordable housing. Unfortunately, these proposals represent a blunt instrument that does not consider the diverse needs of our city's communities. For this reason, **the Bellcourt Civic Association, a neighborhood of early 20th-century homes representing some 500 households in the heart of Bayside, Queens, stands firmly against the City of Yes Housing proposals.** Here are just a few of our objections:

Transit-Oriented Development: Our neighborhood, just a block or so away from the Bayside LIRR station, sits within the Greater Transit-Oriented Development Area. While the blocks adjacent to the tracks already accommodate multifamily housing, Bellcourt is primarily zoned for one-family homes, with a typical lot size of 40 X 100 feet. The push for development near transit would rapidly change the character of this neighborhood, increasing density without enhancing the necessary supporting infrastructure. Depending on how the proposal is interpreted, it may permit the construction of large apartment buildings on some lots in the neighborhood, which would further exacerbate crowding, parking, and stress on infrastructure.

Parking: Eliminating the parking mandate in new construction makes no sense in Northeast Queens and other communities throughout the five boroughs that are beyond reach of the subway. It is disingenuous to pretend residents of these neighborhoods don't need cars—whatever the vision for the next century may be, residents here today rely on cars for work, shopping, commuting, and daily errands. There are no commercial garages—our choices are driveways or the street. As we are located near a train station, weekday parking is extremely dense. Homeowners already illegally pave over lawns and yards to accommodate their cars, worsening water drainage during storms. Parking is a necessity, particularly as neighborhoods become more densely populated.

ADUs: These are often presented as solutions for housing aging parents or providing starter units for young families. While we agree that both populations need housing, we don't agree that adding disruptive and dangerous ADUs on small lots in less-dense areas is the answer. Allowing ADUs on tiny NYC lots eliminates much-needed green space, overcrowds neighborhoods that are not equipped to handle a doubling in population, and effectively eliminates single-family zoning. And legalizing existing basement apartments, particularly in light of increasing storm frequency and flooding, is foolhardy.

Increased FAR: Houses in our neighborhood are already pushing the envelope on size. Many are illegal and therefore unregulated two-families. None of this new construction has done anything to improve affordability. In fact, house prices are skyrocketing. Allowing larger homes in single-family districts will simply lead to larger, more expensive homes, doing absolutely nothing for the affordable housing crunch.

We look forward to hearing more details and asking questions when DCP representatives bring the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity to our local community board. But we can say with great surety that the current zoning proposals in the City of Yes will wreak havoc on our neighborhoods and as such are deemed entirely unacceptable by our community.

Roseann Foley Henry
On behalf of the executive committee of the Bellcourt Civic Association