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**Gale A. Brewer, Borough President**

May 13, 2021

Hon. Bill de Blasio  
Mayor  
City of New York  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Dermot F. Shea  
Commissioner  
NYC Police Department  
1 Police Plaza  
New York, NY 10038

Dear Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Shea:

I am concerned that the city's streets, parks, and sidewalks continue to be plagued by all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) a.k.a quad bikes, dirt bikes, and dangerous street racing. Operating ATVs and dirt bikes is illegal in New York City (NYC Administrative Code § 19-196), and poses a great danger to motorists, pedestrians, and even the drivers. Along with this being a nuisance issue, often the vehicle operators drive recklessly, block traffic, lack helmets and headlights, and speed through stop lights.

It is my understanding that, due to safety concerns, the New York City Police Department (NYPD) has a "no-chase policy" when pursuing these drivers. While understandable, further measures must be taken to combat this community problem. I understand that recently the Recovery Task Force, working with Lorraine Grillo and Chief Monahan, has gone to the gas stations where the owners of the ATV's are filling up and, when appropriate, has confiscated the vehicle. 150 vehicles so far have been confiscated. I urge you to continue directing officers to issue fines and seize vehicles rather than arresting individuals.

Addressing the challenge of ATV's operating illegally is not an easy task. I congratulate the Washington Heights-Inwood Task Force which has developed a list of recommendations (enclosed) for your consideration. I recommend you review them and work with the Community Boards and this Task Force to develop policies that are appropriate and practical for all stakeholders.

**Potential Solutions to Combat the Illegal Operation of Motorized Bikes & Street Racing**

*Pedestrian & Street Safety Task Force*

I suggest that the Mayor's Office & NYPD create a Pedestrian & Street Safety Task Force to determine the areas with the largest amount of illegal vehicle activity and recommend potential solutions. I advise enlisting the help of Community Boards in identifying specific locations where these drivers begin their route, end their route, and store their vehicles. Lastly, these motorized bike and street racing groups are well organized and strategize their routes. I believe this task force would be useful in determining how these groups organize through social media channels such as Facebook groups, Twitter, and Instagram hashtags, etc.

### *Incentivize Reporting of Illegal Riding*

Following the lead of the NYC Department of Environmental Protection, perhaps the City could explore an incentive program. Similar to DEP's Citizens Air Complaint Program, a citizen would receive a reward if their efforts led to the enforcement of a violation in the City's traffic code related to ATVs, dirt bikes, or street races.

### *Increase the Cost of the Summonses & Fine Gas Stations*

In New York City, operating ATVs and dirt bikes constitutes a violation punishable by a fine of up to \$500 for the first offense and up to \$1,000 dollars for any subsequent offenses (NYC Administrative Code § 19-196). These fines may not be enough to deter drivers from operating these illegal vehicles. In New Haven, Connecticut, a recent ordinance increased fines on a first offense for drivers illegally operating vehicles, and fined gas stations for allowing ATVs to fill up without being on a trailer. NYPD should explore the use of these tactics in New York City. Measures such as these would discourage illegal activity.

### *Education Campaign & Legislation*

It is imperative that the Mayor's office communicate to the public that this vehicular activity is illegal. The Mayor should introduce a directive that details when, where, and how these vehicles can be seized and impounded by NYPD. Also, the directive would need to clearly define illegal operation and illegal storage of these vehicles. Due to the volume and frequency of reckless motorized bike and street racing activity, it seems to many NYC residents that this behavior is allowed. An education campaign explaining the directive and the dangers of this activity would be helpful to residents and operators. Lastly, we must remind New Yorkers that in order to drive on NYC streets, a vehicle must be registered, inspected, and be licensed by the State of New York.

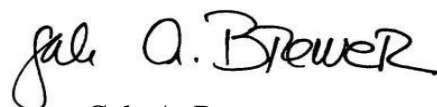
### *Increase Notification & Response Time*

We must give NYPD the tools and information to quickly respond to dangerous drivers and large, disruptive groups of vehicles. I suggest a tip line or new 311 request option. For example, citizens should be able to enter a "Dirt Bike/ATV" and "Street Racing/Intentional Car Backfire" request under the Noise and Vehicles sections on the 311 app. This information will potentially allow NYPD to coordinate efforts and track traffic routes. Additionally, NYPD could use the information to identify patterns and investigate meeting points and storage areas.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. With summer approaching, we must act quickly to prevent an ATV, dirt bike, or street racing-related tragedy – crashes have occurred in other cities.

I look forward to your response. Please feel free to contact April Adams, Deputy Director of Community Affairs, with any questions. She may be reached at [apriladams@manhattanbp.nyc.gov](mailto:apriladams@manhattanbp.nyc.gov) and 929.337.0978.

Sincerely,

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

Gale A. Brewer