

For Immediate Release
November 6, 2023
Contact: Mitch Schwartz, (914) 330-1026

Elected Officials and Carnegie Hill Neighbors Protest Massive, Unnecessary Sidewalk Cell Towers and Offer Solutions for City's Technology Goals

New report, released with Assembly Member Bores, charts a better path forward

NEW YORK—[Carnegie Hill Neighbors](#) joined U.S. Rep. Jerry Nadler, Assembly Member Alex Bores, Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright, Council Member Keith Powers outside City Hall today to protest the City's plans for massive, out-of-scale, and unnecessary sidewalk cell towers in historic districts across the city. At the press conference, Assembly Member Bores released "Navigating the 5G Revolution: Solutions for New York City's Connectivity Challenges," a new report charting a better path forward for New York City's technology goals. Copies of the report, which will be [online](#) tomorrow, are available today upon request.

Advocates rallied to demand the City reconsider the Link 5G program. The 32-foot towers are redundant, out of scale and context, and already out of date; less intrusive and less expensive technologies are already available to help meet the City's technology goals.

"Carnegie Hill Neighbors is gratified by Assembly Member Bores' discovery, outlined in his report, and the breadth of common sense alternatives in use elsewhere demonstrates that New Yorkers do have options when a forum for discussion is made," said **Joanna Cawley, Executive Director, Carnegie Hill Neighbors**. "Several verified options exist - and show that segmenting a citywide plan to consider sensitive neighborhoods like historic districts is possible and the right thing to do."

"I'm proud of my work with our community to pause the installation of these towers by urging the FCC to reevaluate their impact under the National Historic Preservation Act, CityBridge continues to ignore the concerns of our community as they move forward with their flawed plan," said **Rep. Jerrold Nadler**. "I applaud Assembly Member Bores for his initiative in releasing today's report that provides alternative options to the current proposal that will preserve our city's character and still meet our connectivity goals."

"5G is the future, and expanding access is going to have massive benefits for all New Yorkers — but 32 foot towers which cost more to provide less are not the way forward," said **Assembly Member Alex Bores**.

"It's crucial that we obtain more research on 5G cell towers' unknown health and environmental effects before construction continues. New Yorkers deserve to know how this technology could impact their

lives, especially using their tax dollars. I commend Carnegie Hill Neighbors for protecting the character of our communities,” said **Assembly Member Rebecca A. Seawright**.

“I share Carnegie Hill Neighbors’ concerns about the placement of 32-foot-tall 5G towers in historic districts, especially because OTI and CityBridge have been unable to produce data regarding the need for these towers in Carnegie Hill. They have made - and continue to make - haphazard siting changes that have left the community feeling confused and anxious throughout the process. I ask that CityBridge reconsider the location of these towers to find an appropriate balance between the needs of the City and the needs of its residents,” said **City Council Majority Leader Keith Powers**.

“Since the announcement of these 5G towers, constituents have raised concerns regarding the size and density of the towers. We should look toward more aesthetically appropriate alternatives that fit into the character of our neighborhoods. Other cities like Los Angeles, Denver, Portland, and El Paso use more contextual smart pole technology for the city to emulate,” said **City Council Member Julie Menin**.

These elected officials, longtime champions in the effort to protect historic districts, have co-signed letters to the [Landmarks Preservation Commission](#) and [FCC](#) in protest of the City’s proposed plans.

“Navigating the 5G Revolution: Solutions for New York City’s Connectivity Challenges” is the first report of its kind from a sitting elected official. It offers three key recommendations to put the City’s plans for better connectivity back on track. They include:

1. **Ensure real community engagement** by improving transparency with easier access to public information on the City’s plans;
2. **Optimize installation on existing infrastructure** by pivoting to street poles and preserving the visual aesthetics of the surrounding environment; and
3. **Foster innovative designs** by looking to other cities for inspiration and finding creative solutions that reflect the character of the neighborhoods they’re in.

Advocates noted CityBridge, the company awarded the Link 5G contract, has a history of botched rollouts, civil liberty complaints, missed installation deadlines, and late payments to the City. They called on the City to develop a safer, cheaper, less intrusive way to expand wireless service.

Existing street furniture alternatives to the stand alone towers are varied. One example is on site and is a “backpack” model that addresses the city’s technology goals and considers the public realm by reducing streetscape clutter, carbon footprint, pedestrian safety, curb access, preserving the sidewalk for more green space to reduce more potential harms from climate events.

The press conference built on recent news reported in the [New York Post](#) regarding alternative technology solutions to provide connectivity on smaller poles that would include additional community engagement and feedback.

“The New York Landmarks Conservancy urges the City to consider alternatives for 5G equipment. There are ways to increase coverage that would be less obtrusive than the current equipment which is degrading neighborhoods across the boroughs,” said **Peg Breen, President, New York Landmarks Conservancy.**