

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY
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Mayor Eric Adams
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Matthew C. Fraser, CTO
Office of Technology & Innovation
The NYC Office of Technology & Innovation
2 MetroTech Center, P1
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Sarah Carroll, Chair
Landmarks Preservation Commission
1 Centre Street, 9th floor
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor Adams, Chief Technology Officer Fraser, and Chairwoman Carroll,

I am writing to express my concerns about the plans for installing 18 new 32-foot tall 5G towers on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. While it is important to ensure that every New Yorker has access to 5G service, oversaturating the Upper East Side with these towers where connectivity is well over 100% does little to achieve that goal. Instead of expanding service where it is needed, the 5G towers would be an unsightly burden on the area, which is a relatively small geographic area of all of New York City and in many of the site locations, designated historic.

The 32-foot towers would dominate the landscape on many blocks. They are the equivalent height of a three story building – taller than many brownstones in the area. They rise above the tree line, classic Bishop's Crook lampposts (26-foot tall) and Cobra Head lampposts (30-foot tall). Residents worry about having the towers directly adjacent to their windows. Furthermore, the kiosk tablets that City Bridge plans to affix to towers in mixed use and commercial districts would add noise and light pollution to the streetscape and disrupt residents in their homes 24 hours a day. The towers themselves would add to sidewalk congestion, creating yet another street obstruction that people would have to maneuver around.

The siting of towers should be based on need. I understand that the Upper East Side is one of the most fully wired communities, with over 100% mobile phone and broadband coverage. While some 5G towers might be necessary to speed service, 18 towers seem excessive, particularly since the current plan calls for heavy saturation of certain areas and sparse coverage of others. Of the 280 sites selected, 31 are below 96th Street in Manhattan and 58% of those are located on the Upper East Side. One area in the East 60s is slated to have 5 new towers located just one block from each other (807 Fifth Avenue, 688 Madison Avenue, 24 E 63rd Street, 30 E 64th Street and 570 Park Avenue). It is hard to believe that

this small area, or the Upper East Side as a whole, needs such a disproportionately high share of the new towers.

I understand that 15 of the 18 sites are located either in the Carnegie Hill Historic District or the Upper East Side Historic District. Carnegie Hill comprises 15% of the Upper East Side but would receive over 50% of the proposed towers. These modern cellphone towers conflict with the iconic streetscapes of those two historic communities. If the towers were necessary to provide service to those communities, it would be one thing, but these communities are already well-served and the excess of towers is unnecessary to ensure service. The Landmarks Preservation Commission should specifically review any towers sited in a historic district and should offer the community an opportunity to comment in a public hearing.

Locations along Madison Avenue conflict with existing guidelines for illuminated storefronts and signage. The Special Madison Avenue Preservation District has design standards that specifically prohibit illuminated advertising, which is commonly affixed to the towers. At recent Community Board 8 hearings, City Bridge stated its intent to install ad kiosks in five sites within historic districts (46 East 91st Street, 1354 Madison Avenue, 24 East 63rd Street, 688 Madison Avenue, and 30 East 64th Street). There is no reason for these towers to violate the standards met by other commercial operations.

Community Board 8 has called for a moratorium on the construction and planning of Link5G poles and devices, and I share their concerns and join their call. In addition, Carnegie Hill Neighbors has organized a petition on Change.org that has garnered more than 2500 signatures, and other community organizations have spoken out against this plan. I urge you to develop a holistic, comprehensive plan that is based on need, that reuses existing infrastructure wherever possible, and that minimizes the intrusion of kiosks that add to light and noise pollution. Additionally, the city should explain to the community how these specific locations will close gaps in coverage and will not create unnecessary redundancies.

Very truly yours,

Hon. CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Former Member of Congress, 12th Congressional District

CC:

State Senator Liz Krueger
State Assembly Member Alex Bores
State Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright
Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine
City Council Majority Leader Keith Powers
City Council Member Julie Menin
Deputy Mayor Maria Torres-Springer
Deputy Mayor Sheena Wright
Manhattan Community Board 8
Carnegie Hill Neighbors
Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts
Matt Bauer, Madison Avenue BID