



**Statement in Support of Int 1933**  
**To the City Council Committee on Transportation**  
**Submitted by Brooklyn Greenway Initiative Executive Director Terri Carta**  
**April 24, 2020**

Brooklyn Greenway Initiative (BGI) is a private nonprofit that for two decades has been focused on the development, establishment, and long-term stewardship of the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway, a vital and nearly complete component of the greenways network throughout NYC's five boroughs. As the "backbone" of the city's bike infrastructure network, greenways serve as safe and accessible green corridors for active recreation and non-motorized transportation. They are linear connectors of people and communities, providing public access to green space and the waterfront, commercial corridors, and job centers.

**BGI enthusiastically supports the proposed COVID-19 Relief Package calling for NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) to install no less than 75 centerline miles of streets as temporary space for pedestrians and cyclists.** This will enable New Yorkers in all neighborhoods to safely get outside for fresh air and exercise for their physical and mental health. These spaces will allow citizens to connect with community while remaining physically distant, and to commute to essential jobs using alternative means of transportation.

Implementation of this new Local Law should address open streets needs along two lines: space for stationary or hyper-local activities like taking in fresh air and sunshine, neighbors socializing from a distance, or children playing outside; and space for longer-range mobility like commuting and running or cycling for exercise.

For longer-distance needs, BGI advocates use of two ready-made and already-approved frameworks to facilitate quick installation of temporary infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists throughout the five boroughs, benefiting more New Yorkers faster:

- The Green Wave Plan map of projects to be implemented by the end of 2021
- The Streets Master Plan use of a "connectivity index" for prioritization of projects

As other cities transition to the next phase of the COVID-19 crisis, they have seen an increased use of bicycles for transportation and healthful exercise. We expect the same in New York City where we have already seen surges in bike traffic. BGI's Greenway usage data collected continuously since last June near the Brooklyn Navy Yard shows a 140% surge during the first three weeks of March as Coronavirus hit NYC, followed by sustained higher-than-normal use in late March and April. Over the last three weekends, use has almost doubled week over week [our sensor recorded 7,268 bikes on 4/19 vs 3,925 on 4/4], climbing higher than the busiest day recorded last summer. Our data correlates with increased bike traffic over East River Bridges and patterns of use by essential workers reported by CitiBike.

Right now, the Greenway is providing critical safe passage for people commuting to essential jobs and safe space for solo exercise and stress-relief. But this isn't true where gaps in the planned network remain.

**The Council and DOT need to prioritize connecting gaps in the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway and our citywide greenways network to help New Yorkers access public space and safely commute post-pandemic.**

Open streets are needed within neighborhoods and communities, and also needed between them. Closing major gaps in the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway – in Red Hook, Sunset Park, from Coney Island Creek to Plumb Beach, and between the Navy Yard and Brooklyn Bridge Park – will immediately benefit Brooklyn's 2.65 million residents and over 1.1 million employees.

Thank you, Speaker Johnson, for bringing this conversation to the fore with leadership from Council Members Rivera, Rodriguez, Menchaca, Kallos, Reynoso, Levin, Cabrera, Constantinides, Van Bramer, Powers, Koo, Levine, Lander and Chin. Thank you, Chair Rodriguez and the Transportation Committee, for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record.