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**THE COUNCIL
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March 7, 2012

Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan
New York City Department of Transportation
55 Water Street
New York, NY 10041

Dear Commissioner Sadik-Khan:

We are writing to request that the New York City Department of Transportation restore public access to the abandoned railroad tunnel below Atlantic Avenue, located on the border of the 39th and 33rd Council Districts in Brooklyn. Popularly known as the Atlantic Avenue Tunnel, it is an important community asset and a significant historic resource for our constituents and for the City as a whole.

Built in 1844, the Atlantic Avenue Tunnel is the oldest railway tunnel beneath a city street in North America. The tunnel is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and borders the Brooklyn Heights and Cobble Hill Historic Districts. According to the Brooklyn Historic Railway Association, a local non-profit organization that conducted tours of the tunnel until December 2010, over 12,000 people visited the tunnel in 2010.

Given the tunnel's historic value and the demonstrated interest in its preservation, we were disappointed to learn that the public no longer has access to the Atlantic Avenue Tunnel. We would like to understand why public access to the tunnel was terminated and ascertain a path to re-open the tunnel and restore this important community asset.

We appreciate your prompt response to our inquiry. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Rachel Fuentes in Councilmember Levin's District office at rfuentes@council.nyc.gov or Catherine Zinnel in Councilmember Brad Lander's office at czinnel@council.nyc.gov.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Brad Lander in black ink.

Brad Lander
City Councilmember, District 39

Handwritten signature of Stephen Levin in black ink.

Stephen Levin
City Councilmember, District 33