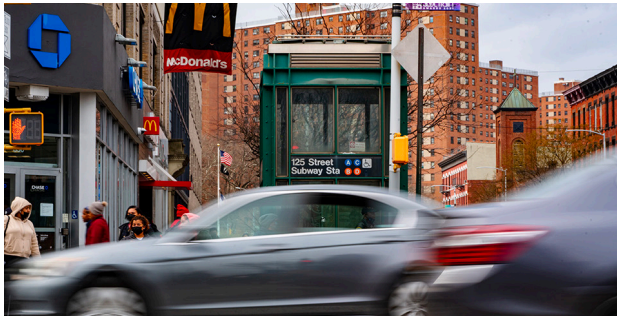


SEPTEMBER 7, 2022 - NYC RESIDENT PARKING PERMITS IN THE NEWS - By C. Buttenwieser

Amid parking crisis, parking permit advocacy rises in Upper Manhattan

For the 15 years that she commuted from Manhattan to her job in Connecticut by car, Renee Baruch wasted hours searching for parking on the Upper West Side.



By Gabi Levy / Columbia Daily Spectator

In May, **Baruch** founded **NYC Resident Parking Permits Now**, a grassroots campaign that focuses on addressing the pervasive lack of residential parking spaces for drivers in the city by canvassing neighborhoods and filing requests to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority board.

Recently, Baruch submitted comments to the MTA discussing the presence of parking permits in almost every other large city in the world. She cited the proposal of former Mayor Michael Bloomberg and support from City Council member Gale Brewer for a residential parking program.

Residential parking permits, the allocation of parking spaces to local residents, have been a long-standing issue, addressed as early as 2008 by Bloomberg during his mayorship. According to Baruch, the root of the issue in part comes from out-of-state residents and commuters.

“You’ll see a proliferation of license plates from Connecticut and New Jersey and Massachusetts, and many of these people do not pay income taxes in New York City at all,” Baruch said. “People who want to have residential parking permit programs pay income taxes in New York City, and it would reduce carbon emissions by reducing the [number of] drivers searching for parking.”

Elliott Sclar, a professor emeritus at Columbia’s Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, explained the frustration of local residents with out-of-state parked cars.

“People who actually have second homes outside of

Manhattan, ... they register their cars getting insurance [there] because it becomes a cheaper place to do it,” Sclar said. “But then they take those cars into Manhattan where they were avoiding paying taxes and fees in New York. But they’re taking up parking spaces from other New Yorkers who say, ‘Look, you’re not paying the full cost. I am. I should have more rights to the space than you do.’”

Following the height of the pandemic, the problem has been exacerbated by a significant increase in car registrations, as well as the continued presence of outdoor dining sheds and the ever increasing presence of delivery trucks. According to Sclar, the issue of parking space is particularly salient on the Upper West Side and West Harlem due to the high density living.

However, not everyone thinks that prioritizing parking over other amenities is necessary. Dave Robinson, the president of the Morningside Heights Community Coalition, sees amenities like outdoor restaurants and Citi Bike stands as worthwhile investments in the city—even if they may take away from parking spaces.

“[I am] definitely not that sympathetic to that market and [that it is] hard to find parking,” Robinson said.

Harlem-based environmental group WE ACT has advocated for parking permits in Upper Manhattan. Originally, Sclar worked with WE ACT following concerns about commuters parking in Harlem before getting on the subway to avoid paying for congestion pricing charges that begin on 60th Street. The study, however, found that there is so little parking space in Harlem that most commuters would not seek out parking in the area anyway.

Although local advocacy for parking permits has grown in recent months, it continues to face pushback. While Baruch argues that parking permits have a positive environmental impact by lowering the carbon footprint created by drivers searching for parking at length, some special interest lobbyists use an environmental argument in a different way. Baruch says that they argue that parking permits would encourage New York City residents to drive more and lead to an overall increase in cars in Manhattan. *Continue Reading Online.*