



October 8, 2021

Bill de Blasio
Mayor of the City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: African Burial Ground Request for Proposal

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

As a co-chair of the task force visioning a community-led future for the site at the corner of Bedford and Church avenues, it has always been my primary task to amplify the voices of Flatbush residents and their vision. Since the launch of the task force late last year, and over the course of this public engagement process, a clear preference has been expressed for a memorial to be sited at the Flatbush African Burial Ground along with accompanying open space.

While the task force's final vision document has yet to be released, I stand in solidarity with the vision for a memorial and open space. Our borough absolutely needs to build more affordable housing, especially in Flatbush, but I cannot support building it on an area shown to have human remains of enslaved peoples below. This is an opportunity to truly reflect on the painful past of our City's founding and recognize the role that our overlooked ancestors have played in its growth and, more importantly, to properly memorialize their lives.

In addition to a dearth of affordable housing, this community has long faced a shortage of parkland relative to the rest of the city, and COVID-19 has proven the public health imperative of open space. I believe the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) should transfer this property to New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) or the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC) for the development of a culturally-appropriate memorial and open space, potentially funded through alternative revenue generation mechanisms such as the transfer of development rights from nearby properties.

I urge our agencies working on this vision to continue to engage the Flatbush community to identify other sites where we can deliver greater housing affordability to our neighbors in need. I truly believe that the task force has done its job to accurately reflect the community's vision of open space and memorialization and I thank its members for its continued work and to all who have engaged in this effort.

Should you have any questions, please contact my chief of staff, Ryan Lynch, at ryanlynch@brooklynbp.nyc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eric L. Adams". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Eric Adams
Brooklyn Borough President

EA/rl