



CITY OF BEACON New York

Lee Kyriacou, Mayor

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MAYOR KYRIACOU ANNOUNCES MAIN STREET ACCESS INITIATIVE, WITH CITIZEN COMMITTEE TO TACKLE PARKING, TRAFFIC, TRANSIT AND PEDESTRIAN ISSUES

Beacon, NY: At the second official meeting of the 2020 Beacon City Council on January 21, Mayor Lee Kyriacou announced a Main Street Access Initiative to improve and plan for parking, traffic, transit and pedestrian issues – beginning with the formation of a special committee of Beacon residents and Main Street businesses.

In announcing the Main Street Access Initiative, Mayor Kyriacou noted, “The City has not kept pace with development in terms of planning for and providing Main Street parking, traffic management and pedestrian access. We must quickly make some basic improvements in Main Street access, while laying out plans for longer term capital investments. I will work closely with the City Council to establish, set goals for and provide resources for this initiative.”

Kyriacou outlined the basic components that he wants to see in the Main Street Access Initiative:

Main Street Access Committee: With City Council input and oversight, the Mayor will create an *ad hoc* committee, appoint members and a chair, establish specific objectives and timing, and provide needed planning resources.

Overall Goal: The Committee is to develop a holistic action plan for sustainable Main Street parking, traffic, public transit and pedestrian use – both short-term improvements (e.g., large blue “P” parking signs, modified striping to create extra parking spaces) and a long-term plan for appropriate infrastructure investment and funding (e.g., parking facilities, transit options).

Long-Term Plan: The Committee’s long-term view should look at access in a comprehensive fashion over at least a 10-year horizon. Current and projected parking needs should be considered block-by-block, with a focus on at least some parking for each side of each block of Main Street. Traffic and parking plans should take into account changing patterns of private vehicle use, as well as public transit, pedestrian and non-vehicular access.

Funding: Plans at a high level must consider funding mechanisms – other than property tax increases – for proposed capital investment in parking or other infrastructure. Funding discussions should look at grants, contributions from Main Street buildings that lack sufficient parking, monthly user fees for resident parking stickers, allocation of a portion of existing higher tax rates paid by commercial properties, and other concepts.

The Mayor said, “Our Main Street is the heart of Beacon. Improving access is critical to Main Street’s ability to handle more people living nearby, which itself is critical to Main Street’s

viability. We need to deal with access holistically and for the long term. I trust our community will come together to help build a better, vibrant and sustainable Main Street.”

The next step will be discussions by the City Council of the proposed Main Street Access Initiative at the next workshop in January.

About the City of Beacon:

Beacon, New York is located on the eastern shore of the Hudson River 60 miles north of New York City, with a population of 15,000. Originally a Native American settlement, the area was purchased from the Wappinger Tribe in 1683 and settled by Dutch and other Europeans, leading to the riverfront community of Fishkill Landing on the Hudson, and the mill community of Matteawan on Fishkill Creek. The two communities were incorporated together as the City of Beacon in 1913, named for the Revolutionary War signal fires on Mount Beacon. Beacon thrived as a 19th and 20th Century factory city, but as factories closed after WWII and the local economy declined, the city went through a period of hard times. Today, Beacon has successfully reinvented itself as a 21st Century river community centered around tourism, the arts and access to the scenic Hudson River heritage area. A diverse and thriving small city, it is now home to DIA:Beacon (one of the largest exhibition spaces in the country for modern and contemporary art), a network of Hudson River parks connecting to Fishkill Creek and Mount Beacon trails, and a vibrant historic Main Street of art galleries, shops, cultural venues and restaurants.