



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Tony Avella

## Avella: City Must Acquire Private Streets

TONY AVELLA January 22, 2018

**Queens, NY** – Last week, State Senator Tony Avella stood with residents of Willow Place and Stuart Lane in Douglaston to call on the City of New York to take control of these two small streets and all other privately owned streets throughout the city.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) previously announced plans to release a study on the status of acquiring privately owned streets throughout the City. However, DOT has thus far failed to respond to Senator Avella's calls for updates on this study, details on this study, and how recommendations can be made for what streets to include in the study.

Senator Avella sent three separate letters to the DOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg regarding the privately owned streets such as Willow Place and Stuart Lane as well as the continuation of 116<sup>th</sup> Street that connects 115<sup>th</sup> and 116<sup>th</sup> Streets in College Point.

"All of these streets are actively used by residents and some are even used heavily by City agencies but are in deplorable conditions and littered with large potholes, limiting motorists' ability to drive safely," **said Senator Avella.**

Senator Avella has also announced plans to introduce legislation in the New York State Senate to require the City to obtain ownership of each private street and is asking residents who live on privately owned streets to contact his district office so he can include their street

in his legislation.

“I would appreciate hearing from any homeowners experiencing this issue so that I can make this legislation as comprehensive as possible,” **stated Senator Avella.**

Willow Place and Stuart Lane are two streets in Douglaston that are privately owned streets and as a result are ignored by the City. Residents on these streets say it is a burden on their quality of life and safety. When residents on Stuart Lane first moved here in the 1970s the street was owned and maintained by the City but over 10 years ago was sold to a private owner in a move that many have called a mistake.

The lack of city services has resulted in a hazardous situation for the residents of these blocks. There are no street lights, the streets don't get paved or plowed, and when trees fall during a storm—like they did during Superstorm Sandy—residents have to find alternative ways to remove them. Some residents even suggested that the City should reduce their taxes since they don't receive City services.

In the past, tensions between the private owner, who refuses to maintain the street, and the residents escalated to the owner threatening to put a toll on the road and force residents to pay in order to access their own homes.

“It's shameful to walk down these privately owned streets and see how the lack of basic services has deteriorated everyone's quality of life. The City needs to address this situation and take control over all of the privately owned streets throughout the five boroughs. New Yorkers who live off these private streets need to receive the same city services that everyone else does. In many of these cases the City has approved homes to be built on these streets and should take responsibility for this oversight,” **added Senator Avella.**

“When we first moved here it was beautiful, the roads were paved, we had garbage collection, we didn’t have to bring our garbage up the block, the road was maintained. Beautiful. Then little by little, we didn’t know the road was sold, but started to notice no garbage collection, pot holes opened up, and the road deteriorated. Living here has become terrible. Nobody wants to come down here because they’re afraid. The quality of life is terrible,” **said Stuart Lane resident Peggy Kalesis.**