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\*\*\*Press Release\*\*\*

## Motorcycle and Motorscooter Riders Rally At City Hall On 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Ride To Work Day

*Rider Groups Call Attention to the Benefits of Riding To Work and The Need for Designated Parking*

***New York, July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005***

Dozens of motorcycle and motorscooter riders rode to City Hall this morning to celebrate the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Ride To Work Day (<http://www.ridetowork.org>), an annual event founded to call attention to the positive aspects of riding powered two wheeled vehicles (PTW). The rally, organized by members of the Vespa Club of New York and ParkingNOW, was also meant to call attention to the need for designated motorcycle and motorscooter parking in New York City. Riders, rode in caravan over the Brooklyn Bridge to City Hall and down from points North in Manhattan.

Speakers called on the city to create designated on and off street parking areas for Powered Two-Wheeled Vehicles (or PTWs) the generic name for motorcycles and motorscooters (smaller vehicles in the tradition of Italian Vespas). To date, the Department of Transportation has been dismissive of demands of PTW owners.

“If you go to any other great urban city: London, Paris, Rome, San Francisco ... You will find accommodations for people who ride scooters and motorcycles.” Said Noel Hidalgo, a founding member of Vespa Club of New York and activist with ParkingNOW. Hidalgo continued, “What these cities realize is that a person on a scooter or motorcycle is one less car coming into a central business district. That means less congestion and less pollution which means people get where they are going faster. But in New York City there is no available PTW parking.” While London has gone as far as to waive the central city congestion pricing for PTWs, New York City has eliminated most designated parking areas including one at Battery Park and Greenwich street last fall, and at the beginning of the summer a defacto spot at Lafayette and Kenmare in Soho.

“A PTW takes up a small fraction of the space of a car or SUV, we are willing to pay for parking in shopping districts and business districts—where cars pay—but the system does not allow for it.” Said Gregory Heller, founder of ParkingNOW, “We cannot park legally on the streets without risking a ticket or worse, damage to our vehicles. Muni-meters do not allow for a motorcycle,” because there is no way to secure the receipt to the vehicle. Furthermore, Heller added, “Drivers of cars and SUVs regularly knock into PTWs, or even pick them up and move them out of legal spaces into illegal ones.”

Theft is also a constant danger for motorcycle and scooter owners. Thieves can easily circumvent built-in security features, or even pick PTWs up and put them into vans or trucks. Riders assert the best way to secure their vehicles is by locking them to an immovable object like a sign or light post, or a bicycle rack. ParkingNOW is calling on the city to create designated parking areas that have secure attachment points so riders have something to lock their vehicles to.

“The fact is that there are over sixty thousand single car metered parking spaces in New York City, motorcycles and motorscooters make up almost 2 percent of all private vehicles registered in the five boroughs, if metered parking spaces were allotted proportionately, there would be nearly 1000 parking spaces for PTWs.” said Heller.

The rally was not only about parking. Mary Anne Powers, a veteran rider with over 15 years of experience in New York City talked about the ease and speed with which she could get to work and meetings, “Riding a scooter changed my experience of New York City. While other people are stuck in cars or consigned to the fixed paths of subways and buses, my scooter lets me go anywhere, at any time. It about more than just getting from point A to B, its fun, fast and efficient, but there is also cultural and historical significance to scooters.” Ms. Powers sentiments were echoed by other riders like Cristina Topham, from Bay Ridge, who rides her scooter everywhere, “I wouldn't be able to live where I do without it. It just makes so much sense. Much more than a car.”

“SUVs are completely out of scale with New York City,” said Carter Booth. Inspired by the ease with which his girlfriend Katherine Stanfield zipped off to work each day on her scooter, he decided to add another scooter to their household for himself. “Most of the time, you see one person or two in a hummer, or Yukon, they are adding excess weight to the road, taking up huge spaces, burning gas, causing traffic and often doubled parked because they can't even find a parking space. We just zip by on the scooter and laugh to ourselves. When we park, both scooters together take up less than a third of the amount of space the typical car in the city uses.”

Riders demonstrated, with the aid of a length of rope measured to the outline of an SUV, that six to eight PTWs could fit in the same amount of space.

“We are not trying to ban cars. And we are not asking for carte-blanch. We are asking for a reasonable accommodation based on the recognition that our vehicles are lower impact [on the city] than cars, SUVs and trucks, and there are some special circumstances and dangers that we face— theft, damage and the inability to secure a legal parking spot under the current law which states one motor vehicle per spot. Nothing stops a driver from moving my bike in a space so that he can park at the meter and now i am illegally parked.” Said Porter Geiske, fellow New York City Motorcyclist. “Far too often, drivers in New York park by Braille—the don't stop till the hit something.” Added Porter Geiske, “We're just looking for a little more awareness and protection.”

ParkingNOW is also asking the city to reduce the fines levied for motorcycle and scooter parking violations. PTW's have a smaller impact than cars, SUVs, and trucks, yet violations are levied at the same rate. “Parking on the sidewalk, one of the few safe places is \$110 ticket. If my PTW is seen equal in eyes of the law, why can't I have equal parking rights on the street” said Noel Hidalgo. “It's insane that PTW are seen as a cash cow for this city.”

Lastly, ParkingNOW would like to see the city create PTW parking at proportionate rates in municipal garages and require privately operated public garages to set aside an adequate number of spaces. Most publicly accessible parking garages will not accept PTWs or charge rates only marginally less than that for regular cars.

**ABOUT VESPA CLUB OF NEW YORK (VCNY):**

The Vespa Club of New York endorses and supports scooters and scootering, bringing together all types of scooter riders in the New York City for the love of their scooter. Vespa Club of New York was founded in early 2005 and grew out of the active NY scooter community that numbers in the hundreds. For information, visit [www.VespaClubOfNewYork.com](http://www.VespaClubOfNewYork.com)

**ABOUT PARKINGNOW!:**

ParkingNOW! is the campaign for designated on-street, and off-street parking for powered two wheeled vehicles (PTWs), including motorcycles and motorscooters in New York City. ParkingNOW! Was founded in 2003 to address the need for designated PTW parking. For more information, visit [www.ParkingNow.org](http://www.ParkingNow.org)

**ABOUT RIDE TO WORK DAY:**

Founded in 1992, Ride to Work Day advocates and supports the use of motorcycles for transportation and provides information about two-wheeled transportation to the public. Participating Ride to Work Day Countries include the United States, Germany, the Philippines, England, Germany, Israel, Turkey and Ecuador. For more information, visit [www.RideToWork.org](http://www.RideToWork.org)

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