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## West Street garage converting to bus parking

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The Spitzer administration is planning to convert a West Street garage from private parking to bus parking, potentially removing 175 commuter and tourist buses from idling along the lower Manhattan riverfront.

Avi Schick, chairman of the Lower Manhattan Development Corp., said West Street holds a “wall of buses” many days, and that they are polluting the air and clogging streets.

“To foster the growth of a successful residential, commercial and cultural district, we must make lower Manhattan less congested,” Mr. Schick told group of more than 200 executives at Thursday’s Crain’s New York Business breakfast.

The garage conversion could also free up 3 million square feet of residential “air rights,” or development rights that could be transferred to surrounding buildings, he said. The additional air rights could open up residential development in the south Greenwich Street corridor.

Mr. Schick said the development rights could provide the last opportunity in lower Manhattan for a substantial affordable housing program. But when pressed for details, he said, “let’s not get ahead of ourselves. The first step is to get the garage.”

The West Street garage is owned by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which operates it for private passenger vehicles. The MTA has been looking into selling assets to bolster its budget.

An MTA spokesman says the agency is looking forward to exploring the idea with Mr. Schick and other state officials.