

## District Needs Statement – Fiscal Year 2013

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### INTRODUCTION

Even as the city continues to persevere in the midst of a global economic crisis, Community Board 1 has continued to experience tremendous growth. The release of the U.S. Census confirmed our own projections that the population of Lower Manhattan has *doubled* in the last ten years. Building and infrastructure construction is ongoing virtually everywhere in the district. And we have added two new schools as of this year, with a third new school at the old Peck Slip Post Office in the Seaport to begin incubation at the Tweed Courthouse next year.

Community Board 1 (CB1) is made up of numerous distinct, mixed-use neighborhoods: Battery Park City, the Civic Center, Greenwich South, the Financial District, the Seaport and Tribeca. All are experiencing strong residential growth, most dramatically the Financial District. The nearby Governors, Ellis, and Liberty Islands also fall under the jurisdiction of CB1.

With the surge in population and construction comes the need to address and mitigate, however possible, some of the negative side-effects of rapid growth: school overcrowding, a shortage of community resources, and quality of life issues associated with constant construction.

With the surge in population comes the need to make sure that sufficient schools and community amenities are constructed to keep pace with increasing needs. While a new library opened in Battery Park City last year, and a new community center, Asphalt Green, is opening across the street from it this year, the east side of our district where population has grown the most still lacks a public library and community center. And though we recently secured the construction of the Peck Slip school, our schools still face tremendous overcrowding, and we'll need at least another elementary school in order to support the growing population of children in Lower Manhattan.

As increasing numbers of residents move into mixed-use neighborhoods, we also must mediate conflicts between the quality of life of residents and the growth of businesses downtown. We have seen increasing tension between residents and liquor licensed establishments in Tribeca and other growing neighborhoods.

Much work remains to be done to strengthen the future of Lower Manhattan and make sure that government agencies make good on their promise to rebuild and revitalize this historic district, financial nexus, and growing residential community. CB1 will play a key role throughout this process by keeping residents informed about the continued years of disruptions ahead and by ensuring that there is community participation in the efforts to manage growth and development and plan for the future. We will also seek to hold all government agencies accountable for keeping commitments and taking measures to defend quality of life in the area during this challenging time.

While the unprecedented construction and rebuilding activity poses special challenges and opportunities for our district, CB1 continues to work toward the sustained growth of a vibrant residential, industrial, and commercial neighborhood.

## **IMPACTS OF POPULATION GROWTH**

The most dramatic change to Lower Manhattan in recent years has been the tremendous growth in our residential population. Until the mid-1970s, there were only a few thousand people living south of Canal Street. The population doubled between 1970 and 1980 bringing the total to over 15,000. That number jumped another 10,000 in the subsequent decade to a little over 25,000 in 1990 and rose another 9,000 during the 1990s, reaching 34,420 in 2000. In total, therefore, CBI's residential population grew by 336% between 1970 and 1990.

It is the residential growth since 2000, however, that is truly remarkable. According to the U.S. Census, the population in Lower Manhattan is now at almost 67,000 residents – an increase of at least 26,000 since the last census was taken. By the end of 2011, Community Board 1's population will likely reach 70,000. And, according to our in-house study of the construction and conversion of new residential units, Community Board 1 has added approximately 14,000 units since 2000. These figures place Community Board 1 as the fastest growing community district in the city.

Obviously, this continued rapid growth presents unprecedented challenges to CB1 and it will be imperative that city agencies work with us to ensure that our physical infrastructure and network of services are improved and expanded to meet new needs.

- **Additional schools in Lower Manhattan**

As the rapid growth of the Lower Manhattan residential population continues, our local schools are becoming increasingly overcrowded. These schools have rightly won widespread acclaim and score near the top of lists of City public schools in reading and math scores. We must make sure that enough new schools are built to keep pace with population trends so that all children in the area will continue to receive a quality education.

Even with the opening of two new schools, P.S. 397 and P.S. 276, CB1's schools were forced to implement lotteries and waitlists last year in order to allocate school seats. This year, twenty five kindergartners on the P.S. 89 waitlist were reassigned by the Department of Education to attend P.S. 150 more than a mile away and outside of our community district. All over, class sizes have swollen, and students are forced to travel greater distances to attend a school.

We urged the Department of Education to build an elementary school at the old Peck Slip Post Office, and we were glad that the Department of Education has agreed to build a new elementary school at the site. We also advocated strongly for the need for the DOE to use school space at the Tweed Courthouse for the incubation of this new school, and in response to our advocacy, the DOE has agreed to limit Innovate Charter School to just one year, with incubation of Peck Slip beginning in the fall of 2012.

Unfortunately, the current capital plan for the Peck Slip school only includes the construction of 476 school seats, which according to our estimates would fall short of the need even on opening

day. According to studies we conducted with Eric Greenleaf, former Community Education Council District 2 member and Professor at New York University's Stern School of Business, the day the Peck Slip School opens, it will be completely full, and we will be hundreds of seats short by 2015. Due to an increasing trend of children staying in the district through elementary school, we will need 1,320 more seats. In short, we need another elementary school.

Though the Department of Education has indicated that overcrowding can be averted by sending local students out of the community board district, overcrowding is widespread throughout School District 2. Nearly all of the schools regarded by the Department of Education as having extra capacity have waitlists and are already overcrowded.

Given the time it takes to site and develop a school, it is imperative that we begin planning for another district-based elementary, middle, and high school now. We have been working to this end with New York State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver's School Overcrowding Task Force, Department of Education representatives, other local elected officials, and parents.

- **Community Recreation and Cultural Centers**

CB1 has long sought community recreation and cultural centers for our neighborhood—places where children and teenagers can play, learn, and grow; where our seniors can socialize and find needed resources and intellectual stimulation; and where adults can find personal enrichment through fitness and continuing education. The Manhattan Youth Downtown Community Center on Warren and West Streets, which CB1 helped create, ably serves people of all ages and has creatively developed programs in response to evolving community needs. In addition, a new community center, Asphalt Green, is nearly complete on Sites 23 and 24 in Battery Park City to serve the growing community there.

CB1 has also supported the development of performing arts in Lower Manhattan, including at the World Trade Center, and through the use of Castle Clinton.

A need also exists for a facility to serve the fast-growing population east of Greenwich Street. With the tremendous increase in the population of the Financial District and Seaport and Civic Centers, a community center is urgently needed to build a strong and stable community there. CB1 established a task force to plan an east side community center with General Growth Properties, the former owner of the South Street Seaport. Significant progress was made in planning a center that would meet the expressed needs of the community, but unfortunately these plans faced a major setback when General Growth Properties shelved plans for redeveloping the site and declared bankruptcy during the financial crisis. The site is now owned by Howard Hughes Corporation, and we have encouraged them to resume the joint planning effort with CB1 as soon as possible.

- **Community Amenities East of Broadway in CB1**

The east side of our community, which includes the South Street Seaport, Civic Center, and Financial District, was radically transformed in the last decade into a thriving mixed-use community with a large residential population. Though all of downtown has experienced

tremendous growth, the population growth on the east side has been the greatest, making it the fastest growing neighborhood in the city.

A number of years ago, CB1 envisioned the creation of the East River waterfront and redevelopment project, and we are pleased that our advocacy has resulted in the recent opening of a section of the East River Waterfront, which will provide much needed open space and amenities to an underserved, growing community. The development of pedestrian and bicycle paths along the East River is a critical part of developing Lower Manhattan's transportation network – especially for children in our district who play sports on the East River fields, which currently have limited public transportation access. We look forward to the completion of parks currently under or scheduled to begin construction soon including Titanic Park, Collect Pond, and Peck Slip.

In addition, the east side is greatly in need of a public library branch and other facilities for residents.

## **REBUILDING LOWER MANHATTAN**

As rebuilding activity continues, CB1 will continue to play a very active role in representing the interests of local residents and workers and making sure that the community has meaningful input and involvement in the redevelopment process. The Community Board works closely with our elected officials and the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC), the Lower Manhattan Construction Command Center (LMCCC), the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ), the Battery Park City Authority (BPCA), New York City and State Departments of Transportation (DOT), the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), the Department of City Planning (DCP) and Department of Buildings (DOB), the Economic Development Corporation (EDC), Mayor's Community Assistance Unit (CAU), Department of Conservation (DEC), Department of Protection (DEP), and many other government agencies and stakeholders, such as the Downtown Alliance. We strive to ensure that our voices are heard throughout the planning, development and construction stages and that government agencies are properly responsive to the needs and best interests of our community.

We have been outspoken advocates for years for the responsible allocation of the LMDC's remaining monies and for a sunset provision for that agency. The LMDC mission to "help plan and coordinate the rebuilding and revitalization of Lower Manhattan" is nearly complete. Since the deconstruction of 130 Liberty Street has finally been completed, we have once again urged the LMDC to sunset.

We hope to receive an updated timeline soon for the allocation of funds under LMDC's cultural and community grant programs. Applications for the program were submitted nearly a year ago, and no announcements of grant recipients have yet been made, contrary to the urging of CB1 to expedite these allocations.

- **World Trade Center Site**

As we approach the tenth anniversary of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the rebuilding of the WTC site is moving forward. One can easily see at street level the progress that is being made on many elements of the WTC Master Plan.

Key portions of the WTC Memorial will be open for the tenth anniversary and the WTC Museum is scheduled to open in 2012. The steel frame of One World Trade Center (WTC1, formerly known as the Freedom Tower) is almost at the 80<sup>th</sup> floor and the metal and glass façade panels have been installed past the 50<sup>th</sup> floor. Sub-grade work on WTC2 is ongoing and expected to be complete by mid-2012, and superstructure work is proceeding for WTC3. Steel is now above floor 35 at WTC4. For the first time we can actually envision the completion of this enormous urban revitalization project, and look forward to the positive ripple effect that it will have on the surrounding residential and business community and around the region. We believe it is important to have stable leadership at the Port Authority and other key agencies that is competent, professional, and familiar with the intricacies of such a large complex construction project.

In addition, we look forward to the expected reopening of the southbound side of the Cortland Street Subway Station (R and W) by September 2011. It is an important part of encouraging visitors to use public transportation and rebuilding local infrastructure for downtown residents and workers.

- **Fulton Street Transit Center**

The MTA is currently constructing the Fulton Street Transit Center, which will connect all of the subway lines downtown and the PATH train. The Transit Center will also include expanded retail space. We believe the combination of infrastructure development and retail expansion will significantly contribute to the ongoing revitalization of Lower Manhattan, and we look forward to the completion of this project. We hope the MTA will open sections under construction as soon as possible, without hindrance to the flow of subway traffic and the cleanliness of stations.

- **Performing Arts Center**

We continue to be a leading proponent of the creation of the Performing Arts Center (PAC) on the WTC site. Due to our advocacy, \$100 million was allocated recently for the project, which would create immediate construction jobs, long term jobs, and overall serve as a means for economic revitalization for the neighborhood. The PAC was conceived as a calming bridge between the bustle of commerce and the reflection and remembrance that will be inspired by the memorial and as a focal point to help ignite the resurgence of arts in Lower Manhattan.

The PAC is vital to the rebuilding of Lower Manhattan and it is imperative that it not be forgotten or left as an afterthought; its planning should be expedited and fundraising should commence immediately. We have requested a timetable and a plan of implementation for each of the steps involved in the design and construction of the PAC, as well as specific information on funding the project, as soon as possible. It is also time for new tenants to be brought into the project to ensure that it is a world-class facility.

We support the formation of an advisory panel including representatives of CB1 to monitor and address issues related to the PAC and other cultural enhancements for the WTC. It is imperative that this process be open and transparent in the future.

We reiterate our call for the prompt establishment of a board structure for the PAC that is independent of both the LMDC and the National September 11<sup>th</sup> Memorial and Museum Board. The PAC Board should be charged not only with the responsibility of raising funds, but also with developing programming that will make the PAC a world class performing arts center. The PAC is critical to the revitalization of Lower Manhattan and we will continue to strongly advocate for it.

- **Major Street Reconstruction Projects**

CB1 has a number of major reconstruction projects currently underway: Fulton Street, Chambers Street, Hudson Street, the Brooklyn Bridge and most recently the Peck Slip Reconstruction Project. These major projects will involve reconstruction of underlying infrastructure, resurfacing, and storefront revitalization projects. We will work with DOT, DDC and other involved agencies to ensure that they recognize and address to the greatest extent possible the adverse impacts from these projects on the quality of life of residents and local businesses.

- **Mitigation of adverse effects of construction**

Lower Manhattan faces a special challenge as we approach the peak construction phase of the rebuilding effort. At this time, multiple projects are under or set to undergo construction, including the new WTC PATH station, the Fulton Street Transit Center, Route 9A, much of the WTC site, the World Trade Center Memorial & Museum, 500,000 square feet of WTC retail, and the major reconstruction projects including Fulton Street, the Brooklyn Bridge, Chambers Street and Hudson Street.

This activity can lead to temporary and permanent loss of residential parking, raise noise and vibration issues, and contribute to the proliferation of the rat population downtown. We look forward to continuing our work with the LMCCC, DDC, DOB, and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), among others, to ensure that concerns of Lower Manhattan residents and workers are promptly investigated and addressed. It is particularly important to us that the LMCCC be adequately funded through the peak years of construction downtown. The Departments of Sanitation and Health have worked with us to address problem locations and these agencies must redouble their efforts to conduct more frequent pick-ups of commercial and residential garbage and baiting of sites where rats are observed. CB1 will continue to work with these agencies to identify areas where action must be taken, and we will maintain these efforts as construction activity continues in coming years.

We reiterate that all construction vehicles and equipment should be retrofitted to use ultra low-sulfur diesel fuel. We urge that all other construction projects in our district, including those sponsored by the MTA and Port Authority, as well as large private projects, utilize low sulfur fuel. Concrete trucks in particular need to be retrofitted, since they tend to idle during security checks and lengthy concrete pours. Retrofitting can make a big difference in the potential impacts from these projects on the health of people in our district. Construction sites should also be hosed down regularly to limit airborne dust.

Environmentally responsible development should be a guiding principle in the redevelopment of Lower Manhattan to support a sustainable urban community. New buildings and renovations

should be encouraged to take full advantage of state-of-the-art sustainable technologies to create healthier habitats, limit consumption of fossil fuels, and reduce toxic emissions and particulates. We've supported efforts to convert boilers in buildings that use dirty heating oil (#4 and #6), and we look forward to the elimination of all dirty heating oil by schools, businesses, and residential and public buildings.

We must also address problems associated with the many stalled construction sites in CB1 including plywood sheds that block sidewalks, poor sidewalk maintenance, limited street lighting, sanitation problems, and rodent infestations. While we appreciate the Downtown Alliance initiative which wraps unsightly lots and projects with carefully selected art, we would like the City to convert them where possible into community gardens or basketball courts for public high schools that have no gyms.

We would also like the DOB to assess scaffolding within CB1 to ensure that it is needed for safety and in compliance with City regulations, especially where it installed for construction projects that have stalled. For example, scaffolding went up around 50 West Street, and though construction has been stalled there for several years, the scaffolding is still in place. The scaffolding negatively impacts the nearby residential buildings, restaurants, and street life and hampers ongoing efforts to revitalize the area south of the WTC site called "Greenwich South."

- **Affordable Housing**

It is of paramount importance that Lower Manhattan preserves the existing affordable housing stock that it has and builds new affordable housing in the district. We must ensure that people who teach our children, patrol our streets, or fight our fires can afford to live in the neighborhood they serve. We therefore urge the city to build more affordable housing downtown as well as do everything possible to maintain existing affordable units. We recently advocated for inclusionary zoning as part of the Tribeca North Rezoning so that new affordable housing units will be built in our community.

In response to concern about building owners attempting to leave programs that require rents in their buildings to remain subsidized and to ensure that Lower Manhattan remains a diverse community that is affordable to people from a mixed range of income levels and demographic groups, two years ago a team of CB1 members and community activists put together a guide to rent-stabilized housing in CB1. This year, the group was formalized as an Affordable Housing Task Force and produced a report and inventory on affordable housing in our district. Recently CB1 created a Housing Committee to continue and expand this important work.

- **Retail Development**

It is important to attract new retail and service businesses to our growing community and retain those that are currently meeting the needs of area residents. New space for quality retailers is part of the plan for the World Trade Center site (500,000 square feet) and the space in the Fulton Street Transit Center (25,000 square feet) is especially meaningful because nearly 150 local businesses were evicted when buildings were demolished to make way for construction of the project, which will create order for over a dozen subway lines.

It is hoped that the upgrading of Fulton Street will bring additional retailers to meet the needs of Lower Manhattan residents and workers. The bankruptcy of General Growth Properties and the financial difficulties of the South Street Seaport Museum have complicated plans to revitalize the area around the South Street Seaport, but when a plan to develop that area is ready to move forward it should include plans for retail offerings that meet the needs of Downtown residents and workers as well as visitors.

A diverse mix of retailers is essential to the vitality and economic life of the community. Retail development should meet community needs and create ground floor/street level spaces in a variety of sizes. We applaud the grant program established by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation to support businesses adversely affected by construction, and commend the LMDC for expanding the program as we requested. We encourage all government agencies such as the NYC Department of Small Business Services and the NYC Economic Development Corporation to do everything possible to support our struggling businesses and ease the way for needed new ones during this difficult economic time.

CB1 has also been happy to see the development of Greenmarkets throughout the district, including at a new location in Battery Park City. We hope that more Greenmarkets will be developed in the Financial District to replace the one lost at Zucotti Park. An example of a successful food market is the New Amsterdam Market under the FDR drive, where an abandoned area is regularly transformed into a bustling farmers and food market and has become a platform for event-driven cooking experiences and a destination for people living in the community and from all around the city, as well as tourists.

On the other hand, it is important to continue to enforce laws against illegal street vending. Already congested streets are made worse when vendors set up shop illegally at overflowing subway station entrances and heavily trafficked intersections. Two such examples are at Broadway at the intersections of Fulton and John Streets where both a sidewalk and street lane have been taken away for the construction of the Fulton Transportation Hub.

## **OPEN SPACE**

- **Small Parks and Public Plazas**

Due to the advocacy of CB1, rebuilding funds have been provided by the LMDC for the construction and renovation of thirteen parks in Lower Manhattan. For example, several years ago, the city proposed building a tall tower on the Pearl Street Playground. CB1 opposed this proposal and instead \$2 million was allocated to refurbish and expand a new playground and open space on Pearl Street. In addition, due to our advocacy, the following other new parks and open spaces have been opened recently: Delury Square Park, West Thames Park, Louise Nevelson Plaza, the Washington Market Comfort Station, Imagination Playground, and Albert Capsouto Park. We also look forward to completion of planned work on Collect Pond Park, Peck Slip Park, and Titanic Park. In addition, once the Vehicular Security Center at the World Trade Center site is completed, we will also gain open space in the form of a park on top of it.



However, while we are very pleased by the creation of these new parks, we must be sure that the Parks Department will have sufficient resources to adequately maintain both new and existing parks in the district for public use and enjoyment.

Several years ago, CB1's Planning and Infrastructure Committee first created a proactive plan to meet the community's needs in Greenwich South, the area of our community just south of the World Trade Center site. The area is still sorely lacking in community spaces, and we hope the coming year will finally see the redevelopment of Edgar Plaza in accordance with the proposal developed by the Downtown Alliance.

- **Revitalization of the East River and Hudson River Waterfronts**

Open space is in particularly short supply on the east side of Lower Manhattan. However, there is an extensive waterfront, which, when developed, will be a wonderful amenity for the community.

We welcome the improvements made along the Hudson River waterfront, which we advocated for and were pleased that our vision for the long-anticipated reopening of Pier 25 was realized earlier this year. We have advocated for the completion of Pier 26, where funding is still needed for design and development of the Estuarium and other planned elements. CB1 urges State, City and Federal officials to fully realize this park as soon as possible. We are also working with the city on plans to convert into an attractive amenity the East River waterfront, which not long ago was viewed as largely inhospitable and dilapidated. We clearly need to tap into the great potential of this public space, to increase public access to it and transform it into a stimulating and inviting series of varied experiences including open space, retail offerings and other attractions that will serve the needs of local residents, workers and visitors.

At our urging, the LMDC allocated \$150 million toward the redevelopment of the East River waterfront, and these funds were sufficient to get the project started. The Economic Development Corporation has been working on the long anticipated East River Esplanade and Piers Project, and Phase I in the Wall Street/Pier 15 area is now open to the public. Additional funds will be needed to fully implement the comprehensive waterfront restoration project for all of Community District 1 and Community District 3 as envisioned in the city's well-received East River Waterfront concept plan put forward in 2005. CB1 urges the Economic Development Corporation and Department of City Planning to work closely with CB1 to identify additional funds, complete a final design and move forward expeditiously to complete this project, which has very strong community support. Also, sources for maintenance funds need to be identified once the project is completed.

It is crucial as well that plans for the Hudson River Park and the waterfronts at Battery Park and Governors Island be fully integrated with those for the East River Waterfront. It is important that while this project has momentum and broad-based support, we turn the entire expanse of Lower Manhattan waterfront into an integrated community resource that includes a continuous pedestrian and bicycle pathway with access to the waterfront and needed amenities.

The redevelopment of the Battery Maritime Building is important because it will connect the Battery Park City, Battery Park and East River waterfronts. CB1 has worked with EDC and the developer on this project, and we are encouraged by recent indications that the plan is moving forward. A successful redevelopment of this site would bring activity to a part of our waterfront that has been largely idle in recent years. We also look forward to the planned renovation of Pier A by the Battery Park City Authority and hope that the restaurant complex proposed there will meet the needs of local residents and workers as well as visitors to nearby sightseeing destinations.

One key component in reclaiming our waterfront is the removal of security tents at the Historic Battery. The Battery Conservancy has been working with the National Park Service to transform Battery Park into a calming, peaceful place for residents, workers, and tourists to relax and view the harbor. However, these “temporary” security tents erected after September 11<sup>th</sup> are unsightly and block the prized view of the harbor. With the tenth anniversary of September 11, 2001 rapidly approaching, these security tents are a constant, visible reminder of the events of that day and interfere with efforts to transform Battery Park, and make it impossible for residents to walk the entire waterfront. We welcomed a commitment to remove the tents made at our Financial District committee earlier this year and hope that the reasons for the delay in implementing the plan will be resolved as quickly as possible.

- **Ball fields to serve CB 1**

As our population grows, pressure on the ball fields in Battery Park City increases. Our local little leagues report that they can barely accommodate the children seeking to sign up due to the limited number of nearby fields. CB1 and the leagues have worked with the Battery Park City Authority and local elected officials to implement a partial solution that involves converting the Battery Park City fields from grass to artificial turf and utilizing the lights over the field for extended hours. The lights are in place and the artificial turf is currently being installed.

CB1 also urges that steps be taken, where possible, to identify other potential playing field sites in the area. At our urging, the LMDC allocated \$2 million in funds to create a new ball field on Cherry Street, located in CB3 but available for all of Lower Manhattan to use. We look forward to the realization of that project. Despite limited options, we need creative solutions to address the shortage of space. Additional space on piers, roofs of buildings, and at existing parks (Battery Park, Rockefeller Park, Wagner Park, and West Thames Park) might provide additional active recreation options for our growing population.

CB1 also supports the use of fields on Governors Island and Pier 40 for organized downtown leagues. Although Pier 40 is located in CB2, CB1 has participated actively in discussions about its future and stressed how important it is for all Lower Manhattan youth to use the fields there. Any future plan for Pier 40 should accommodate the growing youth population in Lower Manhattan and the increasing need for ball fields. Similarly, Governors Island is potentially a great resource for families from Lower Manhattan, and we look forward to working with the Trust for Governors Island to ensure that active recreation space and access to it are included in the Island’s future.

- **Governors Island**

CB1 pushed for and supported the city to take over the stewardship of Governors Island. The island's 172 acres contain numerous historic structures in good condition, well-maintained playing fields, and some of the most spectacular views in New York. As mentioned above, CB1 children and adults are dramatically short of recreation fields to play on, and Governor's Island can perhaps be an important part of the solution.

It is essential that as much of Governors Island and its historic structures as possible remain open to the public and easily accessible. High popularity of the island has contributed to the fact that the ferries to Governors Island are full from the first to the last ferry every day they run. We have been encouraged by recent efforts by the Trust for Governors Island to create amenities and programming that draw greater numbers of people to the Island for events and activities.

Last year, the New York Harbor School opened on Governors Island and already it is showing signs of being a great success. However, there is space on the island for many more public uses, and we will continue to work closely with the Trust for Governors Island so that the needs of Lower Manhattan residents are fully considered and it continues to develop exciting new projects that will bring more people than ever to the island.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

- **A Bus Management Plan**

Lower Manhattan currently accommodates hundreds of commuter and tour buses every day. They layover on local streets and create congestion, pollution, and safety issues. The Memorial at the WTC site is expected to attract upwards of seven million tourists and other visitors annually, not to mention residents who already pass through the site on a daily basis and tens of thousands of people who will work at the new buildings. This will generate many new bus trips to and from Lower Manhattan every day.

These buses must not circulate unnecessarily, creating additional toxic fumes and snarled traffic in an already congested area. The health, accessibility and viability of our neighborhoods depend on the development of a viable plan that includes dedicated places for these buses to go, including bus storage facilities and spots where they can load, unload and pick up passengers as unobtrusively as possible.

When DOT proposed to layover buses on Warren Street in Tribeca, we opposed this plan and insisted that DOT include CB1 in its bus management plan working group. As a result, the bus management plan has been revised. We have urged DOT to utilize drop-off locations in New Jersey such as Liberty Park and have visitors to the Memorial take public transportation. We also urged the creation of a uniform transit card for PATH, MTA, and ferries. We hope the city will be able to do more in the future to ensure that visitors are encouraged to use mass transit and to vigorously enforce rules against bus idling. We must ensure that our community is not obstructed by tour buses when the Memorial opens and that visitors use public transportation to

the fullest extent possible. Due to our urging, the DOT has also developed a bus metered parking system from which proceeds will go to the enforcement of bus idling and illegal layover in the Lower Manhattan area. CB1 looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively with DOT, the Memorial and other agencies and elected officials on this effort.

- **West Street Crossings**

West Street/Route 9A, which bisects CB1 on the west side, has long been a source of concern for workers and residents who cross it daily. We have received complaints that the timing of signals is too short for pedestrians crossing the street, and that traffic enforcement agents frequently wave cars through red lights.

CB1 and Speaker Silver's Office successfully advocated for securing funding for pedestrian managers along West Street. We also welcomed recent news that countdown signals will be installed along West Street as CB1 requested several years ago. While these have the potential to improve pedestrian safety, we continue to support the construction of a pedestrian bridge in southern Battery Park City, particularly with the opening of P.S. 276 where children need to cross the highway daily.

Accessibility is also an issue. Elevators and escalators on the bridges are frequently broken, and notice is not always given. Notification to the community about such break-downs should continue to improve. We also hope that the at-grade crossing at Vesey Street will be restored soon, as elevators and escalators there are frequently broken. The State DOT has indicated to us that they have no objection to this, and businesses in Battery Park City like Goldman Sachs strongly support the removal of the bridge. We were disappointed when the City DOT stated that the bridge would not be removed until the completion of the underground east-west connector.

We also believe the left hand turn from the southbound West Street lane onto Albany Street must be restored as soon as possible. The ability to take this left hand turn is critical to access the core of Greenwich Street South where there are three hotels and several residential buildings. Currently, some vehicular traffic must go through BPC in order to access Albany Street from Route 9A. We have urged City and State DOT to expedite the restoration of this turn as much as possible.

- **Parking**

We applaud the City's efforts to crack down on placard parking in our district and believe these should continue with involvement from all relevant agencies, especially NYPD and DOT. Owing to the presence here of numerous City, State and Federal buildings, our district has a major problem with government-authorized vehicles occupying space on our streets and sidewalks. We urge City, State and Federal agencies to continue to reduce the number of placards issued and better regulate them. Vigorous efforts to enforce regulations should be made so that our streets are not filled with "official" vehicles illegally parking on sidewalks, in bus stops, atop traffic islands and in handicapped zones, and preventing others from parking legally in the limited number of legitimate parking spaces throughout our district. Such abuses create great resentment among residents who have few on-street parking options, as well as among

merchants and small businesses whose delivery trucks need space to unload and often receive tickets when they are forced to double-park.

In addition, government agencies need to manage parking by construction workers so that the neighborhood is not overwhelmed with vehicles from outside the district during the massive rebuilding effort underway throughout Lower Manhattan. The city should create more on-street (alternate-side-of-the-street) parking in our district to accommodate the ever-growing residential population.

We also need increased enforcement against vehicles that park all day long in non-parking spots and bike lanes in association with commercial activity.

- **2nd Avenue Subway**

The introduction by the MTA of Select Bus Service to replace the M15 bus line has brought a welcome new option for bus riders. However, the development of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Subway is still greatly needed to relieve the overcrowded Lexington Avenue line and make Lower Manhattan more accessible to uptown workers. This major project has been anticipated for decades and is important to the long-term vitality of Lower Manhattan.

- **Ferry Service**

The disruption of PATH service after September 11, 2001 highlighted the need for water transportation. Quick implementation of new ferry routes helped Lower Manhattan recover. Today, boats from New Jersey, Brooklyn, Manhattan's Upper West Side and La Guardia Airport bolster our linkages with the surrounding region. The expansion of ferry service should be encouraged, but requires sound planning. Flexible arrangements for docking, while essential during emergencies, can have unintended consequences for residents when not adequately planned. Ferry and water taxi facilities must be part of a coordinated approach to waterfront protection and development. We have also heard complaints from residents in Battery Park City about noise and diesel fumes generated by ferries. It is important that meaningful sound mitigation and better air quality measures be utilized as much as possible.

- **Bicycle Sharing**

It was recently reported that the city is developing a Request for Proposals for a bicycle sharing program. Such programs work well in other national and international cities, and CB1 would welcome locations in our district where people could rent bicycles. The Downtown Alliance operated a temporary, free bicycle sharing service that was very popular in Lower Manhattan. We would welcome such a program as a permanent service for residents, commuters and visitors to our district.

## **ZONING**

At the request of CB1, the Department of City Planning began to examine the changing character of northern Tribeca, and CB1 worked with the DCP for several years on a comprehensive rezoning of northern Tribeca, which had been zoned for manufacturing uses. The plan, adopted by the City Council in 2010, permits residential development as-of-right, while preserving the size and scale of Tribeca as it exists today, including the prevention of big box retailers by restricting the scale of retail spaces to 10,000 square feet on wide streets and 5,000 square feet on narrow streets. It also maintains existing light manufacturing uses and encourages inclusionary housing zoning bonuses in newly constructed residential buildings to bolster the stock of affordable housing in Tribeca so that the neighborhood continues to include people of various income levels

## **HISTORIC DISTRICTS**

Lower Manhattan is the birthplace of New York City, and preserving and respecting its heritage must be an utmost concern. Landmarks are not only a neighborhood amenity or a focus for school trips, they are also integral to maintaining tourism, one of the principal economic motors of CB1, and they contribute immeasurably to the desirability of Lower Manhattan as a place to live and work.

Residents of Tribeca and the Seaport have expressed strong support for safeguarding the character and authenticity of these historic communities. An appealing characteristic of both areas is their old cobblestone roadways. CB1 strongly favors retaining cobblestone streets, and the city should do a far better job of maintaining these important resources. CB1 successfully advocated for funds to be set aside to rebuild many of the cobblestone streets in the South Street Seaport Historic District, and we worked with DDC to include as many Tribeca cobblestone roadways as possible in the Harrison and Hudson Street Reconstruction projects. These are in generally poor condition and need attention.

We have nine historic districts in Lower Manhattan, including four in Tribeca, three in the Financial District, one in the South Street Seaport, and one on Governors Island. We also have many individual landmark structures throughout our Lower Manhattan district. Unfortunately, designating an historic district does not guarantee its integrity. Incursions frequently occur: inappropriate signage is hung, windows are modified out of code, and owners make significant unapproved additions. While individual violations sometimes seem small, their cumulative effect greatly degrades the character and value of the historic districts. The Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) has power of enforcement, but with only one or two enforcement officers for all five boroughs, countless violations go uncorrected. As more buildings and districts gain landmark status in New York City, LPC needs additional staff to defend our architectural heritage. We urge the LPC and the Mayor to find funding for adequate enforcement, or landmark districts could eventually exist in name only.

Finally, consideration should be given to designating additional historic districts within the Financial District to protect significant buildings that are not already individually designated as landmarks or included in existing historic districts. The Historic Districts Council has labeled as a “Neighborhood at Risk” the portion of the Financial District called the Fulton-Nassau (<http://www.hdc.org/neighborhoodatriskFulton-Nassau.htm>), which is of particular interest

architecturally, as the buildings are historic examples of the early evolution of the office skyscraper. We also believe that the South Street Seaport Historic District should be expanded to include all of Pier 17 so that it matches the federal and state historic district boundaries, and that the Tribeca North Historic District should be expanded to include additional architecturally distinguished buildings that are threatened with redevelopment and merit protection.

## **OTHER PRIORITIES**

- **Addressing the Loss of St. Vincent's**

The closing of St. Vincent's Hospital in CB2, our neighbor to the north on the west side, was a tremendous loss for Lower Manhattan. With its closure, travel and wait time for emergency care patients has increased in many instances. We hope that the city will work to replace St. Vincent's with a comparable medical center in the same space it once occupied.

New York Downtown Hospital is now the only full-service hospital in our area, and we urge the city to do everything possible to support it. As Lower Manhattan residents and workers continue to grapple with health problems caused by the events of September 11, 2001 and their aftermath, it is all the more important that NY Downtown Hospital be outfitted with equipment needed to provide the best possible state-of-the-art care.

Residents in CB1 also rely on the services of Gouverneur Healthcare Services. Although this facility is located in CB3, our neighbor to the northeast, it is the closest municipal hospital to CB1 and many of our residents receive medical treatment there. In addition, Gouverneur is one of the World Trade Center Environmental Health Centers of Excellence, which were established to address physical and mental health issues resulting from September 11, 2001. We are grateful for the notable capital improvements that have been made in recent years to Gouverneur Healthcare Services and we encourage the City to continue to ensure that it has the facilities and resources to provide excellent healthcare..

- **Safety and Security**

CB1 maintains a close relationship with the 1<sup>st</sup> Police Precinct, and crime has generally remained at low levels in recent years. We applaud the 1<sup>st</sup> Precinct for their excellent work and responsiveness to the community. We were disappointed by the New York Police Department (NYPD)'s decision to move the mounted police unit from its Tribeca stables this year to make room for a temporary WTC command facility. We are concerned that a permanent WTC command center has not yet been created even though the Memorial will be opening this year. NYPD has assured us that the stables will be restored when permanent space is identified and developed for the WTC command. We urge NYPD to identify and build the permanent WTC command center as soon as possible.

It is also important to take account of safety and security considerations at construction sites. To this end, it is important that new construction meet or exceed NYC's fire, building and safety code regulations and incorporate adequate measures for security. Evacuation protocols should be incorporated into plans for new buildings. During this time of widespread construction and street

blockages, it is more important than ever for emergency and service vehicles to be able to access and serve the safety needs of everyone without hindrance or obstruction.

The NYPD is developing a plan to restrict and regulate traffic in the vicinity of the World Trade Center, as Police Commissioner Kelly discussed at a special CB1 meeting in November, 2008. CB1 looks forward to continuing to work with the NYPD and local leaders and stakeholders to find the right balance between safety considerations and livability so that the area around the WTC site will be a thriving and vibrant as well as secure area.

Plans must continue to take into account the needs of businesses, which suffered greatly under emergency restrictions put in place after September 11, 2001. This collaborative process that included ongoing consultation with CB1 should be a model for future efforts elsewhere in Lower Manhattan including around the WTC site.

We strongly recommend that to the greatest extent possible, where safety concerns have been addressed, that areas closed after September 11, 2001 be re-opened to the public. We have worked with Friends of City Hall Park to encourage the City to increase public access to restricted parts of City Hall Park and were encouraged by the opening of the northern end of the park, which provided a welcome lift to area residents and workers without compromising security at City Hall. Comparable ways to safely re-open Park Row should be explored and implemented to relieve severe burdens placed on residents in that area by restrictions associated with 1 Police Plaza.

*J. Menin*

Julie Menin  
*Chairperson*

*N. Pfefferblit*

Noah Pfefferblit  
*District Manager*