

FY 2022 Borough Budget Consultations

Manhattan - Landmarks Preservation Commission

Meeting Date 9/11/2020

AGENDA ITEM 1: General Agency Funding Discussion:

The purpose of holding the Borough Budget Consultations is to provide Community Boards with important information to assist in drafting their statement of District Needs and Budget Priorities for the upcoming fiscal year. As you know, Community Board Members are volunteers who may not be familiar with the budget process and how agencies' programs are funded. At the same time, Community Board members are very knowledgeable about local service needs.

This year's Manhattan agendas have three sections:

I. Agencies faced unprecedented cuts and new funding requirements this year due to COVID 19. Can you list the previously unplanned cuts to the FY 21 budget due to COVID and the new initiatives necessitated by the emergency? Please discuss the expected timeline for the new initiatives. What programs and capital projects will be continued uncut. Of the cuts in spending for FY 2021, please identify the most significant cuts that are currently expected to be permanent [or continued at the reduced level into FY 2022].

What is the overall budget decrease for FY 21 adopted budget compared to FY20 budget?

II. Then, the agenda continues with Community Boards asking about specific program funding.

III. Lastly, the agendas include Boards' requests on district-specific budget questions. We request that the agency respond in writing, but have any further discussions on these items with the Community Boards outside of the consultation.

For the first section, please present on the four topics below for 10-15 minutes at the beginning of our Consultation. Also, please provide written responses or even a PowerPoint presentation that we can use to fully and accurately educate our Board Members.

1. What are your priorities and operational goals for FY21 and projected priorities and operational goals for FY22?
2. What are the current proposed FY21 and FY22 service and operational goals and proposed funding?
3. Which programs is the agency adding, dropping, or changing for FY21 and projected for FY22?
4. What are your benchmarks for new and existing programs and what are your benchmarks/key performance indicators for measuring success?

AGENCY RESPONSE:

Budget Reduction Due to COVID 19 Pandemic

These past few months have been difficult and challenging, but the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) adapted quickly, adjusting to make sure the agency could continue to serve the city while protecting the health of its employees and the general public. By March 19, 2020, all staff were working remotely, and we had implemented e-filing to process permit applications, and on April 21, 2020, we resumed public hearings and meetings through a video conferencing application and began live streaming them on our YouTube channel. In June, LPC launched a Recovery Initiative, with a dedicated recovery team, hotline and

expedited permit process to serve the needs of restaurants and retail establishments. We have active engagement in our virtual public hearings now that they are being livestreamed, with peak viewership at nearly 100 for some applications. While our office at 1 Centre Street remains closed for the foreseeable future, we will continue to provide services by email and phone and continue to conduct virtual public hearings and meetings.

These are challenging times for all of us, and LPC, like all other City agencies, did in fact see a decrease in our budget compared to the previous fiscal year. Our overall budget decreased by about \$90,000 (or 1%) from FY20 to FY21, and there could be more budget cuts as the City continues to battle the economic impact of the pandemic. Even with a reduction in resources, we have found innovative ways to continue to provide all our essential services without significant delays.

Priorities and Operational Goals for FY21 and FY22

LPC will continue to focus on equitable and inclusive service delivery through education and outreach efforts to communities across all five boroughs. These efforts include virtual community meetings to inform diverse stakeholders including residents, property owners, business owners and community boards about the landmark designation process and its regulatory impact and working with applicants from all backgrounds to provide technical advice and expedite applications for improvements and alterations to landmark properties. The Commission is continuing to develop more multi-lingual accessibility to serve those same audiences.

FY21 and FY22 service and operational goals and funding:

Service and Operational Goals for FY21 and FY22

Ia - Identify and designate as landmarks, eligible individual buildings, interiors, scenic landmarks and historic districts.

Ib - Facilitate appropriate work on landmark buildings through technical assistance and timely issuance of permits.

Ic - Increase compliance with landmark regulations

Id - Evaluate potential impacts to archaeological resources in a timely manner

<i>Unit of Appropriation</i>	<i>Adopted Budget FY21</i>	<i>Estimated Budget FY22</i>
<i>Personnel Services</i>	\$6,037,847	\$6,147,402
<i>Other Than Personal Services</i>	\$575,329	\$676,329
<i>Agency Total</i>	\$6,613,176	\$6,823,731

At this time, no programs are expected to be added, dropped, or changed for FY21 and projected for FY22.

Benchmarks/key performance indicators for measuring success

Ia - Identify and designate as landmarks, eligible individual buildings, interiors, scenic landmarks and historic districts.

Targets:

- A total of 20 designations each year (all designation types – individual, interior and scenic, and historic districts).

Ib - Facilitate appropriate work on landmark buildings through technical assistance and timely issuance of permits.

Targets:

- Issue 85% of Certificates of No Effect (CNE) within 10 business days each year.
- Issue 100% of Expedited Certificates of No Effect (XCNE) within 2 business days each year.

Ic - Evaluate potential impacts to archaeological resources in a timely manner.

Target:

- Review 85% of all archaeology applications within 10 business days each year.

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

During the pandemic, LPC held a virtual hearing and voted to designate as landmarks five buildings of Manhattan’s Tin Pan Alley. LPC also celebrated the designation of its 150th Historic District this past June. The Historic District was located in the Bronx.

LPC put together a guide book on permits to provide a clear and transparent process for e-filing applications. LPC has been conducting its meetings virtually and live streaming public hearings. LPC wants to continue the virtual and live streamed meetings post-Covid since its' resulted in more participation from the public.

LPC has put out a new version of the historic landmarks maps and has a new campaign called "Love NYC Landmarks."

LPC's budget received a 1% cut which is approximately \$90,000 and are not changing or eliminating any programs. LPC's NMR targets remain the same.

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

AGENDA ITEM 2: Staffing

LPC provided detailed responses in its September 2019 Budget Consultation responses (FY 2020) concerning Staffing.

1. Please provide an update using the same template as LPC's September 2019 Budget Consultation Responses (FY 2021) with any updated staffing totals.
2. Please advise whether the current levels of Staffing are adequate to meet LPC's operational goals in terms of accomplishment of its mission and timeliness of responses to applicants and other constituents.
3. What would be the budgetary impact of adding one additional meeting of the Commission each month?

AGENCY RESPONSE:

LPC has 83 authorized staff, which includes 76 full time and 7 part time staff. The agency had a net loss of 1 staff line due to budget savings.

Breakdown by Departments:

- Executive: the agency has 8 fulltime executive staff including the LPC Chair, Executive Director, Agency Counsel, and others, who oversee day- to-day operations and designation and regulatory policy.
- Finance and Operations: Total headcount is 7 fulltime staff. This department is responsible for the agency's budget, procurement, human resources, payroll and facilities management.
- External Affairs: Total headcount is 4 fulltime staff and is comprised of the Communications and Intergovernmental & Community Affairs departments. This team is responsible for the agency's communication and outreach strategy, including outreach to Community Boards and the general public related to our work and public hearings. This also involves providing educational materials on our website, including technical fact sheets, property searches for designation and permit information, and walking tours and interactive maps.
- Research: Total headcount is 15 (13 full-time and 2 part-time). This department is responsible for identifying and proposing items for designation. LPC designates new individual landmarks and historic districts in the context of the agency's priorities and citywide equity agenda.
- Preservation: Total headcount is 38 (37 full-time and 1 part-time). This department is responsible for reviewing permit applications from property owners, issuing permits for certain kinds of work to landmarked buildings and sites, and preparing applications for review by the full Commission. The department processed over 14,000 applications last fiscal year.
- Enforcement: Total headcount is 5 (4 full-time and 1 part-time). This department investigates reports of alleged violations, and helps owners correct them.
- Archaeology & Environmental Review: Total headcount is 5 (3 full-time and 2 part-time). These departments are responsible for assessing architectural and archaeological resources in areas where there are projects undergoing the

environmental review process. They work closely with the Research Department to ensure our reviews are coordinated.

- **Historic Preservation Grant Program (HPGP):** 1 part time staff to support LPC's Director of Finance and Operations and 1 Sr. Landmark Preservationist from the Preservation Department who oversee the grant program. LPC's Grant Program provides façade restoration grants to non-profit organizations and income-eligible owners of landmark buildings.

Our current staffing levels are adequate to meet our operational goals and accomplish our mission efficiently in accordance with the agency's priorities.

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

LPC is subjected to a hiring freeze. The current staffing is adequate to meet their goals and to continue to do their job. LPC holds four (4) meetings a month if needed. The Commissioners are volunteers so there is no real impact on the Personnel Services portion of their budget.

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

AGENDA ITEM 3: Funding for Completing Request for Evaluations (RFEs)

1. Please provide a summary of the LPC's goals for responding to an RFE, distinguishing if appropriate between RFEs for individual landmarks, historic districts, and scenic landmarks.
2. Is the current level of funding adequate to meet those goals?
3. What additional resources other than funding would be useful or welcome in reaching those goals?
4. Has there been an increase or decrease in the number of applications that have been approved at staff level from March 2018-2019 through March 2019-2020? Does this impact staffing levels?

AGENCY RESPONSE:

- *Requests for Evaluation (RFEs) are requests by members of the public to the Commission to evaluate potential eligibility for designation, but they are not applications.*
- *The Commission identifies properties that may be eligible for future landmark consideration through our own internal surveys and from requests from the public.*
- *When we get an RFE, we review it to see if the property meets the minimum standards under the Landmarks Law, and in many cases, the determination is that it may pending more research. At that point, the property becomes part of our internal study materials and timing of any further research depends on agency priorities.*
- *There are many factors that determine whether the Commission will formally consider a property, including merit/architectural, historic or cultural significance, the importance of the resource in the context of similar and/or already designated resources, how it aligns with agency policies such as designating landmarks in all five boroughs, the level of threat, and the level of stakeholder support.*
- *LPC designates new individual landmarks and historic districts in the context of the agency's priorities and citywide equity agenda. LPC's Research Department, which is comprised of 15 staff, has a detailed work plan to accomplish significant designation work within this Fiscal Year in accordance with the agency's priorities.*
- *Please note that this is response to question 4, which we believe is a misplaced question unrelated to RFEs but related to LPC's regulatory work. Between March 2018 and March 2019, the percentage of permit applications approved at staff-level generally stayed within the usual 94-97% range. What has drastically dropped in FY 20 is the number of applications received. Applications received in FY20 are about 3,000 less than FY19. The number of applications received was essentially flat for several years, then began dropping in the last 18 months and then plummeted during the second half of FY20 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

This year LPC has 3000 applications less than before to consider for designation.

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

AGENDA ITEM 4: Website

LPC's website and data services have created significant new capacity, including an updated web portal with detailed information concerning applications, and a monthly email of pending applications by Community District made available to Community Boards.

1. Please provide an update of any further enhancements or new features of LPC's website and data services.
2. Please advise whether additional funding is needed or would be useful in maintaining or enhancing LPC's online and digital data services.
3. Please advise what funding would be needed in order to digitize paper archives (pre-2010 records) so that they may be accessed on-line?
4. Please advise what funding is required to initiate consistency in syntax across the portal (e.g. sometimes addresses can be found only using "st." other times the full word street must be input) to allow for easier usage?

AGENCY RESPONSE:

Enhancements to LPC's website and mapping tools include the following:

- In December 2019 we launched an updated edition of our Permit Application Guide, now named the LPC Permit Guidebook: How to Get Staff-Level Approvals to help applicants file applications that include the correct materials so that staff can review the proposed work and issue a permit more quickly. The Guidebook, which is available on our website and reflects the new rules and amendments adopted by the Commission in January 2019, focuses on the most common types of work that require a permit, such as window replacement, restoration and additions. Our website also allows users to download individual chapters of the Guidebook.
- In March we released a new Landmark Violation Search tool that for the first time allows the public to look up information on violations that have been issued to any designated property.
- In May LPC launched a beta version of its Discover New York City Landmarks map, that includes additional search and filter functions that will allow for a greater understanding and appreciation of New York City's designated buildings and neighborhoods.
- Our public hearings are now live on our YouTube channel and our website has instructions in several languages on how to participate in our virtual hearings.

LPC continues to maintain a searchable database of all permit applications, as well as presentation materials and decisions on all Certificate of Appropriateness applications.

Regarding question #3, LPC needs clarification on what specific archives are being referred to.

For question # 4, LPC will investigate this.

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

LPC has digitized all of their designation reports. However, LPC receives 11,000 - 14,000 permit applications a year so digitizing that is a large undertaking and is not a priority at the moment.

In March, LPC will have a designation search tool, a permit finder map, and a “beta” version of an architectural map in May. At a recent conference, LPC was recognized for National Excellence in such maps. LPC pointed out a distinction between designation reports and permit or designation applications. A designation report is the report issued that is approved by the Commissioners and is used as a regulatory agreement and that has been digitized since the 1960s.

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

AGENDA ITEM 5: Recommended Priorities for CB Support

1. What budget priorities would LPC recommend that the Community Boards support or request as part of our FY 2022 Budget Priorities Statements?

AGENCY RESPONSE:

We understand that we are in an era where city resources are scarce, and funding must be prioritized. With that in mind, we believe that our current budget can accommodate our strategic goals for the next fiscal year.

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

AGENDA ITEM 6: Upgrades to LPC Offices

1. What progress has been made on upgrading the sound system and HVAC system in the public hearing room at 1 Centre Street?

2. Is funding adequate to continue with the updates to LPC headquarters?

AGENCY RESPONSE:

LPC will continue to hold public hearings virtually for the foreseeable future, which have significant advantages in terms of sound and visual quality, and the ability to livestream.

Renovation of LPC’s new headquarter is being done with capital funds managed by DDC and DCAS

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

Funding for construction of the LPC offices is not in their budget, but it is in the DCAS and DDC budgets which are the two agencies that are in charge of leased space, executing leases and construction.

LPC is looking at incorporating diversity and inequity to all aspects of its works.

Public input comes in many ways such as the public hearings. Also, the public making recommendations for designations. Public input is part of the ecosystem and is incorporated into many aspects of their work. Input is critical to what they do and part of their daily work. Violations are complaint driven and they have an enforcement system that reviews those. That process requires community input. Input related to designation and it comes in terms of request for designation or an entire historic district. On line public hearing is very effective and want to continue to provide virtual access to the public.

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS: