

FY 2023 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 previously faced unprecedented cuts and new funding requirements due to COVID 19. The Federal Government recently provided relief funds to states and municipalities as part of COVID relief stimulus.

1. What programs are restored by this funding for the current fiscal year and what further changes are planned for FY 23 when an estimated \$4 billion budget gap reemerges?
2. What changes in federal funding have been instituted for FY 22? Will those changes continue into FY 23? What portion or percentage of the FY 21 and FY 22 budgets consisted of non-recurring federal funding?
3. What is the overall budget increase or decrease for FY 22 adopted budget compared to FY21 budget? Does the Agency anticipate a budget shortfall for FY 22, FY 23 or further out years after the non-recurring federal funding has been exhausted?

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

1. What programs will see a significant increase or decrease in funding? To what extent, if any, is the increase or decrease in funding related to non-recurring federal funding allocations?
2. Which programs will be new or eliminated entirely?
3. What are your benchmarks for new and existing programs and what are your benchmarks/key performance indicators for measuring success?
4. What are your priorities, operational goals, and capital goals for FY22 and projected priorities, operational goals, and capital goals for FY23?
5. What expense or capital needs would ACS recommend or encourage Community Boards advocate be funded or expanded?

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. Which Manhattan community districts will see the largest increases or decreases in applied operational or capital funding for programmatic goals in FY 22 and FY 23?
 - a. What indicators do you use to direct these funds according to perceived need?

AGENCY RESPONSE:

Budget Reduction Due to COVID 19 Pandemic and subsequent COVID Relief Stimulus

- 1. The last 18 months have been challenging times for us all; however, even with a reduction in our FY21 budget, LPC found innovative ways to continue to provide all our essential services without significant delays or cuts to any of our programs. Regarding plans to address the estimated FY 2023 budget gap, that would be a citywide initiative led by OMB which would involve looking comprehensively across all agencies to develop a plan. We will await their guidance and continue to provide all our essential services to the best of our ability.*
- 2. There are no changes to LPC's federal funding in FY 2022 and we don't anticipate any changes in FY 2023. LPC's FY 21 and FY 22 budgets did not include non-recurring federal stimulus funding.*
- 3. LPC had a net budget decrease of about \$34,000 (about 0.5%) between FY 2021 and FY 2022 at adoption primarily due to one-time State grant for a special project in FY 2021. This decrease is expected to be canceled by the November plan due to another one-time State grant award. LPC did not receive non-recurring federal stimulus funding, so the agency does not expect a shortfall due to that funding being exhausted.*

Program Funding

- 1. LPC does not anticipate significant increase or decrease in funding for any programs at this time.*
- 2. LPC does not anticipate adding or eliminating any programs at this time.*

Benchmarks/key performance indicators for measuring success (Question 3)

1a - 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).*

1b - 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.*

1c - Evaluate potential impacts to archaeological resources in a timely manner.

Target:

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

Priorities and Operational Goals for FY 2022 and FY 2023 (Questions 4-5)

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.

Currently, LPC does not have any expense or capital needs that the agency would recommend or encourage Community Boards advocate be funded or expanded.

Community District Funding

LPC's programmatic goals and the funding to support those goals are applied citywide and are not allocated at the community district level.

MEETING NOTES:

COVID-19 impacts: Have an e-filing system; worked on outreach, had owner meetings over Zoom. Overall, agency has been able to conduct business. Designation numbers are a little lower than in previous years. This change does in part reflect some impacts of the pandemic. But also looking at designations from an equity lens.

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. What would be the budgetary impact of adding one additional meeting of the Commission each month? There are community concerns regarding the length of time required for the landmarking process. There is particular concern that a fragile building could be lost during this period. Would staff increases eliminate the backlog and increasingly longer times for this process

AGENCY RESPONSE:

LPC has 83 authorized staff, which includes 76 full time and 7 part time staff.

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.*

Regarding adding one additional meeting each month to the Commission's calendar:

- *This is not a budget or personnel issue. The Commission, comprised of unpaid volunteers, already meets approximately 3 times a month. With that schedule, the commission is able to accommodate the number of applications we receive, the holidays, and to respect the time of our Commissioners, who dedicate nearly a day each week unpaid.*
- *In terms of designations, there is no correlation between the number of public hearings and the number of designations and increasing the number of hearing days would have no impact on the number of landmarks or historic districts designated.*
- *There is currently no designation backlog and the agency is able to designate in a timely manner, and well within the legislated time periods.*

MEETING NOTES:

Criteria for what gets reviewed at staff level changes in 2018. These rules mostly streamlined the process, and does not require an increase in staff. Since these rules were implemented, the overall number of applications have continued to decrease, so CBs are seeing less applications in part because of the rule change but also because of the decrease in overall number of applications.

AGENDA ITEM 3: 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:

1. *In addition to the monthly email, LPC continues to maintain a searchable database of all permit applications, a web map with that information, as well as access to presentation materials and decisions on all Certificate of Appropriateness applications.*
 - *LPC's in-person public hearings are now being livestreamed on our YouTube channel for the first time. Throughout the pandemic LPC conducted public hearings and meeting virtually on Zoom, and in September we will begin to have hybrid hearings, allowing the public to testify and applicants to present remotely.*
 - *Additionally, LPC has held webinars focusing on helping owners understand how to file an application for work on their properties as well the financial incentives that may be available to them. These have been uploaded to our YouTube channel and are available for viewing by the public at their convenience.*
 - *As we noted last year, in March 2020 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.*
 - *We continue to make improvements to our Discover map, and frequently update our open data.*

Regarding additional funding for maintaining or enhancing LPC's online and digital data services:

2. *We have adequate funding to enhance and maintain online and digital services. Last year we received a grant from New York State to build an online archive of our designation photos, which is currently being built, and will further enhance our digital services to the public.*

Regarding funding to digitize paper archives (pre-2010 records):

3. *We started accepting digital applications in March 2020, so from that point forward we will now have an archive of digital applications. As we process approximately 13,000-14,000 permit applications annually, digitizing all the applications prior to 2010 would be a very substantial undertaking, and such a project is not currently a priority.*

Regarding consistency in syntax across agency portal:

4. *LPC's web portals and maps auto-populate the full addresses when partial addresses are entered. Please advise which portal has the issue being referenced and we will investigate.*

MEETING NOTES:

AGENDA ITEM 4: 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:

AGENDA ITEM 5: 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 does not have a HVAC system, but the commission now has new window air conditioner units in the public hearing room that are a lot quieter than the ones we had before. An audio technician was also hired to tune up our audio equipment and improve sound quality. Furthermore, LPC will begin conducting hybrid hearings in September, which will provide more access and better sound and visual quality.*
- Renovation of LPC's new headquarter is being done with capital funds managed by DDC and DCAS.*

MEETING NOTES:

Virtual open house hours have enabled LPC to educate the public--sometimes before they even submit and application to LPC.

Discover Map allows LPC's research to be more readily available to the public.

Agency has some vacancies, and are actively working to fill them