

Appendix F
Comments on the DSGEIS

DSGEIS Hearing Transcript

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

CITY OF NEW YORK
NEW YORK CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

-----x

BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

NOS. 7, 8 & 9

SPECIAL GOVERNORS ISLAND DISTRICT

DGEIS & ULURP PUBLIC HEARING

-----X

Spector Hall
22 Reade Street
New York, New York

May 8, 2013
10:09 a.m.

B E F O R E :

AMANDA BURDEN,
THE CHAIR

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

A P P E A R A N C E S:

COMMISSIONER PRESENT FOR CITY PLANNING COMMISSION:

- Amanda Burden, Chair
- Kenneth J. Knuckles, Vice Chair
- Angela M. Battaglia
- Rayann Besser
- Irwin G. Cantor
- Alfred Cerullo, III
- Betty Y. Chen
- Michelle De La Uz
- Maria Del Toro
- Joseph I. Douek
- Richard Eaddy
- Anna Hayes Levin
- Orlando Marin
- Yvette Gruel, The Clerk
- The Public
- The Press

Marc Russo, Stenographer

INDEX OF SPEAKERS

3	<u>SPEAKER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
4	Leslie Koch	
5	The Trust for Governors Island	4
6	Simon Bertrang	
7	The Trust for Governors Island	17
8	Alex Herrera	
9	New York Landmarks Conservancy	23
10	Michael Levine	
11	Community Board 1	29
12	Catherine McVay-Hughes	
13	Community Board 1	32
14	Melissa Levin	
15	Lower Manhattan Cultural Council	36
16	Aditi Sen	
17	SEIU 32BJ	41
18	Robert Pirani	
19	Governors Island Alliance	43
20	Connie Chung	
21	Alliance for Downtown New York	48
22	Jennifer Gardner	
23	Manhattan Borough President	51

24

25

P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. GRUEL: The next part of the calendar is the public hearing section on page 11.

Borough of Manhattan, calendar Nos. 7, 8 and 9.

Calendar No. 7, CD1 N130189ZRM;

Calendar No. 8, N130189(A)ZRM;

Calendar No. 9, N1301190ZMM;

A public hearing in the matter of applications for amendments of the zoning resolution and the zoning map concerning the Special Governors Island District.

Notice: A public hearing is also being held by the Office of the Deputy Mayor of Economic Development in conjunction with the above ULURP hearings to receive comments related to a Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

This hearing is being held pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act and the City Environmental Quality Review.

THE CHAIR: The first speaker who signed is Leslie Koch.

MS. KOCH: Thank you, Madam Chair.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

Good morning. My name is Leslie Koch. And I'm the president of the Trust for Governors Island - a not-for-profit corporation created by the City to manage the operation, planning and redevelopment of 150 acres of Governors Island.

For almost two centuries this Island was a military base closed to the public. In 2001, the federal government created the 22-acre Governors Island National Monument. And in 2003 the federal government transferred the remaining acreage to the people of New York.

The federal transfer deed established a vision for the redevelopment of the Island, including substantial public open space and educational uses, as well as a broad range of commercial uses; culture, the arts, recreation and entertainment, hospitality, retail and offices. Residential and industrial uses were prohibited.

The deed also established an expectation that ran from these uses but helped defray the cost of the Island's public operations.

The Trust's mission is to fulfill this vision to transform Governors Island into a

1

2 destination with extraordinary public open space,
3 as well as this mix of facilities. And now ten
4 years after the transfer, with expanded visitation,
5 public programming, investment in infrastructure
6 and stabilization, the construction of an ambitious
7 park and public space plan, the development of the
8 Island as it a very promising and critical
9 juncture.

10

In 2005 when we first opened the
11 Island, we had a total of 8,000 visitors. In 2012,
12 we had over 8,000 visitors per day.

13

At the same time, Mayor Bloomberg
14 has invested \$260 million in the transformation of
15 the Island. We are building the first phase of a
16 park and public space plan envisioned in the 2010
17 Master Plan and I must acknowledge Commission Chen,
18 who then worked on the Island and was the author of
19 that plan with West 8.

20

Most of the investments bringing
21 infrastructure up to date including: potable water,
22 21st-century electric and telephone, continued
23 stabilization of our historic buildings and
24 replacing half of our seawall.

25

The City's investment has set the

1

2 stage for new private investment in the restoration
3 of re-tenanting of the beautiful, but vacant
4 landmark buildings on the North Island.

5

The Trust is the steward of these
6 buildings - part of a national and local Historic
7 District and has already invested tens of millions
8 in their stabilization.

9

But the vision has always been
10 that these buildings would be home to a diverse
11 array of enterprises. Those enterprises responsible
12 for their adaptive reuse and those enterprises part
13 of a widely and diverse year-round, 24/7 program of
14 activity on the Island.

15

Towards that end, we released a
16 request for proposals in December to solicit new
17 uses of these buildings. We're actually in the
18 process of reviewing those proposals with the goal
19 of an updated new chapter of tenancy.

20

At the same time, the Trust,
21 working with the Department of City Planning, has
22 proposed the creation of a Special Governors Island
23 District, only for the North Island, which you see
24 here, (indicating) that will reconcile the uses
25 allowed by the deed with uses -- up-to-date zoning.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

Our vision is for that mix of uses; artist studios, galleries, offices, work shops, academic and research institutions and hotels, in addition to the dormitories and schools that are currently allowed under the existing legacy, R3-2 Zoning.

8

9

10

11

The proposed Special District would allow all these commercial uses, with commercial uses greater than 7,500 square feet subject to initial review by Community Board 1.

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

The most important aspect of the proposed Special District would be this change of allowable uses. Because the existing landmark protections remain in place for the Special District, all changes to height, massing and design of the buildings, as well as all changes to anything of landscape, require approval by the Landmarks Preservation Commission and the State Office of Historic Preservation, as well as Community Board 1.

22

(Bell rings.)

23

24

MS. KOCH: Thank you very much for considering this proposal.

25

I want to highlight that we've

1

2 worked extensively with the Community Board and the
3 community in Brooklyn on this and we await your
4 approval.

5

Thank you.

6

THE CHAIR: Thank you, Leslie.

7

8 Don't go away, there might be
9 questions for you. It's always good to see you.

9

Any questions for Ms. Koch?

10

11 Commissioner De La Uz and Anna
12 Levin.

12

13 COMM. DE LA UZ: I thank you for
14 being here.

14

15 I'm wondering if you could just,
16 since you have been speaking with the Community
17 Boards both in Manhattan and Brooklyn, obviously,
18 Community Board 1 is in favor but they had a number
19 of things that they commented on. And then, of
20 course, the Borough President, approval with
21 conditions.

21

22 I wonder if you could speak to
23 their comments.

23

24 MS. KOCH: Yes, we could speak a
25 little bit. We worked very closely with the
Community Board and that balancing, I think, their

2 just our desire to have input with their desire to
3 balance that with all the other demands of the
4 Community Boards. So I think the 7,500 square-foot
5 reflects that and it's very much something that we
6 came to jointly.

7 And then we've also worked very
8 closely with the Borough President's office. And
9 have worked -- and I think Simon will speak to
10 that, our Vice President of Planning -- on what he
11 worked out with the Borough President's office.

12 THE CHAIR: Okay.

13 Anna Levin.

14 COMM. LEVIN: Well, so then maybe
15 my question is, I should hold it on. But anyway,
16 I'll ask my question anyway.

17 But before I do that, Ms. Leslie,
18 I want to say, I think the work that you've done
19 since you've taken over to bring people to the
20 Island in small groups for, you know, not --
21 setting aside the grand vision, which I know we all
22 want to see and it's going to be really difficult
23 to achieve, you -- it's -- you've been really
24 intelligent about opening the Island up to a whole
25 variety of smaller activities that, I think, that

2 may mean that many more New Yorkers now understand
3 the potential of Governors Island.

4 And I look forward to doing some
5 outdoor things out there this summer. My favorite
6 was the Dutch archeological dig, which I continue
7 to run into people who thought that was the real
8 thing.

9 MS. KOCH: Well, it's my personal
10 favorite as well.

11 COMM. LEVIN: Yeah.

12 (Laughter.)

13 COMM. LEVIN: So, anyway, so --
14 my question was simply to ask you to address the
15 Borough President's concerns, first about the fact
16 that we're being asked to, basically, give you a
17 blank check for commercial uses.

18 The Borough President points out
19 that there are some uses that would be then allowed
20 that are probably not anywhere near your mind but,
21 you know, is that -- should there be some units on
22 the commercial zoning. And then, also, you know,
23 the recommendation about an authorization process
24 for, particularly large units.

25 MS. KOCH: Right. I think, from

2 our perspective, I think, that what is particularly
3 important, and I know that many of the
4 Commissioners have been to the Island, is to really
5 think about the actual structures themselves.

6 And, again, because this is a
7 Landmark District, we don't actually envision
8 really any changes to the structures. So the
9 definition of the structures, we're talking about
10 30 officers' homes, Ligett Hall, which is the
11 majestic McKim, Meade & White building but very
12 constrained by its design, only 40 feet deep.

13 So, I think that actually, those
14 uses are the fact that we don't expect there to be
15 very much leeway in any of the exterior
16 modification to those buildings. It really kind of
17 sets the stage for what kinds of uses, whether
18 they're commercial or not commercial would be
19 envisioned.

20 So, for example, in our dialogue
21 with the Borough President's office, we talked
22 about something like big box retail, unlikely to
23 happen in 30 officers' homes. So I think that in
24 thinking about the Island and those mix of uses,
25 there are a variety of very appealing commercial

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

uses that will co-exist always with a public use of the Island.

And that public use is not just the public space. We always refer to this as the park and public space plan. And you can see in the southern half of the Island, the new park that's under construction, as well as, obviously, all the public spaces of the Historic District.

And so that is our -- one of the criteria articulated in our request for proposals is, of course, that fitting uses respect that primary public use and public access for the Island.

So it gives -- there is a flexibility given really the unique nature, you know, a very extensive dialogue with City Planning. And I want to acknowledge, in particular, David Karnovsky's role in that constructive dialogue, about giving that flexibility but really understanding that it's the footprint and design of these existing landmark structures that really kind of sets the tone for that mix of uses that will happen within.

And I think that Simon will speak

2 to this a little bit more, but I think that the
3 Borough President's office has also suggested kind
4 of a list of some uses that wouldn't be appropriate
5 and not envisioned in addition to some of the uses
6 already banned by the deed.

7 COMM. LEVIN: And do any of these
8 structures lend themselves to a nightclub? That
9 was one of the concerns.

10 (Laughter.)

11 MS. KOCH: I don't think so. I
12 cannot imagine -- obviously, there's a whole broad
13 range of entertainment in the world right now, but
14 none of them really do lend themselves to a
15 nightclub.

16 And also -- just so you are aware,
17 we're also very respectful; we share the Island
18 with the National Park Service. And there are
19 actually are national guidelines in place governing
20 national parks. There are more than 310 national
21 parks in the nation about noise. So we are very
22 respectful of that and worked very closely with
23 them as the co-stewards of the Island.

24 THE CHAIR: Kenneth.

25 VICE CHAIR KNUCKLES: Yes.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

So no maritime-themed discos?

(Laughter.)

MS. KOCH: You know, I'm just
sort of speechless about it.

(Laughter.)

MS. KOCH: We were -- and you can
surprise me only occasionally.

VICE CHAIR KNUCKLES: Okay.

Leslie, I'm among those that you
have brought to the Island. And it is a very
special place.

This is not a question that is
contained in the actions before us but I think it's
a question that you will have to deal with in order
to realize the vision. And that is, how do you
envision financing these various endeavors because,
I mean, they are all compatible to the character of
the Island but not necessarily the easiest to -- to
find capital for.

MR. KOCH: You're a wise man, sir.
And think that really sort of struck at the heart
of why we've come to the Commission to permit this
range of uses. Because, again, even ten years ago,
at the time of the transfer it was always

1

2 envisioned that there would be a mixture of uses,
3 the park and public space, or as we call it, the
4 sort of the anchor of the Island - pardon the
5 nautical pun - but that there would be commercial
6 uses because rent from those commercial uses would
7 help defray the cost not only of maintaining the
8 Island itself, but making it a public resource.

9 So when you think about that mix
10 of commercial uses, which will, of course, happen
11 over time, they can include hospitality uses,
12 retail, office space or studio space. So there are
13 a mix of uses because, of course, the deed does not
14 permit residential housing or gambling.

15 THE CHAIR: Any other questions
16 for Leslie?

17 (No response.)

18 THE CHAIR: Thank you so much for
19 being here.

20 MS. KOCH: Thank you so much for
21 having me.

22 THE CHAIR: And the next speaker
23 is Simon Bertrang;

24 Who will be followed by Alex
25 Herrera;

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

And then Michael Levine.

MR. BERTRANG: Good morning, City Commissioners.

I'm going to give my testimony and then I'm going to address, more specifically, some of the questions about the comments that the Borough President had on the plan.

My name is Simon Bertrang. And I'm the Vice President Planning, Design and Preservation for the Trust for Governors Island - a not-for-profit corporation and instrumentality of the City of New York.

I wanted to speak briefly about the Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement for the phased redevelopment of Governors Island, currently under review.

This hearing today doubles as the public hearing for that Draft Supplemental GEIS.

In 2011, the Trust completed the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement for that same phased redevelopment with the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development as the lead agency.

The overall development of the

1

2 Island is a complex project that will occur in
3 multiple phases over many years and is dependent on
4 financing and other factors.

5 At that time, we identified a
6 Phase I redevelopment, which we are now in the
7 process of building. We analyzed Phase I in detail
8 within the context of the more generic later phases
9 of the project, with the full development to be
10 completed in 2030.

11 Phase I, as described in the 2011
12 FGEIS, included the first phase, park and public
13 space improvements, including 30 acres of
14 spectacular new parks south of Liggett Hall and
15 upgrades to the already beautiful and historic
16 North Island public spaces.

17 The seawall repair and
18 reconstruction, including replacement of several
19 thousand feet of seawall on the western and
20 southern edges of the Island with rift raff and
21 revetment, and a new potable water connection with
22 the Buttermilk Channel. All of these projects are
23 underway and will be completed by 2014.

24 Later phases, as described in the
25 2011 FGEIS, included: development of 3 million

1

2 square feet through the re-tenanting of existing
3 North Island buildings and the construction of new
4 buildings on two South Island development sites and
5 the completion of the remainder of the park and
6 public space.

7

We are now proposing the next
8 phase of redevelopment in more detail:

9

The creation of the Special
10 Governors Island District on the North Island;

11

The re-tenanting of 1.2 million
12 square feet of that new district;

13

The completion of remainder of the
14 park and public space Master Plan;

15

Increased ferry service to support
16 the increase in visitors created by that
17 redevelopment.

18

We have prepared a Supplemental
19 GEIS that analyzes the environmental impact of
20 completion of this second phase by 2022. And this
21 is still in the context of the full redevelopment
22 of the entire Island in a still later phase to be
23 completed by 2030.

24

As there are no specific plans or
25 specific uses in mind for the two South Island

1

2 development zones, this later phase remains generic
3 in the analysis.

4

5 The Draft SGEIS, including
6 responses to comments received as part of the
7 public scoping session earlier this year, is
8 available for review and comment today -- at
9 today's public hearing and for ten days following.

9

Thank you.

10

11 Please let me know if you have any
12 questions. And then about the question about the
13 Borough President's comments, we are amenable to
14 the -- there were a couple of recommendations
15 outlined in their letter. It was a very thoughtful
16 analysis and we are amenable to trying to find
17 specific uses that we can identify ahead of time
18 that might address some of their concerns about the
19 broad range of uses.

19

20 But we have, also, the interest in
21 preserving the flexibility. And, I think, Leslie
22 spoke to it very well about the reasoning behind
23 that flexibility if we were able to achieve the
24 mixed use vision for the Island that was -- as the
25 Island was delivered from the federal government to
the people of New York ten years ago, that was the

1

2 vision for the Island and we are advancing that
3 vision.

4

THE CHAIR: Thank you, Simon.

5

Let me see if there are any

6

questions for you.

7

(No response.)

8

THE CHAIR: There are none.

9

Question from Michelle.

10

Michelle.

11

COMM. DE LA UZ: Thank you for

12

being here.

13

Since you -- since you brought up,

14

obviously, the broader scope about the Generic

15

Environmental Impact Statement, I'm just wondering

16

and maybe just to clarify, what will, if any, the

17

north portion vision is going to influence, in

18

terms of the uses, would influence the south

19

portion vision for the two structures?

20

MR. BERTRANG: I think the two

21

questions are fairly separate. They're, obviously,

22

on the same Island but the unique nature of the

23

North Island, because it's in a federal and local

24

Historic District, because we have 44 existing

25

buildings which are in desperate need of

1

2 re-tenanting and restoration, it was approached as
3 a very specific problem.

4

And we worked closely with City
5 Planning to figure out the best way to come up with
6 a zoning text modification and -- and map this
7 Special District that would address the needs of
8 that district.

9

I think we purposely did not
10 really look at the South Island, and I would say
11 that, and it's described in the EIS, that the
12 discussions about the rezoning of the South Island,
13 both the uses and the massing, you know, all of the
14 design guidelines and controls that would have to
15 take place to think about that, would be part of a
16 later discussion.

17

So I guess I would say, we -- we
18 really thought of them as two separate issues. The
19 South Island would clearly include commercial uses
20 because that was the vision when the federal
21 government gave the Island to the people of New
22 York. But we haven't, actually -- we purposely
23 have not tried to speculate on what those uses are
24 beyond the very generic programs we've outlined in
25 the EIS.

1

2

THE CHAIR: Thanks, Simon.

3

MR. BERTRANG: Thank you.

4

THE CHAIR: Alex Herrera; and

5

then Michael Levine; and

6

then Catherine McVay-Hughes.

7

MR. HERRERA: Good morning.

8

THE CHAIR: How are you?

9

MR. HERRERA: I'm Alex Herrera.

10 I'm the Director of Capital Services at the New

11 York Landmarks Conservancy.

12

And thank you for the opportunity

13

to express the Conservancy's views on the proposed

14

Special Governors Island District.

15

The historic ensemble of buildings

16

and structures on Governors Island define the

17

character of the Island and give it a unique -- its

18

unique and appealing sense of place. This historic

19

village should be preserved for the enjoyment and

20

education of New Yorkers now and in the future.

21

The Conservancy has taken an

22

active interest in the well being of these

23

landmarks and has monitored the repairs and

24

restoration of the buildings on the Island for many

25

years. We commend the Trust and Leslie, for its

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

stewardship of the buildings.

The Conservancy believes that a viable tenancy for the buildings is crucial to their continued preservation. Empty buildings deteriorate and suffer neglect. We, therefore, commend the Planning Commission for a new plan that would help bring new compatible uses to these buildings.

However, we believe that there are certain stipulations that could be clearer. For example, we urge the Commission to place a defined height limit, a height restriction, say 55 feet or on all the construction within the Historic District.

The Conservancy also believes that a list of allowable uses would be helpful, actually, enumerating the uses that would be allowed are encouraged.

And, lastly, we believe that important open spaces, such as Nolan Park and the Admiral House Green, and other green areas, should be deemed off limits for new construction.

It's not enough to merely identify sites where the new buildings are allowed. We

1

2 believe we need to identify sites where new
3 construction is not allowed.

4

5 These clarifications, we believe,
6 would help regulate change in the Historic District
7 and would assist the Landmarks Preservation
8 Commission enormously in their task.

8

9 Additionally, we believe that the
10 aforementioned list of uses should be separate for
11 large existing building, such as Liggett Hall and
12 smaller, older buildings, such as the cottages and
13 houses.

13

14 The list of allowable uses should
15 be tailored to the distinct types of existing
16 buildings.

16

17 The north side of Governors Island
18 is a municipal jewel. Any new land use regulation
19 that affects the Historic District should be in
20 harmony with the Landmark's Commission rules and
21 should not set up future conflict between the goal
22 of preserving the building and the needs of
23 adapting to reuses.

23

24 We think the Planning Commission
25 -- we thank the Planning Commission for its
continued support of the preservation goals on the

1

2 north side.

3

THE CHAIR: Thanks.

4

Let me see if there are questions

5

for you.

6

Michelle.

7

COMM. DE LA UZ: Do you have a

8

suggested -- thanks for being here and for your

9

testimony.

10

Do you have a suggested list of

11

uses that you'd like to share?

12

MR. HERRERA: Well, that I would

13

have to discuss with my colleagues. But, yes, I'm

14

sure we could come with a suggested list of uses --

15

(Laughter.)

16

MR. HERRERA: -- for -- I mean,

17

what concerns us that to shoehorn uses in the small

18

buildings that, you know, perhaps would be more

19

compatible in the large buildings, just to make it

20

clearer for potential tenants and to others.

21

COMM. DE LA UZ: Thank you.

22

THE CHAIR: We're not really asking

23

for a list.

24

(Laughter.)

25

THE CHAIR: Any other questions

1

2 for Alex Herrera?

3 Yes.

4 COMM. LEVIN: Well, yes, I guess
5 I'd like to ask on the request for a height
6 restriction and the notion that certain areas
7 should be designated off limits for redevelopment.
8 Some degree of oversight would be provided by the
9 Landmarks Preservation Commission; right, about
10 construction in this area?

11 MR. HERRERA: Well, I mean,
12 that's correct.

13 COMM. LEVIN: And is that
14 sufficient?

15 MR. HERRERA: No. I mean --

16 COMM. LEVIN: And if not, why not?

17 MR. HERRERA: I was Director of
18 Preservations on the Landmarks Preservation
19 Commission for 20 years. And people will come and
20 ask for unbelievable things even though they know
21 the chances are very slim of getting them.
22 The will hire the best land use lawyers that money
23 can buy to try to bend the rules and to try to get
24 around the regulations.

25 In Historic Districts such as

1

2 Brooklyn Heights, the Upper East Side and Cobble
3 Hill, those are all designated Historic Districts.
4 And yet, they also have height limits. Very helpful
5 just to stop, you know, their proposals for --

6 COMM. LEVIN: So they don't even
7 think about asking.

8 MR. HERRERA: They don't even
9 think about, right. Because, you know, I think
10 wherever there are open water views, as in New York
11 City, it is a huge temptation to go as high as
12 possible.

13 And -- and, you know, I've seen it
14 over the years, you know, the way -- the clever
15 way, you know, that -- that -- that folks try to
16 attempt to rationalize why a taller building would
17 be compatible.

18 THE CHAIR: Richard.

19 COMM. EADDY: Alex, hi. Good to
20 see you.

21 MR. HERRERA: Hi.

22 COMM. EADDY: You also made
23 mention of areas that you'd like to see off limits
24 from development. Are there specific areas you
25 have concerns about or is this just a belts and

1

2 suspenders type of --

3

MR. HERRERA: Well, it's, you
4 know, that's right, belts and suspenders. As I
5 said, my experience is that the clearer you can
6 make it, you know, the better. Because there are
7 some beautiful park-like areas here. And I think it
8 would be very attractive.

9

COMM. EADDY: Just a few -- is it
10 marked? I mean, are they mapped parks?

11

MR. HERRERA: I don't think they
12 are.

13

COMM. EADDY: They're not. Okay.
14 Okay. Thank you.

15

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much.

16

The next speaker is Michael

17

Levine; and

18

Then Catherine McVay-Huges; and

19

Then Melissa Levin.

20

MR. LEVINE: Good morning.

21

My name is Michael Levine.

22

I'm Director of Planning for

23

Manhattan Community Board 1.

24

I have just submitted two

25

statements to the secretary. One is a copy of the

1

2 testimony I will be giving today. And the second
3 is a resolution that was adopted unanimously by
4 Manhattan Community Board 1 on March 27, 2013, in
5 favor of the proposed zoning text and map change
6 before you today.

7

8 We thank you for the opportunity
9 to allow us to come today to testify on the reasons
10 why we support the zoning text and map change.

11

12 We applaud the efforts of the
13 Governors Island Trust since the year 2003 to
14 transform Governors Island into a public resource
15 for the city, the state and the nation. The many
16 visitors that go there today are testimony to the
17 great work of the Trust.

18

19 Now more than ever, we are
20 enthusiastic about the future of the Island and we
21 see it as a benefit to all those who live and work
22 in this area.

23

24 The Special District Zoning would
25 allow re-tenanting of 1.2 million square feet of
space, as you have heard, in the Historic District.
The zoning currently is R3.2 and this would allow
an appropriate mix of commercial uses to be
introduced to the Island.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

We believe the proposal and re-tenanting plan will result in increased public use of the Island, bring revenue to the Trust to maintain the Island and, hopefully, provide economic opportunities for small businesses and local organizations in Lower Manhattan and Brooklyn to come out to the Island.

We are particularly thankful to the Governors Island Trust staff and the Department of City Planning staff for working with the Community Board in devising a formula whereby the Community Board will review all commercial uses 7,500 square feet or greater, to determine the appropriateness on the Island.

It's not an authorization process that we have agreed to. It's a simple review. The opportunity to speak to the potential applicant, determine its use and provide our feedback as to what would we feel is appropriate and any questions it may have.

For this reason, we're delighted to support the text and map changes. We've heard discussion on the proposals by the Borough President's office for an authorization process for

1

2 large uses and for a list of -- list of uses that
3 were reviewed. We have no problem. We would be
4 glad to continue to work with the Department staff
5 and the Trust staff to make any appropriate
6 amendments to the proposed text and map today.

7 Again, we therefore support of
8 this text. We urge this Commission to rule in
9 favor of it.

10 And I will be followed by the
11 Chair of Community Board 1, who will state to you
12 some of the concerns we raised at the scoping
13 session for the DGEIS before it was prepared that
14 talk about potential negative impacts on the
15 Island.

16 Thank you.

17 THE CHAIR: Thanks, Michael.

18 Let me see if there are questions.

19 (No response.)

20 THE CHAIR: There are not.

21 The next person to speak is
22 Catherine McVay-Hughes.

23 MS. MC VAY-HUGHES: Good morning.

24 I am Catherine McVay-Hughes, Chair
25 of Manhattan Community Board 1.

1

2

3

4

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this application for the creation of a Special Governors Island District.

5

6

7

Mitigating negative impacts of the potential increased development on Governors Island remains a primary importance to Community Board 1.

8

9

10

Transportation to Governors Island occurs from two ferry portals; one in Manhattan and one in Brooklyn.

11

12

13

14

15

16

We are particularly concerned about the area surrounding the Battery Maritime Building in Lower Manhattan and have specific concerns regarding the potential negative impacts from the North Island re-tenanting plan associated with this zoning proposal.

17

18

19

CB1, therefore, requests that the following factors be considered as potential impacts of increased use of Governors Island:

20

21

22

1. Air quality and noise issues resulting from ferries transporting to and from Governors Island.

23

24

25

Ferries should be retrofitted using the best available technology and industry standards and use Ultra Low Sulphur Diesel fuel.

1

2 For example, we recently noticed the black soot
3 emanating from the ferries transporting people to
4 and from the Island, as well as the Staten Island
5 Ferry.

6

2. Pedestrian/vehicle flow at the
7 Governors Island Ferry Terminal.

8

Sidewalks and bike paths must be
9 wide enough to accommodate increased traffic.

10

In addition, vehicular and
11 pedestrian traffic must be separated in order to
12 reduce pedestrian/vehicle conflicts.

13

CB1 also requests more information
14 about increased transportation opportunities, such
15 as additional bus stops when the terminal is built
16 out.

17

3. Garbage removal from Governors
18 Island.

19

CB1 requests a plan for how
20 garbage will be handled, including whether or not
21 composting will be utilized for minimizing garbage.

22

4. LEED and Energy Star.

23

Newer or renovated construction
24 should be LEED-rated and Energy Star certified.

25

5. Consideration of possible

1

2 future storms.

3

4 New Governors Island construction
5 and terminal development must be built to the
6 highest industry standards to withstand storms
7 similar to Super Storm Sandy.

8

6. Balance retail uses.

9

10 Future development at Governors
11 Island should seek a balance of retail uses that
12 will attract residents of CB1, as well as tourists.

13

7. Maintaining open space.

14

15 Sufficient open space must be
16 ensured as part of any new construction on the
17 Island in order to maintain its park-like
18 atmosphere.

19

20 While we're concerned about the
21 impacts of commercial development in the North
22 Island, we're also focusing on the future
23 development in the south -- in the South Island.

24

25 On Monday, May 6th, Community
26 Board 1 was given a tour by the Governors Island
27 staff of the new 30-acre park that will be
28 completed later this fall. We are thrilled about
29 the positive progress being made on the Island.

30

Thank you for the opportunity to

1

2 testify today and we look forward to continuing to
3 discuss the redevelopment and implementation plans
4 for Governors Island.

5

THE CHAIR: Thanks, Catherine.

6

7 for you.

8

(No response.)

9

10 here.

11

MS. MC VAY-HUGHES: Thank you.

12

THE CHAIR: Melissa Levin; and

13

Then Aditi -- Aditi Sen.

14

And then Robert Pirani.

15

MS. LEVIN: Good morning.

16

17 I'm Melissa Levin. And I'm the
18 Director of Cultural Programs for the Lower
19 Manhattan Cultural Council. Lower Manhattan
20 Cultural Council is a 501(C)(3_ not-profit.

21

22 We've been a leading voice for
23 arts and culture since 1973, dedicated to
24 presenting cultural experiences downtown, making
25 Manhattan a thriving center of arts and activity
with relevance to the arts community worldwide and
working in partnerships to improve the quality of

1

2 life for New York City's workers, residents and
3 visitors.

4

LMCC believes that visionary
5 cultural initiatives can lead to sustainable
6 community growth and the development of
7 opportunities for artists if those initiatives:

8

Align with neighborhood needs;

9

Find support from both public and

10

private sectors; and

11

Engage cross-sector partnerships.

12

In partnership with property

13

owners, leading downtown employers, community

14

organizations, local residents and public

15

officials, LMCC nurtures the assets and responds to

16

the needs of local communities across Manhattan and

17

at Governors Island, advances the careers and

18

practices of artists from across the City and

19

transforms perceptions about what it means to be in

20

Lower Manhattan.

21

The Trust for Governors Island has

22

been a core partner for LMCC in this work since

23

2010. The Trust is a partner who truly understands

24

that cultural activity is invaluable to New York

25

City and to the development of the Island as the

1

2 most highly sought after new location in the City.

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

LMCC has activated building 110 at Governors Island as a multi-purpose, multi-disciplinary art center with artist studios, rehearsal spaces and a gallery.

The prospect of a rezoned Historic District to include a broad range of commercial uses that benefit the visiting public and are compatible with the recreational, cultural and educational uses allowed under the existing zoning, is very exciting to LMCC, as one of only two current tenants on the Island.

The rezoning, along with the possibility of extended ferry service, a more diverse Island population, a range of amenities and more is certain to greatly benefit our programming and the artists with whom we work.

At building 110, LMCC's Arts Center at Governors Island, LMCC's programming directly addresses New York City's -- New York City artists' growing needs for career development tools, access to mentors and professional networks, time and affordable work spaces and opportunities to engage and build audiences and markets for their

1

2 work.

3

4

5

6

7

8

Currently, each year the residency program at building 110 provides over 35 talented contemporary visual artists and 15 performing arts groups with free studio space for up to five months to develop specific projects, as well as create and present new work.

9

10

11

12

13

LMCC has also hosted talks, networking events, public programs and its flagship professional development intensive, the Artist Summer Institute, which provides 55 artists with strategic, business planning training.

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

The Arts Center is truly a unique experience for New York City's artists, a parkland retreat within commuting distance of their homes and day jobs. Whether they are receiving a longer term residence or participating in any types of workshop, artists frequently describe their experience as transformative and value the opportunity to interact with the Island's topography, as well as the Island's visitors.

23

(Bell rings.)

24

25

MS. LEVIN: LMCC annually sees steady, if not increased, program inquiries,

1

2 participation and applications for its residence
3 programs and public program opportunities. This
4 demand clearly highlights the ongoing needs of the
5 City's artists, their desire to build thoughtful
6 and sustainable careers and their specific interest
7 in engaging with Governors Island.

8 THE CHAIR: Can you please,
9 conclude your remarks.

10 MS. LEVIN: Sure.

11 A vibrant and compelling Historic
12 District at Governors Island that preserves the
13 bucolic setting of this historic Island and
14 enhances historically, recreational, cultural and
15 educational programs is vital for the overall
16 redevelopment of the Island with great benefit to
17 New York City.

18 Thank you for the opportunity to
19 speak.

20 THE CHAIR: Thanks so much for
21 being here.

22 Let me see if there are any
23 questions.

24 (No response.)

25 THE CHAIR: We appreciate it.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

Aditi Sen; and

Then Robert Pirani.

MS. SEN: Good morning.

I'm here today to testify on behalf of the 70,000 members of Service Employees International Union, Local 32BJ.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment regarding the future development of Governors Island.

Any developer who is chosen for the development sites on the Island will benefit greatly from the opportunity as these are very valuable public resources.

As we've heard before, \$260 million in capital investments is coming from the City's ten-year capital budget. This will go towards making infrastructure improvements on the Island, including basic services such as bringing potable water to the site.

The uses on these sites are restricted precisely because it is recognized how important a resource this is for the New York City public at large. Therefore, it is imperative that all developers selected for this iconic site,

1

2 through the parallel RFP processes that are
3 ongoing, to have a track record of responsible
4 development and employment.

5

6 They must ensure that the jobs
7 created through this project and these developments
8 are the good jobs with the prevailing wages and
9 benefits that New Yorkers need to support their
10 families. That's just the right thing to do.

11

12 Given the significance of this
13 site, the established goals for the Island and the
14 huge public investment that has already been
15 committed, we need to make sure that all
16 development on this site go to developers who are
17 committed to creating good jobs with family
18 sustaining wages and benefits.

19

20 The Trust for Governors Island, as
21 well as the City, should make sure to keep the
22 needs of all New Yorkers in mind for both those who
23 visit and those whose work it is to maintain the
24 facilities and grounds, keep the Island secure and
25 service those visitors to the Island.

26

Thank you.

27

28 THE CHAIR: Thanks so much for
29 being here.

1

2

We appreciate it.

3

Robert Pirani.

4

And Connie Chung.

5

Then Jennifer Gardner.

6

7

MR. PIRANI: Good morning and
thank you for this opportunity to testify.

8

9

10

11

12

Since 1995, Governors Island
Alliance has worked to celebrate the Island's rich
history, create memorable parks and public spaces
and ensure appropriate re-use of the Island and its
historic structures.

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

We share with the commendations
offered by others today, and the Commission itself,
with the considerable progress that's been made on
returning the Island to the people of New York.
The public visitation, the progress on
infrastructure and park investments and
stabilization of historic buildings, and now the
prospect of tenancies in the Historic District are
all things that the City should be proud of. And
we owe much to the Trust for the progress in that
matter.

24

25

In particular, we're delighted
that the City's proceeded on an RFP for new tenants

1

2 that would animate the more than 50 buildings with
3 -- in the City and National Landmark Historic
4 District.

5

The proposed creation of the
6 Special District is a good approach for enabling
7 leases with commercial, cultural and educational
8 tenants identified in the recent RFP, to proceed.

9

The District would reconcile the
10 uses anticipated in the documents that it complete
11 the transfer of the Island to New York for the
12 zoning text and, particularly, allowing commercial
13 uses such as dormitories, hotels, spas and their
14 supported retail uses, to move forward.

15

Larger tenancies in the more than
16 1.4 million square feet of historic building space,
17 is critical towards building success and their
18 sustainability.

19

The design guidelines that are --
20 that govern redevelopment in the Historic District
21 offer additional protection for the character of
22 the Island and the opportunity for public input
23 into its redevelopment.

24

They -- in considering the
25 District and it's offered, again, we're very

1

2 supportive with some minor modifications.

3

4 We think it's critical that the
5 City provide a clear path to decisions to
6 prospective tenants with a minimum of oversight
7 when they aren't keeping with the goals and
8 objectives as stated in the general purposes of the
9 statute, the deed restrictions, and the design and
10 development guidelines created for the Historic
11 District.

12

13 We would suggest some minor
14 modifications to the text as currently written.

15

16 First, additionally, you know,
17 with share with the Borough President the idea that
18 clarity in the specific uses that are to be
19 permitted, as of right, should be in keeping with
20 other -- will be in keeping with other zoning text.
21 And a list of those uses would offer additional
22 clarity for prospective tenants going forward.

23

24 Allowing leases as of right
25 without any Community Board review or Commission
26 certification, while we're really supportive of the
27 idea of doing it for buildings in less than 7,500
28 feet, we don't believe that should hold for hotel
29 and hospitality uses of any size or for new

1

2 structures within the Historic District.

3

4 Those should be reviewed by the
5 Commissioner as well as the Community Board. In
6 particular, on the hotels and hospitality use,
7 we've learned that in other parts of the City,
8 innovative developers have kind of pushed the
9 boundaries between permanent residences and
10 hospitality uses. And we want to make sure that
11 that doesn't happen here.

12

13 Finally -- and we would share with
14 the Borough President the idea that an upper limit
15 on the size of those uses that could proceed with
16 only a certification also be considered. We would
17 offer the suggestion that at probably 20,000 square
18 feet is probably too small, --

19

(Bell rings.)

20

21 MR. PIRANI: -- anything on the
22 order of 40,000 square feet would be more in
23 keeping with the idea of maintaining that mix of
24 uses on the Island, diversity of use and not making
25 any one use dominate large portions of the Historic
26 District, but at that same time allowing
27 flexibility for prospective tenants.

28

Finally, let me close my

1

2 statement, the relatively flexible provisions of
3 the Special District should not be considered a
4 precedent for the southern half of the Island.

5

I've included in our testimony
6 design, design guidelines and principles that had
7 been development by our Board and Advisory
8 Committee for the Commissioners and Commission's
9 review.

10

In particular, and we would
11 suggest --

12

THE CHAIR: You have to close.
13 But I'll ask you to close. If you could just close
14 with your closing points.

15

MR. PIRANI: Yeah. So it's just,
16 you know, in particular, we would suggest that as
17 zoning for the southern half of the Island moves --
18 goes forward, that in particular we would -- we
19 would like to see design guidelines as well as
20 mapping of the public spaces and parks that are
21 being created as City parkland so that the they're
22 protected in perpetuity.

23

Thank you very much.

24

And I'll be happy to answer any
25 questions.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

Let me see if there are any.
Michelle.

COMM. DE LA UZ: Thank you for
being here and for your testimony.

I'm just wondering if you happened
to have shared your comments about the review of
leases for hotel and hospitality uses, regardless
of size, at the Community Board hearing or at the
Borough President's hearing. I was just wondering
if they had heard that prior.

MR. PIRANI: They had -- no. I
had shared it with the Community Board and with the
Trust at a meeting following the -- when the
proposed text was released.

THE CHAIR: Great. And be sure
you leave your testimony for us.

MR. PIRANI: Sure.

THE CHAIR: All right.

Thanks for being here.

MR. PIRANI: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Connie Chung.

And then Jennifer Gardner.

MS. CHUNG: Good morning.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

Madam Chair and members of the
City Planning Commission - I'll be quick.

Thank you for the opportunity to
speak here today in support of the Governors Island
rezoning.

I'm Connie Chung, planning analyst
for the Alliance for Downtown New York, which
manages the business improvement district for Lower
Manhattan south of Chambers Street.

Governors Island is an invaluable
resource and amenity for Lower Manhattan's 310,000
workers, 60,000 residents and an estimated
11-and-a-half million visitors a year, as well as
the City as large.

We, therefore, support the
creation of a Special Governors Island's District
on the North Island. It is necessary for the City
to modernize the zoning of the North Island in
order to expand opportunities for the public to
visit Governors Island and to implement the
long-term mixed use redevelopment plan proposed by
the Trust for Governors Island.

Current legacy zoning does not
capitalize on the vast potential of Governors

1

2 Island. By allowing commercial uses such as
3 studios, galleries, offices, workshops, academic
4 and research institutions, hotel and retail through
5 adaptive re-use, a Special Governors Island
6 District would create conditions in which this
7 potential can be achieved while maintaining the
8 historic character of the North Island
9 neighborhood.

10 Once renovations are completed in
11 2015, a redeveloped Governors Island, or the North
12 end, I should say, will be an even more compelling
13 destination for local workers, residents and
14 visitors of Lower Manhattan.

15 The Downtown Alliance believes the
16 plans for Governors Island, seeded by the creation
17 of the Special Governors Island District, will
18 provide a strong economic benefit for New York City
19 and become an important asset and neighbor to Lower
20 Manhattan.

21 We are happy to support this
22 project in front of the Commission today.

23 Thank you.

24 THE CHAIR: Thanks so much for
25 coming.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

Jennifer Gardner.

MS. GARDNER: Good morning.

I'm Jennifer Gardner. I'm an urban planner with the Manhattan Borough President's office.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Commission this morning on behalf of the Borough President for -- with regard to the Special Governors Island District.

Since many of our concerns have already been covered and you're all very aware of what we're recommending, I'll briefly highlight just a few of our concerns and our recommendations, again.

I'd also like to begin by acknowledging that the Trust for Governors Island has done really incredible work in establishing the master plan and engaging with the community throughout this development process. But part of our concern is that, as it is a name or a body, the Trust is Mayoral body that is subject to change over time according to interest.

So, first, in terms of our concerns:

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

Permitting all commercial uses is an unusual approach. We felt that more finely tuned zoning can ensure the flexibility that's required for the Trust and would also more closely mirror the other existing restrictions, such as with the transfer deed.

We reference the Special Tribeca District and the Special Coney Island District in our response, for which new use groups were created and regulated according to local character. And I believe at the review session the Stapleton Special District was also given as a counter-example, yet even their use group 12 is prohibited and certain restrictions are made for waterfront uses.

The current Trust, of course, has great intentions to create a dynamic mixed-use community on the Island. But we have seen property owners - and this has been highlighted today in some of the testimony about the Historic District - we're seeing property owners and tenants re-purpose all sorts of buildings for all sorts of uses. More specificity can be of greater benefit to Governors Island.

So, our second concern is that

1

2 uses of a large scale or concentration may
3 introduce new impacts or limit the ability of the
4 public to enjoy the Island as a City-wide resource.

5 Twenty-five percent of the
6 buildings within the Historic District are -- range
7 in size from about 20,000 square feet to 400,000
8 square feet at the high end - so roughly from the
9 average Duane Reade to 346 Broadway around the
10 corner.

11 So larger structures or groupings
12 of smaller ones present the best redevelopment
13 opportunities. But they may also create
14 destinations within the destination, potentially
15 limiting access to open space or other public uses
16 on the Island or straining infrastructure without
17 sufficient review.

18 And we also felt that all Special
19 Districts add a certain degree of flexibility, but
20 they also appropriately restrict that flexibility
21 to reflect local character.

22 And we believe that the Commission
23 can more clearly establish these restrictions for
24 Governors Island, as well as a more rehearsed
25 process to review the redevelopment.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

So in terms of our recommendations, just to highlight these briefly, we feel that first, zoning should take a more traditional approach of aligning uses with the intent of the redevelopment, the deed and the unique character of the Island by more narrowly defining permitted uses, which we understand is certainly on the table for discussion.

We also recommend an authorization process which would encourage planning and offer a greater degree of oversight for the uses of greatest impact, a review based on quality and findings.

Increasing the size threshold to 20,000 square feet is based on a two-part rationale corresponding to the existing building sizes, as well as the ULURP definitions for major concessions for adjoining park spaces.

(Bell rings.)

MS. GARDNER: So just to wrap up.

The Borough President recommends that the Island's significance should not be viewed solely as a real estate opportunity. And that our reverse planning and review process is critical for

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

preserving Governors Island as a dynamic public resource.

And we look forward to continuing this conversation with the Trust.

THE CHAIR: Thank you so much for coming and speaking on behalf of the Borough President.

Is there anyone who hasn't spoken on the plan who would like to do so?

(No response.)

THE CHAIR: All right.

The record will remain open for ten days for additional comments on the Draft -- the Draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement.

And this hearing is now closed.

(At 10:54 a.m., the proceedings were concluded.)

* * * *

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

STATE OF NEW YORK)
SS.
COUNTY OF NEW YORK)

I, MARC RUSSO, a Shorthand
(Stenotype) Reporter and Notary Public within and
for the State of New York, do hereby certify that
the foregoing pages 1 through 56, taken at the time
and place aforesaid, is a true and correct
transcription of my shorthand notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have
hereunto set my name this 9th day of May, 2013.

Marc Russo

MARC RUSSO

Written Comments on the DSGEIS

Borough President Recommendation

City Planning Commission
22 Reade Street, New York, NY 10007
Fax # (212) 720-3356

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Return this completed form with any attachments to the Calendar Information Office, City Planning Commission, Room 2E at the above address.
2. Send one copy with any attachments to the applicant's representative as indicated on the Notice of Certification.

Application: **C 130190 ZMM and N 130189 ZRM**

Docket Description:

IN THE MATTER OF an application submitted by Governors Island Corporation d/b/a the Trust for Governors Island pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter for an amendment of the Zoning Map, Section No. 16a by establishing a Special Governors Island District (GI) bounded by a line 2675 feet northeasterly from the southwesterly point of Governors island as measured along a line perpendicular to said line and bisecting the angle formed by the southwesterly boundary lines of Governors Island, and the northerly, northeasterly and southeasterly shorelines of Governors Island, Borough of Manhattan, Community District 1.

COMMUNITY BOARD NO:

1

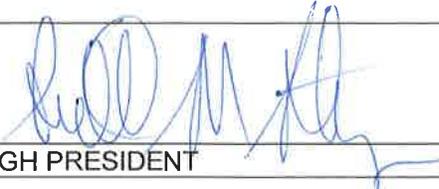
BOROUGH: Manhattan

RECOMMENDATION

- APPROVE
- APPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS/CONDITIONS (List below)
- DISAPPROVE
- DISAPPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS/CONDITONS (Listed below)

EXPLANATION OF RECOMMENDATION – MODIFICATION/CONDITIONS (Attach additional sheets if necessary)

See Attached


BOROUGH PRESIDENT

4/29/2013
DATE



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

SCOTT M. STRINGER
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

April 29, 2013

Recommendation on
ULURP Application Nos. C 130190 ZMM and N 130189 ZRM
Special Governors Island District
By Governors Island Corporation d/b/a/ the Trust for Governors Island

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Governors Island Corporation (d.b.a. Trust for Governors Island, “the applicant”) seeks approvals for land use actions that will lead to the creation of a new special district on the northern portion of Governors Island, in order to facilitate reuse and re-tenanting of approximately 1.2 million square feet (SF) of space within existing, historic structures, as well as the construction of one new facility to support existing concession uses.

Pursuant to Sections 197-c and 201 of the New York City Charter, the applicant seeks an **amendment to Zoning Map Section No. 16a (C 130190 ZMM)** that will **establish a Special Governors Island District** in Manhattan Community Board 1 (“CB 1”). The proposed special district would be comprised of the entire area of Governors Island located to the north of the former Division Road.

The applicant has filed a related application for a **zoning text amendment (N 130189 ZRM)** that establishes regulations for the proposed special district. The proposed text amendment would apply to the following sections of the Zoning Resolution (“ZR”): **§ 12-10 (Definitions)**, **§ 13-00 (Comprehensive Off-Street Parking Regulations)**; and **§ 134-00 (Special Purpose Districts-Special Governors Island District)**. Generally, the proposed text change would permit commercial uses within the underlying R3-2 zoning district. The proposed amendments also address parking and loading regulations, height, setback and bulk regulations.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant seeks zoning map and text amendments that will establish and regulate the Special Governors Island District (“special district”) on the northern portion of Governors Island (“North Island”) within Community District 1 of Manhattan. The text will allow the Trust for Governors Island (“Trust”) to tenant approximately 1.2 million SF of existing space with commercial uses



in addition to the as-of-right community facility uses. The applicant intends to tenant the island's historic structures and construct a new, two-story structure to support existing concession uses.¹

Governors Island (Manhattan Block 1, Lot 10) is located in New York Harbor, approximately one half mile south of Manhattan and one quarter mile west of Brooklyn.² The applicant holds title to 150 acres of the island, which is composed of two primary sections, the North Island and the South Island, separated by Division Road, which roughly bisects the island on a northwest-southeast axis. The boundaries of the proposed special district are coterminous with the Governors Island Historic District.³ The North Island is also the location of the 22-acre Fort Jay and Castle Williams National Monument site, which is owned and operated by the National Park Service. The island is a car-free zone, and is accessible by ferry from multiple locations in Manhattan and Brooklyn.

Zoning Map Amendment

A **zoning map amendment** establishes the boundaries of the proposed special district on the North Island. The proposed special district, excluding the National Monument site, contains about 1.375 million SF of space in approximately 50 historic structures that range in scale from 400,000-square foot Liggett Hall, a four-story institutional building, to Building 11, a 1,200-square foot single-family wood frame home. The applicant has released a request for proposals ("RFP") for 44 separate historic structures, which is being reviewed concurrently with this application. In addition to the historic resources, the North Island also features 40 acres of open space, accessible to the public.

Zoning Text Amendment

The applicant proposes to supplement the existing R3-2 zoning district with a special purpose district with unique use and other restrictions as relevant under zoning. The proposed **zoning text amendment** defines the objectives of the proposed special district and establishes specific regulations for commercial uses, waterfront zoning, signs and bulk regulations, and unique control mechanisms.

Commercial Uses

In addition to the as-of-right educational, cultural and recreational uses, the proposed text permits all commercial uses within the special district. Additionally, physical culture or health establishments would be permitted without seeking a special permit pursuant to ZR § 73-36.⁴

¹ Additionally, two non-contributing structures within the Governors Island Historic District will be demolished.

² City of New York, Office of the Mayor, Positive Declaration Notice of Intent to Prepare a Draft SGEIS, 12/5/2012.

³ The Governors Island Historic District was designated by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission and approved by the City Planning Commission in August 1996 (N 960676 HKM). This designation requires the preservation of all contributing buildings on the North Island. The North Island is also a National Historic Landmark District and has been listed on the New York State and National Registers of Historic Places.

⁴ Physical culture establishments may include spas, gyms or other such uses associated with hospitality and recreational uses on the island.

Waterfront Zoning

The proposed text amendment establishes Governors Island as a single zoning lot and waives the applicability of ZR § 62-00, Special Regulations Applying in the Waterfront Area.

Signs, Bulk, Height and Setbacks

Commercial uses and physical culture or health establishments would be required to meet the sign and floor area regulations consistent with those of a C1 overlay mapped within an R3-2 district. Additionally, the provisions of ZR § 62-341 (Developments on Land and Platforms) would apply to all buildings within the special district.

Parking and Loading

Modifications to ZR § 13-00 explicitly exclude Governors Island from the Comprehensive Off-Street Parking Regulations for Community Boards 1-8 in Manhattan and 1 and 2 in Queens. As a passenger vehicle-free island, these regulations are largely inapplicable. Instead, accessory off-street parking and loading berths to any use permitted within the special district would be allowed.

Control Mechanism

The text amendment additionally seeks to establish a review process for future commercial or physical culture or health establishments greater than 7,500 SF. Such facilities would be subject to review and comment by Manhattan Community Board 1 and the Trust would be required to respond to such comments. The City Planning Commission (“CPC”) Chair would need to certify that such response occurred. The Trust would be required to demonstrate to CB 1 that the proposed use would promote the goals of the special district and be generally compatible with the scale and character of previously established uses.

This CPC review would be in addition to that required by the Landmarks Preservation Commission (“LPC”) and the New York State Historic Preservation Office (“SHPO”), which would examine physical changes to North Island’s historic structures.

Existing Land Use and Other Relevant Restrictions

The island is currently zoned R3-2 district, which is a general residential district that permits Use Groups 1-4 (residential and community facilities),⁵ and allows a range of housing typologies. The district encourages smaller-scale and low-density uses, with a maximum building height of 35 feet, and an allowable FAR of 0.5 for residential⁶ and 1.0 for community facility uses. Additionally, absent the text Governors Island is subject to Waterfront Zoning regulations. As a result, the island is not only a single zoning lot but also constitutes a single, waterfront block.

There are a number of active, non-compliant uses on the island, which is open to the public on weekends and holidays during the summer season. Year-round uses currently include the New

⁵ UG 3: Community facilities like schools, libraries, museums and galleries, college dormitories, nursing homes, residential facilities for special needs populations are all examples of uses already permitted. UG 4: Community facilities like houses of worship, community centers, hospitals, ambulatory care facilities and other facilities without sleeping accommodations are also permitted under current R3-2 zoning.

⁶ Up to 0.6 FAR for residential uses with an attic bonus.

York Harbor School, artist studios sponsored by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council as well as the offices and other support facilities occupied by the applicant.

In addition to zoning, uses permitted and prohibited on the island are also governed by restrictions established in the federal transfer deed. The federal transfer deed permits a range of commercial uses, which would require a zoning override in order to legally exist without further change to the underlying zoning.

Federal Transfer Deed

Ownership of Governors Island was transferred to the City of New York in 2003. The deed contains use covenants that are “intended to ensure the protection and preservation of the natural, cultural and historic qualities of Governors Island, guarantee public access to this magnificent island, promote the quality of public education, and enhance the ability of the public to enjoy Governors Island and the surrounding waterways,” with the aim of creating a contributing asset to the quality of life in the city, the region and the nation.⁷ To this end, the deed defines permitted uses that contribute to the public benefit purposes of the island including: parkland and open space; educational uses; and “additional” public benefit uses, such as museums, transportation facilities and cultural facilities.

Additionally, the deed allows uses deemed compatible with the historic and civic character of Governors Island. These uses include entertainment facilities, hotels, office space, retail, public works and health facilities and housing for island caretakers.

The federal transfer deed further prohibits certain uses with the intent of maintaining the island’s character. These prohibitions include, gaming and casinos, electrical power generation for use off-island, industrial or manufacturing uses, residential uses⁸ and parking.

Proposed Development Program Phasing and Environmental Review

The redevelopment of Governors Island includes two phases. Phase 1 includes the Park Master Plan and construction of the initial portion of the public park design, which is currently underway.⁹ The phase also includes significant public investment in infrastructure upgrades ranging from seawall repair to water main construction in preparation for expanded use and mixed-use redevelopment.

The second phase will include the completion of the Park Master Plan, including the construction of 32 additional acres of public open space, the tenanting of the North Island historic structures and 33 acres of new development within the South Island development zones. The development of the North Island is projected to be completed by 2022, but full completion including the South Island is projected for 2030. While the current application only seeks approvals for a specific set of land use actions focused on the North Island historic district, the supporting environmental review considers a “full build” scenario that includes:

⁷ Federal Transfer Deed

⁸ Caretaker housing or student dormitories is permitted

⁹ Phase 1 of the Master Plan is scheduled to be complete by fall of 2013.

- occupancy of all redeveloped historic structures on the North Island;
- completion and use of all public open space in the Park Master Plan; and
- extended ferry service to seven days per week in support of increased activity.

The applicants issued an Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (“SGEIS”) based on a generic development program specific uses for the island have not yet been determined. The hypothetical development program includes two different scenarios with different concentrations of uses, including: university, conference center/hotel, office, retail/restaurant, cultural, public school and maintenance facilities.

The SGEIS determines that the proposed project may result in additional significant adverse impacts previously unaddressed in the 2011 FGEIS in the following areas:

Transportation: several vehicular intersections, the Bowling Green Subway Station and three pedestrian intersections in lower Manhattan would have impacts. While most impacts can be mitigated, the Bowling Green station would require stairway widening, which may not be structurally feasible.

Noise: the analysis also found that including a school playground in the development program may result in significant noise impacts if located adjacent to an open space area. Mitigation could include physical separation through landscape barriers or site plan alternatives.

Neighborhood Character: the SGEIS found that significant, noticeable change to the character of the island as a result of full redevelopment; however, the analysis notes that it is expected that this change would be beneficial, citing the new amenities offered and enlivening the site with a diversity of users.

COMMUNITY BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

Community Board 1 unanimously approved, with 26 votes in favor, the proposed zoning text and map amendments in a full board meeting on March 27, 2013. CB 1’s resolution cites the positive significance of the Trust’s long-term redevelopment plans and supports the adoption of the proposed zoning map and text amendments, provided the applicant make “every effort” to ensure mitigation of potential negative impacts of increased use of Governors Island in key areas of concern, including:

- air quality and noise impacts of ferries;
- pedestrian and vehicular flow at the Ferry Terminal (Battery Maritime Building);
- garbage removal from the island;
- energy efficient adaptive re-use through LEED and Energy Star ratings;
- consideration of future storm events;
- balanced retail uses appealing to residents and tourists;
- maintenance of sufficient open space and
- minimization of impacts on wildlife habitat.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Governors Island is a unique community and city-wide resource with nearly 150 acres available for public access, parkland and economic development. The island's significance, however, should not be viewed solely as a real estate opportunity. The island's military, maritime and civic history; its geographic location, attendant views and waterfront recreational opportunities; its enduring historic architectural character; and its sheer novelty as a "new" public place to discover and explore make Governors Island an unmatched resource. The island has the potential to be one of the city's most significant places for cultural, educational, recreational and economic development. This unique opportunity creates a need for careful, long-term planning and development strategies.

The redevelopment of the island is a complex process with no precedent in New York City or, arguably, the nation. The Trust is charged with facilitating the redevelopment of the island. Its mission is to ensure the transformation of Governors Island into a destination with great public spaces with mixed-use development through expanded visitation, public programming and investment in infrastructure and public parks. The Trust has commendably engaged in a high level of outreach throughout a public planning process that has spanned the better part of a decade, establishing a dialogue with the local community in Manhattan as well as Brooklyn. Further, it has successfully engaged in the critical preliminary work of managing the significant infrastructure work necessary to facilitate public use and new development.

Governors Island is already a true resource for all New Yorkers, many of whom have already had the chance to discover the island since its first open season in 2008. A number of active uses now exist on the island. In summer 2012, an average of 8,000 visitors came to the island each day to enjoy open space and parkland, as well as a variety of public recreational and cultural programs.¹⁰ The continuing redevelopment project will add a diversity of uses and users to the island.¹¹

Generally, to facilitate this outcome, the applicant seeks flexibility within the proposed special district in order to allow for a range of uses. The federal transfer deed permits commercial uses on the island; however existing zoning does not permit these uses. As such, the applicant seeks to allow all commercial uses within the special district and allow the federal transfer deed to act as an upper limit on the type of commercial uses currently permitted on the island. Reconciling those uses with the uses permitted in the zoning will lead to a more harmonious regulatory environment for prospective tenants on the island.

However, while new development on the island is welcome, it must be carefully balanced with larger potential impacts, infrastructure needs and the Trust's intention for the island to serve as a public resource.

¹⁰ Attendance peaked in 2011 at 448,000 seasonal visitors; 2012 saw the partial closure of the island and visitor numbers dropped to 345,000, according to the SGEIS for the proposed project.

¹¹ In the 2011 FEIS, the Trust estimates that annual park and public space visitation from the full development of the proposed project (2030) would increase to approximately 1.89 million, and the number of visitors in the summer on a busy (85th percentile of in-season visitation) day during the weekend and during the week would be around 21,690 and 7,998, respectively.

In order to understand the overall effect of the Special District on the island, the proposed compatibility and scale of potential uses are the appropriate measures. As written, the proposed text presents several planning concerns regarding unintended outcomes:

1. The request that all commercial uses be permitted within the special district is an unusual approach that may result in incompatible uses.
2. Impacts generated by the uses of a particular scale or concentration may introduce new environmental impacts and limit the ability of the public to enjoy the areas established for public benefit, such as parkland and open space or cultural facilities.
3. The precedent set by the special district for development of the North Island may impact future decisions for the remainder of the island.

While the current Trust has done an admirable job working with the larger community, the Trust's makeup is subject to change over time. Further, while the Trust has recently issued a Request for Proposals ("RFP") for the North Island and a Request for Expressions of Interest ("RFEI") for the South Island, no specific users have been chosen. As such, it is impossible to know what uses will be ultimately selected in the immediate or extended future. It is therefore important to consider how the proposed zoning will ensure compatible uses that have minimal impact.

Planning Considerations

Breadth of Commercial Uses

The inclusion of commercial uses on the island is fully appropriate. While uses will be limited by the federal transfer deed, the inclusion of *all* commercial uses as of right in the zoning resolution is highly unusual. Typical special districts prescribe or restrict uses in specific terms within the zoning resolution. The Zoning Resolution has strong precedents for fine-tuning permitted uses such as in the Special TriBeCa District and the Special Coney Island District zoning text. In these examples, new use groups were created and permitted or restricted as necessary to best describe the type and scale uses that are appropriate according to the unique character of those areas.

Governors Island is defined by its unique open spaces. Three distinct open space areas in the North Island area are currently available for public use. The wide range of use groups sought in the proposed zoning text allows uses that are clearly incompatible with public open spaces. By permitting all uses, many uses are included which are not typically located next to public parks including large night clubs, pawn shops, gun repair shops and large-format retail. Additionally, it also introduces several commercial categories defined by the zoning resolution as semi-industrial uses, such as larger print shops, carpentry facilities and soldering or welding shops.

Permitted uses should be considered in terms of their potential impacts on the public benefit purpose of Governors Island. The ability to comfortably use and enjoy these open areas will be determined by the type of users that occupy the buildings surrounding them. Incompatible uses could add noise, light or air pollution that would reduce the public's ability to use the open areas.

While it is unlikely that the current Trust would propose such uses as its primary mission is to maintain the island for public benefit, the future makeup of the Trust and its goals are unknown. It is, therefore, zoning's purpose to mitigate any potential incompatibility between uses and prevent such conflicts. Allowing all commercial uses on the island is inappropriate.

Environmental Impacts

Further, from an environmental review perspective, permitting a broad range of as-of-right uses is rarely done as it can lead to unpredictable environmental impacts. As currently proposed, the broad range of uses may draw individuals at varying hours of the day for example: a nighttime entertainment use, such as a night club, would draw visitors at vastly different hours than a daytime oriented use, like office space. Additionally, a significant concentration of similar smaller uses or a single-tenant large user may result in a more regional draw than a wide range of smaller uses by establishing a commercial "destination." These variations may result in environmental impacts that are not currently anticipated.

The SGEIS identifies several transportation impacts that are anticipated to be mitigated: air quality and noise impacts from the ferries and impacts on pedestrian and vehicular flow at the Ferry Terminal (Battery Maritime Building) and at Pier 6 in Brooklyn. The ability to mitigate these impacts, however, is based on an assumption of the type of users, which cannot be reasonably predicted by allowing all commercial uses. The potential for unexpected impacts is particularly acute as the project is already predicted to have an impact on the Bowling Green subway station that may not be mitigated due to structural constraints.

Ensuring sufficient ferry service and transportation infrastructure to meet demand generated in such a varied scenario is an issue not addressed directly through environmental review. While the Trust will continue to provide ferry service through subsidy received from the City, uncertain development outcomes may create additional, unanticipated strain on planned ferry service, potentially reducing the ability to enjoy public benefit uses on the island. Further, there is no plan to address other transportation impacts in Manhattan or Brooklyn if the type of anticipated user changes.

Precedent for the Island

The proposed plan addresses only the tenanting of the North Island through the establishment of the special district. Further public review will be required of any development proposed for the South Island zones.¹² However, it is typical for applicants seeking a rezoning to look towards neighboring zoning districts when determining the appropriate density and uses.

Therefore, it is possible that future iterations of the Trust will look towards the precedent set by the North Island special districts for determining the appropriate uses on the South Island. If all commercial uses are allowed on the North Island today, then it is logical to expect a similar treatment on the south side. As mentioned above, the wide range of uses could have unintended consequences that may introduce incompatible uses and introduce inadvertent environmental impacts. This potential scenario is particularly plausible for the South Island as there are no

¹² FGEIS concluded that the proposed project (GI special district) will require further environmental review as specific development plans are proposed.

landmarked buildings to prevent inappropriate building types and densities to occur on the island.

Alternative Land Use Control Mechanisms for the Special District

The proposed zoning text offers a broad-stroke solution despite the uncertainty associated with the future development on Governors Island. The applicant and the Commission should take a more conservative approach to altering the zoning text by focusing on setting appropriate controls that relate to the type and scale of future redevelopment.

Given the potential for unintended, negative consequences associated with the proposed zoning actions, it is necessary to fine tune the proposed zoning so that the Trust is allowed the necessary degree of flexibility while also imposing the appropriate level of control and review. Two potential zoning solutions exist to address concerns related to incompatibility of uses, unintended environmental impacts and potential precedent: more specifically define the proposed uses and create a more robust oversight mechanism.

Define Appropriate Uses for Governors Island under Zoning

One solution to the uncertainty is to develop an appropriate list of uses or use groups to reflect the desired uses. The zoning text should reflect the use covenants set out by the federal transfer deed, while allowing a degree of flexibility that enables the Trust to bring additional, compatible and appropriate uses to the island.

The Commission should consider which uses are appropriate and seek to exclude uses from Use Groups 7, 8, 10 and 12 that are incompatible with the island's open space and other public benefit uses. Such restrictions can be implemented without compromising the island as a new destination for mixed-use tenants. By excluding uses like large-scale regional retail (Use Group 10), the zoning text would more closely mirror the intent of the federal transfer deed.

An additional opportunity exists to create a special use group for waterfront uses. This will ensure the inclusion of relevant transportation and recreation infrastructure, and reduces concern that the proposed special district may create precedent for large-scale or incompatible uses under future administrations, or future extensions of the special district to the South Island development zones.

Require CPC Authorization for Large-Scale Commercial Uses

A second approach to strengthening the proposed zoning text as a future tool for land use control is to ensure that the special district regulations provide public review over large-scale uses located on the island.

Governors Island is already a destination for New Yorkers and tourists alike due to its unique location and existing amenities. The full redevelopment of Governors Island may include large-scale operators that will act as an additional draw to the island—creating destinations within a destination.

The applicant proposes that a CPC Chair certification be required for commercial uses over 7,500 square feet. The applicant consulted with CB 1 to determine the 7,500 square foot threshold for the proposed certification. Of the 44 available historic structures, 30 individual buildings would be eligible for this certification process. The proposed review only requires the CPC Chair to certify that the applicant presented the proposed use to the community board and responded in writing to any concerns. A certification based on process does ensure appropriate public oversight on potential impacts or planning concerns.

If a broad range of uses is necessary, then the commission and the applicant should consider a new oversight process to prevent conflicts and unintended environmental impacts. Specifically, a new CPC authorization should be created for commercial uses greater than 20,000 square feet within the special district. Increasing the size threshold to 20,000 square feet is based on a two-part rationale, as this number corresponds to existing building sizes on the island and to ULURP definitions for major concessions.¹³

Eleven North Island structures, or approximately one third of the available properties for redevelopment, are greater than 20,000 square feet. Thereby it would not prevent leasing to smaller tenants who do not have the resources for a public review process, but would provide a review for larger tenants. Further, the use of an authorization process gives the applicant continued flexibility in its approach to planning and development. Authorizations may be sought either prior to after selecting a tenant as long as the proposed use for a building is known.

The zoning resolution and the city charter anticipate this type of land use control as exhibited in the following examples:

- In the Special TriBeCa Mixed Use District, Use Groups 6A and 6C are limited to 10,000 square feet except by special permit.
- Kiosks and open air cafés are only allowed in publicly-accessible open areas with a certification by the CPC Chair that requires a 60-day community board review and an option for City Council review.
- Use Groups 6A and 10 are only allowed in certain manufacturing districts at a size greater than 10,000 square feet by special permit.
- Concessions require full ULURP review if they are greater than 20,000 square feet on land other than parkland or 15,000 square feet within parkland.

The CPC should create a similar review process with appropriate findings that would ensure a new use would cause minimal adverse effects on the public benefit use of Governors Island. Specifically, the findings should include that the proposed use:

- does not substantially impact access to the island or transportation near key island access points;
- relates harmoniously to other uses on the island and does not oversaturate the island with any specific use;

¹³ Full ULURP review is required for a concession for a use for which a new building of over 20,000 square feet of gross floor area will be constructed when such building will be located on property other than parkland (<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/luproc/conrule.shtml>)

- includes environmentally sustainable features where appropriate;
- complements the public benefit uses on the island including open space and educational uses; and
- is consistent with the intent of the special district.

Conclusion

While the Manhattan Borough President's office commends the Trust on their extensive public outreach to date, the proposed text requires further refinement. The broad range of commercial uses proposed by the zoning text may result in the introduction of incompatible uses or unintended environmental impacts.

The office looks forward to continuing this important conversation throughout this public planning process and as the Trust enters into the next phase of development. A rigorous planning and review process is critical to preserving Governors Island as a dynamic public resource for the City of New York.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

Commercial uses on the island are generally appropriate and the proposed Special Governors Island District allows for the reconciliation between restrictive zoning with the redevelopment anticipated in the Governors Island transfer deed. However, the proposed zoning text introduces an unusual provision that permits all commercial uses within the special district, making it unique among special purpose districts. Further, the potential tenanting of the North Island with large-scale and highly concentrated single uses may lead to unanticipated negative impacts. Both factors generate concern over long-term ability of all New Yorkers to enjoy the primary, public benefit uses intended by the federal deed and by the applicant.

Therefore, the Manhattan Borough President recommends conditional approval, provided that the applicant continues to work to establish either:

- 1. an appropriate list of uses or use groups more narrowly defined to both reflect the desired and permitted uses set out in the deed, which is consistent with the typical approach to special purpose districts; and/or**
- 2. a new authorization to provide oversight for commercial uses greater than 20,000 square feet.**



Scott M. Stringer
Manhattan Borough President



The City of New York

Manhattan Community Board 1

Catherine McVay Hughes CHAIRPERSON | Noah Pfefferblit DISTRICT MANAGER

New York City Planning Commission

**Special Governors Island District
N 130189 ZRM**

**Testimony by Michael Levine, Director of Planning
Manhattan Community Board 1**

Wednesday, May 8, 2013

**22 Reade Street, Spector Hall New York, NY
10:00 AM**

Good morning. I am Michael Levine, Director of Planning at Manhattan Community Board One (CB1). Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this application for the creation of a Special Governors Island District.

CB1 applauds the incredible planning effort that has taken place since the decision was made in 2003 to transform Governors Island into a public resource, including the recent plans to transform the Island into a vibrant, mixed-use destination. Now, more than ever, we are enthusiastic about the incredible potential of the island for appropriate redevelopment benefiting the surrounding communities, the City and the region.

The Special Governors Island District zoning and re-tenanting proposal on the North Island would allow most commercial uses to be developed in the existing R3-2 district in approximately 1.2 million square feet of space in existing historic structures. We believe the zoning proposal and the re-tenanting plan will result in increased public use of the island, bring revenue to the Governors Island Trust to maintain the island and create economic opportunities for local small business and organizations.

We are pleased that the Governors Island Trust staff has worked with us and the Department of City Planning staff to devise a formula whereby Community Board 1 will have the opportunity to review all commercial developments 7,500 square feet and larger which may have the potential for major impacts on the Lower Manhattan community. We are therefore pleased to support adoption of this zoning text and map amendment.

I will be followed by Catherine McVay Hughes, Chairperson of CB1, who will outline our specific concerns regarding the potential impacts of increased commercial development in the area surrounding Lower Manhattan's Battery Maritime Building.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

COMMUNITY BOARD #1 – MANHATTAN
RESOLUTION

DATE: MARCH 27, 2013

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: PLANNING

COMMITTEE VOTE: 11 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained 0 Recused
BOARD VOTE: 26 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained 0 Recused

RE: N 130189ZRM
C 130190ZMM
Special Governors Island District

WHEREAS: In 2003, planning efforts began to transform Governors Island into a public resource and in 2009, a Master Plan for Governors Island was completed that focused on the Island's parks and public spaces, while acknowledging the intention for future development on the Island, including re-tenanting of the North Island's historic buildings and development in two development zones on the South Island; and

WHEREAS: On February 19, 2013, the Department of City Planning certified an application submitted by The Trust for Governors Island (Trust) for a zoning text amendment to create the Special Governors Island District (GI) and a zoning map amendment to establish the Special Governors Island District on the northerly portion of Governors Island; and

WHEREAS: Currently, the entire island is zoned R3-2 which permits only residential and certain community facility uses and these changes are being made in order to facilitate the reuse and re-tenanting of approximately 1.2 million square feet (sf) of space in existing historic structures, and the construction of a new building located at the northern end of Governors Island; and

WHEREAS: The Trust intends to re-tenant all of the vacant North Island buildings by 2022. All of the currently vacant buildings will be restored for a variety of commercial and community facility uses both to generate revenue and to transform the historic North Island into an active resource for the City of New York ; and

WHEREAS: Community Board 1 is pleased that the Governors Island Trust staff has worked with Community Board 1 staff to devise a formula whereby the Community Board will have the opportunity to review each commercial development with a potential major environmental impact exceeding 7,500 sf in order to determine whether the proposed use complements the North Island's character as a public resource and destination; and

WHEREAS: Transportation to Governors Island occurs from two ferry portals, one in Manhattan and one in Brooklyn; and

WHEREAS: On February 25, 2013, Community Board 1 testified to the New York City Council regarding redevelopment plans for Governors Island in which we noted the importance of mitigating negative impacts on Lower Manhattan and specifically the area surrounding the Battery Maritime Building from the increased development on Governors Island. We requested that the following factors be considered as potential impacts of increased use of the Island:

1. *Air quality and noise issues resulting from ferries transporting to and from Governors Island* – Ferries should be retrofitted using the best available technology and industry standards and use ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel.
2. *Pedestrian and vehicular flow at the Governors Island Ferry Terminal* – Sidewalks and bike paths must be wide enough to accommodate increased traffic. In addition, vehicular and pedestrian traffic must be separated in order to reduce pedestrian-vehicular conflicts. CB1 also requests more information about increased transportation opportunities such as additional bus stops when the terminal is built out.
3. *Garbage removal from Governors Island* – CB1 requests a plan for how garbage will be handled including whether or not composting will be utilized for minimizing garbage.
4. *LEED and Energy Star* – New or renovated construction should be LEED-rated and Energy Star certified.
5. *Consideration of possible future storms* – New Governors Island construction and terminal development must be built to the highest industry standards to withstand storms similar to Superstorm Sandy.
6. *Balanced retail uses* – Future development at Governors Island should seek a balance of retail uses that will attract residents of CB1 as well as tourists.
7. *Maintaining sufficient open space* – Sufficient open space must be ensured as part of any new construction on the island in order to maintain its park-like atmosphere.
8. *Minimize negative impact on wildlife habitats' and the natural environment, now*

THEREFORE
BE IT
RESOLVED
THAT:

Community Board 1 supports the adoption of the proposed zoning text and map amendments to establish a Governors Island Special District provided that the Governors Island Trust make every effort to mitigate potential negative impacts on Lower Manhattan and specifically the area surrounding the Battery Maritime Building resulting from increased development on Governors Island in the following areas: air quality and noise, pedestrian and vehicular flow and garbage removal at the Governors Island Ferry Terminal, and

BE IT
FURTHER
RESOLVED
THAT:

Community Board1 requests that new or renovated construction should be LEED-rated and Energy Star certified, that consideration be given to amelioration of possible future storm damage, that retail uses seek a balance of uses that will attract residents of CB1 as well as tourists and that sufficient open space be included as part of any new construction on Governors Island in order to maintain its park-like atmosphere.



The City of New York

Manhattan Community Board 1

Catherine McVay Hughes CHAIRPERSON | Noah Pfefferblit DISTRICT MANAGER

New York City Planning Commission

**Special Governors Island District
N 130189 ZRM**

**Testimony by Catherine McVay Hughes, Chairperson
Manhattan Community Board 1**

**Wednesday, May 8, 2013
22 Reade Street, Spector Hall New York, NY
10:00 AM**

Good morning. I am Catherine McVay Hughes, Chair of Manhattan Community Board One (CB1). Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this application for the creation of a Special Governors Island District.

Mitigating negative impacts of the potential increased development on Governors Island remains of primary importance to Community Board 1. Transportation to Governors Island occurs from two ferry portals, one in Manhattan and one in Brooklyn. We are particularly concerned about the area surrounding the Battery Maritime Building in Lower Manhattan and have specific concerns regarding the potential negative impacts from the North Island re-tenanting plan associated with this zoning proposal. CB1 therefore requests that the following factors be considered as potential impacts of increased use of Governors Island:

- 1. Air quality and noise issues resulting from ferries transporting to and from Governors Island* – Ferries should be retrofitted using the best available technology and industry standards and use ultra low sulfur diesel fuel. For example, we recently noticed the black soot emanating from ferries transporting people to and from the island.
- 2. Pedestrian and vehicular flow at the Governors Island Ferry Terminal* – Sidewalks and bike paths must to be wide enough to accommodate increased traffic. In addition, vehicular and pedestrian traffic must be separated in order to reduce pedestrian-vehicular conflicts. CB1 also requests more information about increased transportation opportunities such as additional bus stops when the terminal is built out.
- 3. Garbage removal from Governors Island* – CB1 requests a plan for how garbage will be handled including whether or not composting will be utilized for minimizing garbage.
- 4. LEED and Energy Star* – New or renovated construction should be LEED rated and Energy Star certified.

5. *Consideration of possible future storms* – New Governors Island construction and terminal development must be built to the highest industry standards to withstand storms similar to Superstorm Sandy.

6. *Balanced retail uses* – Future development at Governors Island should seek a balance of retail uses that will attract residents of CB1 as well as tourists.

7. *Maintaining sufficient open space* – Sufficient open space must be ensured as part of any new construction on the island in order to maintain its park-like atmosphere.

While we are concerned about the impacts of commercial development in the north island, we are also focusing on future park development in the south island. On Monday, May 6th, Community Board 1 was given a tour by Governors Island staff of the new 30-acre park that will be completed later this fall. We are thrilled about positive progress being made on the island.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and we look forward to returning to discuss continuing redevelopment and implementation plans for Governors Island.



Alliance for Downtown New York, Inc.
120 Broadway, Suite 3340
New York, NY 10271
212 566-6700 Fax 212 566-6707
www.DowntownNY.com

**Public Hearing
Special Governors Island District
[Calendar Items 7-9]**

City Planning Commission of the City of New York

**Spector Hall
22 Reade Street, New York, NY
May 8, 2013, 10:00 AM**

To Chair Burden and the members of the City Planning Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak here today in support of the Governors Island rezoning. I am Connie Chung, Planning Analyst with the Alliance for Downtown New York, which manages the business improvement district for Lower Manhattan south of Chambers Street.

Governors Island is an invaluable resource and amenity for Lower Manhattan's 310,000 workers, 60,000 residents and an estimated 11.5 million visitors a year, as well as the city at large.

We support the creation of a Special Governors Island District on the North Island; it is necessary for the city to modernize the zoning of the North Island in order to expand opportunities for the public to visit Governors Island, and to implement the long-term mixed-use redevelopment plan proposed by the Trust for Governors Island.

Current legacy zoning does not capitalize on the vast potential of Governors Island. By allowing commercial uses such as studios, galleries, offices, workshops, academic and research institutions, hotels and retail through adaptive re-use, a Special Governors Island District would create the conditions in which this potential can be achieved, while maintaining the historic character of the North Island neighborhood.

Once renovations are completed in 2015, a redeveloped Governors Island will be an even more compelling destination for local workers, residents and visitors in Lower Manhattan.

The Downtown Alliance believes the plans for Governors Island, seeded by the creation of the Special Governors Island District, will provide a strong economic benefit for New York City and become an important asset and neighbor to Lower Manhattan. We are happy to support this project in front of the City Planning Commission today.

Thank you.



Donna Milrod
Depository Trust & Clearing Corp.

Peg Breen
NY Landmark Conservancy

Tonio Burgos
Tonio Burgos and Associates,
Inc. / Nyproco, Inc.

Michael Burke
Statue Cruises

Jay Clayton
Sullivan & Cromwell

Helena Durst
Durst Organization

Kenneth Fisher
Cozen O'Connor

Jonathan Hughes
Barclays

Arthur Imperatore Jr.
NY Waterway

Amy Jedlicka
Trinity Real Estate

Edith Kean
Landscape Designer

Richard Kennedy
Cushman & Wakefield, Inc.

Michael Klein
McKenna Long & Aldridge

Robert Levine
RAL Companies and Affiliates LLC

Amelia Rea Maguire
Florida International University
College of Business

Sean McDevitt
Haren Group

Sara Mirski
The Sapi Organization

Robert Pirani
Regional Plan Association

Marc Ricks
Goldman Sachs

Judith Rivkin
Christodora

Jay Schippers
Housing Resource Foundation

Thomas Secunda
Bloomberg LP

H. Claude Shostal
Regional Plan Association

Ivan Thornton
Fiduciary Management Group

Susan Carey Dempsey

Organization for
Affiliates Only

4 Irving Place, 7th Fl.
New York, NY 10003
tel: 646.820.7556
fax: 212.253.5666
email:
info@governorsislandalliance.org
www.governorsislandalliance.org
twitter: @govisalliance

**Testimony of
Robert Pirani
before the
New York City Planning Commission
May 8, 2013**

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on the proposed Special Governors Island District.

Since 1995, the Governors Island Alliance has worked to celebrate the Island's rich history, create memorable parks and public spaces, and ensure appropriate reuse of the Island and its historic structures.

We are delighted by the considerable progress that has been made on the goal of returning the Island to the people of New York. Last summer, more than 8,000 people a day visited the Island. This growing popularity has made the Island an integral part of New York City summers.

Over \$ 300 million has been invested in the Island's parks and public spaces, infrastructure and historic buildings. This investment, design work and construction on the Island have set the stage for the needed redevelopment of the Island and its historic buildings. We are delighted that the City has proceeded on an RFP for new tenants that will animate the more than 50 buildings with the City and National Landmark Historic District.

The proposed creation of the Special District is a good approach for enabling leases with commercial, cultural, and educational tenants identified in the recent RFP to proceed. The District would reconcile uses anticipated in the documents that accompanied transfer of the Island to New York with the zoning text, in particular allowing commercial uses such as dormitories, hotels, spas and/or supportive retail uses to move forward.

Long-term tenancies in the 1.4 million square feet of buildings is critical to sustaining these national treasures and meeting the Island's overall needs. The design guidelines that govern redevelopment in the City's Historic District offer additional protection for the character of the Island and opportunity for public input into its redevelopment.

We should offer those prospective tenants a clear path to decisions with a minimum of oversight when they are in keeping with the goals and objectives as stated in the general purposes of the statute, the deed restrictions and the Design & Development Guidelines created for the Historic District. The Special District does that.

We would suggest approval with some minor modifications:

- Additional clarity in the specific uses that are to be permitted as-of-right would be in keeping with other zoning text;
- Allowing leases as-of-right without any community board review or Commissioner Certification is not appropriate for hotel and other hospitality uses of any size, or for new structures within the historic district;
- The Commission should consider an upper limit on the size of uses that could proceed with only a certification. A threshold of 400,000 square feet or more would help ensure that large scale redevelopment across the historic district for a single tenant would be reviewed appropriately.

Finally let me close by stating that the relatively flexible provisions of this special district should not be considered a precedent for the southern half of the Island.

While we are strongly supportive of bringing in new uses to the Island, we are also mindful of the need to ensure that the potential 1.6 million new square feet of new development anticipated under the GEIS contribute and not detract from this public resource. It is worth noting that the City recently issued a broad and very general RFEI for the southern half of Island that opened the door for sizable new uses, including uses that would violate the terms of the current deed restrictions.

The complex nature of the development sites and the lack of control over the public spaces being created there suggest a detailed new zoning district in the southern half of the Island. This must include specific design guidelines and the mapping of major public space on the Island as New York City parkland.

In consultation with our Board and advisory committee, the Alliance has developed its own set of criteria for reviewing development proposals made for the Island. They are attached to this testimony. These common sense principles provide some guidance for ensuring that new development enhance, rather than detract from the public interest in the Island.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Criteria for Evaluating Proposed Uses December 2012

Donna Milrod
Depositors Trust & Cleaning Corp.

Peg Breen
NY Landmarks Conservancy

Tonio Burgos
Tonio Burgos and Associates,
Inc. - Niprocon, Inc.

Michael Burke

Status- Cruises

Jay Clayton
Sullivan & Cromwell

Helena Durst
Durst Organization

Kenneth Fisher

Cozer O'Connor

Jonathan Hughes

Barclays

Arthur Imperatore Jr.

NY Waterway

Amy Jedlicka

Trinity Real Estate

Edith Keag

Landscape Designer

Richard Kennedy

Cushman & Wakefield, Inc.

Michael Klein

Lickenna Long & Aldridge

Robert Levine

RAL Companies and Affiliates LLC

Amelia Rea Maguire

Florida International University

College of Business

Sean McDevitt

Maren Group

Sara Mirski

The Sappi Organization

Robert Pirani

Regional Plan Association

Marc Ricks

Goldman Sachs

Judith Rivkin

Christofora

Jay Schippers

Housing Resource Foundation

Thomas Secunda

Bloomberg LP

H. Claude Shostal

Regional Plan Association

Ivan Thornton

Fiducian Management Group

Susan Carey Dempsey

Organization for
Arbitration Only

The Governors Island Alliance is strongly supportive of redevelopment of the historic buildings and other real estate on the Island. The following criteria will be our basis for evaluating proposed uses on the island. The criteria are based on the Alliance's mission and goals, as well as critical issues such as compatibility with deed restrictions and programmatic agreements; financial and environmental sustainability; and recognizing the benefits of competition.

Evaluation of a given proposal may lead to the Alliance publically and/or privately endorsing or opposing a project

The Alliance is prepared to endorse proposals that:

1. Reflect the Vision and Obligations contained in the Terms of Transfer from the Federal Government

Proposals should be within the permitted range of educational, recreational, hospitality, and other commercial and non-profit uses expressed in the transfer documents and in keeping with the overall vision of the Island as a great civic space for New York and the Nation.¹

2. Enhance Parks and other Public Spaces

New uses should contribute and maintain the open park-like campus atmosphere the Island currently enjoys by providing public accessibility throughout the Island's open spaces while accommodating reasonable privacy needs of leaseholders. Where certain uses require physical separation, visual accessibility should be preserved and design cues rather than physical barriers should be employed.

Proposals should support or be compatible with public space commitments made for the National Monument under its General Management Plan and Master Plan for Parks and Public Spaces adopted by The Trust for Governors Island and the Alliance's goal of mapping City owned public spaces as parkland. Development south of Division Road should be limited to the 33 acres contained in the two development zones identified in the Master Plan for Parks and Public Spaces adopted by The Trust for Governors Island.

4 Irving Place, 7th Fl.

New York, NY 10003

tel: 646.820.7556

fax: 212.253.5666

email:

info@governorsislandalliance.org

www.governorsislandalliance.org

twitter: @govisalliance

3. Protect Historic Character

Proposals should preferably seek to reuse and rehabilitate all existing structures that have been identified as historic structures or as contributing to the historic character of the District in the Governors Island Historic District Design & Development Guidelines. Any new construction in the development zones on South Island should complement and not compete with the rehabilitation and reuse of the existing historic buildings.

Within the Historic District, all existing structures that have been identified as historic structures or as contributing to the historic character of the District should be retained and maintained, consistent with preservation covenants developed by GSA and subject to adaptive reuse for all permitted uses as detailed in the Governors Island Historic District Design & Development Guidelines adopted by the National Park Service, State Historic Preservation Office, and City Landmarks Commission.

4. Promote Harbor Revitalization and Maritime Uses

Proposals should help connect visitors to the Harbor's waters, marine life, and maritime uses by making the Island accessible to a variety of private and public watercraft and other water dependent activities and providing physical and programmatic links to other waterfront parks and destinations. Proposals should support convenient and affordable ferry access from throughout the Harbor.

5. Achieve Design Excellence

New construction should be located in the designated development zones and designed appropriately to enhance the Island's campus quality and historic character in terms of their materials, height, massing, and bulk. They should be in harmony with surrounding buildings, the waterfront esplanade, and the park and public spaces. Open view corridors to the water along existing and future streets and ways should be maintained. The impact of service equipment and areas should be minimized by good planning and concealment.

6. Are Feasible and Supportive of the Island's Financial Well Being

Proposals should be part of a mix of uses that help provide for public services and the overall fiscal health of the Island by attracting and generating sufficient private capital and operating dollars. Large-scale tenants should anchor but not dominate the Island. Proposals should be based on realistic market assumptions and understanding of the Island's physical challenges. There should be appropriate public transparency during selection process and negotiating process.

Public participation in the financing of the development should be largely limited to improvements in infrastructure up to the boundaries of the “lot” that defines the leasehold. Proposals and subsequent agreements should set a timetable for development, to ensure that private parties cannot unreasonably tie up properties without demonstrating progress. Proposals should define the area and service (eg Island transportation) that a developer is responsible for developing/maintaining, either directly or through a fee.

7. Are Part of a Comprehensive Vision for the Island, Harbor, and City

Proposals should be well-integrated into an overall vision and set of programs for the whole Island. Management distinctions between lands owned by National Park Service and The Trust for Governors Island should be minimized. New uses should respect the needs of parks and public spaces as well as those of existing long term tenants such as The Urban Assembly New York Harbor School. New uses should reflect the uniqueness of the Island and New York. Proposals should help diversify the economy of the entire City while providing amenities and services that enhance redevelopment efforts in lower Manhattan and the Brooklyn waterfront.

8. Strive for Sustainability

Proposals should incorporate the use of green technology such as those that provide for high ranking in scoring indices such as LEEDS and the Sustainable Sites Initiative and be supportive of Island-wide sustainable development and educational principles. Proposals should be compatible with having vehicular access to the Island generally limited to support vehicles.

9. Ensure a Diversity of Uses and Users

As a package, proposals for the Island should be attractive to a diversity of people and price points. Ferry service to the Island should be affordable for New York families.

The Deed Restrictions and other transfer documents reflect the following terms:

- **An obligation to comply with the historic preservation covenants** with respect to the protected structures and landscapes in the Island's National Landmark Historic District, including open spaces at Nolan Park, Colonels Row Green, and the Building 400 South Courtyard.
- **An obligation to establish:**
 - **A permanent public park** of not less than 40 acres to be primarily located in that portion of the Island south of Division Road and consisting primarily of public park uses. Not less than 20 acres of the park shall be contiguous.
 - **A public esplanade** around the perimeter of the Island.
- **Permitted Uses on the Island** shall include conference centers, hotels, short term or extended stay facilities; restaurants, catering establishments, and other dining facilities; retail and service facilities; entertainment facilities; office uses; health facilities; commercial recreation facilities; and cultural and educational uses. No less than 20 acres must be used for educational purposes.
- **The following uses are specifically prohibited:** Residential uses, except in connection with permitted uses such as dormitories or employee housing; industrial or manufacturing uses; casino or gaming uses; and electric generating stations other than those that furnish power only to Governors Island.

Lower Manhattan Cultural Council

125 Maiden Lane Fl 2
New York, NY 10038
T 212 219 9401
F 212 219 2058
www.LMCC.net

Board of Directors

Cherie Nanninga, *Chair*
CBRE

Timur Galen, *Vice Chair*
Goldman Sachs

Francis Greenburger, *Treasurer*
Time Equities

Steven M. Davis, *Secretary*
Davis Brody Bond

Michael Ashworth
JPMorgan Chase

Robin Klehr Avia
Gensler

Jay Berman
Pei Cobb Freed

Kimberly Blacklow
Cleary Gottlieb

Marcia Caban
American Express

Eric Deutsch
Montparnasse 56

Bruce Ehrmann
Douglas Elliman

Hillary Gal
Citigroup

John Genovese
Westfield World Trade Center

Anne Goldrach
Greystone Management

John Haworth
National Museum of the
American Indian

Kevin Hoo
Savanna

Greg James
Cake Group

Meredith Kane
Paul, Weiss

James Law
Ameriprise Financial

Tony Perez
BMCC

Craig Schwitter
Buro Happold

Frank J. Sciamè
Sciamè Construction

Robert Sorin
Fried, Frank

Frederieke Taylor, *Ex Officio*
Frederieke Taylor Gallery

Philippe Visser
Port Authority

Madelyn Wils
Hudson River Park Trust

Xue Ya
China Center New York

Sam Miller, *President*
LMCC

Honorary Board Members

Charles J. Malkish, *Chair Emeritus*
Flory Barnett, *Director Emeritus in*
Memoriam

Jenny Dixon, *Director Emeritus*

Edward J. McGuire, Jr., Esq.,
Director Emeritus

Liz Thompson, *Director Emeritus*

TESTIMONY PREPARED FOR:
City Planning Commission
Amanda M. Burden, FAICP, Chair
Kenneth J. Knuckles, Esq., Vice Chairman
Angela M. Battaglia
Rayann Besser
Irwin G. Cantor, P.E.
Alfred C. Cerullo, Iii
Betty Y. Chen
Michelle R. De La Uz
Maria M. Del Toro
Joseph I. Douek
Richard W. Eaddy
Anna Hayes Levin
Orlando Marin, Commissioners
Yvette V. Gruel, Calendar Officer

SPECIAL GOVERNORS ISLAND DISTRICT Public Hearing 5/8/2013

Good Morning City Planning Commission and members of the public. My name is Melissa Levin and I am the Director of Cultural Programs at Lower Manhattan Cultural Council.

Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, has been a leading voice for arts and culture since 1973, dedicated to presenting cultural experiences Downtown, making Manhattan a thriving center of arts activity with relevance to the arts community worldwide, and working in partnerships to improve the quality of life for New York City's workers, residents, and visitors.

LMCC believes that visionary cultural initiatives can lead to sustainable community growth and the development of opportunities for artists if those initiatives:

- Align with the neighborhood needs;
- Find support from both public and private sectors; and
- Engage cross-sector partnerships.

In partnership with property owners, leading Downtown employers, community organizations, local residents and public officials, LMCC nurtures the assets and responds to the needs of local communities across Manhattan and at Governors Island, advances the careers and practices of artists from across the City, and transforms perceptions about what it means to be in Lower Manhattan.

The Trust for Governors Island has been a core partner for LMCC in this work since 2010. The Trust is a partner who truly understands that cultural activity is invaluable to New York City and to the development of the Island as the most highly sought-after new location in the city. LMCC has activated Building 110 at Governors Island as a multipurpose, multidisciplinary Arts Center with artist studios, rehearsal spaces, and a gallery.

The prospect of a rezoned historic district to include a broad range of commercial uses that benefit the visiting public and are compatible with the recreational, cultural, and educational uses allowed under the existing zoning, is very exciting to LMCC as one of only two current tenants on the Island. The rezoning, along with the possibility of extended ferry service, a more diverse Island population, a range of amenities, and more, is certain to greatly benefit our programming and the artists with whom we work.

At Building 110: LMCC's Arts Center at Governors Island, LMCC's programming directly addresses New York City artists' growing needs for career development tools, access to mentors and professional networks, time in affordable work spaces, and opportunities to engage and build audiences and markets for their work. Currently each year, the

residency program at Building 110 provides over 35 talented, contemporary visual artists and 15 performing arts groups with free studio space for up to five months to develop specific projects as well as create and present new work. LMCC has also hosted talks, networking events, public programs, and its flagship professional development intensive the Artist Summer Institute (ASI), which provides 55 artists with strategic, business planning training. The Arts Center is a truly unique experience for New York City's artists – a parkland retreat within commuting distance of their homes and day-jobs. Whether they are receiving a longer-term residency or participating in an intensive workshop, artists frequently describe their experience as “transformative” and value the opportunity to interact with the Island's topography, as well as the Island's visitors. LMCC annually sees steady, if not increased, program inquiries, participation, and applications for its residency programs and public program opportunities. This demand clearly highlights the ongoing needs of the City's artists, their desire to build thoughtful and sustainable careers, and their specific interest in engaging with Governors Island.

Jennifer Monson, a performing artist who participated in LMCC's residency program at Governors Island said, “[The Governors Island] residency had a profound impact on the creative development of my work... It was particularly important that we could look out over New York City's harbor... It was powerful to look back at the city from a quiet space. The residency allowed me a kind of space and time for being in my creative process that I rarely find in the city.”

A vibrant and compelling historic district at Governors Island, that preserves the bucolic setting of this historic island and enhances its recreational, cultural, and educational programs, is vital for the overall redevelopment of the Island, with great benefit to New York City. By presenting culturally diverse and transformative experiences, and often connecting attendees to unexpected ideas or spaces, LMCC is committed to providing audiences uniquely “New York” events, the likes of which should certainly be found at the newly redeveloped Governors Island.

The discovery of arts and culture with a historic waterfront backdrop, and the catalyzing of the creation of diverse uses at Governors Island are vital to the health of its continued development. Our commitment to our partners at The Trust for Governors Island in the development of Governors Island as a public amenity and cultural destination with a broad range of uses, including the arts, remains steadfast.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

May 8, 2013

**Testimony of the New York Landmarks Conservancy
Before the New York City Planning Commission
Re: Governor's Island**

Thank you for the opportunity to express the Conservancy's views on the proposed Special Governor's Island District.

The historic ensemble of buildings and structures on Governor's Island define the character of the island and give it its unique and appealing sense of place. This historic village should be preserved for the enjoyment and education of New Yorkers now and in the future. The Conservancy has taken an active interest in the well-being of these landmarks and has monitored the repairs and restoration of the buildings on the Island for many years.

The Conservancy believes that viable tenancy for the buildings is crucial to their continued preservation. Empty buildings deteriorate and suffer neglect. We therefore commend the Planning Commission for a new plan that would help bring new, compatible uses to these buildings. However, we believe that there are certain stipulations that should be clearer. For example, wherever there are open water views in New York City, developers will try to build as high as possible. We urge the Commission to place a defined height restriction, say 55 feet, on all new construction within the historic district. The existing height guidelines in the overlay could be misinterpreted. The Conservancy also believes that a list of allowable uses would be helpful. Actually enumerate the uses that would be allowed or encouraged. And lastly, we believe that important open spaces such as Nolan Park, and the Admiral House Green and other green areas should be deemed off limits for new construction. It is not enough to merely identify sites where new buildings are allowed. We believe you need to identify sites where new construction is not allowed. These clarifications would help regulate change in the historic district and would assist the Landmarks Preservation Commission enormously in their task.

Additionally, we believe that the aforementioned list of uses should be separate for large existing buildings such as Liggett Hall, and smaller, older buildings such as the cottages and houses. The list of allowable uses should be tailored to the distinct types of existing buildings.

The north side of Governor's Island is municipal jewel. Any new land use regulation that affects the historic district should be in harmony with Landmarks rules and should not set up future conflicts between the goal of preserving the buildings and the needs of adapting them to new uses. We thank the Planning Commission for its continuing support of preservation goals on the north side.



Comment before the City Planning Commission

Special Governors Island District, N 130189 ZRM

SEIU Local 32BJ

May 7th, 2013

Good morning. I am here today to testify on behalf of the 70,000 members of Service Employees International Union, Local 32BJ, regarding the future development of Governors Island.

Any developer who is chosen for this project will benefit greatly from the opportunity to develop these very valuable public resources. \$260 million in capital investments is coming from the city's ten-year capital budget. This will go towards making infrastructure improvements on the island, including bringing potable water to this site. The uses on the site are restricted precisely because it is recognized how important a resource this is for the New York City public at large.

Therefore, it is imperative that all developers selected for this iconic site—through the parallel RFP process that is ongoing—have a track record of responsible development. They must ensure that the jobs created through the project are the good jobs with the prevailing wages and benefits that New Yorkers need to support their families. That's just the right thing to do.

Given the significance of this site, the established goals for the island, and the huge public investment that has already been committed, we need to make sure that all development on this site go to developers who are committed to creating good jobs with family-sustaining wages and benefits. The Trust for Governors Island should make sure to keep the needs of all New Yorkers in mind, both those who visit and those whose work it is to maintain the facilities and grounds, and keep the island secure.