



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
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**Special District-- Questions & Answers**

**Where did the idea of a Special District come from?**

For many years now CB 3 has been receiving complaints from residents and businesses about the loss of retail diversity, the difficulty of small businesses staying in business, the oversaturation of nightlife businesses that result in many blocks having all closed businesses during the day—which does not provide foot traffic to support daytime businesses. After much research, CB 3 looked at the idea of a Special District as implemented on the Upper West Side to resolve some of the same problems.

**Some people like chain stores and find banks convenient—why is CB 3 against these businesses?**

CB 3 has not taken a position against banks or chain stores. The issue is balance—chain stores should not dominate the store fronts in place of local businesses. Only a few banks are needed. Banks and chains pay rents that local businesses cannot compete with—and have been shown to drive local stores out of business.

**This proposal seems to be against nightlife**

This is not against one type of business—it is to regain balance and diversity. Residents and local businesses need businesses that serve their needs. They also need to eat and drink. The many nightlife businesses that are shuttered during the day create an atmosphere of daytime blight. We cannot attract new businesses because there is no daytime foot traffic. Many restaurants that have tried to open for breakfast and lunch find they cannot sustain these hours. The proposed area is residentially zoned with commercial overlays designed to meet the retail needs of the residents and local businesses. Many of the new businesses moving in are destination businesses.

**Does CB 3 support the Small Business Survival Act? What else has CB 3 done to help small businesses?**

CB 3 has passed a resolution in support of this resolution. In addition, CB 3 has met in the past with the Dept. of Finance Commissioner and has also held a public forum on the property tax pass-along that impacts many businesses. CB 3 also helps businesses on a daily basis that reach out to the office for help with the agencies. After the Second Ave. Explosion, CB 3 with the LES BID created a fund to help small businesses. CB 3 has also been researching the major problems for small businesses in the area and surveying the vacant storefronts. You can find all this information on the CB 3 website:

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/mancb3/downloads/fellowship/CB3%20Quality%20of%20Life%20Impacts%2005-11.pdf>

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/mancb3/html/fellowship/retaildiversity.shtml>

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/mancb3/downloads/fellowship/Clinton%20Street%20Survey%202010.pptx>

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/mancb3/html/fellowship/ecodev.shtml>

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/mancb3/html/fellowship/rezoning.shtml>

**If the Special District is implemented, does that mean there will not be any more new businesses open after midnight?**

No, it does not. The idea of creating a balance of businesses by having new businesses close at midnight is one idea. We are interested in hearing input and other ideas that would help sustain retail diversity. Additionally, there would be a process to permit later closings or other variances. These kinds of permits currently exist for some businesses. For instance, to open a physical culture (gym) requires a permit from BSA. There could be a similar process—we have not worked details as we are still in the stage of hearing from community.

**Dept. of City Planning has no information on this proposal. Why is that?**

CB 3 has been discussing this concept for a few years and has made Dept. of City Planning aware of this. However, it is too early for CB 3 to be speaking to City Planning. This is a plan coming from the community and we are still in the community outreach stage. We need to hear from more residents and businesses regarding this proposal and other ideas. The community board then needs to take an official position after hearing from the community and before reaching out to City Planning.

**Has a Special District been implemented anywhere else in the City?**

There are Special Districts throughout the City. See the link below for a listing and descriptions of Special Districts in Manhattan.

**<http://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/zoning/districts-tools/special-purp>**