



The City of New York

Manhattan Community Board 1

Anthony Notaro, Jr. CHAIRPERSON | Noah Pfefferblit DISTRICT MANAGER

**Manhattan Borough Board
FY2018 Preliminary Budget Hearing
Diana Switaj, Director of Planning and Land Use
Guttman Community College
50 West 40th Street, New York, NY 10018
4:00P.M., Wednesday, February 15, 2017**

Good Afternoon. My name is Diana Switaj, Director of Planning and Land Use at Manhattan Community Board 1 which includes most of Manhattan below Canal Street and south of the Brooklyn Bridge, as well as Ellis, Governors and Liberty Islands. Thank you for holding this important public hearing today and inviting testimony on the Mayor's Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2018.

Lower Manhattan continues to one of America's largest business districts, even after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the financial crisis of 2008 and Superstorm Sandy in October 2012. Our residential population is one of the fastest growing in the whole city. Lower Manhattan remains a resilient place that more and more people want to live, work and visit. We have a lot of work to do to assure that these powerful growth trends result in a district that is livable for all. Our FY2018 budget requests reflect that mission and contain many recurring requests to help accommodate our rapid growth and protect our district. One of our top annual requests is for additional school seats, as our rapid population growth has resulted in chronically overcrowded schools.

We all must work together to ensure that the Lower Manhattan is protected. Two of CB1's top capital budget requests for FY2018 were the following:

- Provide funds to close the funding gap for Lower Manhattan Coastal Resiliency, for the design and construction of long term resiliency infrastructure in anticipation of future extreme weather events.
- Provide funds for the design and construction of short to medium term resiliency infrastructure in anticipation of future extreme weather events.

At a height of seven feet, CB1 experienced one of the highest inundation levels in Manhattan during Superstorm Sandy. Two people in our district drowned and the storm resulted in billions of dollars of damage to infrastructure, housing and commercial property and utilities. We are concerned about both the short-term and long-term time frame because Lower Manhattan remains largely unprotected approaching the fifth anniversary of Superstorm Sandy. We face an increasing potential for suffering extreme weather events and subsequent financial damage to Lower Manhattan and the City at large.

CB1 has worked collaboratively with City, State and Federal representatives since October 2012 when Sandy devastated our community. We thank the City for the funds it has already contributed towards resiliency in Lower Manhattan. The Lower Manhattan Coastal Resiliency project is underway but there is a substantial funding shortfall. CB1 maintains that it is critical to fully finance the Lower Manhattan Coastal Resiliency project and ensure that our district is protected in the future. It is unclear where the required funding will come from and we urge the City to find ways of securing additional funding sources for the construction of a more resilient Lower Manhattan.

Another top budget request for FY2018 was:

- Funding for traffic and mobility studies in the Financial District, including east of Broadway and south of Park Row, as well as the WTC area, to address safety, sanitation and crowding issues as noted previously by CB1 and numerous other groups, including for example, the "Make Way for Lower Manhattan" initiative.

CB1 has long requested a study of traffic and mobility issues in our district and specifically in the Financial District area. Our street grid is the oldest in the City and was not built to support a high density, 24/7 mixed-use community with car, truck and bus traffic; high volumes of commercial and residential garbage and recycling; pedestrian traffic from residents, commuters and tourists; and security infrastructure that crowds already narrow streets and sidewalks. We reiterate the request for funding to facilitate a study of these conditions as the first step to establishing a proactive, holistic approach to implementing a plan for better managing the unique street and sidewalk conditions in Lower Manhattan.

On February 14, 2017, six of our elected officials co-signed a letter (attached) addressed to the Commissioner of the Department of Transportation to support our Board and our community in the request for a comprehensive mobility study for Lower Manhattan. We thank our elected officials for their support and hope that we can work collectively to solve these complex issues.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on our top budget requests for FY 2018. We urge the city to fund these items.



February 14, 2017

Polly Trottenberg
Commissioner
New York City Department of Transportation
55 Water Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10041

Dear Commissioner Trottenberg,

We write regarding pedestrian and vehicle mobility in Lower Manhattan. Since 9/11 and Hurricane Sandy, Lower Manhattan has bounced back and grown to become a thriving commercial district and residential community. In order to maintain this success, we must think critically about how the streetscape can support future growth. For this reason, we join the Financial District Neighborhood Association and Community Board 1 in requesting a comprehensive mobility study for Lower Manhattan to better understand how people and goods move throughout Lower Manhattan.

Lower Manhattan has experienced tremendous growth in the past 15 years. The residential population has more than doubled, and thousands of apartments are scheduled to be built over the next several years. In addition, Lower Manhattan's commercial sector is experiencing tremendous success. Over the next five years, research from Downtown Alliance projects businesses creating over 2.3 million square feet of new retail space and constructing nearly 4,000 hotel rooms, as well as leasing millions of square feet of office space. In addition, New York City has more tourists than ever before, with many popular sightseeing locations in Lower Manhattan.

Lower Manhattan's popularity inevitably increases pressure on the area's streetscape, the design of which remains a vestige of the city's earliest days. As a result, broad thinking and innovative solutions are required to ensure this community's growth for businesses and retailers, public transportation, emergency and private vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, and all who depend on this thriving community.

We hope you are able to support this study. Should you have any further questions, please contact our offices.

Sincerely,

Daniel Squadron
State Senator

Yuh-Line Niou
Assemblymember

Jerrold Nadler
Congressmember

Gale Brewer
Manhattan Borough President

Deborah Glick
Assemblymember

Margaret Chin
Councilmember