



The City of New York

Manhattan Community Board 1

Catherine McVay Hughes CHAIRPERSON | Noah Pfefferblit DISTRICT MANAGER

**Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer
Public Hearing on Manhattan Congestion
Borough of Manhattan Community College
199 Chambers Street, Theater 2
Thursday, September 17, 2015 at 9:30 AM**

Thank you, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer for holding this important public hearing today and inviting our testimony. My name is Catherine McVay Hughes, and I represent Community District 1 in Lower Manhattan where I am Chair of Community Board 1. Our district includes most of Manhattan below Canal Street and south of the Brooklyn Bridge.

Our Executive Committee unanimously passed the following resolution which will come before our full board at our meeting on September 30th, regarding congestion in Manhattan and specifically in Community District 1:

- WHEREAS: Vehicular and pedestrian congestion is a major quality of life and safety issue for those that live, work and visit our district; and
- WHEREAS: Vehicular congestion is compounded by the sheer number of double-decker tour buses, tour buses, personal vehicles and commuter buses; and
- WHEREAS: Hundreds of tour buses travel an endless loop of hop-on, hop-off stops, regardless of how many seats are filled. This is a major issue in Community District 1 (CD1) as they clog the streets; and
- WHEREAS: One solution is to place a cap on the number of tour buses to encourage tourists to use public transportation, as originally proposed by U.S. Congressman Jerrold Nadler;
- WHEREAS: This congestion leads to critical issues such as emergency vehicles being impeded by blocked streets, subsequently increasing response times; and
- WHEREAS: A comprehensive national study from NYU Langone Medical Center notes that air quality pollution causes increases in heart attacks, strokes and breathing-related causes of death. The main source of pollution is residue from the burning of fossil fuels emitted from vehicles, the most dangerous of which is fine particulate matter which contains dangerous chemicals and slips past our body's natural filters, into the blood and lungs; and
- WHEREAS: Excessive construction still exists in CD1's 1.5 sq mile with over 75 major public and private simultaneous construction projects, which also contributes to congestion; and
- WHEREAS: In July 2015, Community Board 1 (CB1) adopted a resolution supporting Buro Happold Engineering's "Make Way for Lower Manhattan" plan, which contains various suggestions

and tools for improvements to provide room for growth by facilitating vehicular and pedestrian mobility; and

WHEREAS: CB1 has not yet taken a position on MoveNYC; but adopted a resolution in February 2008 supporting the January 2008 Alternative Congestion Pricing plan, with recommended amendments; and

WHEREAS: An article titled “Manhattan Traffic Congestion: Where Are We Now?” published by Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer on September 11, 2015 outlines the current status of Manhattan congestion and outlines a handful of potential solutions; and

WHEREAS: One potential solution noted by Borough President Gale Brewer is the Cross-Harbor Freight Tunnel. This tunnel, similar to the one proposed by U.S. Congressman Jerrold Nadler in 1993, would run under New York Harbor connecting New Jersey and Long Island, removing roughly 500,000 trucks from Manhattan’s streets each year. The tunnel would cost \$7 billion to \$11 billion in funding that has not yet been allocated, and is being considered in an ongoing study by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and the Federal Highway Administration. CB1 supports this concept and requests more information; and

WHEREAS: The Manhattan Borough President’s Office will hold a public hearing on Manhattan Congestion on Thursday, September 17th at 10:00am to discuss the current status of the problem and potential solutions; now

THEREFORE
BE IT
RESOLVED

THAT: CB1 calls upon the New York City administration and its local elected officials to study and implement creative solutions for easing congestion in Manhattan, which has many negative impacts; and

BE IT
FURTHER
RESOLVED

THAT: Completing subway connections at the World Trade Center (WTC) site is essential to improving connectivity and use of mass transit: Reopen 1 subway line at Cortland Station, R line at Cortlandt Street, and E at WTC; and

BE IT
FURTHER
RESOLVED

THAT: Upgrading subway signaling can increase capacity of existing subway lines, especially the 4/5/6 which is 120%; and

BE IT
FURTHER
RESOLVED

THAT: CB1 supports the solution to place a cap on the number of tour buses to encourage tourists to use public transportation, as originally proposed by U.S. Congressman Jerrold Nadler.