



The City of New York

Manhattan Community Board 1

Julie Menin CHAIRPERSON | **Noah Pfefferblit** DISTRICT MANAGER

**The Council of the City of New York
Committee on Lower Manhattan Redevelopment**

**Oversight Hearing on
The Status of Construction of the World Trade Center Site**

**Tuesday, October 19, 2010 at 1:00 p.m.
250 Broadway, 14th Floor Committee Room, New York, NY**

**Testimony of Julie Menin, Chair of Community Board One and
Catherine McVay Hughes, Vice Chair**

Thank you, Chairperson Chin, for convening this important hearing regarding The Status of the Construction of the World Trade Center (WTC). As you well know, the WTC is at the epicenter of Manhattan Community Board One (CB1)—and what happens at the WTC significantly affects the rest of Lower Manhattan and the region.

As we approach the tenth anniversary of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the rebuilding of the WTC site is finally moving forward. One can easily see at street level the progress that is being made on many elements of the WTC Master Plan.

Key portions of the WTC Memorial will be open for the tenth anniversary and the WTC Museum is to open one year later. Though we look forward to the reopening of the street grid, including Greenwich, Liberty and Fulton Streets, we are concerned that plans have not yet been presented about how the changes in traffic will be managed. With the expected surge of visitors to the site, CB1 has repeatedly requested that the officials who are currently developing a Vehicular and Pedestrian Management Plan and security plans for the tenth anniversary and afterwards share with us now how they will address the phase-in of WTC components and the reopening of its street grid while still an active construction site.

In the meantime, we look forward to the expected reopening of the southbound side of the Cortland Street Subway Station (R and W) by September 2011. It is an important part of encouraging visitors to use public transportation.

With construction plans for the redevelopment of the western and eastern portions of the WTC site finally in place, one of the vital elements of the WTC site that has yet to be realized is the WTC Performing Arts Center (PAC). This June foundation work began at Site 1B, which is a positive sign. In addition, the Lower Manhattan Redevelopment Corporation (LMDC) Board of Directors allocated \$100 million to the PAC at its October board meeting and we look forward to the formal affirmative vote supporting funding of the PAC at LMDC's upcoming November meeting. But much remains to be done. We reiterate our call for the prompt establishment of a

board structure for the PAC that is independent of both the LMDC and the National September 11 Memorial and Museum Board. The PAC Board should be charged not only with the responsibility for raising funds for the PAC, but also reassessing the proposed programming of the PAC to ensure that it becomes a world-class performing arts center. The community has long advocated for the PAC since it is critical to the revitalization of Lower Manhattan, including the leasing out of commercial and retail space being rebuilt at the WTC site.

As construction peaks in the next few years with the building of the WTC Memorial, the Memorial Museum, Tower 1, Tower 4, the Calatrava Transportation Hub, the Fulton Transit Center and the restoration of the retail space throughout the area, the continuation of the Lower Manhattan Construction Command Center continues to be important to the livability of those that work and live downtown.

With LMDC finally completing the demolition of 130 Liberty Street, LMDC needs to turn over the property permanently to the PANYNJ so that work on the eastern portion of Vehicular Security Center (VSC) can finally begin. At Speaker Silver's last 130 Liberty Community Advisory Committee Meeting on October 8, 2010, the LMDC Chairman, Avi Schick, told CB1 that the deconstruction of 130 Liberty Street is to be completed by December 31, 2010. We would like to know whether this deadline will still be met; if not, we would like to know the new projected date for completion. Once the deconstruction is completed, Mr. Schick said that the PANYNJ will be given access to the site for 18 months for staging and other purposes related to the work on adjacent sites. However, at that time, Mr. Schick also said that the focus after deconstruction will be developing longer-term plans for the site.

The LMDC mission to "help plan and coordinate the rebuilding and revitalization of Lower Manhattan" is nearly complete except for allocating remaining funds and cleaning up the legal work related to 130 Liberty Street. We have been advocating for years for the responsible allocation of the remaining money and a sunset provision for the LMDC, and we reiterate that position today.

The sooner 130 Liberty Street is transferred to the PANYNJ, the sooner the VSC and the roof deck space of Liberty Park can be completed. Preliminary plans for the roof deck garden for Liberty Park promise the addition of a much needed attractive public open green space.

In order to continue the progress made at rebuilding the WTC, we need continuity of competent leadership that is familiar with the intricacies of such a large complex construction project. After living through the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and over nine years of rebuilding our community, to say that we are eager to see the WTC rebuilt would be an understatement. Since the PANYNJ is a bi-state agency, what happens in politics at the New York and New Jersey Governor level affects what happens here. We have had enough of the politics. We ask for continuity of leadership at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ), which owns the WTC site, so that the implementation of the Master Plan can finally be realized. The current Executive Director, Chris Ward, is the only PANYNJ Executive Director who has met with the community, and he has done so on numerous occasions.

For the first time we can actually envision the completion of this enormous urban revitalization—and we are already seeing signs of the positive ripple effect that it is having here on the surrounding residential and business community and around the region. The fact that the

Durst Corporation is investing in WTC1 signals private interest. The Letter of Intent from Condé Nast for WTC 1 for 1 million square feet shows to the world that downtown is diversifying its job base and that it is still a competitive and vital economic center of the city.

We thank everyone who assisted in breaking the latest impasse between the PANYNJ and SPI at the eastern portion of the WTC site, including our elected officials.

We look forward to the prompt realization of the WTC Redevelopment Plan, which will have significant community and commercial benefits. The WTC site will become the largest green complex in New York City while using Environmental Performance Credits in the process. We eagerly anticipate the day when office workers and visitors begin to replace construction workers at the WTC site.

Thank you.