



The City of New York

Manhattan Community Board 1

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The Council of the City of New York
Committees on Lower Manhattan Redevelopment, Transportation, and Housing and
Buildings
Oversight Hearing on
Construction Coordination in Lower Manhattan

Testimony by
Julie Menin, Chairperson
And
Catherine McVay Hughes, Vice Chairperson
Manhattan Community Board 1

Monday, April 23, 2012 at 1:30 p.m.
250 Broadway, 14th Floor Committee Room, New York, NY

Good afternoon, Chairperson Chin and Members of the Committees on Lower Manhattan Redevelopment, Transportation and Housing and Buildings. I am Julie Menin, Chairperson of Community Board 1, and I am accompanied by Catherine McVay Hughes, our Vice Chairperson. Thank you for convening this important public hearing on construction coordination in Lower Manhattan.

We are proud of the fact that Lower Manhattan is now among the largest commercial business districts in the country, one of the areas in the city that is experiencing job growth, and the fastest growing residential neighborhood in the city. We do not want to jeopardize the great strides we have made downtown if small businesses and residents end up leaving the neighborhood because of the deleterious effects of ongoing construction that are not properly mitigated. The Lower Manhattan Construction Command Center (LMCCC) is needed to continue to coordinate the effects of the myriad construction projects on our neighborhood.

On June 17, 2003, Community Board 1 (CB1) unanimously adopted a resolution in support of the Coordinated Construction Act for Lower Manhattan, legislation introduced to coordinate and facilitate construction, reduce costs, and promote safety and fairness in connection with the rebuilding of Lower Manhattan following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. CB1 worked with elected officials and the business community to create the LMCCC to minimize the accumulative impacts of rebuilding our community.

In November 2004, the Lower Manhattan Construction Command Center (LMCCC) was established by executive orders issued by New York Governor George E. Pataki and New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and charged with coordination and general oversight of all construction projects south of Canal Street, jointly estimated to be worth more than \$25 billion.

Since then, CB1 has repeatedly and unanimously reiterated its support for the extension of the Lower Manhattan Construction Command Center (LMCCC) through the peak construction period

in resolutions adopted on June 19, 2007; December 15, 2009; June 22, 2010; January 25, 2011; March 22, 2011; September 27, 2011; and most recently, January 23 and February 27, 2012. We have also expressed our support for LMCCC in testimony at various hearings and other events including your timely press conference last week on John Street. Please see attached the two most recent testimonies.

The LMCCC continues to play a vital role in the rebuilding of Lower Manhattan at a time when there are more than 50 large, unfinished public and private building and infrastructure construction projects in CB1 including 12 projects at the World Trade Center Site, six street reconstructions, four transportation projects, eight parks, 17 residential buildings, nine hotels, and various other types of construction projects.

We are very concerned by continuing reports suggesting that LMCCC's budget will be significantly reduced once again. CB1 is apprehensive about how these changes will affect the future of LMCCC, particularly its Environmental Compliance and Coordination Unit. A recent news article headlined, "LMCCC staff is slashed by more than half" (Downtown Express, by Aline Reynolds, February 8, 2012) described a planned reduction by four of seven remaining full-time members of the LMCCC staff, which is already greatly reduced from the original number when it provided independent oversight.

The LMCCC remains necessary at a time when our air quality in CB1 remains under threat. The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's "New York City Community Air Survey: Results from Year One Monitoring 2008-2009" reported high levels of four air pollutants [fine particles (PM2.5), elemental carbon (EC), nitric oxide (NO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO2)] in downtown Manhattan and found that traffic was a major emission source.

The LMCCC currently coordinates over 10,000 construction vehicles (fitout/trades, general, concrete, steel, etc.) that come into the one square mile of CB1, monitoring environmental impacts and ensuring that traffic flow is acceptable for emergency fire and police vehicles, buses (MTA, tour, school, double-decker and commuter), taxis, and black cars. The response time to an emergency response could be the matter of life or death.

The situation on John Street in the Financial District illustrates the need for meaningful, ongoing oversight of construction in our district. Five major construction projects have been underway on John Street in recent months, including the Fulton Street Transit Center, the Pace University dormitory at 180 Broadway, a hotel at 24 John Street, the Fulton Street Reconstruction project, and Con Edison infrastructure work. Recently LMCCC worked with Community Board 1 to put together a public meeting on these projects that was attended by nearly 100 people and where we brought all the projects together in a meeting that led to improvements for neighbors and better coordination. For example, as a result of the meeting 180 Broadway began to work at 7 a.m. instead of 6 a.m. and Con Edison issued a schedule and made a commitment to better secure metal plates so that they make less noise when vehicles travel over them. In addition, coordination was improved for permitting of the crane at 24 John Street so that the street is accessible to emergency vehicles. However, the situation still needs continued attention. For example, Con Edison closed off John Street again on Saturday night although it was not on their upcoming schedule that is released weekly on Fridays to the impacted community.

In addition to John Street, there are numerous other construction areas in our district where major construction projects have generated complaints from neighbors in recent weeks. The Brooklyn Bridge reconstruction project involves late-night drilling and other noisy work that has been in progress for many months. The Chambers Street reconstruction project has also produced a high level of concern among neighbors and in fact the LMCCC has organized a stakeholders meeting for next week that CB1 will attend.

CB1 has urged in our resolutions that Governor Cuomo and Mayor Bloomberg work with the LMCCC funding partners, including the PANYNJ, the Federal Transportation Authority, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the New York State Department of Transportation to adequately fund the LMCCC until development and construction activity in Lower Manhattan is substantially completed. It is especially important that LMCCC retain sufficient resources through peak construction.

We welcome your support, Chairperson Chin, and that of your colleagues on the City Council in our effort to ensure that the LMCCC remains in place and with sufficient staffing and resources to ensure that adverse impacts to our environment and quality of life from the large volume of construction projects underway in our community are reduced to the greatest extent possible. The LMCCC must remain in place to continue the positive momentum of the past several years and ensure that those in our community who remained downtown and rebuilt Lower Manhattan after a terrorist attack against our country are protected from further exposure to toxic pollutants during the upcoming years of peak construction.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.