



The City of New York

Manhattan Community Board 1

Catherine McVay Hughes CHAIRPERSON | Noah Pfefferblit DISTRICT MANAGER

Public Comment on New York City Phase 2 Application for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development National Disaster Resilience Competition

This testimony was submitted to the Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency as public comment on New York City's Phase 2 application for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) National Disaster Resilience Competition (NDRC). Community District 1 includes most of Manhattan below Canal Street and south of the Brooklyn Bridge, as well as Ellis Island, Governors Island and Liberty Island.

Our full board unanimously adopted the following resolution on September 30th, regarding NYC's Phase 2 application for HUD's NDRC:

- WHEREAS: Community District 1 (CD1) is surrounded by water on three sides. At a height of seven feet, CB1 experienced one of the highest inundation levels in Manhattan during Superstorm Sandy, resulting in the drowning of two people in our district as well as extreme property and financial damage; and
- WHEREAS: Superstorm Sandy also affected tens of thousands of individuals in Lower Manhattan, including seniors and otherwise vulnerable populations who were displaced or unable to evacuate, and who consequently suffered the extended loss of basic services within their own buildings and in the community, causing dangerous and unsanitary conditions; and
- WHEREAS: Community Board 1 (CB1) has played an active and positive role in the public process of Sandy recovery with the City since October 29, 2012; and
- WHEREAS: While great strides have been made in CD1 in terms of recovery and relief, there is still much that must be done to rebuild and revitalize what was destroyed, and to protect the area in anticipation of future extreme weather events; and
- WHEREAS: Lower Manhattan is in desperate need of immediate resiliency and hardening measures; and
- WHEREAS: According to the American Geophysical Union, "combining the newly calculated rise in storm tide with the rise in sea level that has taken place since the mid-1800s, the researchers found that today, waters can be expected to overtop the lower Manhattan seawall -- 1.75 meters (5.74 feet) high -- once every four to five years;" and
- WHEREAS: We are concerned about both the short-term and long-term time frame because Lower Manhattan remains largely unprotected approaching the 3rd anniversary of Superstorm Sandy and faces an increasing potential for suffering extreme weather events and subsequent financial damage to Lower Manhattan and the City at large; and
- WHEREAS: The Lower Manhattan Protect and Connect Project is a vision of comprehensive resiliency investments that are integrated into the community fabric; and

- WHEREAS: The Lower Manhattan Protect and Connect Project defines Lower Manhattan to be south of Montgomery Street, including a large portion north of the Brooklyn Bridge which is the northern boundary of CD1 on the east side; and
- WHEREAS: In March 2015, the City announced nearly \$15 million for Lower Manhattan resiliency, which included \$6.75 million from the City and State for preliminary design and environmental review and another \$8 million in City capital funds for first-phase flood protection design and implementation at the Battery; and
- WHEREAS: The City has just recently announced that it will commit an additional \$100 million for this project. If successful with its application, the City intends to leverage its own commitment to this project with National Disaster Resilience Competition (NDRC) funds to make the next phase of this project a reality; and
- WHEREAS: New York City's Phase 2 application for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) NDRC contains four main components:
1. Coastal Protection for Two Bridges
 2. Coastal Protection for Manhattan Tip
 3. Stormwater Management through Placemaking
 4. Multi-Family Resiliency Retrofit Program
- WHEREAS: Of these four components, Coastal Protection for Manhattan Tip, which is defined as the area from the Brooklyn Bridge to the western edge of Battery Park, is the only one that occurs in CD1; and
- WHEREAS: The Manhattan Tip project is expected to cost \$234 million in capital costs; and
- WHEREAS: The coastal flood protection system for the Manhattan Tip area begins adjacent to the Brooklyn Bridge, connecting to the southern end of the coastal flood protection system for Two Bridges, and continues along the southern tip of the island to the western edge of Battery Park but does not include Battery Park City; and
- WHEREAS: The application proposes transitions from fixed walls along the FDR, to deployable panels along the Whitehall Ferry Terminal building, and concludes with a levee system at the perimeter of Battery Park; and
- WHEREAS: The coastal flood protection system would defend the critical arteries and infrastructure of the region, including the Battery Park Underpass and the entrance to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel as well as other key assets; and
- WHEREAS: The City proposes a levee for Battery Park and aims to add a series of landscape elements to the levee, including constructing a pedestrian and bicycle trail and adding various shading elements, a covered walkway and an outdoor amphitheater; and
- WHEREAS: Five deployable pump stations and wet wells would be placed based on the proximity to key portions of the existing sewers and the alignment of the coastal flood protection system along the East River; and
- WHEREAS: Community Board 1 has several questions and concerns regarding NDRC NYC Phase 2 proposal:
- Assuming the City receives the full \$622 million, what is the order of implementation for proposal projects?

- If the City receives less than \$622 million, how will the funds be allocated? What are the priority projects?
- Number two of three items is “stormwater management for NYCHA campuses in the Lower East Side and Two Bridges. What is the plan for south of that area in Community District 1 for stormwater management?”
- Will stormwater storage be located under the Brooklyn Bridge for areas north of it? CB1 is currently working with City agencies to restore parks and recreation space in that area, as well as to relocate placard cars from under the bridge to alleviate congestion.
- The section outlining coastal protection for Manhattan Tip states that “the most feasible option for the coastal flood protection system for this area based on preliminary site analysis and basic design concepts transitions from fixed walls along the FDR, to deployable panels along the Whitehall Ferry Terminal building.” We would like the City to clarify and provide details on specific types of protection along this stretch.
- Battery Park City and Tribeca are not included in the application. Therefore, CD1 continues to be exposed even if Manhattan Tip is completed; and

WHEREAS: There is still no comprehensive resiliency plan for CD1, and the City has still not issued a Request for Proposals for Montgomery Street through Tribeca. Nothing has yet been implemented; and

WHEREAS: Above all, it is of the utmost importance to CB 1 that public participation throughout the planning and design process is implemented in a way that is equitable for all areas affected; and

WHEREAS: CB1 thanks the City for their investment of over \$100 million towards resiliency planning and protection in Lower Manhattan; now

THEREFORE
BE IT
RESOLVED

THAT: CB 1 endorses the Manhattan Tip portion of the proposal, the only proposal in the application affecting CD1, as a medium to long range solution. However, we remain gravely concerned by the lack of short to medium range strategies to protect CD1 in the event of another large storm; and

BE IT
FURTHER
RESOLVED

THAT: CB1 requests its fair share of resiliency funding to ensure that our district is protected not only in the future, but in the interim as well.