



The City of New York

Manhattan Community Board 1

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New York City Council

Committees on Lower Manhattan Redevelopment and Transportation

Oversight Hearing: Update on the Status of the MTA Fulton Center

Testimony by Catherine McVay Hughes, Chair Manhattan Community Board 1

December 11, 2013

250 Broadway, 16th Floor Committee Room, 10:00 A.M.

Good morning, Chairpersons Margaret Chin and James Vacca and members of the Committees on Lower Manhattan Redevelopment and Transportation. Thank you for convening this important oversight hearing regarding the status of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Fulton Center.

Community Board 1 (CB1) received an update on the Fulton Center by Uday Durg, Senior Vice President at the MTA, at our Financial District Committee meeting on Wednesday, December 4th. We appreciate the MTA's continued collaborative outreach with key stakeholders since the beginning of the project and over many years. CB1 was most recently pleased to learn that construction of the Fulton Center remains on schedule for completion in June 2014. We look forward to the realization of this \$1.4 billion LEED-rated project that will link together six existing subway stations and improve connections among 11 subway lines for an estimated 300,000 daily subway passengers.

By making it easier to navigate the many subway lines that converge in Lower Manhattan, we expect the much-awaited Fulton Center to be good for businesses in our district and a welcome amenity for residents and workers. It will be the kind of iconic structure for Lower Manhattan that Grand Central Terminal is for midtown.

We have advocated along with our elected officials and the Downtown Alliance for this project for many years, including at times when the needed funding was threatened, and we are gratified that the project is nearly complete. We commend the MTA for finding ways to reduce costs on this project through value engineering, and preserving and restoring the historic Corbin building, which is on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Although the Corbin building is not a New York City landmark, the MTA found a way to incorporate it into the project to ensure its preservation.

We commend the MTA for three major improvements in handicapped access this year by putting in service the elevator at 135 William Street (11/4/13), two escalators in the A/C East Mezzanine (11/12/13) and the elevator in the A/C East Mezzanine (11/20/13).

The combination of transportation infrastructure development and retail expansion will significantly contribute to the ongoing revitalization of Lower Manhattan. We understand that the MTA is nearing the selection of a master leaseholder to operate the 66,000 square feet of retail space in the Fulton Center. CB1 is keenly interested in the retail plans, as we lost 150 local businesses to the plan when they were evicted to make way for the structure in 2003. Many of these businesses had long-standing, deep ties to local residents and workers. The new retail at the Fulton Center will provide an opportunity to add service and retail businesses to replace what was lost. CB1 appreciates the assurance by the MTA that CB1 will have an opportunity to meet with the operator once the selection is finalized and to provide input regarding planned retail. We would welcome a diverse mix of retailers to meet the needs of local residents, workers and visitors.

In addition to the lost businesses, the community has lived with the inconvenience of this and dozens of nearby construction projects for many years. The completion of the project on time will enable conditions around the Center to be restored, including the reopening of the area on Broadway that has been closed off and the restoration of lighting on John Street. Therefore, we are concerned about the impact on the quality of life of the surrounding residents and small businesses and the potential for timeline slippage with the currently planned sunseting of the Lower Manhattan Construction Command Center this December 31, 2013.

We look forward to the many additional benefits of the Fulton Center, including improved street-level access, rehabilitation of numerous stations, and a previously unavailable transfer between the 4/5 and the R and E lines. The recent opening on October 21, 2013 of the well-illuminated 150 William Street Fulton Center Entrance is a significant improvement in that area. In addition, we also look forward to the eventual connection between the Fulton Center and the World Trade Center site, PATH trains and Hudson River ferries at the World Financial Center. We would like an update about the expected date of the opening of the underground Dey Street connection.

CB1 would also like to know the MTA's plans for maintenance of the site, in particular how cleanliness will be maintained and how the escalators and elevators at the Center will remain operational to ensure that the Center is accessible to the disabled.

Finally, we would like additional information about how the MTA will ensure that the Center is sufficiently resilient to withstand weather events in the future comparable to Superstorm Sandy or even more severe. It is important as well that the station not get flooded in the more frequent and intense downpours. For example, as a result of this past Friday's rainstorm, the ceiling was leaking in various areas on both the renovated uptown and downtown 4/5 platforms.

The reconstruction of Broadway which is expected to last for four years will also take several lanes in front of the Fulton Center out of service for some time. We are concerned about the impact on pedestrian and vehicular flow, and safety.

We look forward to receiving more details about our remaining concerns. The completion of the Fulton Center will be a major milestone in the redevelopment of Lower Manhattan after September 11th. CB1 thanks everyone who has helped to make this possible. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.