

Manhattan Community Board Five

Vikki Barbero, Chair

450 Seventh Avenue, Suite 2109
New York, NY 10123-2199
212.465.0907 f-212.465.1628

Wally Rubin, District Manager

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 5 DISTRICT NEEDS STATEMENT FISCAL YEAR 2016

INTRODUCTION

Manhattan Community Board Five represents the heart of Manhattan. Its boundaries are largely from Lexington to 8th Avenues and from 14th Street to 59th Street. Encompassing the midtown central business district, it includes world-class cultural institutions and tourist destinations, major universities, retail flagships, major industries and a growing residential population. Taken together, these diverse institutions and groups increasingly place demands upon the district's resources.

Public School Seats

Not only has the residential population increased dramatically between 2000 and 2010 (17.4 %), but increases have been especially pronounced among residents ages 0-5 (54.4%) and 5-9 (24.0%). While PS 340 (the first public elementary school in our district in at least decades) is a welcome addition, it is imperative that there be better coordination between DCP and SCA planning to ensure residential growth is met with growth in school capacity. Fundamentally, the community needs a net INCREASE in school seats. Charter schools may be able to play a role in this so long as they contribute to a net increase in seats and do not displace what would otherwise be zoned schools seats. Additionally, UPK needs to be properly funded and planned so as not to overcrowd the public school system.

Transportation

Our district has immense transportation needs given the dense concentration of businesses and the presence in (or bordering) our district of Grand Central Terminal, Penn Station and the Port Authority Bus Terminal.

MTA Investment—Conditions on the 4/5/6 lines are extremely overburdened and the City and MTA must find ways to alleviate overcrowding to support a more efficient flow of riders. 5th Ave/ 53rd St and Lexington Ave/ 51st-53rd St Stations are also in need of significant upgrades.

Develop 23rd St Select Bus Service—While 14th St has the L line, 34th St has Select-Bus-Service (SBS) and 42nd St has the Shuttle and the 7 lines, 23rd St lacks a rapid transit route. We believe there is a need to study the feasibility of installing a SBS route on 23rd St.

ADA Access in MTA Stations—All subway stations should be accessible to our physically disabled communities. This is especially important in Community District 5—given that our community serves as the Central Business District of the City. Anytime a developer is normally required to relocate a sidewalk staircase into a newly constructed building, the City and MTA should encourage the developer to provide ADA access (if station is currently lacking) as a means of fulfilling their obligation.

Enforcement of 34th St Select Bus Service—NYPD needs to more effectively enforce traffic regulations on 34th St to ensure that the benefits of SBS are realized by commuters.

Automobile/Bicycle/Pedestrian Enforcement —Pedestrian safety is paramount for our community and NYPD Traffic Enforcement needs to better enforce all existing laws regulating street use.

Street Repavement—Many streets in the district are in need of repavement. DOT should do an assessment throughout the District to identify the streets most in need.

Safe Streets—As arguably the most crowded district in the City, we need to ensure that our streets are designed to maximize safe and efficient flow for all users. The City should evaluate the efficacy of safe street redesign plans throughout the district and present safety plans to CB5 for our review.

Comprehensive Approach to Intercity Bus Transit—As the Port Authority is filled to capacity, many bus operators flood portions of our district for pickups/drop-offs. While DOT under a new NY State regulation can permit stops, our community needs a more comprehensive approach to buses than assigning curbside locations in the district. The City, MTA and Port Authority should work in tandem to develop a comprehensive plan that considers the creation of a new bus terminal or an expansion of Port Authority.

Housing & Services for Low-Income and Special Needs Communities

Between 2000 and 2010, the residential population within CB5 has grown substantially at 17.36%. This is far higher than the overall 2.08% citywide rate of residential growth between 2000 and 2010. The City needs to place a greater focus on the existing housing stock in the District as well as consider how future development can best serve the diverse communities in the District

New Housing Affordable to a Wide Range of Household Incomes—From Central Park South to Union Square, the district is becoming an increasingly desirable place to live. This demand for housing stock in our district can have resulted in a significant increase in residential development, some of which is creating affordable housing units through the Inclusionary Housing Program. At present, these programs secure far fewer affordable units than would be proportional to the bonus granted to developers. These programs need to be revised to ensure that the public most effectively leverages private housing development to develop the greatest number of quality affordable units—thus keeping our neighborhoods more socioeconomically diverse than would otherwise be the case.

Protect the Stock of Affordable Housing—As the 2010 Census shows, the district is comprised of mainly rental units. According to the 2010 Decennial Census, CD 5 has a total population of 51,673 living in 21,797 rental housing units and 8,024 owner occupied units. Such units are subject to price volatility and it is important to ensure that those tenants who are in stabilized units have safe and decent housing. HPD should vigorously enforce the Housing Maintenance Code and make emergency repairs immediately if landlords have unrectified hazardous conditions for their tenants.

Address Homelessness—The district has a growing street homeless levels and the City must expand outreach efforts. For both the street homeless and sheltered homeless, the City must identify pathways to permanent affordable housing for individuals and families. The existing shelter system, along with the emergency shelter program, places significant financial burdens on public coffers. Money can be more effectively invested to help these populations through creating new housing options.

Seniors—The district has thousands of households that appear to be aging in place. There was a 26.4% increase in the 65+ age population between 2000 and 2010—bringing the district's population to nearly 6,000. The City should both ensure these seniors have access to services that can assist aging in place. The City should also consider supporting senior housing development in the district

that would enable residents to age in their neighborhoods and potentially free up larger units for larger households.

Supportive Housing—For many special needs populations, there is a need for affordable housing that comes along with supportive services. Absent this investment, many of the City’s most vulnerable will continue to be at risk.

Reducing Adverse Impacts of Construction through Proactive City Engagement

With constant construction throughout all neighborhoods of the district, better coordination and sensitivity to community concerns is essential, particularly in these three key areas:

Quality of Life—DOB must better work with the community to set and enforce noise and work rules that correspond with the localized characteristics of the varied neighborhoods of the district.

Safety—DOB must significantly increase their vigilance to make sure work sites are safe for construction workers as well as the public. Existing supervision has proven inadequate.

Business Interruption—DOB, SBS and other stakeholders should identify ways for developers to provide some assistance to small businesses adversely impacted by development.

Libraries

The New York Public Library facilities serving the district continue to need additional funding to meet the demand for its services. Apart from providing resources to support increased library hours, the City should commit to providing a steady stream of capital to the library branches. This will better allow NYPL to plan strategically for growth and upkeep through all of its branches.

Sanitation

Sanitation needs of our district are immense. The district needs significantly improved corner trash pick-up. There is also a need for more recycling and composting bins—especially in the residential sections of the District. Tourism in the city is at record levels, and we need to ensure Times Square and other key tourist destinations are kept at impeccably clean levels.

Maintenance and Enforcement of Privately-Managed Public Spaces

For parks and plazas managed by not-for-profit and for-profit entities, the City needs to ensure greater maintenance and benefits for the public.

Parks—Privately managed parks are an important feature of the district. There is a need to maximize use of public spaces for recreational use by residents and workers within the context of allowing these management organizations to have self-supporting financing mechanisms to cover maintenance and park programming.

Privately-Owned Public Spaces—The Department of City Planning and DOB need to coordinate to ensure that properties receiving density bonuses through provision of a plaza are fulfilling all of their obligations to afford a true public amenity. The City should make unexpected inspections of all privately owned public spaces each year, issue warnings to owners violating the terms of their bonus and remove the DOB occupancy permits for bonuses floor area for owners who do not bring their plazas into compliance within a reasonable time frame.

Historic Resources

Community Board Five is the steward of New York City's most iconic landmarks. The district is also the home of two significant landmarks historic districts, The Madison Square North Historic District and the Ladies Mile Historic District. Currently, LPC's funding and manpower is inadequate to provide the level of service and review expected. It is important that LPC receive additional resources to expedite review of requests submitted to the commission.

Chemical Dependence

Our district's neighborhoods are a major destination for consumers of alcohol and drugs. We have a need for greater resources to proactively treat problems and mitigate the adverse impacts to the neighborhoods of our district.

Inclusive Economic Development

Our economy is increasingly bifurcated—with high wage financial services, corporate, law, consulting and tech jobs on the one hand, and low-wage retail and service jobs on the other hand. There needs to be careful consideration of how all

city policies impact the economic wellbeing of the diverse members of the community.

Diversified Economy—It is important that our city's economic policy support a diversified economy within our district. One means of achieving this goal is ensuring that land use policies allow for the growth and flourishing of industries with living-wage jobs in fashion, light manufacturing and other sectors currently using the Class B and Class C office stock of the district.

Workforce Development—The City should identify and pursue policies that enable low-wage workers (thousands of which are in our district) and the unemployed to meet the workforce needs in the city.

Environmental Health

Given the dense nature of the district, it is especially critical to ensure that basic human needs are met.

Water Quality—The city's DEP and the state's DEC need to remain vigilant to protect our air and water quality. This includes actions taken both in the city and environmental conditions and in other portions of the state the agencies have jurisdiction over.

Air Quality—The City must better enforce idling laws and pursue planning and transit policies to reduce congestion in the District.

Respectfully submitted,



Vikki Barbero,
Chair



Eric Stern
Committee Chair



Wally Rubin
District Manager