



Assemblymember

Deborah J. Glick's

- Community E-Update -

March 2015

Victory for Crossing Guards

My colleagues and I sent a letter to Police Commissioner Bratton, NYPD Chief of Transportation and the NYPD Chief of Patrol Services, demanding an solution to the lack of crossing guards at schools in Lower Manhattan. I am delighted to announce that last week, our requests were fulfilled! My office was informed that the New York City Police Department is filling nine posts with either uniformed Police Officers or Traffic Enforcement Officers at PS/IS 276, PS 234, and PS 89, in addition to six other locations. This news is the result of our collective advocacy on behalf of students traveling to and from school in some of our most congested road ways and intersections in Manhattan.

The schools slated to receive coverage are:

- 1) PS234: at Chambers Street and Greenwich Street;
- 2) PS 234: Covered by SCG at Chambers Street and West Street;
- 3) PS 397/Spruce/William: Currently, there is a traffic enforcement agent. They will receive a permanent crossing guard;
- 4) PS 343/Peck/Pearl: Currently, there is a traffic enforcement agent. They will receive a permanent crossing guard;
- 5) PS 89: at Warren Street and West Street;
- 6) PS 276: at Battery Place and 1 Pearl

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Place

7) PS 150: at Harrison Street and Greenwich Street;

8) Leman Manhattan Prep: at West Street and Morris Street;

9) Cooke Center School: at MacDougal Street and W. Houston Street.

I have also partnered with the Henry Street Settlement's Workforce Development Center to assist with recruiting local residents to find employment with the NYPD as a crossing guard for Lower Manhattan. I want to sincerely thank the NYPD for listening to the concerns of the community and providing us with crossing guards to protect students.

Passing Ethics Reform

Outside of the Budget, the Assembly passed Ethics Reform Legislation last week. As I said on the floor of the Assembly, this is only a step towards all that needs to be accomplished, but it is a good first step.

The legislation would close the limited liability companies (LLC) loophole, and provides greater transparency regarding the source of lobbying funds. The bill drastically lowers the contribution limits for LLCs to the same \$5,000 limit applied to corporations. The bill also takes steps to limit the ability of special interests to influence government without disclosing the sources of their funding, often referred to as "dark money." Currently, entities that lobby for themselves or hire a lobbyist are required to report the funding source of any amount over \$5,000 if they have spent more than \$50,000 on lobbying in a year. Under the proposal, the thresholds would be lowered to \$1,000 and \$5,000 respectively. Finally, the legislation caps outside income for legislators.

Under the proposal, a legislator's outside income may not exceed 40 percent of the annual salary of New York State Supreme Court Justices.

Therefore, no sitting legislator would earn more in outside income than their base salary. As an Assemblymember, I have never received outside income, and I have serious concerns over how high the allowed outside income could be under this framework. I believe that New Yorkers deserve to have full-time legislators working on their behalf. Nonetheless, this legislation is a good step towards needed changes.

Celebrating Elizabeth Street Garden

As you probably recall, last year, the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) applied for a grant from the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) for the purposes of developing Elizabeth Street Garden as an affordable housing site. I testified against this application.

Last week, LMDC voted against granting these funds to HPD. This is a huge victory for the Elizabeth Street Garden. While this does not mean the Elizabeth Street Garden has been saved, it does mean that the community opposition and desire to see the preservation of scarce green space in lower Manhattan was heard. I hope that HPD will use this as an opportunity to reopen the dialogue with Community Board 2, lower Manhattan residents and elected officials regarding the preservation of Elizabeth Street Gardens and alternative sites for affordable housing. I remain committed to fostering the development of affordable housing in the City and hope we can capitalize on the momentum created from this victory to ensure that we build

affordable units while preserving green space.

Improving Houston and Varick Streets

This month, I wrote to the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) regarding the intersection at West Houston and Varick Streets which is inundated with heavy traffic due automobiles trying to enter the Holland Tunnel. As a result, this intersection is particularly hazardous for pedestrians. It is particularly difficult to cross the street after exiting the Houston Street subway station, and local residents are regularly trying to maneuver around a constant stream of traffic. As a result, this intersection has frequently been rated as one of the most dangerous in the City, and efforts to improve it have been discussed but never completed. I called on DOT to look into the intersection and what has impeded the implementation of safety improvements. I hope that DOT will review the serious concerns at this intersection, especially in light of the Mayor's renewed commitment to Vision Zero and reducing pedestrian traffic fatalities.

Commemorating the Anniversary of the East Village Explosion

On Saturday, March 26th, I joined Rosie Mendez, other local elected officials and community members at a press conference commemorating the one-year anniversary of the devastating East Village Explosion. After a year of working with community members and elected officials to rebuild and stabilize the East Village following this terrible tragedy, I am proud to stand with our community and remember those we lost. Recently, the building owners, contractors, and other responsible parties in this tragedy were indicted, beginning the process of serving justice in this tragic event. Additionally, City officials and Councilmember Mendez have renewed efforts to increase penalties for gas related tampering and

prevent these crimes. I look forward to continuing to working with other elected officials and this community to ensure that horrible events like this does not occur in the future, and residents are protected from entirely preventable events.

Fighting Against Tenant Harassment

This month, I joined with many local colleagues in calling on Westminster Management, the company in charge of 118 East 4th Street, to address the many grievances experienced by tenants. Frequent complaints ranging from collapsed ceilings to a lack of cooking gas forced tenants to organize with the help of Cooper Square Committee. These requests for basic services have not been met with an adequate response by the management company or owner, Jared Kushner.

Landlords are obligated to provide a reasonable standard of habitability for tenants regardless of their status as rent-regulated or market rate. Despite assurances made by management to repair unacceptable conditions, there has been no movement to remedy these unacceptable circumstances. Tenants have protections under the law and should not be forced to go to court in order to combat an abusive landlord. I hope that the current actions by tenants will strongly encourage Westminster Management to address the needed changes and send a clear message that abuse from landlords will not be tolerated.

Save our Supermarket

Affordable supermarkets and other essential services such as dry cleaners are what make neighborhoods livable. The continued loss of these services is detrimental to our communities. Pan Am Equities, the owner of the building which currently houses an Associated Supermarket at 255 W 14th Street, is trying to raise the rent from \$32,000 to over \$100,000. This is usurious. I was happy to join Councilmember Johnson, Senator Hoylman and community members in a rally outside of Pan Am Equities, demanding that they open a dialogue about a reasonable lease renewal. I also implore the City to address the increasing need for affordable commercial spaces.

If you would like to sign the petition to save our supermarket, [you can do so here](#).

Protecting Against Illegal Hotels

I was pleased to join my colleagues on both the State and City levels this month, in a round table discussion with Christian Klossner, the newly appointed Director of the Office of Special Enforcement (OSE). OSE is intended to fight the pervasive problem of illegal hotels and sublets perpetuated by sharing sites such as Airbnb. A recent report by New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman found that in 2013, nearly 40% of all Airbnb rentals were located in the Lower East Side/East Village, Chelsea/Hell's Kitchen, and Greenwich Village/SoHo. We can't afford to continue to exacerbate the housing shortage by turning our back to illegal short-term rentals.

Small fines and civil penalties have done little to curb behavior. Neighbors who live adjacent to frequent short-term renters are repeatedly subjected to quality of life disturbances from the frequent arrivals of tourists using apartments. I am pleased to have met Director Klossner, and to hear that OSE is being staffed-up.

It is imperative that this Administration send a clear message to individuals who are breaking the law for financial gain. We must be clear that this practice depletes available housing stock, and will not be tolerated. The joint effort from City and State elected officials, as well as experienced advocacy groups, to further combat illegal hotels, will increase availability of affordable, stable apartments for New Yorkers.

Pressing the AG to Act on Egregious NYU Actions

With streetscape changes along Bleecker Street between LaGuardia Place and Mercer Street currently underway, and further construction plans from the New York University's (NYU) Capital Plan, I have written to the Attorney General requesting he look into NYU's real estate holdings. Previously, I asked Attorney General Schneiderman to look into real estate holdings of NYU in Greenwich Village

that may contribute to the pervasive problem of escalating real estate prices that are out scale with actual neighborhood values. When a major institution can pay two to three times the property's selling price only a year prior, they contribute to the irresponsible growth in profits, property values, and commercialization.

As the problem continues to grow, a question of transparency within NYU, which is a registered non-profit, arose following the closure of the Coles Sports Complex and the opening of the much smaller 404Fitness. I have called on the Attorney General to look into NYU surrounding these real estate deals, and why certain promises to the community have not been upheld. Furthermore, students and community members are paying fees for the use of an athletic facility that is significantly smaller, and are not getting the full value for that they are paying. I hope the Attorney General will see the immense need to look into these issues and act for the benefit of the community and students at NYU.

Seeking Information on Possible L Train Shut Down

Following news that the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) will potentially shut down the Canarsie Tube through which the L Train crossing the East River, I wrote to MTA President Veronique Hakim, calling for public conversations about community concerns regarding this potential loss of mass of transit. While the brunt of the transit disruption will be felt by Brooklyn residents who will be forced to find alternative transportation into Manhattan, many Manhattan residents also rely on this service. Businesses along the L, including in Manhattan, rely on travelers to shop and conduct business.

Recently, the Montague Tunnel for the R train was

closed for to repair damages sustained in Hurricane Sandy. This change was difficult for downtown communities and parts of southern Brooklyn; however the geographic location of the R-line meant relatively accessible alternative options were available to residents to cross between boroughs. The L Train, on the other hand, is unique in that there are fewer readily available options for commuters to use in place of the L train. This is why I asked President Hakim to ensure that the public and community boards have ample time to be updated on the project and scope of disruption, and that the MTA offer a viable contingency plan. I hope that the MTA and heavily affected communities can work together to address this potential transit crisis.

Request New Trees on Your Block

New York City Parks Department has a fantastic street tree planting program that will allow residents the opportunity to request new trees be planted along their blocks. Trees on our streets have the unique ability to beautify blocks, increase property values, cool and clean the air, reduce storm water runoff, and lower building energy costs. By shading hot surfaces, trees improve public health by reducing the formation of ozone, and mitigate other adverse health effects that occur in dense urban environments. Tree planting is a key element to make the city more sustainable as our population grows.

The current program is seeking requests from residents for a survey that will allow trees to be planted this fall. Once a request is begun, NYC

Parks Department will survey the proposed block and location, assess the location for utilities and feasibility of a tree pit, and if possible, submit the proposal for a tree planting. A current list of upcoming planting locations for Spring 2016 [can be found here](#). For more information about having the Parks Department plant trees on your block, and to begin the process of submitting a request for a tree on your block visit [Parks website](#) or call 311.

Hearing on Proposed Changes to M5 Bus Route

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) will hold a public meeting regarding proposed revisions to the M5 bus route. Currently, the M5 runs from South Ferry to the George Washington Bridge. The M5 is consistently one of the worst performing bus routes in Manhattan, and the MTA reports that buses along this route frequently fail to complete the full route due to extensive delays, forcing commuters to find other modes of transportation.

The MTA proposal would split the route into two sections with a central loop at 37th Street. As a result, the M5 would run from the George Washington Bridge/West 178th Street to West 37th Street, and a newly created M55 would run along the southern route of the existing M5 from West 37th Street to South Ferry. Bus riders looking to travel on the bus across West 37th Street in either direction would need to exit the bus at the stop and board the corresponding M5 or M55 to complete their trip. The MTA indicates that splitting the route into two sections will provide faster and more

reliable service.

The public hearing will be held on **April 20th at 5PM, at 2 Broadway on the 20th Floor**. In order to speak, you must register in advance by calling 646-252-6777, or [visit the MTA website](#).

Study on the Health Impacts of 9/11

Doctor Roberto Lucchini at the World Trade Center Health Program Data Center, at Mount Sinai Hospital, is embarking on a study to gauge the impact of the 9/11 attacks and its aftermath, on children in the immediate area. He is studying exposures to toxic chemicals found near the site of the 9/11 World Trade Center attacks through analyzing baby teeth.

Dr. Lucchini has conducted similar studies in the past by tracing pesticide exposure and its impact on children's IQ. This new study will fill a gap created by other studies by tracking toxic debris and pollution in babies and toddlers. If you still have baby teeth from a child who was born in 2001 or later and lived near the site of the attacks in 2001, and would like to participate in the study email manish.arora@mssm.edu and Roberto.lucchini@mssm.edu.