



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

424 West 33rd Street, Suite 580 New York, NY 10001

tel: 212-736-4536
www.mcb4.nyc

JEFFREY LEFRANCOIS
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

February 15, 2023

Hon. Mark Levine
Manhattan Borough President
1 Centre Street, 19th Floor South
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Eric Adams
Mayor, City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: Proposed Waterfront Oversight Agency

Dear Borough President Mark Levine & Mayor Adams,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4)'s Waterfront, Parks, and Environment Committee (WPE) thanks the Manhattan Borough President's Office (MBPO) for their presentation on Thursday, January 12th proposing the establishment of a new citywide, mayoral agency for waterfront oversight.

The MBPO believes there is good reason to establish a Waterfront Oversight Agency to "improve coordination, management and monitoring of current and future waterfront infrastructure" citing both the chronic hazard of sea level rise and extreme events such as coastal flooding. In light of the billions of dollars in new coastal protection infrastructure being considered, designed and constructed and no central agency oversight, there is a need to ensure the effective operations and maintenance of associated programs across city agencies. The proposed agency would work under city agency guidelines and serve as both a jurisdictional and a capital delivery agency.

The Waterfront Oversight Agency proposal would also oversee coordinated efforts in allocating the nearly 25% of Hurricane Sandy aid remaining unspent and switch waterfront permitting from

Small Business Service (SBS) to Department of Buildings (DOB), establishing a waterfront building code in granting permits.

Manhattan Community Board 4, at its February 1st Full Board meeting by a vote of 41 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible, supports the exploration of such an agency with the following comments:

While supporting the premise of a new, independent Waterfront Oversight Agency, MCB4 would like to note the vast majority of Community District 4's waterfront is controlled by New York State and the Hudson River Park Trust (HRPT). Any new waterfront agency would not have jurisdiction in our district and would have to include HRPT in any planning and projects related to our waterfront.

The new agency, merely by its waterfront and coastal protection objective, will be undertaking extremely complex issues involving technical infrastructure design, construction and operation, environmental considerations and involving political interaction among all levels of government. The expectation is this new agency will be staffed by experienced personnel capable of undertaking these important tasks.

Under this proposal, waterfront permitting would be moved to the DOB. MCB4 is concerned about the current lack of maritime expertise in the agency to be aptly qualified in handling the permitting of harbor structures. As this plan develops, we would ask accommodations be made for the proper personnel at DOB to handle these requests as well as supporting a new waterfront code, as the MBPO suggests. We also are interested where the Greenway off-road trail situated between Hudson River Park and the West Side Highway (NY 9A) would fall under this new agency.

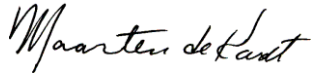
Recently, the US Army Corps of Engineers released NY & NJ Harbor and Tributaries Focus Area Feasibility Study (HATS), a long-term resilience and sustainability study including a number of proposed plans, and a preferred proposed plan, for the NY/NJ harbor region. We would like to note that many of our members were disturbed with the Corps' proposed barrier wall along New York State Route 9A and Hudson River Park. We expect any new city waterfront agency closely work with the community and related agencies as this multi-billion dollar project moves forward. MCB4 also suggests the proposed agency serve as a visionary consortium implementing future green infrastructure to combat rising tides and eroding coastlines.

MCB4 appreciates the MBPO's proactive approach to the coastal resiliency problem our city is facing. A new Waterfront Oversight Agency will help coordinate efforts and provide the expertise on capital projects that will inevitably be developed in the near future. No doubt, as work progresses to potentially establish this agency, other concerns will surface. MCB4 looks forward to discussing how the city further plans to deal with policy and capital projects regarding storm and waterfront protection.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey LeFrancois
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Maarten deKadt
Co-chair
Waterfront, Parks & Environment Committee



Leslie Boghosian Murphy
Co-chair
Waterfront, Parks & Environment Committee

CC: Hon. Adrienne Adams, NYC Council Speaker
Hon. Erik Bottcher, NYC Councilmember