

**Michael Blaise Backer Statement on Proposed Throggs Neck BID**  
**Before City Council Finance Committee**  
**November 28, 2018**

Good morning Chair Dromm and members of the Finance Committee. I am Michael Blaise Backer, Deputy Commissioner of Neighborhood Development at the Department of Small Business Services (SBS). I am joined by our BID Program Director, Roxanne Earley and our Senior Program Manager for BID Development, LeMel Lindsey. We are here to testify in support of the proposed Throggs Neck Business Improvement District (BID).

At SBS, we are working hard to open doors for New Yorkers across the five boroughs – focusing on creating stronger businesses, connecting New Yorkers to good jobs, and fostering thriving neighborhoods. We believe that the vitality of the City’s commercial corridors is a key part of achieving this goal, and BIDs have been valuable and proven partners in revitalization and economic development across all five boroughs.

In addition to our role overseeing and supporting the City’s existing network of 75 BIDs, SBS also supervises the BID formation and expansion process, serving as an advisor and resource for communities interested in developing or expanding BIDs. Every year SBS works with numerous communities throughout the five boroughs that are in various stages of BID formation or expansion. Throughout the process we are careful to ensure that each steering committee we work with adheres to our planning policies and procedures; solicits robust community input; and performs extensive outreach to collect and demonstrate broad-based support across all stakeholder groups.

Moreover, we are cognizant of the unique nature of each community we assist, and aim to empower local stakeholders to make determinations on (1) proposed services, (2) boundaries, and (3) budget size that best suit their community’s needs, and their appetite and ability to pay assessments. While we always impart strong planning principles and share our data and best practices from across the BID network when working with any community, BID formation is fundamentally a community driven process and we recognize that the power and effectiveness of BIDs rests in the unmatched understanding of local needs and issues.

Similar to other recent BID formations that SBS has overseen, the Throggs Neck BID formation effort involved numerous meetings and consultations with local stakeholders throughout the planning and outreach phases. After an extensive

outreach effort and close coordination with all key parties, SBS determined that the documented support among all stakeholder groups – including over 50% of the area’s total assessed value providing written support in favor – was sufficient to submit the application into the legislative process.

As required by law, the Throggs Neck Steering Committee mailed the summary of the City Council Resolution, no less than 10 days and no more than 30 days before today’s hearing, to the following parties:

- To each owner of real property within the proposed district at the address shown on the latest City assessment roll,
- To such persons as are registered with the City to receive tax bills concerning real property within the district, and
- To tenants of each building within the proposed district.

Furthermore, SBS arranged for the publication of a copy of the summary of the Resolution at least once in the City Record.

Additionally, I would like to acknowledge and thank Council Member Mark Gjonaj for his ongoing support of the Throggs Neck BID formation effort.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge that representatives of the BID Formation effort are present here today to testify and address any specific questions that I am unable to answer.

At this time, I am happy to take any questions. Thank you.

**Michael Blaise Backer Statement on Proposed Hudson Square BID**  
**Expansion**  
**Before City Council Finance Committee**  
**November 28, 2018**

Good morning Chair Dromm and members of the Finance Committee. I am Michael Blaise Backer, Deputy Commissioner of Neighborhood Development at the Department of Small Business Services (SBS). I am joined by our BID Program Director, Roxanne Earley and our Senior Program Manager for BID Development, LeMel Lindsey. We are here to testify in support of the expansion of the Hudson Square Business Improvement District (BID).

At SBS, we are working hard to open doors for New Yorkers across the five boroughs - focusing on creating stronger businesses, connecting New Yorkers to good jobs, and fostering thriving neighborhoods. We believe that the vitality of the City's commercial corridors is a key part of achieving this goal, and BIDs have been valuable and proven partners in revitalization and economic development across all five boroughs.

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Moreover, we are cognizant of the unique nature of each community we assist, and aim to empower local stakeholders to make determinations on (1) proposed services, (2) boundaries, and (3) budget size that best suit their community's needs, and their appetite and ability to pay assessments. While we always impart strong planning principles and share our data and best practices from across the BID network when working with any community, BID formation is fundamentally a community driven process and we recognize that the power and effectiveness of BIDs rests in the unmatched understanding of local needs and issues.

Similar to other recent BID expansions that SBS has overseen, the Hudson Square expansion effort involved numerous meetings and consultations with local stakeholders throughout the planning and outreach phases. Additionally, the steering committee organized many community planning sessions, held informative public displays, and distributed various supplemental material to inform the community. After extensive outreach and close coordination with all key stakeholders, SBS determined that the documented support among all stakeholder groups – including over 50% of the area’s total assessed value signing in favor – was sufficient to submit the application into the legislative process.

As required by law, the Hudson Square Expansion Steering Committee mailed the summary of the City Council Resolution, no less than 10 days and no more than 30 days before today’s hearing, to the following parties:

- To each owner of real property within the proposed district at the address shown on the latest City assessment roll,
- To such persons as are registered with the City to receive tax bills concerning real property within the district, and
- To tenants of each building within the proposed district.

Furthermore, SBS arranged for the publication of a copy of the summary of the Resolution at least once in the City Record.

Additionally, I would like to acknowledge and thank Speaker Corey Johnson and Council Member Margaret Chin for their ongoing support of the Hudson Square BID expansion effort.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge that the BID expansion effort is also represented here today by the president of the Hudson Square BID and members of the expansion steering committee who will also be providing testimony.

At this time, I am happy to take any questions. Thank you.

**Testimony of Jill Salayi**  
**General Manager, Workman Publishing**  
**To the New York City Council Finance Committee**  
**Re: Proposed Expansion of the Hudson Square BID**  
**November 28, 2018**

Good Morning, Mr. Chair and Finance Committee members. My name is Jill Salayi and I am the Co-Chair of the Hudson Square Business Improvement District Expansion Steering Committee. I am also the General Manager at Workman Publishing, an independently owned family of publishers, with 225 employees working out of our offices at 225 Varick Street, located in the BID expansion area. Workman's been at the Varick Street location for 14 years, and I have personally witnessed the dramatic transformation of the neighborhood, particularly the results of the BID's efforts directly to our south along Varick Street.

I am proud to have co-chaired the Expansion Steering Committee over the past two years, and to be presenting our proposed BID expansion on behalf of the Committee. Our Steering Committee has represented diverse viewpoints of the neighborhood, and engaged in thoughtful consideration of the neighborhood's identity, and expansion area stakeholders' needs at every step of the way.

Beyond my role on the Steering Committee, I feel personally that the BID expansion is critical for bringing about the kind of positive neighborhood change that our company and its employees need. The intersection of Varick and Clarkson streets, situated at the northeast corner of our building, poses a significant pedestrian safety challenge for our employees. On a typical day, during the evening commute hours, Holland Tunnel-bound and local cross-town traffic become tangled in this poorly designed intersection, blocking crosswalks, and pitting aggravated drivers against pedestrians trying to safely reach local transit destinations such as the West 4<sup>th</sup> Street subway station. On more than one occasion, employees have reported to me, in tears, about nearly being struck by a vehicle. It is critical that steps be taken to improve this situation, and I believe that the BID's Pedestrian Safety Manager program and proposed design changes to the Varick-Clarkson intersection will go a long way toward creating a safer environment for our people.

In today's competitive environment, workplace quality of life is a key component in attracting and retaining a talented workforce, and in a City like New York, workplace quality is driven very much by the quality of the surrounding streets, sidewalks, and open spaces. The BID has done a great job in humanizing the street-level experience on the blocks just south of us, with all of the greening and seating that has been added under the BID's streetscape program. Many of our employees have passionately voiced their desire for those sidewalk amenities on our block, which currently exists as a barren slab of space, only adding to the overwhelming feeling of the adjacent traffic. Additionally, improved connections to Hudson River Park are badly needed, as our neighborhood is underserved by open space, which plays an important role in the health and wellness of our employees. Hudson River Park – a first class open space – is located just a quarter-mile from our office, but the uninviting and sometimes unsafe conditions of the connecting pedestrian corridor on Houston Street serve as a major deterrent to accessing the Park. The potential for re-making this corridor into a pedestrian-friendly corridor promises to unlock the incredible value of Hudson River Park for our employees, and to that end, we would greatly benefit from the BID's streetscape services.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify.

**Testimony of Ellen Baer**  
**President, Hudson Square Business Improvement District (BID)**  
**To the New York City Council Finance Committee**  
**Re: Proposed Expansion of the Hudson Square BID**  
**November 28, 2018**

Good Morning, Mr. Chair and Finance Committee members. I'm Ellen Baer, President of the Hudson Square Business Improvement District. Formed in 2009, our BID has been successfully transforming the public realm in Hudson Square – the former Printing District, now a major media and technology hub - into a place for people, not just cars and trucks bound for the Holland Tunnel. One of very few BIDs that does not provide supplementary sanitation services, our focus has been on pedestrian safety services, through our signature Pedestrian Safety Manager program and the implementation of our \$27 million public-private partnership with the City, *Hudson Square Is Now*. With the help of our Council member, Speaker Corey Johnson, to date, we have planted or retrofitted 250 trees using an award winning innovation in green infrastructure; have completed a \$5 million renovation of the new Spring Street Park on Sixth Avenue; and are beginning construction of a protected bike lane with a widened sidewalk with new greening, seating, and lighting along Hudson Street from Canal to Houston. The BID and the City each contributes 50% of capital expenditures to *Hudson Square Is Now* and there are no attendant expense budget costs for the City.

The original boundaries of the BID complement what would eventually become the Hudson Square Special District. It has become abundantly clear that the existing BID boundaries do not match the physical, economic, or environmental boundaries of the neighborhood. Throughout the first nine years of the BID, we have consistently heard from businesses just outside our boundaries, asking for the amenities and service available to BID members. Recent re-zonings, such as 550 Washington, have created an opportunity to better tie together the neighborhood, and improve physical connections to surrounding neighborhoods and open spaces.

In July 2016, we convened a Steering Committee – representing the variety of commercial stakeholders in both the existing BID and potential expansion area – to explore this issue of better aligning BID and neighborhood boundaries. For the past two years, the Steering Committee, in coordination with the NYC Department of Small Business Services, has been leading an expansion process that has involved extensive community outreach. Building on the City's outreach template, we have held local visioning sessions, installed interactive displays in public areas, and designed engaging mailer materials to get extensive feedback about the needs of expansion area stakeholders.

Based on that feedback, the Steering Committee is proposing a plan with the following key components:

- Expansion of the current BID beyond the Hudson Square Special District to encompass the entire neighborhood including major gateways on the north, south and west.
- Services consistent with those offered by the BID: pedestrian safety management, streetscape planning and design, retail and marketing, advocacy, and maintenance of improvements we install.
- To cover these additional services, the Steering Committee has proposed an increase in our annual budget from \$2.5 million to \$3.2 million initially with the ability to increase the budget to \$3.9 million over time. Increases above the initial \$3.2 million would require Board approval.

The Hudson Square BID, Expansion Steering Committee, and our many engaged stakeholders look forward to advancing the BID expansion in the coming months, and to the opportunity to serve the entire Hudson Square neighborhood.

Throggs Neck Business Improvement District

New York City Council Meeting Testimony

November 28, 2018

I wish to thank you, Councilmembers, for giving me the opportunity to speak on behalf of the establishment of a Business Improvement District in the Throggs Neck area of the Bronx.

As the former President of the Throggs Neck Merchants Association and now legal counsel, I'm proud to work with such an incredible Merchants Association. Unfortunately, over the years it has become apparent the negative impact the Tremont commercial corridor, within Throggs Neck area, has had being surrounded by malls, chain stores, and the Hutch Metro Center which houses many medical centers, city agencies, and offices. Vacancies abound on Tremont Avenue. The merchants voluntarily undertook the Herculean effort to establish a BID in the Tremont area stretching from Miles Avenue in the south to Bruckner Boulevard in the north.

Numerous public meetings were held, mailings were sent, door to door solicitation by the members were done, surveys were undertaken, articles and advertisements were placed in the local newspapers. After many discussions, reason prevailed and the merchants knowing that they would be assessed \$38 a linear foot voted overwhelmingly, 144 to 28 for a BID. The owners similarly voted to accept the BID by an assessed value of \$27,800,000 to \$8,800,000.

We ask for your support today for our survival as a vibrant commercial corridor and a wonderful middle-class area is dependent on it. The merchants who will eventually foot the bill overwhelmingly supported the BID. Many feel that without the BID, the united advocacy for the merchants and owners and the enhancements that it brings, we will be laced in a precarious position, with the BID, there will be a renaissance.

Sincerely,

Steve Kaufman

Throggs Neck Business Improvement District

New York City Council Meeting Testimony

November 28, 2018

Good morning Council Chair and fellow Councilmembers. My name is Bobby Jaen and I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the proposed Throggs Neck Business Improvement District (BID) in the Bronx.

As the President of the Throggs Neck Merchants Association I can truly say that we are blessed to have a great Merchants Association. Several years ago the members of the Merchants Association were both saddened and frustrated to see the Tremont commercial corridor within the Throggs Neck neighborhood surrounded by the development of big chains such as Target and Co-op City Mall (one of the largest indoor malls in the country) nearby.

In response to these changes, the Throggs Neck merchants formed a steering committee in 2014 and proposed to establish BID along East Tremont Avenue from Bruckner Boulevard to the North to Miles Avenue in the South. Over the past few years, the Throggs Neck Steering Committee, in coordination with New York City Small Business Services, has worked diligently through the BID formation process.

Throughout this process, the steering committee held numerous public meetings, distributed surveys identifying local challenges, sent ballots to every stakeholder in the district, published notifications in several local newspapers and engaged stakeholders in person.

As a result of our efforts the Throggs Neck BID formation effort received support from over 50% of the area's total assessed value. On behalf of the Throggs Neck steering committee, we ask for your support today so that Throggs Neck can continue to be a vibrant commercial corridor. Many folks in our community, including the overwhelming support from merchants, feel that a BID and its ability to enhance our community and advocate on our behalf is necessary for our success.

Sincerely,

Bobby Jaen



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1227 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ELLEN BAER

Address: 180 Varick St.

I represent: Hudson Square BID

Address: 180 Varick St.

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1226<sup>1227</sup> Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 11-28-18

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: SBS / DEPT SMALL BUSINESS SERVICES

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1227 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/28/18

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JILL SALAYI

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Hudson Square BID expansion

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/28/2018

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: STEVE KAUFMAN

Address: 3372 E. TREMONT AVE.

I represent: THROGGS NECK

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: NOV 28, 2018.

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Bob JAEN

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Throggs Neck BID

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms