

**Statement by Deputy Commissioner Blaise Backer, NYC Dept. of Small Business Services**  
**New York City Council, Finance Committee**  
**October 17, 2017**

Good morning Chair Ferreras-Copeland and members of the Finance Committee, I am Michael Blaise Backer, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Small Business Services (SBS). I wish to express our support for the law providing an increase in the amount to be expended in 11 Business Improvement Districts (BIDs).

In order to propose an assessment increase, BIDs must complete a multi-step review process overseen by SBS. The BID Board of Directors—which includes local property owners, merchants, and residents, as well as representatives from the City Comptroller, Borough President, City Council, and SBS—must review and approve the proposed assessment increase. Additionally, SBS requires all BIDs to submit a four-part justification outlining how the increase will be allocated, minutes from the Board meeting when the increase was approved, and letters of support by all City Councilmembers represented in the BID boundaries. SBS then reviews these proposals and determines whether they are sufficient to bring to City Council.

Additionally, as required by law, each of the 11 BIDs published a notice of the public hearing at least once in a local newspaper having general circulation in the districts specifying the time and place of today's hearing, and stating the proposed amount to be expended annually. Each District has also certified that they have mailed a letter to property owners informing them about the proposed assessment increase, and the time and place of this public hearing.

It is a priority of the Agency that assessment increase proposals focus on enhancing programs and services provided to the district. The 11 Districts proposing assessment increases are doing so to address vital needs and changing conditions. These increases will further expand, reinforce and strengthen existing core services currently provided in the business districts, and include funds for capital improvements, plaza activation, and added staff capacity. Additionally, portions of these increases will be used to sustain current levels of sanitation and public safety programs and services impacted by rising contract costs related to the increase in minimum wage.

The proposed increases for FY18 range from \$14,500 to \$4.5 million, varying according to budget size, district size, and proposed changes in programs and services. I am happy to restate the specific amounts if necessary.

- (1) 34th Street, from \$10,885,000 to \$12,640,000;
- (2) 82nd Street, from \$224,450 to \$254,450;
- (3) Church Avenue, from \$188,500 to \$203,000;
- (4) Downtown-Lower Manhattan, from \$15,900,000 to \$20,400,000;
- (5) DUMBO, from \$835,000 to \$1,250,000;
- (6) East Mid-Manhattan, from \$2,200,000 to \$3,500,000;

- (7) Flatbush Avenue, from \$314,520 to \$386,000;
- (8) Fordham Road, from \$670,000 to \$1,010,000;
- (9) Kings Highway from \$290,000 to \$400,000;
- (10) SoHo-Broadway, from \$550,000 to \$900,000; and
- (11) Times Square from \$12,638,972 to \$14,347,293.

The City's 74 BIDs invest over \$134 million into local economies in the form of supplemental services and programs that serve more than 85,000 businesses across the city. BIDs have been valuable and proven partners in ongoing initiatives of neighborhood revitalization and economic development across the five boroughs, making New York City neighborhoods cleaner, safer, and more vibrant. BIDs are also advocates for small businesses in their districts, helping them to navigate government, facilitating networking among fellow business owners, providing business retention support, and attracting shoppers to the area. In partnership with city government, BIDs help create jobs, improve the quality of life for New Yorkers and visitors, enhance the city's tax base, and strengthen local economies.

Representatives from each BID requesting an assessment increase are present to answer any questions pertaining to their specific requests. However, I am happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1698 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

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

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jennifer Kitson

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

I represent: Director, BID Program, Small Business Services

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. 1698 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 10/17/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Michelle Blaise Backer

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

I represent: Deputy Commissioner, Small Business Services

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

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