

Community Update from Assembly Member Richard Gottfried

Dear Neighbor,

As your Assembly Member, my job is here in our community, not just in Albany. I am proud that my Community Office is widely regarded as one of the best. We work with community groups and individuals on a broad range of issues and problems, including rent and housing; community preservation; opposing excessive development; problems with utilities, public benefits, and quality of life issues (e.g., problems with late-night bars and clubs); and utility problems. We can also assist you to apply for programs and benefits.

My Community Office at 242 West 27th Street, 212-807-7900, GottfriedR@nyassembly.gov – is here to serve you.

If you're having a problem with a government agency, your landlord, a utility, etc., or if your block association or other group needs my help or would like me to come to a meeting, or if there is any other way I can help, please call or e-mail.

You can follow my work and legislative news by going to the Assembly website: www.nyassembly.gov/Gottfried. If you'd like to contact me or sign up for updates, you can click on the "contact" link there or e-mail me at: GottfriedR@nyassembly.gov. **I work for you full-time, year-round.** I am a lawyer, but I do not have a private practice. I don't work as an employee or consultant or run a business on the side. My only job is working for you. I serve as a full-time legislator and believe that should be the rule for all NYS legislators.

The Legislature has enacted laws to increase disclosure of the financial interests of all elected officials, and should do more. We also need to strengthen enforcement of the laws requiring disclosure and punishing wrongdoing. These are just a few of the actions we need to take. I also support greater transparency for all State funds being spent at the discretion of legislators and the governor, in order to eliminate the potential for conflicts of interest.

I have always fought for reforms to make our government more open and accessible. For me, being able to work for our community and help shape public policy for the values I believe in is a cherished privilege and public trust.

Sincerely,



Richard N. Gottfried
Assembly Member

Ayuda en español
Mi oficina de la Comunidad está localizada en el 242 West 27th Street, 212-807-7900, GottfriedR@nyassembly.gov, y estamos aquí para servirle. Varios de mis empleados hablan español. Si usted está teniendo problemas con su casero, alguna agencia del gobierno, Con Edison, servicios públicos, etc., podemos ayudarlo. Llámenos al 212-807-7900. Estamos abierto de lunes a jueves.

New Port Authority Bus Terminal: What Would It Mean for Our Community?

The Port Authority (PA) Bus Terminal on Eighth Avenue is in bad shape and inadequate. The PA plans to replace it. I'm fighting to make sure that does not include tearing down more of our area's housing, locally owned businesses, a church and historic buildings, whether by eminent domain or otherwise. We've lost too many affordable homes and businesses in Hell's Kitchen in recent years. But several options the PA is looking at would do just that.

The Port Authority owns a lot of under-used land in Hell's Kitchen. One of its options is to build a temporary terminal on that land while they tear down the old Terminal, and build a new one on that site. But several of their proposed options use most of the current site for high-priced skyscraper development and build the new terminal partly on existing PA property and partly on **blocks that are now filled with hundreds of homes and small businesses.**

In April, Community Board 4, State Senator Brad Hoylman, and I hosted a public town hall meeting in Hell's Kitchen about the PA's plans. PA officials explained the process for the "design competition" for the new terminal, and heard the adamant concerns voiced by the community. But the Port Authority has continued its process despite our concerns and without community input. All our local

officials – U.S. Rep. Jerry Nadler, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, Senator Hoylman, Councilmember Corey Johnson and other local elected officials – have held a press conference, written to the PA, testified at a PA board meeting, and published columns in newspapers. We are demanding the immediate termination of the PA's "Design + Deliverability Competition" until proper planning can be completed, all alternatives studied, and the Port Authority allows input that gives the public a voice in its future.

It is very clear: the only reason the Port Authority would need to destroy more of Hell's Kitchen is to let it use the current Bus Terminal land for lucrative development. I believe we must fight to stop that.

It is bad enough that the PA is a bi-state public authority that is largely exempt from New York State and City laws. It is using a "design competition" to justify destroying more of Hell's Kitchen. Holding a design competition **before** a comprehensive planning process puts the emphasis on form over function.

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BUS TERMINAL BATTLE BUILDS:
I'm fighting to stop the Port Authority from tearing down more of Hell's Kitchen for its bus terminal plan. Last spring I co-hosted a forum with Community Board 4 and State Senator Brad Hoylman on the Port Authority's plans for a new bus terminal in west midtown. In July, I joined Congressman Jerry Nadler, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and other local elected officials to demand greater community consultation by the Port Authority before it proceeds with its midtown bus terminal design competition.



L Train Closing for 18 Months: Protecting Our Community

Starting in January 2019, the State Metropolitan Transportation Authority will be rebuilding the 14th Street L subway line's "Canarsie tunnel" under the East River, which suffered severe damage during Superstorm Sandy in 2012. The project will take at least 18 months, during which there will be no subway service on the L line, which carries about 400,000 riders every day. In addition to the effect on people who ride the L line to and from our community, it will have a major impact on above-ground vehicle and pedestrian traffic as people use other ways to travel.

I have joined with other elected officials representing neighborhoods affected by the L train shutdown to urge the MTA and the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) to study ways of improving alternative crosstown travel options along 14th Street. We wrote to MTA President Thomas Prendergast and NYCDOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg urging their agencies to consider reserving lanes of 14th Street to speed the flow of MTA buses on 14th Street.

We also emphasized considering the needs of seniors and persons with disabilities, including Access-A-Ride users, and exploring the traffic impact on streets running parallel to 14th Street and streets that begin or terminate at 14th Street.

Beth Israel Hospital's Future

The Mount Sinai Health System is proposing to cut inpatient capacity at its Beth Israel Hospital at First Avenue at 16th Street, relocate the hospital to a new, smaller facility on East 14th Street, and sell the old site.

Community members, health care advocates, and elected officials are rightly deeply concerned. Especially after the 2010 closing of St. Vincent's Hospital in the West Village, it is important to make sure that lower Manhattan neighborhoods are not underserved.

That is why we are working closely with Mount Sinai, which initiated a dialogue with us, asked for community input and offered to hold a public meeting about its plans – which the NYS Department of Health has said it will attend – and discuss its plans for reviewing the project (email me at GottfriedR@nyassembly.gov for the date). I am working with all the local elected officials, community boards and many others in the area south of 34th Street to make sure that the community's health care needs are fully met. We will also work with State and City agencies that have regulatory and approval responsibilities.

Mount Sinai officials have stated that Beth Israel, which suffered an operating loss of \$115 million last year, will remain open at its current location before it moves to the new building (in about four years), and that Beth Israel's primary care, behavioral, and outpatient surgery services would be expanded during that period and after.

Increasingly, good health policy recognizes that providing care as much as possible on an outpatient basis and minimizing hospital stays means better outcomes. Mount Sinai plans to decrease the number of hospital beds. They also stated that the new building *will have 70 or more beds and will have an emergency department offering the same services it now provides.*

Mount Sinai says it plans to expand outpatient facilities at three sites in the area, providing more than 35 operating and procedure rooms, as well as its 16 physician practice locations served by over 600 doctors. They have negotiated with labor unions representing doctors, nurses, and other hospital employees, and given assurances that job security and benefits for unionized workers would be protected, although some may be reassigned to other facilities in the Mount Sinai Healthcare System.

While we have a lot of questions, we know that the movement in health care delivery is toward integrated health systems with the focus being on primary care, prevention and wellness to reduce hospital inpatient care and emergency room visits. Is 70 beds too few? At this point, we don't know. That's something for which we will be getting information from Mt. Sinai, because we asked for it. Since most surgeries are scheduled and Mount Sinai has other hospitals in Manhattan that people can also utilize for planned surgery, maybe it is the right thing. We will be consulting independent health care experts to help us analyze the data and the need.

Marching in Pride



I march in the LGBT Heritage of Pride Parade every year. We celebrated the strength and diversity of New York's thriving LGBT community but we also mourned the victims of the massacre in Orlando.

Fighting to Preserve New York's History, One Building at a Time

The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) reviews and approves or denies the “landmarking” of buildings and historic districts and proposed alterations to landmarked buildings.

In June, the LPC held a hearing about 404 West 20th Street, the oldest house in the Chelsea Historic District where the new owner intends to demolish virtually all of the house except its façade, and to expand the structure significantly, eliminating its side yard and increasing the building’s height and bulk, to more than double the size of the 4,000-square-foot home. The house was originally built in 1830 on property owned by the famous writer Clement Clarke Moore, and is part of the celebrated “Cushman Row” of townhouses in the Chelsea Historic District.

Working with community residents, historic preservation advocates and other local elected officials, I submitted testimony against the proposal, arguing that when owners buy historic buildings, they shouldn’t be looking to modify them for grandiosity; they should accept and embrace the responsibility that comes with owning a landmark building. Unfortunately, the LPC approved the changes to this historic home. We don’t always win, but it’s always important to make the effort.

Hopper Gibbons House, at 339 West 29th Street, is the only known Underground Railroad site in Manhattan. It was frequented by famous abolitionists like Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison, and was nearly destroyed during the 1863 New York Draft Riots. A nine-year-long battle has been waged to force the building owner to remove an illegal fifth story – a move that threatens the historic integrity of this link to New York’s past. We have won important court victories and rulings from the Buildings Department, and the next battle is at LPC on September 20, where it is due to make a decision. I encourage you to attend this public meeting. For more information, please contact my community office at 212-807-7900 or GottfriedR@nyassembly.gov.

I spoke about these two historic sites and other issues involving historic preservation and landmarking on “Represent NYC,” a public affairs program broadcast on the Manhattan Neighborhood Network. My guests were Fern Luskin of Friends of Hopper Gibbon House Underground Railroad Site and Andrew Berman of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation. You can view it online at <https://vimeo.com/173926705>.



PRESERVING NEW YORK'S HISTORIC LANDMARKS:

In June, I spoke at a rally to save 404 W. 20th Street, the oldest house in Chelsea, along with Borough President Gale Brewer, Councilmember Corey Johnson, members of Save Chelsea, and other local residents and preservationists. A month later, I hosted a show on issues involving historic preservation and landmarks in New York City with Fern Luskin of Friends of Hopper Gibbons House Underground Railroad Site and Andrew Berman of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation.

Fighting Excessive Development on the Upper West Side

In July, I testified before the Land Use Committee of Community Board 7 to express my opposition to a zoning variance applied for by Congregation Shearith Israel (CSI) on West 70th Street at Central Park West in the Central Park West Historic District. The synagogue wants to put up a nine-story building, including five top floors of luxury-priced apartments, and its application to the NYC Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA) in 2008 was approved, although it was rejected by Community Board 7. Now, after CSI made significant revisions to its plans, the BSA wrote to the Congregation’s attorneys requiring them to answer a list of 40 questions regarding the application that it will need to address before a BSA hearing can be scheduled on the revised plan.

The proposed building would reach an overall height of more than 119 feet, instead of the 75 feet allowed for most of the site under current zoning. The proposed building is too tall and out of character with the architecturally and historically significant buildings that line the side streets of the Historic District in the immediate vicinity of the synagogue. It would continue the dangerous trend of developers and property owners pushing high-priced development beyond the City’s zoning and historic preservation rules.

While Shearith Israel has revised its plans several times, the underlying issues that make the plan so troubling have not changed. It should be rejected by the Board of Standards and Appeals.

New Port Authority Bus Terminal continued from page 1

There are vital public choices to be made. We must have an open public planning process that considers urban planning, environmental impact, and transportation issues. Only after sensible public policy decisions are settled should there be a “design competition.”

Together with our other local elected officials and community leaders, I have unequivocally opposed using residential or commercial property for the project. We also criticized the lack of transparency and public engagement regarding the project’s Master Plan and its Design Phase, about which neither Community Board 4, the elected officials who represent the community, the City of New York, or other stakeholders were consulted. Our letter also noted the lack of an environmental impact statement or air quality analysis, and that the Port Authority has not studied the project’s relation to existing and future infrastructure assets, including the new Moynihan Station, the expanded Javits Center, the East Side Access

Project, and the Lincoln Tunnel, among others.

We wrote in our letter to the PA: “It would be a grave disservice, not only to our constituents, but to all the people of New York and New Jersey, to proceed with the Competition for a new PABT before a thorough and public examination is conducted of all of the outstanding issues and all of the available alternatives regarding a new bus terminal.”

For the best results, there needs to be an open planning process that includes the information gleaned from previous studies commissioned by the PA, and meaningful input from the bus terminal’s community and its local elected officials, its users, and the City, considering all the things the Port Authority says are its key objectives: improving safety and security, minimizing traffic on local streets, meeting the needs of both commuter and long-distance bus travelers, and improving bus parking and staging while also meeting the needs of the neighboring community. Only then should there be a design competition.

A New, Refurbished Penn Station?

Earlier this year, I joined Governor Cuomo and scores of elected officials, business and labor leaders, and executives from Amtrak, the State Metropolitan Transportation Authority, and Madison Square Garden as he presented his proposal for a new Penn Station and the nearby James A. Farley Post Office/Moynihan Station. He announced that the State would help underwrite a major overhaul of the station and presented several options for achieving this goal.

The most ambitious proposal he outlined envisions large projects on both sides of Eighth Avenue between 31st and 33rd Streets; erecting a giant glass façade on the east side outside the current Penn Station site; and converting the Farley Post Office into a waiting hall, ticketing area, and retail center. One of the

options includes demolishing the 5,600-seat Theater at Madison Square Garden to make way for a new entrance to the station. Other options are adding new entrances on Seventh Avenue or 33rd Street.

Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer has convened a task force of the local elected officials and community boards in the area. We are working to identify concerns and proposals and ensure that City government and the community are involved in planning and decision-making.

Penn Station is the busiest transportation hub in the Western Hemisphere, serving over 600,000 people a day (including me when I travel to Albany and back), and sorely in need of a redesign and refurbishing.



Assembly Member Richard Gottfried's Newsletter Part 2: Community Update September 2016

Este boletín está disponible en español.

Register to Vote Online in New York

If you or someone you know is not registered to vote, or has moved since you last voted, you need to register to vote by Fri., October 14 to vote in the Nov. 8 election.

In New York, if you want to vote in a political party’s primary, you must enroll in that party as part of your voter registration.

Anyone who has a New York State driver’s license or non-driver ID may register to vote or change party affiliation online at dmv.ny.gov using the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) automated online system, MyDMV.

To register to vote in New York, you must:

- Be a United States citizen.
- Be 18 years old by Dec. 31 of the year in which you submit the form (but you must be 18 by the date of the election in which you want to vote).
- Live at your present address at least 30 days before an election.
- Not be in prison or on parole for a felony conviction, or be ruled mentally incompetent by a court.
- Not claim the right to vote elsewhere.

For more information on voting in New York City, please go to the Board of Elections website at <http://vote.nyc.ny.us>.