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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

M-116

September 2, 2014

Dear Speaker Viverito:

Attached is the 2014 Strategic Policy Statement for the Office of the Manhattan Borough President. As required by the City Charter, (§82(14)) this Strategic Policy Statement is being submitted to you, the City Council, and Manhattan's 12 Community Boards. This statement outlines the most significant issues facing the Borough of Manhattan, my office's goals for addressing these issues, and strategies for achieving our goals over the next four years.

This Strategic Policy Statement comes as I complete my first eight months in office as the Manhattan Borough President. Since taking office this year I have attended Community Board meetings in all 12 of Manhattan's Community Districts, and have traveled frequently to every neighborhood of Manhattan. I have met with thousands of constituents, community leaders and advocates to discuss issues of great importance to Manhattan and to listen to concerns and ideas.

My overarching goal is to improve the lives of all those residing and working in the borough of Manhattan. By giving all Manhattanites a greater voice in, and access to, their local government we can make local government more responsive and accountable to those it serves. To this end my office has also devoted an enormous amount of time and resources to serving constituents throughout the borough and is working toward opening the first storefront Borough President's office in Northern Manhattan which will be staffed seven days a week.

Manhattan will confront significant issues in the coming years, including:

- Transit and traffic: The City's population is expected to grow by approximately 700,000 from 2013 to 2030 according to the Department of City Planning. While only a portion of this growth will occur in Manhattan, many of those who do not reside in Manhattan will work or travel frequently to Manhattan adding additional stress to an already burdened transit system.
- Housing and Development: Manhattan is losing affordable housing at an alarming rate while at the same time experiencing an unprecedented boom in development. Balancing the needs of our communities and new development will be critical to our Borough over the next many years.
- Food: Access to healthy food is and will become more critical to combat obesity and other health issues and to help an increasingly aging population live healthier lives.

This Strategic Plan is not a comprehensive list of the critical issues this office expects to address in the next four years but is a starting point at this early time in my administration.

I have always believed that these and other issues facing Manhattan can best be tackled by (1) empowering communities and giving them larger roles in finding solutions; (2) bringing communities, government, not-for-profit and private sector stakeholders together to solve problems; (3) using technology and data to ensure that the public and government agencies have access to the best and most comprehensive information; and (4) ensuring transparency in government so that it is as accountable and accessible to the public as possible.

My office has already begun applying these principles to significant issues faced by our Borough. To do this effectively we are in the process of empowering Manhattan's Community Boards through a Community Board Leadership Development Training Series which has begun, and will continue to provide training to Community Board members on land use and zoning, mapping and technology, conflicts of interest, and parliamentary procedure. We will continue to bring both training and other resources to Community Boards that will enhance their ability to serve as the governmental entity closest to each neighborhood population.

As we do this we are making the Community Boards integral to the process of finding solutions to issues faced by our Borough. Community Boards are helping us to identify potential sites for affordable housing, and potential "hotspots" to help achieve Vision Zero's goal of eliminating traffic fatalities. They are also active participants in working groups seeking to shape major developments throughout Manhattan.

We have formed a number of such working groups bringing together Community Boards, elected officials, residents, businesses and advocates to ensure the greatest possible input on land use projects that will have a major impact on our Borough before the formal start of the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure.

In addition we have worked with GrowNYC, New York State farmers, senior centers, and agencies to expand our Fresh Food for Seniors Program. We have worked closely with the DOE, Mayor's Food Policy Advisor, and others to provide thousands of parents and students with information on locations for summer meals. We recently conducted a tour of upstate farms, attended by several Commissioners and agency representatives to promote and facilitate increased local sourcing in the food procurement process.

I will continue to work on the issues outlined in this plan, and many others. This is an exciting yet challenging time in Manhattan and I know I can count on the support of your administration as we move forward in meeting our goals.

Sincerely,


Gale A. Brewer