

Michael Blaise Backer Statement

Before City Council Committee of the Whole

April 22, 2020

Good morning Speaker Johnson and members of the Committee. I am Michael Blaise Backer, Deputy Commissioner of Neighborhood Development at the Department of Small Business Services (SBS). I am joined today by our BID Program Director, Roxanne Earley and our BID Development Senior Program Manager LeMel Lindsey.

I hope that this virtual committee meeting finds each of you, your families, your staff and your colleagues in continued good health, and that you all remain safe and in reasonably good spirits throughout this pandemic. My colleagues and I at SBS thank you for your continued service to our great City in this time of crisis, and we look forward to our continued partnership as we all work to support our commercial districts and small businesses both now and throughout their recovery.

Today, we would like to report on the result of the objections filed with the City Clerk against the proposed expansion of the Downtown Flushing Business Improvement District (BID). We would also like to take a moment to emphasize the role that the Downtown Flushing BID has played in the Flushing community and neighborhood.

Since the start of COVID-19, the Downtown Flushing BID has connected hundreds of businesses and stakeholders to city programs and resources in an effort to combat the numerous challenges brought about by this pandemic. Additionally, the BID has provided free advertising for local businesses, grant and loan application assistance, and launched a stay healthy campaign which installed sanitation stations and distributed hundreds of sanitation resources to the community. In our observation, the Downtown Flushing BID has demonstrated its commitment to the community and continues to serve as a resource to stakeholders in the district.

As required by law, the Downtown Flushing BID Expansion Steering Committee mailed the summary of the City Council Resolution to the following parties:

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

Additionally, the Downtown Flushing BID published a notice of the public hearing at least once in a local newspaper having general circulation in the district specifying the time when, and the place where, the hearing will be held and stating the increase proposed in the maximum amount to be expended annually.

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

We would like to report on the result of the objections filed with the City Clerk against the proposed expansion of the Downtown Flushing BID. At the conclusion of the objection period at 5:00 PM on March 12, 2020 and taking into consideration any objections postmarked by that date, no objections were filed with the City Clerk.

In light of these results, the Department of Small Business Services supports the expansion of the Downtown Flushing BID. In our judgment, the BID will continue to improve the quality of life and business conditions in the Flushing commercial district. Furthermore, we believe that the Downtown Flushing BID, through its various programs and services, will be an essential partner to the City in the recovery and long-term resiliency of the neighborhood.

Thank you.