

Testimony of Assemblymember Deborah J. Glick
Re: World Trade Center DOT Proposal for Busing and Pedestrian Traffic
June 28, 2011

As the Assemblymember who represents a large portion of Community Board 1, I am here today to present testimony addressing concerns with the Department of Transportation's proposal regarding the implementation of the busing program for the World Trade Center Memorial. It is imperative that the Department of Transportation provide specific guidelines to aid in the ebb and flow of both pedestrian and vehicular traffic which will be conducive to the livelihood, safety, health and quality of life of the residents and business owners in the World Trade Center area. I have concerns that the plans in their current form, do not meet the community's needs.

DOT has suggested that Thames Street be used as the primary pedestrian gateway to the Memorial which would eliminate any vehicular traffic on Thames Street. In conjunction, Cedar Street traffic would be reversed. This proposed change has left community members concerned. It is critical for DOT to present for comment their work plan which would deal with issues caused by this change to residents, schools, and emergency response teams. For example where can children be dropped off and picked up, where will residents be able to hail cabs, and where will deliveries be able to be dropped off? These are issues that will affect people living and working in this area.

DOT also must alter its bus parking plan. The current proposal indicates that bus muni-meters are at designated points south of Houston Street. The current proposal would allow those buses that choose to avoid the designated muni-meters to travel North of Houston which will create congestion in an area that is already far too congested with bus traffic. It is critical that CB2 be given an opportunity to be a part of this dialogue as they are the community most affected by congestion North of Houston. Any meters should not create new bus parking but should utilize the bus parking spaces already in effect.

Furthermore, I am concerned with the proposed pricing of the commercial muni-meters in and around the WTC Memorial Area. Specifically, the \$20 dollar per hour per three hour parking blocks seems counter-intuitive to the desired effect of discouraging extended layovers by buses and discouraging avoidance. While the pricing was configured through trade usage, applicable parking prices in New York City, and pricing of all day parking in neighboring boroughs, it must also be measured against the cost the transportation partners will accrue if found to have violated the muni-meters. Currently the cost of a violation for parking over the meter time is \$65 dollars which does not lend itself to being a deterrent to abusing and violating the parking system set in place by DOT when the cost of parking for the three hour term would only be \$60 dollars. While there is pending legislation which will increase the fines for abusers, and specifically target multiple offenses by transportation companies, this legislation will not be in effect before the impending opening of the memorial. Therefore, DOT should raise the rate of the hourly parking to reflect the current penalty fees in order to be an effective deterrent against potential violators.

In furtherance of controlling the bus traffic, DOT should defer to the community boards for a list of specific streets which should be closed to buses. The proposed “no-bus” streets would make parking and idling enforcement by the police more consistent and structured. On previous occasions DOT has stated that they do not have the authority to regulate interstate bus routes, and parking on city streets. However, it is my understanding DOT, under the Administration Code and Rules of the City of New York, in fact does have the authority to regulate New York City bus parking within city limits as well as to approve or disapprove proposed routes by tour bus operators. DOT’s authority was demonstrated in 1998, by establishing and regulating a tour and charter bus layover area for Brooklyn Heights at Cadman Plaza West. Regulation was a good idea in that instance and it will be a good idea in this instance as well.

I applaud DOT’s and the First Precinct on their continued attention to this matter and ask that their pamphlets for educating the World Trade Center Task Force traffic officers in surveying and regulating the area be made available to the community boards. I hope that DOT will continue keeping the community up to date as their enforcement and education efforts continue.

In closing, I would like to thank the DOT, as well as the World Trade Center Memorial Task force for their on going hard work and communication with the community. I ask that going forward the process continues to take the interests of the immediate community as well as the larger community that will be affected to heart and address their concerns with transparency and timeliness. Thank you for your time.