

UPDATE FROM [APRIL 2015]
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Recommendations to help Manhattan’s dwindling number of small businesses.

Small businesses are the economic heart of New York City, especially the street-level retail stores and restaurants that keep things running 24/7 and provide the everyday necessities and comforts New Yorkers rely on. But with high rents, corporate competition, and real estate development, these businesses—what we call “storefronters”—are facing serious challenges over and above the ones small businesses typically grapple with.

Small Business, Big Impact: Expanding Opportunity for Manhattan’s Storefronters, my office’s report on improving the environment for Manhattan’s storefronters, was released in late March. The result of hundreds of hours of interviews and study by my Land Use Division (with kudos to Lucian Reynolds, the principal researcher), the report recommends taking the pressure off lease renewals, modernizing policies governing street vending, encouraging “condo-ization” of storefront space, and creating “low-intensity” commercial districts.

As part of continued small business outreach, my office is conducting a series of roundtables where business owners can discuss the recommendations and make new ones. The first roundtable will be held during Small Business Week, Wednesday, May 6, from 4:30 to 6:30 in my offices at 1 Centre St. If you are a small business owner, [register on Eventbrite](#) (another roundtable will be soon be scheduled uptown for those who can’t make it May 6). [Download a complete PDF copy](#) of the 16-page report.

Manhattan electeds present a near-united front on Mayor’s “Zoning for Quality” proposal.

My office wrote and coordinated support for a letter from almost all of Manhattan’s City Council delegation, State Senators, State Assemblymembers, and Members of Congress to

Carl Weisbrod, Chair of the City Planning Commission, urging that reforms to the city's Inclusionary Housing Program be included in the Mayor's proposal.

The letter calls for applying a higher requirement for affordable housing in Manhattan developments that would reflect the higher value of real estate bonuses in Manhattan; ending the so-called "poor door" loophole that developers are using to build developments with segregated entrances for market-rate and affordable tenants/owners; and applying changes to contextual zoning districts more surgically, rather than with a broad brush citywide. [Read the entire, detailed letter.](#)

Volunteers needed!

My office has a presence at public events throughout Manhattan year round, but with the warm weather approaching (hopefully!) we especially need help staffing tables at outdoor events like street fairs and housing development family days. It can be a lot of fun, and since I strive to attend every street fair and family day, I look forward to the help in distributing information and listening to constituents. Please [complete the form](#) to sign up.

Summer interns needed!

Each summer my office hosts a dozen or more interns, usually college students who are eager to learn the ins and outs of city government. An intern will be placed in a part of the office—Land Use, Community Affairs, Budget, Policy, or Communications—that's compatible with the student's ability, experience, and interest. Weekly seminars will be presented by staff professionals to offer interns additional opportunities to learn. Flexible scheduling is available. If you're an energetic college student—or know someone who is—you can apply at <http://bit.ly/MBPOSummerIntern2015>.

Stay tuned: Community Board appointments almost ready to announce!

After receiving a record 700+ applications for Manhattan's 12 Community Boards—including a few dozen from 16 and 17-year olds!— and conducting over a dozen sessions with small-group experimental simulations covering land use, ethics, budget and problem-solving, this year's 600 Community Board appointments are almost ready to announce in my next e-news blast. If you haven't signed up yet, [subscribe today](#) (Similarly, we will shortly be announcing my office's capital funding grants, so please make sure you're on the list!).

EVENTS

April 8: Landmarks 50 reception.

6 - 8 pm, Alexander Hamilton U.S. Custom House on Bowling Green

I'm proud to be joining the NYC Landmarks 50 Alliance to commemorate the 1965 signing of the NYC Landmarks Law, and to celebrate the continuing efforts of our city's dedicated preservationists. Without the benefits of historic preservation, our city would not have the cachet and attractiveness it has today. We will honor this great tradition with a cocktail reception at one of NYC's very best landmarks, the U.S. Custom House on Bowling Green.

April 20: Healthy Teen Relationships Forum.

6 - 8 pm, Macaulay Honors College, 1st Floor Lecture Hall, 35 West 67th St.

As we confront the growing issue of campus assault in our city, it is important that we also focus on early prevention, and begin educating students at the middle and high school level. My office is joining with Public Advocate Letitia James and Councilmember Helen Rosenthal to organize a teen dating panel where students, parents and educators can discuss ways to promote healthy teen relationships and prevent dating violence. Please [RSVP on Eventbrite](#). Space is limited.

April 29: Denim Day NYC rally on the steps of City Hall.

11:00 am, steps of City Hall

Begun in response to the 1999 Italian Supreme Court decision that overturned a rape conviction because the victim wore tight jeans, [Denim Day](#) has grown into a national movement. I'm proud to sponsor NYC's Denim Day, so put on your denim and join me, NYPD Commissioner Bratton, and hundreds of activists on the steps of City Hall.

All month in the MBPO Gallery: Linda Caspe sculpture.

9 am – 5 pm Monday - Friday, Manhattan Municipal Building, 1 Centre Street, 19th Floor South

Linda Caspe's sculptures, sculptural reliefs and preparatory drawings are on display during business hours in the month of April in the MBPO Gallery. A member of the Federation of Modern Painters and Sculptors, her work has been exhibited at the Cooper Hewitt Museum, Westbeth Gallery, and the Synagogue of the Arts. See more on her [website](#).

May 2: Harlem Routes scavenger hunt.

My office is delighted to co-sponsor an all-day scavenger hunt in Harlem on Saturday, May 2, which helps set the table for National Small Business Week the following week. Harlem Routes encourages the exploration of the culture and community of Harlem. Find out more

(and sign up) on their [website](#), or follow them on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).