



Alliance for Downtown New York, Inc.
120 Broadway, Suite 3340
New York, NY 10271
212 566-6700 Fax 212 566-6707
www.DowntownNY.com

PRESS CONTACTS: Downtown Alliance, [James Yolles](#) (212) 835-2763, (202) 997-4559
Shea Communications, George Shea, Mark Faris (212) 627-5766

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE TESTIFIES ON NEED FOR IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN MEASURES ON WEST STREET

New York, NY (April 19, 2010) – The [Alliance for Downtown New York](#) today expressed support for measures to improve pedestrian safety and access on West Street at a joint hearing by the New York City Council Committees on Lower Manhattan Redevelopment and Transportation. Testimony delivered on behalf of Downtown Alliance President [Elizabeth H. Berger](#) noted concerns about pedestrian experience along the stretch of highway in Lower Manhattan.

"We endorse the expedited introduction of proposed pedestrian managers which will extend a proven method to guide foot traffic during peak commuter hours," the testimony read. "We also support the proposed consideration of signal timing adjustments where appropriate to allow sufficient crossing times for pedestrians of every age and ability."

The Downtown Alliance is New York City's largest Business Improvement District.

The testimony reads as follows:

Committee Chair Chin and Co-Chair James Vacca, other distinguished Council members, thank you for holding this hearing. You recognize that pedestrian safety weighs heavily on the minds of many parents, students, workers, visitors and others who—every day—cross the urban highway that is West Street. We appreciate your advocacy and also commend the ongoing leadership of Speaker Silver and his task force on West Street safety. And we applaud the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation for its commitment to provide resources that will help promote a safer public realm through simple, effective and innovative methods.

For several years the Downtown Alliance has been concerned with the pedestrian experience along West Street. While we are not experts in the technical matters involved, we do remain committed—on behalf of our constituents—to examining the conditions that inhibit connections between Battery Park City and the Financial District and the World Trade Center perimeter, from Chambers Street to Battery Place.

Our recent visioning study—[Five Principles for Greenwich South](#)—looked at the area south of the World Trade Center and highlighted improvements to West Street's crossings as crucial to the enhancement of safety and economic development in Lower

Manhattan. The study identified a range of options, embracing at-grade and elevated strategies, to improve connections along the entire West Street corridor. Following completion of reconstruction by the State Department of Transportation, additional improvements to signage, landscaping, signals and design elements could further transform the look and feel of West Street and make motorists and pedestrians more aware and accommodating of each other. All measures must ultimately be explored to ensure clear, safe and convenient crossings.

The need for appropriate crosswalk placement and enhancements along West Street is a matter of growing urgency. Recent completion of 200 West Street, as well as the opening of PS 276 this fall in Battery Park City and a new high school in 26 Broadway, will mean thousands of additional pedestrians of all ages crossing West Street throughout Downtown. For this reason, we endorse the expedited introduction of pedestrian managers, who can extend a proven method of guiding foot traffic during peak commuter hours. We also support the consideration of signal timing adjustments, where appropriate, to allow sufficient crossing times for pedestrians of every age and ability.

The Downtown Alliance, meanwhile, is acting as a catalyst and collaborator to develop small interventions that can effectively guide pedestrians well before they cross West Street. We are exploring concepts for a proposed redesign of Edgar Plaza, directly east of the Battery Garage. And we are teaming up with the MTA on the deployment inside the garage of our [Re:Construction](#) program, also made possible by a generous Lower Manhattan Development Corporation grant. Our goal is to install compelling signage and wayfinding graphics that will encourage safe and reliable passage through the garage and across West Street. At this and other locations, innovative design methods can serve to improve the public realm and inform pedestrians of safe, clear and appealing access routes to and across an otherwise intimidating West Street.

Our continued operation of the [Downtown Connection](#)—Lower Manhattan’s free, seven-days-a-week bus service—also helps the Downtown community traverse West Street while uniting east and west.

As Lower Manhattan continues to evolve into an intensely mixed-use community of visitors, workers and residents, we recognize that, ultimately, West Street is the most significant barrier to uniting the area from Battery Park City through Greenwich South and the Financial District. Efforts to improve the experience of pedestrians along the corridor will not only address the critical matter of public safety but also reinforce the connections needed to build an active street life crucial to the successful redevelopment of Lower Manhattan.