



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## NY Rising: Include all Storm-Battered Lower Manhattan in Community Reconstruction Area

BRAD HOYLMAN November 1, 2013

In early summer, as part of Governor Cuomo's NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program, Lower Manhattan was awarded \$25 million to create and implement locally-created strategies for rebuilding and strengthening the community against future extreme weather. A Community Planning Committee made up of community leaders, experts, and officials has been driving the planning process.

On October 15, the planning committee proposed a catchment area from the tip of Manhattan to as far north as Canal Street west of Essex Street and up to Delancey Street east of Essex. I was alarmed that many Lower Manhattan communities I represent that were badly damaged by Sandy's storm surges – including West Chelsea, Stuyvesant Town-Peter Cooper Village and Waterside Plaza – were not included.

In response, I joined State Senator Daniel Squadron and other area elected officials as well as Community Boards 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 in writing to the Director of the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery to request that the Lower Manhattan reconstruction area be extended to include all of its component neighborhoods severely affected by the storm.

Furthermore, on October 30, I attended the planning committee's first community

engagement event and presented members with written testimony (see below) making the case that the reconstruction area should run as far north as the mid-30s on the East Side and the high-20s on the West Side. I provided examples of residences, businesses, and vital resources in these areas that suffered heavy flooding and significant recovery challenges. I included a color-coded *New York Times* map “Surveying the Destruction Caused by Hurricane Sandy,” that illustrated the prevalence of high floodwaters in the areas the committee had left out.

The planning committee has now announced its intention to include all of Manhattan south of 14th Street in the planning area. I am grateful that the Lower East Side, SoHo and West Village communities are no longer excluded; however, none of the vulnerable areas that are still recovering should be left behind. I am continuing to advocate for this expansion and I urge you to make your voice heard as well. Please submit your comments and suggestions online at <http://bit.ly/HEDVCy>.