



THE POLICE COMMISSIONER
CITY OF NEW YORK
May 23, 2011

Julie Menin
Chairperson
Community Board 1
49-51 Chambers Street, Room 715
New York, New York 10007-1209

Dear Ms. ~~Menin~~: *Julie*

This letter is in response to your letter dated May 18, 2011, regarding the relocation of Mounted Unit Troop A, a police facility on Varick Street in the 1st Precinct. On behalf of the residents of Community Board 1, you expressed alarm about moving a unit with a long-standing tradition of service to your community.

The Department understands and appreciates your concern, but the relocation of Troop A and the temporary establishment of a World Trade Center Command (WTCC) in the vacated facility is necessary to advance the New York City Police Department's mission to protect this city. The WTCC, intended temporarily to provide a muster location and administrative site for 230 officers, is a public-safety matter of the highest priority. Although most communities in the City would welcome 230 additional officers, I recognize that the potential diminishment of Mounted Unit services—a diminishment that will not occur—gives you pause. Accordingly, key members of my executive staff who are involved in the WTCC project attended a meeting recently with yourself, members of Community Board 1, and staff from various legislators' offices. We value your input on this matter.

But while the Department is willing to consider alternate sites, time is of the essence. The World Trade Center's construction is on a definite, unalterable schedule, with the tenth anniversary of the attacks and the opening of the 9/11 Memorial coming in less than four months. Any delay that might compromise the security of the World Trade Center puts at risk the thousands of people who will visit the memorial daily. It is imperative to create a command from which to deploy the 230 officers who will comprise the first staffing allotment of the WTCC, and this cannot be postponed.

That said, it must be emphasized that the WTCC will merely be a muster location capable of meeting the personnel-related and clerical needs of a police command. It will not function as a state-of-the-art strategic command center. As you are aware, the Department already has a strategic command center—the Lower Manhattan Security Coordination Center. It should also be emphasized that the planned total complement for the WTCC, expected to be achieved in 2017, is 630 officers. That headcount will not fit in the Varick Street facility, and the Department will

therefore continue to search for a permanent home. We look forward to working closely with the community to identify a proper location for such a permanent command. But the initial complement of 230 officers must be housed as soon as possible.

Determining where to situate the WTCC temporarily is predicated on public safety, and swayed by costs and time. Simply put, locating the WTCC in the Varick Street facility is the most cost-effective and fastest means of creating a critical base of operations. The Department already owns the site and minimal renovations will be required. Currently, the building features a large administrative area on the floor above the stalls that is equal to the WTCC's administrative needs. Locker areas for 230 officers will replace the first-floor stalls. Anticipated renovation costs at this location will be minimal—approximately \$100,000. This is far less than what is required to lease a location of similar size in the area, costs of which are approximately \$372,000 per year, not including build out. (Purchasing in the area is, of course, entirely cost prohibitive.) Renovations will also take the building's age and history into consideration. The Mounted Unit and the Police Museum have already surveyed the facility for items or architectural cues that are of historical significance.

Utilizing the Varick Street facility also allows additional savings by avoiding the lengthy and expensive process of procuring new property. This process is so lengthy, in fact, that initiating it would make meeting the World Trade Center Memorial's timeframe impossible.

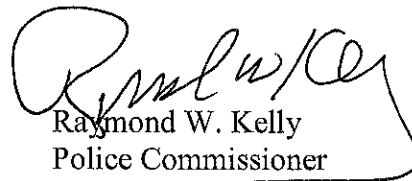
Because the location is immediately adjacent to the 1st Precinct stationhouse, the Department will realize efficiencies with regard to mustering officers, processing arrests, and conducting training. Additionally, the facility's location vis-à-vis the World Trade Center is ideal. Because officers assigned to the WTCC will police the relatively tight confines of the World Trade Center area, virtually all of the officers assigned to the command will be on foot. Their primary mode of transportation to and from the site will be by train, and the Varick Street facility is conveniently located one stop from the World Trade Center. And while the two sites are close enough for officers to deploy to the World Trade Center in a timely manner, they are distant enough that the command would not be affected by a significant event at the World Trade Center.

For the immediate future, the majority of Troop A will be absorbed by the already existing Troop B, located a short distance north of the Varick Street facility on Pier 76, which is well equipped to accommodate the additional personnel and horses. Owing to the pier's centralized location, mounted officers can be deployed throughout southern Manhattan, to a variety of locations that require the special presence of police horses. Among these are Times Square (the location of a recent terrorist attack at which a mounted officer was the first officer on scene and assisted in the evacuation of the area), Midtown, City Hall, and the World Trade Center. With regard to the 1st Precinct, there will be no changes to current mounted-officer deployment strategies, and no change in the impact or availability of Mounted Unit operations in lower Manhattan.

In sum, the vacated Varick Street/Troop A facility is an ideal initial base of operations for the first complement of the WTCC. The relocation of the stables is unfortunate, but it is necessary in order to achieve the police presence and security demanded by the World Trade Center site, the 9/11 Memorial, and the thousands of visitors expected at each. It is also worthwhile to note that, historically, the Mounted Unit has seen contraction and expansion before. Be assured it is the Department's intent to return Troop A to their longtime home when a permanent site for the WTCC is available for use.

In the meantime, a facility that otherwise would have stood empty will temporarily house one of the most important commands in the City.

Sincerely,



Raymond W. Kelly
Police Commissioner