

Imitation.....Flattery – Maybe Just Darn Smart!

Whether by Osmosis or by a careful reading of [CIVIC 2030](#), note the recent position of City Comptroller William Thompson reported in the New York Post today (August 6, 2009) by City Hall Bureau Chief David Seifman. That carefully and studiously drafted Queens Civic Congress platform covers many issues, including economic development. The first item stated,

Institute the "Downtown Manhattan Tax Credit Model" to help neighborhood commercial shopping strips - The shopping areas in the other boroughs should be able to use this concept of tax credit incentives. The tax credit model was successfully used in the revitalization of downtown Manhattan to improve commercial and residential neighborhood occupancy, and to increase utilization and enhance competitiveness with respect to neighboring megastores and suburban malls."

Seifman reported that the Comptroller "pointed to a program begun in lower Manhattan after 9/11 that provided property-tax abatements of \$2.50 per square foot and exemptions from the commercial-rent tax to businesses that relocated downtown." Hmmm. Message to other candidates and hardworking policy wonks in their employ – not often can you find ready-made steady, sound and implementable policies to advocate and embrace as your own. And no one will beat you up for taking up the cause; you will just gain plaudits.

- Corey Bearak, President, Queens Civic Congress

http://www.nypost.com/seven/08162009/news/columnists/ill_brake_chains_of_everywhere_stores_t_184782.htm



I'LL BRAKE CHAINS OF 'EVERYWHERE' STORES: THOMPSON



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INSIDE CITY HALL

YOU'LL have to hike awhile to reach the nearest Starbucks or [Duane Reade](#) if city comptroller and mayoral candidate Bill Thompson has his

way.

During a forum last week in Midtown, the Democrats' front-runner argued that chain stores are ruining the fabric of the city and suggested imposing restrictions to keep them from proliferating.

"If you look at neighborhoods all across the city of New York -- East Side, Upper West Side, Brooklyn Heights and so many others -- that were at one point wonderful because of the local businesses that were there and now it's changed dramatically," Thompson told a meeting of Democrats in Hell's Kitchen.

"Now those local businesses have been pushed out. It makes our city very different."

Banks were singled out as one of the worst culprits.

"I never knew there was a need for that much money in having all those ATMs across the city of New York," observed the comptroller.

Thompson aides pointed to San Francisco -- which has some of the toughest zoning rules in the United States -- as a possible model.

Under San Francisco's "Formula Business Restrictions," which have been upheld in the courts, individual neighborhoods get a chance to veto the establishment of a chain shop.

Thompson didn't go quite that far.

But he did raise the idea of "retail retention zones" where large retailers would be blocked from renting space held by small mom-and-pop shops.

Thompson also called for taxpayer subsidies to hold down retail rents.

He pointed to a program begun in lower Manhattan after 9/11 that provided property-tax abatements of \$2.50 per square foot and exemptions from the commercial-rent tax to businesses that relocated downtown.

That raises the question of whether the city -- facing a \$5 billion deficit in fiscal 2011 -- can afford new tax breaks.

Mayor Bloomberg's campaign declined comment.

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