



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

330 West 42nd Street, 26th floor New York, NY 10036
tel: 212-736-4536 fax: 212-947-9512
www.nyc.gov/mcb4

LOWELL D. KERN
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

March 13, 2020

Hon. Bill de Blasio
Mayor
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: Statement on the Preliminary Budget, Fiscal Year (FY) 2021

Dear Mayor de Blasio,

Manhattan Community Board Four (MCB4) appreciates the ability to submit our feedback on your \$95.3 billion Preliminary Budget for FY2021 and to thank you for funding several of our capital and expense requests in the FY2020 budget. And yet, as the second fastest growing district in the City, our district has many long-standing and new needs which are not being addressed.

In particular, we are grateful the current budget has addressed:

- Continuing the completion of the design for a new park at West 48th Street and 10th Avenue as committed to during Western Rail Yard rezoning and negotiations. (Parks)
- Converting painted pedestrian islands, extensions and neck downs to permanent concrete structures (10th Avenue and 11th Avenue) including tree pits and trees. (DOT)
- Repairing or constructing new curbs or pedestrian ramps to ensure they are ADA complaint (DOT)
- Increasing funding for homeless outreach services. (DHS)
- The initiation of a study to relocate the Tow Pound from Pier 76. (Mayor's Office)
- Providing additional funding for after placement support staff for homeless families that are selected through the DHS family preference for buildings receiving 421a benefits. (HRA)
- Updating Department of Building's (DOB) website and software so applications for improper demolitions in special districts are flagged, as are applications without a tenant safety plan and /or certificate of non-harassment. (DOB)

- Enhancing funding to increase number of Inspectors, Community Coordinators, and Administrative Associates for MCD4 to expand after-hours inspections and aggressively pursue landlords and operators with repeat violations, enforce unsafe and after-hours compliance (DOB)
- Expanding HRA Anti-Harassment Legal Services to Manhattan Community District 4 (HRA).

While these investments are celebrated, the reality is that our district is undergoing significant growth with needs outpacing the existing investments. Meanwhile, we remain alarmed by the Administration’s continued departure from supporting agreements previously established through re-zonings.

But even more troubling has been the lack of transparency and resulting confusion surrounding the plans for NYCHA properties in our district. While we are pleased that the deadline for a resolution of Fulton/Chelsea NYCHA has been extended, and that the working group appears to be making significant progress, additional funding may well be needed to support this important effort and fully affirm what we have always known: demolition was never considered a viable or appropriate option for our community or, most importantly, the NYCHA residents in our district.

CB4 remains deeply committed to ensuring high quality and safe affordable housing, however, years of neglect and underfunding, coupled with the most recent developments, has led many to believe the city does not share in that commitment.

Meanwhile, the rise of homelessness lacks a systemic, well-funded response.

We hope you will take all of these concerns and suggestions seriously, and respectfully requests the following **capital projects be funded** in the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget:

NYCHA:

The working group recently convened to address the future of the Fulton Houses, Elliot-Chelsea and Chelsea Addition NYCHA developments represents a model for identifying new financial resources, and we believe can be used to identify new solutions for addressing the acute needs at the following three properties in the district:

- Harborview Terrace, 525 West 55th Street:
 - Funding for roof repair, boiler upgrade, new building entrance doors, upgraded lighting for public hallways, new hoper doors for garbage shoots, renovate garbage storage area for senior building, and new apartment front doors;
- Elliot-Chelsea, 425 West 25th Street:
 - Repaint all building lobbies
 - Install cameras in front of the Hudson Guild pathway and playground at 441 West 26th Street; and
- Fulton Houses:
 - Install security cameras on the roof of all buildings

- Increase funding for new elevators at 418-419 West 17th Street and 420 West 19th Street;
- Additional benches throughout complex

Affordable Housing:

- Provide adequate capital subsidy:
 - in addition to land, for the development of affordable housing at the NYCHA Harborview Terrace site (W 55th and Tenth Ave);
 - for DEP and MTA sites, per Western Railyards points of agreements, at 705 Tenth Ave and 806 Ninth Ave, respectively, to develop middle- and moderate-income housing; and
- Provide affordable housing subsidy for the 100% permanently affordable development slated for the Slaughterhouse Site located at 495 11th Ave.

Homelessness Services:

- Establish new family and children shelter(s) to address increased homelessness.

Parks and Libraries:

- Fund the renovation and construction of the bathrooms at the following parks:
 - DeWitt Clinton Park (52-54th Streets, Eleventh – Twelfth Avenues)
 - Mathews-Palmer Park (445 West 45th Street)
 - Chelsea Park (450 West 27th Street);
- Fund the complete renovation of Gertrude Kelly Playground and park area at 320 West 17th Street and Hell’s Kitchen Park at 10 Ave. between W. 47 St. and W. 48 St.; and
- Increase funding to provide additional \$1M to renovate Penn South Basketball Court.

Education:

- Expand funding to the School Construction Authority (SCA) to:
 - purchase and install security cameras in the following schools: P.S. 33 Chelsea Prep – 281 9th Avenue, P.S. 51 Elias Howe – 525 West 44th Street, P.S. 111 Adolph S. Ochs – 440 West 53rd Street, P.S. 212 Midtown West – 328 West 48th Street;
 - renovate the kitchen and cafeteria area at P.S. 33, 281 9th Avenue;
 - complete the science lab at P.S. 51 at 525 West 44 Street;
 - install new security door alarms at P.S. 11 at 320 West 21 Street; and

Public Transportation:

- Increase investment in street safety by adding \$150 million to the DOT vision Zero Program. Such investments would generate multi-year cumulative savings by reducing congestion and health costs related to the 61,200 annual traffic injuries.
- Consider the addition of capital and expenses funds to DOT and MTA's budget to improve bus speed and transit accessibility; and
- Undertake a study for the proposed subway station at 41st and 10th Avenue.

MCB4 also requests the following **expense projects be funded** in the Fiscal Year 2020 Budget:

Housing and Enforcement:

- Dedicate resources to further the capacity and outcomes of the NYCHA working group, allowing the group to complete proposals related to capital funding, tenant protections, and tenant engagement;
- Purchase and install new sump pit/pumps for 420 West 19th Street and 434 West 17th Street;
- Enhance funding to further coordinate enforcement between DOB and HPD in interest of efficiency and improving outcomes; and
- Expand funding for the enforcement of the regulations on illegal hotel use.

Homeless Services:

- Increase funding for workforce development and GED completion programs to reduce homeless recidivism.

Education and Culture:

- Increase funding from Department of Cultural Affairs for 52nd Street Project, 789 10th Avenue for the following programs:
 - Playwriting and performing programs from children ages 10-18;
 - New platforms, other than theater, that serve to engage young people;
 - Smart Partners, a mentorship program, averaging 50-52 pairs per year;
- Increase funding from Department of Cultural Affairs for the following IndieSpace Programs within the Community District 4 borders:
 - One on one theatre organization consultations;
 - Additional workshops;
 - Panel discussions and events; and
- Fund a study on impact of exempting cultural not-for-profit organizations from real estate taxes.

Public Health and Senior Needs:

- Increase funding for HIV/AIDS education, prevention, and treatment, with consideration given to The Ryan Center, GMHC, NYCDOH Chelsea Center, and Callen-Lorde;
- Expand existing programs for Seniors Meals program to the following locations:
 - Penn South NORC, 290 Ninth Avenue
 - Encore Community Services, 239 West 49th Street
 - The SAGE Senior Center, 305 Seventh Avenue; and
- Expand existing programs for seniors for in-home supports, supportive housing, preventative health, and social services, possibly by partnering with service providers such as Service Program for Older People (SPOP) and the following organizations: Ryan Chelsea Clinton Clinic, GMHC, Hudson Guild Senior Services, Coffeehouse Senior Center, Project FIND, and Clinton Senior Center Project FIND.

Parks:

- Increase funding for fixed post staff at DeWitt Clinton Park, Mathews-Palmer Park, and Chelsea Park; and
- Increase funding for Fitness Recreation Specialists

Environment:

- Fulfill the staffing request from Department of Environmental Protection for five additional noise inspectors;
- Add one air monitor to the South Hell's Kitchen area surrounding the Port Authority; and
- Increase funding for organics collection and composting programs.

Sanitation:

- Include overtime funding within the base line budget for additional basket truck crews; and
- Increase funding for an additional three crews on the day shifts for paper and other recyclables.

Land Use:

- Implement the extension of the Special West Chelsea District (SWCD) to adjacent areas; and
- Study the rezoning of the midblock areas between Sixth and Eighth Avenues, between West 14th and West 26th Streets to control the development of out-of-scale buildings and to preserve a continuous street wall.

The aforementioned priorities will indeed help to make New York the fairest big city in America. It is a goal our community has long fought for – equity and equality for all – and thank you for what has been done to bring us this point. And as you have acknowledged, we have a long way still to go.

Thank you.



Lowell D. Kern
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Jeffrey LeFrancois
First Vice Chair



Jessica Chait
Second Vice Chair

CC: Hon. Corey Johnson, Speaker, City Council
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President