



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**DISTRICT OVERVIEW**

Manhattan Community District No. 4 is comprised of two West Side neighborhoods, Chelsea and Clinton/Hell's Kitchen. The District (CD4) generally covers the area between 14th and 59th streets - to the west of Eighth Avenue north of 26th Street, and west of Sixth Avenue south of 26th Street. CD4 shares borders with Greenwich Village, the Flatiron, the Upper West Side and the Midtown central business district. Portions of several other well-known areas exist within CD4's boundaries: the Garment District, the Flower District, the Gansevoort Meat Packing District, the Ladies Mile Shopping District and the Theater District. Other notable sites in CD4 include Restaurant Row, the High Line, Columbus Circle, Maritime Piers 56 - 99 including the Passenger Ship Terminal (Piers 88, 90 and 92), and the northern half of Hudson River Park.

The total population of CD4 is approximately 100,000. Many residents are long time residents; others are relative newcomers. An estimated 10,000 new residents already occupy or are expected to move into housing developments completed or begun since the last Census. Chelsea and Clinton/Hell's Kitchen remain desirable residential neighborhoods for their streetscapes, building types and local institutions, as well as their proximity to world-class cultural resources and amenities. It is the diversity of residents, however, that is their greatest asset.

CD4 is central to Manhattan and the region's core. The physical character of CD4 is defined as much by its neighborhoods as by the infrastructure that supports the citywide economy. At the local level, transportation infrastructure exerts the greatest impact as it channels hundreds of thousands of visitors through CD4 every day. Streets and avenues are exceedingly congested, trucks are an increasing presence on residential streets, off-street facilities for all types of buses and commuter vans are inadequate and environmental pollution is a constant quality of life complaint and threat to public health. These problems are a condition of the sometimes competing goals of neighborhood protection and improvement and the efficient flow of traffic.

Currently, development of all types is considerable, but housing production is predominant. In-fill construction, building enlargements and substantial renovations have filled in gaps and improved the housing stock in core residential areas. Housing development activities in less dense areas have preserved and strengthened the character of

existing neighborhoods (Hell's Kitchen South and the Clinton Urban Renewal Area) and created new population centers (42nd Street and far west 23rd Street).

A range of economic activities exists within CD4. Many reflect the area's historical development as an immigrant, working-class neighborhood once closely tied to an industrial waterfront and later serving as a "backstage" community for the theater industry. Local businesses and cultural organizations are vital to the community. Many provide essential services to the midtown central business district, the city's garment trades, or nearby entertainment and tourism industries. Neighborhood shops, restaurants and other enterprises serve area residents and workers, but are also widely known for high-quality goods and services and have become important destinations for art, culture and recreation.

As a result of recent rezonings, significant new commercial and residential development is now possible in formerly industrial districts in western Chelsea and southern Clinton/Hell's Kitchen. Local goals for growth have been developed, with an eye toward balancing the redevelopment of these areas with the preservation and expansion of CD4's residential neighborhoods. Most important is strengthening our diversity by ensuring that new development produces permanent affordable housing.

The rejection of the proposed West Side Stadium requires the reconsideration of the planning goals of the Hudson Yards rezoning, especially those for the MTA rail yards and the Eleventh Avenue corridor. Development of other large scale proposals for the corridor between 30th and 35th street - an additional trans-Hudson River rail tunnel, the conversion of the Farley Post Office into the new Moynihan Train Station, and the expansion of the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center - will similarly require an approach that balances local and regional needs.

CD4 is defined by its homegrown, unique characteristics, both physical and social; its symbiotic relationships with surrounding neighborhoods; and our communities' reaction to the unique characteristics, both physical and social, of those surrounding neighborhood. In the current setting of growth and development, Manhattan Community Board No. 4's priorities are (1) preventing displacement, (2) maintaining neighborhood character, stability and quality of life, and (3) attracting development that enhances diversity and positive neighborhood relations among disparate groups. Concrete efforts to realize these priorities include advocacy for increased supply and access to affordable housing, improvement of the area's physical infrastructure, and adequate delivery of social and public services.

## **LAND USE PLANNING**

### **Hell's Kitchen/Hudson Yards Follow-Up**

The Hudson Yards Rezoning was approved by the City Council in January 2005, but the proposed stadium that was integral to the City's Hudson Yards plan failed to receive the

necessary approval of the Public Authorities Control Board in June 2005, and is no longer part of the City's plan. The proposed No. 7 Subway Extension has not yet been fully approved by the MTA and its funding remains in doubt. Without mass transit to the area, the high density commercial development allowed by the Hudson Yards Rezoning west of Tenth Avenue is unlikely to be realized.

A new comprehensive plan for the Eastern and Western Rails Yards is required. The Rail Yards and the areas east to Eighth Avenue between 30th and 35th Streets should be established as the area's main high density commercial corridor. The high density commercial development planned for Eleventh Avenue should be eliminated. This new plan should be developed through a public process to select the best possible mixed-use development proposal to serve the City's planning needs and the capital needs of the MTA, as owner of the Rail Yards.

The following items were agreed to by the Administration and the City Council in connection with the Hudson Yards Rezoning, and await completion:

Follow Up Corrective Actions Text Amendment. This amendment would add several items of great importance to this community, in particular the addition of a harassment and cure provision to the Special Hudson Yards District text, updating of the harassment and cure provisions of the Special Clinton District text, and prohibition of conversion of ground floor residential uses in the Hell's Kitchen midblocks. Certification of the ULURP application is expected in July 2005.

A further text amendment is required, and has been agreed to by the local Councilmember and the Commissioner of HPD, to make the central provisions of the Special Clinton District, Special Hudson Yards District and the P2 portion of the Special Garment Center District more consistent.

Development on "Site M" located on the west side of Tenth Avenue between 40th and 41st Streets of 150 affordable housing units as detailed in the letter agreement between the Administration and the City Council.

Development on the "NYCHA Harborview Site" located at 56th Street just west of Eleventh Avenue of 155 affordable housing units (see letter agreement for details).

Development on the "Studio City Site" located between 44th and 45th Streets, between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues of 600 affordable housing units and an expanded elementary school (see letter agreement for details, and the Board's letter dated March 3, 2005).

Creation of \$45 million affordable housing fund from proceeds of the disposition of the Studio City Site.

Rezoning of the northwest corner of 42nd Street and Eighth Avenue.

Establishment of a taskforce to work toward creating open space on Port Authority sites in the Hell's Kitchen midblocks (see letter agreement for details). Enhanced relocation assistance is required for a small number of residential tenants and businesses if the Hudson Yards condemnations proceed. Except for the acquisition of Block 675, those condemnations are not necessary. See the Board's letter dated July 8, 2005 to the Law Department.

### **Clinton/Hell's Kitchen**

Clinton/Hell's Kitchen continues to experience an explosion of commercial and residential development. This has created opportunities in some areas, such as the accelerated pace of redevelopment in the Clinton Urban Renewal Area, and challenges in others, such as the increased pressure on affordable and contextual residential properties in the Special Clinton District.

#### Clinton Urban Renewal Area

The Clinton Urban Renewal Area (CURA), which has long been the focus of the Board's land use efforts in Clinton/Hell's Kitchen, has been part of this development boom.

The recent, substantial progress toward completion of redevelopment in the CURA reflects the cooperation that has developed between CB4 and HPD with the assistance of DCP. The Board also acknowledges the ongoing assistance of the Clinton CURA Coordinating Committee, a coalition of not-for profits, in developing and sponsoring affordable housing in this area. The coalition includes Clinton Housing Association, Clinton Association for a Renewed Environment, Clinton Housing Development Company, Encore Community Services and Housing Conservation Coordinators.

A small number of sites await redevelopment: Sites 7E, 7F and 7G (portions of which could be combined into a single project), the undeveloped portions of Site 9A, and Site 9C-1 (500-508 W. 52nd Street). We look forward to continued cooperation by the City, the Board and the Coordinating Committee to redevelop these sites without delay.

Consistent with the Board's past positions, we maintain that all city-owned property developed in the CURA should maximize the number of units dedicated to affordable housing. Other CURA principles adopted by the Board include a new mixed-use zone to accommodate existing commercial, light manufacturing, cultural and non-profit institutions on site; urban design controls to reconcile the community's need for more housing with the preservation tradition and limits of the Special Clinton District; and the maintenance and development of only low-rise buildings on the west side of Tenth Avenue to match the low-rise character of the District to the east. Any action by HPD to facilitate development in the CURA must reflect these principles.

In addition, we note that the only acquisition parcel that has yet to be acquired by the City in the CURA is Site 6, which is the western portion of block 1082, on Eleventh Avenue between 53rd and 54th Streets. As such, this property is not subject to the development restrictions of the Clinton Urban Renewal Plan and, because it is located within the CURA boundary, it is also excluded from the height and bulk restrictions of the Special Clinton District. This Board will oppose any future request to permit redevelopment of Site 6 for a use inconsistent with residential use or at a density that exceeds what is allowed in an R8A zoning district.

#### Special Clinton District - Other Area

The western area of the Special Clinton District beyond the boundary of the Preservation Area, is primarily zoned for light or medium industrial uses. The Board supports a rezoning of this area to create a mid-rise residential corridor along both sides of 11th

Avenue and preserve industrial uses west of that corridor. The rezoning should contain the following elements:

Extend R-8 zoning west to Eleventh Avenue between 43rd and 55th Streets.

- FAR 6.02 within 100 feet of 11th Avenue
- FAR 4.2 from 100 feet east of 11th Avenue to present R-8 boundary

Extend Preservation Area boundary west to 100 feet east of Eleventh Avenue.

Create MX zoning district west of 11th Avenue from 43rd to 57th Streets, allowing residential uses along the 11th Avenue blockfronts and surrounding DeWitt Clinton Park, and preserving industrial uses throughout the district, particularly those that serve the theater district and other midtown businesses and residents.

- FAR 6.02 within 100 feet of Eleventh Avenue
- FAR 5.0 from 100 feet west of Eleventh Avenue to Twelfth Avenue
- Industrial retention mechanisms (to be developed)

To preserve existing loft character of Eleventh Avenue and avoid blocking Preservation Area core from the waterfront:

- Limit streetwalls on Eleventh Avenue to 150 feet, and overall building height to 180 feet
- For developments occupying most of an Eleventh Avenue blockfront, require lowered streetwalls for 25 to 30 percent of the Eleventh Avenue frontage

Allow ground floor commercial uses on Eleventh Avenue that serve area residents

Limit clubs and adult uses

Pedestrian bridge over Route 9A from DeWitt Clinton Park to Hudson River Park

Special Clinton District - Preservation Area

The development boom throughout Clinton has put considerable pressure on the Special Clinton District, which was established in 1973 to, among other things, preserve and strengthen the residential character of the community, and permit rehabilitation and new development in character with the existing scale of the community and at rental levels which would not substantially alter the mixture of income groups then residing in the area. Continued attention must be paid to enforcement of the protective provisions of the Preservation Area of the Special Clinton District, the neighborhood's residential core. The proper training and assignment of inspectors with detailed local knowledge is a must. Without adequate and informed enforcement, the district goals will not be fulfilled.

Ninth Avenue is thriving as the main commercial corridor of the Special Clinton District and the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood extending south to 34th Street. We request streetscape improvements such as better lighting and more street trees to improve the pedestrian experience and create a stronger connection above and below the Port Authority Bus Terminal.

## **Chelsea**

The Chelsea 197-a Plan created by this Board for the protection of the traditional core of Chelsea east of Tenth Avenue together with the rezoning that implemented it have now

been supplemented by the West Chelsea Rezoning for most of the area west of Tenth Avenue. This action centers on the preservation and conversion of the High Line into a park, but has major implications for land use in the area.

There remains a good deal of unfinished business following up on this action. Actual acquisition of the High Line, final design, and construction of the first segment including access to it are only the beginning of a long process to which we are glad to see the City appears fully committed.

There are also a number of land-use related items that require follow up. They require action by a wide variety of agencies, including the City Council. In many cases prompt action is required to attain the desired goals.

Carrying to completion the numerous provisions supporting creation and preservation of affordable housing within the action itself or listed as "Points of Agreement" in a letter from the Office of the Mayor is essential:

Expanding the 421-a exclusion zone to cover the rezoning area and the area to the west.  
Extending the anti-harassment and demolition restrictions developed for the Hudson Yards into appropriate areas of the rezoning;

Implementing the proposals for creation of affordable housing by HPD on two NYCHA sites: in Elliott-Chelsea Houses at the northwest corner of West 25th Street and Ninth Avenue, and in Fulton Houses on West 18th Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues;

Constructing affordable housing on the underused Department of Sanitation lot on West 20th Street between Sixth and Seventh Avenues, or failing that, on another site in Chelsea;

Permitting City, State, and Federal programs in the inclusionary programs in order to provide greater incentives and ensure permanent affordability of the housing produced;

Tiering of inclusionary bonuses to include higher income levels;

Creating a West Chelsea Affordable Housing Fund to produce more affordable housing in Community District 4. Provisions must be found to ensure this Fund actually produces affordable housing in the West Chelsea Area;

Ensuring a community preference of 50% in the bulk of affordable housing created;

Introducing provisions for an Inclusionary Housing Bonus for conversions mirroring those for new construction.

The number and complexity of these provisions and the pressure for immediate development will require long-term monitoring, first to ensure they are promptly finalized and adopted, and then to ensure their effective use over time. The official position of the Community Board and the expertise of its membership and staff indicate that it is the appropriate body to take the leading role in this process.

Follow up is also required on other aspects of the rezoning:

Reducing the maximum height on Tenth Avenue between 24th and 28th Streets to 125 feet;

Adjusting the various bonuses to maintain sufficient capacity to attain the goals related to the High Line as well as inclusionary housing. The Board is surprised to see an increase in the High Line Improvement Bonus in Subarea I among them.

Two other commitments listed as for "Further Study" will require prompt action and timely follow up on the results to ensure that the development of West Chelsea takes place in appropriate fashion. Otherwise changes directly or indirectly stemming from the rezoning may change the situation on the ground beyond correction.

Study by the Department of City Planning of areas west and south of the rezoning area with an eye to future actions appropriate for the neighborhood. This includes studying the areas between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues north of 22nd Street and other areas near the High Line further south with the goal of including them in the Special West Chelsea District and making other appropriate changes.

Study by the Landmarks Preservation Commission of the proposals put forward by Community Board 4 and production of recommendations concerning the proposed West Chelsea Waterfront Industrial Historic District as well as individual landmarks.

The Board also reminds the Department of City Planning that its long delayed commitment to study rezoning at an appropriate scale of the blocks of West 14th Street between Seventh and Ninth Avenues on the basis of the proposals in the original Chelsea Plan is likely to be overtaken by events as the area becomes more and more desirable. The potentially glorious old brownstones and the buildings once housing the center of the first Latino community in the city risk being lost.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

More and more vehicles crowd our streets and avenues each year. This creates high levels of congestion increasing pollution, leading to dangerous situations for pedestrians at street crossings, impairing the ability for cyclists to safely travel, and raising competition for the limited curbside parking space on neighborhood blocks. There are no easy solutions. A real sense of partnership between the community and the DOT, NYPD and the Port Authority will be required to make progress and enable a more livable community.

As plans develop to add considerable new density in CD4, we must work together to both enforce existing and create new policies to maintain livability and growth. We should devote increased resources and more creative strategies to encourage use of mass transit and car-pooling and create new more pedestrian and bicycle friendly corridors.

### **Ninth Avenue**

From 14th Street to 59th Street, Ninth Avenue is the neighborhood serving commercial center for residents and thus an important pedestrian corridor. However increased development, traffic and congestion are diminishing the neighborhood and pedestrian orientation of Ninth Avenue. During the last year, CB4 has made several recommendations

to address the situation and improve 9th Avenue pedestrian access and reduce unsafe congestion:

### **Lincoln Tunnel Access**

One of the critical areas of concern is Lincoln Tunnel Access. The intersections on Ninth Avenue between 42nd Street and 37th Street have among the highest pedestrian accident rates in the city and the traffic is typically clogged North to 50th Street for several hours each day. The Community Board has made several recommendations to improve the situation, few of which have been acted upon to date:

The placement of Additional Traffic Officers on Ninth Avenue: Both auto and pedestrian traffic on 9th Avenue have increased over the last year, increasing the number of pedestrian related accidents. However, there has not been an increase in traffic agents. At least three additional traffic agents are needed during rush hours in the area - on 37th and 9th Avenue, on 45th and 9th Avenue and on 43rd and 9th Avenue. In addition, additional agents are needed beyond rush hours at 42nd and 9th Avenue, which remains one of the most dangerous corners in the city.

Enforce the ban on bus traffic on 45th Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenue: Community residents have noticed increased bus parking and bus traffic on this street, despite the no-bus policy. Bus turning and bus crossing of 9th Avenue at 45th Street disrupts both 9th Avenue and 45th Street traffic and full enforcement of this policy is needed;

Placement of no-honking signs and increased enforcement of that policy on Ninth Avenue between 47th and 46th and between 43rd and 42nd Street. Constant car horn honking has become the norm on Ninth Avenue during rush hours. The placement of signs and their enforcement would likely improve that situation

Add a sign on 37th Street, near the corner of Ninth Avenue indicating no left turn onto Lincoln Tunnel entry lanes;

Encourage use of Eleventh Avenue as an alternative for entrance into the Lincoln Tunnel, including making Eleventh Avenue above 42nd Street southbound only;

Replace existing static signs with similarly sized "Smart Signs" to better inform traffic traveling into the Lincoln Tunnel.

14th - 16th Streets

We recommend making all lanes on 9th Avenue from 14th to 16th Street southbound. Currently, with the northbound lane from 14th Street to 16th Street, there is traffic from five directions (east and westbound on 14th Street, southbound on Ninth Avenue and Hudson Street and northbound on Ninth Avenue) for pedestrians to observe before crossing. This causes confusion for pedestrians. During the last few years, as ground floor commercial uses have increased on West 14th Street and the streets to the south, this has become a highly used pedestrian area.

Parking

Vans and buses



There is a pressing need for additional off-street parking sites for tourist and commuter buses and vans. There is currently an inadequate number of available spaces and more parking lots are being converted into alternative uses. The parking and standing of these vehicles on our streets, particularly around the Port Authority and side streets up through 47th Street from Eighth Avenue to Tenth Avenue, brings with it serious traffic and pollution problems. Using the streets as terminals for loading and unloading commuter vehicles and parking/standing when not in use is an unacceptable problem, particularly as residential and related ground floor commercial uses grow. There should also be increased enforcement to prevent illegal on-street parking of buses and vans. A comprehensive plan for off-street parking for buses, van services and waiting "black cars" should be devised.

#### Parking/Standing regulations

We appreciate the responsiveness of the DOT to our request for changes in parking/standing regulations and taxi stands as the community grapples with changes, such as the increased number of night clubs in West Chelsea from 27th to 29th Street. With these changes in signs, we request more vigilant enforcement. The mixture of commerce and residential uses in our Board area makes imperative budgeting for adequate enforcement staff.

#### **Mass Transit**

##### Improving service

Much of CD4's population uses mass transit. Keeping the City's system operating at an optimal level is therefore a continuing basic need. In addition to efficient movement of surface traffic, the accessibility of bus stops and subway stations contribute materially to the usability of public transit. Subway stations must be designed to be as accessible and friendly as possible for all riders. Bus stops should have clear signage. Where feasible, shelters are desirable, and standing vehicles must be kept away so that buses can "curb" for passengers with mobility limitations. We note that new development along the waterfront and in the far west reaches of the district has created new demands for bus service in those areas, especially on Eleventh Avenue.

##### Fairly addressing budget cuts

The Board and the surrounding community must be kept apprised of temporary and emergency changes in bus routes, subway station closings, and schedule alterations. We are aware that the MTA is going through a severe budget crisis and join with transit officials and advocates in calling on the State and City to more seriously address the budget needs. We also appreciate the notification we have received in proposed cutbacks to subway and bus services. However, as the tragic death of a passenger after delayed emergency assistance due to a subway booth closing made clear, safety must come first and we urge the MTA to listen to the prioritizations of this and other community boards as it adjusts to its budget realities. We urge the MTA to continue to consult with Community Boards before implementation of permanent changes in types of equipment used, schedule modifications, and bus stop relocations.

#### **Columbus Circle**

The Columbus Circle subway station is sorely in need of additional work beyond the Subway Improvement Program being undertaken by the Hearst organization. This involves moving promptly ahead with the remainder of the improvements that MTA has committed to carrying out. These should include noise abatement; improved lighting, ventilation and signage; and appropriate final surfaces. Creating direct access to the downtown IRT platform from the west side of Broadway, and addressing the dangerously steep stair at the entrance adjacent to the Trump International Plaza should also be priorities. The Board believes that the plans should include an escalator from the uptown IND platform to the uptown IRT, since this is a very heavily used transfer. An effective location should be found. It has been suggested that a passage could be created between the north and south mezzanines via the now unused central IND platform. This suggestion seems attractive to the Board as an inexpensive measure to improve connections between the south end of the station and the uptown IRT and should be further considered. It is time to complete planning and start construction.

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian safety**

All areas of Chelsea and Clinton/Hell's Kitchen should be safe and friendly for pedestrians and bicyclists. CB4 reiterates its request for DOT to extend the Hudson Street/Eighth Avenue bike lane and buffer lanes to West 59th Street, a request that has also been made to DOT by our neighbors on Community Board 5. The Board understands that restriping prior to repaving may require the removal of some of the current lane stripes, which could leave a mark on the roadway. Given the current status of Eighth Avenue street surface, which are already disfigured by numerous cuts and patches, the marks left by stripe removal are of minimal concern, compared to the substantial public benefit to be conferred on the community by the restriping. We appreciate DOT's partnership with the community in identifying appropriate areas for bicycle racks and encourage expeditious installation of sites already identified.

We recommend that DOT consider widening the west side of the Eighth Avenue sidewalk between 30th and 38th streets by 6 feet. The pedestrian level of service there is "F" (the lowest possible rating) during the morning and evening peak periods. It is often so crowded that hundreds of people end up walking in the street, creating very dangerous conditions.

During any future roadway work, DOT should widen sidewalks within CD4 as much as possible, especially at corners to create "bulb-outs." Bulb-outs increase pedestrian safety by increasing the turning radius around corners, thus slowing motor vehicles. Bulb-outs also shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians. Bulb-outs that were already created at various intersections in the 40's are welcomed by the pedestrians who use them.

As the primary entry/exit route of the Lincoln Tunnel, Dyer Avenue receives heavy traffic and requires special attention to ensure pedestrian safety. However, these basic concerns must be addressed:

Intersection of Dyer Avenue and 40th Street. Pedestrian signals have been installed at this location; however, pedestrian crossings are still problematic. Two pedestrians were killed at this intersection since 2001. Crosswalks should be realigned to avoid the columns of the ramp leading to the Port Authority Bus Terminal. In addition, improved signage is required to alert drivers that they have left the Tunnel and entered the New York City street grid.

35th Street and Dyer Avenue. Not all pedestrian crossings are striped; none are hatched. Vehicles associated with the Midtown South Police Precinct are often parked in pedestrian crossing lanes.

Enforcing all laws regarding the proper use of bicycles substantially contributes to pedestrian safety. NYPD should increase enforcement of laws prohibiting bicycle riding on the sidewalk and target businesses that are repeat offenders. In addition, there is a continued need for bike parking racks throughout Chelsea and Clinton/Hell's Kitchen to discourage chaining of bicycles to trees, tree-guards, scaffolding and other inappropriate locations. There must be vigilance to ensure that sidewalks are kept clear of unnecessary clutter and obstructions. That goal requires a constant balancing of the needs of commerce with human needs, and this Board requires the active help of various City agencies to accomplish it.

## **QUALITY OF LIFE**

### **Police Department**

Responsibility for enforcement of traffic regulations has been shifted from the DOT and the Taxi and Limousine Commission to NYPD. We note that a great number of auto repair shops and taxi, bus and truck depots are concentrated on the west side of Manhattan, where the 10th and Midtown North Precincts are already responsible for nightclubs, prostitution, drug and other problems. Any increase in precinct responsibilities must be balanced by an increase in the number of officers.

We continue to welcome the community policing strategies implemented by the Administration and NYPD. We are happy to see that these strategies have improved the quality of life for our citizens and tourists. CB4 will continue to work closely with our local precincts. We encourage the police to maintain their sensitive balancing of the quality of life for the community with the rights of individual citizens. We also recommend that care be taken to assure a consistent presence of beat officers. Community policing has such a positive impact that even a small lack of continuity in deployment creates a negative effect. We must add, however, that community policing coverage has been significantly reduced (e.g. last year, the 10th Precinct had 10 community policing officers; today the 10th has only 4). As a result, community policing beats have become too large, especially in midtown; smaller beats are more effective and more efficient.

The increased demands on police enforcement make it urgent that staffing levels in our precincts - the 10th, the 13th, Midtown South, and Midtown North - be brought up to full strength.

We welcome the implementation of legislation which would provide the first comprehensive overhaul of the New York City Noise Code in over 30 years. Noise

complaints from CD4 consistently rank among the highest registered by DEP and are rising in the Board area, especially at night. We are encouraged that the law focuses on reducing sound resulting from construction and on a more flexible standard and enforcement schedule for bars, clubs, and cabarets as well as a new standard to measure bass-level and vibrational sound. We are also encouraged by the provision to simplify enforcement by using a plainly audible standard instead of conventional decibel limits which require use of a noise meter. We look forward to working for a solution to this growing problem.

We request that the Manhattan South Borough Command closely monitor the needs of precincts since the merger of the Housing Police with the NYPD. Precincts such as the 10th and Midtown North, which contain a significant amount of public housing, may now be facing a burden out of proportion with their current staffing level.

Growth and development within CD4 and in surrounding areas increasingly strains our under-staffed, under-equipped local precincts. We feel that it is vital to bring all of our precincts up to strength both in manpower and in communications technology. West Chelsea in particular has seen an explosive growth of clubs and bars in the last three years. This has increased evening and late night traffic on the streets and noise and congestion (which is further exacerbated in some cases by the smoking ban) on the sidewalks in front of bars and clubs. Clinton/Hell's Kitchen also is experiencing an increase in clubs. Noise and disruption by unruly patrons leaving the bars and clubs is a growing and disturbing nuisance in residential neighborhoods.

We ask for police enforcement of the Limited Truck Zone in Chelsea, especially in view of the advent of Route 9A and its impact on Chelsea.

Our district is diverse. People of all races, religions, and lifestyles live, work and visit our neighborhoods. It is critical that all police agencies, including NYCHA police, make their officers aware that bias crimes will not be tolerated in any of our neighborhoods. We applaud efforts by the NYPD to increase membership of minorities and women in its ranks. This Board also urges the City to reexamine the potential usefulness of allowing NYPD's Paid Detail Unit to work outside bars and nightclubs.

Our precincts need more cell phone accounts for community affairs officers. Cell phones play an increasingly important role in managing the increasing number and size of demonstrations, parades, and public events and in responding to emergency situations. Cell phone also enable officers to respond quickly to calls from community members. Our local precincts have other specific needs. The Midtown North Precinct requires an up-to-date computer system to give this most important of city precincts a critical edge in the fight not only against crime but also against threats of terrorism to the midtown area. The 10th Precinct requires additional unmarked vehicles to conduct anti-crime patrols and street narcotics operations.

In 1996, CB4 (along with neighboring CB5) requested a major revision of the boundaries between Midtown North, Midtown South and the 10th and 13th Precincts that would

reflect the changing residential identification along the existing borders. CB4 articulated this request again this year; however, NYPD determined such a change was not feasible at this time. We hope that someday this change will be implemented.

### **Sanitation**

The reduction in the number of litter baskets on our avenues and streets together with a reduction in the number of trash pickups has substantially increased the litter and filth on streets. If we want tourists and visitors to feel safe on our streets we have to work at keeping the streets clean of litter. Dirty streets are a health hazard, and the negative impact on everyone's quality of life cannot be in question. Not every neighborhood has a Business Improvement District with its own private sanitation crew; all neighborhoods need the City to do its job in keeping our streets clean.

Improving Sanitation maintenance in the area is important, especially along 14th Street and the adjoining avenues, as commercial and tourist traffic has increased dramatically over the past few years, leading to a constant overflowing of wastebaskets. Increased foot traffic and a scattering of undeveloped lots have also contributed to the worsening garbage accumulation on the sidewalks along Ninth Avenue in the middle of CD4.

### **Mayor's Office of Midtown Enforcement**

CB4 strongly affirms its support for the continued and strengthened existence of the Mayor's Office of Midtown Enforcement, an office essential to the welfare of the community - residents, businesses and visitors alike. Support for OME is especially urgent in light of the illegal vending and storage of counterfeit goods in our district. No other City agency can so effectively marshal the vital components - fire, housing, and health inspectors, police and attorneys - often necessary to resolve illegal, threatening or dangerous situations in our area. Immediately, OME needs an additional attorney line and added support staff, including inspectors.

### **Department of Information Technology & Telecommunications**

The proliferation of public pay telephones (PPTs) in our community is the product of a quest for advertising revenues from booth walls. It is not a response to public demand for additional stationary telephonic services. PPTs at times are a great convenience and at times are essential for public safety. However, PPTs can also attract socially unacceptable enterprises, are obtrusive on most residential streets, constitute a negative element in the viewscape, and present unnecessary obstructions to fluid pedestrian movement.

Inoperable, damaged, or poorly maintained phones have no value and diminish the quality of life. Increasingly many of the phone booths on 9th Avenue, particularly north of 42nd Street, have fallen into such condition. CB4 is pleased that the City budget restored two additional inspectors for DOITT and requests that an inspection of 9th Avenue payphones and enforcement of existing regulations regarding their condition be completed. A similar effort two years ago along 8th Avenue had positive results.

Over the past year and a half, this Board reviewed and provided substantive comments to over 500 proposed new PPT locations in CD4. Site observations determined that public demand is sufficiently met, and probably exceeded, within the Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Avenue corridors. While there may be other areas in CD4 that are appropriate for new installations, without location-specific data, there is no way of knowing where PPT service is needed.

It remains very important that Community Boards continue to be consulted with regard to all installations of PPT's in public spaces. Further, Boards must be respected when they determine that a particular location is inappropriate for a new installation or that a particular booth should be removed in the public interest.

### **Department of Consumer Affairs**

We look forward someday to improved legislation in regard to the licensing and oversight of nightlife establishments. The State legislature recently passed legislation that would require liquor license applicants to prove that they are in compliance with their buildings' certificates of occupancy before receiving a license. We support similar legislation with regard to the issuance of cabaret licenses by the City.

At least 60 sidewalk cafés are licensed to operate within CD4. Storefront businesses also commonly use sidewalk space for merchandise displays, signage, planters, informal seating and other business-related uses. When operated responsibly and within the law, these uses can contribute positively to the vibrancy of our neighborhoods. However, as sidewalk space is increasingly occupied by commerce and public street furniture, less space exists for pedestrians. Given limited enforcement personnel and other budget constraints, we encourage multi-agency enforcement by DCA, DOT, OME, DOB and DOS to ensure that sidewalk space is maximized for pedestrians and that all sidewalk regulations are upheld. We also repeat our request of DCA to implement perhaps the simplest mechanism to ensure adequate sidewalk space for pedestrians: striping of the perimeter of sidewalk cafés as required by the law.

While we have in the past coordinated efforts with the 10th Precinct, DOB, OME and DCA to increase enforcement of parking lot regulations, these efforts have recently been unsuccessful. When DOB or OME identifies faulty or expired Certificate of Occupancy documents, it is essential that DCA follow through to ensure that parking lots operate legally, especially with respect to capacity. We look forward to working with DCA to tackle this difficult problem.

### **311 Citizen Service Center**

The 311 Citizen Service Center has brought government information and services closer to New Yorkers. 311 not only makes government more accessible, but it also represents a valuable planning and management tool. However, now that 311 is widely used by New Yorkers to report problems or to request services, CB4 receives considerably fewer calls

than it did a year ago. Since the launch of 311, the overall number of complaint calls to CB4 has dropped by a third, leaving the Board with much less information to support its thinking and decision-making.

Without reports on 311 calls, the system stands to undercut our ability to carry out Charter-mandated responsibilities properly and effectively and to serve as representative voices in government. Regular and detailed reporting of 311 to Community Boards must be required.

## HOUSING

CB4 is committed to the preservation and expansion of affordable housing within our district. It is the Board's policy that 30% of all units in new residential development be affordable to a range of low, moderate and middle income households.

Today, CD4 is a mixed-income community offering a range of services and resources to people of lower income that are not available elsewhere. Since its inception, the Board has worked to create a community open to people of all income levels. Unfortunately, the economic upswing of the past ten years has made tenants in Clinton/Hell's Kitchen and Chelsea vulnerable to rising rents and displacement. The Board requests that the City recognize the long-term benefits associated with mixed-income neighborhoods and mixed-income buildings when considering the best use for the remaining government-owned property within the district as well as when reviewing any zoning changes, variance requests or development plans.

The District's diversity is in danger. CB4 is primarily a rental community that relies heavily on rent regulations, government subsidies and public housing to maintain its affordable housing. To date, rent regulations have played a large role in maintaining that diversity. However, the 1997 amendment to the rent stabilization regulations that permits the deregulation of apartments once rents reach \$2,000 per month has resulted in a significant loss of affordable housing stock.

In the near future, CD4 stands to lose a significant amount of affordable housing due to expiring uses. Mitchell-Lama and Section 8 contracts have come up for renewal; property owners are considering opting out of these programs. The 20% affordable component in many 80-20 (80% market-rate-20% affordable) developments will soon approach expiration, and those apartments will revert to market-rate. The City must work to achieve a permanent solution to prevent the displacement of these households. In the short term, the City must ensure that rental subsidies (Section 8 Certificates or other programs) are in place to meet the needs of those tenants faced with displacement by their inability to afford increased rent due to opt outs.

The district has also lost a number of units to illegal use. Preliminary findings of a community survey indicate that this is a growing problem. For example, residential units are often leased to corporations; bed and breakfast operations are created in long-term

residential units; residential apartments are used for commercial use; others are illegally subdivided for multiple occupancy; SRO units are now used for tourist occupancy and other short term rentals.

CB4 supports the increasing of the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) annual income limits from \$24,000 per year to \$30,000 per year to reflect today's economics. Many seniors with income comprised of Social Security and pensions totaling \$30,000 are unable to afford their rents but make too much to qualify for SCRIE.

CB4 believes significant government attention and investment are required to ensure new permanently affordable (low-, moderate-, and middle-income) housing is built in our community. We are encouraged by the City's commitment to develop affordable housing in the newly rezoned Hudson Yards and Chelsea districts and are hopeful this will lead to varied and creative new mechanisms to support this goal. Little, if any, new affordable housing has been constructed in recent years outside of the 80-20 Housing Program. However, the affordable component of an 80-20 development is only for a limited time, offers no long term benefit to the community, and does not respond to the need for housing affordable to a range of low-, moderate- and middle-income residents. We strongly believe that this program is not the best use of public funds.

Since the long ago demise of the Mitchell-Lama Program, most government funding opportunities do not address the needs of middle-income housing. In a community with a minimal supply of publicly-owned land, the best use for the remaining government-owned property within the district must be affordable housing. New means of creating and encouraging affordable housing on privately-owned property must also be considered. Text and map modifications of the Zoning Resolution, new funding mechanisms, and innovations in housing type/construction must be explored.

#### Department of Housing Preservation & Development

CB4 continues to support HPD programs that fund the rehabilitation of buildings, prevent evictions and improve the living conditions of those who live there.

Over the last 10 years, most city-owned residential property within CD4 has been transferred to non-profit and tenant-ownership programs that have provided opportunities for preserving and increasing the supply of decent, affordable housing. Tenant ownership has been possible through HPD's Tenant Interim Lease (TIL) Program. Several years ago, there were almost twenty buildings enrolled in the program. Last year, the final TIL building was sold to its tenants, marking the completion of the TIL program in the Board area. Since 1980, the TIL program will have produced over 500 affordable units of low-income cooperative housing providing homeownership opportunities for families and individuals whose incomes do not allow them to compete in the real estate market.

CB4 continues to support programs such as HPD's Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP), which funds the rehabilitation the city-owned buildings. We recognize that not every group of tenants is capable of, or desires to, assume the responsibilities of home



ownership. Non-profit rental buildings are a long-term stabilizing force in our neighborhood. CB4 also supports the continued use of the Supportive Housing Program to preserve and expand the supply of affordable SRO housing for homeless persons and community residents. This housing, with on-site supportive services for tenants, has been a successful model in housing very low-income persons. It is the sole HPD program that provides funds for acquisition of privately owned property for conversion to affordable housing, and provides a means to expand the supply beyond currently publicly owned land.

CB4 strongly supports the expansion of programs, such as the Community Consultant Contracts, that preserve affordable housing through preventing evictions and working to improve living conditions. These programs, among others, are critical to several community groups in our district working to preserve and increase affordable housing. As a result of their work deteriorated buildings have been restored to excellent, long-term affordable housing and the rights of tenants have been protected. Their funding sources, always in danger, should be increased.

#### General Code Enforcement

Residents of Chelsea and Clinton/Hell's Kitchen continue to experience the negative impact of insufficient government response to conditions that threaten life, health and safety. In the 1980s, there were 685 housing code inspectors citywide. There are many fewer today. CB4 requests that HPD increase the number of its inspectors; fill the vacancies in its Litigation Bureau; and step up code enforcement as well as increase the number and timeliness of litigation against the most egregious violators of the housing codes. We also request of HPD, DOB, and Corporation Counsel to pursue with due diligence the collection of outstanding fines owed by repeat violators, ensuring better enforcement and creating badly needed income for the City. An atmosphere of lawlessness now exists because corrupt landlords know there will be few consequences for disregarding relevant statutes and codes.

DOB and HPD inspectors, and those assigned to the Mayor's Office of Midtown Enforcement (OME), do essential work in our area. Their work is particularly important within the Special Clinton District (SCD), where we depend on their skills to enforce arcane but essential provisions of the SCD. The Board continues to see cases where owners have made renovations in SCD buildings without first applying for a required Certificate of No Harassment. The Board is concerned that the spread of self-certification by architects and engineers in applications to DOB and other agencies has led to a lowering and evasion of standards, particularly in areas like the SCD where special zoning regulations apply. Close monitoring of the effect of self-certification is essential. The city must continue to work closely with CB4 to establish the Hudson Yards special district and to set up a workable enforcement mechanism.

Regulations are only as effective as the system in place to enforce them. We therefore request that DOB, HPD and the OME dedicate specific inspectors to concentrate on SCD enforcement. These inspectors must receive rigorous and adequate training to ensure that they have the particular knowledge essential to preventing the flagrant disregard of SCD regulations that continue to occur too frequently. We also commit to taking such actions as

are appropriate and necessary to stop illegal conversions, and to ensure that tenants are not harassed. We also call upon the DOB's Legal Department, Corporation Counsel and HPD to begin prosecuting the most flagrant violators of the regulations of the SCD and other housing codes and regulations. It is crucial that an on-going procedure be implemented by DOB to meet regularly with the Board and the community regarding these issues.

#### Single Room Occupancy Housing (SROs)

A large number of SROs (including rooming houses, SRO hotels, and converted tenements) exists in our District. However, SROs continues to disappear from the neighborhood at an alarming rate, due to both legal and illegal conversions to transient hotels or other uses. SROs have become the single most important source of affordable housing for single adults and an important resource for the prevention of homelessness. Affordable housing within our District is critical to house the diverse population of artists, students, minimum wage earners and those on fixed incomes. This mixed population includes the backbone of the service and cultural economy of the city, as well as many of the most frail and isolated members of our community.

The largest concentration of SRO housing in our community lies between Eighth and Ninth avenues from 42nd Street to 57th Street. In that area, there are 62 buildings that contain nearly 2,200 SRO units. The majority of those units are found on 51st Street where twelve buildings contain 574 units. 46th Street is home to the largest concentration of SRO buildings, with 21 buildings housing 289 units.

CB4 supports the acquisition, renovation and new construction of sensitively-sited supportive housing developments to preserve and expand the SRO housing stock. The OME and HPD must strengthen the SRO anti-harassment laws and enforce them to protect this valuable and essential community resource. Continued funding of the efforts of the West Side SRO Law Project to protect tenant's rights and to preserve SRO housing is essential.

#### New York City Housing Authority

Security and enforcement are issues facing all property owners in the city. In particular, the board is concerned about security concerns at Harborview Terrace, a senior NYCHA complex in Clinton. As reported in the New York Times last year, residents report drug dealing, elder abuse and threats from a number of younger people who are illegally occupying units at the complex. We encourage NYCHA to work with CB4 to help coordinate solutions using a community-wide strategy instead of isolating developments and the people living within from the resources that surround them.

## **HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

### **Homelessness**

Tragically, homelessness, continues to be a terrible problem citywide and a particularly visible one in the CB4 area. We continue to appreciate the City's various efforts over the past few years to address the root causes of homelessness and, especially, the new

resources devoted to the production of additional units of critically needed affordable and supportive housing.

Nonetheless, street homelessness remains a very visible problem in our district - actually increasing over the past two years. Over the years, efforts to "clean up" Midtown and other "high visibility" areas has only driven a larger number of homeless people into other parts of our community. Large public facilities located within our district, such as the Port Authority Bus Terminal, are also a natural gathering place for people without homes. Many homeless people need social services, in particular drug treatment and/or mental health services. Inclusion of these services is essential in any effort to address New York's homelessness situation.

Currently, two of the twelve citywide drop-in centers for homeless individuals are located within CD4. We encourage the City to continue funding these centers, as well as to maintain and expand funding for effective outreach, to ensure that the comprehensive interventions that are needed can be provided. We are also deeply concerned about the inadequacy of family shelter slots, especially for victims of domestic violence, as well as the lack of adequate resources for homeless youth. It is especially troubling that the needs of women, children and youth at risk are still far from being met.

### **Supportive Housing**

CB4 recognizes the need for residential facilities and has consistently welcomed them into our neighborhoods, but we also realize that they can only be successful if they are well planned and staffed and appropriate for the location and population served.

Again, we are pleased to see the Mayor's plan focus on the provision of permanent housing; we believe that, whenever possible, such projects should mix supportive housing units with other low- and moderate-income units. Community boards must be given an opportunity to assess any proposal for residential facilities in terms of the needs for specific facilities, the adequacy of the plan, and the quality of the provider. The City should work with the community to determine the size, site and design of each facility. Any facility must provide adequate and essential social services as well as access to health services and other necessary support services.

### **HIV / AIDS**

New York City continues to account for a major proportion of the nation's AIDS cases; CD4 is home to the nation's largest percentage of people with AIDS. In order to slow and hopefully stop the spread of this disease, we actively support educational programs, condom distribution and needle exchanges. For our neighbors who are stricken with this disease, we welcome community-based care facilities, supportive housing and other programs geared towards people with AIDS. HIV/AIDS infection rates have long been increasing especially within communities of color, and among women and youth, however funding for prevention and services to these communities has not kept pace.

## **Core Support for the Young and the Old**

CB4 is concerned that the youngest and the oldest among us have adequate access to services necessary to assure their health, safety and security. For young children, adequate, supportive, licensed and affordable child care must be available for all those eligible, especially those newly moving into employment. Easily accessible and responsive health services for children and pregnant women are essential. For the elderly, a comprehensive range of services, including community centers, in-home supports, transportation, supportive housing, and preventive health and social services, are essential to assuring that they can live out their lives with dignity within their home communities.

## **Accessibility**

We call upon the city Human Rights Commission to increase funding for more inspectors to investigate and enforce disabled accessibility building code compliance. We continue to receive complaints about deficiencies in various aspects of the paratransit system, including serious limitations in Access-a-Ride service.

## **Environment and Health**

### **Hospital Care**

CD4 lacks a municipally funded hospital. The nearest ones are Bellevue Hospital in CD6 and Gouverneur Hospital in CD3. With the Chelsea rezoning and Hudson Yards plans, the population of our district will increase significantly. Therefore a reassessment of community health care needs is necessary. It is anticipated that the voluntary sector will meet the needs of new residents with health care coverage or in self-pay status. However, there is concern for our Medicaid and Medicare-only reliant residents and those who lack any health care coverage who are often referred to the municipal hospital system. Our board is opposed to any cuts to health care service in the district and/or the imposition of increased co-pay requirements for these patients. We also feel the closing of existing hospital beds will impact negatively on our community.

### **Substance Abuse**

CB4 is concerned about reports that crystal methamphetamine use is gaining a foothold among a subset of our community. In addition to other health and mental health dangers, use of this drug has been associated with increased use of other illicit drugs and sexual practices which enhance chances of contracting HIV and other STD's. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene needs to increase funding for education, prevention and treatment programs to address this problem.

### **Other Health Concerns**

Residents of Clinton/Hell's Kitchen and Chelsea are faced with a variety of other health and environmental concerns. We continue to be concerned about the need for adequate pest control and urge maintenance of funding for this critical service. Similarly, we are concerned that sufficient resources be focused on addressing issues of maintaining, repairing, and upgrading the sewer and storm drainage system, especially west of Ninth

Avenue. This has been the source of chronic problems in the past that are likely to be exacerbated by new construction and needs constant monitoring from the DEP and DOT.

#### Noise

We note, with appreciation, that DEP has been consistently responsive about inspecting HVAC systems, nightclubs, and other sources of commercial noise; it is critical that these resources be maintained, given the level of relevant business development in this area. We'd ask that consideration be given to supplementary funding for additional initiatives in the area of sound mitigation, perhaps through a study of best practices or an effort to develop strengthened regulations.

### **YOUTH SERVICES**

The Chelsea and Clinton/Hell's Kitchen community is home to more than 8,400 children under 18 years of age, more than 17% of whom receive public assistance and more than 77% of whom receive emergency food assistance Youth services in our district have been woefully under funded for many years. While we appreciate the recent attention given to the issue of youth services citywide, the changes implemented through the Out of School Time (OST) process still leave concerns regarding the overall adequacy of available funds to create and sustain high quality programs and to reach all those in need of such services.

More specifically, we are extremely distressed by the dramatic reduction in general youth services funds for school-age children and teens that was allocated to our district through the OST process. Despite what aggregate statistics might suggest, this is a district with a large low-income population - especially concentrated in several local public housing developments, several severely underperforming schools, and significant social needs, as evidenced by measures such as substance abuse and child abuse and neglect. The planned elimination of ACS school-age classrooms in the district compounds this problem and leaves little, if any, safe, affordable, year-round child care for working parents. In neighborhoods such as ours, which includes many low-income working families, quality, publicly-funded day care - including school-age child care - is a primary concern.

Four percent of our older youth, ages 16 to 19, are not enrolled in school and are not working. While there are a number of reputable community providers trying to address the needs of this population through alternative schools and the provision of employment training and other support services, these organizations are under-funded and have already exceeded their program capacity. We are concerned that the City's clear preference for funding school-based OST programs does not address the needs of this population.

We are pleased that the Youth Employment Program was at least funded and implemented in a more timely way this year, avoiding some of the horrendous delays and confusion of recent years. However, we continue to be very distressed by the decline in funding for this program overall. Across the City, an overwhelming number of older youth are not prepared to finish high school or to enter the workforce. Through YEP, these young people gain valuable vocational and soft skills, discipline and leadership. We feel strongly that funds should be restored to the level available as of 4 years ago.

In May of 2004, the Chelsea Recreation Center opened in our district. While this facility is available to all ages, over half of its summer members are under the age of 21. The Center is in need of additional staffing, specifically playground assistants and other youth workers, to coordinate youth activities. Recreation Center members also have voiced the desire for services to be expanded to include Sundays, but have been informed that budgetary constraints do not permit this expansion.

With regard to other youth needs, we urge that housing for homeless and run-away youth be maintained and expanded, and that alternative to violence and creative justice programs, as well as job training and placement programs be maintained and expanded.

## **CULTURE & EDUCATION**

### **Schools**

CD4 has many schools of all grades serving local children as well as children from other school districts and boroughs. We have always supported education and are committed to developing and maintaining high standards for teachers as well as students. We must also provide assurances to parents that their children are in safe and healthy environments, both during the school day and during after school programs; this means on the streets as well as indoors.

There exists a heavy concentration of high schools within CD4; therefore, we would like to be consulted when new schools (provided through either new construction or space rental) are planned. The reason for this provision can best be seen in the case of Park West High School and Graphic Communication Arts, which are within one block of each other. The 3,500 students attending these schools come from all five boroughs. This has led to clogged neighborhood streets at varying arrival and dismissal times, problems at subways and at other transportation points, and disruptive situations affecting our residents and businesses.

In addition, greater consideration should be given to community residents in terms of their needs, which include better sanitation around schools, cleaner and safer streets for pedestrians, etc. Joint planning between the Department of Education and CB4 can result in a more harmonious relationship, which will lead to a better educational environment.

In regard to the schools' challenge to recruit and retain qualified teachers, and the severe levels of turnover, this Board supports efforts to increase teachers' salaries to levels in parity with the surrounding suburban areas.

### **Libraries**

CB4 endorses the restoration of funds cut from NY Public Libraries in order to continue six day service in all branch and research libraries, full funding for books and materials and important programs like the Connecting Libraries and Schools Project (CLASP). CB4 would also recommend that our libraries remain open on Saturdays for those residents who are unable to have access to them during the week.

We support increasing branch library funding to bridge the "digital divide" through free computer training and broad access to the Internet. Ninety-eight percent of all free public access computers in the City are in public libraries.

CB4 also believes library funding for expanded hours, and technology training and services should be increased. This Board seeks funding for building and technology infrastructure, which would serve to protect the investment that the City has made in computers and electronic information resources while ensuring well-maintained and secure libraries.

In regard to the libraries' challenge to recruit and retain qualified librarians, and the severe levels of turnover, this Board supports efforts to increase librarian salaries to levels in parity with the surrounding suburban areas.

#### Cultural Affairs

CB4 is concerned about the continued loss of funding for small theatrical companies within our community. Small theatrical arts groups develop new talent in areas of writing, performing, and directing and this Board is pleased that the new administration has made support for these companies a priority.

We must also keep in mind the secondary theater and other artistic services that exist within CD4. For example, rental storage space for art, costumes, scenery and lighting are located throughout Chelsea and Clinton/Hell's Kitchen. There are many dance companies and actively used rehearsal studios in our area. The money generated from these industries provides jobs and maintains the artistic life of the city. CB4 is also concerned with the loss of artists' studios in the District and the displacement of working artists.

#### **WATERFRONT & PARKS**

CD4 is home to about 100,000 residents who share 700 acres of dense city blocks. Yet the District has only 3 parks and 11 pocket parks or playgrounds, totaling less than 16 acres, plus a long narrow strip of Hudson River Park still under development seven years after the Hudson River Park Act was signed, and with no firm timetable set for the development of over 50% of it within CD4. Ten years ago it was reported by the Manhattan Borough President that, of the 59 community districts in the City, CD4 ranks 57th in terms of open space with less than 1/5 of an acre of open space per 1,000 residents, compared to a citywide average of 2-1/2 acres per thousand. Sadly this is still true today. Delays in the development of key parts of Hudson River Park (in particular Pier 97, still home to DOS garbage trucks, and Pier 76, still Manhattan's tow pound - not to mention Gansevoort Peninsula, at the southern edge of CD4) mean that this imbalance will continue for at least a few more years, and will only improve marginally at best.

Further, expense and capital budget cuts and the dramatically low staffing levels of the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) make it harder and harder for the Department to maintain the few parks we have, threatening the quality of life. While it's encouraging

that, in the 2005 Report Card issued by New Yorkers for Parks, Chelsea Park Scored a 93 (A) (up from a B in 2004 and C+ in 2003), it's discouraging that Hell's Kitchen's only park of significance, Dewitt Clinton park, scored a 77 (C+) (down from a B- in 2004 and a C in 2003).

Over the past 30 years, the DPR budget has fallen sharply. As a result of less funding, DPR now has less than half of the full time staff that it did ten years earlier and parks are cleaned less frequently, fewer recreational programs are offered and less security is provided.

CB4 demands that the administration make a greater commitment to open space in our community by restoring the Parks Department budget. We should be ashamed of a simple comparison of two similar cities - Chicago, where parks enjoy 4% of the annual budget, and New York, which has to make do with less than 3/10 of 1%. Our goal at the moment, as it has been for several years, is for parks in NYC as a whole to be funded at a paltry 1%. In particular, several areas need special attention:

Each park in our district should have a full-time, on-site park keeper to address constituents' concerns, provide security and perform routine maintenance of that park alone.

Funding must also be directed towards full-time gardeners, maintenance workers, PEP officers, as well as seasonal aides and playground associates for the summer.

Funding for requirements contracts should be increased so the Parks Department can maintain the parks in the best fashion.

Funding must also be dedicated to support Green Thumb Community Gardens and pruning for street trees.

Hudson River Park  
Waterfront

Hudson River Park remains the one bright star on the horizon - but for many parts of the park, it's been far too long on the horizon. Happily, Pier 84, which will be the jewel of HRP in CD4, will open in the spring/summer of 2006. But funding for much of the Chelsea segment, including the balance of Chelsea Waterside Park remains insecure - and, as mentioned, significant portions of the park (Pier 97, Pier 76 and Gansevoort) are still being used for municipal purposes despite the terms of the Hudson River Park Act. And even as we wonder when these portions will eventually become parkland (or 50% parkland in the case of Pier 76), there is talk of re-opening and/or building new garbage transfer stations at three locations in the park: Gansevoort, Pier 76 and Pier 99. We cannot, as a city, lose sight of the vision of a complete Hudson River Park. Here are several areas of concern:

Piers 92 - 97

The newly opened Clinton Cove Park is delightful - but small. Pier 97 needs to be vacated by DOS as soon as possible as per the terms of the Hudson River Park Act. As per NYS law, it should have been vacated by December 2003. Further, some significant mitigation for the continued occupation of Pier 97 by DOS is expected. The northern stub of the Pier



94 head house must be reclaimed for public space, especially now as the city contemplates the use of both Piers 94 and 92 as a midsize convention center. A pedestrian bridge between Dewitt Clinton and Clinton Cove Parks is needed for both safety and convenience in crossing the busiest section of Route 9A.

#### Passenger Ship Terminal

The new design for the Passenger Ship Terminal must be inclusive of and sensitive to park visitors to the maximum extent possible. Traffic flow must be dramatically improved. Waterfront access must also be improved as the terminal is being redesigned.

#### Piers 81 and 83

A resolution must be found with Circle Line/World Yacht parking areas in order to free the upland area of Piers 81 and 83. CB4 supports the building of a garage on Pier 81 to accomplish this in exchange for Circle Line voluntarily relinquishing its lease on these upland areas.

#### Pier 76

The tow pound at Pier 76 must be relocated as soon as possible so that this pier can be developed with 50% allocated to new park space.

#### Heliport

CB4 remains opposed to any heliport within Hudson River Park, and calls for the heliport in the vicinity of 29th Street to be closed immediately.

#### Piers 63 - 66a

Work on Pier 64 should begin as soon as possible. At Pier 63, planning must take place immediately to ensure that Basketball City's commercial lease is not renewed and that the building be demolished as soon as possible so that construction of the western portion of Chelsea Waterside park can begin as soon as possible. In addition, funding must be secured for the long planned concession and comfort station in the eastern part of Chelsea Waterside Park. CB4 also supports moving of the very popular public access pier called Pier 63 Maritime to Pier 66A just north of Pier 64.

#### Gansevoort Peninsula

The Hudson River Park Act requires that the salt pile at Gansevoort Peninsula be removed by December 2003, and that remaining DOS uses be vacated as soon as possible. We are now approaching two years past that NYS legislated deadline - this is unacceptable. The DOS timetable of leaving Gansevoort in 7 to 8 years is much too long and must be shortened. Further, some significant mitigation for the continued occupation of Gansevoort is expected.

#### Inland Parks and Recreation Centers

Inland parks within CD4 are a mixed bag of good news and ongoing problems and challenges. The good news is the completion of the Chelsea Recreation Center and the recent high grade of 93 (A) for Chelsea Park, and the restoration of Hell's Kitchen Park,

nearing completion as this is being written. In addition, we are pleased about the continued progress on the new High Line park. It also seems that progress is being made toward the restoration of the 59th Street Recreation Center. But attention needs to be paid to the following areas:

#### Clement Clark Moore Park

Maintenance is an issue at Clement Clark Moore Park. The park needs a horticultural master plan. The children's spray fountain must be renovated. One corner of the park near a gate that is permanently padlocked should be reused. The park's trees desperately need pruning.

#### Chelsea Park

The stone columns, which date back to Tammany days, should be moved to a more appropriate location than the current random spot. Long term solutions for homeless in this area are still needed.

#### Dewitt Clinton Park

Dewitt Clinton Park is in need of major renovation. Funding should be secured for a tot-lot at the southeast corner of the park to replace an underutilized paved area. We have heard reports from ball field users that irrigation and grading need significant improvement. Steps at the western end of the park need repair. This is just the start - CB4 plans to make the restoration of this park a priority in 2006.

#### Hell's Kitchen Park

Our only disappointment with Hell's Kitchen Park is the lack of a comfort station which was originally planned.

#### High Line

Now that the High Line is moving in a positive direction, the City must ensure that this important project is funded and completed.

#### New Parkland

CB4 continues to pursue potential sites for new parkland including 49th Street and Tenth Avenue, currently held by the DEP for construction of the Third Water Tunnel and the Ninth Avenue frontage of MTA's Rail Control Center Project between 53rd and 54th streets, which is no longer needed by MTA. More parkland for the Chelsea neighborhood needs to be identified and secured such as the DOS parking lot on the south-side of 20th Street between Sixth and Seventh avenues. Furthermore, Hell's Kitchen Park South, shown in the City's Hudson Yards plan, must be created with a combination of public and private funds for land acquisition and long-term development strategies.

#### Street Trees

More street trees, a major influence on the quality of life in Chelsea and Clinton, and more GreenStreets are needed in CD4. Street trees should be planted on Ninth Avenue from 34th to 42nd Streets and between Ninth and Tenth Avenues from 35th to 41st Streets. DPR's Greenstreets program should be used on Port Authority marginal land adjacent to Dyer

Avenue and the Lincoln Tunnel approaches. More trees are also needed on 9th Avenue between 42nd up to 57th Street, as well as other locations. DPR should share its tree census data with CD4 so that further locations can be identified.