



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**LOWELL D. KERN**  
Chair

**JESSE R. BODINE**  
District Manager

February 10, 2021

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

Hon. Corey Johnson  
Speaker, City Council  
250 Broadway, 18<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: Statement on the Preliminary Budget, Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22)**

Dear Mayor de Blasio and Speaker Johnson,

Manhattan Community Board Four (MCB4) wishes to request increased funding for its critical priorities in the \$92.28 billion Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2022. Our district faces an incredibly challenging year ahead. With a high concentration in interim homeless shelters, jobs dependent on Broadway, the Arts and thousands of restaurants, we have an exceptional situation and more will need to be done to ensure recovery is realized as soon as possible.<sup>1</sup>

While we are thankful for the budget requests that were satisfied in 2021 (see further below), as the preliminary budget suggests, new investments must also be made in “what matters most”, including COVID response, closing the COVID achievement gap in our schools, and strengthening our essential services<sup>2</sup>. It is with this mind, that we implore you to reconsider these following priorities from MCB4’s FY22 Statement of District Needs.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> MCB4, at its regularly scheduled meeting voted 41 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstaining, and 0 present not eligible in support of the Budget Task Force recommendations.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/sum1-21.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://cbmanhattan.cityofnewyork.us/cb4/about/budget/>

## **Expand Funding for Homelessness and Housing**

The impact of COVID on New York City's economy has resulted in an increase in street homeless and people needing city services. While NYC's homelessness outreach program has received additional funds in the past, MCB4 feels during this time of crisis further expansion of funds is necessary.

DSS & DHS must reduce the density of the existing temporary hotel shelters in the district and then diversify the shelter population by establishing a standard family with children shelter that can provide a robust level of onsite services and programs in the district.

We also request the provision of adequate capital subsidy for the Multifamily Preservation Loan Program (MPLP) and the Senior Affordable Rental Apartments (SARA) for the following affordable housing projects: 560 West 52nd Street - (MPLP) 500 West 52nd Street - (SARA).

The NYCHA working group recently concluded its recommendations but we cannot wait for these long needed, critical improvements to be made:

- elevators are frequently broken and taken out of service. In 2018 there were about 44,000 elevator outages which is an absolutely unacceptable performance level; All NYCHA developments within CD4 (Chelsea/Elliot Houses, Fulton Houses, and Harborview Terrace) require skilled mechanic positions to be filled so servicing needs can be met, and chronically underperforming elevators must be replaced.
- repairs to the roof, a boiler upgrade, new building entrance and emergency exit doors, and retiling of all building common areas is required at Harborview Terrace (525 West 55<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10019);
- increased funding for the renovation and upgrade of new sump pit pumps at NYCHA Fulton Development (421 West 17th Street New York, NY 10011) buildings including 401 West 16 Street; 420 West 19 street; 434 West 17 Street; and
- provide adequate capital subsidy for the HPD development at the NYCHA Harborview Terrace site located at West 55 Street and 10th Avenue and designate a developer from the most recent RFP process.

## **Education**

Remote learning has become a staple of the Department of Education's programming and may continue. Students, families, and teachers need additional tech support, particularly for straightforward troubleshooting that does not require a ticket to be created with the DOE Help Desk.

Meanwhile, with remote learning continuing for the foreseeable future, there are still students who do not have access to a device, who are using a device that is less than ideal, and/or are facing tech challenges. This is both an immediate need as well as a long term need as schools do not expect to receive all of the devices back in working condition and therefore, will need to replenish their inventory. Funding must be provided and baselined to support the purchase and distribution of additional learning devices.

Funding should also be provided to purchase new books. Many schools have set up lending libraries so that students and families may take home books to allow for independent reading and read-alouds in the home. Schools anticipate needing to continue to restock as well as have a long-term need to purchase classroom libraries in the future to replenish their inventory.

Furthermore, the city should expand and baseline funding for licensed school social workers in all schools within Manhattan School District 2 is critical. Given the trauma many students had experienced prior to the pandemic and that many are continuing to experience during it, universal access to social workers will be critical.

### **Sanitation**

The service cuts to DSNY corner basket pick up must be reinstated to prior FY2021 levels of service and the total amount must be baselined in the 2022 fiscal year budget. Our community has had to clean the streets every weekend in order to keep some appearance of order and our restaurants complain that customers do not want to sit down next to piles of garbage.

DSNY could save money in other areas by strategically determining the areas most urgently in need of service restoration given the altered residential, tourist and workplace traffic patterns during the pandemic. Leaders of business improvement districts and community groups like the Hell's Kitchen Litter Legion can also provide valuable feedback on the most problematic corner basket sites within our neighborhoods.

Additionally, we request an investment in other complementary solutions to help keep our sidewalks clean, in particular, we recommend programs such as ACE to provide supplementary sanitation services.

### **Transportation**

We are disappointed and surprised that the list of 31 dangerous intersections where vehicles conflict with pedestrians and bicycles and have caused injuries and fatalities are not slated to be fixed this year. We cannot wait for another fatality to occur to act.

In 2009, the city committed in a formal Points of Agreement document to create a ramp at 40 West 34th street. Twelve years later the ramp is not scheduled. It is time to fulfill

the city's commitment to install ADA compliant ramps at intersections - Dyer Ave and West 34th Street - North side of West 42 Street and Dyer Avenue. In addition, install up to 30 audible pedestrian signals, especially at West 15th Street and 9th avenue.

### **Parks, ADA Enforcement, and Libraries**

The field and running track in Chelsea Park, at West 28th Street and 10th Avenue, pose a safety risk and desperately require renovating.

Provide additional funding for Department of Buildings enforcement inspectors for non-compliant ADA entrances.

The elevator and roof at Columbus Branch Library at 742 10th Ave have long been in need of repair.

### **We are grateful that the 2022 budget addresses the following priorities of CB4:**

#### **Education:**

- the purchase and distribution of additional remote learning devices;
- confirmed funding to after school programs to conduct their programming virtually and/or in a socially distanced in person environment; and
- secured initial funding for needed security cameras as Fulton Houses and at P.S. 33 Chelsea Prep, 281 9th Avenue; P.S. 51 Elias Howe, 525 West 44th Street; P.S. 111 Adolphs Ochs, 440 West 53rd Street; and P.S. 212 Midtown West, 328 West 48th Street.

#### **Housing and Homelessness**

- expanded funding for NYC homelessness outreach programs;
- expanded funding for supportive services for families and adults that are currently in and soon to be exiting shelter;
- expanded HRA Anti-Harassment Legal Services to Manhattan Community District 4.

#### **Transportation**

- expanded funding for all Open Street Programs;
- conducting a study sidewalk capacity and pedestrian demand along the balance of 8th Avenue from 34th Street to 38th street and 43rd Street to 50th streets; and 9th Avenue North of 34th Street; and
- approval for the installation of 4 sidewalk extensions per the study completed by the Community Board/and traffic engineers.

**Parks**

- supported the relocation of the NYPD Tow Pound off of Pier 76 and initiated the design of additional park land in the Hudson River Park.

Sincerely



Lowell D. Kern  
Chair  
Manhattan Community Board 4



Jessica Chait  
Second Vice Chair

CC: Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President