



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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LOWELL D. KERN
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

December 23, 2021

Judge Tamiko Amaker
Administrative Judge
Criminal Court for the City of New York
100 Centre Street
New York, NY 10013

Judge Kevin McGrath
Supervising Judge
Criminal Court for the City of New York
100 Centre Street
New York, NY 10013

Judge Janet DiFiore
Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals
and of the State of New York
20 Eagle St
Albany, NY 12207

Re: Midtown Community Court Closure

Dear Judge Amaker, Judge McGrath and Judge DiFiore,

The Housing, Health, and Human Services Committee (HHHS) of Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) was briefed on November 18, 2021, regarding the temporary closure of Midtown Community Court (MCC) at 314 West 54th Street.

MCB4 at its regularly scheduled Full Board meeting on December 1, 2021, voted by a vote of 43 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining and 0 present not eligible, **to request the immediate reopening of Midtown Community Court and to increase its budget allocation, as needed, to provide adequate staffing to the MCC.**

Background

Seeking to reduce crime and incarceration, deter recidivism, and increase public trust in justice, the Midtown Community Court was established to work with neighborhood stakeholders to improve Midtown Manhattan.¹ The court responds creatively to low-level offending, seeking sentences that are restorative to the victim, defendant, and community. The court's onsite social

¹ [Midtown Community Court](#)

services clinic and fatherhood and workforce development program are open to everyone—court participants as well as community members. An independent evaluation documented reductions in both crime and the use of jail in the area covered by the court.

Its six-story building at 314 West 54th Street, between 8th and 9th Avenues, was originally constructed in 1894-96 as the Seventh District Police Court and Prison and the Eleventh Judicial District Courthouse. The prison facing West 53rd Street was removed during a 1968 renovation, and an annex was added. The building was designated a New York City Landmark in 1989.

The Midtown Community Court opened at the building in 1993 to offer an alternative adjudication process for quality-of-life offenses.² Located immediately next to the Midtown North Precinct, MCC provides a holistic approach to non-violent low-level offenders by offering a variety of social services.

Due to Covid, MCC is closed for all in-person court proceedings, instead, court hearings are held virtually once per week for four hours. This schedule has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of people being serviced by the programs MCC has to offer.

Although Manhattan Criminal Court has begun to reopen for in-person appearances, operating in a hybrid virtual and in-person manner, MCB4 has been informed that due to the lack of Court staff, MCC has not been able to re-establish in-person appearances. Such in-person appearances are critical in its ability to reach individuals in the criminal justice system, provide diversion and linkage with needed social services.

Computer Statistics (CompStat) Crime Statistics (2020-2021 year to date)

Precinct	Midtown North (18th)			Midtown South (14th)		
	2020	2021	% Change	2020	2021	% Change
Robberies	121	124	2.5	150	393	162
Burglaries	245	184	-24.9	322	396	23
Transit Crimes	70	46	-34.3	125	137	9.6
Petit Larcenies	<u>1,312</u>	<u>1,788</u>	<u>36.3</u>	<u>1,618</u>	<u>2,051</u>	<u>26.8</u>
Misdemeanor Assaults	<u>286</u>	<u>421</u>	<u>47.2</u>	<u>474</u>	<u>811</u>	<u>71.1</u>
Hate Crimes	3	14	366.7	3	36	1,100.0
Total	2037	2577	26.5	2692	3824	29.6

² [NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services – Midtown Community Court](#)


Precinct	10 th Precinct			13 th Precinct		
	2020	2021	% Change	2020	2021	% Chg
Robberies	115	125	8.7	147	173	17.7
Burglaries	154	118	-23.4	354	211	-40.4
Transit Crimes	16	21	31.2	55	53	-3.6
Petit Larcenies	<u>664</u>	<u>523</u>	<u>-21.2</u>	<u>1,626</u>	<u>1,813</u>	<u>11.5</u>
Misdemeanor Assaults	<u>224</u>	<u>229</u>	<u>33.5</u>	<u>356</u>	<u>416</u>	<u>16.9</u>
Hate Crimes	14	3	-78.6	7	18	157.1
Total	1187	1019	-14.2	2545	2684	5.5

As you can see, the vast majority of crimes committed are petit larcenies and misdemeanor assaults, especially in Midtown South, those defendants would greatly benefit by diversion to the MCC.

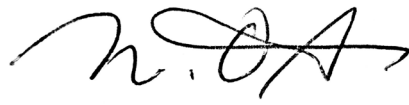
Conclusion

Midtown Community Court has long been an important resource to promote public safety in Manhattan Community District 4, covering the Clinton/Hell’s Kitchen, Garment Center and Chelsea communities. With the incredible spike in petit larcenies and misdemeanor assaults as shown in the attached CompStat reports, it is an even more critical tool to restore public safety to the streets in the Midtown West section of Manhattan. MCB4 urges the Office of Court Administration to review the staffing resources in criminal court in order to reopen MCC to defendants for these lower-level crimes.

Sincerely,



Lowell D. Kern
Chair
Manhattan
Community Board 4



Maria Ortiz
Co-Chair
Housing, Health
Human Services Committee



Joe Restuccia,
Co-Chair
Housing, Health
Human Services Committee

- cc: Hon. Corey Johnson, Speaker, City Council
- Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
- Hon. Scott Stringer, New York City Comptroller
- Hon. Helen Rosenthal, New York City Council
- Hon. Jumaane Williams, New York City Public Advocate

Hon. Jerry Nadler, U.S. Congress
Hon. Brad Hoylman, New York State Senate
Hon. Robert Jackson, New York State Senate
Hon. Richard Gottfried, New York State Assembly
Hon. Linda B. Rosenthal, New York State Assembly
Deputy Inspector Megan O'Malley, 18th Precinct
Captain Robert Gault, 10th Precinct
Deputy Inspector Robert W. O'Hare, 14th Precinct
Deputy Inspector Angel L. Figueroa Jr., 13th Precinct