



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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District Manager

April 15, 2022

Hon. Eric Adams
Mayor
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: Statement on the Preliminary Budget, Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23)

Dear Mayor Adams,

Manhattan Community Board Four (MCB4) appreciates the opportunity to respond to your \$98.5 billion Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2023. MCB4, at its regularly scheduled meeting on April 6, 2022, voted, by a vote of 41 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 1 present but not eligible to vote, to recommend the following comments on the Preliminary Budget for fiscal year 2023.

New York City and its economy is in recovery mode from the devastation of the pandemic. City revenues are increasing and there is no deficit in the preliminary budget you are presenting. The out years of the Financial Plan project deficits that are small and manageable by historical standards. You are budgeting for the largest reserves in city history including \$2 billion in the general reserve and the rainy day fund. Nevertheless you are proposing in FY23 across the board "right sizing," that is a reduction, in the city workforce of 7,000 positions regardless of programmatic and geographic needs.

Our district has been uniquely affected by the COVID pandemic and its still lingering consequences. Home to Broadway, Penn Station and the Port Authority bus terminal, as well as some of the largest employers in the city, our neighborhoods have been financially debilitated by the lack of tourism and commuter activity. We are also convalescing from the high concentration of temporary homeless shelters which has changed our landscape and brought an acute need for broader services in our district.

Many of the programs we address in the following paragraphs need additional funding and the efficient and professional use of expanded staffing levels to implement successfully, not injudicious cuts and unthinking attrition of personnel.

Housing

We thank the administration for addressing many of our housing requests, especially providing adequate capital subsidies for the HPD development at the NYCHA Harborview Terrace site. We look forward to further discussions as the project moves forward. We are also grateful for the funding of the following housing requests:

- Providing adequate capital subsidy for the senior supportive housing site at Hartley House located at 413 West 46th Street.
- The development of The Slaughterhouse Site RFP located at 495 11th Ave. providing 100% permanently affordable units.
- Expanding outreach for street homeless and people needing city services.
- An expansion of rental assistance programs/vouchers for permanent housing for homeless individuals and families that are selected through the DHS family preference program for the "Affordable New York" program.

Partial funding is noted for our request for 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 & 464 West 25th Street - (MPLP) 500 West 52nd Street - (SARA). We look to get further explanation on the extent of the funding.

And we continue to strongly advocate for adequate capital subsidies for DEP and MTA sites, per Western Railyards points of agreements, at 705 Tenth Ave and 806 Ninth Ave, respectively, to develop middle- and moderate-income housing.

To secure affordable housing we must think long-term. To those ends, MCB4 requests you re-examine funding for DOB Special District code enforcement and to update the DOB website to flag improper demolition permits. Improper demolition permits in our district has resulted in over one hundred residential units demolished over the last five years.

But of the three top priorities our communities identified and reflected in MCB4 Budget Priorities and Requests, housing, public safety & street cleanliness/environment, we are discouraged two were not addressed.¹

MCB4 requests the following **capital and expense items be funded** in the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget:

Public Safety

Our district was home to the most densely populated temporary shelters during COVID and we are now suffering residual effects in the form of serious public safety concerns.

¹ <https://cbmanhattan.cityofnewyork.us/cb4/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2022/03/22-MCB4-SDN-and-Budget-Requests-FY2023.pdf>

We are also seeing quickly deteriorating conditions in and around our major transit hubs of Penn Station and Port Authority, areas that were already saturated with drug activity and street homeless. Our district is the gateway to New York City and our first impression is not a good one. In these areas, covered by our Midtown South Police Precinct, crime, in most categories, is up.² In our public survey of district priorities, public safety was, by far, most mentioned. We hope you recognize and understand our need and reconsider funding for our public safety asks.

- Reinstate and expand the geographic boundaries of the Midtown South Precinct's 8th Avenue Crime Reduction Program and the Midtown Business District Recovery Initiative. These two NYPD initiatives prioritize NYPD officers conducting foot patrols and engaging with local business owners and community stakeholders. More of the CD4 area should benefit from officers “on the ground” and these outward facing crime prevention initiatives.
- Provide funding to the four police precincts in MCD4 to expand the number of annual community-building events. These events strengthen community-police relations and help build partnerships. In particular, targeted outreach to underserved populations such as people of color, LGBTQ and any other underrepresented populations. These type of events can have positive impacts on both the community and the officers.
- Fund and deploy 9 traffic officers to increase enforcement of the following traffic violations: vehicular spill-back, parking in no standing, bus drivers using unauthorized routes, vehicular idling, bicycles riding on sidewalks, wrong way on bike paths and streets, running red lights, illegal use of electric bikes, vehicles blocking bike lanes, and unnecessary honking. We expect that enforcement will be race-neutral and that the midtown court will be used for restorative justice and much needed education. We are pleased that two new posts were created on 9th Avenue (W37th and W38th Streets), however the agents are there only sporadically and the increase in Lincoln tunnel traffic makes the other seven posts more critical than ever.
- Fund the necessary land use actions to ensure certification of a new permanent EMS station on West 29th Street between 11th and 12th Avenues. Both the developer of the West 29th Street project and the Mayor’s office committed to providing this essential resource a permanent location since 2018.

Sanitation

Regular DSNY service cuts are proving detrimental to the health and recovery of our district and must be fully restored. Our streets and sidewalks are filled with overflowing waste baskets, mountains of garbage bags and a profusion of scattered litter. This is not just a matter of aesthetics but of health and safety, as well. And with the permanency of outdoor dining, the need for trash pick up and rat mitigation is all the more urgent. In order for our district to fully recover from the pandemic, we need the tools to do so. We

² <https://compstat.nypdonline.org/2e5c3f4b-85c1-4635-83c6-22b27fe7c75c/view/89>

strongly urge you to fully fund the following DSNY requests back to pre-pandemic levels:

- Restore and Expand funding for the Better Bin Pilot Program. There are also areas in our neighborhood in need of additional baskets (e.g. recycling in addition to trash, to prevent overflow).
- Reinstate litter basket collection to pre-pandemic levels. Funding is needed for incremental services like the Precision Cleaning team that addresses overflowing baskets and supports response to sanitation issues reported via 311
- Reinstate and the Syringe Collection Unit and increase staffing. Syringes are appearing more frequently on our streets posing an immediate danger to residents and pets. DSNY needs to implement faster response times for syringe pick-up.
- Greater enforcement by sanitation police is needed to increase compliance with alternate side parking regulations. Greater enforcement by sanitation enforcement agents is also needed to ensure business owners comply with responsibilities for commercial trash and sidewalk cleanliness.

During your campaign you pledged to transform NYC “into a global leader in sustainability, environmental preservation, green technology, and more -- because the climate crisis requires nothing less than our total commitment to a greener future.”³ We are extremely disappointed you abandoned the composting program, a necessary step toward the greener future you promised. Organics account for one-third of the waste stream and we encourage you to reassess your decision and **restore universal curbside organics collection**. MCB4 also encourages DSNY to implement a composting education program for residents and building management.

Transportation

MCB4 would like to thank the city for scheduling the installation of ADA compliant ramps at intersections - Dyer Ave and West 34th Street - North side of West 42 Street and Dyer Avenue and installing up to 30 audible pedestrian signals. We also are excited to hear a traffic planning review is underway to convert painted pedestrian islands, extensions and neck downs to permanent concrete structures (10th and 11th Avenues) including tree pits and trees.

You have asked the Department of Transportation (DOT) – like all other agencies – to cut its budget. At a time when road safety is at its worst, when the DOT is mandated to implement the Street Master plan which will crucially contribute to reducing fatalities, and to take over and expand the Open Restaurant program, a staff reduction seems ill advised. Reallocating internal resources should be required but reducing resources will be counterproductive.

We look forward to bringing a higher priority and gaining funding and further discussions on the following projects:

³ <https://twitter.com/ericadamsfornyc/status/1385224617992798218>

- Fix 31 dangerous intersections in the district where vehicles conflict with pedestrians and bicycles – in particular at West 36th Street and 9th Avenue, West 45th and 8th Avenue. MCB4 has sent two letters with the details.
- Study sidewalk capacity and pedestrian demand along the balance of 8th Avenue from 43rd Street to 50th streets; and 9th Avenue North of 34th Street. In particular, study space effectively allocated to pedestrians, sidewalk obstructions and pedestrian volumes resulting in a true pedestrian level of service.
- Install 4 sidewalk extensions per the study completed by the Community Board/and traffic engineers.
- Conduct a study of potentially installing a protected bike lane on 10th Avenue from West 13th to West 59th Streets.

In addition, the DOT is assuming a massive and critical new role - to help regulate and enforce a permanent sidewalk and roadside dining program. The Hell's Kitchen portion of our district has the second most liquor licenses in NY State creating a surfeit of outdoor dining spaces. We ask for sufficient funding to provide rapid and effective enforcement of this new program and strongly request for a serious study on the effects of the Open Restaurants text amendment on neighborhood character, noise, ADA accessibility and quality of life in Chelsea/Hell's Kitchen with significant input from the community.

Environment

MCB4 also requests serious consideration in financing the transition to electric shore power at the Manhattan Cruise Ship Terminal. Our district has some of the dirtiest air in all of NYC. When docked, ships run their engines to generate power, emitting thousands of tons of diesel particulates into the air. A ship docked for 24 hours can emit the equivalent of 34,000 idling tractor trailers.⁴ Creating a facility for cruise ships to "plug-in" to draw power from the existing power grid will reduce diesel particulate matter and improve the water quality in the Hudson River. EDC should work with the cruise ship companies to upgrade the terminal and reduce the carbon footprint of the cruise ship industry. We have been consistent with this request over the years and the repetitive "further study needed" is unacceptable.⁵

Parks

We are equally disappointed the lack of "green" funding extends to our Parks. During your campaign you committed to allocating 1% of the annual budget to Parks. Instead, you are now proposing to cut \$60 million and eliminate 3,500 positions. We hope you reassess the commitment to open, green spaces and fund the following:

⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/26/nyregion/cruise-ship-exhaust-shore-power-nyc.html>

⁵ <https://cbmanhattan.cityofnewyork.us/cb4/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2020/10/06-WPE-Letter-to-EDC-HRPT-Nadler-re-Manhattan-Cruise-Ship-Terminal-need-for-Flexibility-of-Space-Shore-Power-and-Financing.pdf>

- Upgrade DeWitt Clinton Park, Hell’s Kitchen largest Park. It provides active and passive park space as well as a significant playground. The Park has also gone without renovation in decades and is in need of serious improvements.
- Increase funding to renovate Penn South Basket Ball Courts, drinking fountains and surface area & sidewalks.
- Resurface the heavily used dog run at DeWitt Clinton Park. The surface should smooth out and soften the asphalt, which is cracked and split throughout both the small and large dog run areas. Improved water facilities should also be completed.
- Fund the renovation and construction of the bathrooms at the following parks: Dewitt Clinton Park - West 52/54 from 11/12 Ave Matthews-Palmer Park - 445 W 45th St Chelsea Park - 450 West 27th Street.

Education

Students, school staff, parents and caretakers have experienced overwhelming hardships these past 2+ years. As students return to a pre-pandemic social and educational environment, we urge the Department of Education (DOE) to expand and baseline the funding for licensed school social workers in all schools within Manhattan School District 2. Many of our school buildings require structural repairs and also need to be made compliant with the American Disabilities Act. Today’s teaching environment depends on the use of technology. The upgrading of internet/Wi-Fi access is essential to support the use of commonplace devices used in today’s classrooms. Several of our schools may be obligated to return unused federal funds. We urge DOE to find a way to recirculate these funds back to our schools. In addition, MCB4 notes the failure of DOE to meet the capital and expense needs of our schools in this year’s Preliminary Budget and urge a reexamination of the following requests:

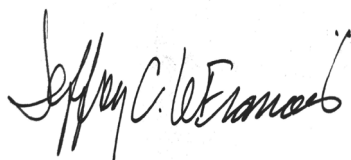
- Install security cameras in the following schools: P.S. 33 Chelsea Prep, 281 9th Avenue; P.S. 111 Adolph S. Ochs, 440 West 53rd Street; P.S. 212 Midtown West, 328 West 48th Street.
- Repair roof at Manhattan Bridges High School at 525 West 50th Street. The leaking roof over the science labs are inhibiting students from utilizing the labs as well as hindering the school from having their out-of-date labs upgraded.
- Make the P.S. 111 School, at 440 West 53rd Street, gymnasium and auditorium ADA accessible.
- Elevator replacement at the Bayard Rustin Educational Complex at 351 West 18th Street.
- Install security door alarm system at P.S. 11 at 320 West 21 Street.
- Install an auditorium HVAC system at the Business of Sports High School at 439 West 49th Street.

We thank the city for providing baseline funding for social workers in all our district’s public schools and request more clarity and detail on the rollout.

Arts

Right off Broadway, our District is home to many in the Arts community. The last two years of the pandemic laid bare the true value and economic might of the performance and visual arts industries in New York City. Their success is critical to that of MCB4 and all of NYC. MCB4 has been a long supporter of independent theaters, art initiatives and independent artists and we are deeply concerned your proposed budget slashes \$72 million from the Department of Cultural Affairs. The arts define so much of the city's culture and the DCLA is recognized as the country's largest cultural funding agency. To eliminate 35% of its funding at a time when artist organizations are climbing out of COVID is an assault on the city's identity.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey LeFrancois
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Leslie Boghosian Murphy
Second Vice Chair
Chair, CB4 Budget Task Force

CC: Hon. Mark D. Levine, Manhattan Borough President