



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD No. 4

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LESLIE BOGHOSIAN MURPHY
Chair

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District Manager

January 13, 2026

Javier Lojan
Acting Commissioner
NYC Department of Sanitation
59 Maiden Lane, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10038

Re: Draft Solid Waste Management Plan 2026

Dear Acting Commissioner Lojan:

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft 2026 Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP26). Sanitation remains among the top concerns identified in our annual Statement of District Needs, and we welcome DSNY's renewed, comprehensive focus on improving the City's waste management systems, advancing the circular economy and enhancing neighborhood quality of life. We recognize the scale of the challenge and commend DSNY for presenting a plan that addresses long-standing infrastructure issues while incorporating ambitious goals for waste reduction, diversion and education. Manhattan Community Board 4 at its January 7, 2026 Full Board meeting voted to approve the following comments by vote of 44 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to vote.

As a dense, mixed-use district with heavy residential, commercial, institutional and nightlife activity, MCB4 is deeply invested in the success of the initiatives outlined in this plan. We are encouraged by several elements of SWMP26 that have the potential to meaningfully improve waste handling, reduce environmental burdens and strengthen public engagement within our district.

1. Expansion of Drop-Off Programs and Community Reuse Events

We strongly support the plan's intention to expand drop-off opportunities for textiles, paint, electronics, carpets and other specialty materials, as well as DSNY's commitment to increase

community reuse and recycling events in every community district. MCB4 has long advocated for more accessible waste diversion options — particularly for residents in multifamily buildings, NYCHA developments and households with limited storage space. Expanding these programs will help keep recoverable materials out of the refuse stream while also providing more convenient, neighborhood-level opportunities for reuse, repair and proper disposal.

2. Strengthening Organics Programs at NYCHA and Schools

MCB4 is encouraged by DSNY’s emphasis on the expansion of composting programs at NYCHA campuses and New York City Public Schools. These institutional settings are critical leverage points for long-term culture change around sorting and organics recovery. Many MCB4 families rely on local public schools, and we have three NYCHA developments — improved organics education, paired with reliable service will advance both climate goals and local cleanliness.

3. Planned Growth of Composting Infrastructure Citywide

We also acknowledge and support the planned expansion of composting infrastructure, including the creation of new composting sites and upgrades to existing facilities. Building out local and citywide processing capacity is essential to ensuring the long-term success of mandatory organics collection. MCB4 looks forward to continued updates on siting, capacity, technology choices and opportunities for community partnerships.

4. Commercial Waste Zones Implementation

MCB4 has consistently advocated for stronger oversight and route rationalization in the commercial carting sector. We therefore welcome DSNY’s commitment to implementing Commercial Waste Zones and establishing consistent standards, expanded organics requirements and improved data collection. Our district experiences extraordinarily high commercial activity — from restaurants and entertainment venues to retail and office uses — and we anticipate that Commercial Waste Zones will reduce truck traffic, improve nighttime street conditions, and support higher diversion rates.

5. Containerization Rollout for Multifamily Buildings and Schools

We are encouraged by the planned rollout of containerization for buildings with more than nine units, a change that aligns with MCB4’s long-standing advocacy to remove loose bags from sidewalks, reduce rodent activity and improve overall street cleanliness. Many buildings in MCB4 fall within this category and look forward to working with DSNY to ensure that containerization is implemented equitably, efficiently and in a manner that considers our district’s unique density and sidewalk constraints. To that end, we request that the department work with local tenant and block associations to determine the best placement locations for any on-street containers considering vehicle obligations (i.e. private carting, school buses, drop-off/pick-up locations, etc.)

Additionally, we strongly support fast-tracking better containerization for schools, which experience some of the heaviest daily waste volumes and can become focal points for litter and rodent concerns. Consistent standards for school waste setouts and equipment would greatly benefit the surrounding community.

6. Extended Producer Responsibility Legislation

MCB4 also expresses strong support for the Solid Waste Management Plan's commitment to expanding Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs. The plan outlines important steps to shift the management of difficult and hazardous materials away from the City and onto manufacturers — where it belongs. This includes developing pathways to incorporate recycled tire rubber into infrastructure projects; strengthening EPR policies for batteries and improving oversight of rechargeable battery disposal to reduce fire risks; creating systems for the responsible recycling of photovoltaic (solar) panels with clear diversion targets over the next decade; and advancing producer responsibility frameworks for gas cylinders to ensure safe handling and recovery. Together, these initiatives address some of the most challenging materials in the waste stream. We also underscore the need to reduce the use of hard-to-recycle packaging materials overall so that producers, rather than residents or the municipal waste system, bear responsibility for wasteful or non-recyclable product design. Plastic packaging has become an increasingly large part of the municipal solid waste stream and EPR will render them easier to capture and recycle. We look forward to the day when packaging is further reduced and such packaging that exists can readily be collected and remanufactured for additional use thus adding to the robustness of the circular economy. Strengthening and expanding EPR programs will improve diversion rates, enhance safety, reduce disposal costs and support the City's transition to a more sustainable circular economy.

7. Updating the Residential Waste Management Plan Approval Process

MCB4 strongly supports DSNY's continued refinement of the Residential Waste Management Plan approval process, which has already proven to be a critical improvement since the 2022 rule first required large new developments and major building alterations to integrate waste management planning into their design submissions. Prior to this requirement, many large buildings were constructed without adequate internal storage or handling systems, resulting in massive piles of refuse bags on the sidewalk that obstruct pedestrian flow, degrade neighborhood conditions, and attract rats. The current process represents an important shift toward designing buildings that responsibly manage the waste they generate.

As DSNY works to update this approval process to incorporate organics and all recyclable materials—including textiles and e-waste—we encourage further exploration of strategies that reduce the volume of material placed at the curb. This includes assessing the feasibility of internal compactors to decrease overall refuse volume and improve on-site storage. For exceptionally large and dense buildings, MCB4 also recommends exploring roll-on/roll-off compactors or similar high-capacity systems to prevent the accumulation of large quantities of

bagged waste that may exceed the limits of standard containerization approaches such as Empire Bins. These design-based solutions are essential to achieving cleaner streets, improving diversion rates, and reducing the operational burden on both residents and DSNY.

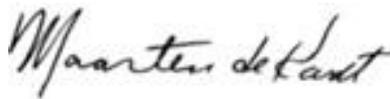
MCB4 appreciates the thoughtful and forward-looking work reflected in SWMP26. We support DSNY's efforts to reduce waste generation, expand diversion opportunities, build a robust circular economy and improve the cleanliness and health of our neighborhoods. We look forward to continued collaboration as these programs advance, particularly on containerization, organics expansion, Commercial Waste Zones and community-level reuse and recycling initiatives.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Leslie Boghosian Murphy
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Maarten de Kadt
Co-Chair
Waterfront, Parks & Environment Committee