

# EXCERPTS FROM COMMUNITY BOARDS' "STATEMENTS ON THE PRELIMINARY BUDGET" FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016

Reactions to Agency Responses listed in the FY '16 Register of Community Board Budget Requests are collectively listed under Agency Subheading

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## Health & Mental Hygiene

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### **BRONX 7**

The agency's response to tracking code 107201402C is inadequate. The Board strongly feels that the current arrangement as it relates to animal shelters in New York City shortchanges the Bronx. We are fully aware of the costs associated with construction of a new facility, but we strongly believe that this is a core municipal service for which the administration must find the necessary funding. The Board is ready and willing to assist the administration in locating a suitable location for such a facility.

### **BROOKLYN 1**

**Pest Control** – We have seen a steady rise in the rodent population in parts of the district. Pest control services and the dissemination of educational anti-rat information by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene are greatly needed to ensure the health and safety of our residents. We support efforts by the City to ensure that all construction sites are complying with rodent control protocols as well as taking anti-mosquito steps in regards to standing water and halt any spread of West Nile fever. We continue to urge coordination of baiting and exterminating efforts between the DOH&MH's Pest Control Unit and the MTA. The "L" and "G" lines crisscross the district and have become an underground home and travel route for rodents. Baiting is needed on both above ground structures and underground areas to stem the growth of the pest.

### **BROOKLYN 14**

The agency's commitment to reviewing and assessing smoking cessation programs is gratifying and the board will support the agency in outreach and in other ways to address the recent uptick in the numbers of smokers.

The board strongly supports funding for adequate staffing levels for pest control issues. The agency's inspection increase is gratifying and the board supports the walk-through program.

### **MANHATTAN 4**

**Department for Homeless Services (DHS)**

**Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)**

**Asks:**

- **Increase DHS and DOHMH funding to maintain and expand existing programs.**
- **Provide funding for additional shelter facilities to allow for the downsizing of the West 25<sup>th</sup> Street BRC site so as to alleviate community conflicts.**

Homelessness has long been and continues to be a major problem in MCD4. While we have productively welcomed numerous and varied homelessness-related services to our district, these facilities must be properly sized to fit seamlessly into our residential community. The BRC facility on West 25<sup>th</sup> Street is a prime example where too large of a facility becomes a hardship for a community. The negative impact to businesses and residents of the surrounding area has been well documented by our Board. Multiple facilities with a smaller capacity will help to provide the balance our community needs.

MCD4 is further concerned that there be adequate funding for those service components directed at preventing homelessness. We urge full funding of the adult rental assistance program; the anti-eviction and SRO legal services programs, which provide free legal services to low- and moderate-income people faced with eviction from their homes, as well as services for low-income Single Room Occupancy housing tenants; and aftercare services, which prevent families placed in permanent housing from returning to shelters.

In the past, we have stressed our concern 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.

The contracting process for shelters also bears further scrutiny, as the City is currently paying far more for shelter beds than would be required to pay for permanent affordable housing subsidies. Some of the funding dedicated to shelter beds should instead be directed to rental subsidies to keep people in their homes, rather than place them in temporary shelters.

Furthermore, we encourage the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to improve service delivery through additional funding. MCD4 is home to a significant population who suffers from mental illness, particularly among our homeless population in and around Port Authority Bus Terminal and Times Square. As noted in our comments regarding the Department for the Aging, there is a very real need to baseline funding to meet the growing mental health needs of our older adult population.

## **MANHATTAN 5**

305201302E—The city must increase funding for education and prevention efforts to reduce the spread of HIV and other STIs.

## **MANHATTAN 6**

Rat infestations have significantly increased in Manhattan Community District Six. Rats are present in our parks, around construction sites, and in areas of frequent littering. We appreciate the Department's efforts to address the problem with inspections, "walk-through" tours and follow-ups to 311 calls; however, the problem does not seem to improve. Budget funds should be allocated for a multi-agency effort that includes DOHMH, DSNY, DOT, and Parks for a major reassessment of current procedures and implementation of new efforts to abate rat infestations.

This Department should also work more closely with our Board and the Department of Housing and Preservation to identify current and future plans to expand supportive housing for the mentally ill, as described under the NYNY III and IV programs.

C-09: 306200102C - Additional housing for the homeless mentally ill (see also HPD)

E-10: 306201601E – Increase funding for rat abatement

## **MANHATTAN 9**

Separate and apart from affordable housing and educational needs within District 9, CB9 remains attentive to the importance of striving to ensure and maintain a reasonably comfortable quality of life for District 9 residents, ever mindful that failure to be assiduous in this regard shall likely lead to adverse consequences including, among others things, the relocation of middle-class residents, which thereby renders District 9 less capable both politically and otherwise to guard against the advent of further socio-economic adversity. In the spirit of recognizing the importance of guarding against such adverse consequences, CB9 submitted expense requests to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Department of Sanitation, and the Police Department.

A case in point is CB9's second Expense Request, petitioning for an increase in funds for pest and rodent control, to decisively address the infestation of rats, mosquitos, bed bugs and the increasing voracious raccoon population (Expense Request No. 2). The statement of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene ("DOHMH"), which has annually become a rote response, that "[The Department] continues to increase the number of inspections performed annually" is non-responsive to District 9's atypical geography as compared with other Community Districts.

As stated hereinbefore, District 9's parks and open spaces approximate to thirty percent (30%) of the District's total acreage. Consequently, the DOHMH must develop a targeted strategy specifically for District 9. For example, the Columbia University Expansion, which is presently among the largest massive construction projects in all New York, has (as was anticipated) exacerbated pest and rodent control within the District, especially in the Manhattanville section of the District. Unfortunately, this Section of District 9 abuts the Harlem Piers and Riverside Park, both of which are (at least presently) heavily-utilized scenic, recreational areas and pedestrian thoroughfares, notwithstanding being inundated with rats and mosquitos.

Not unsurprisingly, the North River Wastewater Treatment Plant, which incidentally releases 800 million gallons of rain runoff and untreated sewage into the Hudson River, has been detrimental to the health and environmental safety of District 9's landscape and, most importantly, District 9 residents. Specifically, the North River Wastewater Treatment Plant is located within Riverside Park, and the Treatment Plant itself serves as the foundation for its own Park – that is, Riverbank State Park. Although the infestation of rodents and mosquitos around the Treatment Plant was anticipated by CB9, CB9 did not in any way foresee the possibility that both New York State and the DOHMH would leave the health and safety hazards brought by rats, mosquitos, and raccoons, without the allocation of any resources, to be singularly resolved by District 9 residents.

In short, the DOHMH's response altogether ignores the interconnection between District 9's unique (parks and recreational) geography and the import of promoting sports and recreational activities which, as hereinbefore emphasized, would provide the City and District 9 residents with the proper means to cost-effectively reduce adolescent crime rates, childhood obesity, health, safety and, by virtue of the benefits thereof, the incidence of residential relocation from parts of District 9 (*see* Expense Request Nos. 2, 3, 6, 9, and 12, *inter alia*).