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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

March 2021 Full Board Report to Manhattan Community Board 6

Full Newsletter: <https://mailchi.mp/manhattanbp/weekof3-1events?e=f80849c37e>

- 1) **Open Culture:** Last month, after the City's "Open Culture" program initially included only streets below 116th Street, I put out a call for artists and cultural groups to recommend uptown streets. I submitted more than 80 recommendations to the Department of Transportation and will continue to push for uptown neighborhoods to be fairly represented in this great opportunity for the arts. The Department of Transportation will reopen the process for more submissions in the spring, so please keep your suggestions coming! Applications for Open Culture street permits opened this past Monday, March 1st.
- 2) **Vaccines:** On February 10th, I sent a letter to Governor Cuomo and Mayor de Blasio asking that they ensure homebound New Yorkers get vaccinated. I was happy to see that the Mayor announced on February 12th that he is working on a plan to vaccinate homebound seniors and home health aides. Additionally, I submitted testimony last month to the Committee on Health, Aging, and Technology during their Zoom-Webinar titled "*Oversight - COVID-19 and Seniors: Addressing Equity, Access to the Vaccine, and Scheduling Vaccination Appointments Online in NYC.*" I have also formed a [Manhattan Vaccine Task Force](#) to improve local implementation of, and increase health equity within, the City and State's vaccination efforts. It is composed of community-based organizations, volunteer groups, elected officials, Community Board chairs, and other stakeholders from across Manhattan with on-the-ground knowledge. Please contact info@manhattanbp.nyc.gov to learn more. You can view an informative testing and vaccines town hall on [MNN's Facebook page](#). I participated in the town hall with the National Black Leadership Commission on Health and community partners to dispel misinformation on January 27th. I also created a [testing and vaccines webpage](#) on my site to create a one-stop portal. If you need assistance booking your vaccine appointment, my Northern Manhattan Office staff are available to assist you.
- 3) **Senior Quality of Life Initiative:** Recently, I announced my new joint initiative with the New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM), "Age-friendly Manhattan". "Age-Friendly Manhattan" will address the issues faced by older New Yorkers in Manhattan. The initiative will continue to solicit feedback from older New Yorkers to inform city planning and policy and will mobilize older people and their providers to advocate for local age-friendly improvements. To launch the "Age-friendly Manhattan" we have issued a new report, [Steps to a More Age-friendly Manhattan](#), surveying over 1,000 older Manhattanites about their attitudes and experiences with regards to everything from transportation to housing to community support and health services.
- 4) **Manhattan Community Board Applications and Community Leadership Training Series:** I am happy to report that my office saw a very large surge of applications in the runup to this year's application deadline, and we wound up surpassing our application total over last year. My office will be in touch regarding next steps, which will include interviews for potential applicants. Those re-applicants who submitted their application after February 1st will also have to interview. My office's annual Community Leadership Training Series will return the week of March 15th. My office will send information to the CB 6 office and it will also include the dates in my upcoming newsletter.
- 5) **New Policy Updates:** I was excited to see NBC's reporting that ["the Mayor announced that Community Councils will have a hand in selecting Commanding Officers starting this year."](#) I participated in a call on

February 11th with NYPD and the other Borough Presidents about this initiative and I look forward to sharing more information as it becomes available. Speaker Corey Johnson has proposed that the City institute a comprehensive zoning plan that would improve our current, piecemeal process. It is a decent idea that needs to be executed well. I testified last week before the City Council's Governmental Operations and Land Use Committees about how to enhance the proposal and increase public engagement in the process. The storefront vacancy database that I helped create was supposed to go live last week. Due to COVID, the Department of Finance has extended the deadline for property owners to submit information about vacancies, so the dataset may now reflect the impact of the pandemic on storefronts. I am also seeking public input on my annual Borough Board Budget Priorities Report, a statutory requirement of the City Charter. By Tuesday, March 16th, please fill out a short survey about what budget issues are important to you. In addition, you can submit additional comments to mbpobudget@gmail.com. Responses to the questionnaire will remain confidential and will be added to my final report to the Mayor, City Council, and Office of Management and Budget.