Alida Camp
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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan

February 18, 2020

Hon. Bill De Blasio
Mayor of the City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor De Blasio:

We continue to be disappointed by the responses to our Preliminary Budget and Community Needs Request. We hope that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Department of City Planning, and your office understand that our request reflects the ongoing needs of our community. We understand funds are limited but more consideration should be given to the priorities and needs of the Community Board when developing the budget.

The New York Public Libraries:

The libraries are a vital part of our community and continue to be used by all residents now more than ever. We are pleased to see that the NYPL is supported in a number of our capital requests (#2, 4, 11) and our expense request (#19) and we will continue to support this essential agency. We do request funds from our elected officials, but their discretionary funds are limited. More than 20% of Manhattan Community District 8's residents are senior citizens – a high number of whom are frail elderly. As libraries are essential to democracy, the fact that the Yorkville Branch Library is not accessible is simply unacceptable. Furthermore, we continue to stress the importance of restoring Sunday service to one library on a rotating basis so that our working parents will be able to spend time with their children at a library and our residents who need access to a computer will receive it, even on Sundays. We encourage your office to allocate the necessary funds to ensure this much needed agency can effectively continue to address the needs of the community.

The Department of Sanitation and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene:

The Upper East Side has been identified by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene as having a chronic rodent problem. With the opening of the Second Avenue Subway and an increased number of new developments, bars and restaurants in the district, a more proactive response needs to be made by the agencies to address this issue. We have repeatedly requested additional corner trash cans and recycling containers as well as asking for more rodent extermination to assist with this ongoing issue. See capital request (#8) and expense request (# 4, 11, 17, 20). In response to our expense request (#20),

the Department of Sanitation asked for a list of areas of concern, but this is a community-wide problem, for example, rat homes have been identified by community members. We encourage Sanitation and DOH to allocate more funds for inspections as well as obtaining the necessary corner baskets, Big Bellies and recycling bins to address this persistent problem.

The Department of Parks and Recreation:

As in previous years, we are pleased to see the agency supports a number of our expense requests (#5, 6, 9, 24 and 26) but are unable to allocate the funds for FY2021. The maintenance, safety, and upkeep of our local parks is essential to our residents. We have the least amount of open space and park land in the City and our local parks should be clean, safe and rodent free. In order for this to happen, we are asking the agency to reconsider its responses and allocate the necessary funds to our request. We are also pleased that your office and the City Council has allocated $41 million for work on the Esplanade between 63rd and 96th Streets and that design work is underway for phase one. See capital request (#3). **We will continue to request funding for this project until complete.** Regarding our request for enhancements at Ruppert Park (#6) and John Jay Park (#7), we would be happy to meet with the Commissioner to discuss the request.

The Department of Transportation:

The Board has become increasingly alarmed by the increased number of uneven streets and sidewalks, as well as potholes and the inability to cross a street safely, capital request (#5) and expense request (#7 and 12). The response "the agency will accommodate this issue within existing resources" to a number of our requests does not provide an adequate response and commitment to address these problems. We ask that additional funds be allocated to ensure that all streets are made safe for the constituents, especially the elderly.

The Department of Education:

We lack the appropriate number of 3-K, Pre-K, and elementary public school seats desperately needed for the growing number of families with school age children, who now reside within the boundaries of Manhattan Community District 8. In response to expense request (#1), your agency said that further study is needed. Community Board 8 is calling on you to do that study promptly. We continue to advocate for this much needed request and ask that the DOE allocate additional funds for developing more local seats, so that families are not forced to travel outside of their community, especially for families with small children or families with more than one child. They are often forced to travel great distances to enroll their child in a school or they must split their time traveling from one school to another for their children.

The Department of Youth and Community Development:

The Board found your response to expense request #3 inadequate. Our youth need to be occupied and we are specifically requesting that you fund out of school time and DayCare programs for all of our children who either attend school or whose parents work in Manhattan Community District 8.

The Department of Buildings:

We are calling on the Department of Buildings to increase the number of inspectors and to look into the process of self-certification and assess its effectiveness (expense request #13).

We hope that our comments to the Preliminary Budget, which are based on a detailed assessment of community needs, will be included in the Final Budget. Thank you for your consideration.

The Police Department:

We are urging the provision of funding to increase the current number of Traffic Control agents, particularly by the Marine Transfer Station. There have been two accidents involving sanitation trucks in the less than one year the facility has been open. Children play there and in the nearby playground, and go to nearby schools. The visibility of children would be increased by the presence of ample numbers of traffic enforcement officers. This applies as well throughout the District.

Sincerely,

Alida Camp
Chair

Barbara Chocky
Chair, Budget Committee

cc: Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Carolyn Maloney, 12th Congressional District Representative
Hon. Liz Krueger, NYS Senator, 28th Senatorial District
Hon. Dan Quart, 73rd Assembly District
Hon. Rebecca Seawright, 76th Assembly District
Hon. Keith Powers, NYC Council Member, 4th Council District
Hon. Ben Kallos, NYC Council Member, 5th Council District