



BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 8



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Laura Spalter, Chairperson

Vacant, District Manager

February 15, 2023

OFFICERS:

Vice Chairperson
Bob Bender

Secretary
Robert Jacklosky

Treasurer
Scott Krompinger

The Honorable Eric Adams
Office of the Mayor
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Attn: Jacques Jiha, OMB Director

Re: Statement on Fiscal Year 2024 Preliminary Budget

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

Aging
Lisa Daub

Budget
David Gellman

Economic Development
Nicholas R. Fazio

Education, Libraries & Cultural Affairs
Sylvia Alexander

Environment & Sanitation
Dr. Camelia Tepelus

Health, Hospitals & Social Services
Omar Murray

Housing
Lee Chong

Land Use
Charles G. Moerdler

Law, Rules & Ethics
Martin Wolpoff

Parks & Recreation
Debra Travis

Public Safety
Edward Green

Traffic & Transportation
Kelli Buford

Youth
Dr. Julia Gomez

Dear Mayor Adams:

Bronx Community Board No. 8 (BxCB8) held a public hearing on February 14, 2023, providing members of our community the opportunity to comment on city agency responses to our 31-capital budget and 38 expense budget priority requests for Fiscal Year 2024. There were several community leaders who testified at this public hearing. Their comments included the need for more park enforcement, greater traffic enforcement, library programs, and increased police presence for public safety. In addition, we personally participated in numerous local and borough-wide planning and agency review sessions to help develop and prioritize these requests. The board will continue to advocate directly with City agencies and our elected officials for the myriad of concerns voiced by the people of this district through our community board.

Upon reviewing the agency responses, Community Board 8 greatly appreciates the city’s purchase of the **CSX right-of-way**, enabling the daylighting of Tibbett’s Brook. BxCB8 has long advocated for daylighting Tibbetts Brook, which will divert and prevent billions of gallons of water from overwhelming our combined sewer system and polluting our rivers.

For years, our budget priorities have called for significant capital improvements for **Marble Hill** and **Ft. Independence Houses**, which include mechanical and security systems and sidewalks. Residents have often found themselves without heat and hot water for long periods due to malfunctioning boilers. We are gratified that these priorities are included in the Housing Authority’s “department estimates” for fy 2024. We urge that next steps progress quickly to address these serious issues. BxCB8 is aware that it is not possible for every request to be funded every year. However, at the same time, we note a frequent refrain on the capital budget side citing their agency’s lack of resources to undertake various capital projects and suggesting that we go to our local elected officials for special funding. While it is

clear that there are limited resources for capital projects, it is also clear that the lack of capital budgets within agencies hinders their ability to plan for the physical plant of New York City in general, and Bronx Community District 8 in particular.

Bronx Community Board 8 urges the mayor to reconsider other critical needs of our community and offers the following comments:

Department of Transportation

The agency notes that the requests to repair several step streets are not contiguous. Please note that while the locations are not contiguous, each is within the Community Board District. The proposed serve as primary access to the central business districts and transportation hubs within the community. Further, the current state of these step streets presents a severe risk to those who traverse them and subject the city to unnecessary litigation as misaligned steps and breaks in the cobblestone create inherent dangers. As such, it is not in the interest of the agency to forego funding of requests to repair sidewalks and major travel conduits.

The following step streets are prioritized:

- Reconstruct Van Cortlandt Park South step street from Van Cortlandt Park South to Gale Place including integrating green infrastructure to capture storm water.
- Broadway between W. 231st and W 233 Street
- W. 231st between Sedgwick Ave. and Kingsbridge Ave.

Parks & Recreation

While noted that the agency supports increased park personnel, it is essential that major funding be allocated in the budget. Last year, CB 8 passed a resolution calling for 1% of the city's budget be allocated for parks. Currently, the entire borough has only four mobile Parks Enforcement Patrol Commands, consisting of forty-nine total PEP officers to cover all shifts seven days a week. Community Board 8 has 20% of the public parkland in the Bronx. Park maintenance, cleanliness, and safety are paramount. Our residents depend heavily on our parks and the need for more PEP officers, long a Board priority.

We continue to prioritize the redesign & reconstruction of Bailey Avenue Playground in Kingsbridge, to introduce green space, update equipment and update deteriorated drains. We recommend adding the adjacent Tibbett's Tail area into an expanded Bailey Avenue Park area. Likewise, we advocate for reconstruction of Old Fort Four Park including playground equipment and basketball courts. Both of these projects are in underserved communities.

NYPD

We urge hiring additional school safety agents due to increased violence during school dismissal from the John F. Kennedy multi-high school campus. The board urges reinstating funding for the Police Athletic League afterschool programs and Youth Crime Prevention services in order to engage our youth proactively.

Department of Sanitation

DSNY is “evaluating” the Board’s request for funding for additional trash removal in heavily trafficked under-served commercial areas throughout our district, especially in designated Environmental Justice areas of Kingsbridge, Kingsbridge Heights, Marble Hill, and Broadway commercial corridor. Funding is essential to alleviate unsightly litter and eliminate a source for rats, which adversely impacts the health, well-being, and quality of life of our residents.

Education

BxCB8 has requested funding for a nursing room for the Health Services Career Technical Education (CTE) program at Marie Curie HS for Medicine, Nursing & Health Professions. The DOE response that they are unable to prioritize funding for his project request at this time is unacceptable. This project has been approved by the School Construction Authority but needs Department of Education funding. Education is a top priority for BxCB8 and this project, along with restoring funds for **Library Services** is particularly important in a post pandemic world.

The members of Community Board No. 8 continuously work for the betterment of our neighborhoods. We do this in cooperation with our residents and hope the administration understands the underlying reasons for our budget requests. We will continue to work with the city agencies and our elected officials to advance the important priorities within our Community District. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely yours,



Laura Spalter`
Chair, Bronx Community Board 8

CC: NYC Office of Management & Budget
Hon. Vanessa L. Gibson, Bronx Borough President
Hon. Eric Dinowitz, Council Member, District 11
Hon. Pierina Ana Sanchez, Council Member, District 14
Hon. Carmen De La Rosa, Council Member, District 10