Shareing & Careing

BREAST CANCER SUPPORT SERVICES • FOUNDED 1994

FY 2027 NYC Council

Executive Budget Hearing

Public Session

Hon. Linda Lee, Chair

NYC Council Finance Committee

June 10, 2026

Submitted on behalf of:

Anna Kril

Founder & President

Laura Jean Hawkins

Advisory Board Chair

Astoria/Queens SHARE-ING and CARE-ING, Inc.

(dba SHAREing & CAREing)

31-19 Newtown Avenue

Suite 401

Astoria, NY 11102

718 777-5766

www.shareing-careing.org

On behalf of the Board and Staff of SHAREing & CAREing, we thank you for the Council's longstanding support of community organizations, including ours, which assist cancer survivors, their families and caregivers AND for your support of our funding under the Council's *Cancer Services* Initiative.

We are here today to once again URGE the Council to increase funding to this Initiative and to fully support our funding request of $250,000. If granted, this would be our first increase since the creation of the Initiative.

SHAREing & CAREing was founded to address the needs of Queens women living with breast and/or ovarian cancer. It was our position then, and remains so today, that Queens residents should not have to leave the Borough for quality cancer treatment, care and support. Through the years, our reach has expanded and we now serve women and men with all types of cancer.

We are a one-stop, grassroots, community-based organization which provides **FREE** supportive services to Queens cancer survivors, their families, caregivers and community members. We strive to reduce fear and eliminate cultural and financial barriers in order to promote early detection and treatment as well as to improve access to life-saving services.

Through our diverse programs and services, we assist approximately **3,000** individuals a year, providing bilingual cancer awareness and education, linkages to free or low-cost cancer screenings and treatment, patient navigation, case management, family support services, emergent needs assistance, community wellness programs, individual counseling facilitated by our licensed clinical social worker and peer led support groups. Additionally, we provide assistance with insurance matters, identifying and applying for public entitlements/benefits, transportation to and from treatment, chemotherapeutic drug coverage, surgical camisoles, mastectomy bras, prosthesis and wigs.

We have strong relationships with our public and private hospitals and are unique in that our staff and volunteers have deep roots in diverse neighborhoods, including Spanish-speaking immigrant and Black faith-based populations. As such, we are trusted by many disparate Queens communities.

Over the course of the past two years, we have provided programming in **26 of the 51 Council Districts** through our High School Outreaches, our Community Wellness Programs at Public Libraries, Senior Centers and other community venues and through the provision of direct services to those living with cancer. And while the majority of those we serve reside in Queens, we have also assisted cancer survivors from other boroughs. **No one is ever turned away.**

There is currently a cancer epidemic in our state, our country and throughout the world. Cancer is occurring in more adults – considered healthy before their cancer diagnosis - under the age of 50. These are called "early-onset" cancers which are diagnosed in adults between the ages of 18-49. Most individuals in this age group are too young for routine cancer screenings – for example, mammography screening typically starts at age 40 and colonoscopies at age 45.

Why is the happening? No one knows but we can tell you this. More people in our community are being diagnosed with cancer. **And they are turning to us for help.** Help that is getting harder and harder to provide with our limited funding.

Since 2020, we have experienced a **25% increase** in the demand for our services. Funding under the Cancer Services Initiative, however, has stayed flat since the Initiative's creation.

Unlike contracts with DOHMH and other agencies, Council discretionary contracts are not eligible for COLA increases. The only way for the Council to address COLA is to enhance funding for its Initiatives. Given the cancer epidemic we are facing, rising

medical costs, rising job instability, fluctuating inflation and the elimination of NYS Article VI matching funds to CBO's under the *Cancer Services* Initiative, we seek your help.

We urge you to act on behalf of the cancer community in Queens and throughout the city by enhancing funding to the Cancer Services Initiative and supporting SHAREing & CAREing's request of $250,000. Increased funding by the Council will allow us to continue assisting cancer survivors, including those currently in treatment, in a significant and meaningful way, providing them with comfort and hope.

Thank you.

Testimony Supporting Funding for Community Composting

Finance Committee Hearing

June 10, 2026

My name is Jane Selden, and I chair 350NYC's Waste Reduction Committee. As a group committed to promoting just and equitable solutions to the climate crisis, we recognize the vital role NYC's Community Composting programs play in educating New Yorkers about the benefits of organics recycling, one of the most important ways individuals can actively engage in combating the climate crisis. **We commend the Council for funding Community Composting last year through the Schedule C Initiative funding for Community Composting and urge the Council to continue to allocate funds for this valuable work for the fiscal year 2027.**

Composting organic waste is essential if NYC is to reach its greenhouse gas reduction goals. Forty percent of the City's waste stream is composed of recyclable food scraps and yard waste. When this organic waste ends up in landfill, it emits methane, a greenhouse gas 80X more potent than CO2 over a twenty-year period. Landfills are the largest source of anthropogenic methane emissions in the United States. When organic waste is sent to incinerators, the process of burning material with so much moisture is very energy-intensive, resulting in high levels of greenhouse gas emissions.

Diverting organic material from landfill and incinerators will also have a positive impact on the health of communities living near these facilities and near waste transfer stations in the city. The majority of these waste transfer stations are located in low- income communities and communities of color, where toxic emissions from heavy truck traffic is linked to very high rates of asthma and other respiratory illnesses.

The city has committed to achieving zero (recyclable) waste to landfill by 2030 and has recently begun enforcing the mandatory curbside composting law as an important step towards achieving this goal. However, ensuring widespread participation in the organics recycling program will require many New Yorkers to acquire new habits and behaviors regarding waste disposal. People need to not only understand the nuts and bolts of source separation but also feel motivated to do it. Based on conversations I've had with neighbors and while tabling at local events, I think there is often a lack of awareness of the direct benefits of composting. This is where the Community Composting programs play an essential role. A flyer or sign posted above a brown bin tells you **how** to recycle food scraps, but it doesn't tell you **why** it's important. Signs and flyers are no substitute for a friendly, informative conversation with a community composter at a farmer's market food scrap drop-off site or the hands-on experience of applying composting to create healthy soil in community gardens and to neighborhood street trees.

These composting programs also strengthen communities by bringing together New Yorkers of diverse backgrounds and ages with the common goals of creating

nutrient-rich soil, growing healthy food, and diverting waste from landfill and incinerators. Many of the social benefits community composting engenders like cooperation, mutual respect, and community resilience can't be quantified numerically, but their value on a human level is immense.

I'd also like to point out that **100% of the food scraps collected by local composting organizations are converted to compost, whereas 80% of the organic waste from City's curbside composting program isn't composted.** It's sent to Newtown Creek's wastewater treatment plant where it's anaerobically digested to produce biogas (methane) and fertilizer. **We believe that the city should prioritize converting organic waste into compost, not biogas, utilizing local processing operations to reduce transportation emissions and produce high quality compost.** This can be used to nourish the depleted soil of local parks, community gardens, street trees, and urban farms. And, as the city faces rising sea levels and more frequent torrential downpours, compost can play a vital role in flood mitigation because it acts as a sponge, retaining up six times its weight in water. NYC has spent millions of dollars developing green infrastructure: over 12,000 rain gardens have been created, and the City's first mini-forest has recently been planted on Roosevelt Island. The application of compost- enriched soil will enhance the effectiveness of these climate resiliency measures.

The city currently spends over $190 million dollars a year exporting food scraps and yard waste to landfill and incinerators. It makes fiscal sense to generously fund organizations that play a vital role in diverting organic material from these waste sites, and instead turn it the valuable resource known as "black gold."

Thank you.

Jane Selden
Chair, WasteNøt Committee
350NYC

From: Suzette Simon
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] While We"re All Feeling Knicks Fever... / Testimony Exec Budget Wed June 10 @ 9:30 am
Date: Saturday, June 13, 2026 9:31:05 AM
Attachments: image.png
image.png
image.png

[redacted]

Testimony Exec Budget Wed June 10 @ 9:30 am

Dear Speaker Menin, Cultural Affairs Deputy Speaker Williams, CM Epstein and Esteeemed Members of the City Council,

Like many New Yorkers, I've spent the past few weeks riding a wave of Knicks fever. The city has been buzzing with excitement, strangers have been talking to each other again, and for a brief moment we've all remembered what it feels like to be part of something bigger than ourselves.

That's also what the arts do.

I'm Suzette Simon, Founder and Artistic Director of NYLaughs, a nonprofit that has spent nearly two decades bringing free comedy to parks, plazas, libraries, and public spaces throughout New York City.

As you enter final budget negotiations, I urge you to restore and baseline the additional **$20 million for arts and culture**, create a **Culture Capital Plan**, and increase funding for the **Coalition of Theatres of Color to $8 million** with flexible operating support.

A few budget reasons to support culture:

- Because therapy is expensive, but a free comedy show in the park is still free.
- Because the arts are the only city service where people willingly gather without being promised free pizza.
- Because every dollar invested in culture generates economic activity, while every dollar not invested generates another "For Lease" sign.
- Because artists make neighborhoods vibrant long before real estate brochures discover them.
- Because laughter is one of the few things in New York that still feels affordable.
- Because Knicks fever eventually ends, but culture keeps New York's spirit alive year-round.

At NYLaughs, we've watched strangers become neighbors, parks become gathering places, and communities reconnect simply by sharing a laugh.

New York is the cultural capital of the world. Let's fund it like we mean it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Warmly—with love, light and LOLs,

Suzette :)
Your Local LOL Dealer
Founder and Artistic Director, NYLaughs
Tiny Team operating on Scrappy Magic and NY Delusion
Using comedy to connect New Yorkers - no algorithm needed
nylaughs.org
212-633-0474
Taking Comedy to the People Since 2007. Comedy in Public Spaces for a better NYC



6/2/2026

TO: New York City Council — Finance Committee
RE: Support the QueensLink — preserve the Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way for both transit and parks

Dear Chairperson Lee and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Aaron Wong, and I am a resident of Rego Park.I am writing in strong support of the **QueensLink**, which would bring both new subway service and new parkland to Queens by reactivating the former Rockaway Beach Branch, and against the current $43 million allocated in the budget for phase one of the QueensWay, also referred to as the Met Hub project.

Why this matters to me

This additional train line runs right through my neighborhood and I see it as a wonderful addition and expansion of transportation and movement in this city. This would help me reach family members in Brooklyn much easier, without having to take a lengthy trip through Manhattan. I believe in the long term that transit will only benefit our neighborhood as it brings economic activity and more people to the area.

Why the QueensLink is the right choice

Two competing concepts exist for the deactivated Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way: the park-only QueensWay, and the dual-purpose QueensLink, which combines subway and park uses. The QueensWay would be built directly on the former railbed, which would virtually eliminate the possibility of ever restoring transit there. The MTA itself recognized in its 2023 20-Year Needs Assessment that a linear park along the corridor would create a challenge for any future transit alternatives. Once a rail right-of-way is converted to other uses, it almost never returns to transit.

The QueensLink would create the first north-south subway line in Queens, extending the M line south from Rego Park to Ozone Park and then over the A train tracks to the Rockaways — increasing service to the Rockaways by up to 165%. It would also let the G train run all the way to Forest Hills, increasing capacity on the crowded Queens Boulevard local lines by 50% and connecting central Queens with north Queens and Brooklyn.

A study by the Steer Group found that the QueensLink would remove millions of vehicle trips each year, making streets safer and lowering harmful emissions, while adding up to 33 acres of new parks and trails integrated with the subway design. Over 20 years, the study concluded the project would more than pay for itself by creating jobs, saving New Yorkers time, and reducing healthcare costs tied to air pollution and traffic crashes.

Queens needs parks *and* trains. The QueensLink would provide both. I urge the Committee to preserve this irreplaceable right-of-way for future transit and to support the QueensLink.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

Aaron Wong

[redacted]

Rego Park, 11374

City Council District 30

Hon. Linda Lee
Chair, New York City Council Finance Committee
Councilmember, District 23

June 10, 2026

Queensway is not the way to go. Our city deserves bold ideas and bold leadership. I campaigned vigorously for Mayor Mamdani last year for just that reason, and to see him go back on supporting Queenslink is extremely disappointing. The key issue here is not whether we should build a park in Queens or not, but whether it is worth building a park that would forever block the option to build transit.

Make no mistake—if phase 1 of Queensway (known as the Met Hub project) is built, it will be politically impossible to replace it with a subway later on. The $43 Million park leaves no provision for rail service in the future. Rather than simply being a project we can complete in the meantime before more funding is available, this park actively opposes transit from ever being built.

As a former Urban Design student at CUNY, I am inspired by design projects that bring equity to the city, and I am concerned by those that move us further away from it. After years of following this debate, it has become clear that Queensway is an environmentally unjust project, especially in this initial phase. Forest Hills, which will benefit most from phase 1, already has significant access to green space through the 543 acres of nearby Forest Park and ample tree cover on its residential streets. Meanwhile, the transit advocated by Queenslink would provide transformative access to mobility for the collective residents of Rockaway, Ozone Park, Woodhaven, Forest Hills and Rego Park.

By funding Queensway, the Council would therefore trade the benefits of a small park in a single neighborhood for forever preventing a transit project that would connect many now-disconnected neighborhoods. I therefore ask that you reject funding for Queensway and preserve this right of way for future transit access.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony,



Abram Morris

Research Assistant, Spitzer School of Architecture, the City College of New York

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my full support of the QueensLink plan over the Queensway plan to redevelop the existing rail infrastructure in Queens.

To me, the main reason that has been given for support for Queensway has been that it is the easier path and that it would cost less than reestablishing rail in that corridor.

And to that argument, I point you to pretty much any great feat of engineering within New York City that has improved the lives of millions of people. Bridges, the subway system, airports, etc. None of this was cheap to build at the time, and all of it had resistance and worries from people who claimed it was “too expensive.”

For once, can New York’s leaders actually look to what things might look like in 10 years? Or twenty? And stop the short sighted policies that lead to compromise, in what is considered the wealthiest city in the world?

If we talk the talk, we better be able to walk the walk. Queensway is a compromise and this city is too good to be compromising for the future of hundreds of thousands of residents that will benefit directly from reestablishing rail (AND PARKS and BIKE BATHS too).

Thank you,

Adam Lipowicz
Queens Resident

Dear Committee on Finance,

Resources are limited, so parks are poorly maintained and public transit connections are poor in the outer boroughs. Please do not fund the new Queensway park, which would block the construction of the Queenslink. We should not be wasting this opportunity to bring better transit to Queens. Let's not put up any barriers to constructing the Queenslink, which would help people get around Queens and reduce traffic on parallel Woodhaven Blvd. The funding set aside for Queensway could be used to improve the existing parks in the area, such as Forest Park.

Sincerely,

Adrian Horczak

Good afternoon, my name is Adrian Rangel Sosa. I am a Senior attending the Brooklyn School for Math and Research at Bushwick Campus. I wear different hats in my school community and one of them is being an RJ Youth Leader with Make the Road New York.

I am here to talk about my Restorative Justice experience and its role in my school community. Restorative justice has made my peers more open-minded towards others and towards themselves, it has created a safe space for growth and has taught me emotional regulation. Restorative Justice has created a community on my school campus. It has given me the opportunity to learn about other student experiences and their different points of views. Empathy, the skill to step into another person's shoes and feel their emotions as your own, is a dying art. RJ has created an alternative to how to respond to harm, create community and tap more into empathy to help connect with students.

Restorative justice has given me friends across my campus composed of four different high schools. It has created a space where I can be vulnerable in ways I can't even do at home. Restorative Justice has given me the tools to connect with my peers and be vulnerable with them. It has formed a community where we can share knowledge and give a platform to people's voices. My RJ Coordinator has been my inspiration and my role model and is passing down the torch to me and all the graduating seniors. RJ is bigger than our school community. It is about connecting with other people, offering skills to resolve conflicts and understand the impact of our actions. These are skills that we will take with us as we move forward in our lives.

The young minds are the future, we are the future. If more people learn about RJ, we will be in better hands. RJ is an investment in our future, if you remove funding for Restorative Justice, spaces where we can see the humanity in us will cease to exist. We live in a time where social media takes away from interpersonal connection, we will be in better hands if we provide students with the space to develop empathy and where we care for other people.

RJ is a community built through shared experiences. It has contributed to my learning outside of the curriculum. Removing the funding removes not only the community but also the transformative experiences that come from RJ.

This is a direct attack to education and development, please protect our voices through the investment of Restorative Practices in NYC public schools.

Thank you for your time.

BROOKLYN	QUEENS	STATEN ISLAND	LONG ISLAND	WESTCHESTER
301 GROVE STREET	92-10 ROOSEVELT AVENUE	161 PORT RICHMOND AVENUE	1090 SUFFOLK AVENUE	46 WALLER AVENUE
BROOKLYN, NY 11237	JACKSON HEIGHTS, NY 11372	STATEN ISLAND, NY 10302	BRENTWOOD, NY 11717	WHITE PLAINS, NY 10605
TEL 718 418 7690	TEL 718 565 8500	TEL 718 727 1222	TEL 631 231 2220	TEL 914 948 8466
FAX 718 418 9635	FAX 718 565 0646	FAX 718 981 8077	FAX 631 231 2229	FAX 914 948 0311

To Members of the Committee on Finance

I'm a Brooklyn resident with roots in Cypress Hills and Woodhaven. I grew up in Cypress Hills and spent my high school years around Forest Park and Queens Center.

I've taken that bus ride from Jamaica Avenue up Woodhaven Boulevard to Queens Center. It was pretty slow. Trains are faster than busses.

The Queenslink would provide another sorely needed outer borough rail connection, like the currently lonely G line. The IBX will help, as would Queenslink. And by the way, the future IBX passes through my old neighborhood of Borough Park. I used to see what will be used for the IBX rail line all the time. I'm extremely happy that it's moving ahead.

Queensway is just bike trails with no plan for a train line. Forest park, if you haven't noticed has a lot of bike paths. Queens residents do not need another Highline. They need better transit options.

Thank you.

Agostino Sasso

Subject: Privatization Creates Instability for Seniors.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

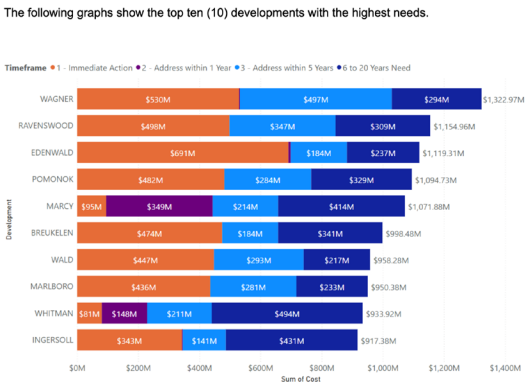


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.

- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am a resident of LIC near Court Square and I am writing to demand that the commitments made in the OneLIC Neighborhood plan are fulfilled on time.

LIC already suffers from one of the lowest levels of open and green space per resident in New York City, and multiple public reviews of the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan acknowledge that the neighborhood's parkland and open space are already severely lacking, and will worsen with new residences without intervention, which the city has acknowledged. Despite this, the budget pushes back several commitments to open space:

- Waterfront esplanade and new open space construction, planned for completion in 2031, is not planned for funding until 2031
- Queensbridge Baby Park, planned for completion in 2031, is not planned for funding until 2032 or 2033
- Renewal of Queensbridge Park, planned for design in 2028, is not planned for funding until 2032

It also fails to fund the Parks Department at 1%, and does not baseline funding for the 115 Parks workers whose jobs expire in June or provide the 276 new jobs in Parks needed to support our existing public spaces, or provide adequate funding for GreenThumb and the Urban Park Rangers.

The rezoned area requires significant improvements to provide safe connections through and beyond the neighborhood, allow people the space and infrastructure to spend time with their neighbors outdoors, and help bridge the divide between Queensbridge residents and other parts of LIC. Despite these real needs, the executive budget fails to include or significantly delays several of the promised improvements:

- Court Square Toilet not included in the budget
- Lighting Study in the IBZ not included in the budget
- Feasibility Study of Public Realm Improvements Under QBB Ramps not included in the budget
- Queens waterfront greenway delayed until 2029 + 2032
- 21st Street Intermodal Hub delayed until 2029 + 2032
- 44th Drive corridor improvements delayed until 2029 + 2032

As the City moves forward with significant new development in Long Island City, it is critical that these commitments are not delayed, deferred, or reduced. The City Council must ensure that the promised funding to allow the neighborhood to support so many new residents is not pushed off or ignored.

I believe that park and public space improvement promised under OneLIC must be fully funded and delivered on an appropriate and timely schedule so that neighborhood infrastructure keeps

pace with growth and current residents are not asked to continue bearing the consequences of decades of underinvestment.

We need the City to honor and prioritize its commitment to the previously promised funding by the Mayor's Office to ensure equitable development. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future.

Sincerely,
Aimery Methena

Dear Finance Committee,

NYC libraries are one of our most essential resources. They provide services like internet, air conditioning, bathroom access and free gathering spots with that would be a monumental logistical and financial challenge to provide in other ways. It is no coincidence that they are a primary site of attack for anti-democratic and anti-social factions in our nation.

Given how essential this public good is, there must be adequate resources to support it. It is much easier to support a healthy tree than to revive a struggling one, and, given how much is at risk in our times, we cannot allow this critical institution to become weakened. We must do everything we can to strengthen our library system while we still have the chance. To allow it to struggle is to tear a rip in the very fabric that sustains this city.

Funding libraries at a benchmark of 0.5% is a realistic and sustainable choice. In an ideal world, our libraries would have the resources to help fill the most creative and life-giving dreams, but until then, 0.5% could sustain the libraries without weakening them any further. It is an embarrassment to fund the libraries at the level of the Adams' administration, an administration that did not uphold the values of a free, equal, and corruption-free New York City.

As a society, we often dump the problems that we haven't found the power to solve to our schools and libraries. They have become one of the last providers of care and decency in our communities, providing much more than their essential services of access to knowledge, which would in itself warrant sustaining with significant financial resources.

I implore you to increase funding to the libraries, an institution in which we have significant pride, and an institution that helps us live us up to our strongest ideals for ourselves and our society.

Sincerely,

Alainna Lynch

Make Em Pay — FY27 Executive Budget Testimony

Alan Abraham, The People's Plan NYC (~2 minutes)

Good afternoon]. My name is Alan, and I'm with The People's Plan NYC. I'm here on behalf of our Make Em Pay campaign — a coalition effort built on one idea: New York City is owed at least $1.5 billion by landlords and corporations whose lawbreaking makes this city unsafe and unaffordable, and we have the tools to collect it.

I want to start by recognizing the real progress in this budget. The city is hiring 50 new auditors at the Department of Finance — projected to bring in $100 million a year. The Department of Consumer and Worker Protection, the agency that takes on companies cheating workers, saw its funding increase. These are exactly the kind of investments our campaign has called for, and they prove the core point: when you fund enforcement, the city collects what it's owed, and it pays for itself.

So as the budget heads into its final weeks, we're asking the city to finish the job. Three priorities.

First, the Commission on Human Rights. CCHR enforces our civil rights law — discrimination in housing and on the job. It already takes that agency nearly 600 days to close a case, and this budget shrinks its funding rather than growing it. That's the one place this budget moves in the wrong direction, and it's our top ask to reverse.

Second, collecting from landlords. The city is owed $800 million by delinquent landlords alone. Staffing up enforcement at the Departments of Buildings and Housing Preservation — and modernizing HPD's systems — is how the city actually goes and gets that money.

Third, finishing what's started at DCWP. The increase was a real step, but the agency is still short of the $135 million the Mayor pledged to double it to. Closing that gap is what turns our new worker protection laws from words on paper into real enforcement.

This administration ran on making the powerful pay their fair share. This budget shows that's more than a slogan. We're asking the Mayor and this Council to use these last few weeks to fund the Make Em Pay agenda in full.

The money is already owed. Let's fund the people who go get it.

Thank you.

To the City Council of New York,

I am writing in to advocate that you **oppose** the QueensWay linear park budget provisions included in the Mayor's proposed budget.

Queens is in dire need of more public transportation. While the proposed IBX will be a great boon to the borough, it alone will not provide the level of rapid transportation that can bring long-term prosperity to Queens. Reviving the Rockaway Beach Branch, as per the QueensLink Park + Rail option, is a much stronger choice for the future of Queens, and while budget is a concern, the economic value the QueensLink proposal

While the Mayor claims that the QueensWay will have options for future rail additions, it will be much more difficult to demolish and overhaul an existing park in use than to work on a currently disused provision. Rushing to support QueensWay now will undercut any future possibility of adding rail, as seen in areas such as Atlanta and Maryland that created parks and then faced massive opposition when trying to activate rail transit along said parks.

The Queensway park-only proposal, while pleasant, will ultimately add very little to the future of New York City, while the Queenslink rail proposal will allow for long-term development and gain. For that reason, the Council should **reject** the Queensway provision, and direct usage of the Rockaway Beach Branch towards the Queenslink rail proposal.

I am submitting this testimony to state that I'm against the Queensway project and do not support the funding and development of this project. I have been a resident of southern Queens most of my life near the abandoned rail. I see firsthand that it is a waste of our space and an eye sore. It creates unsanitary conditions and it is a health and safety issue. I was excited to hear that there was a plan to revamp the space and make it something useful.

I, like many residents of New York, heavily rely on public transit for both my work and personal time. Unfortunately, the ability to commute from here to northern Queens is an arduous task. Yes, this takes 20 minutes by driving but, the highways associated with this route have heavy traffic. The Uber or taxi cost for this trip is quite expensive. In order to use public transportation, it would require me to take at least 2 buses and a train. What is usually a 20 minute drive by car turns to an hour commute with public transit. The lack of options in southern Queens is ridiculous, it's disheartening to see how limited our options are compared to other regions. It's all the same borough, why is it easy for me to head to another borough than another part of the borough I live in?

Hearing about Queenslink excited me with the ability to commute to northern Queens as simple as I could go to Brooklyn. I know many of the residents of Queens would support and frequently use this line. This would ease the strain of traffic as less people will rely on cars to travel between Queens. I was excited to see that a new hopeful mayoral candidate with fresh takes and ideas, supported Queenslink. It felt as though someone cared for us, as we're often ignored by the rest of the city. I was extremely disheartened to hear that Mayor Mamdani went back on his support of Queenslink in favor of Queensway. His support of Queenslink was a many reason why many of us voted for him and it's disappointing to see that he, like his predecessors, are abandoning us.

A train line is more useful to the residents of Queens than green space. If residents had the chance to vote between Queenslink and Queensway, I'm confident that they would vote overwhelmingly for Queenslink. Queens already has many green spaces, there is no urgent need for more. The proposed spot already has a large park nearby called Forest Park. In addition, Queenslink allows for the creation of both a train line and a park. It doesn't have to be one of the other. I support Queenslink because it puts public transportation at the forefront and we don't have to sacrifice another green space. With Queensway, a new train line will be virtually impossible. I don't understand why Mayor Mamdani would go back against his support of Queenslink by claiming that we need green space when Queenslink also have green space. Southern Queens, despite being home to a significant airport, is extremely lacking when it comes to public transit.

I am asking to reconsider funding Queensway and I am urging you all to support and fund Queenslink. Queenslink has the green space that the mayor cites as his reasoning to fund

Queensway and it provides a transit desert a train option that we so desperately need. This would greatly benefit so many of the residents here. I am concerned that Queensway does not benefit the people who live here in any way. Queensway feels like yet another ploy to gentrify the city and push us out. Queensway does not benefit the residents of Queens. Queens does not need a High Line, what it needs is more public transit.

Hello New York City Council,

My Name is Alex Kosmowski and I am a resident of Queens living in Astoria. I am writing to you as a means to show my support for QueensLink and to urge you to not move forward with the current plan and budget for queensway.

There are many reasons for this, and many I'm sure you have already heard or read, so I will do my best to be brief and concise.

Queens desperately needs more transit. It is growing rapidly in population and our transit system has not been able to keep up with this demand. On top of this, Queens does not and has not had any north-south train connection for decades. This opportunity to restore an abandoned train line to use for rapid rail transit is a winning lottery ticket and to waste it would be a shame.

Furthermore, Queenslinks provides both rails and trails. This combination of both is the perfect solution whereas queensway will permanently exclude the possibility of increasing rail along this route.

Queenslink also has extensive research and public support. Not only will it increase transit service, it will make traveling in queens safer by taking thousands of cars off the road and preventing accidents. It will improve air quality and lower emissions. It will also lower traffic making drivers happy too. It will increase economic activity all throughout Queens. All of these are made impossible or at best diminished by Queensway.

The choice is clear, Queenslink. I urge you to not move forward with the budget for queensway at this time. Place it in areas more needed such as paying EMTs, helping fund schools and existing parks, or put it in savings to help fund the Queenslink project, but do not allow queensway to start construction. At least not with any way that will preclude the possibility for Queenslink to also happen.

Thank you again from a concerned resident,
Alex Kosmowski

Dear City Council,

I'm writing today to express my deep concern about the future of the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch and why I strongly urge you to support the QueensLink vision.

Queens is the city's largest borough in area and the second-largest by population, yet it has the fewest subway miles per capita. QueensLink aims to solve this problem with a "rails and trails" solution consisting of 33 acres of new community parks along with an extension of the M subway train. As of March 2026, we finally have professional research from industry-leading experts showing that QueensLink would generate at least $8.9B in economic growth and "deliver up to $2.20 of benefit to wider society for every $1 of public investment." The report determines that the project would have twice as many riders per mile compared to the Interborough Express. QueensLink also reduces vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by 30 million each year, equating to 7,200 fewer tons of CO2 annually. To sum it up, QueensLink performs exceptionally well compared to other megaprojects across the country, it puts money back in New Yorkers' pockets, and it helps make our city more affordable.

However, the QueensWay plan, one that former Mayor Adams funded, aims to build ONLY a park along this corridor that explicitly does not include any plan for future rail transit. The New York City Economic Development Corporation aims to start its construction this year, and Mayor Mamdani's latest budget proposal includes funding for this park, which I strongly oppose. Let me be clear: if QueensWay begins construction, it will BLOCK any hope of future rail reactivation.

As an assemblymember, Mayor Mamdani supported QueensLink due to the project's many benefits, which is why I find it deeply disheartening that his Administration is taking action now to block it. Simply put, QueensLink is common sense, and I strongly urge you to support such a transformative and equitable project. This begins with removing any funding of the opposing QueensWay scheme from the city's budget and directing the New York City Economic Development Corporation to pause all work on that project. I hope that you take this information to heart and move forward with QueensLink's "rails and trails" vision for the Rockaway Beach Branch.

Yours sincerely,

Alex

Good afternoon,

I am a resident in buildings right on Austin Street and 67 Ave, right near LIRR tracks.
I am suspicious of Queensway's plan to build over the right of way that has been long promised to residents of New York as a potential transit corridor. It is time for New York City to stand up to landlords who only want higher rents without offering anything in return.

Queensway says they're the new High Line. When the High Line was built, the rents skyrocketed and properties began to be built along the park that was never designed with a regular person in mind. As you walk in that park, who do you imagine living in there? Surely not a home health aide or a restaurant worker. This is who lives in Queens. Regular people who want to get to their job on time. Queens people keep to themselves. We're not as politically organized or motivated as parts of Brooklyn, but we want nice things, such as Queenslink. All Queensway with its fake park does is raise rents and preclude viable, affordable transportation and sends a message - we cannot built here.

On a personal note, Queenslink holds a special personal place in my heart. I am a frequent user of the JFK AirTran due to its quickness and convenience, even to the Rockaways. Besides being convenient for me to get to JFK Airport and the Rockaways, it is a grassroots movement from people who live, travel and work in New York. It unites transit advocates all over the world. For this Council to accept the funding of Queensway, a park in an area desperate for transit it a slap across the face for residents in Queens. Breaking ground for the Met park will be a mistake and a legal bondoogle that doesn't serve people of Queens and New York.

Please deny Queensway the funding they need as it will prevent any further projects to be built. Please listen to reason and not money.

Your Constituent,

[redacted]ov
[redacted]
Rego Park, NY 11375

To the members of the New York City Council:

As a longtime New Yorker, I am writing to urge you, in the strongest possible terms, to ensure that at least 0.5% of the FY 26 city budget is devoted to libraries.

Libraries serve an irreplaceable role in our city. They offer a model of how cities can educate and care for all people, regardless of their circumstances or identity. New Yorkers rely on libraries now more than ever. Besides providing free books, libraries provide free and open climate-controlled public spaces for all city residents, giving our unhoused neighbors safe places to go in extreme heat and cold; language and bureaucracy assistance for non-English speaking immigrants, an NYC Food Delivery worker support program, and much more.

The current FY '26 library budget is $523 million, which is 0.45% of the overall city budget. This was adopted last year during the Adams administration. Mayor Mamdani campaigned on a promise of 0.5% for libraries. However, in January the FY '27 preliminary budget from the mayor proposed that libraries receive just $491 million, or 0.39% of the overall city budget of $124.7 billion. The proposed executive budget for libraries, released May 12, is $526 million, which is just 0.42% of the overall city budget.

While this budget is $3 million dollars higher than last year's, it fails to account for the 3.8% inflation rate. For example, adding and updating just two elevators at the Astoria library branch cost $13.4 million. So an increase of a mere $3 million across 220 branches citywide is hardly something to celebrate.

Mayor Mamdani promised 0.5% of the budget for libraries. To do that, he needs to dedicate $623.5 million. In addition, we ask that the 0.5% of the total city budget be the *benchmark* for all future library budgets.

The executive budget is still $97 million short of the campaign promise.

If you commit to adding this to the budget, it will allow libraries – again, relied on now more than ever – to be more fully staffed and accommodate patron needs.

To borrow language from our friends at Urban Libraries Unite: "This flat funding proposal relegates library workers in NYC to continued short staffing and overwork, compromising the ability to provide services to our neighbors at the same time need is rising."

Thank you for your attention. Please do the right thing.

Members of the committee on Finance,

As you all are well aware, New York City would not function without public transit. The costs to build transit here are some of - if not the - highest in the world, and because of that we need to take every action we can to keep costs down for current and future projects.

The plans for the Queensway Met Hub would be disastrous for not only our immediate transit needs, but would make any future transit expansion in this part of Queens unnecessarily expensive by converting an existing transit right of way into **a park with no provisions to add transit**.

I implore you all to Defund the Queensway, support QueensLink, and in doing so make a decision future generations of new yorkers will look back on as visionary and forward thinking.

Best,

Alexander de la Vega

No Way to QueensWay! Alexander Ho

QueensWay will steer Queens residents and New Yorkers the wrong way when it comes to revitalizing the Rockaway Beach branch and surrounding neighborhoods!

Any reasonable person looking at the current proposal and comparing it to Atlanta's Beltline will come to the same conclusion: another rails-to-trails project with bad-faith design elements that would block any provisions for meaningful transit later.

QueensLink is a better alternative that serves the needs of borough residents. It provides:

- Direct service to Rockaway Park
- More trains to the Rockaways (as evidenced by any straphanger who had to ride the LIRR to and from Far Rockaway in early 2025, while the Broad Channel crossing was rebuilt)
- Shorter commute times for the Rockaways and south Queens
- More north-south Queens travel, easing the burden of overcrowded north-south bus routes
- More Queens Boulevard Line local trains

There should be no funds allocated to QueensWay from the city's Executive Budget for FY2027. Any funds should instead go towards further study of QueensLink, defraying costs otherwise incurred by the MTA and NY State.

If the city insists on directing the funds to green spaces, the existing Queens parks would be great destinations for them! While nearby Forest Park and Corona Park come to mind, the most visible impact would come from restoring cuts to Parks Department funding to refresh existing facilities, prune overgrown green space, and hire more staff to reverse the city's downturn in the Trust for Public Land index (now at a shameful #20 spot!).

In short, No Way to QueensWay!

Regards,
Alexander Ho
[redacted]

June 1, 2026

Support for QueensLink

My name is Alexander Schwarz and I am a Queens resident writing in strong support of the QueensLink.

The proposed rail line would connect Queens residents and communities, provide a powerful tool for economic development, improve air quality and roadway congestion and expand MTA rail coverage to transit-starved communities. QueensLink would help deliver a stronger, healthier, more prosperous, more equitable NYC.

Thank you,

Alexander Schwarz

[redacted]

From: Alexander Schwarz
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for Hardened Traffic Daylighting at NYC Intersections
Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 6:13:46 PM

[redacted]

My name is Alexander Schwarz and I'm a Brooklyn resident writing in support of hardened traffic daylighting at NYC intersections. An existing proposal calls for $15 million for hardened daylighting around NYC. This is a good start to safer intersections for NYC families. Daylit intersections reduce accidents, injuries and deaths, and make NYC neighborhoods more pedestrian-friendly. Please support hardened traffic daylighting at NYC intersections.

Thank you,

Alexander Schwarz
[redacted]

May 26, 2026

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing as a parent of a sixth grader at MS 104, Simon Baruch Middle School, to express serious concerns regarding DYCD's decision to end the school's long-standing partnership with Manhattan Youth despite strong objections from school leadership and families. **I urge the Committees on Finance and Children and Youth to examine not only this decision itself, but also the opaque process through which these contracts appear to be awarded.**

Families have received no explanation about how this decision was made or what criteria were used. Was it based on cost? Existing relationships with DYCD? Demonstrated program outcomes? Community satisfaction? Most importantly, how are the voices of principals, students, and families factored into these decisions? When programs that are deeply embedded in school communities can be removed without transparency or meaningful community input, it erodes trust in city institutions and raises serious concerns about accountability.

Manhattan Youth has been extraordinarily successful at Baruch. It is not simply an outside vendor operating after school hours --- it has become an integral part of the school community over more than a decade. My daughter, Fern, has flourished under Mike Jones's leadership and with the support of his staff.

Like many District 2 families, we ranked Baruch #1 in part because of the strength and reputation of the Manhattan Youth program. **At a time of declining public school enrollment citywide, New York should be prioritizing programs that attract and retain families in public schools--not destabilizing them.**

I am also concerned that the proposed replacement, the Imogen Foundation, appears to have limited experience managing middle school after-school programs of this size and complexity, particularly the athletics programming that is central to the Baruch community.

Additionally, multiple parents from PS 3 have contacted Baruch families to share that their own long-standing after-school program was removed without meaningful community input and replaced by the Imogen Foundation. Several expressed frustration with both the process and the quality of the program afterward. These concerns only reinforce questions about transparency, community input, and whether sufficient weight is being given to proven program effectiveness. The relationships, continuity, and institutional knowledge Manhattan Youth has built at Baruch cannot easily be replicated by a new provider unfamiliar with this community.

I respectfully urge the Council to provide greater oversight into how DYCD contracts are awarded and to ensure that transparency, community input, demonstrated effectiveness, and school-specific needs are meaningfully considered before successful programs are displaced.

Thank you for your time and attention to this issue.

Alex Cardasis
MS 104 Parent

Dear Honorable NYC Council Members,
As a 25 year resident of New York City, I am passionate about our city. As you all know, it is not an easy place to live but there is nowhere else in the world I would rather be. The melting pot of people, the culture, the food and the access to anything your heart desires makes NYC truly unique. NYC is also unique in that it is a hub for dog and cat rescues and for caring people who love their pets. I cannot even fathom how many dogs and cats also call NYC home. As the proud owner of rescue pups, they have opened my world to getting to know my neighbors and enjoying all the amenities my neighborhood offers like off-leash times at local parks and access to dog runs.

Since 2019, I've also fostered nearly 200 puppies for various NYC dog rescues. I've seen first-hand how pets enrich people's lives and how it is expensive and difficult to own pets here. More than half of New Yorkers cannot afford basic veterinary care. My friend Tony runs Animal Rescue Consortium, a boots on the ground operation here that rescues abandoned and stray animals off the streets of NYC. His rescue cannot keep up with the constant influx of dumped dogs and cats. Most come in emaciated and in dire need of life-saving veterinary care. NYC spends just $2.98 per person on animal care, one of the lowest rates of any major American city. We desperately need the city to fund spay/neuter clinics. 75% of the dogs surrendered and entering ACC are unfixed. The cost barriers to spay/neuter in NYC are extreme. I spayed my female rescue dog three years ago in the city and it was $1,100! And that was after shopping around! That is unfathomably expensive for an essential service for a pet. I cannot even imagine how expensive it is now.

I also work with several Brooklyn-based cat rescues to trap/neuter/return (TNR) the many, many street cats in my Clinton Hill, Brooklyn neighborhood. So many people have dumped their cats the past five years, it is scary. 193,000 spay/neuter surgeries are needed annually for community cats and for owned pets who cannot afford them. As it is, the city only funds 3,500 surgeries. It is an emergency for our pets! Aside from funding spay/neuter and veterinary resources, please also consider funding pet food banks/pantries. That is another essential stop on the roadmap of keeping pets with their families and out of the ACC. Thank you very much for your time and consideration of my testimony. I do hope you will further fund these essential services for our four-legged, devoted companion New Yorkers.

Thank you,

Alexandra Corriveau
Clinton Hill, Brooklyn
[redacted]

QueensLink

06/13/2026

TO: New York City Council — Finance Committee
RE: Support the QueensLink — preserve the Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way for both transit and parks

Dear Chairperson Lee and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is **Alexandre Mathurin** , and I am a **resident of the Canarsie Area**. I am writing in strong support of the **QueensLink**, which would bring both new subway service and new parkland to Queens by reactivating the former Rockaway Beach Branch, and against the current $43 million allocated in the budget for phase one of the QueensWay, also referred to as the Met Hub project.

Why this matters to me

Living in Canarsie, I know firsthand how isolating limited transit can be. The L train is our lifeline, but it only takes you to Manhattan or to Broadway Junction which provides east-west travel. Getting anywhere north or south of Queens means taking slow buses stuck in the same traffic everyone else is sitting in. Driving is far from ideal, but with so few reliable alternatives, it's often the only practical choice, whether I'm helping my parents get where they need to go or commuting to work/school. No family should have to default to a car just because the transit map forgot about us. Whether it's catching an event or simply trying to get to another part of Queens, transit leaves you with slow buses and multiple transfers, so most people just drive and deal with the unfortunate traffic/parking situation, but it shouldn’t be that way. For a neighborhood like Canarsie, the QueensLink wouldn't just be a convenience; it would be the north-south connection we have never had.

Why the QueensLink is the right choice

Two competing concepts exist for the deactivated Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way: the park-only QueensWay, and the dual-purpose QueensLink, which combines subway and park uses. The QueensWay would be built directly on the former railbed, which would virtually eliminate the possibility of ever restoring transit there. The MTA itself recognized in its 2023 20-Year Needs Assessment that a linear park along the corridor would create a challenge for any future transit alternatives. Once a rail right-of-way is converted to other uses, it almost never returns to transit.

The QueensLink would create the first north-south subway line in Queens, extending the M line south from Rego Park to Ozone Park and then over the A train tracks to the Rockaways — increasing service to the Rockaways by up to 165%. It would also let the G train run all the way to Forest Hills, increasing capacity on the crowded Queens Boulevard local lines by 50% and connecting central Queens with north Queens and Brooklyn.

A study by the Steer Group found that the QueensLink would remove millions of vehicle trips each year, making streets safer and lowering harmful emissions, while adding up to 33 acres of new parks and trails integrated with the subway design. Over 20 years, the study concluded the project would more than pay for itself by creating jobs, saving New Yorkers time, and reducing healthcare costs tied to air pollution and traffic crashes.

Queens needs parks *and* trains. The QueensLink would provide both. I urge the Committee to preserve this irreplaceable right-of-way for future transit and to support the QueensLink.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

Alexandre Mathurin

[redacted]

Council District 46

QueensLink

Finance Committee on 6/10

TO: New York City Council — Finance Committee
RE: Support the QueensLink — preserve the Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way for both transit and parks

Dear Chairperson Lee and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Alexei Sanoff, and I am a longtime transit advocate from New York City. I am speaking in strong support of the QueensLink project, which would bring both new subway service and new parkland to Queens by reactivating the former Rockaway Beach Branch, and against the current $43 million allocated in the budget for phase one of the QueensWay, also referred to as the Met Hub project.

Two competing concepts exist for the deactivated Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way: the park-only QueensWay, and the dual-purpose QueensLink, which combines subway and park uses. Renderings produced by the QueensWay show that their proposed park would be built directly on the former railbed. This would prove a massive obstacle to future rail reactivation. There are virtually no examples of deactivated rail lines with parks being reconverted back into rail lines. Famously, Atlanta's beltline rails-and-trails proposal built the trail first and never got around to building the rail. The rail must be designed for and built in from the start!

Full construction and integration of QueensLink would create the first north-south subway line in Queens, extending the M service south from Rego Park to Ozone Park and then over the A train tracks to the Rockaways. This would ultimately increase through service to the Rockaways by up to 165%. This in turn would open terminal capacity in Forest Hills for the G train to operate along the Queens Boulevard local tracks, increasing local service by around 50%, and connecting central Queens to northern and western Brooklyn.

A study by the Steer Group found that the QueensLink proposal would replace millions of vehicle trips each year, making streets safer and lowering harmful emissions. This makes it, ironically, the greener option. It does this while adding up to 33 acres of new parks and trails *integrated with* the subway design. Over 20 years, the study concluded the project would more than pay for itself by creating jobs, saving New Yorkers time, and reducing healthcare costs tied to air pollution and traffic crashes.

As an alumni of Brooklyn Technical High School, I saw how many of my peers attempted to commute into Brooklyn from Queens and often had very long hour-plus trips to do so. Saving them commutation time means more time for studying and extracurricular activities. Most of the existing MTA system is laid out to favor commutation into Manhattan. By extending the G train to Forest Hills, the outer borough market can be much better-served, and all while increasing the total number of trains operated along the very crowded Queens Boulevard line.

Queens needs parks *and* trains. The QueensLink would provide both. I urge the Committee to preserve this irreplaceable right-of-way for future transit and to support the QueensLink.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

Alexei Sanoff
11217
[redacted]
Brooklyn CB 6

June 10, 2026
Alicia Peaker, Ph.D.
[redacted]

I'm writing to ask that you support increasing the New York City libraries budget to 0.5% of the total budget this year and to commit to this amount in future years. I am a life-long beneficiary of public libraries and a frequent patron of both NYPL and the Brooklyn Public Library. I don't just borrow books and ebooks and DVDs (over 150 check-outs each year), I also attend events hosted by or in library spaces. I drop in to libraries to stay warm or cool between appointments and meetings. I get great recommendations from staff on topics and resources new to me. It was through a public library that I was able to access SAT-prep books that opened doors to first a college degree and later a Ph.D. that led to a career in academia and academic libraries.

Libraries are imperative to the health and well-being of New Yorkers. Currently, the libraries are working under a structural deficit caused by inflation. Increasing the portion of the city's budget that is allotted to libraries to just 0.5% will correct that issue and allow libraries to better meet patrons' needs.

We’ve heard too many stories about people having to abandon their pets, or decide not have their pets neutered because of the cost. Approving these funds should save hundreds, if not thousands, of animal lives.

We hope you’ll approve these desperately needed funds. Thank you!

June 10, 2026

As a teacher with more than twenty years of experience exclusively in schools that are members of the New Visions for Public Schools network, I am continually grateful for the tremendous level of support provided by the NVPS organization. Thus, the proposed elimination of $8.9 million of funding for the New Visions Portal in Fiscal Year 2027 is extremely distressing and disappointing for me. The Portal is an incredibly useful tool in so many ways, ranging from communication with families to collaborating with colleagues while utilizing its incredibly helpful features.

I am strongly advocating for the restoration of the $8.9 million that will continue to allow making the Portal available to all New York City schools.

Sincerely,

Alison Ritz
Social Studies Teacher, The Young Women's Leadership School of the Bronx

Committee on Women and Gender Equity

Subject: Zohran’s budget fails to recognize the vital role public housing plays in advancing gender equity.

I oppose Zohran’s proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Women and Gender Equity should recognize that public housing is fundamentally a women's issue. For decades, Section 9 public housing has served a population made up largely of women and female-headed households. Nationally, women head the overwhelming majority of public housing households, and many residents are single mothers, grandmothers raising grandchildren, caregivers, and women balancing work, family responsibilities, and economic hardship. Public housing has provided generations of women with the stability, support, independence, community, and affordability necessary to raise families, care for loved ones, pursue education, build careers, and participate in civic life.

Women, particularly women of color, continue to bear a disproportionate share of caregiving responsibilities while facing persistent wage disparities and economic barriers. Because Section 9 ties rent to household income rather than market conditions, it creates opportunities for residents to pursue employment, training, entrepreneurship, and educational opportunities without the constant threat of rent increases or displacement. Housing stability is a prerequisite for economic mobility, and Section 9 remains one of the strongest examples of that principle in practice.

The Committee should also recognize the relationship between housing stability and gender-based violence. Survivors of domestic violence and other forms of abuse often remain in dangerous situations because they lack access to safe, affordable housing alternatives. Public housing serves as a critical source of stability and independence for many survivors, providing a pathway toward safety, self-determination, and long-term security.

Beyond housing, Section 9 has historically fostered leadership, mutual aid, and civic engagement among women. Tenant associations, resident councils, community centers, and resident-led initiatives have created opportunities for women to organize, advocate, govern, and shape policies affecting their communities. Some of New York City's strongest community leaders have emerged from public housing because these developments provide not only homes, but spaces where women build networks of support, develop leadership skills, and strengthen their communities.

Zohran’s budget fails to recognize the vital role public housing plays in advancing gender equity. When public housing is weakened, it is women—particularly working-class women, single mothers, caregivers, grandmothers raising children, and survivors of violence—who often bear the greatest burden. When Section 9 is strengthened, women gain the housing security that allows them to thrive. We urge the Committee on Women and Gender Equity to support comprehensive modernization of Section 9 public housing and reject policies that condition investment on privatization. A city committed to gender equity must ensure that women have access to safe, affordable housing, meaningful opportunities for leadership, and the stability necessary to build healthy families and strong communities.

You cannot advance gender equity while allowing the housing insecurity that disproportionately burdens women, caregivers, and survivors to persist.

Good day to the various members of the Finance Committee, I am Allende Jerome Aigbedion, a New York City resident of over 36 years and a staunch believer and advocate for better urbanism, reducing our carbon footprints, further building out our city's various rapid transit network modalities and improving their accessibility and ease of use.

I come here to testify on behalf of QueensLink, a transformative rapid transit project that aims to do everything its direct competitor, the QueensWay project, does while **also** granting the additional benefit of providing greater network connectivity for all users of our subway system. This expansion effort would specifically assist the hundreds of thousands of daily working class Queens residents that make up the ridership of buses that pack Woodhaven and Cross Bay Boulevards between Forest Hills and the Rockaways. These same riders are already subjected to some of the most time consuming trip patterns in the city whether it is for their continued ability to work or grow within city boundaries. In an era of renewed focus on climate change & sustainability, providing equitable and flexible access throughout the city to its residents, and helmed by a mayor in Zohran Mamdani who campaigned on many transit positive bullet points understanding frequent high quality transit's role in the growth and maintenance of this region, I find it particularly ghoulish that a plan that would immediately parallel such a busy corridor and provide rapid transit support the full length is somehow such a pariah while the creation of more green space – a noble pursuit in a vacuum but tempered by the proximity this project has to the existing Forest Park to the South and Flushing Meadows to the north – while blatantly championing how much Queens "does not need any more trains" or outwardly presenting detailed plans that preclude any rapid transit consideration for the present or future is seemingly stepping over the desires of the many onto the fast track.

Are you to tell us that the vision for a borough of New York City that is consistently growing in size and having its existing transit network stretched to its ends under that load is "good enough" when many can point to the lived reality of trying to get from southern Queens to northern Queens for their own personal reasons and can see the problems with our subway system's current limitations? In this state then, are you telling me that the people have truly come to a consensus that we "have enough transit" in this region? Is this transit at all efficient or sufficient as the previously mentioned boulevards crawl to a standstill in peak traffic, produce immeasurable amounts of car waste and emissions, and occupy large amounts of space that a consistent subway line would reduce by an order of magnitude? The QueensWay project is quite literally playing in front of our faces.

This "well-intentioned" obstructionism is not new and has no shortage of analogues one can point to in other areas of our own country. One only needs to look at the story of the Atlanta Beltline for the best cautionary tale against allowing the more attractive and "easier" political win that is the park to come first while punting the dedication to transit for "whoever's next". In a very similar vein to the QueensLink v QueensWay competing projects, the final design of the Beltline was hotly contested by two groups who either sought the rails and trails built simultaneously or focused on the park first with a non-committal to outright contemptuous stance on the rail. In the end, the latter camp won out and to date, the park has remained and no one has dared to equip it with any sort of rapid transit. Even the concessions have produced little more than continued

“heated debate” as residents in the region appreciate the park but consistently note their lack of real transit options pointing longingly at what could have been if the powers that be had more vision and remained principled.

I implore the City Council to remain vigilant and steadfast in hearing the people’s voice on which project to finance. I also urge you all to think about how easy it is for one “simple” decision now to leave continued “missed connections” or a history of unrealized potential in our city. Do not let the attractiveness of one easier to reach plan cost generations of New Yorkers the chance to more fully navigate and inhabit their own city. I thank you for your time and attention on this matter.

I am writing in support of the QueensLink rail proposal.

Queens deserves a stronger north-south transit connection, especially for neighborhoods that have long relied on slower, less direct bus and car travel. Reusing the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch for rail service is a practical way to improve mobility, reduce congestion, and better connect residents to jobs, schools, parks, and other parts of the city.

I also support the QueensLink because it does not frame transit and open space as competing priorities. The proposal includes both rail service and new public green space, creating a more complete public benefit for Queens communities.

This corridor should be planned for long-term public use, not a short-term or limited solution. Advancing the QueensLink would support equity, climate goals, economic access, and a more connected Queens.

I respectfully urge decision-makers to support further study, planning, and implementation of the QueensLink rail proposal.

Sincerely,
Allie Falco, Founder of QNS Trash

From: Cohose, Allison
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] LAB middle school & Yorkville East Middle school
Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2026 2:55:51 PM

[redacted]

I am writing as a District 2 parent to express my strong concern about the recent afterschool provider changes impacting Lab Middle School and Yorkville.

These programs are not interchangeable. At schools like Lab and Yorkville, the existing afterschool partnerships are deeply connected to the school communities, students, families, and staff. Replacing long-standing providers disrupts much more than programming — it affects student support, trust, safety, and the daily experience of families who rely on these programs.

I respectfully urge DYCD and DOE leadership to review this decision and work with the affected school communities before moving forward. Families deserve transparency, and schools should not be forced to lose trusted partners without meaningful input.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Allison Cohose

Get Outlook for iOS

-Mayor Mamdani promised 0.5% and for that to happen he needs to dedicate $623.5 million. In addition, we ask that the 0.5% of the total city budget be the benchmark for all future library budgets.
-The executive budget is still $97 million short of the campaign promise.
-While this budget is higher than last year by $3 million dollars, it does not even keep up with the 3.8% inflation rate
-adding and updating just 2 elevators at the Astoria library branch cost $13.4 million dollars. And there are 220 branches citywide.

Subject: Privatization of NYCHA Creates Instability for Seniors.

I live at Mitchel Houses in the South Bronx and do not have an email address. I am being supported in submitting this testimony by Save Section 9.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

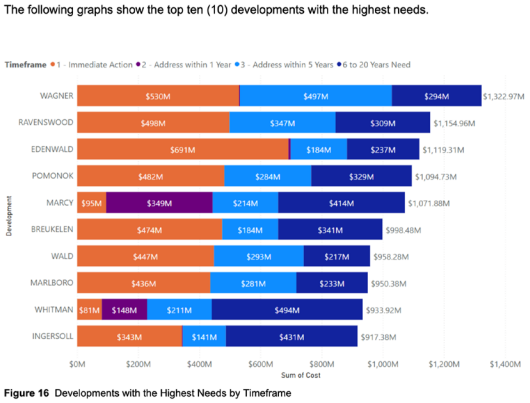


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.
- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

Testimony of Alysha Lim
Librarians of Tomorrow Intern, Brooklyn Public Library

Good afternoon. My name is Alysha Lim, and I am a high school junior at Staten Island Technical High School and a Librarians of Tomorrow intern at Dyker Library.

The library has been an important part of my life for nearly ten years. I first started visiting Dyker Library when I was six years old, and today I have the privilege of serving as an intern there. Even after all these years, the library remains just as welcoming, supportive, and inspiring as it was when I first walked through its doors.

Libraries are much more than places to borrow books. They are safe, free spaces where people of all ages can learn, connect, and grow. At Dyker Library, I regularly see students using the library to do homework, study for exams, work on projects, print documents, and meet with friends in a productive environment. During the summer, many patrons come simply to enjoy a comfortable and welcoming space. Others browse books, attend programs, or spend time in a community that makes them feel included.

As an intern, I have seen firsthand how much the library means to our community. The staff are patient, kind, welcoming, and always willing to help. Whether they are assisting someone with technology, helping a child find a book, guiding a patron through a form, or teaching a class, they make every visitor feel valued and supported.

The library has also had a direct impact on my own growth. Through the Librarians of Tomorrow program, I have developed organizational skills, communication skills, patience, and creativity. I have learned more about what it means to serve a community and what librarians do every day to make knowledge and opportunities accessible to everyone. My experience has been so positive that it has given me a deeper appreciation for libraries and the people who work in them.

I have also benefited from library programs myself. A resume workshop helped me strengthen and improve my resume, giving me skills that will be useful throughout my academic and professional career. I have participated in painting programs that were both enjoyable and engaging. In addition, I have seen children's programs that get kids excited about learning and bring families together. I have also watched English language classes help community members gain confidence and improve their skills through patient instruction and encouragement.

These opportunities are only possible because libraries are funded and supported. Additional funding would allow libraries to expand collections, improve technology, update furniture and facilities, and offer even more programs for teens, children, and older adults. It would ensure that

libraries can continue serving as welcoming community centers and educational resources for everyone.

I would like to thank our elected officials for supporting libraries in previous budgets. I respectfully ask that you continue to fully fund the Brooklyn Public Library so that it can continue providing the world-class services, programs, and opportunities that Brooklyn residents deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Hello,

My name is Amanda Barstow and I have lived in the 38th District for over a decade in and in NYC since 2000.

I have a desk job that pays my bills, but spend more than 40 hours a week as a volunteer cat rescuer and feral cat colony caretaker.

Since 2017 I have rescued hundreds of pet cats that were abandoned on the street. I have TNRed (Trap/Neuter/Spay/Return to Their Colonies) hundreds of cats who were too feral to be adopted. I care for 3 cat colonies in Red Hook and Gowanus, Brooklyn that require daily food, water and shelter from inclement weather for over 30 cats. I am also responsible for their on-going vet care when they can no longer eat because their teeth are rotting, or they get cancer and need to be humanely euthanized.

As you will hear from the entire rescue community: the cost of veterinary care is out of reach for the majority of New Yorkers and many have to choose to feed their families, over keeping their beloved pets alive. We are seeing abandoned pets in unprecedented numbers as our neighbors face housing instability and food insecurity. Many do not trust our municipal shelter system and feel their pets will be safer on the street and so that is where we find them, scared and alone, fighting to survive.

Free or low-cost/high quality spay and neuter should be a RIGHT for all New Yorkers! We have over half a million cats living on our streets and we can't adopt our way out of this crisis. I am hoping that the city will get started asap on allocating funds for a stationery clinic at all Animal Care Centers at a minimum, so they can spay and neuter all of the cats and dos in their care, instead of using the finite number of appointments the ASPCA has to offer. It is also imperative that the city funds a pet pantry, so that our neighbors DON'T have to choose between feeding their human family over their fur family. The city should also provide tax incentives and funding to private vets that work with rescues and will provide affordable services to New Yorkers on public assistance.

What I would also like to stress, is that we desperately need oversight of both NYCHA, which does not enforce any of their policies regarding pet ownership, and shops (mostly bodegas/delis) that are violating Department of Agriculture laws by having cats in the first place. I strongly believe that any business with a "working cat" should need to either have a permit or license to have cats on the premises and the animal should be required to be fixed and vaccinated at a

minimum. Both of these entities are responsible for a glut of cats and kittens that eventually end up with rescuers or in our shelter because they are breeding unchecked. How are we ever going to solve this cat overpopulation crisis, when the city isn't enforcing any regulations? I truly believe that most pet owners want the best for their pets and will do whatever they can to make sure they are healthy and safe, however I have not had the same experience with bodega owners or NYCHA staff. Bodega owners often lie and say they do not have cats or are dismissive of offers for free services. Their cats are often denied food and locked in dark filthy basements, where they are expected to control vermin and are not expected to be treated humanely. NYCHA staff, including NYPD, have laughed in my face or been completely dismissive when I report tenants that are breeding cats. I was actually told that unless there is a dead body, they won't do anything, despite a tenant having 30+ cats and kittens going in and out of her first floor window. I eventually had to beg the ASPCA's Matt Goldweber, to visit the tenant, but out of confidentiality, he will not share with me the outcome. I have already rescued and paid for full veterinary care for 10 adult cats and 10 kittens, all found outside and all originating from this one apartment. Can you imagine how many cats there would be if I hadn't intervened?!

I have a Masters degree in public policy. I am a problem solver. This is a problem that we can absolutely solve! I look forward to more hearings and task forces and public/private partnerships in the very near future, while we have this amazing momentum.

Thank you so much for your time!

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the city's irresponsible support and funding of the Queensway project, and its effective blocking of the future development of the much needed Queenslink rails and trails.

The Queenslink would bring in almost $9 billion in economic activity for New York City. With over 75,000 daily riders, commute times would be dramatically reduced, and 4.7 million cars would be removed from the roads every year, resulting in a reduction of 7,200 tons of CO2 each year.

Building transit on existing tracks is significantly cheaper and faster than building a new line from scratch. The cheaper transit is to build, the more transit can be built. New Yorkers rely on this transit, and an increasingly connected and reliable transit system would be a massive, noticeable improvement to their everyday lives.

The Queensway would block the development of better transit access for hundreds of thousands of people throughout Queens, as well as block the development of proven effective climate-resilient infrastructure at a time of increasingly dire climate conditions.

Please make the right choice for your constituents and your legacy, and vote NO on the funding and development of the Queensway.

Thank you,
Amanda Cammarota

To whom it may concern on the committee,

It is my understanding that the program taking over for Manhattan youth at many schools in New York City has no plan in place for programming. It is my understanding that they have previously only implemented programming focusing on tennis and tutoring. I have a child who is not athletically inclined, I also have a child like every other child who benefits from an afterschool program that does not feel like a continuation of school, or a punishment. Unfortunately, many parents in the community will send their children to paid programs that are better developed, leaving only less financially advantaged children to suffer through an under-developed program, focusing on tennis or anger management, according to the NYJTL website.

It seems to me that the current program, Manhattan Youth, has developed a well-rounded and enriching program in multiple ways to serve every child in the community, including sports, theater, arts, homework help, and an extremely diverse array of other options for children to meet the needs of the community, and allow for all public school kids to participate in the same program. Please retain this provider to continue to ensure a high standard of programming accessible to all kids. Thank you for your consideration.

June 8, 2026

My name is Amanda Ramirez, and I am the wife of an FDNY EMT.

I am speaking today in support of FDNY EMS pay parity.

My husband has dedicated his life to service. He has served as an FDNY EMT for two years and has also served in the military for six years. Every day, he responds to emergencies, traumatic incidents, medical crises, and life-threatening situations throughout New York City. He does the same work that New Yorkers depend on during their most vulnerable moments. Yet despite his dedication, our family is struggling to survive. We are a family of four living in Upstate New York. We have two young children with significant disabilities and medical needs. Our children require therapies, services, specialized foods, and ongoing support. Like many parents of children with special needs, our lives revolve around making sure our children have what they need to succeed. My husband works hard. He works overtime. He sacrifices time with his family. He misses birthdays, dinners, and important moments. He puts himself in dangerous situations to serve the people of New York City and still, we cannot make ends meet. Today, my husband is seriously considering military activation/deployment opportunities, not because he wants to leave his family, but because we are desperate for financial stability. We have spent months discussing options that would require him to be away from his children for a year or more. We have discussed active duty military service simply because the pay and benefits would allow us to survive. No family should be forced into that position. No FDNY EMS member should have to choose between serving New York City and providing for their family. My husband loves EMS. He loves medicine. He loves helping people. But when a dedicated FDNY EMT cannot support his family despite working overtime and sacrificing so much, something is fundamentally wrong.

Pay parity is not just about salaries.

It is about retention.

It is about recruitment.

It is about protecting the EMS workforce that New Yorkers depend on every day.

Most importantly, it is about recognizing the value of the men and women who answer the call when someone is having the worst day of their life.

The City asks EMS members to run toward danger, provide lifesaving care, and shoulder immense responsibility. They deserve compensation that reflects that responsibility.

My husband should not have to consider leaving his family, leaving his children, or leaving the profession he loves simply to provide basic financial security.

I urge the Council to support meaningful EMS pay parity and invest in the workforce that protects New Yorkers every single day.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

URBAN JUSTICE CENTER | Freedom Agenda

Testimony to the City Council Committee on Finance
Submitted by Amanda Velasco
June 10, 2026

Good afternoon. My name is Amanda Velasco, and I am submitting this testimony as a member of Freedom Agenda.

I am here as Javier Velasco's wife and as the mother of children who have had to live with this loss every single day. My husband lost his life to Rikers Island five years ago, and five years later, the pain is still devastating. There is no part of our lives that this tragedy has not changed.

What I personally lived through is something no family should ever have to endure. I repeatedly warned people responsible for Javier's care that I believed he was at risk of suicide. I was told that he was being manipulative and that his threats were not being taken seriously. Even after his earlier suicide attempt, I was still given the message that this was manipulation, not a real mental health emergency.

I also did not learn of my husband's death from the Department of Corrections, humanely or directly. I had to find out about my husband's death from the porter in my building.

What makes this even harder is that the public record later confirmed serious failures. Public findings like the Nunez Report state that Javier made a serious suicide attempt days earlier, was placed on suicide watch, and then was removed from suicide watch prematurely without proper psychiatric consultation. Those same findings concluded that his acute suicidal ideation was not properly recognized and treated, and that his death was preventable.

The public reports also found that staff failed to conduct adequate supervisory tours in the housing area where he was held. They found confusion and delay in the emergency response, including uncertainty about who was responsible for calling EMS.

My family cannot change what happened to Javier. But this Council can help prevent another family from living this nightmare. That means real investment in mental health care like the Campaign to Close Rikers is recommending, real suicide prevention, real staff training, real accountability, and a jail system where warnings are taken seriously before it is too late. You can read our full budget analysis below.

CLOSE RIKERS

DECARCERATE ✷ DEFEND ✷ DIVEST & REDISTRIBUTE

FY2027 City Budget Analysis & Priorities

At a cost of nearly half a million dollars per person per year, Rikers Island is the most expensive and least effective tool our City has to create community safety. The FY2027 Executive Budget includes some key steps toward reining in jail operation costs, and reinvesting those savings in true public safety. And in order to Close Rikers as quickly as possible, we'll need to do more. To align the FY2027 budget with the City's legal and moral obligation to Close Rikers, it must include:

1. **An additional $39.2M to meet mental health needs outside of Rikers,** including:
    a. **At least $66.3M, baselined, for Intensive Mobile Treatment (IMT) teams,** $22M more than the Executive Budget allocates, which should eliminate the current waitlist.[1]
    b. **At least $23.8M, baselined, for Assertive Community Treatment (ACT),** $4.5M more than the Executive Budget allocates.[2]
    c. **At least $6M, baselined, for Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT),** $2M more than the Executive Budget allocates, which provides both mental health and reentry services to people returning from jail and prison.[3]
    d. **$1.7M to establish an outpatient competency restoration pilot program** for 50-75 people who might otherwise be waiting at Rikers for transfer to a state hospital.
    e. **$3M in capital funds to support 60 new residential treatment beds** for people with serious mental illness and with co-occurring addictions.[4]
    f. **At least $8.8M, baselined, for crisis respite centers,** $6M more than the Executive Budget allocates, to open four new centers, in compliance with Local Law 118-2023.[5]
2. **An additional $47.2M for diversion and reentry services through the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ), including:**
    a. **$10M** in new funds for ATI programs and **$10M** in new funds for Reentry Services, as recommended by the ATI/Reentry Coalition, to scale up these evidence-based models.
    b. **$6.9M** to expand programs serving court-involved youth with mental health needs.
    c. **$20.3M**[6] to establish at least 150 units of low-barrier housing for people with court-involvement and mental health diagnoses.
    d. OCJ should also publish an analysis of the full need for transitional reentry housing, and conduct a data match to generate an updated eligibility list for Justice Impacted Supportive Housing (JISH), a permanent reentry housing model.[7]
3. **An additional $3.6M to restore cuts to the Board of Correction (BOC), and expand their oversight capacity.** The Executive Budget shows $605,000 in cuts to BOC's budget.[8] These cuts

[1] Per DOHMH testimony on June 5, 2026, the waitlist is 600 people. Each new IMT team can serve 27 people.
[2] The combined waitlist for all ACT teams, including FACT and SPACT, was 654 people as of June 5, 2026 per DOHMH testimony. The City should also work with the state to eliminate the waitlist for all ACT teams.
[3] For FACT teams, the City adds approximately $675,000 per ACT team to supplement state funding by adding reentry specialists.
[4] State funding through OASAS would provide operational funds.
[5] The FY2026 budget for crisis respite centers was $5.3M, but only $2.8M in the FY2027 Preliminary Budget, as reported by DOHMH.
[6] Approximately $135,000 per unit, based on similar Safe Haven models.
[7] While JISH funding would come through DOHMH, OCJ coordinated the first (and only) data match, when the program was launched.
[8] $233,000 is associated with cutting two vacancies, and $374,437 is associated with cuts to OTPS

are unwise and unnecessary. The Board of Correction has testified that they need at least 60 staff roles (29 more than the Executive Budget includes)[9] to carry out their oversight responsibilities, as a first step to rightsizing their budget.[10] Expanding BOC's capacity could not only improve conditions in the jails, but also protect the city from future liability, like the $123 million dollars paid out in FY2025 for claims against DOC.

Meanwhile, DOC remains over-resourced. With new management in place, DOC can better deploy resources, not rush to fill vacancies. The FY2027 budget should build on smart vacancy reductions announced in the Executive Budget, and:

4. **Eliminate vacancies for DOC uniformed staff, to begin to rightsize the agency**
    a. The Executive Budget authorizes 6,474 positions for uniformed officers in FY2027 (down from 7,060 in FY2026), but as of January 1, 2026 DOC employed 5,759 officers and 1,301 positions were vacant.[11] Filling DOC's remaining 715 vacancies would cost an additional **$95.6M annually.**[12] These remaining vacancies should be eliminated, in order to reduce incarceration and cut wasteful spending.
5. **Reduce overtime spending** by consolidating operations and permanently closing jails on Rikers, starting with the vacant Anna M. Kross Center, where 109 officers are still assigned.[13]
6. **Conduct and release a staffing analysis as soon as possible,** to determine how many staff DOC actually needs to operate the facilities it currently manages.

The Executive Budget also includes 580 more police officers, among a surge of low-level arrests that frequently impact New Yorkers who lack stable housing and need mental health services. These resources should instead be used for housing, healthcare, and other community-based interventions.

DOC Budget Breakdown

- The Executive Budget proposes spending at least **$2.96 billion[14] for jail operations in FY2027**. This represents a slight reduction from the FY2027 Preliminary budget, but still a 3.8% increase from last year's adopted budget.[15]
- The Executive Budget shows an authorized headcount of **6,474 uniformed DOC officers**. With approximately 6,600 people in custody, this amounts to a **staffing ratio that is still nearly 4 times higher than the national average**, and **2 times more officers** than will be required to operate the borough jails.[16]
- DOC is on track to spend **$369 million on overtime** for uniform staff in FY2026 - 229% of their adopted budget.[17]
- New York City spent at least **$485,801 annually to incarcerate one person** at Rikers in FY2025.
- Most of DOC's costs are driven by staffing. The FY2027 budget projects that 87% of DOC expenses will be staff salaries, overtime and benefits.

---

[9] Based on testimony from the Board of Correction on March 7, 2025 that approximately 60 staff are needed to fulfill their mandate. BOC's proposed staffing in the F27 budget is 33 people, and total agency budget of $3.67M, per Departmental Estimates.
[10] Board of Corrections representatives previously advocated increasing their budget to a minimum percentage of DOC's.
[11] Per Independent Budget Office
[12] Based on $133,756 per officer, as calculated by the Vera Institute.
[13] City of New York Executive Budget Fiscal Year 2027, Supporting Schedules p. 1414
[14] Including expenses, associated fringe benefits, pensions, and debt service. Expense Revenue Contract Budget
[15] DOC's FY2026 Adopted Budget was $2.85 billion. A-Look-Inside-the-FY-2027-New-York-City-Department-of-Correction-Budget.pdf
[16] The Independent Rikers Commission estimates 3,240 officers will be needed in the borough jail system.
[17] Per Independent Budget Office

Amaya Guillermo Giménez
[redacted]
New York, NY 10028
amayaguiller@gmail.com
[redacted]

June 12, 2026

New York City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Members of the City Council,

My name is Amaya Guillermo Giménez and I am writing as a parent at Yorkville East to express my strong support for saving the Manhattan Youth after-school program at our school.

For my family, this program is not just a convenience. It is an essential part of my daughter's daily life and development. It provides her with a safe, caring, and enriching environment after the school day ends. She has the opportunity to learn, play, build friendships, explore new interests, and feel connected to her school community beyond the classroom.

My daughter currently participates in basketball and volleyball through the program, and she absolutely loves it. These activities have given her the chance to stay active, build confidence, be part of a team, and develop friendships in a supportive environment. Seeing how much joy and growth this program has brought her makes it even clearer to me how valuable it is for our children.

As working parents, knowing that our daughter is in a trusted program with dedicated staff gives us enormous peace of mind. The Manhattan Youth team knows our children, understands our community, and has built relationships with families over time. That kind of trust and continuity cannot be easily replaced.

I also have a younger daughter who will be entering Yorkville East, and I deeply hope she will have the same opportunity that her older sister has had. It would be heartbreaking for new students and younger siblings to lose access to a program that has meant so much to so many families.

The recent RFP announcements have caused deep concern among Yorkville East families. Removing or disrupting this program would have a real impact on children, parents, and the

broader school community. Our children deserve stability, consistency, and access to high-quality after-school care in an environment where they feel safe and supported.

I respectfully urge the City Council to listen to the many families who are speaking out and to do everything possible to protect the Manhattan Youth program at Yorkville East. This program matters deeply to our children and to our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Amaya Guillermo

Yorkville East Parent

Good afternoon. Thank you Chair Lee and members of the committee. My name is Ambur Nicosia, and I am honored to serve as the President of Penn South.

We are a campus-style limited-equity community regulated by HPD. We have 15 buildings spread out over 21 acres, and we are home to over 5,000 New Yorkers, making us one of the largest affordable cooperatives in New York City. At a time when there is a housing crisis, we are very proud to be part of the city's housing solution.

Maintaining that affordability, however, is becoming more difficult. Built in 1962, Penn South is aging and already requires significant capital improvements to ensure safe and reliable housing for our residents, **the majority of whom are senior citizens on fixed incomes.**

Over the next several years, we will begin our largest and most expensive capital projects:
replacing underground utility piping,
replacing boilers and chillers
replacing our roofs
modernizing our elevators
façade work, etc.

At a time when we are already struggling financially to complete necessary capital projects, we must also now comply with the City's climate requirements under **Local Law 97**. **Make no mistake - We strongly support the City's climate goals.** However, achieving them will require transformative investments in our energy infrastructure. These include electrification of our power plant, geothermal heat pump systems spread out over 21 acres, renewable energy sources, and building envelope improvements.

The combined cost of these projects is estimated to be **hundreds of millions of dollars**. For affordable cooperatives like Penn South, these costs are **simply not possible.**

We are asking the City to take responsibility for the legislation that is being passed. While we fully support these initiatives, we need financial support so that we can

- Modernize our aging infrastructure, **and**
- Meet current decarbonization goals, **and**
- Continue to provide housing stability for thousands of low-income New Yorkers.

We can't do this alone. We need your help. Thank you.

QueensLink

Finance Committee on 6/10

June 11, 2026

TO: New York City Council — Finance Committee
RE: Support the QueensLink — preserve the Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way for both transit and parks

Dear Chairperson Lee and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Ami Dube and I am a resident of Washington Heights and frequent commuter on the Van Wyck Expressway. I am writing in strong support of the **QueensLink**, which would bring both new subway service and new parkland to Queens by reactivating the former Rockaway Beach Branch, and against the current $43 million allocated in the budget for phase one of the QueensWay, also referred to as the Met Hub project.

The only solution to traffic is viable alternatives to driving. The Van Wyck Expressway is a monstrosity, and the money poured into its expansion will provide no long-term relief to the congestion that chokes the corridor. Woodhaven Boulevard is in a similar situation. Residents of Southeast Queens rely on automobiles and slow buses, all while an abandoned railway structure runs directly through their neighborhoods. The decision to deprioritize transit expansion onto the corridor is imprudent, and in a time where our administration is emphasizing the needs of working-class new yorkers, it is incredibly confusing and incongruous.

Why the QueensLink is the right choice

Two competing concepts exist for the deactivated Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way: the park-only QueensWay, and the dual-purpose QueensLink, which combines subway and park uses. The QueensWay would be built directly on the former railbed, which would virtually eliminate the possibility of ever restoring transit there. The MTA itself recognized in its 2023 20-Year Needs Assessment that a linear park along the corridor would create a challenge for any future transit alternatives. Once a rail right-of-way is converted to other uses, it almost never returns to transit.

A study by the Steer Group found that the QueensLink would remove millions of vehicle trips each year, making streets safer and lowering harmful emissions, while adding up to 33 acres of new parks and trails integrated with the subway design. Over 20 years, the study concluded the project would more than pay for itself by creating jobs, saving New Yorkers time, and reducing healthcare costs tied to air pollution and traffic crashes.

Queens needs parks *and* trains. The QueensLink would provide both. I urge the Committee to preserve this irreplaceable right-of-way for future transit and to support the QueensLink.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

Ami Dube

Washington Heights, 10033

Council District 10

From: Mukhopadhyay, Amrita
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony LIC Schools
Date: Thursday, June 11, 2026 1:14:55 PM

[redacted]

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am a parent and physician residing in Long Island City. I am writing to demand that the commitments made in the OneLIC Neighborhood plan are fulfilled on time.

Long Island City's schools are already failing to meet the demands of existing families. The lack of inclusion of the promised school construction and improvements in the approved budget means the existing families in Long Island City and all the new residents will be unable to guarantee nearby elementary school seats, and may be forced to leave the neighborhood or send their young children on very long commutes. The budget must include:

- Funding to build the 2 promised new elementary schools and 1 middle school as part of OneLIC.

Currently, there are not enough seats for children to be able to go to the elementary school that is right next door! With all of the new buildings that will be constructed, and new families moving in, this problem will only get worse. Every child deserves access to a school near them. **Schools are the very foundation of a community's future.** Please ensure that there are enough schools to match the expected growth in families in this neighborhood.

As the City moves forward with significant new development in Long Island City, it is critical that these commitments are not delayed, deferred, or reduced. The City Council must ensure that the promised funding to allow the neighborhood to support so many new residents is not pushed off or ignored.

I believe that the schools promised under OneLIC must be fully funded and delivered on an appropriate and timely schedule so that neighborhood infrastructure keeps pace with

growth and current residents are not asked to continue bearing the consequences of decades of underinvestment in schools.

We need the City to honor and prioritize its commitment to the previously promised funding by the Mayor's Office to ensure equitable development. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future.

Sincerely,
Amrita

Amrita Mukhopadhyay, MD, MS, FACC
Eugene Braunwald, MD Assistant Professor of Cardiology
The Leon H. Charney Division of Cardiology, Department of Medicine
Division of Healthcare Delivery Science, Department of Population Health

NYU School of Medicine | NYU Langone Health
227 East 30th Street, 8th Floor
New York, NY 10016

amrita.mukhopadhyay@nyulangone.org
Website; LinkedIn



The Importance of Pet Neutering and Pet Ownership in Low-Income Communities

Spaying and neutering pets is one of the most impactful steps low-income communities can take to improve the well-being of both animals and people. Uncontrolled pet reproduction leads to overpopulation, putting enormous strain on already underfunded animal shelters and increasing the number of stray animals in neighborhoods. Stray and feral animals are more prone to injury, disease, and suffering — and can pose safety risks to residents, particularly children. Many nonprofit organizations and local clinics offer low-cost or free spay/neuter programs specifically designed to remove financial barriers, making it accessible regardless of income. By taking advantage of these resources, pet owners not only prevent unnecessary litters but also reduce long-term veterinary costs, since neutered animals are less prone to certain cancers and behavioral issues. A community that prioritizes responsible pet ownership creates safer streets, healthier animals, and a more compassionate environment for everyone.

Beyond physical health, the bond between a person and their pet carries profound mental health benefits that are especially meaningful in low-income communities, where stress, isolation, and limited access to mental health services are common challenges. Pets provide unconditional companionship, routine, and a sense of purpose — all of which are proven to reduce anxiety, depression, and feelings of loneliness. Studies have shown that interacting with animals lowers cortisol levels and increases the release of oxytocin, the hormone associated with bonding and emotional well-being. For children growing up in difficult circumstances, a pet can be a source of stability and comfort; for seniors or those living alone, they offer daily connection and motivation. Recognizing and supporting the human-animal bond in underserved communities is not just a kindness to animals — it is an investment in the emotional resilience and mental health of the people who love them.

Dear New York City Council Members,

My name is Ana Chiu. I have been a resident of Long Island City for the last 8 years, and am an active volunteer, parent, and voter. I am writing to demand that the commitments made in the OneLIC Neighborhood plan are fulfilled on time.

PARKS & PLAYGROUNDS - LIC already suffers from one of the lowest levels of open and green space per resident in New York City, and multiple public reviews of the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan acknowledge that the neighborhood's parkland and open space are already severely lacking, and will worsen with new residences without intervention, which the city has acknowledged. Despite this, the budget pushes back several commitments to open space:

- Waterfront esplanade and new open space construction, planned for completion in 2031, is not planned for funding until 2031
- Queensbridge Baby Park, planned for completion in 2031, is not planned for funding until 2032 or 2033
- Renewal of Queensbridge Park, planned for design in 2028, is not planned for funding until 2032

It also fails to fund the Parks Department at 1%, and does not baseline funding for the 115 Parks workers whose jobs expire in June or provide the 276 new jobs in Parks needed to support our existing public spaces, or provide adequate funding for GreenThumb and the Urban Park Rangers.

SCHOOLS - Long Island City's schools are already failing to meet the demands of existing families. The lack of inclusion of the promised school construction and improvements in the approved budget means the existing families in Long Island City and all the new residents will be unable to guarantee nearby elementary school seats, and may be forced to leave the neighborhood or send their young children on very long commutes. The budget must include

- Funding to build the 2 promised new elementary schools and 1 middle school as part of OneLIC.

INFRASTRUCTURE - The rezoned area requires significant improvements to provide safe connections through and beyond the neighborhood, allow people the space and infrastructure to spend time with their neighbors outdoors, and help bridge the divide between Queensbridge residents and other parts of LIC. Despite these real needs, the executive budget fails to include or significantly delays several of the promised improvements:

- Court Square Toilet not included in the budget
- Lighting Study in the IBZ not included in the budget
- Feasibility Study of Public Realm Improvements Under QBB Ramps not included in the budget
- Queens waterfront greenway delayed until 2029 + 2032
- 21st Street Intermodal Hub delayed until 2029 + 2032

- 44th Drive corridor improvements delayed until 2029 + 2032

As the City moves forward with significant new development in Long Island City, it is critical that these commitments are not delayed, deferred, or reduced. The City Council must ensure that the promised funding to allow the neighborhood to support so many new residents is not pushed off or ignored.

I believe that the parks, schools and infrastructure promised under OneLIC must be fully funded and delivered on an appropriate and timely schedule so that neighborhood infrastructure keeps pace with growth and current residents are not asked to continue bearing the consequences of decades of underinvestment.

We need the City to honor and prioritize its commitment to the previously promised funding by the Mayor's Office to ensure equitable development. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future.

Sincerely,

Ana Chiu
Long Island City, NY

Subject: Privatization of NYCHA Creates Instability for Seniors.

I live at Mitchel Houses in the South Bronx and do not have an email address. I am being supported in submitting this testimony by Save Section 9.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

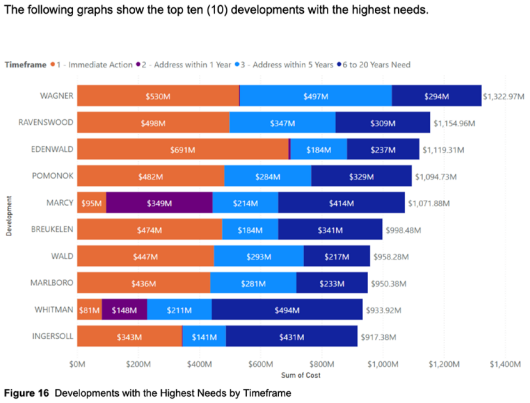


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.
- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

Subject: Privatization of NYCHA Creates Instability for Seniors.

I am a senior living in the South Bronx and do not have an email address. I am being supported in submitting this testimony by Save Section 9. I benefit from NYCHA and their community center managed by East Side Houses.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

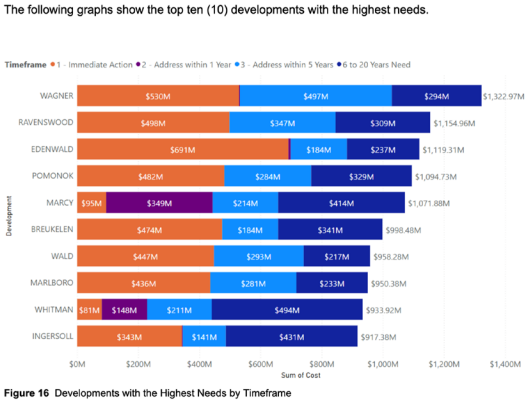


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.
- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

Dear Budget CommitteeNYC Council Committee on Finance,

My name is Andrea Lieske. I live in Harlem. I am asking the City Council to advocate for and ensure that **community composting is funded in FY27.** NYC Community Compost Network **requests $9,075,000, which includes $6,775,000 of program support and $2,300,000 for construction of a compost site**.
Community composting is not the same as curbside composting. It is a proven, community solution that reduces waste, builds local leaders, and delivers environmental benefits directly to NYC neighborhoods. Sustained funding ensures these programs continue to grow and serve all New Yorkers.

What This Funding Supports
With this funding, the Network and it's organizations like Earth Matter, delivers essential, community-based programs citywide:
● **Outreach & Education** – Culturally relevant, multilingual programming that increases participation in composting across communities
● **Master Composter Certificate Program** – Trains New Yorkers as educators, leaders, and composting stewards
● **Technical Assistance & Infrastructure** – Provides tools, training, and support to build and sustain local composting systems
● **Food Scrap Collection** – Accessible neighborhood drop-off sites, especially for residents without reliable curbside access
● **Local Composting & Processing** – Transforms food scraps and horticultural waste into compost locally, keeping resources in NYC and acting as demonstration sites for education. ● **Compost Distribution** – Provides free compost to community gardens, urban farms, and residents
● **Soil & Green Infrastructure Support** – Improves soils in parks, street tree beds, and public spaces, strengthening climate resilience

Why This Funding Matters
● **Essential to NYC's zero waste goals -** Increases organics diversion and complements curbside collection
● **Ensures equitable access -** Expands composting opportunities to underserved communities where there lacks curbside services
● **Builds community and leadership -** Strengthens neighborhood networks and creates a citywide culture of stewardship
● **Creates green jobs and workforce pathways -** Supports internships, training, and employment in the green economy
● **Improves climate resilience -** Healthy soils absorb stormwater, reduce flooding, and support urban ecosystems
● **Creates a local circular economy -** Food scraps are turned into compost and returned to the same communities—reducing reliance on export-based systems

Sincerely,
Andrea Lieske

Dear New York City Council Members,

My name is Andres Uzquiano (Full name - Jaime Andres Uzquiano Sandy) and I am a resident of Long Island City along with my partner and our daughter. I am writing to demand that the commitments made in the OneLIC Neighborhood plan are fulfilled on time.

LIC already suffers from one of the lowest levels of open and green space per resident in New York City, and multiple public reviews of the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan acknowledge that the neighborhood's parkland and open space are already severely lacking, and will worsen with new residences without intervention, which the city has acknowledged. Despite this, the budget pushes back several commitments to open space:

- Waterfront esplanade and new open space construction, planned for completion in 2031, is not planned for funding until 2031
- Queensbridge Baby Park, planned for completion in 2031, is not planned for funding until 2032 or 2033
- Renewal of Queensbridge Park, planned for design in 2028, is not planned for funding until 2032

It also fails to fund the Parks Department at 1%, and does not baseline funding for the 115 Parks workers whose jobs expire in June or provide the 276 new jobs in Parks needed to support our existing public spaces, or provide adequate funding for GreenThumb and the Urban Park Rangers.

Its concerns me as parks and recreation areas for children are limited and currently feel overcrowded at times. I cannot imagine how it will feel when we have the additional 15,000 residential units completed.

As far as Schools go, Long Island City's schools are already failing to meet the demands of existing families. The lack of inclusion of the promised school construction and improvements in the approved budget means the existing families in Long Island City and all the new residents will be unable to guarantee nearby elementary school seats, and may be forced to leave the neighborhood or send their young children on very long commutes. The budget must include

- Funding to build the 2 promised new elementary schools and 1 middle school as part of OneLIC.

We are planning to expand our family, and are thinking of staying long term in this lovely neighborhood; it should not be that hard to get early education for children.

As the City moves forward with significant new development in Long Island City, it is critical that these commitments are not delayed, deferred, or reduced. The City Council must ensure that the promised funding to allow the neighborhood to support so many new residents is not pushed off or ignored.

I believe that parks/waterfront connections, and schools development promised under OneLIC must be fully funded and delivered on an appropriate and timely schedule so that neighborhood infrastructure keeps pace with growth and current residents are not asked to continue bearing the consequences of decades of underinvestment.

We need the City to honor and prioritize its commitment to the previously promised funding by the Mayor's Office to ensure equitable development. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future.

Sincerely,

Jaime Andres Uzquiano Sandy

5/30/2026

To whom it may concern,

My name is Andrew Lwin, I'm currently an 11th grader student at Baccalaureate School Global Education. I want to ensure our school remains fully funded for our relocation so we can transition to a safe, modern, and purpose-built space. We need BSGE to have a better place and better space for all the newcoming students, all our siblings and neighbors in District 30 deserve the same modern school spaces, and advocate for the other promised neighborhood schools to be fully funded. The strong community needs fully funded elementary and middle schools so students can thrive before they reach high school. As a student, BSGE has a higher education system, great teachers, and great principals but the school building is old and small that we don't have enough room for taking the IB exams and laboratory is very old, no auditorium and gym is small so we have to go to gym outside even in severe weather conditions. The hallways are very narrow for students to walk creating a huge crowd. The school has a very high education system and well behaved students. As a student, I feel safe at this school, and I have a high education for a lot of opportunities for the future. That's why we need a bigger space for incoming future siblings and neighboring communities for students. Every year, students apply to get into BSGE. We had more than 1,000 applications every year, BSGE can accept only a few students because the space is too small, which is not enough space for all incoming students. I'm here to testify the written email to BSGE remain fully funded for our relocation and other promised neighborhood schools to be fully funded. Thank You So Much

Sincerely

Andrew Lwin
11th Grade
Baccalaureate School Global Education

Finance committee members, please join with me and persuade the council overall to redirect the Mayor. Currently he is funding Queensway in the budget which will convert an inactive rail line in Queens into a park.

He claims transit can be added back later but no one should credibly believe we will put a train back into a corridor which has become a park.

Fortunately we do not have to choose either-or. The City Council needs to ensure that instead the QueensLink proposal moves forward which provides transit and park.

This will provide transit to an underserved area in Queens, it will allow the people of your district to eventually get a G train that goes to Forest Hills once again and it may even provide a way to have a direct subway to JFK some day.

Green space is important, but, in a city where new transit is almost impossible to build we cannot allow the misguided Queensway proposal to move forward. The council must support Queenslink instead.

Dear Council Member Gutiérrez,

As a resident of [redacted] Decatur Street in Ridgewood and a member of this community for the past 15 years, I a[redacted]riting to express my profound disappointment with Mayor Mamdani's recent support for the QueensWay initiative, and to urge you to champion the QueensLink project instead.

While the idea of a "High Line in the middle of Queens" might appeal to developers and look attractive in architectural renderings, it represents a catastrophic waste of pre-existing transit infrastructure. Our borough does not need a purely cosmetic, single-use park built over a dormant rail line; we need functional, efficient public transportation.

Supporting QueensLink over QueensWay is the only logically sound choice for our district and the borough at large, for three specific reasons. First, currently, traveling north-to-south through Queens via subway is a convoluted, time-consuming process that forces riders through Manhattan or Brooklyn. By reactivating the Rockaway Beach Branch for the M train, QueensLink would immediately solve this transit desert, connecting Ridgewood and surrounding neighborhoods directly to central and southern Queens.

Second, QueensLink Provides Both Transit AND Green Space. The QueensWay presents a false dichotomy between green space and transit. QueensLink's proposal includes 33 acres of park space built alongside the reactivated rail line. We do not have to sacrifice a critical transit artery - one that would be logistically and bureaucratically impossible to recreate or recapture - to get a park; we can have both. Building QueensWay permanently destroys the right-of-way for future rail expansion.

Last, the working-class residents in our community rely on efficient transit to access jobs, schools, and essential services. A linear park does not reduce commute times, does not take cars off the road, and does not lower the borough's carbon footprint the way a new subway line would. Investing tax dollars solely into a park—while ignoring the pressing transit needs of central and southern Queens—is a failure of equitable urban planning. My neighbors and I will not utilize a localized pedestrian walkway to the degree that justifies its price tag, but we will use expanded rail that actually connects our borough.

I urge you to push back against the Mayor's stance, look at the immense practical utility of the QueensLink proposal, and publicly support restoring rail to the Rockaway Beach Branch.

Sincerely,

Andy Cushman
[redacted] Decatur Street
[redacted]ewood, NY 11385

Andy Zhou: Testimony
Finance Committee Hearing: June 10, 2026

Good morning. I am Andy Zhou, a long-time NYC resident and soon-to-be college student studying civil engineering. I closely follow our city's urban planning and transit infrastructure headlines.

I've frequently ridden the A train towards the Rockaways. However, whenever I frequent the Rockaways beaches in the summer, or Howard Beach Station for the AirTrain to JFK, I've always found the A-train frequency to be the weakest link. Once, as I disembarked the JFK AirTrain, the Manhattan-bound A train was just pulling out of the platform. I glanced at the departure board, and the next and ONLY train that was tracking was in 27 minutes.

[Pause 2 seconds]
Let that sink in. TWENTY-SEVEN MINUTES.

Imagine being a resident who lives in the Rockaways and relies on the subway to get to work daily. Does twenty-seven minutes sound like a waiting time ANYONE in a city as great as New York should EVER endure, let alone on a daily basis?

Imagine a family who decides to take public transit to JFK Airport. Is it reasonable for them to pay nearly TEN dollars for the AirTrain, and STILL be subjected to a possible half-hour wait time for the only link to get them from the Howard Beach AirTrain station back home?

No, it most definitely is not.

QueensLink, a proposal to reactivate a rail-and-trail linear corridor between Rego Park, Queens, and the A train corridor in the Rockaways, is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to not only bring transit equity to long-time locals, but also to showcase the world-class transit NYC deserves to have for our millions of summertime beach-goers and annual tourists. Plus, it also serves to beautify the local areas it traverses by building a linear park alongside the transit line. Furthermore, it crucially increases regional resiliency by relieving chronic congestion along Woodhaven Blvd, giving residents another option to get where they need to go.

I cannot stress enough how important this proposal is; the immense economic value and equity it brings to NYC are far beyond the financial investment required to make it a reality.

Thus, I urge you, the Committee, to stand with QueensLink and allocate the necessary capital funding for a comprehensive environmental and engineering study to finally get this rail-and-trail project moving.

Let's make the right choice together—one that will reshape the future of our City for generations to come, not one that will lock hundreds of thousands of Queens residents out of our transit network forever.

Thank you.

Additional Policy Considerations:
In addition to my remarks above, I urge the Committee to consider the following critical logistics realities regarding QueensLink:

1. **Preserving the rail right-of-way:** Even if there is insufficient budget for QueensLink currently, I heavily urge the Council to, at the minimum, mandate the physical right-of-way be preserved for possible future rail service; this involves routing Queensway's linear park plan adjacent to the trackbed as opposed to directly on top of it. This is a minimal-cost no-build alternative that still preserves the opportunity to unlock unrealized mobility and economic gains for millions should the City decide to proceed with rail service reactivation.
2. **Surface street congestion reduction:** A rail corridor parallel to Woodhaven Blvd provides critical systemic relief and redundancy to an overcrowded road too many are over-reliant on. Currently, a single car crash or similar incidents along Woodhaven can strand thousands of Central and South Queens residents. QueensLink introduces the long-overdue yet necessary infrastructure redundancy, ensuring that locals always have reliable secondary travel options, regardless of personal preferences. Furthermore, giving daily commuters the option of rail transit also diverts traffic off the surface roads, reducing congestion for those who must drive, making this a win-win for transit riders and motorists alike.
3. **Land-Usage Control:** Even though QueensLink didn't make it onto MTA's current 5-year plan, the City ultimately controls the land use. If the City Council funds a park-only design without any future provisions (such as preserving the rail right-of-way), it permanently removes the corridor from any *future* MTA Capital Plan. We shouldn't let a state agency's 5-year budget cycle dictate the next hundred years of Queens' infrastructure.

P.S. Lauren, is it a good idea to have an Official-Submit draft with more details? Thanks!

Subject: Privatization Creates Instability for Seniors.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

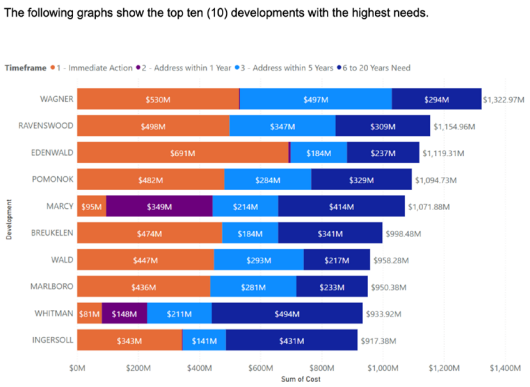


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.

- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

Right now, more than half of New Yorkers cannot afford a basic veterinary visit. And forget spay/neuter services. They are a whopping $1,000 per animal! At the same time, animal rescuers are being overwhelmed by a growing wave of abandoned and neglected animals with no support from the city.

NYC spends less than $3 per resident on its shelter system, and even that funding isn't guaranteed. Meanwhile, other cities invest in solutions such as free or low-cost spay/neuter programs that help reduce shelter intake and abandonment.

This is not an individual problem. Our finance committee needs to hear that New Yorkers are carrying a responsibility that belongs to the city itself—and that without investment in affordable veterinary care, spay/neuter programs, and community support, the crisis will only continue to worsen.

In the richest city in the richest country in the world, citizens who want to help animals are often forced to drain their savings or turn to GoFundMe simply to provide services that should be part of a city response.

I receive no city funding for the lifesaving work I do. In fact, I spend thousands of dollars out of my own pocket on bridge tolls and other expenses just to rescue and move animals to safety. At the same time, I am forced to drive on dangerous roads while transporting animals, *while NYPD and NYS police fail to maintain even basic road safety.* Independent rescuers are filling in the gaps, yet we are left to bear the financial, physical, and personal risks *alone*.



Good afternoon, my name is Angelike and I'm a youth leader with Make the Road New York. I'm an eighth grader in a middle school in Queens. Council Member Thomas-Henry represents where I live and where I go to school.

This year was a very hard year for me. I was depressed and had no motivation to do anything. I felt like going to school would just make me feel worse and I missed a lot of days. When I'm going through these issues, I want to talk to a mental health professional trained to help me – not a police officer who is trained to arrest me. New York City employs more school police than guidance counselors and social workers combined. That's not helpful and that's not where New York City should spend over $400 million dollars a year.

Last year, a school cop searched my friend without her consent. My friend felt very uncomfortable with this and started crying. This situation should have been handled differently. My friend was already going through a hard time and this just made things worse. It would have been better if a trained mental health professional could have responded to the situation. Then they could have talked about the root of the problem and worked to figure it out. The safest schools have the most resources, NOT the most police.

We also need afterschool programs that support our mental health. I go to this afterschool program called Beacon, where I do competitive dance. The city usually pays our fees for the competitions. But recently, the city cut our funding and if we want to go to the competition, we have to pay ourselves. My family barely makes ends meet and we cannot afford this. It's really unfair and I think that instead of money being wasted on school cops, it should fund programs and activities that help us clear our minds. We need safe spaces to be kids and teenagers; not more school cops.

We are calling for the Mayor and the city to prioritize young people. We want to secure a hiring freeze on school cops and cut the funding for the empty school cop positions. The city can then invest those millions of dollars in protecting and expanding mental health supports in schools and restorative justice. School is a place where all young people should be free to learn, grow from mistakes, explore new interests, and be safe. I know that I have made a lot of mistakes, but all I really needed was mental health support. New York needs to listen to young people when we talk, invest in our education not school cops. Thank you.

Good day,

I am writing to express my concern about going forward with Queensway. Building a park along the former Rockaway Branch would make it significantly more challenging to implement future transit back into that area, as the land would have to be reconfigured in order to fit a train again. The millions of dollars it would take to build Queensway could be utilized to fix other issues, such as improving bike lane infrastructure along streets. Residents of Queens believe it would be much more beneficial to reactivate the existing abandoned railway, and help our neighbors in Southern Queens have fast and reliable transit options. Forest Park is already a very large greenspace for Queens residents. Bringing back transit service along the former Rockaway Branch would make Forest Park much easier to get to, and be accessible for farther away neighborhoods. The Queenslink has proposed the idea of not only reactivating the abandoned rails, but to also provide parks nearby the potential transit line. It is imperative that this current administration stop their decision to make Queensway, and start listening to the proposal for Queenslink instead!

Regards,
Angel - Queens Resident

Written Testimony in Support of Funding for Spay/Neuter Services and Pet Food Pantries

Dear Members of the New York City Council,

I am writing in support of allocating $1.5 million for spay/neuter services and $2 million for pet food pantries in the city budget.

As a New York City resident and the owner of two cats, including one that I adopted, I have a deep appreciation for the work that shelters and rescue organizations do every day. Through my experience as a pet owner and my interest in fostering, I have become increasingly aware of how overwhelmed many shelters and rescues have become due to the growing number of animals in need of care.

At the same time, many families are struggling with rising costs and are being forced to make heartbreaking decisions about whether they can continue to care for their pets. No one should have to surrender a beloved animal because they cannot afford pet food during a difficult period. Funding pet food pantries is a practical way to help families stay together while reducing the burden on our shelter system.

Increased funding for spay/neuter services is equally important. Preventing unwanted litters helps address shelter overcrowding at its source and reduces the number of animals entering already strained shelters and rescue organizations.

Animal welfare organizations provide an essential service to our communities, yet the need continues to outpace available resources. These investments will help keep pets in loving homes, reduce shelter intake, and create a more sustainable and humane animal welfare system for New York City.

Sincerely,
Anita Giza
Brooklyn, New York

I meant to submit this for the appropriate hearing three days ago, however I had a medical emergency and am staying at a rehabilitation facility temporarily. As a longtime resident of Ozone Park, Queens with multiple sclerosis who lost the ability to drive decades ago, we need rails and trails with QueensLink.

The Atlanta Beltline example of having a new park obstruct an already existing transit right of way will be repeated in Queens if QueensWay is built. QueensWay does absolutely preclude the construction of transit along the former Rockaway Beach branch, that is undeniable.

We should not be wasting time on a High Line in Queens when people between the Rockaways, Rego Park, and even parts of eastern Brooklyn within a few miles of the line such as Starrett City and Flatlands need reduced road congestion and faster travel times badly.

If recreation is the primary concern to some members of the City Council, then along with the fact that QueensLink is also including a park with bike infrastructure, people going to and from Manhattan will have a 60-70% faster commute to or from Rockaway Beach.

The Trust for Public Land behind QueensWay even said that “The residents of Queens don't need another train line – they need safe ways to walk or bike to home, work, and transit hubs.” which is an alarmingly tone deaf statement completely detached from reality. QueensWay is designed to prevent another train line from opening.

It cannot be emphasized enough, QueensLink will provide both rails and trails for bikes and walking along with so many other benefits, such as reopening the Woodhaven LIRR stop and getting people from east, south, and central Queens to East New York, Bed-Stuy, and Downtown Brooklyn (Atlantic Terminal) and all of their respective connections so much faster.

Throw out the billionaire-backed QueensWay, jump on the working class-backed QueensLink.

Thank you for reading my testimony.

Ann Whitman Testamony in Favor of Financial Support for Animal Spat/Neuter and Food Pantry

In the grand scheme of the NY budget, this is not a big ask but would have a big impact on the lives and happiness of many New Yorkers and their pets. A growing animal population is only going to cost the city more money in the long run, by increasing the load on city-run animal shelters and potentially contributing to public health issues. And pet food has increased by an insane amount in the last several years. I got my cat in 2020, and I think his per can food cost has almost doubled. I can afford this, but many cannot and they should not have to abandon or surrender their pets when all they need to keep them is a little support.

For far too long, the city has taken advantage of the caring but emotionally taxed volunteers out there in the city who pick up the spay/neuter/rehoming costs of dogs, cats, and others. Pleased support this modest ask and help to build a model for what animal care and control can look like in our great city.

Dear members of the Council and fellow New Yorkers and residents of Queens,

I am humbly requesting that you take an in-depth look at the QueensLink proposal, to add subway access and park space to the Rockaway Beach Branch corridor (which is currently abandoned tracks).
Plans for the Queensway Met Hub leave no space for transit. This means the Queensway park would have to be destroyed in order to add trains. It is undeniable that to do so would be a waste of taxpayer money — so in effect if the park is built as the plan currently is, are cutting off the possibility of ever building transit on this rare right-of-way owned by the city that could be used to build transit and to connect communities.
All I ask is that the alternative that includes transit, be given serious consideration. I live very close to the tracks, I do understand the concerns of people with homes right along it. As far as I can tell from the QueensLink proposal, the trains would be underground in the sections closest to housing, or under a tunnel. Of course that doesn't alleviate all concerns, but the chance to add a new subway line is so rare that the idea of not even properly exploring the idea seems short-sighted. Also the projected ridership used in the initial detail of the plan is only for the current population and I believe does not take into account the rise in population that inevitably follows the opening of new subway stops.
Also the plan as proposed is not an either-or—it would be both trains and park space.
Perhaps parts of the Queensway park plan such as the outdoor classrooms can also be incorporated into the QueensLink plan.
As the city prioritizes housing and further density in every borough, the strain of more people on the roadways and the resulting pollution will be felt even more keenly. As anyone who lives along Woodhaven Blvd knows often your only practical option is bus or car along much of that road. Someone wanting to visit Rockaway beach from the Rego Park area (or vice versa) is looking at roughly an hour on the bus, or 23 minutes by car. A train could make a transit trip much easier, and could improve the economies of both areas (beach access, shopping and medical facilities access).

One can also not ignore that to try to build transit AFTER density has increased (which is already happening) will only become more expensive and difficult to do.

Thank you for your consideration,
Sincerely,
Anna Sabatini

Testimony to the City Council Committees on Criminal Justice budget hearing
June 10, 2026

Good afternoon. Thank you so much for allowing me to testify today. My name is Anna Schupack, and I am a social work student at Silberman School of Social Work and a volunteer with the Campaign to Close Rikers.

I would like to start by saying that, as a taxpaying citizen of this city, I am astounded that Rikers Island is the most expensive and least effective tool our City has for creating community safety. The FY2027 Executive Budget includes some key steps toward reining in jail operation costs and reinvesting those savings in true public safety. And in order to Close Rikers as quickly as possible, we'll need to do more. To align the FY2027 budget with the City's legal and moral obligation to Close Rikers, it must include:

1. An additional $39.2M to meet mental health needs outside of Rikers, including:
    a. At least $66.3M, baselined, for Intensive Mobile Treatment (IMT) teams, $22M more than the Executive Budget allocates, which should eliminate the current waitlist.[1]
    b. At least $23.8M, baselined, for Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), $4.5M more than the Executive Budget allocates.[2]
    c. At least $6M, baselined, for Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT), $2M more than the Executive Budget allocates, which provides both mental health and reentry services to people returning from jail and prison.[3]
    d. $1.7M to establish an outpatient competency restoration pilot program for 50-75 people who might otherwise be waiting at Rikers for transfer to a state hospital.
    e. $3M in capital funds to support 60 new residential treatment beds for people with serious mental illness and with co-occurring addictions.[4]
    f. At least $8.8M, baselined, for crisis respite centers, $6M more than the Executive Budget allocates, to open four new centers, in compliance with Local Law 118-2023.[5]
2. An additional $47.2M for diversion and reentry services through the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ), including:
    a. $10M in new funds for ATI programs and $10M in new funds for Reentry Services, as recommended by the ATI/Reentry Coalition, to scale up these evidence-based models.
    b. $6.9M to expand programs serving court-involved youth with mental health needs.
    c. $20.3M[6] to establish at least 150 units of low-barrier housing for people with court-involvement and mental health diagnoses.

[1] Per DOHMH testimony on June 5, 2026, the waitlist is 600 people. Each new IMT team can serve 27 people.
[2] The combined waitlist for all ACT teams, including FACT and SPACT, was 654 people as of June 5, 2026 per DOHMH testimony. The City should also work with the state to eliminate the waitlist for all ACT teams.
[3] For FACT teams, the City adds approximately $675,000 per ACT team to supplement state funding by adding reentry specialists.
[4] State funding through OASAS would provide operational funds.
[5] The FY2026 budget for crisis respite centers was $5.3M, but only $2.8M in the FY2027 Preliminary Budget, as reported by DOHMH.
[6] Approximately $135,000 per unit, based on similar Safe Haven models.

    d. OCJ should also publish an analysis of the full need for transitional reentry housing, and conduct a data match to generate an updated eligibility list for Justice Impacted Supportive Housing (JISH), a permanent reentry housing model.[7]
3. An additional $3.6M to restore cuts to the Board of Correction (BOC), and expand their oversight capacity. The Executive Budget shows $605,000 in cuts to BOC's budget.[8] These cuts are unwise and unnecessary. The Board of Correction has testified that they need at least 60 staff roles (29 more than the Executive Budget includes)[9] to carry out their oversight responsibilities, as a first step to rightsizing their budget.[10] Expanding BOC's capacity could not only improve conditions in the jails, but also protect the city from future liability, like the $123 million dollars paid out in FY2025 for claims against DOC.

Meanwhile, DOC remains over-resourced. With new management in place, DOC can better deploy resources, not rush to fill vacancies. The FY2027 budget should build on smart vacancy reductions announced in the Executive Budget, and:

4. Eliminate vacancies for DOC uniformed staff, to begin to rightsize the agency
    a. The Executive Budget authorizes 6,474 positions for uniformed officers in FY2027 (down from 7,060 in FY2026), but as of January 1, 2026 DOC employed 5,759 officers and 1,301 positions were vacant.[11] Filling DOC's remaining 715 vacancies would cost an additional $95.6M annually.[12] These remaining vacancies should be eliminated, in order to reduce incarceration and cut wasteful spending.
5. Reduce overtime spending by consolidating operations and permanently closing jails on Rikers, starting with the vacant Anna M. Kross Center, where 109 officers are still assigned.[13]
6. Conduct and release a staffing analysis as soon as possible, to determine how many staff DOC actually needs to operate the facilities it currently manages.

The Executive Budget also includes 580 more police officers, among a surge of low-level arrests that frequently impact New Yorkers who lack stable housing and need mental health services. These resources should instead be used for housing, healthcare, and other community-based interventions.

I am truly rooting for a city where people are set up for success, with basic needs met, and where people are free to live lives with dignity and in community with loved ones. We can and must do better.

---

[7] While JISH funding would come through DOHMH, OCJ coordinated the first (and only) data match, when the program was launched.
[8] $233,000 is associated with cutting two vacancies, and $374,437 is associated with cuts to OTPS
[9] Based on testimony from the Board of Correction on March 7, 2025 that approximately 60 staff are needed to fulfill their mandate. BOC's proposed staffing in the F27 budget is 33 people, and total agency budget of $3.67M, per Departmental Estimates.
[10] Board of Corrections representatives previously advocated increasing their budget to a minimum percentage of DOC's.
[11] Per Independent Budget Office
[12] Based on $133,756 per officer, as calculated by the Vera Institute.
[13] City of New York Executive Budget Fiscal Year 2027, Supporting Schedules p. 1414

To the City Council members,

My name is Annette Linda Ramtahal. I have been a paraprofessional with New York City public schools District 75 for over 11 years.
I would like to give my testimony today on why this “respect check” is not the respect that paraprofessionals need and deserve.

Let me be clear, any money in the pockets of paraprofessionals is well earned. However, this proposed $10,000 is non-pensionable because it’s not within our contract. This will hurt paraprofessionals later down the line because it will ultimately affect our already abysmally low pensions.

New York City paraprofessionals are grossly underpaid throughout the years during contract negotiations. We have been told that we are bonded by the MLC‘s agreement and we are lumped in together with other pedagogues accepting 3% raises.
This is unacceptable. a paraprofessional with a bachelor's degree that has worked over 10 years is unable to make $50,000 in one of the most expensive cities in the country.

Most paraprofessionals work two and three jobs just to make ends meet. They are on the bread lines and being priced out of the city.

There is no one more hard-working than paraprofessionals; especially in District 75.

We serve a population of students who require 100%– our physicality, our mental and emotional health is put on the line.

The extreme quantities of vacancies for paraprofessionals shifts the burden of the workday on those of us already in the classroom.

Most days I am burnt out by 10:30 in the morning because I have already responded to a child getting off the bus having a tantrum, toileting accident, and dealing with extreme behaviors.

Why would anyone want to become a paraprofessional?
The city and the Department Of Education are in the red because of countless violations of IEP’s.

The students' mandates are not being met because of the lack of paraprofessionals.

Paraprofessionals need pensionable increases to our salaries, which reflects the cost of living.

Paraprofessionals need LODI - line of duty injury. I am sure most of you are not aware that we are not covered by this even though we are with students at all times during the day.

Paraprofessionals need longevity raises on par with other pedagogues.

Paraprofessionals need better working conditions.

This proposed $10,000 by our union outside of contract was a scheme concocted by Michael Mulgrew, the president of the UFT in order to get reelected in the last election.

Michael Mulgrew does not truly care about paraprofessionals because if he did, during our last contract negotiations, he had $450 million to give paraprofessionals pensionable raises. He did nothing.

I am asking the City Council to seriously consider not passing this bill because it will be more injurious to paraprofessionals down the line when it comes time to retire.

I am available to speak with any member of the city council on this matter privately or publicly.

Thank you
Annette Linda Ramtahal
NYCPS UFT paraprofessional

Buenas tardes. Gracias al Consejo Municipal de la Ciudad y en especial la Concejal Linda Lee, por darme la oportunidad de someter testimonio sobre el presupuesto anual de la ciudad.

Es de mucha satisfacción compartir mi experiencia con los miembros del Consejo Municipal, ya que por medio de estas vivencias les puedo testificar todo lo que pase como sobreviviente, quiero decirles que gracias a la ayuda ofrecida por New Destiny encontré una vivienda digna para mis hijos, donde nos sentimos libres de todo abuso y de maltratos. Mis hijos sienten lo que es un hogar libre de violencia y traumas.

Dentro de mi caso, viví con un hombre narcisista que odiaba a mis hijos y mi madre, que me maltrato en todos los sentidos, tanto emocional como psicológico, tanto a mí como a mis hijos, y me usaba para lo que él quería.

Con la ayuda del programa federal *Emergency Housing Voucher* (EHV), un vale de asistencia a la vivienda, pude lograr darles más estabilidad a mis hijos. New Destiny me ayudó con el proceso de búsqueda y el papeleo para encontrar mi departamento. Ahora el mismo vale que nos dio seguridad, nos está causando un proceso de retraumatización, desde que nos hemos enterado de que el gobierno federal ha decidido desfinanciar el programa antes de tiempo.

Aunque el programa fue originalmente financiado hasta 2030, la administración de Trump ha anunciado que el financiamiento se ha agotado, poniendo en riesgo a 50,000 hogares en todo el país. Los hogares con EHV se encuentran en todos los distritos de la ciudad de Nueva York.

NYCHA administra 5,200 vales EHV, incluyendo el mío. La única solución que NYCHA nos ha ofrecido hasta ahora es que solicitemos una transferencia a vivienda de NYCHA. Y eso no es viable. Simplemente no hay unidades disponibles para todos nosotros. Además, esto significa una mudanza, para la cual no nos están facilitando fondos.

La solución más directa es CityFHEPS. Esto permitirá que los sobrevivientes de violencia doméstica, como yo y mis hijos, podamos permanecer en los hogares que tanto esfuerzo nos ha costado reconstruir.

Señoras y señores del Consejo Municipal, le incluyan en el presupuesto anual fondos para que las familias con NYCHA EHV puedan obtener CityFHEPS. Necesitamos que la ciudad nos ampare ya que el gobierno federal nos ha fallado.

Le doy gracias a Dios primero y a New Destiny, que durante mi proceso de violencia doméstica me dieron ese apoyo. Ahora que enfrentamos otro momento de crisis, pongo mi confianza en Dios y en los funcionarios públicos para que escuchen mi plegaria y se aseguren de que mi hogar, así como los miles de otros que dependen de NYCHA EHV, tengan un lugar seguro en donde vivir y cuidar de sus familias.

Creo en que le será posible.

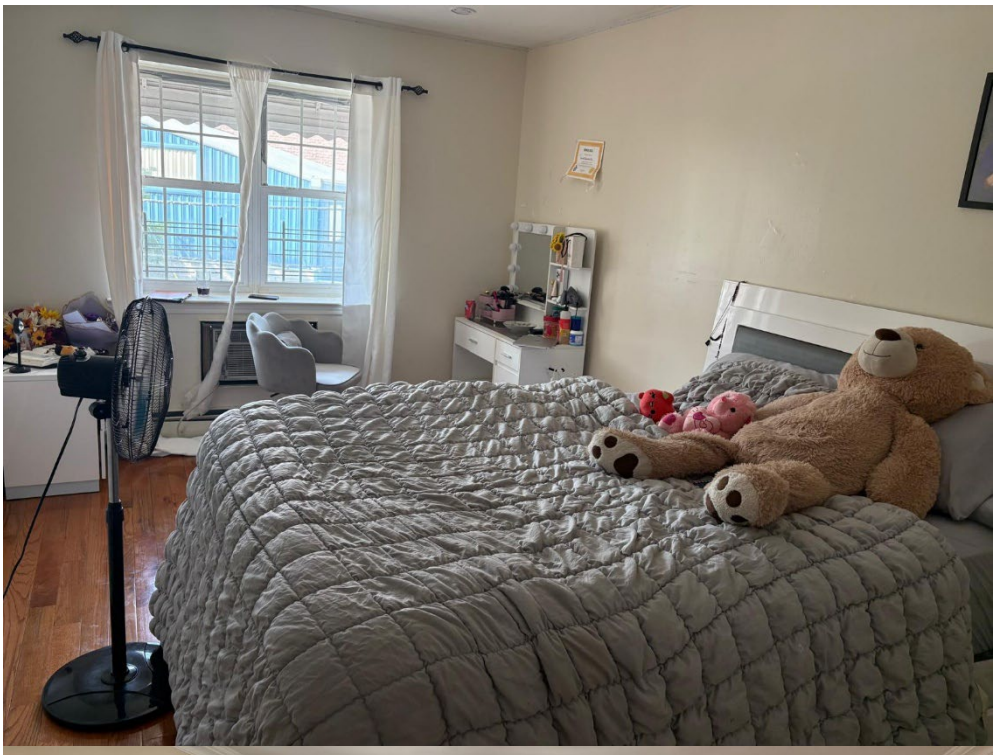
Gracias 🙏 y bendiciones a todos.

Neoyorquina, madre, sobreviviente de violencia doméstica, e integrante del programa Voces de Cambio de New Destiny Housing

Adjunto fotos del hogar en donde vivo con mis hijos gracias al EHV, donde nos sentimos seguros y quisiéramos permanecer:











Anthony P
6/9/2026

Hello, I am writing this to the New York City Committee of Finance regarding Queensway, Queenslink and the Department of Parks budget. Queensway, where 43 million dollars is planned to be dedicated, is not a good idea and at worst will hurt Queens and New York City in the long term. Queensway uses a former railroad right of way that is very valuable for a potential subway extension that will cut down on north-south travel times significantly. If Queensway, which is parks only, gets built, it will prevent this opportunity from ever happening forever. And even without the rail aspect, Queensway is still a bad idea to fund right now as the parks department is currently getting a budget cut in the same proposal. How are we able to dedicate money to building a brand new park when there's not enough to fund the maintenance of the current parks? Especially when many existing parks are still in dire need of rehabilitation. This is especially when the full Queensway project may cost upwards of $500 million by the end, which is nearly the entire parks department budget! Delaying or even canceling Queensway will be more beneficial as it can reallocate 43 million dollars to existing parks that need maintenance, while also giving a chance to rethink Queensway into Queenslink, which will allow the former railroad right of way to be both a subway and a park. Unlike Queensway, Queenslink will benefit everyone through better connections, spark new housing to support your promise of building affordable housing, and it will still include new park space which will benefit far more New Yorkers than Queensway, which is designed to block transit and takes away money from other parks. Please reconsider your decision on the Queensway funding in the budget and do what’s right for New Yorkers.

Thank you for reading, Anthony P

Good Morning. I am testifying today in support of the QueensLink project, and in opposition to the QueensWay project. QueensLink is a no-brainer project that would solve many problems for transit riders and the MTA, not just in Southeast Queens, but for the whole subway network. For instance, it would add capacity to the Queens Boulevard Local Subway Service, allowing for the G train to be restored to Forest Hills full time by diverting the M train away to the Rockaways, which would add new connections to Brooklyn and Queens. Combined with the Interborough Express, this would support crosstown commutes heavily. Queensway proponents say that a park is needed and Mayor Mamdani stated that a park would not preclude future rail service. However, this is not necessarily reflected in reality, as restoring rail service to the Rockaway Beach Branch under the current Queensway plan will require demolishing the park, which would add political difficulty. A similar project in Atlanta known as the Belt Line was built with a park first with rail added later. Now, the rail project is facing significant pushback from residents who are worried the park would be affected. Going with this project would create another Robert Moses-like legacy, where he built highways and parks, but did not leave provisions for future transit expansion, which New Yorkers are paying the price for today. Another great thing about Queenslink is it would include a park as well, creating a public space as well as a valuable transit asset. Ask riders who live in Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, and the Rockaways if they would rather take an infrequent A train or an overcrowded Q52/Q53 bus, because if QueensWay moves forward, you would be relegating those neighborhoods to continue facing some of the longest commutes in the nation. This project is widely supported by members of city, state, and federal government and all different political ideologies, including at one point Mayor Mamdani himself. If we do not do this project, we will be squandering a huge opportunity that is sitting right there and needlessly making life more difficult for working people. Thank you for your time.

To Whom it May Concern,

I'm writing today to plead on behalf of the QueensLink project. I have seen recently that money in New York's budget has been set aside for QueensWay, the opposing plan. I love the idea of a park, but QueensWay will prevent any further development of a rail system in that area, and some of this newly built park would have to be ripped up.

Once people are attached to something, they will rarely agree to damage it, even temporarily. If you look at the Purple Line in Maryland or the Belt Line in Georgia, both of these areas experienced the same thing we are going through now. I urge the members of this committee and other people in New York who have a direct say in this project moving forward to learn from the mistakes these failed rail projects made. They put in parks with the assurance that they could always build a rail at a later point, but the residents got used to the park and consistently voted against something that would disrupt it.

I want to be clear in my statement that QueensLink and QueensWay aren't opposites. We can have both. QueensLink plans also include 33 acres of park land. If we want this budget to go as far as it can, receiving an outdoor space *and* transit will benefit a larger demographic of New Yorkers.

As of March 2026, we finally have professional research from industry-leading experts showing that QueensLink would generate at least $8.9B in economic growth and "deliver up to $2.20 of benefit to wider society for every $1 of public investment." The report determines that the project would have twice as many riders per mile compared to the Interborough Express. QueensLink also reduces vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by 30 million each year, equating to 7,200 fewer tons of CO2 annually.

I strongly urge you to support such a transformative and equitable project. I hope that you take this information to heart and approve a budget for QueensLink's "rails and trails" vision. If that is not possible at this time, I am pleading for the Committee to hold the funding set aside for QueensWay until we can assess the potentially permanent obstacles it could create for future, much-needed transit.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Aria Kelly

A CALL TO ACTION

DEFUND THE QUEENSWAY, SUPPORT QUEENSLINK!

June 8, 2026

To the New York City Council,

My name is Aria Todd, and I'm a lifelong resident of the city, now living in Central Queens in Jackson Heights. I'm submitting this testimony on behalf of the Queenslink project and in opposition to the recently proposed Queensway project. Queensway, with its lack of provision for including rail in it's initial build is not what Queens needs. This borough is a transit desert, and our existing rail corridors are already overcrowded and reaching their limits. Many Queens residents have to rely on buses to reach rail transit to get to and from work every day, many of whom live in two fare zones.

I support Queenslink and strongly oppose the Queensway. **Queensway is not what our city needs right now**. We need more rail access for the residents of south and eastern Queens. Building parkland on the existing infrastructure would be a wasted opportunity to revolutionize the transit corridor of this borough for years to come. Any more time lost on this will only add additional challenges for the future development of Queens and be a lost opportunity to improve the quality of life and access to thousands of residents that are currently underserved by accessible transit.

As a lifelong taxpayer in this city, I ask that the city council defund the Queensway proposal and support what Queenslink wants to do for our borough, allowing right of way for **both rails and trails**.

Thank you for your time,

Aria Todd

CONTACT

1234 MAIN STREET | ANYTOWN, STATE ZIP | (123) 456-7890 | HELLO@EXAMPLE.COM

Dear New York City Council Members,

My name is Ariadni Vezyroglou, and I am a longtime Long Island City resident and parent of two children in the public school system. I am writing regarding the commitments outlined in the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan and the need for timely investment in neighborhood infrastructure.

Long Island City already has among the lowest levels of open and green space per resident in New York City. Multiple public reviews of the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan have acknowledged that the neighborhood's existing parkland and open space are insufficient and will become even more strained as new housing is added without timely intervention.

Despite this, several open-space commitments appear delayed in the current budget:

- Waterfront esplanade and new open space construction — planned completion: 2031; funding not scheduled until 2031
- Queensbridge Baby Park — planned completion: 2031; funding not scheduled until 2032 or 2033
- Renewal of Queensbridge Park — design planned for 2028; funding not scheduled until 2032

The budget also does not fund the Parks Department at 1% and fails to baseline funding for the 115 Parks workers whose jobs expire in June. It also does not provide for the 276 additional Parks positions needed to support existing public spaces, nor adequate support for GreenThumb and the Urban Park Rangers. Green public space is essential to the health, connection, and daily life of our community.

Long Island City's schools are already struggling to meet the needs of current families. Without funding for the promised school construction and improvements, both existing and future residents may be unable to secure nearby elementary school seats, forcing families either to leave the neighborhood or to send young children on long commutes. The budget should include funding for the two promised new elementary schools and one middle school as part of OneLIC. Many families had to leave the neighborhood because of the lack of middle school options.

The rezoned area also requires major public-realm improvements to create safe connections within and beyond the neighborhood, support outdoor community life, and help bridge long-standing divides between Queensbridge residents and other parts of Long Island City. However, several promised improvements are either missing from the budget or significantly delayed:

- Court Square restroom — not included in the budget
- Lighting study in the IBZ — not included in the budget
- Feasibility study of public-realm improvements under the QBB ramps — not included in the budget
- Queens waterfront greenway — delayed until 2029 and 2032
- 21st Street intermodal hub — delayed until 2029 and 2032
- 44th Drive corridor improvements — delayed until 2029 and 2032

As the City moves forward with significant new development in Long Island City, it is critical that these commitments are not delayed, deferred, or reduced. Neighborhood infrastructure must keep pace with growth, and current residents should not continue bearing the consequences of decades of underinvestment in green space, schools, and public infrastructure.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns and for your continued leadership on Long Island City's future.

Sincerely,

Ariadni Vezyroglou
Artist, Designer, Educator
www.vezyroglou.com

Queenslink

Dear New York City Council,

I’m writing in support of Queenslink and urging you to not fund Queensway. I firmly believe Queenslink will provide both transit and trails, making the city more accessible. If Queensway moves forward, it will prevent future transit and keep Queens car-dependent, making it more difficult for people to get around. I have met locals who remember when the tracks were not abandoned and they yearn for them to be used again. After researching into Queenslink, I also discovered that the renewed tracks would bring about 8million dollars from businesses close by. Please consider not funding Queensway, thank you.

From: Ariana Winfield
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Why Manhattan Youth means so much to me
Date: Monday, May 25, 2026 1:40:06 PM

[redacted]

Dear to whom it may concern,

I am writing to share how much this after-school program truly means to me and the incredible impact it has had on my life. It is so much more than just a place to go when the school day ends; it is a community that has helped me grow in ways I never thought possible.

My absolute favorite part about the program is the environment it creates. It is a space where I feel completely supported and encouraged to challenge myself. The teachers here have been a huge part of that. Whenever I am struggling with a difficult assignment or trying to understand a complex concept, they are always patient, taking the extra time to help me work through it until I feel confident. Their belief in me has made a lasting difference in how I view my own potential.

Because of this program, I have been given opportunities that I wouldn't have had otherwise. I've been able to dive deeper into subjects I love, work on advanced projects, and build skills that help me both inside and outside the classroom. This program matters so much because it provides a safe, inspiring space to learn, explore, and connect with peers who share similar goals.

Without this program, my routine would look very different, and I wouldn't have the same access to the guidance and academic resources that have helped me thrive this year. If there is one thing people should understand, it is that this program is a vital stepping stone for our futures. It is so much more than childcare or a safe place to wait for a ride home—it is a place where students are truly empowered to succeed, discover their passions, and prepare for the next big steps in their lives.

Thank you for supporting a program that does so much for all of us.

Sincerely,

Ariana Winfield, Robert F. Wagner Middle School

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident and parent to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

LIC has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, Kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, and yet most area schools are already operating over capacity: P.S. 112 at 130%, and P.S./I.S. 78 at 111%. What is more, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City — Court Square — still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message to families is clear: you may not be guaranteed a school seat in your neighborhood.

I would also like to express urgent concern about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed school project. In a neighborhood where families are struggling today to secure local school placements, this project, along with other promised school construction projects in LIC, cannot continue to fall behind competing priorities. While I appreciate the creation of an incubation site for Q508 (Q439Q), a temporary solution cannot become a justification for continued delays to the permanent facility. Families were promised a permanent neighborhood school, with the full facilities and long-term stability that a dedicated school building provides. An incubation site may help relieve short-term pressure, but it does not address the broader and growing need for permanent school infrastructure in LIC.

Additionally, the current lease for the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE, Q580) is set to expire in just three years. Families have been assured that the school would be relocated so that it can continue serving students without disruption. We are appreciative that the budget includes funding for BSGE. However, we want to emphasize that it is critical that the City follow through on this commitment and move urgently to secure a permanent home for the school. Allowing delays to continue would create significant uncertainty for students and families and risks the loss of an important educational institution in a neighborhood already facing a severe shortage of school seats. The City must prioritize funding and planning for BSGE's relocation now to ensure continuity and stability for the community.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has also recognized the need for additional schools to support the neighborhood's rapid growth. Specifically, commitments were made to advance development of a school at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard. Creation of two additional schools has also been promised to create 1,300 more seats in conjunction with the planned construction of over 14,000 residential units. As more housing is developed through OneLIC, school construction must move in parallel — not years behind residential growth. Without firm commitments and accountability around these promised schools, the existing seat crisis will only intensify.

Delays to the opening of these schools are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and more families pushed out of the neighborhood because they cannot rely on access to local public schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency, accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508 and other promised schools on schedule. Schools aren't just a service—they're the foundation of a stable, thriving neighborhood.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future. Please ensure that timely funding is delivered to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority for the completion of these projects.

Sincerely,

Ashlan Brewington

Resident of Court Square, Long Island City 11101

Parent to a D30 Student

From:	Ashley MacSuga-Gage
To:	Testimony
Subject:	[EXTERNAL] The Council"s Committee on Finance and the Committee on Children and Youth 5/28 - Reinstating Manhattan Youth Services programming at Middle Schools (Specifically School of the Future Middle School)
Date:	Wednesday, May 20, 2026 3:05:34 PM

[redacted]

Hello,

My name is Ashley MacSuga-Gage and I am a parent of a middle school student at School of the Future in Manhattan. I am also a lifelong educator with a Ph.D. In the field of Special Education focusing on positive behavior supports.

I am writing to express my strong personal and professional opposition to the recent decision by the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) to replace the long-standing afterschool provider, Manhattan Youth, with organizations that often lack the necessary experience and established relationships within our school communities.

My daughter, Olive Sue, attends School of the Future's Middle School in the Flat Iron district. She is currently in 6th grade. Last year our family moved to NYC from Florida to escape the politics and hateful policies and laws that the state of Florida. Since moving my daughter has had a VERY difficult transition - missing friends, family, and the sports team she was a part of. The Manhattan Youth in Schools program provided her with the opportunity to play Volleyball this year. Being a part of SOF's Volleyball team completely changed my daughter's outlook on her life in NYC. Finally she was a part of something - a team - and it gave her the chance to meet and deeply connect with her peers. Honestly, this experience saved her and significantly improved her depression, anger, while simultaneously increasing her academic commitment. When Volleyball season ended in the fall I saw very clear increases in sadness, loneliness, and overall happiness. Olive and her peers deserve and, honestly, NEED the programs provided by MYS - they are more than sports teams/activities, they are fundamental programs supporting the mental health and well-being of our children. This is ESPECIALLY Critical given the age, stage, and development of middle schoolers - this time is a chance to build or lose self-esteem, form positive or damaging social connections, interests, and more.

I respectfully request and emphatically urge you to reinstate these invaluable programs in all schools and especially my daughter's middle school, School of the Future MS. While my anecdotal evidence regarding the improvement in my daughter's life is compelling, broad research clearly supports the innumerable benefits academically and socially of participation in after school and team sport activities.

I can be reached for comment or consultation any time via email (ashley.macsuga@gmail.com) or phone 860-597-2402.

Best,

Dr. Ashley MacSuga-Gage
Mother of Olive Sue Gage a School of the Future Middle School 6th grade student & Volleyball Player

_____
Ashley S. MacSuga-Gage, Ph.D. (she/her/hers)

Sent from my iPhone - Please excuse the brevity of my response and any inevitable typos.

Testimony in Support of Funding for Pet Food Pantries and Spay/Neuter Services

Good afternoon Chairperson and Members of the City Council.

My name is Charlotte Conley, Founder of Astoria Cat Rescue, a volunteer-run 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization serving Queens and New York City communities.

I am here today to strongly support increased funding for pet food pantries and affordable spay/neuter services.

For years, our rescue has worked on the front lines of the animal welfare crisis. We rescue abandoned, sick, injured, and neglected cats, perform Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR), assist struggling pet owners, and feed community cat colonies throughout Queens. What we witness every day makes one thing clear: prevention works.

Pet food pantries help keep families together. Many New Yorkers are facing financial hardship and are struggling to afford food, rent, and basic necessities. When pet owners cannot afford food for their animals, they are often forced to surrender beloved pets or seek help from already overwhelmed rescues and shelters. A bag of cat food or dog food can be the difference between a family keeping their pet and losing a cherished companion.

Funding pet food pantries is not only compassionate—it is cost-effective. It helps prevent unnecessary shelter surrenders and reduces the strain on animal welfare organizations that are already operating beyond capacity.

Equally important is funding for low-cost and free spay/neuter services. Every kitten season, our rescue receives desperate calls about litters being born outdoors, pregnant cats struggling to survive, and colonies growing faster than volunteers can manage. Many caretakers want to do the right thing but simply cannot afford the cost of sterilization services.

Spay and neuter programs are one of the most effective tools we have to reduce animal homelessness, decrease shelter intake, and prevent suffering before it starts. Every dollar invested in spay/neuter saves countless dollars in future sheltering, medical care, and animal control costs.

Our rescue currently helps care for community cat colonies and responds to emergencies throughout the year, but volunteer organizations cannot solve this issue alone. We need the City's partnership and investment in programs that address the root causes of animal homelessness and pet surrender.

I respectfully urge the City Council to increase funding for pet food pantries and spay/neuter services. These programs save lives, support struggling families, reduce shelter overcrowding, and create healthier communities for both people and animals.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to animal welfare throughout New York City.

Testimony to the NYC City Council Finance Committee
June 10, 2026
Audrey Jenkins, MPH

NYC Soil Economy: the Value of Local Organics Collection, Processing, and Use

Dear members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Audrey Jenkins. I am a doctoral researcher in urban policy at The New School studying public voice in organics management in New York City. I hold a Masters of Public Health from Columbia, and I have lived and worked in New York City for 15 years, including 3.5 years as a city employee. I am currently a quantitative research associate in economic policy at the Center for New York City Affairs.

I am submitting independent testimony about the ***soil economy*** in New York City**.**

We know that New Yorkers today are under paid and essential services are struggling from defunding exacerbating hardships and inequities across the city. We should fund those services. We should also rethink how we spend other public funds, including around organics.

When done right, local organics collection, processing and use can be a valuable resource **to help relieve hardships and inequities while promoting NYC's organics diversion. Organics collection, processing, and use are essential pieces in** the city's soil economy, which is the exchange of **the *labor and the value*** in the systems of taking nutrients from soil, circulating those nutrients through the city, and then returning them back into the soil **- from agriculture to food industries to regeneration.**

Unfortunately, New York City has an incomplete soil economy.[1] The last step, regeneration, is missing. In its place, New York City primarily invests in the "waste" industry. Paying over $200 million each year to send organic materials to landfills leading to health and climate harms due to anaerobic decomposition and leakage of methane and toxic liquid into neighboring communities. Much of **what we do divert from "waste" currently goes to a different wastestream: waste water treatment biogas production, which ultimately gets landfilled or used on farmland despite, again documented health and environment harms** and injustices to rural communities.

We have models in the city, and people eager to innovate, that invest the reliable resource of organics in the quality of life in our neighborhoods, including economic, social and environmental wellbeing. Simultaneously, they promote organics participation by linking collection, processing, and use to solution for more pressing issues in New Yorker's lives, particularly economic and environmental**.**

[1] We currently extract from soil when we grow and import foods, we pollute soil when we export trash and PFAS from waste water treatment biogas solids, and we deplete soil when we do not return our organic materials via regenerative practices.

For example, Compost Power, a local business that employs 10 New Yorkers, prioritizes rat control and local green space beautification at NYCHA campuses to increase organics separation buy-in and participation in the community. They also work with organizations like Caferia Culture to process school organics and engage kids in changing our city's culture to value the economic, social, and ecological activities we can build around soil.

This is important. **Participation remains the biggest limiting factor in our organics system with the most recent DSNY data showing a citywide organics diversion of just 7.85% as of May 2026.**[2] The IBO estimates that low participation costs us $602 per ton to collect organics, and estimated the city will not **reach parity with trash collection costs until we get to 15% - which won't happen until well beyond 2035 if at all**[3]**. Despite the city's Zero Waste law requiring 100% diversion by 2030, the City has not baselined funding for boosting participation in collections or use.**

Currently, the City doesn't really fund this - the city council does (thank you all) but only 15 organizations and with disparities in funding. **The City budget for organics is also scheduled to decrease from $23 to $19 million**[4]**. All this while, as we heard during public testimony, the NYPD's proposed budget is increasing by $300 million. And as the industrial sector capitalizes on this resource, it restricts the creativity, value, and relational work that so many New Yorkers are passionate about. A passion that could be catching.**

This is unacceptable. New York law requires deeper investments to reach 100% diversion by 2030, and we deserve this investment in our communities. The millions the city spends exporting organics is too much money because it is not a fair deal for New Yorkers.[5]

If NYC were to take the soil economy seriously, public funds would be invested to support the existing innovation space in our city. We need to establish public policy and investment that respects local organics for the sector it should be, jointly funded by public and private entities to ensure the organics are used regeneratively for social and ecological benefit.

In addition to passing Intro 396 to require expanded local processing, please consider the following investments for building up this local sector:

1. Baselining **equitable** public funds for local community-based collection, processing, and use - with ramp up. - this means establishing pathways for New Yorkers in their own neighborhoods to receive funds for the work they want to do locally in ways that respond best to local needs.
2. Investing in annual pilot and seed funding to lower barriers to entry and equalizes local start-up space in the sector.

---

[2] https://tracknyctrash.com/
[3] https://tracknyctrash.com/
[4] https://www.wastetodaymagazine.com/news/nyc-releases-curbside-composting-program-analysis/
[5] Ignoring the ethical or environmental issues with the current arrangement

3. Use joint funding streams to bolster organics and green stewardship across the city for parks, urban agriculture, flood mitigation, pest management, and organics processing recognizing this work is intersectional not siloed.
4. Require the use of locally-produced compost in all public spaces and private public spaces (with compost quality standards and testing for public safety and effectiveness)
5. Funds for community-led visioning around organics stewardship and use in the city.

Finally, I am conducting a deep economic analysis to scope out a ramp-up plan and fully-scaled up system of local collection, processing, and use capacity of organics in New York City. In collaboration with the Solid Waste Advisory Boards, Cornell Institute, and a growing network of partners, we will produce a report this fall on the material, social, and economic circularities that can be generated when organics are managed locally. Based on current models like Compost Power and Earth Matter, the value per dollar of local processing will be calculated across a set of metrics including:

- jobs and tax revenue,
- savings from an increase in high-quality local compost access,
- food production,
- public safety,
- social and health benefits, and
- increased organics diversion rates.

Research at this level has not been conducted previously and will be conducted in connection with community-visioning efforts to also generate public buy-in through democratic methods.

Thank you,
Please contact me at jenka639@newschool.edu for any questions or future research requests.
Audrey Jenkins

I am pasting my previous testimony on the Solid Waste Management Plan, public participation in policy, and equity in local processing here.

See pages below.

Testimony to NYC Council Committee Sanitation and Solid Waste Management
Oversight - Engagement for the City's 2026 Solid Waste Management Plan
December 9, 2025
Audrey Jenkins, MPH
https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=1348340&GUID=4883ACDD-550D-4210-8235-2E199F6BD517&Options=info%7C&Search=

Dear members of the Sanitation Committee,

My name is Audrey Jenkins, and I am a doctoral candidate at The New School where I research public empowerment in urban social-ecological policy, currently focused on organics management in NYC.

Since fall 2023, when community composting was defunded by the Adams administration, I have been studying the efforts of community-based composters to deepen the city's investments in building an organic waste system that returns the value of organic materials to our neighborhoods in the form of valuable organic soil amendment, public ecological stewardship education, and, critically, equitable economic opportunity.

I am testifying today to highlight how valuable the Solid Waste Management Plan is for addressing inequities that are growing in our city. Although I am not here as a representative of my employer, I am currently a research associate at the Center for New York City Affairs where our most recent economic and fiscal findings highlight the New York metro area as the most racially inequitable economy among the top biggest metro-city areas in the country. We have the largest gap between white and black unemployment, with Black workers experiencing an 8.6% unemployment rate as of this quarter, a rate that - in a trend with most other cities - has risen dramatically over the past year with federal defunding and economic uncertainties.

Designing a waste system that centers equity is critical. This matters both for distribution of waste impacts and recycling opportunities, but is also important in the distribution of investments.

The Institute for Local Self Reliance has found that per 10,000 tons of organic materials, community composting generates 6.2 jobs, compared to only 1-2 jobs in industrial organics processing.

We know from decades of practice here in NYC that these community composting jobs are quality and impactful jobs. Community composters are community builders - so they are never just collecting, processing, and distributing organics; they are also teachers, social connectors, innovators, environmental stewards often also directly involved in urban agriculture and local food system sovereignty and resilience, and highly effective promoters of organics waste separation participation.

Additionally, community composting provides a rich set of professional, technical, and social skills building that are particularly accessible to youth workers as they start to enter the workforce (a population facing the highest rate of unemployment in the city at 11.4%).

Hyper-local, publicly-funded community composting in short is an incredibly simple way to help address multiple complex city problems from social isolation to environmental stewardship, while also offering an opportunity to invest directly in our neighborhoods in the form of livable jobs.

The SWMP currently highlights the layered economic potentials for textile and other resource recovery streams. The same should be included for organics. But more critically, the Solid Waste Management Plan should center economic equity. The plan currently highlights inequities in waste and pollution exposure and the importance of meeting the requirements of the Waste Equity Law. The plan should ensure that neighborhoods facing high volatility and sensitivity to political and economic conditions (e.g. historically Black and latinx communities in New York) are able to retain resources like organic materials in their neighborhoods and receive investments for managing those resources for the many economic, social, and ecological benefits they offer.

The city administration currently spends $215 million on exporting organics, and $21 million on organics separation and processing. City council currently invests a little over $6.25 million for community composting. What is needed is a serious increase in community based organics management. Because funding has not been intentionally allocated for equity in the most economically-impacted communities, the SWMP is an opportunity to take a strong stance in favor of making organics (and other waste stream) investments equitable by maximizing the use of these raw materials for local community use, including by insuring that land access for processing and good jobs are distributed explicitly in terms of economic equity and with an intentional effort to promote the multi-impact outcomes of community-based waste management.

Thank you for your time.

Citations:

NYC Department of Sanitation. (2025). Solid Waste Management Plan 2026 Draft. *Accessed: December 9, 2025.* https://www.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/downloads/resources/reports/solid-waste-management/2026-swmp/draft-swmp-2026.pdf

Kanarick, E., Civello, M., Keyser, R. (2025). Expanding Composting in New York City: The Case for Passing and Implementing Intro-0696-2024. *Published in collaboration with Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynosos, Brooklyn SWAB, Manhattan SWAB, Queens SWAB, and Bronx SWAB.* https://static1.squarespace.com/static/673e83ccad155a3f48ae39a3/t/68fd75da40a784762f527cad/1761441242700/Intro696_02_v06-05_1.pdf

Platt, B., Libertelli, C., and Matthews, M. (2022). Growing a Movement: 2022 Community Composter Census. *Institute for Local Self Reliance.* https://ilsr.org/article/composting-for-community/composting-2022-census/

Melodia, L. et al. (2026 forthcoming) New York City's 2026 Economic and Budget Outlook Report. Center for New York City Affairs.

Testimony to NYC Council Sanitation and Solid Waste Management Committee
NYC's 2026 Solid Waste Management Plan
April 6, 2026
Audrey Jenkins, MPH

Dear members of the NYC Council Sanitation and Solid Waste Management Committee,

My name is Audrey Jenkins, and I am a doctoral candidate at The New School studying public empowerment in urban social-ecological policymaking. I am also a quantitative research associate at the Center for New York City Affairs Economic and Fiscal Policy unit where I analyze local labor and wage inequities.

The 2026 NYC Solid Waste Management Plan is much more than a plan to reduce waste and mitigate its impacts. Waste systems have deep social implications as the societal value of the materials we discard is both established and distributed by laws, programs, and pre-existing social and economic inequities. This has historically subjected communities to environmental injustices while simultaneously devaluing and ultimately limiting access to these materials.

In this light, SWMP26 is a declaration of the City's desire to shift how it values and distributes that value of discarded materials, and with what social impact. The revised SWMP26 clearly seeks to establish circular economies that minimize environmental injustices, therefore raising the value of discarded materials, however economic equity in the distribution of these valued materials is not seriously considered. Furthermore, broad participation in designing the city's solid waste systems is left out entirely.

I ask the City Council and DSNY to revise the SMWP26 to:

1) **Make equitable distribution of both the use value and economic value created by circular economies an explicit objective of the ten-year plan.** Reuse materials have direct use value (e.g. using compost to amend soil) and economic value (city contracts for diversion and processing, and product sales) that should be maximized for the equitable benefit of New Yorkers. Equitable opportunities can be achieved by ensuring:

    a) that the demand for use value in New York City neighborhoods is prioritized and fulfilled in the ways that communities desire and with secure funding,

    b) that the quality and distribution of enterprising resources like land, start-up costs, and other funding needs for engaging in circular economies is accessible, particularly in racially marginalized and lower-income communities.

This goes far beyond the M/WBE contracting goals mentioned in the draft SWMP26, requiring intentional cultivation of knowledge, resource access, and pathways to entrepreneurship in the ways that New Yorkers desire and equitably across neighborhoods.

1.1 Organics recommendations:
The City currently contracts with regional vendors for high throughput pre-processing of organics that is then either processed by those vendors, or is delivered to a processing site like the Staten Island Composting Facility or waste water treatment plant like Newtown Creek. As curbside organics collection rates increase, the city will need additional capacity to pre-process and process organics collected by DSNY. Land access and start-up costs are often prohibitive for everyday New Yorkers, creating unique barriers of entry into this specific industry. This is primarily “economic value”.

However, New Yorkers are not just interested in scale, but in quality.
Many residents are interested in expanding **hyper-local collection and processing at the city block and neighborhood levels** to both offset DSNY collection and hauling burdens, educate and engage the public, and produce high quality compost alongside community-focused resilience resources like food production. This is both “use value” and “economic value” - especially because the quality of small-scale compost exceeds industrial compost in application tests for urban farming.

These desires generally fall in the “community composting” category, which is currently sidelined in SWMP26. **No plans have been made to expand, secure additional funds, or ensure equitable access to community composting in SWMP26.**

The City should collaborate with entrepreneurs in lower-income communities to address both barriers to competitive contract applications in the organics processing industry and support needed for community composting activities that communities desire.

Explicit economic equity objectives in SWMP26 also allows the City to take greater advantage of State resources, particularly around organics. The State’s SWMP goal #4.2.9 (page 47) indicates that the State will “provide financial assistance for local, nonprofit, and small-scale organics collection and processing operations” starting next year. This means that the City could use its own SWMP to advocate that state dollars reach neighborhoods and composters equitably in our city. The city can make a commitment to support and grow our already diverse ecosystem of local composting operations through mechanisms like low-cost land use agreements and city contracts to better position and prepare local enterprises and organizations for access to those financial benefits, and ensure that these operators receive timely information and direct support for accessing these State funding opportunities.

Recommended changes to 2. Organics Diversion and Recovery Program:
Addition: “2.8 Establish pathways and equity standards for organics contracts”

Edit initiative title “2.7 *Expand* support for community composting” and add milestones:

- Establish reliable and accessible community compost quality testing resources
- Assess and develop pathways for equitably fulfilling demand for community composting resources in collaboration with community-based entrepreneurs

1.2 Go beyond M/WBE for equity

Building explicit social equity measures in our essential services systems like waste and circularity is an invaluable tool for New York, the city with the highest income inequality in the country. Across all NYC households, 62% are economically insecure, and 50% struggle to meet basic needs. This inequity is racially stratified, with rising and persistent unemployment and labor force discouragement over the past year among New Yorkers of color, with Black unemployment now at 8.6%, compared to just 3% among white workers. History shows that New Yorkers of color experience deeper, longer-lasting instability and hardship from economic downturns. Ensuring that communities are integrated into essential services can help flip the script of New York inequity.

This will require a concerted effort across city agencies including DSNY, land-stewarding agencies, Small Business Services (SBS), and the Mayor’s Office of Contract Services (MOCS) to go beyond existing M/WBE methods for equitable contracting and goal with deep support and engagement around equity and access.

The revised draft SWMP has not incorporated equity at this level as an explicit objective. *Omitting this objective from the plan fundamentally builds inequity into NYC’s solid waste management systems*.

2) **Use the SWMP26 as an opportunity to deepen democracy.** Waste is everyone’s business as an intimate part of our daily lives; how we design our waste systems impacts our relationship with waste itself as well as with each other. The closest the revised SWMP26 comes to proposing public participation in waste system design is goal 1.7. Convene New York City’s Circular Economy Stakeholders, however this goal does not list residents, building managers, or non-circular economy businesses as stakeholders, and currently provides no indication of the nature of this convening and does not suggest a structure for sharing decision-making power with stakeholders. Instead, the goals states that “DSNY will lead the development of a virtual hub to increase coordination, compile research, collect data, and share best practices,” with no indication that stakeholders will be engaged using ideal methods for collectively defining and imagining needs, desires, and pathways for equity and quality of life in the city.

   On page 28 of its SWMP, New York State includes in its vision an aim to “strive for full public participation, fairness, and environmental justice” by ensuring “that all New York State residents have the opportunity to meaningfully engage and participate in materials management planning in their communities.”

While the State Department of Environmental Conservation reviews the SWMP draft over the next months, the City and State have an opportunity to pursue this vision of "meaningful participation," by:

1) extending the public feedback period to the end of summer 2026,

2) building participation objectives into the SWMP for next 10 years of implementation, with funding for compensated and equity-centered participation such as citizen's assemblies, local waste system and circularity visioning and system development processes, and outreach and engagement for Solid Waste Advisor Boards.

Recommended changes to SWMP26:
Add "9. SWMP36 Public Participation" to the SWMP26 list of programs, with the following milestones:

- Gather feedback on the SWMP26 development process
- Design a public participation approach for developing SWMP36 (for public feedback and finalize by 2029)
- Initiate SWMP36 development in 2030, with the first draft due to the public much earlier (for example by 2033)

I am grateful for the City's efforts with SWMP26, and for venues like the City Council hearings and SWAB meetings for collecting public input, and for all of the people who continue to steward these spaces in a deep spirit of public empowerment. There is still much to do as we shape a sustainable social and ecological future. Thank you for your time and serious engagement with and incorporation of the feedback you are receiving on SWMP26.

Citations:

Cabico/Sentient, G. (2025, Dec 11). Is New York City getting its composting program right? Critics argue the city could do more to tackle its food waste problem. *Floodlight News.* https://floodlightnews.org/is-new-york-city-getting-its-composting-program-right/

Checker, M. (2020). *The sustainability myth: Environmental gentrification and the politics of justice.* NYU Press.

FPWA. (2025). True Cost of Economic Security: Policy Implications for New York City. *Accessed: January 12, 2026.* https://www.fpwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/True-Cost-of-Economic-Security_Policy-Implications-for-New-York-City_9.29.25-1.pdf

Harrison, R. (2023). Can Citizens' Assemblies Help Restore Trust in Government? Yale ISPS. https://isps.yale.edu/news/blog/2023/11/can-citizens-assemblies-help-restore-trust-in-government

NYC Department of Sanitation. (2025). Solid Waste Management Plan 2026 Draft. *Accessed: December 9, 2025.* https://www.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/downloads/resources/reports/solid-waste-management/2026-swmp/draft-swmp-2026.pdf

NY State Department of Environmental Conservation. (2023). The New York State Solid Waste Management Plan: Building the Circular Economy through Sustainable Materials Management. *Accessed: January 11, 2026.* https://dec.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2024-05/finalsswmp20232.pdf

Kanarick, E., Civello, M., Keyser, R. (2025). Expanding Composting in New York City: The Case for Passing and Implementing Intro-0696-2024. *Published in collaboration with Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynosos, Brooklyn SWAB, Manhattan SWAB, Queens SWAB, and Bronx SWAB.* https://static1.squarespace.com/static/673e83ccad155a3f48ae39a3/t/68fd75da40a784762f527cad/1761441242700/Intro696_02_v06-05_1.pdf

Platt, B., Libertelli, C., and Matthews, M. (2022). Growing a Movement: 2022 Community Composter Census. *Institute for Local Self Reliance.* https://ilsr.org/article/composting-for-community/composting-2022-census/

Melodia, L. et al. (2026). New York City's 2026 Economic & Budget Outlook: Making Affordability a Reality Amidst Inequality and Fiscal Constraints. Center for New York City Affairs. https://www.centernyc.org/reports-briefs/new-york-citys-2026-economic-budget-outlook-making-affordability-a-reality-amidst-inequality-and-fiscal-constraints

From: Avaaz Basu
To: Testimony; NYC Council Hearings
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Submission of Written Testimony
Date: Tuesday, June 2, 2026 6:01:00 PM

[redacted]

Below is written testimony from a middle school student for the Committee on Children and Youth

Thursday, May 28, 2026 | 10:00 am
Oversight: FY27 Executive Budget Hearing
Jointly with the Committee on Finance.

Dear Committee Members:

I am an 11 year old, who is deeply impacted by the recent changes to the New York City afterschool program. My name is Avaaz, and I urge you to please reconsider the new afterschool setup put in place by the Mamdani administration.

I write to discuss the sudden change in afterschool programs at several New York City public schools due to an opaque new bidding process. It is my understanding that 12 schools including my own have lost Manhattan Youth as their afterschool provider. It appears your reasoning behind this was to create a more equitable afterschool experience, one in which schools and providers would have a fair and refreshed chance to suitably match up with each other. Based on my research, I found that the process involved bidding for schools. YMCA submitted a bid for many schools which looked attractive and cost-effective. However, it has resulted in a situation where schools, like my own, have been matched with ill-suited afterschool programs.

The new matchups came as a shock for faculty, parents, and children at several schools. My school, Lab Middle School for Collaborative Studies, lost Manhattan Youth and in turn was switched to YMCA. Manhattan Youth has partnered with Lab for afterschool for over 10 years. Afterschool is an integral part of the Lab mission. Over 80% of students participate in afterschool, and it was a big selling point for me and others who chose Lab.

Sports are a fundamental part of childhood and thankfully Manhattan Youth provides them, including varsity, junior varsity, and clinics for those who want to play in a less competitive environment. I participated in many sports teams, as does a large amount of the Lab community. Other students come to games and support the teams. These sports bring joy, helping us pivot from an arduous school day. For those who don't like sports, Manhattan Youth offers an exciting and wide array of activities, like 3D printing, cooking, board game club and even producing a play.

YMCA is not planning to fund our sports teams, and the cost to do it ourselves will be exorbitant. Without sports teams, huge amounts of kids for whom sports are a part of their identity will urge their parents to pay out of pocket for private teams or classes. This contradicts the idea of free afterschool and most hurts the kids who can't afford to pay for alternate afterschool or whose parents are too busy working to take them.

While the YMCA has a decent reputation for standardized homework help, with Manhattan Youth, even things like afterschool study lab are tailored to our students' specific needs. Lab middle school is the only middle school in District 2 with a Nest Program, which inclusively serves students on the autism spectrum. A few of my friends on the autism spectrum hugely benefit from the spectacular extracurricular program provided by Manhattan Youth. The instructors are aware and helpful. My friend J, who is on the autism spectrum, and I were the only sixth graders who made it on the varsity boys soccer team run by Manhattan Youth. This experience brought J the confidence he needed to do well academically and emotionally and allowed us to become good friends.

A critical part of your goals as mayor is to support the working class. Though my school is in a wealthy area, many students come from other boroughs and some live in public housing. I know that many parents at my school do not speak English making our special relationship with Manhattan Youth crucial. My friend E is from Yemen and his parents did not understand how to sign him up for afterschool, but the Manhattan Youth director for my school, Kara Spencer, contacted E directly to help him sign up himself.

Mayor Mamdani promised to give communities and parents a strong voice in their children's education, yet this process completely blindsided families. Moreover, the process seems neither fair nor equitable. The reason for this drastic reshuffling seems to be more about saving money for the City than helping students. It seems that no one is better off. Though 12 schools have lost Manhattan Youth, it looks like no new schools will be reassigned to Manhattan Youth. The gains for other schools are unclear, and there's no way that the YMCA can match up to our experience with Manhattan Youth at Lab.

I am a privileged kid but many kids at Lab are not. None of us deserve to have our thoughtful, caring, and inspiring afterschool program taken away from us for absolutely no good reason. I urge you to reconsider and allow Manhattan Youth to stay at Lab.

Respectfully,

Avaaz Austen Basu

[redacted]

QueensLink

Testimony — Finance Committee on 6/10

June 9, 2026

TO: New York City Council—Finance Committee
RE: Support the QueensLink—preserve the Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way for both transit and parks

Dear Chairperson Lee and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Axyl Fredrick, and I am a Queens commuter and frequent public transit user. I am writing in strong support of the **QueensLink**, which would bring both new subway service and new parkland to Queens by reactivating the former Rockaway Beach Branch, and against the current $43 million allocated in the budget for phase one of the QueensWay, also referred to as the Met Hub project.

Why this matters to me

I commute two hours each way from home to CCNY during the semester via the Q30 bus and the train, and it is very time-consuming and frankly exhausting, so I know firsthand how hard it is to get to the city. I also have many family members and close friends in the Guyanese community who live in South Ozone Park and have to deal with very long commutes to the city, as well as into parts of western Queens like Astoria, or even to Queens Center Mall. The Q53 simply isn't adequate, as I have taken the bus from QCM to Jamaica Avenue and all the buses along the corridor were picked to the brim—my father used to be a bus driver and knows first hand the operational nightmare that brings. Buses need to be supplemented with the QueensLink, which will save so many hours and open up new opportunities and ways to get to places where we need or want to go; all my friends from Northern and Western Queens are now able to go to Resort World or try great Caribbean restaurants in a much shorter time.

Why the QueensLink is the right choice

Two competing concepts exist for the deactivated Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way: the park-only QueensWay, and the dual-purpose QueensLink, which combines subway and park uses. The QueensWay would be built directly on the former railbed, which would virtually eliminate the possibility of ever restoring transit there. The MTA itself recognized in its 2023 20-Year Needs Assessment that a linear park along the corridor would create a challenge for any future transit alternatives. Once a rail right-of-way is converted to other uses, it almost never returns to transit. This has already happened to the transit expansion for Atlanta's Beltline, where the park was built first without provisions for transit, as the QueensWay plan in the budget has it currently. The optics of demolishing parts of any park is a nightmare, so it is crucial that the transit is built in tandem with the greenspace.

QueensLink would create the first north-south subway line in Queens, extending the M line south from Rego Park to Ozone Park and then over the A train tracks to the Rockaways, increasing service to the Rockaways by up to 165%. It would also let the G train run all the way

to Forest Hills, increasing capacity on the crowded Queens Boulevard local lines by 50% and connecting central Queens with north Queens and Brooklyn.

A study by the Steer Group found that the QueensLink would remove millions of vehicle trips each year, making streets safer and lowering harmful emissions, while adding up to 33 acres of new parks and trails integrated with the subway design. Over 20 years, the study concluded the project would more than pay for itself by creating jobs, saving New Yorkers time, and reducing healthcare costs tied to air pollution and traffic crashes.

Queens needs parks *and* trains. The QueensLink would provide both. I urge the Committee to preserve this irreplaceable right-of-way for future transit and to support the QueensLink.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

Axyl Fredrick
11362
[redacted]
19th City Council district

My name is Rabbi Barat Ellman. I live in Brooklyn NY and I am testifying on behalf of Freedom Agenda and the Campaign to Close Rikers regarding the 2027 budget, specifically as it concerns community safety. I am concerned about two areas in the budget: First reducing the inflated budget for the Department of Corrections, particularly for the staff on Rikers Island, and investing those funds in community based safety, diversion and reentry service (approximately 47.3 million) as well as in mental health services; Second, securing the essential $26 million in funding for the Office of Hate Crime Prevention and incorporating the Hate Violence Prevention Program proposed by Jews for Racial and Economic Justice.

First DOC and Rikers. At a cost of nearly half a million dollars per person per year, Rikers Island is the most expensive and least effective tool our City has to create community safety. It must close. It is bound to do so both by law and moral argument. I am glad that the FY2027 Executive Budget includes some key steps toward reining in jail operation costs, and reinvesting those savings in true public safety. I support increased funding to meet mental health needs outside of Rikers, including programs like IMT, ACT and residential treatment. The jail system is not set up to provide proper mental health care. I support allocating and additional $47.3 million for diversion and reentry services through the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice to reduce recidivism which in turn will lower the population on Rikers Island and facilitate its closure. I support restoring the $3.6 million diverted away from the Board of Correction which provides essential oversight of DOC.

DOC's inflated budget can be reduced to make the aforementioned possible. And it can be reduced. DOC remains over-resourced. With new management in place, DOC can better deploy resources, not rush to fill vacancies. DOC's budgeted headcount of more than one uniformed officer for each incarcerated person is more than 4 times higher than the national average. NYC's is the only jail system among the nation's 50 largest cities that has nearly as many officers as people in custody. This is bloat and waste., I support eliminating vacancies for DOC uniformed staff, and working to right-size the agency. I support reducing overtime spending by

consolidating operations and permanently closing jails on Rikers, starting with the vacant Anna M. Kross Center, where 109 officers are still assigned.

Turning to the Office of Hate Crime Prevention. I am thrilled that the Mayor's Executive Budget allocates an additional $26milion to the Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes, and 800% increase from the previous $3million budget. I urge the City Council to join with Mayor Mamdani in committing to funding OPHC at $26million, an amount that matches the price tag of the *NYC Against Hate Violence* policy proposal spearheaded by Jews For Racial & Economic Justice and endorsed by the Progressive Caucus. The title of this office speaks to its objective. Prevention. Not incarceration. The proposal calls for investment in Intergroup Collaborative Programs and Community-based organizations; developing sophisticated monitoring and data-collection; expanding de-escalation and upstander training combined with rapid response systems, and implementing a "whole of government" approach to anti-bias education.

These two issues –DOC's budget and Rikers on the one hand and Hate Crime Prevention on the other – are linked by their shared recognition that we cannot incarcerate our way to public safety. The budget must reflect a commitment to disrupting the factors that have contributed to jailing more and more New Yorkers.

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am Barbara Etzel, a resident of Long Island City since 2009. During this time there has been a record-breaking influx of residents into LIC. However, the city services have not kept up with this inflow. Over the last 6 years I have been advocating for zoning changes that I expected would improve this area and create more housing, including affordable units.

Council Member Julie Won did an amazing job of advocating for improvements to this area, however, despite promises that were made, the current mayor is so far refusing to honor these commitments. I am writing to demand that the commitments made in the OneLIC Neighborhood plan are fulfilled on time. These need to be funded in this year's budget? How many more years are we going to subject our neighbors to unfilled promised about greenspace and sewers.

Parks, Playgrounds and Greenspaces

LIC already suffers from one of the lowest levels of open and green space per resident in New York City, and multiple public reviews of the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan acknowledge that the neighborhood's parkland and open space are already severely lacking, and will worsen with new residences without intervention, which the city has acknowledged. Despite this, the budget pushes back several commitments to open space:

- Waterfront esplanade and new open space construction, planned for completion in 2031, is not planned for funding until 2031
- Queensbridge Baby Park, planned for completion in 2031, is not planned for funding until 2032 or 2033
- Renewal of Queensbridge Park, planned for design in 2028, is not planned for funding until 2032

It also fails to fund the Parks Department at 1%, and does not baseline funding for the 115 Parks workers whose jobs expire in June or provide the 276 new jobs in Parks needed to support our existing public spaces, or provide adequate funding for GreenThumb and the Urban Park Rangers.

Schools

Long Island City's schools are already failing to meet the demands of existing families. The lack of inclusion of the promised school construction and improvements in the approved budget means the existing families in Long Island City and all the new residents will be unable to guarantee nearby elementary school seats, and may be forced to leave the neighborhood or send their young children on very long commutes. The budget must include

- Funding to build the 2 promised new elementary schools and 1 middle school as part of OneLIC.

Transportation and public realm

The rezoned area requires significant improvements to provide safe connections through and beyond the neighborhood, allow people the space and infrastructure to spend time with their neighbors outdoors, and help bridge the divide between Queensbridge residents and other parts of LIC. Despite these real needs, the executive budget fails to include or significantly delays several of the promised improvements:

- Court Square Toilet not included in the budget
- Lighting Study in the IBZ not included in the budget
- Feasibility Study of Public Realm Improvements Under QBB Ramps not included in the budget
- Queens waterfront greenway delayed until 2029 + 2032
- 21st Street Intermodal Hub delayed until 2029 + 2032
- 44th Drive corridor improvements delayed until 2029 + 2032

We've already had record-breaking growth in population. We can't afford to delay improvements any longer.

As the City moves forward with significant new development in Long Island City, it is critical that these commitments are not delayed, deferred, or reduced. The City Council must ensure that the promised funding to allow the neighborhood to support so many new residents is not pushed off or ignored.

I believe that parks/waterfront connections/schools/street improvements/public open space improvements promised under OneLIC must be fully funded and delivered on an appropriate and timely schedule so that neighborhood infrastructure keeps pace with growth and current residents are not asked to continue bearing the consequences of decades of underinvestment.

We need the City to honor and prioritize its commitment to the previously promised funding by the Mayor's Office to ensure equitable development. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future.

Sincerely,
Barbara Etzel
Board Member of Hunters Point Parks Conservancy
LIC resident, voter and taxpayer

Dear City Council Members,

We are a group of 9th & 10th grade students at BASIS Independent Manhattan.
We are concerned about the lack of health insurance- and therefore medical care- for individuals with little to no income. The first thing we wanted to understand was how health insurance coverage works, and why some people have it and others don't.

We did some research on what is currently happening with healthcare access in New York City and we found that:

- At least 5% of New Yorkers don't have health insurance.
- Black, Asian, and Hispanic New Yorkers, as well as low-to-moderate income groups, are less likely to be insured.

The many reasons people don't have health insurance include:

- Being undocumented
- Being unemployed
- Having an employer that doesn't offer insurance
- Missing deadlines for programs like Medicaid

We learned that the main way NYC is addressing the health care disparity is a program called NYC Care.

NYC Care is a health care access program providing low-to-no-cost services through NYC Health + Hospitals. It's for New Yorkers who cannot afford or do not qualify for insurance, and it's provided regardless of immigration status or income. NYC Care provides access to primary care providers and medication. Especially as NY State faces significant Medicaid budget cuts, NYC Care is a critical part of the safety net. Unfortunately, we also learned that most people don't even know about it!

It's impossible to say the exact number of people living in NYC who do NOT have health insurance, in part because there are so few statistics about undocumented residents.
We DO know that there are likely more than 450,000 undocumented individuals living in NYC without any health insurance. And there are about 600,000 low to moderate income residents who do not have insurance, which is a higher rate than the NYC population overall (according to nyc.gov). Despite this, there has been a total of only 100,000 New Yorkers enrolled in NYC Care since it launched 7 years ago!

We acknowledge that there has been a change to the State budget, and want to support New Yorkers who are struggling with the affordability crisis in our City.

By using NYC Care, you can target individuals who cannot afford healthcare or have trouble understanding the healthcare system, and help them gain access without paying an excessive amount.

The City Council can help make sure all New Yorkers are aware of NYC Care.

Our proposal is for you to raise awareness about NYC Care and help make sure everyone who needs health care is aware of this program.

We hope that you acknowledge this testimony.

Sincerely,

Sasha, Flavia, Deven, Liam, Siri, Clara, and Elijah (representing the 9th & 10th grade at BASIS Manhattan)

To the New York City Council Committee on Finance,

I am writing as a parent to express my support for continued funding of Girls Inc. at TYWLS Astoria.

My daughter, Isabella, has truly enjoyed being part of the Girls Inc. program. It has given her a supportive environment where she can learn, grow, build confidence, and connect with other students outside of the classroom.

I would also like to recognize Program Directors Soukeyna Abbott and Jazmin Navarro, who have been incredibly helpful and dedicated to the students and families they serve. Their commitment and genuine care make a real difference in the lives of the girls in the program.

Girls Inc. is an important part of the TYWLS community, and I hope it will continue to be available for current and future students. I respectfully ask that you continue supporting funding for this valuable program.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Belinda Tipkelan

[redacted]

Good afternoon. My name is Ben Yee, and I'm a lifelong New Yorker and Lower Manhattan resident.

And honestly, every New Yorker understands this problem intuitively.

Every one of us has looked at the subway map and wondered why almost every trip between Brooklyn and Queens somehow requires going through Manhattan first. Why is the city built like a wheel with Manhattan as the hub, even when millions of people are trying to travel between the outer boroughs?

Getting around the outer boroughs is a disaster. And that disaster, in turn, makes Manhattan a disaster.

It overloads subway lines that were never meant to handle every regional trip. It pushes people into cars and Ubers that clog bridges and tunnels with underfilled vehicles. It creates absurd commutes where someone enters Manhattan from the north but has to travel all the way downtown before heading back out again — or vice versa. Entire sections of the city are effectively disconnected from one another unless you're willing to lose another 45 minutes underground.

QueensLink is one of the few projects that actually short-circuits that problem.

And what's remarkable is that we can do it at dramatically reduced cost because the right-of-way already exists. We are not talking about tunneling a brand new subway under the city. We already have the corridor. We already have the infrastructure footprint. Opportunities like that are incredibly rare in New York.

This is also bigger than one rail line.

QueensLink reflects something New York has struggled with for decades: our inability to build the obvious connective infrastructure everyone agrees would improve life in this city.

New Yorkers constantly talk themselves into believing ambitious public works are impossible. "That'll never happen." And yet sometimes they do happen. Sometimes the city actually does the thing people have been talking about since before I was born.

What if, for once, we actually closed the loop the G train starts? What if Brooklyn and Queens were meaningfully connected without forcing everything through Manhattan first?

And the benefits compound.

We can create better transit, new green space, and expanded housing opportunity at the same time. Nobody has to lose parks to build this. In fact, the project creates them.

And in the middle of a housing crisis, creating fast no-transfer and single-transfer access to areas currently dominated by detached homes and low-density development opens enormous long-term opportunity for smart transit-oriented growth.

That is how cities are supposed to evolve: integrated infrastructure, transportation, parks, housing, and economic access working together instead of competing against one another.

Previous generations built infrastructure with the expectation that New York's future mattered. We should still be capable of that level of ambition today.

Thank you.

To whom it may concern,

Public transit is one of the most important tools we have to combat the accelerating climate crisis. QueensLink would provide high-quality transit service to grossly underserved areas in southeast Queens, while QueensWay will do nothing but make future construction of a train along this right-of-way a political nightmare as parkland would have to be torn up.

Benjamin Gallai

Testimony of Bettina Calloway-White representing Parent Power for Cultural Equity on the New York City FY27 Executive Budget. Committee on Finance. June 10, 2026

Good afternoon, and thank you to Speaker Julie Menin, Finance Chair Linda Lee, and members of the committee and the entire city council. My name is Bettina Calloway-White. I am a 67-year-old lifelong resident of New York City, and I have seen many changes over the years. It has been a journey.

I have mainly lived in the Bed-Stuy area, a mecca of culture, diversity, and artistic expression. It has been enlightening to experience the opportunities afforded to my community. Over the years, I have seen creative expression diminish.

When I was in school, all schools had arts in the curriculum. We all took ceramics, woodworking, cooking, sewing, etc. Today, those skills are still needed, but they are not extended to all. How would I know if I like painting if I have never been introduced to it?

As a parent, I wanted my children to have artistic experiences. I work for an early childhood program, Bedford Stuyvesant Early Childhood Development Center, which gave us the Cool Culture card. Cool Culture provides 50,000 families in 450 Early Childhood Centers and Title 1 Department of Education schools with a Cool Culture Family Pass that offers families a year of unlimited, free admission for up to five people to our 90 New York City cultural institution partners. Having that card made visiting affordable and let us experience and venture out to the vast neighborhoods of the city.

For the last two years, I have had the pleasure of belonging to a group called Parent Power for Cultural Equity (PP4CE), a program of Cool Culture in partnership with the Bedford Stuyvesant Early Childhood Development Center.

We are mothers, daughters, granddaughters, and sisters. We're caregivers, organizers, researchers, and members of a community where art has always been part of everyday life. Many of us are also artists in our own ways — raising children who love art, passing down creative traditions, and living in a neighborhood with a deep cultural history.

We came together because we believe that art is not something extra. It's a way communities connect, express identity, and protect culture across generations.

Through this project, we partnered with the Public Science Project at the CUNY Graduate Center to design and lead a community research project grounded in the knowledge of people who live here. This group of moms wondered about the lack of artistic opportunity in the community now. With sponsorship from Cool Culture, we began our quest.

Using surveys, interviews, and even community mapping efforts, we created a critical participatory action research project in Bed-Stuy focused on the lack of the arts here. With presentations across the city and workshops with our stakeholders, we worked to spread the word about our work. The outcome of our research manifested into our report called *Creative Pathways in Bedstuy: A Participatory Study on Art Access, Intergenerational Creativity, and Cultural Equity*. We are Parent Power for Cultural Equity.

My job is to work with families, to foster relationships, set goals, and to help them advocate for their needs. My passion is doing all that and then celebrating their every success.

Being a part of our CPAR project solidified that the voices of the people must always be heard, acknowledged, and fed. It's time to stop dreaming of what people's reality is and to now start asking them how to make it become reality.

We found that when motivated with a common cause that is respectful, motivational, non-judgmental, and attainable, the masses will come. It is believed that we live in a time where people are just not interested, but we learned that they are.

We heard that:

People want to meet for common goals.
They will gather with a call of action.
They want to talk together, generation to generation, in a safe and secure space.
People want to preserve their past and culture.
People want to stay close to home.
Because of the economy, they want to do things at little or no cost.

This aligns strongly with our four key research findings:

Key Finding 1: Art is everywhere. Access is not
Key Finding 2: Art is an intergenerational connection and families want those pathways restored
Key Finding 3: Gentrification is reshaping art and cultural belonging
Key Finding 4: Bedford Stuyvesant families hold bold freedom dreams for their creative future.

It is imperative to me that elected officials like you hear the people and make realities become true.

Although we have gotten an increased investment in the arts from you, speaking up and speaking out is acceptable through the arts. I believe it's a pivotal time for creativity to be enhanced.

Many in our city and our nation feel that so many of life's opportunities are dwindling away, and their voices are not being heard. But through spoken word, you can hear me and my intention. Through painting and drawing, my fantasies and realities become seen. You can see my struggle through my hair and dress. You can see us soar as we dream skyscrapers, buildings, and housing dreams through architecture.

New Yorkers dream big. New Yorkers work hard. New Yorkers create uniquely.

The funding of this one project helped women begin to come into themselves. They broke boundaries. They experienced new things. They were heard when they thought no one cared about what they wanted to say. They learned how to organize.

These gifts not only helped the project but also helped them in their daily lives. They gained time management skills, budgeting, presentation tools, and how to sell themselves. The most important skill for me was that they gained confidence.

A confident parent raises children who can rule the world. When families feel that they can have it all, they soar. Our communities are better, their lives are better, the world is better.

I encourage you to increase the base amount for culture and arts in the city budget by $30M. I understand this is not an increase over the amount the Department of Cultural Affairs received last year, but setting it as a baseline will go a long way toward stabilizing arts and culture organizations and keeping them going.

If I had a dream today, it would be that you continue to fund programs like Parent Power for Cultural Equity, knowing that every dollar invested today is worth life-changing assets for the future that are immeasurable and bankable.

Thank you.

Bettina Calloway-White

Founding Member, Parent Power for Cultural Equity

Family Services Coordinator, Bedford Stuyvesant Early Childhood Development Center

Save QueensLink and Stop Funding QueensWay!

Version 2 - Additional Info and Corrections

sources are numbered in parenthesis and listed at the very end

Dear NYC Council Members, especially those in the Committee on Finance,

As a resident of Queens who relies on public transportation to get around in the city, it saddens to me to see Mayor Zohran K. Mamdani and his administration step back from his support for QueensLink and continue to use tax payer money to fund an anti-transit scheme that is known as QueensWay, as seen in the FY 2027 Executive Budget Commitment Plan - Volume 3, pages 1108, 1177 and 1212 (1). For the sake of QueensLink's future, for the sake of not letting a short-term pseudo-win ruin it, for the sake of the community surrounding the former LIRR Rockaway Beach Branch and for the sake of Queens residents that need to travel to and from the northern and southern areas of the borough, I urge all the council members to reject any Final Budget that includes any amount of funding going towards QueensWay.

QueensWay is a rails to trails project that is set on turning the abandoned railroads on the now defunct LIRR Rockaway Beach Branch into a park akin to the Highline in Manhattan. Right now phase 1 of the QueensWay, the Metropolitan Hub, is set to be constructed in Fall of 2026 and features no provisions for rail reactivation, as seen in their proposed final design (2). That being said, even if somehow QueensWay were to be changed to include rails provisions for later reactivation, it would still not be enough when you consider what's going on with the Beltline in Atlanta, Georgia. The Atlanta Beltline was conceived as a rails to trails project of sorts, only they decided to build the trails first and set aside some land for rails to be added later. Any attempt to add rails continued to get pushed back over and over again, completely disregarding the transit needs of the area (3).

Meanwhile, QueensLink is a real opportunity to bring both rails and trails to communities that have previously lost rails, while creating a fast and efficient way to travel between south and north Queens (4). QueensLink would rebuild the right of way and connect the IND Queens Boulevard line to the IND Rockaway line, adding 4 new stations between the two lines while providing in system transfer to the BMT Jamaica line and the LIRR Atlantic Branch, granted that they also need to restore the abandoned Woodhaven Junction station (5). In-system transfers to the IND Fulton line would also be possible. It wouldn't just be monumental for Queens, but also rather helpful for people in west to east Brooklyn that need better ways to travel to northern and southern Queens. The M train would go down the new railroad, while also serving areas of the Rockaway, effectively replacing the shuttle train service. This not only helps northern Queens residents go to the Rockaways, but also helps people in the Rockaway go to northern Queens, without relying on infrequent overcrowded buses like the Q52 and Q53, or having to drive on unsafe congested roads. QueensLink would also include protected bike lanes nearby.

I understand the city's hesitation to back QueensLink due to the MTA's own reluctance to push for QueensLink, but understand that the high projected cost and low projected ridership in the MTA's analysis is very unrealistic. QueensLink's "Corridor Analysis Phase 1: Preliminary Assessment was conducted in 2021 to dispute the MTA's previous study in 2018 to Reactivate the Rockaway Beach Branch, MTA partnering with Systra to conduct their study. In QueensLink's 2021 assessment, they despite the general capital budget that the MTA came up with, which was around $8.1 billion if integrated with the NYC Subway system, like QueensLink proposes, but QueensLink notices the soft costs making up over half of the total cost, being higher than the actual projected cost to reconstruct the Rockaway Beach Branch, this is found in page 20 (6). QueensLink's 2018 assessment suggests that the actual total cost for the project to be in the $3.4 - $3.7 range, with actual construction costs being $1.7 - $1.8, consistent with the construction costs the MTA has come up with (6). Keep in mind the soft cost of this size is very unprecedented when comparing it to the soft cost and construction cost of the Second Avenues Subway phase 1, which had a total cost of $4.45 billion (7). QueensLink also released a Ridership Study on March 19, 2026, reviewing different alignments, all alignments having significantly higher ridership than the MTA's own projection (8). Finally on March 25, 2026, QueensLink published their "Initial Business Case" outlining all the potential economic benefits of that it would to the area, as well as slashing travel times of residents going between south and north Queens, while reducing the amount of cars on the street due to increased transit access, also improving air quality in the area (9). Also, MTA Chairman and CEO, Janno Lieber, has recently been much more receptive towards QueensLink, praising the efforts of QueensLink's transit activists (10). Besides, it wouldn't be out of the ordinary for NYC to spearhead and fund new subway infrastructure and service, especially when it wasn't a priority to the MTA and the NY State government, as seen in Hudson Yards (11). While the 7 train extension to Hudson yards wasn't all perfect, the NYC gov could learn their lessons where mistakes were made and apply what worked if NYC is interested in self financing QueensLink, it would be transformational to the borough. On the other hand, QueensWay would gentrify the surrounding areas without even improving transit access across most of Queens.

With all that said, I once again urge the NYC Council to reject any budget that includes any funding for QueensWay, including their Metropolitan Hub. I see four viable decisions that can be made with the left over money that will no longer be going to QueensWay. One option is to reallocate that money towards further preliminary environmental studies, preliminary design studies etc for QueensLink, to essentially pay for a portion of the soft costs that the MTA and NY State would have to pay for to conduct those analyses, and further move QueensLink forward, no more time wasted sitting around doing nothing. A second option is to reallocate that money to our existing parks and park-related services, like Forest Park and Flushing Meadows corona park, it's very redundant to build phase 1 of QueensWay basically right next to Forest Park, while ignoring Forest Park itself, Queens already has enough parks. A third option is to reallocate that money towards anything else that would better improve the livelihood of New Yorkers more than QueensWay ever would. A fourth option is to do nothing with the money, to

have it be saved for later. All four of these options at the very least makes sure nothing is being done on the Rockaway Beach Branch, preserving the right of way, and keeping the prospect of QueensLink alive and well, whether the MTA wants to jump on the chance immediately or in the near future. Any push to reactivate rail on the Rockaway Beach Branch in the way QueensLink proposes, after QueensWay gets constructed, would require ripping up sections of QueensWay, which would make any project to restore rail service needlessly expensive, time consuming, and flat out wasteful, and would probably further turn the MTA and NY State government off the idea to attempt it in the first place. The fate of Queens rests in all your hands, please make the right decision.

Sincerely,
Brad A. Tenezaca Moina

June 12th, 2026

Sources:

(1) https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/exec26/com5-26c.pdf
(2) https://edc.nyc/sites/default/files/2026-05/NYCEDC-QueensWay-MetHub-CB6-Presentation-5-6-26.pdf
(3) https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2026/05/12/rail-to-trail-projects-queensway
(4) https://thequeenslink.org/the-plan/
(5) https://thequeenslink.org/portfolio/forest-park-woodhaven-richmond-hill/
(6) https://thequeenslink.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/The-QueensLink-Corridor-Analysis_Ph-1-Prelim-Assessment-Study-Rpt_June-2021_Final.pdf
(7) https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/pmoc-report-secondavesubway-january-2017.pdf
(8) https://thequeenslink.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Queenslink-Ridership-Study-2026.pdf
(9) https://thequeenslink.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/QueensLink-Initial-Business-Case-2026.pdf
(10) https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2026/03/25/mamdani-budget-could-tank-queens-subway-expansion-he-once-supported#:~:text=Lieber%20did%20praise%20the%20effort
(11) https://www.businessinsider.com/bloomberg-nyc-first-ride-7-train-subway-extension-2013-12

A Public-Private Partnership That Works: The New Visions Portal

Overview

Every year, New York City spends billions of dollars on social services and educational programs to support its most vulnerable students and families. A significant share of those investments underdeliver because the agencies, schools, and nonprofits responsible for delivering services cannot see one another's work, coordinate activities, or organize around shared and measurable outcomes. The New Visions Portal has become the connective infrastructure that addresses this problem by extending a platform schools already trust into the broader ecosystem of agencies, providers, and community-based organizations that serve NYC students and families. NYCPS invests over $8M annually in the Portal, which costs more than $13M a year to maintain and develop. New Visions closes that gap through philanthropy, securing more than $30M in private investment over the past decade, and $5.5M this year alone. This makes the Portal one of the most leveraged public-private investments in the city's education and social services infrastructure.

There are four reasons why continued investment by NYCPS in the Portal should be prioritized:

- **The Portal delivers vital services that schools and their partners depend on.** In the absence of any central mandate, nearly every public school in NYC has chosen to use the Portal because it has become indispensable to how they plan for and serve students. Principals, counselors, social workers, college advisors, and teachers use it to develop and monitor personalized student plans; superintendents and central staff use it to oversee schools and citywide initiatives; and a growing set of partners outside NYCPS — DHS shelters, CUNY program and admissions staff, Every Child and Family is Known (ECFIK) Caring Adults, and community-based organizations — rely on it to coordinate their work with schools.
- **It is becoming NYC's unified social-services and education infrastructure.** For decades, NYC's services for vulnerable students and families have been delivered through a fragmented constellation of agencies, schools, and nonprofit providers that work in silos. The Portal is the first integrated public-sector platform of its kind in the city — linking schools, DHS shelters, CUNY, and social-service providers through a single trusted system. No other city has built anything comparable at scale, and as that infrastructure evolves, NYCPS, Mayoral, and interagency initiatives leveraging the Portal — including FutureReadyNYC, ECFIK, CUNY College Now, and the emerging foster-care pilot with ACS — will be better positioned to collectively support a broad range of student outcomes.

- **There is no cost-effective or viable path to these capabilities through internal teams or for-profit vendors.** The Portal is not something the City could simply buy from a vendor. Rebuilding any comparable capability in-house would cost multiples of the current contract and take years. What makes it work is more than a decade of accumulated expertise, relationships, and institutional knowledge that cannot be quickly replicated. This includes a team of 50+ data, design, and technology specialists with deep familiarity with NYCPS and partner agency systems, data structures, policy, and operational realities — paired with trusted relationships and feedback loops with practitioners across NYCPS, ACS, CUNY, DYCD, and a large portion of the nonprofit sector that no technology partner has ever established.
- **The cost to the city is dramatically offset by philanthropy.** NYCPS pays substantially less for the Portal than it actually costs to maintain and develop. New Visions is a mission-driven, NYC-based nonprofit and as a result is committed to providing technology services at or below cost. In addition, New Visions has spent over a decade securing significant philanthropic investment to subsidize the platform and to fund ambitious new functionality — functionality that becomes available to all Portal users at no additional cost to the city. This is not a vendor relationship; it is a public-private partnership that only works if the public commitment is maintained. Institutional funders will not redirect this investment to exclusively internal NYCPS technology efforts, which means the philanthropic co-investment is contingent on continued public funding of the Portal.

1. The Portal Delivers Vital Services

What the Portal Is

The Portal is a comprehensive school-management and student-planning platform that has been in continuous development since 2015. It aggregates demographic, attendance, academic, and program-participation data; allows school staff to develop, monitor, and adjust personalized student plans; and provides district and central users with real-time visibility into school performance and program implementation. Increasingly, it functions as cross-agency infrastructure — integrating data streams from NYCPS, CUNY, and DHS, and providing customized, permission-based access to community-based organizations and city agencies.

Who Uses the Portal

The Portal is currently used by a wide range of users inside and outside NYCPS.

User Type	Description
NYCPS School Users	
Principals & Assistant Principals	School-leader access for monitoring schoolwide performance, program implementation, and student-level interventions.
Guidance Counselors, College Advisors & Social Workers	Attendance, academic interventions, work-based learning, postsecondary planning, dual-enrollment tracking, credit gap analysis, and Regents planning across student caseloads.
School Secretaries	Operational and administrative support for student records, scheduling, and communication.
Teachers	Caseload or school-level access to student academic, attendance, and intervention data.
NYCPS Central & District Users	
Central Office Staff	Flexible, real-time access to citywide data across organizational units, NYCPS initiatives, and student subgroups.
Superintendent Staff	Citywide and district views supporting school supervision, performance monitoring, and program oversight for superintendent portfolios.
Office of Community Schools	Program monitoring, student-level support tracking, and coordination with community-based partners.
Office of Students in Temporary Housing (STH)	Custom views integrating NYCPS and DHS data to support attendance and academic outcomes for students in shelters.
Office of Student Pathways / FutureReadyNYC	Postsecondary dashboard tracking the Vital Few Metrics and KIMs; school, district, and central program monitoring for FRNYC implementation.
Non-NYCPS Users (Cross-Agency & Community Partners)	
Department for Homeless Services (DHS) Shelter Staff	Real-time attendance and academic data for the students residing in DHS shelters.
CUNY K-16 Program Staff	Visibility into dual-enrollment eligibility, application status, and program participation across CUNY K-16 initiatives.
CUNY Campus Admissions Staff	Access to high school transcript data to support evaluation of College Now applicants.
Every Child and Family Is Known (ECFIK) Caring Adults & Program Leadership	School-based Caring Adults logging family check-ins; program leadership monitoring assignment, completed check-ins, and family needs across 125 schools.

User Type	Description
Community-Based Organizations	Permission-based student data and shared views supporting program implementation, participation, and impact.

Usage Analytics

Usage of the Portal is entirely voluntary; no central mandate exists, and NYCPS communication about its availability has been historically inconsistent. Therefore, every user has made a deliberate choice to engage with the tool, indicating they perceive a genuine value in it. With this as context, the following represent the latest usage analytics:

User Type	Usage in SY 2025-26
Overall School Users	99% of NYCPS schools have accessed the Portal this year
Monthly Unique School Users	18,564* in March 2026 (up 78% from March 2025; up 145% from March 2024) **usage is roughly evenly split across K-12 school types*
Central / District Users	1,243 superintendent and central office staff have accessed the Portal this year (61% monthly), including 785 users from 45 superintendencies

2. Building NYC's Unified Infrastructure for Students and Families

The following is a non-exhaustive list of initiatives and cross-organizational collaborations which the Portal currently supports, which along with the roadmap outlined in the subsequent section, represent a significant step forward towards unified educational and social services infrastructure in NYC:

Initiative	Role of the Portal
FutureReadyNYC	Built in partnership with the Office of Student Pathways, the Portal has become the system of record for FutureReadyNYC — tracking progress of the Vital Few Metrics and KIMs, and giving school, district, and central leaders real-time visibility into implementation and student outcomes.
CUNY College Now	In close collaboration with CUNY, the Portal identifies eligible students, delivers outreach to 130,000+ students and caregivers each semester, and gives school, district, and CUNY admissions staff real-time visibility into their College Now application status.

Initiative	Role of the Portal
CUNY Welcome Campaign	Expanding on the College Now outreach, New Visions and CUNY collaborated to automate personalized CUNY Welcome Letters — reaching 111,520 graduating seniors and caregivers last fall.
Every Child and Family is Known (ECFIK)	The Portal is the data and program-management platform for this Children's Cabinet initiative, supporting 5,100+ students across 125 schools — with 1,300+ ECFIK staff logging critical family needs information from more than 53,000 check-ins.
DHS Shelter System	The Portal gives 200+ Division of Homeless Services shelters real-time access to attendance data.
CBO Coordination	CBOs across the city use the Portal to monitor student participation, track program implementation, and measure impact — giving community partners the same real-time data visibility as school and district staff.

3. Near-Term Roadmap for Additional Infrastructure Development

In addition to the integrations above, New Visions is currently working on an ambitious set of new infrastructure projects which will significantly expand the cross-organizational coordinating power of the Portal. These projects are mostly funded by philanthropic commitments already secured, and include:

- **Foster-care access,** bringing meaningful student data to staff at 20+ foster-care agencies serving 6,400+ students with shared views to NYCPS and ACS leadership to facilitate cross-agency goal setting and progress monitoring.
- **DYCD programs,** extending Portal access for DYCD staff and other providers to identify eligible students, monitor enrollment, ensure seats are filled, document participation, and understand program impact on student outcomes across SYEP, COMPASS, and other DYCD programs.
- **Portrait of a Graduate support,** equipping schools with the tools to implement complex new graduation requirements and track diverse evidence of student learning and experience.
- **Postsecondary infrastructure,** including expansion of features to plan and track dual-enrollment, deeper integration with CUNY and SUNY to support seamless student transitions, and robust alumni reporting to inform NYCPS school and district planning.
- **Proactive benefits screening,** through a collaboration with the Office of Technology and Innovation to leverage schools in support of families accessing benefits such as SNAP, WIC, TANF, and Medicaid.

- **A citywide social-service referral system anchored in public schools,** leveraging the digital-consent and AI-tagging infrastructure already built for Every Child and Family is Known to support referrals of families to social service providers.

4. The Cost to the City Is Dramatically Offset by Philanthropy

The Portal is the product of a long-running public-private partnership between NYCPS and New Visions, not a traditional vendor contract. That partnership has, for years, produced technology purpose-built for NYC's schools, students, and agencies at a fraction of what a comparable commercial or in-house build would cost. The funding model below reflects how the partnership has been sustained.

Funding Component	Amount
NYCPS contract (current annual)	$8+ million
True annual cost of maintaining and developing the Portal	$13+ million
Annual gap closed by philanthropy	$5+ million
Direct philanthropic funding for the Portal this year alone	$5,561,955 **understates total investment, as New Visions also leverages additional organization-wide resources funded by philanthropy*
Total philanthropic investment over the past decade	$30+ million

Funders providing direct support for the Portal this year include Bloomberg Philanthropies, The Clark Foundation, Cummings Foundation, the James and Judith K. Dimon Foundation, Google.org, the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation, Robin Hood Foundation, Siegel Family Endowment, Tiger Foundation, and the Walton Family Foundation.

The model is straightforward: the city contract funds access and maintenance for all 1,600+ schools, district users, and DHS shelters. Philanthropy funds ambitious new feature development and data integrations, which then become available to all Portal users as part of the package supported by the city contract.

Why public commitment is non-negotiable

Major institutional funders will not continue to invest at scale without substantial, stable public funding. A major reduction in central funding would not just cut the city contract — it would unwind the philanthropic co-investment that has dramatically reduced the cost of these services to NYC.

Conclusion: What Is at Stake

Defunding or reducing Portal funding would mean three losses, all simultaneous and all difficult to reverse:

Educators and their partners lose a critical tool. Thousands of school, district and CBO staff would be forced back to the inefficient, error-prone manual processes the Portal replaced. This would negatively affect the educational and social support students receive and make implementing complex instructional and programmatic initiatives more challenging.

The city loses philanthropic leverage. Tens of millions of dollars in private funding for data-infrastructure modernization — funding that institutional donors will not redirect to internal builds — would walk away with the contract.

The cross-agency agenda stops. Years of groundwork on data sharing across NYCPS, CUNY, DHS, ACS, DYCD, OTI, and DSS would be lost. The first real attempt to give NYC a unified view of how its services reach vulnerable children would end before it has been fully realized. Defunding or substantially reducing the Portal contract means losing the tool, the team, the data integrations, and the agency relationships simultaneously.

Continued investment in the Portal is not a choice between funding a tool and funding services. It is the choice that determines whether the billions NYC already spends on education and social services for vulnerable students and families grow more efficient and effective over time, or remain locked in the fragmented systems that have undermined them for decades.

A school-by-school subscription model is also not a viable alternative. Charging individual schools for access would fundamentally alter the partnership — forcing New Visions to redirect substantial resources toward marketing, eroding equitable access across schools, arbitrarily removing data for subsets of schools from central and superintendent leadership views, and making it impossible to coherently support the Chancellor's and Mayor's citywide priorities. The choice for NYCPS is whether to sustain this infrastructure as a public good, or to lose what a decade of public and private investment has built.

I am Brendan Birth, a current Brooklyn resident, and someone who grew up in South Queens.

I add the context of where I grew up because growing up in South Queens showed me just how useful a north-south subway in Queens would be. I went to high school in Central Queens, and if a north-south subway existed during my high school years, my commute times to and from school would've been shorter. That would've meant more time for extracurricular activities and/or studying and/or sleeping. In short, a north-south subway in Queens would've transformed my life.

While I graduated high school fourteen years ago, I want future generations of Queens residents to have the very transit that would've helped me back when I was in high school. And there is a proposal to bring that transit into Queens, in the form of QueensLink.

Unfortunately, there is a competing plan for the corridor QueensLink would use. That competing plan is called QueensWay, and that competing plan is currently in the Mayor's budget from what I've heard. While I love walking, I oppose QueensWay—which would bring trails without rail—for three reasons.

First, and most importantly, the QueensWay plan is out of alignment with how commuters actually commute in this part of Queens. If you look at the City's own Environment & Health Data Portal, which has data on how adults in different neighborhoods commute to work (https://a816-dohbesp.nyc.gov/IndicatorPublic/data-explorer/walking-driving-and-cycling/?id=2415#display=summary), you'll see that the overwhelming majority of people in these neighborhoods either drive or take public transit to work, rather than walk or bike. For example, in Woodhaven, one of the neighborhoods that would stand to benefit from QueensLink, nearly 6,200 people were estimated to take public transit to work, while 34 people were estimated to bike to work. Yes, you read that correctly—34! Good policy relies on using good data, and bad policy either uses bad data or doesn't use data at all. Based on the City's own available data, the QueensWay plan, which has trails without rail, is bad policy. I have screenshots of this data at the bottom of my testimony, because I think the City Council needs to know about this data.

Second, despite the rhetoric that rail could be added later, the reality is that it is hard to add it once you build trails without rail. Look no further than Atlanta's Beltline. We should seek to learn from Atlanta's mistake, not repeat it.

Last, as a student of American mass transit history, I know from experience that the longer we wait to build a transit project, the more expensive it will become, and the less likely a transit project is to get finished due to it becoming more expensive. As such, while it may sound nice to say that we can build something later, waiting will only decrease the chances of something like QueensLink getting built, due to costs likely only increasing over time.

For all the reasons mentioned above, I urge the City Council to negotiate with the Mayor to remove QueensWay funding, diverting instead to QueensLink.

Figure 1: Transit Mode Shares in Rego Park (From the City's Environment & Health Data Portal)

Area	Bicycle (number)	Car, truck, or van (number)	Public transportation (number)	Walked (number)
Rego Park Queens	55	3,714	6,537	821

Figure 2: Transit Mode Shares in Forest Hills (From the City's Environment & Health Data Portal)

Area	Bicycle (number)	Car, truck, or van (number)	Public transportation (number)	Walked (number)
Forest Hills Queens	168	12,607	21,409	2,786

Figure 3: Transit Mode Shares in Woodhaven (From the City's Environment & Health Data Portal)

Area	Bicycle (number)	Car, truck, or van (number)	Public transportation (number)	Walked (number)
Woodhaven Queens	34	6,198	10,394	823

Figure 4: Transit Mode Shares in Richmond Hill (From the City's Environment & Health Data Portal

Area	Bicycle (number)	Car, truck, or van (number)	Public transportation (number)	Walked (number)
Richmond Hill Queens	118	6,484	7,076	674

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF CONTINUED FUNDING

Girls Inc. After-School Program

Presented to: New York City Council

Honorable Members of the New York City Council,

My name is [Your Name], and I am here today to urge the City of New York to continue its vital funding for Girls Inc., an after-school program that has become a cornerstone of our community. This program is not simply a place for students to go after the school bell rings — it is a place where young girls discover who they are, build lasting friendships, and develop the strength of character they will carry with them for the rest of their lives.

Bringing Students Together

New York City is one of the most diverse places on earth, yet meaningful connection across those differences does not happen on its own — it must be cultivated. Girls Inc. does exactly that. The program brings together students from different neighborhoods, backgrounds, and walks of life, creating an environment where every girl belongs. Through collaborative projects, group mentoring, and shared experiences, participants learn to listen to one another, celebrate their differences, and recognize the common ground they share. These are not just life skills; they are the foundation of a stronger, more united city.

Creating Community

Girls Inc. does more than occupy the hours between 3 and 6 PM — it builds community. Students form bonds with their peers, their mentors, and the dedicated staff who show up for them every single day. Many participants come from households where a trusted adult presence is scarce; Girls Inc. fills that gap with warmth, consistency, and genuine investment in each girl's future. Families, too, become part of this community, knowing their daughters are in a safe, nurturing space. When we fund Girls Inc., we are investing in the social fabric of our neighborhoods — and that investment pays dividends for decades.

Building Character

Perhaps most importantly, Girls Inc. builds character. The program's curriculum is rooted in helping young women discover their own strength, voice, and values. Girls learn to set goals and follow through on them. They learn to stand up for themselves and for others. They learn resilience — how to face setbacks without giving up. They learn integrity — what it means to do the right thing even when it is hard. These are young women who, because of this program, will walk into their futures with confidence, compassion, and conviction. The City of New York cannot put a price on that.

I urge this Council to continue its support for Girls Inc. with renewed commitment and full funding. The return on this investment is visible in every young woman who has

walked through those doors — in her confidence, her compassion, and her readiness to contribute to this great city. To cut this funding would be to turn our backs on the very future we all say we want to build.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your ongoing commitment to the young people of New York City.

Respectfully,

[Your Name]
[Your Title / Affiliation]
[Date]

Brian Chow
[redacted]

Mayor Zohran Mamdani picked the wrong team. You say it does not preclude the future of rail expansion, except it does. If a linear park is built first, it will kill off any chance of reconnecting the Rockaways to Queens and drastically increase travel times for Queens residents. Not to mention, Queensway is being built where there is a park already and would make it impossible to have a rail connection from northern to southern Queens.

Queenslink is built with M train service expansion in mind and will also feature park space. It would be designed to separate trains from surrounding homes using concrete barriers and vegetation. The parks Queenslink has in mind would be built over the tunnels coming from Queens Boulevard in the northern part of the corridor and would run alongside the train in the south. Queenslink will run parallel to Woodhaven Boulevard and carry many passengers and decongest Woodhaven Boulevard and reduce crowding on buses. By running M trains via Queenslink into the Far Rockaway, residents would be able to have more frequent service and be able to access Queens Boulevard and Midtown Manhattan faster.

Queens does not want a vanity project. It needs better rail infrastructure. The reason the Highline in Hudson Yards works is because there are already many trains in Hudson Yards and no park space and is touristy. Queens already has a park and doesn't need another, especially one that would divide Queens.

June 12, 2026

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident and parent to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

LIC has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, Kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, and yet most area schools are already operating over capacity: P.S. 112 at 130%, and P.S./I.S. 78 at 111%. What is more, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City — Court Square — still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message to families is clear: you may not be guaranteed a school seat in your neighborhood.

I would also like to express urgent concern about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed school project. In a neighborhood where families are struggling today to secure local school placements, this project, along with other promised school construction projects in LIC, cannot continue to fall behind competing priorities. While I appreciate the creation of an incubation site for Q508 (Q439Q), a temporary solution cannot become a justification for continued delays to the permanent facility. Families were promised a permanent neighborhood school, with the full facilities and long-term stability that a dedicated school building provides. An incubation site may help relieve short-term pressure, but it does not address the broader and growing need for permanent school infrastructure in LIC.

Additionally, the current lease for the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE, Q580) is set to expire in just three years. Families have been assured that the school would be relocated so that it can continue serving students without disruption. We are appreciative that the budget includes funding for BSGE. However, we want to emphasize that it is critical that the City follow through on this commitment and move urgently to secure a permanent home for the school. Allowing delays to continue would create significant uncertainty for students and families and risks the loss of an important educational institution in a neighborhood already facing a severe shortage of school seats. The City must prioritize funding and planning for BSGE's relocation now to ensure continuity and stability for the community.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has also recognized the need for additional schools to support the neighborhood's rapid growth. Specifically, commitments were made to advance development of a school at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard. Creation of two additional schools has also been promised to create 1,300 more seats in conjunction with the planned construction of over 14,000 residential units. As more housing is developed through OneLIC, school construction must move in parallel — not years behind residential growth. Without firm commitments and accountability around these promised schools, the existing seat crisis will only intensify.

Delays to the opening of these schools are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and more families pushed out of the neighborhood because they cannot rely on access to local public schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency,

accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508 and other promised schools on schedule. Schools aren't just a service—they're the foundation of a stable, thriving neighborhood.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future. Please ensure that timely funding is delivered to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority for the completion of these projects.

Sincerely,

Bridget Dalton
Hunters Point
Parent of two

Dear City Council,

As a resident of Queens, I am writing in support of the Queenslink. The Queenslink would provide public transportation to parts of Queens deprived of meaningful transportation and make connections between city neighborhoods that are extremely difficult to go between.

I live in Jackson Heights, and while I have access to 5 trains the E, F ,M ,R and 7, I still drive to work in Williamsburg. In order to get to work on time I have to allot for 1.5hrs if I take public transportation. When I drive, I allot for just half the time. Usually, I take the E to either the B32 or B62 bus, or I take the E and transfer to the G. The Queenslink would allow the G train to return to its original route and extend past Court Square into Queens. Being able to take just one train to work would make my commute much more reasonable and reliable. There have been so many times when the bus doesn't come and I miss my connection and it becomes highly stressful to get to work on time.

Using existing rail lines astronomically reduces costs. But most importantly it also makes this a viable project. If there were no existing rails the construction and infrastructure would likely be impossible because of not only the extreme costs but more so because it would be extremely difficult to add new rail lines where there are existing homes and businesses.

I can see why funding the Queensway is appealing. The success of the High Line is phenomenal, I myself love going to the High Line. However, what is crucial to understand is that funding the Queensway makes it impossible to ever again make use of these rail lines which is a catastrophic mistake, shooting yourself in the foot for future transportation possibilities. And while the Queensway appears to perhaps be more of a “green project”, the Queenslink will have a huge impact on greening New York City by reducing driving and taking 4.5 million cars off the streets and and reducing carbon emissions by 7,200 million tons annually. And it also still does include a 33 acre park!

I can also see that residents who have lived with an abandoned rail line behind their homes are now very weary about having an active train track. Considering their concerns is important and it seems that there is new technology that could help reduce sound. For example, I think of the current construction project alongside installing soundproofing barriers along the Van Wyck Expressway. We have the technology to help with this, and so including that in the Queenslink proposal seems possible.

How incredible would it be to have the IBX and Queenslink projects underway simultaneously? I am just a citizen and don’t know the numbers, but I imagine the two combined impact at least ¼ of the NYC population. While the mayor of course inherited a budget with a historic deficit, I don’t even expect you to include the Queenslink in this year’s budget. What I am asking is that you don’t fund the Queensway, so that you can still allow for the possibility of the Queenslink in future years. The folks at Queenslink have done so much admirable research, I greatly respect their fight for transportation justice.

Thank you for reading my testimony, and for considering this very important issue. Queens deserves better transportation, and dedication to supporting this initiative in a thoughtful way.

Please ask me any questions!

All the best,
Brighid Greene

To: New York City Council.
CC: Committee on Public Housing and Committee on Finance.
Date: June 12th, 2026

Subject: **Testimony in Support of Comprehensive Modernization of NYCHA Section 9 Public Housing**

To the Members of the City Council and the Committee on Finance,

As a New York City resident and taxpayer, I strongly urge the Council to invest public housing funds in comprehensive Section 9 modernization instead of privatization.
I stand in support of the position of the Citywide Council of Presidents, Residents to Preserve Public Housing, Neighbors Helping Neighbors, and Save Section 9.

The mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M toward PACT, a privatization program that hands public housing to private managers under 100-year leases. An independent review of data shows that NYCHA's actual rehabilitation need is approximately $2.07B annually. That same $662M could fully address the needs of Wagner Houses, 22 buildings, over 2,000 homes, for the next century. That's what responsible investment looks like.

Instead, PACT costs taxpayers more while increasing evictions, weakening tenant rights, and permanently shrinking public assets, without voter consent or a clear path back to public ownership. The NYC Comptroller and tenant attorneys have raised serious concerns about outcomes under this program. Before spending another dollar on privatization, the Council must know whether it's actually delivering results.
The responsible path forward is clear:

- Institute a moratorium on PACT pending an independent impact study
- Redirect the mayor's $2.6B allocation toward Section 9 comprehensive modernization.
- Establish sustainable revenue streams, such as dedicating a portion of revenue from the Fair Share Act and the Stock Transfer Tax, and pursuing federal legislation, so that NYCHA has reliable, long-term funding sources instead of relying on privatization.

Public housing is one of this city's most valuable assets. Taxpayer dollars should preserve it, not transfer it to private hands for generations to come!

I urge the Council: Take immediate action to place a moratorium on PACT, reinvest the allocated $2.6B into Section 9 modernization, and publicly commit to preserving public housing for the next generation.

Stand with residents, protect public assets, and lead NYC toward a fairer, more sustainable future. Choose comprehensive modernization now, not privatization.

Regards,

Brighid O'Dea
[redacted], 11215

June 10, 2026

TO: New York City Council — Finance Committee
RE: Support the QueensLink — preserve the Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way for both transit and parks

Dear Chairperson Lee and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is **Britany Lee**, and I am a **resident of Queens**. I am writing in strong support of the **QueensLink**, which would bring both new subway service and new parkland to Queens by reactivating the former Rockaway Beach Branch, and against the current $43 million allocated in the budget for phase one of the QueensWay, also referred to as the Met Hub project.

Why this matters to me

This matters to me because more accessible transit in Queens is important. Providing faster access to the Rockaways, quicker access to other parts of the city for employment, as well as providing more transit options will help revitalize Queens and show Queens residents that they matter.

Why the QueensLink is the right choice

Two competing concepts exist for the deactivated Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way: the park-only QueensWay, and the dual-purpose QueensLink, which combines subway and park uses. The QueensWay would be built directly on the former railbed, which would virtually eliminate the possibility of ever restoring transit there. The MTA itself recognized in its 2023 20-Year Needs Assessment that a linear park along the corridor would create a challenge for any future transit alternatives. Once a rail right-of-way is converted to other uses, it almost never returns to transit.

The QueensLink would create the first north-south subway line in Queens, extending the M line south from Rego Park to Ozone Park and then over the A train tracks to the Rockaways — increasing service to the Rockaways by up to 165%. It would also let the G train run all the way to Forest Hills, increasing capacity on the crowded Queens Boulevard local lines by 50% and connecting central Queens with north Queens and Brooklyn.

A study by the Steer Group found that the QueensLink would remove millions of vehicle trips each year, making streets safer and lowering harmful emissions, while adding up to 33 acres of new parks and trails integrated with the subway design. Over 20 years, the study concluded the project would more than pay for itself by creating jobs, saving New Yorkers time, and reducing healthcare costs tied to air pollution and traffic crashes.

Queens needs parks *and* trains. The QueensLink would provide both. I urge the Committee to preserve this irreplaceable right-of-way for future transit and to support the QueensLink.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

Brittany Lee

Queens Village, NY 11429

[redacted]

District 27

Hi my name is Brittany Shropshire and I am a resident of Queens and a long time lover of the library. The library has been my second home since I was able to read. I have cards at all three library systems and visit my local branch in Briarwood weekly to check out books and access services. As a social worker I also request professional development books through the library frequently. The library is truly the lifeline of the city, serving every single age group and population and should not be used as a bargaining chip every time budget talks come around. Not only is that heartbreaking to me but also exhausting and frustrating to all of us who support the library and the staff members having to pour countless energy into advocating when they are already stretched thin by limited staffing. I am asking for the mayor to follow through with allocating 0.5% of funding in the 2027 budget and make that the benchmark for future budgets and that city council support in that advocacy. I would rather live in a city where libraries have abundant funding instead of an unnecessary amount of money going towards police officers. We need public goods and services funded now more than ever and I am urging everyone responsible to make that happen.

NYC City Council
Committee on Finance (June 10, 2026)
Written testimony re: Manhattan Youth & Robert Wagner Middle School

Hello,

I am reaching out today to express my strong opposition to the recent decision by the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) to replace the established afterschool provider at my son's Middle School (PS 167 – Robert Wagner Middle School), Manhattan Youth. This decision appears to involve new organizations that lack the necessary experience, breadth of service offering and established relationships within our school communities that Manhattan Youth has fostered.

I respectfully urge reconsideration of these decisions and request the restoration of Manhattan Youth partnerships for schools seeking continuity for the 2026-2027 school year. From what I understand, this decision seems to have been made through a rushed and opaque process, excluding key stakeholders such as students, families, teachers, School Leadership Teams, PTA leadership, and the broader school community. Many principals who supported Manhattan Youth were informed that alternative providers had been selected for their schools, despite concerns about their experience and program quality.

Principals were directed to partake in a closed-door ranking process, where they had to rank providers they did not support. They were instructed not to discuss this process with essential stakeholders. There was no opportunity for public input, no transparency regarding evaluation criteria, and no appeals process. Families became aware of decisions affecting their children only after selections were finalized, which is unacceptable.

Changes to this beloved afterschool program create unnecessary hardship for families during an already stressful time for students. The transition to new providers could undermine families' confidence in their child's safety and well-being after school.

Many newly selected providers lack the experience necessary to operate comprehensive middle school afterschool programs, and that appears to include PS 167 where a tennis-focused program appears to have been selected; Manhattan Youth provides dozens of

opportunities across not only sports (including tennis) but also arts - theater, chorus, visual arts, writing, band/instruments, etc - and many other avenues, which is necessary to support a large and diverse student body. As I'm sure you know, PS 167 is one of the largest middle schools in the NYC system, so having an after-school provider who appears to be narrowly focused, makes no sense and is not in the best interests of the student body.

I disagree with the DYCD's decision and request that Manhattan Youth be restored as our choice afterschool program. Specifically, we call upon DYCD, DOE leadership, and City Hall to:

- Pause the implementation of the newly awarded middle school afterschool contracts
- Reinstate Manhattan Youth partnerships for schools requesting continuity
- Provide a transparent explanation of the provider selection process
- Establish a formal appeal mechanism for schools and communities
- Ensure future decisions prioritize middle school expertise, student well-being, and community trust

The current process has generated confusion and frustration across our community. We urge you to reconsider these decisions before they cause lasting harm to the programs that have served our children well for years.

Our students deserve continuity, trusted relationships, and decision-making processes grounded in transparency and genuine community engagement.

Thank you,

Bryan Smith
[redacted]
New York, NY 10128
[redacted]

From:	Calley Wang
To:	Testimony
Cc:	District35
Subject:	[EXTERNAL] RE: 6/10/2026 Committee on Finance (Transportation, QueensWay, Queenslink, Rockaway Beach Branch)
Date:	Wednesday, June 10, 2026 1:54:41 PM

[redacted]

Hello,

I am an NYC resident speaking in my own personal capacity opposing this year's budget allocation for the QueensWay park project without a provision for future subway service on the Rockaway Beach Branch corridor (QueensLink proposal).

A business case study has shown QueensLink would connect northern and southern Queens by rail, increasing transportation equity and delivering almost $9 billion in economic benefit. By increasing the capacity of the existing Queens Boulevard subway line, QueensLink would also improve service reliability on the M and R trains and allow the G train to return to Forest Hills. Queenslink has citywide benefits far beyond northern Queens. After the IBX, this is the last rail expansion opportunity in New York City that uses an existing right of way.

The QueensWay project as planned will prevent these benefits from ever happening. There is no provision for a future transit right of way and any future transit project would require costly demolition. This would effectively put an end to any transit on the Rockaway Beach Branch corridor.

The Mayor, EDC, and NYC Parks have not adequately addressed the public's concerns that QueensWay as designed would block future transit. I urge the council to defer the allocation of funds for QueensWay until the question of transit compatibility is addressed in detail, and the project is redesigned to include a guaranteed right of way for a future subway line.

I also wish to clarify that the IBX is not a substitute for QueensLink. They serve different corridors and different markets, both of which are heavily lacking in high quality transit options. These crosstown corridors complement each other by enabling seamless travel between the boroughs. Even if the funding and political consensus to build rail on the Rockaway Beach Branch don't exist today, the council should not deny tomorrow's leaders the option.

Keep the right of way open and defer QueensWay until transit provisions are guaranteed -- the old adage to "measure twice and cut once" applies here. Blocking transit now will constrain equitable transit access for generations to come.

Best,

Mr. Calley Wang
11238

Camilo Zamora
BSGE Parent
[redacted]
Flushing, NY 11358
[redacted]
June 9, 2026

NYC Council Finance Committee
Honorable Deputy Speaker Dr. Natasha Williams
Honorable Chair Linda Lee
250 Broadway, 17th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Dear Honorable Dr. Natasha Williams and Honorable Linda Lee:

Please accept this written testimony in support of keeping capital funding in the city's budget to provide the necessary resources to the School Construction Authority to build four school buildings, as part of the OneLIC rezoning.

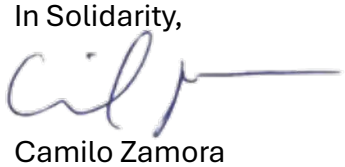
Specifically, capital funds already designated as part of the OneLIC rezoning to ensure the relocation of the Baccalaureate School for Global Education ("BSGE") remains fully funded; one 650 seat middle school; and two 600 seat elementary schools.

The OneLIC rezoning will rapidly increase the population of Long Island City and without these new seats, schools will face severe overcrowding. Furthermore, if these new school buildings are not funded, it will result in school overcrowding and non-compliance of the state's class size rules and regulations. Lastly, not funding new school buildings will break a critical infrastructure promise made to neighborhood families as part of the rezoning resolution.

I am a proud parent of a 10th grade student at the Baccalaureate School for Global Education, one of the few high schools in NYC that offers the International Baccalaureate diploma program. The school is in a small former shoe manufacturing building, which does not have the space nor the facilities adequate for a high school. For instance, the cafeteria serves as the school's lunchroom, gymnasium, and auditorium.

I sincerely hope the City Council and the city's Office of Management and Budget will adequately fund these important new school buildings in Long Island City. Thank you for your time and attention.

In Solidarity,



Camilo Zamora

From: Kristin Olsen
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Written Testimonial for 5/28 Budget Meeting
Date: Monday, May 25, 2026 4:35:18 PM

[redacted]

Hello,

Please see my child's written testimonial regarding the DYCD's decision to eliminate Manhattan Youth as Wagner Middle School's after school program.

This is for the upcoming meeting:
Mayoral Executive Budget Meeting w/City Council's Committee on Finance and Committee on Children and Youth
Date: Thursday, May 28, 2026
Time: 10:00am
Location: Council Chambers at City Hall

Written Testimonial:
Dear City Council,

My name is Campbell Olsen, and I am a seventh grade student at Wagner Middle School. I am writing because I am very worried to hear the Manhattan Youth afterschool program might be eliminated. I really hope you will reconsider this because Manhattan Youth changed my life in so many important ways.

Before joining Manhattan Youth sports at Wagner, I never thought of myself as an athlete. I probably would have never tried sports otherwise. But because of this program, I discovered a passion for volleyball, basketball, and softball. Through these teams, I made new friendships with people at my school that I never would have made during regular school hours. Now sports are a big part of who I am.

Some of my best memories at Wagner have come from Manhattan Youth sports. This year I became the catcher on my softball team, and it taught me something really important: I can try new things, and I can succeed at them too! Coach Marty helped me believe in myself and become more confident. It makes me excited to wake up in the morning and go to school because I know I get to be part of my amazing softball team.

Without Manhattan Youth, Wagner would lose a huge part of what makes our school special.

Students would lose friendships, the chance to try new things, and a place where we feel safe, connected and encouraged.

I hope you understand how important this program is to students like me. Manhattan Youth has changed me as a person and made me realize how important sports, community, and school can all be together.

I'm begging you to please bring this program back for Wagner students.

Sincerely,
Campbell Olsen
7th Grade Student, Wagner Middle School

From: carlnelson19@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Carl Nelson
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony: FY27 NYC Parks Executive Budget Hearing, Finance Committee
Date: Monday, June 1, 2026 4:01:32 PM

[redacted]

Dear New York City Council New York City Council Members,

Our city's parks are our lifelines, supporting public health, climate resilience, and quality of life in every neighborhood. We know the City Council values parks, and this year's budget presents a critical opportunity to match that support with meaningful investment.

We appreciate Mayor Mamdani's inclusion of $15 million in the FY27 Executive Budget to baselining of 161 critical positions.

However, the Executive Budget fails to protect 100 Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) officers and 15 GreenThumb workers from losing their jobs at the end of the fiscal year. These workers are on one-year contracts and continue to face uncertainty year after year despite performing essential services for New Yorkers.

Over the past three years, NYC Parks has lost more than 600 staffing lines due to budget cuts. This year the Mayor and City Council must make a good-faith effort to rebuild an agency that has endured years of disinvestment and staffing losses, and put NYC on the path of 1% for Parks.

I stand with the Play Fair for Parks Coalition in urging the following actions:

1. The Mamdani Administration must baseline the remaining 115 Parks workers currently funded through one-shot contracts.

2. The Council must fund an additional 276 one-shot positions, including:
- 100 Parks Enforcement Patrol Officers
- 100 City Park Workers, Associate Park Service Workers, and Gardeners
- 50 Forestry Staff
- 26 Playground Associates

New Yorkers are eager for greater investment in parks. A recent New York Times poll identified increased parks funding as the public's top policy priority, garnering more than 35,000 votes.

NYC's 30,000 acres of parkland remain one of the city's most valuable and accessible public resources, providing free spaces for recreation, community gathering, and connection to nature. Yet these spaces cannot thrive without the staff who maintain them, protect them, and deliver vital services to the public.

We urge the Mayor and City Council to restore staffing, strengthen park maintenance, and continue making measurable progress toward the long-overdue goal of dedicating 1% of the city budget to NYC Parks.

Sincerely,
Carl Nelson
[redacted] Ridgewood, NY 11385-5118

My name is Carla Hollingsworth and I am the Secretary for the Stuyvesant Gardens I Tenants Association. NYCHA and PACT partners ignored the voices of our residents and they bundled us with other developments and they closed on our "bundle" in Septmber 2025. To date, they haven't been transparent, they have harassed, coerced and scared people into signing leases. They used the numbers from the other developments against us , but kept residents separated, so that we couldn't work together. We are presently attempting to combine forces even though we are being told that we can't.

So after having to do without heat, hot water, water period, for a large portion of the heating season, asking questions that don't really ever get answered, we are now being told that the price per unit to renovate "the bundle:" is $380,000 per unit. This is not true. When questioned about it on a Zoom call, Pierre Downing (Kalel Companies), stated that, that cost includes landscaping, roofs, boilers, etc. And I stated that ilandscaping, roofs and boilers are not in unit and should have their own line. Unit cost should be what it costs to complete the renovation of a unit. We (the TA) have requested a breakdown of costs but we have not received it yet. But common sense dictates that it will cost more to renovate a 4 bedroom unit, than a 3 bedroom unit which would be more than a 2 bedroom unit. And I would like to invite the Council to visit us and see what these $380,000 units look like when completed. Mr. Downing's response to my saying that I doubt that more than $15,000 is going into renovating (and they have been using the words renovate and refurbish, interchangably even though they are totally and completely different things.)

Their boiler company, DualFuel has been onsite pretty much daily since September 25, 2025.
In October we were told that they were rebuilding the boiler. In March, when asked when the boiler work would be completed, we couldn't get an answer. So we looked up how long it takes to rebuild a boiler and the answer is 3 - 5 days. So we asked for and still are waiting to receive, all DualFuel invoices. We were told in April that they are going to refurbish the boilers. So our new question is why are they not already refurbished? DualFuel has been working on them from September to present.

We were supposed to do a tour of renovated apartments for the purpose of assessing whether the new flooring was sufficient to deal with the issue of noise overhead. PACT canceled the walkthrough the day before it was to happen. The reason given was that the apartments that we to be shown, had to be redone because the flooring was coming up.
Everytime that we advocate for a resident, they modify their construction schedule which really isn't a schedule because when you have a plan and a schedule, you go building by building. They are in all buildings at once. The schedule that they submitted is fictitious.

I could go on, but I've said all this to say that PACT doesn't work. Don't fund it and please make them do what has been promised and also help us to get rid of NYCHA. The problems begin and are perpetuated right there, and until they are held accountable for their bad stewardship and until they are held accountable for the negative impact that they have had on so many lives,.they cant be trusted. They feel that they have absolute power and, absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Thank you for reading my testimony,
Ms. Carla Hollingsworth

6/10/26

Carlos Ramos, certified Librarian/Archivist
DORIS Department, DC 37, Navy Veteran

I’m writing in supporting .5% of the city’s budget towards NYPL,QPL,BPL, and other public service libraries for funding library resources, infrastructure and public education.

Growing up in Jamaica Queens, the Jamaica library was a place that provided service to patrons from diverse cultures, status and ethnicities, every morning, I see people and children waiting for a library to open, to connect, learn and explore what is available, accessible and affordable in our libraries,

Working as a reference librarian for one year and three years as a reference archivist, I’ve have served people who are homeless, disabled, immigrants, students, veterans and ordinary citizens who are searching, struggling or curious to find audio, visual, foreign language and braille library/archival resources and materials that will impact, influence and make a difference in their lives.

Patrons have thank me with tears in there eyes because I find vital records their searching for, assist in historical/library research and access to information and services, or direct them where they needed to go.

Ultimately, libraries are a safe haven for anyone who needs refuge, second chances, civil services and education regardless of their status, condition, and level of competency. Mr. Mayor, please help our libraries remain the refuge of democracy, community, education, medicine & justice for people and children of this city and make a difference in people’s lives. I hope you take my views, experience and advise into consideration.

“"My alma mater was books, a good library... I could spend the rest of my life reading, just satisfying my curiosity."-Malcom X

“The only thing you absolutely have to know, is the location of the library-Albert Einstein

“There is not such a cradle of democracy upon the earth as the Free Public Library, this republic of letters, where neither rank, office, nor wealth receives the slightest consideration."-Andrew Carnegie

"If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need."-Marcus Tullius Cicero

Sincerely,
Public Servant
Carlos Ramos

References

Cicero. (1913). Letters to his friends (E. S. Shuckburgh, Trans.). George Bell and Sons. (Original work written ca. 43 BCE)

Malcolm X, & Haley, A. (1965). The autobiography of Malcolm X. Grove Press.

Simpson, J. (Ed.). (2009). The Oxford dictionary of quotations (7th ed.). Oxford University Press.

Subject: Privatization Creates Instability for Seniors.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

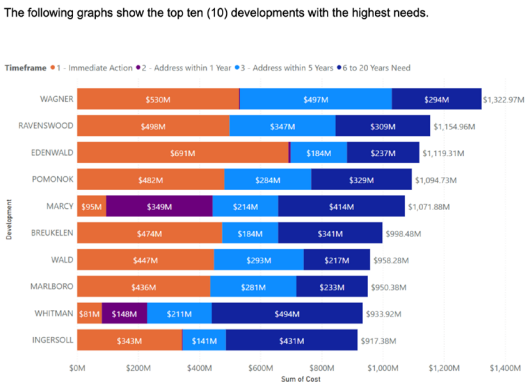


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.

- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

Subject: Privatization of NYCHA Creates Instability for Seniors.

I live at Mitchel Houses in the South Bronx and do not have an email address. I am being supported in submitting this testimony by Save Section 9.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

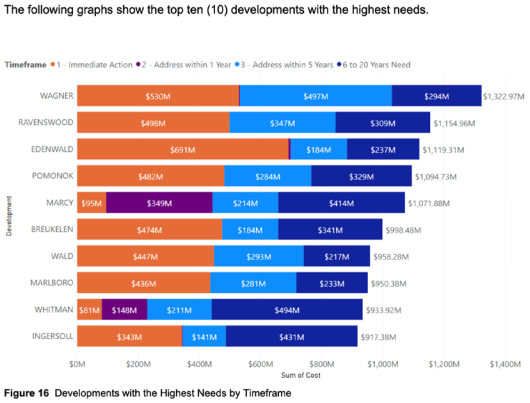


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.
- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

Fiscal Year 2027 Executive Budget Hearing – Committee on Finance
June 10, 2026
Testimony by Carol Benovic-Bradley, Friends of Queens Public Library at Ridgewood

Greetings Committees on Finance and on Culture, Libraries and International Relations,

Thank you for your service to our city. My name is Carol Benovic-Bradley and I'm a resident of Ridgewood, Queens. While I am very involved at my local branch as a volunteer, I am largely writing to you today as a library patron advocating to increase library funding to .5% of the city's budget.

My local library is the QPL Ridgewood branch and I must say that it means everything to me:

- Nonprofits, elected officials, and city agencies share their services and use the branch as a meeting place.
- The graphic novel book club has the best book recommendations. *Look Back* was a recent favorite of mine!
- I've listened to local authors share their stories there.
- I've played Drag Bingo, helped giveaway comic books, and cared for the garden.
- In the summer, the greenery of the garden forms an oasis — the perfect place to read, craft, or just listen to the city sounds.
- Being able to print 20 pages a day is clutch! Shipping labels, resumes, coloring sheets, I've appreciated it all.
- The branch is a cooling center, a place for game nights and ESOL discussion groups (English for Speakers of Other Languages), and somewhere to find something new — a book, music, a skill, or a friend!
- It feels like home —the staff, the regulars, the plants, the building's history — all of these people and things make me feel welcome each and every time I visit.

Somehow, I've gotten this same vibe at every library I've visited in New York. Each location is a unique representation of the community, people, and culture around it. Libraries are both an ode to and an investment in our city and its people.

That said, for too long, libraries have existed on a meager budget. The uncertainty of a year-to-year budgeting process also makes it difficult to plan the programming, necessary staffing, and operations behind all of the amenities that I just described. For example, the Ridgewood branch is scheduled to have a construction related closure for about two years, leaving the community without a library and with no plans for interim mobile library service. Stretched thin by other closures and a tight budget, this is one example of a tradeoff that library systems are forced to make that directly impacts our communities.

With more funding, QPL, BPL, and NYPL could expand the impressive and thoughtful programming that they provide, continue rolling out seven-day service, hire for necessary roles, and pay their staff fairly. With increased funding and investment, we can raise libraries across

all boroughs to a new level of excellence, making every branch across the city a beloved destination for locals and visitors alike.

I hope you'll consider the endless potential possible when we all have more access to libraries and the resources that they provide. If I ever meet you, I'd love to trade library stories and I'd love to see you at a branch soon.

Thank you,
Carol Benovic-Bradley

Caroline Cutroneo
[redacted]
Staten Island, NY 10301

Testimony in Support of More Funding for Public Libraries

To the City Council:

I am an employee of New York Public Library. The library branches are understaffed. Building conditions in many branches are not good. Staff are in crowded conditions and in unsafe situations. Library buildings desperately need to be upgraded with better air conditioning and heat for staff and patrons. Patrons come in with complex problems of all kinds, we do our best to help and enjoy our jobs but we need more staff. Also, librarians with master's degrees, and other workers, are simply not paid enough to deal properly with inflation, expenses and rent in New York City.

I urge the City Council to provide a baseline of .5% funding so libraries can afford to make their services better for staff and patrons!

Thank you very much.

June 11, 2026

Dear Members of the New York City Council:

Our family lives in Astoria, Queens, and our daughter goes to middle school at TYWLS of Astoria. We recently learned that the wonderful afterschool program at TYWLS, Girls Inc. of NYC, did not have their contract renewed by DYCD, and our community is so upset and devastated by this news.

Girls Inc. of NYC has been a lifesaver for our family at TYWLS of Astoria, especially as our daughter started middle school this year. This is such a tough transitional time for tween girls, and the incredible leadership and staff of Girls Inc. of NYC have been so supportive and instrumental in helping our daughter navigate the challenges of middle school. Their thoughtful and impactful programming has given our daughter a wide range of experiences and enabled her to continue to grow as an empowered, resilient, healthy, kind, and community-minded young person. And Girls Inc. of NYC makes her happy, which is no small feat for a tween! When she tells us what she did in school, their programs are often the highlight of her day. She says she loves all the hands-on activities, from the variety of arts and crafts and the different clubs (she's currently loving designing with the costuming club), to playing sports and going on field trips. She says she also learns a lot from the educational presentations about her body and mind and how to understand and take better care of herself and her peers. And all of this is happening in the context of this beautiful, safe, inclusive community that the Girls Inc. leadership and staff have built with such intention and expertise.

Our family is shocked and outraged at DYCD's decision, and we are definitely not alone. On behalf of our school community, we ask that you please reconsider and allow Girls Inc. of NYC to continue to serve and support the youth of TYWLS of Astoria, as it has done so effectively and impactfully for years. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Best,
Caroline Hong

Subject: Privatization of NYCHA Creates Instability for Seniors.

I am a senior living in the South Bronx and do not have an email address. I am being supported in submitting this testimony by Save Section 9. I benefit from NYCHA and their community center managed by East Side Houses.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

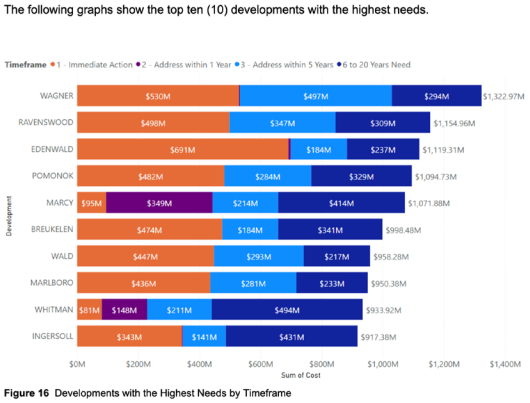


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.
- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

From: carolyn weeks
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Written testimony submission for 5/28/26 Budget Hearing
Date: Tuesday, May 19, 2026 1:28:53 PM

[redacted]

Good afternoon,
My name is Carolyn Weeks and my daughter is a current student at MS 104. I find myself compelled to reach out to you now on behalf of my daughter, and all the other middle schoolers at MS 104 Simon Baruch. To our great surprise and dismay, MS 104 parents learned on May 15th, 2026 that the Manhattan Youth Afterschool Program would abruptly end its 11 year partnership with MS 104 because DYCD unilaterally decided to terminate MY's contract here. There was no procedure implemented to survey the affected community regarding this decision, and it is our understanding that DYCD unreasonably dismissed requests made by school leadership to gather such input. We have been shocked and dismayed by the utter lack of due process. We the parents and children of MS 104 have the right to voice our opinion regarding such a drastic change, and I would greatly appreciate your consideration of my testimony.
For MS 104, Manhattan Youth has been more than just an afterschool program provider. It is an integral part of the very fabric of our community. MY's leadership, teaching artists and assistants are indispensable to the school's daily operation. They have built personal relationships with the students, administration, teachers and parents alike, all for the greater good of the students. MY has demonstrated its unwavering commitment to the MS 104 community for the past 11 years. Mike Jones tirelessly collaborated to create an environment that values and nurtures every member of our diverse student population. MY provides an emotional and physical outlet for our students as they navigate the tumultuous terrain of adolescence, and it truly makes our children feel seen and valued as individuals by building relationships with them. The breadth of programming, from Symphony Orchestra, Debate Team, Fencing, Top Chef, Film Club, to its amazing array of competitive sports such as flag football, soccer, and volleyball, has given our children a much-needed arena for building their self-esteem and confidence. Additionally, MY staff support student dances, prom, spirit weeks, Summer Rising, and many other events and activities, to create the very best opportunities and environment for our children to learn and thrive. They are part of us and we cannot lose them. In just three days, the petition to retain MY as our afterschool provider has gained well over 1,500 signatures (https://c.org/b4MHsc65tj). Countless students are handwriting letters to express their profound sadness and disappointment, imploring decision-makers to keep MY at 104.
I know most of the parents, including Leigh Pasqual, acting SLT member at MS 104, share my deep concern regarding the irreparable harm MY's abrupt departure will inflict on the students of MS 104. We would be so very grateful for your support

and advocacy to keep our precious parenting partner, Manhattan Youth, at MS 104 Simon Baruch.
Thank you so much for your consideration of our request.
Carolyn Weeks
MS 104 parent
--

From: cathleensims@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Cathleen Sims
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support Legislation Protecting Education Institutions
Date: Thursday, May 21, 2026 2:06:39 PM

[redacted]

Dear Council Members,

As a concerned constituent, I urge you to vote YES on the Schools Safe Access Act. With 1,160 antisemitic incidents recorded in New York State in 2025 and 141 in K-12 schools, immediate action is critical. Mayor Mamdani's veto of the previous bill was a failure to protect student safety. This revised legislation is a common-sense next step following the successful passage of security perimeter protections for houses of worship and essential to the safety of New York City's children. I urge you to pass this bill without delay.

Sincerely,
Ms. Cathleen Sims
[redacted] Brooklyn, NY 11201-2325

June 10, 2026

Chair Lee and esteemed city council members, I am Chaplain Dr. Victoria A. Phillips, also referred to as Dr. V. Although unable to attend in person, I wish to share my perspectives on the city's budget. My focus is on three key areas: community, health, and justice.

Communities of color in New York City, particularly Black communities, have faced profound injustices that surpass those experienced by other marginalized groups. These communities urgently require resources to foster independence, connectivity, and sustainability within their neighborhoods. Schools continue to fall short in providing adequate educational tools, social workers, and wellness resources, such as conflict resolution or meditation spaces. As a single parent who actively participated in the PTA until my son graduated high school, I can attest that resources intended to prevent interactions with law enforcement fail to reach the entire community effectively.

Accountability for acts of bigotry and a lack of cultural sensitivity must be continuous. Encouraging, training, and practicing peer accountability in real time is essential. As the nation faces turmoil, it is evident that we must unite to navigate these challenging times. The allocation of funds this budget season will have long-lasting effects on our communities.

Reflecting on our city's historical involvement with the slave trade on Wall Street, the Brooklyn shorelines, and the displacement of Seneca Village in Central Park, there is an imperative to restore trust in our leadership. Despite the city's progressive image, racial and ethnic segregation persists across many boroughs. Inclusion frequently remains an afterthought or, at times, an illusion.

In areas such as those surrounding Brooklyn College, there have been instances where certain council members have attempted to intimidate protestors while openly carrying firearms. Bigotry escapes no city agency.

Systemic racism has persisted and continues to significantly impact Black and Brown communities in our city. Without substantial efforts to address these issues, this influence will persist into the future. One potential step forward could be renaming

Rikers Island. Removing the women and youth immediately. With 60% of the population having mental health concerns this is a pandemic. A call for a community overhaul of resources.

The mental distress and triggers associated with Rikers Island are beyond description. Numerous individuals have been affected, and families mourn those who have died while in custody, despite New York not having the death penalty. I know because my ministry Visionary V Ministries often is called to assist the families through their grief and funeral arrangements. Many become lifelong friends, especially after sharing such raw emotions.

Consider the current statistics in our state: every two days, someone dies within our prison system. New York City contributes significantly to the state's prison population. The legacy of Rikers Island continues to echo the grim history of enslavement, as it incarcerates individuals unjustly. This is underscored by the fact that New York ranks third in the nation for wrongful convictions.

The community has also experienced significant mental strain. The distress of being disregarded and marginalized when voicing complaints or seeking justice has become intolerable. The systems in place, which are meant to protect us, fail to do so effectively.

The rates of addiction, homelessness, domestic and intimate partner violence, and femicide have surged significantly. Since 2005-2006, I have been engaged in training professionals on preventing domestic violence. It is noteworthy that law enforcement personnel are consistently among the top three groups identified as perpetrators of domestic violence.

Catch that.

For two decades, that statistic has held steady. Nevertheless, this council persistently seeks to expand the NYPD's budget, arsenal, scope of influence and surveillance, detention capabilities, and escalation tactics.

The 2020 protests following George Floyd's death are often remembered for the significant human and civil rights violations by the NYPD. However, even before these

events, activists had raised concerns about misconduct. In 2014 and 2015, activists reported on Inspector Andrew Lombardo of the Strategic Response Group, a when in service of the 310 Brigade, 800th Battalion. Lombardo, who previously served as a prison guard at Abu Ghraib during the notorious prisoner abuse era, is known for his aggressive behavior. Even after undergoing my emergency brain surgery, I vividly recall his imposing presence and actions. He was present on the night officers wore "I Can Breathe" shirts, taunting Erica Garner. I know this because I stood beside her.

Numerous advocates have highlighted instances of authority misuse, excessive force, and arbitrary arrests, drawing parallels to the treatment of prisoners of war.
On domestic soil, citizens deserve respect and dignity from law enforcement officers. With a personal connection to the military through my mother, who rests in a military cemetery, I insist that equity should not remain an illusion for Black communities. It is crucial to specifically address Black issues, as they often differ in outcomes within broader discussions about people of color. Law enforcement officers who misuse their power should no longer receive protection or rewards from this city or state. Despite claims of progressivism, there is a notable increase in funding for correctional facilities and law enforcement. Meanwhile, oversight boards grapple with inadequate budgets and minimal staffing. Allowing agencies to self-police results in a lack of accountability, leading to a situation where lawlessness by those meant to uphold the law becomes commonplace, threatening the very fabric of democracy.

As the years pass, history often seems to repeat itself. An examination of the period surrounding Lombardo's reported misconduct in 2014-2015, when compared to 2020, reveals a troubling consistency: only the names have changed, leaving his ties to the department intact. A pervasive culture of violence, deceit, and corruption appears to be deeply ingrained within the city's elite and its law enforcement agencies.

The budgets for the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) and the Board of Correction (BOC) must be increased to align with their anticipated responsibilities. The recent cuts to the BOC should be reversed, and their oversight capacity expanded. They require twice the staff allocated by the executive budget. It is imperative to address this now. How can the budget for the correction agency increase without a corresponding rise for its oversight? For too long, strategies reminiscent of past administrations have dominated New York's governance. It is time to prioritize funding where it is most needed.

Alternative to incarceration (ATI) and reentry programs are closely linked and should be expanded and well-funded.

When a community member is detained, the impact often ripples through the lives of many others. Currently, approximately 75% of women entering New York City's Department of Correction serve as primary caregivers. Alarmingly, one-quarter of these women are survivors of sexual assault and continue to face harrowing experiences of abuse within correctional facilities.

For the past 14.5 years, as co-founder of the Jails Action Coalition (JAC), I have consistently highlighted these issues and more. If the Department of Correction were held accountable more frequently, the city's financial liabilities for such abuses would likely exceed the $123 million paid out last year. It is imperative that we confront these truths with open eyes and set aside personal pride, so that New York City can begin to heal from the trauma inflicted by its correctional system, or criminal legal system as a whole.

As the founder and CEO of Visionary V Ministries, I have provided private clergy sessions, healing modalities, and support for funerals, grief, and loss to detainees, community members, and uniformed staff. Building a community requires a mindset and actions focused on the well-being and healing of all its members. Investing in humanity and demonstrating this through examples is essential. While change does not happen overnight, it is impossible without hearing the voices of the community, providing adequate funding and lifelong commitments.

BeHeard must transition from being a mere illusion of mental health crisis response to becoming an effective solution. How many more years must I question why emergency rooms in our city remain open while crisis response teams do not? New Yorkers should not accept this disparity. Incarceration is not the answer to mental illness, as 68% of those with mental health concerns do not receive adequate treatment while detained. The solution lies in community-based treatment; New York City needs treatment, not jail.

Currently, individuals on Rikers Island are awaiting transfers to state facilities, despite being deemed unfit for a correctional environment. Why place them there? The entire

system requires immediate reform. We can achieve this promptly, but resources must be made available.

Respite centers serve as essential frontline responses to mental health crises within our communities, offering individuals the ability to maintain control over their treatment. The importance of their bed availability, funding, and expansion across boroughs cannot be overstated. These centers provide real-life alternatives by offering voluntary, short-term, peer-run spaces designed to de-escalate psychiatric emergencies.

In accordance with New York City Local Law 118 of 2023, the city is mandated to establish four new crisis respite centers. These centers offer safe, community-based, and peer-run alternatives to hospital emergency rooms for those experiencing psychiatric crises. As of June 2026, we must acknowledge the areas where progress is still needed. This situation is reminiscent of the DOC Bellevue therapeutic unit, which was slated to open in 2019 but only became operational in 2026 after years of advocacy and waiting. It is imperative to open the four respite centers without delay. We must not continue to overlook cries for help that result in suffering. Addressing mental health crises should be approached with the same urgency and expertise as responding to car accidents or a mother in childbirth.

It is our responsibility to serve all constituents, which includes ensuring that the Public Advocates Office budget is balanced and meets the needs of all New Yorkers. And why are we reducing the Human Rights budget at a time where discrimination is at an all time high? Who do you serve?

Turning my attention to housing, specifically the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), a notable remark was made during a law breakfast in August 2023 by Eric Adams. It was stated that some of the city's most sick residents live within NYCHA properties. This comment struck a personal chord, as I entered NYCHA as a young, healthy woman and new mother. A DV survivor who left her own private home for a place of refuge.

However, my health rapidly deteriorated due to frequent basement backups flooding my unit with raw sewage. Many evenings, after returning home from school with my toddler, I had to send him to the babysitter so I could clean up sewage, tampons, and

cigarettes from unknown sources. NYCHA's response was often delayed, typically arriving a day or two later, and lacking proper hazmat cleanup. Consequently, I developed an autoimmune disease. Following Hurricanes Irene and Sandy, I became known as the "flood lady", when it began to rain through my ceiling.

The mold in that unit and the adjacent one contributed to the growth of my tumors, which were surgically removed from my foot, stomach, head, and throat. Over the past 18 years, I have undergone life-saving surgeries due to environmental injustices linked to NYCHA'S environmental injustices, all on my dime, and professional time off.

Legal action is constrained by a 90-day filing deadline, raising questions about accountability. Despite signing petitions for years regarding a gas leak, our concerns were ignored for over six years until construction was halted to replace a gas line. This led to the replacement of the gas line in my unit and the line, and it was only then that I finally received a working stove after more than seven years of complaints. The gas company was unable to approve the gas connection without a working stove to conduct necessary tests.

For years, my doctor completed medical accommodation forms on my behalf due to ongoing conditions and inconsistent elevator service. Too often, I have been compelled to cross the roof just to enter my home, or when access is impossible, resort to sleeping in my car. Imagine bitter cold nights in winter, afraid to leave the car running for long because you don't want to die from carbon monoxide. Or sweating throughout a blistering hot night because you live on a fixed income and can't afford extra gas.

Imagine returning after a day of community building, navigating the halls of Rikers, engaging in crisis response chaplaincy, or volunteering as a doula—all demanding both cognitively and physically—imagine returning home only to find entry barred. Or supposed to be emceeing a press conference only to be trapped for hours in an elevator, happened twice to me. Imagine being forced to buy water for years because yours came out brown after they started work on the roof during the pandemic. Forced to buy water for you, your child, and service dog. Water to cook, drink, bathe, brush your teeth, not a third world county but here in NYC.

Moreover, years without adequate heating have led to a bleeding disorder, affecting my iron levels, energy, heart rate, and mobility—all by the age of 35. The health of New Yorkers is undeniably affected by negligent landlords. Though I am not reliant on the system, perhaps I should be, as it owes me.
Who else is deserving of true justice? How many have suffered in silence? My son lived with a hole in his wall for over nine years, exposing him to lead and other hazards. This occurred after the unit with the sewage floods. When I documented this issue on my new lease agreement, I was instructed to sign a blank form or risk my paperwork not being processed. Upon my refusal and attempt to take a picture of the form, the authorities were called. Despite making no threats or using any offensive language, my safety was not prioritized when the police were called. It was clearly harassment and a form of intimidation by NYCHA management.

The years of neglect and subsequent cover-up by the NYCHA system are deeply troubling. Numerous tenants have endured hardships, with some even losing their lives, yet we remain unrecognized as victims.

The policy limiting abatement to a six-year window is harsh, particularly for individuals like myself who now endure chronic, lifelong invisible disabilities, largely due to years of lease violations by NYCHA that require lifelong care. Who do we turn to? Many watch dogs in place are in fact working with nycha not the tenants. And who fills the loophole of those who are in the process of the trust? The lead division, ombudsman, etc all can’t help once the trust gets involved. So who helps in real time?

The management office once made a jest, likening me to a cat with nine lives, suggesting that despite everything, I simply won't succumb. There is nothing humorous about the struggles of being a single parent clawing back from the pits of hell. Relearning how to talk and walk, fighting to appear normal while discovering the new differently abled you.

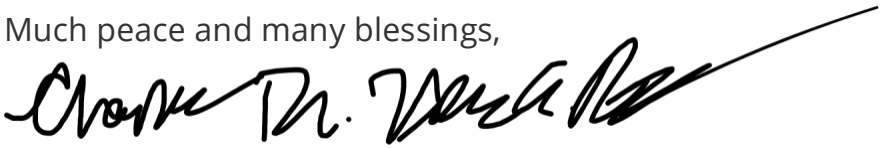
Navigating the city amidst cognitive disabilities, traffic and congestion pricing tolls, lacking a white handicap placard after years of submitting medical documentation, facing mounting medical bills that thwart homeownership, and suffering damaged credit, all while bearing the stigma of disability, is no laughing matter. Moreover, New York City's treatment of the disabled, especially concerning MTA accessibility, is deeply disrespectful.

The mayor recently shared a video on social media providing tourists with guidance on navigating the city and recommending attractions. However, the video has sparked criticism within the differently abled, for not addressing the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities or those with limited financial means. Critics argue that the video overlooks the difficulties of standing, running for trains, climbing stairs, and walking long platforms, particularly for those who may struggle physically or financially. Some of us can't afford to just jump into a cab.

New York City's leadership appears to prioritize the needs of able-bodied individuals, as reflected in their proposals for NYCHA. Instead of addressing long-standing issues faced by tenants, there is a push towards privatization, which could further alienate residents from their rights. Despite dedicating over 20 years to advocating for New Yorkers, the pursuit of justice remains elusive to me.

It is essential that financial strategies are logical when implemented. Furthermore, I assert that the work of my ministry can compete with any Community based organization in terms of my expertise within this city. However, it is predominantly nonprofits that receive recognition and compensated opportunities for collaboration. This inequity must be addressed as well. Credit should be given where it is due, and grassroots efforts deserve respect. At a time where whitewashing history is quickly returning to its norm, we must lead by example.

Much peace and many blessings,



Chaplain Dr, Victoria A. Phillips – Dr. V

From: Charlie Todd
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] I support daylighting in the budget!
Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 6:13:58 PM



Hi!

I'm submitting testimony on the city budget. I would like to see $15 million for hardened daylighting around New York City!

I live in Hell's Kitchen and walk everywhere with my young sons. Daylighting would help our family navigate our busy streets more safely! I'd love for cars to be able to see my kids at every intersection. Thanks!

Charles Todd

Charlie Dibe

Written Testimony to Committee on Finance

Subject: Reallocate investment into Section 9, say no to RAD/PACT.

As a longtime tenant rights and housing justice activist, I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all!

The Committee on Finance should carefully examine whether this budget represents responsible stewardship of public resources. We believe it does not. Public housing is one of New York City's largest public assets, and a responsible financial strategy would strengthen that asset. Instead, this budget spends public dollars in ways that gradually diminish public ownership, public accountability, and public control.

The Mayor's budget allocates hundreds of millions of dollars toward privatization strategies while continuing a pattern of underinvestment in Section 9 public housing. This approach asks taxpayers to fund the rehabilitation of public assets while simultaneously transferring management authority, development rights, long-term leaseholds, and future revenue opportunities to private entities. If taxpayers are funding the rehabilitation of public housing, why should only developments slated for privatization receive priority access to those resources?

Section 9 residents are consumers of a public service funded by taxpayers. They should not be required to surrender public ownership, public accountability, or public governance in order to receive the repairs and investments their developments need. Public dollars should be allocated according to objective measures of physical need, not conditioned upon participation in privatization programs. The current budget framework creates a two-tiered system in which developments selected for privatization receive substantial investments while traditional Section 9 developments continue to wait for basic repairs.

A privatization strategy is only fiscally successful if it lowers costs, preserves public value, and improves outcomes. PACT does none of these. It costs taxpayers more, transfers public authority to private entities, and leaves future generations with fewer policy options and less public control over publicly funded assets. From a fiscal perspective, PACT is a poor investment. Taxpayers fund the repairs, taxpayers fund the subsidies, taxpayers fund the oversight, yet taxpayers receive less public control in return. That is not a sound return on public investment.

The Committee should also examine whether privatization is delivering the outcomes promised to both tenants and taxpayers. Supporters of PACT have argued that privatization would improve conditions, reduce administrative burdens, and create efficiencies. Yet concerns raised by tenants and findings identified by the Comptroller regarding eviction practices in PACT developments raise important questions about whether these programs are producing the public benefits that justify their costs. If taxpayers are paying more while tenants face increased housing instability and diminished public accountability, the financial assumptions underlying privatization deserve renewed scrutiny.

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society independently reviewed NYCHA's Physical Needs Assessment and found that much of the reported growth in capital needs stems from inflation and market conditions rather than dramatic deterioration of the housing stock itself. Based on this analysis, NYCHA's need is approximately $41.4 billion over twenty years, or roughly $2.07 billion annually. This is a significant challenge, but it is not an impossible one. Strategic investments by the city, state, and federal governments can preserve and modernize Section 9 without surrendering public assets.

We urge the Committee on Finance to shift the City's housing strategy away from privatization and toward comprehensive modernization of Section 9 public housing. We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice. Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve

public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

June 10, 2026

Dear Mayor Mamadani and the New York City Finance Committee,
Please consider funding the NYC Parks substantially enough so that we can have the necessary funding to operate our New York City park system. The Adams Administration cut funds so severely that it cut hundreds of essential staff positions and programs that were meant to keep our parks and urban forests safe, clean and well maintained.

New York City parkland is precious and sacred. It helps this city thrive, and gives residents and tourists necessary respite from the noise, chaos and pollution of the city. It helps with climate change by cooling the city from the trees that have grown because of the dedicated time put into the forests by staff and volunteers with long term land management practices.

As a dedicated volunteer with the Van Cortlandt Park Alliance since 2020, I can say that it takes thousands and thousands of hours on an ongoing basis to maintain, preserve and restore the forested areas in New York City due to the increase of invasive species, weather events and human carelessness. We have a small army of staff and volunteers that simply is not sufficient to keep up with nature's ongoing changes.

We need funding that will secure permanent jobs of trained forest management staff that can handle land management over a long arc of time. It is not sufficient to hire untrained seasonals to do the necessary work and to count on volunteers to pick up the slack. We need continuity and longevity in our staff. We are stretched thin. As stewards, we feel a responsibility to see that this land is cared for properly. We love and know the land deeply. Not knowing from season to season whether there will be funding for staff and programs makes it impossible to plan long term, something essential for best land management practices.

Established organizations in the city have the stats to show the difference an increase in funding will make in the long term benefits for residents, tourism, the economy, pollution and climate change. I urge you to increase NYC Parks funding so that we can do the essential long term projects that will benefit all for generations to come.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Best regards,

Chris Chalfant
Volunteer
Van Cortlandt Park Alliance
NYC Parks Super Steward
[redacted]
Yonkers, NY 10704
[redacted]

Support for the NYC Council's Commitment to Fund the construction of a new building for The Baccalaureate School for Global Education

June 8th, 2026

Good morning, Chairperson and members of the Council.

My name is Chris Tirado, and I am the proud parent of an 11th grade student at The Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE).

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

I am here to ask that the city continue to honor its commitment to building a new home for BSGE. The school is already included in the School Construction Authority's Five-Year Capital Plan, and I hope that commitment remains in place as decisions are made about the future of Long Island City.

I also want to express my support for the other schools included in the OneLIC plan that still need funding and investment. This should not be about schools competing against one another. Every child deserves access to a great public school, and every school community deserves the resources it needs to succeed.

As Long Island City continues to grow, our investment in schools must grow as well. Families are choosing to make this neighborhood their home, and they need to know that there will be strong schools available for their children at every stage of their education.

The elementary and middle schools being discussed as part of the OneLIC plan are important for all of us. Many of those students may one day attend BSGE. Strong elementary schools help create strong middle schools. Strong middle schools help create strong high schools. When we invest in students, we build stronger communities for everyone.

As a parent, I know how important stability is. Students and families deserve confidence that promises already made will continue moving forward. Protecting the funding for BSGE while also investing in other schools is not an either-or choice. Our children deserve both.

BSGE is proud to be part of the Long Island City community. We support not only our own students, but also the future students who will come through the schools being planned and funded today.

I urge the Council to protect the funding already designated for BSGE and continue investing in the schools that will serve families across Long Island City for years to come.

Thank you.

Chris Tirado

BSGE Parent

6/8/26

My name is Christian Chan. I am a senior at Townsend Harris High School that is about to graduate. I live in Ozone Park, an area that would benefit from QueensLink being built. My commute has always been a slog for the last four years, getting to and from school which was taking the Q64 and backtracking on the E train to transfer to the J train at Sutphin Boulevard and then getting onto a crowded Q52/Q53 SBS bus and vice versa. QueensLink would have been a time saver for me which would have allowed more time for me to study and allotted more leisure time instead of it being wasted sitting in traffic on Woodhaven Boulevard. When last year's election for the mayoralty resulted in the victory of Zohran Mamdani, a known QueensLink supporter, I was elated during the months after his election.

That was until I discovered in March of this year that the Queensway funding done by his predecessor, Eric Adams, three years ago was in Mayor Mamdani's proposed budget. I assumed it was a fluke at first until last week, when the mayor appeared on a talk show hosted by Brian Lehrer, a caller questioned why his budget kept Queensway funded despite him being an ardent QueensLink supporter for years. I was disappointed in his response because I thought he knew better than this. Queensway is a transit obstructionist project with no provisions for

rail and they know that a park is very politically unfeasible to alter which will forever make the right of way that QueensLink will use to never be able to run trains on it again. They even maliciously said on their website that Queens does not need more trains when clearly we do. Furthermore, his response stated that Queensway does not preclude rail activation, when it clearly does. When you see their concept art on their website, there are no such provisions for rail.

I believe Mayor Mamdani is doing this move to do an easy PR victory and a ribbon cutting ceremony that would still be in his term so we must hold him accountable. Even when he says he wants provisions for rail, we must look at Atlanta's Belt Line. It is like QueensLink, except they built the park first and when they finally wanted to build the light rail, opposition sprung up because people did not want the park to be altered even as provisions for the light rail were there showing how politically unfeasible it is to alter a park. This teaches that we must build both parks and rail at the same time, or build the rail first, then the park. So I urge you all to oppose the budget the mayor has proposed and significantly revise it on the line item referring to Queensway. Defund the Queensway and reallocate said funds to the QueensLink. Queensway is not a popular project in the neighborhoods it affects according to a poll by State Senator Joseph Addabo while QueensLink is. This legislative body has supported QueensLink before through

Resolution 59 last year in a bipartisan effort. Continue your support and oppose the mayor's budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Christina Dietz, and I am a staff member of The Guild for Exceptional Children's 4410 Preschool Special Education program.

4410 preschool special education programs have existed for decades serving NYC's students with disabilities. Our highly trained school staff includes special education teachers, speech pathologists, occupational and physical therapists which work with students with complex educational needs. Placements for preschoolers with special needs requires the thoughtful development of individualized educational plans. Without qualified special education staff, the promise of early intervention for NYC's most vulnerable students will fall short. Salary parity needs to be addressed for 4410 programs to continue to provide services to students with special needs.

I urge the City Council to ensure 4410 programs are fully and equitably incorporated into plans and budgets for universal childcare.

To: New York City Council Members

Subject: Urgent Call to Prioritize Funding to Expand School Capacity in Long Island City

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident, parent, and President of the Court Square Civic Association to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

LIC has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, Kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, and yet most area schools are already operating over capacity: P.S. 112 at **130%**, and P.S./I.S. 78 at **111%**. What is more, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City — Court Square — still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message to families is clear: you may not be guaranteed a school seat in your neighborhood.

I would also like to express urgent concern about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed school project. In a neighborhood where families are struggling today to secure local school placements, this project, along with other promised school construction projects in LIC, cannot continue to fall behind competing priorities. While I appreciate the creation of an incubation site for Q508 (Q439Q), a temporary solution cannot become a justification for continued delays to the permanent facility. Families were promised a permanent neighborhood school, with the full facilities and long-term stability that a dedicated school building provides. An incubation site may help relieve short-term pressure, but it does not address the broader and growing need for permanent school infrastructure in LIC.

Additionally, the current lease for the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE, Q580) is set to expire in just three years. Families have been assured that the school would be relocated so that it can continue serving students without disruption. It is critical that the City follow through on this commitment and move urgently to secure a permanent home for the school. Allowing delays to continue would create significant uncertainty for students and families and risks the loss of an important educational institution in a neighborhood already facing a severe shortage of school seats. The City must prioritize funding and planning for BSGE's relocation now to ensure continuity and stability for the community.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has also recognized the need for additional schools to support the neighborhood's rapid growth. Specifically, commitments were made to advance development of schools at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard, 4-99 44th Drive, and 5-46 46th Avenue. As more housing is developed through OneLIC, school construction must move in parallel — not years behind residential growth. Without firm commitments and accountability around these promised schools, the existing seat crisis will only intensify.

Delays to the opening of these schools are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and more families pushed out of the neighborhood because they cannot rely on access to local public schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency, accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508 and other promised schools on schedule. Schools aren't just a service—they're the foundation of a stable, thriving neighborhood.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long fIsland City's future. Please ensure that timely funding is delivered to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority for the completion of these projects.

Sincerely,
Christina Kaul
Long Island City, 11101
President, Court Square Civic Association; Parent; Community Member

From: Christina Lin
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Bring Back Manhattan Youth to Baruch Middle School
Date: Thursday, June 11, 2026 12:11:59 PM

[redacted]

Dear DYCD Leadership,

I am writing to urge DYCD to continue and protect funding for Manhattan Youth programs.

As a working parent, I know firsthand how important these programs are for New York City families.

Programs like Manhattan Youth are essential for working parents who rely on high-quality after-school programming to ensure their children are safe, engaged, and supported during the critical hours after school ends. For many families, these programs make it possible to maintain employment while knowing their children are receiving meaningful educational and social experiences.

The testimony presented at recent budget hearings reflects what many parents already know: youth development programs are not optional extras. They are a vital part of the support system that helps children thrive and helps families remain economically stable.

Reducing or eliminating funding for Manhattan Youth would have real consequences for students and parents across the city. The investment DYCD makes in these programs pays dividends through stronger academic outcomes, social-emotional growth, community engagement, and support for working families.

I respectfully ask DYCD to continue defending and funding Manhattan Youth programs so that future generations of New York City children can benefit from the same opportunities that helped my son grow and succeed.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to New York City's youth and families.

Kind regards,
Christina

Dear Members of the Finance Committee,

Please think of the poorest New Yorkers as well as the very rich. Yes, a park with running and walking paths would be beautiful – we do need green spaces for health, community, and connection to nature. We also need an easy affordable way for New Yorkers to travel through Queens. Please support QueensLInk so that we can enjoy both!

Sincerely,

Dr. Christina Matone

From: Mary Simmy
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Saturday, June 13, 2026 6:53:52 PM

[redacted]

"I oppose Zohran's budget and proposal for NYCHA. I want all monies for Section 9 Public Housing Comprehensive Modernization. I want it executed based on physical needs!"
Be for the people
Christine Burke

Christine Henson
Email: [redacted]
Testimony for City Council Committee on Finance
June 10, 2026

My name is Christine Henson. I am the mother of Andrew Henson, who is affected by autism and limited speech abilities. When he was 16, Andrew was assaulted by the NYPD.

It is disappointing that Mayor Mamdani's executive budget invests approximately $12B in the NYPD, increases the officer headcount by 580, and increases funding to the failed B-HEARD program while failing to make real investments in services New Yorkers need.

In 2018, I requested a speech evaluation at Andrew's school, and the principal referred us to BronxCare. The principal told me there would be transportation, but I wasn't told it would be an ambulance. When we got outside, the street was blocked off and filled with police. There were officers from two different precincts and, surprisingly, they followed us to BronxCare.

When we arrived at BronxCare, Andrew pointed to a store. When we started to walk, the EMT grabbed Andrew's arm and said "You are not going anywhere". I told him we came voluntarily. Within seconds, multiple NYPD officers rushed over, grabbing Andrew's arms and forcing them behind his neck. His neck was choked and twisted. His body went limp. Then he was forced into the waiting area, where his face was pressed down into a seat. His arm was bent aggressively and his screams were disregarded. He cried out, "Mom!", and I said "he has special needs" but I was ignored. Police don't need to respond to mental health and health calls, especially for people with Autism.

My son was just hungry. He was in no way a threat. But instead of being treated with care, the NYPD, EMTs, and hospital security violently escalated against him. Andrew has regressed and his independence has been altered because of the police. They destroyed a part of his life.

The NYPD should not be responding to people with developmental or mental health concerns AT ALL. Until our city moves away from criminalization and meaningfully invests in trauma-informed, evidence-based services for people like Andrew, the most vulnerable New Yorkers will continue to be endangered by NYPD violence.

Mayor Zohran Mamdani promised to move away from the city's historically harmful police-first approach to responding to people with developmental, mental health and substance use needs, and he said the Office of Community Safety is going to help do this. However, based on the Executive Order that created it, OCS is not doing anything to reduce police involvement or increase services for the people it is supposedly supposed to serve.

The emphasis on expanding and increasing funding for the failed B-HEARD pilot program is extremely worrying. B-HEARD fails to follow best practices for crisis response, over-relies on traumatizing involuntary hospitalizations, and manages only a small fraction of mental health calls. Just last week, NYPD Commissioner Tisch testified that B-HEARD responded to less than 8% of potentially eligible calls – leaving the vast majority of New Yorkers in need of care with only police responses. Expanding B-HEARD risks further entrenching NYPD in mental health response rather than removing them.

On top of this, the mayor's executive budget pours approximately $12 billion dollars into the NYPD, (including its expense budget, debt services, benefits and pensions) and funds 580 new officers - even though, on the campaign trail Mamdani promised to keep officer headcount flat. At the same time, outside of B-HEARD, he proposes to make almost no new investments in mental health services. In other words, his executive budget follows the same old trends that we saw with Eric Adams.

If the City Council truly cares about New Yorkers' safety, dignity and health, you will pass a City budget that cuts Mamdani's proposed 580 new officers, implements a hiring freeze for school police, eliminates funding for vacant school police positions, further reduces the NYPD's bloated budget, and eliminates funding increases to B-HEARD so that resources can be channeled into services that actually increase safety and well-being for New Yorkers who need care. Some of these services include:

1. **At least $66.3M, baselined, for Intensive Mobile Treatment (IMT) teams** – $22M more than the Executive Budget allocates, which should allow the program to expand sufficiently to eliminate the current waitlist.[1]
2. **At least $23.8M, baselined, for Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)** – $4.5M more than the Executive Budget allocates.[2]
3. **At least $6M, baselined, for Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT)** – $2M more than the Executive Budget allocates), which provide both mental health and reentry services to people returning from jail and prison.[3]
4. **At least $8.8M, baselined, for crisis respite centers** – $6M more than the Executive Budget allocates, which should enable the opening of four new centers, in compliance with Local Law 118-2023.[4]
5. **$20.3M**[5] to establish at least 150 units of low-barrier housing for people with court-involvement and mental health diagnoses.[6]
6. **At least $12M, baselined, for Restorative Justice that is funded by City dollars**. $6M of this funding was baselined in the FY26 budget. The remaining $6M expires in June. NYC Public Schools must be safe, welcoming spaces where young people can grow, learn, resolve conflict and navigate challenges.[7]

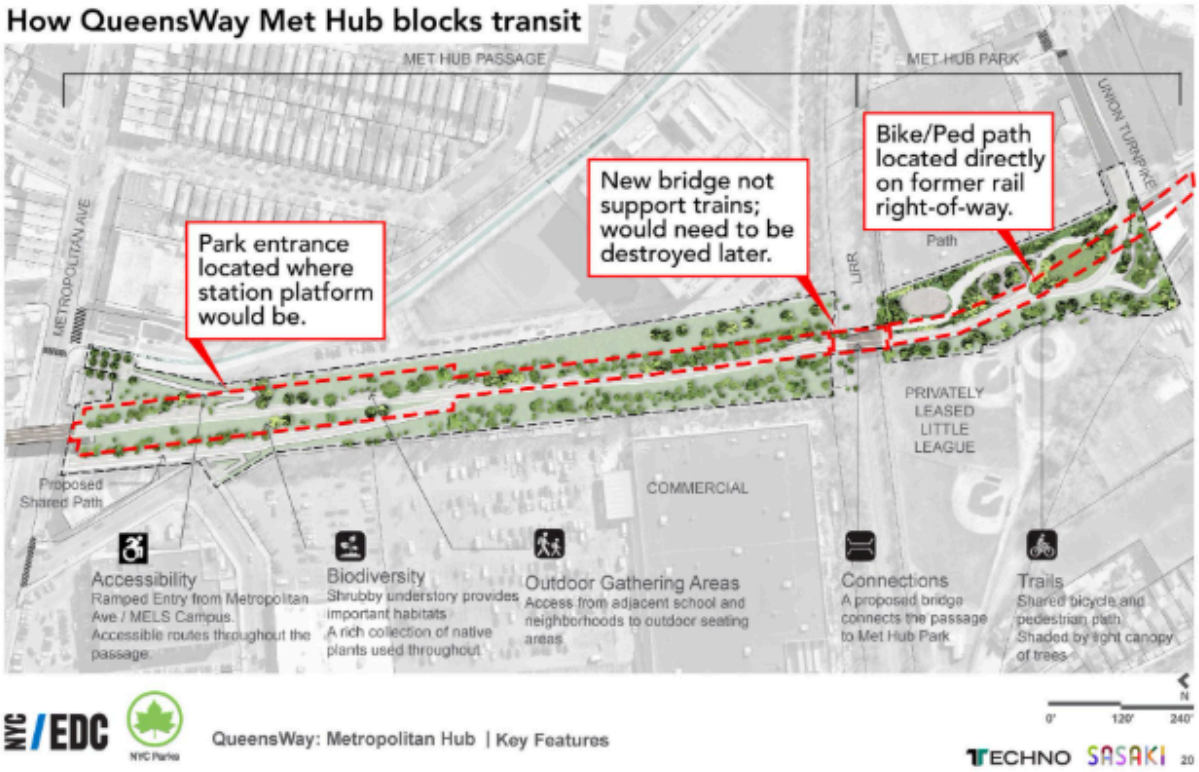
Thank you for your attention. We would like to see our concerns considered and implemented.

---

[1]Per DOHMH testimony, the waitlist was 575 people as of February 27, 2026. Each new IMT team can serve 27 people.
[2]The combined waitlist for all ACT teams, including FACT, was 312 people as of February 27, 2026, per DOHMH testimony. The City should also work with the state to eliminate the waitlist for all ACT teams.
[3]For FACT teams, the City adds approximately $675,000 per ACT team to supplement state funding by adding reentry specialists.
[4] The FY2026 budget for crisis respite centers was $5.3M, but only $2.8M in the FY2027 Preliminary Budget, as reported by DOHMH.
[5] Approximately $135,000 per unit, based on similar Safe Haven models.
[6] Budget demands 1-5 obtained from Freedom Agenda, with permission to uplift and share.
[7] Via the Police-Free Schools Coalition and Make the Road NY.

Our voiceless animal friends need us.
More than half of New Yorkers cannot afford a basic veterinary visit. No New Yorker should have to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their pet. Funding pet food pantries and low-cost veterinary services keeps animals where they belong: at home with the people who love them. As cost barriers are removed, adoptions will increase and preventable euthanasia will decrease. Reduces pressure on NYC's animal shelters and rescue organizations. Reduces burnout on employees and volunteers. Fewer cats will suffer outdoors.

I would like to go forward with this QueensLink/QueensWay situation. I would like to say: Do not build the QueensWay. The QueensWay is a park-only project that does not include rail, and this park was designed to block transit. Below are two images showing the evidence.



The QueensWay does not preclude rail. If the government chooses in the future to fund and implement a rail, they will always have that right. Discontinuing the current work on the QueensWay would only result in the loss of a chance to do something incredible for our neighborhood now.

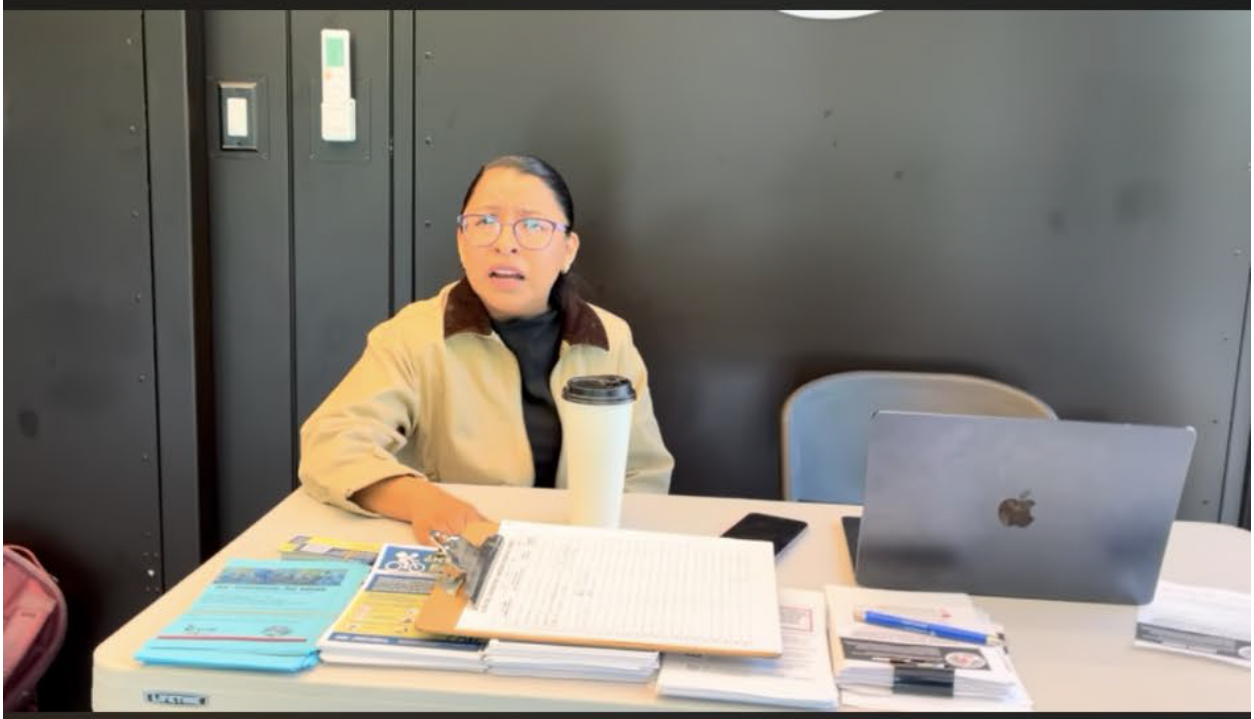
Instead, QueensLink would give equity to Queens, help transit deserts, slash travel times, and take cars off the road. It is both rails and trails, meaning both the subway and/or walking and biking can be utilized. QueensLink also aligns with one of your ideas: To improve public transit. QueensLink is a win for New Yorkers, especially those

living in Queens. Therefore I am asking for QueensWay to be removed from the budget, and that QueensLink be added to the budget. Thank you for reading.

Christopher Leon Johnson
[redacted]
6/13/26

as I said at the budget hearing for FY27 executive hearing. I suggest that the workers justice project recieve $2000 so they can get a more professional table for their deliverista hub outside nyc city hall. The table they got in their deliverista hub outside city hall is abysmal. It looks like a 20 dollar table they got from the lot less not that far on broadway and Reade street up the block from city hall. Below is a photo of their table that they have inside the deliverista hub. Thank you.

Example of the Workers Justice Project current table they have inside their deliverista hub as of 6/13/26







A proper examples of the table they shoud have inside their hub for professionalism.







60-inch Aurora Square Conference Table in 1/2-inch black traceless engineered surface top, black traceless tambour base, and black MX3 power box.

Aurora Square Conference Table With X2 Base

Production Time: 3 Weeks

3:56 5G 79

wayfair

Find anything home...

HOT SUMMER SALE PRESENTED BY AFTERPAY →

Compare Similar Items

4+ Star Reviews | Best Sellers | On Sale



$419.99



$370.99 ~~$401.99~~



$599.9

~~$770.00~~



Nea Desk Shell, 48 Inch Office Top,...

By Benjara

Color: Mocha Brown | Size: 29.5" H x 48" W x 24" D

3:55 5G 79

Secretlab MAGNUS Evo

Sit-to-Stand Desk with Magnetic Ecosystem

From $699

EXPLORE FEATURES



Shop via **860-812-1111** or **chat**

Ships in 3 to 7 days

Ailyn Black 55" Adjustable Height Desk

75 people added this item to their cart

★★★★★ 1



Thank you. I hope that the council takes this into conversaton.

Sincerely
Christopher Leon Johnson.

6/13/26

Subject: Urgent Call to Prioritize Funding to Expand School Capacity in Long Island City

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident and parent to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

LIC has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, Kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, and yet most area schools are already operating over capacity: P.S. 112 at **130%**, and P.S./I.S. 78 at **111%**. What is more, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City — Court Square — still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message to families is clear: you may not be guaranteed a school seat in your neighborhood.

I would also like to express urgent concern about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed school project. In a neighborhood where families are struggling today to secure local school placements, this project, along with other promised school construction projects in LIC, cannot continue to fall behind competing priorities. While I appreciate the creation of an incubation site for Q508 (Q439Q), a temporary solution cannot become a justification for continued delays to the permanent facility. Families were promised a permanent neighborhood school, with the full facilities and long-term stability that a dedicated school building provides. An incubation site may help relieve short-term pressure, but it does not address the broader and growing need for permanent school infrastructure in LIC.

Additionally, the current lease for the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE, Q580) is set to expire in just three years. Families have been assured that the school would be relocated so that it can continue serving students without disruption. We are appreciative that the budget includes funding for BSGE. However, we want to emphasize that it is critical that the City follow through on this commitment and move urgently to secure a permanent home for the school. Allowing delays to continue would create significant uncertainty for students and families and risks the loss of an important educational institution in a neighborhood already facing a severe shortage of school seats. The City must prioritize funding and planning for BSGE's relocation now to ensure continuity and stability for the community.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has also recognized the need for additional schools to support the neighborhood's rapid growth. Specifically, commitments were made to advance development of a school at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard. Creation of two additional schools has also been promised to create 1,300 more seats in conjunction with the planned construction of over 14,000 residential units. As more housing is developed through OneLIC, school construction must move in parallel — not years behind residential growth. Without firm

commitments and accountability around these promised schools, the existing seat crisis will only intensify.

Delays to the opening of these schools are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and more families pushed out of the neighborhood because they cannot rely on access to local public schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency, accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508 and other promised schools on schedule. Schools aren't just a service—they're the foundation of a stable, thriving neighborhood.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future. Please ensure that timely funding is delivered to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority for the completion of these projects.

Sincerely,
Christopher Lo
11101, Court Square
Parent

To whom it may concern:

I am writing today in reference to the Fiscal Year 2027 Executive Budget, and specifically my strong opposition to allocating $43 million in funding to the Queensway park project.

I currently live in Hell's Kitchen in Manhattan, and grew up in Far Rockaway, Queens, where my family is still based. I commuted from Far Rockaway to CUNY City College for two years for graduate school. The subway in Southeast Queens is an economic lifeline for those, like me when I was a student, who can't swing the extremely high fares of the LIRR or have no other transit options. The Queenslink project would greatly improve transit times and options for my family and myself. The Queensway project completely destroys the once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape transit in Queens, all for an overpriced park.

The Queenslink project, which will also include parks amenities, is far more deserving of limited public funding, and much like the Interborough Express project, would reactivate existing rail infrastructure to alleviate transit deserts, take tens of thousands of cars off the road, improve air quality, and add parkland. I strongly urge the City Council to reallocate the funding from Queensway to Queenslink, preserving this important right of way for transit in a fast growing and underserved part of the city. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Christopher Vacchio
[redacted]
New York, NY 10019

From: Cindy Geyer
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Manhattan youth remains our after school vendor (MS 167 WAGNER)
Date: Monday, May 25, 2026 2:29:56 PM

[redacted]

The manhattan youth programs and staff at MS 167 Robert Wagner are exceptional. The staff are caring and know the kids and families at a level which only happens through years of working hand in hand with the school and families. Please consider keeping them at our school. Thank you for listening.

Cindy Geyer
6th grade parent

Civics United for Railroad Environmental Solutions CURES

DSNY disclosed at the budget hearing on 3-16-26 that its export budget is increasing by $100M, from $500M to $600M, and that was before the energy cost impacts of the Gulf war. Commissioner Greg Anderson has stated that high export costs reflect the fact that DSNY "does waste-by-rail-export right." I am submitting this public comment on the budget for Civics United for Railroad Environmental Solutions, to respectfully bring forward the fact that DSNY's waste-export-by-rail vendorship is currently cutting corners, not "doing it right," and to request some changes to increase the value received for the hundreds of millions that are being spent.

First, capture and composting rates for organics are extremely low, with most organics still winding up in black bag trash exported by rail to landfills and incinerators, with many resulting deleterious impacts on communities within the city and in receiving communities, and only Staten Island's organics actually being composted.

Also, despite the huge export expense, contractual obligations, and a NYS law that mandates containment of waste-by-rail, the vendors DSNY is contracting with to "do waste-by-rail-export right" are cutting corners, and there is a lack of enforcement by DSNY and the LIRR. Where waste-by-rail is stored and hauled in NYC and beyond, this results in foul odors, rats, and pollution from rail cars and locomotives.

At a previous hearing, Hon. Justin Sanchez, Chair of the NYC Council Sanitation and Solid Waste Committee spoke about this problem in his Bronx neighborhood, and DSNY said they would look into dwell times. However, since that hearing CURES has received reports from Fresh Pond Yard and Calamus Circle about stinking rail containers and long dwell times, with the foul stench present 10 blocks away from Calamus Circle and many rat sightings.

Based on the documented stench coming from the railroad right of ways, which NYA has acknowledged (see email thread below), we ask DSNY to:

- Make surprise inspections at the transfer stations, along the tracks, and in the railyards where waste is loaded, stored, hauled, and handed off daily among these vendors to see if the rail containers meet DSNY contractual and New York Consolidated Laws, Environmental Conservation Law ENV § 27-0712 standards. MSW cans that are dented, deformed, punctured, rusted, old, or otherwise damaged so that they cannot be sealed and leakproof do not meet these standards, are "defective." NYA also has had a tariff mandating sealed, leakproof containment of MSW. In the past DSNY has taken an active

role in maintaining standards that protect residents, as DSNY's Harry Szarpanski did back in 2010, when waste-by-rail was starting to roll through NYC. Harry also sent enforcement to places where C&D-by-rail originated, including greater Long Island. Under Harry's active leadership WM transitioned from vented containment, to sealed, leakproof containment, and, with NYC EDC's and EPA's support, WM used $1.5M of its own money to procure what is still the only Tier 4 freight locomotive working in NYC. Leaving things up to the vendors isn't working.

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Szarpanski, Harry** <hszarpanski@dsny.nyc.gov>
Date: Thu, Aug 5, 2010 at 5:01 PM
Subject: Railroad and Waste Issues
To: CURES <civicsunited@gmail.com>, Cc: Doherty, John <jdoherty@dsny.nyc.gov>, CB5-Queens <qnscb5@nyc.rr.com>, Dolinar, Sarah <sdolinar@dsny.nyc.gov>

Mary, Anthony and Laura,

I'm glad that Sarah Dolinar of my staff and I were able to come out to Middle Village and witness first hand some of the issues of concern to the people residing along the rail line. Thank you Anthony and Laura, and please thank Joseph Dalfino and his wife for their wonderful hospitality.

Solving the problems faced by the communities is a complicated matter, given that there are multiple private and governmental entities and legal jurisdictions involved. While, in my capacity, there are issues that I can more readily address in an attempt to improve the current situation, I obviously cannot promise that I can make all the problems disappear. Having said that, I feel strongly that the status quo is not acceptable.

I will report to you next week on the on-going discussions that I've been having with Waste Management. I also plan to meet with New York and Atlantic and with CSX to discuss potential steps each of those firms can take.

I look forward to working with you. Please do not hesitate to call or email me if you have specific suggestions.

Harry

Harry Szarpanski
Deputy Commissioner
DSNY Bureau of Long Term Export
44 Beaver Street, New York, NY 10004
Phone: [redacted] **| Fax:** [redacted]

- Direct 311 calls about foul odors from waste-by-rail to DSNY, not NYA. NYA is a company whose corner-cutting ownership and the adverse impacts that result have been a constant, even as their railroad Presidents have changed over the years.

- Support a competitive procurement for LIRR's Transfer Agreement. The LIRR Transfer Agreement with NYA is expiring in 2027 after an initial 20-year term and a 10-year renewal period, during which there have been numerous, ongoing safety, quality of life, health, and environmental problems from NYA's operations, including:
    - In May 2026, CBS News New York reported what they said is a violation of the Transfer Agreement by NYA during a segment entitled "Maspeth residents fed up with piles of garbage along railroad tracks."
      : https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/video/maspeth-residents-fed-up-with-piles-of-garbage-along-railroad-tracks/?intcid=CNM-00-10abd1h&fbclid=IwY2xjawSK3fNleHRuA2FlbQIxMQBzcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjIwMzkxNzg4MjAwODkyAAEec-q8LypPyt3Coo3Mvo_3SAr2hMiVcO3L7MkqK0MiyhyR6trEJXi_d3DKWmc_aem_ae_lHM2V-EBEQiLLA8IYOQ
    - During the nearly three decades NYA's ownership has had the Transfer Agreement, they have taken on multiple roles in waste-by-rail. NYA has been the common carrier operating under the LIRR's freight rail license. At least a third of NYA's annual carloads are waste-by-rail. NYA's ownership has built two waste-by-rail transfer stations (C&D and coal ash) within MTA-LIRR railyards (Blissville and Farmingdale). As a Member of the American Short Line & Regional Railroad Association NYA is a party to Case #: 1:24-cv-00135-RA-VF in the US District Court Southern District of New York. The case seeks to overturn New York Consolidated Laws, Environmental Conservation Law ENV § 27-0712. NYA continues to store and haul toxic and noxious waste-by-rail in ways that do not fulfill the law's mandates. And they want a new LIRR Transfer Agreement?
    - During the term of the current Transfer Agreement Renewal, NYA maintenance of way workers sued, alleging discrimination. Did the MTA ever get to the bottom of this? https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/14/nyregion/railway-workers-lawsuit-discrimination.html
    - NYA's grade crossing collision triggered a Federal Railroad Administration review. The report, which was released after the current Renewal was signed, can be accessed at this link: https://meng.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/meng-evo.house.gov/files/FRA%20Report.pdf NYA's 10-year FRA safety record contains numerous other incidents and accidents. These can be accessed and compared to other railroads in NYA's class at this link: https://data.transportation.gov/stories/s/dsuf-xcni.

Following is a recent email thread with NYA, initiated by a resident whose neighborhood is being adversely impacted by DSNY-WM stinking waste-by-rail cans in Fresh Pond Yard. Note

that she says her calls to NYA's "Hotline" have been ignored, and that NYA took 9 days to make their excuses.

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **CURES** <civicsunited@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, May 27, 2026 at 9:49 PM
Subject: CURES: New Violation! Trash trains in Glendale - rancid odor in residential area and city park
To: Garcia, Hector <hgarcia@lirr.org>, Marlon Taylor <mtaylor@anacostia.com>

Hector, Glad the strike is settled. We are looping back around here because we never heard from you yet about this problem, and the New York & Atlantic Railway is not addressing community concerns (see below). They are just making excuses, not solving this problem, which continues. The DSNY-WM rail containers are supposed to be sealed and leakproof. They are contaminated and can stink whether they are empty or full. They need to be sealed when they are in transit. The LIRR has two railroads: passenger and freight. Why is this still a problem? What action is the LIRR taking to help Ms. XXXX and tens of thousands of others who are being subjected to this filth and the rats it attracts? Mary Parisen-Lavelle, Chair CURES - 718-772-6563

Patte Loper *Sat, May 23, 7:04 PM (4 days ago)*

to NYA-Community, me

Dear community hotline response team,

Thank you for your reply. This does not explain why train cars full of garbage are parked in front of our house for hours many days a week, filling our neighborhood with a rotten odor. There is a train of rancid garbage in front of our house right now, and it has been sitting there since 1:45 PM. It's 50 degrees outside right now and still the odor is very strong.

Please adhere to the law and cap these cars adequately so that the odor does not infringe on our quality of life.

Warmly,
Patte Lop
www.patteloper.com

On Wed, May 13, 2026 at 4:01 PM NYA-Community Hotline <nyacommunityhotline@anacostia.com> wrote:
Hi Patty,

Thank you for your call of May 4th concerning a train positioned that day in the vicinity of your home on Shaler Avenue.

On that date, late in the afternoon, several cars of municipal solid waste along with other outbound cars arrived in the yard for transfer the following day to CSX, and these cars were positioned for outbound movement on the interchange track on the Fremont Secondary. This train service is designed to arrive later in the day and to depart earlier the following day, but due to a track outage east of the CSX bridge, the train was in that position a bit longer on both ends of the move.

The MSW cars are sprayed with a disinfectant that helps keep odors under control.

We apologize for the additional time this train was positioned there, especially on a weekend. We hope you understand that we strive to ensure a timely exchange of this traffic so that does not stay in our possession for any longer than necessary, but the need to complete a track repair on CSX was the major factor impacting our operations at this location on this date.

Thank you for bringing this to our attention, and we will continue to work to ensure our operations proceed as planned, so this is not an issue for you in the future.

NYA Community Response Team
NYACommunityhotline@anacostia.com
(347) 767-2100
Click here to learn more about New York & Atlantic Railway

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This email and any attachments are for the exclusive and confidential use for the intended recipient. If you are not the intended recipient, please do not read, distribute or take action in reliance upon this message. If you have received this in error, please notify us immediately by return email and promptly delete this message and its attachments from your computer system. There is no waiver of attorney-client or other privilege by the transmission of this message.

From: *ReceptionHQ <noreply@receptionhq.com>*
Sent: *Monday, May 4, 2026 9:38 AM*
To: *NYA Turnover <NYAturnover@anacostia.com>*
Subject: *Is This An Emergency: NO Name: Email: Address..*

Is This An Emergency: *NO*
Name: [redacted]
Number: [redacted]
Email: [redacted]
Address: [redacted]
Reason for call: *Caller advised there is a train of garbage parked outside there house she advised it smells very bad.*

Caller ID: [redacted]

Note: *This message was taken by your Virtual Receptionist from a call to (866) 228-1863. This email was sent from an unattended mailbox - please do not reply to noreply@receptionhq.com. Our customer service email is: support@receptionhq.com*

Civics
United for
Railroad
Environmental
Solutions
civicsunited@gmail.com

On Wed, May 13, 2026 at 1:48 PM CURES <civicsunited@gmail.com> wrote:
FYI, Hector, Marlon, NYA is not supposed to be hauling defective WM MSW cans that don't seal, are not leakproof. This is an NYA tariff, no? In the past there have been terrible odor problems due to WM MSW cans being deformed from being old, damaged, or punctured, so they do not seal. Also, state law says the C&D -- with its smelly, toxic, hydrogen sulfide gas emissions from rotting gypsum -- has to have solid covers, and the Transfer Agreement says NYA has to abide by state law. Dwell times for MSW "hot loads" of MSW are not supposed to be lengthy. So what is the locus of the current odor problems?! CURES is receiving complaints not only from this area by Mafera Park, but from residents by Calamus Circle, where the stench has been reported up to 10 blocks away from the tracks. Yes, that is CSX track, but all of those railcars come from Fresh Pond Yard, LIRR's ROW, and DSNY, another public agency, is paying WM for sealed, leakproof containment for MSW. So who is responsible and what are they going to do to end these problems? BTW, Marlon, is the inspector just looking for Commercial Waste/MSW being commingled with C&D, because, as you know, even if that's not happening anymore, the C&D can still stink because of the toxic gas emissions, as well as the MSW stench from rotting organics in those loads, even if they are not commingled in the same gondola. I look forward to your responses and hearing about the actions you are taking. Mary Parisen-Lavelle, Chair CURES - 718-772-6563

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: [redacted]
Date: Wed, May 13, 2026 at 10:40 AM
Subject: Trash trains in Glendale - rancid odor in residential area and city park
To: <nyacommunityhotline@anacostia.com>
Cc: CivicsUnited@gmail.com <CivicsUnited@gmail.com>,
<iris.quinones@mail.house.gov>

Dear NYA Hotline,

Good morning, my name is [redacted] I live at [redacted] Shaler Ave in Glendale New York and I have called your hotline numerous times to report strong garbage odors from your train cars in our neighborhood with no response. My understanding is that this is an illegal practice and request that you cover the cars and move them from our neighborhood. We have pride in where we live and deserve to have breathable air, to enjoy our outdoor spaces, and to be able to open our windows. The garbage odor

affects Mafera park, where local children play. We have very young children and people with chronic illnesses in our neighborhood.

I am sharing articles that outline how this practice affects residents and that describe the passage of the Train Waste Bill. Please adhere to your legal and civic duty by removing these train cars.

https://queensledger.com/2023/06/29/glendale-residents-celebrate-passage-of-train-waste-bill/

https://qns.com/2016/07/trash-filled-trains-left-parked-in-middle-village-made-for-one-smelly-holiday-for-residents/

Warmly,
(name) (phone number)

DSNY exports 85% of waste by rail. However, exporting waste by rail instead of using a different transportation mode doesn't reduce the tonnage or toxicity of waste. Rail export doesn't change the fact that waste export funding is going into corporate pockets out of state and out of the US, instead of staying in NYC as fiscal stimulus, multiplying in the local economy and providing other benefits -- as when local composting of organics provides local employment in the form of good "Green" union jobs, compost for NYC's parks, gardens, and trees, and a host of social benefits. And export by rail doesn't eliminate quality of life, health, and environmental problems in neighborhoods within and outside New York City where all that waste is tipped, processed, hauled, landfilled, and incinerated. DSNY needs to shift focus and budget to capturing and diverting waste from export at the increased levels that are in DSNY's Solid Waste Management Plan draft. This will reduce current problems and enhance NYC's economy. Following on pages 8-11 are photos and descriptions of waste-by-rail problems to which DSNY and the LIRR are presently turning a blind eye.

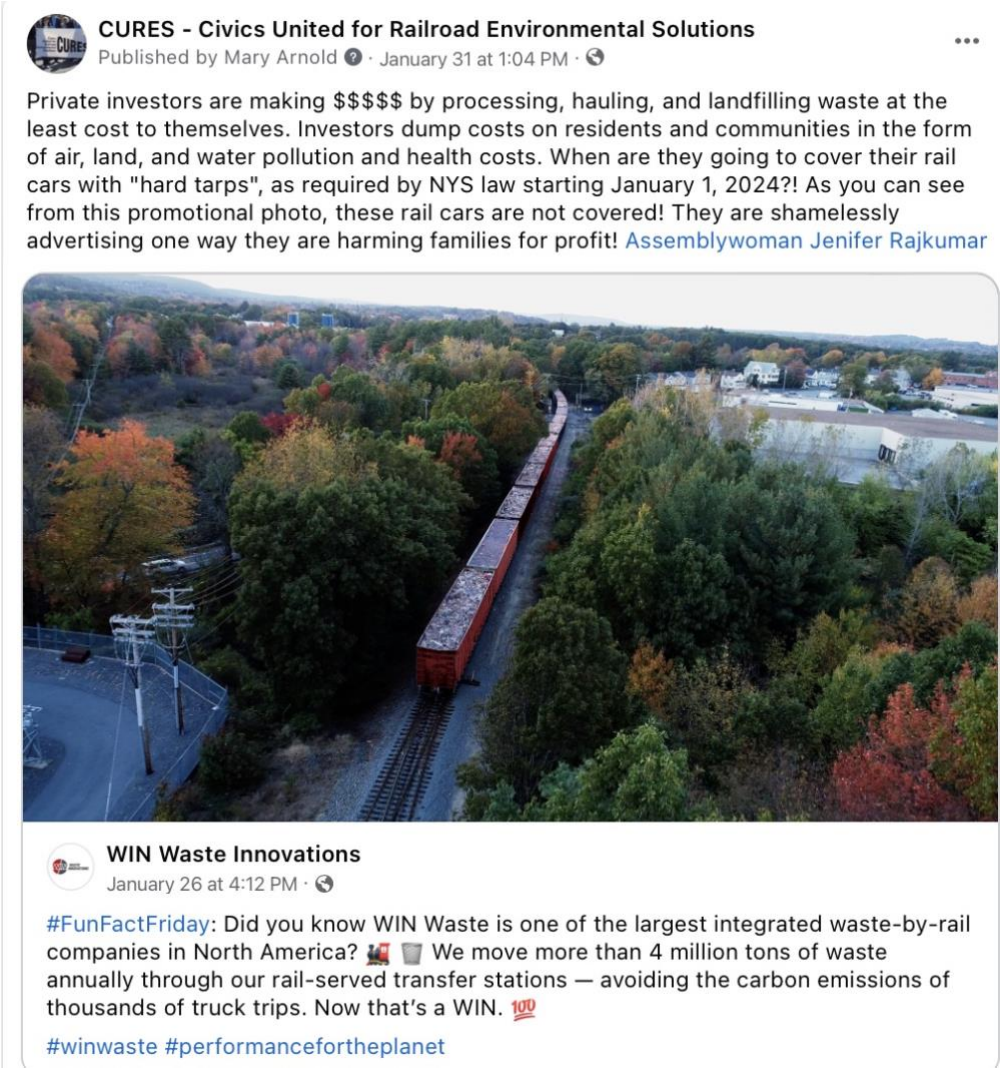
- With few exceptions the locomotives that haul waste are high-polluting 1970's diesel technology. See below a photo taken by a resident near the Met oval in Queens on March 8, 2026. You can see Waste Management MSW cans being hauled by ancient locomotives spewing clouds of toxic diesel emissions. Such waste-by-rail movements take place day after day. Spiking diesel prices also impact railroads and other aspects of waste export.



- Especially during the warm weather months, Municipal Solid Waste rail containers too often emit the stench rats love, because a third of the material in this black bag trash is still organics and old and damaged cans are not being maintained and replaced. Here is a photo of dented and punctured Waste Management MSW cans being hauled on the Bay Ridge line by PS 68 in Queens, NYC. These cans are defective, not sealed and leakproof. Because they are contaminated with organics, the cans stink whether they are full or empty. The IBX will share the railroad right of way with waste-by-rail, adversely impacting the "rider experience."



- Construction & Demolition Debris, C&D, can contain heavy metals, PCBs, asbestos, and other toxics. Yet C&D is crushed, dumped, and hauled in open top rail cars with floor drains, resulting in emissions of toxic blowoff, leachate, and gas in neighborhoods of NYC. To protect public safety a 2023 New York State law mandates solid covers for these rail cars. However, the National Waste and Recycling Association - New York State Chapter, Association of American Railroads, and American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA) filed a lawsuit in January 2024 to stop this modest public protection. NYA is a member of the ASLRRA. November 2026 is when discovery is due. So, apparently the case will not be heard in 2026, a full two years after the law went into effect. Toxic C&D pollution continues to be dumped on NYC neighborhoods and other communities because private investors -- including international Macquarie/WIN Waste Innovations -- don't want to spend money using rail cars with solid covers.





This muffin top load of C&D in a WIN Waste gondola is being hauled in NYC, covered only by pervious orange netting. The article below cites NYS law about the toxics found in C&D.

NYC Council Member Holden to NYS:

FIX WASTE-BY-RAIL PROBLEMS

Or Be DENIED New Transfer Station Permit

Civics United for Railroad Environmental Solutions **CURES**

By Mary Parisen-Lavelle, Chair
Civics United for Railroad Environmental Solutions

Here we go again, folks. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is reviewing another permit application for a new waste-by-rail transfer station: Peconic Environmental Services. The permit application proposes shipping the tonnage of up to 5,300 additional large, Plate F rail gondolas of "C&D Residue" into NYC from Suffolk County annually. All of these rail cars of landfill-bound waste will be handled by the New York & Atlantic Railway and CSX in and around Fresh Pond Yard.

In response to the permit application, on October 20, 2022, Council Member Bob Holden submitted a blistering public comment to DEC. (see Letters, page 12) He said the permit should be denied unless New York State addresses community problems that already can be anticipated. Council Member Holden's letter specifically refers to adverse community impacts caused by a lack of state waste-by-rail containment standards. What does the Peconic Environmental Services application disclose that points to how this industry dumps problems and costs on neighborhoods? What happens to your family when they load waste odors, blowoff, and leachate into rail gondolas with open tops and drains in the bottom?



The railroad compliant tarps used today, under the CSX tariff, are pervious orange mesh that allows precipitation to enter the rail gondola.

The problem of foul odors coming from rail gondolas of "C&D Residue"

The Peconic Environmental Services permit application discloses information that points to why rail cars hauling "C&D Residue" can emit foul odors and leachate. The application discloses that the transfer station dumps its potential leachate and odor problems into rail gondolas that they ship "away" into your neighborhood! The application says: "FLOOR DRAINS - The facility shall not collect leachate and store it in underground tanks. These are prone to clogging and produce foul odors. Instead, the concrete slab shall be pitched towards the center region of the tipping floor. Moisture is typically absorbed within the C&D material. In the event standing water is discovered, absorbent pads or booms shall be utilized and then disposed of with the C&D material."

The problem of stinking leachate draining out the bottom of the rail car

The Peconic Environmental Services permit application says they will use the same type of open rail gondolas that are already being used for "C&D Residue"-by-rail, with railroad compliant tarps. These gondolas are open at the top and have drains in the bottom. The railroad compliant tarps used today, under the CSX tariff, are pervious orange mesh that allows precipitation to enter the rail gondola. Because of the way the bottom of the rail gondolas are shaped, and because they are never completely emptied, filthy leachate both collects in the bottom of the rail car and drains out in your neighborhood.

The problem of waste blowoff polluting community air

Since the waste is not completely contained within the rail cars, the cars emit clouds of dusty C&D blowoff in neighborhoods, as they are hauled, classified, and the wind blows through them. And yet the Peconic Environmental Services application says they will test it... *"(e) Should any fill material or residue leave the facility for reuse, it shall be analyzed in accordance with the sampling and analysis requirements outlined in section 360.13(e) of Part 360. A minimum of one analysis is required for every 1000 cubic yards of fill material and must follow the criteria outlined in section 360.13(f) of Part 360"*

Why would the applicant have to promise to test? What is NYS concerned about finding in the "C&D"? According to what is in the list below, it's toxic pollution! This material is crushed and dumped into rail gondolas that regularly emit possibly contaminated dust that no one is testing into community air!

Analytical parameters. Fill material samples must be analyzed for:

(i) the Metals, PCBs/Pesticides, and Semi-volatile organic compounds listed in subdivision 375-6.8(b) of this Title;

(ii) asbestos if demolition of structures has occurred on the site;

(iii) volume of physical contaminants, if present, based on visual observation; and

(iv) Volatile Organic Compounds listed in subdivision 375-6.8(b) of this Title, if their presence is possible based on site events such as an historic petroleum spill, odors, photoionization detector meter or other field instrument readings.

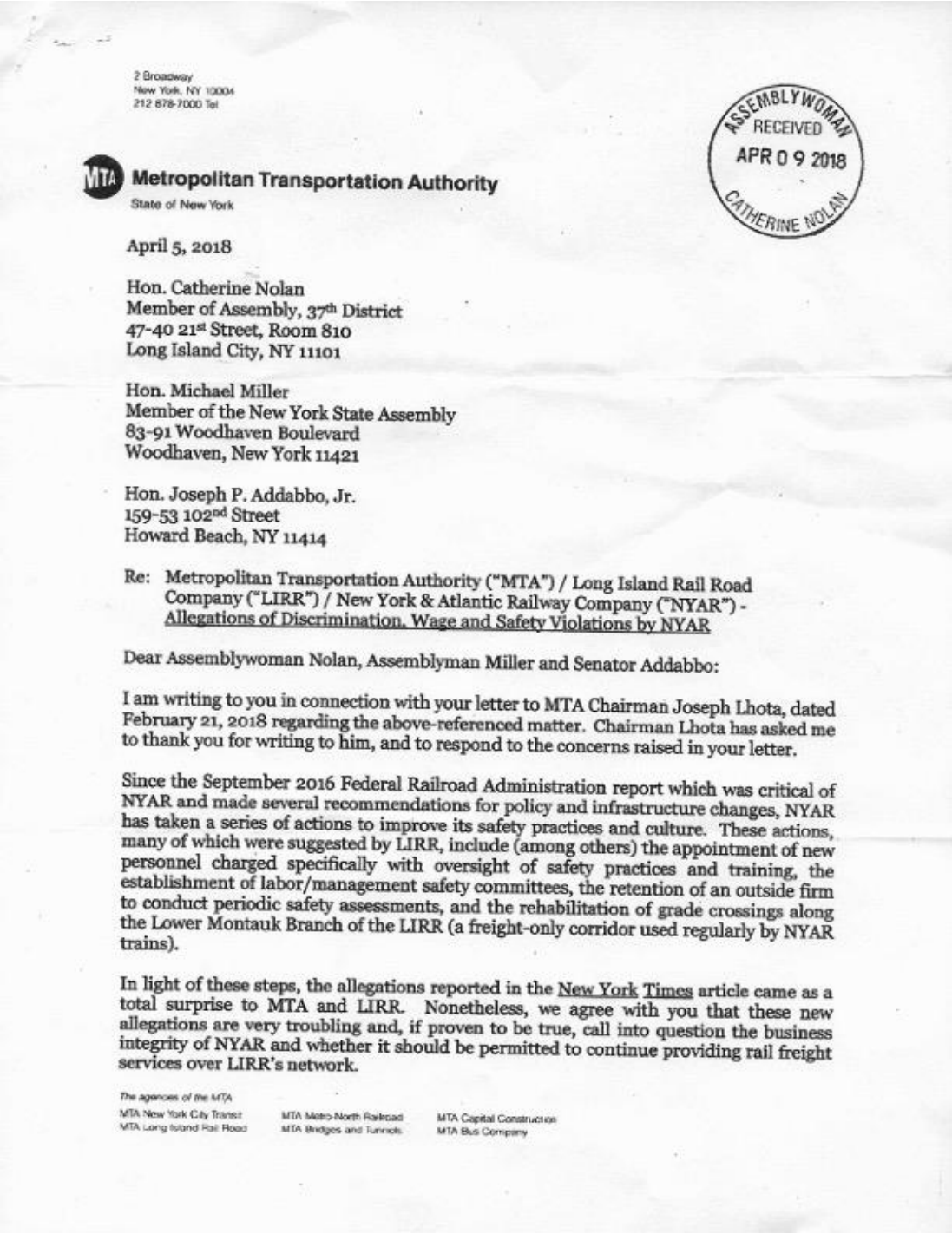
N.Y. Comp. Codes R. & Regs. Tit. 6 § 360.13 - Special requirements for predetermined beneficial use of fill material

Senator Joe Addabbo, Assembly Members Hevesi and Barnwell, and Congress Member Grace Meng have tried to enact legislation to establish standards for containment of waste in a rail car to protect communities. However, today all that "protects" our families from what is in the "C&D Residue" that blows and drains out of rail gondolas is that orange mesh. ***Thank you, Council Member Holden for telling New York State this has to stop!***

What does the Peconic Environmental Services application disclose that points to how this industry dumps problems and costs on neighborhoods?

What happens to your family when they load waste odors, blowoff, and leachate into rail gondolas with open tops and drains in the bottom?

During the term of the current Transfer Agreement Renewal, NYA maintenance of way workers sued, alleging discrimination. Did the MTA ever get to the bottom of this? To date the MTA has not submitted a new Transfer Agreement to the NYS Comptroller for review. This offers an opportunity to put waste-by-rail on a better footing.
https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/14/nyregion/railway-workers-lawsuit-discrimination.html



2 Broadway
New York, NY 10004
212 878-7000 Tel

ASSEMBLYWOMAN
RECEIVED
APR 0 9 2018
CATHERINE NOLAN

Metropolitan Transportation Authority
State of New York

April 5, 2018

Hon. Catherine Nolan
Member of Assembly, 37th District
47-40 21st Street, Room 810
Long Island City, NY 11101

Hon. Michael Miller
Member of the New York State Assembly
83-91 Woodhaven Boulevard
Woodhaven, New York 11421

Hon. Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.
159-53 102nd Street
Howard Beach, NY 11414

Re: Metropolitan Transportation Authority ("MTA") / Long Island Rail Road Company ("LIRR") / New York & Atlantic Railway Company ("NYAR") - Allegations of Discrimination, Wage and Safety Violations by NYAR

Dear Assemblywoman Nolan, Assemblyman Miller and Senator Addabbo:

I am writing to you in connection with your letter to MTA Chairman Joseph Lhota, dated February 21, 2018 regarding the above-referenced matter. Chairman Lhota has asked me to thank you for writing to him, and to respond to the concerns raised in your letter.

Since the September 2016 Federal Railroad Administration report which was critical of NYAR and made several recommendations for policy and infrastructure changes, NYAR has taken a series of actions to improve its safety practices and culture. These actions, many of which were suggested by LIRR, include (among others) the appointment of new personnel charged specifically with oversight of safety practices and training, the establishment of labor/management safety committees, the retention of an outside firm to conduct periodic safety assessments, and the rehabilitation of grade crossings along the Lower Montauk Branch of the LIRR (a freight-only corridor used regularly by NYAR trains).

In light of these steps, the allegations reported in the New York Times article came as a total surprise to MTA and LIRR. Nonetheless, we agree with you that these new allegations are very troubling and, if proven to be true, call into question the business integrity of NYAR and whether it should be permitted to continue providing rail freight services over LIRR's network.

The agencies of the MTA
MTA New York City Transit · MTA Long Island Rail Road · MTA Metro-North Railroad · MTA Bridges and Tunnels · MTA Capital Construction · MTA Bus Company

In summary, the New York Times reported that 18 individuals initiated a civil lawsuit against NYAR's parent Anacostia Rail Holdings Company (ARH), NYAR, and several of ARH's or NYAR's managers. These individuals, who claim to have been employed by NYAR, allege that NYAR routinely discriminated against them because they were immigrants or were perceived as immigrants, in violation of various anti-discrimination, wages and hours, and worker safety laws.

As the owners of property over which NYAR operates, and as firm proponents of treating all workers fairly, without regard to race, ethnicity, national origin or immigration status, MTA and LIRR are concerned about these allegations and believe that an independent investigation may be necessary to determine whether the allegations are true and, if so, whether the violations are continuing. As such, within two days of the article's publication, LIRR made a formal request to the New York State Department of Labor to conduct such an independent investigation into those allegations that fall within its jurisdiction, including allegations relating to minimum wages, overtime wages, and the provision of wage statements and wage notices as required by the New York Labor Law. LIRR will, of course, cooperate with any such investigation. In addition, LIRR is consulting with the MTA Inspector General about whether additional investigative measures are appropriate.

Please be assured that as the civil litigation and related investigations move forward, MTA will continue to monitor developments and treat this matter as one of the utmost importance. Thank you again for writing to the MTA and for sharing your concerns with us.

Sincerely,

Anita L. Miller

Anita L. Miller
Chief Employee Relations
and Administrative Officer

cc: Joseph J. Lhota, MTA Chairman

Again, please, shift existing DSNY funding to actions that result in less waste export tonnage, by whatever transportation mode. Put this funding to work capturing and diverting reusables, recyclables, and compostables for beneficial purposes within NYC and for economic enhancement and affordability instead. Please hold the waste-export-by-rail vendorship to account for the sake of taxpayers, and for residents' health and quality of life, including residents in EJ and Disadvantaged Communities,

Thank you.

Mary Arnold, CURES Board Member, civicsunited@gmail.com, June 10, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to add my name to all of those submitting testimony requesting Council funding for animal rescues (like the one I work for, PuppyKittyNYC, puppykittynyc.org, @puppykittynycity) that coordinate and pay for the spay/neuters of the stray and feral cats that are in their care. The need is increasing, but so are veterinary costs, and organizations like the ASPCA, Flatbush Cats and the Brooklyn Cat Café are overwhelmed with rescues and owners needing their low-cost services. Providing funding directly to rescues like PuppyKitty will help them be able to work with other veterinary services more easily, creating new partnerships and spreading out a network of providers.

This testimony is also to request funding for pet pantries, which will provide low-income pet owners with the support they may need to be able to keep their beloved pets. Owner surrenders (or worse, pet dumping) for financial reason are so incredibly sad. Given all of the documented benefits of having a pet, pet pantries are an easy way to help ameliorate the increasing costs of pet ownership.

Funding animal care will benefit neighborhoods all over the City, helping to address the stray and feral cat population and to support rescues and pet owners. It's an important quality of life issue both for the animals and for the humans who love them. Please allocate $1.5M for spay/neuter and $2M for pet food pantries in this year's budget.

Thank you.

Fiscal Year 2027 Executive Budget Hearing – Committee on Finance
June 10, 2026
Testimony by Clara Pecoraro, Friends of Queens Public Library at Rosedale

To the New York City Council's Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Relations.

I wish to express my support for the continued proper funding of the Queens Public Library.

As a member of the Friends of Rosedale Library, I personally feel that the QPL offers so many members of our community the opportunity to learn, to be entertained, to work, to express themselves and to connect with others. It is an invaluable institution that just improves the quality of all of our lives.

As a Queens resident for 40 years, the QPL has been an essential resource for myself, my husband and my children.

To the Committee on Finance:

Thank you for your efforts to fund equitable and sustainable waste management efforts throughout New York City. I am testifying today in support of continuing funding for community composting throughout New York City and especially in Red Hook, Brooklyn, where I currently work.

I am the Compost Coordinator at Red Hook Initiative (RHI), where we run a youth-centered urban farming and food justice program, and operate 4 acres of publicly accessible urban farmland. We are part of NYC's Community Composting Network, which provides essential waste diversion services, environmental education, and green jobs.

Two years ago, funding from the City allowed our operation to resume after food scrap collection was paused at our site due to budget cuts. With the restored funding provided by the New York City Council, we collected and processed over 11 tons of neighborhood food scraps in 2025.

Those food scraps were processed into compost by staff and volunteers without using any fossil fuels, providing an up-close-and-personal experience with composting. Anyone who attends a volunteer session gets the chance to feel the heat from rapid decomposition, pick out plastic contamination by hand, and see the rich earthiness of the finished compost – which we both give back out to local gardeners and use on the farm to grow fresh, organic produce for neighborhood residents. The people we reach come to understand organics recycling in the most concrete way possible – by participating in it.

Red Hook Initiative has submitted a request of $150,000 in discretionary funding through the Community Composting Initiative to continue and deepen our efforts.

I also want to uplift the Community Composting Network's total ask of $9,075,000. Like Red Hook Initiative's staff and volunteers, community composters throughout New York City provide crucial education and community outreach at a grassroots level. Our peer members of the Community Composting Network need continued funding to continue our work – keeping organic waste out of landfills, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and strengthening neighborhoods through education and engagement.

Thank you for the support you have already shown for this vital work; I urge you to fully fund community composting so that New Yorkers can continue to reap the environmental, educational, and social benefits.

Warmly,
Clara S. Kiely
Compost Coordinator

Dear City Council,

Please fund $1.5M for spay/neuter and $2M for pet food pantries. Keep families together. Stop the unnecessary surrendering of animals to the shelter. Please save animal lives. Make NYC more humane and pet friendly.

Funding is urgent.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Clarisel Gonzalez
Editor and Publisher
Kitty & Doggie News

MAKE THE ROAD NEW YORK

Written Testimony on the Executive Budget Hearings - Finance

June 10, 2026 | City Hall | 11:00 AM

Good morning, Chair Lee and Council Members, thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Clawdeen Rattray, and I am a student of the Leadership Development and Social Justice Fellowship at City College of New York and an intern at Make the Road New York. I'm here to share our organizational concerns with the budget and its impact, particularly on TGNC New Yorkers.

Just this week, a recent Gallup poll shows that approval of same-sex marriage, moral acceptance of gay and lesbian relations, and endorsement of gender affirming care have declined by 6% from peaks reached in the early 2020's. So what does this mean for us? For our communities, it means needing to allocate more of our City resources to fighting the escalating threats from the federal government. It means needing to protect healthcare access and gender-affirming care, and resisting efforts that undermine our civil rights and very basic human rights. For our communities, it means losing any form of stability we have had access to in the past couple of years.

As you negotiate a city budget and make decisions for our city, it is important to remember that all our struggles are interconnected. From women's rights, Black Freedom and Latin Justice, to public health justice, immigrant justice, reproductive justice, indigenous decolonial movements, and many more civil rights movements, we must keep present that these fights are deeply linked and benefit us all. Therefore, when we pass a budget that uplifts Trans and queer people everyone in our commuties wins.

New York has always been a haven, even when the larger America was not, and these policies are setting us back and putting our lives at risk, and it is Black and brown, migrant, low-income, and youth people who are experiencing the brunt of these attacks. This is why today we are urging the Council to stand with us and:

1. **Fully fund the Trans Equity Fund at $10 million and prioritize trans-led groups.** The Trans Equity Initiative is a lifeline for trans and gender-expansive New Yorkers, yet current funding at $6.5M falls short of meeting the growing need.
2. **Invest $15 million to protect TGNB healthcare providers**. At a time when federal attacks are threatening access to care, New York must step up to protect and expand life-saving gender affirming care for young people. The current $3.5M investment falls far short of the growing need.

3. **Allocate $10 million to the Supports for Persons Involved in the Sex Trade Fund.** The current funding level of $3.5 million allocated to this fund is not sufficient to sustain the harm reduction, health access, and outreach services that communities involved in the sex trades rely on. The City Council must increase this funding to ensure culturally competent, nonjudgmental support through community-based organizations that understand the realities faced by people involved in the sex trades.
4. **Allocate $15M for a NEW LGBTQIA+ Immigrant Fund.** Trans and Queer migrants face significant barriers to accessing critical legal services, including asylum, U visas, T visas, SIJS, and deportation defense. If we want to continue to call New York City a city of immigrants, then we need to establish this fund now.

Thank you, council members, for the opportunity to testify. We look forward to working together as a community to make sure we protect our Trans and Queer communities.

Good morning Chair Lee and members of the Committee.

My name is Coco Killingsworth, and I serve as Chief Experience and Impact Officer at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM). Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and for your continued commitment to New York City's cultural sector.

Arts and culture are essential public goods that strengthen neighborhoods, support economic activity, and improve quality of life for New Yorkers. As the City continues to address issues of affordability, equity, and community wellbeing, investment in cultural institutions must remain a priority. We urge the Council to permanently baseline the $30 million restoration included in last year's budget and to increase support for the cultural community to meet rising operating costs and growing public demand.

For more than 160 years, BAM has served as a cultural anchor for Brooklyn and New York City. Today, BAM presents theater, dance, music, opera, film, visual art, and literary programming while serving hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers each year through artistic, educational, and community initiatives. Beyond performances, BAM functions as a year-round civic institution, providing affordable access to culture, supporting artists and cultural workers, welcoming students and families, and creating spaces where communities gather and connect.

Our impact extends far beyond our stages. Through BAM Education, we partner with schools across the city to provide arts learning opportunities for students, teachers, and families. Our Senior Programs offer free cultural experiences that combat isolation and promote lifelong engagement in the arts. Programs such as DanceAfrica bring together tens of thousands of residents and visitors annually, generating economic activity while celebrating the cultural traditions that make Brooklyn unique. Across all of this work, BAM remains committed to ensuring that arts experiences remain accessible and affordable for New Yorkers of all backgrounds.

Like many nonprofit cultural organizations, BAM faces significant financial pressures. The costs of operating and maintaining specialized performance venues continue to rise, including labor, insurance, utilities, technology, production expenses, and the preservation of historic facilities. Performing arts institutions in particular operate complex, year-round facilities that require sustained investment. Theaters and performance spaces are not passive venues; they are highly specialized environments that depend on skilled union labor, advanced technical systems, rigorous safety standards, and constant maintenance. They serve as rehearsal hubs, educational sites, community meeting spaces, and economic drivers for surrounding small businesses. Unlike commercial presenters, nonprofit performing arts institutions balance earned revenue with a public service mandate. We keep ticket prices within reach, offering free programming, and making space for community use. Public investment is what makes this balance possible.

To sustain this work, BAM respectfully requests $4 million in FY27 support. This investment will help maintain core operations, preserve jobs, and ensure the continued delivery of artistic, educational, and community programming. Funding will support the operation of BAM KBH at the L10 Arts and Culture

Center, including the public presentation of arts and cultural programming, the continued operation of the cinemas, and the establishment of the first permanent public home for the BAM Hamm Archives. It will also strengthen programs that serve students, educators, seniors, artists, and local residents while supporting the workforce and infrastructure necessary to deliver these services.

This investment is particularly important during a period of ongoing economic uncertainty. Without sufficient public support, performing arts institutions like BAM face difficult choices that can result in reduced programming, diminished public access, and workforce reductions. These impacts extend beyond cultural organizations themselves, affecting local businesses, artists, educators, and communities that rely on cultural institutions as neighborhood anchors.

The coming year will mark the 50th anniversary of DanceAfrica, one of the nation's longest-running celebrations of African and African diasporic culture. This milestone reflects decades of artistic excellence, community partnership, and sustained public investment. It serves as a reminder that cultural institutions create lasting value when they are supported consistently over time.

New York City's cultural sector is one of its greatest strengths. It drives tourism, supports employment, contributes to neighborhood vitality, and helps define the City's identity around the world. Continued public investment ensures that these benefits remain accessible to all New Yorkers, not just those who can afford them.

We are grateful for the Council's longstanding support of arts and culture and respectfully urge you to make permanent the $30 million restoration while increasing investment in the cultural sector. Doing so will help ensure that institutions like BAM can continue serving artists, students, families, seniors, workers, and communities for generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

From: Lance Patterson
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Don't Cancel MY after school provider
Date: Monday, May 25, 2026 4:06:15 PM

[redacted]

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Cooper Bernardi-Patterson, and I am 13 years old. I wanted to write because I heard the afterschool program might be canceled, and I really hope that does not happen

This program has been really important to me. It gives me something to look forward to after school, and I have made new friends and had experiences I would not have had otherwise. I enjoy being part of something where I feel included and around people I like spending time with.

The teachers and staff have been really supportive and make the program feel welcoming. They care about the kids and make it a place where people feel comfortable, have fun, and learn new things.

This program is more than just somewhere to go after school. It gives kids a safe and positive place to be, helps us build friendships, and gives us opportunities we would not otherwise have. For me, it has been something I genuinely enjoy and look forward to.

Without this program, our community would lose something really important for students. I think it is important for people to understand how much programs like this matter to kids and families.

I really hope you reconsider canceling it.

Sincerely,
Cooper Bernardi-Patterson

To the Committee on Finance.

Hello, good afternoon. My name is Dalton James Patterson, and I am a Brooklyn resident. I am writing today, June 10, to urge the City Council to support QueensLink over the park-only QueensWay project.

As a former resident of Queens, I can say that the borough suffers from a lack of reliable transit options. Mayor Mamdani supported QueensLink during his campaign, but now, all of a sudden, he is funding QueensWay, focusing on building a park first without disturbing the existing rail infrastructure.

My confusion with Mayor Mamdani's statement is that QueensLink is supposed to advocate for both rail and park space, not just parks alone. If QueensWay goes through, we could permanently lose the chance to use the old Rockaway Beach Branch line for trains.

QueensLink offers a better future not just for Queens residents, but for New York City as a whole.

Please use our city's budget to support transit equity and green space together. Do not leave Queens commuters behind. Please fund QueensLink.

Thank you,

Dalton James Patterson
Brooklyn Resident / 11234

Wed, June 10, 2026 @ 9:30 AM

Committee on Finance
Dante Damele
Luca Damele
Susan Eastwood
[redacted]

I am a PTA member at Yorkville East Middle School (YEMS). I have one son who graduated from YEMS last year and has just completed his first year at Regis High School, and a younger son who is currently a 6th grader at YEMS.

When I look at my older son, I see growth, confidence, leadership, and maturity. During his time at YEMS, he participated in fencing, debate, and Dungeons & Dragons through Manhattan Youth. As parents, we want our children to feel safe, happy, and supported. We want them to try new things, discover their interests, find their community, and be surrounded by adults who genuinely care about them. We want mentors who celebrate their successes, help them navigate setbacks, and encourage them to keep growing.

Manhattan Youth has been that for my son.

I can honestly say it changed the trajectory of his life, and I will be forever grateful.

Through Manhattan Youth, he was introduced to debate in middle school. Today, he competes on the Regis High School Debate Team in Public Forum Debate on the national circuit. This year, he was ranked 109th at the Harvard International Tournament and placed 9th at the New York State Tournament.

Without Manhattan Youth, he never would have had the opportunity to try debate. Our family could not have afforded weekly debate classes. What began as an after-school activity became a passion that he plans to pursue throughout high school and possibly college.

Parents at his high school often talk about how debate opens doors and develops future leaders. Many former debaters go on to become judges, CEOs, district attorneys, diplomats, and public servants. I do not know what the future holds for my son, but I do know that Manhattan Youth

gave him the foundation and the opportunity to discover a passion that continues to shape his life. That is something I will never take for granted.

My older son formed lifelong friendships through fencing. He found a mentor in Coach Jonah, and now my younger son fences with him as well. We have known Jonah for four years. He is kind, supportive, and genuinely cares about every student he works with.

Last year, Coach Jonah was offered the opportunity to work at another school, but he chose to stay at Yorkville because of the relationships he had built with students and families. The feeling is mutual. Over the years, he has become a trusted mentor and an important part of our school community. He introduced us to his girlfriend, and we have celebrated birthdays together. These are the kinds of meaningful relationships that develop when programs and staff remain part of a community for years.

My older son's team won first place at the Baruch Tournament, where students from 14 schools across the city compete. Baruch is also losing its after-school provider, which means these tournaments may no longer continue. The impact extends far beyond one school. It creates a ripple effect across an entire network of students, coaches, and programs.

My younger son may lose the opportunity to continue fencing and compete against students from other schools. He may lose connections with friends he has built relationships with over several years. In fencing and many other activities, 6th, 7th, and 8th graders participate together. Older students mentor younger students, creating a culture of encouragement, leadership, and belonging.

The fencing team's unofficial mascot is a yam, the "YEMS Yams." Students bring a yam to tournaments covered with the names of team members. It may sound silly, but it represents something special: a sense of belonging, school pride, tradition, and community. These are the experiences and relationships that cannot be easily replaced.

My older son participated in Dungeons & Dragons, and now my younger son does as well. For both of them, it became a place where they found their people. Through imagination, creativity, teamwork, and storytelling, they built friendships and confidence. Students across grade levels play together, and sometimes siblings participate in the same groups. It helps make the school feel like a true community. I do not want that taken away from them.

Our experience with Yorkville East and Manhattan Youth was so positive that when it came time for my younger son to apply to middle school, we ranked Yorkville as our first choice. When we learned he received a lottery number of 00, I cried with happiness. We could have chosen any school, but we chose Yorkville because of the incredible experience our family had there. We wanted to give back, which is why both my husband and I serve on the PTA.

I want my younger son and every child at YEMS to have the same opportunities that my older son had. I want them to discover new interests, build friendships, develop confidence, and find

caring mentors. Many families, including ours, could not afford many of these activities outside of school. After-school programs make these opportunities accessible to everyone.

Research consistently shows that children are most vulnerable during the hours between 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. High-quality after-school programs provide safety, structure, supervision, enrichment, and community during these critical hours.

Our school community includes children being raised by single parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other caregivers. Many families depend on after-school programs so they can continue working and supporting their households.

I have read students' letters and spoken with many of them. Several are worried that their parents may have to reduce work hours or even lose their jobs if after-school programs disappear. One of our 6th graders recently lost his father and is now worried about his mother and sister. He fears that without a reliable after-school program, his family will face additional financial hardship.

Some students previously attended schools with different after-school providers. They described those programs as little more than babysitting, with limited enrichment opportunities and few activities that sparked their interest. One student shared that he disliked his after-school experience so much that he felt anxious about going to school each day.

These are burdens that children should not have to carry.

Our children should be focused on learning, growing, building friendships, and simply being kids. As adults, it is our responsibility to put their best interests first.

What makes this situation even more troubling is that families, students, and many school communities were not given a meaningful opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. The people most affected by these changes were largely excluded from providing feedback before decisions were finalized. Families only learned that long-standing partnerships were being severed after selections had already been made, creating confusion, uncertainty, and frustration across our school communities.

The concern is not simply about change. It is about replacing a proven provider with deep experience serving middle school students and established relationships within our schools. Manhattan Youth staff are not interchangeable contractors. They are trusted mentors, coaches, and role models who have spent years building relationships with our children. Those relationships provide stability, belonging, and support during some of the most important and vulnerable years of a child's development. They cannot be replaced overnight.

The impact of Manhattan Youth cannot be measured simply in program hours or enrollment numbers. It is measured in opportunities, relationships, confidence, mentorship, and the futures of children whose lives have been changed because someone invested in them.

My older son is one of those children.

I hope the same will be true for my younger son and for every child at Yorkville East. I want them to thrive, discover their passions, try new things, feel seen, receive those high-fives after a hard day, and be surrounded by adults who believe in them and want them to succeed.

I respectfully urge DYCD, DOE leadership, and City Hall to reconsider these decisions, restore Manhattan Youth partnerships for schools seeking continuity, and ensure that future decisions involving our children are made with transparency and meaningful community input. Our students deserve proven programs, trusted relationships, and a voice in decisions that profoundly affect their daily lives.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you would like to hear directly from students, families, and teachers affected by these decisions, I encourage you to visit our PTA Instagram account, @ms177pta, where community members have shared their experiences and perspectives.

Sincerely,

Susan Eastwood
PTA Member
Yorkville East Middle School

Dear New York City Council,

I am a rising sophomore and an alumni of Yorkville East Middle School, where I was an active participant in Manhattan Youth. During my three years, I learned who I was and I wanted to do with my life. In sixth grade, I tried out four activities which were completely new to me: a basketball camp, a fencing team, a debate program, and a Dungeons and Dragons class. That year, I discovered a lot about myself. I discovered that, even though I was not really a basketball person, I loved to fence. At the six tournaments I went to that year, I learned things I never had from any other sport: I learned the value of camaraderie, of working with your teammates in order to push towards a common goal; I learned the value of perseverance, of giving it your all even if your team is fifteen points down; and I learned how to be gracious in victory or in defeat, and shake hands with your teammate. That year, I discovered that I loved Dungeons and Dragons. I met so many of my friends by playing, and I loved it when they would come alight when the ogre burst into the room, or gasp in awe when I dealt 200 damage with one divine smite. We learned how to share a story, how to narrate an epic, and how to sacrifice for a friend. That year, I discovered how much I love debate. I loved writing my four minute case, and prepping with my partner. I loved researching whether congestion pressing actually has a significant environmental impact, or if the European Union had better animal protection than the United Kingdom. I learned how to find information, how to speak publicly, how to stand up in front of a judge, your parents, and your team when all you have in your notebook is “alternative: five eyes security.”

Fast forward to now. I am a rising sophomore at Regis High School. I host Dungeons and Dragons sessions for my friends, and narrate the destructive wrath of a giant or the shining radiance of a flaming sword. I help teach my younger brother and his friends how to fence, and help them through the arduous journey of getting their gear on. Most of all, I debate on national circuits for my high school, debating at tournaments around the country. I was ranked 109th at the international Harvard tournament, and ninth in New York State. I am the only person on my team to have previous experience debating, and to have paid no money to do so. I honestly think Manhattan Youth has changed my life. The provider that would replace them, YMCA, does not offer competitive debate, nor does it offer team fencing, nor does it offer consistent Dungeons and Dragons classes.

During my three years in middle school, I had access to opportunity after opportunity at Manhattan Youth. Please ensure that others can continue to have the same experience.

Thank you,

Dante Damele

Dear New York City Council,

I am a 6th grader at my school Yorkville East Middle School, also known as YEMS. Both me and my brother have gone to YEMS and participated in the after school program Manhattan Youth, MY. My brother is currently going to Regis Highschool and couldn't have done it without the help of MY. I am currently hoping to either follow in my brother's footsteps or blaze my own path to Bronx Science. If you take MY away, you will be taking away many student's opportunities, ruining their chances of going to where they want to go. Debating has helped my brother become who he is today, and given him the chance to go to his dream school. He has also found his friendships in Dungeons and Dragons, creating bonds that have lasted for years. And, in fencing, my brother hopes to create a new club at his school, giving him the confidence to do this in his life. I am currently taking fencing and D&D in MY and hope to do debate next year. But, if you take away MY, then you will be taking away my chances of debating and maybe my chances of a good high school. Not only this, but we have built relationships with our MY teachers, and if you take away that, you will break these bonds. No teacher friends, no familiar faces, no opportunities. Don't take all of this away from us. Keep Manhattan Youth!

Sincerely, Luca Damele

Mayor Mamdani’s decision to include QueensWay in the city’s budget instead of QueensLink is a massive, short-sighted mistake. If QueensWay is built, it will undoubtedly hinder future transit development along the corridor. The outer boroughs are in desperate need of transit investment, and the city should take the opportunity of this existing right of way to create a vital link between northern and southern Queens. Doing so would expand access to transit, promote economic opportunity, and decrease car travel and traffic in Queens. It is vital that the City Council advocate for QueensLink and fight for its inclusion in the budget.

Thank you,

Daniel De Martino

Members of the City Council,

My name is Dan DeSousa, and I am a New York City educator who has seen the positive impact of NYC Solves across our school system. It's encouraged students to solve problems, reason through concepts, and develop a deeper understanding of mathematics.

That's why **I urge you to baseline $200 million in the city budget to keep, grow, sustain, and improve NYC Reads and NYC Solves**.

The expansion of NYC Solves to earlier grade levels is extremely promising, but only if the City Council now completes its own piece of the puzzle provides baseline funding for professional learning and other implementation support. This Council needs to understand that curriculum alone is not enough. We need systemwide coordination, not isolated efforts, for New York City to emerge as a national leader on reading and math.

For instance, at my school, my colleagues and I had the opportunity to have peer collaboration time as part of our professional learning. We identified areas where students needed additional support, shared strategies that were working, and planned improvements for the following year. That kind of structured collaboration is incredibly valuable. It helps educators continuously improve instruction and ensures that curriculum remains engaging, rigorous, and accessible for all learners.

But unfortunately, opportunities like that are not guaranteed. Without dedicated funding for ongoing professional learning, schools may struggle to provide the planning time, coaching, and implementation support that educators need to make these initiatives successful. While I am excited to see NYC Solves expanding to more students across New York City, the reality is that the City Council must baseline funding and invest in the supports that make high-quality curriculum work for our students in the first place.

The City has already committed to expanding NYC Solves. The question, now, is whether the City Council will let that opportunity go to waste. It can't afford to.

Thank you.

Animal shelters are overwhelmed by surrendered animals that NYers can no longer afford to care for. Let's spend the money up front to prevent families from being broken apart and save our shelters from overcrowding. Please fund $1.5M for spay/neuter and $2M for pet food pantries.

Thank you,

Daniel Kressman

9:30 AM- Committee on Finance

Subject: Manhattan Youth and Robert F. Wagner

Written Testimony

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

I am writing to you as the parent of a 7th grader at Wagner Middle School (District 2). My wife and I are deeply troubled by a decision made by the Department of Youth and Community Development that will directly harm my child, her classmates, and our school community.

In May, we learned that DYCD did not renew Manhattan Youth's contract as Wagner's after-school provider. This decision was made despite Wagner's principal rating Manhattan Youth as the clear and preferred choice, and despite families and students having no opportunity whatsoever to weigh in.

The Manhattan Youth program is where my child has made lasting friendships with a diverse group of classmates, discovered a passion for theater through Drama Club, and worked on projects that give back to the community. It is one of the most meaningful parts of their middle school experience — and it is being taken away through a process that explicitly excluded the families it affects most.

This not how decisions affecting children should be made.

The voices of Wagner families were shut out of this process. I am asking you to make sure they are heard now and that this decision is overturned.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Daniel Manu

To the Committee on Parks and Recreation:

My name is Daniel Pecoraro; I was born and raised in Southeast Queens and now live in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, and I am writing concerning the Metropolitan Hub phase of QueensWay park being included in the Mayor's proposed budget.

I am a strong believer in public transit, including (closer to home) the Interborough Express. So I was disappointed that the mayor has included this funding at the likely expense of the QueensLink project to reactivate the Rockaway Beach Branch for use of the M train. QueensLink has the potential to be a transformative project, especially when viewed in tandem with the IBX. I recognize the desire to get something done now, rather than waiting until the MTA comes around to the project. Further, I also recognize that a TIF may not be a successful means of funding a revitalization of the line, compared to the 7 train extension. But I urge the Council to either lockbox the funding until or unless a definitive decision is made by the MTA regarding reactivation of the line, or conditioning the funding on a design that allows for reactivation of the line. In other words: let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater. If we must develop a park, let's build trails with the true potential for rails.

From: Daniela Kumar
To: Testimony
Subject: Testimony in Support of Girls Inc. at TYWLS of Astoria
Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 11:56:51 AM

Dear Members of the New York City Council,

I am writing to express my strong support for Girls Inc. at The Young Women's Leadership School (TYWLS) of Astoria and to urge the Council to take any available action to preserve and support this important program.

Girls Inc. provides students with invaluable opportunities for academic enrichment, leadership development, mentorship, and personal growth. For many young women, the program offers a safe and supportive environment where they can build confidence, develop critical life skills, and prepare for future success in college, careers, and civic engagement.

The impact of Girls Inc. extends beyond individual students. The program strengthens families, schools, and the broader community by empowering young women to become leaders and advocates. Eliminating or reducing support for this program would mean losing a resource that has positively influenced countless students and helped create pathways to achievement and opportunity.

TYWLS of Astoria has long been recognized for its commitment to supporting young women, and Girls Inc. is an essential part of that mission. Preserving this program is an investment in the future of New York City's students and communities.

I respectfully ask the Council to support efforts to maintain Girls Inc. at TYWLS of Astoria and ensure that current and future students continue to benefit from the opportunities, mentorship, and support it provides.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Daniela Kumar
Pronouns (she/her/hers)
Parent Coordinator
The Young Women's Leadership School of Astoria
Email: DKumar3@schools.nyc.gov
[redacted]

Last April, as candidate, Mayor Mamdani pledged to commit 0.5% of the city's budget to public libraries.

This number, informed by organizers, would help ensure that every library location in the city has the staffing and resources necessary to provide the robust services they deliver to our communities.

The demand for library services continues to grow, and previous cuts have already affected services we New Yorkers receive. And as extreme weather intensifies and free and open spaces become vanishingly rare, libraries offer more than books and access to tools – they are valuable public space.

Library union locals that represent library staff have already warned that underpaid workers are stretched beyond their job descriptions. Less money equals less staffing. We need increased funding to support the unions, who ask for higher wages and more positions.

Our libraries deserve more than a stagnant budget – they deserve our enthusiastic support. The library is a key piece of stable, social infrastructure that the city relies on.

And while this budget is higher than last year, it does not keep up with the inflation rate. How do we ensure that libraries can do the work we need in these times?

We need at least one-half of 1% (0.50%) of the total New York City expense budget be committed to our library systems, both now and in the future.

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident as well as a parent leader to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

LIC has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, Kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, and yet most area schools are already operating over capacity: P.S. 112 at **130%**, and P.S./I.S. 78 at **111%**. What is more, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City — Court Square — still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message to families is clear: you may not be guaranteed a school seat in your neighborhood.

I would also like to express urgent concern about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed school project. In a neighborhood where families are struggling today to secure local school placements, this project, along with other promised school construction projects in LIC, cannot continue to fall behind competing priorities. While I appreciate the creation of an incubation site for Q508 (Q439Q), a temporary solution cannot become a justification for continued delays to the permanent facility. Families were promised a permanent neighborhood school, with the full facilities and long-term stability that a dedicated school building provides. An incubation site may help relieve short-term pressure, but it does not address the broader and growing need for permanent school infrastructure in LIC.

Additionally, the current lease for the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE, Q580) is set to expire in just three years. Families have been assured that the school would be relocated so that it can continue serving students without disruption. We are appreciative that the budget includes funding for BSGE. However, we want to emphasize that it is critical that the City follow through on this commitment and move urgently to secure a permanent home for the school. Allowing delays to continue would create significant uncertainty for students and families and risks the loss of an important educational institution in a neighborhood already facing a severe shortage of school seats. The City must prioritize funding and planning for BSGE's relocation now to ensure continuity and stability for the community.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has also recognized the need for additional schools to support the neighborhood's rapid growth. Specifically, commitments were made to

advance development of a school at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard. Creation of two additional schools has also been promised to create 1,300 more seats in conjunction with the planned construction of over 14,000 residential units. As more housing is developed through OneLIC, school construction must move in parallel — not years behind residential growth. Without firm commitments and accountability around these promised schools, the existing seat crisis will only intensify.

Delays to the opening of these schools are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and more families pushed out of the neighborhood because they cannot rely on access to local public schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency, accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508 and other promised schools on schedule. Schools aren't just a service—they're the foundation of a stable, thriving neighborhood.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future. Please ensure that timely funding is delivered to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority for the completion of these projects.

Sincerely,

Danielle LoPresti Lee
11101, Long Island City Queens
Parent, PTA Co President PS 384Q, PTA President HPCMS, CEC30 Member

From: Danielle Soares
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Thursday May 28,2026 at 10AM- Committee on Children and Youth.
Date: Tuesday, May 19, 2026 7:06:43 PM

[redacted]

To Whom It May Concern,

I am submitting this written testimony in support of Manhattan Youth regarding the DYCD contracting decision and the May 28 City Council hearing.

As a PPAS parent, I want to express my heartfelt support for Manhattan Youth and the incredible impact this program has had on our students and families.

My son, who is in middle school, has had the opportunity to participate in theater productions supported through Manhattan Youth partnerships, including playing Shrek in Shrek The Musical Jr. and Prince Oliver in Between the Lines Jr. These experiences were far more than school shows — they gave students confidence, discipline, creativity, friendship, and a true sense of belonging.

Programs like these create safe spaces where children feel seen, encouraged, and inspired. As a parent, I have personally witnessed how Manhattan Youth has positively shaped not only my child's artistic growth, but also his emotional growth and self-esteem.

The staff truly care about our children and continuously go above and beyond for this community. Losing Manhattan Youth would be a tremendous loss for PPAS families and students.

Thank you for taking the time to hear our voices and consider the importance of this program for our school community.

Sincerely,
Danielle Soares
PPAS Parent

Sent from my iPhone

Testimony to the City Council on Finance

June 10, 2026

Submitted by Danyil Alvarez

Good afternoon, Chairperson,

My name is Danyil Alvarez. I am a Black Trans 20-year-old Youth Advocate at Youth Represent as well as a Member of Freedom Agenda.

As a person who is surviving in the Homeless Shelter System, I am here to tell you that all New Yorkers deserve support and resources, especially our youth. NYC spends nearly half a million dollars per year to incarcerate just one person on Rikers and is still sitting on $95.6M worth of vacancies, even after some vacancy reductions in the Executive Budget. We need to reinvest every dollar of those resources in services that foster real community safety and wellbeing, like the solutions the Campaign to Close Rikers is recommending.

In the Shelter System I've seen a lot of young people get lack of medical assistance, get non-wholesome meals. It doesn't surprise me that sometimes people end up sleeping on the trains instead. But now, they're being arrested, and that will only get worse if 580 more cops are hired. So, imagine if we can move that money into resources that would be far better used outside of the policing and jail system to meet people's needs and prevent interaction with the criminal legal system.

Unfortunately, a lot of young people don't receive Public Assistance and it's like a never-ending roller coaster with improper care from individuals who work at facilities we the youth are placed in. Oftentimes, we the youth are forgotten or not listened to. So, imagine if we correct this misallocation of funds and invest in youth programs, Alternatives to Incarceration programs, Mental Health Clinics, Respite Centers, and many others.

Also, let me please remind the City Council about New York City's commitment to closing the jails on Rikers Island by 2027. The investments I'm recommending today will help the city close Rikers by resourcing New Yorkers and their communities both before and after they interact with the criminal legal system. The FY-2027 Executive Budget includes a few key steps toward reining in jail operation costs and reinvesting those savings in true public safety. However, if we truly care about closing Rikers as quickly as possible, we'll need to do much more.

The solution is simple, Close Riker's and Reinvest in our communities.

[attached: Campaign to Close Rikers Budget Priorities]

CLOSE RIKERS

DECARCERATE ✷ DEFEND ✷ DIVEST & REDISTRIBUTE

FY2027 City Budget Analysis & Priorities

At a cost of nearly half a million dollars per person per year, Rikers Island is the most expensive and least effective tool our City has to create community safety. The FY2027 Executive Budget includes some key steps toward reining in jail operation costs, and reinvesting those savings in true public safety. And in order to Close Rikers as quickly as possible, we'll need to do more. To align the FY2027 budget with the City's legal and moral obligation to Close Rikers, it must include:

1. **An additional $39.2M to meet mental health needs outside of Rikers,** including:
    a. **At least $66.3M, baselined, for Intensive Mobile Treatment (IMT) teams,** $22M more than the Executive Budget allocates, which should eliminate the current waitlist.[1]
    b. **At least $23.8M, baselined, for Assertive Community Treatment (ACT),** $4.5M more than the Executive Budget allocates.[2]
    c. **At least $6M, baselined, for Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT),** $2M more than the Executive Budget allocates, which provides both mental health and reentry services to people returning from jail and prison.[3]
    d. **$1.7M to establish an outpatient competency restoration pilot program** for 50-75 people who might otherwise be waiting at Rikers for transfer to a state hospital.
    e. **$3M in capital funds to support 60 new residential treatment beds** for people with serious mental illness and with co-occurring addictions.[4]
    f. **At least $8.8M, baselined, for crisis respite centers,** $6M more than the Executive Budget allocates, to open four new centers, in compliance with Local Law 118-2023.[5]
2. **An additional $47.2M for diversion and reentry services through the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ), including:**
    a. **$10M** in new funds for ATI programs and **$10M** in new funds for Reentry Services, as recommended by the ATI/Reentry Coalition, to scale up these evidence-based models.
    b. **$6.9M** to expand programs serving court-involved youth with mental health needs.
    c. **$20.3M**[6] to establish at least 150 units of low-barrier housing for people with court-involvement and mental health diagnoses.
    d. OCJ should also publish an analysis of the full need for transitional reentry housing, and conduct a data match to generate an updated eligibility list for Justice Impacted Supportive Housing (JISH), a permanent reentry housing model.[7]
3. **An additional $3.6M to restore cuts to the Board of Correction (BOC), and expand their oversight capacity.** The Executive Budget shows $605,000 in cuts to BOC's budget.[8] These cuts

[1] Per DOHMH testimony on June 5, 2026, the waitlist is 600 people. Each new IMT team can serve 27 people.
[2] The combined waitlist for all ACT teams, including FACT and SPACT, was 654 people as of June 5, 2026 per DOHMH testimony. The City should also work with the state to eliminate the waitlist for all ACT teams.
[3] For FACT teams, the City adds approximately $675,000 per ACT team to supplement state funding by adding reentry specialists.
[4] State funding through OASAS would provide operational funds.
[5] The FY2026 budget for crisis respite centers was $5.3M, but only $2.8M in the FY2027 Preliminary Budget, as reported by DOHMH.
[6] Approximately $135,000 per unit, based on similar Safe Haven models.
[7] While JISH funding would come through DOHMH, OCJ coordinated the first (and only) data match, when the program was launched.
[8] $233,000 is associated with cutting two vacancies, and $374,437 is associated with cuts to OTPS

are unwise and unnecessary. The Board of Correction has testified that they need at least 60 staff roles (29 more than the Executive Budget includes)[9] to carry out their oversight responsibilities, as a first step to rightsizing their budget.[10] Expanding BOC's capacity could not only improve conditions in the jails, but also protect the city from future liability, like the $123 million dollars paid out in FY2025 for claims against DOC.

Meanwhile, DOC remains over-resourced. With new management in place, DOC can better deploy resources, not rush to fill vacancies. The FY2027 budget should build on smart vacancy reductions announced in the Executive Budget, and:

4. **Eliminate vacancies for DOC uniformed staff, to begin to rightsize the agency**
    a. The Executive Budget authorizes 6,474 positions for uniformed officers in FY2027 (down from 7,060 in FY2026), but as of January 1, 2026 DOC employed 5,759 officers and 1,301 positions were vacant.[11] Filling DOC's remaining 715 vacancies would cost an additional **$95.6M annually.**[12] These remaining vacancies should be eliminated, in order to reduce incarceration and cut wasteful spending.
5. **Reduce overtime spending** by consolidating operations and permanently closing jails on Rikers, starting with the vacant Anna M. Kross Center, where 109 officers are still assigned.[13]
6. **Conduct and release a staffing analysis as soon as possible,** to determine how many staff DOC actually needs to operate the facilities it currently manages.

The Executive Budget also includes 580 more police officers, among a surge of low-level arrests that frequently impact New Yorkers who lack stable housing and need mental health services. These resources should instead be used for housing, healthcare, and other community-based interventions.

DOC Budget Breakdown

- The Executive Budget proposes spending at least **$2.96 billion[14] for jail operations in FY2027**. This represents a slight reduction from the FY2027 Preliminary budget, but still a 3.8% increase from last year's adopted budget.[15]
- The Executive Budget shows an authorized headcount of **6,474 uniformed DOC officers**. With approximately 6,600 people in custody, this amounts to a **staffing ratio that is still nearly 4 times higher than the national average**, and **2 times more officers** than will be required to operate the borough jails.[16]
- DOC is on track to spend **$369 million on overtime** for uniform staff in FY2026 - 229% of their adopted budget.[17]
- New York City spent at least **$485,801 annually to incarcerate one person** at Rikers in FY2025.
- Most of DOC's costs are driven by staffing. The FY2027 budget projects that 87% of DOC expenses will be staff salaries, overtime and benefits.

---

[9] Based on testimony from the Board of Correction on March 7, 2025 that approximately 60 staff are needed to fulfill their mandate. BOC's proposed staffing in the F27 budget is 33 people, and total agency budget of $3.67M, per Departmental Estimates.
[10] Board of Corrections representatives previously advocated increasing their budget to a minimum percentage of DOC's.
[11] Per Independent Budget Office
[12] Based on $133,756 per officer, as calculated by the Vera Institute.
[13] City of New York Executive Budget Fiscal Year 2027, Supporting Schedules p. 1414
[14] Including expenses, associated fringe benefits, pensions, and debt service. Expense Revenue Contract Budget
[15] DOC's FY2026 Adopted Budget was $2.85 billion. A-Look-Inside-the-FY-2027-New-York-City-Department-of-Correction-Budget.pdf
[16] The Independent Rikers Commission estimates 3,240 officers will be needed in the borough jail system.
[17] Per Independent Budget Office

Subject: Privatization of NYCHA Creates Instability for Seniors.

I live at Mitchel Houses in the South Bronx and do not have an email address. I am being supported in submitting this testimony by Save Section 9.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

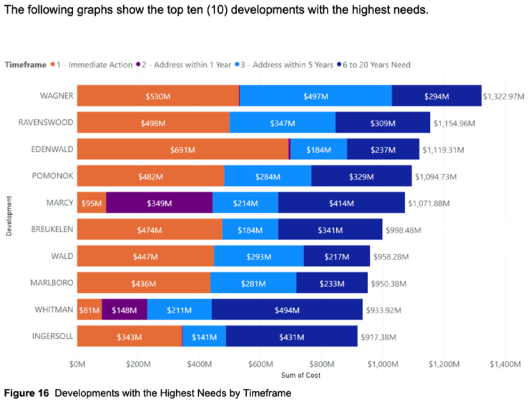


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.
- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

As Mamdani continues the project of his predecessors, breaking his own campaign promises, I question whether he is a mayor for all New Yorkers, or just the ones that are convenient. Funding Queensway will take away any potential for developing public transportation on the rail that it uses. Public transportation is the circulatory system of New York City, and Southern Queens is missing key arteries. QueensLink wants to build these arteries. QueensLink wants to bring opportunities to underserved communities, while Queensway wants to bring green space to the borough with the most green space. QueensLink would connect South Queens to the rest of the city, drastically reducing commute times for millions of New Yorkers. Seemingly the only reason Queensway is being funded is because it's easier and more convenient. It is cheaper, and has traction, but it will ultimately do very little to help the communities it goes through to afford their rent. If Queensway persists, 20 years from now, someone in Rockaway won't think much about it, but they will wish they could get to their job in less than 2 hours. To me it is clear that QueensLink is the only way forward. Instead of prioritizing convenience, it prioritizes community and connection.

How Manhattan Youth Helped Me Grow

The teachers and staff have helped me grow as a student because they push me out of my comfort zone, make me try new things, and help me realize that I can do much more than I thought was possible. If I had never joined the Manhattan Youth after-school program, I never would have realized that I am capable of much more than I thought.

This program matters because, without it, we would lose something to be excited about after school and a place where we can make new friends. I personally know that before I found Manhattan Youth, I went home and just played video games for the rest of the afternoon. But when I joined, I made new friends, some of them even being teachers. If we lost Manhattan Youth, that would mean losing something that helps us and encourages us to socialize with people we might not normally talk to, and everybody would just go back to sitting on the couch on their screens.

One thing people should understand about this program is that it is not just childcare. Childcare is the action or skill of looking after children, but the staff from Manhattan Youth like coming to play with us and having a good time with us. Childcare can sometimes feel like someone does not want to be there and is just there for the money, and that is the exact opposite of the staff at Manhattan Youth.

One opportunity I have had because of this program is that I got the chance to do spotlight for the Manhattan Youth *Guys and Dolls* play. I never would have done this if I had not joined Manhattan Youth. Once the show was over, I got asked by the music teachers to do spotlight at their band concert. This was a big step because I had never done anything like that before, but because Manhattan Youth pushed me out of my comfort zone, I learned. I ended up smashing it and got compliments from every parent afterward. Because of Manhattan Youth, I am now considering LaGuardia for stage crew in high school.

Hi folks - I'm Darrien Glasser,

I'm an NYC resident. I like in Manhattan, but I spend quite a bit of time in Queens. I'm here to testify in support of QueensLink over the inferior, and very short thinking QueensWay.

In Mamdani's recent housing reform, named "Block by Block" - the mayor clearly understands both what makes New York City great, but also what will alleviate the housing crisis. There are two major aspects I took away, zoning reform, and **Transit Oriented Development**. For proper transit oriented development, well you need transit after all.

QueensLink provides additional rail to a major corridor in Queens that is currently underserved by transit. But in addition to that, providing additional rail service also helps push the mayor's "Block by Block" mandate, allowing for more transit oriented development, and a larger corridor to up-zone to help alleviate the housing crisis. That means current residents will have better rail service, future residents will have better rail service, and we will have additional areas where we can do urban infill, to help alleviate the housing crisis.

QueensWay has no provisions for rail, and like Atlanta's BeltLine, will ensure that rail is never built there. In 10, or 20 years, as we see the subway system continue to be stressed as we grow, will we have wished we put rail there instead of a park?

Additionally - Mamdani has spoken in support of Congestion Pricing and decreased emissions, but if we don't provide residents of Queens with better rail service, how can we expect them to drive less?

Additionally - with the budget balanced, I know it can be difficult to add something new, but in this case, Mamdani is very clear - we will be doing upzoning new major transit corridors. This means we can finance QueensLink with something like Tax Increment Financing based on the upzoned corridors. Land is currently cheaper and zoned for less development than more developed areas like lower Manhattan, downtown Brooklyn, and Long Island City. It is an area that could provide lots of greenfield development and lots of new tax money for the city. Or if the city prefers, more area for public housing.

All in all, QueensWay is incredibly short sited. For an administration that is thinking for the future, and seems to generally be trying to do the best for its people, not including QueensLink is a MAJOR omission from the budget. And I strongly endorse and recommend including QueensLink.

Thank you all for reading,
Darrien Bradley Glasser

Dear Council Members,

Please fund $1.5 for spay/neuter and $2M for pet food pantries.

Think of the upsides!

Using preventive measures in NYC to contain the population of pets in need of a home will absolutely reduce the city's financial burdens in the long run, more importantly it will reduce the senseless killing of innocent hapless animals that are perfectly adoptable yet fall victim to a broken system. So may are already contributing out of pocket in the form of small rescue groups actively practicing trap, neuter, release on cats and fostering pets on death row. Have a heart but please also use your head. This financial boost is a win/win for the city, it's pets and those who already give time an energy to this cause! Help the rescuers to help you!

In regards to food pantries for pets, this is an excellent idea! Please consider how difficult it is to make ends meet. Pets are very important to mental well being. Especially for some that do not have family or cannot afford to have a family or have escaped abusive situations.

Being poverty stricken is miserable enough. Give these good heated people a break. By giving a boost to this much needed program you will enable them to feed themselves a little better. I strongly believe this will also get the ball rolling in a very positive direction and you will see resounding support from the communities where the pantries reside.

People who love their pets tend to support each other. Even if you are not an animal advocate in any way shape or form at least look at this from a logical perspective. These two measures will make a huge difference in the city's budget and as well as in New Yorkers' day to day lives.

Dava Nasr

New York City Council
Committee on Finance
250 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

June 12, 2026

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my disappointment that the Department of Youth & Community Development has chosen not to continue the contract for Manhattan Youth at Robert F. Wagner Middle School (JHS 167).

My two daughters have used Manhattan Youth for the past two years for afterschool activities, and we have all had a very positive experience with the program. It is well run, it offers a wide breadth and variety of after-school options, and it is staffed by caring people. Our schedules would have been far more challenging and expensive without this excellent offering.

Please reconsider the decision to end Manhattan Youth at Robert F. Wagner. It would mean a lot to kids and parents alike.

Thank you,



David Grimm

TO: New York City Council — Finance Committee

RE: Support the QueensLink — preserve the Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way for both transit and parks

Dear Chairperson Lee and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is David Mascio, and I am a resident of Bensonhurst, Brooklyn. I am writing in strong support of the **QueensLink**, which would bring both new subway service and new parkland to Queens by reactivating the former Rockaway Beach Branch, and against the current $43 million allocated in the budget for phase one of the QueensWay, also referred to as the Met Hub project.

Why this matters to me

I care about QueensLink because an old coworker of mine commuted everyday from the Rockaways into our job in Midtown East. I saw first hand how the low train service frequencies and limited subway options on the Peninsula made his daily travels much more difficult than they could be. With QueensLink, what was a complex route with transfers could become a one-seat ride for him on the M.

QueensLink is important not just for the residents of the Rockways, but for everyone in the city. The popularity of the NYC Ferry Rockaway route, the Q52, and the Q53, all clearly show there is demand for better public transportation to the area. With QueensLink, the city can turn that demand into action.

Why the QueensLink is the right choice

Two competing concepts exist for the deactivated Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way: the park-only QueensWay, and the dual-purpose QueensLink, which combines subway and park uses. The QueensWay would be built directly on the former railbed, which would virtually eliminate the possibility of ever restoring transit there. The MTA itself recognized in its 2023 20-Year Needs Assessment that a linear park along the corridor would create a challenge for any future transit alternatives. Once a rail right-of-way is converted to other uses, it almost never returns to transit.

The QueensLink would create the first north-south subway line in Queens, extending the M line south from Rego Park to Ozone Park and then over the A train tracks to the Rockaways — increasing service to the Rockaways by up to 165%. It would also let the G train run all the way to Forest Hills, increasing capacity on the crowded Queens Boulevard local lines by 50% and connecting central Queens with north Queens and Brooklyn.

A study by the Steer Group found that the QueensLink would remove millions of vehicle trips each year, making streets safer and lowering harmful emissions, while adding up to 33 acres of new parks and trails integrated with the subway design. Over 20 years, the study concluded the project would more than pay for itself by creating jobs, saving New Yorkers time, and reducing healthcare costs tied to air pollution and traffic crashes.

Queens needs parks *and* trains. The QueensLink would provide both. I urge the Committee to preserve this irreplaceable right-of-way for future transit and to support the QueensLink.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

David Mascio
Bensonhurst, Brooklyn 11228
City Council District 38

The reason why libraries matter in New York city is because libraries is essential to New York City and they also provide AC as well so when the summertime comes around and if people who don't have AC in their house and they feel dizzy or exhausted outside,they can go to the libraries and they can cool off there,the staff can also be friendly and they can assist you if you need help with something and you can also find books there that you may like and it can possibly turn into your favorite book and they also offer internship programs which many people don't know which they can sigh their kid up for and they can not only gain knowledge about the library but they also earn a stipend as well.

Fiscal Year 2027 Executive Budget Hearing – Committee on Finance
June 10, 2026
Testimony by David Pecoraro, Friends of Queens Public Library at Rosedale

To the New York City Council's Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Relations:

I am a 60-year resident of Rosedale. During my six decades in this community, I have witnessed how the Rosedale Library has been an irreplaceable resource for our community throughout all those years.

My late mom, Sheila, knew that when she led the sit-in that prevented the closure of our branch during the 1970's NYC fiscal crisis.

And I know that today as President of The Friends of Rosedale Library. We provide culturally relevant services for our community. We need proper funding to continue meeting those needs.

I urge your committee to increase funding for libraries in the budget to an amount that reflects the reality of the scourge of inflation.

Thank you for your attention to the needs of the Queens Public Library.

David S Pecoraro
President
Friends of Rosedale Library

NYC Council Testimony for the Committee on Finance (June 10, 2026)

My name is Dean Patrick H. Aquino from Howard Beach (part of City Council District 32). The residents in my area, including myself, support "QueensLink," which is a 3-in-1 project where it can provide a crucial north-south rail line for Queens, as well as a linear park and bicycle/multi-use path next to it. This is to revitalize the abandoned LIRR (Long Island Rail Road) Rockaway Beach Line between Rego Park and Ozone Park.

When Zohran Mamdani was running for mayor, he supported the "QueensLink." Unfortunately, since he became mayor, he has turned his back on us and put $43 million on this anti-transit project called "QueensWay," a planned linear park with NO provisions in its design to accommodate any rail line. In addition, it is also being built in an area with a lot of existing park space, such as Forest Park.

As stated earlier, "QueensLink" consists of a rail line, a park, and a bicycle or multi-use path. It will transform access for transit deserts in South Queens, as well as to bring together North and South Queens. It will slash travel times across the borough as well as other parts of the city. "QueensLink" can relieve a lot of traffic congestion along Cross Bay, Woodhaven, and Lefferts Boulevards, as well as the heavily-congested Van Wyck Expressway. As a public transit user, it can help ease crowding on the bus lines that run on Cross Bay and Woodhaven Boulevards, most notably the Q52 & Q53 buses. In addition, "QueensLink" will serve very important parts of Queens, such as the Rockaways (the area has beaches and more housing development), JFK Airport, Resorts World (which is expanding), a shopping area at Metropolitan Avenue, and the malls along Queens Boulevard. It can make connections to other lines, such as the A, J/Z, E, F, M, R, and S (Rockaway Park Shuttle). It could also add a new LIRR station at Atlantic Avenue to connect with the "QueensLink." "QueensWay" does not have any of these components in its design.

I strongly request that the City Council stop funding "QueensWay" and instead focus on a project that benefits not just Queens, but all of New York City. Please support "QueensLink." Thank you for your time.

DEBORAH THOMAS TESTIMONY TO NYC COUNCIL
IN SUPPORT OF CITY SPAY/NEUTER SERVICES &
AND PET FOOD PANTRIES – June 12, 2026

Good morning. My name is Deborah Thomas and I have volunteered at the NYC Animal Care Centers (ACC) Manhattan Shelter as a cat adoption facilitator for nearly 20 years. I am also a member of several animal welfare organizations and I advocate for all NYC animals. I am also a New York City voter.

First of all, I want to thank the NYC City Council for all you have done and continue to do to help animals in New York City.

As you well know, animal shelters in NYC have been experiencing a troubling overcrowding over the past few years due to people surrendering their pets for several reasons, including extremely high veterinary costs for spay and neuter services, as well as for other routine and emergency medical procedures that pets need. Also, New Yorkers in all income brackets are finding it harder and harder to put food on the table for themselves now, let alone having enough money to feed their four-legged family members, which often leads to people having to make the heart-breaking decision to surrender their pets to shelters.

I respectfully urge the City Council to do two (2) things to help remedy these growing problems.

1) Since 193,000 spay/neuter surgeries are needed annually for community cats and owned pets who cannot afford them, please allocate $1.5 million in the upcoming City budget to provide funding in the amount of for spay and neuter services in NYC for all who need them, both for pets and for community cat colonies. Doing so would help to lessen the financial burden on citizens seeking spay and neuter services, as well as prevent the overpopulation of animals in NYC. This funding would be a crucial step toward building the infrastructure needed to humanely and effectively manage the population of animals in NYC significantly.

2) Please allocate $2 million in the upcoming City budget to create and maintain pet food pantries in NYC, so that New Yorkers do not need to choose between feeding themselves and their beloved pets, and in the worst case scenario, to surrender their pets to a shelter.

By investing in these services, the City can take proactive steps to reduce shelter intake, improve public health, and support working families and equity issues.

Thank you very much for your attention to these important issues.

Deborah Thomas
[redacted]
New York, NY 10025

New Yorkers are suffering, including our 4-legged New Yorkers. Allocating even a small amount in the budget to provide support for spaying and neutering and pet food pantries will make a world of difference and could save the City in the long run as individuals may not consider surrounding their pet if they can afford to care for them.

Why do we need to add $1.5M for spaying and neutering and $2M for pet food pantries?

- 75% of dogs entering ACC are unfixed.
- Fewer cats will suffer outdoors as we can reduce the stray population with more spaying and neutering.
- 193,000 spay/neuter surgeries are needed annually for community cats and owned pets who cannot afford them. The city funds only 3,500 surgeries.
- Affordable veterinary care and spay/neuter keep animals where they belong — at home with the people who love them.
- As cost barriers are removed, adoptions will increase and preventable euthanasia will decrease.

Right now, more than half of New Yorkers cannot afford a basic veterinary office visit. Animal rescuers are overwhelmed by the growing number of stray and abandoned animals who need help — with no financial or logistical support from the city.

Families are surrendering the animals they love because they cannot access resources — adding even more pressure to NYC's already strained rescue community and shelter system. No New Yorker should have to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their pet.

NYC spends just $2.98 per person on animal care — among the lowest of any major U.S. city. We can add just this small amount to improve the lives of our 4-legged New Yorkers and the many 2-legged New Yorkers that care for them.

Testimony to the City Council Committee on Finance
Submitted by Deonie Hall
Date: 6.10.26

Good afternoon, Council Members,
Thank you for holding this hearing. My name is Deonie Hall, and I am testifying on behalf of Freedom Agenda as a Community Organizer, Intern, and a member of the Campaign to Close Rikers. I'm here today as someone who has personally experienced the system and seen how it impacts young people and our communities.

When I was arrested, I was taken to Crossroads for a medical exam. What I experienced there is not what care is supposed to look like. The conditions were not clean, and it didn't feel safe. That experience has stayed with me and shown me how the system treats young people rather than helping them. While Crossroads is run by ACS, it operates under the same failed approach as Rikers, and in many ways, funding DOC at the levels we currently do is based on the idea that our City will keep failing young people, in our communities and at places like Crossroads. Experiences like mine are not rare. Too many young people go through environments that are supposed to care for them, but instead make things worse for them. It doesn't just affect them in the moment; it affects how they feel and how they move forward after.

At the same time, our city continues to put money into jails and incarceration, while young people don't have enough access to real support. We need mental health services, safe spaces, and opportunities, not systems that harm us.

It feels like the system responds to harm with punishment instead of prevention. But if we truly want safer communities, we need to invest in people before they ever come into contact with the system.

I'm part of a generation that wants something different. We want investment in education, youth programs, mental health services, and job opportunities, not more funding for incarceration. The city needs to add an additional $47.2M for diversion and reentry services through the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice and another $39.2M for community mental health treatment.

I urge the Council to reduce funding for incarceration and invest in the communities that need it most.
You can read our full budget analysis here.

Thank you for your time, and thank you for holding this hearing.

CLOSE RIKERS

DECARCERATE ✷ DEFEND ✷ DIVEST & REDISTRIBUTE

FY2027 City Budget Analysis & Priorities

At a cost of nearly half a million dollars per person per year, Rikers Island is the most expensive and least effective tool our City has to create community safety. The FY2027 Executive Budget includes some key steps toward reining in jail operation costs, and reinvesting those savings in true public safety. And in order to Close Rikers as quickly as possible, we'll need to do more. To align the FY2027 budget with the City's legal and moral obligation to Close Rikers, it must include:

1. **An additional $39.2M to meet mental health needs outside of Rikers,** including:
    a. **At least $66.3M, baselined, for Intensive Mobile Treatment (IMT) teams,** $22M more than the Executive Budget allocates, which should eliminate the current waitlist.[1]
    b. **At least $23.8M, baselined, for Assertive Community Treatment (ACT),** $4.5M more than the Executive Budget allocates.[2]
    c. **At least $6M, baselined, for Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT),** $2M more than the Executive Budget allocates, which provides both mental health and reentry services to people returning from jail and prison.[3]
    d. **$1.7M to establish an outpatient competency restoration pilot program** for 50-75 people who might otherwise be waiting at Rikers for transfer to a state hospital.
    e. **$3M in capital funds to support 60 new residential treatment beds** for people with serious mental illness and with co-occurring addictions.[4]
    f. **At least $8.8M, baselined, for crisis respite centers,** $6M more than the Executive Budget allocates, to open four new centers, in compliance with Local Law 118-2023.[5]
2. **An additional $47.2M for diversion and reentry services through the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ), including:**
    a. **$10M** in new funds for ATI programs and **$10M** in new funds for Reentry Services, as recommended by the ATI/Reentry Coalition, to scale up these evidence-based models.
    b. **$6.9M** to expand programs serving court-involved youth with mental health needs.
    c. **$20.3M**[6] to establish at least 150 units of low-barrier housing for people with court-involvement and mental health diagnoses.
    d. OCJ should also publish an analysis of the full need for transitional reentry housing, and conduct a data match to generate an updated eligibility list for Justice Impacted Supportive Housing (JISH), a permanent reentry housing model.[7]
3. **An additional $3.6M to restore cuts to the Board of Correction (BOC), and expand their oversight capacity.** The Executive Budget shows $605,000 in cuts to BOC's budget.[8] These cuts

[1] Per DOHMH testimony on June 5, 2026, the waitlist is 600 people. Each new IMT team can serve 27 people.
[2] The combined waitlist for all ACT teams, including FACT and SPACT, was 654 people as of June 5, 2026 per DOHMH testimony. The City should also work with the state to eliminate the waitlist for all ACT teams.
[3] For FACT teams, the City adds approximately $675,000 per ACT team to supplement state funding by adding reentry specialists.
[4] State funding through OASAS would provide operational funds.
[5] The FY2026 budget for crisis respite centers was $5.3M, but only $2.8M in the FY2027 Preliminary Budget, as reported by DOHMH.
[6] Approximately $135,000 per unit, based on similar Safe Haven models.
[7] While JISH funding would come through DOHMH, OCJ coordinated the first (and only) data match, when the program was launched.
[8] $233,000 is associated with cutting two vacancies, and $374,437 is associated with cuts to OTPS

are unwise and unnecessary. The Board of Correction has testified that they need at least 60 staff roles (29 more than the Executive Budget includes)[9] to carry out their oversight responsibilities, as a first step to rightsizing their budget.[10] Expanding BOC's capacity could not only improve conditions in the jails, but also protect the city from future liability, like the $123 million dollars paid out in FY2025 for claims against DOC.

Meanwhile, DOC remains over-resourced. With new management in place, DOC can better deploy resources, not rush to fill vacancies. The FY2027 budget should build on smart vacancy reductions announced in the Executive Budget, and:

4. **Eliminate vacancies for DOC uniformed staff, to begin to rightsize the agency**
    a. The Executive Budget authorizes 6,474 positions for uniformed officers in FY2027 (down from 7,060 in FY2026), but as of January 1, 2026 DOC employed 5,759 officers and 1,301 positions were vacant.[11] Filling DOC's remaining 715 vacancies would cost an additional **$95.6M annually.**[12] These remaining vacancies should be eliminated, in order to reduce incarceration and cut wasteful spending.
5. **Reduce overtime spending** by consolidating operations and permanently closing jails on Rikers, starting with the vacant Anna M. Kross Center, where 109 officers are still assigned.[13]
6. **Conduct and release a staffing analysis as soon as possible,** to determine how many staff DOC actually needs to operate the facilities it currently manages.

The Executive Budget also includes 580 more police officers, among a surge of low-level arrests that frequently impact New Yorkers who lack stable housing and need mental health services. These resources should instead be used for housing, healthcare, and other community-based interventions.

DOC Budget Breakdown

- The Executive Budget proposes spending at least **$2.96 billion[14] for jail operations in FY2027**. This represents a slight reduction from the FY2027 Preliminary budget, but still a 3.8% increase from last year's adopted budget.[15]
- The Executive Budget shows an authorized headcount of **6,474 uniformed DOC officers**. With approximately 6,600 people in custody, this amounts to a **staffing ratio that is still nearly 4 times higher than the national average**, and **2 times more officers** than will be required to operate the borough jails.[16]
- DOC is on track to spend **$369 million on overtime** for uniform staff in FY2026 - 229% of their adopted budget.[17]
- New York City spent at least **$485,801 annually to incarcerate one person** at Rikers in FY2025.
- Most of DOC's costs are driven by staffing. The FY2027 budget projects that 87% of DOC expenses will be staff salaries, overtime and benefits.

---

[9] Based on testimony from the Board of Correction on March 7, 2025 that approximately 60 staff are needed to fulfill their mandate. BOC's proposed staffing in the F27 budget is 33 people, and total agency budget of $3.67M, per Departmental Estimates.
[10] Board of Corrections representatives previously advocated increasing their budget to a minimum percentage of DOC's.
[11] Per Independent Budget Office
[12] Based on $133,756 per officer, as calculated by the Vera Institute.
[13] City of New York Executive Budget Fiscal Year 2027, Supporting Schedules p. 1414
[14] Including expenses, associated fringe benefits, pensions, and debt service. Expense Revenue Contract Budget
[15] DOC's FY2026 Adopted Budget was $2.85 billion. A-Look-Inside-the-FY-2027-New-York-City-Department-of-Correction-Budget.pdf
[16] The Independent Rikers Commission estimates 3,240 officers will be needed in the borough jail system.
[17] Per Independent Budget Office

No New Yorker should face the tough choice between their own meals and those of their furry friends.

When veterinary care and spay/neuter services are accessible and affordable, pets can stay at home with the families that love them.

By removing financial barriers, we can expect to see a rise in adoptions and a decrease in preventable euthanasia.

Imagine a future where fewer cats endure life on the street.

My name is Diana Jean Stewart, and I am testifying on the FY2027 budget.

The budget includes approximately $1.5 billion over two years in HPD capital funding for RAD/PACT and related Section 8 conversion activity. These City capital commitments support the conversion pipeline for roughly 62,000 NYCHA units.

That money should be moved out of the HPD RAD/PACT capital lines and placed directly in the NYCHA capital budget for Section 9 comprehensive modernization.

NYCHA residents need repairs funded directly: roofs, boilers, elevators, mold remediation, lead abatement, heat, kitchens, bathrooms, and accessibility upgrades. The City should not require a development to convert from Section 9 public housing to Section 8 before major capital repairs become possible.

I urge the Council to reallocate the $1.5 billion from HPD RAD/PACT conversion funding to NYCHA Section 9 capital repairs, for the comprehensive modernization program.

Fund Section 9 directly. Keep public housing public.

Good morning. My name is Diego Figueroa, and I am a college student. I have lived on the West Side of Manhattan my entire life, and have been heavily involved in the fight to stop the demolition of Fulton & Elliott Chelsea Houses, a project that the mayor seeks to accelerate through this budget. Rather than investing in comprehensive modernization for NYCHA tenants, this administration has opted to use taxpayer dollars to fund the privatization of 62,000 units of genuinely affordable Section 9 housing, and convert them to Section 8. There is about $1.5B earmarked in the budget for the next two years that will fund the RAD/PACT conversion. I testify before you today urging this committee, and the council at large to divert this funding from HPD to Section 9.

Public housing is the true bastion of affordability in this city. For too long, developers have lined their pockets off the backs of working class people and communities of color. They preach a desperate urge to build as much new housing as humanly possible, with no regard for the people who live in neighborhoods they seek to topple. Thousands of tenants live at Fulton & Elliott Chelsea. They are real people, with real voices, and real stories. Their community is sacred to them, and remains one of the last bits of authentic New York on the West Side. I refuse to sit by while wealthy transplants, gentrifiers and yuppies tell them that their homes are not worth saving, especially when we have money to fund Section 9!

This plan is not about creating more affordable housing. It is about gentrifying the neighborhood, and turning Chelsea, and the entire city into the next Abu Dhabi.

Stop the displacement, stop the demolition, and fund Section 9. Keep public housing public.

Animals are the most innocent and most harmed New York City residents. They need help and support, especially with the current economic environment when people can barely afford to feed themselves. I've done TnR (trap, neuter, release/or adopt if possible) at my own expense for over 10 years in NYC. I've worked with rescuers across Brooklyn as well as residents to help get cats as well as any other animal in need help, including fish, a pig, a goat, ferrets (which should be legal), chameleons, rats, hamsters, dogs, oppossum, raccoons, pigeons and other birds. Most rescuers work marginal jobs and are barely staying afloat but have a huge heart and can't bear to see anyone suffering. They live paycheck to paycheck just to afford food for the colonies they feed and care for, rescues they take in, and any other animal that crosses their path in need. Vet visit prices have doubled since covid and there are very few of them who will help provide much needed discounts to rescuers. Rescuers also help residents who can no longer afford their companions. NYC needs to also set aside funding to create a program to lower pet food for low income households - that would help alleviate the problem of animals being abandoned on the streets. Spaying and neutering rates are woefully low - nobody should be able to get their hands on any animal that is not spayed or neutered. It's an expensive service, running $400-800 at a private vet's office.

Helping people pay for care - both medical and daily feeding/care - for their furry family members would reduce the amount of murders committed by ACC for lack of space. Providing funding to these efforts helps all New Yorkers - human and non-human.

I am writing today to express my deep concern about the future of the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch and to directly urge the council to align the administration's executive actions with the transit equity values that Mayor Mamdani has long championed for.

Queens is the city's largest borough in area and the second-largest by population, yet it has the fewest subway miles per capita. QueensLink resolves this disparity with a "rails and trails" design consisting of 33 acres of new community parks built alongside an extension of the M subway train. As of March 2026, professional research from independent transit experts confirms that QueensLink would generate at least $8.9 billion in economic growth, deliver up to $2.20 of wider societal benefit for every dollar of public investment, and carry twice as many riders per mile as the Interborough Express. The project would also reduce vehicle miles traveled by 30 million miles each year, cutting 7,200 tons of carbon emissions annually.

Despite these clear metrics, the latest budget proposals continue to fund the QueensWay plan—a parks project from the previous administration that builds exclusively a park, with no structural or spatial allowances for future rail transit. The New York City Economic Development Corporation intends to move forward with construction on this model this year.

Furthermore, while the expansion of green space remains a legitimate city/municipal priority, these capital resources would be far more effectively utilized by addressing the millions of dollars in deferred maintenance that currently plague New York City's existing parks.

Additionally, to claim that building the QueensWay does not block future transit ignores both engineering reality and New York State law. The current "Metropolitan Hub" design consumes the entire width of the right-of-way directly behind the Metropolitan Expeditionary Learning School and adjacent commercial properties. There is zero physical space left over to run tracks alongside the path. More importantly, the moment this city-owned right-of-way is officially developed and designated as an active public park, it triggers state parkland alienation laws. Reverting that land back to a transportation corridor down the road would require an act of the New York State Legislature. The political and legal friction of stripping parkland status and demolishing multi-million-dollar community assets makes future reactivation practically impossible. The QueensWay effectively blocks transit permanently.

The administration has proposed to dedicate a significant political capital to a $700 million universal free bus proposal for one year, but a structural reallocation of these resources would deliver far greater citywide equity and long-term mobility for all. For starters, a fraction of that funding should instead be used to expand the Fair Fares program to 150% of the Federal Poverty Level for completely free bus *and* subway rides for Low-Income New Yorkers, while offering 50% discounted half-fares for New Yorkers up to 250% of the poverty line. This targeted approach addresses immediate economic hardship across the entire rapid transit network, recognizing that the vast majority of low-income riders rely on subways as well as buses.

Furthermore, carving out about $50 million to $100 million from that pool would also allow the city to fund and initiate the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) study

and the preliminary engineering design for the Rockaway Beach Branch reactivation. By taking on the upfront costs of the EIS and design work now, the city can deliver the QueensLink project directly to the State and the MTA in a shovel-ready state. This could secure eligibility for federal infrastructure matches, state funding, and accelerate the extension without forcing the MTA to disrupt its existing 5-year capital program.

As an Assemblymember, Mayor Mamdani stood with transit advocates because he recognized that true environmental and economic justice requires reliable rail access for outer-borough transit deserts. It is deeply disheartening to see the administration now fund a design that permanently breaks a continuous rail spine. I strongly urge the City Council to amend the budget priorities, halt the current EDC timeline for the QueensWay, and allocate the necessary engineering funds to initiate and advance the shared rails-and-trails vision of QueensLink.

Thank You

All the best,
Donghoon Yi



Subject: Privatization of NYCHA Creates Instability for Seniors.

I live at Mitchel Houses in the South Bronx and do not have an email address. I am being supported in submitting this testimony by Save Section 9.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

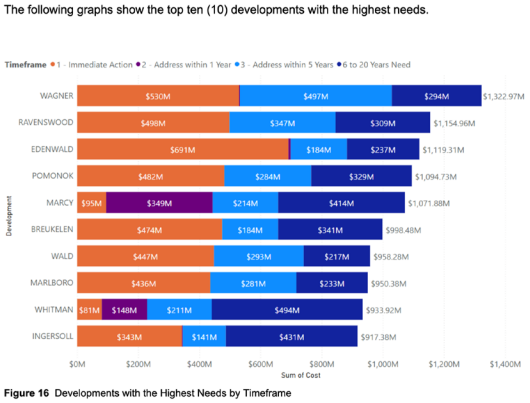


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.
- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

Thank you Chair Lee, Finance Committee members, and all the City Council members still listening at hour 13 of this hearing—while the Knicks are playing, no less.

My name is Dylan Flesch and I'm a member of the New York City Public Library Action Network, NYC PLAN.

Our demand is simple: fund libraries at 0.5% of the city expense budget. Mayor Mamdani campaigned on that promise, yet the Executive Budget falls $97 million short of this amount. It includes $526 million for libraries, which is just 0.42% of the budget, an even lower percentage for libraries than what they saw in the last Adams budget.

I'm grateful to the 11 Council members, including four members of the budget negotiating team, who have committed to fighting for 0.5%.

The $97 million we're demanding is a rounding error in the city budget, but it would be transformative for our libraries. Library CEOs recently testified that they face a $35 million operating budget shortfall and I'm glad they highlighted that gap, but they are NOT asking for enough.

They do not speak for library patrons or library workers when they ask for crumbs while the need is so much greater. We want a meaningful INCREASE in library funding, not just to keep up with inflation and barely scrape by.

Libraries belong to us, to the people, not to the CEOs. They exist because of workers and the public they serve. They're also not a GIFT from the city to the people, they, like everything else in this city, are funded by us, and we are entitled to them.

That is why we're demand 0.5% now, not sometime in the next two terms, but now, and as a baseline in every financial plan going forward. 0.5% is the floor, not the ceiling.

Thank you.

And I'll also throw in a demand for 1% for parks.

Hello council members, my name is Edrick. I live in Woodside and have family in Woodhaven. I'm writing this testimony in support of QueensLink.

I rely on the subway system to travel around the city, from commuting to college, and traveling for leisure. As of present day getting from Woodside to Woodhaven without using a car has been a challenge.

It has come to my concern that the anti-transit project known as the QueensWay Metropolitan Hub is still funded on the New York City budget. If approved, it would block the future reactivation of the Rockaway Beach Branch. Even though the project has been said to not "preclude future rail", official design submissions for the park contradict this statement.

It is also noted that the city is looking to expand green spaces, yet the Metropolitan Hub is located in an area with a large amount of existing green space that being Forest Park.

QueensLink also includes a park with a rail so there is no reason to not have both. A rail new line would also help alleviate crowding on the Q52/53SBS routes along with relieving congestion on Woodhaven Blvd. It can also cut down travel times through out the borough. All of this can be done with an existing right of way which many other rail expansion projects don't have the luxury of having.

I urge City Council to reconsider the funding of the QueensWay Metropolitan Hub or at the very least consider redesigns that do not block future rail reactivation. Thank you for your attention and consideration.

June 10, 2026

To: New York City Council, Committees on Finance and Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Relations
Re: Public Library Funding

My dearest City Council members,

Please accept this written testimony for the June 10, 2026 committee meeting on the FY2027 budget. I'm writing specifically on the topic of funding for NYC's three stellar and irreplaceable public library systems.

First, permit me to rehearse what is for you surely well known history:

- The current FY '26 library budget is $523 million, which is 0.45% of the overall city budget. This was adopted last year during the Adams administration.
- Mamdani campaigned on a promise of 0.5% for libraries.
- In January the FY '27 preliminary budget from Mamdani proposed libraries receive a mere $491 million, or 0.39% of the overall city budget of $124.7 billion.
- The proposed executive budget released on May 12th is $526 million, which is just 0.42% of the overall city budget.

While this budget is higher than last year by $3 million dollars, it does not even keep up with the 3.8% inflation rate (Keeping up with inflation of 3.8% would mean a budget of $542 million, which is still not adequate or close to the promised 0.5%). Also, for context, adding and updating just 2 elevators at the Astoria library branch cost $13.4 million dollars[1]. So the increase of a mere $3 million dollars across 220 branches citywide is hardly something to celebrate.

Mayor Mamdani promised 0.5% and for that to happen he needs to dedicate $623.5 million. In addition, we ask that the 0.5% of the total city budget be the *benchmark* for all future library budgets.

The executive budget is still $97 million short of the campaign promise.

I think it's a realistic but significant number. I believe this would allow libraries, which are relied on now more than ever, to be more fully staffed, and to accommodate patron needs.

To borrow language from our friends at Urban Libraries Unite: "This flat funding proposal relegates library workers in NYC to continued short staffing and overwork, compromising the ability to provide services to our neighbors at the same time need is rising."[2]

Now that is all very monetary and practical. But I don't want to leave it at that–this is much deeper than dollars and cents. This is a fight for the soul of our city and our society as a whole. **Public goods** are the true American dream, the true force for democracy, the true light of our great city and country. If we lose our libraries, what chance do we stand of getting them back? We must fund them, must put our money where our heart and mouths are. We must do right by the workers and patrons.

You've no doubt heard and read a great deal already about the enormous benefits public libraries bring. I won't add to it, much as I could go on for hours and hours. Instead, I want you to close your eyes and feel the pull of your own hearts and do what you know is right. Thank you.

[1] https://www.nyc.gov/assets/ddc/downloads/presentations/QBPL_BPPresentationMarch2023R1.pdf
[2] https://urbanlibrariansunite.org/save-nyc-libraries/

To the New York City Council,

Hello, my name is Edward Zheng and I am a Queens resident of 12 years. I am also a regular commuter of the Woodhaven Blvd corridor. The buses there are overcrowded and slow, and that road itself is constantly congested with traffic.

That is why I am a very strong supporter of the Queenslink project. The Queenslink would take an abandoned rail line called the Rockaway Beach Branch and repurpose it for a subway. It would also have 33 acres of brand new parks alongside the subway line. By reactivating the branch for rail, it would provide a parallel subway to the overcrowded Woodhaven Blvd and Van Wyck Expwy, the former having 14,000 daily bus riders and the latter having 170,000 commuters between Kew Gardens and JFK Airport. By reactivating the branch for rail, it would add more trains to South Queens and the Rockaways, two regions of Queens that have lackluster subway service yet are receiving thousands of units of new housing. By reactivating the line, you cut travel time to South Queens and the Rockaways into Midtown Manhattan, as Queenslink would open up a straighter path through Central Queens.

This project is as close to a slam dunk for Queens transit. However, Queenslink is under threat by Queensway, which is a proposed park that would be placed on top of the Rockaway Beach Branch, the same branch that Queenslink would use. Unfortunately, a part of Queensway called the Metropolitan Hub is currently being funded inside the budget, at a tune of $43 million.

Queensway will claim that their park won't block Queenslink. But there are glaring inconsistencies with that claim, inconsistencies that Queensway has not addressed. For one, if a park won't block transit, that should be reflected in the design of the park. For example, there should be dedicated space for rail and the structures should be engineered in a way that can hold the weight of a train. That is not the case with Queensway's Metropolitan Hub. The overpass on Metropolitan Ave is designed to be too weak for trains and the current proposed paths are in direct conflict with the proposed train tracks. What this means is that when it comes time to build Queenslink, this entire structure would need to be demolished, something that was confirmed by the MTA. At best, it would mean the $43 million would be a complete waste. At worst, Queensway would actively use the park to lobby against the train, citing the fact that their park would be demolished. And given that Queensway has the audacity to put on their website that "Queens does not need another train line," it is obvious that Queensway intends to use their park to block the train from ever materializing.

Another claim that Queensway loves to use to rationalize their park is the claim that rail costs too much (between $6 billion and $8.1 billion). Except, the studies that Queensway uses to reach that claim is completely misleading. In construction, costs are divided into hard and soft costs. Hard costs are related to constructing the physical project, soft costs are other costs not related to construction. Inside the 2018 study that Queensway lives to tout, the MTA claimed the hard cost is $1.9 billion. The remaining $6.2 billion is all soft costs. This claim should raise serious alarm bells because in construction, hard costs never outnumber soft costs. Even the Second Ave Subway, which was on record for having the largest soft cost bloat in the history of

the MTA at the time, only had a $1.5 billion soft cost against a $3 billion hard cost. So, using those same ratios, the cost of Queenslink would look something closer to $2.67 billion 2016 dollars, or $3.7 billion in today's dollars. That is a far cry from the $8.1 billion or even the $5.9 billion that Queensway and the MTA love to cite.

Let me be clear: I am not asking for Queenslink to be done by next year. What I am asking is that the Metropolitan Hub should not be funded unless it is designed in a way that does not block transit. For example, it should be visible that there is space leftover for rail. It should be visible that the entire structure should be engineered in a way that allows it to hold the weight of subway trains. This way, in the very likely event that Queenslink is needed, the Metropolitan Hub does not need to be demolished. Rather, relatively simple construction is needed to add the rail to the park. That is way better than having to demolish the park and waste $43 million that can be used on other park projects in the city.

I conclude by asking the City Council to consider revoking or attaching conditions to that funding regarding the Metropolitan Hub. Because Queens needs more transportation options, and we need more than words that the Metropolitan Hub doesn't block Queenslink. We need action.

Thanks for your time.

Edward Zheng

My name is Edwin ‘’Tito’ Delgado, and I am a Chelsea resident. I am submitting this written testimony on the fiscal year 2027 budget.

My message is a simple and direct one: Our tax dollars should not be going into the pockets of private real estate via section 8. Our tax dollars should go directly to section 9. We are not asking for additional money. We are simply asking for the money that is currently proposed to be allocated to the profit driven section 8 landlords rather than to go to section 9. As you know the private sector has never given anything to the working man.

Please do not give the 1.5 billion dollars that belongs to section 9 over to the private sector. This is a transfer of tax money to a private sector. That will never do anything for poor working people. The money that NYC has should be used for section 9 public housing. Do not privatize the only affordable housing left in New York City. Thank you.

Note: I am a blind senior citizen who waited from 8:30 AM until 2PM this past Wed. to testify in person, to no avail. I had to leave as my achy body could not take being there any longer. I am submitting my testimony electronically, but obviously that was not my first choice. Nothing substitutes an oral argument when you can hear in our voices our pain and frustration with this lack of attention to public housing. In the future , please give some accommodations to the disabled community. No need to wait so long.

Dear members of the Commmittee on Finance:

I urge you to prioritize funding for NYC Parks and the urban forest in this year's City budget, including a $150 million investment to rebuild the NYC Parks workforce and kickstart the City's new NYC Urban Forest Plan.

Our parks, trees and natural areas cool our neighborhoods, reduce flooding, clean our air, lower energy costs, and provide free, safe places for New Yorkers to enjoy—benefits that are essential as the city faces increasing climate risks. Yet NYC Parks has received well under 1% of the City budget for decades, despite managing more than half of the city's tree canopy and 14% of its land.

Years of staffing cuts and underinvestment have strained the workforce responsible for caring for the green spaces we rely on.

This spring, New York City released its first-ever Urban Forest Plan—a major step forward for protecting, expanding and caring for the city's 7+ million trees. But without dedicated, stable funding, the 10-year plan cannot be implemented. The proposed $150 million is essential to restore NYC Parks positions, expand the forestry and natural areas workforce, increase tree planting, and support the cross-agency coordination the plan requires.

As you finalize the budget, please ensure the City has the resources needed to maintain and grow our urban forest, improve park stewardship, and deliver the environmental and public-health benefits all communities deserve.

Sincerely,

Edwin Zawadzki

Subject: Urgent Call to Prioritize Funding to Expand School Capacity in Long Island City

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident and parent to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

LIC has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, Kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, and yet most area schools are already operating over capacity: P.S. 112 at **130%**, and P.S./I.S. 78 at **111%**. What is more, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City — Court Square — still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message to families is clear: you may not be guaranteed a school seat in your neighborhood.

I would also like to express urgent concern about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed school project. In a neighborhood where families are struggling today to secure local school placements, this project, along with other promised school construction projects in LIC, cannot continue to fall behind competing priorities. While I appreciate the creation of an incubation site for Q508 (Q439Q), a temporary solution cannot become a justification for continued delays to the permanent facility. Families were promised a permanent neighborhood school, with the full facilities and long-term stability that a dedicated school building provides. An incubation site may help relieve short-term pressure, but it does not address the broader and growing need for permanent school infrastructure in LIC.

Additionally, the current lease for the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE, Q580) is set to expire in just three years. Families have been assured that the school would be relocated so that it can continue serving students without disruption. We are appreciative that the budget includes funding for BSGE. However, we want to emphasize that it is critical that the City follow through on this commitment and move urgently to secure a permanent home for the school. Allowing delays to continue would create significant uncertainty for students and families and risks the loss of an important educational institution in a neighborhood already facing a severe shortage of school seats. The City must prioritize funding and planning for BSGE's relocation now to ensure continuity and stability for the community.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has also recognized the need for additional schools to support the neighborhood's rapid growth. Specifically, commitments were made to advance development of a school at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard. Creation of two additional schools has also been promised to create 1,300 more seats in conjunction with the planned construction of over 14,000 residential units. As more housing is developed through OneLIC, school construction must move in parallel — not years behind residential growth. Without firm

commitments and accountability around these promised schools, the existing seat crisis will only intensify.

Delays to the opening of these schools are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and more families pushed out of the neighborhood because they cannot rely on access to local public schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency, accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508 and other promised schools on schedule. Schools aren't just a service—they're the foundation of a stable, thriving neighborhood.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future. Please ensure that timely funding is delivered to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority for the completion of these projects.

Sincerely,
Ei Mon
11101
Parent

Testimony in Support of Protecting Section 9 Public Housing and New York City Residents

Good afternoon,

My name is El Sonido Latino Presente, and I stand here today not only for myself, but for the hundreds of thousands of residents who call the New York City Housing Authority home.

NYCHA is not just housing. NYCHA is one of the last lines of truly affordable housing for working-class families, seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, and generations of New Yorkers who helped build this city.

Today, we are deeply concerned about the future of Section 9 public housing. Many residents believe that claiming to lease public housing developments for 99 years to profit-driven market-rate entities is a clear violation of the original mission of public housing — to protect the most vulnerable New Yorkers and preserve deeply affordable housing for future generations — along with the continued lack of transparency surrounding the City's housing agenda, preservation structures, and budget priorities.

The FY2027 Executive Budget references billions of dollars for housing investments, including $5.6 billion in the 5-Year Capital Plan dedicated to NYCHA. It also highlights:
• $500 million for renovations and modernization,
• and $256 million for vacant unit restoration.

But the budget language remains extremely vague and confusing to residents.

Large funding amounts are grouped together without clearly explaining:

- what funding is specifically protected for Section 9 public housing,
- what funding is tied to project-based Section 8 structures,
- what preservation trusts or preservation structures are involved,
- what developments are affected,
- what outside entities may be involved,
- and what long-term agreements residents are actually being asked to accept.

Residents are hearing broad terms like:
"housing investments,"
"modernization,"
"preservation,"
and "housing preservation trusts,"
without clear explanations about what is truly being preserved and under what housing structure.

How much of this funding is specifically protected for Section 9 public housing?

How much is tied to conversions, preservation trusts, privatization structures, or programs connected to Section 8?

Which developments are being prioritized?

What contract partners, preservation entities, management structures, or outside organizations will be involved moving forward?

What guarantees exist to preserve permanent public control of NYCHA housing for future generations?

Residents deserve exact answers before decisions are finalized.

For years, NYCHA residents have watched funding for public housing be neglected, delayed, and underfunded. Now we are being told that large-scale changes, preservation structures, and long-term agreements are the only solution. But many residents fear these decisions are slowly moving public housing away from its original mission.

Section 9 public housing was created to provide deeply affordable housing protected from the private market. Residents are concerned that long-term agreements of 99 years with private or profit-driven entities, including preservation trust structures and outside management organizations, could permanently reshape public housing without meaningful resident consent.

The construction may move forward either way, but for tenants the distinction between Section 9 and project-based Section 8 matters deeply because the contract partners, preservation entities, management structures, oversight, and long-term control of the housing can change.

That distinction affects residents, families, and future generations.

Let’s not forget that residents and NYCHA are supposed to be in partnership. Residents are not supposed to be excluded from decisions that directly affect their homes, families, and futures.

That is why residents must be included before major decisions are made.

Many residents feel the current teams and structures in place are operating more in the interest of profit-driven market-rate models than in protecting the residents who are supposed to be safeguarded at all times. Residents feel their livelihood, stability, and future are no longer being placed first.

There should be organizations and leadership involved that truly have the heart to protect the most vulnerable populations living in public housing.

That is why many residents are asking elected officials and decision-makers to seriously look at the work being done by the Committee To Save Section 9 — a group of residents and volunteers dedicating their time, energy, education, and organizing efforts to protect the livelihood of residents living in more than 177,000 apartments across 335 NYCHA developments throughout New York City.

Because at the end of the day, we are all residents of New York City Housing Authority trying to protect our homes, our communities, and our future.

We also cannot ignore the fact that residents of NYCHA do not see enough elected officials publicly standing up and fighting to protect Section 9 public housing at a time when the entire City of New York is struggling with affordability and housing instability.

Many residents feel abandoned by the very elected officials who were elected with the support and votes of NYCHA residents. Too often, elected officials come to NYCHA developments during election season asking for support, only for residents to later feel ignored, unheard, and betrayed once those officials are in office.

Residents are asking:
Where are the elected officials publicly fighting to preserve Section 9 public housing?
Where are the voices demanding transparency and accountability for NYCHA residents?

Many residents recognize City Council Member Christopher Banks as one of the few elected officials who has publicly acknowledged these concerns surrounding Section 9 and NYCHA residents.

But residents believe this responsibility should not fall on one person alone.

This needs to stop.

Elected officials work for the people. Their responsibility is to fight for the rights, protections, and livelihood of the people who elected them and whose tax dollars pay their salaries.

Residents are demanding changes within the structure of our elected institutions so that public officials truly fight for the people, protect affordable housing, and stop allowing decisions to be made without meaningful resident participation and transparency.

At the same time, we must also recognize that the affordability crisis is hurting New Yorkers outside of NYCHA as well. Families across this city are struggling

under rising rents, displacement, overcrowding, and housing instability. The rent-burdened population facing impossible housing costs matters too.

We cannot continue dividing New Yorkers between NYCHA residents and non-NYCHA renters while the overall affordability crisis worsens across the city.

Whether someone lives in public housing, rent-stabilized housing, or market-rate housing, working people throughout New York City are struggling to survive. Housing policies should unite residents around affordability and stability — not separate communities while people are being priced out of their neighborhoods.

We are asking elected officials, including Mayor Zohran Mamdani, to protect all residents facing housing insecurity while also preserving Section 9 public housing as a permanent public asset for future generations.

We are asking elected officials to remember who NYCHA belongs to:
the people.

Not developers.
Not political organizations.
Not private interests.

The voices of residents must be central to every conversation about the future of public housing.

We also believe accountability is necessary. Residents have the right to question policies, leadership decisions, and organizations that claim to represent us while supporting actions many residents do not agree with.

That is why many residents are rallying behind the Committee To Save Section 9 — because residents want transparency, education, participation, and protection of permanent affordability for future generations.

We are asking for the following:

1. Full transparency on all NYCHA funding allocations within the FY2027 budget.
2. Clear public breakdowns separating Section 9 funding from Section 8-related programs, preservation trusts, and conversion structures.
3. Public disclosure of all contract partners, preservation entities, management organizations, and long-term agreements connected to NYCHA funding.
4. Binding resident consultation before any long-term agreements affecting NYCHA developments are approved.
5. Protection of permanent affordability and public oversight for future generations.

6. Direct resident representation at decision-making tables regarding NYCHA policy, capital funding, preservation structures, and housing preservation.

NYCHA residents are not powerless.

More than 600,000 people live in NYCHA housing. We are workers, taxpayers, parents, seniors, students, and lifelong New Yorkers.

We are organizing because we understand what is at stake.

Affordable housing is disappearing across New York City. NYCHA remains one of the last protections keeping many families from displacement and homelessness.

This fight is not only about NYCHA. It is about protecting affordability, dignity, and stability for all New Yorkers.

We are not asking to be ignored while decisions are made for us.

We are demanding to be heard.

Thank you.

El Sonido Latino Presente
An Organization For
“We The People”

From: Joan Lee
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Written Testimony Regarding Manhattan Youth at Robert F. Wagner Middle School
Date: Tuesday, May 26, 2026 3:26:13 PM

[redacted]

Submitted on behalf of my child, Eleanor Kim (6th grader at Wagner Middle School)

I'd like to express my deep disappointment in the fact that schools around the city are being changed to new afterschool programs. My school, Robert F Wagner Middle School (MS 167) is being switched from Manhattan Youth, a program that has been at our school for 8 years, to a new program NYJTL or the New York Junior Tennis and Learning. Most importantly, students are affected very heavily by this decision.

The staff at Manhattan Youth is always able to support the students in all ways. My newsletter teacher, Ms. Howard has constantly supported me through the newsletter. She always helps us with the entire process of making the newsletter and printing it. She is always able to break the tension with a funny joke- and let's be real, it is hard to make middle schoolers laugh. My D&D teacher, Grae, has been working with Manhattan youth for 2 years. They are a really great teacher, assisting me through the stunning worlds of D&D. Without them I would have never known anything about D&D. Another thing Manhattan Youth is great at is their musical theatre productions. This year, the Manhattan Youth performance of Guys and Dolls was absolutely stunning. I'd have never realized that Wagner had many talented singers and actors if it weren't for it. Without Manhattan Youth Wagner would be a very different place.

Afterschool is meant to be a place where students can learn things that they can't learn in school. "NYJTL school-based after school programs offer year-round enrichment, tutoring, tennis, sports, fitness, wellness, and nutrition education, arts programs, character education, STEM, literacy activities, educational field trips, and access to city-wide tournaments."(NYJTL website). Excluding the tennis programs, many of the programs offered are similar to the programs we already do at school. We already have an arts program, character education, field trips, and STEM. Manhattan Youth offers many programs that we don't have in school such as D&D, newsletter, and guitar--all of the programs that I have participated in this year. Had NYJTL been our after school program provider this year, there wouldn't be any activities for someone like me.

While Imogen isn't assigned to Wagner I would still like to express my concern. My elementary school PS 267's afterschool program was Imogen. During fifth grade I only did filmmaking. The Imogen options are limited and the foundation is meant for elementary school students-not middle schoolers. The Imogen Foundation was disappointing for a fifth grader-and I ended up dropping out because it was so boring.

Manhattan Youth is a crucial part of Wagner already, and has been for the past eight years. The variety in the classes at NYJTL will not meet the diverse needs of all Wagner students. Manhattan Youth program at Wagner is a thriving community and it would be a great loss to all members of the

Wagner community to have it go away.

Eleanor Kim, 6th grade
MS 167, Robert F Wagner Middle School
[redacted]

Written Testimony

New York City Council

FY27 Budget: Spay/Neuter, Affordable Veterinary Care, and Pet Food Assistance

June 2026

Submitted by:

Elena Natale

[redacted] Brooklyn, NY 11226

[redacted]

[redacted]

To the Members of the New York City Council:

I am submitting this testimony to urge the Council to allocate funding in the FY27 budget for spay/neuter services and affordable veterinary care for New York City pets. Currently, less than 1% of the city's animal welfare budget goes toward preventing animals from entering shelters in the first place—and our overcrowded shelters are paying the price. I am asking the Council to invest $1.5 million in spay/neuter and affordable veterinary care, and $2 million for a pet food pantry pilot in The Bronx and Brooklyn. In the context of a $124.7 billion budget, this is a modest ask with an outsized impact—preventative care for a cat or dog costs around 75% less than sheltering one.

I speak from direct experience: As an independent rescuer in my neighborhood and a volunteer with Flatbush Cats, I see firsthand what happens when preventative resources are out of reach. The emotional weight of responding to animals in crisis—and the out-of-pocket costs that fall on volunteers like me—are real and unsustainable. So too is the heartbreak faced by families who love their pets but are forced to make impossible choices when vet bills are unaffordable or food costs stretch a tight budget too far. Keeping pets with their families is both the compassionate and the fiscally smart choice. A pet food pantry helps families through hard times so they don't have to surrender animals they love, and accessible spay/neuter services reduce shelter intake at the source.

I urge the Council to champion these investments and help ensure New York City stops leaving pets—and the families who love them—behind. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Elena Natale

June 12, 2026

I oppose Zohran’s proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Finance should carefully examine whether this budget represents responsible stewardship of public resources. We believe it does not. Public housing is one of New York City's largest public assets, and a responsible financial strategy would strengthen that asset. Instead, this budget spends public dollars in ways that gradually diminish public ownership, public accountability, and public control.

The Mayor's budget allocates hundreds of millions of dollars toward privatization strategies while continuing a pattern of underinvestment in Section 9 public housing. This approach asks taxpayers to fund the rehabilitation of public assets while simultaneously transferring management authority, development rights, long-term leaseholds, and future revenue opportunities to private entities. If taxpayers are funding the rehabilitation of public housing, why should only developments slated for privatization receive priority access to those resources?

Section 9 residents are consumers of a public service funded by taxpayers. They should not be required to surrender public ownership, public accountability, or public governance in order to receive the repairs and investments their developments need. Public dollars should be allocated according to objective measures of physical need, not conditioned upon participation in privatization programs. The current budget framework creates a two-tiered system in which developments selected for privatization receive substantial investments while traditional Section 9 developments continue to wait for basic repairs.

A privatization strategy is only fiscally successful if it lowers costs, preserves public value, and improves outcomes. PACT does none

of these. It costs taxpayers more, transfers public authority to private entities, and leaves future generations with fewer policy options and less public control over publicly funded assets. From a fiscal perspective, PACT is a poor investment. Taxpayers fund the repairs, taxpayers fund the subsidies, taxpayers fund the oversight, yet taxpayers receive less public control in return. That is not a sound return on public investment.

The Committee should also examine whether privatization is delivering the outcomes promised to both tenants and taxpayers. Supporters of PACT have argued that privatization would improve conditions, reduce administrative burdens, and create efficiencies. Yet concerns raised by tenants and findings identified by the Comptroller regarding eviction practices in PACT developments raise important questions about whether these programs are producing the public benefits that justify their costs. If taxpayers are paying more while tenants face increased housing instability and diminished public accountability, the financial assumptions underlying privatization deserve renewed scrutiny.

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society independently reviewed NYCHA's Physical Needs Assessment and found that much of the reported growth in capital needs stems from inflation and market conditions rather than dramatic deterioration of the housing stock itself. Based on this analysis, NYCHA's need is approximately $41.4 billion over twenty years, or roughly $2.07 billion annually. This is a significant challenge, but it is not an impossible one. Strategic investments by the city, state, and federal governments can preserve and modernize Section 9 without surrendering public assets.

We urge the Committee on Finance to shift the City's housing strategy away from privatization and toward comprehensive modernization of Section 9 public housing. We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources identified at the city,

state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice. Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Subject: Privatization of NYCHA Creates Instability for Seniors.

I live at Mitchel Houses in the South Bronx and do not have an email address. I am being supported in submitting this testimony by Save Section 9.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

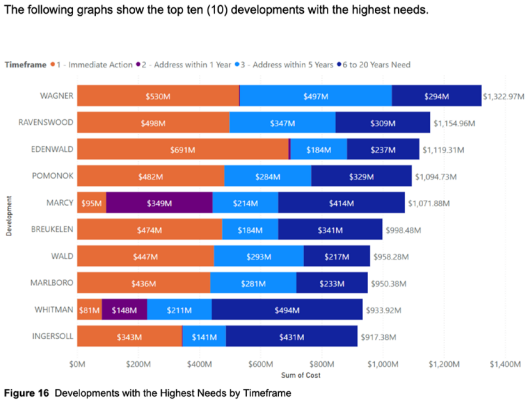


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.
- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

Testimony

My name is Elinor Lewis, and I am a shelter volunteer and rescue dog owner. I am here to urge the City of New York to fund $1.5 million for spay/neuter services and $2 million for pet food pantries — two targeted, cost-effective investments that will reduce shelter intake, decrease euthanasia, and keep families together.

Every week, I work alongside incredible dogs at the shelter who are there not because they were unwanted, but because their families simply couldn't afford to keep them. New Yorkers are surrendering pets they love because they cannot cover a vet bill or put food in a bowl. At the same time, 75% of dogs who arrive at city shelters are not spayed or neutered, meaning we are in a continuous cycle of unwanted litters being born into a system that is already overwhelmed. This is cruel to the animals, heartbreaking for families, and expensive for the City.

New York City currently spends just $2.98 per person on animal care — among the lowest of any major U.S. city. That is not a reflection of how New Yorkers feel about their pets, who are members of the family. It is a reflection of how little we have invested in keeping those families whole. Funding spay/neuter services breaks the cycle of overpopulation at its source. Funding pet food pantries ensures that no New Yorker has to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their dog. As these cost barriers are removed, adoptions will increase, preventable euthanasia will decrease, and the long-term suffering of dogs languishing in shelters will be reduced.

This funding is not a luxury — it is a humane, fiscally sound step toward a solution. I urge the Council to support it.

For: Budget Committee Chair Linda Lee and Members of the Committee
From: Elisabeth Axel, Art Beyond Sight – 589 Broadway, New York, NY 10012
Hearing Date: June 10, 2026

Investing in the Future: Funding MOPD and Disability Community Partnerships in NYC

Thank you, Chair Lee and Members of the Council, for the opportunity to testify about why New York City's investment in the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities and community-based disability initiatives, partnerships, and cultural programs matters to the future of disability inclusion in our city.

My name is Elisabeth Axel. I am President of Disability Pride Parade NYC, First Vice President of the 504 Democratic Club, and President and CEO of Art Beyond Sight, an almost 39-year-old disability arts organization.

I have dedicated my entire adult life to advancing accessibility, disability inclusion, and cultural participation for people with disabilities, including disabled artists, cultural workers, and community members.

I am here today to speak about the critical role the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) has played in advancing disability inclusion in New York City through initiatives I was directly involved in and why strengthening that role is essential moving forward.

Too often, MOPD is viewed primarily through the lens of compliance and enforcement. Those responsibilities are important. But some of the office's greatest contributions—and some of New York City's greatest advances in disability inclusion—have come from its ability to convene partners, coordinate across agencies, leverage outside resources, and build community infrastructure that no single organization or agency could create alone.

In 2010, Mayor Bloomberg and MOPD Executive Director Matt Sapolin asked me to bring the national Obama Administration Project Access initiative, which I then co-chaired, to New York City. Together, we improved accessibility not only in cultural institutions, but also in funding guidelines, grant applications, parks, libraries, and recreational programs.

In 2013, under MOPD Commissioner Victor Calise and Cultural Affairs Commissioner Kate Levin, MOPD partnered with Art Beyond Sight and Project Access for All to conduct the first-ever citywide accessibility training for cultural organizations receiving Department of Cultural Affairs funding. This cross-agency partnership moved disability arts and accessibility forward in ways that individual organizations could not accomplish alone.

MOPD also partnered with the Department of Small Business Services, the 504 Democratic Club, business improvement districts, and community partners through the Businesses Committed to Access and Inclusion Project Access initiative. Working with organizations including the Chinatown Partnership Local Development Corporation (CPLDC) and local business districts, this effort helped businesses understand accessibility not simply as compliance, but as an opportunity to welcome disabled customers, employees, residents, and visitors.

The impact of that work continues today. It helped elevate accessibility within neighborhood and economic development conversations and demonstrated how disability inclusion can be incorporated into community revitalization efforts. For example, CPLDC later advanced accessibility improvements through its Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) Building Upgrade Project funded by New York State.

These examples illustrate an important point: when MOPD has the resources to lead, convene, and partner, it creates opportunities to leverage outside expertise, nonprofit capacity, philanthropic support, business engagement, and community networks in service of New Yorkers with disabilities. The impact of those partnerships often extends far beyond any single program, agency, or funding cycle.

Partnership also helped make Disability Pride NYC’s first parade possible. With leadership from Disability Pride NYC's first Executive Director, Mike Schweinsberg, and working together with MOPD Commissioner Victor Calise, Mayor de Blasio's administration, and disability community partners, the Disability Pride Parade grew into a major citywide event celebrating disability pride, culture, leadership, and visibility.

During the pandemic, those partnerships also helped launch Disability Unite, which has become New York City's—and, to our knowledge, the nation's—largest free disability cultural event, creating opportunities for disabled artists, performers, advocates, families, and community members to participate fully in civic and cultural life.

These partnerships were not simply City programs. They were public-private collaborations that brought together government agencies, nonprofit organizations, cultural institutions, businesses, community leaders, and people with disabilities to achieve outcomes none of us could have accomplished alone.

In recent years, however, resource constraints have made it increasingly difficult for MOPD to provide the level of staffing, coordination, outreach, and partnership-building that helped make many of these successes possible. As demands on the office continue to grow, New York risks losing not only capacity, but also opportunities for the kinds of partnerships that have historically multiplied the impact of public investment.

That is why funding matters. A strong MOPD is not simply an investment in compliance; it is an investment in collaboration, innovation, and community capacity.

Whether in arts and culture, small business development, accessibility planning, community engagement, or civic participation, MOPD's greatest successes have often come through partnerships that multiply the impact of public investment.

I would also encourage the City to strengthen initiatives such as Department for Cultural Affairs Disability Forward Fund by embracing the principle of "Nothing About Us Without Us" and ensuring meaningful participation by disabled people in setting priorities and shaping investments. Just as MOPD's strongest work has historically come through partnership, future disability investments should be guided by meaningful collaboration with the communities they are intended to serve.

I would also encourage the City to recognize the value of investing in community-based organizations and initiatives that already serve as trusted infrastructure within the disability community. The City's investment in MOPD should be matched by investments in the disability-led community partnerships, cultural programs, leadership opportunities, and neighborhood-based initiatives that help bring disability inclusion to life.

Through requests submitted to the Speaker's Office, borough delegations, and City Council districts, organizations such as Disability Pride Parade NYC, Disability Unite Festival, five-borough Disability Pride events, and neighborhood-based outreach and needs-assessment efforts seek to strengthen community connection, identify unmet needs, and engage disabled New Yorkers in civic life.

These are precisely the kinds of collaborative partnerships that MOPD has historically helped foster and that we hope to continue building in the future.

Representation and cultural visibility have been essential to many successful equity movements. The disability community is no different. Visibility, culture, leadership, and participation help build understanding, reduce isolation, create opportunity, and strengthen community.

Are these issues as urgent as healthcare, transportation, housing, or employment?

No.

But as the largest minority community in New York City, people with disabilities also deserve opportunities to participate fully in the cultural and civic life of our city. These investments support mental health, community connection, leadership development, belonging, and the social infrastructure that helps communities thrive.

New York City has long been a national leader in disability inclusion. That leadership was built through partnership—between government, nonprofits, businesses, cultural institutions, and disabled New Yorkers themselves.

I urge the Council to ensure that MOPD has the resources necessary not only to enforce accessibility, but also to convene partners, support innovation, strengthen community infrastructure, and help build an inclusive, vibrant, and connected city where everyone belongs.

The history of disability inclusion in New York City is a history of partnership. Every major example I have described today—from Project Access to cultural accessibility training, from accessible business initiatives to Disability Pride NYC and Disability Unite—was built through collaboration between government and community.

The budget decisions made today will determine whether that history continues.

A strong and well-resourced MOPD, together with investments in community-based disability organizations and initiatives, will help ensure that those partnerships continue to grow, innovate, and serve future generations of New Yorkers with disabilities.

Thank you.

Investing in low-cost spay/neuter services and community pet pantries are fiscally responsible and compassionate choice for New York. Affordable spay/neuter programs reduce pet overpopulation, decrease shelter intake, and lower the taxpayer burden associated with animal control and sheltering costs. A pet pantry helps families facing temporary financial hardship keep their pets at home, preventing unnecessary surrenders and reducing strain on local shelters and rescue organizations. New York has an opportunity to demonstrate leadership by supporting programs that promote public health, responsible pet ownership, and the human-animal bond while delivering measurable cost savings for taxpayers.

Dear Finance Committee,

I am a regular New Yorker, living in Council Member Farah Louis's District 45. I work a 9-5 job doing research with teachers across the world. But the job that takes nearly all of my attention, literally keeps me up at night, and pulls at my heart is cat rescue.

Every day I get texts from neighbors in East Flatbush, Crown Heights, PLG, and Prospect Heights (Districts 45, 40, 36, and 35). Our neighbors are concerned about the cats they are seeing all over. On the streets, in their alleyways, abandoned in their parks, and hiding in their basements. Cats who have been hit by cars, cats who are crying at back doors to be let in, kittens whose eyes are crusted over from infection, and cats who are fighting, breeding, birthing and dying in a constant cycle. On **every single block** of this city there are cats who we have failed.

ACC will not take them, even if they are friendly. ACC will not spay/neuter them. I have asked community members to bring cats to ACC and ACC has turned them away at the door "we can't take kittens that young, put them back outside" (despite the fact the mom has not been spotted for 24+ hours and they're at risk of dying.) "We don't take cats found outside" - even when the cat is clearly friendly and also not spay/neutered.

Last year I rescued over 90 cats and kittens. It cost me tens of thousands of dollars, which I had to raise from kind hearted community members who reached for their last dollars from that weeks paycheck to help. This year I have already rescued 40 cats and kittens. I got a text today about 3 more in need.

NYC needs to increase the budget it provides for animal care - namely spay/neuter and pet food pantries. You'll hear a lot today that NYC spends less than every other major city on animal care, under $3 per person. But what you might not hear is that more money than that is being spent, it's coming out of the pockets of residents who are trying to do the right thing even when the system will not.

No New Yorker should have to choose between their housing and their pet. Affordable veterinary care and spay/neuter keeps animals where they belong - with the people who love them. No New Yorker should have to see kittens born and die in their backyards or friendly cats struggling outside, as their city shelter tells them "they're fine where they are." With more accessible spay/neuter, fewer cats will suffer outdoors.

New Yorkers have the will power to make this happen. We've already been doing this work without you. But every year we fall further and further behind. Every year I sacrifice more and more. It's unfair and it's unkind, to people and to animals.

It's easy to think that outdoor cats are a "natural" part of a city. That it's an appropriate place for them to live. I leave you with a quote from Courtney Gustafon's memoir about the power of

trap-neuter-return and what the word feral truly means:

> *The difference between* wild *and* feral *may seem subtle, but it's a distinction that matters. A wild animal has evolved that way; everything about it is programmed to survive without interference from people. A feral animal is not the same. Feral animals are those whose species were, at some point, domesticated by people, and then for whatever reason left to survive on their own. Feral animals - their histories, their futures, their survival - are inextricably linked to humankind. Their lives are tied to ours.*
>
> ***Feral, for all the wildness it implies, just means that an animal was abandoned by the system that created it.***

What does it say about NYC that we have over half a million outdoor and feral cats struggling on our streets? Will we continue to abandon them?

I urge you to fund $1.5M for spay/neuter and $2M for pet food pantries.

Thank you,
Elizabeth Falcone

This is a comment I wrote on Ed Boks Animal Politics on Substack on June 8, 2026. NYC is third world when it comes to the way it treats its animals – Surely, NYC can do better.

https://animalpolitics.substack.com/p/aspcas-spayneuter-pivot-signals-big

Comment

I only know about NYC, which is widely considered the richest city in the world.

But talk about the Haves and the Have-Nots

Per AI, " Total Millionaires: ~384,500 (meaning roughly one in every 22 residents is a millionaire).Centimillionaires: ~818 (individuals with $100 million+ in assets).Billionaires: 66+ (with varying estimates pushing higher depending on the reporting agency)."

Tell that to the countless NYC rescuers, advocates, and residents who can't afford spay/neuter surgery that goes for upwards of $1,000 for a spay. 75% of the animals given up at the city pound are intact.

NYC is a desert for the availability of widespread, affordable spay/neuter services. Most affordable/free locations (very few) have long waiting lists. The Toby Project (mobile spay/neuter) has a three-year wait list. That hardly makes sense, but this is what they say.

To clarify what the ASPCA spends on spay/neuter surgeries in NYC -- it is free or low-cost to people who qualify -- but the list by zip code is always closed. The money to fund this comes from the NYS Animal Population Control Program -- not the ASPCA coffers.

However, the ASPCA does fund TNR for certified rescuers. Former New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo vetoed the Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) funding bill (Assembly Bill 2778) in 2015. Really stupid, but he was lobbied hard by certain groups.

The opportunity for certified TNR rescuers to sign up with the ASPCA stopped during COVID. Unfortunately, the many ferals who breed were not notified, and they kept breeding. Rescuers scramble, find other sources, or those who are lucky enough to get ASPCA appointments often share them with others.

The bottom line is that I hope this funding does help some communities, but it does not appear to help NYC. And what's with the rush to submit RFPs?!!

In 1994, the ASPCA gave up the animal control contract with the city of NY, which led to the troubled Animal Care Center. In 2013, they shut down their Humane Law Division. As Sheila Massey says below, the ASPCA prefers the national profile.

And to add insult to injury, we have a City Council that does not care. The jury is still out on Mayor Mamdani and the Animal Welfare Caucus.

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident and parent to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

LIC has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, Kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, and yet most area schools are already operating over capacity: P.S. 112 at **130%**, and P.S./I.S. 78 at **111%**. What is more, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City — Court Square — still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message to families is clear: you may not be guaranteed a school seat in your neighborhood.

I would also like to express urgent concern about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed school project. In a neighborhood where families are struggling today to secure local school placements, this project, along with other promised school construction projects in LIC, cannot continue to fall behind competing priorities. While I appreciate the creation of an incubation site for Q508 (Q439Q), a temporary solution cannot become a justification for continued delays to the permanent facility. Families were promised a permanent neighborhood school, with the full facilities and long-term stability that a dedicated school building provides. An incubation site may help relieve short-term pressure, but it does not address the broader and growing need for permanent school infrastructure in LIC.

Additionally, the current lease for the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE, Q580) is set to expire in just three years. Families have been assured that the school would be relocated so that it can continue serving students without disruption. We are appreciative that the budget includes funding for BSGE. However, we want to emphasize that it is critical that the City follow through on this commitment and move urgently to secure a permanent home for the school. Allowing delays to continue would create significant uncertainty for students and families and risks the loss of an important educational institution in a neighborhood already facing a severe shortage of school seats. The City must prioritize funding and planning for BSGE's relocation now to ensure continuity and stability for the community.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has also recognized the need for additional schools to support the neighborhood's rapid growth. Specifically, commitments were made to advance development of a school at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard. Creation of two additional schools has also been promised to create 1,300 more seats in conjunction with the planned construction of over 14,000 residential units. As more housing is developed through OneLIC, school construction must move in parallel — not years behind residential growth. Without firm commitments and accountability around these promised schools, the existing seat crisis will only intensify.

Delays to the opening of these schools are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and more families pushed out of the neighborhood because they cannot rely on access to local public schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency, accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508 and other promised schools on schedule. Schools aren't just a service—they're the foundation of a stable, thriving neighborhood.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future. Please ensure that timely funding is delivered to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority for the completion of these projects.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Noble
Long Island City, 11101
Parent

Statement in Support of Mount Prospect Park
Submitted to the New York City Council
June 12, 2026

Honorable Members of the New York City Council:

Mount Prospect Park is where families picnic, children play soccer, and everyday New Yorkers access nature for free. It is being allowed to deteriorate — and that neglect is now being used as leverage to push through an eleven-million-dollar concrete skateboard complex the community has clearly and repeatedly rejected. Thousands of residents, Brooklyn Community Board 9, and a broad coalition of civic organizations have said no. Offering to finally seed the lawn and clear the drains in exchange for community silence is not governance — it is coercion.

The project is environmentally indefensible. Brooklyn already has the worst tree canopy and the least green space per capita in the city. Paving permeable parkland requires costly engineering workarounds, threatens shade trees, and adds yet another skate facility to a borough that holds over 40 percent of the City's total — many neglected, most clustered near this very park.

There is also an accountability question: the Adopt a Park law, passed by this Council, exists to ensure private partners contribute fairly. Records show a million-dollar payment from Tony Hawk's organization was zeroed out — while that organization spent hundreds of thousands lobbying City officials. The Council should demand answers.

Mayor LaGuardia dedicated Mount Prospect Park as a monument to good government. Fund park maintenance — genuinely and without strings. And stop a project that exploits neglect at the public's expense.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth R. Rawson
Prospect Heights

I am writing not only as a parent in District 2, but as a strong advocate for quality public schools for all students in all neighborhoods. I think it is an admirable goal to extend free after school programs to more middle schools. However, the process by which contracts were reassigned was not thought out and will hurt more students than it helps. After school providers can be an important part of the school community, and the quality of the relationship between a school and its provider can make or break a student's experience. What works for one school does not work for another, and the school communities are the best judge of what works.

When we moved to NYC in 2021, my son attended 1st grade at Ella Baker School. I believe in progressive education and sincerely credit the wonderful parent community consisting of families from all boroughs and all economic positions with helping us transition to the city. However, at the time Manhattan Youth was the afterschool provider, and that experience was not good. My son is neurodivergent, and while we were waiting to get a diagnosis, he was asked to leave the afterschool program because they could not deal with his behavior. While my son ended up attending another District 2 school for 3rd grade, I stayed in touch with the parent community at Ella Baker, and learned they carefully vetted and had conversations with many after school providers before switching to the Imogen Foundation, which turned out to be a wonderful fit for the elementary school program.

This past fall our family participated in the middle school selection process. One of the factors we considered were the after school programs, because this will be a crucial part of our son's experiences. All the District 2 schools we toured had established programs with Manhattan Youth that the community was very happy with. I realized Manhattan Youth was a much better fit for middle schools than it had been for Ella Baker. We ended up choosing School of the Future, another progressive school that serves families across all boroughs. Established after school clubs like Dungeons and Dragons, Coding, Minecraft, and Soccer were a huge selling point as we were sure they would help him make friends.

Hearing about the DYCD decision to re-assign contracts was a huge disappointment. SoF was assigned YMCA. Parents I know who have used the YMCA summer camps in Manhattan have been generally disappointed with them, and the school has no relationship with anyone from the program. Schools like the Anderson School that share a building with other schools and combined resources between their Manhattan Youth programs have been split between different programs, which will lead to increased expenses. Some schools were assigned to Imogen Foundation without any knowledge of the program, while Ella Baker, which requested Imogen Foundation specifically for middle school, did not get the contract. Imogen has been operating the elementary program at Ella Baker at a loss, and will not be able to continue there unless they also receive the middle school contract.

All these changes make no sense and will hurt students and increase costs. A program that is a good fit for one school is not a good fit for another, and the school communities know this best. To expand free after school care to more schools, why not assign programs like YMCA to schools new to the program, which are starting a relationship from scratch anyway, rather than assigning YMCA to schools that already had good relationships with other programs? I am

asking the DYDC to please reconsider these contract assignments, for the good of not only my student but all the other students and families from District 2 and across the whole city that I have gotten to know in these last years.

From: Elizabeth
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for Manhattan Youth
Date: Monday, June 15, 2026 8:56:58 PM

[redacted]

We are New American Youth Ballet supporting Manhattan Youth

- THIS PROGRAM MATTERS BECAUSE.. it helps so many families have amazing opportunities in an extraordinary facility and warm Staff

- WITHOUT THIS PROGRAM, OUR COMMUNITY WOULD LOSE... so much educational, sports and cultural benefits

- ONE THING PEOPLE SHOULD UNDERSTAND ABOUT THIS PROGRAM IS... how exceptional and important it is

- THIS PROGRAM IS MORE THAN CHILDCARE BECAUSE... Manhattan Youth is a family of caring people

- WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF THE AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM? Us continuing to bring dance education to the community

- HOW HAVE TEACHERS/STAFF HELPED YOU GROW AS A STUDENT OR PERSON? They are supportive, kind and caring

- WHAT OPPORTUNITIES HAVE YOU HAD BECAUSE OF THE PROGRAM (SPORTS, ARTS, LEADERSHIP, TRIPS, CLUBS, PERFORMANCES, FRIENDSHIPS, ETC.)?
  . thanks to Manhattan Youth, our school and ballet company have survived!

We are so grateful for Manhattan Youth and Bob Townley!

Queens is the city's largest borough in area and the second-largest by population, yet it has the fewest subway miles per capita, and has a vast disconnect between the north (covered by the QBL) and the south (covered in part by the JZ and CA branches) with no connection between them, forcing north-south travelers to take extremely indirect routes via Manhattan or fall back to bus or car travel.

QueensLink aims to solve this issue with an extension of the subway linking the QBL, JZ and AC branches. The plan is to do this by using the Rockaway Beach Branch, a deactivated but still existing right of way. This would provide direct north-south rail connections and pull drivers and bus passengers off the very overcrowded Woodhaven blvd. and 102nd st. corridors.

QueensWay aims to build a park, ala the Highline, along this right of way. They aim to intentionally inhibit any use of the corridor for rail transit since, if built, QueensWay would have to be demolished to allow rail service. Thus, once it has been built, its existence would lead to a three-pronged argument against having rail service on the right of way:

1. It would be a waste of money to demolish what was just built
2. It would destroy newly created parkland that the community (theoretically) enjoys
3. It would subject the community to additional years-long construction disruptions

Note that QueenLink plans to have both Rail service AND park space built together, whereas QueensWay explicitly builds only park space, intentionally without any provision for rail service.

The New York City Economic Development Corporation aims to start construction on QueensWay this year. The latest budget proposal includes funding for this park and authorization to begin work as soon as August, which I strongly oppose.

Let me be clear: if QueensWay is built, it will block any future rail transit on this right of way, requiring either demolition of completed work or alternative routing (ie fully underground tunneling, massively increasing expense and complexity to provide this service).

I strongly urge support for and advancement of QueensLink with all due speed, and to stop QueensWay from going forward by removing any funding for it and stopping all work on that project.

My name is Elroy Solondz, I am currently a high school student and resident of StuyTown. When I was six years old, Blackstone, an international, multi-trillion-dollar investment firm, purchased the neighborhood for $5.3 billion dollars. With a $220 million dollar subsidy from the city, the private equity firm agreed to preserve 5,000 of the 11,200 previously existing affordable units for the next 20 years. Today, the residents of these units have only 9 years left before their rents skyrocket from $3,000 to $6,000 a month. By 2035, StuyTown will likely transform into a community composed solely of affluent New Yorkers and wealthy ex-suburbanites. While I am one of the few lucky individuals that can afford to live in market-rate housing, my neighbors can not, and that's why I, and the Council should care about what is happening to StuyTown.

Now, these same forces are gunning for Fulton-Elliott-Chelsea (FEC) at the other end of the island. Through RAD-PACT conversions and preservation trusts, the current administration, now in conjunction with Related Companies and Essence Development, is ready to tear the community apart in favor of luxury high-rises, with exorbitant rents and the same temporary affordable units for the tenants of FEC.

As a city resident, I am not willing to let FEC succumb to the same fate as StuyTown. That is why I urge the Council to reallocate the $1.5 billion from HPD RAD/PACT conversion funding to NYCHA Section 9 capital repairs, for the comprehensive modernization program. Public funds should not go to private developers, especially since, under traditional Section 8 housing, the developer pays for capital needs. Instead, we should strive to keep public housing *public* and permanently stop the plan to demolish FEC.

From: elsye putri
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Manhattan Youth - JHS 167 Robert F Wagner
Date: Friday, May 29, 2026 7:05:27 AM

[redacted]

To whom it may concern,

As an incoming family, we strongly support Manhattan Youth continuing as the after-school provider for our school, JHS 167 Robert F Wagner, community.

While we are new to the school, one of the things that gave us confidence in joining this community was hearing consistently positive feedback from current and former families about Manhattan Youth. Parents spoke not only about reliable childcare, but about a program where children feel safe, engaged, supported, and genuinely excited to participate. We have also heard that the kids themselves have such a positive and enriching experience with Manhattan Youth.

What stood out to us most was the sense of community the program creates. Families described caring staff, strong communication, enriching arrays of activities, and an environment that supports children socially, emotionally, and academically. For working parents, having a trusted and established after-school provider is not simply a convenience — it is essential to family stability and children's well-being.

Transitions in after-school programming can be disruptive for children and stressful for families, especially for a big school like JHS 167 Robert F. Wagner. From our perspective as incoming parents, continuity matters and in fact, it was part of our considerations in deciding which school for our

kid to go to. Maintaining Manhattan Youth, who has been with the school and community for at least 8 years, would preserve relationships, routines, and institutional knowledge that benefit both students and the broader school community.

We hope the administration carefully considers the experiences and voices of the many families and children who value this program. As a family about to join the school community, we would feel reassured knowing our children will have access to a trusted provider with a strong reputation and deep roots in the community.

Thank you for your consideration

Kind regards,
Elsye

QueensLink

Testimony Template — Finance Committee on 6/10

June 5, 2026

TO: New York City Council — Finance Committee
RE: Support the QueensLink — preserve the Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way for both transit and parks

Dear Chairperson Lee and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is **Emil Fraija** and I am a **Forest Hills** resident. I am writing in strong support of the **QueensLink**, which would bring both new subway service and new parkland to Queens by reactivating the former Rockaway Beach Branch, and against the current $43 million allocated in the budget for phase one of the QueensWay, also referred to as the Met Hub project.

Why this matters to me

QueensLink is important because more transit equals greater access to job opportunities, schools, and recreation. Right now, my work commute to Brooklyn is three trains, two transfers, and lengthy walks. A journey that has become increasingly difficult after foot surgery. QueensLink would transform how residents in Brooklyn and Queens commute between the two boroughs by slashing commute times and opening up transfers we drastically need. Queens is the largest borough in size in New York City and second in population, yet it ranks fourth in subway coverage. Queens needs this project. Queens deserves this project.

Why the QueensLink is the right choice

Two competing concepts exist for the deactivated Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way: the park-only QueensWay, and the dual-purpose QueensLink, which combines subway and park uses. The QueensWay would be built directly on the former railbed, which would virtually eliminate the possibility of ever restoring transit there. The MTA itself recognized in its 2023 20-Year Needs Assessment that a linear park along the corridor would create a challenge for any future transit alternatives. Once a rail right-of-way is converted to other uses, it almost never returns to transit.

The QueensLink would create the first north-south subway line in Queens, extending the M line south from Rego Park to Ozone Park and then over the A train tracks to the Rockaways — increasing service to the Rockaways by up to 165%. It would also let the G train run all the way to Forest Hills, increasing capacity on the crowded Queens Boulevard local lines by 50% and connecting central Queens with north Queens and Brooklyn.

A study by the Steer Group found that the QueensLink would remove millions of vehicle trips each year, making streets safer and lowering harmful emissions, while adding up to 33 acres of new parks and trails integrated with the subway design. Over 20 years, the study concluded the project would more than pay for itself by creating jobs, saving New Yorkers time, and reducing healthcare costs tied to air pollution and traffic crashes.

Queens needs parks *and* trains. The QueensLink would provide both. I urge the Committee to preserve this irreplaceable right-of-way for future transit and to support the QueensLink.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

Emil Fraija
Forest Hills, NY 11375
[redacted]
Council District 29

I urge the City Council to include **$1.5 million for affordable spay/neuter and veterinary care** and **$2 million for pet food pantries** in the FY 2027 Speaker's Initiative budget.

Such a small investment will make a big difference in reducing the suffering of animals across New York City and will allow more pets to stay with their owners, receive veterinary care, and reduce the population(s) of ACC and stray animals – **a win, win, win**.

A quick story: I took care of two stray cats for over 7 years in front of a city-sponsored supportive housing facility in Bed-Stuy. In the years those cats were there, the supportive housing facility (Clover Hall) was the one spot on the block that I never saw a rat. Ever. The cats were cared for (they had a house, were fed daily, were vaccinated etc). Since the cats are gone (one passed away quite old, and one is living with a rescuer) the number of rats in front of the facility has skyrocketed. It's nothing but rat tunnels in the front to the point they've chopped down all the lovely plantings they had there (that I also cared for).

Taking care of street cats, feral cats, cat colonies, stray cats reduces the rat population – a problem that New Yorkers HATE.

Some basic facts:

- More than half of New Yorkers cannot afford a basic veterinary visit.
- 75% of dogs entering ACC are unfixed
- 193,000 spay/neuter surgeries are needed annually for community cats and owned pets who cannot afford them. *The city funds only 3,500*. This means rescuers and TNR trained folks are footing the bill, fundraising per spay/neuter, and scrambling to pay.

No New Yorker should have to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their pet. By funding pet food pantries and low-cost veterinary services, NYC will help to keep animals where they belong: **at home with the people who love them!**

As expenses are reduced and barriers are removed, we believe that adoptions will increase, and preventable euthanasia will decrease. We will reduce pressure on NYC's animal shelters and rescue organizations, reduce burnout on employees and volunteers, and PROFOUNDLY decrease the number of stray cats that are suffering outdoors.

Please fully fund these initiatives – they will make a tangible difference in the life of New York City's animals and the New Yorkers that love them.

Emily Harting
TNR Certified
Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn
[redacted]

Committee on Women and Gender Equity

Subject: Zohran’s budget fails to recognize the vital role public housing plays in advancing gender equity.

I oppose Zohran’s proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Women and Gender Equity should recognize that public housing is fundamentally a women's issue. For decades, Section 9 public housing has served a population made up largely of women and female-headed households. Nationally, women head the overwhelming majority of public housing households, and many residents are single mothers, grandmothers raising grandchildren, caregivers, and women balancing work, family responsibilities, and economic hardship. Public housing has provided generations of women with the stability, support, independence, community, and affordability necessary to raise families, care for loved ones, pursue education, build careers, and participate in civic life.

Women, particularly women of color, continue to bear a disproportionate share of caregiving responsibilities while facing persistent wage disparities and economic barriers. Because Section 9 ties rent to household income rather than market conditions, it creates opportunities for residents to pursue employment, training, entrepreneurship, and educational opportunities without the constant threat of rent increases or displacement. Housing stability is a prerequisite for economic mobility, and Section 9 remains one of the strongest examples of that principle in practice.

The Committee should also recognize the relationship between housing stability and gender-based violence. Survivors of domestic violence and other forms of abuse often remain in dangerous situations because they lack access to safe, affordable housing alternatives. Public housing serves as a critical source of stability and independence for many survivors, providing a pathway toward safety, self-determination, and long-term security.

Beyond housing, Section 9 has historically fostered leadership, mutual aid, and civic engagement among women. Tenant associations, resident councils, community centers, and resident-led initiatives have created opportunities for women to organize, advocate, govern, and shape policies affecting their communities. Some of New York City's strongest community leaders have emerged from public housing because these developments provide not only homes, but spaces where women build networks of support, develop leadership skills, and strengthen their communities.

Zohran’s budget fails to recognize the vital role public housing plays in advancing gender equity. When public housing is weakened, it is women—particularly working-class women, single mothers, caregivers, grandmothers raising children, and survivors of violence—who often bear the greatest burden. When Section 9 is strengthened, women gain the housing security that allows them to thrive. We urge the Committee on Women and Gender Equity to support comprehensive modernization of Section 9 public housing and reject policies that condition investment on privatization. A city committed to gender equity must ensure that women have access to safe, affordable housing, meaningful opportunities for leadership, and the stability necessary to build healthy families and strong communities.

You cannot advance gender equity while allowing the housing insecurity that disproportionately burdens women, caregivers, and survivors to persist.

My name is Emily McVey and I am a resident of Park Slope. I spend my free time trapping, rescuing, and fostering cats along with other independent rescuers in Brooklyn. I work full time and use my own money to fund these rescue initiatives and to also contribute to the work of other rescuers. I have spent thousands of my own dollars on this work to help support a better quality of life for animals in need. Private citizens should not have to fund animal welfare in a city as wealthy as New York. Because of this I am voicing my support for funding spay/neuter and pet food pantries.

Subject: Urgent Call to Prioritize Funding to Expand School Capacity in Long Island City

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident and parent to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

LIC has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, Kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, and yet most area schools are already operating over capacity: P.S. 112 at **130%**, and P.S./I.S. 78 at **111%**. What is more, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City — Court Square — still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message to families is clear: you may not be guaranteed a school seat in your neighborhood.

I would also like to express urgent concern about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed school project. In a neighborhood where families are struggling today to secure local school placements, this project, along with other promised school construction projects in LIC, cannot continue to fall behind competing priorities. While I appreciate the creation of an incubation site for Q508 (Q439Q), a temporary solution cannot become a justification for continued delays to the permanent facility. Families were promised a permanent neighborhood school, with the full facilities and long-term stability that a dedicated school building provides. An incubation site may help relieve short-term pressure, but it does not address the broader and growing need for permanent school infrastructure in LIC.

Additionally, the current lease for the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE, Q580) is set to expire in just three years. Families have been assured that the school would be relocated so that it can continue serving students without disruption. We are appreciative that the budget includes funding for BSGE. However, we want to emphasize that it is critical that the City follow through on this commitment and move urgently to secure a permanent home for the school. Allowing delays to continue would create significant uncertainty for students and families and risks the loss of an important educational institution in a neighborhood already facing a severe shortage of school seats. The City must prioritize funding and planning for BSGE's relocation now to ensure continuity and stability for the community.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has also recognized the need for additional schools to support the neighborhood's rapid growth. Specifically, commitments were made to advance development of a school at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard. Creation of two additional

schools has also been promised to create 1,300 more seats in conjunction with the planned construction of over 14,000 residential units. As more housing is developed through OneLIC, school construction must move in parallel — not years behind residential growth. Without firm commitments and accountability around these promised schools, the existing seat crisis will only intensify.
Delays to the opening of these schools are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and more families pushed out of the neighborhood because they cannot rely on access to local public schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency, accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508 and other promised schools on schedule. Schools aren't just a service—they're the foundation of a stable, thriving neighborhood.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future. Please ensure that timely funding is delivered to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority for the completion of these projects.

Sincerely,
Emily Molinelli

11101

LIC Parent

I have two children ages 2 and 5 and we go to the library every single week. I am writing in support of more funding for libraries and asking that the promised .5 percent of the budget be given to the public library.

In my neighborhood of Harlem, the two libraries within walking distance of me are the ONLY places that provide a FREE community space where I can bring my children when it is too cold, too hot, or too rainy to be outside. As a mom raising two small kids in a small apartment, this community space in incredibly valuable.

My children know their librarians by name: Mr. Wayne and Mr. EJ and Ms. Mandy are local celebs to them and their neighborhood friends. My two-year-old goes to a daycare nearby that takes all the children to the library for programming every single week.

I have firsthand seen how much value the library brings to my neighborhood and how hard staff work to be an accessible and welcoming community space for everyone. I deeply believe in the work of the public library, and have seen firsthand how they support children, families, older adults, every neighbor who enters their doors and am asking the council to support .5 percent of the budget for libraries! Thank you.

Emily Pickens
[redacted]
New York, NY 10026

June 10, 2026

TO: New York City Council — Finance Committee
RE: Support the QueensLink — preserve the Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way for both transit and parks

Dear Chairperson Lee and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Emily Tabourin.

I am writing in strong support of the **QueensLink**, which would bring both new subway service and new parkland to Queens by reactivating the former Rockaway Beach Branch, and against the current $43 million allocated in the budget for phase one of the QueensWay, also referred to as the Met Hub project.

The Queensway plan, which is currently on the budget, is fraught with issues. The park would preclude any new transit line on the redeveloped section, and be in the way of where tunnel boring machines could feasibly be installed without disruption. Queensway would emulate the High Line, but it can never be the High Line, nor have the draw of it, because it is too far out of the way and is only surrounded by low to medium-density houses, instead of weaving through brownstones and skyscrapers with many views of The Hudson and the Empire State Building. For tourists and many city residents, they would much rather go to the High Line, because it is much easier to access, and is in a more interesting place with more interesting scenery.

While the park would provide increased benefits to Forest Hills through increased quality of life from additional green space, a much greater quality of life increase would arise from the construction of both a park *and* a transit link. Providing a new, faster, and direct link to areas that currently have indirect or without service to Northern Queens, Long Island City, or Midtown Manhattan would greatly improve quality of life, reducing commute times which would give people time back in their lives. The better connection would facilitate more trips being taken, currently projected at an additional $9.8 billion in economic activity. Other gains would be the increased capacity on the Queens Boulevard Subway. There would also be a projected 4,700,000 reduction in car trips, as well as $4.9B worth of time saving. For all of these reasons, I believe that Queensway funding should be taken off of the budget.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

Emily Tabourin
10024
District 6

Subject: Privatization of NYCHA Creates Instability for Seniors.

I live at Mitchel Houses in the South Bronx and do not have an email address. I am being supported in submitting this testimony by Save Section 9.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

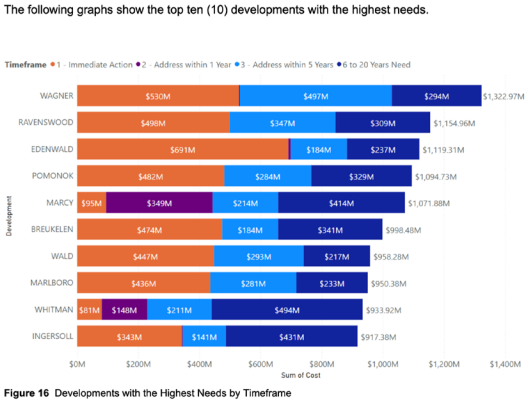


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.
- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

From: Eric Baker
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] My Family and I support Hardened Daylighting
Date: Thursday, June 11, 2026 12:11:28 PM

[redacted]

Dear Sir or Madame:

As a family with young children that walks first, bikes second and takes transit third we are 100% behind more hardened daylighting for NYC intersections. Please support this small initiative to jump start these life-saving projects!

Thank you,

Eric Baker
Brooklyn

Eric M. Narburgh

Sunnyside, NYC • [redacted] • linkedin.com/in/ericnarburgh

June 9, 2026

Committee on Finance
New York City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10007
Submitted via web form: council.nyc.gov/testify

Re: FY27 Executive Budget Hearing Testimony

Dear Council Members:

I write to submit express my support for requests in the upcoming city budget as follows:

NYC Arts & Culture

- **$30M restoration and baseline:** The FY27 Executive Budget includes a $10M baselined increase for arts and culture, an important step forward for New York City's cultural sector. AS the budget process continues, I urge the City to restore and baseline an additional $20M in the adopted budget to ensure sustained investment in cultural institutions, artists, and communities.
- **Budget cost adjustments**: Establish year-over-year funding adjustments to cover rising operating costs and wages for the cultural workforce.
- **Create a culture capital plan**: Develop and implement a comprehensive cultural capital infrastructure plan to streamline project delivery, reduce delays, and enable institutions to maintain and modernize their facilities efficiently.
- **Increase cultural initiatives**: Increase funding for the Coalition of Theaters of Color, CASA, SU- CASA, the Cultural immigrant Initiative, Support for Arts Instruction, and create new initiatives to match Council priorities.

OneLIC Commitments

The city must fund the commitments it agreed to as part of the OneLIC rezoning proposal, including:

- **Transportation**: public space, pedestrian and bike infrastructure improvements ($55M)

- **Economic Development**: LIC YMCA renovations ($1.1M, New Community Center ($10M)
- **Parks**: Queensbridge Park Upgrades and new open spaces ($209M)
- **Education**: New middle school and two elementary schools ($519M)

Western Queens

While Mayor Mamdani's Executive Budget baselines funding for essential initiatives, the City must also restore the following:

Transportation

- 44th Drive Corridor improvements delayed until 2029-2032 ($30M)
- 21st Street Intermodal Hub delayed until 2029-2032 ($13M)
- Improved connections to Queens Waterfront Greenway delayed until 2029-2031 ($10M)
- Comprehensive lighting study in LIC IBZ ($1.25M)
- Public toilet at Court Square ($700K)
- QBB ramps public realm improvements study ($250K)
- Additionally, please support the DOT daylighting program ($15M)

Parks

- New park under Queensboro Bridge delayed until 2032 ($97M)
- LIC waterfront esplanade delayed until 2032 ($79M)
- Funding to renew Queensbridge Park delayed until 202 ($30M)
- Clean, Green & Safe Parks program ($32.5M)
- Tree pruning and maintenance ($2.5M)
- Urban Park Rangers, Greenthumb and stump removal ($19.5M)
- Additionally, please support restoring parks funding to 1% of the City Budget and baseline funding for 115 Parks workers whose jobs expire in June and 276 new Parks jobs

Education

- $519M missing to build two new elementary schools and one middle school in Long Island City
- Fair class sizes ($500M)
- Learning to work ($31M)
- SEED Intensive Sensory Needs ($12M)

- Restorative Justice ($5M)
- Mental Health Continuum ($5M)
- Immigrant Family Communications and Outreach ($4M)
- Student Success Centers ($3.3M)
- Amplify Dual Language Assessment ($250K)
- Additionally, please support $10M citywide for infant and toddler childcare seats and $5M for outreach on existing Early Childhood Education programs

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Eric Narburgh

Members of the City Council,

My name is Erica Addy, and I am a special education teacher at College Point Collaborative Middle School in District 25.

I am here today to urge the City Council to baseline $200 million in dedicated funding to keep, grow, sustain, and improve NYC Reads and NYC Solves, with a particular focus on ensuring ongoing professional learning (PL) for educators.

Curriculum does not implement itself. PL is what helps educators bring those materials to life and ensures accessibility by helping educators adapt lessons, provide appropriate scaffolds, and ensure students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and students with varying academic needs can successfully access grade-level content. It's why 83 percent of teachers who are very satisfied with their professional learning also have positive perceptions of their curriculum.

I'm concerned about the lack of baseline funding for professional learning because I've witnessed the consequences of temporary funding before. During the pilot year of NYC Solves, I received extensive support, including consistent coaching visits and ongoing guidance around implementation. That support helped me build confidence, refine my practice, and better meet the needs of my students. But the following year, as I transitioned to new eighth grade and Algebra I curricula, the level of support decreased significantly. Ironically, it was just as I was beginning to fully understand the curriculum and identify new opportunities to strengthen implementation. This put progress to a halt.

This Council has an obligation to not let progress stall again. I urge you all to baseline $200 million in dedicated funding so the progress and historic gains of NYC Reads and NYC Solves continue.

Thank you.

Members of the City Council,

My name is Erica Boyce and I am a self-contained third and fourth grade special education teacher at PS1 132 in Queens. **I urge you to baseline $200 million in the city budget to keep, grow, sustain, and improve NYC Reads and NYC Solves**.

Survey data of educators shows the most useful form of Professional Learning for improving their instruction is participating in peer learning communities, indicating a desire for and need for investment in peer-to-peer, curriculum-aligned collaboration time.

This aligns with my experience. The few opportunities I've had to collaborate with peers and engage with the curriculum have been so meaningful. Peer learning communities help teachers like me align curriculum assessment and instructions in collaboration, not isolation. It helps teachers work towards shared outcomes. Peer learning communities allow educators like myself to discuss what is actually happening in our classrooms, what's working, what's not working, and making immediate adjustments.

They are also beneficial in supporting diverse student populations. Peer learning communities have allowed my colleagues and I to share strategies like repeated exposure, scaffolds, and small group supports that improve student outcomes.

I worry that if these initiatives continue to expand without baseline funding, it will be difficult to continue the very thing that's made NYC Reads such a success in my classroom. It will be difficult to sustain, scale, or strengthen PL – the key ingredient for success – without permanent funding that's safeguarded from annual budget fluctuations.

Right now we're relying on philanthropy and year-to-year allocations for NYC Reads. That makes little to no sense for what's now a core, popular, and evidence-based program.

I urge this City Council to provide permanent, full funding for NYC Reads and NYC Solves, and ensure our classrooms have stable funding that allows them to improve outcomes for our kids.

Thank you.

My name is Esther, and I'm a resident of Queens and a library patron. I am also a member of NYC PLAN, a group that wants to end the budget dance around libraries by benchmarking at least 0.5% of the city budget for public libraries every year. For too long, libraries have been unable to properly plan for programming, material acquisitions, and building maintenance because the preliminary budget is always inadequately low. The adopted budget inevitably increases but still results in funding levels that do not meet the needs of libraries, and therefore do not meet the needs of New Yorkers.

NYC PLAN is demanding an end to the budget dance and an end to inadequate library funding. If the executive budget is adopted, it will result in a budget shortfall of $17.5 million for NYPL, $8 million for BPL, and $9.6 million for QPL.

The people of New York City deserve libraries with functional HVAC, functional elevators, and libraries that are adequately staffed. Library workers also deserve these things. Mayor Mamdani promised to end the budget dance by committing to a baseline of 0.5% of the city budget for libraries. This is a funding level that he promised would be the floor, not the ceiling of funding to be reached in the future. It is time to honor that promise and do right by the people of New York.

Ethan Cherkasky
[redacted]
New York, NY 10075

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of Manhattan Youth's program at Wagner Middle School. I have been a math teacher and the Drama Club Co-Director for 17 years. I have directed 16 musicals in my time at Wagner, the last 7 of which have been produced by Manhattan Youth.

I remember a time when Wagner did not have Manhattan Youth as an afterschool option. Funding was limited, enrollment for after-school was low, and faculty was reluctant to commit to running it. I had directed the musical under these circumstances for 9 years before Manhattan Youth came to our community. We had to charge the students to participate in afterschool, which meant that students were left out. Even though we offered scholarships, it was still a barrier for some students to ask. I deeply believe that theatre should be for all students and it was crushing for me to see year after year that some students weren't able to participate. When Manhattan Youth came, that all changed. Marylyne Myrthil and her dedicated staff made it their mission to see that every child had a place and felt belonging in afterschool. She worked tirelessly to improve our program, staying late to provide the staff and students with everything we needed to build a culture and community where students felt they were part of a family. I am proud to say today that we had over 90 students participate in our spring musical, Guys and Dolls Jr, a number that would have been unfathomable 10 years ago. I am also proud to say that Marylyne has improved our production quality to such a degree that our offerings have become a large factor for elementary school students who are interested in theatre when it is their turn to choose a middle school.

Beyond the Drama Club, I have witnessed first-hand the Manhattan Youth's staff impact on our community and students. Every club they offer has a dedicated following of students that truly feel seen and heard. For many of these students, afterschool is one of the best parts of their day and a motivating factor in getting them to school. Students often find their "people" in these clubs and Marylyne has been able to create classes based on student interest and always makes decisions that are in the best interests of the students. Her staff is well trained and, impressively, are able to make connections and build relationships with every single student they encounter. The Manhattan Youth staff are dedicated to helping each child find themselves and making an impact on their lives. They have worked tirelessly to help the Drama Club, coming in on weekend rehearsals, staying late for performances, and adding to the quality and cohesion of our show.

This decision to not award Manhattan Youth with Wagner's afterschool contract not only affects me professionally but also on a personal level. I am a parent of three and live in this neighborhood. My oldest child is set to enter Wagner next year as a 6th grader. I was looking forward to her joining Manhattan Youth's afterschool and finding something that she could be passionate about. Many families ask me about Wagner and whether they should send their kids there. Most of these families worry about Wagner being such a big school. My response is often about how a big school has the advantage of having every type of student. Of course, most schools have some students that are into sports or academics, or the arts. But at Wagner we have kids that also into Comics, Cosmetology, Gaming, Dungeons & Dragons, Anime, Jewelry Making, Coding, Photography, Film Making, Web Design, Broadcasting, and Yoga. Every single one of these options is a Manhattan Youth afterschool offering and if asked, every student in these clubs would say it is something that made them feel they belong and are seen at this very big school. You could not put a price on an impact like that. Students in these clubs are often our most vulnerable and have the hardest time finding their friend groups. With Manhattan Youth every child is afforded the opportunity to find like-minded friends and build lifelong relationships. That is what I would wish for my children and every child that enters Wagner.

Any change from Manhattan Youth would have a deep impact on the culture that has been built over the last 8 years. The loss of the Manhattan Youth staff would be such a profound loss it would dramatically change the makeup of our school. A more limited after-school offering would leave some of our most vulnerable students in the dust. I implore you to please listen to the voices of the staff, students, and families in our community that would be impacted by this decision. Please revise this decision and keep Manhattan Youth at Wagner Middle School.

Sincerely,

Ethan Cherkasky

Ethan Cherkasky
[redacted]
8th Grade Math Teacher
Drama Club Co-Director
Wagner Middle School

Dear City Hall ,

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Eva Gray and I am a DOE teacher writing in support of continued funding for the New Visions Portal, which is under threat in the proposed education budget. This portal is a vital resource for students and has provided invaluable support for me as a first-year special education teacher. The New Visions Portal promotes transparency, accountability, and goal setting for students, families, and teachers.

Personally, I use the portal nearly daily to inform students of their progress, credit accumulation, and Regents scores. This is the only place that compiles all the necessary information to build a comprehensive picture of student achievement, far superior to what the DOE student profile currently offers. In addition, the portal provides a lot of the up-to-date information I need for writing IEPs, as I use it to glean student attendance trends, report cards and Regents schedules. This also helps me to conference with SPED students, helping them set goals and track their progress. The varying levels of data (individual, by demographic, or schoolwide) also allow us to have productive conversations as a school staff about trends we're noticing and strategies to address concerns.

Overall, I cannot stress the importance of this system for data analysis, SPED support and overall student achievement. The loss of this system will create unnecessary difficulties for schools and families. With this in mind, I urge you to maintain funding for the New Visions Portal.

Thank you,
Eva

Dear Mayor Mamdani and his honorable Administration,
I am writing to state the need for the Queenslink rail project, and not to go forward with the Queensway park-only project. Many others have stated these points too, but I have put it in the form of a catchy little song. It goes to the tune of the Dark Mountain Forest theme from Legend of Zelda:

https://youtu.be/-QnjeYaQ82o

[Verse 1]
Don't put Queensway in the budget,
Don't you realize what choosing it means?
Queensway's a NIMBYist project
That will forever block subway access to Queens!
Millions of bus riders each day
Would benefit from Queenslink's new train.
But if it's park with no subway,
It would waste that corridor for so little gain.

[Chorus]
Mamdani, why are you salting the earth?
We thought you knew what the subway is worth!
Please reconsider before it's in ink:
Don't fund the Queensway, fund the Queenslink!

[Verse 2]
Don't put Queensway in the budget,
When you're already defunding parks!
It doesn't make sense to fund it,
When the existing parks are just left in the dark!
Queenslink is by far the right choice,
It has a park and trains hand in hand!
Please do not fall for Queensway's noise:
They will prevent subways forever on that land!

[Chorus]
Mamdani, why are you salting the earth?
We thought you knew what the subway is worth!
Please reconsider before it's in ink:
Don't fund the Queensway, fund the Queenslink!

MAKE THE ROAD NEW YORK – ENGLISH
Written Testimony on the Executive Budget Hearings - Finance
June 10, 2026 | City Hall | 11:00 AM

Good morning, Chair Lee and members of the Council. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Evanna Vásquez, I am a trans woman from Peru and a leader of the Trans Immigrant Justice Project at Make the Road New York.

Last year, our city took a step forward by increasing the funds available for services directed to our community. However, these resources are not sufficient to cover the magnitude of the crisis that Trans people are experiencing at this moment.

As a trans immigrant person, I know firsthand how difficult it is to find safety, dignity, and the resources we need to survive. Many of my siblings have faced rejection, homelessness, and barriers to accessing healthcare simply because of who we are. Some of my peers have experienced homelessness, or have stayed in shelters where we have been discriminated against, disrespected, and have survived violence in these spaces. I can attest to the constant abuse and violence that take place in New York City shelters, as my partner and I were beaten simply for expressing our sexual orientations, gender expression, and for speaking Spanish.

To prevent our communities from continuing to go through these hardships, we need New York City to commit to approving a budget that includes:

$10 million for the Trans Equity Initiative Fund. This fund is essential because it directly supports Trans-led organizations that understand our communities and provide life-saving services.

In addition, we urgently need **$15 million for the Gender Affirming Care for Youth Fund**. Trans youth are under some of the most severe attacks right now, facing political attempts at the federal level to deny them access to necessary healthcare, and they are also being impacted by hospitals in our city that are not providing gender-affirming care for youth.

We are also requesting **$10 million for the Support for Persons Involved in the Sex Trade Fund.** Many trans and queer immigrants and friends of mine depend on these services for safe sexual health practices, legal representation, and community spaces to build community, and the budget allocated over the past several years has not been sufficient.

Lastly, it is important to create a **$15 million fund for Trans and Queer immigrant communities**. I know firsthand how difficult it is to find legal representation in order to adjust one's immigration status, and I have seen how some of my Trans and Queer siblings have been detained by immigration authorities because they did not have access to free legal representation. Therefore, it is essential that this new fund be created.

Allocating these funds would help us provide immediate support to trans, nonbinary, and gender-expansive people facing medical emergencies, seeking access to safe shelters, needing support with relocation to permanent housing, and much more.

Investing in our communities is not optional; it is necessary and vital, especially because New York City has a historic debt of repair to our communities. Our very existence depends on access to life-saving services funded through these resources, and we can no longer wait.

Thank you very much for your attention. ¡Sí se puede!

I live across the street from Mount Prospect Park, at 135 Eastern Parkway. Every weekend, I spend time in the park with my kids – playing soccer, throwing frisbees, having picnics. My son's last two birthday parties were in the park, and many of his friends also celebrate their birthdays there. The park is a treasure for people in Crown Heights, Prospect Heights and other Brooklyn neighborhoods, full of magnificent trees and greenspace. It is also adored by people who come there with their dogs. I am deeply concerned about the city's plans to pave a large portion of the park so that it can be transformed into a place for skateboard stunts and BMX bikes. Spending public money for such a project does not reflect the wishes of the many people in Brooklyn who go to the park precisely because it is *not* a paved area. I hope this plan will be reconsidered and that the park's greenspace and trees will be preserved. Such a plan should only proceed with input from the people who live near and use the park, which does not appear to have happened in this case.

Sincerely,

Eyal Press, Brooklyn Resident

June 11, 2026

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for the continuation of the Girls Inc. of New York City program located at The Young Women's Leadership School of Astoria.

This program provides students with a safe, supportive, and enriching environment where they can continue learning and growing beyond the school day. Through academic support, leadership development, mentoring, and engaging activities, Girls Inc. helps students build confidence, strengthen their skills, and develop the tools they need to succeed both in school and in life.

The after-school program is especially important because it offers students a structured and positive space during critical after-school hours. It promotes personal growth, encourages healthy decision-making, and fosters meaningful relationships with peers and mentors. For many families, the program also provides reliable support that allows parents and caregivers to work knowing their children are in a safe and nurturing environment.

Girls Inc. aligns perfectly with the mission of The Young Women's Leadership School of Astoria by empowering young women to be strong, smart, and bold. The program helps students discover their potential, develop leadership skills, and gain experiences that prepare them for future educational and career opportunities.

Closing or reducing access to this program would have a significant impact on the students and families who rely on it. Maintaining the Girls Inc. after-school program at TYWLS Astoria ensures that students continue to benefit from the resources, support, and opportunities that have become an integral part of their educational experience.

I respectfully urge you to keep the Girls Inc. after-school program at The Young Women's Leadership School of Astoria open and fully supported. Its continued presence is vital to the success, well-being, and development of the students it serves.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Fazia Khan

[redacted]

[redacted]

From: Felicia O"Nate (Messiah Alexander)
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Protect Manhattan Youth Programs
Date: Thursday, June 11, 2026 4:27:15 PM

[redacted]

Dear DYCD Leadership,

I am writing to urge DYCD to continue and.

As a working parent, I know firsthand how important these programs are for New York City families. My son participated in Manhattan Youth's middle school program at LAB Middle School, and it was far more than after-school care. It provided a safe, structured, and enriching environment where he was able to build friendships, develop independence, explore new interests, and continue learning beyond the school day.

Programs like Manhattan Youth are essential for working parents who rely on high-quality after-school programming to ensure their children are safe, engaged, and supported during the critical hours after school ends. For many families, these programs make it possible to maintain employment while knowing their children are receiving meaningful educational and social experiences.

The testimony presented at recent budget hearings reflects what many parents already know: youth development programs are not optional extras. They are a vital part of the support system that helps children thrive and helps families remain economically stable.

Reducing or eliminating funding for Manhattan Youth would have real consequences for students and parents across the city. The investment DYCD makes in these programs pays dividends through stronger academic outcomes, social-emotional growth, community engagement, and support for working families.

I respectfully ask DYCD to continue defending and funding Manhattan Youth programs so that future generations of New York City children can benefit from the same opportunities that helped my son grow and succeed.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to New York City's youth and families.

Sincerely,
Felicia O'Nate
[redacted]
Sent from my iPhone

As a resident of Forest Hills, I am writing to strongly urge your support for the QueensLink project and to halt any further funding for the park-only QueensWay proposal.

Getting to southern Queens from central Queens is currently incredibly difficult, relying on slow, heavily congested bus routes that sever the economic and community ties of our borough. QueensLink offers a proven, multi-modal solution: a transit line that restores the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch while simultaneously creating a 33-acre greenway alongside it. It is the "Rails and Trails" compromise that Queens deserves.

Proponents of QueensWay argue for the necessity of green space, but we are already well-served by parks immediately north and south of our neighborhood. If the city wishes to invest in recreational infrastructure in this area, resources should instead be directed toward connecting the Willow Lake Trail to the rest of Flushing Meadows Corona Park. Building a redundant, transit-blocking linear park over an invaluable municipal rail corridor is short-sighted and permanently kneecaps our borough's transit future.

Furthermore, we cannot allow this critical infrastructure project to be derailed by the gross accounting exaggerations present in the MTA's initial financial estimates. The MTA originally slapped an $8.1 billion price tag on QueensLink—a figure that independent engineering reviews have shown was artificially inflated to make the project appear unfeasible.

The MTA's budget estimate was bloated through several irregular accounting tactics:

* **Inflated Timelines:** The agency calculated the capital costs using 2030 "Year of Expenditure" dollars rather than the standard present-day dollars typically used in federal transit feasibility studies, artificially compounding the price tag.
* **Excessive Contingencies:** The estimate applied massive "unallocated contingencies" and escalation factors that far exceed industry standards and standard federal transit guidance.
* **Disproportionate Soft Costs:** The estimate blew up professional and soft costs completely out of proportion to mask the fact that the actual "hard" construction costs for building on an already cleared, city-owned right-of-way were only in the $1.8 billion to $2.2 billion range.
* **The Reality:** Independent transportation studies have repeatedly shown the true cost to be between $3.4 and $3.7 billion—less than half of the MTA's exaggerated number.

We do not have to choose between public transit and green space; QueensLink provides both. I urge you to look past the MTA's flawed mathematics, prioritize genuine mobility, and support QueensLink.

Sincerely,
Fernando Torales Acosta
Forest Hills, Queens

6/10/2026

Saludo Contialmente sra Vickie Paladino y deseo que no se cierre el casaclub de Lifelinks.

Debido a que nos intereza al maximo pues con ello, reibimos,higierne mental.

Esperamos que neuestros deseo sean escuchados para nuestro bien, y nuestro eomeidad

Atte: Flaminia Roldan . miembro

I’m writing to urge the City Council to include $1.5 million for affordable spay/neuter and veterinary care and $2 million for pet food pantries in the FY 2027 Speaker's Initiative budget.

I’m TNR certified and I act as a solo rescuer. The majority of rescues I’ve been involved in have been costly not only financially but emotionally. I know f/t rescuers whose entire lives revolve around trying to help the most vulnerable among us, and it’s grueling in every possible way.

If the city had the ability to pay people to do this important work, provide recovery space with people who are there to tend to these recovering animals, and much more, we could probably get a handle on all the strays. They don’t ask to be born. We need to help stop the flow of unwanted animals. And with better planning and city involvement, I think that could happen.

With all costs skyrocketing, paying vet bills falls to the bottom of a priority list for a lot of people. They can’t afford to keep their pets well, let alone feed them decently. If help was there at all stages— from TNR/rescue, recovery, vet visits, and food, perhaps we’d all be in better shape, humans and pets.

Thank you for your consideration.

From: [redacted] on behalf of Francesco Siciliano
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony to Committee on Finance: FY27 Executive Budget for NYC Parks
Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 12:23:44 PM

[redacted]

Dear New York City Council New York City Council Members,

Our city's parks are our lifelines, supporting public health, climate resilience, and quality of life in every neighborhood. We know the City Council values parks, and this year's budget presents a critical opportunity to match that support with meaningful investment.

We appreciate Mayor Mamdani's inclusion of $15 million in the FY27 Executive Budget to baselining of 161 critical positions.

However, the Executive Budget fails to protect 100 Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) officers and 15 GreenThumb workers from losing their jobs at the end of the fiscal year. These workers are on one-year contracts and continue to face uncertainty year after year despite performing essential services for New Yorkers.

Over the past three years, NYC Parks has lost more than 600 staffing lines due to budget cuts. This year the Mayor and City Council must make a good-faith effort to rebuild an agency that has endured years of disinvestment and staffing losses, and put NYC on the path of 1% for Parks.

I stand with the Play Fair for Parks Coalition in urging the following actions:

1. The Mamdani Administration must baseline the remaining 115 Parks workers currently funded through one-shot contracts.

2. The Council must fund an additional 276 one-shot positions, including:
- 100 Parks Enforcement Patrol Officers
- 100 City Park Workers, Associate Park Service Workers, and Gardeners
- 50 Forestry Staff
- 26 Playground Associates

New Yorkers are eager for greater investment in parks. A recent New York Times poll identified increased parks funding as the public's top policy priority, garnering more than 35,000 votes.

NYC's 30,000 acres of parkland remain one of the city's most valuable and accessible public resources, providing free spaces for recreation, community gathering, and connection to nature. Yet these spaces cannot thrive without the staff who maintain them, protect them, and deliver vital services to the public.

We urge the Mayor and City Council to restore staffing, strengthen park maintenance, and continue making measurable progress toward the long-overdue goal of dedicating 1% of the city budget to NYC Parks.

Sincerely,
Francesco Siciliano
[redacted] Brooklyn, NY 11218-1336

Hello my name is Frank Guaman. I am a member from the Lifelinks clubhouse. My council member is Phil Wong. I want Lifelinks clubhouse to be open. I want Lifelinks clubhouse to continue to help our community to be a better place. Being part of the clubhouse help me to improve my voice so save Elmhurst hospital Lifelinks clubhouse. Please help our Lifelinks clubhouse to keep it open and save our budget.

Thank you,
Frank Guaman

June 9, 2026

Dear City Council

I urge the City Council to include **$1.5 million for affordable spay/neuter and veterinary care** and **$2 million for pet food pantries** in the FY 2027 Speaker's Initiative budget.
More than half of New Yorkers cannot afford a basic veterinary visit.
75% of dogs entering ACC are unfixed.
193,000 spay/neuter surgeries are needed annually for community cats and owned pets who cannot afford them. The city funds only 3,500.
No New Yorker should have to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their pet.
Funding pet food pantries and low-cost veterinary services keeps animals where they belong: at home with the people who love them.
As cost barriers are removed, adoptions will increase and preventable euthanasia will decrease.
This reduces pressure on NYC's animal shelters and rescue organizations.
This reduces burnout on employees and volunteers.
Fewer cats will suffer outdoors.

Thank you,
Frank Wild
New York, NY 10010

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident and parent to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

LIC has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, Kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, and yet most area schools are already operating over capacity: P.S. 112 at **130%**, and P.S./I.S. 78 at **111%**. What is more, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City — Court Square — still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message to families is clear: you may not be guaranteed a school seat in your neighborhood.

I would also like to express urgent concern about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed school project. In a neighborhood where families are struggling today to secure local school placements, this project, along with other promised school construction projects in LIC, cannot continue to fall behind competing priorities. While I appreciate the creation of an incubation site for Q508 (Q439Q), a temporary solution cannot become a justification for continued delays to the permanent facility. Families were promised a permanent neighborhood school, with the full facilities and long-term stability that a dedicated school building provides. An incubation site may help relieve short-term pressure, but it does not address the broader and growing need for permanent school infrastructure in LIC.

Additionally, the current lease for the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE, Q580) is set to expire in just three years. Families have been assured that the school would be relocated so that it can continue serving students without disruption. We are appreciative that the budget includes funding for BSGE. However, we want to emphasize that it is critical that the City follow through on this commitment and move urgently to secure a permanent home for the school. Allowing delays to continue would create significant uncertainty for students and families and risks the loss of an important educational institution in a neighborhood already facing a severe shortage of school seats. The City must prioritize funding and planning for BSGE's relocation now to ensure continuity and stability for the community.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has also recognized the need for additional schools to support the neighborhood's rapid growth. Specifically, commitments were made to advance development of a school at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard. Creation of two additional schools has also been promised to create 1,300 more seats in conjunction with the planned construction of over 14,000 residential units. As more housing is developed through OneLIC, school construction must move in parallel — not years behind residential growth. Without firm commitments and accountability around these promised schools, the existing seat crisis will only intensify.

Delays to the opening of these schools are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and more families pushed out of the neighborhood because they cannot rely on access to local public schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency, accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508 and other promised schools on schedule. Schools aren't just a service—they're the foundation of a stable, thriving neighborhood.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future. Please ensure that timely funding is delivered to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority for the completion of these projects.

Sincerely,
Gabriela Hirsch Augustinyova
11101

Please fund $1.5 million for spay and neuter services and $2 million for pet food pantries.

Every day, countless cats and dogs are living on the streets, reproducing without access to affordable spay and neuter care. Shelters and rescue groups are already overwhelmed, and far too many healthy, adoptable animals face euthanasia simply because there is not enough space, funding, or support available to save them.

Animal rescuers pour their blood, sweat, tears, time, and personal savings into helping these animals. Many pay for food, veterinary care, transportation, medication, and emergency treatment out of their own pockets while also relying heavily on donations from the public. These individuals are doing work that benefits the entire city, but they cannot continue carrying this burden alone.

The city currently funds only a small fraction of the spay and neuter surgeries that are needed each year. More funding would prevent unwanted litters, reduce the number of animals entering shelters, decrease preventable euthanasia, and help families keep the pets they love. Pet food pantries are also essential because no New Yorker should have to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their animal.

Rescuers and struggling pet owners need the city’s help. Please invest in affordable spay and neuter services and pet food assistance before even more animals are abandoned, left on the streets, or lose their lives.

Hello, I have been a resident of Queens for most of my life. I lived in Whitestone, Howard Beach, Forest Hills and now Woodside. My mother grew up in Astoria, and my father in Clearview.

Queens is home.
And Queens is crowded.
And Queens is expensive.

The expense of Queens comes not from many of the expenses of most other Boros, but ones our brothers and sisters of Staten Island are all too familiar with.

Cars.

I work all around this city, and whenever I find work in Manhattan I feel quite blessed. Hop on the subway and pop out at work.

But jobs around much of my own boro and especially Brooklyn bring a sense of dread.

Traffic. The very issue that brought on congestion pricing.

Woodhaven and Rockaway blvd, Metropolitan, Yellowstone and Cooper Ave, some of the worst traffic you'll find in New York these days. And I have to do it.

I HAVE to have a car to navigate my whole boro. A boro that has already suffered immensely from highways being carved into it. A playground for Robert Moses to separate and cripple our boro.

Queens is already the 2nd largest economy of the 5 boros, and has more potential to grow than any of the 5. Its size both population and land, diversity, multiple transportation hubs and cultural centers makes it the perfect boro to develop.

Please, consider the incredible long term benifits of this once in a cities life opportunity for effective and easy transportation to build. Hundreds of thousands of cars off the road. 9 billion dollars in potential growth. What good a park while emissions remain high? What good is it if would struggle to even get there?

I wish not to drive, I wish not to miss my friends in Brooklyn, I wish not to divvy out hundreds in car insurance in one of the most expensive cities for car ownership.

Queens link adds parks. It creates new natural hub to incentivize housing so that the city can focus on building public housing elsewhere.

Queensway, will bar us from the opportunity. I refuse to listen to those who say it won't. Other cities and states have made this promise only for it to turn into a mistake. How long can a city as

grand as New York procrastinate the most obvious expansion for its residents. To put more red tape over something that can be done now. This administration promised transportation and parks, and it's possible to do both. We need not to sacrifice one for the other. We need not to waste money and time on projects that will only benefit a select few.

QueensLink must be built, and it will be one of our greatest embarrassments to not build it.

Funding for Dance and Arts

Its important to make a living in NYC , and perform in the arts that you want to work in.
I feel that dance and the arts , for performers, students , and interns . Have more paid focus groups and more scholarships.

Thanks,

Gayle Dorsky
Choreographer, artist , dancer , and actress

June 6,2026

Geeva Ebens
[redacted],
Forest Hills, NY 11375

Dear Members of the City Council,

I am writing as a parent of a student at the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE) in Queens to urge the City to protect the funding already committed for BSGE's new school site and to fully fund the additional promised schools in our neighborhood.

BSGE has been an exceptional educational environment for my child. The school fosters intellectual curiosity, global awareness, academic rigor, and a diverse, supportive community that prepares students to think critically and engage meaningfully with the world around them. Like many families, we chose BSGE because of the quality of the educational experience and the opportunities it provides students.

The City made a commitment to BSGE through the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan, and it is essential that the funding for our school's relocation remain fully protected. Students deserve a safe, modern, and purpose-built learning environment that reflects the excellence of the education taking place inside the classroom.

At the same time, I urge the City to honor its broader commitment by fully funding the additional promised middle school and elementary schools. These local schools are a vital part of our larger Queens community.

Strong public schools are fundamental community infrastructure. BSGE students, as well as the younger children who will follow them, deserve access to learning environments that are adequately funded and designed to support student success.

I respectfully ask the City Council and the Office of Management and Budget to protect BSGE's funding and fully support the additional school commitments.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Geeva Ebens
Parent, Baccalaureate School for Global Education

Written Testimony
New York City Council | Committee on Finance | June 10, 2026
Subject: Please fund $1.5M for spay/neuter and $2M for pet food pantries

I am asking the City Council to please prioritize funding $1.5M for spay/neuter and $2M for pet food pantries in the NYC FY2027 Budget – these are essential resources needed for companion and community animals and their caretakers in New York City.

I am a constituent of District 38. I have previously submitted testimony to the Committee on Health on 03-19-2026 asking for investment in these resources that would support New Yorkers to care for their animals and themselves. Many New Yorkers can no longer afford the cost of these basic services on top of today's cost of living. The rate of pet surrenders and abandonment continues to rise with a direct link to affordability. Please take action and help New York City address the overpopulation crisis with meaningful solutions. This investment will improve the lives of people, animals, and the communities where they live.

Thank you.

George Denison

It is beyond reason to use NYC taxpayer money to pave green space in historic Mount Prospect Park, Brooklyn for a skatepark. NYC needs all the green space it has while being assaulted by heat and storms. In 2024 Prospect Park burst into fire.

Historic Mount Prospect Park was dedicated by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia in 1939 as a monument to good government. Most recently it has been neglected by the Parks Department, without the appropriate level of maintenance for the beloved green space. Nevertheless the Park is valued by the Mount Prospect Park community and others for providing respite from the bustle of the City and its cooling effect during the summer (easily 10 degrees cooler than paved spaces).

The current plan is to use $11 million of our taxpayer money to pave the Park to create a skatepark. How does the City have this money to pave green space, when there are so many urgent uses for it, as mentioned during the Finance Committee's hearing this week? It is irresponsible to proceed with this wrong-headed plan. It is a destructive, wasteful project. This plan was kept secret for years among a few Brooklyn officials and NEVER discussed with the New Yorkers affected. It was decreed, regardless of the damage.

Better to fund the Park's maintenance so everyday New Yorkers who use this park many times a week will benefit. I urge you to stop the skateboard project and move it to an already paved space. New York can't afford to waste our $ on it. Stop it now.

Girls Inc at TYWLS - Astoria

My daughter is an eight grader at TYWLS. When she first arrived in sixth grade, we were excited to hear about Girls, Inc because it helped us with complicated pick up schedules by giving our daughter a place to be after school. We thought she would go only on the days when we couldn't get her right after school. However, we very quickly realized that she would stay there everyday. She was excited by the programs that Girls Inc offered and the friends she was making. It's hard to imagine her TYWLS experience being as robust and great without Girls INC. The caring staff and her experiences there were every bit as critical to the amazing young woman she has become as her time in class at TYWLS. Please consider reinstating Girls Inc. at TYWLS Astoria, so the next generation of students there can experience the wonder, joy, and support they provide.

Gmail Gilberte Lal [redacted]

Please support MS104 Class Size Reduction

3 messages

Gilberte Lal [redacted] Wed, Jun 3, 2026 at 1:50 PM
To: dinowitz@council.gov, District2 <district2@council.nyc.gov>, district4@council.nyc.gov
Cc: info@classsizematters.org

Dear CM Epstein and Maloney:

I am your constituent and my child attends MS104 Simon Baruch Middle School school in District 2 where I am the PTA president. I am very concerned that while the administration has received two more years to comply with the goals in the class size law, neither the Mayor nor the Chancellor has yet provided any information to show how they will lower class size to ensure all students receive smaller classes even within the extended timeframe.

My child's classes this year were unacceptably large in 7th grade hitting the old cap sizes in all her classes. MS104 was able to reduce only the current 6th grade class this year and has a plan to reduce class sizes for the rest of the school in grades 7th and 8th next year. At the beginning of the year we were extremely optimistic that the budget would be approved to allow the school to reduce class sizes next year. However, the Mayor has not approved the budget to allow the school to hire teachers to implement this program.

My daughter Vaishali is extremely distraught that in her words "it is unfair that we fought for class size reduction and it is the law, yet I will never benefit from it. It is unfair that Karan and Radha [her younger siblings] got reduced class sizes at PS116 and that they will get lower class sizes in middle school in the coming years." She is right! It is unfair that I advocated for years to lower class sizes and she will not see the benefit of this. It is unfair that my other children have lower class sizes now in elementary school and will go to middle school only to have the class size almost double.

All our children in NYC deserve lower class sizes. We cannot delay this another 2 years. Middle School years are critical years for children as they go through so many changes. Lower class sizes will allow teachers to provide more individual attention to students and work with their needs. It is impossible in a class of 35 students to give one on one instruction. With District 2 implementing Wit & Wisdom for ELA and pressuring schools to add Geometry courses, it is even more important to lower class sizes so every child can get "What I Need".

At the education budget hearings on Monday, please ask the Chancellor and the SCA whether they have an actual, realistic, and detailed multi-year plan to achieve the goals in the law and if so, will they provide it to you as soon as possible. I also urge you to hold off approving the education budget or the capital plan before you're confident that such a plan exists and will be implemented.

Thanks so much,

Gilberte Lal

PTA President, MS104

Mail Delivery Subsystem <mailer-daemon@googlemail.com> Wed, Jun 3, 2026 at 1:50 PM
To: [redacted]

Address not found

Your message wasn't delivered to **dinowitz@council.gov** because the domain council.gov couldn't be found. Check for typos or unnecessary spaces and try again.

LEARN MORE

The response was:

```
DNS Error: DNS type 'mx' lookup of council.gov responded with code NXDOMAIN Domain name
not found: council.gov For more information, go to https://support.google.com/mail/?p=BadRcptDomain
```

Final-Recipient: rfc822; dinowitz@council.gov
Action: failed
Status: 5.1.2
Diagnostic-Code: smtp; DNS Error: DNS type 'mx' lookup of council.gov responded with code NXDOMAIN
Domain name not found: council.gov For more information, go to https://support.google.com/mail/?p=BadRcptDomain
Last-Attempt-Date: Wed, 03 Jun 2026 10:50:44 -0700 (PDT)

noname
4K

Gilberte Lal [redacted] Wed, Jun 3, 2026 at 1:51 PM
To: dinowitz@council.nyc.gov

[Quoted te t hidden]

From: Gina Noy
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fiscal Year 2027 - Manhattan Youth
Date: Thursday, June 11, 2026 10:30:46 AM

[redacted]

Dear DYCD Leadership,

I am writing to urge DYCD to continue and protect funding for Manhattan Youth programs.

As a working parent, I know firsthand how important these programs are for New York City families. My son participated in Manhattan Youth's middle school program at LAB Middle School, and it was far more than after-school care. It provided a safe, structured, and enriching environment where he was able to build friendships, develop independence, explore new interests, and continue learning beyond the school day.

Programs like Manhattan Youth are essential for working parents who rely on high-quality after-school programming to ensure their children are safe, engaged, and supported during the critical hours after school ends. For many families, these programs make it possible to maintain employment while knowing their children are receiving meaningful educational and social experiences.

The testimony presented at recent budget hearings reflects what many parents already know: youth development programs are not optional extras. They are a vital part of the support system that helps children thrive and helps families remain economically stable.

Reducing or eliminating funding for Manhattan Youth would have real consequences for students and parents across the city. The investment DYCD makes in these programs pays dividends through stronger academic outcomes, social-emotional growth, community engagement, and support for working families.

I respectfully ask DYCD to continue defending and funding Manhattan Youth programs so that future generations of New York City children can benefit from the same opportunities that helped my son grow and succeed.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to New York City's youth and families.

Thank you, Gina

From:	New York City Council
To:	Testimony
Subject:	Wed, Jun 10 2026 @ 9:30 AM - Committee on Finance
Date:	Monday, June 8, 2026 2:48:07 PM
Attachments:	For-Julie-Zero-Fines-Collected-200-Million-not-going-to-Victims-of-Domestic-Violence.pdf

---

Attendee will be: Testifying via Zoom (web)
[redacted]
Attendee name (Zoom name): Glen Bolofsky, CPA
[redacted]
Hearing: Wed, Jun 10 2026 @ 9:30 AM - Committee on Finance
Subject of testimony: Stipulated Fine Program Costing NYC $1.5 Billion
Organization: Self
Organization if "Other":

If a testimony was uploaded, it will be in the attachments.

Stipulated Fine and Commercial Abatement Programs Parking Summons Payment Schedule
Effective 1/5/2026

VIOLATION CODE	VIOLATION DESCRIPTION	Other Areas		Manhattan 96th Street and Below	
		Fine Amount	Program Timely Payment Rate	Fine Amount	Program Timely Payment Rate
1	FAILURE TO DISPLAY BUS PERMIT	$515	$515	$515	$515
2	NO OPERATOR NAM/ADD/PH DISPLAY	$515	$515	$515	$515
3	UNAUTHORIZED PASSENGER PICK-UP	$515	$515	$515	$515
4	BUS PARKING IN LOWER MANHATTAN	$0	$0	$115	$115
5	BUS LANE VIOLATION	$50	$50	$50	$50
6	OVERNIGHT TRACTOR TRAILER PKG	$250	$250	$250	$250
7	FAILURE TO STOP AT RED LIGHT	$50	$50	$50	$50
8	IDLING	$115	$115	$115	$115
9	OBSTRUCTING TRAFFIC/INTERSECT	$115	$115	$115	$115
10	NO STOPPING-DAY/TIME LIMITS	$115	$100	$115	$100
11	NO STANDING-HOTEL LOADING	$115	$100	$115	$100
12	MOBILE MTA BUS LANE VIOLATION	$50	$50	$50	$50
13	NO STANDING-TAXI STAND	$115	$85	$115	$85
14	NO STANDING-DAY/TIME LIMITS	$115	$90	$115	$90
15	MTA DOUBLE PARKING	$50	$50	$50	$50
16	NO STANDING-EXC. TRUCK LOADING	$95	$0	$95	$0
17	NO STANDING-EXC. AUTH. VEHICLE	$95	$80	$95	$80
18	NO STANDING-BUS LANE	$115	$95	$115	$95
19	NO STANDING-BUS STOP	$115	$100	$115	$100
20	NO PARKING-DAY/TIME LIMITS	$60	$25	$65	$25
21	NO PARKING-STREET CLEANING	$65	$40	$65	$40
22	NO STAND TAXI/FHV RELIEF STAND	$115	$115	$115	$115
25	NO STANDING-COMMUTER VAN STOP	$115	$100	$115	$100
26	NO STANDING-FOR HIRE VEH STND	$115	$100	$115	$100
27	NO PARKING-EXC. DSBLTY PERMIT	$180	$180	$180	$180
28	OVERTIME STANDING DP	$95	$60	$95	$60
29	ALTERING INTERCITY BUS PERMIT	$515	$515	$515	$515
30	NO STOP/STANDNG EXCEPT PAS P/U	$515	$515	$515	$515
31	NO STANDING-COMM METER ZONE	$115	$90	$115	$90
32	OT PARKING-MISSING/BROKEN METR	$35	$25	$65	$25
33	MISUSE AGENCY AUTHORIZED PARKING PERMIT	$65	$65	$65	$65
35	SELLING/OFFERING MCHNDSE-METER	$35	$30	$65	$40
36	PHTO SCHOOL ZN SPEED VIOLATION	$50	$50	$50	$50
37	EXPIRED MUNI METER	$35	$20	$65	$30
38	FAIL TO DSPLY MUNI METER RECPT	$35	$25	$65	$45
39	OVERTIME PKG-TIME LIMIT POSTED	$60	$25	$65	$25
40	FIRE HYDRANT	$115	$115	$115	$115
42	EXPIRED MUNI MTR-COMM MTR ZN	$35	$30	$65	$50
43	MTA BUS STOP	$50	$50	$50	$50
44	PKG IN EXC. OF LIM-COMM MTR ZN	$35	$30	$65	$60
45	TRAFFIC LANE	$115	$100	$115	$100
46	DOUBLE PARKING	$115	$65	$115	$65
47	DOUBLE PARKING-MIDTOWN COMML	$0	$0	$115	$100
48	BIKE LANE	$115	$115	$115	$115
49	EXCAVATION-VEHICLE OBSTR TRAFF	$95	$60	$95	$60
50	CROSSWALK	$115	$100	$115	$100
51	SIDEWALK	$115	$100	$115	$100
52	INTERSECTION	$115	$100	$115	$100
53	SAFETY ZONE	$115	$100	$115	$100
54	PICKUP/DISCHARGE TX/COMMUTER VAN/FHV	$115	$115	$115	$115
55	TUNNEL/ELEVATED ROADWAY	$115	$100	$115	$100
56	DIVIDED HIGHWAY	$115	$100	$115	$100
57	BQE Weigh-In-Motion	$650	$650	$0	$0
58	MARGINAL STREET/WATER FRONT	$45	$30	$65	$40
59	ANGLE PARKING-COMM VEHICLE	$115	$25	$115	$25
60	ANGLE PARKING	$45	$30	$65	$40
61	WRONG WAY	$45	$30	$65	$40
62	BEYOND MARKED SPACE	$45	$25	$65	$25
63	NIGHTTIME STD/ PKG IN A PARK	$95	$60	$95	$60
64	NO STANDING EXCP D/S	$95	$60	$95	$60
65	OVERTIME STDG D/S	$95	$60	$95	$60
66	DETACHED TRAILER	$45	$30	$65	$40
67	PEDESTRIAN RAMP	$165	$165	$165	$165
68	NON-COMPLIANCE W/ POSTED SIGN	$60	$25	$65	$25
69	FAIL TO DISP. MUNI METER RECPT	$35	$30	$65	$55
70	REG. STICKER-EXPIRED/MISSING	$65	$50	$65	$50
71	INSP. STICKER-EXPIRED/MISSING	$65	$60	$65	$60
72	INSP STICKER-MUTILATED/C'FEIT	$65	$30	$65	$40
73	REG STICKER-MUTILATED/C'FEIT	$65	$30	$65	$40
74	FRONT OR BACK PLATE MISSING	$65	$25	$65	$25
75	NO MATCH-PLATE/STICKER	$65	$30	$65	$40
76	VIN OBSCURED	$65	$30	$65	$40
77	PARKED BUS-EXC. DESIG. AREA	$45	$30	$65	$40
78	NGHT PKG ON RESID STR-COMM VEH	$65	$40	$65	$40
79	UNAUTHORIZED BUS LAYOVER	$115	$100	$115	$100
80	MISSING EQUIPMENT	$45	$30	$60	$40
81	NO STANDING EXCP DP	$95	$60	$95	$60
82	COMML PLATES-UNALTERED VEHICLE	$115	$65	$115	$65
83	IMPROPER REGISTRATION	$65	$30	$65	$40
84	PLTFRM LFTS LWRD POS COMM VEH	$45	$35	$65	$55
85	STORAGE-3HR COMMERCIAL	$65	$30	$65	$40
86	MIDTOWN PKG OR STD-3HR LIMIT	$0	$0	$115	$100
87	FRAUDULENT USE PKG PERMIT	$65	$65	$65	$65
89	NO STD(EXC TRKS/GMTDST NO-TRK)	$0	$0	$115	$25
91	VEHICLE FOR SALE(DEALERS ONLY)	$45	$30	$65	$40
92	WASH/REPAIR VEHCL-REPAIR ONLY	$45	$30	$65	$40
93	REMOVE/REPLACE FLAT TIRE	$65	$30	$65	$40
96	RAILROAD CROSSING	$95	$60	$95	$60
97	VACANT LOT	$45	$30	$65	$40
98	OBSTRUCTING DRIVEWAY	$95	$60	$95	$60
99	OTHER	vary	$25	vary	$25

Executive Budget Hearing - Finance Committee

Wednesday, June 10, 2026

Gloria Martindale, Garden Member, The Garden by the Bay

Thank you to Chair Lina Lee and members of the Finance Committee for the opportunity to submit this testimony. My name is Gloria Martindale , and I am a member of The Garden by the Bay, located at 480 Beach 43rd Street, Edgemere, NY 11691in the borough of Queens.

I have been involved with The Garden by the Bay for 4 years. Our garden is more than a green space. It is a place where neighbors grow food, share cultural knowledge, build relationships, support young people, care for elders, and create safety and belonging on our block.

- While we applaud the $15 million baselined in funding to NYC Parks workers, GreenThumb's 17 seasonal staff also needs to be baselined.
- GreenThumb is the primary support system for more than 550 gardens across NYC.
- Gardens need to be recognized as an essential public asset; they need to be protected from development.
- GreenThumb continues to operate with limited staff and budget constraints. Restore the previously allocated $2.6 million in funding for GreenThumb.
- Introduce legislation to permanently protect all NYC community gardens on city-owned land from rezoning and development.
- Allocate **$300,000 through the Parks Equity Initiative** for direct funding to gardens
- Fund community-based organizations to distribute resources equitably
- Invest in **A Greener NYC** to create green jobs for youth and support environmental education and advocacy in gardens.
- Strengthen the Get Stuff Clean Initiative to combat rodent infestations and illegal dumping in and around gardens by:
    - Increasing DSNY and DOHMH support for gardens.
    - Expanding access to Rat Academy training and sanitation services.

Thank you,
Gloria Martindale

Hi, I would like to express my disapproval of city funds being used to further the QueensWay project on the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch in Queens. I am in full support of QueensLink, which reactivates the city's railway that is currently sitting dormant.

As a lifelong Rockaway resident and Queens taxpayer, who is watching an unprecedented investment into the peninsula, I am truly gobsmacked that the investment into more reliable and diverse transit is being sidestepped for the anti-transit QueensWay. The park seems to be the city's hasty attempt to produce something with the currently inactive rails, but the advancement of QueensWay is incompatible with the trajectory that Queens is on right now.

This administration is funding the construction of thousands of new units of housing all up and down the peninsula, yet neglecting the pitiful infrastructure available. To truly invest in Queens would be to invest in QueensLink, which supports a plan that aims to connect the North and South sections of Queens by rail while providing green space alongside it.

The construction of just a park on this space, with no provisions for future rail addition will only prove difficult for any future attempts to provide the inevitable transportation upgrades the Rockaways and Central Queens need.

I really hope this administration isn't interested in kicking the can of transportation equity any further down the road, because it stands in opposition to almost everything the current mayor campaigned on. So I ask this committee to consider a more connected and thriving Queens that can come to pass with the development of QueensLink, and withhold funds for QueensWay.

Sincerely,
A concerned Queens constituent

Hello my name is Grace Lord and I am a 19 year old student at the Silver School of Social work at NYU testifying on the FY2027 budget.

Growing up, I have witnessed a progressive erasure of culture from the West Village that has gone hand in hand with increased privatization and the closure of community pillars such as beloved pools and recreational centers.

I am now witnessing this continue to happen across the city at the hand of my own school and with the blessing of New York City officials.

This is not a hearing about numbers, it is a hearing about who gets to remain in New York City. For the amount of vacant housing in this city, there are too many who have been pushed further and further from their homes, or worse, have ended up on the streets or have faced serious health complications as a result of displacement.

You are now being offered a chance to counteract this, with the recommitting of 1.5 billion dollars of taxpayer money to section 9 instead of private developers. I do not consent to my tax money being directed toward the privatization scheme being conjured by NYCHA and their pact partners and demand that the 1.5 billion dollars mentioned go toward comprehensive modernization for NYCHA developments.

Finally, I want to stress the importance of true section 9 housing among the rampant affordability crisis in this city and the necessity of stopping the demolition of Fulton & Elliot and Chelsea homes for this very same reason.

We want full transparency of where our tax dollars are going and the dignity of knowing that they are being allocated toward the public good.

Thank you.

My name is Greg Williams and I am a resident of Ozone Park, NY, and have been a homeowner here for the better part of the last 5 and a half years. I am a freelance professional musician and Adjunct Professor at Queens College. I currently use the subway pretty regularly to get into Midtown Manhattan for rehearsals and performances, and this has included Broadway. While the A train can get me into Midtown Manhattan in about an hour, there are instances where due to delays, the frequent conversion of the track to the local will create significant delays. There are instances where I have to rely on either the Long Island Railroad from Forest Hills, or have to outright drive into Manhattan because the A train is not always reliable.

Having the option of cutting through Queens via the Queenslink would make my commutes much easier. I would be able to connect to a bus to get to Queens College easier without having to pay for parking, and not having to rely on my car as frequently. It is urgent that the the Finance Committee get behind supporting the construction of Queenslink. We need a way to connect the North and South line that connects the Rockaways, Ozone Park, and Howard Beach to the northern half of the borough much more than we need additional parkspace in that part of Queens.

June 10, 2026

Dear Council,

I've been a proud resident of NYC for over a decade now. For multiple years I helped with a cat rescue organization, and the volunteers, including myself, would spend our nights and weekends working to capture stray cats, organizing foster care, coordinating adoption, and other myriad activities required to make this successful.

There's a herculean effort and large network involved in this work around the city. This not only helps our feline friends, but also helps stabilize the local wildlife populations, prevent nuisance calls, and more. However, since the pandemic there has been a huge surge in the number of cats going through the system. TNR helps greatly at the source, but for all the other animals out there we need another answer.

And one of the things we have seen repeatedly is a concern for the cost of care. This applies to both the financially strapped volunteer organizations and the owners. Allocating money to low-cost spay/neuter options, veterinary care, and food pantries allows the rescues to focus on the effort of helping connect animals with new owners rather than the fundraising, and opens up the door for more people to adopt a little friend without the financial stress.

I humbly ask that you allocate what you can for the spray/neuter efforts and food pantries, to ensure that the people and animals in our community can find the companionship that they deserve.

Sincerely,
Gregory Padgett
[redacted]
NY, NY 10023

Dear New York City Council Members,

My name is Han Xiao, and I have lived in Long Island City for the past year. I am writing to urge the City Council to restore funding for the commitments made under the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan and ensure they are delivered on the schedule that was promised to the community.

One of the main reasons I chose to live in Long Island City is the access to the waterfront, parks, and open public spaces. I run regularly throughout the neighborhood, often along the waterfront and through local parks. I regularly train for races and spend many hours each week running in LIC. These spaces are not abstract amenities to me. They are part of my weekly routine and a major reason I feel connected to the neighborhood. I also plan to continue living in Long Island City long term.

That is why I am concerned about the delays to parks and open space projects, including the waterfront esplanade, Queensbridge Baby Park, and improvements to Queensbridge Park. LIC already feels limited in green space, especially during peak hours along the waterfront and in popular park areas. As thousands of new housing units are added, these spaces will become even more important for everyday use. Delaying these projects means delaying infrastructure that residents already rely on.

I am also concerned about delays to transportation and public realm improvements, including the Queens waterfront greenway, the 21st Street Intermodal Hub, and the 44th Drive corridor improvements. As someone who runs and walks through LIC frequently, I experience firsthand how some routes feel incomplete or disconnected. Better lighting, safer crossings, and more continuous pedestrian and running paths would make a real difference in how livable the neighborhood feels.

I support more housing in Long Island City, but housing growth should come with the parks, public spaces, and transportation improvements that were promised as part of the plan. If these investments are delayed while development continues, the neighborhood risks becoming more crowded without becoming more livable.

I respectfully ask the City Council to restore funding for the OneLIC commitments and ensure that these projects move forward on a timely schedule. Long Island City's growth should be matched by investments in the public spaces and infrastructure that support daily life.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Han Xiao
Long Island City Resident

From: H
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Request that the Dept. of Youth & Community Development Reinstate Manhattan Youth
Date: Friday, May 29, 2026 12:58:55 PM

[redacted]

Dear Members of the Council,

My name is Hang Su, and I am a parent of a student at Lab Middle School who enjoys the after school programming offered by Manhattan Youth.

I am writing to voice my concern regarding the sudden, unclear administrative decision to change the after school provider to the YMCA of Greater NY ("YMCA") at Lab Middle school for 2026-2027. It is unclear if the YMCA will be able to offer all the same clubs, theater, debate and sports teams that Lab Middle school students love and depend on for next year. So far we learned from the Director of the Middle School Athletic League, which Lab Middle sports teams participate under, that the YMCA will not fund the sports teams next year.

This was devastating as Lab Middle School students have been enjoying a wide variety of sports teams including but not limited to baseball, basketball, volleyball, fencing, badminton, and track and field run by Manhattan Youth for almost a decade. Manhattan Youth has built a track record of providing robust and inclusive extracurricular programs, encompassing athletic and non-athletic activities.

If an establishing program that offers a diverse selection of sports teams (and many other non-athletic clubs and activities) has been bringing nothing but comprehensive benefits to students and families and it has built trust and fostered bonds within the school communities, then why would it be taken away? Even if a new provider is introduced due to some administrative decisions and that new provider offers as many athletes and non-athletic activities as Manhattan Youth currently does, there would be a period for everyone to see how the new program functions. Many opportunities may be found and also may be lost during such a trial and error time. Now that the new provider will not even fund the sports teams next year?

My son has been participating in different after school programs and doing well in fencing. He has learned not only sportsmanship, but also emotional resilience and personal responsibility during these critical after school hours. The Director of Manhattan Youth program at Lab Middle School, Ms.Kara, is particularly diligent and highly communicative and collaborative with parents and willing to work with each student based on their abilities and situations. With her leadership and her team's support, my son is working towards joining the track and field and baseball team in September 2026.

I respectfully request that this decision be re-evaluated and that Manhattan Youth be reinstated. I remain hopeful that my son's established plan and many other students' ones will

be implemented this fall, Proceeding without sports teams by another provider is deeply concerning and would cause an unacceptable regression in student progress and create a profound, lasting void in our school community.

Respectfully,
Hang Su
[redacted]

I'm writing in support of Manhattan Youth's outstanding after school program at Robert F. Wagner Middle School. It will be an extraordinary loss to hundreds of children and families, and to the entire school community, to have this program removed from the school.

Manhattan Youth's program is a shining star at Wagner. The program is highly professional, organized, communicative, and enriching. The Manhattan Youth staff are coaches, mentors, and role models to the kids at the school: reliable adults who "show up" for them. They are diverse, inclusive, supportive, and empowering.

My child has benefited enormously from the Manhattan Youth program. He has explored brand new interests and hobbies: he became enthralled with Dungeons and Dragons in 6th grade; he learned about Stage Tech and Theater Lighting in 7th. He's had casual downtime with peers in a structured and supportive environment. He's attended special events, like dances, art shows, and theater – all organized and supported by Manhattan Youth staff. He's played on two different sports teams (one of which was a brand new sport to him). He has grown, learned, and excelled. He knows all of the staff by name and they know HIM – pretty unique in a school with hundreds of kids.

I'm sure a new provider has the potential to be good, too. But what our kids will lose – especially those, like mine, right now in 7th grade – is just what kids in middle school desperately need: continuity, relationships with role models, and adults who consistently care. This will be an extraordinary loss to so many children who depend on Manhattan Youth for new experiences, for learning, for a safe space, and for caring adults.

Please rethink this RFP and these awards. It is hard to imagine that this is in the best interest of NYC schools, kids, and families.

Mount Prospect Park is a beloved neighborhood green space where its community gathers for picnics, summer camps, dog walks, volunteer maintenance, jogging --with every mental and physical health benefit that a park provides. If you were to visit Mount Prosect Park on any day of the week, you will see small children with their parents, studying the mature trees or playing soccer, older folks sitting on benches, while dogs play, neighbors gather.

Tragically, Mount Prospect Park is being starved for maintenance while funds are diverted to a skating park which will entail the paving over of the central useable space and the destruction of trees, a project for which the community was never given sufficient opportunity for objection.

Ironically, the concrete skating project has been touted repeatedly in testimony as 'something for everyone from six to sixty," – an express admission that the approximate 24% of the population over sixty as well as parents with children under six, simply should not have a voice and do not belong in the space any longer.

Heard another way, the argument is often made that young people need something to do in Brooklyn, that there's not enough activity, and that requires paving over our park. If you were to visit Mount Prospect Park, you would see people of all ages enjoying our park immensely for sports, for learning about nature and for all its obvious benefits of clean air and refuge from the heat, gathering and sharing. There are many concrete alternatives already in existence which would well accommodate the niche project of a skating park.

Please do not allow yourselves to be swayed by the skating park planners and lobbyists to let Mount Prospect Park languish so that it will be further vulnerable to destruction. Mount Prospect Park is a community gem, and its care must be properly funded.

FDNY EMT Base Pay is LOWER in 2026 than Firefighter base pay Was in 2010

► Here's the 2010 FDNY Firefighter Base Salary:

$39,764 - New Hire Rate for firefighters hired on or after January 17, 2006

$41,724 - That's an added $1,960 for 5th Grade
$45,445 - That's an added $3,721 for 4th Grade
$49,989 - That's an added $4,544 for 3rd Grade
$55,102 - That's an added $5,113 for 2nd Grade
$77,253 - That's an added $22,151 for 1st Grade

Source: https://www.nyc.gov/assets/olr/downloads/pdf/collectivebargaining/firefighters-executed-contract-2010-2017.pdf

► The 2026 FDNY EMT's Base Salary is Lower:

(This contract expired in 2022)

$39,386 - New Hire Rate
$41,616 - That's an added $2,230 after 1 year
$42,357 - That's an added $741 after 2 years
$49,047 - That's an added $6,690 after 3 years*
$59,534 - That's an added $10,487 after 5 years

Source: https://www.nyc.gov/assets/queenscb2/downloads/pdf/2024/EMT-FLYER-2022.pdf

In the following table, please note that a person with no firefighting experience when hired, earns more than most Emergency Medical Technicians (table above) who've been trained and certified and have years of on-the-job experience providing patients with emergency medical assistance and transportation to hospital Emergency Rooms.

► These were the FDNY Firefighter Base Salary Steps as of 2024:

$54,122 - Firefighter New Hire Rate*
$56,788 -That's a 4.93% increase after 1.5 years
$61,853 -That's an additional 8.9% increase after 2.5 years
$68,039 -That's an additional 10.00% increase after 3.5 years
$74,998 -That's an additional 10.23% increase after 4.5 years
$105,146 - That's an additional 40.2% increase after 5.5 years

Source: https://www.joinfdny.com/careers/firefighter/

The FDNY Emergency Medical Services Crisis - -

PAY is a PROBLEM for EMS - Longer Response Times Are a Problem for New Yorkers

- Successive NYC Councils Have Called for Pay Parity for the FDNY EMS
  - Successive NYC Mayors Have Openly Rejected Pay Parity

In 2001, the NYC Council Adopted and Then Had to Override Mayor Giuliani's Veto of Local Law 19

"The Council finds that employees working for the fire department of the city of New York ("FDNY") as emergency medical technicians ("EMT's"), advanced emergency medical technicians ("paramedics") and the supervisors of EMT's or paramedics have certain terms and conditions of employment similar to those, of the **uniformed services** of the city of New York, including police, **fire, sanitation** and correction services . . . The Council intends by this amendment to the administrative code that **those individuals employed by the FDNY as EMT's, paramedics and supervisors of EMT's or paramedics be accorded the same unique bargaining rights as the uniformed forces of the City**." NYC Local Law 19 of 2001. https://intro.nyc/local-laws/2001-19

Next, the Giuliani and Bloomberg Administrations fought Local Law 19 in the Courts for Years but Lost

"The Mayor of New York City challenges the validity of two local laws, passed by the City Council over his veto, that give certain fire department employees the status of "uniformed" fire service members for collective bargaining purposes. Like Supreme Court and the Appellate Division, we reject the Mayor's challenge. . ." Mayor of City of N.Y. v Council of City of N.Y. 2007 June 12, 2007 Court of Appeals. As corrected through Wednesday, September 12, 2007.
https://law.justia.com/cases/new-york/court-of-appeals/2007/2007-05132.html

In the 18 years since that Appellate Court decision, 3 FDNY Emergency Medical Services labor contracts have been negotiated, one in 2008 with the Bloomberg administration, and two with the de Blasio administration in 2016 and 2021.

Again In 2020, the NYC Council Made Its Position Clear It Adopted Pay Parity Resolution 1062-2019-A

That "**the salaries of New York City emergency medical service personnel to be comparable to New York City's firefighters and police officers**". Unanimously adopted on May 28, 2020. Sponsored by Council Members: I. Daneek Miller, Laurie A. Cumbo, Adrienne E. Adams, Margaret S. Chin, Helen K. Rosenthal, Joseph C. Borelli, Ydanis A. Rodriguez, Francisco P. Moya, Ben Kallos, Peter A. Koo, Diana I. Ayala, Justin Brannan, Robert F. Holden, Alicka Ampry-Samuel, **Brad S. Lander**, Fernando Cabrera, Costa G. Constantinides, Carlos Menchaca, Antonio Reynoso, Farah N. Louis, Andy L. King, Donovan J. Richards, Deborah L. Rose, Robert E. Cornegy, Jr**., Keith Powers**, Carlina Rivera, **Mark Levine**, Vanessa L. Gibson, Paul A. Vallone, Alan N. Maisel, **Public Advocate Jumaane Williams**.
https://nyc.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4146331&GUID=6E165905-EC68-4D4B-9B08-BE4D480E42C2&G=2FD004F1-D85B-4588-A648-0A736C77D6E3&Options=&Search=

By 2019, the NYC Council Already Knew Low Pay & High Attrition Rates Were Having Negative Consequences

"The **attrition rate is higher** among Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) than firefighters because of a **lower average salary**, when compared to other employers in the healthcare field. EMTs also often leave FDNY for other healthcare careers, and some transition to other jobs within the Department. **This raises concerns around the Department's retention and budgetary strategy for EMS personnel.**"

" . . . the different pay rates for uniformed [firefighters] and EMS may create staffing challenges for the Department. . . A first-year firefighter makes 24 percent more than an EMT . . ."

"EMS' Fiscal 2020 Preliminary Budget totals $322.1 million, with a headcount of 4,301 [includes the Chiefs, Captains, and Lieutenants] . . . headcount remains unchanged when compared to the Fiscal 2019 Adopted Budget."

"The number of EMS ambulance runs and headcount has steadily increased over the years. **From 2014 to 2018, the average number of EMS ambulance runs was 1.7 million runs**. . .The increase in the trend could be attributed to EMS having to pick up runs that were previously operated by non-FDNY entities.

"The Department generates revenue from EMS ambulance transports. . . The projected revenue for Fiscal 2020 **is $182.2 million**." Lee, Jin, Financial Analyst, et al., "The Council of the City of New York Report of the Finance Division on the Fiscal 2020 Preliminary Plan and the Fiscal 2019 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report for the Fire Department of New York", March 7, 2019, pp. 6-15.

https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2019/03/FDNY1.pdf

2020 - Former NYC Council Adrienne Adams Speaker & Former Finance Committee Chair Justin Brannan

"This tremendous wage gap sends a clear message to rank-and-file EMS . . . that they are second-class citizens in the eyes of our city. . . Police officers, firefighters and EMS workers may have different titles and responsibilities, but they are all first responders who risk their lives daily to protect our lives and "the lives of their fellow first responders. **The case for pay parity is overwhelming.** We need to deliver it and we need to deliver it now." Adrienne Adams and Justin Brannan, "Pay EMTs What They Deserve", *New York Daily News*, February 22, 2020, page 20. https://www.nydailynews.com/2020/02/22/pay-emts-what-they-deserve-end-the-indefensible-disparities-between-these-and-other-first-responders/

Former NYC Council Speaker Corey Johnson and I. Daneek Miller, Former Chair of NYC Council Committee on Civil Service and Labor - May 2020

"There can be no further argument against fairly compensating these beleaguered but endlessly brave first responders. The time is now to show our gratitude for their service, commitment to excellence, and the value they add daily to our city by **giving them the equal pay and benefits** they rightly deserve." Johnson, Corey and Miller, I. Daneek, "Enough Talk, Time to Give FDNY EMS Their Due," *Gotham Gazzette*, May 27, 2020.
https://www.gothamgazette.com/130-opinion/9436-enough-talk-give-fdny-ems-their-due-coronavirus-benefits

Testimony before the NYC Council - January 2020

FDNY Emergency Medical Services EMT and Paramedics Local 2507

"Our members risk their lives every day just like our brothers and sisters of the fire side, many who are here today to show support. We should be paid and recognized as the first responders we are. By way of example, three days ago the Mayor issued an advisory that laid out the city's preparedness for the deadly coronavirus that has spread to 16 countries including the United States. He boasted we have the best emergency response team in the nation, guess whose members are going to be on the frontlines of this life threatening fight providing the medical support, expertise and skill to protect over eight million New Yorkers from this deadly attack, it's these EMTs and paramedics that are facing life threats each and every day. . . **Not only are they underpaid but they are only given 12 paid sick days per year unlike their colleagues on the fire side of the same department that have unlimited sick pay**." Oren Barzilay, Then President Local 2507 of District Council 37 representing the uniformed EMTs, paramedics and fire inspectors. NYC Council Committee on Fire and Emergency Management, Oversight - EMS Attrition, January 28, 2020. Hearing Transcript.
https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4288305&GUID=3B51F7AA-A446-45D4-94B9-12A3EF630F68&Options=&Search=

Testimony before the NYC Council - January 2020

FDNY Emergency Medical Services Officers' Union Local 3621

"**For the past two decades** we have been coming here explaining the trials and tribulations of New York City's EMS system, the common thread in all those meetings have been **retention** and **salary.** For two decades we have told you the adverse impact on the citizens of New York this causes. In the last four years alone, as of 2019, a full 68 percent of our workforce has left for other jobs. . . the practice of medicine is one that only gets better with experience, what the Mayor and city has done is create a civil service version of hunger games with EMS workers as the tribute. **The average current EMS worker has four years or less of experience, we are street doctors, and nobody here would go to a hospital if we were told them that every doctor in there has less than four years' experience**. As recent events such as the coronavirus has shown us it will be EMS on the frontline treating and containing it, we are the canaries of the medical system. . . we know our sacrifice will help protect and save those lives of the people of this great city." Anthony Almojera, Current Vice President Local 3621 EMS Officers' Union. NYC Council Committee on Fire and Emergency Management, Oversight - EMS Attrition, January 28, 2020. Hearing Transcript.
https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4288305&GUID=3B51F7AA-A446-45D4-94B9-12A3EF630F68&Options=&Search=

The New York City Council - March 2020

Attrition Alert

"Recognizing that EMS staff are the **lowest paid first responders in NYC**, the Council in its Fiscal 2020 Preliminary Budget Response, called for an increase in EMS staff pay rates. FDNY's Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and Paramedics earn less than their counterparts in many other U.S cities do.

Furthermore, **FDNY EMS salaries are significantly lower than firefighter salaries**. . . The difference in a firefighter salary and those of EMTs and paramedics grows to 68 and 31 percent respectively after five years.

"The different pay rates for uniformed (firefighters) and EMS create staffing challenges for the Department as many EMS workers apply . . . to become a firefighter**.** According to the Department, **the Fiscal 2019 attrition rate for EMS was 13.2 percent**, which is 8.6 percentage points higher than the Fiscal 2019 firefighter attrition rate of 4.6 percent. The attrition rate is higher among EMTs than firefighters because of a lower average salary, when compared to other employers in the healthcare field."

"EMS' Fiscal 2021 Preliminary Budget totals **$346.3 million**, with a headcount of 4,593 positions. . . EMS has seen an increase in workload since Fiscal 2016. . . **EMS continues to spend over the budgeted amount of overtime due to increased workload, staffing challenges**, . . . "

"FDNY's annual EMS budget of approximately **$345 million** is partially funded by revenue from ambulance transports."

"For Fiscal 2020, the FDNY is projecting $227.8 million from all sources. Of the total **EMS actual revenue in Fiscal 2019, 44 percent came from commercial, 27 percent from Medicaid, 11 percent from Medicare, and approximately five percent from self-paying individuals**." Kern, Jack, Financial Analyst, et al., "The Council of the City of New York Report of the Finance Division on the Fiscal 2021 Preliminary Plan and the Fiscal 2020 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report for the Fire Department of New York", March 3, 2020, pp. 6-19.
https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2020/02/057-FDNY.pdf.

The New York City Council - March 2021 - Lack of EMS Pay Equity

"Using figures provided by the Fire Department, the average Emergency Medical Technician makes $32,000 less than the average firefighter, and paramedics make $14,000 less compared to firefighters. When fringe benefits, including pensions, are factored in the average EMT earns $134,000 less and the average paramedic makes $108,000 less." Kern, Jack, Financial Analyst, et. al., "New York City Council Report of the Finance Division on the Fiscal 2022 Preliminary Plan and the Fiscal 2021 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report, Fire Department City of New York, March 19, 2021, p. 15.
https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2021/03/FDNY-.pdf

The New York City Council - May 2021 - FDNY EMS - Lowest Paid First Responders

"**FDNY's emergency medical technicians and paramedics are among the lowest paid first responders in New York City**. **The Council called on the administration to increase the salaries to be comparable to other first responders** by performing an analysis to determine the cost of phasing in a wage increase. There are approximately 4,300 FDNY EMS members, of whom approximately 59 percent are nonwhite. **FDNY's EMTs and paramedics earn significantly less than other emergency responders in New York City** and other EMS services around the country. A starting EMT in San Francisco earns $74,000 in the first year, compared to $35,254 for an FDNY EMT. After five years, the base salary in New York is only $50,604 for EMTs, $65,226 for paramedics, in comparison to $85,292 for firefighters. The gap continues into supervisor ranks, and the average salary is $102,253 for a Uniformed FDNY lieutenant and $70,139 for an FDNY EMS lieutenant." McKinney, Latonia R., Director, et al., Finance Division,

"New York City Council Finance Division Note on the fiscal 2022 Executive Budget for the Fire Department of New York", May, 2021, p. 5. https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2021/05/FDNY-Budget-Note.pdf

The New York City Council - August 2021

Bargaining Hasn't Helped

". . . Firefighters and EMS workers belong to different unions yet work in the same agency, resulting in vastly different compensation. EMS workers (predominantly women and Hispanic or Latino, and Black or African American) have attempted bargaining for higher pay but have not been successful, while the FDNY has not faced the same issues " New York City Council Data Operations Unit, "Pay Equity in NYC, Analysis of Pay differences in the New York City Municipal Workforce", August, 2021, p. 63. http://council.nyc.gov/data/wp-content/uploads/sites/73/2021/08/080221.OC03.PAY-EQUITY-IN-NYC_v8.pdf

The New York City Council - March 2022

Another Attrition Warning

"FDNY's Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and Paramedics earn less than their counterparts in New York. The starting salary for an EMT at the Department is $39,386. It is $53,891 for a paramedic. A first- year firefighter earns $43,904, 11 percent more than an EMT. . . **The different pay rates for uniformed and EMS create staffing challenges for the Department as many EMS workers apply for a promotion to become a firefighter.**

"**According to the Department, the Fiscal 2019 attrition rate for EMS was 13.2 percent**, which is 8.6 percentage points higher than the Fiscal 2019 firefighter attrition rate of 4.6 percent. The attrition rate is higher among EMTs than firefighters because of a lower average salary, when compared to other employers in the healthcare field. The attrition rate for EMS was 5.4 percent and 6.7 percent in Fiscal 2020 and 2021 respectively, while it was 4.6 and 4.1 percent for Firefighters in the same years . . . This **raises concerns around the Department's retention** and budgetary strategy for EMS personnel." Kern, Jack, Financial Analyst, "New York City Council Report on the Fiscal 2023 Preliminary Plan and the Fiscal 2022 Mayor's Management Report for the Fire Department of New York City", March 9, 2022, pp. 6, 9-10. https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2022/03/FDNY.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3vnKebyClgsX6tlwJ5s86wUF66ZD9LYAS4PLnkRFQlbInhJG6TlXYNy14

The New York City Council - April 2022 -

Council Wants EMS Pay Parity

"The Council calls on the Administration to take the necessary steps to achieve EMS pay parity. . . it is important to recognize that **pay parity for our Emergency Medical Services workers is still a priority to the Council**; EMS salaries must be competitive with other first responders so that these frontline worker positions can be retained."

"**EMS members are the lowest paid first responders in New York City**, and the Council has consistently advocated for wage equity. We urge the Administration to raise EMS salaries to be competitive with other first responders. Prior to his election, Mayor Adams stated that EMS personnel required parity. The Council requests that the Administration include wage parity in future contract discussions with EMS members. . . The approximately 4,600 members of EMS, including EMTs and paramedics, earn much less than other emergency responders in New York City and other EMS services across the country. Following negotiations in the summer of 2021, the EMS union stated **'the City categorically refused to provide pay parity or anything that approximated pay parity for EMS First Responders in the FDNY.' "** Edwards, Esq., Tanisha S., Chief Financial Officer, "The New York City Council's Response to the Fiscal

2023 Preliminary Budget and Fiscal 2022 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report", April 1, 2022, pp. 2, 11, 13. https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2022/04/Fiscal-2023-Preliminary-Budget-Response-.pdf

The New York City Council - March 2023 - EMS Response Times Increasing

"Civilian EMS make up the next largest portion of the (Fire) Department, with more than 4,300 positions, comprising 25 percent of the Department's headcount.

"The FDNY has nine performance indicators that present response time trends. . .**The most notable increase is end-to-end combined average response time to life-threatening medical emergencies by ambulances, which increased from seven minutes and twenty seconds in the first four months of Fiscal 2022, to seven minutes and fifty-five seconds in the same period in Fiscal 2023**."

"EMS has historically been more diverse than the Department at large. In Fiscal 2022, the EMS was comprised of 74 percent male and 26 percent female. In Fiscal 2021, the EMS headcount skewed slightly more female, with a headcount made up of 73.63 percent male and 26.37 percent female." Singh, Tanveer, Financial Analyst, "New York City Council Report on the Fiscal 2024 Preliminary Plan and the Fiscal 2023 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report for the Fire Department of New York", March 13, 2023, pp. 5-10. https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2023/03/FDNY-.pdf

The New York City Council - April 2023 - No EMS Pay Parity - a Problem for Public Safety

"Another common reason provided for high vacancy rates in particular positions, something that predates the pandemic, is the low pay provided to employees in certain titles. . . **This is an issue of particular concern for the emergency medical service (EMS) workers at the Fire Department. . . Without additional pay parity, service provision will continue to erode, in some cases endangering public safety."** Lee, Richard, Director Finance Division, et al., "New York City Council's Response to the Fiscal 2024 Preliminary Budget and Fiscal 2023 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report, April 3, 2023, p. 19. https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2023/04/Fiscal-2024-Preliminary-Budget-Response-Final-1.pdf

The New York City Council - May 2023 - EMS Revenue to Exceed Costs?

"Projected revenue to cover the costs of the EMS is $367 million, which is $16.4 million more than the Fiscal 2023 budget at adoption."

NOTE - FDNY EMS assumed the operation of 2 basic life support units previously run by Kingsbrook Jewish Hospital**.** Singh, Tanveer, Financial Analyst, New York City Council, "Report to the Committee on Finance and the Committee on Fire and Emergency Management on the Fiscal 2024 Executive Plan and the Fiscal 2024 Executive Capital Commitment for the Fire Department of New York, May 17, 2023, pp. 2 & 4. https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2023/05/FDNY.pdf

The New York City Council - March 2024 - Advocates Wage Equity

"The EMS are consistently the lowest paid first responders in New York City. The Council has long advocated for wage equity for the EMS making their salaries competitive with other first responders.

"Prior to his election, Mayor Adams stated that EMS personnel required parity, this has not yet been accomplished by his Administration." Singh, Tanveer, Financial Analyst, "New York City Council Finance

Division Report on the Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Plan and the Fiscal 2024 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report for the Fire Department of New York", March 15, 2024, p. 9.
https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2024/03/057-FDNY.pdf

The New York City Council
Committee on Civil Service and Labor - January 2025
Inequity

"I will reiterate to you our commitment to getting this right when it comes to our EMS EMT workforce. **I recognize the inequity and the unfairness that your workforce has had to contend for years,** and I remain committed to continuing to work with you on this issue so more to come and I really appreciate you taking the time to come here and to speak about this discrepancy, this unfair treatment that this workforce that is so important, right? If anyone has been in an ambulance, we understand the importance of this workforce and you all should be compensated as such. . ." Carmen De La Rosa, Chairperson, City Council City of New York, Committee on Civil Service and Labor, Transcript of the Minutes of the Committee on Civil Service and Labor, January 27, 2025, pp. 69-70.
https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7091565&GUID=B0A93DA2-6836-40CA-B612-52DBFCA863F1&Options=&Search=

NYC Council - March 2025
Response Times Up - Hiring and Retention Issues to Blame

"Average response time to life-threatening medical emergencies by ambulances (FDNY dispatch and travel time only) increased from 8 minutes in the first four months of Fiscal 2024 to **8 minutes and 48 seconds** in the same period of Fiscal 2025, moving further away from **the Department's target of 6 minutes and 55 seconds.** The Department claims **this increased response time is due to issues** regarding **hiring and retention** of emergency medical technicians and paramedics.

"Response times for life-threatening medical emergencies have worsened, moving further from the Department's target. . .Compounding this issue is a staffing shortage, as **many EMS personnel are leaving to take the Firefighter promotion exam**, further reducing the available headcount. The Council has consistently advocated for EMS pay parity to improve recruitment and retention. . . " Singh, Tanveer, Financial Analyst, "Report on the Fiscal 2026 Preliminary Plan and the Fiscal 2026 Preliminary Capital Commitment Plan for the Committee on Fire and Emergency Management", March, 2025, pp. 6-7.
https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2025/03/New-York-City-Fire-Department-1.pdf

Joann Ariola
NYC Council Fire and Emergency Management Committee Chair

"We've been crying pay parity for a very long time." New York City Council Committee on Fire and Emergency Management Hearing March 14, 2025.
https://citymeetings.nyc/meetings/new-york-city-council/2025-03-14-1000-am-committee-on-fire-and-emergency-management/chapter/ems-wages-pay-parity-and-retention-challenges/

The New York City Council - April 2025

"The Council proposes allocating $50 million in baseline funding to begin addressing **long-standing pay disparities between Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel and their counterparts in both the firefighting ranks and other major U.S. cities**." (The money didn't materialize.) NYC Council Press Release, April 2, 2025. https://council.nyc.gov/press/2025/04/02/2827/

The FY2010-2026 FDNY EMS Salary Increases were Lower When Compared to other New York City "UNIFORMED" Services & Did Not Keep Up with "CIVILIAN" Pattern Salary Increases

"Uniformed Service" Contract Pattern (United Firefighters Assoc.)	FDNY **EMT**s & **Paramedics** **Contracts: 2010-2022** E**MS Locals 2507 & 3621**	"Civilian" Contract Pattern DC 37
Fiscal Year	**% salary increase**	**% salary increase**	**% salary increase**
2010	1% on 8/1/10	0%* as of 6/10/2016	0% ** on 3/3/2010
2011	1%	0%	1% on 9/30/2011
2012	1%	0%	1%
2013	1%	0%	1%
2014	1.5%	0%	1.5% ** + a $1,000 bonus
2015	2.5%	1.5%	2.5%
2016	3% on 12/1/2016	2.5% * + a $1,000 ratification bonus	3.00%
2017	2.25% on 8/1/2017	3% on 3/6/17 & 3.03% on 9/5/17	2.00% on 9/ 26/2017
2018	2.5%	2% on 6/29/2018	2.25% on 9/26/2018
2019	3% on 8/1/2019	2.25% on 6/29/2019	3.00% on 10/26/2019
2020	3.25%	3% on 7/29/2020	0% *** bonus in lieu of
2021	3.25%	4% ↓ as per 2021 Contract.	3% 5/26/2021
	► But the 2021 **EMS** contract re-defined and **increased the work week** from 37½ hours to 40 hours equivalent to an additional 6.67% hours or **3½ more weeks of work per year** starting 9/12/2021.		
2022	3.50%.	contract expired July 28, 2022	3% on 5/26/22
2023	3.50%	contract expired July 28, 2022	3% *** + a $3,000 bonus
2024	4.00%	contract expired July 28, 2022	3%
2025		contract expired July 28, 2022	3.25% on 5/26/2025\
2026	**ALL THESE LABOR CONTRACTS HAVE EXPIRED**		

► The 2021 FDNY EMS contract did not adhere to the spirit of Council Resolution 1062-2019, unanimously passed on May 28, 2020, that called "for the salaries of New York City emergency medical service personnel to be comparable to New York City's firefighters and police officers."

► About the 2021 contract, Mayor de Blasio announced, "This agreement conforms to the pattern reached with other civilian unions, and includes productivity enhancements tied to increased work hours . . ." Press Release, Office of the Mayor, "Mayor de Blasio, Commissioner Campion Announce Tentative Contract Agreement with EMS Union District Council 37, Raising Wages for Over 4,500 FDNY Employees, Official Website of the City of New York, August 6, 2021. See Appendix C, pages 19 and 20.

- In the above contract years, in what ways were EMT's, paramedics and supervisors of EMT's or paramedics accorded the same unique bargaining rights as the uniformed forces of the City as per the law?

- Did the EMS contracts with years of 0% raises and increased work hours "conform" to even the "Civilian" Contract Pattern?

- Until August 2021, which of DC 37's other locals had an increase in the number of work hours to 40 per week?

Sources

Williams, Diane S. "4% raises in two-year pact", Public Employees Press, November, 2008. http://www.dc37pep.net/news/pep/11_2008/2yr_pact.html

Linn, Robert, Commissioner, "2010-2017 Memorandum of Agreement District Council 37 and the City of New York", City of New York, Office of Labor Relations, July 1, 2014. https://www.nyc.gov/assets/olr/downloads/pdf/collectivebargaining/cbu-dc37-nyc-moa-2010-2017.pdf

Campion, Renee, Commissioner, "Executed Contract: Firefighters August 1, 2010-July 31, 2017", NYC Office of Labor Relations, January 17, 2020. https://www.nyc.gov/assets/olr/downloads/pdf/collectivebargaining/firefighters-executed-contract-2010-2017.pdf

Linn, Robert, Commissioner, "EMS Memorandum of Agreement, June 10, 2016", The City of New York, Office of Labor Relations. https://www.nyc.gov/assets/olr/downloads/pdf/collectivebargaining/ems-moa-2010-2018.pdf

"Mayor de Blasio Announces Tentative Contract Agreement with Emergency Medical Service Workers, Bringing over 97 Percent of Workforce Under Contract", NYC Office of the Mayor, June 15, 2016. https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/536-16/mayor-de-blasio-tentative-contract-agreement-emergency-medical-service-workers-

"Mayor de Blasio and DC 37 Announce Tentative Contract Agreement, Providing A Fair Wage To 100,000 Employees", NYC Office of the Mayor, June 26, 2018. https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/327-18/mayor-de-blasio-dc-37-tentative-contract-agreement-providing-fair-wage-100-000#/0

Campion, Renee, Commissioner, "Memorandum of Agreement", August 1, 2017 to July 31, 2020, The City of New York, Office of Labor Relations. December 23, 2021. https://www.nyc.gov/assets/olr/downloads/pdf/collectivebargaining/2017-2020-ufa-moa.pdf

Campion, Renee, Commissioner, "EMS Memorandum of Agreement ", The City of New York, Office of Labor Relations, August 6, 2021. https://www.nyc.gov/assets/olr/downloads/pdf/collectivebargaining/ems-moa-2021.pdf

"Mayor de Blasio, Commissioner Campion Announce Tentative Contract Agreement with EMS Union District Council 37, Raising Wages for Over 4,500 FDNY Employees", August 6, 2021. https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/552-21/mayor-de-blasio-commissioner-campion-tentative-contract-agreement-ems-union-district

"Mayor Adams, OLR Commissioner Campion Announce Tentative Contract Agreement with Uniformed Officers Coalition", NYC Office of the Mayor, June 15, 2023. https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/420-23/mayor-adams-olr-commissioner-campion-tentative-contract-agreement-uniformed-officers#/0

DC 37 Press Release, "Mayor Adams and DC 37 announce tentative contract agreement, providing fair wage increases and other benefits to nearly 90,000 employees and securing fair deal for NYC taxpayers", February 17, 2023. https://www.dc37.net/news/newsreleases/2023/nr02_17/

So Far 1,717 FDNY EMTS Have Completed Training during the Adams & Mamdani Administrations BUT Because of the High Attrition Rate the FDNY Has No More Staff than in 2022

1,717 EMTs x $42,000 (Cost of Training) = $72,114,000

FY 2022

- **147 new EMTs** were added on May 24, 2022 https://www.fdnyfoundation.org/fdny-foundation-congratulates-147-probationary-emts-on-their-graduation/

FY 2023 = 444

- **153 new EMTs** were added on September 26, 2022 https://www.nyc.gov/site/fdny/news/025-22/acting-fire-commissioner-laura-kavanagh-presides-graduation-ceremony-153-emergency-medical - /0
- **135** new EMTs were added on January 31, 2023. https://www.fdnyfoundation.org/fdny-foundation-congratulates-135-probationary-emts-on-their-graduation/
- **156** new EMTs were added on June 21, 2023. https://www.fdnyfoundation.org/fdny-foundation-congratulates-156-probationary-emts-on-their-graduation/

FY2024 = 486

- **148** new EMTs were added on September 26, 2023. https://www.fdnyfoundation.org/fdny-foundation-congratulates-148-probationary-emts-on-their-graduation/
- **184 new EMTs** were added on January 10, 2024. https://www.facebook.com/FDNY/posts/the-fdny-is-proud-to-welcome-184-probationary-emts-into-our-ranks-for-the-past-1/763065625857559/
- **154 new EMTs** were added on June 11, 2024. https://www.nyc.gov/site/fdny/news/F61124/fdny-welcomes-154-probationary-emts-graduation-ceremony

FY2025 Total = 343

- **87 new EMTs** were added on September 24, 2024. https://www.fdnyfoundation.org/fdny-foundation-congratulates-87-probationary-emts-on-their-graduation/
- **119 new EMTs** were added on February 25, 2025. https://www.fdnyfoundation.org/fdny-foundation-congratulates-119-probationary-emts-on-their-graduation/
- **137 new EMTs** were added on June 17, 2025. https://x.com/FDNY/status/1935036835056730483

FY2026

- **154 new EMTs** were added on October 21, 2025. https://www.nyc.gov/site/fdny/news/54-25/fdny-commissioner-robert-s-tucker-preside-graduation-ceremony-154-probationary - /0
- **143 new EMTs** were added on March 19, 2026

https://www.nyc.gov/site/fdny/news/07-26/the-fdny-hold-graduation-ceremony-probationary-emts-promotion-ems-officers - /0

October 2022 - 4,550 Total FDNY EMS Staff

EMS WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

As of today: 10/03/2022

GENDER AND ETHNICITY															
EMS WORKFORCE	***MALE***							***FEMALE***							
RANK	***W***	***B***	***H***	***A***	***N***	***OTHER***	*MALE TOTAL*	***W***	***B***	***H***	***A***	***N***	***OTHER***	*FEMALE TOTAL*	**GRAND TOTAL**
CHIEF of EMS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	**1**
ASSISTANT CHIEF	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
DEPUTY ASSISTANT CHIEF	4	1	1	0	0	0	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	**8**
DIVISION CHIEF	11	1	2	0	0	0	14	5	2	1	0	0	0	8	**22**
DEPUTY CHIEF	14	3	6	3	0	0	26	4	5	1	0	0	0	10	**36**
CAPTAIN	34	6	10	4	0	0	54	15	8	7	1	0	0	31	**85**
LIEUTENANT	177	50	87	31	1	3	349	40	34	28	7	0	1	110	**459**
PARAMEDIC	252	97	179	58	2	25	613	86	58	108	11	0	12	275	**888**
EMT	1030	437	575	85	10	163	2300	188	242	240	14	0	55	739	**3039**
EMS TRAINEE	2	3	2	0	0	0	7	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	**10**
TOTAL	1525	598	863	181	13	191	3371	340	352	386	33	0	68	1179	**4550**
Percentage %	33.52%	13.14%	18.97%	3.98%	0.29%	4.20%	74.09%	7.47%	7.74%	8.48%	0.73%	0.00%	1.49%	25.91%	**100.00%**

https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2023/01/FDNY-EMS-DEMOGRAPHICS-OCT-2022.pdf

The October 3, 2022 work force analysis above listed 3,957 FDNY EMTs and non-officer Paramedics, **3039 EMTs** and **888 Paramedics**. Basic Life Support ambulances are staffed with 2 EMTs and Advance Life Support ambulances are staffed with 2 paramedics. EMS covers the 5 boroughs, 365 days a year, 7 days a week, and 24 hours a day.

June 1, 2026 - According to official testimony at the NYC Council Budget Hearing, there were then 290 empty FDNY EMS positions.

As a logical consequence of the chronic EMS staffing shortfall, in May alone it took more than 20 minutes for ambulances with paramedics to arrive and treat 3,553 men, women and children, who had life-threatening medical emergencies.

That was 1,299 more such patients, who waited longer than 20 minutes for paramedics than a year ago, in May 2025. Averages can be deceptive. Some waited much longer; and for at least one patient in May 2026, the wait was too long.

NYC mourns 51 fire fatalities. But how many "medical emergency fatalities" could also be prevented, lives saved and outcomes improved, if FDNY EMS treatment arrived sooner?

NYC Council Finance Committee — FY27 Executive Budget Hearing

Testimony of Dr. Henry O. Love · Point Source Youth

In Support of $4,775,000 for the Targeted Housing Assistance Program (THAP) — FY27 Budget

Chair Lee, Deputy Speaker Williams, Majority Leader Abreu, and Members of the Finance Committee:

I. WHO I AM — AND WHY THIS IS PERSONAL

My name is Henry Love. I've spent over a decade in housing justice, and I help oversee the implementation and expansion of THAP at Point Source Youth — including right here in New York City at Henry Street Settlement and The Door.

I am not testifying only as a researcher. I am testifying as someone who needed this program and didn't have it. After college I moved to Atlanta during the recession — no job, no stable housing. I couch-surfed for months, one eviction notice away from the street. That chapter ended in a suicide attempt. THAP wouldn't have been a cure-all — but **a one-time $3,700 direct cash transfer and a housing plan would have prevented my darkest chapter.** I know this because I lived the alternative.

Like thousands of Black and Brown queer young people, I eventually found refuge in New York City. THAP is how this Council keeps that promise to the next generation.

II. FIFTY-FOUR YEARS OF POLICY FAILURE

In 1969, on these streets, Black and Brown transgender women — Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera — fought back at Stonewall. They were not symbols. They were young people without housing, without family, surviving. In 1970 they founded S.T.A.R. House at 213 East 2nd Street: the first trans-led youth shelter in New York City, built through informal economy because the city offered nothing. *S.T.A.R. House was the original THAP.*

In 1973, Sylvia Rivera told a Pride crowd: *"I have been trying to get up here all day, for your gay brothers and sisters in jail... I have been beaten. I have had my nose broken. I have been thrown in jail. I have lost my job. I have lost my apartment for gay liberation."* Fifty-three years later we are asking the same question — not of pride marchers, but of a budget process. The city is 54 years late. You have $4,775,000 and a budget vote.

III. THE CRISIS — AND WHAT THE EVIDENCE SHOWS

The shelter system is at capacity and turning youth away. DYCD's LL79 reports document **2,513 youth denied shelter beds in FY2024** — up from 9 in H1 2023. As of January 2025, **418 youth were counted unsheltered** — the highest in a decade. 777 of 813 DYCD youth shelter beds are occupied with zero new beds planned. New York City has **only 116 LGBTQ+-affirming shelter beds** across all five boroughs. (DYCD LL79, 2024; DYCD LL95 FY25Q4; THE CITY, Feb. 2026)

40% of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ+ — nearly ten times their share of the general population. 64% cite family rejection as the primary cause — not substance use, not mental illness. Rejection. 57% of NYC shelter heads of household are Black. This is a Black and Brown crisis. This is an LGBTQ+ crisis. It has always been both. (NYS OCFS, 2024; Chapin Hall; NYC DHS)

The Bellevue shelter oversight hearing exposed a system with no innovation roadmap and no answers for the 2,513 youth it turned away. Bellevue is what happens when prevention fails. We are asking you to fund what comes before Bellevue. Meanwhile, Washington has cut **$2.67 billion** in LGBTQ+ programs, eliminated HUD youth homelessness funding, and defunded the 988 LGBTQ+ Youth Suicide Lifeline. When Washington erases us, New York City has always said no. This is that moment.

THAP works — in your city, with your data. Evaluated by Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and Prof. Dennis Culhane (University of Pennsylvania) across seven states: **98% of NYC THAP participants** at Henry Street Settlement and The Door were not seen in any homelessness services at six months — per HMIS administrative data, NYC's own system. 85% of cash was spent on basic needs. 83% of participants were BIPOC; 40% LGBTQ+. At $3,700 one-time versus $81,000 per year in shelter, every dollar returns more than $14 in avoided public costs — **$69.2 million in projected savings** against a $4,775,000 investment. (PSY/Johns Hopkins THAP Final Report, March 2026; NYS Comptroller DiNapoli, March 2026)

IV. THE ASK — PRIDE IN POLICY, NOT JUST PARADES

Every June, this city invokes Marsha P. Johnson's name. But Marsha and Sylvia didn't build S.T.A.R. House for a parade — they built it because young people were on the street and the city wasn't coming. They built it with nothing but community and conviction. I am asking this Council to do what the city never did for them: allocate **$4,775,000 for THAP in the FY27 budget** — $3,700,000 in direct cash to reach 1,000 youth annually, and $1,075,000 for operations through PSY, Henry Street Settlement, and DYCD's Borough-Based Drop-In Centers. **Baseline this permanently** — not as a member item, but as a line item that reflects a permanent commitment to the young people Marsha and Sylvia were protecting in 1970.

I lived a version of what these young people are living. I got out. Many do not. A $3,700 transfer and a housing plan wouldn't have fixed everything — but it would have given me a floor. Not a study. Not a pilot. **A proven model, in your city, with your data, serving your constituents.** *Pride in Policy means the budget reflects the values on the banner. The city is 54 years late. The window to act is now.*

Thank you.

Henry Love · Point Source Youth
Obama Leaders Fellow · henry@pointsourceyouth.org

Sources: PSY/Johns Hopkins THAP Final Report, March 2026 · HMIS Administrative Data (Henry Street Settlement & The Door) · DYCD LL79 Reports FY2022–FY2025 · DYCD LL95 FY25Q4 · DYCD Youth Count Jan. 2025 · DYCD RHY Annual Report FY2023 · NYS OCFS 2024 · NYS Comptroller DiNapoli, March 2026 · Chapin Hall/Voices of Youth Count · NYC DHS · Human Rights Campaign, May 2025 · Prof. Dennis Culhane, UPenn · THE CITY, Feb. 2026 · NYC Mayor's Office, March 2026

Good afternoon Chair and members of the Committee, and thank you for the opportunity to testify.

My name is Holden Ellenberg, and I am a high school student assisting a PhD candidate with research in urban economics. Over the past few months, I have been helping develop a memo examining the costs of shifting New York City's waste system toward a more sustainable composting model.

When I began this work, I expected to learn where New York City's waste goes. Instead, I found myself asking a different question: why are we spending so much money throwing value away?

The numbers are striking. According to the Independent Budget Office, organic material makes up more than one third of New York City's residential waste stream. Yet only about 2.4% of residential waste collected in 2025 was captured through organics collection programs. At the same time, New York City businesses generate roughly 4 million tons of waste annually, and an estimated 1.5 million tons of food waste is still sent to landfills each year.

As a student interested in economics, those numbers stood out to me. We often think of food waste as simply an environmental problem, but it is also an economic one. Every ton of organic material sent to a landfill represents a resource that could have been composted, converted into energy, or otherwise put to productive use.

What this research keeps coming back to is not whether a more sustainable system costs money–it does–but whether we are paying enough attention to the cost of keeping the current system. When discussions focus only on the price of expanding composting infrastructure, it is easy to overlook the ongoing cost of transporting and disposing of millions of tons of potentially valuable material year after year.

I also learned about New York City's Commercial Waste Zones initiative. Before those reforms, according to the city's own reporting, more than 90 private carting companies crisscrossed the city each night, creating unnecessary truck traffic, emissions, and inefficiencies. The city recognized that system was not sustainable and redesigned it. I believe we should approach organics the same way. Not as an optional environmental add on, but as a core part of New York City's waste infrastructure going forward. There are already models across New York City that show what this investment can look like. Community composting organizations and local businesses such as Compost Power and GreenFeen OrganiX work directly with residents to

turn food scraps into a resource rather than a waste product. Supporting and expanding programs like these can help make organics more visible to New Yorkers while creating local economic opportunities and keeping more of the value generated by composting within the communities that produce the material in the first place.

For many New Yorkers, the cost of waste management is largely invisible. It appears somewhere in taxes, service fees, and municipal budgets. But those costs are real. Every dollar spent transporting organic material to a landfill is a dollar that cannot be invested elsewhere. At a time when families are already struggling with the cost of groceries, rent, and everyday necessities, New Yorkers deserve a waste system that makes better use of the resources they are already paying for.

The question before us is not whether we will spend money on waste management. We already do, according to city budget analysts, it costs over a billion dollars a year to ship the city's waste out and pay tipping fees to other states. And according to the Brooklyn Borough President report on expanding compost, the city spends over $195 million per year moving food scraps alone on their way to a landfill. The question is whether we will keep paying to discard that material, or begin investing in systems that recover value from it. Delay is not a savings, it is a continuation of that cost, compounded over time.

I am here because my generation will inherit both the environmental and economic consequences of today's budget decisions. I am also here because spending months studying this system up close has made it genuinely difficult to accept how much value we are still leaving on the table.

I urge the Council to continue investing in organics collection, composting infrastructure, public education, and the integration of organics into the city's broader waste management reforms. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Hello,

My name is Hope Tarullo. I'm an independent cat rescuer in Brooklyn and I'm writing to urge the City Council to fund $1.5 for spay/neuter services and $2M for pet food pantries.

It's hard to understand why this is so so important unless you are involved in animal rescue work. I didn't until I got TNR (Trap-Neuter-Release) certified in February and volunteered to help with an abandoned street cat (a cat who once had a home but was left behind by his owner when the owner moved away) in need of medical care. I went expecting to help with one cat and discovered six or seven cats in need of fixing. They need to be fixed because if they are not, they will reproduce and create more kittens. Kittens that there are no homes for and who will themselves reproduce if not spayed/neutered. They also suffer. One of these cats got hit by a car a few weeks ago and died. Children on the street witnessed the cat's death. As a side note, neighbors have requested that a speed bump be installed but haven't gotten a response from the city.

Another example: last week a woman in my neighborhood asked for help spaying/neutering the cats that live in back of her house. There are twelve adult cats and a litter of kittens. As a TNR certified individual, I am eligible for reduced rate spay/neuter services. That reduced rate is around $125. $125 x 12 cats=more than I can afford. And paying for cats to be fixed is just one piece of the puzzle. Rescuers and rescues are also responsible for coordinating with feeders, trapping the cats, transporting them to the vet, and finding a warm, safe place for the cats to recover before they can be released again. It is a massive effort that takes an enormous amount of money, coordination, time, and energy. And it completely falls on the shoulders of independent rescuers and non-profit organizations. It's not sustainable.

Other reasons for the City Council to fund spay/neuter and pet pantries: people can't always afford to spay their pets so they don't get them fixed, thus endlessly contributing to the number of homeless animals; people can't afford to feed their pets so they abandon them on the street or to overwhelmed rescues; and cats and dogs suffer as a result of our choices.

It doesn't have to be this way. **Please** fund $1.5M for spay/neuter services and $2M for pet food pantries. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Hope Tarullo
39th District

Subject: Privatization of NYCHA Creates Instability for Seniors.

I am a senior living in the South Bronx and do not have an email address. I am being supported in submitting this testimony by Save Section 9. I benefit from NYCHA and their community center managed by East Side Houses.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

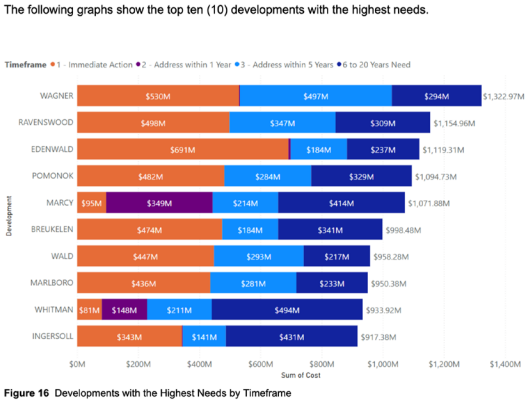


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.
- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

Hello, NYC City Council. I hope this email finds you (or a member of your staff) well.

This email is about the provision in the mayor's executive budget to fund the QueensWay Met Hub, a park project that would block the reactivation of the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch in southeast Queens for subway service expansion.

Please, please, please DO NOT fund this project in the final budget. The construction of this particular part of the broader QueensWay proposal would build park infrastructure that would be very difficult and expensive to tear up later to put in railway infrastructure. Combined with the monetary cost of tearing up the park infrastructure and retrofitting the area to be suitable for rail, removing already built park space from a community is even less palatable politically. (The QueensLink proposal includes park space as well—RAILS AND TRAILS).

To get a brief overview of how the proposed funding of this project would royally screw future subway expansion, look at the webpage here: https://thequeenslink.org/get-involved/contact-your-leaders/

The QueensLink proposal to reactivate this railway branch is the easiest layup for rail expansion in all of NYC. The right-of-way already exists—we cannot squander this opportunity for what would be such a transformational expansion. Further, it is in an area that will not only greatly benefit from this new service but also needs it in Southeast Queens. It is in an area that will not only greatly benefit from this new service but also needs it.

QueensWay Met Hub, in its current form, would ensure it never happens. Please do everything in your power to make sure this particular park project is not funded.

I’m writing today to express my deep concern about the future of the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch and why I strongly urge you to support the QueensLink vision.

Queens is the city’s largest borough in area and the second-largest by population, yet it has the fewest subway miles per capita. QueensLink aims to solve this problem with a “rails and trails” solution consisting of 33 acres of new community parks along with an extension of the M subway train. As of March 2026, we finally have professional research from industry-leading experts showing that QueensLink would generate at least $8.9B in economic growth and “deliver up to $2.20 of benefit to wider society for every $1 of public investment.” The report determines that the project would have twice as many riders per mile compared to the Interborough Express. QueensLink also reduces vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by 30 million each year, equating to 7,200 fewer tons of CO2 annually. To sum it up, QueensLink performs exceptionally well compared to other megaprojects across the country, it puts money back in New Yorkers’ pockets, and it helps make our city more affordable.

However, the QueensWay plan, one that former Mayor Adams funded, aims to build ONLY a park along this corridor that explicitly does not include any plan for future rail transit. The New York City Economic Development Corporation aims to start its construction this year, and your latest budget proposal includes funding for this park, which I strongly oppose. Let me be clear: if QueensWay begins construction, it will BLOCK any hope of future rail reactivation.

As an assemblymember, you supported QueensLink due to the project’s many benefits, which is why I find it deeply disheartening that you’re taking action now to block it. Simply put, QueensLink is common sense, and I strongly urge you to support such a transformative and equitable project. This begins with removing any funding of the opposing QueensWay scheme from the city’s budget and directing the New York City Economic Development Corporation to pause all work on that project. I hope that you take this information to heart and move forward with QueensLink’s “rails and trails” vision for the Rockaway Beach Branch.

I am writing you once again about QueensLink and continuing my pleading of you to not fund the QueensWay Met Hub in its current design, as it will block the proposed QueensLink extension from ever happening in the future.

My note today is about someone I know personally who has told me that QueensLink would change their life.

This person lives in The Rockaways, which we both know are quite far. And while The Rockaways are connected to Brooklyn and Manhattan via the (A) train, as well as the eastern parts being close to the LIRR, it is not connected to the rest of Queens very well. Reactivating the Rockaway Beach Branch with a new short tunnel would connect the main Queens corridor—commonly known as the Queens Blvd Line (QBL) in transit circles.

This person has told me that he could take his young kid to destinations like Queens Center Mall or Flushing Meadows Corona Park MUCH easier and said he would do those kinds of trips far more often with this direct connection via subway. They told me about the long slogs on the Q52-SBS and Q53-SBS bus routes, which are NOT a replacement for subway service.

There are tens of thousands, maybe even hundreds of thousands, of stories like this where just this short subway line would open up so many more possibilities. DO NOT FUND THE QUEENSWAY MET HUB IN ITS CURRENT DESIGN. DO NOT BLOCK THIS EASY LAYUP FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL SUBWAY EXPANSION PLEASE!

Ian Sowden
Brooklyn, NY

June 12, 2026

Speaker and Members of the New York City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker and Members of the Council:

I am writing to express how deeply disappointed I would be if the City Council failed to build QueensLink. Reactivating the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch would give Queens its first north-south subway connection, linking the Queens Boulevard line to the A train and the Rockaways across 3.5 miles that have sat dormant since 1962. The MTA has already found this feasible, with ridership estimates in the tens of thousands daily, and the project would bring 33 acres of new park space along with the transit. There is no reason to choose between a park and a train when we can have both, and no excuse for letting that right-of-way be paved over permanently.

I want to be transparent that I vote in every primary and I take seriously my responsibility to make sure other voters know who stood up for this city and who did not. QueensLink is a project with enormous public support and a story that travels easily. As someone who works professionally in social media, I will be informing my community and others about how their representatives voted on this issue. I hope the Council will build the train Queens was promised, and give me something better to report.

Sincerely,

Ian Sowden

June 12, 2026

Dear New York City Council,

It is completely unacceptable for the mayor to propose $ 662 million for PACT in FY 2027. Tenants have had horrific experiences under RAD and PACT, and it makes no sense to hand taxpayer money to private developers so they can then take over one of the last bastions of affordability in New York. I urge City Council to allocate all money toward Comprehensive Modernization rather than RAD/PACT — this will keep Section 9 rights and avoid the need for privatization. In fact, I'd like to see a moratorium on RAD/PACT until an impact study can be conducted to truly assess the costs of this program to both taxpayers and public housing tenants.

Thank you,

Jack Dunnington

[redacted]

[redacted]

My name is Jaclyn Gurrieri, and I am an Assistant Principal at New Dorp High School, a large comprehensive high school on Staten Island serving more than 3,000 students. My job responsibilities include data analysis and monitoring, specifically for graduation tracking and academic interventions related to it. I am writing to strongly oppose any proposal to discontinue funding for or access to the New Visions Data Portal (aka the Portal).

The New Visions Data Portal is one of the most valuable tools available to school leaders. It saves me hundreds of hours each year and has become an essential part of my daily work. More importantly, it makes many complex and seemingly insurmountable tasks manageable.

I have read that the Portal is duplicative because NYC Public Schools already has the Insight Tool. As a former district employee who trained schools on the Insight Tool's use and has remained knowledgeable about its development over the years, I can confirm that it can't compare to the Portal in terms of functionality and user experience.

The Portal contains an extensive collection of trackers, reports, and management tools that demonstrate a deep understanding of how administrators, counselors, teachers, and support staff use data to do their jobs. Whether monitoring graduation readiness, tracking student interventions, analyzing Regents outcomes, or supporting postsecondary planning, the Portal consistently provides tools that answer the questions schools are actually asking. Recent additions to the Portal, such as the Future Ready and Postsecondary Trackers, demonstrate how the Portal constantly adapts to new initiatives, making it even more valuable.

Frankly, discontinuing the Portal would feel like an insult to the school staff members who rely on it every day. School staff are constantly being asked to do more. The New Visions Data Portal is one of the few tools that genuinely reduces workload while improving our ability to support students.

I am also concerned because NYCPS has a history of replacing highly effective platforms with internal alternatives that never fully match their functionality or usability (for example, DOE Grades and DOE Messaging). That history should give us pause before eliminating a tool that schools clearly value and depend on. If budget reductions are necessary and duplication is truly the concern, the Insight Tool is the more logical platform to discontinue. The Portal offers substantially greater value to schools.

My Clubhouse Testimony (Jacqueline Hinds)

I have always been independent and capable of managing my daily responsibilities. However, one area where I struggled was socializing and building meaningful connections with others. I often found myself feeling isolated and lacking opportunities to engage with people who understood my experiences.

Joining JCC Clubhouse provided me with a welcoming, supportive community where I could connect with others in a comfortable, respectful environment. JCC Clubhouse gave me a place to interact with peers, participate in activities, and develop friendships that have enriched my life.

Through attending JCC Clubhouse, I became more confident in social situations and improved my communication skills. Participating in group activities, discussions, and events helped me step outside of my comfort zone and build relationships with people from diverse backgrounds. I found a sense of belonging and community that I had been missing.

What I appreciate most about JCC Clubhouse is that it recognizes each person's strengths and encourages everyone to contribute in meaningful ways. Although I was already independent in many aspects of my life, the Clubhouse helped me grow socially and reminded me of the importance of connection, support, and community.

The friendships, employment, and social opportunities I have gained through JCC Clubhouse have positively impacted my overall well-being. I am grateful for the welcoming environment, the supportive Director, staff, and fellow members who have helped make JCC Clubhouse an important part of my life.

Subject: Urgent Call to Prioritize Funding to Expand School Capacity in Long Island City

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a 12-year Long Island City resident and parent to demand that the City Council prioritize and secure the promised capital funding for Long Island City schools. My family has lived here for over a decade—including ten years in the exact same building as P.S. 78—watching the neighborhood density explode while school seat construction remained stagnant. Not a single local school seat has been created within my daughter's lifetime.

The mathematical reality for families in this district is broken. For Kindergarten enrollment, my daughter is currently waitlisted at **#62 for PS 384** and **#98 for PS 78**. These are our zoned neighborhood options. It is entirely unacceptable that our family was able to secure a school placement across the river at PS 116 in Manhattan, yet it is mathematically impossible to access a seat in our own borough and home district.

While we were offered a placement at the P.S. 439 incubation site, the physical distance, total lack of adequate facilities, and logistical inconsistencies make it unworkable for our family. This sentiment is widespread: out of 20 local families I know who received an offer for the 439 incubation site, only 3 are accepting. We want the permanent school to open and succeed, but the recent survey offered three poor options in a neighborhood bursting at the seams.

We have watched our political leaders court and then chase away Amazon, who subsequently fulfilled promises to build schools in other states—schools we should have right now in LIC. Furthermore, as a former Citylights resident, I have seen firsthand the success of integrating a public school directly into the base of a high-rise. The city must commit to developing new schools along this exact model while the OneLIC plan moves forward.

Our community deserves transparency regarding where developer mitigation fees are going. I have requested these figures because it is clear those funds have left our neighborhood instead of building local infrastructure. There are numerous vacant buildings, including Department of Education and government-owned properties, sitting empty across LIC. While schools must comply with strict building codes, these structures do not need to be entirely demolished to be transformed into useful community assets. I even personally contacted the Plaxall family regarding their vacant office spaces for an incubation site; they agreed to discuss options, yet the SCA, ODP, and the local Council Member's office took zero operational action.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan recognizes the need for additional infrastructure, specifically the commitments at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard and the promise of 1,300 new seats alongside 14,000 residential units. School construction must move in parallel with residential growth, not years behind it. We also require firm budget protections to ensure the relocation of the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE, Q580) stays funded and on schedule before its lease expires in three years.

Delays to Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and our other promised schools are forcing families to leave the neighborhood entirely. A temporary incubation site cannot be used as an excuse to stall the permanent facilities promised to our community.

The capital budget must fully commit and protect the hundreds of millions of dollars needed for LIC schools. Please ensure the Department of Education and the School Construction Authority are held accountable to build these facilities on time.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline R. Daley

Long Island City Resident & Pre-K Parent

11101

From: [redacted]
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] City Council Meeting June 10 2022
Date: Thursday, June 11, 2026 12:31:33 PM

[redacted]

City Council Meeting
Chambers
June 10 2022

Good Evening,

My name is Jacquelyn Harrington, the real Jacquelyn Harrington that was made a mockery through a five year federal court case here in New York. The Real Jacquelyn Harrington that was impersonated and had my settlement from my human trafficking trauma disguised as a business exchange stolen from me, along with my trust fund, probate, and two businesses I recently formed in the last year and a half.

Let's talk about financing and oversight.

The judicial system was weaponized against me in multiple countries and states to fraud the state and federal government of active currency, causing huge inflation and deficits through life insurance policy scams, false will and testaments, false marriages, false marriage/birth/death certificates, impersonated court cases for child support, guardianships, powers of attorney, and other family and surrogate hearings and more.

Federal funding is wasted on nonprofit organizations, including MOIA, that only refer legal aid, housing services, immigration, and other services to a phone number that continues to refer you to another referral department. So, you never are actually assisted with your situation. These nonprofits do not actually assist the public assistance departments of the city or state.

Federal funding is fraud Ed in the Department of Social Services by using repeating identities and Social Security Numbers and false person cases made to increase public assistance with food/cash, housing vouchers, and emergency assistance while cutting funding to the original person in need and homelessness or struggle.

Medical records are confused and frauded making people with similar identical names open to false allegations of mental health issues and other medical records.

Homeless shelters participate with staff stealing mail, settlement checks and more, and cashing it out in the struggling person's name or business name, causing the person to continue struggling instead of receiving their rightfully earned or obtained finances.

Federal grants are misappropriated for apprenticeship programs at the City University of New York and the sums are pocketed by staff and the board of supervisors instead of redistributing the money appropriately.

NYPD is over funded where police are used as cross walk personnel at light intersections that function normally and do not require human interference.

Redistribution of the NYPD and wasted fraud funds to the Department of Transportation would reduce metro card and OMNY card prices making it more accessible for people to use public transportation, reduce traffic, air pollution, and carbon emissions and would be more affordable for jobless, homeless, and students to find and maintain work, housing, and education transportation.

In Turn, keeping people mobile to maintain paying taxes and contributing financially in society to pay the federal government appropriately to lower the IRS deficit.

To the committee:

I am writing as a constituent in the borough of Manhattan to ask that the City Council provide increased funding toward animal care. When I moved to the city several years ago, I adopted a kitten from ACC Brooklyn. In a metropolis where I could count the people I knew on one hand, she became my lifeline. Luckily, my adoption fee at ACC was waived, and the cost to spay her at ASPCA was reimbursed in full. However, I know that not every New Yorker is so lucky. Every year, the city funds 3,500 spay/neuter surgeries through direct monetary support, in addition to reimbursement for up to 24,000 surgeries at $125. Despite such efforts, these initiatives have been unable to operate at their full potential due to lack of funding. A report from Comptroller Mark Levine lists the following recommendation for animal population control measures in New York City: "Explore additional funding avenues as permitted under Section 17-811, including by petitioning the City Council to amend Section 17-812 (Animal Population Control Fund) to add mandatory revenue streams to support the Program". DOHMH was in agreement with this recommendation. If we are to give the best lives possible to New Yorkers' canine and feline companions, the City Council must listen to both the data and the pleas of animal advocates: more funding, please and thank you!

Testimony from Jairo Guzman on Mamdani City owned Grocery—06/10/2026

My name is Jairo Guzman and I am the Founder and president of the Mexican Coalition for the Empowerment of Youth and Families, and am also a board member of the Multicultural Business Coalition. I am here today to voice my opposition to Mayor Mamdani's plan to build five city-owned grocery stores in NYC: The plan is not only a waste of city tax payer money; it is also a direct assault on minority entrepreneurship.

The Multicultural Business Coalition is made up of over 50 minority business chambers of commerce-representing almost every single ethnic group in NYC. We are Hispanic, Korean, Indian, Chinese, and South Asian among others-and we are in discussion with our Arab bodega and supermarket owners to join with us. Collectively, we are the business-spark that has and will continue to make NYC a mecca for small business, but will also keep the city's immigrant culture as a beacon of excellence.

More specifically, however, our Coalition represents all of the major ethnic groups that have led a spectacular rival of food retailing in New York. The National Supermarket represents over 400 predominately Dominican supermarkets, and these owners led to the revival of supermarkets in poor and working-class neighborhoods when the urban disorders of the 1970 saw all of the major chains flee from the city for the suburbs.

And they did this without a dime of public money! Taking the risk with their own sweat equity and financial investment. They were not alone. Just like their Hispanic counterparts, Korean

and Arab supermarkets also came in to fill the huge void created when the chains fled. Because of these courageous risk takers almost all of the neighborhoods they went into are not the food deserts they would have become.

Using public money to compete with these small business owners is shameful-a slap in the face to the risks they have taken. It's even more so, when there are so many other things NYC can do that would help the existing supermarket and bodega owners to reduce the cost and groceries and make NYC more affordable-reducing regulatory and tax burdens on behalf of our stores and our customers.

The MBC has issued a supermarket sustainability memo that outlines some of these needed policy changes, but the first thing that needs to be done is to establish a Supermarket Task Force to explore the best way to reduce our costs, and help us provide healthy food at the lowest possible prices.

All this being said, we are simply asking that the mayor sit down with us in order to consider a different path to achieve the goals that he believes can be achieved through city owned stores. We believe there is a better way, let's sit down and discuss a different path.

June 12, 2026
TO: New York City Council — Finance Committee
RE: Support the QueensLink — preserve the Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way for both transit and parks

Dear Chairperson Lee and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is James Barbagallo and I am a resident of Manhattan. I am writing in strong support of the QueensLink, which would bring both new subway service and new parkland to Queens by reactivating the former Rockaway Beach Branch, and against the current $43 million allocated in the budget for phase one of the QueensWay, also referred to as the Met Hub project.

Access to subways benefit all residents and public transportation is one of the most important parts of living in New York City. This project could help streamline commuting for all in a trickle-down effect. It gives New Yorkers another way to get to JFK Airport and Rockaway Beach, as well as providing the first North-South subway through Queens. I strongly believe QueensLink will have an outsized positive effect for all New Yorkers.

Two competing concepts exist for the deactivated Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way: the park-only QueensWay, and the dual-purpose QueensLink, which combines subway and park uses. The QueensWay would be built directly on the former railbed, which would virtually eliminate the possibility of ever restoring transit there. The MTA itself recognized in its 2023 20-Year Needs Assessment that a linear park along the corridor would create a challenge for any future transit alternatives. Once a rail right-of-way is converted to other uses, it almost never returns to transit.

The QueensLink would create the first north-south subway line in Queens, extending the M line south from Rego Park to Ozone Park and then over the A train tracks to the Rockaways — increasing service to the Rockaways by up to 165%. It would also let the G train run all the way to Forest Hills, increasing capacity on the crowded Queens Boulevard local lines by 50% and connecting central Queens with north Queens and Brooklyn.

A study by the Steer Group found that the QueensLink would remove millions of vehicle trips each year, making streets safer and lowering harmful emissions, while adding up to 33 acres of new parks and trails integrated with the subway design. Over 20 years, the study concluded the project would more than pay for itself by creating jobs, saving New Yorkers time, and reducing healthcare costs tied to air pollution and traffic crashes.

Queens needs parks *and* trains. The QueensLink would provide both. I urge the Committee to preserve this irreplaceable right-of-way for future transit and to support the QueensLink. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

James Barbagallo
Battery Park City, 10280
[redacted]
Council District 1

Testimony for animal care funding: $1.5M for spay/neuter and $2M for pet food pantries

June 10, 2026

Good morning, Chair and members of the Committee on Finance.

My name is James (Jay) Barrett. I am a resident in Long Island City, New York, and I am providing this testimony to urge the committee to fund two critical programs in the budget: $1.5 million for the spay/neuter program and $2 million for pet pantries.

I speak as someone who sees the consequences of underfunding animal care every single day in my neighborhood.

- I volunteer with a local organization that runs a trap-neuter-return program for feral cats. I have personally intervened when animals were abandoned in my area – sadly a frequent occurrence.
- Our local Facebook groups are flooded with lost, abandoned, and surrendered animals, and community members scrambling to rehome them, often with no vetting, which puts those animals at serious risk of ending up in a bad situation.
- I have also seen unhoused New Yorkers choose to sleep outside rather than enter a shelter that would not take their animal.
- More than half of New York City residents cannot afford basic veterinary care — and the rapid consolidation of veterinary practices by private equity is making it worse.
- Rescues across the city are overwhelmed. Families are surrendering animals not because they want to, but because they have no other option.
- New York City spends just $2.98 per person on animal care - the lowest per-capita rate among major U.S. cities.
- The gap between need and capacity is significant. An estimated 193,000 spay/neuter surgeries are needed annually for community cats and companion animals whose guardians cannot afford the procedure. The City currently funds approximately 3,500.

The investments before you today are targeted, cost-effective, and humane.

Spay/neuter reduces feral cat colony populations over time, decreases shelter intake, and prevents the euthanasia of healthy animals who are let down by the system. Pet pantries reduce the financial pressure that causes families to surrender or abandon the animals they love.

No New Yorker should be forced to give up their companion animal simply because they cannot access basic care. New York City's animals are part of the fabric of the city - woven into our families, our communities, and our streets.

By increasing access, reducing cost barriers, and supporting the rescues and volunteers who fill the gaps every day, this Council can reduce surrenders, slow feral colony growth, reduce the suffering of cats outdoors, increase adoptions, and prevent euthanasia that should never happen.

I urge the committee to include full funding for both programs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards

Jay Barrett

Subject: Privatization of NYCHA Creates Instability for Seniors.

I am a senior living in the South Bronx and do not have an email address. I am being supported in submitting this testimony by Save Section 9. I benefit from NYCHA and their community center managed by East Side Houses.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

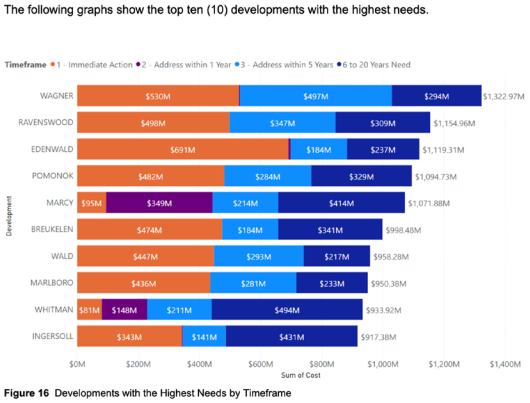


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.
- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

From: Jamie Parganos
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Jamie Parganos - testimony NYC Council FY2027 Executive Budget Hearing
Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 4:22:47 PM

[redacted]

NYC Council FY2027 Executive Budget Hearing

Good morning.

My name is **Jamie Parganos**.

I am a single mother of two children with special needs in District 2. I am a parent at MNS, I plan to join the Wagner PTA, and my son Alex, who is autistic and twice-exceptional, will be attending Wagner.

I am also a youth development professional. I have worked with every major provider being discussed in this issue in some capacity: **Manhattan Youth, NYJTL, the YMCA, and Imogen Foundation.**

I helped build the kinds of programs families are now fighting to save. I helped start the fencing league. I helped shape spelling bees, sports leagues, enrichment, school performances, social-emotional learning, mentorship, and the belief that afterschool should be more than childcare. I pushed for social workers and adults who actually knew children, not just supervised them.

DYCD once selected me to sit on a panel of some of the city's most experienced afterschool directors to help inform what quality programming should look like.

So I am not guessing.

I helped build this ecosystem.

And I know what children lose when adults treat it like paperwork.

Even with all of that experience, I was not sure I would make it here today.

Not because I did not care enough to come. I was not sure I would make it because my autistic son refused to eat breakfast this morning because the babysitter I hired and cannot afford, just to help me get out the door, made his toast in the shape of a triangle instead of a square.

That is not a joke.

That is parenting an autistic child.

That is what routine means.

The wrong shape of toast can disrupt the morning. The wrong transition can disrupt the day. The wrong adult at the wrong moment can make a child who was barely holding it together fall apart.

For many autistic children, routine is not a preference. Routine is access. A trusted adult is access. A predictable handoff is access.

For a child in a wheelchair, everyone understands that removing the ramp is an access issue. For many autistic children, the routine is the ramp. The trusted adult is the ramp. The adult who knows that arguing may be anxiety, refusal may be overload, and silence may be shutdown, that person is the ramp.

And DYCD is removing those ramps while telling us students with disabilities were part of the equity analysis.

Do not count my child in your equity formula and then leave him unprotected in the actual transition.

I know this is a budget hearing, not a Manhattan Youth hearing. That is exactly why I am here.

Because DYCD is asking this Council to fund this.

And DYCD is acting like this is its money.

It is not.

It is public money. It is our money. It is money entrusted to DYCD to serve public children, public schools, working families, frontline youth workers, and communities.

Before one more dollar moves forward, before one more six-year contract is registered, DYCD needs to show the public what it did.

DYCD's public awards page says the COMPASS school-based site programs were deemed eligible for award, and DYCD's own award list states the awards remain subject to contract negotiation, responsibility determination, and contract registration. That means this is not over. The harm has been announced, but it does not have to be locked in.

In my years in youth development, this is the worst afterschool implementation failure I have ever seen.

Not because change is impossible. Not because providers should never be reviewed. Not because Manhattan Youth is perfect.

But because DYCD took the programs it claims to value and acted like it did not understand why they mattered.

DYCD called this a major COMPASS expansion, including 806 school-based programs, 121 community-center programs, and more than 103,000 elementary and middle-school seats.

DYCD also says these programs are supposed to create safe, welcoming spaces where young people build confidence, discover talents, and strengthen communities.

Exactly.

That is why this matters.

DYCD funds afterschool because relationships matter. Because working families matter. Because students with disabilities matter. Because social-emotional learning matters. Because staff matter. Because community matters.

Then DYCD turned around and treated these programs like they were easy to swap out.

They are not.

The adults who run these programs are not interchangeable. The people who coach teams, direct plays, run debate clubs, manage dismissal, calm overwhelmed children, call late parents, and know which student needs food before homework are not interchangeable.

The adult who knows how to support a child at 3:00 p.m., when that child has already used every ounce of self-control to survive the school day, is not interchangeable.

The problem is not that DYCD rebid afterschool contracts.

Governments rebid contracts. Providers should be reviewed. No organization owns a public program forever.

The problem is how this was done.

Six-year contracts. Multiple schools disrupted at once. Long-standing providers displaced. Parents excluded from the actual selection. Principals apparently overruled. Equity invoked without school-by-school explanations. Communities learning after the decisions were largely made. New providers still building relationships after the awards.

Afterschool is not road paving. It is not trash collection. It is not a software contract.

Afterschool is human infrastructure.

For a middle-school student, the adult who knows their anxiety, their IEP, their friend group, their triggers, and the look on their face before they fall apart, that relationship is part of the service.

So my question is simple:

What specifically became better for students because of these provider changes?

At Wagner, what became better?

At Lab, what became better?

At Baruch, Salk, Computer School, School of the Future, and the other affected schools, what became better?

If DYCD cannot answer that school by school, then the Council should not fund and register six-year contracts through a process the public still cannot see.

My son Alex is twice-exceptional. He is gifted and disabled at the same time.

That is a specific population, and it is misunderstood constantly.

If a child is gifted, adults assume he does not need help. If a child is disabled, adults may miss how brilliant he is. If he argues, they miss the anxiety. If he melts down, they miss the intellect. If he performs well academically, they assume the rest of his day must be fine.

That is not how twice-exceptional children work.

Wagner mattered because it has a screened academic program. My son needs intellectual challenge, but he also needs disability-aware adults after school. Those needs are not contradictions. That is what twice-exceptional means.

A screened academic placement without a safe afterschool transition is half a bridge.

Access is not just getting into the right school.

Access is surviving the whole day.

Access is making it from 2:45 to pickup without being misunderstood, punished, removed, or labeled a problem.

It is reasonable to expect that a screened school like Wagner serves twice-exceptional students. I am not claiming a number, because the public data does not give us one. But whether there are 50 twice-exceptional students or 500 is not the point.

The point is that DYCD says equity includes students with disabilities, but DYCD has not explained how replacing Manhattan Youth with NYJTL at Wagner improves services for students who need both academic challenge and disability support.

Show us the Wagner-specific plan for twice-exceptional students.

Show us the plan for autistic gifted children.

Show us the plan for children who need rigor and regulation.

Show us the plan for children who are too advanced to be dismissed as incapable, but too vulnerable to be treated as fine.

That is my child.

And that is why this provider change is not abstract.

I moved my life around District 2 because of that. I struggled to get here. I scraped to get here. I built my work, my commute, my childcare, my school choices, and my whole fragile family structure around the belief that District 2 had the schools and afterschool programs my children needed.

I chose Wagner because I believed in that ecosystem. I chose it because Marylyne was there, a woman of color who had been in that program for years. I trusted her. For a parent of an autistic child, trust is not sentimental. Trust is survival.

If I had known Wagner was going to lose Manhattan Youth and be handed to NYJTL, maybe I would have made a different choice. Maybe I would have chosen East Side, where Manhattan Youth was retained. Maybe I would have applied to a paid program and begged for financial aid. Maybe I would have built a different life plan.

But DYCD took that choice away from me after the choice had already been made.

A free program that cannot safely serve my child is not access.

A free program that changes after I choose the school is not real choice.

DYCD did not just change the provider. It took away my ability to make an informed decision for my own child.

And when people around this process talk about children being resilient, I need to say this clearly: resilience is not a policy. Resilience is not implementation. Resilience is what people are forced to develop when systems fail them.

If DYCD is relying on resilience, then DYCD is admitting this will hurt children and expecting them to absorb the harm.

I am not here to say Manhattan Youth is perfect. I have personally advocated for Manhattan Youth to be removed from a school when I believed children were not being served properly. So this is not blind loyalty.

But if a site was weak, fix the site. If leadership needed accountability, require accountability. If quality concerns existed, disclose them.

Do not use weak-site concerns to dismantle an entire District 2 ecosystem.

That is like finding one broken stair and demolishing the whole building.

Manhattan Youth was not just a vendor at individual schools.

It was an ecosystem: sports leagues, fencing, spelling bees, theater, debate, school performances, joint musicals, cross-school events, trusted staff, shared expectations, and years of institutional memory.

Manhattan Youth describes its middle-school programs as working closely with principals and faculty and including interscholastic sports, school plays, science and math teams, technology workshops, literacy and arts projects, and homework support.

I know because I helped build parts of it.

I helped start the fencing league. I helped shape the spelling bee. I helped shape sports leagues and enrichment practices. I pushed the idea that kids who are good at math also want to be on stage. I pushed for social-emotional learning before everyone used that phrase. I pushed for social workers, mentorship, and adults who actually knew children.

So when families are fighting for Manhattan Youth, they are not fighting for a logo.

They are fighting for years of accumulated culture: the coach who knew the team, the spelling bee that made a quiet child brave, the musical that taught a STEM kid she could perform, the fencing league that gave a child a sport he never would have found, the debate coach who taught a middle schooler that his voice mattered, the staff member who knew which child needed movement, food, a quiet corner, or five minutes before he could talk.

That is not interchangeable.

That is institutional memory.

That is community infrastructure.

That is youth development.

And DYCD treated it like a procurement map.

DYCD mistook an ecosystem for a monopoly. It saw concentration where families saw community. It saw provider power where children saw coaches, directors, theater teachers, league organizers, and adults who knew them.

A provider becoming deeply embedded in a school community is not automatically a failure. That is supposed to be the goal.

Roots are not the same thing as ownership.

Roots are what keep children grounded.

And if DYCD wants to talk about ownership, then let's talk about ownership.

No provider owns a public program. Manhattan Youth does not own these children, these schools, or public money.

But DYCD does not own them either.

DYCD does not own the children's relationships. DYCD does not own school communities. DYCD does not own the public money it is spending. DYCD is supposed to steward public money, not wield it like private power.

If DYCD is accusing Manhattan Youth of having a sense of ownership around relationships and continuity, then from where I sit, DYCD is the one acting like it owns these programs.

DYCD acted like it could redraw school communities without showing the scoring, override principals without explaining why, exclude parents from the actual decision and call that engagement, disrupt children with disabilities without showing a disability-access plan, and throw frontline workers into uncertainty without showing a workforce-impact review.

That is public power without public accountability.

Equity cannot be a magic word.

If equity required these provider changes, show us the data, school by school. Show us how Wagner is better served. Show us how Lab is better served. Show us how students with disabilities are better protected. Show us how community was preserved.

DYCD says students with disabilities were part of the equity analysis. Fine. Then show us the disability plan. Show us the autism transition plan. Show us the IEP impact review. Show us how replacing Manhattan Youth with NYJTL at Wagner improves services for disabled children.

Do not count disabled children in your equity formula and then leave them unprotected in the actual transition.

Continuity is not ownership.

For students with IEPs, continuity is often the service.

And do not ask us to pretend principals chose this. Chalkbeat reported that the Computer School principal said her school identified Manhattan Youth as the best fit for its community, yet a different provider was selected. Chalkbeat also reported DYCD's statement that more than 80 percent of principals got their first or second choice, while DYCD still had to balance principal preference with scoring, capacity, and provider diversity.

If most principals got one of their top choices, why did this cluster of school communities lose continuity?

What score overrode them?

Who made that call?

Why was principal trust treated as optional?

DYCD let parents help describe the menu, then shut us out of deciding who could actually serve it to our children.

That is not meaningful family engagement.

That is after-the-fact damage control.

I am not here to attack NYJTL. NYJTL may be a legitimate organization. NYJTL's own materials say it runs comprehensive afterschool programming in 33 locations throughout New York City.

But legitimacy is not the same as fit.

DYCD has not shown Wagner families that NYJTL has comparable experience running a full, embedded, District 2 Manhattan middle-school afterschool ecosystem.

NYJTL may have a tennis footprint at or near Wagner, but its own Community Tennis Program materials say that tennis program is **not a drop-off program** and that scheduled lessons are usually **one to one-and-a-half hours**.

That is not the same thing as daily middle-school afterschool.

A daily afterschool program is dismissal, attendance, supervision, study space, clubs, sports, theater, family communication, disability accommodation, de-escalation, staff continuity, late pickup, and knowing which child can handle a transition and which child cannot.

If DYCD counted NYJTL's tennis presence at or near Wagner as local experience, say so.

How many Wagner students were served?

How many had IEPs?

How many were autistic or twice-exceptional?

What comparable Manhattan middle-school afterschool experience did NYJTL demonstrate?

What made NYJTL more community-based for Wagner than the provider already embedded in the school?

A community district label is not a school community.

A tennis presence is not a community impact plan.

How can you build a real afterschool program in two months? How can you replace years of relationships, leagues, routines, staff knowledge, sports, theater, debate, spelling bees, fencing, and disability supports in two months?

You cannot.

You can open a program in two months.

You cannot build community in two months.

Where is the community in the Department of Youth and Community Development?

I stood at a rally with families and children from multiple schools. What broke my heart is that the children understand what is happening. Chalkbeat reported that families and students rallied at Simon Baruch, with others from School of the Future and Salk joining; Tribeca Citizen reported that parents were panicked and rallying after Manhattan Youth lost contracts at 12 middle-school programs.

The children are asking, in their own way: why are you attacking our community?

Adults call it procurement. Children experience it as loss. The coach may be gone. The theater program may disappear. The team may be cut. The spelling bee may disappear. The fencing league may disappear. The joint musical may not happen. The adult who understood them may not be there next year.

Children should not have to become activists to keep the adults they trust.

The backlash is not proof that families are entitled. The backlash is proof that the programs worked.

People fight for what they love. Children fight for adults who made them feel safe. Parents

fight for programs that let them work. Schools fight for partners who understand their culture.

If DYCD can define community broadly enough to award a contract, it can define community deeply enough to measure what children are losing.

If DYCD can count provider diversity, it can count community loss.

If DYCD can score paperwork, it can score continuity.

If DYCD can invoke students with disabilities, it can produce a disability-access plan.

I also want to speak for the schools and families who may not be protesting as loudly. Do not mistake exhausted families for satisfied families. Do not mistake silence for consent. Do not mistake lack of protest for lack of harm.

If DYCD's equity process only hears the families with enough power to fight after the fact, then DYCD has recreated the exact inequity it claims to solve.

Equity cannot be done from 30,000 feet when the harm happens to children at 3:00 p.m.

And do not tell me District 2 children are fine because some of these schools are high-performing. I have worked with children everywhere from Avenues to the Bronx. Privilege and pain are not mutually exclusive. Autism does not disappear because a child is gifted. Anxiety does not disappear because a child goes to a desirable school. Middle schoolers are struggling everywhere.

Afterschool staff are frontline workers.

They hold children at the most chaotic hour of the day. They manage hungry kids, dysregulated kids, missing kids, late parents, locked classrooms, behavior incidents, staff shortages, and children who have already used every ounce of self-control to survive school.

Can you imagine dedicating ten years of your life to building something, earning children's trust, becoming part of a school community, and then finding out through a rushed procurement process that you may be gone?

How many frontline youth workers are being displaced by this reshuffle? Hundreds? Thousands? DYCD should know before the Council funds it.

When DYCD destabilizes afterschool staff, it destabilizes children.

Children do not attach to award lists.

They attach to people.

I also need to say something about Imogen Foundation.

Imogen saved my life.

When I was struggling, when I could not afford the support my son needed, Imogen gave us financial aid. They gave my son a place where he could stabilize. They gave him a space where he could make friends. He became a mentor to younger children.

My son told me this has been the second-best year of his life. That is such an autistic-child sentence, in the most beautiful way. Precise. Ranked. Honest.

That is youth development.

That is what afterschool is supposed to do.

So when I say providers are not interchangeable, I mean that in every direction. A provider can be good somewhere and still be wrong somewhere else. Youth development is not plug-and-play.

And if DYCD was determined to move some programs, Imogen is the one transition I can at least understand because Theseus helped build this kind of work and understands this community.

But Theseus deserved a better transition. Families deserved a better transition. Children deserved a better transition. Staff deserved a better transition.

No father should have to sit here and hear the foundation built in his daughter's name treated like the symbol of a crisis DYCD created.

That is what bad process does. It misdirects pain. It turns parents and providers against each other when the agency should be answering for the process.

The city should have looked at Manhattan Youth's strongest programs and asked: how do we replicate this?

Instead, DYCD appears to have looked at success and treated it like a concentration problem. It did not replicate excellence. It redistributed disruption.

It is as if the city looked at a program offering children steak and said: because every child cannot have steak yet, no one gets steak. Everyone gets the same fast-food version of afterschool.

But this was not one meal.

This was a whole kitchen.

DYCD did not just replace the meal.

It broke the kitchen.

And when those of us who actually work in afterschool look at the official award list and see one large provider, New York Edge, appearing over and over, roughly 88 times by my count, we are scratching our heads.

What did this procurement reward? School fit? Community trust? Staff continuity? Disability access? Or the ability to scale paperwork across the city?

Scale is not quality. A citywide footprint is not community. A fast-food model is not youth development.

We have seen this flawed logic before in New York City education. In the name of equity, the city has too often weakened ladders instead of building more ladders.

When I went to Brooklyn Tech in 1996, Black and Latino students were everywhere. We had local gifted programs, honors tracks, and school-based pipelines that helped prepare kids for places like Tech.

Today, Brooklyn Tech is only 5 percent Black. In 2025, Black students received only 3 percent of offers to the eight SHSAT-based specialized high schools.

That is what bad equity does.

It breaks the ladders and then blames children for not climbing.

Real equity would build more ladders: preparation, rigor, access, stable afterschool, mentorship, sports, arts, debate, spelling bees, fencing, childcare, and disability support.

Not take working programs away and call that fairness.

I am asking the Council to use its budget and oversight power.

Do not allow public money to lock schools into disputed six-year COMPASS contracts until DYCD releases the scoring, principal input, old-provider-to-new-provider crosswalk, school-by-school equity rationale, provider-capacity evidence, disability-access plan, workforce-impact review, community-impact review, and real transition plan.

I am not here today to litigate. I am here begging you to prevent harm before families are forced to explore legal remedies just to get what should have existed from the beginning.

Please do not tell me this is just a vendor change.

A vendor change is paper.

This is my child.

This is whether I can work.

This is whether my family can stay in New York.

This is whether an autistic child enters middle school feeling known or feeling like a problem.

This is whether a twice-exceptional child gets both rigor and regulation, or is punished because adults only see one side of him.

I moved to District 2 because I was trying to give my autistic child the ramps the city does not even recognize as ramps.

The routine was the ramp.

The trusted adult was the ramp.

The afterschool program was the ramp.

Marylyne was the ramp.

The ecosystem was the ramp.

The school community was the ramp.

My entire life plan was built around those ramps.

And now DYCD is removing them after the fact while calling it equity.

Equity without transparency is not justice.

Equity without community is not justice.

Equity without disability access is not justice.

Equity that destroys what already works is not equity at all.

It is harm with better branding.

Pause the disputed awards before registration.

Show us the data.

Protect the children.

Do not fund opacity.

Do not fund rushed licensing.

Do not fund disruption without evidence.

Do not make families sue for the transition plan DYCD should have created before it touched these programs.

Thank you.

Jamie Parganos (Alex and Leo’s Mom)

From: Jamie Parganos
To: Testimony; NYC Council Hearings
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Urgent written testimony: DYCD COMPASS/SONYC awards and disability-access concerns
Date: Thursday, June 11, 2026 12:57:07 AM

[redacted]

Dear New York City Council,

Please accept this written testimony regarding DYCD's disputed COMPASS/SONYC afterschool awards and the impact on District 2 students, including students with disabilities.

I am Jamie Parganos, a District 2 parent, a single mother of two children with special needs, and a youth-development professional who has worked with major afterschool providers and with DYCD.

The issue is not simply disappointment over a provider change. The issue is whether DYCD's procurement process adequately considered disability access, continuity, safety, and irreparable harm to students who rely on predictable routines, known adults, and trusted transitions.

For children with autism, ADHD, IEPs, Section 504 needs, anxiety, and other disabilities, afterschool is not just enrichment or childcare. It is often the difference between inclusion and exclusion.

I respectfully request that the Council urgently examine whether DYCD should pause implementation or registration of disputed COMPASS/SONYC awards pending review of disability-access impacts and transition risks.

Sincerely,

Jamie Parganos

Please fund the FY ‘26 library budget at the rate Mayor Mamdani promised during his campaign! At a time of increased climate change, homelessness, and dropping literacy rates, libraries are an essential refuge and resource. They’re integral to the well-being of New Yorkers and democracy. It’s great that this year’s budget is $3 million dollars more than last year, but that doesn’t even keep up with the rate of inflation or match what the Mayor promised while campaigning. I’m asking for 0.5% of the total city budget to be the floor, not the ceiling, for future library budgets. A budget is a moral document. It’s how legislators make good on their promises to secure the well-being of their constituents. We’ve seen time and again that this city finds money for all sorts of initiatives and to fund other institutions in the city, so let’s get this right by supporting the incredible work of libraries.

My name is Jane Rao and I am testifying on the fiscal year 2027 budget. I am an Elliott-Chelsea resident, I am living in the oldest building constructed in 1947. During the last half year, NYCHA has renovated apartments for relocating seniors from the best senior building.
As per the budget, how much did NYCHA spend to renovate each apartment? The cost is likely far less than what the developer proposed. If the oldest building apartments can be successfully renovated and become desirable homes for residents, why can't the newest senior building built in 1968 also be renovated? All buildings in Elliot-Chelsea are stunning and solid in foundations and structure. Successful renovation will save millions of taxpayer dollars, and demonstrate NYCHA's ability to manage and improve its own properties. Public funds should be invested in Section 9. The funding should remain dedicated to serving the most vulnerable residents of our city.

Manhattan is the most crowded area. Developers plan to increase apartments from roughly 2,500 to 3,500 units. This 1/3 population increase will bring significantly more cars and make existing congestion worse. Packing more density into Manhattan is not affordable and has over developed..

As a conclusion, funding Section 9, using 1.5 billion dollars/public funds wisely for the public.

Janice Kruger
[redacted]
NY NY 10025
[redacted]

8 June 2026

Committee on Finance
New York City Council
250 Broadway
New York NY 10007Dear Committe,

I am asking the City Council to advocate for and ensure that **community composting is funded in FY27.** NYC Community Compost Network **requests $9,075,000, which includes $6,775,000 of program support and $2,300,000 for construction of a compost site**.

Community composting is not the same as curbside composting. It is a proven, community solution that reduces waste, builds local leaders, and delivers environmental benefits directly to NYC neighborhoods. Sustained funding ensures these programs continue to grow and serve all New Yorkers.

What This Funding Supports

With this funding, the Network delivers essential, community-based programs citywide:

- **Outreach & Education** – Culturally relevant, multilingual programming that increases participation in composting across communities
- **Master Composter Certificate Program** – Trains New Yorkers as educators, leaders, and composting stewards
- **Technical Assistance & Infrastructure** – Provides tools, training, and support to build and sustain local composting systems
- **Food Scrap Collection** – Accessible neighborhood drop-off sites, especially for residents without reliable curbside access
- **Local Composting & Processing** – Transforms food scraps and horticultural waste into compost locally, keeping resources in NYC and acting as demonstration sites for education. ● **Compost Distribution** – Provides free compost to community gardens, urban farms, and residents
- **Soil & Green Infrastructure Support** – Improves soils in parks, street tree beds, and public spaces, strengthening climate resilience

Why This Funding Matters

- **Essential to NYC's zero waste goals -** Increases organics diversion and complements curbside collection
- **Ensures equitable access -** Expands composting opportunities to

underserved communities where there lacks curbside services

- **Builds community and leadership -** Strengthens neighborhood networks and creates a citywide culture of stewardship
- **Creates green jobs and workforce pathways -** Supports internships, training, and employment in the green economy
- **Improves climate resilience -** Healthy soils absorb stormwater, reduce flooding, and support urban ecosystems
- **Creates a local circular economy -** Food scraps are turned into compost and returned to the same communities—reducing reliance on export-based systems

Sincerely,

Janice Kruger

Hello distinguished members of the Council of New York City.

My name is Jasmine Venus Sapphiria, and I am a resident of NYC. I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the QueensLink proposal.

I write today in strong support of QueensLink and its vision for the future of transportation, public space, and connectivity in Queens.

For decades, the former Long Island Railroad Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way has remained an underutilized asset despite serving communities that continue to face transportation challenges. QueensLink presents a rare opportunity to transform existing, and disused infrastructure into a project that delivers meaningful benefits to residents across multiple neighborhoods. By restoring rail service while incorporating public green space, the proposal addresses both mobility and quality-of-life concerns in a manner that is ambitious, practical, and forward-looking.

As New York City continues to grow, investment in public transportation must remain a priority. Reliable transit access expands economic opportunity, reduces dependence on automobiles, shortens commute times, and strengthens connections between communities. Projects such as QueensLink are particularly important because they seek to maximize the value of infrastructure that already exists rather than requiring entirely new corridors to be constructed.

Beyond transportation, QueensLink represents a broader commitment to sustainable urban development. The integration of public space, recreational opportunities, and environmental improvements alongside transit infrastructure reflects the type of comprehensive planning that New Yorkers deserve. Infrastructure should not merely move people; it should improve the communities through which it passes.

I also believe it is important for the City to evaluate long-term regional benefits rather than focusing solely on short-term costs or challenges. Major transportation investments have historically shaped New York's prosperity for generations. Decisions made today will influence mobility, accessibility, and economic development for decades to come. For that reason, proposals that expand transit access and strengthen the city's transportation network warrant serious consideration and support.

I respectfully urge the Council to continue advancing the study, evaluation, and development of QueensLink. The project offers an opportunity to reconnect neighborhoods, expand transportation options, and make productive use of a corridor that has remained dormant for far too long.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service to the people of New York City.

Respectfully submitted,

Jasmine Venus Sapphiria

(Legal Name: Tristan Leonard)

To: New York City Council
From: Jay Sherman
Email: [redacted]
Date: May 26, 2026

Subject: Support QueensLink and Halt QueensWay

Purpose

I urge the City Council to take immediate action to advance QueensLink and stop QueensWay construction before the city loses its only chance to restore rail service on the Rockaway Beach Branch.

Summary

QueensLink directly addresses Queens' severe transit shortage by extending the M line and adding 33 acres of parkland thru its "***rails and trails***" plan. Independent experts confirm it would generate **$8.9B** in economic growth, return **up to $2.20** per **$1** invested, attract **twice the riders per mile** of the Interborough Express, and cut **30 million vehicle miles traveled** and **7,200 tons of carbon dioxide (CO_2)** annually.

QueensWay, however, is a **park-only** plan that would **permanently eliminate the possibility of rail reactivation**. The **New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC)** intends to begin construction this year, and the mayor's budget funds it—despite QueensLink's far greater public benefit.

Request

Remove QueensWay funding from the city budget and direct NYCEDC to pause all work so QueensLink can move forward.

From: Jayati Vora
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Written testimony by a Lab Middle School parent
Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2026 6:03:57 PM

[redacted]

Hi,

I'm the parent of a child at Lab Middle School and my son has been attending afterschool with Manhattan Youth twice a week for the past 2 years.

We went from him protesting the need to do ANY afterschool to him excited about doing cooking class (a double session no less!), voluntarily adding a second day of afterschool (working on the school paper) and excitedly bringing home what he made in afterschool. In fact, on our school tour, MY and the student guides' enthusiasm for the afterschool programs was one of the reasons we listed it as our top choice. Without MY, I have no doubt he would be spending those hours playing Fortnite or another video game.

The partnership between Lab and Manhattan Youth is a long and successful one. I don't understand why MY was not selected to continue offering afterschool to Lab, when the stakeholders who this actually affects — the kids, the school, the afterschool program providers — seem to want this change.

What can you do to help reverse this decision?

Thank you for reading,
Jayati Vora

Sent from my iPhone

Please Reinstate Manhattan Youth at Wagner MS (Resolution #299)

To Whom it May Concern at DYCD and Department of Finance,

My family and I are deeply upset to learn that Manhattan Youth's contract with our daughter's school, Wagner Middle School, has been terminated without any input from our school community and ask that this decision be reconsidered.

This rushed and opaque process that led to this decision shows at best a clear lack of understanding - or at worst a willful ignorance and lack of concern - to the vital role these established programs play in a family's plan to provide for their children's safety and growth in the NYC public school system.

The feeling that DYCD gave no consideration to the longstanding ties these programs have with the schools and chose to act unilaterally to remove them is hurtful, insulting, and frankly alarming.

If why I feel this way is not understood, then please understand this: my child, a 7th grader at Wagner, has grown tremendously as a result of the thoughtful enrichment programming and dedicated staff at Manhattan Youth. Manhattan Youth has given her the opportunity to make new friends, pursue her passions in the arts and find mentorship.

My daughter was devastated to hear that their contract with Wagner had been terminated for unclear reasons and replaced with a tennis program that nobody asked for.

She, and a number of her fellow Manhattan Youth participants, their parents, and their teachers from across District 2 spoke passionately at Community Education Council District 2 meeting asking for Manhattan Youth to remain and for support of Resolution 299. It passed unanimously. See the video here: May 2026 Calendar & Business Meetings

They also marched in support of this effort and collected over 5,000 signatures from shocked, concerned and confused community members demanding answers and a *real* role in this decision. **Please consider this community input in lieu of the lack of real outreach performed by DYCD.** Petition · Save Our Afterschool Programs: Demand Accountability from DYCD for Vendor Contracts - New York, United States · Change.org

See also attached her testimony ("… Sadie Walker…").

The established MY program at Wagner was a major reason why we chose Wagner for our daughter. And with both me and my wife working long hours to be able to afford living in New York City, their established programs, their offerings, their long relationship with the school, and the incredibly talented people who run them, reinforced our belief that our daughter was in good hands in a safe environment while we work.

And we now know this because every day we see and talk to them, whether on email or at pick up, and know them like an extension of our family.

As a result, our entire family, but especially my child, has built deep relationships with the staff of Manhattan Youth. Their talent, expertise and passion are on display at every school event and every project my daughter brings home from afterschool.

For these reasons this decision is deeply insulting to not only us but to Manhattan Youth staff who have worked for years to create engaging and diverse programming for our kids. **They are an integral part of our school community and are NOT interchangeable budget line items!**

This decision seriously impacts our quality of life and our families deserve answers. As a NYC public school parent the lack of transparency in the decision making process is especially disturbing. DYCD and NYC have the opportunity to rectify this decision by listening to our voices now. Please reinstate Manhattan Youth's contract with Wagner Middle School immediately.

Please refer to CECD2 Resolution 299 asking for transparency in this process and reinstatement of Manhattan Youth at Wagner and other schools in District 2.

Resolution #299 - Calling for Transparency, Community Input and Independent Review of the DYCD Middle School Afterschool Procurement Process and Reinstatement of Manhattan Youth as the Afterschool Provider at A.pdf - Google Drive

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter

Sincerely,

Jayson Walker

Parent of 7th grader at Wagner Middle School

In addition to **my in-person testimony on 6/10/26**, thank you council members for the opportunity to submit this written testimony to you on behalf of my family and my daughter, a 7th grader at MS 167 Robert F Wagner MS.

Please Reinstate Manhattan Youth at Robert F Wagner Middle School MS167 and uphold CECD2 Resolution #299 (link).

My family and I are deeply upset to learn that Manhattan Youth's contract with our daughter's school has been terminated without any input from our school community and ask that this decision be reconsidered.

This rushed and opaque process that led to this decision shows at best a clear lack of understanding - or at worst a willful ignorance and lack of concern - to the vital role these established programs play in a family's plan to provide for their children's safety and growth in the NYC public school system.

My daughter has grown tremendously as a result of the thoughtful diverse programming and dedicated staff at Manhattan Youth. In a school of over 1000 students, she's found her people, is pursuing her passion in the arts and finding mentorship.

She and her friends were devastated to hear that their contract with Wagner had been terminated for unclear reasons and replaced with a tennis program that nobody asked for.

They and other Manhattan Youth participants, their parents, and their teachers from across District 2 spoke passionately at Community Education Council District 2 meeting asking for Manhattan Youth to remain and for support of Resolution 299.
It passed unanimously.
See the video here: **May 2026 Calendar & Business Meetings**
Student testimonies start here: start of testimonies
My daughter's testimony starts here: Sadie Walker's testimony

They also marched in support of this effort and collected over 5,800 signatures from community members demanding answers and a *real* role in this decision.

Please consider this community input in lieu of the lack of real outreach performed by DYCD. **Petition · Save Our Afterschool Programs: Demand Accountability from DYCD for Vendor Contracts - New York, United States · Change.org**

See also attached her written testimony ("… Sadie Walker…").

The established Manhattan Youth program at Wagner was a major reason why we chose Wagner for our daughter.

We work long hours to afford life here. Their long relationship with diverse programming and talented staff reinforced our belief that our daughter was in good hands in a safe environment while we work.

We also see them everyday. We talk to them everyday. They are an integral part of our school community and are NOT interchangeable budget line items!

This decision seriously impacts our quality of life and our families deserve answers.

DYCD and NYC have the opportunity to rectify this decision by listening to our voices now.

Please uphold Resolution 299 and reinstate Manhattan Youth's contract with Wagner Middle School immediately.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter

Jayson Walker
Parent of 7th Grader at MS167 – Robert F Wagner Middle School

I am a seventh grader at Wagner Middle School and I'm writing to protest the defunding of Wagner's afterschool program with Manhattan Youth. Manhattan Youth means so much to me and everyone else in the middle schools they work with and I can't believe the DYCD and the city would even think about taking it away especially without taking our opinion into consideration. We are the ones who take this afterschool, shouldn't we be a major part in the decision?

Manhattan Youth is the reason I am always excited to come to school. I come to this afterschool from 2:40 to 5:45 almost every day. The Manhattan Youth staff were what kept me going all the time. In the musical, they gave me confidence and helped me make more friends, and be a better friend myself. In fact, a majority of my friends are from the musical! Next year is my last year at Wagner. I finally gained enough confidence to try out for a big role, maybe even a lead! But, no, the DYCD and the city had to go and take this afterschool opportunity away since Manhattan Youth runs the musical. This is so messed up. The MY afterschool staff know me, the real me, not the one trying to fit in with everyone else in middle school, not the one trying to impress teachers. The real me. I have enjoyed every single one of the afterschool clubs and they have meant so so much to me, more than anyone could ever understand. I am always excited knowing I have Chorus and Newsletter on Mondays, the Musical and Paint and Chip on Wednesdays, the Musical and Myths and Legends on Thursdays, and Filmmaking on Friday.

Manhattan Youth made middle school some of the best years in my life, which I know is unusual for middle school. This is exactly why the city and DYCD need to keep Manhattan Youth at Wagner. We have the largest middle school in Manhattan and Manhattan Youth can reach so many more people who need this program now more than ever in these years. Manhattan Youth is what makes Wagner such an inviting, exciting and vibrant community. Middle school is a really, really hard time for many kids and a large reason I have benefited, learned from it and had it be awesome is because of Manhattan Youth. We have had Manhattan Youth at Wagner for eight years, and those eight years have made such a big difference in our community. I also know in every middle school MY has been in they have benefited the community. I have read many comments from people in other middle schools, and we all want Manhattan Youth to stay. The staff in Manhattan Youth know everyone and always bring a smile to people‘s faces when they see them walk by in the hallway. Marylyne, Grae, Zaia, Lyric, T’ahna, Towanna, Angel, Josh, J.P, Dylan, Lexa, Lauren and many many more are always so nice to us and share so many important memories with us. We can’t lose that. The DYCD and city can’t take this away from us.

When we heard this news, I looked around and all I could see was everyone crying, full on bawling, me included. Manhattan Youth means so much to us and I don’t know what the school could ever do without it. If anyone would see even one of our performances, a musical or film festival or arts and crafts festival, they would understand how much this

really means to all of us, every single one in the school. I've been to many many different after schools, but no one has made me feel as welcome as Manhattan Youth has. So, please, stop this insanity and the full on tears because we will not rest until Manhattan Youth is back at Wagner and all of the other middle schools.

Thank you for your time,

Sadie Walker

See also links to:

1) Students speaking at CECD2 5/26/26 meeting and Resolution #299

   May 2026 Calendar & Business Meetings

2) Petition demanding accountability from DYCD:

   Petition · Save Our Afterschool Programs: Demand Accountability from DYCD for Vendor Contracts - New York, United States · Change.org

3) Resolution #299

   Resolution #299 - Calling for Transparency, Community Input and Independent Review of the DYCD Middle School Afterschool Procurement Process and Reinstatement of Manhattan Youth as the Afterschool Provider at A.pdf - Google Drive

Testimony for Budget Committee Hearing held June 10, 2026

Funding for low-cost/high-volume spay/neuter – $1.5 million

Ding! It's early Sunday morning, and an urgent text message comes in: a woman has a mother cat and two kittens in her backyard. There were originally four kittens, but two were eaten by raccoons. She wants someone to pick up the mother cat and the two surviving kittens immediately. Cat rescuers receive a constant stream of messages like this—far more requests than they can manage. Many people assume the city has, or should have, an agency that dispatches field officers to handle animal issues. When they reach out to rescuers, they expect the same kind of response they would get from first responders: immediate, free help delivered on-site.

Cat overpopulation is out of control, and the ACC is as overwhelmed as rescuers. The only lasting solution is to address the problem at its source by spaying and neutering community cats, pets, and store cats. That requires low-cost, high-volume spay/neuter services that are accessible to both rescuers and individual pet owners. The ASPCA provides most of these services, but its appointments are limited to rescuers. A few other clinics, including BBAWC and Flatbush Vets, offer additional appointments, but the overall capacity is far too limited. The city must increase funding to significantly expand these services, or the crisis will continue.

Funding for pet food pantries - $2 million

Pet ownership is becoming unaffordable, and it shouldn't be. The rising cost of pet food is a major reason why. Two months ago, several Park Slope rescuers launched a pet food pantry, and nearly 100 animals are already enrolled. Clients are deeply grateful because the pantry helps them keep the pets they love. When the pantry includes a toy with the food, people light up because they often cannot afford even small extras for their pets. Many of those served are elderly or disabled, living on fixed incomes and relying on SNAP benefits. They are often alone, and their pet may be their main source of companionship. Similar needs exist across the city, yet resources remain scarce. As one elderly woman said about her dog, Gilbert, "He cares about me. No one else does." Pets nourish our souls. Please help provide nourishment for them.

Respectfully,

Jean Bubley

[redacted]
Brooklyn, NY 11217
[redacted]

From: Jeff Schwane
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Universal Daylighting Now
Date: Thursday, June 11, 2026 12:20:55 PM

[redacted]

Please make universal daylighting a reality. I'm tired of prioritizing car owners over a safer and more livable city.

Thanks,
Jeff

My name is Jeff Zysman, and I am an Ambassador for the Innovative Planning and Advocacy Department. This department has helped me become part of my community and work toward my goals. My top three goals are to be professional in the community, to stay safe, and to become more independent.

Through this program, I have learned how to advocate for myself and for others. I now understand that I have a voice and the right to use it. I can speak up for what I need and want, share my concerns, and make decisions about my life.

I am passionate about advocacy because it helps people like me. I travel to Albany to attend rallies and conferences, where I speak up about important issues. One issue I advocate for is fair pay for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), including a proposed wage increase of 2.7%.

I have also met with leaders such as Senator Kristen Gillibrand, Patricia Fahy, Liz Krueger, and Assembly Members Linda Rosenthal and Tony Simone. In addition, I meet monthly with the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) to discuss and vote on budget changes.

The Innovative Department also offers workshops. My favorite was “Right of the Month.” In this workshop, I learned about my rights as a person with a disability. These include the right to choose how I spend my time and the right to vote in local and state elections. I earned a certificate and was promoted to Ambassador. These experiences helped me grow by giving me hands-on experience in advocacy and government.

In my free time, I enjoy going to the gym and working out. I also go bowling on weekends in Long Island with friends. I recently organized a bowling fundraiser for CFS and raised over $10,000. I am now working on planning a second fundraiser.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY FOR THE JOINT HEARING ON THE MAYOR'S EXECUTIVE BUDGET

Committees: Committee on Finance & Committee on Children and Youth

Hearing Date: May 28, 2026

Subject: DYCD COMPASS Contracting Process and the Loss of Manhattan Youth

To Chair Brannan, Chair Stevens, and Members of the Committees on Finance and Children and Youth:

Hi, my name is Jeffrey Zimmer and my daughter attends the Professional Performing Arts School (PPAS) in Manhattan. We live in central Queens and commute in, it's one of the few schools that accept kids from all over the city. I am submitting this testimony to urge the City Council to investigate and demand accountability from the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) regarding their recent, deeply flawed COMPASS after-school contract awards.

Recently, our school community was devastated to learn that Manhattan Youth will no longer be our after-school provider next year. This is not an isolated incident; Manhattan Youth was stripped of its contracts at 12 highly successful middle school programs across the borough.

Manhattan Youth is not just a vendor; they are an essential extension of the PPAS community. At a specialized school like ours that takes children from ALL over NYC, their programming seamlessly aligns with our students' unique creative and academic needs. They have spent years building deep trust, creating safe environments, and tailoring programs that keep our children engaged and safe. They've worked with our administration for over 10 years and everything is like clockwork! Having a free, well-run afterschool program was both necessary for our long commute and welcome due to it being free for our students.

The DYCD's selection process via the PASSPort RFP system has proven to be broken, opaque, and without any community engagement or input. Decisions of this magnitude were made in a bureaucratic vacuum that completely excluded the most critical stakeholders: our principal, teachers, School Leadership Teams, PTAs, and families. Despite our school clearly identifying Manhattan Youth as the best and most qualified fit, a detached city agency took them away. You cannot copy-and-paste a community. Forcing a generic, unwanted transition disrupts our children's stability, ruins long-standing multi-school sports and arts leagues, and disregards the explicit choices of local families.

I urge the City Council to use this executive budget hearing to:

1. Demand absolute transparency from DYCD regarding the exact scoring metrics and "competition pools" that ousted proven, highly-rated providers like Manhattan Youth. I would like to see the results.

2. Freeze or pause these contract transitions until a formal appeals process is completed and local school leadership (principals and SLTs) are given a meaningful seat at the decision-making table.
3. Ensure that city funding respects community continuity rather than blind algorithmic procurement.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and dedication to New York City's youth!

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Zimmer, P.E.

[redacted]
Kew Gardens, NY 11418
[redacted]

PPAS Parent / Community Member

From: Singer, Jena [JJCUS]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] DOE Changes to Middle School After School Program
Date: Tuesday, May 19, 2026 3:14:43 PM
Attachments: image001.png

[redacted]

I am reaching out as a deeply concerned parent regarding the recent decision to end the partnership between School of the Future and Manhattan Youth for the Middle School After School Program. This news has left me—and every parent I've spoken to—feeling shocked, upset, and frankly heartbroken.

For over a decade, Manhattan Youth has been an essential pillar in our school community. Their after-school program isn't just a place for our children to spend time; it has been a source of enrichment, growth, and belonging. The staff know our kids, they understand our values, and they genuinely care about each student's well-being. They have cultivated an environment where students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

The sudden switch to another organization, especially without the input or consent of families or school administration, is not only disruptive but detrimental to our students. Change like this threatens the continuity and stability that so many of our children depend on. The trust and relationships built over years cannot be replicated overnight, and losing Manhattan Youth means losing mentors, role models, and safe spaces that our kids count on.

All the parents I have spoken to share these feelings. There is widespread outrage and sadness—many are even considering alternative options for after school care because they cannot imagine their children in a program that is unfamiliar and disconnected from our community. We feel ignored, and it is incredibly frustrating to know that our voices and experiences have not been valued in this process.

I urge you to reconsider this decision. Please listen to the families who know first-hand how vital Manhattan Youth is to our school. Our children deserve stability, quality care, and programs run by people who know them and love them. On behalf of my family and so many others, I ask that you restore this partnership and put our students' well-being

first.

Sincerely,

Jena Singer
Proud parent of 3 NYC Public School kids

Jena Singer
Director S2C Global Process Owner
Global Procurement, Digital and Process Solutions
[redacted]

Johnson&Johnson

I am writing in support of Girls Inc. My daughter attended Girls Inc. in both 6th and 7th grades (2024 - 2026) at The Young Women's Leadership School (TYWLS) of Astoria. I was always impressed by the program. They allowed the girls opportunities for homework help, socialization and clubs, in a safe and well-supported environment. In a world where everyone is spending so much time on screens, it's so wonderful for a program that provides screen free opportunities in an after-school environment. They've done parties, trips and cultural celebrations. I truly hope funding can be found to keep this program going at TYWLS. It is a huge asset to our community.

Dear New York City Council Members,

My name is Jennifer; I've lived in LIC for seven years, and I plan on staying here for good. I am writing to demand that the commitments made in the OneLIC Neighborhood plan are fulfilled on time.

Just in the past seven years, I've witnessed remarkable growth and development in this neighborhood, and it's a far cry from the warehouse wasteland it used to be decades ago. But right now, developers are overinvesting in luxury housing for residents that will never come, because the appropriate resources aren't being committed to make LIC a nice place to live.

The budget pushes back several commitments to open space:

- Waterfront esplanade and new open space construction, planned for completion in 2031, is not planned for funding until 2031
- Queensbridge Baby Park, planned for completion in 2031, is not planned for funding until 2032 or 2033
- Renewal of Queensbridge Park, planned for design in 2028, is not planned for funding until 2032

It also fails to fund the Parks Department at 1%, and does not baseline funding for the 115 Parks workers whose jobs expire in June or provide the 276 new jobs in Parks needed to support our existing public spaces, or provide adequate funding for GreenThumb and the Urban Park Rangers.

Long Island City's schools are already failing to meet the demands of existing families. The lack of inclusion of the promised school construction and improvements in the approved budget means the existing families in Long Island City and all the new residents will be unable to guarantee nearby elementary school seats, and may be forced to leave the neighborhood or send their young children on very long commutes. The budget must include

- Funding to build the 2 promised new elementary schools and 1 middle school as part of OneLIC.

The rezoned area requires significant improvements to provide safe connections through and beyond the neighborhood, allow people the space and infrastructure to spend time with their neighbors outdoors, and help bridge the divide between Queensbridge residents and other parts of LIC. Despite these real needs, the executive budget fails to include or significantly delays several of the promised improvements:

- Court Square Toilet not included in the budget
- Lighting Study in the IBZ not included in the budget
- Feasibility Study of Public Realm Improvements Under QBB Ramps not included in the budget
- Queens waterfront greenway delayed until 2029 + 2032
- 21st Street Intermodal Hub delayed until 2029 + 2032

- 44th Drive corridor improvements delayed until 2029 + 2032

All of these things contribute to LIC being a pleasant and livable neighborhood, and I as well as everyone else who lives here wants to see it become such.

As the City moves forward with significant new development in Long Island City, it is critical that these commitments are not delayed, deferred, or reduced. The City Council must ensure that the promised funding to allow the neighborhood to support so many new residents is not pushed off or ignored.

I believe that everything promised under OneLIC must be fully funded and delivered on an appropriate and timely schedule so that neighborhood infrastructure keeps pace with growth and current residents are not asked to continue bearing the consequences of decades of underinvestment.

We need the City to honor and prioritize its commitment to the previously promised funding by the Mayor's Office to ensure equitable development. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Chang

Re: Urgent Call to Prioritize Funding to Expand School Capacity in Long Island City

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident and parent to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

LIC has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, Kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, and yet most area schools are already operating over capacity: P.S. 112 at **130%**, and P.S./I.S. 78 at **111%**. What is more, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City — Court Square — still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message to families is clear: you may not be guaranteed a school seat in your neighborhood.

I would also like to express urgent concern about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed school project. In a neighborhood where families are struggling today to secure local school placements, this project, along with other promised school construction projects in LIC, cannot continue to fall behind competing priorities. While I appreciate the creation of an incubation site for Q508 (Q439Q), a temporary solution cannot become a justification for continued delays to the permanent facility. Families were promised a permanent neighborhood school, with the full facilities and long-term stability that a dedicated school building provides. An incubation site may help relieve short-term pressure, but it does not address the broader and growing need for permanent school infrastructure in LIC.

Additionally, the current lease for the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE, Q580) is set to expire in just three years. Families have been assured that the school would be relocated so that it can continue serving students without disruption. We are appreciative that the budget includes funding for BSGE. However, we want to emphasize that it is critical that the City follow through on this commitment and move urgently to secure a permanent home for the school. Allowing delays to continue would create significant uncertainty for students and families and risks the loss of an important educational institution in a neighborhood already facing a severe shortage of school seats. The City must prioritize funding and planning for BSGE's relocation now to ensure continuity and stability for the community.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has also recognized the need for additional schools to support the neighborhood's rapid growth. Specifically, commitments were made to advance development of a school at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard. Creation of two additional schools has also been promised to create 1,300 more seats in conjunction with the planned construction of over 14,000 residential units. As more housing is developed through OneLIC, school construction must move in parallel — not years behind residential growth. Without firm commitments and accountability around these promised schools, the existing seat crisis will only intensify.

Delays to the opening of these schools are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and more families pushed out of the neighborhood because they cannot rely on access to local public schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency, accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508 and other promised schools on schedule. Schools aren't just a service—they're the foundation of a stable, thriving neighborhood.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future. Please ensure that timely funding is delivered to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority for the completion of these projects.

Sincerely,
Jennifer N. Levy
11101, Waterfront LIC
Parent of child born in 2022

From: Jennifer Osterweil
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Save MY for Wagner
Date: Monday, May 25, 2026 12:23:45 PM

[redacted]

As a local family, we had many middle schools to choose from. Manhattan Youth was a big pull for Wagner. As big as it is, Manhattan youth helps it all feel personal and manageable. It is one reason why our family has felt confident in staying in NYC through our children's educational career. Without this program, I believe you could lose a lot of the families that make up the core Wagner community. They might flee from the city to the suburbs for more reliable enrichment and afterschool opportunities.

Sent from my iPhone
Please excuse typos

Dear City Council Members,

I am writing as a formal request for funding for both spay and neuter for all of NYC animals, and funding for a pet food pantry.
I took the day off of work in September 2024 to speak in person about the need for action. As a full time city employee, I now also work almost full time as an unpaid volunteer, helping with TNR services across Queens. I live in Whitestone, I TNR in Whitestone, Flushing, Bayside, Jamaica, and Richmond Hill. I use my own time, money, energy and resources to help with a CITY problem.
Myself and others have expressed NUMEROUS times the need for this funding. I have also filed formal complaints for known hoarding issues within Council Member Lynn Schulman's district of Richmond Hill, with no help for the last 3+ years. This work should not fall on individual constituents, without access to the very things they and the entire city need. Free/low cost spay and neuter services should absolutely be a priority and funding for it should be awarded. It will save massive amounts of money in the long term. And will also save countless lives.

Right now, more than half of New Yorkers cannot afford a basic veterinary office visit.
Animal rescuers are overwhelmed by the growing number of stray and abandoned animals who need help — with no financial or logistical support from the city.
Families are surrendering the animals they love because they cannot access resources — adding even more pressure to NYC's already strained rescue community and shelter system.
NYC spends just $2.98 per person on animal care — among the lowest of any major U.S. city.
75% of dogs entering ACC are unfixed.
193,000 spay/neuter surgeries are needed annually for community cats and owned pets who cannot afford them. The city funds only 3,500 surgeries.
No New Yorker should have to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their pet.
Affordable veterinary care and spay/neuter keep animals where they belong — at home with the people who love them.
As cost barriers are removed, adoptions will increase and preventable euthanasia will decrease.
Fewer cats will suffer outdoors

I sincerely hope that you do the right thing and take this matter seriously, and award the much needed funding to make NYC a better place for all of its residents, including the animals.

Thank you,
Jennifer Rhein
[redacted]
Whitestone, NY 11357

It is imperative for New York, Queens, and our planet that the City and State to block Billionaire-backed Queensway and proceed with Public-backed Rail-&-Trail Queenslink.

The N Rockaway Branch connects Queens' sweeping transit desert where bus and car exhaust dominate the air. We need an alternative, both for Queens' transportation and public health, and also for the greater effects on the climate.

“queensway” is Not supported by the public. “queensway”’s explicit mission statement is to block all rail development in Queens, leaving our City and State polluted, congested, impoverished in the interests of Economic Leakage, where rather than circulating finances locally, these are siphoned from local communities to Auto, Oil and Insurance companies, harming our communities directly, harming the tax base and economy of the City and State, and inducing foreign wars and destruction of our planet.

“queensway” is unacceptable on every level and the benefits of a park without rail do not aid the working family trying to connect with a loved one, enjoy the ocean or get to employment or medical care. Why do we care so little about the working individuals of our city, while we care so much about billionaire’s looking to extract another cheap buck on the back of our citizens, our City and our State? This is fiscally irresponsible. This is irresponsible to the future and present.

Queensway is a block on any future rail projects. Can you imagine building rail on the highline?

Where trail has been placed to the exclusion of rail, even with the intent of later rail, it has been a political grenade. This is the case in all cities where such has been argued, Atlanta being a prominent example, yet we know rail development of any kind is not the goal of “queensway.” “To block all rail development in Queens” is the thesis and central vision of “queensway”, as has been the mission statement written on their webpage.

Can you imagine NYC without rail? The US is behind the world, and we would push NY down to benefit those who already have the most? When New York reached its most magnificent, it was due to the Erie Canal and Rail which followed. Today's New York is shamefully Car Dependent and the economics of the Rust Belt are in part a result of this Car Dependency.

This wouldn't be the first New York has made this mistake of Trail over Rail+Trail either, as when we look to the Adirondacks we see the removal of track, some of which was in use, at the behest of a rich private interest over the call of the people. Rather than expanding rail through from Lake Placid, two-time site of the NY Winter Olympics, along 86 and 9N to connect the Utica-Lake Placid Corridor via rail to the tourism of Vermont and carless Montréal, and allow safe winter travel. Instead, car pollution, winter danger, poverty, and economic atomisation have been encouraged. This has had no positives for our state, and I have only met but one individual convinced this was a positive. This was ripped up just prior to New York bidding on a 3rd Winter Olympics, illustrating the short-sighted vision we must

avoid. When tracks were ameliorated to Tupper Lake, the Village felt hope. It's not too late to bring hope, environmental sanity, and economic well-being to SE Queens.

Having lived in this region, the radial rail network and lack in modernity of circumferential rail added 5h to my work commute. Many are forced to make such outrageous commutes or give up on work altogether.

QueensLink must be the near future of Queens, and “queensway” an obstructionist project harming New Yorkers must be stopped. It is better to engage in no development than to create an headache for future, reasoned generations who care about our communities and the future of our City and State.

QueensLink must be pushed forwards, starting first with restoration and replacement of the basal structures to support businesses, with the rail repaired and segregated from the future park. It is only after this, both the tunneling and park can be put underway.

QueensLink would save and generate astronomical amounts for our City, State and residents. Especially under eye of the Full Accounting of renewed development, saved transit times, reduction of pollution and automobile/insurance/oil Economic Leakage, Road Maintenance, Public Health and Safety, Inclement weather, and so on. Japanese Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is encouraged.

This is New York, not Oklahoma. Look at what the cities moving ahead are doing versus those falling behind. Is Paris or St Louis a better example? Tōkyō or LA?

QueensLink is a no brainer. QueensLink is the only reasonable choice.

QueensLink is for Queens. QueensLink is for New York. QueenLink is for planet Earth.

Thank you for QueensLink,
Jeremy Senko

I am a graduate of Binghamton University. My background is in Bioanthropology, Socioeconomics, Accounting and Urban Planning.

Hello,

My name is Jerry Zou, and I'm a Teen Technie Intern at Brooklyn Public Library. The library holds a significant place in many individuals' lives, including my own. On the surface, the library appears to merely be a place to study. But once you delve deeper, it's also a place where the barriers of education through finance are removed. Those who are unable to afford a computer or a reliable internet could use the library's services to help with education, work, immigration, and practical skills. It's a place of recreation, socialization, and a safe place where learners of all ages can enjoy a public amenity without the frustration of paying for services -- a place where they can truly feel safe.

As a child, I've gone to the library for as long as I can remember, from elementary school to the end of high school. I've used the computers for many reasons -- chess, research, homework, presentations. My interning experience further cemented the impact that the library makes to the community. You can ask patrons at the library; most would say it serves positive experiences that benefit the quality of life for everyone involved. I'd like to ask for the continued allocation of funds to support the entirety of BPL. Thank you.

2026 NYC Council Funding for Spay/Neuter & Pet Pantry

Just in 2025, I and a few of friends around the neighborhood have rescued 10+ cats that were abandoned because they became too much for the owners, born outside because their parents were not spayed/neutered or neglected at bodega to the point they need medical intervention. All of us have to put our own $, time and fundraised close to $30,000 for their medical needs and championed for them on social platforms, worked with rescuers and reached out to friends/families to find the cats a home. This is a very small slice of the rescue works all across Brooklyn and the boroughs of NYC where pet care has become unaffordable that everyday people has to give up their pets and where the city officials have not enforced or taken the proper steps to ensure cats in bodega have been properly taken care of while they are being worked as if they are slaves and potentially passed on diseases to the food that is being sold in the bodega because these cats have never seen a vet in their entire life. Then they are thrown away when they became sick, too disruptive due to in heat or spraying to mark territory or abandoned because they breed too many kittens. And hardworking and caring folks like us to have to carry the burden of rescuing these cats and the financial costs that come with it.

Advocacy for NYC Pets

#1 **Appoint New Leadership & Enforce the Laws We Already Have**

NYC needs clear leadership, enforcement, and accountability to move animal welfare from crisis management to prevention.

- Appoint new leadership at the Mayor's Office of Animal Welfare
- Enforce existing laws around breeding, licensing, and sterilization
- Require transparent, quarterly public reporting from DOHMH

#2 **Make Basic Vet Care Affordable for More New Yorkers**

Affordable veterinary care keeps pets with their families and reduces shelter overcrowding at the source.

- Fund spay/neuter surgeries
- Support capital projects for new clinics
- Pass law requiring low-cost veterinary clinics in every borough

#3 **Expand Community Support & Prevention Programs**

Provide resources to help families weather short-term hardship without surrendering their pets.

- Fund pet food pantry pilots in The Bronx and Brooklyn
- Fund outreach + education pilot to connect families with resources

Affordable Pet Care = Humane City

Affordability is a city-wide issue.
Making pet care more affordable strengthens our neighborhoods by easing financial strain on families and keeping pets off the street.

Quality of life improves when pets are healthy and housed.
Supporting access to care benefits animals, families, and the overall well-being of New York City communities.

Prevention is more cost-effective than crisis response.
Investing in affordable veterinary care and support programs reduces care and support programs reduces shelter overcrowding and saves public resources.

From: Jessica Levitz
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Keep Manhattan Youth at Baruch Middle School!
Date: Thursday, June 11, 2026 11:05:54 AM

[redacted]

Dear DYCD Leadership,

I am writing to urge DYCD to continue and protect funding for Manhattan Youth programs.

As a working parent, I know firsthand how important these programs are for New York City families. My son participated in Manhattan Youth's middle school program at LAB Middle School, and it was far more than after-school care. It provided a safe, structured, and enriching environment where he was able to build friendships, develop independence, explore new interests, and continue learning beyond the school day.

Programs like Manhattan Youth are essential for working parents who rely on high-quality after-school programming to ensure their children are safe, engaged, and supported during the critical hours after school ends. For many families, these programs make it possible to maintain employment while knowing their children are receiving meaningful educational and social experiences.

The testimony presented at recent budget hearings reflects what many parents already know: youth development programs are not optional extras. They are a vital part of the support system that helps children thrive and helps families remain economically stable.

Reducing or eliminating funding for Manhattan Youth would have real consequences for students and parents across the city. The investment DYCD makes in these programs pays dividends through stronger academic outcomes, social-emotional growth, community engagement, and support for working families.

I respectfully ask DYCD to continue defending and funding Manhattan Youth programs so that future generations of New York City children can benefit from the same opportunities that helped my son grow and succeed.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to New York City's youth and families.

Thank you,
Jessica Levitz
Mom of 2 kids in District 2

Subject: Privatization of NYCHA Creates Instability for Seniors.

I live at Mitchel Houses in the South Bronx and do not have an email address. I am being supported in submitting this testimony by Save Section 9.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

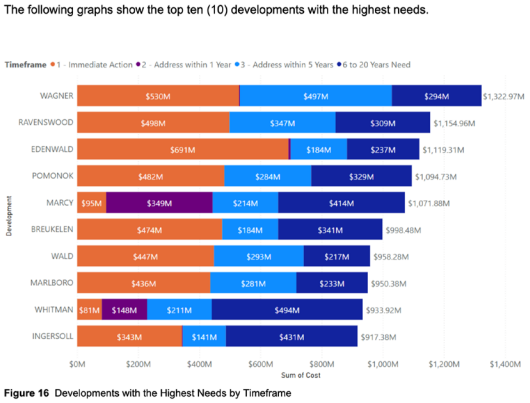


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.
- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

Hello

I am writing as a life long New Yorker, a cat rescuer, a social worker and a voter. I have had pets all my life and have been involved in cat rescue and TNR for about fifteen years. I currently do TNR, rescue and community cat care in Maspeth and near my job in Jamaica Queens. NYC has a growing animal crisis, and real change can only happen if funding is provided for systemic changes.

As the cost of living rapidly increases on a weekly basis, animals are being surrendered and sadly abandoned on the streets of NY. People are having to choose between paying rent, buying food or keeping their pet. More than half of New Yorkers cannot afford a basic veterinary visit. Spay and neuter surgeries can cost $800. and over. Funding pet food pantries and low-cost veterinary services helps keep animals where they belong: at home with the people who love them. As pets help people deal with stress and anxiety, this is a benefit for pets and for the people who love them.

As cost barriers are removed, adoptions will increase and preventable euthanasia will decrease at our overcrowded and overburdened municipal shelters. We desperately need to reduce pressure on NYC's animal shelters and rescue organizations. We need to reduce the number of cats that are suffering and dying on the streets daily.

193,000 spay/neuter surgeries are needed annually for community cats and owned pets for caregivers who cannot afford them. The city funds only 3,500.

I urge the City Council to include $1.5 million for affordable spay/neuter and veterinary care and $2 million for pet food pantries in the FY 2027 Speaker's Initiative budget.

Joan Deraval

Maspeth NY

My name is Joan Puwalski and I am an animal advocate from Queens, NY.
I am constantly seeing animals surrendered to shelters because their humans cannot afford the cost of vet care/food. People are desperate for help and many would keep their pets if they could afford too. Are shelters are currently overwhelmed with pets that are being surrendered! And, it would also prevent pets from reproducing! We do not need any more animals when we can't find home for the ones we already have! Please consider helping New Yorkers keep their beloved pets and in the process help the shelters and the rescuers who are already overwhelmed! Thank you
Joan Puwalski
Bellerose, NY

June 10, 2026

Dear Council Members,

I come to you as a proud public school parent, deeply frustrated by the recent procurement process for the COMPASS afterschool program. Administered by the Department of Youth and Community Development, this RFP process was deeply flawed, resulting in a chaotic, disruptive and damaging reshuffling of the providers that families like mine trust and rely on. The process valued redistribution of the contracts to the detriment of our kids, with no meaningful consideration of the lived experiences of those most profoundly impacted here -- New York City families and children who know these programs best.

Many schools were blindsided with the ousting of their long-standing, thriving afterschool programs. On the other hand, select schools who have long reported dissatisfaction with their current provider were nevertheless given the same provider they don't want.

I am in the best position to speak to the specific circumstances of my own family. I have a sixth grader at MS104 Simon Baruch at 330 E. 21st St. where Manhattan Youth as been removed as our afterschool provider. I am in the position of being a parent who has experienced afterschool programs run by both Manhattan Youth and Imogen Foundation, which has been chosen to replace MY at MS104. Both my third-grade son and my now-sixth-grade daughter attended Imogen afterschool programs at PS41 The Greenwich Village School -- my son continues to attend Imogen programs at PS41 five days a week.

Imogen's classes have been fine in our family's experience.

However, despite the DYCD's procurement process supposedly considering operational experience as part of its rubric to score proposals, **Imogen has no meaningful prior experience meeting the needs of middle schoolers**. In fact, at PS41, Imogen just cut programming in the fall for our oldest students, those who are approaching the transition to middle school. While younger kids as PS41 continue to have the same breadth of options, the classes made available to 4th and 5th graders were cut nearly in half. (In the fall of 2025, the 4th/5th graders and their families had 16 options of classes across a week of programming. In the fall of 2026, we have 9.)

Meanwhile, Manhattan Youth has been indispensable to our family and our daughter at Baruch. Most recently, my daughter has loved participating in the Baruch school musical -- MY is integral to this production, working over many years with our school's drama and performance arts teachers to put on these shows. Nothing can replace the appreciation a parent feels when the adults in her child's life help her discover something she loves and help foster friendships and bonds that will strengthen her as she moves forward in the world. MY also collaborates with our strings and band teachers to offer a symphony orchestra after school, which was a major consideration when we were choosing a middle school for my daughter.

Imogen, on the other hand, refused to allow teacher-led afterschool programs to continue at PS41 on site when Imogen came on as provider in 2023. This led to the elimination of a popular book club led by our beloved literacy teacher -- this was a woman-owned, LGBTQ-owned NYC small business, and Imogen's refusal to subcontract destroyed it. My son, three years later, still comments how much he misses it. At PS41, after immense pressure, Imogen agreed to allow our chess teacher to continue our afterschool chess program as a subcontractor -- this teacher took a pay cut to keep offering our kids a program that families loved.

This failure cannot be repeated. Though DYCD and Imogen are telling Baruch parents that the change in providers does not mean we will lose the programs we already have, our lived experience tells us differently. I'm devastated by the prospect that my daughter could lose the opportunity to play in her school orchestra or participate in the school musical because of the inadequacy of a poorly selected school provider when we've had a great one for years.

It speaks to how the process rewarded providers who crafted proposals based upon fantastical aspirations that played beautifully on a evaluators scorecard, while providers that have *done the work* were given little consideration for the amazing, complex programming they have already built.

Manhattan Youth does more for our school community than simply run daily afterschool programs. MY also helps us put on school dances. I was so overjoyed when my daughter came home from her first ever school dance, exhausted but elated after having danced all night with friends new and old.

What credentials does Imogen have putting on a middle school dance that protects our kids' safety and nurtures the mental health of pubescent teens and tweens? How will they pull that off in a matter of months when their current operational expertise is limited to largely to kids who haven't even heard of puberty yet, let alone started to go through it?

Finally, Baruch's MY program director Mike Jones and his team are trusted and extremely skilled members of our community. Mike Jones was literally the first person in the MS104 community to speak with me one-on-one about the upcoming school year when my daughter was entering middle school as a sixth grader. He called me on my cell phone personally over the summer and put my jitters at ease. To me, that is priceless. Mike and his team have irreplaceable institutional knowledge of MS104 and the needs of our very large and diverse student body.

Now, Mike and his team face losing their jobs. They face the possibility that, if they're invited to continue at our school by the new provider, they could take a pay cut like PS41's chess teacher did.

I urge you to oppose this procurement process that values a skewed, fantastical devotion to a free-market "ecosystem" over the needs, safety and mental health of our children. Stand with us

in demanding better of the DYCD and add your voice to ours as we protest these damaging decisions to the mayor and the comptroller.

Respectfully,
Joan Solsman

From: Joann Perahia
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Daylighting
Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 6:35:07 PM

[redacted]

My son Philippe Haussmann was killed on August 20,2024 on Scott and Flushing Ave while riding his motorcycle from his home in Bushwick Brooklyn to his office in Manhattan. He was 29 years old and an identical twin. He had an extremely successful career in FinTech and was going into business with his twin.

Instead of going into a long story I am attaching links. Let's just say with team work , advocacy myself, and with TA/FSS, NYCDOT, CB01, CBO4 and CM Jenn Gutierrez and MORE we implemented daylighting, closed a very dangerous corridor street down , put in a traffic like, made a Pedestrian Safe Space-

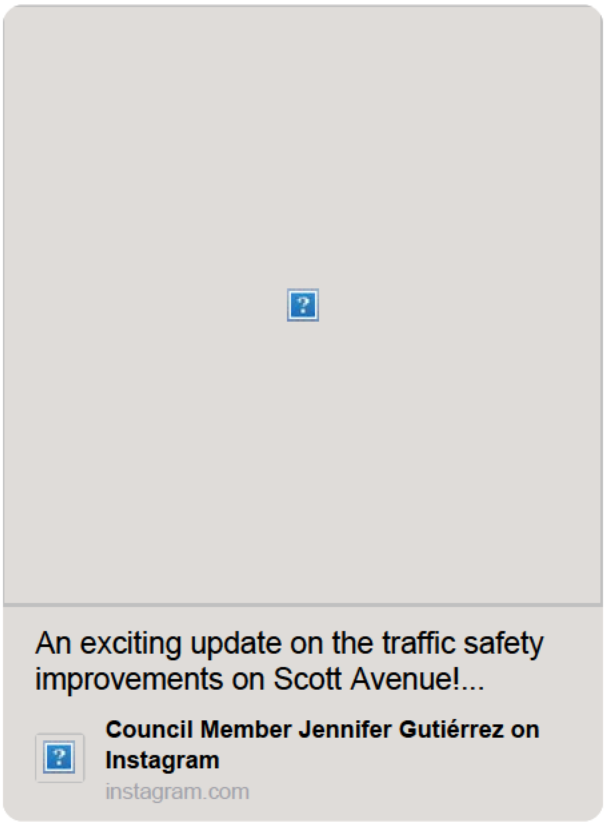
I would like to say that more daylighting is necessary. I am on vacation but needed to take this opportunity.

Here are my links:

News 12 | Brooklyn | Mother Of Son Fatally Struck At Bushwick Intersection Advocates For More Safety
brooklyn.news12.com



News 12 | Brooklyn | Safety Changes Upgrades Coming To Bushwick Intersection After Death Of 29 Year Old
brooklyn.news12.com



An exciting update on the traffic safety improvements on Scott Avenue!...

Council Member Jennifer Gutiérrez on Instagram
instagram.com

Feel free to call me - a piece of my heart is on Scott Ave and Flushing Ave and you/we can save lives by implementing Daylighting and more as was done in this corridor.

Thank you

Sent from my iPhone 15 Pro
Jann Perahia
[redacted]

No one should have to choose between feeding themselves and caring for their pet. Yet that's the reality for many families.

Veterinary care has become significantly more expensive, and for many people, even a routine visit feels financially out of reach. At the same time, the cost of housing, groceries, and other essentials continues to rise. When people are struggling to afford their own basic needs, it's no surprise that many are forced to make heartbreaking decisions about their pets.

Our pets didn't create these economic pressures. They aren't asking for more, yet they're often the ones who suffer when costs become unsustainable. More and more people are surrendering beloved animals because they can no longer afford food, shelter, or basic vet care.

It's hard to ignore how expensive veterinary care has become when a simple office visit can cost as much as a human visiting a physician. Pet ownership shouldn't be a luxury reserved only for those with disposable income. We need to remove cost barriers and expand access to affordable vet care, food assistance, and support programs so that people don't have to choose between caring for themselves and caring for the animals they love.

As a New York City resident, I would like to voice my support for restoring rail service on the Rockaway beach branch between central Queens and the Rockaways to enhance north to South transportation options. The benefits of additional transit options and routes is significant and durable, reshaping our beautiful city and providing additional economic opportunities by reducing commute and transit times. I would like the city council to investigate ways to support this path for the currently unused right of way, and support the MTA in implementing such a solution.

Best,
Joe Rickard

From: John Krinsky
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Housing
Date: Saturday, June 13, 2026 6:37:44 PM

[redacted]

Testimony of John Krinsky

Committee on Public Housing

June 13, 2026

Chairperson Banks and members of the New York City Council Committee on Public Housing,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony for the hearing you held the tenth.

My name is John Krinsky, and I am a professor of political science and public policy at the City College of New York and the CUNY Graduate Center. I have a Master's in urban planning and a PhD in sociology from Columbia University. More than a dozen years ago, I was a co-founder of the New York City Community Land Initiative, which has been at the forefront of efforts to put social housing at the top of the municipal agenda, and on whose board I still serve. *My testimony today, however, is offered solely in my role as a citizen and does not necessarily represent the views of these other affiliations.*

New York City's public housing program is, as you know, the largest in the country, and provides housing for upwards of half a million New Yorkers. It does so with varying degrees of success. And like most federally subsidized housing with a project-based subsidy, too little money has been provided, over time, for its maintenance, especially given the low incomes of the plurality of its residents and the corresponding impossibility of paying for maintenance and capital repairs with the rent rolls, alone. This has been a long-term crisis that has been substantially ignored by successive mayoral administrations and city councils for at least the last thirty years. And the reason for this is clear: there is simply not enough money available in the city budget to tackle the needs of NYCHA residents, even if the monetary value of the need estimates can vary widely (it is agreed that it is at least $40 billion, and likely more than twice that number).

When the city has *not* ignored the problem, it has decided to privatize it. RAD/PACT conversions began during the Bloomberg administration as a pragmatic solution to the repairs problem. By bringing in private developers and managers to run public housing, RAD/PACT converts the development's subsidy from Section 9 to Section 8, allowing private money in and for rents to be set at a level higher than HUD Fair Market Rents, so that the subsidy per unit actually *increases*.

This sounds like a win. And indeed, you have heard testimony at this hearing suggesting that it is, *both* for the city and for NYCHA tenants.

But pragmatic solutions such as this always come with a catch, and in this case, the catch is both *practical* and *political*.

Mayor Bloomberg was no friend of NYCHA, practically or ideologically. But he regularized a relationship with a set of private, for-profit developers, both for housing developed through the Department of Housing Preservation and Development and through NYCHA, that still dominate the landscape today. They have figured out how to turn a profit with Section 8 contracts and other, layered subsidies, plus the rent rolls that the various affordable housing programs produce. *This is what passes for "pragmatic": making sure that private, for-profit interests can make a profit from investing their money in something that we grudgingly acknowledge is a public good—or at least a public problem.*

But how to do they do it? You have heard testimony to the effect that the private contractors are more effective than is NYCHA at collecting rents. Since the pandemic, NYCHA's collection has fallen to a point at which it is now collecting 63 percent of the rent roll across its Section 9 portfolio, while the contractors have a "high 90s" percent collection rate across the RAD/PACT portfolio. Part of the reason, apparently, is that they are able to offer tenants an amnesty and allow residents to start renting from the PACT manager without arrears; and part of the reason is that they initiate far more eviction proceedings than does NYCHA for nonpayment. Indeed, a Comptroller's report two years ago found that PACT contractors bring more eviction cases more than landlords across all housing types in New York City.

The administration's $1.3 billion capital investment into NYCHA is predicated on RAD/PACT conversions. The politics of this speaks to a puzzling heavy-handedness that gives tenants a choice: accede to RAD/PACT or do not get renovation funds. This both undermines the substance of Section 9 organizing rights by which tenants have the right to reject conversion by putting a very substantial thumb on the scale of such decisions and introduces the wrong criteria for repair funds into the City's decision-making.

On the latter issue, it seems clear that the funds for renovation should be channeled through the existing Comprehensive Modernization program and directed to developments with the most need, not developments with tenant associations most willing to allow developers and managers to try to turn a profit with public funds and at a cost of their rights and security of tenure. City Council has the ability to redirect these funds to a more rational allocation.

On the former issue, the *substance* of resident participation is as important as the *form* of this participation. For those of us who are committed to *social housing,* the question of whether the state owns the housing or whether it is operated by a private nonprofit organization is less important than whether affordability and accountability—via a significant measure of democratic control—is preserved. Conditioning this level of funds on RAD/PACT conversion is a subversion of the democratic principles, the realization of which NYCHA needs more than ever. Years of NYCHA mismanagement are due, in part, to this lack of democratic accountability, and tenant associations that gained by doing NYCHA management's bidding. To have properly social housing—a goal that the Mayor has embraced in spirit, at least—should move the city towards, rather than away from, extending democracy beyond the voting booth.

We have seen, through the organizing being done by residents of Fulton and Elliot-Chelsea Houses, for example, that NYCHA's pro-RAD/PACT heavy-handedness under the previous administration has led to some poor inputs and outputs. First, the projects are not among those with the worst conditions in the NYCHA portfolio, and do not need to be demolished. Second, the Trump-friendly development partner, Related Companies (for whose bets on Hudson Yards we may be paying for a long time into the future, not least in missed opportunities on the land and platform over the yards) stands to profit a great deal by consolidating its control over a site so close to its signal investment. This has all led to a dishonestly portrayed survey that alleged that residents supported conversion, demolition and rebuild of their projects, when in fact, they never had a chance to vote on a clearly worded ballot, and have overwhelmingly signed a petition against demolition. The result is that there are now lawsuits that are costing both tenants and the city, and leading to delays

that will also undoubtedly raise the cost of Related's plans, should they end up being imposed on the tenants. This is not good policy from any perspective, and it is a terrible policy process, too. While clearly, the fate of Chelsea and Fulton-Elliott are not at issue today, the current conflict between the city and the tenants betokens a set of policy priorities that shuts tenants out of meaningful participation, and may well lead to similar dynamics in the future.

To conclude, I urge you to direct the money in the budget for NYCHA to the Comprehensive Modernization Program and not to Section 8. The City should not be going full-steam-ahead on RAD/PACT conversions, but should step back, and come up with a more comprehensive redevelopment plan for NYCHA that prioritizes fixing poor conditions over resident agreement to privatization, insulates public housing from profit-making, and maximizes substantive resident democracy and accountability controls.

--
John Krinsky, Professor
Director, Community Change Studies
Department of Political Science
The City College of New York
NAC 4/126
160 Convent Avenue
New York NY 10031
jkrinsky@ccny.cuny.edu
212 650-5236
[redacted]

Board Member, New York City Community Land Initiative
Co-Editor, Metropolitics
Co-Editor, Marxism and Social Movements
Free Labor: Workfare and the Contested Language of Neoliberalism
(with Maud Simonet) Who Cleans the Park? Public Work and Urban Governance in New York City

Subject: Support the QueensLink Project

Dear Members of the New York City Council,

My name is Jonathan, and I run JF Transit, a transit-focused YouTube channel where I film and document public transportation systems throughout New York City and beyond. Through my work, I spend countless hours riding trains, visiting stations, and speaking with everyday riders who depend on reliable transit to get to work, school, medical appointments, and other important destinations.

I am writing to express my strong support for the QueensLink project.

For decades, the former Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way has sat unused while neighborhoods in central Queens continue to face limited transit options. QueensLink presents a rare opportunity to reuse existing rail infrastructure to create new transit connections without the need to build an entirely new corridor from scratch.

As someone who regularly covers transit, I have seen firsthand how rail service can transform communities. Better transit means shorter commutes, improved access to jobs, reduced traffic congestion, and more transportation choices for residents. Many areas that would benefit from QueensLink currently rely heavily on buses or lengthy trips involving multiple transfers.

QueensLink is also an investment in the future. New York City's population continues to grow, and transportation infrastructure must grow with it. Expanding rail service where existing corridors already exist is a practical way to improve mobility for current residents while preparing for future demand.

While recreational spaces are important, opportunities to restore rail corridors are extremely rare. Once transportation corridors are permanently converted to other uses, it becomes far more difficult—and often impossible—to restore them for transit in the future.

Through JF Transit, I have documented how much New Yorkers value reliable transportation. Time and time again, I hear from riders who want faster, more convenient ways to travel across the city. QueensLink would help address those needs while creating lasting benefits for generations of New Yorkers.

I respectfully urge the City Council to seriously consider and support the QueensLink project. Investments in transit have shaped New York City's success for over a century, and QueensLink represents an opportunity to continue that tradition.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jonathan
JF Transit
New York City Transit Content Creator and Advocate

Testimony to City Council Committee on Finance

June 10, 2026

Dear City Council Members,

I strongly urge you to support the QueensLink plan to reactivate the Rockaway Beach Branch of the Long Island Railroad and create four new rapid transit stops on the subway. While the rival Queensway plan has good intentions, this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to expand New York's transit access, and it's possible to get the benefits of new parkland from the QueensLink plan without sacrificing this chance to provide much needed transit options in Queens.

Thanks so much for considering.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Adler, NYC resident

It is so sad that our local politicians are ignoring the architectural integrity , green space, mature tree canopy and tranquility of Mt. Prospect Park, all of which will be degraded by the proposed Skateboarding facility to be constructed there.

Spending 11 million dollars on a destructive, unnecessary project when there are so many pressing needs: housing; child care; medical insurance; food insecurity, etc. is unconscionable.

The local politicians have ignored the community's concerns, and have consistently misled the community regarding the process of moving D39 participatory budgeting monies for a skateboarding facility to D35, without consulting the community.

There is no adequate funding for necessary, continuous maintenance, nor adequate indemnification for injury liability from the co-sponsors, as required by NYC law.

CB9 has opposed that project in a granular and comprehensive resolution. The siting contradicts the expressed guidelines of skateboarding foundations, pours concrete over green space in the borough with the least green space per capita, (and the most skateboarding facilities per capita), and degrades a unique, otherwise tranquil respite from the very busy urban surroundings.

The hypocrisy of the local politicians who routinely tout their commitment to a "greener" NYC, of mitigating the effects of climate change, insuring "environmental protection and environmental justice ," and insist on a "progressive" agenda of affordability, while supporting this environmentally destructive and financially wasteful project is also unconscionable.

- NYC spends just **$2.98 per capita on animal care — among the lowest of any major U.S. city.** We can and must **do better**.
  - More than half of New Yorkers cannot afford a basic veterinary visit including spay/neuter.
  - **75% of dogs entering ACC are unfixed**
  - **193,000 spay/neuter surgeries are needed** annually for community cats and owned pets who cannot afford them. **The city funds only 3,500**
- My household pays Federal, State, and CITY INCOME TAX..... we want the City to help pets
  - I urge the City Council to include **$1.5 million for affordable spay/neuter and veterinary care** and **$2 million for pet food pantries** in the FY 2027 Speaker's Initiative budget.
  - No New Yorker should have to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their pet.
  - Funding pet food pantries and low-cost veterinary services keeps animals where they belong: at home with the people who love them.
  - As cost barriers are removed, adoptions will increase and preventable euthanasia will decrease.
  - Reduces pressure on NYC's animal shelters and rescue organizations
  - Reduces burnout on employees and volunteer
-
- Jone Noveck
[redacted]
NYC,NY 10036
212-977-1001

Subject: Privatization of NYCHA Creates Instability for Seniors.

I live at Mitchel Houses in the South Bronx and do not have an email address. I am being supported in submitting this testimony by Save Section 9.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

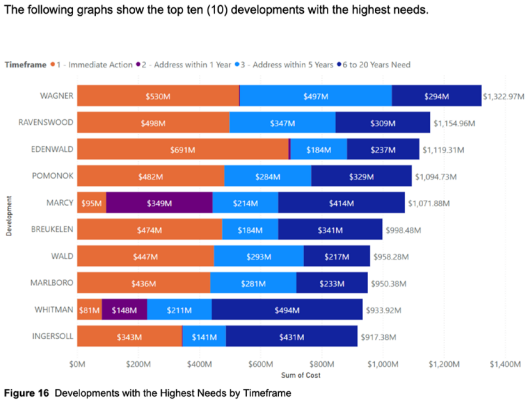


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.
- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

The Importance of the New Visions Portal to my school's functioning

I am testifying to the importance of the New Visions Portal to everything we do regarding data at East Bronx Academy for the Future. We are one of the city's many small public high schools, serving the East Tremont neighborhood of the Bronx. Our school does not have a data department, or a large administration–instead, we have a few Assistant Principals, one English teacher who is good with spreadsheets (me) and the firepower of the New Visions Portal to build everything off of.

The portal serves as our bedrock source of information about students. It is easier to use and more reliable than any other city system. It is easy for the people who need access to get the information they need.

In my case, there is a function that the only portal allows that we have built our entire data system on: the ability to create synced sheets. I personally, currently maintain over 100 data documents and spreadsheets that our teams use to plan interventions, track outreach, measure disproportionality in real time, make goals, and a million other functions. I am able to do this while teaching four classes of English because the Portal's synced sheets continuously update information about our rosters and our students and their data that pushes out to all of the sheets I've made automatically.

I spend my data time fixing sheets when they break and figuring out new ways to make data actionable to our teachers, instead of spending my time checking that the data is correct and updating the rosters and information as they change.

This is just my experience. My assistant principal uses the Portal's synced sheets to support our Attendance Team and others, and Guidance uses them to track progress to graduation and college plans.

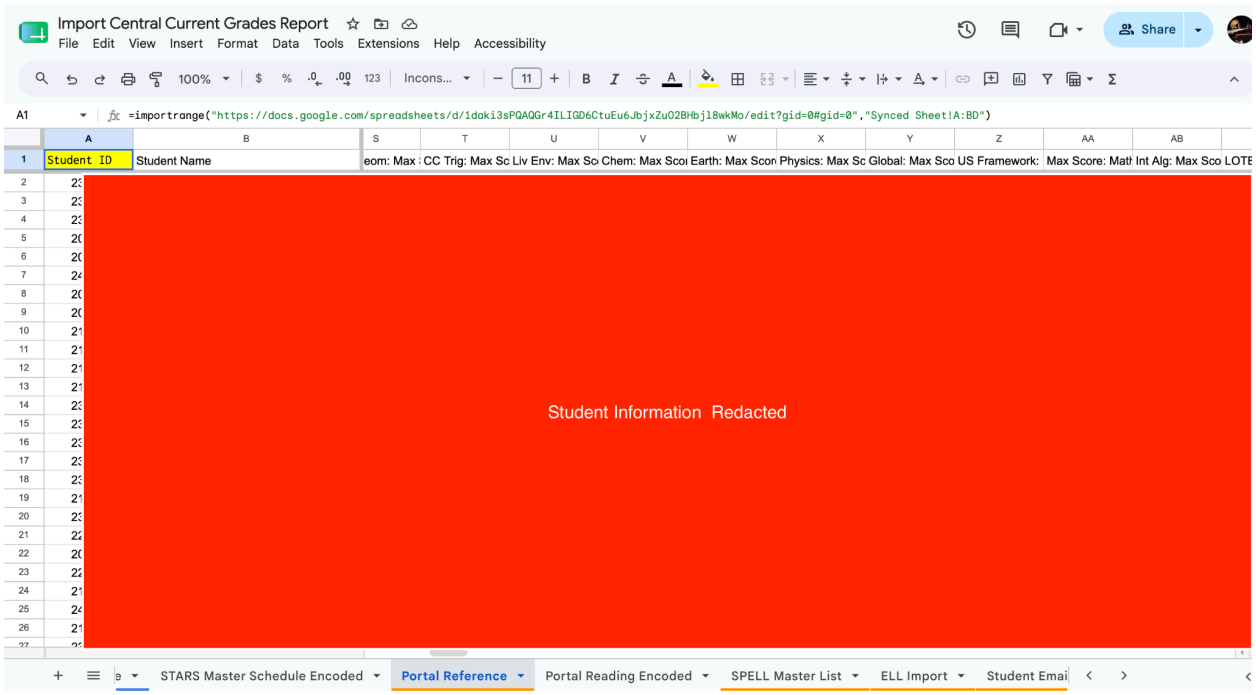
The Portal system is a triumph. Please maintain the small investment needed just to keep it going.

Synced Sheets

Create new sheet

SY2025-26 11	AUTOMATED UPDATES	CREATED BY	LAST EDITED ↓
Literacy Data Sheet_2025-26	Daily	Nick Lawrence	May 26, 2026
June Regents Prep	Daily	Rosanna Castro	Feb 6, 2026
EBA Postsec Tracker 2025-26	Daily	Amy Perlow	Nov 3, 2025
SWD Sync	Weekly on Sunday	Joseph Mccormack	Oct 20, 2025
Attendance Data Sheet 2025-26	Daily	Nick Lawrence	Oct 16, 2025
Tardy Tool 2025-26	Daily	Nick Lawrence	Oct 16, 2025
11th Grade Progress Tracker for Grade Team	Weekly on Sunday	Joseph Mccormack	Sep 22, 2025
11th Grade Progress Document	Weekly on Sunday	Joseph Mccormack	Sep 22, 2025
Cohort 2029 PTG	Daily	Rosanna Castro	Sep 2, 2025

This is what the synced sheet interface looks like for us. Nick Lawrence is our Assistant Principal, who taught me how to use this system.



This is a screenshot from the central spreadsheet that acts as the source for all of the other (over 100) sheets and docs I maintain. You can see here that this tab, “Portal Reference” is pulling information from the sync sheet from the Portal. All of this information (accurate, up to date rosters, continuously updated YTD attendance, Regents scores, Transcript GPAs, Student Contact information, demographic information, reading diagnostic scores) is always accurate and up to date without me having to think about it. On top of that, I use many of New Visions’ custom metrics, such as their “Attn Last 20 vs. YTD.”

From: Joshua Kneidl
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for Universal Daylighting
Date: Thursday, June 11, 2026 11:59:38 AM

[redacted]

To the City Council:

As a long-time, frequent pedestrian of this city, I strongly support universal daylighting for intersections. On at least 2 occasions, I have come very close to possible death, being hit by cars that either were turning right and didn't see me, or even ran the red light (in an intersection where they could could not see pedestrians emerging into the intersection). Daylighting will surely save lives, maybe even mine someday. Please support this life-saving measure.

thanks,
Joshua Kneidl
[redacted]
New York NY 10044

Dear Members of the Committee on Finance and Members of the City Council,

My name is Joshua McDaniel and I am a resident of Brooklyn. I am submitting this written testimony today to express my strong support for the QueensLink project, and to voice my deep concern regarding the current design trajectory of the QueensWay, specifically the "Met Hub" phase.

We have an opportunity to create additional park and trail space along with much improved mass transit options!

The abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity for our borough. For decades, residents of Southern Queens have endured some of the longest and most difficult commutes in the nation. The QueensLink proposal offers a visionary, common-sense solution: a "Rails and Trails" approach that would create a vital north-south transit corridor while simultaneously delivering 33 acres of new, accessible park space.

My primary concern is that moving forward with the QueensWay park *without* incorporating a plan for rail transit will effectively kill the transit project forever.

The Parks Department has stated that their current design for the Met Hub does not take future rail reactivation into consideration. If we build a High Line style park straight down the center of this right-of-way, restoring transit in the future will require demolishing a brand-new park. That would mean wasting tens of millions of taxpayer dollars and facing immense, understandable pushback from the surrounding community. We cannot afford to be short-sighted. Building the park as currently designed creates an artificial barrier to transit equity that Queens will be forced to live with for the next century.

We do not have to choose between green space and public transit. We can, and must, have both.

By simply redesigning the Met Hub and future phases of the park to keep the pedestrian paths off to the side of the embankment, we can preserve the continuous right-of-way for future subway integration. This allows us to enjoy new community spaces today without permanently closing the door on a transit project that would remove millions of cars from our roads, slash carbon emissions, and dramatically improve the quality of life for over 75,000 daily riders.

I urge the City Council to halt the current development of the Met Hub until the design is explicitly modified to accommodate future transit. Please support the QueensLink vision. Let us build a project that serves the whole borough and brings us both the parks we deserve and the transit we desperately need.

Thank you for your time, your service to our city, and your careful consideration of this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Joshua McDaniel

[redacted] Brooklyn, NY 11238

Leonard D. Polletta, Esq.
[redacted]
New York, NY 10001
[redacted]

June 10, 2026

I offer this testimony on the FY2027 budget that deals with the funding of New York City Housing Authority's capital budget.

The budget provides approximately $1.5 billion over two years to HPD capital funding devoted to RAD/PACT conversions that will transfer public housing residents from Section 9 to Project Section 8 status.

These RAD/PACT conversions involve private management capital commitments and will impact roughly 62,000 public housing units.

That money should not be allocated and devoted to HPD privatization efforts.

That money should be removed from the HPD RAD/PACT capital line and allocated, instead, directly into the NYCHA capital budget, and devoted 100 percent to the comprehensive modernization program in the context of enhancing and protecting residents' Section 9 rights.

It is widely and publicly known that NYCHA residents are in desperate need of infrastructure repairs: roofs, boilers, elevators, mold remediation, lead abatement, heat, kitchens, bathrooms, and accessibility upgrades. These renovations need to be directly funded and overseen by NYCHA leadership with accountability, efficiency guarantees and timetables for effective completion.

The city should not facilitate RAD/PACT conversions without first guaranteeing that there is in place a formal vote by residents. And, surely, the city should not condition allocation of major capital funds upon a development's conversion from Section 9 to Section 8 before major capital repairs become possible.

I urge the Council to reallocate the $1.5 billion from HPD RAD/PACT conversion funding to NYCHA Section 9 capital repairs, for the comprehensive modernization program.

As one of the thousands of members of the Chelsea Public Housing Coalition and a co-operator at Mutual Redevelopment Houses Fund, I urge the City Council to do everything in its power to fund Section 9 directly, and to keep public housing public.
Thank you,
Leonard D. Polletta

Written Testimony before the New York City Council in support of the New Visions Portal - the most useful tool I use to know each student well

Submitted by: Joshua Solomon, Ed.D., Principal, Business of Sports School (02M393), Manhattan

Date: June 10, 2026

Good morning. My name is Joshua Solomon, I'm a principal of a public DOE high school called Business of Sports School in District 2 in Manhattan. I'm here to request that the committee continue to fund the $8.9 million for the New Visions Portal.

The New Visions Portal is the most useful tool I use, literally every single day, to know exactly how each of my 400 students is doing and where they need help. It is the only Portal that is so easy to use that I can be used by my entire team - teachers, special needs providers, guidance counselors, social workers, and administrators to not only see a full picture of each student myself, but to plan with colleagues and parents each student's progress to graduation and to college and career in a clear and comprehensible way. I can see on one screen who is keeping up and who is falling behind. Without it, I would be spending time making my own spreadsheets, rather than actually meeting with my students and families.

As just one example, every single time a parent and student comes to meet me or one of my counselors, we take the opportunity to print out the Snapshot Report and then review it with parent and student. Credits accumulation, Regents testing, attendance and lateness and other data in just two pages, a great launching point for a discussion on where we can support your child. I personally use the Portal to email every single student and family a weekly progress report with real-time information about their child, work that used to take days and take many staff away from the children.

My teachers love it too. They use the Mock Regents function to create exams, scan them back into the Portal, and then analyze their results. When teachers and the students see the analysis of what they have learned and what they haven't learned, it really helps students and teachers alike know to focus on their instruction so that the students ace their Regents exams and are prepared for college.

If the Portal ends, all that works becomes so much more time consuming, I may never be able to leave my computer. I'm going to be flipping between Insight, STARS, OASIS, OSYD, CUNY, ILOG, trying to create my own spreadsheets that

few other students, parents or staff can ever see. This saving of $8.9 million will cost teachers, administrators and counselors across the DOE 8.9 millions hours trying to recreate a tool that already existed, and literally keeps improving every semester. New Visions creates new functions while speaking to actual New York educators, so it works and helps us spend time out in the school, not wrestling with a computer.

So please, don't leave us blind, when every child and family deserves to be known. Restore full funding to the New Visions Portal, the most useful tool we have, to know every student well.

Respectfully submitted,

Joshua Solomon, Ed.D.
Principal
Business of Sports School (02M393), Manhattan

Hi my is Juan Caraballo. I am a member of Lifelinks clubhouse. I treat the members and staff like a big happy family. I help in the kitchen by prepping the food for the week so the members and staff can have a meal to eat. It changed my life for the good by keeping busy and making new relationships in the clubhouse and we have lots of fun together with good memories for the near future to come. And the clubhouse needs the funding to stay open so Lifelinks clubhouse family can keep coming as stronger each day. Thank you so much to all the council members that can make it happen in this big meeting that is going live. Hugs and kiss from the Lifelinks clubhouse family.

Wednesday, June 10th, 2026

Testimony of Julez Thompson (supporter of NYC Public Library Action Network) for the Committee on Finance (held on June 10th, 2026)

Dear honorable members of the NYC Council on Committee on Finance:

I write to join the call of NYC Public Library Action Network (NYC PLAN) for both the mayor and the Council to ensure that at least 0.5% of the total city budget for Fiscal Year 2027 (FY '27) be committed to funding for the city's public libraries.

Currently, the FY '27 Proposed Budget's estimated total for public libraries is about $526 million, and the total municipal budget for FY '27 is $127 billion, making the current FY '27 proposal for libraries just 0.42% of the total preliminary budget. While this is $3 million higher than the FY '26 library budget, it is not nearly enough to keep up with 3.8% inflation. My local branch in Astoria needed $13.4 million just to add and update 2 elevators. Thus, a $3 million increase is not enough to meet the needs of our library systems. Increasing this item to at least 0.5% would amount to about $623.5 million and get us on track to meeting the needs of libraries' understaffing, crumbling infrastructure, and important community services.

In addition, I join NYC PLAN in asking that the 0.5% of the total city budget be the benchmark for all future library budgets.

This increase is necessary in order to provide the city's public libraries with enough resources to perform the kinds and quality of services already expected by the public.

Simply put, I love libraries and I love New York City. Where else can you learn a new language, cool off in the summer time, and sit down with a book surrounded by folks with just as much of a love of reading all in the same place? Our public libraries are struggling to maintain infrastructure when they should be thriving community hubs. Our public libraries should be able to support New Yorkers with vital resources. Libraries are one way in which we can show that public goods can actually do good.

Sincerely,
Julez Thompson
Resident of Astoria, Queens, NYC

Testimony in Support of Animal Welfare Funding in the FY2027 NYC Budget

Subject of Testimony: Please fund $1.5M for spay/neuter and $2M for pet food pantries

Dear Members of the Finance Committee,

I urge the Council to include $1.5 million for low-cost spay/neuter and veterinary care and $2 million for pet food pantries in the FY2027 budget.

As the owner of a 7-year-old rescue tabby, I know firsthand that a pet is not just an animal—they are family. Every New Yorker deserves access to affordable resources that allow them to keep the companions they love safe, healthy, and at home.

Far too many New Yorkers are struggling to afford basic veterinary care, forcing families to make heartbreaking choices between paying bills, feeding themselves, and caring for beloved pets. When pet owners cannot access affordable services, animals are surrendered to shelters, rescue groups become overwhelmed, and preventable suffering increases.

Investing in spay/neuter programs is a proven, cost-effective way to reduce animal homelessness, decrease shelter intake, and prevent unnecessary euthanasia. Funding pet food pantries helps keep animals with the families who love them, preserving the human-animal bond and preventing pets from entering an already strained shelter system.

New York City spends comparatively little on animal welfare despite the enormous need. These modest investments will improve animal welfare, support struggling families, reduce long-term costs, and strengthen communities across the city.

I respectfully ask the Council to fully fund these initiatives in the FY2027 budget.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Julia Jiang
Kings County

June 12th, 2026

TO: New York City Council – Finance Committee

RE: Why QueensLink is the obvious choice – a park and transit line in one project

Dear Chairperson Lee and Members of the Finance Committee,

I am Julian, a transportation engineer and planner from southern Brooklyn. More fundamentally, I am a lifelong New Yorker, raised in Brooklyn through to adulthood without ever having access to a private vehicle. Perhaps more fundamentally, I am a human being, needing to transport myself for whatever business one may have in life, carrying a lifetime of compassion and empathy for my fellow New Yorkers and users of transportation, especially for the vulnerable and underrepresented.

As you are most likely acutely aware, there is an abandoned yet intact rail Right-of-Way (ROW) running from Forest Hills to Ozone Park through eastern queens, completely within the city's jurisdiction, and wholly owned by the city. What happens to the Rockaway Beach Branch (the ROW in question) is thus entirely up to the city, and so only the city can choose how to use this critical piece of infrastructure to best benefit the city and its people.

I am writing to urgently inform you that QueensLink is the best application of the Rockaway Beach Branch and is the only one that will bring substantial benefit to the city.

Funding QueensWay is not the way. QueensWay, the competing proposal for the Rockaway Beach Branch, pitches to convert the ROW into a park, and only a park, *effectively* barring future addition of rail infrastructure, despite advertising so. The design of QueensWay's Metropolitan Hub does not include provisions for future transit and will thus block transit from being possible in the future. Try building a subway line along the High Line, or try asking transit experts in Atlanta how the fight to convert the Beltline (a similar linear park that was built without transit provision) to a shared transit/park corridor is going. Ask yourself if you, as the city's leadership, want to fight that same fight in the future.

As a transportation engineer, planner, and an active professional in the field, I can say that public transit by rail is the best investment a dense city like ours can make for its

transportation network, and perhaps the best investment a city can make in general. It's also true that New York lacks what it needs: circumferential rail lines.

New York's urban rail system is robust, but as a result of the legacy of the system being built when downtown Manhattan was by far the most prominent urban center in the region, almost the entire subway network is arranged to funnel people into Manhattan from surrounding areas. This city is no longer that of the 1920s, and the prominence of downtown Manhattan has in no small part given way to the outer boroughs – Jackson Heights, JFK Airport, and Jamaica are now, to a large and growing share of New Yorkers, what Manhattan was to everyone a century ago, yet there is no rail service to speak of to connect these growing urban centers with each other.

As someone who studies and is intimately familiar with the nature of urban transportation, I know that, in any city, travel by private vehicle is unsustainable, full stop. The more people who drive where they need to go in this city, the slower everyone moves, the more polluted the city's air becomes, the more dangerous the city's streets become for everyone (both in and out of cars), and the more land is stolen from New Yorkers for the ease of the motorist minority, all exponentially so. Conversely, as more people use transit, these harmful effects of driving get exponentially reduced. Publicly available data on the city's Environment and Health Data Portal shows that regions of the city with better rail transit access almost necessarily experience higher percentages of commutes by transit and lower percentages of trips by private vehicle. A study by the Steer Group demonstrated a reduction in vehicle trips by the millions each year.

As a lifelong New Yorker, I take pride in the fact that we have one of the most venerable urban park systems in the world. Parks are where my neighbors and I go to breathe, recreate, and form a community. This is not to mention our beautiful and world-renowned beaches, some of which are in the Rockaways. As much as I love our parks, one nice park should by no means siphon from an opportunity to meaningfully expand transit, especially along an axis as important as the Rockaway Beach Branch. Eastern Queens does not suffer from a lack of parks either – Forest Park is among the city's largest. I would say that this point is moot, as QueensLink proposes to reactivate the ROW as *both* a park and a subway line. With your options laid out in front of you, ask yourselves this: would you rather give Eastern Queens just one new High Line, or one new High Line along with better access to the High Line, as well as the rest of the most enviable urban park system in the world?

With New York being the most economically productive city in the world, economic productivity should be a paramount concern for the city, and especially this committee. The economic benefits of public transit are often woefully misunderstood and undervalued. A 2015 Harvard study shows that the key to escaping poverty as an individual and community is effective transportation, in other words, commute times are the single largest determinant of poverty in a community. Commercial corridors are also a major source of revenue and economic vitality for both the city and the individual communities in which they are located. Connecting the entire city to neighborhoods like Richmond Hill, Ozone Park, and the Rockaways would bring about a stimulus in commercial activity that would put these areas back on the map alongside distinguished neighborhoods like Jackson Heights, Jamaica, and Flushing. Like any large-scale infrastructure project, transit incurs considerable cost to build and operate, but make no mistake: QueensLink is an investment that would pay for itself. The Steer Group study concluded that the project would pay for itself over the course of 20 years by creating jobs, revitalizing commercial corridors, and cutting commute times for millions of New Yorkers.

Finally, as a human being, I can say that it simply pains me to see that many of my fellow New Yorkers are still not given equitable transit options, those in Eastern Queens among them. Of the city's areas that are not served adequately by transit, Southern and Eastern Queens are among the poorest by percentage. Leaving our neighbors in these regions commuting by inefficient dollar vans and buses, all because a park blocks vital transit access for them, is an injustice. I know the difficulty of living with slow and inadequate transit. It leads to more time in limbo, getting to and from work, less time at home, more tardy days at school, and over a lifetime, immeasurable frustration and emotional burden. This is invaluable time with family, more sleep at night, , stolen from our neighbors. To know that many in peripheral Queens currently live the same way, and to imagine that they could be robbed of the opportunity for a significantly higher quality of life by transit, leave me in anguish.

I love my profession, my city, and my fellow New Yorkers; those who find the need to transport themselves and oftentimes struggle to do so with the resources that the city provides them. I would not be writing this testimony if I did not. QueensLink is the only meaningful and sustainable solution for the city, and moreover, QueensWay would rob the city of perhaps the most critical transit corridor not currently in design or construction. So I write this with the love and care of my profession, my city, and my fellow New Yorkers, for

it is all I can do, and urge you to make the wise choice of QueensLink, for it is all that you must.

Respectfully yours,

Julian Koya Wong

A concerned citizen.

Brooklyn, NY, 11209

Council District 47

WrittenTestimony of Julian Morales

Before the New York City Council
Committee on Finance for
the Executive Budget hearing
Regarding Introduction 692 – The Respect Act
Wednesday June 10, 2026

Good Afternoon Finance Chair Linda Lee, Speaker Julie Menin, Council Sponsor of Intro 692 Carmen De La Rosa, and Members of the Council: thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of Intro 0692, the Respect Act. My name is **Julian Morales**, and I offer this testimony in my most important role—as a parent. This is my third time testifying regarding the Respect Act, the time to get this done is now!

As someone who grew up in New York City's public school system and benefited from additional support in my own early education, I know firsthand how essential paraprofessionals are—and how deeply undervalued they remain. Their work is especially critical for children with special needs, who require individualized, consistent support that cannot be met with a one-size-fits-all approach.

My daughter Charlotte was diagnosed with autism at age two and began early intervention soon after. Before entering the public school system, she attended Tiegerman Woodside, where she received speech therapy, occupational therapy, and counseling multiple times a week. As she approached kindergarten, we were informed that she would need to transition to a public school due to DOE's integration policy. We were hesitant, but we had no choice.

Fortunately, Charlotte's IEP included a full-time one-to-one paraprofessional. That paraprofessional—**Tara Loeser**—became the constant in an otherwise overwhelming transition. Despite Charlotte having three different teachers that year, Tara remained by her side. Though Charlotte is nonverbal, she and Tara have developed a deep understanding of each other's cues and needs. Tara could be firm when necessary, and Charlotte adored her—especially as her unofficial hairstylist.

As the school year ended, we advocated for Charlotte to be reunited with Tara in first grade. Charlotte's IEP recommended year-round schooling, so she attended a different school over the summer, where she thrived. Inspired by her experience with Charlotte, Tara even wrote a children's book, *My Para & Me*.

Heading into first grade, we were hopeful. Charlotte would have the same teacher, and we prayed Tara would return. But on the first day of school, we learned that Tara had not been assigned to her. The impact was immediate and heartbreaking. Charlotte struggled with eating, sleeping, and getting ready for school. Her anxiety was palpable.

My partner Elizabeth and I quickly shifted into advocacy mode. We pushed the administration to reunite Charlotte with Tara. Compounding the issue, Charlotte's assigned paraprofessional was injured on the third day of school, triggering a revolving door of substitutes that only heightened her distress.

After six weeks of persistent outreach and an urgent meeting with school leadership, we were relieved to learn that Charlotte would be reunited with Tara. The change was immediate.

Charlotte's demeanor improved at home and at school. She and Tara resumed their routines, and Charlotte had her lifeline back.

Tara's dedication didn't stop there. In addition to her book, she launched a website with resources for paraprofessionals, parents, and students. She has written several blogs, including one that touched our hearts deeply: *The Reason I Wrote My Para & Me*—a love letter to Charlotte.

Paraprofessionals like Tara do far more than "help out." They change lives. They stabilize classrooms. They make inclusion possible. And yet, their compensation and recognition remain far out of step with their impact.

Intro 0692 is an opportunity to correct that. The UFT must ensure that paraprofessionals, school aides, and other essential staff are prioritized in the next collective bargaining agreement before November 27, 2027. These workers deserve respect, stability, and pay that reflects the indispensable role they play in our children's lives.

In addition, I would strongly urge this City Council and its leadership to provide more oversight and support for families seeking additional services for their children with developmental disabilities.

Parents like us will stand firmly behind our paras. We urge the Council to do the same.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Julian Morales
[redacted]

June 9, 2026

To Whom it May Concern / Committee on Finance:

I am a student who attends the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE) in Queens and am writing to urge the City Council to ensure our school remains fully funded for our relocation so we can transition to a safe, modern, and purpose-built space and finally have a space for our school community to convene. We currently don't even have an auditorium or gym, or clean drinking water because our building is falling apart.

District 30 students that are younger than me also deserve the same modern school spaces that they have been promised. Please fund the building of the new elementary and middle school as well.

Please hold to your word and follow through giving Queens students better opportunities to learn and grow with new and safe buildings.

Thank you,

Julian Palmer

[redacted]
Long Island City, NY 11101

From: Julian Ruiz
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony: 05/28/26 at 10am Budget Youth Meeting
Date: Tuesday, May 26, 2026 3:09:41 PM

[redacted]

To whom it may concern,

I put Wagner Middle as my top choice for middle school when I was in 5th grade, and that was because of the filmmaking afterschool that made Wagner stand out to me. When I entered Wagner in 6th grade, I also did many other after school classes, such as Comic Book, Screenwriting, Myths and Legends, Creative Writing, and so much more. These classes were all amazing, and I made so many great friends in those classes. Friends that were interested in the same things as me that I would not have met without the Manhattan Youth program. I cannot forget that the classes could not be as great as they are without amazing teachers like Dylan and Rose, who were always so kind, helpful, and encouraging to me and all the other students. I also cannot forget Marilyn, the director of the Manhattan Youth, who was constantly doing things to make everyone enjoy the program and was very successful in that mission. I cannot imagine Wagner without Manhattan Youth, and that is why we need to save Manhattan Youth at Wagner!

Sincerely,
Julian Ruiz
Outgoing 8th grader at Wagner Middle School

[redacted]

Dear City Council - PLEASE include funding for low-cost spay/neutering and pet food pantries in the city budget. I am a volunteer with a local cat rescue group, and a dog foster as well. I'm experienced first hand both the suffering (for the human and the animal) when people are unable to care for their animal companions, and the joy when that support is available. Animals experience pain and loss, just like people. Please make it easier for New Yorkers to not make the difficult choice between keeping their pets - who are members of their families - and paying their bills. These initiatives are relatively low cost, and will prevent hardship, as well as keep the city shelter from overflowing. We can do this!!! New Yorkers love their animals, and their animals love them back. Thank you so much.

Jun 10, 2026

I strongly support allocating $1.5 million for spay/neuter services and $2 million for pet food pantries throughout New York City.

As a resident of Rockaway Beach, Queens, I see firsthand the urgent need for increased funding for animal welfare. Along the Rockaway boardwalk there are numerous unowned and abandoned cats living outdoors, and there is desperate Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) work that remains unfunded and incomplete. I have also witnessed similar colonies in Sheepshead Bay. Without adequate resources, these populations continue to grow, leading to more suffering for the animals and more challenges for communities.

The solution is not neglect—it is prevention. Spay and neuter programs are one of the most effective and humane ways to reduce homeless animal populations, prevent the birth of kittens destined for life on the streets, and decrease the burden on shelters and rescue organizations. Every dollar invested in TNR saves taxpayer money in the long run while reducing animal suffering.

The need for stronger protection of community cats is especially urgent because these animals are vulnerable to cruelty and abuse. I have personally witnessed people threatening stray cats and attempting to capture them. Recent events demonstrate the very real dangers they face. Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark announced charges against David Mosley, who was accused of torturing a stray cat he brought into his home. District Attorney Clark stated, "This defendant is accused of the torture of a stray cat that he took into his home. The defendant's alleged shocking behavior included posting images of a dead cat on social media and bragging about what he had allegedly done." Cases like this highlight why vulnerable animals need greater protection and why communities need resources to care for them.

At the same time, rescues across New York City are seeing increasing numbers of abandoned pets. Organizations such as Flatbush Cats regularly rescue friendly, socialized cats that were clearly once someone's pets. Many New Yorkers are struggling with the rising cost of living, and some families are forced to surrender beloved animals because they can no longer afford food, veterinary care, or housing that allows pets.

This is why pet food pantries are just as important as spay and neuter programs. Pet food assistance helps families keep their animals rather than surrendering them to already overwhelmed shelters or abandoning them outdoors. Keeping pets in their homes is more humane, more cost-effective, and better for communities.

New York City can and should do more for its animals. Community cats, abandoned pets, rescue organizations, and struggling pet owners all need support. I want my tax dollars invested in humane, evidence-based solutions that reduce suffering, prevent abandonment, strengthen communities, and protect vulnerable animals.

I urge city leaders to fully fund the proposed $1.5 million for spay/neuter services and $2 million for pet food pantries. New Yorkers care deeply about animal welfare, and our city budget should reflect those values.

Sincerely,

Julie Nygren

Good afternoon, Chair Lee and members of the Committee on Finance. I am Julien Bryzek, a 17 year-old high school senior who has been watching with shock as Mayor Mamdani has switched his electoral campaign's support of QueensLink to attempts to bury the project in favor of the anti-transit QueensWay. I'm here today to ask a very simple question: since when does New York City deliberately throw away an existing rail right-of-way? I urge you to reject the $43 million executive budget allocation for the QueensWay and protect the QueensLink.

There is a saying that if you tell a lie often enough, it becomes true. For years, QueensWay advocates, and recently the Mayor himself, have repeated the line that building their park won't preclude future rail. This claim does not survive contact with the actual designs.

The $43 million in this budget specifically funds the "Metropolitan Hub" phase. This section is slated to be built right where the QueensLink tunnel must surface. The current designs put paved paths directly over the right-of-way, meaning any future subway expansion would literally require bulldozing the very park you are funding today.

We know the real goal here. The Trust for Public Land originally stated the quiet part out loud right on their website, writing: "The residents of Queens don't need another train line."

This isn't just a park proposal; it's a transit-obstruction scheme disguised as a greenway. We saw this exact same mistake with the Atlanta BeltLine, where building the trail first created political pushback that permanently killed the planned transit.

QueensLink will serve 75,000 daily riders and bring billions in economic activity while still delivering 33 acres of park space. Don't permanently pave over our transit future and take transit away from 880,000 local residents. Reject the $43 million for the QueensWay. Thank you.

Dear Committee on Finance,

My name is Julien Riviere, and while I am not a Queens resident (I actually grew up just outside of Philly), I am a transit activist who is currently completing a master's degree in Global Urban Transformations at Utrecht University in the Netherlands. While I am overall a big supporter of Mayor Mamdani and his administration (taking the train up to see his inauguration back in January was an amazing experience despite the bitter cold), I fear he and his administration are making a grave mistake by funding QueensWay instead of pursuing QueensLink. Below is a paper a classmate and I wrote for one of our classes back in April on the QueensWay and QueensLink debate. Although I believe the entire paper is worth reading to substantiate the claims I am about to make, I would like to highlight a few key conclusions my classmate and myself came to:

Despite what the mayor has said, the current QueensWay plan, especially the Metropolitan Hub section which will be built first, ***will preclude*** the future reactivation of the Rockaway Beach Branch. The Metropolitan Hub park site entirely uses the existing right of way, meaning that any future reactivation will require the destruction of the park, which is not only a waste of funds currently but will almost certainly be politically impossible to achieve, as we saw with the Beltline in Atlanta. **If NYC does not prioritize rail access now, it will be lost forever.** Of course, I understand that the MTA is not currently in a position to fund the rail's reactivation. While I'd argue that it still should be, and their initial cost estimate is greatly inflated, in the meantime if Mayor Mamdani is truly sincere in his previous support for QueensLink and much needed transit access in Queens, **he should instead fund parks along the line where both QueensLink and QueensWay plans agree there should be greenspaces.** Parks and bike paths can be built along the line (up to 33 new acres!!) through QueensLink's plan that would actually not preclude the reactivation of the existing rail, such as the northernmost portion in Rego Park. This would achieve an easy win for the administration while work is done to get the funds necessary from the MTA and State to bring the subway to an area of Queens so desperately lacking it.

The reality is simple. QueensWay does not want to see a subway along the Rockaway Beach Branch while QueensLink does. QueensWay is supported by moneyed interests while QueensLink represents the needs and wishes of working people (with polling finding that approximately 70% of local constituents prefer QueensLink!!). Funding QueensWay will only lead to a repeat of the injustices produced by the High Line, like gentrification, and further transit inequality as was the case with the Beltline in Atlanta. It will also do nothing to fight climate change unlike QueensLink, which would take 4.7 million cars off the road and reduce CO_2 emissions by 7,200 tons annually. **I feel strongly that Mayor Mamdani and his administration should reverse course immediately and continue to support transit in the greatest transit city in the United States by supporting QueensLink and saying no way to QueensWay.**

I hope the paper I co-authored clarifies and reinforces what I have just said. I hope New York City will make the correct choice.

Governing Urban Rails-to-Trails:
Lessons from the QueensWay vs. QueensLink Debate

Table of Contents

1. Introduction 2

2. Theoretical Framework 3

    2.1. Collaborative Governance 3

    2.2. Justice Dimensions 4

3. Rails-to-Trails: Precedents 6

    3.1. The High Line and “High Line Effect” 7

4. Case Study: QueensWay vs. QueensLink 10

5. Discussion 14

6. Conclusion 16

References 17

1. Introduction

Are all urban greenspaces created equal?

Over the past few decades, urban rails-to-trails projects, or the conversion of unused railways into new greenspaces and transit corridors, have appeared in countless cities worldwide, and while their perceived successes have created a global movement, their effects have not been without controversy. While many have praised innovative urban rails-to-trails projects for introducing needed greenspaces to concrete jungles, boosting the economy, and creating exciting new tourist destinations, others have cautioned that such projects often act as sources of gentrification and perpetuate historic injustices. Although these effects are important to evaluate, it is also vital that we examine the processes and actors who shape these transformations. It is crucial therefore, to ask *how do different actors and institutions coalesce around urban rails-to-trails development projects, and how do their governance arrangements shape project outcomes and claims to justice?*

To address this question, this paper adopts a theoretical framework that combines collaborative governance and justice dimensions in order to analyse how decisions are assembled and how the benefits, burdens, and terms of participation in these projects are unevenly experienced. The following section lays out this framework. Section 3 situates the case study within a wider history of rails-to-trails projects, paying particular attention to the High Line, its governance arrangements and its role as a powerful reference point for similar redevelopment initiatives. Section 4 analyses the case of QueensWay and QueensLink as competing proposals for the same corridor, tracing the arrangements of its actors, institutions, and governance processes through which each proposal has been advanced.

Section 5 ties these proposals back to the theoretical framework to examine the uneven terrain on which they unfold, asking how far their benefits will meet justice claims and whether the cases repeat broader patterns that also emerged in the High Line proposal and its aftermath. The paper concludes in Section 6 by returning to the research question with some reflections on what this case reveals about the limits of consensus and the possibilities and constraints of collaborative urban governance.

2. Theoretical Framework

This paper brings together two complementary theoretical lenses: **collaborative governance** to explain how actors, power, and decision-making interact in making the project, and **justice dimensions** to evaluate how the project's material outcomes and participatory processes are distributed and experienced.

2.1. Collaborative Governance

Collaborative governance is understood as a mode of governing, in which public decisions are shaped through interactions among multiple actors, who bring their own different interests, forms of knowledge and capacities to the same policy arena. "Planning" here is read less as the arrival of a fixed plan or blueprint for implementation, and more as an ongoing governance process (Healey, 2003). Healey situates planning interactions within complex, dynamic institutional environments in which wider political, economic, social and spatial forces shape what kind of actions become possible, but not definitively deciding the outcome without negotiations, resistance or redirection by the various actors within the policy arena.

"Collaboration" refers to the processes through which problems are framed, priorities are negotiated and collective action is assembled over time. The processes and outcomes of collaborative governance are seen as co-constitutive, in that the process conditions *which future becomes actionable* through discourse,

institutional routines and how legitimacy of knowledge is established (Healey, 2003). This makes collaborative governance a useful lens to examine structures and distributions of power, contestation and governance of urban commons more broadly. Ansell and Gash extend this lens into an operational model which explicitly identifies starting conditions, institutional design, facilitative leadership and different components of the collaborative process that enable collaboration in governance to succeed, fail or reproduce asymmetries (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Power is central to this framework because collaborative governance does not take place on equal terrain. Healey treats power in collaborative governance as relational, implying that all social relations within planning operate with a power dimension. Some actors enter the process with greater authority, but also with (and also coming from) greater access to resources, institutional proximity, political backing and organisational continuity, while others may collaborate more intermittently or from weaker positions. Collaboration, therefore, can still reproduce asymmetries in the enacted outcome. Healey, to this, states that the language of partnership needs to be treated carefully - the presence of multiple actors does not in and of itself indicate an even distribution of power, or meaningful influence over the outcomes (Healey, 2003).

Curtin and McCullin also discuss this caution in the context of the co-production spectrum and the wider "co-" field, where terms such as co-creation, co-design and co-governance circulate with a strong normative appeal. While they acknowledge that this wider field of terms has made an important conceptual contribution by distinguishing different forms and stages of collaboration, they argue that the language of collaboration should not be taken at face value as evidence of a shared and egalitarian decision-making practice. A process may be described as collaborative, while masking the underlying structures of institutional priorities, selective participation and uneven capacities to shape the governance outcome (Curtin & McMullin, 2025). The authors suggest that we pay closer attention to the assumptions and motivations that undergird collaborative practices. Where collaborative processes may be justified through ideas such as "shared responsibility", "community value", "inclusion" or "buy-in", they find that these motivations vary greatly in meaning and in the extent to which they transform practices on the ground. In this regard, we find this insight useful to include in the paper's theoretical framing, because it urges us to move from the imagined value of such labels, to the political work that such labels perform within collaborative governance processes.

2.2. Justice Dimensions

If collaborative governance helps us explain how decisions are assembled, a justice lens helps evaluate how the benefits, burdens and terms of participation in practice and outcome are unevenly experienced.

While we initially approached the question of equity and justice in rails-to-trails projects from a more material perspective with "how common goods are distributed", we found the work of Schlosberg particularly useful in expanding our perspective on the meaning of justice in this study.

Schlosberg attempts to reconceive and define justice through global movements and political theory, arguing that justice cannot be reduced to fair distribution alone. Instead, he draws from Fraser, Young, Shiva and other thinkers to develop a broader account in which justice joins distribution, recognition and participation in a "plural yet unified" way (Schlosberg, 2004). In this view, justice can be understood as a relational and political question of who benefits, who is acknowledged and who is able to shape collective decisions in a holistic manner beyond the question of allocation of resources.

Kocisky and Holifield adopt this broader definition of justice in a more applied register by using a distributive, procedural and recognitional justice to develop a framework to evaluate how equitable development ideas are translated into planning practice (Kocisky & Holifield, 2025). Their framework is useful in operationalizing these dimensions as criteria for assessing what these development proposals promise to deliver, who they include and recognize in their vision and which inequities are rendered invisible.

Distributive justice concerns who receives the material benefits and burdens of development. In the context of rails-to-trails projects, Kocisky and Holifield make clear that this goes beyond proximity to greenspace, and includes transit connectivity and protection against physical displacement. Their key intervention here is that access alone is not enough in a wider context displacement from rising land prices and housing pressures. "Distribution" here means benefits and burdens of the project, as well as the *durability* of access.

Procedural justice refers to the decision-making processes, and who participates in these processes with what degree of influence. Kocisky and Holifield pay particular attention in their research to historically excluded communities to understand consultations as meaningfully representative across the project lifecycle. We find this temporal definition of participation noteworthy because it draws attention to how participation can mean anything from one-off moments of passive engagement, to an active and continued ability to shape agendas or define priorities in these projects. This teases the difference between participation towards influence and the mere appearance of participation.

Recognitional justice asks whose identities and histories are made visible within planning processes and development visions. It requires identifying historically excluded and vulnerable communities, acknowledging past exclusion or harm in the shaping of present conditions, and addressing cultural

displacement alongside material exclusions. We see a similar vein of thought in the scholarship of scholars like Roy and Spivak with the provocation "can the subaltern speak?", as a guiding question on voice, legibility and subjecthood of different identities in the city (Roy, 2009). Read together, we see how recognitional justice goes beyond naming difference, to actually confronting the institutional conditions under which unequal community representations are forged.

We adopt this framework as an analytical tool to examine the promises of the QueensWay proposal, and rails-to-trails projects as a whole to understand the patterns of asymmetry in material outcomes, forms of participation and politics of representation.

3. Rails-to-Trails: Precedents

The idea of converting abandoned railway lines into recreational spaces has a fairly long history, dating back to the mid- to late 20th century. Across Europe and North America, the rise of automobiles for passenger and freight movement resulted in the decline of rail transportation, leaving behind extensive corridors of "socio-spatial voids" in the wake of their disappearance.[1] Early responses to these disused lines emphasised the need for preservation of railway heritage, through recreational trails, leisure routes and greenways for enthusiasts (Rizk & Salvo, 2025). In the United States, this impulse developed into the rails-to-trails movement, which was driven by activists, railway enthusiasts and cyclists who promoted the conversion of abandoned rights-of-way into mobility corridors for non-motorized transport. A new institution was formed called the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy in 1986, following the 1983 amendment to the National Trails System Act, which introduced "railbanking" and allowed unused sections of railways to be preserved for possible future use while being used temporarily as trails (RTC National Headquarters, n.d.).

A parallel movement is traced in Europe, inspired in part by the American RTC example, with the birth of the European Greenways Association, which moved to frame these corridors not just as leisure routes for enthusiasts, but as an element of regional planning, tourism and green infrastructure. Rizk and Salvo refer to Spain's Vías Verdes programme as particularly influential. Launched in 1993 a collaborative effort involving public entities, railway companies and citizen groups, identified and repurposed 7600 kilometres of abandoned railway lines into a network of roughly 135 greenways for a diverse range of

[1] The legacy of railway infrastructure is ambivalent. As Rizk and Salvo describe, these networks historically bore witness to the industrial revolution, colonisation and globalisation. In the UK and US, railways were often celebrated as symbols of industrial progress and national unity; at the same time they were enmeshed in colonial systems of extraction that reorganised land, labour and resources from indigenous and enslaved peoples. Railways, and their disappearance, in this context evokes images of exploitation and resistance to it.

recreational uses (Fundación de los Ferrocarriles Españoles, n.d.). They note how viability plans outlining ownership, design requirements and future management have been developed and continue to be implemented in a multi-actor and multiscalar approach, bringing together local, provincial and regional authorities with various communities and consortia.

Only in the late 1990s, did rails-to-trails projects enter a second phase, which envisioned a possibility beyond healthy recreation, ecological connectivity and heritage preservation, by introducing the idea to repurpose abandoned rail infrastructure in dense urban cores. Projects such as the Promenade Plantée in Paris, later followed by the New York High Line and Atlanta Beltline were proposed as an opportunity for neighbourhood regeneration and urban branding. The High Line was notably not the first of such projects, but certainly the one through which the "urban rail-to-trail" regeneration model gained unprecedented global visibility and persuasive power.

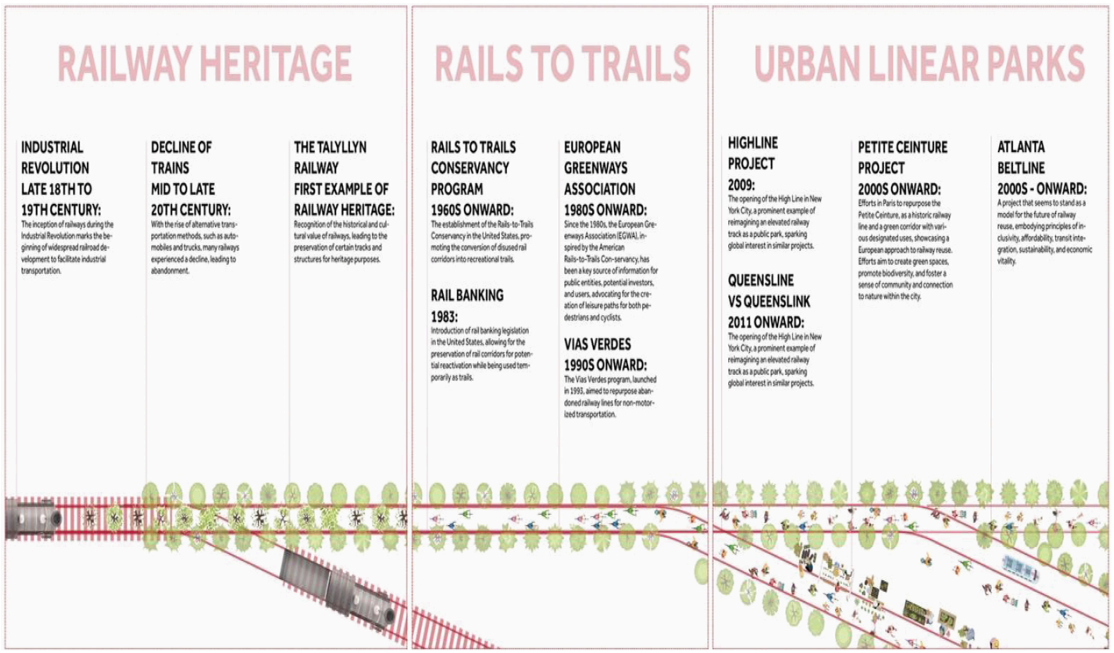


Fig 1: Timeline of the evolution of rails-to-trails projects (Yara Rizk, 2024).

3.1. The High Line and "High Line Effect"

Most significant for our discussion of the High Line project is how it was assembled through a coalition of a wide array of actors and institutions. The redevelopment agenda brought together neighbourhood advocates, non-profits, city agencies, consultants, designers and a range of property developers. The table

below shows the various actors that coalesced to materialise the project (Case Consortium @ Columbia, 2014).

Category	**Names of actors/organisations**	**Notes on role in the project**
Civic Advocates	Joshua David, Robert Hammond	Neighbourhood residents who initiated the project and led the campaign against line demolition
Non-Profits	Friends of High Line (Main firm)	Established by David and Hammond, main advocacy and fundraising vehicle, later took up operations and maintenance.
City Agencies and Public Authorities	Mayor's Office, NYCEDC (New York City Economic Development Corporation), Dept. of City Planning, Parks Department, City Planning Commission	The Mayor's Office under Bloomberg backed the project; city agencies for planning, approvals, rezoning, implementation; City government ultimately took ownership of the viaduct and park.
Consultants and advisors	HR & A Advisors (John Alshuher), Central Park Conservancy, Immortal Strategies	HR & A as economic advisors. John Alshuher later served as the chairman of board of the Friends of High Line for five years; Central Park Conservancy managers advised on long-term operations and maintenance; Immortal Strategies helped secure public approvals and funding.
Designers	Diller Scofidio + Renfro, James Corner Field Operations (Lisa Switkin)	DS +R won the architectural design competition and created the park's plans; Switkin's account shows the design team working with city agencies to push the project through approvals and construction.
Private Interests, property development actors	CSX Transportation Inc., Private owners under the viaduct, developers along 10th and 11th avenues, Chelsea Market, Hudson Yard developers.	CSX owned the disused line before transfer to the city.

What is interesting to note here is how some names overlap, and actors' positions, interests, spheres of influence, and capacities have shifted over the course of the project. At the institutional level also we observe a blurring: with "the city" not being a single entity but internally differentiated with congruent and competing interests, or with how private property holders under the viaduct initially favoured the demolition of the line, but their interests later shifted in favour of its repurposing because of transfer-of-development-rights schemes and speculative benefits of rezoning. Many private firms either located on or contributing development projects along 10th and 11th avenue continue to be major funders

to the Friends of High Line, which in itself has transformed from an advocacy firm to a non-profit organisation responsible for daily operations.[2] Reading through the collaborative governance framework, we see an unevenness in the governance capacities and influence, but also how these arrangements are context-specific and non-static.

Loughran's reading of the High Line is interesting, as it situates the governance processes of the project within a wider pattern of uneven urban public space development, in which certain parks are able to attract exceptional concentrations of economic, political and cultural resources than others. In his account, the High Line's celebrated successes were tied to social networks, redevelopment incentives and the consumption habitus of the emergent urban middle class. This reading points sharply towards how collaborative efforts and their outcomes remain structured by asymmetries of power and privilege (Loughran, 2014).

The High Line's influence extended far beyond the project itself. As scholars and commentators later described through the phrasing "the High Line Effect", it became a widely adopted reference point for how obsolete urban grey infrastructure could be reimagined as a green, attractive and economically catalytic intervention. The Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat (CTBUH) discussion expands on this by illustrating how the High Line generated a broader wave of attempts to replicate its apparent success in cities across the US and beyond, and that this wave of replication often hinged on a very simplified reading of the project, that overlooked the highly specific political conditions that had produced the original case (Ascher & Uffer, 2015). We find Watkins' spatial imaginary concept powerful in framing the transformation and subsequent circulation of the High Line Effect as this "shared urban vision or narrative", travelling across contexts and shaping material interventions elsewhere (Watkins, 2015).

The apparent successes of the High Line, however, remain open to debate, as seen in Loughran's critique of the project. Rail-to-Park transformations, of which the High Line stands a prime example, often intertwine greening, competitive urbanism, real-estate valorisation and inequalities (Argüelles et al., 2022). The gentrification as a result is difficult to separate from the making of the park itself. Plans inspired by the High Line, like the Atlanta Beltline, have attempted to combine the provision of new greenspaces with new rail transit access. However, the Beltline's initial plans to transform abandoned railways into a linear park *and* reintroduce rail transit have not been carried through as expected. While the corridor did see new greenspaces be built, the project also faces the potential cancellation of its transit

[2] Beyond the scope of the High Line park, the Friends of High Line is also at the helm of a peer-to-peer network of 46 similar infrastructure reuse projects, providing technical assistance and best-practice support for the actors involved in them. The projects are located across the US and one in Mexico (https://network.thehighline.org/about/).

promises, with Atlanta's mayor and MARTA, the city's transportation department, deciding to halt rail construction last year, neglecting to address transit inequalities in one of the most car centric cities in North America (Gregory, 2026). Both the High Line and the Beltline, therefore, are examples of processes with ambivalent outcomes. The following section examines another such proposal that emerged from the wake of the High Line effect.

4. Case Study: QueensWay vs. QueensLink

In the early 2010s, two divergent plans emerged in Queens to transform a stretch of the Rockaway Beach Branch of elevated rail that has been left abandoned for over 60 years. The area of South Queens formerly served by the Rockaway Beach Branch stretches from the neighborhood of Rego Park in the north to Ozone Park in the south, and runs parallel to Woodhaven Boulevard, one of the busiest roads in Queens. The area is greatly lacking both greenspaces and transit connectivity, leading to proposals aimed at solving these issues. One plan, called QueensWay, is largely modeled after the High Line, and looks to convert the entire stretch of railway into a new linear park with 47 acres of pedestrian trails, bike paths, and other greenspaces meant for recreation (Trust for Public Land, 2025). The plan was proposed by a nonprofit known as The Friends of QueensWay and is supported by a national nonprofit, Trust for Public Land. Another plan for the same space that emerged in competition with the QueensWay proposal, called QueensLink, is similar to the original Atlanta Beltline plan and proposes reactivating the rail line in order to extend the existing M subway line down to Far Rockaway Beach and create four new subway stations along with 33 acres of greenspaces with pedestrian and bike paths, addressing both the need for greenspace access and transit connectivity (QueensLink, 2026). The plan was created and is led by the QueensLink nonprofit.

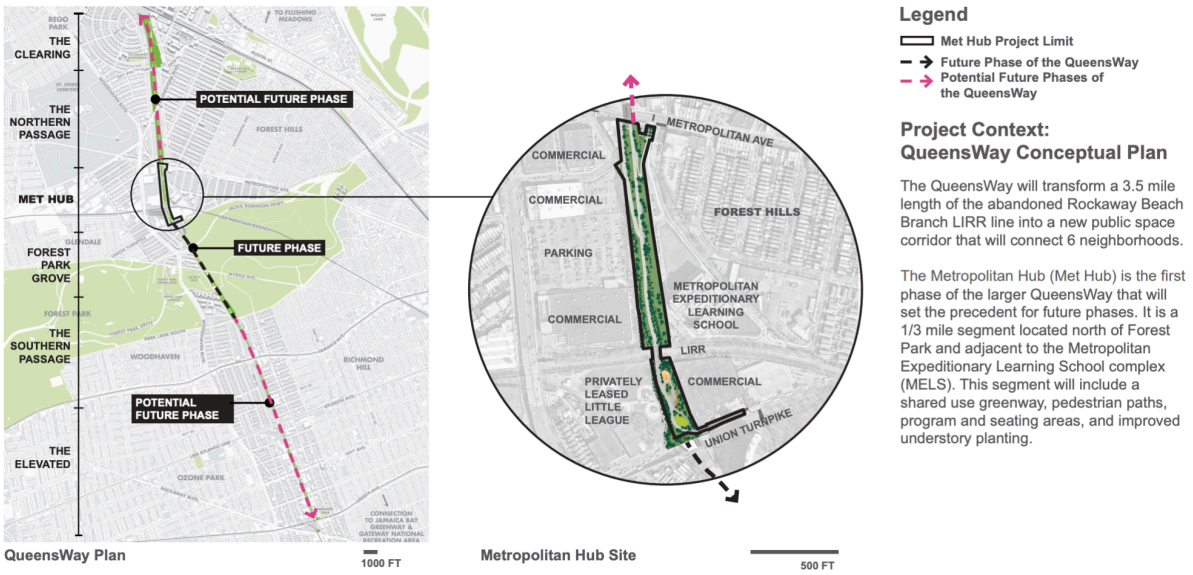


Fig 2: Proposal for QueensWay (NYCEDC, 2024b)



Fig 3: Proposal for QueensLink (QueensLink, 2026)

Initially, both plans received government funding for feasibility studies, and QueensLink even garnered some interest from the MTA, New York City's transportation department, resulting in the MTA studying the plan in 2019 and generating a cost estimate, where it found that the proposal would cost approximately $8.1 million. Such a high estimate dampened support for QueensLink, and although the nonprofit commissioned a new feasibility study by Transportation Economics and Management Systems, Inc., which found that the plan would only cost between $3.4 and $3.7 billion, the plan lost a great deal of institutional support, especially with the MTA having other more pressing projects like the 2nd Avenue Subway extension and the Interborough Express (New York City Independent Budget Office, 2025). This opened the door for QueensWay, which quickly became the preferred plan for the abandoned rail, in large part due to its much lower cost. In 2022, QueensWay went from a largely unknown proposal to a public commitment made by then newly elected Mayor Eric Adams, who pledged $35 million dollars to begin building the linear park. This was then paired with a $118 million grant given by the Biden administration, providing enough money to fund the QueensWay plan in its entirety (New York City Independent Budget Office, 2025). QueensWay's sudden push to the forefront of Mayor Adam's agenda is attributed in large part to multiple meetings with QueensWay supporters in the spring of 2022, culminating in the mayor's support for the proposal. Then president of The Friends of QueensWay, Travis Terry, is reported to have had "a direct line of influence with the incoming Adams administration and cut a 'backroom deal' for QueensWay backing in exchange for in-kind contributions to political organizing during the mayoral campaign" (Espenshade, 2023). Terry is also the CEO of Immortal Strategies, a consulting firm that focuses on public-private partnerships that has worked on many corporate, real estate, and nonprofit projects, including both the High Line and QueensWay (Immortal Strategies LLC, 2026).

Since the Rockaway Beach Branch's land is owned by the city and not the MTA, its land use is largely at the mayor's discretion, meaning that with Mayor Adams' support, the plan found the institutional backing it needed (Dreyer & Murphy, 2025). One supporter of Queensway, New York State Assemblymember Jenifer Rajkumar, thanked the mayor for his actions and touted:

> "We all saw how the High Line overnight became one of the hottest destinations in the entire city, for New Yorkers and tourists alike, who flock to all the surrounding businesses. Now Woodhaven, Ozone Park, Glendale, Richmond Hill, Little Guyana, Rego Park, and Forest Hills will have their own linear park that will produce the same economic renaissance" (NYC Mayor's Office, 2022).

Soon, the city's own NYC Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) held community consultations with residents and released its official plan for the first phase of QueensWay, which calls for

the construction of a five acre park, labeled the “Metropolitan Hub” in Forest Hills (NYCEDC, 2024a). QueensLink advocates were quick to criticize the plan, in large part because the Metropolitan Hub phase “overlaps significantly with the tracks and construction staging areas needed for transit rather than choosing to start with a section where both projects agree a park should go (ex: the northernmost portion in Rego Park), which would effectively block rail development along the whole corridor rather than keep the rail option open while park development progresses” (Espenshade, 2023). Such decisions are reminiscent of the Atlanta Beltline, where greenspaces were ultimately prioritized over transit access, eliminating a possible alternative future for the Rockaway Beach Branch. Furthermore, advocates criticized the decision making process, describing it as largely “top-down, rather than being based on what the constituency has indicated a desire for, saying that tens of thousands of affected residents have ‘no voice in the matter’” (Dreyer & Murphy, 2025). The NYCEDC has so far held multiple community consultation meetings, but they have received very little community input representative of all residents, with their zoom call meetings regularly seeing less than 100 total participants (NYCEDC, 2024b). New York State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo Jr. also released polling that found that “approximately 70% of local constituents prefer the rail to the park,” further indicating that many residents prefer QueensLink when informed of both projects (Dreyer & Murphy, 2025).

Although the Trump administration has since rescinded the $118 million in funding provided by the previous administration, the city still aims to begin construction on phase one of the plan using the cities own funding to begin construction in the very near future, with the most recent proposed budget under current Mayor Mamdani allocating $43 million towards the project, despite Mamdani previously supporting QueensLink as a mayoral candidate (Ionescu, 2026). It remains to be seen if the final version of the budget will fund QueensWay phase one.

Ultimately, depending on the plan chosen by the city, Queens will be transformed in different ways. If the city continues with QueensWay, it will successfully provide greenspaces to neighborhoods in New York City sorely lacking them. CO_2 emissions would also marginally decrease, especially if the new bike paths induce increased cycling trips. Such improvements could be completed rapidly, with the Metropolitan Hub phase one being potentially finished as early as 2028, and its construction can be done at a fraction of the cost required for QueensLink (NYCEDC, 2024b). Questions will arise on the long term impacts, however. If the plan truly replicates the perceived successes of the High Line as many have promised, will it actually benefit the residents along the project’s route? Increased tourism and economic activity may lead to higher rents and gentrification, harming the very neighborhoods QueensWay is supposed to help, especially if no legislative protections are enacted. Furthermore, the region would still remain largely a transit desert, with some 39% of residents continuing to commute to work by car, 12% higher than the

citywide average, while transit commuters remain on some of the most crowded and slowest buses in the city (New York City Independent Budget Office, 2025).

Should the city reconsider and decide to invest in QueensLink, however, the city could see many of the same greenspace benefits, albeit 14 acres less of parks, but also the much needed transit connectivity. The plan hopes to provide subway access to over 75,000 daily riders and promises to reduce travel times across the borough of Queens by up to 60%. Additionally, The plan promises to take 4.7 million cars off the road annually, which would reduce CO_2 emissions by 7,200 tons annually, adding a substantial environmental benefit towards combating climate change in addition to the benefits of increased pedestrianization and cycling along the planned paths (QueensLink, 2026). Of course, all of this relies on the city and MTA being willing to spend the multiple billions of dollars it will cost to complete the project, despite the MTA having other priorities and facing funding cuts from the current federal government. The long project timeline also limits the immediate impacts on the communities affected.

5. Discussion

While the debate between QueensWay and QueensLink concerns many unique, local considerations, it follows many of the patterns present in previous urban rails-to-trails projects. Importantly, it offers us a glimpse into the collaborative governance process influencing the development and application of both plans. While both proposals are led by civic stewardship groups, namely The Friends of QueensWay and QueensLink, QueensWay has received far more support from influential public and private actors. QueensWay is backed by public actors like former Mayor Eric Adams, who wielded his position of power to make QueensWay a priority during his mayorship, other civic stewardship groups like the nationally known Trust for Public Land, and private actors like the Citi Foundation (the private foundation of Citibank) and Immortal Strategies, the consulting firm run by former president of The Friends of QueensWay, Travis Terry (QueensWay, 2026). In comparison, while QueensLink once enjoyed some support from the MTA prior to their $8.1 million estimate, the grassroots organization has been left without much support outside of a few local lawmakers ever since, greatly reducing its ability to influence the decision making process (QueensLink, 2026).

Major Actors Involved in Supporting QueensWay and QueensLink		
Actor Category	**Names of actors/organisations supporting QueensWay**	**Names of actors/organisations supporting QueensLink**
Civic Stewardship	• The Friends of QueensWay	• QueensLink

Groups	• Trust for Public Land • Rails-to-Trails Conservancy	
City Agencies and Public Authorities	• Former Mayor Eric Adams • Mayor Zohran Mamdani (?) • NYCEDC • The Department of Transportation under Biden • Other national and local politicians	• NYC Public Advocate Jumaane Williams • U.S. Congressmember Gregory Meeks representing the 5th District • Former Comptroller Brad Lander, currently running for U.S. Congress in the 10th District • New York State Assemblymember Claire Valdez, currently running for U.S. Congress in the 7th District • Other local politicians
Private Actors	• Immortal Strategies • Citi Foundation • Tiffany & Co. Foundation • Tiger Baron Foundation • Booth Ferris Foundation • Scherman Foundation • Lily Auchincloss Foundation	

Furthermore, ever since earning Mayor Adam's approval, which only occurred thanks to members of The Friends of QueensWay having institutional proximity to the mayor, the consultation process has left much to be desired, such as consultation meetings with limited community participation and signs that residents prefer QueensLink but they are either not properly informed on both proposals or not able to make their voices heard. Using Healey's (2003) and Curtin & McMullin's (2025) frameworks, despite promises to be collaborative, the largely top-down nature of QueensWay's implementation has revealed the uneven capacities of less powerful actors to shape the governance outcome. The arrangement of actors has largely mirrored the High Line's, including the involvement of many of the same actors, like the Mayor's Office, NYCEDC, and Immortal Strategies, further illustrating the reproduction of many of the same governance strategies. Therefore, as it stands, QueensWay's proposal has built more momentum and will likely be implemented in large part due to its greater access to resources, institutional proximity, and political backing.

The QueensWay vs. QueensLink case study also provides insight into the justice dimensions at play when considering both competing plans. Crucially, in terms of distributive justice, as presented by Kocisky and Holifield (2025), the QueensWay plan falls short by only providing access to greenspaces while QueensLink ensures that the residents of South Queens have additional access to much needed transit connectivity. QueensWay's lack of proposed transit access reduces its ability to effectively combat climate

change by not providing a rail alternative to commuting by car, limiting its ability to eliminate carbon emissions at a time when any and all climate measures are paramount. By trying to emulate the High Line, QueensWay also threatens to displace residents by increasing land prices and housing costs, enabling gentrification. It is important to note that the language used by QueensWay supporters like Assemblymember Jenifer Rajkumar who compare QueensWay to the High Line speak predominantly of increased tourism and economic activity, not the needs of the people actually living in Queens (NYC Mayor's Office, 2022).

Procedurally, the implementation of QueensWay has been fraught with injustices, with a top down approach led by private interests and acute power imbalances, along with limited community input as a part of the consultation process which has resulted in a plan that does not reflect the broader wishes of the community. The concerted effort to design a phase one of QueensWay that specifically converts the existing rail right of way into a park to ensure that future rail reactivation will likely be politically impossible illustrates the ways in which the project's priorities have been shaped by those with power.

As for recognitional justice, QueensWay has largely been shaped by actors who may have good intentions when creating new greenspaces, but these greenspaces serve mostly recreational purposes as opposed to improving transit access. Such land use is particularly beneficial to Queens residents wealthy enough to own private vehicles or those who are able to work from home, but it is less beneficial to those who could really benefit from rail transit access to commute to work. This prioritization of mobility for recreation instead of mobility for utility serves only to reinforce existing inequalities. Furthermore, it would be incumbent upon those in power to learn from the mistakes of the High Line, like the gentrification that followed, instead of looking to repeat them. QueensWay has largely failed to consider the needs of the marginalized communities it wishes to positively impact, and this failure speaks to a larger pattern of injustices within many urban rails-to-trails projects.

6. Conclusion

This paper has shown that collaborative governance in urban rails-to-trails projects takes shape through non-static constellations of civic groups, public agencies, private consultants, funders, and actors, each with different starting conditions, incentives, interests, capacities, and influence on the process (Ansell & Gash, 2008). As Healey suggests, the collaborative process and its outcomes are co-constitutive: the ways these coalitions assemble establishes which futures become actionable, while others are partially heard.

Loughran stated regarding the High Line project, that its celebrated success rested on a highly specific configuration of social networks, incentives and concentrated political and economic support (Loughran, 2014). Our comparative analysis of the two proposals: QueensWay and QueensLink proves the importance of these configurations, by underlining how factors like institutional proximity, funding pathways, and political backing can propel a vision into materialisation. The uneven governance arrangements are reproduced as uneven justice outcomes, across the cases discussed. In the High Line, as well as in the competing visions for the transformation of the Rockaway Beach Branch, the benefits of greening, mobility, and investment are not evenly distributed. While participation in these processes remains largely unequal, some needs, priorities, and histories are made more legible than others in planning.

Our explorations and findings in this paper raise broader questions about how success in collaborative governance can be understood. We turn to Hillier who argues that in practice, ideal rational consensus is rarely achievable, and disagreement is a constitutive part of democratic planning (Hillier, 2003). Consensus, therefore, cannot be simply taken as evidence of just outcomes or fair collaboration. In this sense, success in collaboration of urban rails-to-trails projects may then be better indicated by sustained forms of agreement that keep disagreement visible, and the ability to keep alternative futures alive.

References

1. Ansell, C., & Gash, A. (2008). Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *18*(4), 543-571. https://doi-org.utrechtuniversity.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/jopart/mum032

2. Argüelles, L., Cole, H. V. S., & Anguelovski, I. (2022). Rail-to-park transformations in 21st century modern cities: Green gentrification on track. *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*, *5*(2), 810-834. https://doi.org/10.1177/25148486211010064

3. Ascher, K., & Uffer, S. (2015). The High Line Effect [Conference Paper]. In *CTBUH New York 2015*. Council for Vertical Urbanism. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://global.ctbuh.org/resources/papers/2463-Ascher%20Paper.pdf

4. Case Consortium @ Columbia. (2014, May). *High Line*. Public-Private Partnerships for Green Space in NYC. https://ccnmtl.columbia.edu/projects/caseconsortium/casestudies/128/casestudy/www/layout/case_id_128_id_902.html

5. Curtin, M., & McMullin, C. (2025). The co-production spectrum: conceptual blurs in theory and practice. *Perspectives on Public Management and Governance*, *8*, 144-157. https://doi.org/10.1093/ppmgov/gvaf008

6. Dreyer, P., & Murphy, E. (2025). Rails and Trails: Revitalizing the Queens Boulevard Line. In *Manhattan Institute*. Manhattan Institute. Retrieved April 7, 2026, from https://media4.manhattan-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/rails-and-trails-revitalizing-the-queens-boulevard-line.pdf

7. Espenshade, J. (2023). *Public Policy and Planning in New York: Policy Memo*. https://thequeenslink.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/JEspenshade-QueensLink-Case-Study-2023.pdf

8. Fundación de los Ferrocarriles Españoles. (n.d.). *Principal*. Vias Verdes. Retrieved April 3, 2026, from https://old.viasverdes.com/en/principal.asp

9. Gregory, S. (2026, January 23). Exclusive: Atlanta's Eastside Beltline light rail work was secretly halted last year. *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. https://www.ajc.com/news/2026/01/eastside-beltline-light-rail-work-secretly-halted-last-year/

10. Healey, P. (2003). Collaborative Planning in Perspective. *Planning Theory*, *2*(2), 101-123.

11. Hillier, J. (2003). `Agon'izing Over Consensus: Why Habermasian Ideals cannot be `Real'. Planning Theory, 2(1), 37-59.

12. Immortal Strategies LLC. (2026). Immortal Strategies LLC Successes. https://immortalstrat.com/by-industry

13. Ionescu, D. (2026, March 26). Mamdani Budget Funds Queensway, Dimming Hope for Reactivated Long Island Rail. Planetizen. Retrieved April 7, 2026, from https://www.planetizen.com/news/2026/03/137217-mamdani-budget-funds-queensway-dimming-hope-reactivated-long-island-rail

14. Kocisky, K., & Holifield, R. (2025, November 27). How equitable are urban rail-trails? A review of 11 development plans. *Local Environment*. https://doi.org/10.1080/13549839.2025.2594098

15. Loughran, K. (2014). Parks for Profit: The High Line, Growth Machines, and the Uneven Development of Urban Public Spaces. *City & Community*, *13*(1), 49-68. Sage Journals. https://doi.org/10.1111/cico.12050

16. New York City Independent Budget Office. (2025). Parkland and Public Transit: QueensWay and QueensLink Eye Deactivated Rail Line in Southeast Queens. Retrieved April 7, 2026, from https://www.ibo.nyc.gov/assets/ibo/downloads/pdf/environment/2025/2025-october-parkland-and-public-transit.pdf

17. NYC Mayor's Office. (2022, September 16). Mayor Adams announces $35 million investment in Phase one of new Linear Park in Queens. The Official Website of the City of New York. Retrieved April 7, 2026, from https://www.nyc.gov/mayors-office/news/2022/09/mayor-adams-35-million-investment-phase-one-new-linear-park-queens

18. NYCEDC. (2024a). QueensWay Metropolitan Hub. Retrieved April 7, 2026, from https://edc.nyc/project/queensway-metropolitan-hub

19. NYCEDC. (2024b, December 17). QueensWay Metropolitan Hub Community Board 6 Meeting [Slide show; Presentation]. https://edc.nyc/sites/default/files/2025-01/NYCEDC-Queensway-MetHub-CB6-Presentation-12-17-24.pdf

20. QueensLink. (2026). QueensLink – Connecting Communities with Rails & Trails. Retrieved April 7, 2026, from https://thequeenslink.org/

21. QueensWay. (2026). Partners – QueensWay. Retrieved April 7, 2026, from https://thequeensway.org/partners/

22. Rizk, Y., & Salvo, S. (2024, November 01). Turning Rails into Trails: Inspiring Cases of Railway Conversion Around the World [Proceedings of the 11th International Conference of Ar.Tec. (Scientific Society of Architectural Engineering)]. In *Lecture Notes in Civil Engineering* (610). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-71855-7_44

23. Roy, A. (2009). The 21st-Century Metropolis: New Geographies of Theory. *Regional Studies*, *43*(6), 819-830. https://doi.org/10.1080/00343400701809665

24. RTC National Headquarters. (n.d.). *History: 40 Years of Uniting America By Trail - Rails to Trails Conservancy*. Rails to Trails Conservancy. Retrieved April 8, 2026, from https://www.railstotrails.org/about/history/

25. Schlosberg, D. (2004). Reconceiving Environmental Justice: Global Movements And Political Theories. *Environmental Politics*, *13*(3), 517-540. https://doi.org/10.1080/0964401042000229025

26. Watkins, J. (2015). Spatial Imaginaries Research in Geography: Synergies, Tensions, and New Directions. *Geography Compass*, *9*(9), 508-522. 10.1111/gec3.12228

June 9, 2026

To Whom it May Concern / Committee on Finance:

I am a concerned parent of a student who attends the wonderful Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE) in Queens.

I am writing to urge you to protect BSGE's funding that the City has promised for BSGE's new school building and relocation. The allocation has already been designated for our new site and we want to make certain that there is follow-through for the much needed building for our children and that construction and/or relocation happens as quickly as possible.

I also write to urge the Office of Management and Budget to allocate the estimated $519 million needed for the School Construction Authority (SCA) to build the promised 600-seat middle school and two 650-seat elementary schools in Queens North. There are growing needs for more schools in our area. Without these new seats, schools will face severe overcrowding, breaking a critical infrastructure promise made to neighborhood families.

Thank you,



Julienne Kim
[redacted]
Long Island City, NY 11101

[redacted]

From: K9RescueNYC
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] K9RescueNYC on NYCACC/ ASPCA - Finance Committee Testimony June 10
Date: Sunday, June 14, 2026 1:12:34 AM

[redacted]

Dear NYC Council Finance Committee,

My name Del Mar Leon founder of K9RescueNYC (K9RNYC) a rescue who is also leading NETWORKER of dogs for multiple k*ll shelter in California, NYC, FL, TX providing dogs their last chance to get seen & find a foster or adopter on their last 24 hours to live prior to being k*lled: an inhumane manner to handle an animal's life in the US shelter system.

As one of the few independent rescues who also networks animals on their last 24 hours in 4 different states mostly in CA & NYC, K9RNYC, for the past year and a half I has observed unprofessional way of in how the carry their operations specifically in the manner in which the handled handling at risk/ euthanasia commanded animals and at times within the organization employees and volunteers appear to have a cult like manner mentality and act very hermetic showing fearfulness and other times defensiveness if a question was ever asked …and management may choose not to respond when emailed.
I would like to reference a headline from the New York post dated July 2025 that reads:

"Problem-plagued NYC animal shelters suspended intake of dogs and cats due to overcrowding - GOP's Sliwa calls to end 1.4b 'mismanaged' contract "

New York City Animal Care Center (NYCACC) has failed to keep up and adjust to the changing needs of the times and has left in the hands of volunteers what has become one of the most important role/jobs within a shelter system to help animals get seen and adopted: the job of a networker. In my opinion, I do not believe NYCACC even understand let alone value this very CRUCIAL & important role as they make it very challenging for the job to get done and at times may end up costing the animal's life as they choose not to communicate with networkers and leave them out of the equation while making the process of coordinating the rescue of an animal out of the shelter with tight deadlines very ineffective/ inefficient forcing networkers to guess the status of an animal and updating its outcome /current status only after the animal is dead or rescued

and the outcome list showing its status stays without current update many times until the following day while the animals is no longer available. This only wastes an individual's time and robs the animal for his/her opportunity to be able to make it out of NYCACC alive.

In addition animal's are being mislabeled as behavioral when many times the behavior shown may be related to kennel stress or due to living in small confined inhumane space, leash biting, humping, pulling leash and the same medication they are giving them to calm their anxiety is also having negative side effects. Animals are being heavily drugged with very high doses of trazadone to make them cope with the challenging environment…this medication ultimately has also side effects when taking them off of it making them more aggressive and those who are fortunate to be adopted are often being returned as NYCACC may not be warning the new pet parent of the consequences of this medications or how to properly wean them out of it or side effects to expect.

In addition I would like like to add that NYCACC claims to have have 300 New Hope Partner rescues to yet only 50 if at all are actively pulling the dogs NYCACC is placing on their at risk or (euth)anasia commanded list. Fosters are being discouraged with mislabels on the animals character when in fact many are stressed out from living inside small kennels for 23.5 hours a day and overmedicated.
Foster are left waiting to be called back and dogs being killed with fosters because there are no rescues or available to pull the animal. The system is flawed and has hit a bottleneck and the animals are paying with their lives….ASPCA one of the largest organization nationwide and only a few blocks from ACC has only pulled 2 dogs from the at risk list while more than 500 dogs have been killed since the year started … this deserves a lot to be concerned.

It is my understanding from looking at the job openings from NYCACC website, ACC is not only understaffed but also have a crucial role to run a shelter, the role of 2 veterinarians for both the Manhattan and Queens location vacant since I first noticed it last year in February…16 months with no veterinary on 2 locations, therefore this makes one wonder & begs the question of who is in fact really taking care of our animals at NYCACC?….a role that pays $130-140,000 a year which would also mean a saving on NYCACC budget while our animals are suffering with inadequate care and poor decision making and most likely an overworked staff which only increases the likelihood of poor desicion making and increase the likelihood of error.

It is also worth noting ACC use of retaliatory practices against the volunteers who speak against them or those who expose what is happening internally and this is also contributing to a broken system where the only ones who end up loosing are the animals under their care.

I would like to conclude by stating the importance to prioritize looking into the whole

shelter system and to be reconsidered as to what is being funded and determine if it actually benefitting or hurting our animals while also taking a deeper look as to what is actually happening with NYCACC. I would also like to request for New York City Council to put back in their calendar the Oversight Committee Hearing for New York City Animal Care Center which has been postponed since September 2024..they are not being held accountable for their practices, they answer to no one and they actually need to respond to many of the kind of practices they are using against animals that are adoptable healthy and being killed unnecessarily due to not having a proper effective and efficient system in place with an archaic shelter operational model in need of an overhaul. There have been a high number of animals who have been killed right after having spay ans neuter while ASPCA fully funds those....

Why is NYC officials giving NYCACC so much power with a 1.4 billion contract until 2050 with no oversight or holding them accountable while they are MURFDERING innocent healthy adoptable dogs & cats.

Our animals deserve compassion!!!

We request the Finance Committee to approve a $15 million budget for animal welfare including:

Pet food assistance
Pet food distribution program
Veterinary care assistance for lower income New Yorkers
Programs to incentivize keeping their pets
Animal protection and enforcement

K9RescueNYC initiative to build a platform to deliver a more effective and efficient portal to get the shelter animals adopted in record time and help prevent surrendering & education to decrease abandonment

Pet inclusion in the shelter and cosheltering program

I support spay/neuter if also simultaneously considering the fact we need to have a moratorium on breeding. I think they must go hand in hand for it to work...otherwise it will be very costly to only focus on spay and neuter if not simultaneously addressing the root of the problem: human breeding. I would also support the implementation to get a dog license only if taking a training on pet parenting to help educate the pet owner while decreasing the likelihood of abandonment.

[06/13/2023]

TO: New York City Council — Finance Committee
RE: Support the QueensLink — preserve the Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way for both transit and parks

Dear Chairperson Lee and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Kaitlyn Eastmon, and I am a former New York resident. I am writing in strong support of the **QueensLink**, which would bring both new subway service and new parkland to Queens by reactivating the former Rockaway Beach Branch, and against the current $43 million allocated in the budget for phase one of the QueensWay, also referred to as the Met Hub project.

Why this matters to me

As someone who has not lived in New York City but has visited frequently, one of the things I appreciated most was the ability to travel throughout the city using public transportation. Having reliable transit made it easy to experience everything the city has to offer. However, when public transportation was not accessible for that area, navigating such a large and busy city became significantly more stressful.

For that reason, I believe QueensLink would be a valuable investment for both residents and visitors. Improved transit access would make daily travel more convenient for local communities while also creating a more welcoming and accessible experience for people traveling to New York from across the country and around the world. In addition, the creation of a new park would further enhance the city's appeal by providing much-needed green space where people can relax, enjoy nature, and find a respite from the pace of urban life.

Why the QueensLink is the right choice

Two competing concepts exist for the deactivated Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way: the park-only QueensWay, and the dual-purpose QueensLink, which combines subway and park uses. The QueensWay would be built directly on the former railbed, which would virtually eliminate the possibility of ever restoring transit there. The MTA itself recognized in its 2023 20-Year Needs Assessment that a linear park along the corridor would create a challenge for any future transit alternatives. Once a rail right-of-way is converted to other uses, it almost never returns to transit.

The QueensLink would create the first north-south subway line in Queens, extending the M line south from Rego Park to Ozone Park and then over the A train tracks to the Rockaways — increasing service to the Rockaways by up to 165%. It would also let the G train run all the way to Forest Hills, increasing capacity on the crowded Queens Boulevard local lines by 50% and connecting central Queens with north Queens and Brooklyn.

A study by the Steer Group found that the QueensLink would remove millions of vehicle trips each year, making streets safer and lowering harmful emissions, while adding up to 33 acres of new parks and trails integrated with the subway design. Over 20 years, the study concluded the project would more than pay for itself by creating jobs, saving New Yorkers time, and reducing healthcare costs tied to air pollution and traffic crashes.

Queens needs parks *and* trains. The QueensLink would provide both. I urge the Committee to preserve this irreplaceable right-of-way for future transit and to support the QueensLink.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

Kaitlyn Eastmon

From: Kaitlyn Fikaris
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] ATTN: Health/Hospital Committee Policy Team
Date: Monday, May 25, 2026 12:12:19 AM

[redacted]

Dear NYC Council Committee on Health & Hospitals,

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Kaitlyn and I am writing to you as a constituent, an MSW student, and a deeply invested advocate for healthcare equity in our city. My mother Vanessa, and I have thought of an idea and we would love the opportunity to propose a vital, low-cost volunteer initiative that addresses a painful, hidden crisis in our communities: isolated individuals undergoing cancer treatment entirely alone.

There is an irony to life in New York City. We are surrounded by millions of people, yet we are in the midst of a chronic loneliness epidemic that actively worsens our neighbors' physical and mental health. Nowhere is this isolation more heartbreaking than in our oncology and hospice units. Some patients are fortunate to have strong family support networks, but many do not. We are talking about chemotherapy and cancer patients who have lost their families in different ways—some through the pain of bereavement, and others through the heartbreak of abandonment.

No one should have to go through the worst season of their life alone. In these deeply vulnerable times, a person needs someone else by their side so they don't give up on their fight, or on their lives in general. My mom and I believe that when patients have someone beside them to hold their hand during these incredibly hard hours, they are given the emotional strength they need to get better.

This role will be different from traditional Home Health Aides (HHAs). While HHAs provide invaluable medical and physical assistance, this program will focus exclusively on the social and emotional needs of the patient. These volunteers will be there solely for socialization, presence, and emotional comfort—holding a hand, sharing a conversation, and essentially acting as a surrogate family figure for those who have no one else.

My mom and I, both life-long New Yorkers, bring both a passion for helping people and the clinical background necessary to build this safely. My mother is a former HHA and case coordinator for a home care agency, bringing years of hands-on experience navigating patient logistics and vulnerable populations. I am a Master of Social Work student at Fordham

University Graduate School of Social Service—a path I was only able to pursue thanks to a scholarship from New York's Career Pathways Training Program—and I have been placed in a specialist-year field assignment within the NYC Health + Hospitals system for the upcoming year. Honorable mention to my sister, who recently graduated college and plans to apply to nursing school in the upcoming year. It is safe to say my sister and I are lucky to have inherited my mom's best qualities.

With our combined backgrounds, we are ready to help structure, develop, and implement a pilot version of this program. If possible, we would love to schedule a brief meeting with a member of your team to discuss how we can bring this compassionate initiative to life for New Yorkers who need it most. My mom and I deeply hope this is something that can become a reality.

Thank you so much for your time, your leadership, and your commitment to New York.

Warmly,
Kaitlyn Mercado Fikaris
MSW Candidate, Fordham University
[redacted]

I support funding $1.5 million for low-cost spay/neuter and veterinary care and $2 million for pet food pantries.

I have personally participated in TNR efforts for approximately 70 cats and helped adopt out 12 cats. There is a serious cat crisis in NYC. Cats are being hit by cars, suffering outdoors, fighting for food, and reproducing without access to basic care.

Affordable veterinary care is nearly impossible to find, and rescuers spend thousands of dollars out of pocket on veterinary bills and cat food. We want to continue helping these animals, but financial constraints limit what we can do. Additional funding would allow rescuers to save more lives, reduce suffering, and prevent unwanted litters.

Animal rescue benefits not only cats but entire communities by reducing stray populations, improving public health, and helping families keep the pets they love. These animals deserve better, and NYC must do more to support them.

From: Gaia_Quest
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Funding is desperately needed for our parks & trails
Date: Thursday, June 4, 2026 6:34:06 PM
Attachments: AA-Environmental-Funding.docx

[redacted]

My name is Kanwaldeep K. Sekhon and I am submitting written testimony to show support for funding for NYC's environmental and climate programs in the FY27 Budget as your online website requires me to choose a hearing and there is no hearing listed for improving and budgeting NYC parks. Thank you to the city council for allowing us to send written testimony via email.

As the federal government is rolling back decades of bipartisan environmental protections and drastically cutting funding for clean energy, which is not their call. We pay taxes and as taxpayers, we have every right to that funding. By rolling back on air, water and land protections, the federal government is stealing money from us, the taxpayers, to fund the military and Donald Trump's illegal war in Iran and Israel's illegal war in Lebanon, while our continues to experience heat waves, extreme rainfall and flooding, droughts, and sea level rise —which impacts and affects all New Yorkers.

Mayor Mamdani's Administration and the City Council have the opportunity to invest in New Yorkers by funding city agencies that advance proven climate solutions and mitigate the harm the Adams Administration and the Cuomo state government has done for decades, whether it's funding our parks system, prioritizing public transportation affordability, or investing in stormwater resilience.

I am attaching a breakdown of priorities that I feel are vitally needed and I hope that everyone on the city council will pay extra heed to these and vote unanimously to pass these budget priorities. Thank you for allowing me the space and time to comment and submit my written testimony.

L, P & S!! (aka: Love, Peace & Spirit!!)
--Kanwaldeep K. Sekhon ☺
[redacted]
Glen Oaks, NY 11004

Below you will find my FY27 budget environmental and climate priorities:

NYC Department of Parks and Recreation

Funding NYC Parks is even more vital as a Trust for Public Land report recently highlighted how New York City's parks system national ranking has been downgraded to 20th place, due in no small order to lack of funding and significant cuts to the agency's core staff over the last three years. It's a positive sign that the Mamdani Administration baselined $15 million for NYC Parks in the FY27 Executive Budget, which means that 161 of the 276 temporary ("one shot") positions will be made permanent and guaranteed a job after June 30th. This is a critical step forward, and I urge the Mayor and City Council to bring parks funding up to 1% of the city budget, as the Mayor committed to do during his campaign.

- Along with the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, I urge the Mamdani Administration to baseline a remaining $8 million, which would mean 115 critical parks staff who will lose their jobs on June 30th will be guaranteed permanent jobs.
- I also urge the City Council to fund approximately $23 million for a new round of 276 one-shots positions for FY27. These positions will help the agency make progress in key areas that have been pain points for every council member, such as tree maintenance.
- Along with the Forest for All NYC Coalition, I appreciate the Administration publishing the city's first-ever Urban Forest Plan. On that note, I support funding agencies that are tasked with the initial implementation of this Plan.

NYC Department of Buildings

I support the Administration's continued commitment to implementing Local Law 97 by providing $1.8 million to a new Co-op and Condo Hub within the NYC Accelerator program. This will provide specialized support to over 1,000 low- and middle-income co-ops and condos through engagement, decarbonization planning, and connecting with existing incentives and financing. I urge the Administration and City Council to continue providing funding for technical assistance and financial support to assist with the law's compliance.

NYC Department of Transportation

As the Mamdani Administration continues to announce new bus and bike lanes, it is great to see the robust capital funding allocated that will ensure these projects are implemented over the next several years, including funding for expanding the city's bus lanes and new bike lanes.

- For Fair Fares, I urge the City to expand eligibility to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) including fully free for households under 150% of the FPL, in addition to an expansion of Fair Fares with half-priced fares on MTA Express Buses and CityTickets on the LIRR and Metro-North railroads within New York City, and automatic enrollment of qualified households. Not only do we need greater investment in this program to expand eligibility but also more investment for outreach and education to make sure the many who currently qualify are using the program.
- I also urge the City to prioritize and fund Vision Zero policies that encourage safety through engineering, education, and enforcement to better protect pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. I support the City including $15 million in the FY27 budget to fund DOT's

hardened daylighting program citywide, which will improve driver, pedestrian and cyclist safety.

NYC Department of Sanitation

- I am pleased to see strong funding for DSNY's waste containerization program, including $14.8 million in FY27 and growing to $162 million in FY30, moving the city towards a cleaner future. It is also important to fund the purchase of Empire Bins, a European-style stationary on-street container for use by larger buildings, and automated side-loading trucks as the city continues to expand waste containerization.
- I support increasing funding for DSNY to conduct more outreach and education on DSNY's Residential Curbside Organics Program to increase participation rates.
- I also support the NYC Community Compost Network request of $9,290,000 for the city's Community Composting programs. These programs complement the City's residential organics program in that it provides vital jobs and workforce development, educates New Yorkers on zero waste solutions, and invests in local economies.

NYC Department of Environmental Protection

- I support the allocation of $10.6 million in FY27 for DEP's Bureau of Coastal Resilience, which will establish critical in-house capacity to manage the city's growing portfolio of shoreline protection assets and strengthen coastal resilience planning.
- I support continued funding for rain gardens, porous pavement, and other green infrastructure, as well as more investment in the maintenance of green infrastructure.

NYC Housing Authority

- I appreciate the Mamdani Administration's allocation of $38.4 million to provide all-electric heating and cooling at the New York City Housing Authority's Beach 41st Street development, which advances the city's goal of expanding Clean Heat for All to 20,000 apartments by 2031, according to NYCHA's 2026 Sustainability Agenda.

NYC Department of Education

- I urge DOE to fully commit to the timely implementation and funding of Local Law 120 of 2021, which mandates an all electric school bus (ESB) fleet by 2035 to cut harmful pollutants, improve public health and air quality, and fight climate change. The City must work with school bus vendors and utility companies to plan, develop, and fund school bus charging infrastructure throughout the City, especially at school bus depots located in disadvantaged communities, and ESB workforce development programs since bus fleet personnel will require training for driving, properly maintaining EVs, and optimizing charging for electric bus routes, energy needs, and intra-day energy price fluctuations.
- I also support $2.2 billion for clean energy upgrades in NYC Public Schools. This includes solar installation on schools and electrification projects, insulation repairs and upgrades to HVAC systems, and exploring projects that utilize thermal energy networks.

NYC Office of Emergency Management

- I also urge the City to allocate $1.2 million for the implementation of Local Law 128 of 2025, which codifies the NYC Cooling Centers Program. This should include funding for maintenance, staffing, increased hours of operation during extreme heat events (including weekends), and a public education campaign on extreme heat awareness and mitigation.

Subject: Urgent Call to Prioritize Funding to Expand School Capacity in Long Island City

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident and parent to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

LIC has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, Kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, and yet most area schools are already operating over capacity: P.S. 112 at **130%**, and P.S./I.S. 78 at **111%**. What is more, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City — Court Square — still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message to families is clear: you may not be guaranteed a school seat in your neighborhood.

I would also like to express urgent concern about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed school project. In a neighborhood where families are struggling today to secure local school placements, this project, along with other promised school construction projects in LIC, cannot continue to fall behind competing priorities. While I appreciate the creation of an incubation site for Q508 (Q439Q), a temporary solution cannot become a justification for continued delays to the permanent facility. Families were promised a permanent neighborhood school, with the full facilities and long-term stability that a dedicated school building provides. An incubation site may help relieve short-term pressure, but it does not address the broader and growing need for permanent school infrastructure in LIC.

Additionally, the current lease for the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE, Q580) is set to expire in just three years. Families have been assured that the school would be relocated so that it can continue serving students without disruption. We are appreciative that the budget includes funding for BSGE. However, we want to emphasize that it is critical that the City follow through on this commitment and move urgently to secure a permanent home for the school. Allowing delays to continue would create significant uncertainty for students and families and risks the loss of an important educational institution in a neighborhood already facing a severe shortage of school seats. The City must prioritize funding and planning for BSGE's relocation now to ensure continuity and stability for the community.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has also recognized the need for additional schools to support the neighborhood's rapid growth. Specifically, commitments were made to advance development of a school at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard. Creation of two additional schools has also been promised to create 1,300 more seats in conjunction with the planned construction of over 14,000 residential units. As more housing is developed through OneLIC, school construction must move in parallel — not years behind residential growth. Without firm

commitments and accountability around these promised schools, the existing seat crisis will only intensify.

Delays to the opening of these schools are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and more families pushed out of the neighborhood because they cannot rely on access to local public schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency, accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508 and other promised schools on schedule. Schools aren't just a service—they're the foundation of a stable, thriving neighborhood.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future. Please ensure that timely funding is delivered to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority for the completion of these projects.

Sincerely,
Karen Chin
Long Island City - 11101
Parent

I, Karen Hernandez Morales, would like the baseline funding for the lifelinks clubhouse because it helps me get out of the sluggish days I have. It also lets me get creative in the administrative field, and helps me be more social after being hospitalized.

Karen Margolis

Please fund $1.5M for spay/neuter and $2M for pet food pantries.

I have rescued sick and hurt cats off the street; I haveTNR'd cats that were unable to be re-homed. I have spent my own money (and I do not have a lot) on food and vet care for feral and abandoned cats. There are so many stray and feral cats in need and I could not look away. I have taken care of cat communities in Bushwick, Manhattan and Sunset Park. I have had to give up my rescue efforts for lack of funds and emotional exhaustion.

Many New Yorkers cannot afford veterinary care and animal rescuers are overwhelmed by the growing number of animals on the street. Its not fair to the animals or the rescuers to have this financial burden on their backs. Pet food is expensive. Pets are important to New York and people should be able to keep their pets and keep them healthy. Affordable veterinary and the ability to spay/neuter their pets will prevent families from abandoning their pets.

With your help we can keep the feral and abandoned cat population down and keep pets where they belong – with their owners.

Thank you for your consideration!

I have spent years working with cat rescues and seeing first hand how devastating it is when someone cannot care for their pet and have to surrender them. I have also seen the consequences of cats reproducing in the streets, which leads to suffering and lots of deaths. Having a pet is such a wonderful thing, and I want everyone in NYC to be able to have a pet and continue to care for it, especially when it's most needed. Please pass these funding measures. Thank you.

Subject: Support Funding for Crucial Animal Welfare Services in the FY 2027 Budget

Testimony:

Dear Chairperson Brannan and Members of the Committee on Finance,

My name is Katherine “Katie” Myers and I am a resident of Fort Greene in District 35. I am writing to strongly urge the City Council to fully fund vital animal welfare initiatives in the FY 2027 budget.

Specifically, I request the allocation of:

- **$1.5 Million** for low-cost spay/neuter services.
- **$2 Million** for community pet food pantries.
-

Animal Care Centers of NYC (ACC) and local rescue organizations are facing unprecedented strain due to severe overcrowding. Without affordable spay/neuter access, the homeless animal population will continue to surge. Furthermore, skyrocketing living costs are forcing families to surrender beloved pets simply because they cannot afford food.

Investing in these preventative services keeps families together, reduces municipal shelter burdens, and saves taxpayer money. Please ensure our city's budget reflects compassion for both vulnerable animals and the New Yorkers who care for them.

I am doing my part as a volunteer and foster with Brooklyn Animal Action, an all-volunteer organization that rescues, rehabilitates, and rehomes animals across NYC, providing, medical care, foster support, adoption services. and Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) to help stabilize community cat colonies. **Now it’s your turn to do your part by funding what should be a city service and not rely on the kindheartedness of New Yorkers to address this critical issue.**

Thank you for your time and leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,
Katherine “Katie” Myers
[redacted]
11217

June 10, 2026

My name is Kathleen Adams and I am testifying on the FY2027 budget.

The budget includes approximately $1.5 billion over two years in HPD capital funding for RAD/PACT and related Section 8 conversion activity. These City capital commitments support the conversion pipeline for roughly 62,000 NYCHA units.

That money should be moved out of the HPD RAD/PACT capital lines and placed directly in the NYCHA capital budget for Section 9 comprehensive modernization.

NYCHA residents need repairs funded directly: roofs, boilers, elevators, mold remediation, lead abatement, heat, kitchens, bathrooms, and accessibility upgrades. This is largely because the buildings and apartments have been intentionally neglected so they can be declared unlivable and then torn down. This is unconscionable! The City should not require a development to convert from Section 9 public housing to Section 8 before major capital repairs become possible. Stop kowtowing to rich developers!

I urge the Council to reallocate the $1.5 billion from HPD RAD/PACT conversion funding to NYCHA Section 9 capital repairs, for the comprehensive modernization program.

Fund Section 9 directly. Keep public housing public. Don’t perpetuate the bad policies of the Adams administration. Public housing is a public good.

Very sincerely,

K. Adams

Testimony from Kathryn Casey
June 10, 9:30 AM Finance Committee Hearing

Please fund $1.5M for spay/neuter and $2M for pet food pantries

Dear Committee Members:
I am an Upper East Side resident, a volunteer at the Manhattan Animal Care Center, and a new member of The Cat Collective rescue. I'm dismayed and heartbroken by the number of pets – primarily cats and dogs – who struggle to survive on the streets of this city – wounded, sick, abused, abandoned, hungry, cold, exhausted.

The lack of spay/neuter services in the city is responsible for much of this suffering. So is the cost of living. At the Manhattan ACC, I regularly see broken-hearted people crying in the waiting room. I tend to assume they're bringing their sick pets in for euthanasia, but lately often come to realize they're relinquishing those pets because they can no longer afford to feed them.

Anyone on NextDoor.com can testify to the astonishing proliferation of posts about homeless animals in desperate straits. Shelters are chronically overwhelmed, as are rescuers who struggle to cope with the growing number of stray and abandoned animals who need help — with no financial or logistical support from the city.

A few facts:

- NYC spends just $2.98 per person on animal care — among the lowest of any major U.S. city.
- 75% of dogs entering ACC (Animal Care Centers) are unfixed.
- 193,000 spay/neuter surgeries are needed annually for community cats and owned pets who cannot afford them. The city funds only 3,500 surgeries.

This city that considers itself the crossroads of the world needs to do better. Expanded spay-neuter programs and pet pantries would be one step in the right direction. Others would include:

-Taking a page from Hungary's book and doing something like this in NYC?
https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=Hungary%20homeless%20dogs%20enclosure

-Safe indoor/outdoor sanctuaries where TNR'd (trapped, neutered, released) community cats could live safely. Many people who feed neighborhood cats would be happy to volunteer to set up and maintain sanctuaries.

-Preventing landlords from assessing a surcharge for pets or refusing to allow them at all.

Thank you for your time.

From: Kt D
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Manhattan Youth Afterschool Program Contract Testimony
Date: Friday, May 22, 2026 11:51:17 AM

[redacted]

To my City & Community Representatives,

I would like to express my concerns & disappointment on learning about the cancelling of the contract with Manhattan Youth Afterschool Program at Quest to Learn (and a number of other schools). I understand it's important to make sure that the city has a range of quality programs and that RFPs help to continue to insure this quality & equality. But it seems quite unfair to make decisions that affect students & schools without any input from them (or barely any).

Manhattan Youth has been an integral part of Quest to Learn for many years and is a trusted partner in the school and with the kids that go to Quest. My 6th grader has been an active participant in the Manhattan Youth program since he started last fall and I will say this program was one of the reasons that we really liked Quest when we were looking at Middle Schools last year. They offer a wide range of great opportunities to participate in. In particular, my child has participated in the Minecraft club, the Cross Country team, Movie Club, Baking Club & Track programs. That is a wide range of interests, and there are so many more clubs and teams to be a part of. The Manhattan Youth staff are caring & nurturing adults that have helped my child explore their interests and hone their skills!

My child may only have been in the program for one year but he was already looking forward to some of the clubs that he was in in the fall. It feels very disingenuous that the city would just go and pull the plug on a program that was thriving, appreciated and kids were looking forward to. There are many things in this city that could use rehauling but this program is not one of them.

I am hopeful that this contract will be reconsidered and that future decisions on changing programs are more thoroughly examined with input from the people that actually use them.

Sincerely,
Katie Dominguez
Mother of a 6th grader at Quest to Learn Middle School (02M422)

From: Katie Holliday
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Written Testimony re: DYCD 5/28
Date: Thursday, May 21, 2026 11:13:09 AM

[redacted]

I am reaching out to express my strong opposition to the recent decision by the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) to replace the established afterschool provider, Manhattan Youth. This decision involves new organizations that often lack the necessary experience and established relationships within our school communities.

We respectfully urge a reconsideration of these decisions and request the restoration of Manhattan Youth partnerships for schools seeking continuity for the 2026-2027 school year.

BACKGROUND

The decision was made through a rushed and opaque process, excluding key stakeholders such as students, families, teachers, School Leadership Teams, PTA leadership, and the broader school community. Many principals who supported Manhattan Youth were informed that alternative providers had been selected for their schools, despite concerns about their experience and program quality.

Principals were directed to partake in a closed-door ranking process, where they had to rank providers they did not support. They were instructed not to discuss this process with essential stakeholders. There was no opportunity for public input, no transparency regarding evaluation criteria, and no appeals process. Families became aware of decisions affecting their children only after selections were finalized, which is unacceptable.

Manhattan Youth has been part of our school communities for over a decade. Families choose our schools for the quality programming and trusted staff provided by Manhattan Youth. Changes to this beloved afterschool program create unnecessary hardship for families during an already stressful time for students. The transition to new providers could undermine families' confidence in their child's safety and well-being after school.

Many newly selected providers lack the experience necessary to operate comprehensive middle school afterschool programs. We fully disagree with the DYCD's decisions and demand that Manhattan Youth be restored as our choice afterschool program.

THE VALUE OF THE MANHATTAN YOUTH PARTNERSHIP

For over ten years, Manhattan Youth has been an integral part of our school communities. Families often cite afterschool programming as a critical factor when selecting schools. These programs provide academic enrichment, arts, journalism, debate, chess, STEM opportunities, athletics, and safe environments for students.

Manhattan Youth staff members are not just contractors; they are trusted adults who have built lasting relationships with students, families, and school staff. This continuity is vital, especially during middle school, a formative time for students. With rising adolescent anxiety and mental health concerns, maintaining consistent relationships with trusted adults is essential.

Afterschool staff serve as mentors and stabilizing figures in students' lives. Disrupting these relationships undermines the trust and stability students depend on. The knowledge and understanding that Manhattan Youth has developed over the years cannot be easily replaced.

OUR REQUESTS

We call upon DYCD, DOE leadership, and City Hall to:

• Pause the implementation of the newly awarded middle school afterschool contracts

• Reinstate Manhattan Youth partnerships for schools requesting continuity

• Provide a transparent explanation of the provider selection process

• Establish a formal appeal mechanism for schools and communities

• Ensure future decisions prioritize middle school expertise, student well-being, and community trust

The current process has generated confusion and frustration across our school communities. We urge you to reconsider these decisions before they cause lasting harm to the programs that have served our children well for years.

Our students deserve continuity, trusted relationships, and decision-making processes grounded in transparency and genuine community engagement.

Thank you,

Katie Holliday



Today more than half of New Yorkers can't afford a visit to a veterinarian. Even those of us that can afford it, struggle to do so. City-provided spay/neuter services total only 3,500, when 200K are needed annually. It is time for the City to help make affordable veterinary care and spay/neuter services available for all New Yorkers.

Subject: Urgent Call to Prioritize Funding to Expand School Capacity in Long Island City

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident and parent to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

LIC has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, Kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, and yet most area schools are already operating over capacity: P.S. 112 at **130%**, and P.S./I.S. 78 at **111%**. What is more, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City — Court Square — still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message to families is clear: you may not be guaranteed a school seat in your neighborhood.

I would also like to express urgent concern about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed school project. In a neighborhood where families are struggling today to secure local school placements, this project, along with other promised school construction projects in LIC, cannot continue to fall behind competing priorities. While I appreciate the creation of an incubation site for Q508 (Q439Q), a temporary solution cannot become a justification for continued delays to the permanent facility. Families were promised a permanent neighborhood school, with the full facilities and long-term stability that a dedicated school building provides. An incubation site may help relieve short-term pressure, but it does not address the broader and growing need for permanent school infrastructure in LIC.

Additionally, the current lease for the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE, Q580) is set to expire in just three years. Families have been assured that the school would be relocated so that it can continue serving students without disruption. We are appreciative that the budget includes funding for BSGE. However, we want to emphasize that it is critical that the City follow through on this commitment and move urgently to secure a permanent home for the school. Allowing delays to continue would create significant uncertainty for students and families and risks the loss of an important educational institution in a neighborhood already facing a severe shortage of school seats. The City must prioritize funding and planning for BSGE's relocation now to ensure continuity and stability for the community.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has also recognized the need for additional schools to support the neighborhood's rapid growth. Specifically, commitments were made to advance development of a school at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard. Creation of two additional schools has also been promised to create 1,300 more seats in conjunction with the planned construction of over 14,000 residential units. As more housing is developed through OneLIC,

school construction must move in parallel — not years behind residential growth. Without firm commitments and accountability around these promised schools, the existing seat crisis will only intensify.

Delays to the opening of these schools are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and more families pushed out of the neighborhood because they cannot rely on access to local public schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency, accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508 and other promised schools on schedule. Schools aren't just a service—they're the foundation of a stable, thriving neighborhood.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future. Please ensure that timely funding is delivered to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority for the completion of these projects.

Sincerely,
Katrina Im
11101
Parent

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident and parent to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

LIC has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, Kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, and yet most area schools are already operating over capacity: P.S. 112 at **130%**, and P.S./I.S. 78 at **111%**. What is more, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City — Court Square — still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message to families is clear: you may not be guaranteed a school seat in your neighborhood.

I would also like to express urgent concern about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed school project. In a neighborhood where families are struggling today to secure local school placements, this project, along with other promised school construction projects in LIC, cannot continue to fall behind competing priorities. While I appreciate the creation of an incubation site for Q508 (Q439Q), a temporary solution cannot become a justification for continued delays to the permanent facility. Families were promised a permanent neighborhood school, with the full facilities and long-term stability that a dedicated school building provides. An incubation site may help relieve short-term pressure, but it does not address the broader and growing need for permanent school infrastructure in LIC.

Additionally, the current lease for the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE, Q580) is set to expire in just three years. Families have been assured that the school would be relocated so that it can continue serving students without disruption. It is critical that the City follow through on this commitment and move urgently to secure a permanent home for the school. Allowing delays to continue would create significant uncertainty for students and families and risks the loss of an important educational institution in a neighborhood already facing a severe shortage of school seats. The City must prioritize funding and planning for BSGE's relocation now to ensure continuity and stability for the community.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has also recognized the need for additional schools to support the neighborhood's rapid growth. Specifically, commitments were made to advance development of schools at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard, 4-99 44th Drive, and 5-46 46th Avenue. As more housing is developed through OneLIC, school construction must move in parallel — not years behind residential growth. Without firm commitments and accountability around these promised schools, the existing seat crisis will only intensify.

Delays to the opening of these schools are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of

delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and more families pushed out of the neighborhood because they cannot rely on access to local public schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency, accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508 and other promised schools on schedule. Schools aren't just a service—they're the foundation of a stable, thriving neighborhood.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future. Please ensure that timely funding is delivered to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority for the completion of these projects.

Sincerely,
Kay Chen and Pavel May
11109
Parents to incoming 3k student

From: Ken Winfield
To: Testimony
Cc: Marylyne Myrthil
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Written Testimony in Support of Manhattan Youth at Wagner Middle School
Date: Monday, May 25, 2026 2:04:11 PM

[redacted]

Dear Members of the New York City Council,

I am writing as a deeply concerned Wagner Middle School parent in strong support of Manhattan Youth remaining Wagner's after-school partner.

My family's connection to Wagner and Manhattan Youth spans eight years and three children. One of my children is now in college, one is in high school, and one is currently a student at Wagner. Across all three of their experiences, Manhattan Youth has been a constant, trusted, and essential part of our family's school community.

For my children, Manhattan Youth has never been "just" an after-school program. It has been a place where they were known, supported, encouraged, and given opportunities to grow. It has provided them with access to arts, music, sports, clubs, friendships, leadership opportunities, and meaningful relationships with caring adults. These experiences have helped shape who they are as students and as people.

A major reason this program has been so successful is the leadership of Marylyne Myrthil. Marylyne has created a true partnership with Wagner Middle School. She understands the students, the families, the staff, and the culture of the school. She has built trust over time, not through a contract alone, but through years of showing up for children and families with care, consistency, and commitment.

Under Marylyne's leadership, Manhattan Youth has become part of the fabric of Wagner. The program has grown alongside the school and has responded to the needs of the community. It supports not only daily after-school care, but also the broader life of the school, including clubs, performances, student events, dances, spirit weeks, and the kinds of experiences that make middle school meaningful and memorable.

As a parent, I cannot overstate how important continuity is for middle school students. These are formative years. Students need trusted adults, familiar routines, safe spaces, and programs that understand them. Manhattan Youth already has those relationships. Removing this provider would disrupt a program that is working, a partnership that families value, and a community that has been built over many years.

What is most troubling is that the voices of families and students do not appear to have been meaningfully included in this decision. Parents know the impact this program has had on our children. Students know the adults who have supported them. The school knows what works for its community. A decision of this magnitude should not be made without giving real

weight to the experiences of the families and children most affected.

This program matters because it gives students a safe, enriching, and supportive place to continue learning and growing after the school day ends. Without Manhattan Youth, our community would lose far more than childcare. We would lose trusted relationships, institutional knowledge, beloved programs, and a partner that has helped make Wagner the school community our children know and love.

I respectfully urge the City Council and the Department of Youth and Community Development to reconsider this decision and allow Manhattan Youth to remain Wagner Middle School's after-school partner. Please listen to the families, students, and school leaders who know firsthand the value of this program.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Sincerely,

Ken Winfield
Wagner Middle School Parent

June 8, 2026

Attn: Finance Committee of the New York City Council

My name is Kenneth Strohm, and I am a life-long resident of Queens. I submit this testimony in vigorous support of the QueensLink proposal and in firm opposition to the QueensWay park plan, which would foreclose one of the most consequential transit opportunities this borough has seen in generations.

Queens currently lacks rail transit or bicycle infrastructure connecting its northern and southern sections, leaving residents reliant on circuitous bus routes for public transportation. This is not an inconvenience - it is an injustice. For decades, Southeast Queens has functioned as a transit desert, and the 3.5-mile Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to correct that wrong. We must not squander it on half-measures.

QueensLink's genius lies in its refusal to accept a false choice. The city has an opportunity to provide both "rails and trails" by creating 33 acres of new parks and adding new bike paths along a reactivated transit line. The QueensWay proposal, by contrast, offers greenery at the permanent expense of transit - a trade that communities in this borough can ill afford.

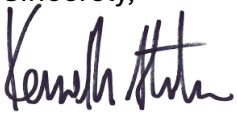
QueensLink is also projected to create more than 150,000 new jobs and add roughly 47,000 daily commuters to the NYC subway system. These are transformative, generational numbers. A linear park produces none of them.

Let us be clear about what QueensWay represents: a wannabe High Line development born of NIMBYism, with its main goal to permanently block transit restoration under the guise of offering ‘desperately needed’ green space to Queens. In fact, the Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way runs directly alongside one of the largest and most richly appointed parks in the entire city. Forest Park spans 543 acres, making it the tenth largest park in NYC and the third largest in Queens. It is not a patch of grass squeezed between apartment buildings. It contains a 165-acre forest, offers softball, baseball, tennis, bocce, handball, and a 110-acre golf course.

To spend $43 million in taxpayer money constructing a narrow linear park in the literal shadow of Forest Park - and to permanently sacrifice subway infrastructure to do so - is not urban planning. It is a punch line. The High Line comparison that QueensWay proponents love so dearly falls apart the moment you note that the High Line was built in a neighborhood with essentially no green space, in a borough with ample mass transit. Woodhaven, Forest Hills and Ozone Park are not Chelsea. Their residents do not need another walking path. They need a train. QueensLink gives them what they need. QueensWay gives them redundancy at the price of their freedom.

Every day this right-of-way sits idle, Southeast Queens chokes - literally. Automobile congestion is poisoning these neighborhoods, and a decorative park does nothing to fix that. New York built the greatest subway system in the world. We still can. Don't let obstruction masquerade as advocacy. Build QueensLink. Re-discover the political will necessary to serve everyone.

Sincerely,



I am writing to share my strong opposition to the proposed development of a skate park within Mount Prospect Park.

This park is an important part of my daily life and well-being. I walk there almost every day to take a break from work, enjoy the quiet, and spend time outdoors. The natural beauty of the park—its open green space, mature trees, and peaceful atmosphere—is what makes it so special. It is one of the few places nearby where residents can truly relax and connect with nature.

As a parent of a ten-month-old son, this park holds real value for me. I already bring him there for walks, and I look forward to continuing to use this space as he grows—whether that's playing on the grass, enjoying unstructured outdoor time, or simply having a safe, open environment to explore. Spaces like this are increasingly rare and incredibly valuable for families.

The fact that public funds are being used to build a skate park that will disturb this beautiful space is upsetting to me and I would like to voice opposition to this plan.

To the Council.

I am a resident of the East Village and frequent the Ottendorfer and Tompkins library branches, along with others when I'm in other parts of the city. The library provides knowledge, classes, space, and resources for the community.

I ask that public library funding be increased from 0.45% to at least 0.5% of the total city budget in this upcoming fiscal year. This was part of Mayor Mamdani's campaign promise, and I would like to see this upheld.

In addition, I ask that the 0.5% of the total city budget be the benchmark for all future library budgets at a minimum.

Thank you,

Kerry Recht
[redacted]
Zip code: 10003

Hello,

I’m writing in support of the Queenslink. The availability of public transportation is vital for equality, especially in NYC. In an ever-growing, and dense city like NY, any and all improvements to transit is essential, as efficient ways to move people from place to place is what keeps the city alive. The Queenslink would allow crucial subway transit access for the transit deserts in South Queens. It’ll drastically reduce travel time across the boro, as well as take thousands of cars off the road each day, which makes everybody happy. The Queenslink includes rail AND trails, so there will still be green space!

Kevin Burns

June 11, 2026

Dear New York City Council Members,

My name is Kevin Davis and I have been a resident of Long Island City for 17 years. I attended many of the DCP working sessions for the development of the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan and care deeply about the future of my neighborhood. I am writing to demand that the commitments made in the OneLIC Neighborhood plan are fulfilled on time.

LIC already suffers from one of the lowest levels of open and green space per resident in New York City, and multiple public reviews of the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan acknowledge that the neighborhood's parkland and open space are already severely lacking, and will worsen with new residences without intervention, which the city has acknowledged. Despite this, the budget pushes back several commitments to open space:

- Waterfront esplanade and new open space construction, planned for completion in 2031, is not planned for funding until 2031
- Queensbridge Baby Park, planned for completion in 2031, is not planned for funding until 2032 or 2033
- Renewal of Queensbridge Park, planned for design in 2028, is not planned for funding until 2032

It also fails to fund the Parks Department at 1%, and does not baseline funding for the 115 Parks workers whose jobs expire in June or provide the 276 new jobs in Parks needed to support our existing public spaces, or provide adequate funding for GreenThumb and the Urban Park Rangers.

Augmenting green space and supporting a green NYC are fundamental to have a resilient and sustainable future.

In addition to Parks concerns, I want to highlight the transportation and public realm issues being compromised by the current budget. The rezoned area requires significant improvements to provide safe connections through and beyond the neighborhood, allow people the space and infrastructure to spend time with their neighbors outdoors, and help bridge the divide between Queensbridge residents and other parts of LIC. Despite these real needs, the executive budget fails to include or significantly delays several of the promised improvements:

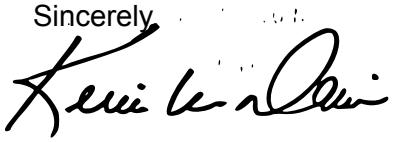
- Court Square Toilet not included in the budget
- Lighting Study in the IBZ not included in the budget
- Feasibility Study of Public Realm Improvements Under QBB Ramps not included in the budget
- Queens waterfront greenway delayed until 2029 + 2032
- 21st Street Intermodal Hub delayed until 2029 + 2032
- 44th Drive corridor improvements delayed until 2029 + 2032

As the City moves forward with significant new development in Long Island City, it is critical that these commitments are not delayed, deferred, or reduced. The City Council must ensure that the promised funding to allow the neighborhood to support so many new residents is not pushed off or ignored.

I believe that parks, open space and transportation improvements promised under OneLIC must be fully funded and delivered on an appropriate and timely schedule so that neighborhood infrastructure keeps pace with growth and current residents are not asked to continue bearing the consequences of decades of underinvestment infrastructure and green space.

We need the City to honor and prioritize its commitment to the previously promised funding by the Mayor's Office to ensure equitable development. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future.

Sincerely,



Kevin Davis, AIA LEED AP
KWD Architecture PLLC
217 51st Avenue
Long Island City, NY 11101

May 30,2026

Dear City councils,

My name is Khin Han. I am the mother of a student from BSGE High School. My son is an 11th grader at BSGE. I am writing this letter to testify that BSGE is fully funded for relocation,protecting the budget allocation already designated for our new site.The city kept its promise to ensure BSGE remains fully funded. The reason I am supporting this testimony, BSGE is a great school and higher education. The school system is great, all the teachers were amazing. All the principles were great. It feels safe for all the students in BSGE. The school is old and small.The laboratory is very old and no auditorium for students. And also not enough room for students to take the IB exam, BSGE has to rent the building to take the exam for our kids.Also the office of management and budget allocate the estimated $519 million needed for the School Construction Authority(SCA) to build the promised 600-seat middle school and two 650-seat elementary schools.Our local Queens North community is growing rapidly without these new seats, schools will face severe overcrowding, breaking a critical infrastructure promise made to our neighborhood families. I am here to testify that the written email to City Councils for BSGE remains fully funded relocation and others promised neighborhood middle school and elementary schools to be fully funded. Thank You So Much.

Sincerely,
Khin Han.
Parent of a student from BSGE.

Dear Members of the Finance Committee,

I am writing in support of funding $1.5 million for spay/neuter services and $2 million for pet food pantries. As a volunteer at an animal shelter, I spent time walking dogs and saw firsthand how many animals are waiting for loving homes. I also adopted my own cat from a shelter, and that experience showed me the incredible impact that rescue organizations have on both animals and people. Affordable spay/neuter programs help reduce overcrowding in shelters and prevent unnecessary suffering, while pet food pantries help families keep their beloved pets during difficult financial times. These programs strengthen our communities, support responsible pet ownership, and give more animals the chance to find safe, permanent homes. Adopting my cat has brought so much joy and companionship into my life, and I hope more New Yorkers have the opportunity to experience that bond. Supporting these programs helps ensure that pets stay healthy, cared for, and with the families who love them. Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

Kinga Skrzat

Dear Councilmembers,

Thank you for your service.

I'm writing to ask you to include $1.5 million for affordable spay/neuter and veterinary care and $2 million for pet food pantries in the FY 2027 Speaker's Initiative budget.

Caring for pets helps in so many ways. It reduces anxiety and depression, as well as loneliness and isolation. It has for me and for many other humans.

It also reduces anxiety, depression, loneliness, and isolation among the otherwise homeless animals living in the city's shelters.

Caring for pets is becoming more and more expensive and impossible for more and more New Yorkers to do.

The more human pet relationships there are, the less destructive behavior there is so all of society ends up benefiting from this.

Please make it easier for humans to care for pets.

Thank you for listening,

Kira Labinger

June 10, 2026
To The New York City Council,

As a parent of two BSGE students, I have been advocating for a new space for our school since 2018. I am thrilled that we are now included in the OneLIC Development Plan and will continue to work to ensure that as promised by the City, BSGE remains fully funded for our relocation protecting the budget allocation already designated for our new site.

In addition, the Office of Management and Budget must allocate the estimated $519 million needed for the School Construction Authority (SCA) to build the promised 600-seat middle school and two 650-seat elementary schools. Without these new seats, schools will face severe overcrowding, breaking a critical infrastructure promise made to neighborhood families.

Sincerely,

Kristen Blackburn

BSGE Parent

The Woodhaven Boulevard Subway should be on the first docket of transit projects executed by the Big Apple Transit Authority under the City Council's stewardship.

This docket should include taking over planning
for the restoration of the Bay Ridge Branch known today as the Interborough Express.

On all subway expansions, thorough alignment alternatives should be analysed such that the development goals of the city council
in conjunction with the mayoralty are prioritised from the ground up
as opposed to the situation today in which expediency forces us to bicker over the reuse of the Long Island Rail Road's abandoned infrastructure.

Where that means proposals which involve heavy construction
outside those currently abandoned or underutilised rights of way,
a city-oriented body must withstand political pushback
and demonstrate that such disruption would facilitate sufficient performance under city-defined metrics to warrant capital investment.

Up for study is a subway line directly under or over Woodhaven Boulevard
along the Q53 corridor between a connection to the existing IND Rockaway Line
at Rockaway Boulevard and 99th Street in the south
to a station next to Queens Centre Mall in the median of
the Long Island Expressway at Queens Boulevard in the north,
then up Junction Boulevard and 94th Street
to Terminal B of LaGuardia Airport and a Cross-Rikers Tunnel
that can one day make this the primary artery between Central Queens and The Bronx, reaching into Hunts Point, East Tremont, Fordham, Kingsbridge, Marble Hill, and Riverdale.

This would serve the mission of expanding transit availability across the outer boroughs as stipulated by the current text of New York Senate Bill 6697,
which if passed would confer the power to make the Woodhaven Boulevard Subway a priority onto you, the city council,
in a municipally-controlled reorganisation of New York City's subway system.

Kuvonn Kalel
2026.06.10

To whom it may concern,

My name is Kyle Ng and I have lived in this city for my whole life. I have had a fascination with public transportation since childhood and have often utilized it to get around the city. Whether it is to get to my home in time square or use buses to get to shopping malls. But my time using public transportation has brought a problem to my eyes, which is the lack of train lines that run within Queens. During my junior year in high school, I participated in a robotics team that competes in competitions against other teams within the city. One of the venues that hosts these robotics competitions is a high school located in Fresh Meadows. When me and my team had to get to the venue, we would have to wake up at five in the morning just to ride the F train through Manhattan and the crowded Q30 for three hours just to get to where we needed to go and back home. Even though our team gets to the venue by my dad's car the following year nowadays, it takes precious time away from my dad who works almost every day from nine in the morning to seven at night. In addition, his ability to drive has worsed these past few years as he gets exhausted more easily due to his old age. However, all of this can change if Queenslink is built, where it can serve as an alternative and faster route which does not go through Manhattan. Not only that, Queenslink will provide both park space and rail compared to Queensway which only seeks to build a park. So on behalf of my family and robotics team, I urge the City council to reconsider their choice on funding Queensway and instead put that funding into Queenslink.

As a Lifelong Rockaway resident our Peninsula is in Desperate Need of Trauma Center with Expanded Health Care Services! We are in Urgent Need of a Trauma Care Center due to the Overwhelming health Emergencies that occur Everyday within our ROCKAWAY Community!

Too many of our Residents in the Rockaway Community suffer life threatening issues such as Gun Violence and Cardiac Health and other health Emergencies.

I am asking that we get the necessary funds to ensure that our Rockaway Trauma Care Center can start development to serve the Rockaway Community.

Thank you so much.

JUNE 11, 2026

TO WHOM IT MAY BELONG:)

TO ALL THE ACRING FOLKS:)

TO THE ONES WHO CAN MAKE LIFE EASIER FOR ALL OF US:)

HI MY NAMIE IS LATONYA 'SASSEE' WALKER. I AM A LOCAL, ONE WOMAN RESCUER DONATING MY TIME AND MONEY TO HELPING THE MUCH NEEDED HUMANS AND ANIMALS IN THE EAST NEW YORK, BROWNSVILLE AND CANARSIE AREA. I HAVE BEEN HELPING EVERYONE I CAN SINCE 2011. I CAN NOT TELL U HOW MUCH I HAVE SPENT AND CONTINUE TO SPEND ON HELPING THE WORLD BUT I CAN TELL U THIS, A MONTH, ON JUST PET FOOD ALONE, I AM EASILY CLOSE TO A 1,000.00 A MONTH. I HELP A TON OF SENIOR CITIZENS, I HELP RESIDENTS IN SHLETERS AND SENIOR CENTERS WHO HAVE PETS OR FEED THE OUT OF CONTROL STRAY CAT/DOG POPULATION. I ALSO PROVIDE TO AND FROM CAR SERVICE TO TAKE PETS TO GET NEUTERED AND I DO THIS BECAUSE IT IS EITHER THAT OR OUTSIDE ON THE STREETS. I DO EVERYTHING TO KEEP PETS IN THEIR HOMES AND I DO EVERYTHING TO CONTROL THE OUTSIUDE POPULATION, TOO MANY ROAMING ANIMALS BRINGS OUT HUMANS HATE AND TRHEY HAVE TIME AND TIME AGAIN HARMED THE INNOCENTS ANIMALS AND THE HUMANS THAT LOVE THEM, SO LESS IS BEST... I GET THEM FIXED AT MY EXPENSE. I DO NOT MIND HELPING BUT LORD KNOWS I CAN USE SOME MAN POWER, ANY HELP, SOME REAL CITY HELP. I WOULD BE SO SO GRATEFUL IF U CA ALLOCATE THE MONIES TO HELP WITH THESE 2 MAJOR MAJOR OBSTACLES, I CAN SEE SOME RELIEF.

PLEASE PLEASDE PLEASE...

IF U NEED PROOF OR WOULD LIKE TO HEAR MORE, DO NOT HESITATE TO REACH OUT TO ME. IN THE MEANTIMNE I WILL CONTINUE TO PRAY SUPER HARD FOR HELP!!!!!

THANK U AND GOD BLESS U ALL!!!

LOVE SASSEE AND THE COMMUNITY...

Dear Chair Brannan and members of the Finance Committee,

I am writing in strong support of allocating $1.5 million for low-cost spay/neuter and veterinary care and $2 million for pet food pantries across NYC.

I am a New Yorker and the guardian of a rescue dog named Kai, and I know firsthand how stressful and financially overwhelming basic veterinary care can be. Even routine services can quickly become hundreds of dollars, and when unexpected needs come up, the cost can feel impossible. There have been times when I have had to ask family for help or worry about whether paying for basic care for my dog would affect my ability to cover rent and other necessities. No one should have to be in that position.

I also constantly see requests from neighbors in online groups asking for donations for essential, life-saving veterinary care for their animal companions. It is heartbreaking every time. People are being forced to make excruciatingly difficult decisions, not because they do not love their animals, but because they simply do not have the money to provide the healthcare their animals need. No family should have to choose between rent, food, and medical care for a beloved companion animal.

Affordable veterinary care shouldn't be a luxury. It's what allows people to keep the animals they love healthy and safe. It also prevents more animals from being surrendered to shelters or left without care simply because their families cannot afford treatment, food, or spay/neuter services. Many New Yorkers love their animals deeply, but the cost of living in this city is already extremely high, and pet care expenses can push families into crisis.

Funding low-cost spay/neuter and veterinary services, along with pet food pantries, is a compassionate and practical investment. It will help keep animals in their homes, reduce pressure on already overwhelmed shelters and rescue groups, prevent unnecessary suffering, and support New Yorkers who are trying their best to care for their pets.

Please include $1.5 million for low-cost spay/neuter and veterinary care and $2 million for pet food pantries in the FY 2027 budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

June 10, 2026

To the New York City Council

Regarding OneLIC funding

Dear New York City Council,

I am submitting this testimony as a parent of a 10th grader at the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE) located on 36th Avenue and as a resident of Long Island City since 2015.

I am thankful to the NYC Council for supporting **OneLIC**, which included funding for a new school building for BSGE. I urge you **to keep your promise to the students at BSGE** and to protect the budget allocation designated for BSGE's new school site.

Please continue your work supporting the children of our district and allocate the money needed for the **School Construction Authority to build the additional promised schools**: a 600-seat middle school and two 650-seat elementary schools.

Our Queens North community is growing rapidly. Without these new seats, schools will face severe overcrowding. Please do not break this promise made to neighborhood families. Please allocate the needed funding so that OneLIC fulfills its vision of schools, parks, and affordable housing for our community.

My family has benefited from living for the past ten years in an affordable housing unit at the waterfront. We live on my salary as a mental health professional working for a Federally Qualified Health Center in New York City and that of my husband, a visual artist. Without the City's support for affordable housing, we would have never been able to sustain living in New York City. Please continue to support these opportunities for other hardworking families by fully funding ***all*** **the promises of OneLIC**.

Thank you,

Laura Meyers.

Laura Meyers

[redacted]

Long Island City, NY 11101

[redacted]

[redacted]

Written Testimony of Laura Paterson
301 East 21st St, Apt 3J, New York, NY 10010

Regarding Funding for Affordable Pet Care in the FY 2027 Speaker's Initiative Budget

My name is Laura, and I urge the City Council to include $1.5 million for affordable spay/neuter and veterinary care and $2 million for pet food pantries in the FY 2027 Speaker's Initiative budget.

As a New Yorker and longtime animal lover, I have personally rescued cats from the streets and welcomed them into my home. Through these experiences, I have seen firsthand how access to affordable veterinary care can mean the difference between an animal receiving treatment and an animal continuing to suffer.

Even for loving and responsible pet owners, veterinary expenses can quickly become overwhelming. More than half of New Yorkers cannot afford a basic veterinary visit, and no one should have to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their pet. Funding pet food pantries and low-cost veterinary services keeps animals where they belong: at home with the people who love them.

The need for affordable spay and neuter services is especially urgent. Approximately 193,000 surgeries are needed annually for community cats and owned pets whose families cannot afford them, yet the city currently funds only 3,500. As someone involved in animal rescue, I have seen the consequences of this gap. Too many cats continue to suffer outdoors, and rescue organizations and shelters are left struggling to keep up.

Seventy-five percent of dogs entering Animal Care Centers of NYC are unaltered. By removing cost barriers to veterinary care, New York City can help prevent unwanted litters, increase adoptions, and reduce preventable euthanasia. These investments will also ease the burden on shelters, rescue organizations, and the employees and volunteers who dedicate themselves to caring for animals in need.

Affordable veterinary care is not just an animal welfare issue—it is a community issue. These programs help keep families together, reduce suffering, and ensure that fewer animals are left to fend for themselves on our streets.

I respectfully urge the City Council to include these critical investments in the FY 2027 Speaker's Initiative budget.

Best

TESTIMONY TO THE NYC COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE
JUNE 10, 2026

Thank you, Committee Chair and members of the finance committee, for the opportunity to share my thoughts today. My name is Laura Wolf-Powers. I am a Professor of urban policy and planning at Hunter College, a member of the Western Queens Community Land Trust (WQCLT) and a supporter of the Abolish the Tax Lien Sale Coalition. My testimony supports expanded discretionary and capital funding for CLTs in the upcoming fiscal year, and also asks the Council to support low-income homeowners negatively affected by the city's tax lien sale.

First, Community Land Trusts. Since 2022, WQCLT has received City Council discretionary funding through the citywide **Community Land Trust (CLT) Initiative**, which has helped catalyze the growth of CLTs across the five boroughs. Multiple CLTs, including ours, have active projects in development or are already stewarding land and housing at the neighborhood level in ways that prevent speculation and encourage community control. CLTs are transforming vacant lots into community and commercial hubs, working with tenants to own and manage their buildings as community assets, and protecting deeply affordable housing in rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods. CLTs were recognized in Mayor Mamdani's Block By Block plan as a key part of a comprehensive housing affordability strategy.

We urge the City Council to fund the CLT Initiative at $3 million for 23 organizations in the FY27 expense budget—up from $1.5 million in FY26. These funds provide essential support to CLTs like ours, which has successfully organized to envision and promote the adaptive re-use of a city-owned building on the Long Island City waterfront as well as engaging with tenants and neighbors to work toward acquiring "zombie buildings" in Elmhurst and a food pantry location in Astoria. Our goal with all the properties in our pipeline is to convert them to permanently affordable housing and workspace that meets local housing and economic development needs. We cannot continue to make progress and maintain our momentum without support from the Council.

We additionally urge the City Council to support the creation of a **$50 million CLT acquisition Fund in the FY27 capital budget**. Mayor Mamdani committed during his campaign to creating such a Fund, which would enable CLTs to more readily bring land housing into permanently affordable community control. New policies — including recently enacted land bank legislation and the reintroduced Community Opportunity to Purchase Act — stand to channel many more properties to community ownership in the coming years. CLTs need to have the resources and wherewithal to seize these opportunities.

Finally, we urge the City Council to address chronic, harmful delays in registering discretionary funding contracts. These persistent delays are creating serious cash flow challenges for small organizations, slowing our progress.

The second thing I would like to testify about today is the **tax lien sale, which affects the same population whose needs community land trusts address**. The Fiscal Year 2027 Executive Budget includes revenue from a tax lien sale while providing no funding for outreach to owners and residents of lien sale-eligible buildings. This is unacceptable.

I have two asks in relation to the lien sale. First, I'd like to urge the Council to pressure the Administration to suspend the lien sale in 2027. The small amount of revenue the sale generates is far outweighed by the harms it imposes on struggling homeowners and on tenants living in buildings owned by tax-delinquent landlords. Second, **The City Council must pass a budget that includes $3 million in outreach funding for residents of lien sale-eligible properties, even if the lien sale is suspended in 2027.** Struggling homeowners will only see their City debt increase if they don't have the support they

need. Tenants in buildings with outstanding debt need to be informed of their rights and connected with groups that can help them improve their living conditions.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee on these two critical and interrelated matters – support for Community Land Trusts and the need to create, ASAP, a more fair and more humane system for dealing with debt-burdened homeowners who stand to be gravely harmed by the tax lien sale. Thank you.

Members of the City Council,

NYC Solves has positively impacted the way I teach math. Students now spend more time making sense of problems, collaborating with peers, and developing a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts. This has led to an uptick, not just in test scores but in educator perceptions of the curriculum they're using.

That's why **I urge you to continue the progress and baseline $200 million in the city budget to keep, grow, sustain, and improve NYC Reads and NYC Solves**.

My name is Lauren DeVita, and I'm a NYC educator. For years, I have been a strong advocate for expanding access to high-quality math instruction across New York City. Like many educators, I advocated for that expansion because I believed more students deserved access to the same high-quality learning experiences I was seeing in my own classroom. But I also know that expansion means we also need the City Council to do its part by providing the long-term funding necessary to support implementation.

We cannot continue expanding these initiatives without making the investments needed to sustain them. Now that both elementary and middle schools will be taking part in these initiatives, we need baseline funding that gives educators opportunities to collaborate across schools and grade bands. NYC Solves is no longer a pilot. It is a growing, citywide commitment to improving math outcomes for students. A commitment of that scale requires permanent, reliable funding and support to ensure students experience a consistent, high-quality instructional experience.

The city answered calls from educators like me to expand NYC Solves to more grade levels. Now, I'm asking members of the City Council to now do its part and ensure that expansion succeeds.

Thank you.

Lauren Rosenthal
[redacted]
New York, NY 10003
[redacted]

May 19, 2026

RE: Manhattan Youth

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to ask that we get to keep Manhattan Youth as the after school provider at MS104 Baruch. My child is a sixth grader and this program is part of why he made such a positive transition to middle school. The program is great. My child has tried so many classes: Lego, Chess, Programming, Fencing, Track, Cross Country, Ping Pong, and Ultimate Frisbee. Mike Jones has been great to work with, he always finds a way so that my child can try the class he wants to be in. I think this program is part of the reason we don't have kids roaming the street during the afternoon, that was a big problem in the neighborhood previously. These activities keeps kids busy and gives them opportunities to try activities they might not otherwise have access to. Sports and hobbies can at times be a barrier to people from different backgrounds building relationships and this program helps kids connect to each other. Manhattan Youth is high quality programming.

By changing the program you are cutting us off from all of our coaches. Can you imagine just firing a big chunk of the school staff? That's basically what's happening. My child has spent the year building these relationships and now this whole aspect of the school will be erased, destroying continuity and more importantly, destroying something that works. Please reconsider.

Lauren Rosenthal

June 9, 2026

To whom it may concern at the City Council:

I urge the City Council to include **$1.5 million for affordable spay/neuter and veterinary care** and **$2 million for pet food pantries** in the FY 2027 Speaker's Initiative budget. More than half of New Yorkers cannot afford a basic veterinary visit. They love their pets, and want them to be healthy and happy! In addition, 75% of dogs entering ACC are unfixed. 193,000 spay/neuter surgeries are needed annually for community cats and owned pets who cannot afford them. The city funds only 3,500.

No New Yorker should have to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their pet. Funding pet food pantries and low-cost veterinary services keeps animals where they belong: at home with the people who love them. As cost barriers are removed, adoptions will increase and preventable euthanasia will decrease. This will reduce pressure on NYC's animal shelters and rescue organizations, as well as reduce burnout on employees and volunteers.

Thank you for working hard to help humans and animals alike!

Sincerely,

Lauren Tartaglia

[redacted], Brooklyn, NY 11249

[redacted]

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter to urge the city Council to support a food pantry for pet food and spay/neuter programs for NYC pet parents. As a Small Pets Volunteer at the Animal Care Centers in Manhattan and Queens, I know firsthand the impact of financial instability on pet owners. Most people in this city are doing their best in an economy that is increasingly straining lower-income and middle-class workers, and their pets are often the ones who suffer. Pet guardianship should not be the sole privilege of the wealthy. Having a pet improves mood, makes people feel less alone, and develops empathy, kindness, and humanity. It is a benefit to our whole society when families and individuals are able to have pets and develop connections that bring them fulfillment and joy. Creating a pet food pantry and funding spay/neuter programs opens up access to those who may have found pet companionship cost-prohibitive. It also prevents pets from ending up in shelters. At my volunteer sites, I have seen too many pet guardians in tears as they have given up their beloved companions due to financial hardship. I hope the city Council will support these programs to help families and pets stay together!

Thank you for your time,
Lauren Upadhyay
Washington Heights
10033

Members of the City Council,

My name is Leigh Ercole, I'm a New York City educator, and **I am here today to urge the City Council to baseline $200 million in dedicated funding to keep, grow, sustain, and improve NYC Reads and NYC Solves.**

The success of NYC Reads and NYC Solves depends not only on strong curriculum materials but also on ensuring that teachers receive the professional learning (PL) and support they need to meet the needs of every student in front of them.

At my school, PL has included collaborative planning time to work together on an English Language Arts unit while preparing students for state assessments. We reviewed assessments, eliminated redundant assignments, and modified others. And the results were powerful. Some students thrived with shared writing support, while others excelled through independent work. Although each path may look different, every student demonstrated mastery of the same standards. Professional learning made that possible and has been one of the most valuable tools for improving my practice.

I have also seen firsthand the impact of tutoring. As an after-school tutor myself and as a classroom teacher whose students receive tutoring services, I know how transformative targeted support can be for students, particularly in mathematics. By investing in both professional learning and high-impact tutoring, through dedicated baseline funding, the city can ensure that students receive a coherent learning experience. It will also give schools the assurance that professional learning, collaborative planning time, implementation support, and high-impact tutoring will remain available year after year.

New teachers enter our schools every year. Student needs continue to evolve. Learning how to implement a curriculum effectively is not a one-time event. By baselining $200 million in the city budget for NYC Reads and NYC Solves, the Council can help ensure that educators have the tools they need and students have the opportunities they deserve.

Thank you.

Subject: Privatization of NYCHA Creates Instability for Seniors.

I am a senior living in the South Bronx and do not have an email address. I am being supported in submitting this testimony by Save Section 9. I benefit from NYCHA and their community center managed by East Side Houses.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

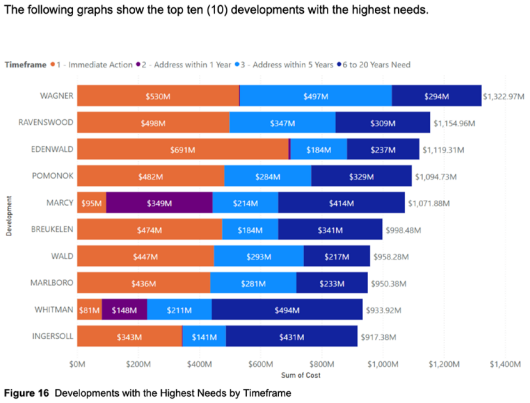


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.
- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

Dear Committee Members,

I'm writing this to the New York City Committee of Finance to express my deep concern about the future of the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch and why I strongly urge this committee to remove any funding of the QueensWay plan from the city's budget, and instead consider funding for the QueensLink plan instead.

Queens is the city's largest borough by area and second-largest by population. Yet it is significantly underserved by transit, with the fewest subway miles per capita. In particular, despite the fact that many Queens residents commute between Northern and Southern Queens, there aren't any clear trips available by transit, involving long bus trips along congested Woodhaven Blvd and/or multi-modal transfers. This makes the corridor one of the longest commute times in NYC. QueensLink seeks to address this by reactivating the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch into *both* 33 acres of new community parks *and* an extension of the M subway line. This extension alone will serve 150,000 Queens residents who are currently without subway access, creating many new transit trips that previously were not possible. With an extension of the M to Rockaway Beach, there can be additional capacity added to the Queens Blvd Line by extending the G line from Court Square to Forest Hills - 71 Av. The Queens Blvd Line is a backbone of Queens transportation network, and it is facing severe capacity issues. QueensLink addresses this by significantly expanding service along the corridor. In total, taking into account the expanded subway service along Queens Blvd, in Woodhaven, and in Rockaway, QueensLink will expand subway service to a population of 880,000 within a 15 minute catchment area. Riders will see trips up to 75% faster between destinations along the corridor.

QueensLink has conducted professional research from industry-leading experts that backs up their plan. One report finds that QueensLink will generate at least $8.9B in economic growth, have 21,300 riders per mile (twice as many riders per mile compared to the Interborough Express), and 4.7M fewer car trips annually, equating to 7,200 fewer tons of CO2 annually. And while many other megaprojects tend to balloon in costs, QueensLink will be an efficient long-term investment towards the city's future that performs exceptionally well compared to these other megaprojects. According to the QueensLink Initial Business Case, "The benefits of QueensLink outweigh the costs: investing $1 in QueensLink returns $1.10 to society."

In comparison to QueensLink, the QueensWay plan aims to build *only* a park along the corridor without any explicit plan for future rail transit. The New York City Economic Development Corporation aims to start its construction this year, and your latest budget proposal includes funding for this park. It is critical that the QueensWay plan is not built because *it includes construction in places using the right-of-way that would prevent rail investment in the future.* The QueensWay plan was developed to intentionally block transit restoration along the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch, even though it is possible to build both rails and trails

using the right-of-way. Should QueensWay be built instead of QueensLink, adding transit later would require demolition of the park, wasting $43M in taxpayer dollars. QueensLink is a once in a lifetime investment into our transportation network that will directly benefit hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers, saving them time and money and giving them the transit experience they deserve.

The Mamdani Administration is adamant about their support and prioritization of public transit expansion. A huge aspect of Mayor Mamdani's platform focuses on affordability and measures that practically help working New Yorkers, notably fast and free buses. And the city is already acting on that vision, such as the new busway proposal on 34th Street. If the city truly cares about helping working New Yorkers' quality of life and making the city more affordable through transit expansion, then it is clear that QueensLink is the way to go, and not QueensWay.

Thank you.

Good morning, council members. My name is Liam McCarthy, and I'm a high schooler in the city. I'm here today to testify about the Wildlife Conservation Society and the impact city zoos and the aquarium have on New York City high schoolers.

As a middle schooler during the pandemic, I obviously didn't spend much time outside. I was awkward and apathetic to the world outside my phone. The summer before my high school, my mother was desperate to get me outside, so I began volunteering at the Prospect Park Zoo as a "Discovery Guide."

During my four years and 550 hours of volunteering as a Discovery Guide, I educated guests of all ages about issues that I, myself, had only just learned about thanks to the program. My knowledge of climate change, invasive species, and environmental justice went from nonexistent to extensive in just four years.

As important as the conservation education part of the WCS youth volunteer program is, it's also responsible for the development of a lot of my social skills, like public speaking (gesture around me). Before the program, I would get nervous and freeze up at the simplest question from a stranger, but by my senior year I was giving wide-scale narration during sea lion training sessions to hundreds, if not thousands of people at a time.

My experience is not unique. I've made dozens of friends through this program who have also gone from shy kids to passionate, outgoing young adults. While many teenagers today are struggling with social interaction in this increasingly online world, New York City Discovery Guides have been developing in the opposite direction.

Much of the ticket revenue at the city zoos and New York Aquarium go toward funding global conservation efforts in more than 50 other countries, so the bulk of these zoos' operation funds comes from outside. This means that programs like the WCS Education Department's Discovery Guide program really do live and die depending on the whims of annual government spending.

The FY2027 budget proposal for the WCS is down by several thousand dollars this year. While this is not a dramatic change, it worries me for the future. By maintaining and expanding this program, more high school students have the opportunity to learn about conservation, along with essential life skills to help them develop into engaged, well-educated citizens.

Thank you.

Subject: Privatization Creates Instability for Seniors.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

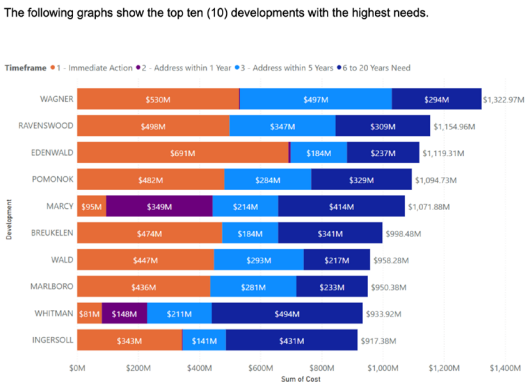


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.

- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

Subject: Privatization of NYCHA Creates Instability for Seniors.

I live at Mitchel Houses in the South Bronx and do not have an email address. I am being supported in submitting this testimony by Save Section 9.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

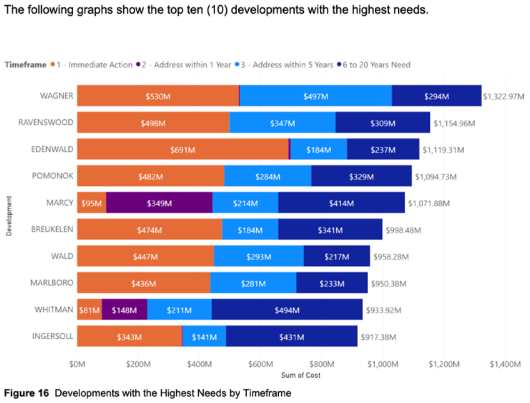


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.
- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

Subject: Privatization of NYCHA Creates Instability for Seniors.

I live at Mitchel Houses in the South Bronx and do not have an email address. I am being supported in submitting this testimony by Save Section 9.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

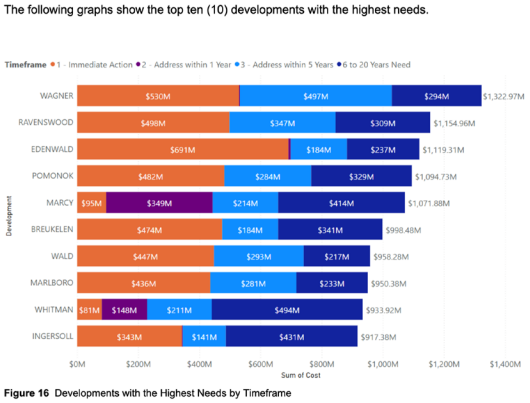


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.
- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

From: Ling Teo
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Save Manhattan Youth!
Date: Thursday, May 21, 2026 9:29:34 AM

[redacted]

To Whom It May Concern,

As a parent and veteran teacher at a prestigious middle school, the Salk School of Science, I am shocked at the decision not to extend Manhattan Youth's contract at our school.

Manhattan Youth has built up an afterschool program unparalleled in scope at Salk. They have been indispensable at school events, such as the school dance. Many of their staff have been so supportive that we have hired them as paraprofessionals in our school- a testament to how important they are to our community. Therefore it comes as a blow to us that they will be replaced by the Imogen Foundation.

Currently, under the capable leadership of Khadijha Henry, Manhattan Youth runs like a well-oiled machine- we have interschool sports competitions for soccer, basketball, ping pong, flag football, a track team, an amazing annual Drama Club production with professional mics, competitive Science Olympiad and Debate Teams, Art Portfolio, Yearbook Club - not to mention the numerous clubs and homework help safe spaces that many students use after school. Replacing Manhattan Youth would mean starting from scratch, erasing the hard work that has been put in over the past decade, and providing a less rich program for our kids.

More than ever, kids need meaningful activities and spaces to go to after school- and Manhattan Youth has enabled our students to grow from strength to strength. Losing them will mean the entire Salk community taking a step back. I strongly urge you to please veto the current bid and restore Manhattan Youth in our afterschool program at Salk.

Sincerely yours,
Dr Ling Teo
Teacher and Parent
Salk School of Science

Mount Prospect Park Green Space

Hello City Council Finance Committee -

I am a resident of Prospect Heights. I live about five blocks away from Mount Prospect Park. I love the park. It is such a delightful surprise to find that beautiful, shaded, quite spot up high just steps off Eastern Parkway. As the second highest point in Brooklyn, it is also unusual for its height, giving it a unique and protected feeling. It is the “prospect” giving the name to Prospect Park and to Prospect Heights.

What makes it special are the big, beautiful mature trees which are in and of themselves majestic presences as well as contributing immeasurably to the appeal of the park.

I am deeply disturbed by the current plan to pave nearly 20,000 square feet of Mount Prospect Park to create a skate facility which will be paid for with public money. Over the past several years, this park has been sadly neglected and poorly maintained. I want my taxpayer dollars to be spent on park maintenance, not on paving green space.

I am enthusiastic about skate facilities – and am pleased that plantings are proposed as part of the plan – but I feel strongly that this build should take place in an appropriate already-paved area. Surely there is a spot would be win-win – save the green space in Mount Prospect Park from being paved and then elevate an underutilized paved area - be it an existing skate facility in need of renovation, or from scratch in a parking lot or other. This would be unbelievably cool - to invest this $11 million dollars and leverage the plantings included in that budget to convert a paved area into a greener environment.

Along with my concerns about paving green space, ! fully believe that the level of paving, construction, and build will badly impact the nearly century-old trees in the central oval of the park. This would be such a loss on top of the area which will become concrete. And this seems completely antithetical to Mamdani’s NYC Urban Forest Plan, especially in the borough with the lowest amount of tree canopy.

Tax dollars should be spent to maintain our parks properly, not to pave green space.

Thank you for considering my input.

Best,
Lisa Curtiss

WRITTEN TESTIMONY — NYC COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE

RE: Please fund $1.5M for spay/neuter and $2M for pet food pantries

June 10, 2026
Submitted by: Lisa Lamberty

My hands shake as I write this, still smelling the disinfectant from yet another emergency vet visit I paid for out of pocket. As a TNR caretaker in Bensonhurst, I manage a cat colony alone; there's no city support, just me, and the overwhelming reality of kitten season. Every time I see a mother cat with a new litter, my heart breaks knowing there’s no affordable spay/neuter clinic nearby, and the city funds barely any of the 193,000 surgeries needed.

I’ve spent thousands of my own dollars trying to save lives, watching foster burnout take hold because there are too many animals and no resources. I’ve seen beloved pets surrendered because families can't afford a basic vet visit or even pet food. No New Yorker should choose between feeding themselves and their pet, or worse, losing a cherished family member because care isn't accessible. Our city's animal care system is teetering on the brink, and the ACC is bursting.

Please, understand the desperation on the ground. We need help. Funding low-cost spay/neuter and pet food pantries isn't just about animals; it's about supporting our community and preventing tragic surrenders. I urge the Council to fund $1.5M for spay/neuter and $2M for pet food pantries in the FY27 budget.

Lisa Lamberty, Bensonhurst

June 11, 2026

Dear City Council Finance Committee,

My name is Lisa Mu, and I am the parent of Ava Martinez, a 6th grade student at The Young Women's Leadership School of Astoria. I am writing to express my deep gratitude for the Girls Inc. program at TYWLS and to urge decision-makers to restore funding so that future students can continue to benefit from this invaluable opportunity.

When she entered middle school this year, she was coming off an incredibly difficult experience at her previous school. The environment there was rigid, heavily disciplinary, and, unfortunately, left her feeling defeated. Over time, she lost confidence in herself, became increasingly anxious, and struggled socially. As her parent, it was heartbreaking to watch her sense of self diminish. I worried constantly about whether she would ever regain the happy, outgoing spirit that had once come so naturally to her.

When Ava started at TYWLS Astoria, I hoped she would find opportunities to make friends, build confidence, and develop greater independence. I specifically looked for after-school programs that could help support that growth, and then she became involved with Girls Inc.

I can honestly say that Girls Inc. has been transformative for my daughter.

The difference between the child I saw last year and the young person I see today is remarkable. Ava is happy. She is thriving. She is confident in herself again. She has built a wonderful core group of friends and feels a true sense of belonging. She looks forward to participating in activities, talks enthusiastically about what she is learning, and has discovered strengths she didn't know she had.

Girls Inc. has provided so much more than an after-school activity. It has given her a safe and supportive community where she feels seen, valued, and encouraged. It has helped her find her voice during a time in life when many girls begin to doubt themselves. It has shown her that her ideas matter, that leadership is within her reach, and that she is capable of achieving great things.

As a parent, there is nothing more meaningful than seeing your child regain confidence after losing it. Watching Ava walk into school with her head held high, excited to see her friends and eager to participate, has been one of the greatest gifts this year.

At a time when girls face increasing pressures and challenges—from social media, societal expectations, and uncertainty about their place in the world—programs focused on female

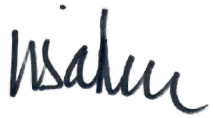
empowerment are not optional; they are essential. Girls need spaces where they can build confidence, develop leadership skills, support one another, and learn that their voices deserve to be heard. Girls Inc. provides exactly that.

For ten years, Girls Inc. has been a source of empowerment, connection, and growth for students at TYWLS Astoria. The impact of this program cannot be measured solely in numbers. It is measured in the confidence of girls like Ava, in the friendships they build, in the leadership skills they develop, and in the belief they gain in their own potential.

I urge you to reconsider the funding cuts and preserve this program for future generations of students. Every girl deserves the opportunity to experience the growth, confidence, and sense of belonging that Girls Inc. has given my daughter. The loss of this program would be deeply felt by countless students and families, including ours.

Thank you for your consideration and for recognizing the profound difference that Girls Inc. continues to make in the lives of young women.

With sincere appreciation,



Lisa Mu
Parent of Ava Martinez, Grade 6
TYWLS Astoria

I urge the City Council to prioritize animal welfare by including $1.5 million for affordable spay/neuter and veterinary care and $2 million for pet food pantries in the FY 2027 Speaker's Initiative budget. Currently, the city faces a staggering crisis where more than half of New Yorkers are unable to afford even a basic veterinary visit, leading to a situation where 75% of dogs entering Animal Care Centers (ACC) remain unfixed. While our community requires approximately 193,000 spay/neuter surgeries annually for community cats and low-income households, the city currently funds a mere 3,500, leaving a massive gap in essential services.

No resident should ever be forced to make the heartbreaking choice between feeding themselves and feeding their beloved companions. By robustly funding pet food pantries and low-cost veterinary services, we can keep animals in their stable, loving homes and out of the overburdened shelter system. Removing these financial barriers will naturally drive up adoption rates and significantly decrease preventable euthanasia.

Furthermore, this investment provides critical relief to NYC's animal shelters and rescue organizations, which are currently stretched to their breaking point. Supporting these initiatives will reduce the severe burnout experienced by dedicated employees and volunteers while ensuring that fewer community cats are left to suffer outdoors. I ask that you support this funding to create a more humane and sustainable environment for all New Yorkers and their pets.

Dear City Council,

$31.7 million in permanent baseline funding for the city's three library systems could end years of uncertainty for institutions that have long offered New Yorkers stable spaces to learn, work and stay safe.

Libraries are third spaces -- places where people connect to community outside of home and work, where anyone can take a class, rent an instrument, get career coaching, learn to speak another language or, of course, borrow a book, all at no cost.

As a result, library staff regularly face challenges that include helping people in crisis, de-escalating conflicts or disruptions, keeping programs running for most patrons and responding compassionately to people in distress.

The only formal de-escalation training librarians receive, according to librarians interviewed at Brooklyn and Queens library branches, is on par with the kind of brief annual online workplace harassment training required across many workplaces.

Librarians are often left improvising responses to patrons experiencing mental health crises, substance use or homelessness. It doesn't help that the level of security varies widely across branches. While some larger libraries have full-time guards, many neighborhood branches rely largely on librarians themselves to de-escalate confrontations and enforce rules.

For New Yorkers without stable housing, libraries offer some of the only free indoor spaces to escape extreme heat or cold. Librarians create refuges for people who do not feel safe in shelters.

While this budget is higher than last year by $3 million dollars, it does not even keep up with the 3.8% inflation rate. Also, for context, adding and updating just 2 elevators at the Astoria library branch cost $13.4 million dollars. So the increase of a mere $3 million dollars across 220 branches citywide is hardly something to completely inadequate and unacceptable.

The current FY '26 library budget is $523 million, which is 0.45% of the overall city budget. This was adopted last year during the Adams administration.

Mamdani campaigned on a promise of 0.5% for libraries.

In January the FY '27 preliminary budget from Mamdani proposed libraries receive a mere $491 million, or 0.39% of the overall city budget of $124.7 billion.

The proposed executive budget released on May 12th is $526 million, which is just 0.42% of the overall city budget.

While this budget is higher than last year by $3 million dollars, it does not even keep up with the 3.8% inflation rate. Also, for context, adding and updating just 2 elevators at the Astoria library branch cost $13.4 million dollars. So the increase of a mere $3 million dollars across 220 branches citywide is completely unacceptable.

Mayor Mamdani promised 0.5% and for that to happen he needs to dedicate $623.5 million. In addition, we ask that the 0.5% of the total city budget be the benchmark for all future library budgets.

The executive budget is still $97 million short of the campaign promise.

This is a realistic but significant number, allowing libraries, which are relied on now more than ever, to be more fully staffed, and to accommodate patron needs.

Sincerely,
Livia Newman
Woodside, NY 11377

From: Liz Rodriguez
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Manhattan Youth and JHS 104
Date: Saturday, May 30, 2026 10:40:59 AM

[redacted]

I am a parent of an incoming 6th grader to JHS 104. We partially chose this school on the promise that Manhattan Youth would be the provider for after school programs. My daughter is eagerly looking forward to programs like cooking and fencing - both of which are offered by MY. Our older daughter attended East Side Middle School and spent a lot of time enjoying MY programs there. We are familiar with their programming and their commitment to engaging with parents and the school community.

As a resident, parent and tax payer, I would like to better understand how the decision to change after school providers was made especially after spending so much time painstakingly touring middle schools last Fall.

Thank you

Liz Rodriguez

My name is Lizette Colón. I am a resident of Penn South in Chelsea and I am testifying on the fiscal year 2027 budget.
We all know we are living in insane times. At this hearing we are facing a proposed budget allocation of 1.5 billion public money to RAD/PACT conversions(which equals allowing NYCHA to transfer buildings to private landlords, who then manage the buildings instead of NYCHA), instead of allocating that amount to directly impact the quality of lives of the current NYCHA tenants. If this proposed allocation is approved, the City Council will make the lives of people who reside in public housing even more insane and you will be responsible for systematically eroding public housing in NYC to the point of no return.

When I became aware of this proposed allocation, right away my brain switched into Spanish with these two popular sayings : “desvistiendo a un santo, pa’ vestir a otro.” Which translated freely means “undressing a saint , to dress another “ or like we say in the streets: "quítate tu pa’ ponerme yo.” Get out so I can take your place. That is the message sent by this body to the public housing residents.

Why even in these insane times would we in NYC even propose to assign available budget money ,meaning public funds, to private developers for Section 8 RAD/PACT? If for a welcomed change, the City is admitting that there is no scarcity in our budget in this particular line, why can’t we grant those funds to the NYCHA tenants who have been waiting for decades for their apts to be repaired and the elevators to work? Why does this body keep allowing private investors and NYCHA to keep playing games with the lives of their NYCHA tenants and our money without any accountability or consequences for the lack of delivery of the services and instead are considering being so generous with the private sector? It is worth reminding all of you as City Council members that when we are talking about lack of services for decades to NYCHA residents, we are talking about your constituents.

Let’s say it loud and clear: up to the past NYC administrations : we have failed the NYCHA residents betraying the original mission of public housing when they were established in NYC by Mayor La Guardia : “ provide dignified, sanitary living spaces, replacing old tenements with modern apartments prioritized for light, air, and shared outdoor courtyards.” Stop that failing pattern! Let’s get it right this time around!

I urge this body and our Mayor to embrace that public housing original mission and finally make it happen full blast: invest in public housing. Save our public housing, which is indeed social housing. Reallocate the 1.5 billion dollars to public housing! Don’t give out our public money to private investors. “Los chavos nuestros no están pa’ regalarse”. Our public funds must not be a giveaway to private developers! Invest in Section 9! That investment “está requetepasaó” is super long overdue!

Lizette Colón
[redacted]
NYC NY 10001

Right now, more than half of New Yorkers cannot afford a basic veterinary office visit. Animal rescuers are overwhelmed by the growing number of stray and abandoned animals who need help — with no financial or logistical support from the city.

Families are surrendering the animals they love because they cannot access resources — adding even more pressure to NYC's already strained rescue community and shelter system.

NYC spends just $2.98 per person on animal care — among the lowest of any major U.S. city.

No New Yorker should have to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their pet.

Affordable veterinary care and spay/neuter keep animals where they belong — at home with the people who love them.

As cost barriers are removed, adoptions will increase and preventable euthanasia will decrease.

To the Members of the City Council Finance Committee,

My name is Louis Lotito and I am a resident of Flushing. I am writing today to urge the City Council to allocate $1.5 million for spay/neuter services and $2 million for pet food pantries in the upcoming budget.

Right now, New York City is facing a quiet crisis. More than half of New Yorkers cannot afford a basic veterinary office visit, and families are being forced to surrender the pets they love simply because they cannot access basic resources. This puts an overwhelming, unfair strain on our city's rescue community and shelter system. Currently, 75% of dogs entering ACC are unfixed, and while NYC needs 193,000 annual spay/neuter surgeries for community cats and low-income pets, the city funds a mere 3,500. Furthermore, NYC spends just $2.98 per person on animal care, placing us among the lowest of any major U.S. city.

No New Yorker should ever have to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their pet. By funding spay/neuter services and pet food assistance, you will remove critical cost barriers, keep animals at home with the families who love them, increase adoptions, and prevent unnecessary euthanasia.
Please support our city's families and animals by approving this vital funding.
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Louis Lotito
[redacted]
Flushing, NY 11358
[redacted]

RE: Testimony in Support of FY 2027 Funding for NYC Animal Welfare

Dear Council Members,

I urge the City Council to include $1.5 million for affordable spay/neuter and veterinary care, alongside $2 million for pet food pantries, in the FY 2027 Speaker's Initiative budget. More than half of New Yorkers cannot afford a basic veterinary visit, and a staggering 75% of dogs entering Animal Care Centers (ACC) arrive unfixed. As someone who's rescued many animals via local NYC rescue organizations, I see firsthand the heartbreak of families forced to surrender beloved pets simply because they cannot afford food or a medical emergency. Funding these vital services keeps animals out of overburdened shelters, prevents outdoor cat suffering, and ensures no New Yorker has to choose between feeding themselves or their pet.

Thank you for your compassion,

Luca Benedetti

[redacted]
Brooklyn, NY 11231
[redacted]

Dear Finance Committee,

I'm writing today to express my deep concern about the future of the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch and why I strongly urge you to support the QueensLink vision.

Queens is the city's largest borough in area and the second-largest by population, yet it has the fewest subway miles per capita. QueensLink aims to solve this problem with a "rails and trails" solution consisting of 33 acres of new community parks along with an extension of the M subway train. As of March 2026, we finally have professional research from industry-leading experts showing that QueensLink would generate at least $8.9B in economic growth and "deliver up to $2.20 of benefit to wider society for every $1 of public investment." The report determines that the project would have twice as many riders per mile compared to the Interborough Express. QueensLink also reduces vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by 30 million each year, equating to 7,200 fewer tons of CO2 annually. To sum it up, QueensLink performs exceptionally well compared to other megaprojects across the country, it puts money back in New Yorkers' pockets, and it helps make our city more affordable.

However, the QueensWay plan, one that former Mayor Adams funded, aims to build ONLY a park along this corridor that explicitly does not include any plan for future rail transit. The New York City Economic Development Corporation aims to start its construction this year, and the latest budget proposal includes funding for this park, which I strongly oppose. Let me be clear: if QueensWay begins construction, it will BLOCK any hope of future rail reactivation. Additionally, if the impossible hypothetical of building train service adjacent to the queensway moves forward, it will close sections of the constructed park for years due to site prep and staging areas essentially throwing previous efforts into the trash. The rails and trails needs to be completed at the same time.

Simply put, QueensLink is common sense, and I strongly urge you to support such a transformative and equitable project. This begins with removing any funding of the opposing QueensWay scheme from the city's budget and directing the New York City Economic Development Corporation to pause all work on that project. I hope that you take this information to heart and move forward with QueensLink's "rails and trails" vision for the Rockaway Beach Branch.

Sincerely,
Luca Scharpf

From:
[redacted] Quintana
[redacted]
Bronx NY 10458

To:
NYC City Council
Finance Committee
June 10 2026 9:30am
Committee meeting

Dear Councilors and to whom it may concern,

I am submitting testimony in support of the proposed $1.5M for pet spay/neuter programs and $2M for pet pantry programs.

Six years ago, I rescued the most friendly beautiful black girl cat out of my building's car parking garage in The Bronx. The poor baby was so hungry, small, and skinny, we thought she was a kitten, but the vet said she was at least 2.5 years old. I named the gorgeous girl Picassa, after the beautiful paintings by Pablo Picasso, and she's now living happily with me and is my best friend.

Unfortunately, Picassa's story is few and far between. She was one of the hundreds of cats I've seen living outdoors over the course of the 16 years I've been in my Bronx neighborhood. The poor babies are either abandoned out of carlessness, neglect, or the disastrous financial strain too many New Yorkers know all too well in this day and age, or are simply born on the street, never knowing the warmth, comfort, and friendship of living indoors, cared for by their best friends.

This is not natural or normal. Domestic cats live short, brutal lives outside compared to indoors, and they are not native or endemic to the ecosystem. Every year, stray cats kill billions of birds, squirrels, chipmunks, and other precious native species we need for our urban biodiversity.

Please fund the $1.5M for spay/neuter and $2M for food pantries. Our communities will be better off with fewer strays on the streets, and our precious wards, the animals of our city, will be forever grateful.

Kind regards,
Luis Lopez de Quintana
Bedford Park, Bronx

Subject: Privatization of NYCHA Creates Instability for Seniors.

I am a senior living in the South Bronx and do not have an email address. I am being supported in submitting this testimony by Save Section 9. I benefit from NYCHA and their community center managed by East Side Houses.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

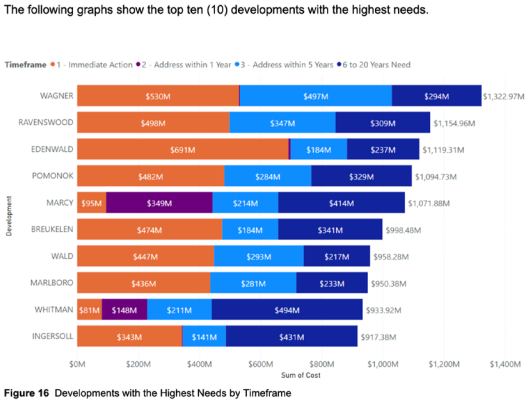


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.
- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

More than half of New Yorkers, including myself at times, cannot afford a basic veterinary office visit. Many end up struggling to even feed their pets and themselves. Families are surrendering animals they love because they cannot access resources. Animal rescue groups are overwhelmed by the growing number of stray and abandoned animals and have no financial or logistical support from the city. Those of us foster or rescue know the pain of wanting to help another suffering animal or a family trying to keep their pet, but simply being out of money or space to help.

Animals and pets are so important for human well being. Several research studies show that children who grow up with pets have stronger, healthier immune systems. Caring for pets teaches vital life and social skills like compassion and consent. They also provide profound companionship, stress relief, and emotional support. My own cats kept me from harming myself when I went through a period of severe depression.

New Yorkers need and want to keep their pets, but many need help. NYC spends just $2.98 per person on animal care—one of the lowest of any major city in the country. 75% of dogs entering ACC are unfixed. 193,000 spay/neuter surgeries are needed annually for community cats and pets whose owners cannot afford them, but the city funds only 3,500.

No New Yorker should have to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their pet. Affordable veterinary care and spay/neuter keep pets at home where they belong. Helping with these costs will also increase adoptions, and decrease preventable euthanasia. And fewer cats will suffer outdoors.

Please fund $1.5M for spay/neuter services and $2M for pet food pantries.

Thank you,
Lydia Gay

To: New York City Council.
CC: Committee on Public Housing and Committee on Finance.
Date: June 10th, 2026

Subject: Comprehensive Modernization, Not Privatization: A Responsible Path Forward for NYCHA

My name is Madison Markham, I am testifying in solidarity with Save Section 9 as a public housing ally. As a private market renter who struggles to pay my rent every month, I believe Section 9 public housing is the solution to the affordable housing crisis in New York.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

Zohran wants to transfer management authority, development rights, long-term leaseholds, and revenue opportunities associated with public assets to private entities under the promise of:

- Repairs for tenants,
- Less constituent demands on councilmembers and,
- Lower costs for the public.

But the PACT/RAD program fails us all. PACT privatizes public housing, hands over the units to private management under long-term leases, and costs taxpayers twice as much.

The Mayor's budget allocates $1.3B dollars toward privatization while continuing a pattern of underinvestment in Section 9 public housing. This approach asks taxpayers to invest in public housing buildings earmarked for privatization. If taxpayers are funding the rehabilitation of buildings, why should slumlords then keep them for 100 years?

Meanwhile Section 9 developments not accepting privatization will continue to wait for basic repairs. This budget harms tenants via PACT, a program that increases evictions, diluting tenant rights and increasing rental burden.

A privatization strategy is only fiscally justifiable if it lowers costs, preserves public value, and improves outcomes. PACT does none of these.

This is why the Citywide Council Of Presidents, Residents to Preserve Public Housing, Neighbors Helping Neighbors and Save Section 9 **are calling for all monies to be invested in comprehensive modernization and put a moratorium on PACT pending an impact study.**

The council must determine if privatization is delivering the outcomes promised to both tenants and taxpayers. Concerns raised by tenants, lawyers and the NYC Comptroller regarding tenant hardships under PACT raise important questions about whether these programs are producing the public benefits that justify their costs.

If taxpayers are paying more while tenants face increased housing instability and diminished public accountability, the financial assumptions underlying privatization deserve renewed scrutiny.

In the meantime the responsible choice is to shift public monies away from privatization and toward comprehensive modernization of Section 9 public housing.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

The following graphs show the top ten (10) developments with the highest needs.

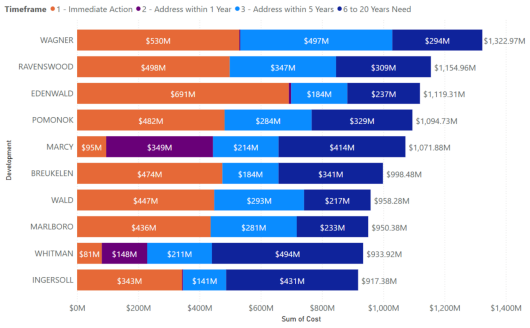


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.
- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.

4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Madison Markham, Public Housing Ally

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

Hello, my name is Mae Hovland. I am a resident of Astoria.

I would like to express my concern over the proposed funding for the QueensWay Metropolitan Hub. I believe that anyone who seriously believes in economic development, equity, and fiscal responsibility should be opposed to this proposed project.

QueensWay Metropolitan Hub is proposed to be developed on a corridor which used to be used by LIRR trains heading from Midtown to the Rockaways. When the line was decommissioned in the 1960s, the city bought the land with the intention of developing subway service along the line in the future. There is a proposal called QueensLink, which would use this city owned corridor to expand the M train from Forest Hills to the Rockaways. However, if QueensWay Metropolitan Hub is built on this land, it will be very difficult, if not politically impossible to return transit to this corridor.

If this proposed park is allowed to block transit, Queens will lose out on billions of dollars in economic development. Transit access is well known to increase economic opportunity. The MTA's own calculations estimate that the IBX, a similar project in Brooklyn and western Queens, would provide $106 Billion in economic development. Eastern Queens deserves to experience those same benefits. The economic value of reducing commute times for neighborhoods such as the Rockaways, which currently experience some of the longest commutes in the country, is incalculable.

In this way, the question of whether to build a train or a park is also an equity one. The QueensWay Metropolitan Hub plan proposes spending tens of million dollars of tax payer dollars to build a park within the affluent neighborhood of Forest Hills, and directly adjacent to Forest Park, which is the 10th largest park in NYC. At the same time the broader Parks Department is being underfunded and transit is being blocked from working class neighborhoods like Ozone Park and Far Rockaway. There are many ways that the money proposed for the QueensWay Metropolitan Hub could be more equitably spent, such as for parks maintenance in underserved areas of the city.

Some have argued that QueensWay Metropolitan Hub will not block future reactivation of transit along this corridor. That is technically true. It is possible that some day in the future, the transit situation in Eastern Queens will become so desperate, the roads will be so congested, and the commute times for so many people will become so long, that the city will be forced to return transit to the corridor. However, in order to do so, the future city will have to demolish what we are planning to spend tens of millions of dollars to build today. In a time when we are facing many challenges as a city, including a limited budget, is building a park next to a park, which would block vital transit improvements, and which might be demolished in the near future, the fiscally responsible thing to do?

•**Protect BSGE Funding:** The City needs to keep its promise to ensure BSGE remains fully funded for a relocation of building, protecting the budget allocation already designated for BSGE new site.
•**Support the Broader District:** The Office of Management and Budget should allocate the estimated $519 million needed for the School Construction Authority (SCA) to build the promised 600-seat middle school and two 650-seat elementary schools.
•**Address Growing Needs:** The local Queens North community is growing rapidly. Without these new seats, schools will face severe overcrowding, breaking a critical infrastructure promise made to neighborhood families.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF QUEENSLINK

Mahan Nanandhan | *South Richmond Hill, Queens* | [redacted]

To the New York City Council - Committee on Finance
Executive Budget Hearings (File #: T2026-1913), June 10, 2026

Getting from Far Rockaway to Flushing takes one hour and thirty-five minutes on a Monday morning rush hour. One hour and thirty-five minutes within a single borough. That is a transportation system failing its basic purpose. And this city is about to make it permanent.

My name is Mahan Nanandhan. I am a lifelong resident of South Richmond Hill, Queens. I am not here to beg. I am here to present the facts because the facts alone make an airtight case. These numbers come from the QueensLink Initial Business Case (IBC), a community funded formal study published in March 2026, prepared by QueensLink, Steer, a professional transportation consultancy, and ridership researchers and modelers at NYU's Marron Institute of Urban Management. All figures are derived from the QueensLink Initial Business Case (March 2026), including modeled ridership, travel time savings, and economic impact projections under stated assumptions. They all leave this Council with only one question to ask themselves: knowing all of this, can we really let this happen?

The QueensWay Does Not Just Fail Queens. It Forecloses Its Future

The administration's official defense, reiterated by Mayor Mamdani on WNYC on June 2, 2026, is that building the QueensWay now "does not preclude future rail activation." He goes further and states that a park can simply serve as an "interim solution" while we wait for state and MTA partnership.

That is not a transportation policy. That is political convenience disguised as one.

To suggest that pouring $43 million into a politically entrenched linear park is a "minimal" cost that can easily be undone later ignores the basic economic and structural reality. Phase 1 of the QueensWay's designs place it directly in the footprint QueensLink needs to occupy. Not adjacent, not nearby, but directly in its path. We do not have to guess what happens when a city builds a public park with the promise of adding transit later. We can turn to the cautionary tales of Maryland and Georgia where identical promises turned into multimillion dollar disasters.

In Maryland, the Purple Line light rail project was delayed for years and hit with an estimated $200 million in litigation costs because of “trail NIMBYs” who sued to block transit from being built next to an established trail path for pedestrians. In Atlanta, the famous Beltline project was originally planned as a rails and trails project. But since the city built the park first, the transit component has stalled for over 20 years. As the urban planner who originally designed the Beltline, Ryan Gravel, said himself about QueensLink, “It’s hard to imagine that if the QueensWay is built, that you’ll ever rip it up for transit. People don’t like stuff being taken away from them.”

The question before this Council is whether speed and political convenience justifies advancing a project that would significantly increase the cost, engineering complexity, and political difficulty of future rail restoration before a joint transit and park alternative has even received a full, good faith evaluation. The transit window does not stay open indefinitely, but rather dramatically narrows the moment the first layer of asphalt is poured. Funding QueensWay Phase 1 today does not keep options open. It effectively renders QueensLink less viable in practice.

QueensLink Is Not Anti-Park. QueensWay excludes transit by default.

The framing of this debate as "parks versus transit” is a deliberate misrepresentation used to make an indefensible decision sound reasonable. QueensLink delivers 33 acres of new parkland, bike lanes, and green space alongside a functioning subway line. It utilizes sound barriers, vegetation buffers, and noise-cancelling tunnels. Not a single building will be demolished. Two hundred and fifty thousand residents will be within a fifteen-minute walk of the new linear park. The QueensLink IBC has addressed the major environmental, noise, and community concerns, with mitigation strategies built into the design. From these studies, there is a glaring disparity between QueensWay and QueensLink:

- The QueensWay gives more park space to communities that already border Forest Park, while offering absolutely nothing to park and transit-starved neighborhoods.

- QueensLink brings green space *and* rapid transit to the communities that have actually waited decades for both: Far Rockaway, Howard Beach, Ozone Park, and South Richmond Hill to name a few.

The choice isn’t a close call. QueensWay leaves transit and park starved neighborhoods behind while QueensLink delivers both parks and transit equity.

Southern Queens Is Not A Second-Class Borough

Since the LIRR Rockaway Beach Branch was shut down and never rebuilt, Southern Queens has been left behind. What replaced a functioning rail line? Overcrowded buses on gridlocked streets. An inconsistent Rockaway Park shuttle. An A train that takes over an hour to reach Midtown. No north-south subway. Decade after decade of studies, promises, and nothing.

To get from Far Rockaway to Flushing, residents must spend one hour and thirty-five minutes commuting each way. That is over three hours a day. Every single day. That is three hours stolen from families every day, from rest, from opportunity, because this city decided again and again that Southern Queens could wait.

QueensLink ends that isolation. It extends the M train from Rego Park to the Rockaways, the first north-south subway line located entirely within Queens. It introduces four new stations and connects to seven subway lines and the LIRR.

Verified transportation data published just three months ago in the QueensLink IBC proves exactly what this project delivers:

- **Unprecedented Mobility:** Cuts commutes by up to 60%. Howard Beach to Flushing drops from 62 minutes to 46; South Richmond Hill to Long Island City drops from 41 minutes to 28.

- **Increased Service:** Boosts Queens Boulevard local service by 50% (restoring the G train to Forest Hills) and increases through-running service to Far Rockaway by 55%, Rockaway Park by 165%, and Howard Beach by 95%.

- **Street Safety:** Removes **14,800 vehicles** from Queens roads every single day, eliminating an estimated 74 injuries and one traffic fatality every two years.

- **Climate Action:** Eliminates **7,200 tons of CO_2** annually by shifting drivers onto clean transit. That isn't just a transit upgrade; it's a massive climate win.

A 2024 poll by NY State Senator Joseph Addabbo across ten affected neighborhoods **(Glendale, Middle Village, Forest Hills, Rego Park, Howard Beach, Ozone Park, Richmond Hill, South Richmond Hill, and Woodhaven)** found that 75% of residents surveyed support QueensLink. The people who will live with this decision have already spoken. The question is whether anyone in power is listening.

This Is Not An Expense. It Is A Return.

Here is the number the Council needs to hear: for every dollar invested in QueensLink, society gets **$1.10 back**. That is not advocacy math. That is the benefit-cost-ratio from a professional transportation consultancy using the city's own evaluation framework.

This project pays for itself and then some, generating:

- **$5 billion** in transit benefits from travel time savings alone.
- **$1 billion** in health and quality of life gains for residents.
- **$780 million** in congestion, safety, and environmental benefits.
- **$9 billion** in total economic output for New York City, supporting 37,000 job years of employment (supported across construction and related economic activity), and $2.5 billion in wages.

Nearly one million total daily minutes of travel time would be saved across New Yorkers, 43% of them to car-free households who need transit the most. The only question left is whether this city has the political will to build it.

$43 Million Requires Full Council Oversight

Mayor Mamdani campaigned on transit equity. He supported QueensLink by name. He knew what these commutes looked like. His administration has since told QueensLink advocates, directly, plainly, without apology, that it is moving forward with QueensWay regardless.

That is his prerogative. But this Council has independent authority over this budget, and independent responsibility to the people of Queens. This administration has placed significant weight on opposition from a small number of stakeholders, despite broader public interest considerations. The nearly 75,000 daily riders who would use QueensLink are asking for yours. The administration does not get to foreclose the transit future of an entire borough without this body having something to say about it. $43 million in public funds demands accountability. That accountability starts with this budget and this Council.

The Ask

The ask is modest. Hold the $43 million. Do not release it for construction until QueensLink has received a full, transparent, good-faith evaluation. One that honestly reckons with what building the QueensWay now will cost Queens transit forever. Not a cancellation. A pause. That is what due diligence looks like. That is what $43 million in public funds deserves.

A project that returns $1.10 for every dollar spent, eliminates nearly a million wasted commuter minutes per day, generates $9 billion in economic output, and has the support of 75% of affected residents does not deserve to be buried under a park because the budget line advanced before the facts were fully evaluated.

If Brooklyn gets the Interborough Express, and Manhattan gets the Second Avenue Subway, then there is no reason Queens should not have QueensLink. That is not a demand. That is what equity looks like.

Southern Queens has been waiting since 1962. The right of way is still there. The need is still there. The solution is still there.

Do not bury this corridor under a park.

Respectfully submitted,

Mahan Nanandhan

Lifelong Resident of South Richmond Hill, Queens

[redacted]

I appreciate the City Council's commitments to the environment in their Preliminary Budget Response, such as expanding the Fair Fares program to make subways and buses fully free for households under at least 150% of the federal poverty line, as well as the Mamdani Administration's commitment in the Mayor's Executive Budget, such as a new iteration of OMB's Climate Budgeting document, funding for bus and bike lanes, and building decarbonization projects.

With that said, the Administration and City Council have the opportunity to invest in New Yorkers by funding city agencies that advance proven climate solutions, whether it's building out more renewable energy infrastructure, electrifying our fleet, funding our parks system, or investing in stormwater resilience.

Budgets express priorities, and we must make our priorities clear: climate change is here, and we must be doing everything in our power to fight it and protect New Yorkers today and in the future.

TO: Committee on Finance, New York City Council

FROM: Malique Rivers, Rail Infrastructure Project Manager & Incoming Graduate Researcher (University College London)

DATE: June 10, 2026

SUBJECT: Opposition to Capital Budget Allocation for QueensWay ‘Metropolitan Hub’ / Support for Co-Located QueensLink Redesign

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Committee on Finance,

My name is Malique Rivers. I am a New York native, a professional Rail Infrastructure Project Manager with over five years of experience directing multimillion-dollar transit programs across the country, and an incoming graduate researcher in Transport and City Planning at University College London.

I am writing to formally submit my testimony regarding the short-sighted allocation of $43 million for the QueensWay's 'Metropolitan Hub' phase within the FY2027 Capital Budget. As a rail systems engineer, I must state clearly: this design represents an act of permanent Option Value Destruction for outer-borough infrastructure.

By placing permanent park structures directly over the center track bed of the Rockaway Beach Branch, the city is actively spending millions to structurally block a vital north-south transit corridor. I urge the committee to analyze three critical financial and spatial realities:

1. False Dichotomy of 'Parks vs. Transit': Just days ago on WNYC, the administration stated that the QueensWay layout, quote, "does not preclude future rail activation." As an infrastructure project manager, I must challenge the technical validity of that statement. Sinking capital funds into permanent trail foundations directly over a narrow, historic rail bed makes future rail activation cost-prohibitive. Conversely, the QueensLink proposal offers a co-located 'Rails and Trails' design. By simply shifting the pedestrian trail to the side of the embankment, the city can deliver a continuous greenway today while explicitly protecting the rail bed for future transit use.

2. Transit Equity in Outer-Borough Deserts: The QueensWay provides zero provisions to accommodate rail, yet it is being built in an area already heavily saturated by existing park space. Meanwhile, South Queens remains a severe transit desert. Passing a park-only budget completely ignores working-class families who endure grueling, multi-seat bus commutes just to travel a few miles within their own borough.

3. Rejection of MTA Cost-Padding: The administration has argued that the cost of a park is a "minimal amount" compared to rail expansion. However, $43 million of city capital is not minimal—it is a significant diversion of funds being used to create an engineering obstacle. While the MTA padded soft costs to project an inflated $6 billion price tag for the line, independent engineering audits confirm the actual civil construction costs sit at $1.8 billion. It is fiscally irresponsible to fast-track multi-billion-dollar deep-cavern subway tunnels in Manhattan while utilizing padded numbers to starve the outer boroughs.

Conclusion & Recommendation:

Budgets reflect our true values. A park is a localized luxury; a transit link is an economic lifeline. I call on this committee to pause the Metropolitan Hub funding and mandate a joint-use redesign that protects the rail corridor. Let’s pass a budget that protects rails and includes parks.

Respectfully,

Malique Rivers
Rail Infrastructure Project Manager
Incoming Graduate Researcher, University College London (UCL)

Testimony to the City Council on Finance

June 10, 2026

Submitted by Manuel Figueroa

Good morning, and thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Manuel Figueroa. I am a member of Freedom Agenda, a community advocate, renewable energy educator, and someone directly impacted by the criminal legal system. I know firsthand the challenges people face returning home after incarceration, because I have lived them.

When we talk about public safety, we must also talk about opportunity.

Right now, New York City spends nearly half a million dollars a year to incarcerate one person on Rikers Island. Yet too often, we release people back into our communities without the tools, support systems, workforce training, or pathways necessary to succeed. Then we ask ourselves why recidivism continues.

If we are serious about reducing incarceration and truly closing Rikers, then reentry cannot begin the day someone comes home. Reentry must begin before release, and continue immediately upon release. That is why the Campaign to Close Rikers is calling for a $10 million increase in funding for reentry programs, along with other investments in prevention and diversion.

We need to invest in workforce development, education, and transitional programming that gives people a real chance at stability and dignity.

I currently teach Renewable Energy 101, a community-based workforce program that introduces justice-impacted individuals and underserved communities to renewable energy, energy efficiency, solar literacy, and green career pathways. What I have seen is that when people are given knowledge, mentorship, exposure, and opportunity, they begin to see themselves differently. They begin to believe that a future is possible.

Programs like Renewable Energy 101, union pathways, apprenticeship readiness, clean energy workforce development, construction trades, and technical certification programs should be made available to incarcerated individuals before release, and immediately connected to them upon reentry.

Imagine if someone leaving incarceration already had enrollment lined up for OSHA certifications, clean energy training, union readiness, apprenticeships, or workforce programs before walking out the gate. Imagine if people came home with a pathway instead of barriers.

This is not just compassionate policy — it is smart public safety.

Employment, housing, education, and mental health support reduce the likelihood of people returning to incarceration. When people can provide for themselves and their families, communities become safer.

I strongly support increased investments in diversion and reentry services, mental health support, transitional housing, and community-based programming. But I also urge policymakers to expand funding for workforce readiness and green jobs programming as part of reentry planning.

We are in a moment where the clean energy economy is growing rapidly. There are real careers being created in solar, energy efficiency, weatherization, electrical work, HVAC, battery storage, and sustainable infrastructure. Justice-impacted individuals should not be left out of this emerging economy.

If we want to lower recidivism, reduce costs, strengthen families, and close Rikers responsibly, we must invest in people before they return to crisis.

People returning home do not need more barriers. They need opportunity, structure, purpose, and support.

[attached – Campaign to Close Rikers Budget Priorities]

CLOSE RIKERS

DECARCERATE ✷ DEFEND ✷ DIVEST & REDISTRIBUTE

FY2027 City Budget Analysis & Priorities

At a cost of nearly half a million dollars per person per year, Rikers Island is the most expensive and least effective tool our City has to create community safety. The FY2027 Executive Budget includes some key steps toward reining in jail operation costs, and reinvesting those savings in true public safety. And in order to Close Rikers as quickly as possible, we'll need to do more. To align the FY2027 budget with the City's legal and moral obligation to Close Rikers, it must include:

1. **An additional $39.2M to meet mental health needs outside of Rikers,** including:
    a. **At least $66.3M, baselined, for Intensive Mobile Treatment (IMT) teams,** $22M more than the Executive Budget allocates, which should eliminate the current waitlist.[1]
    b. **At least $23.8M, baselined, for Assertive Community Treatment (ACT),** $4.5M more than the Executive Budget allocates.[2]
    c. **At least $6M, baselined, for Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT),** $2M more than the Executive Budget allocates, which provides both mental health and reentry services to people returning from jail and prison.[3]
    d. **$1.7M to establish an outpatient competency restoration pilot program** for 50-75 people who might otherwise be waiting at Rikers for transfer to a state hospital.
    e. **$3M in capital funds to support 60 new residential treatment beds** for people with serious mental illness and with co-occurring addictions.[4]
    f. **At least $8.8M, baselined, for crisis respite centers,** $6M more than the Executive Budget allocates, to open four new centers, in compliance with Local Law 118-2023.[5]
2. **An additional $47.2M for diversion and reentry services through the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ), including:**
    a. **$10M** in new funds for ATI programs and **$10M** in new funds for Reentry Services, as recommended by the ATI/Reentry Coalition, to scale up these evidence-based models.
    b. **$6.9M** to expand programs serving court-involved youth with mental health needs.
    c. **$20.3M**[6] to establish at least 150 units of low-barrier housing for people with court-involvement and mental health diagnoses.
    d. OCJ should also publish an analysis of the full need for transitional reentry housing, and conduct a data match to generate an updated eligibility list for Justice Impacted Supportive Housing (JISH), a permanent reentry housing model.[7]
3. **An additional $3.6M to restore cuts to the Board of Correction (BOC), and expand their oversight capacity.** The Executive Budget shows $605,000 in cuts to BOC's budget.[8] These cuts

[1] Per DOHMH testimony on June 5, 2026, the waitlist is 600 people. Each new IMT team can serve 27 people.
[2] The combined waitlist for all ACT teams, including FACT and SPACT, was 654 people as of June 5, 2026 per DOHMH testimony. The City should also work with the state to eliminate the waitlist for all ACT teams.
[3] For FACT teams, the City adds approximately $675,000 per ACT team to supplement state funding by adding reentry specialists.
[4] State funding through OASAS would provide operational funds.
[5] The FY2026 budget for crisis respite centers was $5.3M, but only $2.8M in the FY2027 Preliminary Budget, as reported by DOHMH.
[6] Approximately $135,000 per unit, based on similar Safe Haven models.
[7] While JISH funding would come through DOHMH, OCJ coordinated the first (and only) data match, when the program was launched.
[8] $233,000 is associated with cutting two vacancies, and $374,437 is associated with cuts to OTPS

are unwise and unnecessary. The Board of Correction has testified that they need at least 60 staff roles (29 more than the Executive Budget includes)[9] to carry out their oversight responsibilities, as a first step to rightsizing their budget.[10] Expanding BOC's capacity could not only improve conditions in the jails, but also protect the city from future liability, like the $123 million dollars paid out in FY2025 for claims against DOC.

Meanwhile, DOC remains over-resourced. With new management in place, DOC can better deploy resources, not rush to fill vacancies. The FY2027 budget should build on smart vacancy reductions announced in the Executive Budget, and:

4. **Eliminate vacancies for DOC uniformed staff, to begin to rightsize the agency**
    a. The Executive Budget authorizes 6,474 positions for uniformed officers in FY2027 (down from 7,060 in FY2026), but as of January 1, 2026 DOC employed 5,759 officers and 1,301 positions were vacant.[11] Filling DOC's remaining 715 vacancies would cost an additional **$95.6M annually.**[12] These remaining vacancies should be eliminated, in order to reduce incarceration and cut wasteful spending.
5. **Reduce overtime spending** by consolidating operations and permanently closing jails on Rikers, starting with the vacant Anna M. Kross Center, where 109 officers are still assigned.[13]
6. **Conduct and release a staffing analysis as soon as possible,** to determine how many staff DOC actually needs to operate the facilities it currently manages.

The Executive Budget also includes 580 more police officers, among a surge of low-level arrests that frequently impact New Yorkers who lack stable housing and need mental health services. These resources should instead be used for housing, healthcare, and other community-based interventions.

DOC Budget Breakdown

- The Executive Budget proposes spending at least **$2.96 billion[14] for jail operations in FY2027**. This represents a slight reduction from the FY2027 Preliminary budget, but still a 3.8% increase from last year's adopted budget.[15]
- The Executive Budget shows an authorized headcount of **6,474 uniformed DOC officers**. With approximately 6,600 people in custody, this amounts to a **staffing ratio that is still nearly 4 times higher than the national average**, and **2 times more officers** than will be required to operate the borough jails.[16]
- DOC is on track to spend **$369 million on overtime** for uniform staff in FY2026 - 229% of their adopted budget.[17]
- New York City spent at least **$485,801 annually to incarcerate one person** at Rikers in FY2025.
- Most of DOC's costs are driven by staffing. The FY2027 budget projects that 87% of DOC expenses will be staff salaries, overtime and benefits.

---

[9] Based on testimony from the Board of Correction on March 7, 2025 that approximately 60 staff are needed to fulfill their mandate. BOC's proposed staffing in the F27 budget is 33 people, and total agency budget of $3.67M, per Departmental Estimates.
[10] Board of Corrections representatives previously advocated increasing their budget to a minimum percentage of DOC's.
[11] Per Independent Budget Office
[12] Based on $133,756 per officer, as calculated by the Vera Institute.
[13] City of New York Executive Budget Fiscal Year 2027, Supporting Schedules p. 1414
[14] Including expenses, associated fringe benefits, pensions, and debt service. Expense Revenue Contract Budget
[15] DOC's FY2026 Adopted Budget was $2.85 billion. A-Look-Inside-the-FY-2027-New-York-City-Department-of-Correction-Budget.pdf
[16] The Independent Rikers Commission estimates 3,240 officers will be needed in the borough jail system.
[17] Per Independent Budget Office

To whom it may concern,

My name is Marcos Hidalgo and I am submitting this testimony addressing the current budget proposal allotting funds to the “QueensWay” project transforming the abandoned LIRR Rockaway Beach branch into a linear park in the vein of the High Line. While greenspace would be a positive change for this area, NYC is missing out on the opportunity of a lifetime by not moving forward any provisions for rail along this abandoned branch. The current QueensWay proposal has no provisions in its design to accommodate rail. If rail is revisited sometime in the future, it is likely the park would have to be redesigned and reconstructed at points to accommodate it, which makes it more time-consuming and more expensive. Southeastern Queens already has significant greenspace with Forest Park, but with no way to get to it. An opposing proposal, QueensLink, provides plans for both rails and trails, which are necessities for creating a healthier and safer borough and city. Many neighborhoods in southern Queens are “transit deserts”, places where the demand for transit greatly outweighs the current capacity. QueensLink will transform access for these transit deserts and slash travel times across the borough. I have family in Forest Hills, which does have a subway connection but requires multiple transfers on overcrowded, uncomfortable trains and buses for me to get to them. A project like QueensLink could not only provide new trips for New Yorkers around the Rockaway Beach branch, but relieve trips like mine across the borough and the city. I’m asking the council today to consider the QueensLink project as an alternative to the QueensWay, and to do so before it’s too late and construction begins on a project that could make a project like this impossible. Thank you.

Written Testimony to the New York City Council Finance Committee

Good day Chairperson and Members of the New York City Council Finance Committee,

My name is Marcus Jones, PhD, LMSW, MSEd, and I serve as a School Social Worker and Students in Temporary Housing Liaison within New York City Community School District 2. I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of continued funding and partnership opportunities for Manhattan Youth and the vital services it provides to students and families throughout Manhattan.

In my professional capacity, I have observed firsthand the significant positive impact Manhattan Youth has on students from a wide range of backgrounds and circumstances. The organization provides meaningful academic, social-emotional, recreational, and enrichment opportunities that support student success both inside and outside of the classroom.

Particularly noteworthy is Manhattan Youth's ability to serve diverse and often vulnerable populations, including students experiencing homelessness or housing instability, English Language Learners, students with disabilities, gifted learners, and students requiring additional academic or social-emotional support. These services help ensure that opportunities for enrichment and growth remain accessible to all students, regardless of socioeconomic status or personal circumstance.

Manhattan Youth has also played an important role in supporting families experiencing hardship. Through community partnerships and direct assistance, the organization has helped connect families to food resources and other essential supports while providing students with safe, structured, and nurturing environments during after-school hours and enrichment programming.

The organization's programming extends well beyond supervision. Students have opportunities to develop leadership skills, strengthen academic performance, explore the arts, participate in athletics, cultivate musical talents, and prepare for important academic milestones, including state examinations and specialized high school admissions testing. These experiences contribute meaningfully to students' confidence, achievement, and long-term educational success.

Equally important, Manhattan Youth provides students with a sense of belonging and connection. For many young people, these programs offer a safe and supportive environment where they feel valued, encouraged, and empowered to reach their full potential. The program also provides essential support to working families who depend upon trusted community partnerships to help their children thrive.

As policymakers consider budgetary priorities and programmatic changes, I respectfully urge the Council to recognize the substantial value Manhattan Youth brings to New York City students, families, and schools. The organization's longstanding commitment to educational enrichment, youth development, family support, and equity has positively influenced the lives of countless children throughout Manhattan.

I respectfully ask that careful consideration be given before reducing funding or limiting access to Manhattan Youth programming. Continued investment in these services represents an investment in student well-being, academic achievement, family stability, and the future success of our communities.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and continued commitment to supporting New York City's students and families.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcus Jones, PhD, LMSW, MSEd
School Social Worker / Students in Temporary Housing Liaison
Simon Baruch Middle School / MS 104
New York City Community School District 2

The views expressed in this testimony are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of the New York City Department of Education, Simon Baruch Middle School, or Community School District 2.

Dear Members of City Council,

I want to start by thanking you for all you do for the city and its inhabitants. I'm a fellow public employee and I know what it's like always trying to do more with less. With that said, I'm writing to request that you please fund $1.5M for low-cost spay/neuter & veterinary care and $2M for pet food pantries. I've recently gotten involved in the cat rescue network in Brooklyn, and it is tough work that comes with relying on the generosity of people to make sacrifices on the behalf of cats just trying to survive the streets. Providing affordable access to spay & neuter services is a crucial step in lowering the too high cat population in NYC, and reducing the number of suffering cats. And affordable veterinary care keeps pets at home with their families who love them. Additionally, no New Yorker who's going through a hard time should have to choose between feeding themselves or feeding their pet. If we can help ease some of their burdens, that will be a job well done.

Thank you for your consideration of including $1.5M for low-cost spay/neuter & veterinary care and $2M for pet food pantries in the 2027 budget.

With gratitude,
Margaret Kijinski

Subject: Privatization of NYCHA Creates Instability for Seniors.

I live at Mitchel Houses in the South Bronx and do not have an email address. I am being supported in submitting this testimony by Save Section 9.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

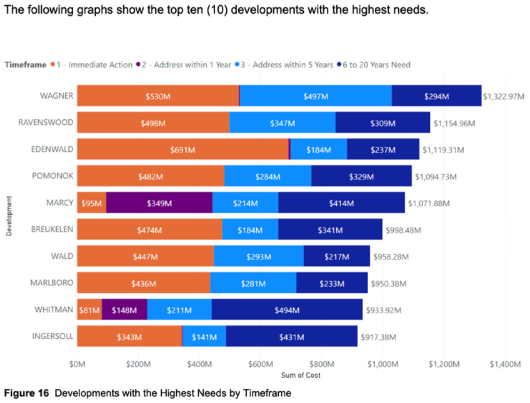


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.
- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

Subject: Privatization of NYCHA Creates Instability for Seniors.

I live at Mitchel Houses in the South Bronx and do not have an email address. I am being supported in submitting this testimony by Save Section 9.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

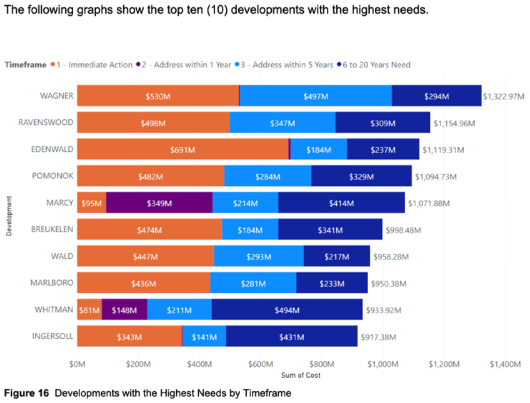


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.
- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this to plead more money to help us pet lovers. I never had a pet before and It is so hard for me and others to afford vets visits. Yes, there is pet insurance, but they are expensive and they don't pay you back 100%. When I go to the vet I see lots people crying because they cannot afford a $500 x-ray and a $300 blood work to see what is going on with the pet. Now that I have a pet I see this is a big business/scam and how they take advantage of people who see their pet more than just a plain animal, but you begin to feel love and sometimes a huge attachment. Please help the little innocents that have unconditional love to us. Thank you

Subject: Privatization of NYCHA Creates Instability for Seniors.

I live at Mitchel Houses in the South Bronx and do not have an email address. I am being supported in submitting this testimony by Save Section 9.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

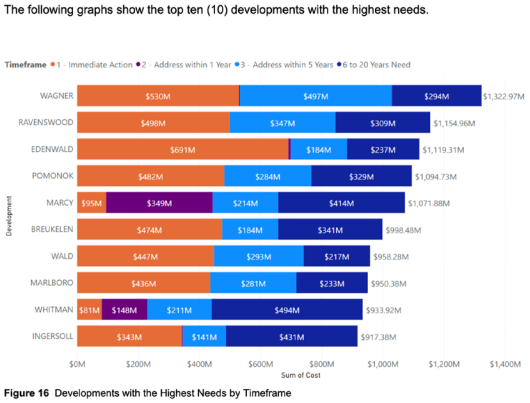


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.
- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

Zoom Testimony - Finance Committee Hearing - June 10, 2026

My name is Mariame Kaba. I am a library patron, librarian and a member of the NYC Public Library Action Network. I am here today to reiterate the need to adequately fund our public libraries. We at NYC PLAN continue to demand that 0.5% of the City operating budget be allocated to NYC public libraries. The Mayor campaigned on this and we expect that he should and will deliver.

I listened with great interest to the testimony on May 26th of the 3 heads of the library systems. Each of them said that their system has a gap in its operating budget. NYPL needs at least $17.5 million, BPL needs over $8 million and Queens needs at least $9.6 million. I am calling on the Council to not shortchange library workers and patrons by continuing to underfund the library systems.

While baselining funding is an improvement over the past and makes it possible for libraries to rely on and build on current funding, the fact is that current funding remains inadequate.

The proposed $526 million in the Mayor's executive budget does not keep up with inflation. To stay at current funding levels, Mamdani would need to increase the budget to $542 million and this would still not meet the 0.5% threshold.

Underfunding libraries means shorter library hours, insufficient staff, less books and less programming. That harms the poorest city residents the most, since they are the ones who most rely on libraries as warming & cooling centers, for internet access, and of course for books. They are also the ones who live near branches where hours are shorter and resources are fewer.

I appreciate the Council members who understand that our libraries deserve to be adequately funded and I ask that you work with library workers and patrons to make it so. Thank you.

Dear Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Maribel Gomez, and I am a New York City resident and a pet owner. I'm writing in strong support of funding $1.5 million for low-cost spay/neuter and veterinary care, and $2 million for pet food pantries across NYC.

As a pet owner, I can personally say that the cost of caring for an animal has become increasingly difficult. Even something as basic as buying cat food can be expensive at times, especially with the rising cost of living in New York City. While I have not yet needed to rely on a pet food pantry, knowing that these resources exist would provide peace of mind and security for pet owners like me who are doing their best to provide for their animals.

These programs are not just about helping pets—they are about helping people keep the animals they love. Too many families are forced to make heartbreaking decisions because they cannot afford food or basic veterinary care. Expanding access to pet food pantries and affordable services can prevent surrenders, reduce strain on shelters, and ensure that more animals remain in safe, loving homes.

This issue is also personal for me because I hope to adopt a second cat in the near future and give another animal a safe, stable, and loving forever home. Programs like these make it more possible for people like me to open our homes to animals in need without fear of being unable to provide for them.

Affordable veterinary care and spay/neuter programs are essential to reducing the number of stray and abandoned animals in our communities. At the same time, pet food assistance helps ensure that no one has to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their pet.

I urge the Council to fully fund these critical initiatives and support both the animals of New York City and the people who care for them.
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Maribel Gomez
Queens, New York City

Good afternoon, Members of the Committee. My name is Marilyn Galfin , Voices for Shelter Animals. Today at Animal Care Centers, there are 26 dogs and 13 cats on the at-risk list. Any of them can be killed at any moment. In 2025, 1,555 dogs and cats were euthanized. In the first four months of 2026, 539 dogs and cats are already gone.
We are in the midst of a severe shelter overcapacity and homeless animal crisis. Abandonment is out of control, euthanasia is escalating, and up to one million community cats are struggling to survive on our streets. Rescues, advocates, and shelter workers are burned out, unable to keep up with the impossible task of saving them all.

Many pet guardians are already facing an affordability crisis. With recent changes to SNAP and Medicaid eligibility requirements, struggling families risk losing critical benefits, forcing them into impossible choices: whether to go hungry to feed their pets, forgo medical care for a sick animal, or—with no other option—make the devastating decision to surrender them to an ACC shelter. Once in the shelter—a system that functions more like a processing machine—dogs are heavily drugged, and many animals fail to receive adequate care. They experience fear, they are traumatized, and they are confused in a chaotic environment, only to be needlessly killed.

New York City's investment in animal welfare remains shockingly inadequate. New York City spends only about $2.89 per resident—an investment level where other major U.S. cities invest three to four times that amount per resident, even those currently struggling with their own shelter crises. An ask of $15 million within the Fiscal Year 2027 Executive Budget's $124.7 billion spending plan is minimal—barely more than one one-hundredth of one percent—yet it would fund critical prevention infrastructure that keeps people and pets together and out of the overwhelmed shelter system. An investment now reduces costs in the long term.

We need pet food pantries, low-cost veterinary and emergency care, high volume spay/neuter services, microchipping, and more, as well as a pilot program for a dedicated civilian animal welfare/enforcement unit and a unit to address the animal abandonment epidemic.

Our city has a moral and ethical responsibility to act now and invest in animal welfare. Animals deserve protection, compassion, the right to live, and our companion animals need a chance to remain united with their pet guardians. Animal lives do matter.

FY 2027 Pet Safety Net Budget

Program	Allocation
High-Volume, Low-Cost Spay/Neuter (Dogs & Cats)	$5,500,000
Pet Food Pantries & Distribution	$3,000,000
Low-Cost Routine Veterinary Services	$1,800,000
Subsidized Emergency Veterinary Services	$2,000,000
Emergency Crisis Pet Boarding	$100,000
Microchipping	$600,000
Pet Behavior Support	$250,000
Education & Outreach	$500,000
PROPOSED PILOT PROGRAMS	
Civilian Animal Welfare & Response Unit*	$600,000
Animal Abandonment Field Investigations Unit*	$600,000
TOTAL	**$15,000,000**

**Replaces police for non-emergency calls.*

Marilyn Galfin Voices for Shelter Animals

From: Marjorie Victor
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] (For 5/28 10AM exec Budget Meeting) Reinstate Manhattan Youth at Wagner MS (MS 167)
Date: Wednesday, May 27, 2026 9:40:22 PM

[redacted]

To Whom it May Concern,

My family and I are deeply upset to learn that Manhattan Youth's contract with our daughter's school, Wagner Middle School, has been terminated without any input from our school community and ask that this decision be reconsidered.

My child, a 7th grader at Wagner, has grown tremendously as a result of the thoughtful enrichment programming and dedicated staff at Manhattan Youth. Manhattan Youth has given her the opportunity to make new friends, pursue her passions in the arts and find mentorship.

Our entire family, but especially my child, has built deep relationships with the staff of Manhattan Youth. Their talent, expertise and passion are on display at every school event and every project my daughter brings home from afterschool. My daughter was devastated to hear that their contract with Wagner had been terminated for unclear reasons.

Furthermore, this decision is deeply insulting to Manhattan Youth staff who have worked for years to create engaging and diverse programming for our kids. They are an integral part of our school community and are NOT interchangeable line items!

This decision seriously impacts our quality of life and our families deserve answers. As a NYC public school parent the lack of transparency in the decision making process is especially disturbing. DYCD and NYC have the opportunity to rectify this decision by listening to our voices now. Please do not break our community bonds. Reinstate Manhattan Youth's contract with Wagner Middle School immediately.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter

Sincerely,
Marjorie Victor
Parent of 7th grader at Wagner Middle School

Committee on Women and Gender Equity

Subject: Zohran’s budget fails to recognize the vital role public housing plays in advancing gender equity.

I oppose Zohran’s proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Women and Gender Equity should recognize that public housing is fundamentally a women's issue. For decades, Section 9 public housing has served a population made up largely of women and female-headed households. Nationally, women head the overwhelming majority of public housing households, and many residents are single mothers, grandmothers raising grandchildren, caregivers, and women balancing work, family responsibilities, and economic hardship. Public housing has provided generations of women with the stability, support, independence, community, and affordability necessary to raise families, care for loved ones, pursue education, build careers, and participate in civic life.

Women, particularly women of color, continue to bear a disproportionate share of caregiving responsibilities while facing persistent wage disparities and economic barriers. Because Section 9 ties rent to household income rather than market conditions, it creates opportunities for residents to pursue employment, training, entrepreneurship, and educational opportunities without the constant threat of rent increases or displacement. Housing stability is a prerequisite for economic mobility, and Section 9 remains one of the strongest examples of that principle in practice.

The Committee should also recognize the relationship between housing stability and gender-based violence. Survivors of domestic violence and other forms of abuse often remain in dangerous situations because they lack access to safe, affordable housing alternatives. Public housing serves as a critical source of stability and independence for many survivors, providing a pathway toward safety, self-determination, and long-term security.

Beyond housing, Section 9 has historically fostered leadership, mutual aid, and civic engagement among women. Tenant associations, resident councils, community centers, and resident-led initiatives have created opportunities for women to organize, advocate, govern, and shape policies affecting their communities. Some of New York City's strongest community leaders have emerged from public housing because these developments provide not only homes, but spaces where women build networks of support, develop leadership skills, and strengthen their communities.

Zohran’s budget fails to recognize the vital role public housing plays in advancing gender equity. When public housing is weakened, it is women—particularly working-class women, single mothers, caregivers, grandmothers raising children, and survivors of violence—who often bear the greatest burden. When Section 9 is strengthened, women gain the housing security that allows them to thrive. We urge the Committee on Women and Gender Equity to support comprehensive modernization of Section 9 public housing and reject policies that condition investment on privatization. A city committed to gender equity must ensure that women have access to safe, affordable housing, meaningful opportunities for leadership, and the stability necessary to build healthy families and strong communities.

You cannot advance gender equity while allowing the housing insecurity that disproportionately burdens women, caregivers, and survivors to persist.

From: Maryam Sultan
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Written Testimony for Girls Inc.
Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 7:40:21 PM

[redacted]

Iam writing as a high school student at TYWLS of Astoria to express how important Girls Inc. is to our school community and why I hope it continues to be a part of our school.

Girls Inc. has given me and many other students valuable opportunities to volunteer, develop leadership skills, and become more involved in our community. Through their programs, I have learned important life skills and gained experiences that have helped me grow both personally and academically.

Whenever students face challenges or difficult situations, Girls Inc. staff are always there to provide guidance, support, and encouragement. They create a safe and welcoming environment where students feel heard, respected, and empowered to succeed.

Girls Inc. also brings happiness and joy to our school through its activities, events, and mentorship. Their presence makes a positive difference in the lives of many students, including myself. The organization helps build confidence, promotes kindness, and encourages us to reach our full potential.

For these reasons, I strongly hope that Girls Inc. will continue its partnership with TYWLS of Astoria. Their support has had a meaningful impact on our school community, and I believe future students deserve the same opportunities and guidance that I have received.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Maryam Sultan
Student, TYWL of Astoria

From: Marylyne Myrthil
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Manhattan Youth and Wagner
Date: Saturday, June 13, 2026 8:05:21 PM

[redacted]

Hello,

Eight years ago, I was tasked with what would be the most challenging and rewarding work of my life. I went to work. For the last eight years, I worked hard at developing what I believe to be the best afterschool program on the upper east side. Hours of hiring, training, lesson planning, budgeting, firing, retraining, event planning, community meetings, PA meetings, admin meetings, open houses and so much more went into this work. It cannot be replicated, it should not be replaced.

Our community loves us (Manhattan Youth) and we love them right back. This work has been the joy of my life. Imagine for a moment how it must feel to have the city that you trusted stood up for and represented take that from you. The announcement was released the day of our Spring Musical where we had a record 90 students participate between cast, crew and pit band. This sudden change is not a simple swap, it erodes the community we spend years building. We are heartbroken. We are humans not numbers. We are not a simple swap.

The hardest thing for me to explain to my families is that I don't know why. We got assigned and scored by people who never stepped foot into our building to see our program. Yet, DYCD consistently scored the program either above or far above standard. What was the point?

This experience unfortunately has completely eroded my faith in NYC's Youth Development system. It feels icky. It feels as if you don't actually care about the children. It feels like you don't care about our families, our principal, our staff. Funny thing is, that was my job. My job which no longer exists. My job that I put my whole heart into.

I fear for the people who like me who get into this work, do a wonderful job then get it

ripped from their hands leaving 30+ workers without a job and in crisis with barely a month's notice.

Shame on this city. Shame on DYCD. Please reverse this horrible decision.

Marylyne Myrthil
Mmyrthil1@gmail.com
Mmyrthil@manhattanyouth.org

Thank you,

Marylyne Myrthil

Program Director, Robert F. Wagner JHS 167
Pronouns: she, her, hers
[redacted]
mmyrthil@manhattanyouth.org
For More Info Visit Our Website, manhattanyouth.org
Follow us, @ManhattanYouth on Facebook | Instagram
Click here to register for afterschool today!
Click here to access the waitlist
Join our mailing list!

My name is Matei Eliezer, and I am a Manhattan-born student at Northeastern University in support of QueensLink. I originally wrote my testimony as an open letter to the mayor. I would like to open my statement with a modest proposal: Let's add subway service to the High Line. Now surely, Mr. Mayor, you would immediately decline such a proposal on the grounds of its technical infeasibility, and rightfully so. Or you can consider Atlanta, who promised rails AND trails on its BeltLine but only built the park and the train is now in limbo. That is the crux of that argument against QueensWay which I bring before you today. I am speaking to you as a civil engineering student–a man in school to dedicate the rest of his life to public works projects exactly like these, and I am warning you of the ramifications a decision like this will bring for decades to come. Relegating these residents of Queens to a gridlocked bus and a public park with the potential to price them out of their own neighborhoods as we saw in Chelsea only 15 years prior is not equitable at all, Mr. Mayor, it is all that which you claim to stand against. A park alone will not benefit these residents. For them, there is no other transportation option. A subway line must be built concurrently with the park to truly serve its community and not become a simple playground for the rich. It has even more potential than just that; building this line opens up more opportunities to build affordable housing at a time when the city faces the worst housing crisis in its history. And it is only technically feasible now. To that end, I urge you to fund QueensLink. It itself is the compromise between the park and the rail line that you wish to see. There is already an abundance of green space in Queens, but only here can any of it translate into an option that can benefit the locals; by reducing their travel times, by better connecting them to the rest of the city, by taking cars off the road and cleaning their air, by simultaneously giving them the park proposed by QueensWay, and by acquiescing to their popular will; local support for a subway line on the Rockaway Beach Branch exceeds 75%. Mr. Mayor, this proposal is in line with everything that you say that you want, so again, I urge you and the city council to fund QueensLink. Central Queens needs your help.

Now with all of that said, I understand that funding may be a genuine problem. I did not simply come to testify to yell at the mayor and city councilmembers and demand that they produce hundreds of millions to billions of dollars out of thin air. In such a scenario, I urge the following: that funding of QueensWay specifically be withdrawn and construction permits halted in order to secure and preserve the right-of-way, allowing construction of the transit line, and park, to be revisited once the city has the wherewithal to do so, all while saving money in the short term. To reiterate, central Queens needs the transit line more and construction of the park now would preclude it, thus construction should be halted until both are possible at once. Thank you for your time and consideration.

June 12, 2026
To the Members of the Finance Committee,
New York City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: Testimony in Strong Support of Continued Funding for Manhattan Youth After-School Program at M.S. 177 — Yorkville East Middle School

Dear Members of the Finance Committee:

I Matthew Carson, the undersigned member of the M.S. 177 — Yorkville East Middle School community, respectfully submit this letter of testimony to urge the Finance Committee to take immediate and decisive action to preserve the after-school program operated by Manhattan Youth at our school. For over ten years, Manhattan Youth has been an irreplaceable presence in the lives of our students, families, and the broader Yorkville community. I write today with serious concern and firm opposition to any proposal to reassign program operations from Manhattan Youth to the YMCA of Greater New York.

A Decade of Dedicated Service to Our Children

Manhattan Youth has served M.S. 177 for more than ten years, building a program rooted in trust, consistency, and deep knowledge of our school community. This is not merely an administrative contract — it is a living relationship between dedicated program staff, students, families, and educators. The staff at Manhattan Youth know our children by name. They understand the unique social, emotional, and academic needs of middle schoolers in the East Side community. That institutional knowledge and genuine investment in our students cannot be transferred overnight to a new organization.

Over 30 Activities That Reach Every Child

What makes Manhattan Youth's program truly exceptional is the extraordinary breadth of opportunities it offers. Every year, the program provides over 30 distinct activities designed to appeal to the full range of interests, talents, and learning styles found among our student body. These activities span multiple domains including:

- Athletics — Manhattan Youth runs the school's sports teams, giving students a structured and safe environment to develop teamwork, discipline, and physical well-being.
- The Arts — Students participate in school performances and theatrical productions, building confidence, creativity, and public speaking skills that serve them for a lifetime.
- Cooking — Culinary programs teach practical life skills, nutrition awareness, and cultural appreciation.
- Debate — Students sharpen their critical thinking and argumentation skills, learning to articulate ideas with clarity and conviction.

- Coding and Technology — Digital literacy and computer science programming prepare students for the demands of a technology-driven future.
- And many more — from visual arts, music, and dance, to STEM exploration, tutoring, and enrichment activities that ensure no child is left without a meaningful option that speaks to their individual interests.

This remarkable variety is not accidental — it is the result of years of careful program development, community feedback, and Manhattan Youth's unwavering commitment to meeting students where they are. A child who thrives in drama may not be the same child who excels on the basketball court, and yet both deserve a space in the after-school program where they can grow. Manhattan Youth has built that space.

The Disruption of Reassignment Would Be Harmful and Irreversible

I respectfully urge the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) and the Finance Committee to reconsider, in the strongest possible terms, the proposed change in assignment from Manhattan Youth to the YMCA of Greater New York. While I do not question the YMCA's broader reputation, the reality is that a transition of this nature — displacing an organization with over a decade of embedded presence in our school — will cause serious and lasting disruption for our children.

Middle school is a critical and sensitive period in a young person's development. Students in grades 6 through 8 are navigating the complexities of adolescence, identity, and academic challenge. Stability in their after-school environment is not a luxury — it is a necessity. An abrupt change in program provider will mean:

- Loss of trusted staff relationships that students have built over years
- Discontinuation or reduction of the 30+ activities that currently serve the entire student body
- A steep learning curve for new program staff unfamiliar with our school's culture, demographics, and individual student needs
- Potential reduction in student participation as trust and engagement must be rebuilt from scratch
- Loss of the athletic teams and performing arts productions that have become cornerstones of M.S. 177 school culture

These are not hypothetical concerns. Communities across New York City have witnessed the damage caused when long-standing, effective programs are replaced without adequate cause. I urge the Committee not to repeat that mistake here.

Free, Accessible Programming Funded by DYCD

It is also worth emphasizing that all activities provided by Manhattan Youth are entirely free to participants, made possible through funding from the Department of Youth and Community Development. This means that every student at M.S. 177 — regardless of family income or circumstance — has equal access to enriching, safe, and developmentally appropriate programming every afternoon. This commitment to equity and access is central to the mission of DYCD and should be honored by preserving the program that has demonstrated its success for over a decade.

Our Respectful and Urgent Appeal

I call upon the Finance Committee to use its authority to direct DYCD to maintain the assignment of Manhattan Youth as the after-school program provider at M.S. 177 — Yorkville East Middle School. The children of our school deserve the continuity, care, and comprehensive programming that Manhattan Youth has provided with excellence for over ten years. They deserve staff who know them, activities that challenge and inspire them, and an environment that feels like a second home.

I trust that the Finance Committee shares our commitment to the well-being and full development of New York City's young people. Iask only that this commitment be reflected in the decision to protect a program that has proven, year after year, that it works — for our children, our families, and our community.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your consideration of this testimony.

With respect and gratitude,

Matthew Carson

Parent of the M.S. 177 — Yorkville East Middle School Community

Good morning,

I am a resident of Queens, but work as a university professor in Manhattan.

I have watched our local libraries in both Queens and Manhattan become more and more stretched for money over the years. I especially use the Performing Arts Library in Manhattan, where I have watched staff eliminated, thus making further demands on the remaining staff; additionally, access and delivery of research materials has slowed down (although I compliment the remaining staff for keeping things running as much as they do). I have also done much work in the Queens libraries, which, I am constantly reminded, serve as community spaces for children after school, for job seekers, for families, for local events, in short, for everyone.

When Mayor Mamdani was elected, one of the things I was most excited about was his pledge to assign .5% of the city budget to libraries. After years of watching our libraries fighting one battle at a time regarding budget cuts, only to have to repeat the process over and over, this seemed like a huge commitment. I applaud Mayor Mamdani and the council for taking some major steps to rework the city budget, but I am very disappointed that the campaign pledge was not fully upheld. The idea is *not to have to fight each year* for library funds—in other words, to recognize in a permanent way how important libraries are to our communities (especially in a world of misinformation and loss of literacy) and give them a chance to shine. When one looks at the vast sums spent on policing especially, the extra bit of a single percent pledged to the libraries and not given seems all the more tragic. It is, proportionally, so small a part of the spending, but practically, and indeed morally, such an important part.

I hope, going forward, that the full 0.5% is awarded to the libraries *every year*. Let's make this amazing pledge into a reality. New Yorkers are watching.

Thank you.

To the members of the council and the finance committee, My name is Matthew Monge. I have lived here my entire life, and currently reside in Middle Village.

I'd like to tell a story. In the 1960s, a large rail line was abandoned due to a decrease in business. A local grassroots organization rose up and submitted a proposition to the council, to revitalize the corridor and bring transit and trails **back** to the area, serving hundreds of thousands of people in what is otherwise a transit desert.

Now, to some of you, this may sound like a project in NYC called QueensLink, but in actuality, is describing the current BeltLine project in Atlanta.

Even though the BeltLine Project was initiated 27 years ago, not a cent was spent, a train built or an inch of track revitalized. Why? The city decided to build the park first.

This story serves as a cautionary tale for the current council.

Currently, $43 million dollars is allocated in the Mayor's Executive Budget for Queens***Way*** (801 P-4QNSWAY); a project that would redesignate the sitting rail line in Queens, as park land.

I'm here to warn not only the council but also those around us, that this is a terrible idea.

According to New York's interpretation of the Public Trust Doctrine, once a park is built it becomes increasingly impossible if not incredibly rare to do any further development. Any transit addition is delayed and debated indefinitely until effectively becoming cancelled.

We need more than promises from the council or the mayor to *eventually* integrate rail, because, as history shows, It doesn't work that way.

Luckily, a proposed alternative to QueensWay, called QueensLink, has a fully laid out plan to revitalize the existing rail and integrate 33 new acres of parkland, the best of both worlds.

But it's being ignored by the mayor and the council.

Now I live in Middle Village but I go to college in downtown Brooklyn.

The only reasonable way to get there is by taking the Q53 down the crowded woodhaven boulevard. And, let me tell you: there are 10 thousand daily riders in that bus, 70 thousand weekly, 3.64 million yearly.

That's 10 thousand more weekly riders than the least used subway. [It is the busiest non-express bus in Queens.] The rail is right there. Why aren't we using it?

This last year was the first time I ever voted in a local election, and I am proud to have voted for my representative phil wong and mayor mamdani, but right now, it feels as if you are turning your back on the community, and depriving transit from the people who need it most.

I am urging the council to learn from the mistakes of their colleagues in Atlanta. Take time and look into the possibility of QueensLink. Block the Mayor, cut QueensWay from the executive budget.

Otherwise, you turn your back on the people you promised to improve the city for.

You are making a mistake.

June 9, 2026

Dear Esteemed Committee Members,

Queens Link is critical for a stronger, more vibrant Southeast Queens, and a stronger, more vibrant New York City. Queens Link will allow individuals who live in the Southeast Queens Community to gain access to job opportunities in the northern part of the borough, without having to go through Manhattan, or take lengthy bus rides to get there.

Constructing only a park on land that holds the right of way for Queens Link will certainly prove to be a "closing door" to all efforts to connect this borough from north to south and is something I urge you all to "stand clear" of. It will prevent residents in Southeast Queens from obtaining and chasing economic opportunities they can take advantage of in the northern sections of Queens – like jobs at LaGuardia Airport – one of New York City's largest employment centers. It will force residents who work in midtown Manhattan to continue trekking through long commutes by way of Brooklyn and the Financial District. It will continue to worsen the traffic on roadways such as the Van Wyck Expressway Woodhaven Boulevard, and Cross Bay Boulevard – which are already choking by the shear amount of passenger and commercial traffic they handle every day.

Lastly, if we are to truly be putting an emphasis on "Economic Justice," then we should really think about the communities that would be impacted by this new transit line. Southeast Queens is a transit desert – and Queens Link would finally help rectify some of the economic injustices that this community has been through year after year.

It is my hope that this Committee, this City Council, and this Mayor, will understand the importance of shortening commute times for the residents of Southeast Queens, and allowing them to go after economic opportunities in other parts of the borough that they should not be precluded from simply because of where they lay their head at night.

Thank you for your time.

Matthew Walker

From: Maura Cosetti
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] manhattan youth at Lab Middle school
Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2026 5:54:49 PM

[redacted]

Dear education Council/Department of education,

Manhattan Youth is an an extremely valuable and amazing resource of Lab and Baurch middle schools. They provides essential, well-run and irreplaceable school activities. These are not extra- they are an absolute necessity for children's middle school development. Not only have both my daughters personally benefited from these programs, I know, hundreds of families who feel the same.

Like many parents who value their child's education above all else, we have contemplated going to charter schools or parochial schools and leaving the public school. Manhattan youth and the services they provide in music and sports are one of the main reasons we've stayed in the public schools

there is no reason that these services should be replaced with something that is not going to offer the exact same options. YMCA will not be offering these and that will be another reason for students to leave the public schools.

Please reconsider and let Manhattan Youth continue to do their excellent job

Sincerely,
mother of a current lab 6th grader and former Baruch 6th -9th grade,

Maura Cosetti

Dear Council Member,

I am writing as a parent and resident to express my strong support for Girls Inc. of New York City and its after-school program at The Young Women's Leadership School of Astoria.

My daughter participates in the program and absolutely loves it. As a parent, I have seen firsthand the positive impact it has had on her growth, confidence, and overall well-being. Girls Inc. provides a safe and supportive environment after school where girls can learn, grow, and build meaningful friendships.

The program offers a variety of enriching activities that help students develop leadership skills, self-confidence, and a strong sense of community. It keeps my daughter engaged in productive and educational experiences while providing opportunities she might not otherwise have access to. Just as importantly, it gives her valuable time away from screens and social media and encourages healthy, in-person connections with her peers.

For more than a decade, Girls Inc. of NYC has partnered with The Young Women's Leadership School of Astoria, helping countless students become strong, smart, and bold. It was deeply disappointing to learn that Girls Inc. was not selected to continue as the service provider for the upcoming contract cycle.

I understand that Girls Inc. is appealing this decision and has the full support of the school's leadership. I respectfully urge you to support their appeal and advocate for the continuation of this exceptional program. The impact on students and families is real, and the loss of this program would be felt throughout our school community.

Programs like Girls Inc. do far more than provide after-school care. They create safe spaces for young girls to develop confidence, leadership skills, friendships, and a sense of belonging during some of the most important years of their lives.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to supporting the youth and families of our community.

Sincerely,

Maureen Howard
Astoria Resident
Parent of a TYWLS Astoria Student

Max Barton

Southeast Queens Resident / Homeowner

[redacted], Laurelton NY 11413

Written Testimony for Support of Trauma Center funding as part of the Executive Budget Process

Wednesday June 10th, 2026. 9:30am

Committee on Finance

Thank you to Chair Linda Lee and members of the Finance Committee. Today I was able to sit through a couple of hours of your hearing in person, before attending the "Rally for Far Rockaway Trauma Center" going on at Murray and Broadway, starting at 11am. As a Southeast Queens Homeowner, Husband and Father, I would like to fully support that the Trauma Center remains front and center as the final Budget decisions are being made.

As you know, Far Rockaway is Geographically isolated. I think the number that the EMS gentlemen testified to today was 7 ambulances for all of Far Rockaway. If one has to go to Jamacia for a Trauma Center, it's not only the fact that is overly time consuming, once the ambulance is there it can be sucked into that area for more calls. Every Boroughs ambulance situation was described today, all were dire. On top of that we are training EMS workers for $42,000 a pop and they are quitting 5-6 years in due to lack of being able to support themselves on that paycheck. 6% ambulance availability in all of NYC was the number I wrote down from today's hearing. Staff can do 3,000 calls a day and they are getting 6,000.

I have to mention this again, because it bears repeating. I fully support the Far Rockaway Trauma Center, on top of that, I would like to applaud my City Council Member, Selvena Brooks-Powers, for making this one of her top priorities. The people of Far Rockaway deserve better. They have incoming 10's of thousands of new housing units

coming to their community soon. A trauma center is long overdue for the population that is currently there now. This has to happen and can no longer be pushed to the back of the line.

On March 25, 2024, Officer Jonathan Diller and his partner were conducting a vehicle stop on Mott Avenue. The passenger, Guy Rivera, refused to comply with orders, drew a firearm, and shot Diller in cold blood. The shooter, Guy Rivera, was convicted and sentenced to 115 years to life in prison. There are no Level 1 trauma centers on the Rockaway peninsula. The closest facility equipped to handle severe, life-threatening trauma is Jamaica Hospital Medical Center, located roughly a 30-minute drive away. The peninsula has been without a local Level 1 trauma center since Peninsula Hospital closed in April 9th of 2012.

Apirl 9th, 2012 = **5,175** days ago today.

This is a **critical healthcare gap**; there is a necessity for a trauma hospital in the Rockaways to handle **life-or-death emergencies**.

In summary, I support my local leaders in making this a priority for the Southeast Queens Community. While Far Rockaway is a little further south from where I live, high tides rise all ships. I am in full support for Far Rockaway getting what they deserve so that their loved ones can have dignity in emergency situations. In life-or-death situations minutes and seconds can have a monumental impact on the result. A 30 minute drive to Jamaica Hospital Medical Center is a death sentence for some, and likely was for Officer Jonathan Diller. Please keep the Trauma Center front and center as final Budget decisions are being made.

June 4, 2026

Max Ebens
[redacted]
Forest Hills, NY 11375

Dear Members of the City Council,

My name is Max Ebens, and I am a 7th grade student at the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE) in Queens. I am writing to ask you to protect the funding for BSGE's new school building and to support funding for the other schools planned for our neighborhood.

BSGE is a really important school to me. I have learned a lot here, not only in academics but also about understanding different perspectives and being part of a diverse community. My teachers challenge me to think critically and work hard, and I have made close friendships with students from many different backgrounds.

Knowing that our school will eventually move to a new building is exciting because it means students will have a space designed for learning and for the needs of our school community. I hope the City keeps its promise to make sure BSGE has the funding it needs for this move.

I also think it is important to support the other new schools that were promised in our area. There are a lot of families and students in Queens, and younger kids deserve good schools with enough space to learn and grow. If schools become too crowded, it can make learning harder for everyone.

Please help make sure BSGE stays funded and that the other promised schools are built too. Students like me care about our schools, and we are counting on adults to keep these promises.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

Sincerely,
Max Ebens
7th Grade Student
Baccalaureate School for Global Education

MAKE THE ROAD NEW YORK
Written Testimony on the Executive Budget Hearings - Finance
June 10, 2026 | City Hall | 11:00 AM

Good morning, Chair Lee and members of the Council. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is **Máxima Rodas,** and I am a trans immigrant woman from Argentina, and I am also a leader with the Trans Immigrant Project at Make the Road New York.

As a transgender immigrant, I know what it means to experience housing instability and to rely on community support to survive. For more than five months, I did not have a permanent home. Friends opened their doors to me, allowing me to shower, cook, and sleep on their couches, but I did not have a place that I could truly call my own. I lived with the constant uncertainty of not knowing where I would be staying next, and no one in our communities should have to experience that level of fear and instability simply because adequate support and resources are unavailable.

I have also witnessed how many transgender immigrants face discrimination in housing, barriers to employment, limited access to health care, and violence from systems that should be protecting us. I have heard the stories of transgender women who engage in the sex trade because they have few other options to survive in an increasingly expensive city, only to be met with harassment, criminalization, and abuse instead of support.

To ensure that our communities do not continue to face these challenges, we need New York City to commit to a budget that includes:

$10 million for the Trans Equity Initiative Fund. This fund was started and organized by Cecilia Gentili. We mentioned her name a lot during Pride Month, but what better way to honor her legacy than by fully allocating this fund to ensure that trans communities have access to life-saving resources.

$15 million for the Gender Affirming Care for Youth Fund. There are hospitals in NYC that are being subpoenaed because they have provided gender-affirming care to young people, and as a result, some are stopping services. We need to make sure we have a city that prioritizes the well-being and health of young trans people.

$10 million for the Support for Persons Involved in the Sex Trade Fund. Many transgender people, especially transgender immigrant women, rely on these programs for health services, legal support, harm reduction resources, and safe community spaces. We know that criminalization and police harassment do not solve poverty or exclusion, investing in our communities does.

Finally**, it is critical allocate $15M for a NEW LGBTQIA+ Immigrant Fund.** As an immigrant, I understand the tremendous barriers many of us face in accessing legal representation, support services, and economic stability. I have seen members of our community become vulnerable to detention and deportation simply because they could not afford legal assistance. This fund would help ensure that Trans and Queer immigrants have access to the resources they need to build safe and stable lives in New York City.

Investing in these funds would provide immediate support to Trans and gender expansive New Yorkers through housing assistance, health care access, employment opportunities, legal services, community support, and emergency resources. I know firsthand how transformative community support can be during moments of instability, and I want every TGI person in this city to have access to the same opportunity to thrive, not just survive.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I urge the Council to fully fund these critical investments and stand with our communities.

Testimony to Strike Queensway
from Budget, to Serve Better Transit and Park Spaces,
by McKein Johnson

When I first heard this administration had supported Queenslink, I was curious to see how this was going to be stricken off the board. However, this administration and committee continues to inherit the same issues from the one prior. The misconception that building the park first and publicizing it before the actual transit infrastructure, has as much effective weight as telling someone to put raw makeup on, without any foundation, and then reminding them that they have to do the whole process over, 20 minutes before the big event. You will tire out any initiative to start the second phase of the project. 1000 miles south, exists Atlanta's Beltway of the same variety, and is yet unable to properly initiate a phase for the transportation project because of that opposition. The project simply did not compensate for level of advancement.

As a 10 year resident of 11208, I desire to travel to any part of Northern Queens with the greatest of ease, as much as a resident in 11510. I would hope that a 11510 resident would have an easier feed in the city, via Queenslink, without relying on the Fulton Street Subway, through Brooklyn. I would even wager a 11375 resident would take a chance on public transport to some capacity, and have an easy feed into our beaches in the Rockaways. The main goal should be **access** through effective and pragmatic means. This committee nor New York City Transit deny people the ability to move however they want through their own neighborhoods. You cannot deny the people, by sugar-coating it with only the IBX, as it is only intra-city service, and yet another greenway that doesn't properly funnel access to transportation hubs, workplaces, or points of interest, the same way that the Highline actually does. This project has something that all generations have been in support of, since New York City, especially QUEENS, became more developed since this Right-of-way's closure in 1962.

No way with Queensway, thank you.

From: Megan Hart
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Manhattan Youth afterschool programs
Date: Thursday, June 11, 2026 2:31:57 PM

[redacted]

Dear DYCD Leadership,

I am writing to urge DYCD to continue to protect funding for Manhattan Youth programs.

As a working parent, I know firsthand how important these programs are for New York City families. My daughter has participated in Manhattan Youth's middle school program at Baruch Middle School, where it has been lead for the last ELEVEN YEARS by an incredible staff and leadership who worked closely with the principal to address our specific community's needs while also provided essential infrastructure and support for athletics through MSAL. Removing Manhattan Youth from multiple schools affects not only the school itself (and ours, Baruch, is absolutely heartbroken to have these relationships and established programs ripped away from our students) but the entire network of schools which participate in these leagues and support one another. There is a carefully crafted ecosystem that is being wiped out rather than built upon.

Aside from the painful loss of programs which are as essential to the culture and functioning of our school as any academics, my concerns are as follows:

- I was told in a follow up email by DYCD that " The updated program model was informed by feedback from students, families, schools and communities. The award process considered multiple factors, including organizational experience, program quality, operational capacity and overall proposal strength." This is a blatant and insulting falsehood. Parents in our community were never asked for input or informed that there was a possibility of a change in provider, nor were we informed of the criteria used to measure these programs. Students were certainly not asked for feedback, though they've provided it in droves since learning they would be losing their beloved program. As for organizational experience, eleven years of demonstrated excellence should be rewarded, not punished, and certainly not replaced by a program with zero demonstrated experience at the middle school level, at this size of school, or in middle school athletics.

- Not only was the process opaque and rushed, but the timing is incredibly concerning. Many parents made choices of middle school enrollment based on after-school programs offered. I know I did, and I have a son who will join his sister at Baruch next year as a sixth grader. Making this decision after enrollment deadlines is bad faith and disregards the important role these programs play in parents' school selection.

- further to the concern around the timing of this announcement is the impossibility of building a functioning and thriving afterschool program in TWO MONTHS to replace a program in

place for eleven years. Staffing alone will be rushed and inadequate, and staffing is the cornerstone to safety and the bedrock of student engagement and therefore student and community benefit.

- Given the wide-ranging protestations around these changes and the problematic process that led to them, locking schools into SIX-YEAR contracts with unproven programs is outrageous and unfair.

The testimony presented at recent budget hearings reflects what many parents already know: youth development programs are not optional extras. They are a vital part of the support system that helps children thrive and helps families remain economically stable.

I respectfully ask DYCD to continue defending and funding Manhattan Youth programs so that future generations of New York City children can benefit from the same opportunities that helped my child grow and succeed. If the goal is equity city-wide, then programs like ours that are functioning at a high level to great outcomes should be studied and replicated, not torn down.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to New York City's youth and families.

Subject: Privatization Creates Instability for Seniors.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

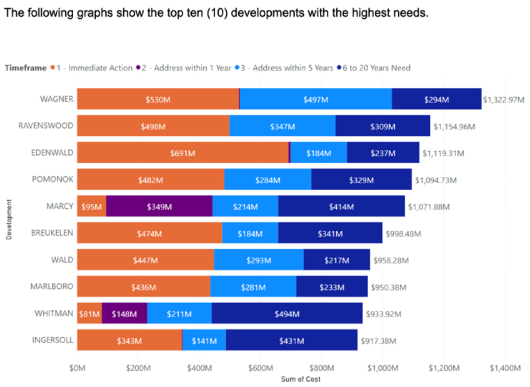


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.

- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

Alliance for Quality Education
6/10/26 Finance committee public comments on executive budget

---

My name is Melanie Fernandez, and I am a teacher at CDS Daycare. I am responsible for providing care and instruction to the children.

Child care providers and educators are the foundation of our communities. Every day, we do far more than simply supervise children. We teach, nurture, comfort, guide, protect, and help shape the next generation. We are teachers, caregivers, counselors, nurses, role models, and sometimes even a child's safe place.

The work we do has a lasting impact on children's lives, yet many educators and child care professionals continue to earn wages that do not reflect the value, responsibility, and dedication required for this profession. We help children develop the skills, confidence, manners, and knowledge they need to become successful, respectful, and productive members of society.

Those entrusted with caring for and educating our youngest learners deserve fair compensation, thriving wages, and meaningful benefits. Investing in educators is investing in our children, our families, and the future of our communities.

It is imperative that policymakers and communities prioritize early childhood education by ensuring that childcare providers and educators receive equitable compensation, comprehensive benefits, and the professional recognition they rightfully merit. An investment in our educators is an investment in the future of our children, the strength of our families, and the well-being of our communities. Furthermore, the significant accomplishments of childcare providers in nurturing the children under their care should be duly acknowledged. Policymakers should recognize that providers and teachers, who are held accountable for adhering to policies, maintaining licenses, delivering instruction, and serving as role models, deserve fair remuneration. It is concerning that their current compensation often falls below minimum wage, and is even less than that of a babysitter, despite the extensive certifications and responsibilities they undertake.

We urge policymakers, community leaders, and decision-makers to take immediate action to strengthen and invest in the early childhood education system. This investment must include fair compensation for educators and child care providers, expanded child care assistance for families, and increased access to high-quality early learning opportunities for all children.

Early childhood educators do far more than supervise children. We are teachers, caregivers, mentors, advocates, and partners to families. Every day, we help children develop the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral skills that serve as the foundation for lifelong success. We teach children how to communicate, problem-solve, build relationships, regulate emotions, and become respectful, confident members of society.

Despite the critical role we play in children's development, many educators and child care providers continue to receive wages that do not reflect the value, skill, and responsibility required by this profession. At the same time, many families struggle to afford quality child care and face long waiting lists before their children can access early education programs. No family should have to choose between financial stability and ensuring their child receives a strong educational start.

We call for increased and sustainable funding to provide educators with living wages, comprehensive benefits, and professional support. We also call for expanded child care vouchers and financial assistance programs that allow working families, especially low- and middle-income families, to access affordable, high-quality child care without unnecessary delays. In addition, we urge leaders to streamline enrollment processes and increase the availability of early childhood education programs so children can receive the services and support they need as early as possible.

Investing in educators and families is an investment in the future of our communities. When educators are fairly compensated, programs can attract and retain qualified professionals. When families receive adequate financial support, children gain access to safe, nurturing, and educational environments during their most important developmental years.

We respectfully urge our leaders to prioritize policies that value educators, support families, reduce barriers to child care access, and ensure that every child has the opportunity to benefit from quality early childhood education. Children cannot wait, families cannot wait, and educators should not have to continue carrying the weight of this essential work without the compensation and support they deserve.

Compost can improve soil health, prevent erosion and reduce the use of fertilizer. Compost is also a water-saving natural resource that acts as a sponge to prevent flooding and drought.

The urgency of maintaining the composting program is not only to decrease the toxic effect of landfills in NYC and decreasing the rat population but more importantly composting has an immediate effect on climate change by decreasing methane levels.

It is vital to continue to finance the composting program and to increase education, participation by community engagement, public media and legislation to continue the city's commitment.

As a board member of the Top of the Park condominiums I am doing everything I can to promote this program.

From: M Keirnan
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] More $$ for Daylighting
Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 7:12:46 PM

[redacted]

Daylighting is a simple and cheap way to slow everything down - people, bikes and cars.

Make our neighborhoods more livable.

Thank you.
Melinda Keirnan
62nd St

Inflation on Pet Care is Causing Animal Abandonment to Skyrocket

Imagine walking into an animal shelter to discover they have so many unhoused animals that, for the first time in their history, they had to suspend intake due to a record-breaking capacity crisis. This is exactly what happened last summer while I was volunteering for Animal Care Centers of NYC (ACC), New York City's largest animal shelter system. New York City is currently facing an all-time high pet overpopulation problem driven by the fast rising cost of veterinary care and pet expenditures, causing pet abandonment to skyrocket. T**he New York City Council needs to fund a *permanent,* low-cost spay and neuter program, as well as a city-funded *pet food pantry program* to reduce the stray cat population and prevent unnecessary pet surrenders.**

It's hard as a New Yorker not to notice that inflation has been on the rise in many areas of the economy, from skyrocketing rents to exorbitant grocery bills, but **"the price of veterinary care has soared more than 60 percent over the past decade, outpacing inflation" (Thomas).** While utility bills and gas have been getting noticeably more expensive, pet owners have an additional recurring expense that is climbing at a much faster rate. Putting food on your family's table now costs significantly more, but it's also becoming steadily more expensive to feed your pet. **A recent "CBS News analysis of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index shows pet food prices have climbed more than 20% since 2022" (Unger).** The rise in overall cost of living combined with pet care is making it extremely difficult for New Yorkers to afford to own a pet, causing many to surrender their beloved furry companions to already overcrowded animal shelters or worse yet, the street.

When people abandon their pets on the streets, it fuels a severe overpopulation crisis, which is exactly what is happening with stray cats in New York City. Many cats living on the street did not start out there. Some were once cherished pets whose owners could no longer afford care, or who lost their housing. The average cost to have a pet spayed or neutered in New York City by a private veterinarian can start at roughly $250 and often exceed $800 for larger dogs. City sponsored and non-profit clinics can be incredibly difficult to access due to high demand and a scarcity of licensed veterinarians, with waitlists often booked out for weeks. These clinics must prioritize appointments, and most of them are granted to TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return) caretakers to help curb the feral cat population. This leaves pet owners with few low-cost options when they need to have their cat or dog spayed or neutered, often resulting in not having the procedure done at all.

Last September, after incessant persistence from local rescue groups, the New York City Council approved a pilot program which will fund 3,500 free and low-cost spay and neuter surgeries. **These surgeries will not come close to helping solve the overpopulation problem when it is estimated that there are between 500,000 and one million stray cats in New York City.** The overpopulation of stray cats causes extreme suffering, with harsh winters being deadly for a species that originated in warm climates. It also creates a severe threat to wildlife. **A prominent study published in 2013 concluded that cats are the greatest source of human-caused mortality for birds, killing an estimated 1.3–4.0 billion birds annually in the United States (Scott R. Loss, Tom Will & Peter P. Marra).** The New York City Council needs to make the approved pilot program permanent. This will allow low-income New Yorkers to access

affordable spay and neuter procedures, helping to mitigate the domestic animal overpopulation crisis both on the streets and in the shelters. In correlation to this, a city-funded pet food pantry program needs to be established immediately so that struggling New Yorkers can continue feeding their pets and not have to choose between feeding themselves or their dog.

Owning a pet shouldn't be a luxury. The animal-human bond has been around for thousands of years, and we know that owning a pet can bring immense joy to a household. Adopting a pet offers both physical and mental health benefits. Pet ownership is shown to reduce stress levels, create routine, and add daily activity to your life. **According to the 2025 American Veterinary Medical Association demographic sourcebook, 58.6 % of American households own a pet (American Veterinary). This means that pet inflation is affecting more than half of America.** It's important that our city **s**upports pet owners across all income levels, so we can provide the proper care our animals need.

Animals offer companionship and ease loneliness, but most importantly, animals teach us about compassion and caring, which feels like something we need more of in this world today. **I'm urging the New York City Council to include permanent funding for spay and neuter programs and pet food pantries in the Fiscal Year 2027 budget.**

Sincerely,

Melissa Ainley

Works Cited

American Veterinary Medical Association. "U.S. Pet Ownership Statistics." *American Veterinary Medical Association*, 2024, www.avma.org/resources-tools/reports-statistics/us-pet-ownership-statistics.

Loss, Scott R., et al. "The Impact of Free-Ranging Domestic Cats on Wildlife of the United States." *Nature Communications*, vol. 4, no. 1, Jan. 2013, https://doi.org/10.1038/ncomms2380.

Thomas, Katie. "The Costs of Caring for Pets." *The New York Times*, 23 June 2024, www.nytimes.com/2024/06/23/briefing/the-costs-of-caring-for-pets.html.

Unger, Brian. "Petflation: How Soaring Pet Food Prices Are Straining Households." *Cbsnews.com*, 4 Nov. 2025, www.cbsnews.com/atlanta/news/petflation-how-soaring-pet-food-prices-are-straining-households/.

Funding for the Far Rockaway Trauma Center
Written testimony by Melissa Julien, Far Rockaway resident

With increasing populations and visitors, the Rockaway Peninsula is becoming more and more popular as a residential and recreational hotspot. The Rockaway Peninsula is also home to NYC's only ocean beach, and yet there are no adequate resources on the peninsula to support victims of drowning and water-related injuries. It is essential that we have a trauma center to keep residents and visitors safe. The best time for a trauma center was yesterday; the next best time for a trauma center is tomorrow.

Thank you,
Melissa Julien

6/12/26

Melissa Kaplan

[redacted]

Astoria, NY 11103

[redacted]

Re: Girls Inc. Afterschool Program, The Young Women's Leadership School Astoria

To Whom It May Concern:

I write in support of Girls Inc with the hope that funding for this program will be reconsidered. I am a single mother with a middle schooler who has attended Girls Inc for the past 2 years. I work in non-profit and have committed my career to serving indigent New Yorkers who suffer from mental illness, chemical dependency and other socio-economic hardships. I can barely afford to get by and pay my bills and support my daughter and I don't have any other resource for assistance or programming afterschool.

Not only has Girls Inc provided after school services, but they have also been available on days when school ends early, so I don't have to take a day off work to pick her up early. I have seen a real impact their programming has had on my daughter; it has provided a sense of community and connectedness and also contributed to building her confidence. Every interaction I have had with employees of Girls Inc has been very professional and I observe daily how they have established trust and respect with the students they are working with.

Please reconsider funding this program. If my daughter doesn't have this afterschool program I will be pulled from work more often, distracted over safety concerns and struggling on a daily basis to manage my child while simultaneously working.

Thank you,

Melissa Kaplan

As a life-long NYC citizen who values the library more than much of what is the budget (like the ever-ballooning costs of the overtime of Jessica Tisch's personal army, colloquially called the NYPD), I was disheartened to read that yet again, despite campaign promises from Mamdani, the library system has yet again not received .5 percent of the NYC budget. Although many have reported that library funding increased under the pending budget, the proposed increases can barely keep up with the rate of inflation. The library budget to reach .5 percent needs to be increased to $623.5 million. In addition, library advocates ask that the 0.5% of the total city budget be the benchmark for all future library budgets. Libraries should not always have to be beg the City Council and mayoral administrations for money. They should be a much greater priority than the NYPD, for example, since they cultivate and nourish New Yorkers, rather than harm, harass, and surveil them all in a pretense of public safety. Libraries are the public safety.

Mellini Kantayya
[redacted]
Brooklyn, NY 11238
[redacted]

Dear Honorable Council Members,

I support investment in skateboarding and believe skaters deserve excellent facilities. However, the proposed skatepark should be relocated from Mount Prospect Park to Thomas Greene Skatepark, **where the same goals can be achieved without exorbitant taxpayer burden, damage to the Prospect Heights resident and educational communities, and sacrificing valuable green space.**

Reasons to Relocate the Project

• Preserve scarce green space

- Mount Prospect Park is one of the few neighborhood green spaces available to residents.
- The proposal would replace existing parkland with a large concrete facility.
- Once green space is paved over, it is effectively lost permanently.
- Brooklyn already has limited parkland per resident and should prioritize protecting existing green areas. **We have the most skate parks per capita and the least green space per capita.**

• Maintain a park that serves everyone

- Mount Prospect Park is currently used by a wide range of residents for walking, relaxing, picnicking, informal recreation, community gatherings, and enjoying nature.
- Over fifteen public schools, charter schools, preschools, afterschool programs and day care centers use the park **as their ONLY SAFE GREEN SPACE for field days, sports, and other necessary-for-healthy-child-development uses.**
- The proposed skatepark dedicates a significant area to a single recreational use.
- Public investments should expand recreational opportunities without reducing access for existing park users.

• Environmental concerns

- Replacing permeable green space with concrete increases hardscape in an area that currently provides environmental benefits.

- Green space helps reduce urban heat island effects, absorb stormwater, and improve neighborhood resilience.
- **Even with drainage improvements, paving existing parkland runs counter to broader climate and sustainability goals.**
- **No feasibility, sustainability, or environmental impact study has been done. The environmental impact and level likely flooding to nearby Brooklyn Botanic Gardens or the nearby 2 and 3 subway line is unknown.**

• Safety and design concerns

- The site's proximity to major traffic corridors, including Eastern Parkway and the entrance to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. The historic and beautiful stairs are an attractive nuisance.
- Questions remain regarding visibility, sightlines, and overall safety for skaters and other park users.
- Shedding trees/acorns (dubbed "stop rocks" by skaters) poses an injury threat to skaters.
- **The Skate Foundation itself, cites the above factors as dangerous and highly undesirable for a skatepark location!**
- Given the availability of an alternative location, there is no need to accept these unresolved concerns.

• Thomas Greene Skatepark is the obvious alternative

- Thomas Greene is already a skatepark.
- **The facility is outdated and in need of greenery, renovation, and modernization.**
- Investing there would improve an existing skate destination rather than converting green space to a new use.
- The location already serves skaters and has established recreational infrastructure.
- **Relocation would increase Brooklyn's greenspaces, not decrease it; all at a savings to taxpayers!**
- The site has strong transit access and is well positioned to accommodate an upgraded facility.

• Better use of taxpayer dollars

- The City plans to spend approximately $11 million on the Mount Prospect project.
- **Instead the city could create a world-class skate facility at Thomas Greene while preserving Mount Prospect Park, creating MORE green space, and all for LESS taxpayer money (a win/win/win scenario for all of us!)**

This is not a choice between supporting skaters and preserving parks.
We can do both!

By relocating the project to Thomas Greene Skatepark, the City can:

- Provide skateboarders with a modern, high-quality facility.
- Preserve valuable green space at Mount Prospect Park.
- Avoid unnecessary conflict among park users.
- Advance environmental and sustainability goals.
- Make better use of public funds.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Council to relocate the proposed skatepark from Mount Prospect Park to Thomas Greene Skatepark and invest in the renovation and expansion of the existing facility.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Mellini Kantayya

QueensLink

Testimony — Finance Committee on 6/10

June 9th, 2026

TO: New York City Council — Finance Committee
RE: Support the QueensLink — preserve the Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way for both transit and parks

Dear Chairperson Lee and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Melody Garcia, and I am a resident of Astoria, Queens, living on the same avenue as the 31st Open Streets and its newly installed bike lanes. Commuting just about everyday of my life and recently just coming back from a trip to the Transit Museum, I would like to speak on behalf of my fellow Queens members to say that we would be in support of the **QueensLink** project.

A former GovCo intern for the NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC), I remember hearing about the QueensWay project initially and being interested in having another park space in Queens much like Flushing Meadows-Corona Park. I assisted in writing the summer 2023 newsletters, updating politicians and city officials about the upcoming projects of the EDC. But now, as I write to you today, I would like to change my mind on the words from the newsletter. As my friend has shown me, QueensWay would be *underutilizing* a valuable resource: the existing track and railway.

Unlike the Highline, the existing infrastructure is not abandoned and could greatly improve accessibility to the other side of the borough. By combining a park and reactivating the former Rockaway Beach Branch, the QueensLink project is the best of both worlds. One of the first memories I have of the NYC transit is looking over through the 7 line windows to see the beautiful view at 5Pointz. QueensLink will be able to make it possible for others to enjoy that same scenic experience as I once did, now on their way to Rockaway Beach and back.

Testifying before Queens officials on behalf of the #Fix the MTA campaign, I want to advocate for my fellow Queens residents that we need an extension of transit. On top of the Interborough Expressway (IBX), the QueensLink track would provide Queens with the transportation it needs and free middle Queens from being a public transit desert.

Why this matters to me
Though having spent nearly 2 hours on the bus from Woodside to Rockaway Beach each way as a child, I was still boundless energy hopping off the bus into the ocean. But knowing that the commute by train would free up so much more time, I hope future kids will be able to enjoy the extra time in the sun riding the QueensLink express. Some of my coworkers now commute from Rockaway Beach into Long Island City. If we have this train, I may find myself being one of them joining in going from work to sitting in the sand at the beach each day.

QueensLink could make this city more accessible and resident friendly, encouraging people to stay and invest in the city they call home. In the long-run, this would help keep the adage “Queens is Forever”.

Why the QueensLink is the right choice

Two competing concepts exist for the deactivated Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way: the park-only QueensWay, and the dual-purpose QueensLink, which combines subway and park uses. The QueensWay would be built directly on the former railbed, which would virtually eliminate the possibility of ever restoring transit there. The MTA itself recognized in its 2023 20-Year Needs Assessment that a linear park along the corridor would create a challenge for any future transit alternatives. Once a rail right-of-way is converted to other uses, it almost never returns to transit.

The QueensLink would create the first north-south subway line in Queens, extending the M line south from Rego Park to Ozone Park and then over the A train tracks to the Rockaways — increasing service to the Rockaways by up to 165%. It would also let the G train run all the way to Forest Hills, increasing capacity on the crowded Queens Boulevard local lines by 50% and connecting central Queens with north Queens and Brooklyn.

A study by the Steer Group found that the QueensLink would remove millions of vehicle trips each year, making streets safer and lowering harmful emissions, while adding up to 33 acres of new parks and trails integrated with the subway design. Over 20 years, the study concluded the project would more than pay for itself by creating jobs, saving New Yorkers time, and reducing healthcare costs tied to air pollution and traffic crashes.

Queens needs parks *and* trains. The QueensLink would provide both. I urge the Committee to preserve this irreplaceable right-of-way for future transit and to support the QueensLink.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

Melody Garcia
Astoria, Queens 11103
[redacted]
[redacted]
District 22

City Council
June 10th Finance Committee
Queenslink Testimony

I'm writing to urge the city council to support the queenslink over the queensway. Although the mayor has claimed that the queensway project will not preclude future rail activation, the current queensway project specifically calls for bike and pedestrian pathways directly over the existing rail. At the very least, the mayor and council should require a design that does not make it that much more difficult to build rail even if the park goes in first. If we are serious about a future with rich transit opportunities in ALL areas of New York, it is obvious that it becomes more difficult and more costly to build transit if a pedestrian pathway needs to be demolished in order to uncover what was previously rail tracks. And examples of the Atlanta beltline and the Maryland Purple line, show that when parks are built first it becomes that much harder to activate transit later.

If the council is committed to solving the housing crisis, prioritizing transit oriented development is key. With queenslink, entire new neighborhoods would be unlocked to achieve the block by block housing mission that the Mayor has recently championed. We should not build a short sited park for today, when we could be building trains for the New York City of five or ten years from now, when the need for transit will be even more pressing. Especially when the area that Queensway would like to begin construction on is already surrounded by two large parks.

We already have proven examples in the 7 line and the IBX, that when there is political will projects can take place even when the MTA has been unenthusiastic. Riders will always follow transit, especially in a city where so many are already relying on slow bus service in a transit desert. Let's not make the mistake of having rails to trails only, and truly make rails and trails a possibility with Queenslink.

Thank you,

Menucha Gurkov
[redacted]
Brooklyn NY 11213

Subject: Privatization of NYCHA Creates Instability for Seniors.

I am a senior living in the South Bronx and do not have an email address. I am being supported in submitting this testimony by Save Section 9. I benefit from NYCHA and their community center managed by East Side Houses.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

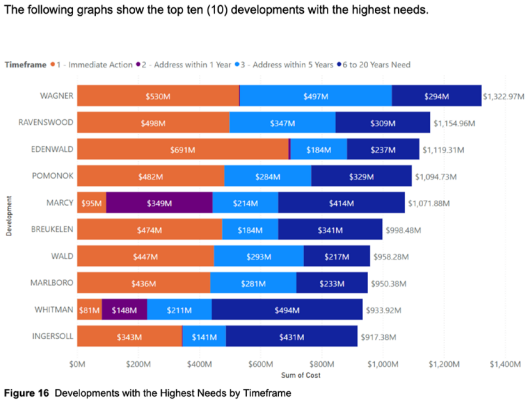


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.
- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

Please do not fund Queensway and undermine all possibilities of creating Queenslink. It would be a lost opportunity just when the MTA is considering taking another look at creating this much needed and relatively cheap service to this transit desert.

From: Michael Ring
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] The testimony I would have given yesterday if you called my name.
Date: Thursday, June 11, 2026 7:13:42 AM



June 11, 2026

Council Member Linda Lee
Chair of New York City Council Committee On Finance
Sent Online at https://council.nyc.gov/testify/
Emailed to: testimony@council.nyc.gov
Re: T2026-1913 New York City Council Fiscal Year 2027
Executive Budget Hearings – Hearing Held On
Wednesday, June 10, 2026

2

June 8, 2026

Dear Chair Lee and Members of the Committee On
Finance,

Yesterday I arrived at City Hall at about 9am I waited in a short line to go through security and entered the City Council Chamber at about 9:30 a.m. I filled out a card with my name. But at 4 pm my name was never called. I asked the sergeant-at-arms if my card might have been lost and he said they don't get called in order. I just had to wait. The meeting was still going on at 5:30 but I was very hungry and had other places to be. Below is taken from the notes of what I would have said if my name was called.

“I'm here as part of a coalition of disability advocacy groups that want to talk about the chronic underfunding of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities. According to my records the annual budget for that office is $678,657. I've heard other numbers today. But less than $750,000 a year. That's probably what it costs to paint this room. From other testimony I heard today, that's what it costs to keep someone in Rikers for a year and a half. We're talking about an annual budget of $1.25 billion. So it's about 0.0005% of the annual budget. To say that's an insignificant amount would not be an exaggeration.

It's one thing to create a city agency with only ceremonial duties. That's what a budget that tiny will do in New York City. A staff that can come out and wave at the crowds of disabled people who need help from the city of New York. That's kind of what referrals to other agencies look like.

But the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities has a required legal function. Local law 12 passed in 2023… A local law requiring agencies to develop five-year accessibility plans . The law states its requirements are that each city agency, in consultation with [MOPD] Shall develop and implement a five-year accessibility plan. … It's now 2026 and some city agencies have put forth plans that are quite extensive. However some city agencies have no plans at all and others look like they were written on the back of an envelope. It doesn't look like the Mayor's Office for People with Disability had the resources to help these city agencies.

I propose increasing the budget of MOPD To $10,000,000 . This will still be less than one One hundredth of the city budget.

Before I close I'd like to go one step further. I'd like to propose how to keep this budget neutral at least for the first few years. The City should create a special program to give out parking tickets to people who are blocking curb cuts and bus stops. This offense affects People with disabilities the most And after a couple of years it might change the culture of New York City car owners so that they know not to do that.

Thank you for your time. “

Michael Ring
he/him

To the City Council Finance Committee –

I am asking you as a citizen of Brooklyn to reconsider and hopefully redirect your financial support for the proposed placement of a skate park in Mount Prospect Park in Brooklyn to the better option of improving the park as it now stands. This park provides a green space for many neighborhood people to enjoy – green space that is in short supply in this city. Although located near busy Eastern Parkway, it nonetheless provides a bit of nature and a little tranquility to those who come from throughout our part of Brooklyn to enjoy it. That tranquility would be lost with the noise generated by skates rasping against concrete at all hours of the day. This cacophony would be heard beyond the dimensions of the skate park and throughout the rest of the park making it essentially useless to anyone seeking the tranquility that parks such as Mount Prospect provide. In addition, the potential loss of trees in constructing this skate park would be a move in the wrong direction – we need more, not less, trees in the city.

Over and above environmental concerns, this initiative is marked by two things that almost always lead to failure and discontent among our citizens. The first is that it is being promoted by an outsider to the city, indeed to Brooklyn itself. Tony Hawks does not live here and will not be materially affected by the worst aspects of the deal he is seeking with the city. He simply takes the money and runs, leaving Prospect Heights residents to live behind closed windows to lessen the noise or avoid the park altogether. Second, it is ill conceived from a location viewpoint. Undoubtedly, Brooklyn has a plethora of alternative sites where a skate park could be built, sites that would not require the destruction of green space and loss of the tranquility it provides as would be the case with a skate park in Mount Prospect Park. An important point is that Friends of Mount Prospect Park as well as all Brooklynites are not anti-skate parks, we are just against skate parks being put in the absolutely worst place for all involved. I appeal to your sense of community to do the right thing and redirect any city funds designated for this skate park to the more palatable option of improving and maintaining Mount Prospect Park as it is, so that it can continue to be enjoyed by Brooklynites and all New Yorkers seeking the comfort of a city park.

Thank you for any further consideration that you may give to this request –
Michael Wagner

encourage you to ask the board to vote against the proposal to put a skate park in Mount Prospect Park, and secondly to perhaps work collaboratively with the city to find other sites in Brooklyn in which a skate park would be more suitable and less of a negative impact that it is surely to have if placed in Mount Prospect Park.

Thank you for any help you can provide in this matter --- Michael Wagner

Hello,

I am testifying in opposition to siting a skate park in Mount Prospect Park, a beloved and well used green space and neighborhood park. There is no need for the Parks Department to create division in our community by pushing their opaque plan.

The skate park was born out of a Participatory Budgeting vote done in a different community board and city council area. Another community wanted an updated skate park in their neighborhood and yet it is proposed to be built in a different neighborhood and city council district entirely. The process is shady and there was no input from the community where the skate park is proposed to be. We've always been told that we can't comment on the proposed location of the skate park only the design. Another nearby park in our community district, Brower Park, is already marked for skate facility upgrades. There are several existing skate facilities in Park Slope and Gowanus (the district that voted to fund a skate garden) that could use upgrades on existing paved surfaces, at Thomas Greene Park and at Washington Park.

The Parks Department has not been good stewards of Mount Prospect Park. In other nearby neighborhood parks, such as Fort Greene Park, the Parks Department has not paved over parts of the lawns that are worn down. They close off the area and reseed the lawn. In Mount Prospect Park, we are supposed to accept their reasoning that the lawn is not in good condition so they must pave over it. Additionally, there are times when trash bins in the park are overflowing and is not picked up for weeks after the community submits multiple 311 requests. Nothing is preventing the Parks Department from reseeding the lawn and planting additional trees and greenery to enhance the green space not take it away. The central field in the park is well used by sunbathers, sport players, people with their dogs, picnics and large birthday parties, barbecues, and summer camps. With a large portion of the park paved over these existing uses will come into conflict, using what is left of the remaining space.

Noone in the community is opposed to a new skate facility being installed in the neighborhood as long as it is on existing paved surfaces and not taking away from our green spaces. I would welcome the added greenery from a "skate garden", where existing pavement has added trees and greenery along with the skating elements. A plan such as this would surely unite the community in support.

In closing, I hope you will oppose funding the current plan. I have never heard a Brooklyn or city resident say that the city could use less green space. The people in the city clamor for more green space, more trees, more grass. Please do not fund paving over our neighborhood green space.

Thank you.

Fiscal Year 2027 Executive Budget Hearing – Committee on Finance
June 10, 2026
Testimony by Michaeline Von Drathen, Friends of Queens Public Library at Ridgewood

I do not know if I can ever find the right words or the perfect amount of words that express the importance of libraries not only to me but to all communities. To have access to knowledge, millions of stories & what feels like just as many resources, events & programs all for FREE truly does boggle my mind. I still find myself pinching myself that libraries still exist, it is truly remarkable & somewhat of a miracle. In today's day libraries feel like the last truly democratic institution we have in this country. Libraries truly welcome everyone! Libraries do not care about your age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, income, who you love, if you were born here or not, your legal status, what language you speak, religion or political party, etc. Libraries ARE a level playing field, ALL are EQUAL at the library & ALL HAVE ACCESS to all they hold whether tangible or intangible. Libraries are a safe space, second home to some, a third space, a community center to others.

As for me & my library, Ridgewood, it is where I go to reflect, to calm myself, to think uninterrupted & where I go when my hope in this world wains. When hope is low, I go & sit at the library & just watch. I see people getting a library card for the first time, meeting with friends for a weekly check-in or game of chess or card game, hearing & seeing the excitement of children at the library, the teens doing homework, studying, playing videogames & creating art, adults picking up their reserves, signing up to use the computers, and signing up for book club. I hear laughter at the library & see ear-to-ear smiles. I hear so many languages at the library & see so many different cultures. I see all who live in my community at the library, it's like seeing the entire world in a day, how marvelous! All these people who may not have much in common or the same beliefs, but yet they all come to gather at the library. I think that says all there needs to be said about the importance of libraries.

Date: May 20, 2026

Subject: Strong Support for Manhattan Youth Afterschool Program at Wagner Middle School

Dear Committee,

I am writing to express how truly grateful and happy we are with **Manhattan Youth as the afterschool program at Wagner Middle School in District 2**.

My name is **Michal Globen**, and I am the mother of Daniel, a student in District 2. Our experience with Manhattan Youth has been nothing short of exceptional. They are a truly wonderful organization, and their dedication to the children is evident in everything they do.

The variety of activities they offer is outstanding—there is genuinely something for every child. From engaging and meaningful **STEM programs** to creative outlets like **Dungeons & Dragons and chess**, as well as **sports and other enriching opportunities**, the program provides an environment where children can explore anything they could dream of.

I often tell my son how incredibly lucky he is to be part of such an amazing program. He has access to opportunities that allow him to discover his interests and grow with confidence. Through Manhattan Youth, he is learning not only academically but also socially—building friendships, participating in team sports, collaborating with peers, creating, and even gaining valuable life skills such as cooking.

We have seen meaningful growth in him. His confidence, curiosity, independence, and ability to work with others have all flourished thanks to this program. The staff are thoughtful, caring, and deeply committed, creating a welcoming, nurturing, and inspiring environment for all students.

For these reasons, we **strongly support keeping Manhattan Youth as the afterschool program at Wagner Middle School**. Their program is consistently high-quality, thoughtfully designed, and deeply beneficial to both students and families. It is not easy to find a program that offers this level of care, structure, and enrichment all in one place.

Manhattan Youth is doing an outstanding job, and we feel very fortunate to be part of this community. We sincerely hope they will continue in this role, as their presence makes a meaningful and positive difference in our children's lives.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Michal Globen
Mother of Daniel, Wagner Middle School, NYC
District 2

My Personal Experiences in Fountain House Community

By: Michele Dechoan Brown

I have been a member of the Fountain House community here in Midtown Manhattan for 3 years now. I have participated in volunteering in one of my units in lending a helping hand to others. In other words I have helped in doing some data entry, facilitate bingo games and make outreach calls to senior citizens.

I feel a clubhouse setting is good as a role model for maintaining self-esteem and work on goal setting for individuals. You have choices in either volunteering in activities or just having fun doing them or make decisions on achieving employment and getting an education to increase one's knowledge.

Either way, being in a clubhouse setting differs from being in traditional programs where they just focus on clinical issues.

My personal experiences has been a good one. Coming out of being homeless living in a shelter, I personally thank the donors of their contributions in keeping communities like this open for people like myself who needs them.

I'm still volunteering in one of my units and another department currently at this time.

Testimony of Michele Evans
Submitted to the New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice and Committee on Finance

Fiscal Year 2027 Executive Budget Hearing, Department of Correction

Greetings,

My name is Michele Evans. I am a New Yorker, an author, an independent journalist, and survivor of Rikers Island.

I was incarcerated on Rikers Island from January 2019 until June 2020. I entered Rikers as a domestic violence survivor whose survival had been criminalized. I left with permanent knowledge of what this city allows to happen to people when the public is not looking.

I am submitting this testimony because the Department of Correction budget cannot be treated as a routine agency funding question. Rikers is not a normal city facility. It is a place where people are caged pretrial, exposed to violence, filth, humiliation, fear, medical neglect, and death. It is a place where people enter legally presumed innocent and leave changed forever, if they leave at all.

The Council should not accept a budget that cuts or underfunds the very programs that help keep people alive, connected, and stable inside.

Programming is not decoration. Programming is not a perk. Programming is not something to cut when the numbers get tight.

Inside Rikers, programming is a lifeline.

It is often the only structured human contact people have that is not about control, discipline, search, count, punishment, or survival. It is where people process trauma, addiction, grief, rage, fear, shame, parenting, release anxiety, and the shock of being trapped in an environment designed to strip people down. It is where people remember they are still human.

When programming is cut, the harm is immediate.

Dorms become more volatile. People sit with nothing but fear, frustration, noise, tension, and waiting. Addiction recovery is interrupted. Mental health needs go unmet. Family connection weakens. Reentry planning falls apart. People who are already unstable become more isolated. People who are trying to change lose access to the very structure that helps them do it.

That does not make the jail safer. It makes it more dangerous for everyone inside, including staff.

Rikers is often called a “gladiator school” because of its entrenched culture of violence, fear, and survival. That phrase is not dramatic. It is accurate. Spending time in that environment is not

merely a loss of freedom. It is the prolonged dismantling of privacy, safety, identity, dignity, and nervous-system stability.

Inside Rikers, the body learns to scan constantly. Who is angry? Who is too close? Where are the exits? Is the dorm about to erupt? What tone did that officer use? What did that look mean? That is not paranoia inside Rikers. That is survival.

But survival has a cost.

A person does not simply walk out of Rikers and become free. The jail follows them. It follows them into sleep, crowds, relationships, work, health, and ordinary daily life. It follows them in the way they flinch at sudden sounds, sit with their back to the wall, mistrust authority, struggle with sleep, and carry shame from being searched, watched, exposed, and treated as disposable.

Rikers does not only punish people. It injures them.

That is why programming matters. It is one of the few tools inside that can interrupt the damage.

Recovery meetings matter. Religious services matter. Educational programs matter. Legal access matters. Reentry planning matters. Domestic violence survivor services matter. Parenting programs matter. Mental health groups matter. Creative programs matter. Peer support matters. Conflict de-escalation matters. Family visitation matters.

These are not soft services. They are violence prevention. They are suicide prevention. They are overdose prevention. They are reentry preparation. They are public safety.

If the Council cuts programming, it should be honest about what it is cutting. It is cutting one of the few stabilizing forces in one of the most unstable places in New York City.

When I previously testified before the Council, I spoke about what I personally saw inside. I worked in the mess hall. My job included killing cockroaches constantly. There were rats. The place was filthy. Those are not minor complaints. Sanitation is a life-safety issue in a jail. When people are locked in crowded dorms, sharing showers, toilets, phones, tables, sinks, air, and limited supplies, basic cleanliness becomes a public health and human dignity issue.

The Council should fund basic sanitation as a non-negotiable requirement. No jail housing unit should have rats, cockroaches, mold, sewage smells, unsafe showers, broken toilets, inadequate cleaning supplies, or people forced to live in filth. People in custody should not have to beg for soap, toilet paper, menstrual products, clean clothing, clean bedding, disinfectant, or functioning showers.

But clean floors alone will not fix Rikers.

A jail where people are locked in clean cages with no meaningful programming is still a cage. It is still deprivation. It is still despair.

The Council should fund and protect programming at a level that recognizes what Rikers actually is: a place filled with people who are poor, traumatized, mentally ill, addicted, disabled, legally presumed innocent, separated from their children, awaiting court dates, and trying to survive a system that often makes them worse.

I am asking the Council to fund the following:

First, restore and expand programming inside all DOC facilities, including educational programming, recovery meetings, religious services, creative programs, trauma-informed groups, parenting support, conflict de-escalation, vocational training, and reentry preparation.

Second, require DOC to publicly report programming cancellations, staffing shortages, lockdown-related interruptions, provider access problems, and the number of people actually receiving services by facility and housing unit.

Third, protect nonprofit and community-based providers that work inside the jails. These organizations are often more trusted by people in custody than the agency itself. They provide continuity, humanity, and a bridge back to the community. Cutting them cuts off one of the few lines of trust that still exists.

Fourth, fund gender-responsive services for women, trans people, nonbinary people, and survivors of abuse. The women's jail is filled with people whose pathways into incarceration are often tied to domestic violence, poverty, coercion, substance use, mental health needs, and survival. Women in custody are also mothers, daughters, caregivers, and survivors. They need confidential ways to report abuse. They need access to services that understand trauma. They need support maintaining contact with children. Pregnant people need real medical care, doulas, midwives, and protection from shackling and humiliation. Trans and gender-nonconforming people need safe housing, medical continuity, hormone access, and protection from sexual violence and retaliation.

Fifth, fund mental health care and trauma-informed services at a scale that matches the trauma inside. Rikers houses people who already carry domestic violence trauma, sexual violence trauma, poverty trauma, homelessness, addiction, grief, and mental illness. Then the jail adds more trauma. It strips people, searches them, crowds them, isolates them, deprives them of sleep, exposes them to violence, and expects them to remain stable. That is not realistic. The Council should fund more clinicians, counselors, peer-support programs, recovery meetings, and trauma-informed crisis response that is not simply another form of punishment.

Sixth, fund family connection and in-person visitation. Cutting people off from family does not make the jail safer. It makes despair worse. Children suffer. Parents suffer. Communities suffer. Visitation, phone access, video access, child-friendly visiting spaces, transportation support, and family programs are not extras. They reduce harm and help people come home.

Seventh, fund real reentry support. People should not be released from Rikers with no housing, no medication continuity, no documents, no treatment connection, no transportation, and no plan. Discharge planning must begin early, not at the door. Reentry services should include

housing referrals, benefits access, medical appointments, mental health continuity, substance-use treatment, identification documents, clothing, transportation, and connection to community-based support.

Eighth, fund alternatives to incarceration and supervised release so fewer people are sent to Rikers in the first place. The most humane condition at Rikers is not being sent there unnecessarily. Many people detained on Rikers are poor, legally presumed innocent, unable to afford bail, mentally ill, unhoused, or caught in crises that jail cannot solve. If the Council is serious about reducing deaths and improving conditions, it must also fund the off-ramp: housing, treatment, community supervision, domestic violence survivor services, mental health care, substance-use treatment, and court-based alternatives.

Ninth, fund independent oversight and public accountability. DOC should not be allowed to investigate itself in darkness and then ask the public to trust the result. The budget must require transparent reporting on deaths, use of force, medical neglect, sexual abuse complaints, grievances, missed services, lockdowns, staff absenteeism, programming cancellations, and conditions in each facility. Funding should be conditioned on compliance with reporting requirements and measurable improvements.

Rikers is an inhumane place. That is not rhetoric. That is lived experience.

I know what it feels like to sleep in a room full of fear. I know what it feels like to lose privacy, bodily autonomy, and any real sense of safety. I know what it feels like to watch people deteriorate because they have nothing meaningful to do, nowhere safe to process what is happening to them, and no reliable access to the programs that might help them hold on.

The Council should not accept a budget that makes that worse.

I am not asking you to reward DOC failure. I am asking you to fund life-saving services while demanding accountability for every dollar. I am asking you to fund programming, sanitation, medical care, mental health care, family connection, gender-responsive services, alternatives to incarceration, and independent oversight with the urgency this crisis deserves.

People are dying.

People are being damaged.

People are being released with injuries this city helped create.

No New Yorker should be sentenced to filth, neglect, violence, humiliation, isolation, or preventable death because they are poor, because they are awaiting trial, because they are mentally ill, because they survived abuse, or because the city has decided that people behind jail walls are easier to ignore.

Rikers has already taken too much from too many people.

This budget should not preserve the machinery of harm. It should fund the programs, conditions, and accountability needed to reduce that harm now.

Thank you for accepting my testimony.

Michele Evans
Author, Independent Journalist,
Formerly Incarcerated at Rikers Island, January 2019 to June 2020

From: michelle
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Student Testimony - Manhattan Youth Belongs With Yorkville East Middle School
Date: Saturday, June 13, 2026 1:09:03 PM

[redacted]

Here at Yorkville East Middle School, Manhattan Youth makes up a large part of our community that could never be replaced!
I am an 8th grade student here at YEMS, and Manhattan Youth has provided countless of programs, sports, and activities that interest me. This includes: school dances, end of year celebrations, volleyball, cross country, fencing, theatre, and countless of other clubs. The Manhattan Youth program at my school is always sending us emails about upcoming events, reminding us and informing us of upcoming programs, and always keeps in touch with students and parents. They truly are a large part of our community, and it would devastate our school community if they were forced to leave.
I strongly encourage you to rethink your decision of taking these powerful members of our community away, who we have had a treasured relationship with for many years. Thank you for your time and consideration.
- Michelle Buran

For years Mount Prospect Park has been a special oasis for me and so many others in our neighborhood. It provides an escape from the loud, bustling traffic of Eastern Parkway and year round, in all kinds of weather, it's been my safe place to go for walks, read, rest, and watch the neighborhood dogs play. As the weather gets warmer it's especially crucial having this green space that is largely shaded and is often much cooler than the rest of the neighborhood.

Mount Prospect Park is a sacred community space that has long been neglected and it pains me to see it suffer each season from a lack of maintenance. It's used daily by so many families, children, and individuals, and could be an even better park if only the grass were maintained and the space was properly cared for. It's extremely frustrating to see a potential project that would destroy so much of what makes Mount Prospect Park cherished, like a skate facility, getting funding over the basic maintenance and care of a park that provides much-needed natural green space for all.

What makes the park so wonderful is the many ways it can be used for anything and everything, and by families, individuals, and people of all ages and abilities. At any given time, there are people exercising, kids riding bikes, people playing sports on the lawn, couples lounging on the grass, and so many other flexible activities that would be impossible if the space were taken over by a skate facility. This community badly needs more green space, not less. Let's support our environment and community by maintaining the amazing Mount Prospect Park we already have, not by paving over the green space that's been ignored for too many years.

QueensLink

Testimony — Finance Committee on 6/10

June 10, 2026

TO: New York City Council — Finance Committee
RE: Support the QueensLink — preserve the Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way for both transit and parks

Dear Chairperson Lee and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is **Mike Scala**, and I serve, in a volunteer capacity, as counsel and legal advisor to the **QueensLink.** I am writing in strong support of the QueensLink, which would bring both new subway service and new parkland to Queens by reactivating the former Rockaway Beach Branch, and against the current $43 million allocated in the budget for phase one of the QueensWay, also referred to as the Met Hub project.

Why this matters to me

I was born and raised in South Queens but went to high school in Bayside. My commute to and from school took up to two hours each way. While I was spending four hours in transit every day, my classmates were enjoying their lives. This ugly reality continues to this day, as a recent survey found that 16 percent of residents of my Assembly district traveled 90 minutes or more each way to work. That means thousands of us are commuting over three hours every day. In the greatest city in the world, this is unacceptable.

Why the QueensLink is the right choice

Two competing concepts exist for the deactivated Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way: the park-only QueensWay, and the dual-purpose QueensLink, which combines subway and park uses. The QueensWay would be built directly on the former railbed, which would virtually eliminate the possibility of ever restoring transit there. The MTA itself recognized in its 2023 20-Year Needs Assessment that a linear park along the corridor would create a challenge for any future transit alternatives. Once a rail right-of-way is converted to other uses, it almost never returns to transit.

The QueensLink would create the first north-south subway line in Queens, extending the M line south from Rego Park to Ozone Park and then over the A train tracks to the Rockaways — increasing service to the Rockaways by up to 165%. It would also let the G train run all the way to Forest Hills, increasing capacity on the crowded Queens Boulevard local lines by 50% and connecting central Queens with north Queens and Brooklyn.

A study by the Steer Group found that the QueensLink would remove millions of vehicle trips each year, making streets safer and lowering harmful emissions, while adding up to 33 acres of new parks and trails integrated with the subway design. Over 20 years, the study concluded the

project would more than pay for itself by creating jobs, saving New Yorkers time, and reducing healthcare costs tied to air pollution and traffic crashes.

Queens needs parks *and* trains. The QueensLink would provide both. I urge the Committee to preserve this irreplaceable right-of-way for future transit and to support the QueensLink.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

Mike Scala
Howard Beach, NY 11414
[redacted]
NYC Council District 32

From: Mildred Martinez
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Subject: Finance Committee: Reject This Budget and Stop the Privatization of NYCHA
Date: Monday, June 15, 2026 11:47:35 PM

[redacted]

Chair Justin Brannan and Members of the Finance Committee—Council Members Diana Ayala, Charles Barron, Gale Brewer, Nantasha Williams, Kevin Riley, Julie Won, and Lincoln Restler

This budget puts each of you on record.

Mayor Mamdani's proposal is not a neutral funding plan it is an aggressive expansion of the privatization of NYCHA through PACT, RAD, and the so-called Public Housing Preservation Trust and NIB financing model. A "yes" vote is a vote to transfer public housing, public land, and public revenue streams into private and quasi-private control for decades.

You are being asked to approve $1.3 billion to accelerate this shift while Section 9 housing continues to be underfunded and left to deteriorate. That is not an accident it is a policy choice that this Committee has the power to reject.

You will hear that this is about repairs and efficiency. But tenants are already telling you what this model delivers: more evictions, higher rent burdens, weakened protections, and less accountability. These outcomes are not theoretical they are happening now across converted developments.

NIB is being presented as a technical financing solution, but it is part of the same pipeline: leveraging public housing assets to unlock private capital while shifting control away from direct public oversight. The structure may be complex, but the result is simple public assets are being used to generate private-facing returns. You can review how this model is being framed by its own proponents here: https://www.nycha.nyc.gov/about/nycha-preservation-trust

So the question before this Committee is straightforward: if taxpayers are funding the rehabilitation of these buildings, why are you approving deals that hand control to private operators or financial structures for up to 99 years?

That is not investment. That is a long-term transfer of public assets and future value.

Finance Committee members are responsible for fiscal stewardship. This model fails that test. It increases long-term costs, weakens public control, and shifts value away from the public while exposing tenants to greater instability.

You also have a duty of oversight. The warnings are already in front of you from tenants, from legal advocates, and from the NYC Comptroller. Approving further expansion of PACT, RAD, and NIB without a full, independent impact analysis is not due diligence it is a decision to proceed without accountability.

Organizations across the city including the Citywide Council of Presidents, Residents to Preserve Public Housing, Neighbors Helping Neighbors, and Save Section 9 are unified in this demand: stop.

We are calling on this Committee to:

Reject any budget allocation that expands PACT, RAD.
Enact an immediate moratorium on all new conversions and transactions
Fund comprehensive, city-led modernization of Section 9 public housing
Establish a dedicated “Save Section 9” funding stream backed by sustainable revenue
Each of you will have to answer for this vote to your constituents, to NYCHA residents, and to the future of public housing in this city.

You can protect public housing, or you can facilitate its dismantling.

Reject this budget. Halt privatization. Fully fund Section 9.

Public housing is not for sale and it should not be signed away on your watch.

Thank you,
El Sonido Latino Presente
Voice for “We The People”

From: Mindy Yuen-Winfield
To: Testimony
Cc: Marylyne Myrthil
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Written Testimony In Support of MANHATTAN YOUTH at Wagner Middle School
Date: Monday, May 25, 2026 2:06:27 PM



To Whom It May Concern,

Manhattan Youth is more than just an afterschool program — it has been an essential part of our children's lives and our Wagner community for years.

Our family has been part of Wagner Middle School since my oldest son began attending in 2017. Now, his younger siblings are students there as well. All three of our children have attended the Manhattan Youth afterschool program, and we cannot overstate the positive impact it has had on our family.

As working parents, Manhattan Youth gave us peace of mind knowing our children were not only safe and cared for after school, but also engaged in meaningful extracurricular activities that otherwise may not have been available to them. The program provides opportunities for students to grow academically, socially, emotionally, and creatively.

Marylyne Myrthil has been with the program from the very beginning, and she is absolutely amazing. The program she runs at Wagner is truly top-notch. She genuinely cares about the children and makes it a priority to know each student personally. That level of dedication is rare and cannot simply be replaced.

From cooking classes and sports programs to art classes and study lab, every teacher involved in Manhattan Youth takes the time to support and encourage the students. We have seen firsthand how this program has shaped each of our three children in meaningful ways.

Our son thrived in basketball and cooking class. We watched a shy young boy gain confidence through the encouragement and support of his teachers. Basketball fueled his passion for the sport, while cooking class gave him a sense of pride as he excitedly brought home what he made each week.

Our daughter flourished creatively through watercolor class, especially when her artwork was selected to be displayed at the end-of-year showcase. Dance class also helped her build confidence and taught her how to perform in front of an audience.

Marylyne and her staff are exceptional. Their dedication, care, and commitment to the students are unparalleled. Programs like this are built on trust and relationships developed over many years. Manhattan Youth has been part of Wagner for eight years — EIGHT YEARS of building connections with students, families, teachers, and the school community. That cannot easily be replaced by a new organization unfamiliar with the school and its students.

As parents, we should have a voice in our children's care and the programs that directly impact their lives. Decisions about our children's wellbeing should not be made without considering the experiences and concerns of the families who rely on this program every day.

Although our children will soon graduate from Wagner, we continue to advocate because we want the best for future Wagner students. We want them to have the same opportunities our children had — opportunities to discover new passions, build confidence, form friendships, and grow into themselves through the incredible programs Manhattan Youth provides.

Please listen to the voices of the Wagner families and reinstate Manhattan Youth as the afterschool provider at Wagner. For years, this program has helped students grow in confidence, creativity, leadership, and friendship through arts, sports, academic support, trips, and community-building experiences. The impact reaches beyond the students themselves; it strengthens working families and helps build the connected, caring community that makes Wagner so special.

What has been especially powerful during this difficult moment is witnessing the extraordinary response from families, students, teachers, and community members. The overwhelming outpouring of love and support for Manhattan Youth speaks volumes about the profound impact this program has had on our children and school community. People do not rally this passionately for something ordinary — they rally because this program matters deeply!

So much hard work, dedication, and heart have gone into building this program over the years. The Manhattan Youth team has consistently shown up every day of the school year for our children with compassion, professionalism, and unwavering commitment. Losing this program would mean losing trusted relationships, stability, mentorship, and opportunities that cannot easily be replaced.

This program is more than childcare. It is a lifeline for families, a second home for students, and a cornerstone of the Wagner community.

I respectfully ask DYCD to listen to the voices of the students, parents, and community members who are speaking loudly and clearly: WAGNER NEEDS MANHATTAN YOUTH!

Please reinstate this vital program for our children and our community.

Sincerely,
Mindy Yuen-Winfield

Testimony to City Council Finance Committee Hearing, June 10, 2026
Bt Miriam Bensman
[redacted]

In Japan, they call it tree bathing—cleansing the soul by walking in the woods. That's why my husband and I walk our dog every day in Forest Park—and why we moved to Richmond Hill, a few blocks from the wild splendor of Forest Park.

My name is Miriam Bensman. As a park lover, I feel odd trying to stop construction of a park 1.5 miles from my home. I'm doing so because there's $43 million in the executive capital budget for the Metro Hub Park, a 5-acre park right next to 550 acre Forest Park. MANY neighborhoods in Queens lack park space. Forest Hills, where this park is located, isn't one of them.

This little park is phase 1 of the QueensWay, a linear park on the defunct Rockaway Beach Branch right of way. Its privileged proponents promote it as bringing a premium park like the High Line or Central Park to their doorsteps.

I'm sure it would be lovely, but we need to use this city-owned rail corridor for rails. The linear park would stop future construction of the first north-south transit line in Queens. South Queens was cut off from the rest of the County and midtown Manhattan when the old Rockaway Beach Branch of the LIRR stopped running in 1962. Since then, racist neglect and austerity politics have left those neighborhoods with the longest average commutes in the U.S.

I support the QueensLink plan to reconnect Queens by extending the M train south over the same right of way and the A train tracks to the Rockaways. Because the M would no longer turn around at 71st St Forest Hills station, it would free up space for the G train to return there. That would increase service on the unbearably crowded Queens Boulevard lines by 50%. Plus, the right of way is wide enough to support up to 33 acres of new parks and trails.

Former Mayor Eric Adams agreed to fund the park-only QueensWay in a backroom deal —without any formal public discussion. It's not popular. A constituent survey by Senator Joe Addabbo, whose district includes all the neighborhoods along the right of way— found that 75% want it to be used for transit. Only 22% want it used for parks. The results were similar in every neighborhood, including Forest Hills. The QueensLink plan

is also popular in north Queens and north Brooklyn. When I described ir to Queens Community Board 2, people cheered.

Mayor Mamdani opposed the park-only QueensWay when he was an Assembly member, but has kept funding for phase 1 in the budget. He notes that the MTA has said it won't preclude future transit development, because . it's.not hard to tear up the asphalt.

Maybe so, but politically, it's almost impossible to tear up a park. The Rails to Trails. Conservancy couldn't cite a single example of a rail corridor that was converted to a park and then back for transit use.

Atlanta recently cancelled the shovel-ready transit portion of a transit PLUS park plan. It had made the mistake of building the park first, because it cost less. When it was ready to build transit, businesses and residents new to the area stopped the train.

Don't let NYC make the same mistake. Please, take the money for QueensWay phase 1 out of the budget. Don't let an unwanted
little park block desperately needed future transit. Queens needs parks and trains.

Miriam Jean Bensman

My name is Monica Levine and I am a Brooklyn resident and cat rescue volunteer. I am writing in support of $1.5M in funding for spay/neuter services and $2M for pet food pantries in the Fiscal Year 2026 budget.

Through my rescue work, I see firsthand how overwhelmed our community is. Rescuers are operating without any financial or logistical support from the city covering vet costs, food, and supplies out of their own pockets. while the number of stray and abandoned cats continues to grow. Affordable spay/neuter access is the single most effective tool we have, yet the city funds only 3,500 surgeries per year when 193,000 are needed. The gap is staggering, and rescuers are left to absorb it alone.

Feeding animals is another constant struggle. Pet food pantries don't just help animals, they help the families who love them stay together, reducing surrenders that add even more pressure to an already strained shelter system.

NYC spends just $2.98 per person on animal care, among the lowest of any major U.S. city. This funding would begin to change that. Investing in spay/neuter and pet food assistance means fewer cats suffering outdoors, fewer animals entering ACC, and less preventable euthanasia.

I urge the Finance Committee to please fund $1.5M for spay/neuter and $2M for pet food pantries. Thank you.

Hi my Name is Monique Jones

I am writing this testimony so the club house could stay open and I just want to say that I enjoy.

The clubhouse because it keeps my mind busy when I am at the club house and its perfect for me.

The staff are very nice with the members and we really need the club house to stay open and it motivates us.

My name is Ms. Story and I am a tenant of the Elliott-Chelsea Senior building.
Government funds are taxpayers' money—the hard-earned wages of working people. Such funds should be spent where they are truly needed, not squandered. In fact, the 1.5 billion dollars could have been used to repair numerous NYCHA homes, enabling residents to enjoy a truly comfortable and happy life. Instead, that money was handed to RAD-PACT! All they have done is recklessly squander funds and indiscriminately demolish buildings, bringing more distress and greater disasters to the residents (our building seniors died more than any other years). Therefore, we strongly demand: No demolition!

Hello, my name is Nabil Islam, and I am a resident of Ozone Park, Queens.

I urge the city council to reverse its decision to fund the linear park known as the Queensway, which would be built on a section of the long-abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch that stretches from Ozone Park to Rego Park in Southeastern Queens. I believe this to not only be a gross misuse of funds that could instead be diverted into investing our existing parks and public services, but also a blatant betrayal by our mayor, Zohran Mamdani, and other elected officials who had long championed an alternate proposal of the right-of-way known as the QueensLink.

Funding the QueensLink would be an overall better use for the right-of-way despite being a much more costly upfront investment, and its long term benefits are much more pronounced. Southern Queens is in desperate need of better transit options as the people here are often saddled with long headways and poor reliability from both our subway lines and our buses; the Q52 and Q53 buses that run along Cross Bay Boulevard also frequently get stuck behind traffic and blocked off due to neglect for our bus lane infrastructure and lack of enforcement against double parked vehicles. We in South Queens also face some of the longest commute times in the nation, and QueensLink would give us a direct route to not just Midtown Manhattan in less than forty-five minutes, but also open up new options to travel to major hubs in Queens such as the mall in Elmhurst or the restaurants in Jackson Heights.

QueensLink would also not be a transit-only option. The plan includes ample space for both parks and bike paths alongside the viaduct that the main 3.5 mile-long section that the right-of-way goes through. There is enough room to have the best of both worlds. Queens deserves nice and modern greenspace, but it absolutely needs better and faster transit.QueensLink would not only extend the M train south through the abandoned right-of-way, but it would also enable the expansion of the G train from Court Square in Long Island City east to Forest Hills. I believe funding Queensway, especially with no provisions to enable a future transit connection, is incredibly short-sighted and would only hurt the working class people in Southeastern Queens in the long term. We are often a forgotten people, and the mayoral administration has made it a point to listen to the people the city seems to forget, and thus I urge the city council and the mayor to walk back the decision to fund Queensway and fund the QueensLink instead.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Nabil Islam

Subject: Urgent Call to Prioritize Funding to Expand School Capacity in Long Island City

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident and parent to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

LIC has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, Kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, and yet most area schools are already operating over capacity: P.S. 112 at **130%**, and P.S./I.S. 78 at **111%**. What is more, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City — Court Square — still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message to families is clear: you may not be guaranteed a school seat in your neighborhood.

I would also like to express urgent concern about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed school project. In a neighborhood where families are struggling today to secure local school placements, this project, along with other promised school construction projects in LIC, cannot continue to fall behind competing priorities. While I appreciate the creation of an incubation site for Q508 (Q439Q), a temporary solution cannot become a justification for continued delays to the permanent facility. Families were promised a permanent neighborhood school, with the full facilities and long-term stability that a dedicated school building provides. An incubation site may help relieve short-term pressure, but it does not address the broader and growing need for permanent school infrastructure in LIC.

Additionally, the current lease for the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE, Q580) is set to expire in just three years. Families have been assured that the school would be relocated so that it can continue serving students without disruption. We are appreciative that the budget includes funding for BSGE. However, we want to emphasize that it is critical that the City follow through on this commitment and move urgently to secure a permanent home for the school. Allowing delays to continue would create significant uncertainty for students and families and risks the loss of an important educational institution in a neighborhood already facing a severe shortage of school seats. The City must prioritize funding and planning for BSGE's relocation now to ensure continuity and stability for the community.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has also recognized the need for additional schools to support the neighborhood's rapid growth. Specifically, commitments were made to advance development of a school at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard. Creation of two additional schools has also been promised to create 1,300 more seats in conjunction with the planned construction of over 14,000 residential units. As more housing is developed through OneLIC, school construction must move in parallel — not years behind residential growth. Without firm

commitments and accountability around these promised schools, the existing seat crisis will only intensify.

Delays to the opening of these schools are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and more families pushed out of the neighborhood because they cannot rely on access to local public schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency, accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508 and other promised schools on schedule. Schools aren't just a service—they're the foundation of a stable, thriving neighborhood.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future. Please ensure that timely funding is delivered to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority for the completion of these projects.

Sincerely,
Nader Shirazie
11101 / Court Square

Written Testimony: NYC Community Gardens

FY27 Executive Budget Hearing - New York City Council

Submitted by: Nicole M. N'diaye

Affiliation: NAHE LLC / NAHE Farms; Bathgate Community Garden; Cookes Community Farm

Borough: Bronx, New York

Position: Support increased funding, protection, and long-term investment for NYC community gardens

Topic: Community gardens, vacant lots, composting, affordable organic produce, and Food as Medicine

Testimony

Good morning Chair and members of the New York City Council.

My name is Nicole M. N'diaye. I am a Bronx-based farmer, educator, community garden leader, and the first Black woman hemp license holder in New York State. I am deeply involved with community gardens in the Bronx, including Bathgate Community Garden and Cookes Community Farm.

I am testifying in support of increased funding, protection, and long-term investment for community gardens, especially in underserved communities.

Community gardens are not just green spaces. They are food access sites, compost hubs, youth education spaces, climate resilience tools, and public health infrastructure. In the Bronx, many families struggle to access affordable organic produce, while too many empty and unused lots sit neglected.

I am asking the City Council to increase funding for GreenThumb, garden materials, soil testing, composting systems, water access, fencing, staffing, youth stipends, technical support, and community-based organizations already doing this work.

I am also asking the City to create a stronger pathway to transform vacant and unused lots into community gardens, urban farms, compost sites, pollinator spaces, and Food as Medicine spaces. Empty lots should not sit idle while communities need safe green space, healthy food, climate relief, and neighborhood healing.

Composting should be treated as essential infrastructure and supported through law, education, staffing, and funding. Composting reduces waste, builds healthy soil, supports local growing, and creates opportunities for youth and green jobs.

Food is medicine, but only if communities have access to land, tools, training, and real investment to grow it. Community gardens are one of the most direct ways to address food insecurity, environmental justice, public health, and neighborhood resilience at the same time.

Please protect NYC community gardens, expand resources for underserved neighborhoods, preserve vacant lots for community use, and invest in the gardeners and community organizations already doing the work.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Key Requests

- Increase funding for GreenThumb and community garden support services.
- Fund composting infrastructure, education, staffing, and local processing.
- Support affordable organic produce access in underserved communities.
- Convert vacant and unused lots into gardens, farms, compost hubs, and Food as Medicine spaces.
- Provide resources for soil testing, water access, fencing, tools, youth stipends, and technical assistance.

From: Nancy Mark
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Manhattan Youth at Yorkville East Middle School MS 177
Date: Friday, June 12, 2026 11:09:47 AM

[redacted]

To whom it may concern,

My daughter in 12th grade graduated from Yorkville East Middle School and my youngest daughter is current an 8th grade student at YEMS have both enjoyed the Manhattan Youth programs.

We were devastated to hear this wonderful program might be discontinued. Please take this email as testimony from us that we want to see many families in the future continue to enjoy and benefit from the Manhattan Youth program and their wonderful staff. They have built a strong relationship with our school community and it works.

Why take it away when they have worked so diligently and hard to foster such leadership, trust, and connections with YEMS families and staff. Please reinstate this program for the community at large.

Thank you,
Nancy Mark (Yorkville East Middle School - PTA member)

Public libraries are cherished institutions that benefit all community members, and underfunding them deprives us of resources, knowledge, and connection. A public library can only serve as a refuge, place of learning, and meeting spot if it is open and properly staffed. Unfortunately, the current executive budget proposal falls well short of this goal.

The current funding proposal for libraries is $97 million short of the promised half a percent (.5%) of the city expense budget and, taking inflation into account, serves as a cut from last year since the $526 million proposed does not keep up with inflation and decreases the percent of the budget allocated to libraries.

Everyone deserves a safe public space they can access for free to cool off, read a book, take a class, or meet with friends, libraries are one of the few spaces we have that serve this purpose and meet this need, but unambitious budgets and vision are eroding libraries and their role and function. We demand these institutions be supported, protected, and cared for, we need .5% of the budget for libraries.

Being a TNR certified individual myself who rescues and helps community cats, I see first hand how bad it is with so many cats being dumped because families cannot access affordable veterinary care and resources. One unfixed dumped female cat can get pregnant multiple times a year and have litters of kittens. Spaying/neutering cats is pivotal to controlling the cat population and making sure fewer cats suffer outdoors, and ensuring families do not dump their cats due to the fact that they cannot get them fixed. NYC funds only 3,500 surgeries while 193,000 spay/neuter surgeries are needed annually for community cats and owned pets who cannot afford them.

Friday, June 12, 2026

Testimony of Natasha Dwyer for the Executive Budget Hearing of the NYC Council Committee on Finance (held on June 10, 2026)

Dear honorable members of the NYC Council Committee on Finance:

I write to join the call of NYC Public Library Action Network (NYC PLAN) for both the mayor and the city council to ensure that at least 0.5% of the total city budget for Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) be committed to funding for the city's public libraries.

I recently visited the Midwood branch of the Brooklyn Public Library and learned about their period pantry, where young people can access free menstrual products:

> "The Cycle Alliance in Every Region (CARE) is a Brooklyn Public Library initiative to establish period and personal care pantries across our system to help menstruators in need. Currently, 15 branches have a period pantry." (https://www.bklynlibrary.org/event-series/cycle-alliance)

This is an amazing project and just one example of how our public libraries are a model for the city: one where people can access the resources they need, where we care for one another, and where anyone is welcome.

Libraries are also essential infrastructure for climate resilience. There is a heat advisory today, with temperatures in the 90s and muggy weather making it feel closer to 100 degrees. During extreme heat events, libraries across the city do double duty as cooling centers. We need funding so that all libraries can stay open seven days a week.

Mayor Mamdani pledged to commit 0.5% of the city's budget to libraries. This is the bare minimum that we need to keep libraries open, make building upgrades, pay library workers higher wages, and fully staff local branches.

While I am deeply disappointed by the FY27 Executive Budget, I remain hopeful that the mayor and the city council can fix this. In addition to the FY27 Budget, I join NYC PLAN in asking that 0.5% of the total city budget be baselined for all future library budgets.

Please end the demoralizing budget dance that puts library services at risk year after year.

Sincerely,

Natasha Dwyer
Resident of Brooklyn, NYC
Brooklyn Public Library Card Holder

June 13, 2026

Dear Council,

I am a lifelong Queens resident and a city Parks employee writing today to urge you to reconsider the funds currently allocated towards the Queensway Metro Hub. While I currently live in Astoria (District 22), I grew up about a block from where the proposed entrance on Metropolitan Ave is set to be (in District 29). I can tell you from experience that that area does not need more park space. It needs better public transit options.

As a teenager, I attended Yeshiva University High School in Washington Heights. A chronic oversleeper, I often missed my bus. When that happened, to get to school, my options were either 90 minutes by public transit or a 90 minute, 16-mile (each way) bike ride. Typically, I chose the latter. While I credit this lack of transportation alternatives for my incredibly toned legs, I do not think that I - at 16 - should have to have been doing that, especially on Queens Boulevard in rush hour traffic.

Outside of Parkside (which we just called Forest Hills when I lived there), Queens desperately needs more transportation alternatives. This is true for the neighborhoods further south which could seriously benefit from direct north-south rail access. **It will only become truer as time passes and the populations of those neighborhoods grow.** Manhattan is no longer the sole destination for commerce and high-density housing in this city, and if the development of Brooklyn Heights and LIC show us anything, it's that our metropolitan centers will eventually have to expand into the outer boroughs to keep up with the demand for affordable housing and commercial zones.

While I love our busses, even at the current capacity, they are woefully inadequate. If you disagree, I invite you to board a Q53 SBS at 4pm on a weekday and see for yourself. 50 years from now, when the city looks to rezone underdeveloped land, like - for instance - many of the parking lots and junkyards that abut the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch, it will have to contend with whatever we choose to do with these spaces right now. When that day comes, will future builders be thankful to the New Yorkers who made those areas easily accessible by public transit? Or will they wonder why anyone thought that blocking that

option was a good idea – especially for a park that will probably look pretty busted by the year 2076 (if we're being totally honest about Parks funding).

I'd like to end on a more personal note. My parents still live in that house off Metropolitan (my mother testified the other day in person). From where I am in Astoria, visiting them takes at least an hour by public transit - and that's on a good day. By car, that same trip takes about 20 minutes; 30 during rush hour. Having an M train stop by them would most likely make a train ride the faster and preferred option. Being able to visit them more quickly and frequently as they get older is important to me, and that's my skin in the game.

To briefly reiterate, I am asking the council to please consider blocking any funds to the proposed Queensway Metro Hub and to further explore the possibility of returning train service to the abandoned Rockaway Beach line. Put it towards Forest Park renovations or save it for later if you must, but please, please, please**: do not put it towards Queensway**. Thank you so much for your time.

Warm regards,

Nathaniel "Natty" Korb

P.s.: Advocates for it will insist that the Queensway Metro Hub will not preclude future transit options. If you haven't already, I invite you to please take look at the approved plans which were presented in May to CB6, at the link below:

https://edc.nyc/sites/default/files/2026-05/NYCEDC-QueensWay-MetHub-CB6-Presentation-5-6-26.pdf

Dear Council Members,

I am a lifelong New York City resident writing in support of QueensLink and in opposition to the proposed $14 million allocation for QueensWay. QueensLink is the superior use of the existing rail corridor because it delivers both transit and park space, while QueensWay would permanently prioritize a park-only project at the expense of future transit. Every benefit offered by QueensWay is also included in QueensLink, making QueensWay a short-sighted alternative.

QueensLink would create new parkland while restoring rail service through Southeast Queens, an area that remains heavily dependent on cars and buses. According to QueensLink, the project would eliminate approximately 4.7 million car trips annually and reduce CO2 emissions by roughly 7,200 tons per year. Beyond the environmental benefits, fewer cars on the road means less congestion, safer streets, and shorter travel times. The existing rail infrastructure makes this a rare opportunity to expand transit at a fraction of the difficulty of building a new corridor from scratch. QueensLink is a generational investment that would deliver lasting value to the city.

By contrast, QueensWay threatens to permanently undermine the possibility of future rail service. Claims that the two projects can coexist are contradicted by the city's own planning documents. Because both proposals rely on the same corridor, building QueensWay first would make future transit restoration far more expensive and politically difficult. QueensLink estimates that replacing a newly built park to restore rail service would add roughly $43 million in unnecessary costs.

The MTA's own study found that rail reactivation is feasible and could serve approximately 47,000 daily riders. While the project would require substantial investment, today's funding challenges will not last forever. The MTA is actively pursuing new funding sources and advancing other major capital projects. There is no urgency to build over a rail corridor that has remained dormant for decades. Rather than spending $14 million to make future transit more difficult, the city should preserve the option to develop a multi-billion-dollar public asset when the time is right.

Support for QueensLink is also stronger among local residents. The primary force behind QueensWay is the Trust for Public Land, a San Francisco-based organization, while QueensLink is a grassroots, volunteer-led effort based in Queens. A 2024 survey conducted by State Senator Joseph Addabbo found that 75% of respondents across Central Queens preferred QueensLink

over QueensWay, with support exceeding 80% in communities such as Howard Beach, Ozone Park, and South Richmond Hill. Mayor Mamdani also pledged support for QueensLink. His administration still has an opportunity to honor that commitment by opposing funding for QueensWay.

Queens has a rare chance to improve both transportation and public space. Choosing QueensWay would prioritize a faster, more visible project while potentially foreclosing a transformative transit investment for generations. New York should not sacrifice long-term mobility for a short-term political win. To build a stronger and more connected city, we must preserve this corridor for QueensLink and reject funding for QueensWay.

Sincerely,
Nazrin Akther

6/13/2026

To: New York City Council – Finance Committee

Re: Support for QueensLink – preserving the Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way for both trains and parks

Dear Chairwoman Lee and members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Ndibmo Umanah, and I am a resident based in Yonkers, New York. I am submitting a written testimony on behalf of QueensLink, a proposal to bring both a subway line and parkland in the borough of Queens via the former Rockaway Beach Branch. While I'm not against adding more parkland, I am against the process in which the input from much of the community is not implemented on day one. Therefore, the current plan for QueensWay should be rejected to make sure that rail service along the right-of-way is implemented with park space included.

In parts of Queens, commuters often face one of the longest commute times in New York City. Commuting from going from north and south of Queens can be challenging with passengers either taking overcrowded buses or taking the A train as it goes to Brooklyn and transfer at the busiest parts of the system in Manhattan. Just ask anyone who has experienced this. In addition, residents in the borough of Queens have to go to their jobs and back with the same options: taking an overcrowded bus, or detour towards Brooklyn before reaching Manhattan on the A train. And for those not taking public transportation, decide to drive. It gets really crowded, especially during rush hour on Woodhaven and Cross Bay Boulevards, and the nearby Van Wyck Expressway. Thankfully, there is a solution in reliving all that traffic. The former Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way parallels with Woodhaven Boulevard and the Van Wyck Expressway. It used to have rail service until the mid-20th century. The city with much foresight bought the whole line from Rego Park all the way down to the Rockaways. However, only the section from Liberty Avenue onwards was rebuilt for subway service and has continued to operate since. There was a plan to connect the right-of-way to the Queens Boulevard Line to Rego Park and run towards Manhattan, but the capacity on Queens Boulevard at that time was a main concern, and it would had complicated operations along the line. That is until 2001, when the connection from the 63rd Street Tunnel was completed enabling more trains to run on Queens Boulevard, and therefore makes the idea of possibly connecting the Queens Boulevard Line to the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch a reality. Imagine an easier commute through Queens, to the destinations to want, and the job centers you need. That is what QueensLink aims to do.

QueensLink is not only a train line, it is also a park. This means that not only can people walk along the right-of-way but also access to the subway stations along the line too, with provisions made available for rail service from day one. QueensLink would bring a north-south subway line in Queens alleviating traffic along Woodhaven Boulevard and the Van Wyck Expressway and

overcrowding from the bus routes serving the corridor. Their proposal involves re-routing the M train from Rego Park to Ozone Park, and then to the Rockaways, and re-extending the G train back to its original terminus at Forest Hills. This will not only increase service to the Rockaways by up to 165% but will also increase local subway service on Queens Boulevard by 50%. With a subway line running all the way to the Rockaways on the former right-of-way means that not only will it reduce traffic but also reduce overcrowding on existing bus routes that serve the Woodhaven and Cross Bay Boulevard corridor, and other bus routes running north and south.

Whereas QueensWay is planned to be a linear park only and would be built on the former right-of-way. This would make reactivating rail service virtually impossible to do. In the MTA's 20-Year Needs Assessment, if rail service were to be constructed on an active park, it could spark controversy as it involves protests and lawsuits, because no community would want to see a park shut down for construction even if it is temporary. The MTA would need to find an alternative location to build a temporary park before proceeding, ultimately increasing the cost of what could be a 'retrofit'. And unlike the High Line in Manhattan, QueensWay does not have train line nearby, and Queens has plenty of green space to spare in Forest Park. Don't get me wrong, you can't go wrong with adding more green space, but it really doesn't solve the traffic issue in and around Queens.

Therefore, I urge the city to not proceed with phase one of QueensWay and preserve the former right-of-way for future transit use. The potential for the reactivation of the former Rockaway Beach Branch for transit service and park space will leave positive impacts on communities, residents, business owners, commuters, and tourists with a more convenient way of going around Queens and still have green space to spare.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

Ndibmo Umanah

[redacted]

June 5, 2026

Subject: Support for NYC Urban Forest Plan Budget

Dear New York City Council Committee on Finance,

My name is Neida Rodriguez, I live in Brooklyn and work as a food educator at Edible Schoolyard NYC where we use school gardens and kitchen classrooms to teach students about food, where it comes from, how it grows, and how it affects their health and environment. In a city where green space is hard to come by, our students get to see different plants bloom during the growing season, we have open gardens for families, and we have many others who like to just sit in the garden and enjoy a moment of peace.

However, when the air quality is bad, a planned class in the garden needs to be moved indoors, especially for our kids with asthma. The changes we are seeing in our climate, such as disruptions caused by extreme weather, extreme heat, and increased levels of air pollution, is making it more difficult to organize our programs around and, in those cases, we have to quickly change plans and we aren't always prepared.

Unfortunately, this means that kids with asthma must miss more activities during the school day due to poor air quality. That time outside is very valuable for children growing up in the city and helps connect them to their built environment, as well as their food systems. My students tell me about their walks to school and the different plants and trees they notice, and it's a good reminder that what we are teaching our students every day can be connected back to what is happening outside of this space when we talk about investing in the stewardship of our trees. We are lucky to have such a lush garden with trees, herbs, and vegetables at P.S. 216- not only is the air here better because we have all this green space, the micro-climate created by our trees and plants combat extreme heat and creates a cooling effect that benefits everyone.

As New York City works to adapt to and lessen the impacts of climate change, the benefits of the urban forest are more crucial now than ever. A healthy, resilient, and robust urban forest will improve air quality, help absorb stormwater, and reduce other climate threats. In the face of extreme heat, city trees can also keep us safer and more comfortable on hot days, shading and cooling us and providing protection from harmful ultra-violet sun rays.

For too many New Yorkers, especially those with children who have asthma or other respiratory conditions, poor outdoor air quality is a daily concern and inhibits students

from spending time outside. Yet, NYC's Budget does not include new expenses or capital funding to support the implementation of the NYC Urban Forest Plan.

That's why I strongly support full funding of the NYC urban forest, especially given the newly released NYC Urban Forest Plan. Seeing how families and students at the school I work at gravitate towards this small green space, adds to the importance of increasing the tree canopy in NYC. Everyone should be able to safely be outside and enjoy outdoor spaces.

As you finalize the budget, please ensure the City has the resources needed to maintain and grow our urban forest, improve park stewardship, and deliver the environmental and public health benefits all communities deserve.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to a healthier, greener city.

Neida Rodriguez, Food Educator for Edible Schoolyard NYC

Neil Goldberg
[redacted]
Apt L1505
New York, NY 10002
[redacted]
[redacted]

June 12, 2026

Dear Finance Committee:

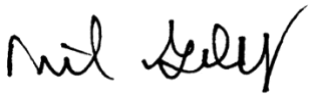
Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. I urge the City Council to include $1.5 million for affordable spay/neuter and veterinary care and $2 million for pet food pantries in the FY 2027 budget.

My husband and I have a cat and a dog, both adopted from local shelters, and they bring enormous joy to our lives. We feel very fortunate to have the means to care for them. At the same time, we were heartbroken by how many animals were already waiting for homes, and it is devastating to imagine that population growing because families cannot access affordable spay/neuter services or basic veterinary care.

It is also painful to think of any New Yorker having to choose between feeding themselves and feeding the animals they love. Pets are family, and helping people keep their animals at home is compassionate, practical, and necessary for reducing pressure on our already overwhelmed shelter and rescue system.

Thank you for considering this request. I hope the Council will fund these urgently needed programs.

Best,



Neil Goldberg

Dear City Counsel,
My name is Neil Sullivan and I have lived in Queens my whole life. I am writing you today to tell you that I believe in Queenslink and NOT Queensway. I believe it would be very foolish to build a linear park on the former LIRR right of way when the citizens of Queens and the entire city deserve better mass transit! The city has become more congested and parking a car is becoming increasingly difficult by the day. I could not begin to tell you how many times over the years I could have used this line to travel but had to use a bus instead which took longer and was more crowded. At least with Queenslink, you can have transit service and parkland. If you go ahead with Queensway's linear park, the chances of restoring transit service afterwards is practically zero. Besides, a portion of the line is already in the middle of Forest Park. Please don't make the same mistake that was made back in the 50's and 60's and jeopardize the line's future by closing it down forever.
Thank you.

06/12/2025

TO: New York City Council — Finance Committee

RE: Support the QueensLink — preserve the Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way for both transit and parks

Dear Chairperson Lee and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Nestor Alfonso and I am a **commuter through Southwest Queens**. I am writing in strong support of the **QueensLink**, which would bring both new subway service and new parkland to Queens by reactivating the former Rockaway Beach Branch, and against the current $43 million allocated in the budget for phase one of the QueensWay, also referred to as the Met Hub project.

As a Queens resident and member of the visually impaired community, I am particularly excited about the increased independence the QueensLink project offers disabled people such as myself. One of the reasons so many of us choose to call New York our home is because of the extensive transit access available in New York City compared to other American cities, especially with trains. This grants us a level of independence and mobility not achievable anywhere else. Unfortunately, sections of the city remain isolated and difficult to reach because of their lack of adequate transit. For these areas, blind people such as myself are forced to rely on slow buses, unreliable paratransit services, or depend on other people to drive us. QueensLink will solve this issue for us in southwest and central Queens, while QueensWay all but ensures we continue to be constrained when traveling through Queens.

Why the QueensLink is the right choice

Two competing concepts exist for the deactivated Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way: the park-only QueensWay, and the dual-purpose QueensLink, which combines subway and park uses. The QueensWay would be built directly on the former railbed, which would virtually eliminate the possibility of ever restoring transit there. The MTA itself recognized in its 2023 20-Year Needs Assessment that a linear park along the corridor would create a challenge for any future transit alternatives. Once a rail right-of-way is converted to other uses, it almost never returns to transit.

The QueensLink would create the first north-south subway line in Queens, extending the M line south from Rego Park to Ozone Park and then over the A train tracks to the Rockaways — increasing service to the Rockaways by up to 165%. It would also let the G train run all the way to Forest Hills, increasing capacity on the crowded Queens Boulevard local lines by 50% and connecting central Queens with north Queens and Brooklyn.

A study by the Steer Group found that the QueensLink would remove millions of vehicle trips each year, making streets safer and lowering harmful emissions, while adding up to 33 acres of new parks and trails integrated with the subway design. Over 20 years, the study concluded the project would more than pay for itself by creating jobs, saving New Yorkers time, and reducing healthcare costs tied to air pollution and traffic crashes.

Queens needs parks *and* trains. The QueensLink would provide both. I urge the Committee to preserve this irreplaceable right-of-way for future transit and to support the QueensLink.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

Nestor Alfonso

11355

[redacted]

City council district 20

new destiny housing

TESTIMONY OF NEW DESTINY HOUSING TO
THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
EXECUTIVE BUDGET HEARING FOR FISCAL YEAR 2027

Maritza Rico, Manager of Policy and Advocacy
June 10, 2026

Thank youFinance Committee Chair Lee, Council Members, and Council Central Staff for the opportunity to submit written testimony on the executive budget for Fiscal Year 2027.

ABOUT NEW DESTINY

Founded in 1994, New Destiny's mission is to end the cycle of domestic violence and homelessness for low-income families and individuals by developing and connecting them to safe, permanent, affordable housing and services.

New Destiny is the only organization in New York City dedicated exclusively to permanent housing solutions for survivors of domestic violence. We are the largest provider of supportive housing for survivors in New York, and we operate the first and biggest federally funded rapid rehousing program for those impacted by domestic violence in our city.

We are also a co-convener of the Family Homelessness Coalition (FHC), a collective of mothers with lived experience of homelessness and organizations committed to tackling housing insecurity among families in our city. New Destiny is also a member of Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence Advisory Council and the Supportive Housing Network of New York.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HOMELESSNESS

Domestic violence and homelessness are fundamentally connected. As New Destiny documented in its report: *A Crisis Compounded: The Dual Crises of Domestic Violence and Homelessness*, domestic violence is the leading cause of family homelessness in New York City, pushing more families into shelter than evictions.

Due to the lack of permanent housing options, which are compounded by the devastating long-lasting effects of abuse, survivors may linger in shelter for years. In 2025, only 9% of survivors moved from a Human Resources Administration (HRA) domestic violence emergency shelter to a permanent home, while more than half left for another shelter upon reaching the State-mandated limit of 180 days.

One in 4 survivors and their children had to move to the massive Department of Homeless Services (DHS) shelter system. For survivors, entering the DHS system means losing the anonymity and the supportive services of the HRA domestic violence shelters. This not only represents a safety risk for them and their kids, but it also may mean an even longer shelter stay for survivors and increased costs for the city. On average, families with children stay in DHS shelter for over a year according to the Fiscal Year 2025 Mayor's Management Report.

With no certainty of when they might be able to find a safe home, survivors are forced to make the impossible choice between entering the shelter system or remaining in abusive situations, putting their lives at risk. In 2023, 1 out of every 6 homicides were domestic violence homicides in New York City, where the victim was either an intimate partner or a family member.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We thank this council for its support of survivors of domestic violence in achieving safety through stable housing. Your advocacy on the CityFHEPS expansion, EHV transition, and expansion of supportive housing has made a direct impact on survivors all over the city. This budget cycle we are focusing on the following priorities to keep moving the needle towards more equitable and inclusive systems for survivors in our city. Starting with,

Protecting all New Yorkers who rely on federally funded housing programs.

As the Trump administration threatens vital programs, the city must stand ready to protect survivors and all New Yorkers who depend on them — including Continuum of Care programs.

Create a CityFHEPS carveout for NYCHA Emergency Housing Voucher households.

The Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program is a federal rental subsidy created in 2021 to help survivors of domestic violence, formerly homeless youth, and other vulnerable households secure stable housing. Though originally funded through 2030, the Trump administration has cut the program early — putting 50,000 households nationwide at risk of losing their homes.

In New York City, NYCHA administers 5,200 EHVs. Among those households, domestic violence survivors received the most vouchers, a total of 1,144. Six hundred are for formerly homeless runaway youth.

NYCHA has offered only one solution: apply for public housing or another unit within NYCHA's portfolio. This means uprooting families who have finally found safety and are starting over — plus, NYCHA simply does not have enough available units to house all 5,200 EHV households. With a waitlist of over 182,000 households, many families could wait years with nowhere to go in the meantime.

We need a comprehensive plan to keep all 5,200 NYCHA EHV households in their homes. We request that the City establish a dedicated carveout so all 5,200 NYCHA EHV households can receive CityFHEPS and stay in their homes.

Fix CityFHEPS and implement the laws already passed.

We are calling for the city government to fully implement the 2023 CityFHEPS legislative package passed by City Council. Additionally, CityFHEPS eligibility must be expanded to include survivors fleeing domestic violence without requiring a shelter stay and survivors regardless of immigration status or family size. We must ensure equitable access to this vital housing resource for immigrant, LGBTQIA+, older adult, and trafficking survivors.

We also call on the city to fix voucher processing, technology and delay move-ins by fully implementing SPEED recommendations.

Investing $10 million in the HOME+ program

In July of 2024, the Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV) launched a low-barrier flexible funding program established by Local Law 112 of 2022, as part of HOME+: a free citywide initiative supporting survivors of domestic violence to remain safely housed. The flexible funding budget for the program was $1.2M, which was not nearly enough to meet the need. After careful evaluation of this program by contracted providers and advocates, we have determined that the program needs $10 million to be fully implemented as designed. This will include the flexible funding program, pendant alarm systems and critical lock changes.

HOME+ prevents homelessness and shelter recidivism among survivors for a fraction of the cost of shelter and re-housing efforts, while helping survivors remain safe.

And finally, Prioritizing DV Survivors in All Affordable Housing & Homelessness Response Plans

We are calling on the city government to enhance Our Space to ensure housing access and successful aftercare support. This includes improving the referral system for Our Space for survivors of domestic violence and allowing specialized service providers to support survivors' transition from shelter to permanent housing

Further, we NYC 15/15 supportive housing eligibility should be expanding to include single adult survivors. Half of DV hotline callers are single survivors, yet few access shelter or permanent housing. They include LGBTQIA+ survivors, trafficking survivors, and older adults.

Supportive housing is one of the most effective interventions for survivors with complex health and trauma needs. After years of advocacy from New Destiny and other organizations, the Adams administration included domestic violence survivors as an eligible population for New York City 15/15, the latest city-funded supportive housing program. However, 100% of NYC 15/15 congregate units have already been allocated, meaning no new DV SH can be developed.

We thank you for your unending support for survivors of domestic violence reaching safety in stable housing. Your partnership is what makes our work possible. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

As a resident of Rego Park, I am concerned and disappointed about the funding allocated to QueensWay in the city budget. The mayor claims that QueensWay will not preclude reactivating the Rockaway Branch train line in the future, but this is akin to saying the High Line could still one day be reactivated as a train. The park design has no provisions for a rail line, so we would need to tear up a newly constructed park in order to expand transit in the future. We all know that once a space is opened up as a park, neither the city nor the state will suggest demolishing it for public transportation.

Central Queens already enjoys the massive and beautiful Forest Park and has no pressing need for another park immediately adjacent to it. What we ARE in need of is a train expansion to connect Rockaway, JFK, Resorts World, the A, the J, Forest Park, Queens Center Mall, and Midtown. A train along this route would ACTUALLY expand access to green spaces (and workplaces, schools, and recreational destinations) for everyone along this corridor, rather than QueensWay Met Hub which only benefits pockets of Forest Hills and Glendale that are already right next to a major park.

Being tempted by this short-term “win” of cutting tape on a new park loses sight of the long-term transit expansions we need in order to build new housing and serve Queens. While we continue to advocate for the state and MTA to support QueensLink, the most important and bare minimum thing the city can do right now is NOT to block the right of way with a unnecessary park.

I want to urge the mayor and city council to pause this funding for QueensWay, as it is not bringing our communities any worthwhile benefits right now and only serves to make a possible future rail reactivation logistically and politically impossible.

Dear Council Members,

I am a Long Island City resident, father, taxpayer, and voter.

The issue is straightforward: if the City continues approving housing growth in Long Island City, it must also deliver the schools that have been promised to support that growth.

For years, families in this neighborhood have been told that additional school capacity is coming. Yet school projects continue to face delays while thousands of new residential units move forward. At some point, the City needs to stop talking about future schools and start delivering them.

Schools are not a luxury. They are basic infrastructure. Families should not have to wonder whether their children will have access to a quality public school close to home.

The recently approved OneLIC plan will bring significant additional development to this neighborhood. School construction must keep pace. If the City can plan for new housing, it can plan for the schools needed to serve the families who live there.

I urge you to prioritize funding, establish clear timelines, and hold the responsible agencies accountable for delivering the school projects that Long Island City has already been promised.

Families have done their part by investing in this community. Now the City needs to do its part.

Sincerely,

Nick Gilman
Long Island City Resident

From: Nicole
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Written Testimony: public hearing on the Mayor's executive budget on May 28
Date: Tuesday, May 19, 2026 1:47:48 PM

[redacted]

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing as a deeply frustrated and outraged parent regarding the decision to remove Manhattan Youth as the after-school provider for Yorkville East Middle School. I strongly object to this decision and demand the reinstatement of Manhattan Youth's contract immediately.

Over the last two years, my child has been enrolled in Manhattan Youth every single session. During that time, I entrusted my child to the care of Rhode Prophete and Anthony Forcer, both of whom have consistently exceeded expectations. They are not simply "program staff." They are trusted mentors, role models, and stable adult figures in the lives of our children.

This decision is far more significant than replacing a vendor on paper. Manhattan Youth has become an integral part of the Yorkville East community, woven into the daily lives and emotional well-being of students and families. The relationships they have built over many years cannot simply be replaced by assigning another organization through a bureaucratic process.

The children have formed meaningful and lasting bonds with these coaches and staff members. They trust them, rely on them, and look forward to seeing them every day. These adults provide consistency, mentorship, stability, accountability, and emotional support during an incredibly important stage of adolescence.

What makes this decision especially unacceptable is that New York City students already endure constant disruption throughout their educational lives — changing schools, adapting to new environments, rebuilding friendships, and repeatedly starting over socially and emotionally. Programs like Manhattan Youth provide one of the few consistent and trusted support systems our children have. Removing that stability without regard for the impact on students is irresponsible and deeply shortsighted.

Equally disturbing is the complete lack of transparency surrounding this process. Families are expected to accept the outcome of a closed-door bidding process with virtually no communication, no meaningful accountability, and no opportunity for the school community to challenge or refute the decision. Decisions affecting hundreds of children and families should not be made in secrecy and without stakeholder input.

The partnership between Yorkville East and Manhattan Youth has been cultivated over more than a decade. Families, students, and school leadership clearly recognize the value of this relationship. Removing a trusted organization that has proven itself year after year undermines the strong community that has been intentionally built over time.

I urge you to reverse this decision and support the appeal to keep Manhattan Youth at Yorkville East Middle School. Our children deserve continuity, trusted mentors, and programs that have demonstrably enriched their daily lives, development, and school experience. The damage caused by abruptly dismantling these relationships should not be underestimated.

Feel free to contact me as I am happy to discuss this matter further with you.

Best Regards,
Nicole Belmont
[redacted]

Please fund $1.5M for spay/neuter and $2M for pet food pantries

I moved into my apartment in 2019. With my first morning coffee I looked out into the backyard and to my surprise there were more than 20 cats roaming about. After speaking with neighbors it was an ongoing problem that has been going on for years. I just knew that I would not be able to let this ride as others had. I contacted a trapper and raised $1000 in order to get 9 cats TNR'd. This was my beginning into the feral cat network of trappers and rescues.

That was 7 years ago and since then I have become TNR certified and actively manage the 6 cats that are now left in the back alley of yards. In that time period I have TnR 30 or so feral cats, and rehomed 15 friendlies. There would be no way for me to be able to do this without the help of the number of rescue groups I have worked with. Just to name a few: Buswick Street Cats, Ocean Hill Cats, Neighborhood Cats, and Meow Squad just to name a few.

I have relied on these rescues for appointments to the ASPCA low cost care as well as listing adoptable cats. And I know that my little dent is nothing in comparison to the amount of work others have committed to outside their own backyards. This is not a problem that can be managed by only folks like me. Over the years of doing this I have personally spent over $10,000 on food, medical care, transportation, and all the needed equipment to TnR.

The majority of these cats once had a home and were not born in the wild. They were dumped. Dumped because for many reasons. I am sure you have heard this over and over and it is true that one of the main reasons is the lack of access to affordable spay and neuter programs. You see the males not being neutered would spray and the female not being fixed would go into heat making them difficult to live with. The other reason I think is affordability for food and ongoing care as well as education as to what having a pet requires. There is no silver bullet to solve this issue but I think silver buckshot could really make an impact.

To start with having pet pantries throughout the city located in the most needed areas by grouping electoral districts and coordinating with the district leaders in the areas to rotate a monthly pantry. A pantry is not just about food and supplies but a way to communicate information and resources for assistance. Maybe a voucher program to low cost vet care. This is a direct way to impact neighborhoods dealing with issues that can keep animals from being dumped.

I personally would love to work with others in my neighborhood to make this a thing.
There are more thoughts I have on how this problem might be looked at but I think a Pet Pantry Bus, rotating through districts would be a great start.

Thank you for taking the time.

Best
Nicole Fell

Subject: Testimony in Support of BSGE Funding and District 30 School Construction

To: The New York City Council Committee on Finance / Committee on Education

Good afternoon, Chairperson, and members of the City Council.

My name is Niki Sesaridou, and I am a proud parent of a student at the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE) in Queens. I am here today to urge the Council to protect our children's future and hold the city accountable to its promises.

First, I explicitly demand that the City keep its promise to ensure BSGE remains fully funded for our upcoming relocation. The budget allocation already designated for our new site must be fiercely protected. BSGE provides a world-class International Baccalaureate education to a diverse group of hardworking public-school students. We cannot allow a bureaucratic shift or budget cuts to compromise our relocation or strip away the resources our students need to thrive in their new home.

Second, I ask you to look at the broader, critical needs of our entire district. The Office of Management and Budget must immediately allocate the estimated $519 million needed for the School Construction Authority (SCA) to build our promised schools. This funding is non-negotiable. It is directly tied to the construction of a 600-seat middle school and two 650-seat elementary schools.

Our local Queens North community is growing at a rapid pace. If you fail to fund these seats, our schools will face severe, unmanageable overcrowding. This isn't just about numbers on a ledger; it is about a critical infrastructure promise made to neighborhood families—a promise that is currently on the verge of being broken.

Our children cannot learn in overcrowded classrooms, and our schools cannot operate on broken promises. Please, protect BSGE's relocation budget and fully fund the $519 million for District 30's new schools. Let's invest in our community's future, not crowd them out of it.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to NYC students.

Sincerely,
Niki Sesaridou
[redacted]

New Visions for Public Schools

Comparison of New Visions Portal and Insight

Context for This Document

New Visions has spent ten years building the Portal in deep collaboration with users across schools and district offices — meticulous user research, iterative co-design with program teams, and steady technical investment that has produced a platform now widely and voluntarily used across the NYCPS system and by partner agencies citywide. What follows is necessarily a compressed summary — not a complete inventory of Portal features, not a full architectural analysis, and not the considered side-by-side evaluation that a decision of this consequence warrants.

In the limited number of cases where Insight has data that are not in the Portal, this is because NYCPS has not shared these data, in many cases even after multiple requests from its own schools and program teams. There is no category of data that is currently available in Insight that could not be integrated into the Portal in a more usable form in a matter of weeks if NYCPS provided them. Furthermore, there is no view or feature that is currently in Insight, that New Visions could not recreate in a more user friendly and useful way in the Portal on a short timeline and at no additional cost. As these materials demonstrate, it is impossible to conclude that Insight could in a cost effective and timely manner do the same to close the feature gap in the other direction. Finally, Insight does not and cannot provide the linkages to DYCD, ACS, CUNY, DHS, foster care agencies, CBO providers and a range of other organizations who desperately need better tools to collaborate with NYCPS in service of public school students and families.

Outdated public sector technology was a recurring theme during Mayor Mamdani's campaign and transition — invoked as a clear example of where government has failed New Yorkers, and named as a priority for the new administration to address. Removing the Portal and consolidating educator workflows onto a platform that has never been widely embraced — and that exemplifies the kind of legacy technology the administration has committed to moving past — would be difficult to reconcile with that commitment to modern, equitable public infrastructure.

The Core Distinction: Two Different Categories of Tool

Insight is largely designed as a **reporting and accountability platform** — built to show how schools and the city are performing against citywide benchmarks and to provide high level metrics for groups of students. The Portal is a **planning, case-management, and interagency operations platform** — built to let school teams, shelters, and partner organizations do the daily work of moving individual students toward promotion, graduation and postsecondary outcomes and to help citywide offices manage programs with efficiency, transparency and accountability.

This is not a difference of polish, feature count, or investment. It is a difference of architecture. A tool designed as a one-way reporting surface cannot become a writable, collaborative, interagency planning system through additional development. The two products were built to answer fundamentally different questions, and the technical foundations reflect those different purposes from the ground up.

Architectural Differences That Cannot Be Bridged by Additional Investment

Read-only vs. writable. Insight is fundamentally a reporting surface — a set of dashboards that display data pulled from NYCPS source systems. The Portal is a workspace where school staff annotate, plan, save, intervene, and act. You cannot add a note in Insight. You cannot save a planning view. You cannot build a Regents plan. You cannot document an intervention. You cannot track participation in a support activity. These are not missing features that could be patched in — they require a different system architecture, including writable data models, permissioning infrastructure, audit trails, and collaboration primitives that Insight does not have.

Customizable workspace vs. preset views. The Portal has a highly customizable Data Grid that lets users build and save views they return to, ensuring they are planning against the most recent data. Users can add or remove columns, sort and filter, save the view, and perform bulk planning actions on the resulting student list — all without leaving the tool. Insight users are restricted to a limited set of preset views and filters. Customization in Insight requires downloading CSVs and manipulating the static data in Excel, which is a fundamentally different — and insecure — workflow.

Single-user vs. collaborative. The Portal supports shared notes, shared tasks, intervention management across staff, the ability to tag colleagues, and transparency of student plans across the school team. Insight's custom groups appear to be visible only to the user who creates them. The collaboration layer in the Portal is not just a feature — it is a property of the system, expressed through how data is permissioned, shared, and surfaced.

Comprehensive student profile vs. one-dimensional views. The Portal's student profile provides a far more comprehensive view of an individual student's educational status — academic performance, attendance, screeners, state exams, Regents progress, postsecondary status, interventions, marking period progress, full transcript history, notes, and past performance, all in one place. In Insight, when you drill from a dashboard into a student list, you are only provided one data point — the data point relevant to the dashboard you are currently on. There is no place in Insight to see a student's full picture. This is a structural limitation of how Insight is organized.

School-level differentiation vs. generic reporting. The Portal allows extensive school-level configuration — schools can specify their own course sequences, expected timing of Regents exams, and individual student plans that then interact dynamically with current data to show

status against local plans and school-specific metrics. Insight is generic. It does not capture the considerable school-level variation that schools actually operate within. This forces schools using Insight to download data and reconstruct local context in spreadsheets — recreating the very problem the Portal solves. This failure to account for school specific differences means Insight cannot be relied on to accurately identify whether or not a student is truly on or off track.

Granular permissioning vs. fixed role tiers. Because the Portal is built on more modern and flexible technology, it can provision access to data in nuanced ways — enabling non-school organizations like Learning to Work providers and ExpandEd to view subsets of data tied to their specific roles and tailored to specific data sharing limitations. School administrators can also modify user permissions within their own buildings to match local practice. Insight's permissioning is tiered into a few fixed roles. The Portal's permissioning architecture is what makes interagency use possible at all; this is not a layer that can be retrofitted onto Insight.

Support for citywide initiatives. FutureReadyNYC is a concrete example of how the Portal can be leveraged and customized to support a citywide initiative in ways that Insight's architecture does not allow. Co-designed with the Pathways office, the Portal supports schools in implementing the program — enrolling students in pathways and tracking their progression through milestones — while giving the Pathways office program-management tools stronger than have ever existed for a citywide program of this kind: visibility into which students are enrolled across every participating school, how they are progressing toward milestone completion, comparisons across schools that surface where implementation is strong and where supports are needed, and structured tracking of student experiences designed to be linked to postsecondary outcomes as those outcomes become available.

Summary of What Insight Cannot Do

No planning features. Insight has no planning surface. Schools using Insight to do student planning must download CSV files and plan in spreadsheets — separating the plan from current data and making it invisible to other staff working with the same students.

No early warning system. The Portal flags risks to promotion and graduation as they emerge. Insight has no early warning system. Identifying at-risk students in Insight requires manual cross-referencing across multiple dashboards.

No MTSS infrastructure. The Portal has a full Multi-Tiered System of Supports feature set — schools can create groups manually or dynamically, persistently track those groups across any data in the system, document participation in interventions and activities, share administration of those activities across staff, and obtain parental consent. None of this exists in Insight. This is not a single feature but an entire infrastructure layer.

No mock Regents system. The Portal supports a citywide initiative used by hundreds of high schools to administer mock Regents diagnostics, score them, and return diagnostic information schools rely on to prepare students for graduation requirements. Insight has nothing comparable.

No interagency integration. The Shelter Portal is used by DHS shelter staff working with students in temporary housing — with both single-shelter and multi-shelter views. CUNY and NYCPS have worked for 2 years with New Visions to deeply integrate the Portal with CUNY's College Now application process, with capacity to send customized emails, track whether students opened them, monitor application progress in near-real time, and let CUNY staff review and accept students into College Now classes. The Portal is used to manage the ECFIK program — which the Mayor's FY27 budget has increased funding to — managing Caring Adults caseloads, tracking conversations with students and families, automatically organizing family needs from natural-language notes into program categories, and surfacing them in dynamic dashboards. None of this exists in Insight, and none of it could be replicated quickly. These are interagency workflows built over years, custom integrations, and program-specific logic baked into the platform.

No Group Actions. The closest thing Insight offers to planning is the ability to create a custom student group. But the utility of these groups is sharply limited by how Insight is built. To assemble a group, users must filter a view and then manually select each student from the resulting list one by one — or paste in an OSIS list copied from a prior spreadsheet. The group, once created, does not appear to be visible to anyone other than the user who built it. There is no ability to take attendance against the group, track participation, attach a plan to it, or roll it up to citywide offices to manage multischool initiatives. The group is a passive saved selection — not an actionable cohort.

The Portal treats group actions as a first-class capability across the entire platform. Users can filter on any criteria — academic, attendance, demographic, postsecondary, intervention status — and then perform bulk actions on every student in the resulting set:

- Record college application status across all filtered seniors at once
- Assign a graduation plan to every student in a cohort
- Move a group of students into an intervention or support activity based on academic screener data
- Add students to a future course scheduling request
- Apply a Regents plan to every student needing a specific exam based on criteria
- Tag a cohort with shared notes or tasks
- Assign students to a Caring Adult caseload
- Document participation in an activity for an entire group at once

This is not a single feature; it is a property of the architecture. Because the Portal is writable, because student groups are persistent and shared across the school team, and because the

same student-group object can be acted on from any feature in the platform, group actions work consistently across planning, intervention, postsecondary, attendance, Regents, and scheduling workflows. A counselor identifying 17 students behind in Regents can move all 17 into a remediation group in one action, attach a plan, and schedule supports — all from within the tool, all visible to the rest of the school team, all updated dynamically as the underlying data changes.

In Insight, the same workflow is impossible. The closest available approximation is: filter a dashboard, click into each student one at a time to view their data, export a CSV, open it in Excel, and from there do whatever planning the school can manage with spreadsheets. This is not a worse version of the same workflow — it is a different workflow, and it produces different outcomes. Planning becomes invisible to the rest of the team. Plans go stale the moment the CSV is downloaded. Group membership and status updates require manual maintenance. The work that takes one action in the Portal takes dozens of actions in Insight, performed in tools outside Insight, with no shared visibility.

Group actions are how the daily work of running a school caseload actually happens. The Portal is built around them; Insight is built around static reporting.

What Insight's Limitations Tell Us About Its Architecture

The limitations described here are not new. They have persisted across years of continued investment in Insight. This is the evidence that they are not feature gaps to be closed but architectural properties of the tool. Even with continued investment, the gap between the Portal's feature set and Insight's will continue to grow over time, because:

Outdated foundation. Insight is built on outdated technology. Its user interface is widely regarded as non-intuitive and inferior by users across NYCPS. This is not an aesthetic complaint — it reflects an underlying technology stack that cannot be retrofitted to support modern interaction patterns, dynamic dashboards, or rapid integration of new data sources.

Workflow friction. Finding information in Insight requires more user actions than the Portal, and users repeatedly run into limitations of what its native dashboards can show — particularly when looking across different types of data. This forces users back to downloading CSVs and manipulating them locally, recreating the security and consistency problems the Portal was built to solve.

The Security and Equity Implications

Forcing schools to do planning by downloading CSVs is not a neutral substitution. It is:

A security risk. Repeatedly downloading student-level CSV files onto local machines proliferates copies of sensitive student data across personal devices, shared drives, and email — the exact pattern the Portal was built to eliminate.

A transparency loss. Planning that lives in local spreadsheets is invisible to administrators and other staff working with the same students. The Portal makes planning shared and current; CSV-based workflows make planning private and stale the moment the file is downloaded.

An equity problem. A CSV-based workflow privileges schools and staff with strong Excel skills. The education of a child should not be dependent on the spreadsheet capacity of an administrator, counselor or superintendent team member in 2026. The Portal levels this — Insight, if used as a planning tool, would re-introduce the disparity.

List of Portal Features

- Citywide, district, school, caseload and student-level views
    - Single sign on across city agencies:
        - NYCPS
        - DHS
        - CUNY
- Cross-agency data integrations
    - Integrated NYCPS data from ATS and STARS
    - Integrated HESC data for FAFSA and TAP applications
    - Integrated CUNY applications and admissions, including College Now dual-enrollment
    - Integrated DHS CARES feed
    - Integrated foster care student flag via NYCPS STH team
    - Screener data integrations with iReady, Acadience and MAP Growth
- Cross-agency data views
    - NYCPS:
        - Citywide, district and school staff with student access
    - CUNY:
        - K-16 citywide data views
        - Campus staff College Now monitoring (all College Now partner campuses)
    - CBO access
        - NYCPS high-impact tutoring partners like ExpandEd
        - Career Discovery Week leadership and support staff
        - Principal-provisioned access for CBOs supporting Learning to Work and Student Success Center postsecondary programs
    - Multi-agency:
        - Every Child and Family is Known central monitoring views (accessible by program leadership staff across Mayor's office, DHS, NYCPS)

- Progress monitoring dashboards and data
    - Academics, with marking period pass rates, current GPA and GPA projections
        - Custom email notifications when MP data is ready for review
    - Attendance
        - Current year and historical views
    - Credit accumulation
    - Demographics
    - Graduation
    - Postsecondary pathways + CUNY college applications and dual enrollment
        - WBL hour tracking
    - Regents, with Mock Regents
    - Screeners
    - State exams
- Data breakdowns with:
    - Custom visualizations
    - Filtering by grade/class, attendance, ethnicity, gender, special populations, housing status, planned diploma/graduation date, supports
    - Grouping by grade/class, ethnicity, gender, special populations, attendance, housing status
    - Integrated ability to see student group and student profiles for every metric
- Student profile
    - Comprehensive view including students' attendance, academics and support plans.
    - Student alerts (attendance, credits, Regents, grade patterns)
        - Alerts highlight where a student needs to schedule a course or exam, add a support or prep plan, or adjust schedule to be in alignment with academic policy
    - Student-level notes and activity feed
    - Attendance and lateness (NYCPS risk group, full year calendar, and trend monitoring across last 3 years)
        - Includes granular attendance breakdowns including: last 5 days, 10 days, 20 days and absences by day of the week
    - Grades summary with current and projected GPA and marking period trend tracking
    - Graduation plan tracking/management with endorsement tracking and automated safety net and NYSAA eligibility
    - Credits accumulation and credit gaps towards graduation based on current program
        - Ability to create and manage current term or future course plans and export to STARS
        - Gaps defined based on school-specific metrics
    - Regents exam accumulation with differentiation based on diploma type

        - Ability to create and manage Regents plans for upcoming administrations
        - Accumulation and determination of on or off track is based on school-specific metrics
- Mock Regents and interim assessments
    - Mock Regents and curriculum-aligned interim assessment support for students across science, math, history and ELA
    - Paper-based answer sheet scanning and correction
    - Robust results dashboards with response analysis for multiple-choice and constructed response questions
- Planning tools and progress to graduation alerts
    - Graduation planning and monitoring progress toward multiple grad outcomes
        - Student-specific based on individual student plans, and school-specific based on individual school course sequencing
    - Regents planning and gap analysis
    - Credits planning and gap analysis
    - Progress to graduation monitoring and alerts (“Core 4”: attendance, credits, Regents, course marks)
- Multi-tiered student supports
    - Custom student group creation
    - Support creation, management and monitoring
    - Mobile-optimized attendance taking
    - Collaborative notes & task assignment to support student progress
- Custom citywide program monitoring and management
    - Every Child and Family is Known
        - Dynamic new eligible student alerts based on DHS data
        - Digital consent management
        - Staff caseload management
        - Custom check-ins for program staff
        - Integrated citywide check-in monitoring for family needs
        - Custom program implementation metrics (e.g. % families consented)
        - Custom analytics tracking in partnership with CIDI
    - FutureReady
        - Custom citywide, district and school dashboards tracking program implementation metrics (“Key Implementation Measures”) and progress toward school designation
        - Built-in ability to monitor student-level data affecting key metrics
        - Custom student FRNYC course sequence tracking
        - Custom CUNY dual-enrollment tracking of FRNYC students to monitor FRNYC-aligned course accumulation
    - College Now
        - Data integration with CUNY Unified application

        - Custom program eligibility identification
        - Personalized College Now recruitment emails for students and guardians for each recruitment window (including custom emails for FutureReady NYC students suggesting pathways aligned College Now options)
        - School dashboards allowing tracking of students through full email, application and enrollment lifecycle across multiple recruitment terms
        - CUNY campus views allowing campus staff to view all applicants and make admissions decisions with a limited student profile
        - CUNY citywide dashboards allowing citywide College Now progress monitoring
    - District 3 “ABC Alerts” Student Success Systems
        - Custom student attendance alerts identifying patterns that need intervention as well as customized next steps aligned with district policy
- Data Grid
    - Ability to create and share custom views across 1,600+ student data points
    - Permission-based sharing: users can only see students they have access to
    - Stored templates, including postsecondary applications, graduation planning and incoming cohorts
- End of term summative reports
    - Pass Rates across classes
    - Regents results across exams
- Student and Family Support
    - Downloadable PDF reports for students and families
        - Attendance
        - Academics
        - Regents
        - Regents planning
        - Mock Regents
        - Screeners
        - Progress to graduation
    - Emails for students and families
        - College Now dual-enrollment recruitment
        - CUNY Welcome email campaign support

Actively in development

- ACS pilot with 20+ foster care agencies
- FutureReady NYC: SY26-27 program monitoring with updated metrics
- Career Discovery Week: SY26-27 program monitoring and support
- Every Child and Family is Known:
    - SY26-27 program monitoring and support
    - OTI benefits data integration for family support with benefits referrals/applications

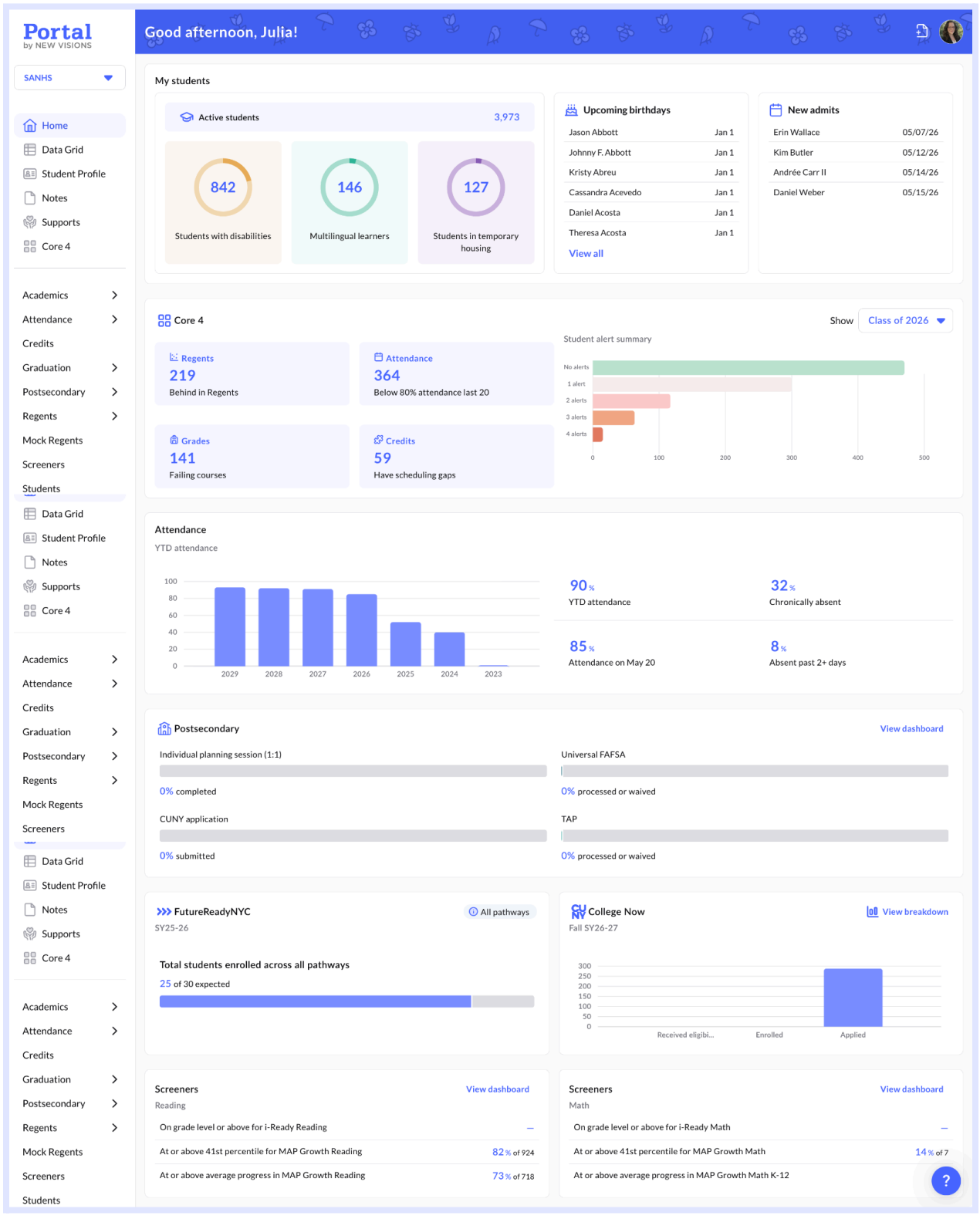
- District 3 “ABC alerts” student success systems pilot
- ExpandEd: High Impact Tutoring support monitoring
- Office of Student Pathways data visibility expansion (integrated CPP, Overgrad/Xello, College Board data, and network benchmarking)
- CUNY:
    - 2026 student Welcome Campaign
    - SY26-27 College Now recruitment and monitoring
    - Early College monitoring

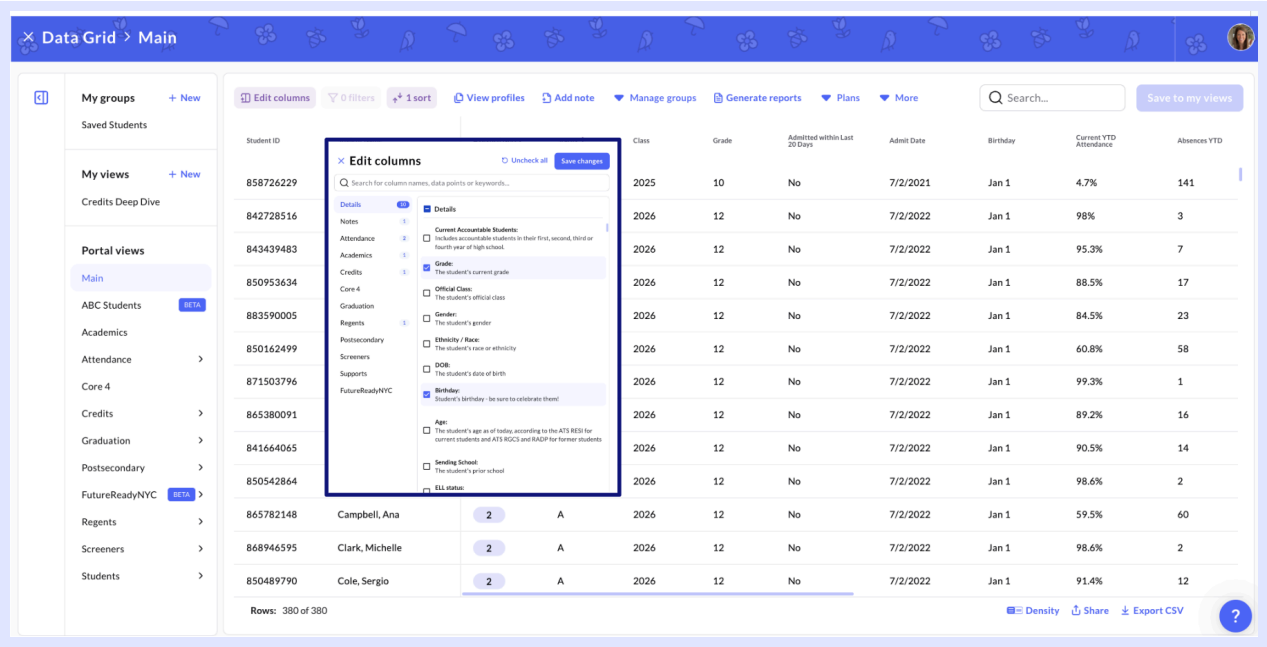
Existing Data Sharing Agreements

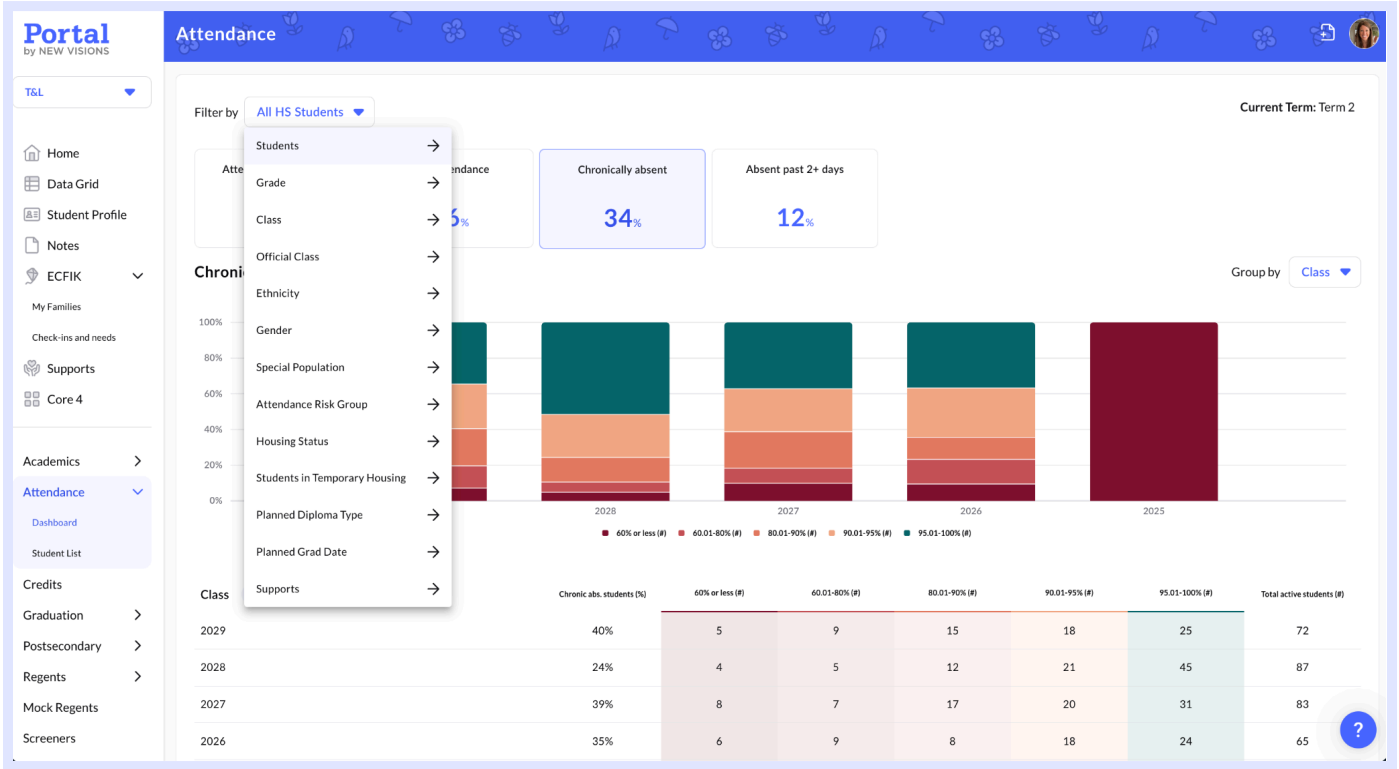
- NYCPS
- CUNY
    - Undergrad college applications
    - Tutor Corps data
- DHS
    - Students in shelters
- ECFIK
    - Cross-agency data sharing

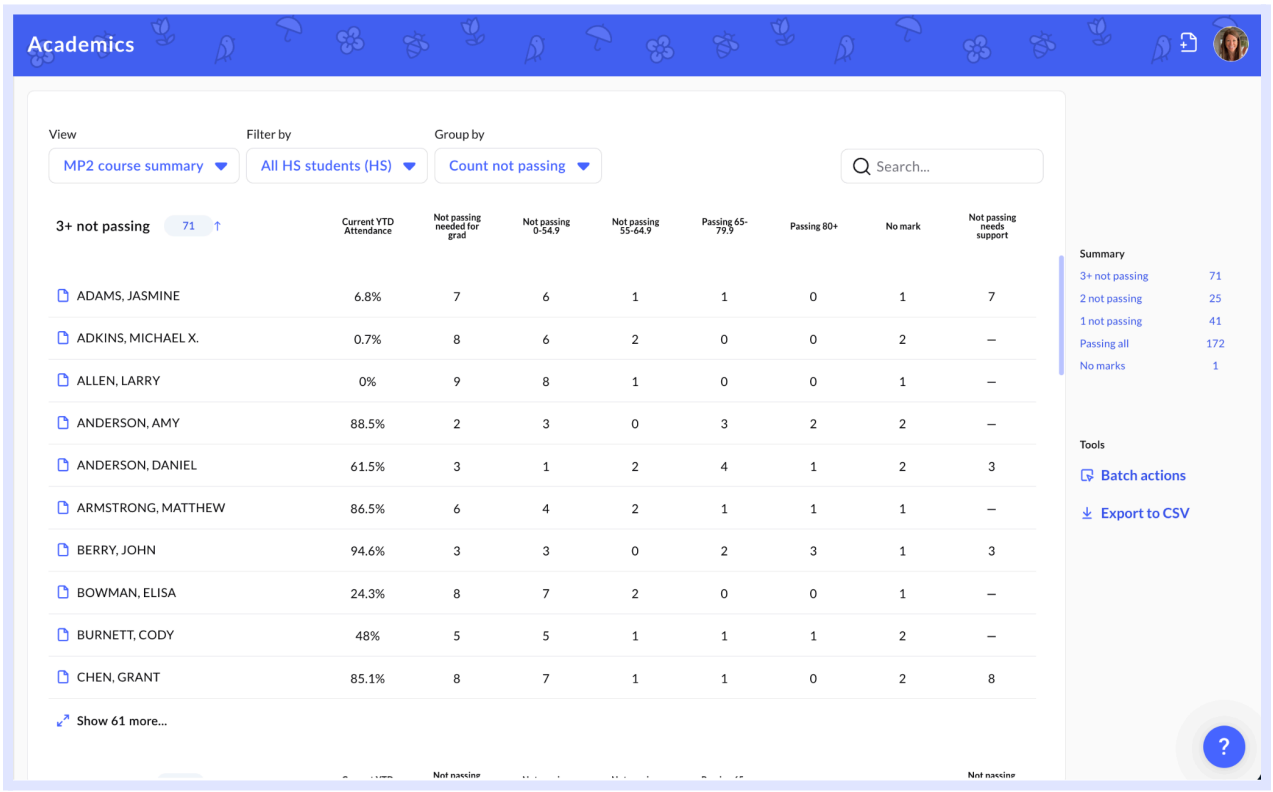
Portal Screenshots

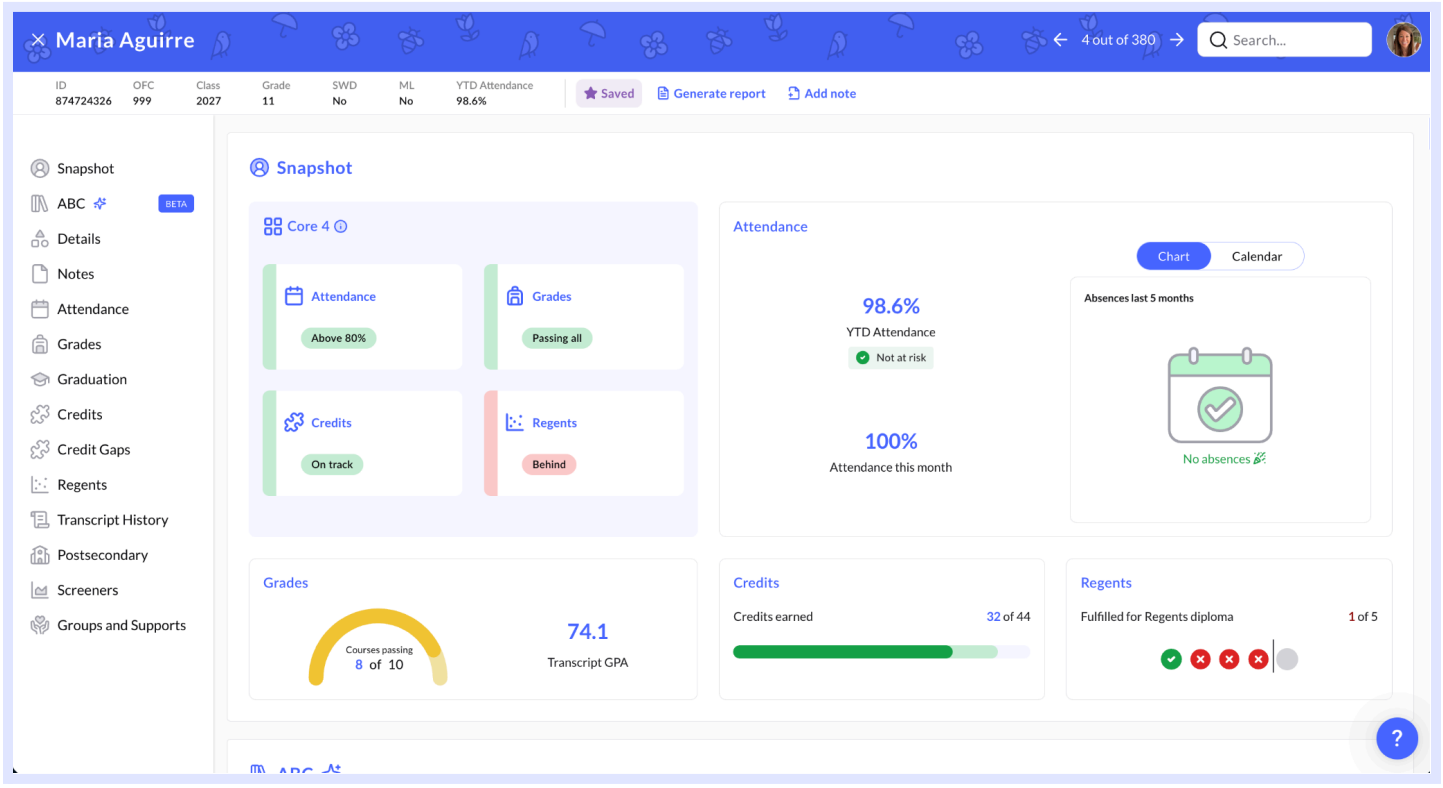
The screenshots (with dummy data) that follow are intended to give a flavor for the visual design, information architecture, and interaction model of the Portal. Static images can only convey so much. The differences that matter most to users — how the platforms feel to navigate, how quickly information can be found and acted on, how planning and intervention workflows actually unfold across a school team, and how dynamic and responsive each tool is in daily use — cannot be fully represented in screenshots.

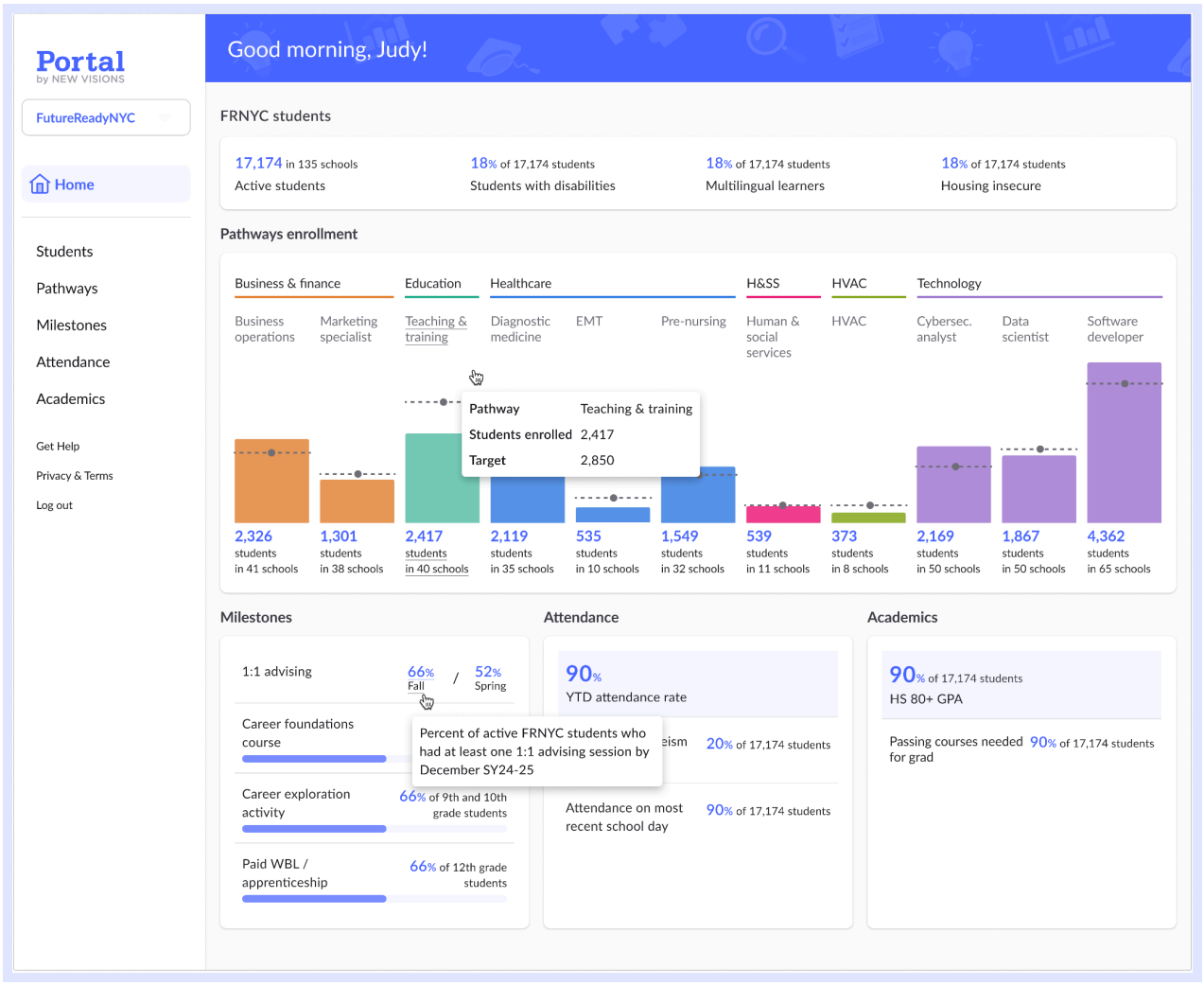

Portal
by NEW VISIONS
SANHS
Home
Data Grid
Student Profile
Notes
Supports
Core 4
Academics
Attendance
Credits
Graduation
Postsecondary
Regents
Mock Regents
Screeners
Students
Good afternoon, Julia!
My students
Active students 3,973
842
Students with disabilities
146
Multilingual learners
127
Students in temporary housing
Upcoming birthdays
Jason Abbott Jan 1
Johnny F. Abbott Jan 1
Kristy Abreu Jan 1
Cassandra Acevedo Jan 1
Daniel Acosta Jan 1
Theresa Acosta Jan 1
View all
New admits
Erin Wallace 05/07/26
Kim Butler 05/12/26
Andrée Carr II 05/14/26
Daniel Weber 05/15/26
Core 4
Show Class of 2026
Regents 219 Behind in Regents
Attendance 364 Below 80% attendance last 20
Grades 141 Failing courses
Credits 59 Have scheduling gaps
Student alert summary
No alerts
1 alert
2 alerts
3 alerts
4 alerts
Attendance
YTD attendance
2029
2028
2027
2026
2025
2024
2023
90% YTD attendance
32% Chronically absent
85% Attendance on May 20
8% Absent past 2+ days
Postsecondary
View dashboard
Individual planning session (1:1)
0% completed
Universal FAFSA
0% processed or waived
CUNY application
0% submitted
TAP
0% processed or waived
FutureReadyNYC
SY25-26
All pathways
Total students enrolled across all pathways
25 of 30 expected
College Now
Fall SY26-27
View breakdown
Received eligibi...
Enrolled
Applied
Screeners
Reading
View dashboard
On grade level or above for i-Ready Reading –
At or above 41st percentile for MAP Growth Reading 82% of 924
At or above average progress in MAP Growth Reading 73% of 718
Screeners
Math
View dashboard
On grade level or above for i-Ready Math –
At or above 41st percentile for MAP Growth Math 14% of 7
At or above average progress in MAP Growth Math K-12

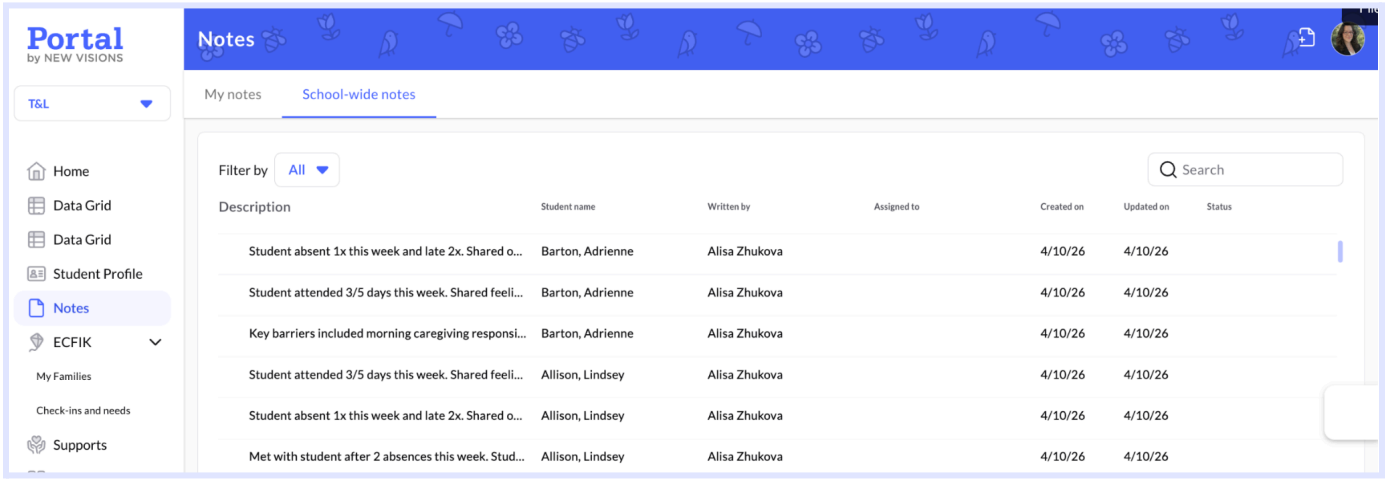

Data Grid > Main
My groups
+ New
Saved Students
My views
+ New
Credits Deep Dive
Portal views
Main
ABC Students
Academics
Attendance
Core 4
Credits
Graduation
Postsecondary
FutureReadyNYC
Regents
Screeners
Students
Edit columns
0 filters
1 sort
View profiles
Add note
Manage groups
Generate reports
Plans
More
Search...
Save to my views
Edit columns
Uncheck all
Save changes
Student ID
Class
Grade
Admitted within Last 20 Days
Admit Date
Birthday
Current YTD Attendance
Absences YTD
858726229 2025 10 No 7/2/2021 Jan 1 4.7% 141
842728516 2026 12 No 7/2/2022 Jan 1 98% 3
843439483 2026 12 No 7/2/2022 Jan 1 95.3% 7
850953634 2026 12 No 7/2/2022 Jan 1 88.5% 17
883590005 2026 12 No 7/2/2022 Jan 1 84.5% 23
850162499 2026 12 No 7/2/2022 Jan 1 60.8% 58
871503796 2026 12 No 7/2/2022 Jan 1 99.3% 1
865380091 2026 12 No 7/2/2022 Jan 1 89.2% 16
841664065 2026 12 No 7/2/2022 Jan 1 90.5% 14
850542864 2026 12 No 7/2/2022 Jan 1 98.6% 2
865782148 Campbell, Ana 2 A 2026 12 No 7/2/2022 Jan 1 59.5% 60
868946595 Clark, Michelle 2 A 2026 12 No 7/2/2022 Jan 1 98.6% 2
850489790 Cole, Sergio 2 A 2026 12 No 7/2/2022 Jan 1 91.4% 12
Rows: 380 of 380
Density
Share
Export CSV

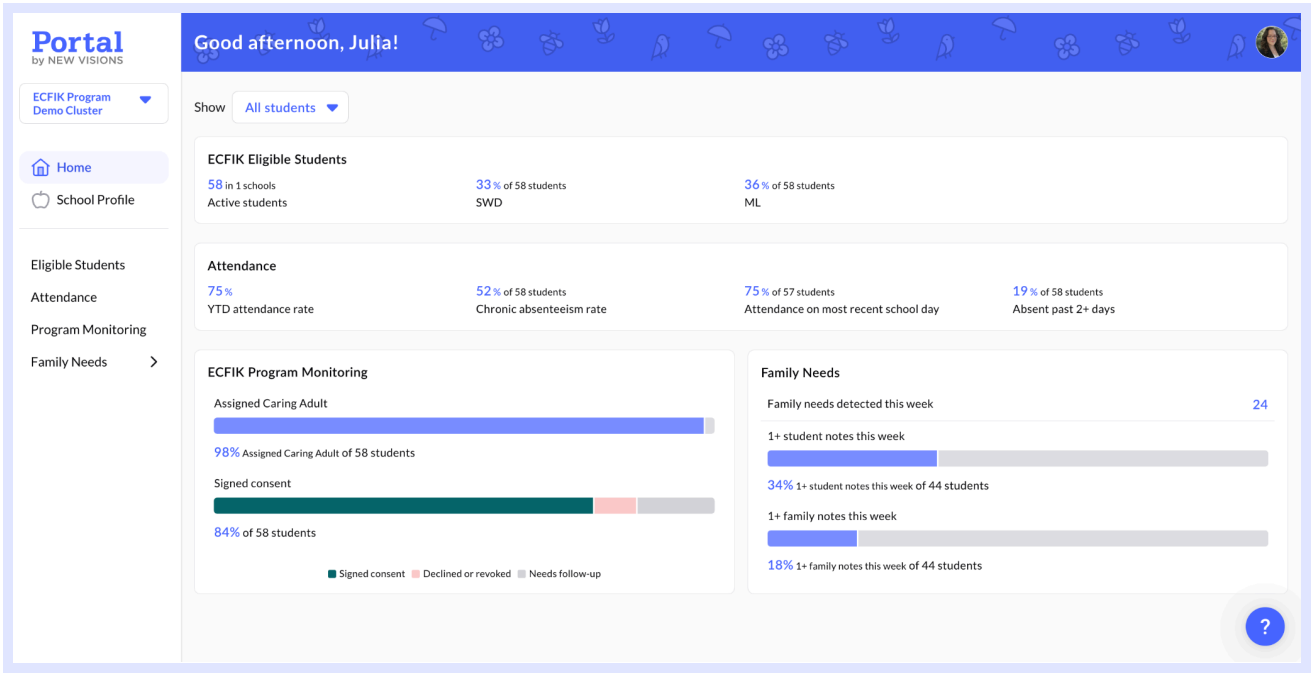

Portal
by NEW VISIONS
Attendance
T&L
Home
Data Grid
Student Profile
Notes
ECFIK
My Families
Check-ins and needs
Supports
Core 4
Academics
Attendance
Dashboard
Student List
Credits
Graduation
Postsecondary
Regents
Mock Regents
Screeners
Filter by
All HS Students
Current Term: Term 2
Students
Grade
Class
Official Class
Ethnicity
Gender
Special Population
Attendance Risk Group
Housing Status
Students in Temporary Housing
Planned Diploma Type
Planned Grad Date
Supports
Chronically absent
34%
Absent past 2+ days
12%
Group by
Class
100%
80%
60%
40%
20%
0%
2028
2027
2026
2025
60% or less (#)
60.01-80% (#)
80.01-90% (#)
90.01-95% (#)
95.01-100% (#)
Class
Chronic abs. students (%)
60% or less (#)
60.01-80% (#)
80.01-90% (#)
90.01-95% (#)
95.01-100% (#)
Total active students (#)
2029 40% 5 9 15 18 25 72
2028 24% 4 5 12 21 45 87
2027 39% 8 7 17 20 31 83
2026 35% 6 9 8 18 24 65

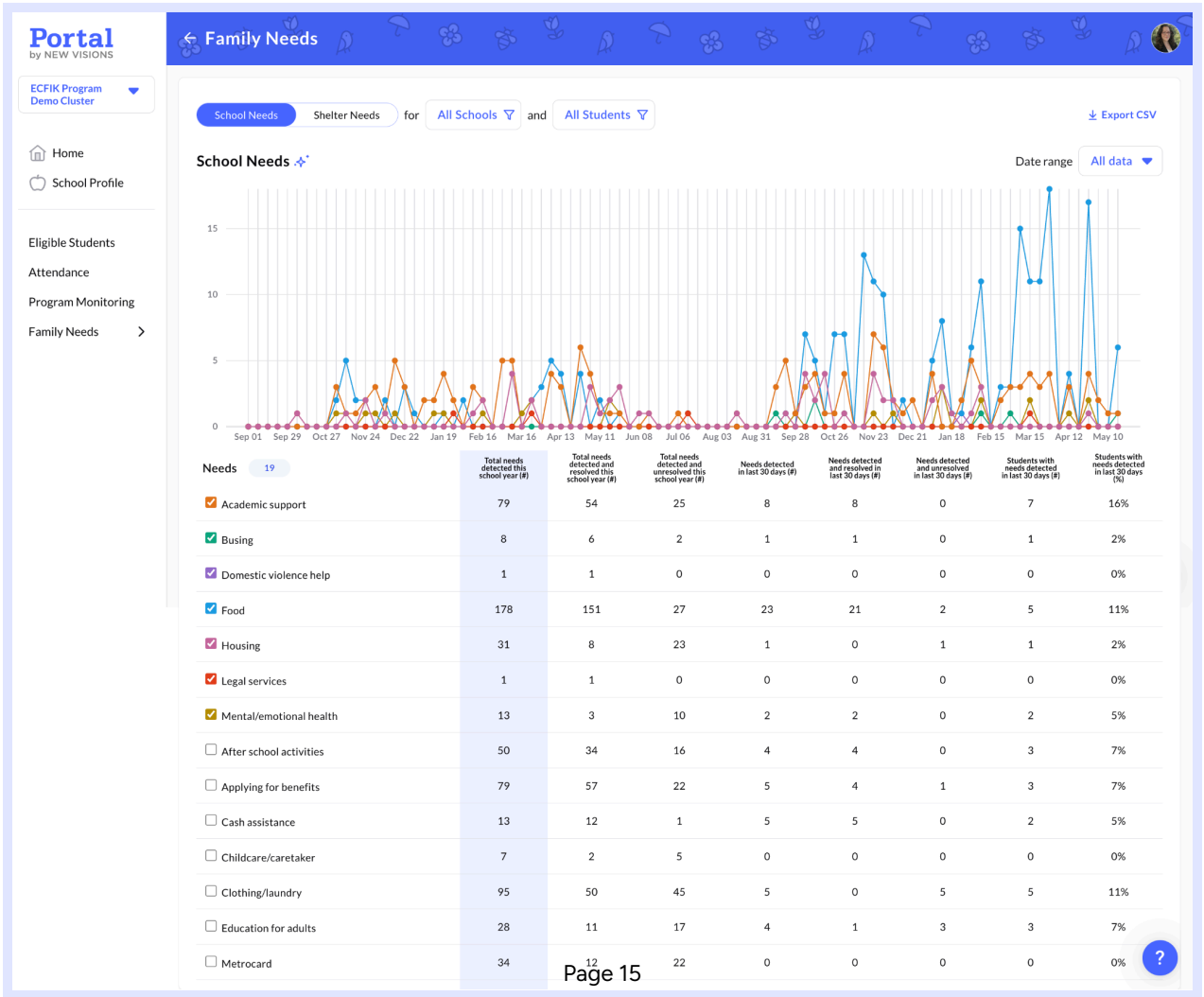

Academics
View
MP2 course summary
Filter by
All HS students (HS)
Group by
Count not passing
Search...
3+ not passing 71
Current YTD Attendance
Not passing needed for grad
Not passing 0-54.9
Not passing 55-64.9
Passing 65-79.9
Passing 80+
No mark
Not passing needs support
ADAMS, JASMINE 6.8% 7 6 1 1 0 1 7
ADKINS, MICHAEL X. 0.7% 8 6 2 0 0 2 –
ALLEN, LARRY 0% 9 8 1 0 0 1 –
ANDERSON, AMY 88.5% 2 3 0 3 2 2 –
ANDERSON, DANIEL 61.5% 3 1 2 4 1 2 3
ARMSTRONG, MATTHEW 86.5% 6 4 2 1 1 1 –
BERRY, JOHN 94.6% 3 3 0 2 3 1 3
BOWMAN, ELISA 24.3% 8 7 2 0 0 1 –
BURNETT, CODY 48% 5 5 1 1 1 2 –
CHEN, GRANT 85.1% 8 7 1 1 0 2 8
Show 61 more...
Summary
3+ not passing 71
2 not passing 25
1 not passing 41
Passing all 172
No marks 1
Tools
Batch actions
Export to CSV


Maria Aguirre
4 out of 380
Search...
ID 874724326
OFC 999
Class 2027
Grade 11
SWD No
ML No
YTD Attendance 98.6%
Saved
Generate report
Add note
Snapshot
ABC BETA
Details
Notes
Attendance
Grades
Graduation
Credits
Credit Gaps
Regents
Transcript History
Postsecondary
Screeners
Groups and Supports
Snapshot
Core 4
Attendance
Above 80%
Grades
Passing all
Credits
On track
Regents
Behind
Attendance
98.6%
YTD Attendance
Not at risk
100%
Attendance this month
Chart
Calendar
Absences last 5 months
No absences
Grades
Courses passing 8 of 10
74.1
Transcript GPA
Credits
Credits earned 32 of 44
Regents
Fulfilled for Regents diploma 1 of 5


Portal
by NEW VISIONS
FutureReadyNYC
Home
Students
Pathways
Milestones
Attendance
Academics
Get Help
Privacy & Terms
Log out
Good morning, Judy!
FRNYC students
17,174 in 135 schools
Active students
18% of 17,174 students
Students with disabilities
18% of 17,174 students
Multilingual learners
18% of 17,174 students
Housing insecure
Pathways enrollment
Business & finance
Education
Healthcare
H&SS
HVAC
Technology
Business operations
Marketing specialist
Teaching & training
Diagnostic medicine
EMT
Pre-nursing
Human & social services
HVAC
Cybersec. analyst
Data scientist
Software developer
Pathway Teaching & training
Students enrolled 2,417
Target 2,850
2,326 students in 41 schools
1,301 students in 38 schools
2,417 students in 40 schools
2,119 students in 35 schools
535 students in 10 schools
1,549 students in 32 schools
539 students in 11 schools
373 students in 8 schools
2,169 students in 50 schools
1,867 students in 50 schools
4,362 students in 65 schools
Milestones
1:1 advising
66% Fall / 52% Spring
Career foundations course
Career exploration activity
66% of 9th and 10th grade students
Paid WBL / apprenticeship
66% of 12th grade students
Percent of active FRNYC students who had at least one 1:1 advising session by December SY24-25
Attendance
90%
YTD attendance rate
20% of 17,174 students
Attendance on most recent school day
90% of 17,174 students
Academics
90% of 17,174 students
HS 80+ GPA
Passing courses needed 90% of 17,174 students for grad


Portal
by NEW VISIONS
T&L
Home
Data Grid
Data Grid
Student Profile
Notes
ECFIK
My Families
Check-ins and needs
Supports
Notes
My notes
School-wide notes
Filter by All
Search
Description
Student name
Written by
Assigned to
Created on
Updated on
Status
Student absent 1x this week and late 2x. Shared o... Barton, Adrienne Alisa Zhukova 4/10/26 4/10/26
Student attended 3/5 days this week. Shared feeli... Barton, Adrienne Alisa Zhukova 4/10/26 4/10/26
Key barriers included morning caregiving responsi... Barton, Adrienne Alisa Zhukova 4/10/26 4/10/26
Student attended 3/5 days this week. Shared feeli... Allison, Lindsey Alisa Zhukova 4/10/26 4/10/26
Student absent 1x this week and late 2x. Shared o... Allison, Lindsey Alisa Zhukova 4/10/26 4/10/26
Met with student after 2 absences this week. Stud... Allison, Lindsey Alisa Zhukova 4/10/26 4/10/26


Portal
by NEW VISIONS
ECFIK Program Demo Cluster
Home
School Profile
Eligible Students
Attendance
Program Monitoring
Family Needs
Good afternoon, Julia!
Show
All students
ECFIK Eligible Students
58 in 1 schools
Active students
33 % of 58 students
SWD
36 % of 58 students
ML
Attendance
75 %
YTD attendance rate
52 % of 58 students
Chronic absenteeism rate
75 % of 57 students
Attendance on most recent school day
19 % of 58 students
Absent past 2+ days
ECFIK Program Monitoring
Assigned Caring Adult
98% Assigned Caring Adult of 58 students
Signed consent
84% of 58 students
Signed consent
Declined or revoked
Needs follow-up
Family Needs
Family needs detected this week
24
1+ student notes this week
34% 1+ student notes this week of 44 students
1+ family notes this week
18% 1+ family notes this week of 44 students


Portal
by NEW VISIONS
ECFIK Program Demo Cluster
Home
School Profile
Eligible Students
Attendance
Program Monitoring
Family Needs
Family Needs
School Needs
Shelter Needs
for
All Schools
and
All Students
Export CSV
School Needs
Date range
All data
15
10
5
0
Sep 01
Sep 29
Oct 27
Nov 24
Dec 22
Jan 19
Feb 16
Mar 16
Apr 13
May 11
Jun 08
Jul 06
Aug 03
Aug 31
Sep 28
Oct 26
Nov 23
Dec 21
Jan 18
Feb 15
Mar 15
Apr 12
May 10
Needs 19
Total needs detected this school year (#)
Total needs detected and resolved this school year (#)
Total needs detected and unresolved this school year (#)
Needs detected in last 30 days (#)
Needs detected and resolved in last 30 days (#)
Needs detected and unresolved in last 30 days (#)
Students with needs detected in last 30 days (#)
Students with needs detected in last 30 days (%)
Academic support 79 54 25 8 8 0 7 16%
Busing 8 6 2 1 1 0 1 2%
Domestic violence help 1 1 0 0 0 0 0 0%
Food 178 151 27 23 21 2 5 11%
Housing 31 8 23 1 0 1 1 2%
Legal services 1 1 0 0 0 0 0 0%
Mental/emotional health 13 3 10 2 2 0 2 5%
After school activities 50 34 16 4 4 0 3 7%
Applying for benefits 79 57 22 5 4 1 3 7%
Cash assistance 13 12 1 5 5 0 2 5%
Childcare/caretaker 7 2 5 0 0 0 0 0%
Clothing/laundry 95 50 45 5 0 5 5 11%
Education for adults 28 11 17 4 1 3 3 7%
Metrocard 34 12 22 0 0 0 0 0%

Nikolaus Unger
[redacted]
Rockaway Beach, NY 11693
[redacted]

June 9, 2026

Written testimony: Defund the Queensway, support QueensLink!

Dear Committee on Finance members,

I strenuously object to the fact that the plans for the Queensway Met Hub leave no space for transit development in the future. This is a shortsighted and negligent planning oversite as this means the park will have to be destroyed in order to add transportation options at a later time. Not only will this be another example of callously wasting taxpayer money, I am certain that the lobbyists behind Queensway won't stand for it! I urge you to consider allowing the potential for future Queenslink development. As a resident of the Rockaways with limited public transportation options graced with generously ample park space, I cannot support the poor and shortsighted planning decisions accompanying Queensway as they present an incomplete and irresponsible solution that limits future development options. Thank you for your time and attention in this matter. Defund the Queensway, support QueensLink!

Respectfully,

Nikolaus Unger

Committee on Women and Gender Equity

Subject: Zohran’s budget fails to recognize the vital role public housing plays in advancing gender equity.

I oppose Zohran’s proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Women and Gender Equity should recognize that public housing is fundamentally a women's issue. For decades, Section 9 public housing has served a population made up largely of women and female-headed households. Nationally, women head the overwhelming majority of public housing households, and many residents are single mothers, grandmothers raising grandchildren, caregivers, and women balancing work, family responsibilities, and economic hardship. Public housing has provided generations of women with the stability, support, independence, community, and affordability necessary to raise families, care for loved ones, pursue education, build careers, and participate in civic life.

Women, particularly women of color, continue to bear a disproportionate share of caregiving responsibilities while facing persistent wage disparities and economic barriers. Because Section 9 ties rent to household income rather than market conditions, it creates opportunities for residents to pursue employment, training, entrepreneurship, and educational opportunities without the constant threat of rent increases or displacement. Housing stability is a prerequisite for economic mobility, and Section 9 remains one of the strongest examples of that principle in practice.

The Committee should also recognize the relationship between housing stability and gender-based violence. Survivors of domestic violence and other forms of abuse often remain in dangerous situations because they lack access to safe, affordable housing alternatives. Public housing serves as a critical source of stability and independence for many survivors, providing a pathway toward safety, self-determination, and long-term security.

Beyond housing, Section 9 has historically fostered leadership, mutual aid, and civic engagement among women. Tenant associations, resident councils, community centers, and resident-led initiatives have created opportunities for women to organize, advocate, govern, and shape policies affecting their communities. Some of New York City's strongest community leaders have emerged from public housing because these developments provide not only homes, but spaces where women build networks of support, develop leadership skills, and strengthen their communities.

Zohran’s budget fails to recognize the vital role public housing plays in advancing gender equity. When public housing is weakened, it is women—particularly working-class women, single mothers, caregivers, grandmothers raising children, and survivors of violence—who often bear the greatest burden. When Section 9 is strengthened, women gain the housing security that allows them to thrive. We urge the Committee on Women and Gender Equity to support comprehensive modernization of Section 9 public housing and reject policies that condition investment on privatization. A city committed to gender equity must ensure that women have access to safe, affordable housing, meaningful opportunities for leadership, and the stability necessary to build healthy families and strong communities.

You cannot advance gender equity while allowing the housing insecurity that disproportionately burdens women, caregivers, and survivors to persist.

June 11, 2026

To whom it may concern,

My daughter, Noe Leo-Faro, has attended the Girls Inc. after school program at TYWLS in Astoria. She is completing 6th grade. When she started her new school, she was quite shy and hesitant to go to school. With the help and guidance of the amazing staff in her after school program she joined clubs, connected to new friends and came out of her shell. I truly believe this is an amazing program and am asking that you reconsider your decision to discontinue it at this school.

Thank you for your consideration,

Nilde Leo

[redacted]

Subject: Privatization of NYCHA Creates Instability for Seniors.

I live at Mitchel Houses in the South Bronx and do not have an email address. I am being supported in submitting this testimony by Save Section 9.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

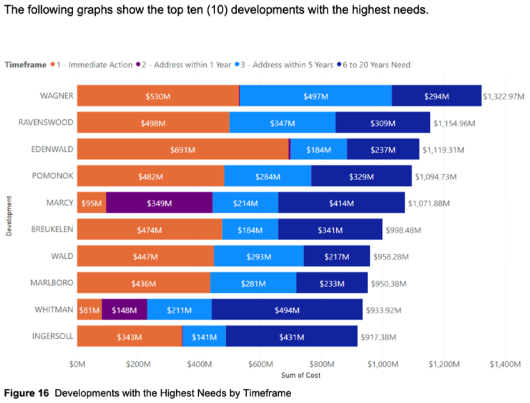


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.
- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

June 9, 2026

To the Members of the New York City Council,
Committee on Education
New York City Council
City Hall, New York, NY 10007

Re: Community Testimony in Support of The Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE) — Funding, Relocation, and Infrastructure

Dear Council Members,

My name is Niris Caba and I am a parent of two children currently enrolled at School BSGE, as well as a proud member of the Queens North community. I am submitting this testimony to urge the New York City Council to take immediate and decisive action to protect the future of School BSGE and ensure that the educational infrastructure commitments made to our community are honored in full.

1. Protect School BSGE's Funding
I respectfully urge the Council to take explicit action to ensure that the City fulfills its promise to guarantee that School BSGE continues to receive full funding for its relocation. The budget allocation already designated for our new location must be protected. Any reduction or delay in this commitment would directly harm hundreds of students and families who have built their educational plans around the City's word. We ask that the Council formally affirm and safeguard this budgetary assignment.

2. Support the District's Infrastructure Needs
Beyond School BSGE, I urge the Council to demand that the Office of Management and Budget allocate the approximately $519 million required for the School Construction Authority (SCA) to build:

- The promised middle/high school with a capacity of 600 students, and
- Two elementary schools with a combined capacity of 650 students.

These are not aspirational requests, they are commitments that have already been made. The Council must hold the administration accountable for delivering on them.

3. Address the Growing Needs of Our Community
Queens North is one of the fastest-growing communities in New York City. Without the creation of these new school seats, our existing schools will face severe overcrowding in the very near future. This is not a hypothetical risk, it is an inevitable outcome unless

the City acts now. Failing to build this infrastructure means breaking a fundamental promise made to neighborhood families, and it means condemning children to learn in conditions that are neither safe nor conducive to academic success. I urge the Council to remind the administration of this obligation and to act with urgency.

A Personal Testimony

I speak as a parent, who has witnessed firsthand the transformative power of School BSGE in the lives of my two children. The quality of education they have received there has been extraordinary, from a rigorous and thoughtful curriculum, to outstanding academic programs, to a staff that consistently attends to the individual needs of every child.

I have seen my children develop into curious, critical thinkers who love science and reading, not because they were told to, but because their school inspired that love in them. The support they have received at School BSGE has not simply improved their academics; it has genuinely changed the trajectory of their lives. That is not something I say lightly.

To withdraw support from a school like this — to put its continuation at risk — would be to deprive our community of something truly rare: a place where something extraordinary is happening every single day. School BSGE is providing world-class education with a global perspective, and it is doing so for children who deserve nothing less.

I do not speak only as a mother. I speak as a member of this community, a community that is proud of what School BSGE represents and deeply invested in its future. When I see the teachers, the staff, and the leadership of this school pour themselves into the education and well-being of all these boys and girls, I feel a sense of pride and gratitude that motivates me to stand here today and advocate for them.

I urge each member of this Council to vote in favor of protecting School BSGE's funding, to champion the full infrastructure investment our district urgently needs, and to ensure that the promises made to our community are kept, because our children are counting on you.

Respectfully submitted,
Niris Caba
Parent of students at School BSGE
Queens North Community Member
[redacted]
[redacted]

- Good Morning, My name is Noah Williams and I am currently a Junior and a Resident of South East Queens. Fundamentally as this council continues debating whether Queenslink is the right path forward, there are clear truths that I urge the council to acknowledge throughout the course of this discussion.
- Queenslink as it currently is projected will have roughly 75 thousand daily riders, those who formerly utilized congested bus routes such as the Q52 and Q53 Select bus services, estimates from Queenslink Initial Business Case has shown that through the combined decreases in transit times, health and quality of life improvements and reductions in congestion, that **every dollar that goes into queenslink $1.10 is returned**
- In accounting for these factors, it's evident that Queenslink will serve to be a **net positive upon** the city as a whole, especially in communities in the rockaways and in the Woodhaven neighborhood that not only will see **higher business traffic**, but save money on time spent enduring lengthy congestion and traffic along woodhaven and Cross bay Boulevards.
- This is especially important to me as a student attending high school, in which people routinely from my class complain about the overcrowding and congestion of the Q52 and Q53 select bus services. Many of my friends from the rockaways whose parents work in the region could gain significantly from the increased **economic activity and less congestion** leading into the rockaways.

In addition to my remarks above, I urge the Committee to consider the following critical logistics realities regarding QueensLink:

1. Preserving the rail right-of-way: Even if there is insufficient budget for QueensLink currently, I heavily urge the Council to, at the minimum, mandate the physical right-of-way be preserved for possible future rail service; this involves routing Queensway's linear park plan adjacent to the trackbed as opposed to directly on top of it. This is a minimal-cost no-build alternative that still preserves the opportunity to unlock unrealized mobility and economic gains for millions should the City one day decide to proceed with rail service reactivation.

2. Surface street congestion reduction: A rail corridor parallel to Woodhaven Blvd provides critical systemic relief and redundancy to an overcrowded road too many are over-reliant on. Currently, a single severe car crash accident or similar incidents along Woodhaven can strand thousands of Central and South Queens residents. QueensLink introduces the long-overdue yet necessary infrastructure redundancy, ensuring that locals always have reliable secondary travel options, regardless of personal preferences. Furthermore, giving daily commuters the option of rail transit also diverts traffic off the surface roads, reducing congestion for those who must drive, making this a win-win for transit riders and motorists alike.

3. Land-Usage Control: Even though QueensLink didn't make it onto MTA's current 5-year plan, the City ultimately controls the land use. If the City Council funds a park-only design without any future

provisions (such as preserving the rail right-of-way), it permanently removes the corridor from any future MTA Capital Plan. We shouldn't let a state agency's 5-year budget cycle dictate the next hundred years of Queens' infrastructure.

Dear New York City Council,

My name is Noelle Hunter, and I am providing this testimony in support of QueensLink and against any funding for QueensWay in the city budget. As a member of Generation Z, living and maintaining an acceptable quality of life is perhaps the most difficult it has ever been in modern history. For many of us, the prospect of owning a home, achieving stable employment, and having access to quality healthcare all seem egregiously unobtainable--challenges that citizens merely 20 or 30 years older would have dismissed as improbable.

I firmly believe that it is our rightful duty to work towards a solution to continue making the world better as we see it. Such a goal starts with the fight for better access and mobility for all New York City residents. In order to achieve affordable housing, climate change mitigation, and the opportunity for better jobs, we must create new mass transit connections. QueensLink provides the foundation for such measures as we deem wholeheartedly necessary. This is the first step towards the capital construction of better subways and parks throughout the borough of Queens, and let this noble resolution signal the beginning of a larger movement for better transit and public amenities throughout the City of New York.

QueensWay, as designed would block any hope of QueensLink ever materializing. If commitment to creating a better and more equitable city lies at the heart of our democracy, then surely commitment to bettering the experiences and lives of future generations is at the heart of our collective moral code. Modern attitudes towards future generations seem to cast this value aside in favor of self-serving interests or short-sighted goals. Today, I am calling on the members of this body to take a moment and consider the future of New York--the people who will inherit the problems you leave behind. With this in mind. I demand that you remove funding for QueensWay and instead, support QueensLink in the pursuit of a better life for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Noelle Hunter

Testimony Before the New York City Council

To: Committee on Oversight and Investigations

Date: June 10th, 2026

Presented by: Norma M. Simon

Good morning, Chairman Krishnan and distinguished members of the City Council:

I previously shared my concerns with the Committee on Civil Service and Labor in 2025 and 2026, yet they were dismissed. I am here today to advocate for three critical changes to how grievance hearings are conducted for city employees. My recommendations are based on direct personal experience that has exposed serious systemic failures in our current labor relations process.

1. **Proposed Change #1: All Grievance Hearings Must Be on The Record**

-Currently, grievance hearings are NOT recorded even when conducted by Zoom. This creates a serious problem because decisions rendered often don't accurately reflect the testimony given. There is no archive or transcript to refer to, and no way to challenge inaccurate decisions. No way to ensure that the best and most accurate union representation is being provided.

I experienced this firsthand - the decision in my case did not reflect the testimony provided at my hearing. Meetings with the Office of Labor Relations and the Office of Collective Bargaining should be required to be recorded and transcribed and a copy provided to the employee within 36 hours of being conducted.

Recording grievance hearings would:

- Hold the OLR, OCB and DC37 accountable for their decision making reflecting the recorded testimony
- Allow employees to file complaints with the Office of Collective Bargaining based on actual testimony when it relates to claims of Misrepresentation instead of Fair Representation
- Ensure transparency in the process
- Save the city money by reducing wrongful termination lawsuits

Proposed Change #2: Unions Must Represent Members Through All Grievance Steps

While unions have the legal right to decline arbitration, there is currently nothing binding them to represent members through Steps 1, 2, and 3 of the grievance process. This is wrong because:

- Members pay union dues for representation amongst other things

- The union should not be allowed to make decisions concerning an employee's lively hood without full disclosure and transparency shared with the employee when it relates to the three steps of grievance

In my case, the union:

- DC37 initially misled the Office of Labor Relations by stating I had "waived" my rights, and this was not true
- DC37 refused to represent me at Step 3 in writing
- Left me to navigate a complex legal process alone after deciding about my livelihood that I was not informed of until after the fact

Proposed Change #3: Labor Relations Must Be Held Accountable

Currently, the Office of Labor Relations can and will:

- Accept improperly obtained evidence
- Proceed with disciplinary action based on tainted evidence
- Face no consequences for procedural violations

In my case, the attorney for labor relations submitted evidence containing protected health information - a HIPAA violation involving an adolescent psychiatric patient. Yet I was being disciplined for similar documentation concerns. This double standard is unacceptable and must be addressed. Moreover, the attorney continues to be a part of the city's legal counsel.

Why These Changes Matter:

These three changes would:

1. Save the city millions in wrongful termination lawsuits
2. Ensure union members receive the best representation possible from the system they pay into for years and potentially decades
3. Hold labor relations accountable for the actual evidence and testimony they receive instead of their interpretation of the facts
4. Create transparency that protects both employees AND the city
5. Ensure decisions reflect testimony given

Because grievance hearings are currently not on the record, I can now pursue wrongful termination litigation against the City of New York - a situation that could have been avoided with proper representation and transparent proceedings.

These changes protect everyone - employees, unions, and the city itself.

Closing Statement:

I want to be clear - it is not my desire to sue the City of New York. All I want is my job back and what is rightfully owed to me.

I sought to settle this matter, yet the city chose to pursue my separation even after their own attorney committed an egregious HIPAA violation at my Step 3 hearing. When this was brought to the attention of Mitchell Katz, head of Health and Hospitals, there was no direct response. Labor's only response was that they would rely on the pending decision - leaving me with no recourse.

This situation should never have gotten this far. It is clear the city maintains a double standard in how H+H employees are disciplined versus how OLR holds itself accountable.

The Office of Labor Relations, while under the Mayor Mamdani's purview, is difficult to hold accountable because there is no record of their actions. They control the narrative, show total disregard for testimony presented, and move forward regardless of the damage done - to the employee or to the city monetarily through wrongful termination lawsuits.

In my case, they took extreme advantage of that unchecked power, particularly given my lack of union representation, leaving me completely vulnerable to their unchallenged double standard.

These three proposed changes would fix that and ensure this never happens to another city employee again.

I wish to note that out of respect for patient privacy, I have chosen not to submit certain materials publicly. However, I am willing to provide my hearing number via email upon request for your review of the employer's submission of exposed public health information at my Step 3 hearing. I welcome any questions. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Norma M. Simon

[redacted]

Testimony to the New York City Council committee on finance
Fiscal year 2027 executive budget hearing
June 10, 2026
Subject: support QueensLink over a park-only QueensWay buildout

My name is Norman Mei, and I am submitting testimony in support of **QueensLink** and against moving forward with a park-only QueensWay design that could make future rail reactivation harder or impossible.

Queens does not need to choose between transit and open space. QueensLink is the better public investment because it combines both: reactivation of the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch for rail service while also creating new park space and protected bike/pedestrian paths. The QueensLink proposal would connect Queens Center Mall, Rego Park, Forest Hills, Woodhaven, Ozone Park, and the Rockaways with new north-south subway service, while also adding up to **33 acres of park space**. QueensLink estimates the project could serve about **75,000 daily riders**, reduce car trips, cut travel times, and improve access between the A, J/Z, E/F/R, 7, and LIRR corridors.

By contrast, the current QueensWay plan is park-only. The city already committed funding to the Metropolitan Hub, the first QueensWay phase, and that phase would convert part of the former rail corridor into a park and greenway. The Mamdani administration is reportedly continuing with QueensWay Phase 1, with about **$43 million** in executive budget funding and final design targeted by mid-2026.

That is the problem: once a park-only design is built directly in the rail right-of-way, future transit becomes much more expensive, politically difficult, and disruptive. Even if officials say QueensWay does not formally “preclude” future rail, building the wrong design first creates a real practical barrier. The Council should not spend public money on a design that fails to preserve the full rail option.

The MTA has already recognized the Rockaway Beach Branch as a corridor worth evaluating, including options for LIRR service or subway service connected to the Queens Boulevard Line.

QueensLink also received federal support for further study through a U.S. DOT Reconnecting Communities grant for a community equity analysis, including environmental, economic, accessibility, and sustainability impacts.

I urge the Council to:

1. **Pause or lockbox QueensWay Phase 1 funding** until the design preserves future rail reactivation.
2. **Require NYCEDC, Parks, DOT, and City Hall to study a rails-and-trails alternative**, not just a park-only build.
3. **Support QueensLink as the preferred long-term use of the Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way.**

Queens deserves parks, but Queens also deserves serious transit expansion. QueensLink gives the city both. QueensWay alone gives up a rare existing rail corridor for a smaller short-term win. Please protect the right-of-way and support QueensLink.

Good afternoon. My name is Nova Macknik-Conde, and I am a Teen Techie intern at the Brooklyn Public Library. Even before I was a Teen Techie, the library—especially the BPL Central Branch Library—was important to me. I go to the library to hang out with my friends, find new books to read, participate in Teen Takeover hangout night events, and be a part of my community. As a homeschooler, the library is one of the only places where I can make friends and just be a teen without having to worry about needing to buy tickets or getting sunburnt or rained on outside. The thing is, many libraries are non-profit organizations and rely on funding to be the pillars of the community that they are. Even with the funding libraries have now, some libraries are still struggling. With more funding, more libraries can open, and currently open libraries can *stay* open longer and more often. The library is central to my education and social life, and I know that the same is true for so many other teens, kids, and adults in NYC. It's imperative to the community of NYC to have libraries. Libraries make our city thrive. Please continue to support these invaluable community centers.

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident and a parent to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

LIC has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, Kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, and yet most area schools are already operating over capacity: P.S. 112 at **130%**, and P.S./I.S. 78 at **111%**. What is more, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City — Court Square — still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message to families is clear: you may not be guaranteed a school seat in your neighborhood.

I would also like to express urgent concern about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed school project. In a neighborhood where families are struggling today to secure local school placements, this project, along with other promised school construction projects in LIC, cannot continue to fall behind competing priorities. While I appreciate the creation of an incubation site for Q508 (Q439Q), a temporary solution cannot become a justification for continued delays to the permanent facility. Families were promised a permanent neighborhood school, with the full facilities and long-term stability that a dedicated school building provides. An incubation site may help relieve short-term pressure, but it does not address the broader and growing need for permanent school infrastructure in LIC.

Additionally, the current lease for the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE, Q580) is set to expire in just three years. Families have been assured that the school would be relocated so that it can continue serving students without disruption. We are appreciative that the budget includes funding for BSGE. However, we want to emphasize that it is critical that the City follow through on this commitment and move urgently to secure a permanent home for the school. Allowing delays to continue would create significant uncertainty for students and families and risks the loss of an important educational institution in a neighborhood already facing a severe shortage of school seats. The City must prioritize funding and planning for BSGE's relocation now to ensure continuity and stability for the community.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has also recognized the need for additional schools to support the neighborhood's rapid growth. Specifically, commitments were made to advance development of a school at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard. Creation of two additional schools has also been promised to create 1,300 more seats in conjunction with the planned construction of over 14,000 residential units. As more housing is developed through OneLIC, school construction must move in parallel — not years behind residential growth. Without firm commitments and accountability around these promised schools, the existing seat crisis will only intensify.

Delays to the opening of these schools are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and more families pushed out of the neighborhood because they cannot rely on access to local public schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency, accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508 and other promised schools on schedule. Schools aren't just a service—they're the foundation of a stable, thriving neighborhood.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future. Please ensure that timely funding is delivered to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority for the completion of these projects.

Sincerely,
Olga Lyudovyk, parent of a three year old
LIC resident (zip code 11101)
[redacted]

NYC Council Committee on Finance – Public Testimony

It was Tuesday evening at 6:30p when I looked up as my kids played in Bailey Playground to witness 15 teenagers in a large circle kicking a soccer ball to one another. At the old jungle gym were my daughters and several other children accompanied by their parents. Kids at the swings, and adults playing basketball at the rundown full courts.

Bailey playground is highly used. We have activated it with events like movies under the stars and puppet Mobile, and more planned wellness activities to come. What we need is funding. Funding to create a new tennis court, new basketball courts, new playground areas, including swings, and a workout area for geriatrics and all ages to exercise. The rubber mats are propping up and are a terrible tripping hazard for children at play. The jungle gym is outdated. Parks from the westside of Manhattan to the westside, Riverdale community of the Bronx, have been entirely renovated. Yet, I have been advocating for this change in my community since 2023. We have activated the park with more consecutive events than ever and will continue outreach efforts to partner with partnerships for parks and have wellness classes like yoga and aerobics for all ages to continue to foster the use of our playground and green spaces.

This isn't about funding for renovation of one park. The increased funding we demand from the finance committee is for the positive future impact of all parks across NYC, with the Bronx being the 2nd Borough with the greenest spaces of all the boroughs, next to Staten Island. The funding should be granted for renovations, and most importantly, continued upkeep of the parks through parks enforcement, who will help keep the parks safe and free of wrongdoers, and also around the clock maintenance shift workers to keep the parks clean and refreshed from open to close. Regular park and restroom maintenance is essential to keeping the parks occupiable by occupants. My daughter takes tennis in the park and the public restrooms close at 4p, but tennis goes on until 6:30.

From the great words of Dr. Seuss:
"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."

Oliver A. Rivera

Hello. My name is Oliver and I represent the New York Young Communist League. I was born and raised in the Bronx and currently live close to the Boston Secor Houses which used to be publicly funded and managed by NYCHA under Section 9. But on September 26th, 2024, NYCHA converted the apartments to project-based Section 8 allowing Wavecrest Management to take control of the property **and** receive public funding while doing so. January 24th of this year, the Boston Secor Houses experienced a horrific gas explosion that killed 1, injured 15, and displaced over 100. Residents later told Pix 11 they reported an electrical fire and smell of gas a week before the explosion, but Wavecrest “did nothing”. The Boston Secor Explosion is a cautionary tale of what project-based Section 8 leads to: displacement, injury, and death.

Right now, the city plans to have $1.5 billion go towards HPD which fuels project-based Section 8 conversions. One such attempt being the demolition of the Fulton and Elliott-Chelsea Houses. This demolition is guaranteed to displace the current residents and create luxury towers most New Yorkers will never afford. **We must not create or bankroll any more disastrous project-based Section 8 housing!**

I, along with my comrades in the Young Communist League, call on City Council to reallocate the $1.5 Billion from HPD’s budget towards comprehensive modernization of Section 9. Stop handing over public housing to greedy companies who’d rather see tenants displaced or dead than taken care of. Prevent the demolition of Section 9 housing like Fulton and Elliott-Chelsea. Keep public housing public!

Hello. My name is Oliver and I represent the New York Young Communist League. I was born and raised in the Bronx and currently live close to the Boston Secor Houses which used to be publicly funded and managed by NYCHA under Section 9. But on September 26th, 2024, NYCHA converted the apartments to project-based Section 8 allowing Wavecrest Management to take control of the property **and** receive public funding while doing so. January 24th of this year, the Boston Secor Houses experienced a horrific gas explosion that killed 1, injured 15, and displaced over 100. Residents later told Pix 11 they reported an electrical fire and smell of gas a week before the explosion, but Wavecrest "did nothing". The Boston Secor Explosion is a cautionary tale of what project-based Section 8 leads to: displacement, injury, and death.

Right now, the city plans to have $1.5 billion go towards HPD which fuels project-based Section 8 conversions. One such attempt being the demolition of the Fulton and Elliott-Chelsea Houses. This demolition is guaranteed to displace the current residents and create luxury towers most New Yorkers will never afford. **We must not create or bankroll any more disastrous project-based Section 8 housing!**

I, along with my comrades in the Young Communist League, call on City Council to reallocate the $1.5 Billion from HPD's budget towards comprehensive modernization of Section 9. Stop handing over public housing to greedy companies who'd rather see tenants displaced or dead than taken care of. Prevent the demolition of Section 9 housing like Fulton and Elliott-Chelsea. Keep public housing public!

Hello,

I want to testify in support of Queenslink. What Queens need is more transit. It is a problem that has bogged down queens for a long time now. The number of cars and 1.5 hour commutes to get to other parts of queens shows this. For NYers without cars, Queens is a transit dessert from itself in certain areas. We as a city need to serve Queens better by providing more transit and taking cars off the roads. Thank you.

Committee on Finance Wednesday June 10, 2026

Today I am asking the City Council to please **fund $1.5 million for spay/neuter surgeries and $2 million for pet food pantries** in the NYC FY2027 Budget.

In my own neighborhood of Sunset Park, Brooklyn (District 38), I have witnessed animals being surrendered and put out to fend for themselves because people cannot afford the rising costs of pet food and veterinary care. Families and individuals continue to struggle amid an affordability crisis. We are asking our city leaders to please help people and their companion animals stay together.

Access to affordable veterinary services and pet food would help support New Yorkers, lessen the burden on the city's overcrowded shelter, animal rescuers, & vet clinics that continue to work tirelessly to help those in need. I can attest that my own community in Sunset Park would greatly benefit from having a pet food pantry. People in our neighborhood often feed their animals before feeding themselves – they love their animals very much and would love to see more resources in our community.

I urge our city council to please help empower families and consider providing these much needed resources so people can care for and keep their animals at home.

Thank you for your time.

Olivia Leyva

From: Olivia Ting
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Manhattan Youth CEC meeting
Date: Monday, May 25, 2026 8:18:47 PM

[redacted]

Dear reader,

I believe that Manhattan Youth is very important and vital to a school's community. Manhattan Youth is a wonderful afterschool program that helps introduce students to new things forming friendships and passions that will affect them throughout their entire life. But now this wonderful program is being taken away from us students.

In the beginning of sixth grade I only had one close friend and no passions in me. I felt like an empty corpse only there to be there and nothing else. But after I joined the Manhattan Youth program I made new friends, and felt passions for many new things. I joined classes like filmmaking and chorus that are part of this wonderful program. These classes introduced me to my appreciation of the arts. Many kids have a similar story to me but some have it worse. But I know one thing that is for sure: Manhattan Youth is a wonderful program that helped form many connections and was a home to kids who don't have a home.

Do not cancel Manhattan youth programs and replace them with an afterschool that doesn't have the same power to make connections. We must have a say in what we as students have and do for afterschool.

Sincerely Olivia Ting,
A student from JHS Robert F. Wagner

To New York City Council Finance Committee Members:

Our daughter entered the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE) as a 9th grader this year. We are very satisfied with the school and look forward to seeing its new home at One LIC. The current building is simply insufficient to accommodate the students: there's no auditorium or gymnasium, and there's always some sort of maintenance issue, such as leaks and flooding, due to the building's advanced age. We expect the City to keep its promise to fully fund this relocation that BSGE absolutely needs.

BSGE accepts students starting in the 7th grade. Therefore, it's important to have good-quality middle schools and elementary schools in the area around One LIC, from which BSGE can accept its future students. About $519 million need to be allocated by the Office of Management and Budget in order for the School Construction Authority to build the 600-seat middle school and two 650-seat elementary schools in the area. Our city is growing in population quite rapidly, and classes are overcrowded in many schools. Having these three new schools will alleviate crowding, and provide students of that area with modern, **fully**-funded environments that will contribute to their education, and help prepare them well for BSGE's 7th-12th grades.

We need to have the funds that were promised to be put to use for relocating BSGE to One LIC, and to build the three new lower schools in the area as well. Please keep these promises. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Ourania Rafaelidis & Stephan Thomatos

Dear Chairperson Lee and any Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Owen Barbagallo, and I strongly believe we should not build Queensway, but instead build Queenslink, which has both transit and a park. We should not allocate $43,000,000 to Queensway, as it will forever harm our ability to properly connect Northern and Southern Queens. The Rockaway Beach Branch has sat there derelict for 60 years. Its southern half has proven its worth connecting the A train and Brooklyn to JFK Airport and the Rockaways to Brooklyn and Lower Manhattan. It will prove its worth by being extended to Northern Queens and Midtown Manhattan.

While a High Line-style park is nice for the neighborhood, it can not be what the High Line was to Chelsea. Instead of weaving in and out through skyscrapers and brownstones, this line runs dead straight through lower and middle-class houses, whose views are blocked by trees. Most people in the city are not willing to commute out to Forest Hills for that, and nor will tourists be. The connection to the park will also be sub-par, with an awkward walk from Rego Park station on the M/R. Providing that transit connection will make that trip a lot more feasible, and it would make the park unique in its own right. Trains running next to green spaces are unique to the city, and will have many more tourists and residents flocking towards the unique experience.

The line would also be a desperately needed relief to the neighborhood. Woodhaven Boulevard is choked with traffic, and its buses are among the busiest in the city. A subway would take cars off the road and reduce trips on the boulevard. Many areas of Forest Hills are a cumbersome trip by Subway currently. I have a friend in Forest Hills, and when I go to visit, I have to transfer to a bus, adding time to my journey that a stop on Metropolitan Avenue would alleviate. It's a trip he has to live much more often. He deserves the convenience of having an easy connection to JFK, Queens, and Manhattan as much as I do, where I live. The MTA itself has tepidly admitted the line is needed, looking into it in its 20-year needs assessment. Unfortunately, they added a ton of soft costs to the project to make it much less appealing, so they didn't have to pursue it.

It would also provide benefits to every user on Queens Boulevard. The M and the R are limited by their terminal at Forest Hills to only 66% of the capacity of the tunnel. By routing the M down Queenslink, the G could be extended to 71st Avenue in its place, allowing for more frequent service to more places, and reducing crowding by 50%. The G could also run more frequently, free from its horrible Court Square terminal, which slows down frequency. Rockaway and JFK service could increase by 165%.

Once a rail is converted to a park, it never comes back. People will protect their parks to hell and back. Queens needs both parks and trains. I implore the finance committee and city council to retain and preserve this irreplaceable potential transit corridor for future use, instead of forever destroying something that Queens desperately needs.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Owen Barbagallo

Subject: Urgent Call to Prioritize Funding to Expand School Capacity in Long Island City

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident and parent to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

LIC has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, Kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, and yet most area schools are already operating over capacity: P.S. 112 at **130%**, and P.S./I.S. 78 at **111%**. What is more, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City — Court Square — still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message to families is clear: you may not be guaranteed a school seat in your neighborhood.

I would also like to express urgent concern about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed school project. In a neighborhood where families are struggling today to secure local school placements, this project, along with other promised school construction projects in LIC, cannot continue to fall behind competing priorities. While I appreciate the creation of an incubation site for Q508 (Q439Q), a temporary solution cannot become a justification for continued delays to the permanent facility. Families were promised a permanent neighborhood school, with the full facilities and long-term stability that a dedicated school building provides. An incubation site may help relieve short-term pressure, but it does not address the broader and growing need for permanent school infrastructure in LIC.

Additionally, the current lease for the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE, Q580) is set to expire in just three years. Families have been assured that the school would be relocated so that it can continue serving students without disruption. It is critical that the City follow through on this commitment and move urgently to secure a permanent home for the school. Allowing delays to continue would create significant uncertainty for students and families and risks the loss of an important educational institution in a neighborhood already facing a severe shortage of school seats. The City must prioritize funding and planning for BSGE's relocation now to ensure continuity and stability for the community.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has also recognized the need for additional schools to support the neighborhood's rapid growth. Specifically, commitments were made to advance development of schools at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard, 4-99 44th Drive, and 5-46 46th Avenue. As more housing is developed through OneLIC, school construction must move in parallel — not years behind residential growth. Without firm commitments and accountability around these promised schools, the existing seat crisis will only intensify.

Delays to the opening of these schools are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and more families pushed out of the neighborhood because they cannot rely on access to local public schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely

completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency, accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508 and other promised schools on schedule. Schools aren't just a service—they're the foundation of a stable, thriving neighborhood.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future. Please ensure that timely funding is delivered to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority for the completion of these projects.

Sincerely,
Palak Patel
Hunters Point, Long Island City (11101)
Parent



Good afternoon, my name is Paola, and I'm a youth leader with Make the Road New York. I'm a sophomore in high school in Queens. Council Member Thomas-Henry represents where I live, and Council Member Julie Won represents where I go to school.

Last month, I had the opportunity to sit down with my city council member and share with her my experience with school cops. I see school cops every morning as I pass through the metal detectors. I hate starting my day like this. I have become so anxious about everything I do in the morning, because I am scared to do something wrong and be labeled as a troublemaker. Based on how I look or dress, something as small as being late to school or forgetting my ID means I have to interact with school police. I know that any interaction with school cops increases the possibility of escalating the situation and moving into the school-to-prison pipeline.

This year I got into an argument with another student, because she was talking badly about my friends. When the school staff heard the argument get louder, they called the school cop, who moved us to the side and said we were going to get detention. Detention was not going to solve my problem. But then a social worker started talking to us to resolve the argument. Then the social worker helped us talk to the dean and clear up the situation. The social worker was actually helpful, and I wish we had more mental health professionals like her inside of my school instead of school cops.

In my classes, there have been multiple times where school cops interrupt the teacher to pull students out of the class. It is very distracting, because then everyone starts worrying about what is going to happen to that student. Schools are a place where we go to learn, but instead we get our class time wasted, and we are treated like we did something wrong.

School policing is racist and makes us feel unsafe. We are calling for the Mayor and the city to start a hiring freeze on school cops and cut funding for the vacant school cop positions. With the millions of dollars they save from taking those actions, I want that money to fund and expand restorative justice practices, counselors, and mental health support that our schools need. These are things that truly keep us safe. Thank you.

From: Patty Sumire McGowan
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Attn Committee on Finance: Urgent Call to Prioritize Funding to Expand School Capacity in Long Island City
Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 12:04:50 PM

[redacted]

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident and parent to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

LIC has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, Kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, and yet most area schools are already operating over capacity: P.S. 112 at **130%**, and P.S./I.S. 78 at **111%**. What is more, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City — Court Square — still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message to families is clear: you may not be guaranteed a school seat in your neighborhood.

I would also like to express urgent concern about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed school project. In a neighborhood where families are struggling today to secure local school placements, this project, along with other promised school construction projects in LIC, cannot continue to fall behind competing priorities. While I appreciate the creation of an incubation site for Q508 (Q439Q), a temporary solution cannot become a justification for continued delays to the permanent facility. Families were promised a permanent neighborhood school, with the full facilities and long-term stability that a dedicated school building provides. An incubation site may help relieve short-term pressure, but it does not address the broader and growing need for permanent school infrastructure in LIC.

Additionally, the current lease for the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE, Q580) is set to expire in just three years. Families have been assured that the school would be relocated so that it can continue serving students without disruption. We are appreciative that the budget includes funding for BSGE. However, we want to emphasize that it is critical that the City follow through on this commitment and move urgently to secure a permanent home for the school. Allowing delays to continue would create significant uncertainty for students and families and risks the loss of an important educational institution in a neighborhood already facing a severe shortage of school seats. The City must prioritize funding and planning for BSGE's relocation now to ensure continuity and

stability for the community.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has also recognized the need for additional schools to support the neighborhood's rapid growth. Specifically, commitments were made to advance development of a school at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard. Creation of two additional schools has also been promised to create 1,300 more seats in conjunction with the planned construction of over 14,000 residential units. **As more housing is developed through OneLIC, school construction must move in parallel — not years behind residential growth.** Without firm commitments and accountability around these promised schools, the existing seat crisis will only intensify.

Delays to the opening of these schools are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and more families pushed out of the neighborhood because they cannot rely on access to local public schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency, accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508 and other promised schools on schedule. Schools aren't just a service—they're the foundation of a stable, thriving neighborhood.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future. Please ensure that timely funding is delivered to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority for the completion of these projects.

Sincerely,

Patty Sumire McGowan
11101 zip code
LIC Parent
[redacted]

Dear Finance Committee,

I am writing in the hopes that you will not go through with Eric Adams backroom deal, now continued by Mamdani, to fund the Queensway.

The narrative that “what is being built will not preclude adding transit later” is simply a false one. Think KelleeAnne Conway’s “alternative facts.” Try to find one example of a rail to trail conversion without any accommodation in its design for future reactivation that ever had rail added later. You simply won’t find one. And you know as well as I do how hard and fierce Queensway fought for this. There is no way they will stand idly by and watch even a blade of grass get cut. And while it may physically be possible to tear it up, it’s a political hand grenade, and I think you know that. Once the local middle school starts holding classes there, kids start playing ball, mom and dad start making family memories on it, it will be ingrained into the neighborhood and no politician in their right mind is going to touch that. Meanwhile, other parts of the borough have playgrounds that are falling apart, the Park budget is not getting funded to the level promised yet funding goes to Forest Hills right above Forest Park? Not a good luck.

Now let’s talk about what’s being passed up. We are watching our borough grow ever more dense by the day. We’re watching resorts world and aqueduct getting developed, which could be a huge money driver for the region. Currently the only north south public transit going to resortsworld is a local Q37, that is often packed. I should know, I live two blocks from it and rely on public transportation. And because public transportation in Richmond Hill (where I live) is so bad, we have to suffer through multiple transfers on bus/train combinations to get to wherever we need to go instead of the one train access that Queenslink could provide for me, my family, and hundreds of thousands of others in South Queens, whose quality of life and economic and educational opportunities are affected daily by our bad transit.

Council ask yourself, were communities actually consulted regarding this decision? The answer is no, they were not asked which proposal they prefer. So this is just another back room deal, and one pushed by lobbyists and the donor class. Again, not a great look. What we do have is an Addabbo survey that shows everyone of the Neighborhood. He represents prefers Queenslink three to one. Why not survey your own constituents, see which they prefer before making a decision?

Besides the MTA overestimating costs and underestimating ridership, there was no consideration given to non-daily riders, such as those going to and from JFK, millions of tourists to the rockaways (which could be a lot greater with Queenslink), or the fact that Queenslink can add 50% capacity on the local Queens Boulevard lines, enough to bring back the G. Is it really worth risking all of the future benefits to create a pocket park in Forest Hills that sits right above a 550 acre park? Because if you speak to those who live along the corridor, whose properties are adjacent to what would become Queensway, none I’ve spoken to want it. They don’t want people walking behind their houses and looking in, they don’t want the crime that parks can bring, or safety concerns.

Please reconsider your decision to fund Queensway. Queens is depending on you to make a decision that represents the will of the majority of your constituents. After all, who else are representatives supposed to represent than the will of the people??

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Queens is relying on you to make the right decision.

Best,

Paul Trust
Richmond Hill Resident

Greetings,

I am a parent of a graduating Wagner Middle Schooler (District 2) and an incoming Wagner Middle Schooler. My eldest chose Wagner because of the various after school offerings. These programs and the variety of them and the magnificent way Ms. Marylyne and Lyric run their programs is the reason we listed Wagner for middle school for our rising 6th grader. We experienced how great these programs are, and I cannot imagine Wagner students being deprived of them. These programs take a massive school such as Wagner and let like minds find each other. Ripping our after-school program away is not acceptable. I implore you to keep Manhattan Youth at Wagner Middle. From a financial perspective, it does NOT make sense to spend money to start-up a new program, which will require more work hours for planning and hiring and logistics. Our school and many schools throughout our district are INCREDIBLY happy with their current programs. Why transfer a program from one school that loves it to another school that does not want it? You are removing our Manhattan Youth to put it somewhere else while taking someone else's established Tennis Program and plopping it into our school. They do not want to lose their program, and we do not want to lose ours. This switch makes zero sense.

I have serious concerns regarding the recent non-transparent decision by the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) to replace Manhattan Youth as our middle school after-school provider. This change raises significant worries, especially since many of the new organizations lack the experience and established ties within our school communities. MY at Wagner is an established and respected program. The students respect their after-school teachers in a way you cannot appreciate until you see it in action. The MY teachers at Wagner know how to keep our teenagers engaged and excited to grow their interests. The older students teach the newer students that these programs are awesome because of the teachers who lead them. My son has always looked forward to the days he would be in his MY afterschool programs. From his creative writing classes, filmmaking and floor hockey, MY has been there for my son during his 3 years at Wagner Middle School.

I respectfully urge an immediate reassessment of this decision and call for the restoration of Manhattan Youth partnership at Wagner for the upcoming 2026-2027 school year. I want my younger son to get the benefits of MY at Wagner Middle School that my older son thrived in. And I also do not want to waste money on moving a program from a school that wants to keep it to my school that wants to keep the program we currently have. Aside from the massive disruption to our communities, you should also be considering the absolutely unnecessary financial strain this re-distribution will create.

Sincerely,
Penelope Ruiz

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident and **parent to children born in 2022 and 2025,** to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

LIC has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, Kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, and yet most area schools are already operating over capacity: P.S. 112 at **130%**, and P.S./I.S. 78 at **111%**. What is more, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City — Court Square — still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message to families is clear: you may not be guaranteed a school seat in your neighborhood.

I would also like to express urgent concern about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed school project. In a neighborhood where families are struggling today to secure local school placements, this project, along with other promised school construction projects in LIC, cannot continue to fall behind competing priorities. While I appreciate the creation of an incubation site for Q508 (Q439Q), a temporary solution cannot become a justification for continued delays to the permanent facility. Families were promised a permanent neighborhood school, with the full facilities and long-term stability that a dedicated school building provides. An incubation site may help relieve short-term pressure, but it does not address the broader and growing need for permanent school infrastructure in LIC.

Additionally, the current lease for the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE, Q580) is set to expire in just three years. Families have been assured that the school would be relocated so that it can continue serving students without disruption. We are appreciative that the budget includes funding for BSGE. However, we want to emphasize that it is critical that the City follow through on this commitment and move urgently to secure a permanent home for the school. Allowing delays to continue would create significant uncertainty for students and families and risks the loss of an important educational institution in a neighborhood already facing a severe shortage of school seats. The City must prioritize funding and planning for BSGE's relocation now to ensure continuity and stability for the community.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has also recognized the need for additional schools to support the neighborhood's rapid growth. Specifically, commitments were made to advance development of a school at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard. Creation of two additional schools has also been promised to create 1,300 more seats in conjunction with the planned construction of over 14,000 residential units. As more housing is developed through OneLIC, school construction must move in parallel — not years behind residential growth. Without firm commitments and accountability around these promised schools, the existing seat crisis will only intensify.

Delays to the opening of these schools are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and more families pushed out of the neighborhood because they cannot rely on access to local public schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency, accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508 and other promised schools on schedule. Schools aren't just a service—they're the foundation of a stable, thriving neighborhood.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future. Please ensure that timely funding is delivered to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority for the completion of these projects.

Sincerely,
Petra West Lunden
11101
Parent

June 9th, 2026

To the New York City Council,

My name is Pily Quintanilla, and I am a Long Island City resident and the parent of a student at Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE). I am writing to urge the City Council to protect the funding already committed to BSGE's new school site and to fully fund the additional schools promised as part of the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan.

As a parent, I have seen firsthand how much BSGE means to our community. The planned relocation to a modern, purpose-built facility is essential to ensuring that current and future students have access to a safe, high-quality learning environment. The City must honor its commitment and ensure that BSGE remains fully funded throughout this process.

At the same time, I strongly support funding for the additional schools promised to our neighborhood: one middle school and two elementary schools. Long Island City and the surrounding Queens North communities continue to grow rapidly. New housing developments have brought thousands of families to the area, yet school infrastructure has not kept pace with that growth.

These schools are not optional amenities; they are critical public infrastructure. Without the promised additional seats, our local schools will face increasing overcrowding, placing unnecessary strain on students, families, educators, and school communities.

I ask the City Council and the Office of Management and Budget to allocate the funding necessary for the School Construction Authority to move forward with all four promised schools. Our children deserve access to safe, modern learning environments at every stage of their education, from elementary school through high school.

Please keep your promise to the families of District 30. Protect BSGE's funding and fully fund the remaining schools included in the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to New York City's students and families.

Sincerely

Pily Quintanilla
Long Island City Resident
BSGE Parent

I urge the City Council to include $1.5 million for affordable spay/neuter and veterinary care and $2 million for pet food pantries in the FY 2027 Speaker's Initiative budget.

More than half of New Yorkers cannot afford a basic veterinary visit. And no New Yorker should have to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their pet. Funding pet food pantries and low-cost veterinary services keeps animals where they belong: at home with the people who love them.

This funding will also relieve the pressure on our overcrowded animal shelters: as cost barriers are removed, adoptions will increase and preventable euthanasia will decrease.

Making spay/neuter services affordable benefits our whole community, not just pet owners. The more cats and dogs are fixed, the fewer homeless or feral animals there would be to rescue and to fill the crowded cages of our animal shelters, and the fewer healthy animals would be put to sleep. The need is clear: 193,000 spay/neuter surgeries are needed annually for community cats and owned pets who cannot afford them, but the city funds only 3,500.

This money is an investment in our future that we'll reap the benefits of in future budget cycles.

From: [redacted] on behalf of Pogo New
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony to Committee on Finance: FY27 Executive Budget for NYC Parks
Date: Friday, June 12, 2026 1:25:19 PM

[redacted]

Dear New York City Council New York City Council Members,

Our city's parks are our lifelines, supporting public health, climate resilience, and quality of life in every neighborhood. We know the City Council values parks, and this year's budget presents a critical opportunity to match that support with meaningful investment.

We appreciate Mayor Mamdani's inclusion of $15 million in the FY27 Executive Budget to baselining of 161 critical positions.

However, the Executive Budget fails to protect 100 Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) officers and 15 GreenThumb workers from losing their jobs at the end of the fiscal year. These workers are on one-year contracts and continue to face uncertainty year after year despite performing essential services for New Yorkers.

Over the past three years, NYC Parks has lost more than 600 staffing lines due to budget cuts. This year the Mayor and City Council must make a good-faith effort to rebuild an agency that has endured years of disinvestment and staffing losses, and put NYC on the path of 1% for Parks.

I stand with the Play Fair for Parks Coalition in urging the following actions:

1. The Mamdani Administration must baseline the remaining 115 Parks workers currently funded through one-shot contracts.

2. The Council must fund an additional 276 one-shot positions, including:
- 100 Parks Enforcement Patrol Officers
- 100 City Park Workers, Associate Park Service Workers, and Gardeners
- 50 Forestry Staff
- 26 Playground Associates

New Yorkers are eager for greater investment in parks. A recent New York Times poll identified increased parks funding as the public's top policy priority, garnering more than 35,000 votes.

NYC's 30,000 acres of parkland remain one of the city's most valuable and accessible public resources, providing free spaces for recreation, community gathering, and connection to nature. Yet these spaces cannot thrive without the staff who maintain them, protect them, and deliver vital services to the public.

We urge the Mayor and City Council to restore staffing, strengthen park maintenance, and continue making measurable progress toward the long-overdue goal of dedicating 1% of the city budget to NYC Parks.

Sincerely,
Pogo New
[redacted] Los Angeles, CA 90026-1996

6/10/2026

TO: New York City Council — Finance Committee
RE: Support the QueensLink — preserve the Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way for both transit and parks

Dear Chairperson Lee and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Pranay Dureja, and I am a resident of Long Island City, Queens. I am writing in strong support of the **QueensLink**, which would bring both new subway service and new parkland to Queens by reactivating the former Rockaway Beach Branch, and against the current $43 million allocated in the budget for phase one of the QueensWay, also referred to as the Met Hub project.

Why this matters to me

The project poses the question “why does it matter what someone in Long Island City thinks about a park on the rockaway beach branch”. While I may live in LIC, it is merely a launchpad from which my livelihood takes me to every corner of the city. Between a day job requiring extensive travel to south Queens and my participation in the arts at night taking me everywhere (playing in a band, doing shows across the city), I am constantly aware how the lack of transit equity in South Queens derails economic and employment opportunities, as well as access to the arts and creative spaces. We routinely are forced to turn down opportunities in South Queens because of the lack of access.

It is ironic how building a park will make it harder for me to breathe (someone with respiratory issues and long covid). More crowded subways and buses on my way to work, and more fumes on the endlessly congested Van Wyck expressway dropping down on all of us.

Why the QueensLink is the right choice

Two competing concepts exist for the deactivated Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way: the park-only QueensWay, and the dual-purpose QueensLink, which combines subway and park uses. The QueensWay would be built directly on the former railbed, which would virtually eliminate the possibility of ever restoring transit there. The MTA itself recognized in its 2023 20-Year Needs Assessment that a linear park along the corridor would create a challenge for any future transit alternatives. Once a rail right-of-way is converted to other uses, it almost never returns to transit.

The QueensLink would create the first north-south subway line in Queens, extending the M line south from Rego Park to Ozone Park and then over the A train tracks to the Rockaways — increasing service to the Rockaways by up to 165%. It would also let the G train run all the way to Forest Hills, increasing capacity on the crowded Queens Boulevard local lines by 50% and connecting central Queens with north Queens and Brooklyn.

A study by the Steer Group found that the QueensLink would remove millions of vehicle trips each year, making streets safer and lowering harmful emissions, while adding up to 33 acres of new parks and trails integrated with the subway design. Over 20 years, the study concluded the project would more than pay for itself by creating jobs, saving New Yorkers time, and reducing healthcare costs tied to air pollution and traffic crashes.

Queens needs parks *and* trains. The QueensLink would provide both. I urge the Committee to preserve this irreplaceable right-of-way for future transit and to support the QueensLink.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

Pranay Dureja
Long Island City, Queens 11101
[redacted]
City Council District 26

Amethyst is my five-year old tabby cat whom I rescued from my backyard just this year. She's been through a lot – she has survived 10* weather with nothing more than a thin fur coat, 100* weather by hunkering down under lawn furniture, and fights with rats and raccoons. Given that most cats born outside live just one to two years under those conditions, she would be considered lucky. Neutering surgery for male cats is just $55 at the Animal Care Centers of New York, and increasing the budget for spay/neuter would allow us to reduce or even eliminate suffering over time. Because these cats cannot care for themselves, we bear the responsibility for their suffering.

It is also paramount that we prioritize pet care in this sociopolitical climate. With fewer New Yorkers choosing to have children, more are opting to own pets. Even New Yorkers who lose will oftentimes choose to keep their pets rather than go to shelters. An estimated 4,000 to 8,000 New Yorkers experience homelessness alongside pets. Studies indicate that roughly 22% of homeless individuals refuse shelter housing because their pets are not permitted, and choose to live on the streets instead. This may seem counterintuitive – why would you choose to live on the streets when there is a bed waiting for you in the shelter? But pets are family, and we rely on our family to support us during difficult times.

Prioritizing pets is about prioritizing people. Taking care of the creatures around us is about protecting our shared humanity.

Hello,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident and parent to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

Long Island City has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, yet many area schools are already operating over capacity, including P.S. 112 at 130% utilization and P.S./I.S. 78 at 111%. At the same time, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City—Court Square—still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message this sends to families is concerning: despite continued development, access to neighborhood public schools remains uncertain.

I am particularly concerned about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed project. While I appreciate the creation of an incubation site for Q508, temporary solutions cannot become a substitute for permanent infrastructure. Families were promised a neighborhood school with the stability, facilities, and long-term capacity that only a dedicated building can provide.

Additionally, the current lease for the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE) is set to expire in just three years. I appreciate that funding for BSGE is included in the budget, but it is critical that the City follow through on its commitment to secure a permanent home for the school. Delays create uncertainty for students and families and risk the future of an important educational institution in a community already facing significant seat shortages.

The recently approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan further highlights the need for urgency. The plan recognizes the need for additional schools, including a school at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard and two additional schools expected to create approximately 1,300 seats alongside more than 14,000 new housing units. As housing construction moves forward, school construction must keep pace. Without firm commitments and accountability around these projects, the existing seat shortage will only worsen.

I would also urge the Council to preserve funding for programs that support children's social-emotional development and school readiness, including initiatives such as SEED. My own son participated in SEED, and we saw firsthand how valuable those supports can be for children working on emotional regulation, frustration tolerance, and self-management skills. Programs like SEED help children build the tools they need to succeed in school and can provide critical early intervention before challenges become more significant. As we invest in school buildings, we must also invest in the supports that help students thrive once they are in those classrooms. SEED has changed our son's life and more children need this.

Delays to these school projects are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and greater pressure on neighborhood schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that previously promised funding is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency, accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508, BSGE's relocation, and the additional schools promised through OneLIC on schedule.

Sincerely,

Quinn T. Rochford

Concerned Parent

From: rachel fuller
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Manhattan Youth MS177 Yorkville East Middle School
Date: Friday, June 12, 2026 10:53:26 AM

[redacted]

To Whom it May Concern:

Manhattan Youth has been an integral part of the MS177 Yorkville East Middle School Community for many years. This program has so many benefits to students and parents and discontinuing it will have a negative impact on students and working parents. It provides enrichment and somewhere for kids to go after school and a safe environment where working parents do not need to worry about their children. Eliminating this program is harmful to the community. I beg you to reconsider and continue to fund Manhattan Youth at MS177 Yorkville East Middle School.

Sincerely,

Rachel Fuller

My name is Rachel Hangley, and I'm writing in to urge this committee to allocate $1.5 million for spay/neuter services and $2 million for pet food pantries in the upcoming budget evaluation. Right now, more than half of New Yorkers can't afford a basic vet visit, and NYC funds only 3,500 spay/neuter surgeries a year against a need of 193,000. This means that thousands of animals are at risk of not receiving care, becoming abandoned and adding to the overpopulation stay crisis, and then continuing to have more babies on the dangerous streets of NYC. No one should have to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their pet, no family should lose an animal because the city failed to invest in them, and no animal should go homeless, hungry, and hurt. Rescues are overwhelmed with too many requests to attend to everyday, with shelters and fosters already over capacity. They need homes to put this animals in, rather than them spilling out of homes. At just $2.98 per person on animal care, NYC ranks among the lowest of any major U.S. city. These investments are modest, but their impact is enormous: fewer animals on the street, less pressure on our overwhelmed shelter system, more adoptions, and less preventable euthanasia. Please fund these programs.

Dear Finance Committee Members:
We are fighting to fix the threat to this public greenspace, dedicated by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia in 1939 as a monument to good government. Over 3,000 petitioning park-lovers, Brooklyn Community Board 9 (two resolutions detailing bad public policy and calling for investigation) and a host of diverse environmental health, historical and climate-conscious skateboarding organizations are calling on **you to save beloved, historic neighborhood green parkland**, and shift any public investment to already-paved space. Please don't pave this beautiful park!!
Sincerely,
Rachel Magida
[redacted]
Brooklyn, NY 11238

Dear City Council Members,

I am the parent of a 9th Grader at the Baccalaureate School for Global Education. Our school provides a unique and wonderful educational opportunity to students from a wide range of backgrounds, ethnicities and socio-economic levels. This includes many first-generation Americans and lower income-level students. As a first-generation American myself, I'm a deep believer in the power of education to change lives. This is even more true when that education is as deep and expansive as that provided by BSGE's International Baccalaureate program, delivered by some of the most talented and committed Teachers, Staff and Administration anywhere.

I am asking the following of our hard-working City Council Members:

Protect BSGE Funding: The City must keep its promise to ensure BSGE remains fully funded for our relocation, protecting the budget allocation already designated for our new site.

•**Support the Broader District:** The Office of Management and Budget must allocate the estimated $519 million needed for the School Construction Authority (SCA) to build the promised 600-seat middle school and two 650-seat elementary schools.

•**Address Growing Needs:** Our local Queens North community is growing rapidly. Without these new seats, schools will face severe overcrowding, breaking a critical infrastructure promise made to neighborhood families. BSGE is a city-wide and Queens-wide school that also serves its neighbors.

Thank you for your consideration,

Rachel Weiss

BSGE Parent and Voter

Testimonial for Girls Inc. of NYC at TYWLS Astoria

My family has had an incredibly positive experience with Girls Inc. of NYC at TYWLS Astoria, and I strongly believe it is important for this program to remain at the school.

My older daughter attended Girls Inc. from 2022-2025, and my younger daughter is currently enrolled this school year. As a parent of three children in the NYC public school system, with two working parents in our household, we have experienced many different afterschool programs over the years. Girls Inc. has been, by far, the best.

What sets this program apart is not just the organization and reliability of how it is run, but the quality of the programming, the opportunities offered to students, and most importantly, the staff. The team creates an environment where students feel welcomed, supported, and valued. During the middle school years, when many students are navigating friendships, confidence, identity, and increasing academic and social pressures, Girls Inc. provides a safe and positive space where students can feel included and connected.

For my children, the program has been much more than afterschool care. It has given them a place to build confidence, form friendships, try new experiences, receive guidance from trusted adults, and feel part of a supportive community. I have seen how meaningful this is not only for my own daughters, but for so many students at TYWLS Astoria.

Girls Inc. fills a critical need for families and students. It supports working parents by providing dependable, high-quality afterschool care, while also giving students enrichment, mentorship, and a sense of belonging. Programs like this are especially important in middle school, and Girls Inc. has become an essential part of the TYWLS Astoria community.

I am truly grateful for the impact Girls Inc. has had on my daughters, and I hope the program continues to be available to TYWLS Astoria students for years to come.

Rachel Woods

Public Testimony Submitted to the New York City Council

Committee on Finance

Subject: Demand for Transparency: Mandating a Public Property Tax Impact Calculator for Proposed Advisory Commission Reforms **Submitted by:** Concerned Resident, Advocate, and Member of Taxpayers of New York

Introduction: The Right to Know

Good afternoon, Chair Lee, and members of the Committee on Finance. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on a matter of critical economic survival for everyday New Yorkers.

We are constantly told that property tax reform is designed to bring "fairness, clarity, and simplicity" to a broken system. Yet, as the New York City Advisory Commission on Property Tax Reform moves its recommendations closer to legislative realities, our constituents are left completely in the dark about what these changes actually mean for their wallets.

Preliminary independent data modeling shows that under these sweeping structural proposals, property tax burdens in neighborhoods like North Brooklyn could skyrocket by **100% to as much as 900%**.

How can government even consider passing historic, sweeping tax overhaul legislation without first performing a rigorous, parcel-by-parcel impact analysis—and, more importantly, without explicitly informing the constituency?

The Responsibility of Transparency

At the end of the day, fiscal transparency is a shared responsibility. It belongs to everyone—both those inside government who wield legislative power, and those outside government who must live with the consequences. Passing bills without understanding their tangible impact is a failure of governance.

While the **New York City Department of Finance (DOF)** is tasked with administering tax maps and collections, the **City Council Committee on Finance** holds the legislative mandate to protect New Yorkers from sudden, destabilizing financial shocks. If the DOF claims it lacks the administrative directive to model these proposed policy shifts for the public, then this Council must collaborate across municipal and state agencies to ensure the public is armed with the facts.

The Solution: A Mandated Public Impact Calculator

We cannot protect our communities with vague promises or dense, hundreds-of-pages-long advisory reports. Everyday homeowners, co-op dwellers, condo owners, and tenants need clear, accessible data tools.

To prove that this can be done, community members have already built an independent, functioning prototype tool. The Department of Finance has the resources and the data to do this

officially, and they must be mandated to build a similar portal.
We urge this Committee to introduce and pass legislation requiring the City to host an official, public **Property Tax Advisory Reform Calculator**.

Community Resources & Action Items

For the official record, and to help constituents immediately protect and inform themselves, we submit the following active community initiatives and resources:

- **Test Your Property:** To see how the so-called advisory commission recommendations will affect you, enter your address into the independent tax impact tool at: https://zohran.web.app/newtax
- **Watch the Calculator Tutorial:** See a video demonstration showing an example of how to use the property tax calculator: https://youtube.com/shorts/AFxBqaTRKmg?feature=share
- **Join the Coalition:** Connect with the Taxpayers of New York group directly online at: https://tony.brooklyncoop.org/
- **Join the Mailing List:** View this short video to see how to join the Taxpayers of New York email update network: https://youtube.com/shorts/8SSlcHaYBxM?feature=share

Conclusion

We demand data before decisions. Do not vote on or advance property tax reform bills until every single New York resident can log onto a city website, type in their address, and see the exact bottom-line impact on their home.
Thank you for your time and leadership on this urgent matter.

06/09/2026

Good morning. My name is Randi Dinh, and I am the parent of a preschool student with a disability in District 30.

I am writing to urge the City Council to restore funding for the SEED program.

Like many families, we have spent years navigating evaluations, services, waitlists, and supports for our child. It can often be an overwhelming process. One of the bright spots in that journey has been the SEED program.

Through SEED, I watched my son gain skills that helped him better understand his feelings, navigate sensory challenges, and participate more successfully in everyday activities. The growth we saw extended beyond the program itself and carried over into his daily life.

For children with sensory needs, these aren't extras. They are the skills that help them participate in the classroom, build friendships, manage challenges, and learn alongside their peers.

That is why it is so difficult to see this funding at risk. At a time when families are already struggling to access needed services, programs like SEED fill an important gap. For some children, SEED may be one of the few opportunities they have to receive specialized support focused on sensory and emotional development.

I urge the Council to restore SEED funding and continue investing in programs that give children the tools they need to succeed both in school and beyond.



Randi Dinh

Long Island City Resident

Mother of a special needs child

06/10/2026

Good morning. My name is Randi Dinh, and I am the parent of a preschool student with a disability in District 30. Noting that I was hoping to share this during the meeting over zoom but after multiple attempts I was never sent any confirmation for the meeting or the zoom link

I am writing to urge the City Council to restore funding for the SEED program.

Navigating special education services cwas not only stressful and overwhelming for my family but for many of our friends and neighbors families. One of the few things that truly helped my son this year and made me grateful for NYC's special education services was the SEED program. Through SEED, I saw meaningful growth in his ability to understand his feelings, navigate sensory challenges, and participate more successfully in everyday activities.

For children with sensory needs, these aren't extras. They are the skills that help them participate in the classroom, build friendships, manage challenges, and learn alongside their peers.

That is why it is so heartbreaking to see funding for this program at risk. There has been a massive lack of related service providers in District 30 and for many families, SEED may be one of the only opportunities their child has to receive specialized support focused on sensory and emotional development. Taking that away would leave many students without resources that can make a lasting difference in their lives.

I respectfully urge the Council to restore SEED funding and continue investing in programs that help students with intensive sensory needs succeed.

Thank you for your consideration.



Randi Dinh
Long Island City Resident / Mother

Good morning,

Thank you for allowing me to speak. My name is Rebecca Schneider-Kaplan (Ms. Becky). I am a proud UPK 4 teacher at Stepping Stones Preschool in Staten Island. I am here today again to ask that CBOs receive a larger share of the budget.

The buildings in which our classrooms exist have become a “scarlet letter,” preventing us from achieving contractual parity and the protections that come with being represented by a stronger union, the United Federation of Teachers (UFT).

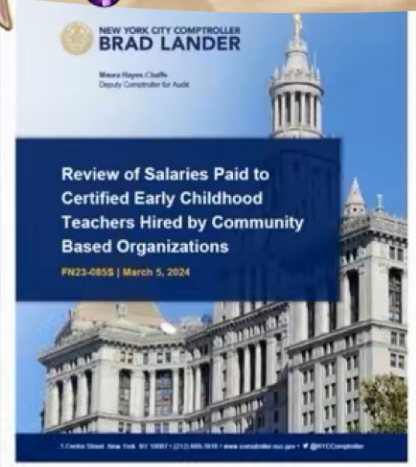
Our students deserve the security of a stable workforce and timely access to the same related services available in DOE schools. Both staff and students also need the support of an in-house crisis team at every CBO.

We deserve the opportunity to remain in the schools we love. I am being forced to choose between staying in my second home and seeking employment at a new school so that I can better provide for my own family and gain access to better health insurance. I currently have an active profile on the NYC DOE Teacher Finder website. It makes me feel sad and defeated that I am being forced to choose between a school I love and a school that can better support me and my family.

I teach NYC’s youngest learners. Please teach me that New York City can rise to meet these challenges. Show me that we value the educators who dedicate their lives to serving children and families in CBO programs. Give us the opportunity to remain in the schools and communities we love while earning the compensation, benefits, and support we deserve. We are an intricate part of our city’s homeostasis.

Thank you

Ms. Becky's Lending Library



Scan Me

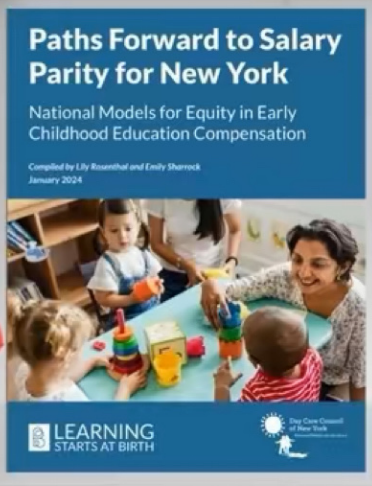




Scan Me



Scan Me



Scan Me





June 11, 2026

To Whom it May Concern,

I write to ask that the Girls Inc. program remain at The Young Women's Leadership School (TYWLS) of Astoria. My daughter is a current 8th grader at the school and has benefited enormously from the program over the last three years, and it would break our hearts if the program were discontinued. I have only positive things to say about this program, and could elaborate for hours on the opportunities, positive experiences, growth, and energy that this program has given my daughter and so many others.

But what I want to say most is that this program provides integral pieces of development for these young women that they aren't always able to get from school itself. The staff at Girls Inc. are incredible and what stands out to me is how these kids are gaining a wonderful group of trusted adults. This is so important for teens and tweens, to have adults in their lives who support them, who listen to them, who help them build social knowledge and communication skills. It is a different relationship than the ones they build with their teachers or parents, one that guides their understanding of friendship, helps them recognize the importance of community, and improves their self-esteem and confidence.

When I asked my daughter to tell me what she liked most about Girls Inc., her answer was the staff. The team members who run Girls Inc. at The Young Women's Leadership School of Astoria are gentle, knowledgeable, and creative, and I cannot imagine the school without them. We have been fortunate with TYWLS, it's a strong school with some excellent teachers, but when I think of my daughter's three years at the school one of the first advantages I think of is Girls Inc.

Please restore the program for the coming year. My daughter will no longer be in the program, as she is a rising 9th grader, so we are not personally benefiting any more. Despite this, as soon as I heard that the program was not being continued, our entire family were ready to write, call, and testify on behalf of the program for the 2026-2027 6th-8th graders at TYWLS Astoria.

Thank you for your time,

-Rebecca West-Mortimer

Robert F Wagner Middle School

220 East 76th Street
New York, NY 10021
(347)-489-1782
Rgomez5@schools.nyc.gov

June 13, 2026

To whom it may concern,

This email will be brief. Just wanted to remind you of the effects of ripping a family apart. Wagner Middle School and Manhattan Youth can be likened to a marriage, the perfect union. We all know the damage that is done when children are involved. That is tantamount to what will happen with this scheduled split. The children, our students will suffer. They will no longer have adults who they know but more importantly who know them well. We will no longer have a place where every kid feels like they belong because there are so many activities to choose from.

As one of the Drama directors our productions changed dramatically, no pun intended, when we partnered with Manhattan Youth. Under the leadership of Marylynne Myrthil and her beloved staff, we were able to double the amount of students who were able to participate. In addition, we were fully supported with costumes, sound engineers, choreographers, lighting designers and just recently a school pit band. None of these would have been possible without them. We finally have a robust Drama Club.

Please reconsider your decision to break up this perfect union!

Sincerely,

Rehea Gomez

Theatre Teacher

Richard Kostenuk: Written Testimony
June 10th, 2026

Good morning, everyone. I am Richard Kostenuk, a Co-President of the Stuyvesant Transit and Urbanism Association.

I love the Rockaways. The boardwalk is a great place to bike, the beach is among the best in the city, and the ocean views bring peace to anyone patient enough to watch them. Thus, it's no surprise that I spend much of my summer free time in the Rockaways.

However, one thing about the Rockaways has always frustrated me, and that is its poor transit access. For example, while returning from a recent trip to the Rockaways, I narrowly missed a train and ended up having to wait 33 minutes for the next one. It was deeply upsetting, and for the entire time, I felt like I had just lost 30 minutes of my life for something outside of my control.

For me, it was merely a one-off inconvenience. But for daily riders of the (A) train's Rockaway branch, this is just one of the many unpredictabilities and inequities they have to endure every single day.

It shouldn't be like this, but thankfully, the City Council has a chance to bring equity to the city's transit.

The answer lies in QueensLink.

QueensLink, which plans to reactivate an abandoned rail corridor to provide massive relief service to residents along the line in Central and Southern Queens, and those getting to and from JFK airport, represents the necessary vision to propel our City to a future deserving of its world-class title.

The proposed rail-and-trail corridor provides a speedy alternative to the city for tourists from the airport, and a quick escape to beautiful cultural venues and beaches in the Rockaways. Better frequencies along the Rockaway Line will not only allow tourists to get to Manhattan faster to spend their money, but will also bring more people to support small businesses in the Rockaways.

Furthermore, the average driver loses over 100 hours sitting in traffic yearly, which amounts to 9.5 billion dollars in lost productivity for the city every year.

QueensLink is expected to carry 75,000 extra passengers daily, which will result in thousands of cars being taken off the road each day, drastically reducing traffic and congestion for all. This reduction in traffic unlocks massive benefits for all: drivers would be able to spend less time in traffic, cyclists and pedestrians would benefit from safer streets, and less cars on the road would mean faster emergency response times for people in need of help.

QueensLink is one of the most important proposals for keeping New York a world-class city in the 21st century. It'll vastly improve the quality of life for everyone in the City, whether it be someone living in Queens, a beachgoer heading to the Rockaways, or even just a tourist arriving at JFK.

Thus, I urge you, the Committee, to stand with QueensLink and allocate the necessary capital funding for a comprehensive environmental and engineering study to finally get this rail-and-trail project moving.

Thank you.

Additional Policy Considerations:
In addition to my remarks above, I urge the Committee to consider the following critical logistics realities regarding QueensLink:

1. **Preserving the rail right-of-way:** Even if there is insufficient budget for QueensLink currently, I heavily urge the Council to, at the minimum, mandate the physical right-of-way be preserved for possible future rail service; this involves routing Queensway's linear park plan adjacent to the trackbed as opposed to directly on top of it. This is a minimal-cost no-build alternative that still preserves the opportunity to unlock unrealized mobility and economic gains for millions should the City one day decide to proceed with rail service reactivation.
2. **Surface street congestion reduction:** A rail corridor parallel to Woodhaven Blvd provides critical systemic relief and redundancy to an overcrowded road too many are over-reliant on. Currently, a single car crash or similar incidents along Woodhaven can strand thousands of Central and South Queens residents. QueensLink introduces the long-overdue yet necessary infrastructure redundancy, ensuring that locals always have reliable secondary travel options, regardless of personal preferences. Furthermore, giving daily commuters the option of rail transit also diverts traffic off the surface roads, reducing congestion for those who must drive, making this a win-win for transit riders and motorists alike.
3. **Land-Usage Control:** Even though QueensLink didn't make it onto MTA's current 5-year plan, the City ultimately controls the land use. If the City Council funds a park-only design without any future provisions (such as preserving the rail right-of-way), it permanently removes the corridor from any *future* MTA Capital Plan. We shouldn't let a state agency's 5-year budget cycle dictate the next hundred years of Queens' infrastructure.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY SUBMISSION

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

To:	Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises / Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings, and Dispositions
Subject:	Support for the QueensLink Proposal (Alternative to QueensWay)
Position:	Strong Advocacy for Unified Transit & Green Space over Park-Only Development

Introduction & Statement of Intent

To the Chairs and Members of the Subcommittees, thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony regarding the future of land use and transportation infrastructure in Queens. My name is Richard Vega, a resident of Queens, and a fierce advocate for working-class commuters trapped inside our borough's pervasive transit deserts. I am writing to express my absolute support for the QueensLink proposal and to urge the City Council to reject any plan, such as the current QueensWay design, that converts the defunct Rockaway Beach Branch line exclusively into an isolated linear park.

The Crushing Reality of South Queens Transit Deserts & Car Congestion

For decades, South Queens has been left behind by our city's transit network. Commuters in neighborhoods like Woodhaven, Ozone Park, Richmond Hill, and the Rockaways face agonizingly long, multi-fare journeys. Because reliable north-south rail transit does not exist here, thousands of residents are forced out of subways and into local buses or personal vehicles just to get across the borough or into Manhattan.

The direct consequence of this transit void is on full display every single day along Woodhaven Boulevard. This vital artery has become one of the most chronically gridlocked, congested, and hazardous corridors in Queens. Bumper-to-bumper car traffic stalls local commerce, delays emergency vehicles, and floods our communities with exhaust fumes. We cannot solve the crisis on Woodhaven Boulevard with paint or minor surface adjustments; we solve it by providing a genuine, high-capacity alternative to driving.

The Rockaway Beach Branch is a precious, existing right-of-way that runs parallel to this exact congestion zone. It represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a seamless, north-south transit spine linking North and South Queens, drastically cutting travel times and taking cars off Woodhaven Boulevard. To permanently block transit on this line in favor of a park-only project is a failure of vision that locks in decades of traffic gridlock for working families.

The Financial Illusion of "Park First, Transit Later"

Proponents of the QueensWay often claim that building a park now does not preclude building transit later. As a taxpayer, I must call this out as a dangerous financial illusion. Building a park entirely first,

only to come back decades later to tear it up, re-engineer foundations, and drop heavy rail transit on top of it, is an astronomical waste of public funds.

> *"Advocating for a 'park-first' model is fiscally irresponsible. Mobilizing crews, grading land, and install park infrastructure only to destroy it later for rail construction doubles the long-term expenditure. True affordability is achieved through unified construction."*

When we evaluate the long-term economic impact, building rail and a park in unison via QueensLink is the only financially sound path forward:

- **Capital and Structural Synergies:** Constructing the transit line and the park concurrently allows for shared engineering costs, unified environmental reviews, and single-mobilization construction contracts. The heavy foundations required for the rail line can support the park space above or alongside it from day one.
- **Avoiding Compounded Inflation Costs:** Delaying transit means that when the city finally decides to build the rail line, inflation, labor costs, and material scarcity will have skyrocketed the budget far past what it would cost to build right now.
- **Relieving the Economic Cost of Traffic:** Unlocking a new rail corridor immediately draws drivers off choked surface streets, reducing the wear-and-tear on city roads and saving commuters thousands of cumulative hours wasted in traffic.

QueensLink Offers the Best of Both Worlds

Let me be clear: this is not a choice between green space and transit. QueensLink is a visionary 'Rails-and-Trails' compromise. It provides 33 acres of vibrant, usable park space for local communities while simultaneously restoring transit access. It acknowledges that local families deserve clean air and recreational spaces, but they also deserve a reliable ride to work.

We cannot feed our families or pay our rent with a walking path if we are spending three hours a day commuting. QueensLink understands that park space and rapid transit are complementary public goods that belong together.

Conclusion: A Request for Bold Leadership

I urge this Committee to look past short-term, superficial fixes and invest in the structural future of Queens. We must choose the comprehensive infrastructure of QueensLink over the exclusive, limiting scope of QueensWay. Let us build responsibly, spend our tax dollars wisely, alleviate the suffocating congestion on Woodhaven Boulevard, and finally provide our neighborhoods with the transit equity they have been denied for over half a century.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Vega
Queens Resident & Transit Equity Advocate

From: R N
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FY "27 Executive Budget Hearing Testimony
Date: Thursday, June 11, 2026 11:26:41 AM

[redacted]

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony. My name is Richter Nietzsche, and I am a resident of supportive housing.

I writing ask the City to invest in tenant safety protections and possibly vouchers for people living in supportive housing.

On May 5, I was physically assaulted by another resident in my supportive housing program. Before that assault occurred, I repeatedly reported safety concerns to staff and case management. I documented incidents, expressed that I felt unsafe, and asked for help. Despite those efforts, the assault still happened.

Afterward, I learned how difficult it can be for supportive housing residents to move to safer housing. Many residents have limited options when they experience violence, harassment, or threats. Even when affordable housing opportunities become available, extreme and explicit barriers can prevent supportive housing tenants from accessing them. This can leave people feeling trapped in situations that may no longer be safe.

I urge the City to allocate funding for stronger tenant protections, emergency transfer programs, and housing mobility services that help supportive housing residents move into stable, affordable housing when necessary. Residents who experience violence should not have to choose between remaining in an unsafe environment and risking homelessness.

Supportive housing plays an important role in helping vulnerable New Yorkers maintain housing stability. But housing stability also requires safety. When residents report serious concerns, there should be resources available to respond quickly and provide meaningful alternatives.

My experience is not only about what happened to me. It is about ensuring that other residents have options before situations escalate into violence. I ask the City to invest in programs that protect residents, expand pathways to permanent affordable housing, and help people remain safe while maintaining their housing stability.

If you need more information you can reach me at:

Richter Nietzsche
[redacted]

Dear New York City Council Members,

My name is Rob Basch and I am President of the board of the Hunters Point Parks Conservancy and a member of the Long Island City Community since 2009. I am writing to demand that the commitments made in the OneLIC Neighborhood plan are fulfilled on time.

LIC already suffers from one of the lowest levels of open and green space per resident in New York City, and multiple public reviews of the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan acknowledge that the neighborhood's parkland and open space are already severely lacking, and will worsen with new residences without intervention, which the city has acknowledged. Despite this, the budget pushes back several commitments to open space:

- Waterfront esplanade and new open space construction, planned for completion in 2031, is not planned for funding until 2031
- Queensbridge Baby Park, planned for completion in 2031, is not planned for funding until 2032 or 2033
- Renewal of Queensbridge Park, planned for design in 2028, is not planned for funding until 2032

It also fails to fund the Parks Department at 1%, and does not baseline funding for the 115 Parks workers whose jobs expire in June or provide the 276 new jobs in Parks needed to support our existing public spaces, or provide adequate funding for GreenThumb and the Urban Park Rangers.

I am also advocating for additional parks and green spaces for Long Island City outside the OneLic borders. As I mentioned even with the new parks and green space in OneLic our community will still be one of the lowest in the city in the percent of parks and green spaces. There is one remaining empty city owned lot in the Hunters Point South Development that should be turned into an active green space/sports field for the community. This is known as Parcel D and we hope this will be converted into a badly needed sports field for the community.

To many of our friends and neighbors have to move out of Long Island City because school seats for their children are not available. Long Island City's schools are already failing to meet the demands of existing families. The lack of inclusion of the promised school construction and improvements in the approved budget means the existing families in Long Island City and all the new residents will be unable to guarantee nearby elementary school seats, and may be forced to leave the neighborhood or send their young children on very long commutes. The budget must include

- Funding to build the 2 promised new elementary schools and 1 middle school as part of OneLIC. [Transportation and public realm] The rezoned area requires significant improvements to provide safe connections through and beyond the neighborhood, allow people the space and infrastructure to spend time with their neighbors outdoors, and help bridge the divide between Queensbridge residents and other parts of LIC. Despite these real needs, the executive budget fails to include or significantly delays several of the promised improvements:

- Court Square Toilet not included in the budget
- Lighting Study in the IBZ not included in the budget
- Feasibility Study of Public Realm Improvements Under QBB Ramps not included in the budget

- Queens waterfront greenway delayed until 2029 + 2032
- 21st Street Intermodal Hub delayed until 2029 + 2032
- 44th Drive corridor improvements delayed until 2029 + 2032

I lived in LIC during Hurricane Sandy and we do not want five feet of water in our lobby again.

As the City moves forward with significant new development in Long Island City, it is critical that these commitments are not delayed, deferred, or reduced. The City Council must ensure that the promised funding to allow the neighborhood to support so many new residents is not pushed off or ignored.

I believe that parks, waterfront connections, schools, street improvements and public open space improvements promised under OneLIC must be fully funded and delivered on an appropriate and timely schedule so that neighborhood infrastructure keeps pace with growth and current residents are not asked to continue bearing the consequences of decades of underinvestment in infrastructure/green spaces and schoolsWe need the City to honor and prioritize its commitment to the previously promised funding by the Mayor's Office to ensure equitable development. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future.

Sincerely,
Rob Basch
President – Hunters Point Parks Conservancy

Honorable Members of the New York City Council,,

My name is Rob McCubbin, and I have been an NYC public educator since 2006. I am submitting this written testimony regarding the proposed funding cut for the New Visions Portal.

Over the course of my career, I have served New York City Public Schools as a teacher, instructional coach, Assistant Principal, Principal, and district-level coach. Across these roles, the New Visions Portal has been one of the *most essential tools* for ensuring student success.

I am writing to unequivocally urge the City Council to maintain funding for the New Visions Portal. If anything, funding and support for the Portal should be increased.

The Portal provides school leaders and educators with a level of clarity and access to student data that has been exceptionally rare within DOE systems. It organizes critical information such as attendance, credit accumulation, Regents performance, screening data, and postsecondary plans into a single, user-friendly platform that allows educators to act quickly and effectively.

In my experience, the Portal fundamentally changes how schools interact with and use data. Leaders can track student progress toward graduation in real time, identify patterns in attendance across groups and individuals, and intervene early when students begin to fall off track. At the district level, I have seen coaches and administrators rely on the Portal regularly to guide conversations with school leaders and to ensure accountability for student outcomes.

Importantly, the Portal is not just for administrators. I have trained teachers to use it to better understand their students, and they have found it highly valuable. Teachers can review prior Regents performance and identify attendance trends. The Portal also sends simple notifications, such as student birthdays, which help teachers build stronger relationships and support students' social-emotional development.

I can say with confidence, based on my experience in this system, that the New Visions Portal has contributed directly to the success of thousands of students, supporting them to graduate on time, earn Regents diplomas, and leave high school with clear postsecondary plans.

In contrast, many of the DOE's legacy systems, such as ATS, STARS, and OASIS, are severely outdated, difficult to navigate, and disconnected from one another. These systems place a significant burden on school staff, who must piece together information from multiple platforms just to gain a basic understanding of student progress. This is inefficient, frustrating, demoralizing to staff, and ultimately harmful to students.

The New Visions Portal represents what our system should be. It is modern, integrated, and designed around the real work of educators. While many other DOE systems remain stuck in the past, the Portal brings critical aspects of school operations into the 21st century.

Eliminating or reducing funding for the Portal would be a serious step backward. It would limit our ability to respond to student needs in real time, weaken coordination across teams and schools, and put more students at risk of falling behind or not graduating.

As I mentioned, this is an area where investment should be increased, not reduced. Cutting the Portal would move our system backward at a time when we should be building on what is already working for students.

I urge the Council to continue funding the New Visions Portal so that schools can maintain and expand the systems that are actually supporting student success.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Rob McCubbin

SUBMIT TO: https://council.nyc.gov/testify/ (SEND BY JUNE 13)

SELECT HEARING: Wednesday, June 10 at 9:30 AM, Committee on Finance

—-------

Subject: Urgent Call to Prioritize Funding to Expand School Capacity in Long Island City

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident and **[parent/community member]** to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

LIC has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, Kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, and yet most area schools are already operating over capacity: P.S. 112 at **130%**, and P.S./I.S. 78 at **111%**. What is more, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City — Court Square — still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message to families is clear: you may not be guaranteed a school seat in your neighborhood.

I would also like to express urgent concern about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed school project. In a neighborhood where families are struggling today to secure local school placements, this project, along with other promised school construction projects in LIC, cannot continue to fall behind competing priorities. While I appreciate the creation of an incubation site for Q508 (Q439Q), a temporary solution cannot become a justification for continued delays to the permanent facility. Families were promised a permanent neighborhood school, with the full facilities and long-term stability that a dedicated school building provides. An incubation site may help relieve short-term pressure, but it does not address the broader and growing need for permanent school infrastructure in LIC.

Additionally, the current lease for the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE, Q580) is set to expire in just three years. Families have been assured that the school would be relocated so that it can continue serving students without disruption. We are appreciative that the budget includes funding for BSGE. However, we want to emphasize that it is critical that the City follow through on this commitment and move urgently to secure a permanent home for the school. Allowing delays to continue would create

significant uncertainty for students and families and risks the loss of an important educational institution in a neighborhood already facing a severe shortage of school seats. The City must prioritize funding and planning for BSGE's relocation now to ensure continuity and stability for the community.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has also recognized the need for additional schools to support the neighborhood's rapid growth. Specifically, commitments were made to advance development of a school at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard. Creation of two additional schools has also been promised to create 1,300 more seats in conjunction with the planned construction of over 14,000 residential units. As more housing is developed through OneLIC, school construction must move in parallel — not years behind residential growth. Without firm commitments and accountability around these promised schools, the existing seat crisis will only intensify.

Delays to the opening of these schools are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and more families pushed out of the neighborhood because they cannot rely on access to local public schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency, accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508 and other promised schools on schedule. Schools aren't just a service—they're the foundation of a stable, thriving neighborhood.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future. Please ensure that timely funding is delivered to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority for the completion of these projects.

Sincerely,
Robert Ahn
11101
The Anable Condo Board President

6120 Grand Central Parkway
Apt C802
Forest Hills, NY 11375

Testimony in Support of QueensLink

June 10, 2026

Good Morning,

My name is Robert Frederick, and I am writing to express my strong support for the QueensLink proposal and to urge decision-makers to move forward with this transformative project.

QueensLink represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reconnect communities, improve mobility, expand economic opportunity, and create a more equitable transportation network for the people of Queens and New York City as a whole.

For decades, the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch corridor has sat unused while residents across Queens face long commutes, limited transit options, and inadequate connections between neighborhoods. QueensLink would turn this neglected asset into a vital public resource by restoring rail service, creating new park space, and connecting communities that have historically been underserved by transit.

The benefits for Queens commuters would be substantial. Many residents currently endure lengthy and indirect trips that require traveling into Manhattan before reaching destinations elsewhere in Queens or Brooklyn. QueensLink would create faster and more reliable east-west and north-south connections, reducing travel times and providing new transit options for working families, students, seniors, and people with disabilities.

Importantly, QueensLink is also an anti-poverty investment. Transportation access is economic opportunity. When people can reach jobs, schools, healthcare, and other essential services more quickly and affordably, they gain access to opportunities that can improve their quality of life and economic mobility. Better transit helps reduce the burden of transportation costs on low-income households and expands access to employment centers throughout the city.

QueensLink would also dramatically improve travel within Queens itself. Too often, New York City's transit system is designed around trips to and from Manhattan, leaving outer-borough residents with slow and circuitous journeys. QueensLink would strengthen connections between neighborhoods across central and southern Queens while also improving access to Brooklyn. These stronger borough-to-borough connections would make the entire city more interconnected, resilient, and efficient.

6120 Grand Central Parkway
Apt C802
Forest Hills, NY 11375

A modern transit system should help people move where they actually need to go—not force them through unnecessary transfers and detours. QueensLink advances that goal by providing a practical, sustainable transportation solution that serves real travel patterns.

I also support the call to **Defund the Queensway and Support QueensLink**. While green space is valuable, Queens already has numerous parks and recreational areas, whereas many neighborhoods along this corridor continue to suffer from inadequate transit access. The corridor's highest and best public use is one that serves both transportation and public space needs while maximizing benefits for the greatest number of residents. QueensLink offers exactly that balance.

At a time when New York City faces challenges related to affordability, congestion, climate change, and economic inequality, investments that expand high-quality public transportation should be a priority. QueensLink would reduce dependence on automobiles, lower emissions, improve accessibility, and provide lasting benefits for generations of New Yorkers.

I urge policymakers, transit agencies, and elected officials to support QueensLink, prioritize transit over the Queensway proposal, and seize this opportunity to deliver meaningful transportation improvements for Queens and the entire city.

Thank you for your consideration.

Robert Frederick

[redacted]

[redacted]

Dear Mayor Mamdani,

I'm writing to express my deep concern over the future of the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch and to urge you to resume your full support of the QueensLink project.

While Queens is New York City's largest borough in area and the second-largest by population, it has the fewest subway miles per capita. Many parts of Queens are considered "transit deserts." Given there are no direct north-to-south rail connections in Queens, QueensLink aims to solve this problem with a "rails and trails" solution: it would include 33 acres of new community parks, along with an extension of the M train from Rego Park to the Rockaways. By extending the M along the Rockaway Beach Branch, residents in southern Queens would have a faster commute to Manhattan and northern Queens. Additionally, there would be 50% more service on the Queens Boulevard Local Line, enabling the G train to be extended back to Forest Hills.

As of March 2026, there is finally professional research from industry-leading experts showing that QueensLink would generate at least $8.9 billion in economic growth and "deliver up to $2.20 of benefit to wider society for every $1 of public investment." The report finds that the project would have twice as many riders per mile compared to the Interborough Express. QueensLink also reduces vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by 30 million each year, equating to 7,200 fewer tons of CO2 annually. Bus and car traffic along Woodhaven and Cross Bay Boulevards (where the overcrowded Q52 and Q53 bus routes run along) and the nearby Van Wyck Expressway would be significantly relieved, and subway ridership to and from the Rockaways would increase substantially. To sum it up, QueensLink would put money back in New Yorkers' pockets, help make our city more affordable, improve commutes for Queens residents, and provide BOTH public transit AND park space. (Additionally, Forest Park is directly next to the Rockaway Beach Branch corridor.)

However, the QueensWay plan, which was funded by both your predecessor, Eric Adams, and former Governor Andrew Cuomo, aims to build ONLY a park along this corridor, with NO plan for future rail transit. The New York City Economic Development Corporation aims to start its construction this year, and your latest budget proposal includes funding for this park, which I and many other residents across the city strongly oppose. While you have repeated the claim that rail activation would be made available in the future, QueensWay has provided NO EVIDENCE of this, nor do they support any provision for it. Given your claims that QueensWay will not block QueensLink, where exactly would space be left available for rail activation in QueensWay's plan? Let me be clear: if QueensWay begins construction, it will BLOCK any hope of future rail reactivation.

As an assemblymember, you expressed your support for QueensLink due to its many benefits, which is why I find it deeply disheartening that you're now taking action to block it. As mayor, you can advocate for and provide subway expansion. Former Mayor Michael Bloomberg successfully pushed for the extension of the IRT Flushing Line to Hudson Yards during the 2008 recession, which the City funded, making the area around Hudson Yards more valuable. Taxing the land's increased value would be a source of revenue to fund a subway expansion. Similarly, utilizing a space like the parking lot near Aqueduct Racetrack in Howard Beach could provide more affordable housing and economically productive land that could pay for QueensLink in the long run.

Overall, QueensLink is a project with common sense, as it would provide New Yorkers with faster, more reliable commutes, fewer cars on the road, and more efficient urban space. I encourage you to renew your support for such a transformative and equitable project. You can begin by removing funding for the opposing QueensWay scheme from the City's budget and directing the New York City Economic Development Corporation to pause all work on that project. I hope that you take this information to heart and move forward with QueensLink's "rails and trails" vision for the Rockaway Beach Branch. If so, you will do right by those who elected you and promise a more efficient borough and city.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Robert Queen

6/10/26 Finance committee public comments on executive budget

I am a citizen of the US and a resident of NYC

There is NO enforcement against landlords who allow their buildings to become rat infested, mold infested slums.....garbage spilling our of cans on the street - not enough porter service to properly bag up this garbage so the whole area becomes RAT infested. VIOLATIONS with the HEALTH DEPT and SANITATION TICKETS are ignored. IT IS OUTRAGEOUS!!!

Spend big money on enforcement: hire qualified people to DO THE REPAIRS if landlords don't do them and charge them for the work. IF THEY REFUSE TO PAY STOP THEM FROM BEING LANDLORDS!!!!

There are so many criminal landlords with BIG MONEY (which they spend on politicians) destroying our city - endangering the health and safety of tenants all over: GET RID OF THEM!!

From: Robertas S.
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public hearing Jun 10, Committee on Finance - Queens Funding
Date: Monday, June 8, 2026 6:19:42 PM



Hello,

I want to strongly testify against the proposed budget cuts to Parks and Transportation in Queens.
In particular I want to strongly oppose the budgets cuts to the following transport initiatives:

44th Drive Corridor improvements
Improved connections to Queens waterfront greenways
21st Street intermodal hub
Public toilet at Court Square

And the following Parks projects:
New Park under Queesborough bridge
LIC Waterfront Esplanade
Clean, Green and Safe parks program
Tree Pruning and Maintenance.

Long Island City is one of the fastest growing areas in LIC and the current infrastructure upgrades are already far behind what this area needs. The problems will only get more acute with the OneLIC development.
We desperately need to get ahead of the curve on this. The proposed delays to 2029-2032 would serevely impact the quality of life in this growing community.
The current administration campaigned on delivering on exactly these kinds of promises and improvements on quality of life, this is a major test that they should now deliver on.
Time is of the essence. Approve the necessary funding now!

Kind regards,

Robertas

Written testimony for $1.5 million for low cost spay/neuter and veterinary care and $2 million for pet food pantries across New York City

I am writing this testimony to urge the City Council to include $1.5million for affordable spay/neuter and veterinary care and $2 million for pet food pantries in the FY 2027 Speaker's Initiative Budget.

Providing affordable spay/neuter and veterinary care and providing pet food pantries would be a tremendous help for New Yorkers who are struggling to keep their companion animals at home and not have to surrender them to a shelter. If cost barriers are removed, adoptions will increase and at the same time, preventable euthanasia will decrease. This would help ameliorate the heavy burden that New York City's animal shelters and rescue organizations currently experience.

It is estimated that over half of New Yorkers cannot afford a basic veterinary visit or to pay for spay/neuter services for their animals. In addition, many of these New Yorkers cannot afford the cost of pet food. Including the above referenced funds in the FY 2027 Speaker's Initiative Budget would help decrease the number of animals in city shelters and help animals who are currently living on the street find a home because the cost of caring for a companion animal would be made affordable.

I once again urge the City Council to include $1.5 million for affordable spay/neuter and veterinary care and $2 million for pet food pantries located throughout the city in the FY 2027 Speaker's Initiative Budget.

Thank you for your kind attention to my testimony.

Submitted by

Robin Jacobson

[redacted]

New York, NY 10024

My name is Robyn Dutra, and I am a resident of Astoria, Queens.

I urge the New York City Council to include $1.5 million for affordable spay/neuter and veterinary care and $2 million for pet food pantries in the FY 2027 budget.

As a lifelong animal lover and pet owner, I know the bond people share with their animals is profound. For many New Yorkers, pets are family. Yet rising costs are making it increasingly difficult for families to access basic veterinary care and afford pet food. No one should be forced to choose between paying household expenses and caring for a beloved companion animal.

Investing in low-cost veterinary services, spay/neuter programs, and pet food assistance is both compassionate and practical. These programs help keep animals in loving homes, **reduce the number of animals entering shelters**, support overburdened rescue organizations, and improve the health and well-being of communities across the city.

New York City can do better for its animals and the people who care for them. I respectfully ask the Council to fund these critical initiatives and help ensure that financial hardship does not become a reason for animal suffering, abandonment, or surrender.

Thank you for your consideration.

Robyn Dutra
[redacted] Astoria, NY 11102

From: Ron Varrichio
To: shaskell@dycd.nyc.gov; tcaldron@dycd.nyc.gov; Shhare@dycd.nyc.gov; Ipruneda@dycd.nyc.gov; RFPProtest@dycd.nyc.gov; acco@dycd.nyc.gov; afterschool@schools.nyc.gov; District2; Fischer-Ward, Jackson; Garner, Shelby; dquillen@dycd.nyc.gov; Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please Keep Manhattan Youth at School of the Future (M413)
Date: Monday, May 25, 2026 2:10:08 PM



To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Ron Varrichio and I am the middle school PE teacher, athletic director, cross country coach, and softball coach at School of the Future. Over the past eight years we have enjoyed a productive and highly successful relationship with Manhattan Youth. The Manhattan Youth staff have become part of our school culture and identity. Unless you are working with my students every day, it is impossible to truly understand the negative impact that the loss of Manhattan Youth would create.

Our partnership with Manhattan Youth allowed us to transform our athletic department into a competitive program that teaches values, sportsmanship, and respect through interscholastic sports. It was not easy for a small school like ours, but Manhattan Youth provided the resources that have allowed us to expand the number of teams we offer, compete at a high level, and become respected throughout the MSAL. Student-athletes at my school proudly wear uniforms on the field as representatives of both School of the Future and Manhattan Youth.

As news has come out over the past couple weeks about this decision by the DYCD, I have had many painful conversations with my middle school students about the possibility that they will lose the adult at School of the Future who they trust and respect the most. Manhattan Youth employees like Sherif (Soccer and Table Tennis Coach), Marcelo (Puppetry and Cartooning Teacher), and CJ (Shakespear and Improve Teacher) are role models and mentors for my students. The loss of Manhattan Youth at School of the Future would abruptly end the relationships that staff have created with my students at such an important stage of their development.

Manhattan Youth wants to continue their relationship with School of the Future and families, students, administration, and teachers at School of the Future unanimously want this partnership to continue.

As someone who deals directly with the students who will be most affected by this decision, I hope I have been able to give you some insight into how meaningful and impactful the interactions between Manhattan Youth and my students have become. It is difficult to imagine that my future students might not be able to have the same great experiences as my current and former students.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and hope you can use this information to help guide your decision.

Ron Varrichio
School of the Future
[redacted]

Testimony Before the New York City Council Committee Finance
FY 2027 Budget Hearing

June 10, 2026

Submitted – Ronald Garcia, Forest Hills Resident

Honorable Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **in support** of continued funding for the QueensWay project, specifically Phase 1 - known as "MetHub" - for which New York City has already committed $50 million in capital funding.

I am a resident of Forest Hills. Part of the abandoned railroad runs behind my home. I am in full support of moving the plan forward to build the Queensway and I am not alone. My friends and neighbors are all eager to see this project move forward. Not only will it create new green space, recreational opportunities, and community connections for Central and Southern Queens, but it will provide flooding resilience that is desperately needed.

My home along with many others suffered significant damage after Hurricane Ida and we continue to struggle with flooding issues when it rains. This project will help mitigate the flood risks we face and should be a priority for the city.

Phase 1, MetHub, located between Metropolitan Avenue and Forest Park, will provide open space, recreational opportunities, and improved connectivity in the short term, while laying the groundwork for future phases of development.

We need more open space in this part of Queens. Approximately 245,000 people live within one mile of the QueensWay corridor, spanning the neighborhoods of Rego Park, Forest Hills, Glendale, Richmond Hill, Woodhaven, and Ozone Park.

This represents an opportunity to take land that has been long abandoned and turn it into a beautiful, safe and usable space that we can all admire. Currently, this space is full of garbage and is dangerous for kids and adults alike.

The QueensWay has the potential to become a critical recreational and environmental asset serving residents of all ages and backgrounds.

The QueensWay is aligned with the City's priorities around parks, public health, environmental resilience, recreation, and equitable neighborhood investment. We have been waiting for decades to see something positive done with this space and I am excited that the city will finally break ground this year.

Please support the continued allocation of $50 million in FY 2027 capital funding for the QueensWay MetHub project.

Thank you for your consideration.

COME ON NEW YORK YOU CAN BETTER! THIS IS THE GREATEST CITY IN THE WORLD AND YET WE FORGET ABOUT OUR ANIMALS. NO DOG OR CAT IN THIS DAY AND AGE SHOULD BE STARVING ON OUR STREETS AND WITHOUT SHELTER. BY SPAYING AND NEUTERING, THESE ANIMALS CAN LIVE HEALTHY AND WE CAN CONTROL THE NUMBER OF ANIMALS ON OUR STREETS.

I AM ONE PERSON AND I DO MY BEST TO TNR AND FEED THESE ANIMALS. BUT IT TAKES A VILLAGE. WHY SHOULD I HAVE TO CHOOSE WHETHER TO FEED A STRAY CAT OR MYSELF? WHY DO I HAVE TO CHECK MY FINANCES IF I TRULY WANT TO VET A STRAY CAT? ONLY YOU, NEW YORK CAN ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS FOR ME. GO NEW YORK GO! WE LOVE THE KNICKS, NOW LETS LOVE THE ANIMALS!

From: Rose Ventimiglia
To: Testimony
Cc: Rose Ventimiglia
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Manhattan Youth @ Wagner M.S.
Date: Friday, May 29, 2026 2:47:34 PM

[redacted]

Deer counsel,

My name is Rose Ventimiglia and I am a proud science teacher at Wagner Middle School (02M167). The after school program that is run by Manhattan Youth is such a robust experience for our students. Students of all identities feel welcomed and are able to showcase their talents in some way through the efforts of Manhattan Youth. Program Director Marylyne Myrth has worked tirelessly to offer students program options based on their interests and needs. Please consider keeping Manhattan youth as our after school provider.

Warmly,
Rose Ventimiglia

Rose Ventimiglia
Chemical Engineer & Educator
MfA Master Teacher Fellow
Urban Advantage Lead Teacher @ NYSCI

Say this to young people...
*"**Engineers** are **changing the world** all of the time.*
*They dream up **creative**,*
practical solutions and work with other smart,
inspiring people** to **invent,
***design and create** things that matter.*

Instead of saying this....
"Engineers solve problems using math and science."



Submitted by Ross Pinkerton

My name is Ross Pinkerton and I am submitting testimony to show support for funding NYC's environmental and climate programs in the FY27 Budget. Thank you, Chair Lee, and members of the Finance Committee, for the opportunity to submit testimony.

I write as a concerned parent and science teacher in Manhattan.

As the federal government is rolling back decades of bipartisan environmental protections and drastically cutting funding for clean energy, and as our city continues to experience heat waves, extreme rainfall and flooding, droughts, and sea level rise—which disproportionately impacts vulnerable New Yorkers—local environmental leadership matters more than ever.

The Mamdani Administration and City Council have the opportunity to invest in New Yorkers by funding city agencies that advance proven climate solutions, whether it's funding our parks system, prioritizing public transportation affordability, or investing in stormwater resilience.

Below you will find my FY27 budget environmental and climate priorities:

NYC Department of Parks and Recreation

Funding NYC Parks is even more vital as a Trust for Public Land report recently highlighted how New York City's parks system national ranking has been downgraded to 20th place, due in no small order to lack of funding and significant cuts to the agency's core staff over the last three years. It's a positive sign that the Mamdani Administration baselined $15 million for NYC Parks in the FY27 Executive Budget, which means that 161 of the 276 temporary ("one shot") positions will be made permanent and guaranteed a job after June 30th. This is a critical step forward, and I urge the Mayor and City Council to bring parks funding up to 1% of the city budget, as the Mayor committed to do during his campaign.

- Along with the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, I urge the Mamdani Administration to baseline a remaining $8 million, which would mean 115 critical parks staff who will lose their jobs on June 30th will be guaranteed permanent jobs.
- I also urge the City Council to fund approximately $23 million for a new round of 276 one-shots positions for FY27. These positions will help the agency make progress in key areas that have been pain points for every council member, such as tree maintenance.
- Along with the Forest for All NYC Coalition, I appreciate the Administration publishing the city's first-ever Urban Forest Plan. On that note, I support funding agencies that are tasked with the initial implementation of this Plan.

NYC Department of Buildings

I support the Administration's continued commitment to implementing Local Law 97 by providing $1.8 million to a new Co-op and Condo Hub within the NYC Accelerator program. This will provide specialized support to over 1,000 low- and middle-income co-ops and condos through engagement, decarbonization planning, and connecting with existing incentives and financing. I

urge the Administration and City Council to continue providing funding for technical assistance and financial support to assist with the law's compliance.

NYC Department of Transportation

As the Mamdani Administration continues to announce new bus and bike lanes, it is great to see the robust capital funding allocated that will ensure these projects are implemented over the next several years, including funding for expanding the city's bus lanes and new bike lanes.

- For Fair Fares, I urge the City to expand eligibility to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) including fully free for households under 150% of the FPL, in addition to an expansion of Fair Fares with half-priced fares on MTA Express Buses and CityTickets on the LIRR and Metro-North railroads within New York City, and automatic enrollment of qualified households. Not only do we need greater investment in this program to expand eligibility but also more investment for outreach and education to make sure the many who currently qualify are using the program.
- I also urge the City to prioritize and fund Vision Zero policies that encourage safety through engineering, education, and enforcement to better protect pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. I support the City including $15 million in the FY27 budget to fund DOT's hardened daylighting program citywide, which will improve driver, pedestrian and cyclist safety.

NYC Department of Sanitation

- I am pleased to see strong funding for DSNY's waste containerization program, including $14.8 million in FY27 and growing to $162 million in FY30, moving the city towards a cleaner future. It is also important to fund the purchase of Empire Bins, a European-style stationary on-street container for use by larger buildings, and automated side-loading trucks as the city continues to expand waste containerization.
- I support increasing funding for DSNY to conduct more outreach and education on DSNY's Residential Curbside Organics Program to increase participation rates.
- I also support the NYC Community Compost Network request of $9,290,000 for the city's Community Composting programs. These programs complement the City's residential organics program in that it provides vital jobs and workforce development, educates New Yorkers on zero waste solutions, and invests in local economies.

NYC Department of Environmental Protection

- I support the allocation of $10.6 million in FY27 for DEP's Bureau of Coastal Resilience, which will establish critical in-house capacity to manage the city's growing portfolio of shoreline protection assets and strengthen coastal resilience planning.
- I support continued funding for rain gardens, porous pavement, and other green infrastructure, as well as more investment in the maintenance of green infrastructure.

NYC Housing Authority

- I appreciate the Mamdani Administration's allocation of $38.4 million to provide all-electric heating and cooling at the New York City Housing Authority's Beach 41st Street

development, which advances the city's goal of expanding Clean Heat for All to 20,000 apartments by 2031, according to NYCHA's 2026 Sustainability Agenda.

NYC Department of Education

- I urge DOE to fully commit to the timely implementation and funding of Local Law 120 of 2021, which mandates an all electric school bus (ESB) fleet by 2035 to cut harmful pollutants, improve public health and air quality, and fight climate change. The City must work with school bus vendors and utility companies to plan, develop, and fund school bus charging infrastructure throughout the City, especially at school bus depots located in disadvantaged communities, and ESB workforce development programs since bus fleet personnel will require training for driving, properly maintaining EVs, and optimizing charging for electric bus routes, energy needs, and intra-day energy price fluctuations.
- I also support $2.2 billion for clean energy upgrades in NYC Public Schools. This includes solar installation on schools and electrification projects, insulation repairs and upgrades to HVAC systems, and exploring projects that utilize thermal energy networks.

NYC Office of Emergency Management

- I also urge the City to allocate $1.2 million for the implementation of Local Law 128 of 2025, which codifies the NYC Cooling Centers Program. This should include funding for maintenance, staffing, increased hours of operation during extreme heat events (including weekends), and a public education campaign on extreme heat awareness and mitigation.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Greetings City Council

My name is Rowan Berryman. I unfortunately could not be in person at the meeting because I am a high school student, at the High School of Art and Design, and I had Regents the day of the hearing. I'm writing today about the issues involving the funding of Queenslink and Queensway. I will start off by saying that I am a huge supporter of the Queenslink, and the work that they have done to try and get the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch reopened for both rails and trails. As a lifelong Queens resident I have had to deal with the struggles of poor transit accessibility in Queens. I have written this to push for the defunding of a minoritarian group Queensway, as well as to provide my own insight on the situation, and other solutions to keep a balance of both Queenslink, and Queensway. The Queenslink is a proposal to reopen the Rockaway Beach Branch for an M line extension branching from the 63 Drive-Rego Park station, and down into the Rockaways to run to Rockaway Park-Beach 116 St. The line extension is planned to be 3.5 Miles long, with 4 stations, and serve +75,000 Riders a day. In addition, the Queenslink project will add a park that runs parallel to the new line which will give 33 acres of new land to the residents of NYC and Queens. I am strongly against the Queensway, as it does not benefit the surrounding area as much as the Queenslink, which will provide both open space and new transportation capacity, both sorely needed in Queens.

I am proposing what most other advocates, and other speakers have put forward, to re-allocate Queensway funds to the Queenslink project , as well as push to obtain additional funding from the state, including the NYS Department of Transportation and Governor Hochul.. The reason why we push for the defunding of the Queensway Metropolitan Hub is because, arguably Queenslink provides better transit and park space equity then Queensway. As I mentioned earlier, I am a student at the High School of Art and Design, I major in architecture, and I can very easily see that there is almost no room for future transit without having to completely demolish the park, and then rebuild it. If my point of view is not convincing enough, my biggest inspiration for being an architect is my father, who is a landscape architect, an architect who designs parks, with over 30 years in his field. He thinks that Queenslink is better than Queensway, and will tell you that there is no room left for any future transit. If you build a park, transit will become the common persons after thought. If you are to act on anything, it

would be to stop the Queensway from being built, the land that it sits on is irreplaceable, and should be used for what it was built for. Not to mention, without good transit, how are people supposed to get to this multi million dollar park? As we have seen in Atlanta with their belt line project, it makes more sense budget wise, and time wise to build a park around a train, than a train shoved into a park. Our mayor also says that these “provisions” for future transit "won't preclude any future rail”, but we have seen, time and time again, that it is not true. These leaders talk about transit in the future with these provisions, but why can’t we have this transit now, when it matters the most?

Of course de-funding a multi million dollar project is not a small thing. So I would like to float the idea of a third option for improved transportation and greenspace in Queens. I will start off by saying that while I am a studying architect, I don’t know everything. But from what I have seen is that we have no proof that transit will ever return to the Rockaway Breach Branch if the Queensway Metropolitan Hub gets built. What I would recommend is to build the southern part of Queenslink between Jamaica Av, and Liberty Avenue where it would connect into the active Rockaway Beach Branch. This is about ⅓ of the line, but yet it has ¾ stations along Queenslink. Most of this section is at grade, with around ½ a mile being elevated. While building a subway line takes a lot of time and planning, this small section could be done relatively cheaply, if constructed properly. I would say based on estimates from the Queenslink study that the line would be ~300-500 Million Dollars. A small cost breakdown would see prices of stations be around 50 Million, which would be $150 million, As well as reconstruction of the small section of elevated which would be ~$75 Million, and the rest of the at grade line, including tracks and other infrastructure would be somewhere in the previously mentioned price range. This would be the best option, as advocates for both sides would be satisfied because it will provide much needed transit that can be expanded in the future and add green space. This would be a sign to the residents of Queens that better transit is coming in the future. While providing the beneficial Political momentum, and getting a start on a expanded transit future for Queens.

Dear Councilmembers,

I’m writing today to express my deep concern about the future of the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch and why I strongly urge you to support QueensLink.

Firstly, it seems rather clear to me that "a train line and parks" is a far better option than "parks" (which is what the currently funded Queensway proposes). The Rockaway Beach Branch is one of the few places in the city that it will be relatively cheap to build additional trains. QueensLink would serve many transit deserts in Queens, a borough that has been lacking in subway service for decades despite it being the biggest borough in the city. Its overcrowded buses are already at capacity, and your plan to make city buses free (which I disagree with in favor of the subway projects laid out in The Transit Costs Project's report A Better Billion, although that's another letter for another time) would only increase their ridership. QueensLink would provide much-needed relief to these bus lines and add transportation options to locations in Queens that need them.

Secondly, QueensLink would provide faster commuter times than currently exist in many parts of Queens and significantly decongest Queens' most crowded subway line. If, as QueensLink proposes, the M train were rerouted from the Queens Boulevard Line (QBL) after Woodhaven Boulevard station or 63rd Drive-Rego Park Station to the Rockaway Beach Branch, and thence to Rockaway Park via A train trackage, it would provide faster commute times to Midtown for people living in the Rockaways, not to mention every other area of QueensLink, both those served by trains and not. In addition, it would provide additional train capacity on QBL. The current Forest Hills terminus has fumigation capacity for 20 trains per hour (tph). However, ignoring the terminus, QBL Local has capacity for 30 tph. Building QueensLink would divert 9 tph (the current tph of M trains) away from the Forest Hills terminus, allowing the G train to be re-extended to Forest Hills. This would allow 29 to 30 tph to run on QBL Local, while not cutting current local service to 67th Avenue. Extending the G train to Forest Hills would not be a problem for Manhattan-bound QBL Local riders, who generally will transfer onto an express train at their earliest convenience, and will greatly help QBL Local riders heading to downtown Brooklyn or Williamsburg. Building QueensLink would also likely facilitate the conversion of Woodhaven Boulevard into an express station, something for which provisions were already created when the IND originally built QBL. This provides more locations for local QBL riders to transfer onto express QBL trains, which is helpful to reduce crowding at Queens Plaza and Jackson Heights, the latter of which is already extremely overcrowded due to narrow platforms, transferring local riders, and transferring 7 train riders. With 30 tph on QBL Local in conjunction with the already existing 30 tph on QBL Express, QueensLink also helps relieve overcrowding and capacity issues on QBL without even addressing the Forest Hills terminus (once again, the fixing of which is a separate project the MTA should also consider).

Thirdly, QueensLink provides another method of radial transportation, like the G train and the IBX. Riders in neighborhoods like Forest Hills would much more easily be able to reach neighborhoods such as Woodhaven, Howard Beach, and the Rockaways, and would provide another option to JFK Airport. QueensLink would also provide significant opportunities to

develop much of outer Queens. With some well-placed transit-oriented development, QueensLink can pay its roughly $1.7 billion price tag (or even the $3.3 billion tag proposed using the Second Avenue Subway's model of soft and contingency funding) back fairly quickly. To quote the iconic movie *Field Of Dreams:* “If you build it, they will come.” It has been proven time and time again that building rail lines spurs development, which spurs economic growth.

If QueensWay is built, QueensLink will never be built. The current administration claims that building Queensway does not preclude future rail expansion in this area, but this is false. NIMBYs have dragged down the construction of both the Atlanta Beltline and the Maryland Purple Line due to its presence on or next to parks. People will complain if a park is torn down for rail reactivation. They will not complain if a disused rail line is torn down for rail reactivation. Even if NIMBYs were not an issue, it seems needlessly complex to build a park, then tear down part of the park to build a rail line, when a rail line and park could be built alongside one another in the first place.

QueensLink would achieve more frequency, connections, and faster commute times in an underserved area of Queens, it would greatly improve capacity on the Queens Boulevard Line, the most crowded line in New York City, and allow for immense economic growth in much of deep Queens. I urge you to hear this information and fund QueensLink instead of QueensWay in NYC's budget plans. Thank you for your time.

Subject: Urgent Call to Prioritize Funding to Expand School Capacity in Long Island City

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident and parent to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

LIC has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, Kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, and yet most area schools are already operating over capacity: P.S. 112 at **130%**, and P.S./I.S. 78 at **111%**. What is more, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City — Court Square — still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message to families is clear: you may not be guaranteed a school seat in your neighborhood.

I would also like to express urgent concern about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed school project. In a neighborhood where families are struggling today to secure local school placements, this project, along with other promised school construction projects in LIC, cannot continue to fall behind competing priorities. While I appreciate the creation of an incubation site for Q508 (Q439Q), a temporary solution cannot become a justification for continued delays to the permanent facility. Families were promised a permanent neighborhood school, with the full facilities and long-term stability that a dedicated school building provides. An incubation site may help relieve short-term pressure, but it does not address the broader and growing need for permanent school infrastructure in LIC.

Additionally, the current lease for the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE, Q580) is set to expire in just three years. Families have been assured that the school would be relocated so that it can continue serving students without disruption. We are appreciative that the budget includes funding for BSGE. However, we want to emphasize that it is critical that the City follow through on this commitment and move urgently to secure a permanent home for the school. Allowing delays to continue would create significant uncertainty for students and families and risks the loss of an important educational institution in a neighborhood already facing a severe shortage of school seats. The City must prioritize funding and planning for BSGE's relocation now to ensure continuity and stability for the community.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has also recognized the need for additional schools to support the neighborhood's rapid growth. Specifically, commitments were made to advance development of a school at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard. Creation of two additional schools has also been promised to create 1,300 more seats in conjunction with the planned construction of over 14,000 residential units. As more housing is developed through OneLIC, school construction must move in parallel — not years behind residential growth. Without firm

commitments and accountability around these promised schools, the existing seat crisis will only intensify.

Delays to the opening of these schools are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and more families pushed out of the neighborhood because they cannot rely on access to local public schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency, accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508 and other promised schools on schedule. Schools aren't just a service—they're the foundation of a stable, thriving neighborhood.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future. Please ensure that timely funding is delivered to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority for the completion of these projects.

Sincerely,

Ruth Katz
Long Island City, 11101
Parent

Hello. My name is Ryan Kuang and I am a Teen Techie intern for the Brooklyn Public Library. The Brooklyn Public library has been around my whole life, giving me a quiet place to study and to check out interesting books to my pleasure. I'm sure it serves as a safe educational space for all students or even adults in Brooklyn. I decided to volunteer for the BPL because the library has given me so much as I've grown up, and I wish to give back just a fraction of that. I first started volunteering at the annex in brooklyn heights. It was a training session to help us get ready for our work that we would do in the future at our branches and build teamwork skills. The library means so much to so many people so I ask you to continue to support this valued resource.

From: Sadie Walker
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please Reinstate Manhattan Youth at my Middle School, Wagner MS 167 (For 5/28 10am Mayoral Exec Budget Meeting)
Date: Wednesday, May 27, 2026 9:46:19 PM



To whom it may concern,

I am a seventh grader at Wagner Middle School and I'm writing to protest the defunding of Wagner's afterschool program with Manhattan Youth. Manhattan Youth means so much to me and everyone else in the middle schools they work with and I can't believe the DYCD and the city would even think about taking it away especially without taking our opinion into consideration. We are the ones who take this afterschool, shouldn't we be a major part in the decision?

Manhattan Youth is the reason I am always excited to come to school. I come to this afterschool from 2:40 to 5:45 almost every day. The Manhattan Youth staff were what kept me going all the time. In the musical, they gave me confidence and helped me make more friends, and be a better friend myself. In fact, a majority of my friends are from the musical! Next year is my last year at Wagner. I finally gained enough confidence to try out for a big role, maybe even a lead! But, no, the DYCD and the city had to go and take this afterschool opportunity away since Manhattan Youth runs the musical. This is so messed up. The MY afterschool staff know me, the real me, not the one trying to fit in with everyone else in middle school, not the one trying to impress teachers. The real me. I have enjoyed every single one of the afterschool clubs and they have meant so so much to me, more than anyone could ever understand. I am always excited knowing I have Chorus and Newsletter on Mondays, the Musical and Paint and Chip on Wednesdays, the Musical and Myths and Legends on Thursdays, and Filmmaking on Friday.

Manhattan Youth made middle school some of the best years in my life, which I know is unusual for middle school. This is exactly why the city and DYCD need to keep Manhattan Youth at Wagner. We have the largest middle school in Manhattan and Manhattan Youth can reach so many more people who need this program now more than ever in these years. Manhattan Youth is what makes Wagner such an inviting, exciting and vibrant community. Middle school is a really, really hard time for many kids and a large reason I have benefited, learned from it and had it be awesome is because of Manhattan Youth. We have had Manhattan Youth at Wagner for eight years, and those eight years have made such a big difference in our community. I also know in every middle school MY has been in they have benefited the community. I have read many comments from people

in other middle schools, and we all want Manhattan Youth to stay. The staff in Manhattan Youth know everyone and always bring a smile to people‘s faces when they see them walk by in the hallway. Marylyne, Grae, Zaia, Lyric, T’ahna, Towanna, Angel, Josh, J.P, Dylan, Lexa, Lauren and many many more are always so nice to us and share so many important memories with us. We can’t lose that. The DYCD and city can’t take this away from us.

When we heard this news, I looked around and all I could see was everyone crying, full on bawling, me included. Manhattan Youth means so much to us and I don’t know what the school could ever do without it. If anyone would see even one of our performances, a musical or film festival or arts and crafts festival, they would understand how much this really means to all of us, every single one in the school. I’ve been to many many different after schools, but no one has made me feel as welcome as Manhattan Youth has. So, please, stop this insanity and the full on tears because we will not rest until Manhattan Youth is back at Wagner and all of the other middle schools.

Thank you for your time,

Sadie Walker

Thank you for taking the time to review my testimony for the June 10, 2026, Finance Cmte. Hearing regarding the FY 2027 Speaker's Initiative Budget.

I'm submitting my testimony to ask the City Council to please include $1.5 million for affordable spay/neuter and low-cost veterinary care, along with $2 million for pet food pantries in the FY 2027 Speaker's Initiative Budget.

This funding will allow for some highly necessary resources for pet guardians (owners) like myself. I have 2 cats – a brother and sister. Their names are Frank and Cleo, both rescued from the streets of a Manhattan neighborhood by a local resident. I came to adopt Frank & Cleo in May 2025 after my senior cat Brownee passed away in February of 2025, and the former veterinarian for my Brownee contacted me about 2 cats that needed a home. After meeting Frank and his sister, I fell in love with them and I felt bad that they did not have a home, so I agreed to adopt them. Some things regarding their care aren't too costly and I manage overall, but their general health care like annual check-ups and annual vaccines are costly. Right now, I'm researching pet insurance for them and have come to learn how expensive it is, and it's a lot more expensive than insuring one cat. Most companies want $100/month to insure Frank and about the same for Cleo. To keep premiums as low as possible, I noticed that I have to select a $1,000 deductible for each cat.

Funding for low-cost veterinary services will not help with insurance but it would allow me to afford some of the basic parts of their care at a lower cost i.e. annual vaccinations. Last September the annual vaccinations for Frank & Cleo cost me over $300 dollars.

Also, I am TNR certified, and sometimes I rescue homeless or neglected cats in my neighborhood. I have a good income but paying for some of the vetting that rescued cats require can be costly too. Recently, I rescued 3 kittens from Carniceria Y Fruiteria, a local grocery store near my home. Their store cat had babies, and the store owner was giving away her kittens. I took all 3 kittens to help find them a home; I've paid for all their vetting from vaccines to getting them de-wormed and microchipped. Also, the additional cost to my shopping bill has not been easy either. Fortunately, their spay surgery cost $60 for all 3 kittens due to some extra funding allocated to Flatbush Vet, which is where the surgery was done. Flatbush Vet lowered their spay/neuter fee for about 2 or 3 months after receiving additional funding from Council Member Lynn Schulman.

As for the $2 million dollars for pet food pantries, I would appreciate the creation of pet food pantries in all 5 boroughs and funding it will provide for a lot of people who could use it. I follow Animal Care Centers on social media, and I see some of the dogs who end up in the shelter. Some of them are thin and it's heartbreaking. If there's any possibility to make pet food pantries accessible to pet owners, I am asking that the City Council make it happen. Animals should not have to suffer because their families face hard times, and pet food pantries could make the difference that pantries for humans have done for decades.

Please give the funding of $1.5 million for spay/neuter and low-cost veterinary care, and $2 million needed for pet food pantries.

Respectfully,

Sakinah S. Abdus-samad

[redacted]

Brooklyn, New York 11204

[redacted]

My name is Sally Stein, taxpaying resident of Inwood in northern Manhattan. Poised to turn 77 this summer. I was born in NYC in 1949, have a mess of degrees (if you like, call me Dr. Stein), taught university in southern California; but widowed and retired and no longer driving (which made continued living in so cal more difficult), I moved back to NYC where I was born, went to college, lived & worked as a young adult and enjoyed the many benefits of so many NY cultural institutions & its mass transit.

I don't have relatives or friends who have been incarcerated. But this affects me not only as a taxpayer but also as a member of the diverse New York City community that I want to see thrive during the rest of my life and well beyond.

I expect New York's City Council to not fritter our precious tax dollars, and it seems pretty clear to me that Rikers wastes, even dooms, the potential of many who have made mistakes (and who hasn't made mistakes; but those who most often pay the price are the most vulnerable). By the same expenditure, it also limits the rest of our city potential by failing to reallocate the huge sums poured on a dungeon-like corrections system with, alternatively, spending **more and better** on rehabilitation programs (IMT, ACT, FACT)as well as increased sums for local education from pre-K to college and beyond for adults whom the system failed the first time round, libraries which have just been hit with cutbacks when they serve so many in diverse ways, and retraining the police force (with psychologists) to serve more sensitively our communities in greatest need.

Cont. >

Currently the half million spent to incarcerate each of those awaiting trial is in my opinion an obscene expenditure on the "incarceration industrial" complex. I hope all Council members have taken the time to watch a fairly short Netflix series by Ava DuVernay on the Centrral Park Five : "When They See Us" (1919). I, sheltered from the abuses of a too often rigged legal system, learned lots from it, and not just how it incarcerates the falsely accused. Maybe because she's a woman, DuVernay focuses not only on the five men directly affected but also their families. Thus I realized than when one person is locked up, an entire family is also mentally, psychologically and economically impaired by this vicious system. To treat crime more humanely (as is done in most other advanced industrial nations) will not only lead to better outcomes for those accused but also for entire communities affected by too often brutal incarceration.

One last point since I don't forget the army of corrections officers currently employed at Rikers: the money saved should also be used to offer retraining to many corrections officers for more humane, psychologically rewarding, careers in a variety of fields starting with helping care for staff & clients in new, small-scale community health facilities.

Thank You

As a teacher at Robert F. Wagner Middle School, I have had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the extraordinary impact Manhattan Youth has had on our school community. Wagner is a special place—a school built on inclusion, creativity, opportunity, and connection—and Manhattan Youth has become an integral part of that foundation.

What sets Manhattan Youth apart is its unwavering commitment to students. Their staff members know our children, listen to them, respect them, and continuously adapt their programming to meet their interests and needs. They provide opportunities for every student to find a place where they belong, whether through athletics, arts, academic enrichment, leadership opportunities, or clubs. Their programming is thoughtful, inclusive, and designed to ensure that every child feels seen, valued, and supported.

As one of Wagner's theater teacher, I have experienced the depth of this partnership in remarkable ways. Manhattan Youth has consistently gone above and beyond to support our theater program and the students who participate in it. They have provided costumes, microphones, sets, staffing support, and countless resources that have allowed our productions to thrive. More importantly, they have helped create transformative experiences for students—building confidence, fostering creativity, and giving young people opportunities to discover talents and passions they may never have realized they possessed.

The relationship between Wagner and Manhattan Youth is far more than a contractual arrangement. It is a true partnership that has been carefully built over years through trust, collaboration, and a shared commitment to serving children. Their staff members have become part of the fabric of our community, forming meaningful relationships with students, families, and faculty alike.

The loss of Manhattan Youth would be deeply felt throughout our school. It would mean losing not only exceptional programming but also dedicated individuals who have invested themselves in the success and well-being of our students. Wagner is fortunate to have Manhattan Youth as a partner, and our community is stronger because of their presence.

I respectfully urge decision-makers to reconsider this change and reinstate Manhattan Youth's contract with Robert F. Wagner Middle School. The positive impact they have made on our students, our programs, and our school culture is immeasurable. It is difficult to imagine Wagner without them, and I firmly believe that maintaining this partnership is in the best interest of our students and our community.

Members of the City Council,

Students who are not reading proficiently by third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school. **That's why I urge you to baseline $200 million in the city budget to keep, grow, sustain, and improve NYC Reads and NYC Solves**.

My name is Kate Gutwillig, a NYC educator who has seen NYC Reads and NYC Solves drive historic gains in reading and math. But continued progress isn't guaranteed without sustained investment. **As these initiatives expand to more grade levels, funding for professional learning and implementation has not been permanently baselined**. This means schools are relying on philanthropy and year-to-year allocations to continue what are now core, popular, and evidence-based programs.

To understand the importance of these initiatives, I'd point to a fifth-grade student of mine, who was reading at a second-grade level. Through NYC Reads, they had a breakthrough during a lesson on Greek mythology. For the first time, he was excited to read aloud and share his writing. It was a transformation that built his confidence and made reading feel like an adventure rather than a challenge.

Moments like these reinforce my belief that NYC Reads, when executed well, could truly change lives. But the phrase "executed well" is the key. I've seen the support I receive through professional learning improve over time, but the last thing we need is seeing that support dissipate just as we're starting to get a handle on it. Professional learning, high-quality curriculum, strong family engagement, and all of the other ingredients that go into student success require stable, ongoing, and permanent funding.

We need this City Council to ensure that educators, students, and families have the resources necessary to continue building on the progress we are seeing today, and that successful, permanent programs are not competing year after year for survival.

Thank you.

Testimony

Samy Feliz
samy@justicecommittee.org
New York City Council Committee on Finance
June 10, 2026

My name is Samy Feliz. I am representing the Justice Committee, a grassroots organization committed to ending police violence and systemic racism in New York City.

I was born and raised in the Bronx and Washington Heights. To me, public safety is very personal.

My brother, Allan Feliz, was killed by NYPD Lt. Jonathan Rivera and Officers Michelle Almanzar and Edward Barrett in 2019. Lt. Rivera has since been promoted, despite a documented record of 40 misconduct allegations and multiple shootings. Since 2020, he has received over $1 million in salary (not including benefits), and cost taxpayers *at least $115,000* in settlements so far, with several lawsuits still pending. Lt. Rivera continues to patrol the streets, despite the fact that the CCRB and NYPD Deputy Commissioner of Trials have recommended he be fired. This is an egregious misuse of city money and it is not keeping New Yorkers safe.

But this is not an aberration – this is how the NYPD operates. Consider NYPD Officer Wayne Isaacs, who killed unarmed father Delrawn Small in 2016. He has received *no* discipline in the near decade since he killed Delrawn, despite being indicted by the New York State Attorney General and having fireable charges substantiated by the CCRB nearly six years ago. The NYPD has intentionally delayed the CCRB's prosecution of Isaacs, allowing him to collect well over $1 million in salary and, more egregiously, continue working long enough to secure his pension.

The pattern is clear: the NYPD systemically shields officers who harm New Yorkers while rewarding them with promotions, raises, and job security. Meanwhile, misconduct complaints remain at decade-high levels, with misconduct complaints in 2025 nearly as high as they were in 2024, and use of force complaints even higher. Last year alone, NYC paid out over $117 million in police misconduct settlements. Why are we continuing to pour so much money into the NYPD when there is no accountability for officers who hurt New Yorkers? This is not the cost of public safety – it's the cost of impunity.

New Yorkers voted for change with the new Mayoral administration, but so far, Mayor Mamdani has maintained the status quo and allowed the NYPD to create chaos and violence at the expense of New Yorkers. Mayor Mamdani's executive budget invests about $12 billion dollars in the NYPD and, despite promises not to, increases the officer headcount by 580. Overtime is set to cost the City nearly a billion dollars, double its allocated budget for this year – and because overtime pads officers' pensions, New Yorkers will continue paying for this overtime for years to come. Meanwhile, low-level arrests and summons, under the guise of 'quality of life' enforcement, are surging. Court cases for people sleeping or taking multiple seats on the

subway went up 3000% from 2024 to 2025, and they're on track to even exceed that in 2026 – all while the department shows no accountability for the harm it causes.

The city cannot arrest its way to safety. Instead of continuing to flood city resources into policing and criminalization, we are calling on the City Council to pass a budget that cuts Mamdani's proposed 580 new officers, implements a hiring freeze for school police, eliminates funding for vacant school police positions, further reduces the NYPD's bloated budget, and eliminates funding increases to B-HEARD so that resources can be channeled into services that actually increase safety and well-being for New Yorkers who need care. Some of these services include:

1. **At least $66.3M, baselined, for Intensive Mobile Treatment (IMT) teams** – $22M more than the Executive Budget allocates, which should allow the program to expand sufficiently to eliminate the current waitlist.[1]
2. **At least $23.8M, baselined, for Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)** – $4.5M more than the Executive Budget allocates.[2]
3. **At least $6M, baselined, for Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT)** – $2M more than the Executive Budget allocates), which provide both mental health and reentry services to people returning from jail and prison.[3]
4. **At least $8.8M, baselined, for crisis respite centers** – $6M more than the Executive Budget allocates, which should enable the opening of four new centers, in compliance with Local Law 118-2023.[4]
5. **$20.3M**[5] to establish at least 150 units of low-barrier housing for people with court-involvement and mental health diagnoses.[6]
6. **At least $12M, baselined, for Restorative Justice that is funded by City dollars**. $6M of this funding was baselined in the FY26 budget. The remaining $6M expires in June. NYC Public Schools must be safe, welcoming spaces where young people can grow, learn, resolve conflict and navigate challenges.[7]

You cannot have public safety without accountability, and you cannot have real safety without addressing the root causes of crises. The choice before this Council is clear: continue funneling billions into a system that protects officers who kill and criminalizes survival, or invest in the services that truly keep New Yorkers well and safe.

Thank you for your consideration.

---

[1]Per DOHMH testimony, the waitlist was 575 people as of February 27, 2026. Each new IMT team can serve 27 people.
[2]The combined waitlist for all ACT teams, including FACT, was 312 people as of February 27, 2026, per DOHMH testimony. The City should also work with the state to eliminate the waitlist for all ACT teams.
[3]For FACT teams, the City adds approximately $675,000 per ACT team to supplement state funding by adding reentry specialists.
[4] The FY2026 budget for crisis respite centers was $5.3M, but only $2.8M in the FY2027 Preliminary Budget, as reported by DOHMH.
[5] Approximately $135,000 per unit, based on similar Safe Haven models.
[6] Budget demands 1-5 obtained from Freedom Agenda, with permission to uplift and share.
[7] Via the Police-Free Schools Coalition and Make the Road NY.

June 11th 2026,

Good day, Members of the NYC Council,

My name is Sandra Celestin, an Advocacy Ambassador for NAMI-NYC. I share my story to highlight the importance of financing Mental Health, as my mother struggles with mental illness for decades, and I face my own Mental and Physical Health challenges starting in 2015.

The FY 2027 Executive Budget for New York City includes vital funding for Mental Health services, proposing $47.3 million annually to sustain critical programs impacted by expiring federal funds. The budget emphasizes community-based care, allocating $10 million for new Mental Health "clubhouses" and supporting Youth Safe Spaces. It links mental health to public safety initiatives by enhancing outreach to unhoused individuals. Additional investments focus on combating the overdose epidemic and strengthening the frontline workforce. Key funding highlights include $16.7 million for survivors and targeted support for seniors, underscoring a shift towards preventive care and equality in Mental Health access.

NAMI NYC is advocating for the FY27 budget to focus on expanded community-based mental health care, increased funding for supportive housing, and a full cost-of-living adjustment for human services workers. Key priorities include funding for city-contracted workers, preserving supportive housing, promoting voluntary mental health programs, and enhancing the Peer Behavioral Workforce. NAMI-NYS has secured a 4% increase for behavioral health workers, expansion of Teen Mental Health First Aid training, and funding for Daniel's Law pilot sites at the state level.

Thank you for your time and attention to Mental Healthcare, as well as noting the concerns addressed.

Best Regards,

Sandra A. Celestin

[redacted]

New York City, New York 10030

[redacted]

I am writing as the parent of a Wagner student whose family has benefited enormously from the after-school program. It has provided a safe, enriching environment for my child—and real peace of mind for our family—knowing he was engaged in a diverse range of offerings spanning academic enrichment, sports, and the arts.

Equally important, if not more so, the staff, instructors, and program leaders are trusted adults and integral members of our school community. Over many years, they have built lasting relationships with students, families, and school staff alike.

Sweeping changes to such a successful and well-established program would damage the school community trust and destabilize the support systems that students and families rely on every day. I respectfully urge you to consider the real impact these changes would have on the children and families this program serves.

Thank you for the opportunity to advocate for reinstating Manhattan Youth's partnerships with our public schools. I am grateful for your time and consideration.

Respectfully
Sandra M Barral Rodriguez

June 10th , 2026

At the exact moment when federal housing policy is being gutted — when Trump-aligned forces and HUD are systematically shrinking, restricting, and destabilizing Section 8 — New York City should be fighting to protect public housing and the people who depend on it.

Instead, this administration is diverting Section 8 funding into the Mayor's budget machinery while NYCHA developments continue to crumble around tenants. That is unacceptable.

For decades, Section 8 was presented as a lifeline. But now HUD restrictions, funding limitations, administrative barriers, and privatization schemes are erasing longtime residents from the very protections they relied on. Families are losing stability. Seniors are terrified. Working-class New Yorkers are being pushed into permanent insecurity.

And now Mayor Mamdani appears prepared to help facilitate this federal retreat instead of resisting it.NYC should not become the local enforcement arm of federal housing abandonment.

And adding insult to injury, Budget Code 806 in the Capital Commitment Plan — Executive Budget Fiscal Year 2027, Volume 2, page 430 — appropriates an astronomical amount of money toward the Section 8 conversion machinery for public housing.

An outrageous $1.5 billion of public money is being positioned to move NYCHA buildings into private developers' hands — our tax dollars handed over so private entities can take public housing and transform it into privatized assets. That is not preservation.
That is engineered transfer of public wealth and public housing into private control.

We are demanding something very simple:Fund Section 9.

Direct the Section 8 funding currently sitting in the HPD budget back into NYCHA for desperately needed Section 9 repairs.

Invest in comprehensive modernization of public housing — not privatization, not demolition-by-neglect, and not displacement disguised as "redevelopment."

The residents of Fulton and Elliott-Chelsea — and NYCHA tenants across this city — are not asking for luxury rezonings, branding campaigns, or public-private real estate experiments.

They are asking for functioning elevators. Safe apartments. Reliable heat. Working plumbing. Dignity.

This hearing matters because tenants across New York are drawing a line in the sand. Public housing is public infrastructure.

And if this city can find billions for stadiums, rezonings, and developer subsidies, it can find the money to preserve homes for the working-class people who built this city and keep it running every single day.

Protect Section 9.
Stop diverting Section 8 funds.
And stop balancing budgets on the backs of NYCHA residents.

Sandy Rayburn
Ft Greene, Brooklyn

Support for Funding for Community Composting

To: The Honorable City Councilmember Justin Sanchez, Chair
From: Sandye Renz
Date: 3/13/26

Chair Sanchez and members of the Committee,

I'm Sandye Renz. I have lived in Gowanus, Brooklyn for over 35 years and I compost.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Thank you to Chair Sanchez and all of the City Council for restoring community composting funding in FY25 and continuing the funding for FY26. I am writing to strongly support **ongoing, stable funding for community composting** through Schedule C Council Initiative funding for Community Composting.

When Mayor Adams cut funding to community programs at DSNY, City Council stepped in FY25 to save decades olds programs that supported community composting, composting education, and outreach through New York nonprofits. The ongoing support from constituents shows how community composting impacts and engages the community.

When community composting was stopped during COVID I began working at The Big Reuse compost site at The Salt Lot in Gowanus. It was heartening and amazing how much community support this composting endeavor received.

Composting is an accessible, easy and cost efficient way to curtail our extensive environmental woes. Nothing should go in a land fill.

Community composting is a proven, community-powered climate solution. It reduces landfill waste, lowers emissions, enriches our city's soil, and strengthens our resilience. Curbside composting needs outreach and education, and community composting provides this. With EPA cuts and climate change denial at the federal level, we know that **acting locally can have a big impact**, and we've seen how the City Council can be part of that change.

This isn't just about compost. It's about environmental justice and climate resilience. It's about green jobs. It's about investing in a better future for all New Yorkers. I urge Council to continue to **fund community composting.** Let's keep growing a cleaner, more resilient New York City—*together.*

Thank you,

Sandye Renz

[redacted]

Brooklyn, NY 11215

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident since 2009 & parent to two young children to urge you to prioritize funding and accountability for the school projects that have been promised to our neighborhood.

Long Island City has been growing rapidly for 20 years, with thousands of new families moving into the community. Yet school infrastructure has not kept pace with that growth. Families continue to face uncertainty about whether their children will be able to attend a public school close to home, and overcrowding remains a reality in EVERY local school.

As a parent, what concerns me most is that schools often seem to arrive years after the housing they are intended to serve. New residential developments continue to move forward, while school projects face delays, shifting timelines, and uncertain funding. This leaves families carrying the burden of planning for an unpredictable future and wondering whether our neighborhood will continue to be a place where children can thrive.

I am grateful that the City has recognized the need for additional schools in Long Island City and has made commitments to new school construction. However, commitments alone are not enough. Families need confidence that these projects will actually be delivered on schedule and that school planning will happen alongside neighborhood growth rather than long after it.

Temporary solutions may help address immediate pressures, but they cannot replace permanent school facilities that provide stability for students, families, and educators. Long Island City needs long-term investment in public school infrastructure, not continued delays.

The recently approved OneLIC plan acknowledges that significant residential growth will require significant educational investment. As thousands of new housing units are built, school construction must remain a priority. Without clear timelines, dedicated funding, and public accountability, the existing shortage of school seats will only become more severe.

Schools are not an optional amenity. They are essential infrastructure and one of the primary reasons families choose to put down roots in a community. When schools are overcrowded or uncertain, families are forced to reconsider whether they can remain in the neighborhood at all.

I respectfully ask that the City fully fund and prioritize the school projects already promised to Long Island City, provide transparency regarding timelines and progress, and ensure that future growth is matched by the educational infrastructure our community needs.

Thank you for your leadership and for your commitment to the future of Long Island City's children and families.

Sincerely,

Sara Benjamin
Long Island City Resident & Families Pastor at Wellspring Church NYC

June 10, 2026

Dear NYC Council,

Before COVID, I was actively involved in a nonprofit cat rescue. Rescues struggled to fund spay/neuters for our intakes while also trying to help cat owners on low-income budgets. It was hard getting low cost spay/neuter appointments then, and it has become just about impossible now. I know rescues are having to drive hours out of Manhattan to secure low-cost appointments.

Since COVID, the number of kittens and cats on our streets have EXPLODED. There is no way rescues can do this alone. Although I am not affiliated with a rescue, I still do what I can to help. I can see how they are all in crisis right now. NYC needs to step up and bring back more low-cost veterinary options for spay/neuter. That is honestly my #1 priority—we have to get the unwanted pet population under control. Pet food pantries are also nice so that people don't put their pets on the street. I feel like people who do that do not have a clear idea of how desperate rescues are. They assume someone will take their pet in and/or provide for them.

I beg you to please give this crisis the attention it deserves.

Sincerely,
Sara Beth Haring
[redacted]
NY, NY 10023

From: New York City Council
To: Testimony
Subject: Wed, Jun 10 2026 @ 9:30 AM - Committee on Finance
Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 6:12:21 PM

Attendee will be: Submitting written testimony
[redacted]
Attendee name (Zoom name): Sara Clark
[redacted]
Hearing: Wed, Jun 10 2026 @ 9:30 AM - Committee on Finance
Subject of testimony: To whom it may concern, I have been involved with rescue work in NYC for the past 23 years. I have worked primarily on my own but also with various rescue groups. It is a heartbreaking job and many of the rescuers I have worked beside have had to pull back or stop helping the animals all together due to going broke. It is nearly impossible to get any help from ASPCA at this point. The availability of free or low cost spay neuter is basically non existent now. New York City meaning ALL the boroughs have a massive problem with homeless cats. In every neighborhood, especially in low income areas there are thousand of cats who suffer every day. I have experienced so much unnecessary suffering in the years I have rescued. The compassionate way forward is to fund programs that will help our city, rescuers and these animals from more suffering. The situations I have seen, nobody wants to see. This is preventable by spay neuter programs and education. Please move forward with funding this bill. It's the right thing to do.. Sincerely Sara Clark
Organization: Self
Organization if "Other":

If a testimony was uploaded, it will be in the attachments.

—-------

Subject: Urgent Call to Prioritize Funding to Expand School Capacity in Long Island City

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident and **parent** to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

My child was born in August 2025, and I am extremely concerned about her ability to get a kindergarten seat in our neighborhood.

LIC has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, Kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, and yet most area schools are already operating over capacity: P.S. 112 at **130%**, and P.S./I.S. 78 at **111%**. What is more, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City — Court Square — still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message to families is clear: you may not be guaranteed a school seat in your neighborhood.

I would also like to express urgent concern about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed school project.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has also recognized the need for additional schools to support the neighborhood's rapid growth. Specifically, commitments were made to advance development of a school at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard. Creation of two additional schools has also been promised to create 1,300 more seats in conjunction with the planned construction of over 14,000 residential units. As more housing is developed through OneLIC, school construction must move in parallel — not years behind residential growth. Without firm commitments and accountability around these promised schools, the existing seat crisis will only intensify.

Delays to the opening of these schools are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and more families pushed out of the neighborhood because they cannot rely on access to local public schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency, accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508 and other promised

schools on schedule. Schools aren't just a service—they're the foundation of a stable, thriving neighborhood.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future. Please ensure that timely funding is delivered to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority for the completion of these projects.

Sincerely,

Sara Nies

11101
parent

Hello,

My name is Sarah Cuk, and I am a resident of New York City and a civil servant at the Department of Records and Information Services, Municipal Archibrd. I am testifying on behalf of the 2027 Fiscal Year library budget, which Mayor Mamdani recently set to be $526 million, only .42% of the overall city budget. I voted for Mamdani, partly based on his campaign promise to offer .5% of the city budget to the public libraries. However, though he raised it 3 million dollars from last year's budget, it is still short of his promise and not in-line with the 3.8% inflation rate. The executive budget is still $97 million short of the campaign promise.

Public libraries are crucial to the health, safety, and happiness of all New Yorkers. Public libraries are the last place New Yorkers can go and not spend any money, other than parks. They offer literature, movies, music, language services, tax help, harm reduction and PPE supplies, AC, Wifi, space for community gatherings, bathrooms, children's services... I could go on. Though the employees of public libraries in NYC do their very best, the libraries need help. They need more accessibility measures, longer hours, better pay and working conditions for employees, better-stocked bathrooms, more programming, etc.. As an information worker, I understand how crucial public libraries are for the dissemination and exploration of information, but as a regular New Yorker, I experience how crucial they are. I urge the City Council to raise the budget for our libraries, which serve the ENTIRE New York City population.

Thank you for your time.

Best,
Sarah Cuk

Sarah Hauser - testimony

Thank you for the opportunity for us to have our voices heard about the dire situation affecting pet parents and people working tirelessly in the animal rescue world.

I have worked with animals in shelter and rescue environments for many years, sharing modalities such as Reiki and TTouch, combined with socialization techniques, specializing in fearful and feral cats. These environments have spanned several boroughs and many neighborhoods. I have worked with animals in larger shelters, with individual rescuers, with fosters and in vet's offices. I also work with people and their rescued pets in their homes.

These experiences have allowed me to see the animal rescue world from many perspectives, and to see how the current situation is impacting so many people and animals.

The pandemic started a chain reaction of crises in animal rescue and animal care – a world already stressed, overworked, underpaid and overwhelmed:

During this time period, spay and neuter was pretty much put on hold, resulting in a huge increase in the population of animals that need help.

During this time, so many people lost their jobs, resulting in more people surrendering their pets, as they could no longer care for them.

Many vet offices have closed, or have been taken over by large corporations whose priorities may not be as well oriented as private practices. The remaining vets not run by these corporations are overworked. Prices of vet care have risen. And the rising prices and less availability of reasonably-priced vet care are impacting shelters, rescuers and pet parents.

The whole system is overwhelmed in every way. So many individual rescuers who I know are working tirelessly, now more than ever, stretched way past their limits, often paying for everything out of their own pockets.

The NYC animal rescue community deserves support and funding to continue the important work that they do.

The NYC government should allocate funding for high-volume, low-cost spay/neuter and affordable veterinary care for anyone in need. We are also requesting allocation of funding for pet pantries.

Help the rescuers to help the animals, and help pet parents to be able to keep their pets. Pets are our family and we want everyone to be able to afford to care for them and keep them in their homes.

Dear Finance Committee,

Please fund $1.5M for spay/neuter and $2M for pet food pantries. I think this is a very important use of city funds that not only helps pets, but helps the families who love them. A bit of support for struggling, pet-loving New Yorkers will help keep families together, including their four-legged and furry members.

Our shelters and rescuers will only become more overwhelmed if families can't keep their pets. This is a chance to stop the problem before it starts, by empowering individuals to care for their animals without having to surrender them to shelters or leave them out on the streets. This prevents suffering for animals and their people.

Pets are important to New Yorkers and we deserve to see our budget prioritize this for all our city's residents, especially those struggling financially. No one should have to choose between feeding their pet or feeding themselves.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Sarah Hymes
Sunnyside, Queens resident
Proud New Yorker

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing because I have heard that the NYC public schools budget cuts funding to the New Visions portal for this fiscal year. Please do not do this. All New York City public schools, not just New Visions affinity schools, have access to the portal, and in speaking to my colleagues both at the elementary and secondary level, they say they value the access and say it helps them better meet students' and families' needs.

One of the most meaningful ways we have used the Portal in the last few years is in support of students and families in temporary housing as part of the Every Child and Family Is Known program, which is a partnership between New York City Public Schools, the Department of Homeless Services and ACS. My school of 655 students has 106 students in temporary housing, 71 of whom are eligible for the program. Advocates document their outreach and interactions in the Portal and track students' attendance and academic performance there. As a result of the careful outreach, tracking and advocacy of their Caring Adults the majority of these students have made academic and attendance gains, been promoted and/or graduated, found work and housing and are thriving. What is even more impressive is that their parents also report doing better and appreciating the careful way our Caring Adults are reaching out and logging their needs and wins. The Portal has been a crucial tool in this successful partnership!

Another way we use the Portal is to drive student achievement for all students by creating student groups and tracking students' progress in these areas. For example, as part of New York City Reads intervention groupings, we have seen 49% of students who took the MAP assessment were in the Growth Categories 4 & 5, which means they made more than one year of reading growth. We also use the portal to group and track students for Regents preparation and participation in tutoring including Saturday Academy. This January, we saw a tremendous increase in Regents passage as a result of this careful tracking.

Additionally, our counselors and support providers use the Portal to plan for students' future needs. We look carefully at aggregate and individual student data to plan the number of sections of each course we will need and to create individualized learning opportunities such as test prep, intervention, internships and work-based learning. We use the student and family-facing reports to explain our programming decisions and help students and families understand the urgency of credit gaps, literacy and math levels, and exams not yet mastered.

Ultimately, I want to be clear that removing NYC public schools' access to the New Visions Portal would be short-sighted. The type of targeted, sustained intervention and tracking, including across city agencies empowered by the tracker is exactly what our educators, students and families need and deserve.

Sincerely,

Sarah Scrogin
Principal 12x271
East Bronx Academy for the Future

Dear New York City Council Members,

My name is Sarah Weiss and I am a resident of Long Island City. I am writing to demand that the commitments made in the OneLIC Neighborhood plan are fulfilled on time.

I am especially concerned that the support for waterfront resilience, ecological considerations, and the budgets to support arts in the neighborhood are all fulfilled as proposed.

LIC already suffers from one of the lowest levels of open and green space per resident in New York City, and multiple public reviews of the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan acknowledge that the neighborhood's parkland and open space are already severely lacking, and will worsen with new residences without intervention, which the city has acknowledged. Despite this, the budget pushes back several commitments to open space:

- Waterfront esplanade and new open space construction, planned for completion in 2031, is not planned for funding until 2031
- Queensbridge Baby Park, planned for completion in 2031, is not planned for funding until 2032 or 2033
- Renewal of Queensbridge Park, planned for design in 2028, is not planned for funding until 2032

It also fails to fund the Parks Department at 1%, and does not baseline funding for the 115 Parks workers whose jobs expire in June or provide the 276 new jobs in Parks needed to support our existing public spaces, or provide adequate funding for GreenThumb and the Urban Park Rangers.

Our current waterfront parks are well loved and used by not just the residents in the neighborhood, but by New Yorkers from around the city as well as tourists and other visitors. Funding new parks only increases the desirability of the neighborhood for residents and visitors alike. The ecological resiliency plans that are part of Hunters Point South Park continue to win awards for the positive climate and aesthetic impacts produced.

Long Island City's schools are already failing to meet the demands of existing families. The lack of inclusion of the promised school construction and improvements in the approved budget means the existing families in Long Island City and all the new residents will be unable to guarantee nearby elementary school seats, and may be forced to leave the neighborhood or send their young children on very long commutes. The budget must include

- Funding to build the 2 promised new elementary schools and 1 middle school as part of OneLIC.

Children have to share the current park space with adult residents which often creates precarious interactions that cause irritation to injury for all involved.

The rezoned area requires significant improvements to provide safe connections through and beyond the neighborhood, allow people the space and infrastructure to spend time with their

neighbors outdoors, and help bridge the divide between Queensbridge residents and other parts of LIC. Despite these real needs, the executive budget fails to include or significantly delays several of the promised improvements:

- Court Square Toilet not included in the budget
- Lighting Study in the IBZ not included in the budget
- Feasibility Study of Public Realm Improvements Under QBB Ramps not included in the budget
- Queens waterfront greenway delayed until 2029 + 2032
- 21st Street Intermodal Hub delayed until 2029 + 2032
- 44th Drive corridor improvements delayed until 2029 + 2032

Solving the need for more affordable housing also needs to be accompanied by increased public transportation utilizing not just the roads but the waterways as well.

As the City moves forward with significant new development in Long Island City, it is critical that these commitments are not delayed, deferred, or reduced. The City Council must ensure that the promised funding to allow the neighborhood to support so many new residents is not pushed off or ignored.

I believe that the public development benefits promised under OneLIC must be fully funded and delivered on an appropriate and timely schedule so that neighborhood infrastructure keeps pace with growth and current residents are not asked to continue bearing the consequences of decades of underinvestment in our neighborhood infrastructure, green spaces, education, and arts support.

We need the City to honor and prioritize its commitment to the previously promised funding by the Mayor’s Office to ensure equitable development. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City’s future.

Sincerely,
Sarah Weiss
Long Island City resident

From: New York City Council
To: Testimony
Subject: Tue, Jun 16 2026 @ 1:00 PM - Committee on Parks and Recreation
Date: Friday, June 12, 2026 8:16:22 AM
Attachments: Hearing-Transcript-1.pdf

Attendee will be: Testifying in-person
[redacted]
Attendee name (Zoom name): Scott B Kearney
[redacted]
Hearing: Tue, Jun 16 2026 @ 1:00 PM - Committee on Parks and Recreation
Subject of testimony: New operator for Salt March Nature Center, Capital Projects, costal restore funds Salt Marsh Nature Center.1.consider, Rfp from a not for profit operatior to match the tier 1 ecological education centers like Ally pond Nature Center's 60,000 user and full week activity calendar. Catered fundraising income to support the non-profit personnel can be associated with the selection of the new operators Non-profit. 2.consider, Ecological project for ecological restoration South avenue U with part of the $11 million funding. Especially since the work can be included with other projects under the property number B57. 3. Lastly, the "drain the swamp" in the 2016 observer remains much as it was. My in 2016, over ten years ago and in 2023 remains the same too. DDC's and DPR's project managers have the solution. Privately, 4 project managers from DDC and DPR decide why DDC's project arn't delayed. A check list can be used by DPR's project manager to request changes from management. Asking Park's admistrators was always going to fail as I testified a decade of wasted playground funding ago. You're welcome to repleate the mistake of your predisesors by asking the Arsenal how to correct Capital Projects and fail another decade with millions of lost new playgrounds. CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you Elba. ELBA SANTIAGO: Thank you. CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you for your work. Thank you to the whole panel. We appreciate it. Okay, next up we have Scott Kearney with the Technical Guild Workers; Dylan House with the Hester Street Collaborative; Jan Lando and Lynn Kennedy with Friends of Astoria Heights Park. Thank you. [Pause] CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Good morning. Do you want to start us off, Scott? SCOTT KEARNEY: Yep. I was just doing a little math here, and I've been with Parks for 30 years, and if you count back the senior people I worked with back 30 years. And you went back a bunch of years, I'm actually directly connected to the WPN [sic] I think. But I've been with Parks for 30 years, and I left my copy of the Daily News and New York Times back here. But we all know what the President has done recently, which we don't like. But my question is how did we get here? What's the difference when I started building parks in 1985 to 1 COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION 75 2 where we are now? The approval process has gone from 3 A, B, C to A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J. Also, now 4 decisions have been decentralized away from the 5 professional staff. Then the professional landscape 6 architects, engineers with whom had this actual and 7 functional knowledge that comes from experience. 8 We're not superseded by new overpaid managers without 9 our experience. Then parks were built by contractors 10 that were knowledgeable about parks. We had more 11 timely, better work for less money. The problems 12 that are shown in the newspapers and the Times didn't 13 happen just now. Giuliani's didn't understand what 14 we did, but much worse, the Bloomberg Administration 15 imposed a private model on public service. What this 16 administration, Commissioner Silver, has inherited 17 can be corrected, and we are your factual resource to 18 do it. 19 By returning the decision making on 20 capital projects to professionals, we can make a 21 promises that capital projects will become more cost22 efficient, and reduce the waste [bell] by 23 anticipating the problems. We recommend reducing 24 outside approvals; return of the seniority system 25 recognized as an invaluable resource; and attracting 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION 76 reliable experience contractors by ensuring they get paid. CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: If you can wrap up, please. SCOTT KEARNEY: Today, Commissioner Silver discussed that his staff has an outreach office. I think that right away that he should use his outreach to go directly to communities and assure them that the problems that are shown in these newspaper articles have been dealt with, and will not repeat again. He also can, with the support of the Mayor's Office, call PDC. I've brought this audit here several times, and spoken with your staff about. Basically, under Bloomberg the advisory capacity move to authority to reject multi-million dollar projects without any formalized procedures. We don't need a tracker to tell us that PDC is doing the job. CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Mr. Kearney for your remarks. Thank you very much, I appreciate it. Mr. House. DYLAN HOUSE: Good morning. Thank you

June 8, 2026

Re: Please fund $1.5M for spay/neuter and $2M for pet food pantries

Hello,
I volunteer at ACC and for PAWS NYC. I see first-hand how desperate families and individuals are when having to surrender a loved pet – because of economic reasons. Please help your fellow NYers in need! Please fund the Spay/Neuter and Pet Food Pantry programs, that are so desperately needed…and have been needed for decades.

Thank you for your attention and empathy,

Scott Goodman
[redacted]
New York, N/Y. 10001

[redacted]

[06/10/2026]

TO: New York City Council — Finance Committee
RE: Support the QueensLink — preserve the Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way for both transit and parks

Dear Chairperson Lee and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is **Scott Qi**. I am writing to oppose the $43M funding for the QueensWay Phase 1, AKA the Metropolitan Hub project in the city budget, and instead advance the QueensLink Project, which would bring both new subway service and new parkland to Queens by reactivating the former Rockaway Beach Branch.

Currently, getting from Southern Queens to Midtown Manhattan is a long commute with inconsistent A train frequencies, while getting to places in Northern Queens like Flushing or Queens Center Mall is a slow bus ride on the Q52 or Q53 bus along Woodhaven Blvd, which is often congested.

Currently, Two competing concepts exist for the deactivated Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way: the park-only QueensWay, and the dual-purpose QueensLink, which combines subway and park uses.

The QueensLink will be the first north-south subway line in Queens, and will create a direct link from Southern Queens and the Rockaways to Midtown without swinging through Brooklyn and Lower Manhattan. It will increase service in Rockaways by 165%. This will mean less time stuck on a slow bus or waiting for an infrequent train, and getting to where they need to go faster for Queens residents, who suffer some of the longest commutes in the nation. At the same time, and I want to emphasize this, QueensLink will include trails and parks space.

A study by the Steer Group found that the QueensLink would remove millions of vehicle trips each year, making streets safer and lowering harmful emissions, while adding up to 33 acres of new parks and trails integrated with the subway design. Over 20 years, the study concluded the project would more than pay for itself by creating jobs, saving New Yorkers time, and reducing healthcare costs tied to air pollution and traffic crashes.

On the other hand, the QueensWay would be built directly on the former railbed, which would virtually eliminate the possibility of ever restoring transit there. The MTA itself recognized in its 2023 20-Year Needs Assessment that a linear park along the corridor would create a challenge for any future transit alternatives. Once a rail right-of-way is converted to other uses, it almost never returns to transit.

Queens needs parks *and* trains. The QueensLink would provide both. I urge the Committee to preserve this irreplaceable right-of-way for future transit and to support the QueensLink.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

Scott Qi

[redacted]

[redacted]

New York City Council
Committee on Finance
New York City Hall
250 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

To whom it may concern:

I urge policymakers to defund the Queensway proposal and instead advance QueensLink as the future of the Rockaway Beach Branch corridor. The Rockaways remain one of New York City's most significant transit deserts, with residents facing long commutes and limited transportation options to the rest of Queens and the city.

Rather than permanently removing the possibility of rail service, we should pursue a "rails and trails" approach that restores transit while also creating new public green space. QueensLink would provide much-needed transportation access, improve connectivity, reduce car dependence, and deliver recreational benefits through a shared corridor design.

The Rockaway Beach Branch is a unique public asset. We should fully explore solutions that address both mobility and open-space needs, rather than choosing one at the expense of the other. For the sake of equitable transportation access and long-term regional planning, QueensLink deserves our support.

Sincerely,

Scott Slater
Arverne by the Sea, Queens, NY

Committee on Finance Testimony
June 10, 2026

I will offer testimony on procurement, specifically as it relates to the NYC Department of Education (District 3 and as a whole); Kamar Samuels; Mariela Graham; and the Special Commissioner of Investigation.

Sean Kreyling

New York City Council
Committee on Finance Hearing Public Comment
Wednesday June 10th, 2026 @9:30am

Subject: Queenslink Public Health Benefits

Queenslink expands access to reliable and frequent public transportation by expanding the M train and should not be a second priority behind a park project lacking a guarantee of future addition of a rail line along the corridor. This could quickly become an irreversible false promise with greater costs to correct in the future, both economically and socially.

As a public health professional, I have studied the importance of bringing green space to communities, particularly in previously abandoned land. I have also studied how increased public transportation improves health. Through Queenslink, we can have both added green space alongside a reliable and frequent subway line serving neighborhoods lacking a rail link while reducing air pollution from previous vehicle trips, improving shade through more trees, and promoting physical activity through the park and subway infrastructure.

Although the Q52 and Q53 currently serve a similar route to the proposed M train expansion, almost every bus rider is familiar with the unreliable arrival times due to traffic and overcrowding. This rail link would redirect overcrowding to a mode of transportation with greater capacity and respond to the modern traffic patterns of the city, growing from the original design of the subway focused on traveling to Manhattan from the outer boroughs. It is a way to unify communities while improving well being through reliable, fast and accessible public transit access alongside expanded green space together.

One of the most important lessons of public health is not only listening to who you serve but also working alongside them. The communities along the corridor have spoken and want to see Queenslink, not a possibility of adding rail to a park later on.

I urge you to consider the voices of those directly living along the corridor who want Queenslink, and I urge you to consider the public health benefits of both reliable public transit alongside green space being built in the same project, guaranteeing a healthier and more accessible city for all.

Sincerely,
Sebastian Cota, MPH

To whom it may concern,

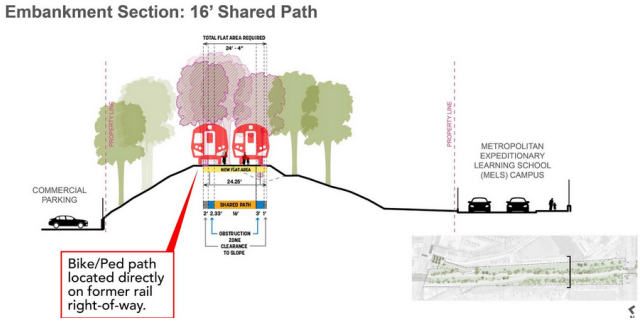
I am writing to express my support for funding QueensLink, the only proposal on the board that offers a dual benefit: the creation of a new park and the utilization of the existing right-of-way rail in this corridor.

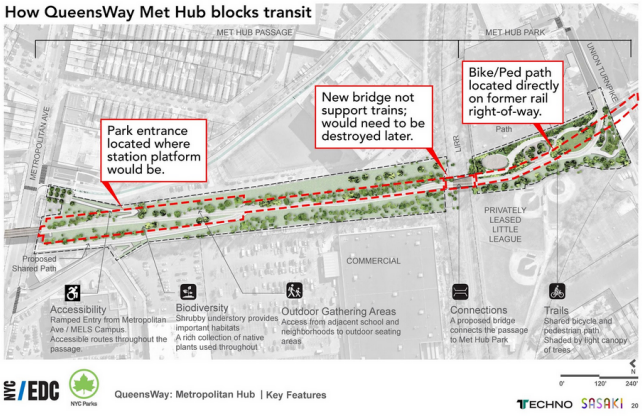
Eastern Queens is a transit-deprived area, and it is imperative that we take proactive steps to make QueensLink a reality. Investing in public transit yields long-term benefits, as it revitalizes local economies, contributes to environmental sustainability, and enhances the overall quality of life by reducing the number of commuters who rely on personal vehicles.

Don't fall for the misconception that the QueensWay proposal guarantees future transit options. In fact, the plan actively obstructs certain sections of the existing right-of-way rail. The entire purpose of this initiative is to utilize existing infrastructure to establish new transit systems. It's a straightforward concept, and investing in this plan would be a waste of city funds if it eliminates transit options.

Please take the future of this city into consideration, as investing in both green spaces & new transit will make eastern Queens thrive! Not to mention pairing QueensLink with the IBX would be perfect, as both would link multiple East/West lines.

Thank you for your consideration,
Seena







Subject: Privatization Creates Instability for Seniors.

I oppose Zohran's proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Aging should recognize that Section 9 public housing is one of New York City's most important aging-in-place programs. Public housing developments are not simply buildings; they are communities where older adults access senior centers, meal programs, social services, resident associations, health and wellness activities, and support networks that allow them to remain independent as they age. Section 9 provides dedicated funding streams and community-based infrastructure that help seniors avoid unnecessary institutionalization, isolation, displacement, and homelessness.

This responsibility is especially urgent given the growing housing crisis facing older adults. Adults aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing demographic experiencing homelessness in the United States and now account for nearly one-fifth of the nation's unhoused population. In New York City, the number of homeless individuals in shelters aged 55 and older increased by approximately 250% between 2004 and 2017, while the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older increased by more than 300% during the same period. Forecasts suggest that, absent meaningful intervention, the homeless population over age 65 could triple again by 2030. These trends are driven largely by the shortage of deeply affordable housing, stagnant fixed incomes, and unexpected health and personal crises.

Yet this budget prioritizes privatization over preservation, sending a message that repairs are available only if developments surrender their public status. Older tenants are often the least able to navigate management transitions, lease changes, recertification requirements, contractor disputes, or legal challenges associated with privatization. They deserve stability, not uncertainty. Older adults who have spent decades building their communities should not be forced to choose between safe housing and public accountability. We urge the Committee on Aging to defend Section 9 as an essential aging-in-place resource and support investments that modernize public housing while preserving the public ownership, tenant protections, affordability, and community services that allow seniors to age with dignity and remain housed.

We further urge the Council to establish a dedicated "Save Section 9" funding stream supported by sustainable revenue sources we've identified at the city, state, and federal levels. Protecting public housing is not only the socially responsible choice—it is the fiscally responsible choice.

Taxpayer investments should produce lasting public value, preserve public ownership, and strengthen one of New York City's most important public assets for generations to come.

Background

Save Section 9 and Community Service Society **independently reviewed** NYCHA's physical needs assessment and concluded that a majority of the increase between the 2017 and 2023 PNA stems from "market conditions and inflation". **NYCHA's actual need is approximately $41.4B from 2023- 2043**. This makes NYCHA's annual need $2.07B. This total need can be addressed by strategic investments by the city, state and congress.

On average New York City allocates 5% of NYCHA's operating budget, approximately $250M. However, the mayor's preliminary budget allocates $662M to privatization via Project Based Section 8. We oppose his investment in privatization (via Project Based Section 8/ PACT) and support of demolition. **We urge the City Council to shift the mayor's preliminary allocation of $2.6B towards Section 9 public housing comprehensive modernization.**

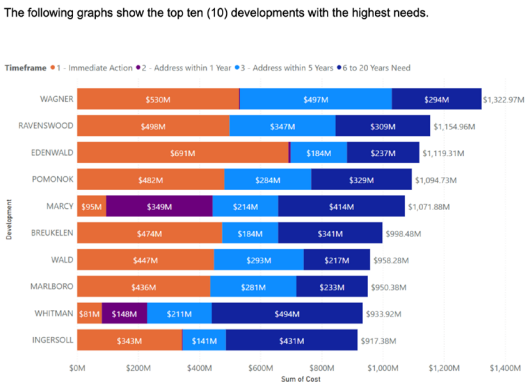


Figure 16 Developments with the Highest Needs by Timeframe

$662M could address the entire fiscal needs of Wagner Houses, the development in the worst shape according to NYCHA's latest physical needs assessment. That's 22 buildings, 2,162 homes for the next 100 years. Wagner has a need of $530M and 128 vacancies, and 16 non dwelling units. It is followed by **Ravenswood Houses** with 31 buildings, 2,166 units and a need of $498M, 65 vacancies, and 4 non dwelling units.

Sustainable Revenue Sources

We urge the adoption of legislative proposals that increase the city and state's revenue. The revenue created by these would fund a budget line item and ensure rehabilitation and expansion of Section 9 is fiscally sustainable.

- In New York City 10% of the Fair Share Act would result in $400M annually for Section 9.
- At the state level 5% of the Repeal of Stock Trade Tax (STT) Rebate Act would secure $3B for Section 9.

- Nationally 5% of the Make Billionaires Pay Their Fair Share Act would create $22B for Section 9.

Solutions

1. **Institute a moratorium on privatization via Project Based Section 8** (RAD/ PACT and the Public Housing Preservation Trust). NYCHA could use this time to assess their performance, recalibrate and refocus on their core responsibility, managing Section 9 in NYC. The moratorium should be reliant on an impact study being conducted by the Government Accountability Office as requested by Congresswoman Maxine Waters in 2023.
2. **Establish a pathway back to Section 9.** RAD/ PACT is fundamentally anti-democratic because it strips tenants, cities, states and Congress of policy flexibility. The lack of a return mechanism erodes public assets, and leads to permanent public-sector shrinkage without future voter consent.
3. **Democratize the privatization process.** Project-Based Section 8 transforms public housing governance without creating equivalent democratic protections for tenants. Tenants experience privatization as something done to them rather than governed with them.
4. **Develop new guidelines for an organizational plan** in tandem with the Federal Monitor. The last plan was fiercely denounced by tenants and adopted in spite of our objections. We recommend this plan be inspired by the operational plans of 1965-1970.
5. **Encourage and support NYCHA's growth.** Ensure that hiring focuses on securing union personnel for roles that improve tenants' quality of life. Each development should have a plumber, a carpenter, and enough building porters to assign two porters to each building. We would make plasterers and painters the second wave of hiring. These roles should provide apprenticeships to tenants and lean on Section 3.

In Solidarity,

Citywide Council of Presidents
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Residents to Preserve Public Housing
Save Section 9

6/10/26 Finance committee public comments on executive budget

---

I'm a graduate from Hostos

They don't pay child care providers and educators more than minimum wage

I will fund programs and services

I'm wanna help women of color and immigrants

Subject: Please Fund $1.5 Million for Spay/Neuter Services and $2 Million for Pet Food Pantries

My name is Shaindel Tomasovitch, and I live in Midwood, Brooklyn. I am an independent rescuer with my group Monty's Misfit Cat Cabaret.

Like many neighborhoods across New York City, Midwood is experiencing a cat crisis. Cats and kittens are being born outside faster than rescuers can help them. Every day, more animals suffer, and every day, ordinary New Yorkers like myself are stepping in to fill a gap that our city has not adequately addressed.

For the past year, my days have looked like this:

I wake up at 5 a.m. to scout cat colony locations. I set traps before work. I transport cats to veterinary appointments. I bring them home to recover. I coordinate fosters and adopters. Then I either release them back outdoors after sterilization or place them into homes.

And then I do it all again the next day.

This is not my job. I am not paid for this work. I barely get work done at my actual job. Yet like countless rescuers throughout New York City, I am effectively performing a public service that benefits the entire community.

In November alone, I had 22 rescue cats in my care at one time—not including my own pets.

Over the last two years, I have personally spent approximately $22,000 on veterinary care for homeless cats. My credit cards are maxed out. I have no savings. As I write this, I have roughly $250 to last me the next two weeks.

I constantly compete for limited low-cost spay/neuter appointments through programs like the ASPCA and Neighborhood Cats. These programs are lifesaving, but demand far exceeds supply. More often than not, I end up paying out of pocket at private veterinary clinics because there are simply not enough affordable options available.

The reality is that rescuers are subsidizing the city's animal welfare infrastructure with our own time, money, vehicles, homes, and emotional labor.

We are on call 24 hours a day. Everyone has our phone numbers. Everyone needs help.

Today, while walking my dog, I found a mother cat with two kittens surviving beside the remains of a pigeon they had been eating. The day before while walking my dog, I found one dead cat in the road, hit by a car—the fifth dead cat I have found in Midwood in two weeks. I wasn't even looking for cats these two occasions. Yet, they find me because they are everywhere.

The solution is not complicated.

We need more access to spay/neuter services and more support for pet owners struggling to afford food and care for their animals.

Funding $1.5 million for spay/neuter programs and $2 million for pet food pantries would be a transformative investment in our communities.

Spay/neuter programs reduce animal suffering, prevent unwanted litters, decrease shelter intake, improve neighborhood quality of life, reduce nuisance complaints, and prevent countless traumatic deaths from vehicle strikes, disease, poisoning, other deadly exposures, and fighting.

Pet food pantries help families keep beloved pets in their homes, preventing owner surrenders and abandonment. They help people through temporary financial hardship before a crisis becomes a shelter intake or another animal on the street.

This is not just an animal welfare issue. It is a public health issue, a quality-of-life issue, and a community investment.

Imagine where New York City could be five years from now if we fully funded prevention instead of constantly reacting to crisis.

I am confident that with adequate resources, I could dramatically reduce the homeless cat population on my block alone. Multiply that impact across hundreds of rescuers and neighborhoods throughout the five boroughs, and the results would be extraordinary.

Please support the allocation of $1.5 million for spay/neuter services and $2 million for pet food pantries.

New Yorkers are already doing the work. We are asking the City to become a true partner in solving this crisis.

Testimony to the New York City Council Committee on Finance for FY '27 Executive Budget Hearing:

June 10, 2026:

Thank you to Chair Lee and committee members for the opportunity to testify about the FY '27 New York City Executive Budget. My name is Shannon Landy and I am an Advocate for Supportive Housing in NYC.

I am calling on our city to prioritize funding and policy changes that improve supportive housing access for domestic violence and sexual assault survivors.

I ask that you allocate an appropriate number of apartments to victims/survivors who are in dire need of a therapeutic community. Because of living arrangements, many victims who seek to save their own lives become homeless, exacerbating their health and mental health. Challenges procuring housing is their biggest barrier in getting the help they need. This city is starving for safe homes for victims to metamorphosize into survivors.

You are looking and listening to me today, but a couple of decades ago, you would have not recognized me nor would you have even listened to me. All I needed was a roof and a team of people to meet me where I was at. The woman upstairs (God) guided me into an apartment where I was safe. I was still using to medicate the emotional turmoil that I was in, but I had a roof over my head.

Community Access provided me with housing first and the toolbox that I needed to stand in front of you here today, becoming the proud woman that I am with a master's degree and an expert in how to help victims. Nobody could beat on me any further. I was a survivor and 20 years later, I am still standing and still surviving because I worked with everyone and everything that a supportive housing setting gave me access to. So now, it's time to pay it forward and be here today to speak up for the voices (and faces) that need your help.

Thank you for your consideration and attention.

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE BUDGET HEARING
JUNE 10, 2026

TESTIMONY BY SHARIKE B.

My name is Sharike B. and I am a member of New Destiny's Survivors Voices Project.

New Destiny is the largest provider of supportive housing for domestic violence survivors in New York State.

I am submitting testimony as a survivor of domestic violence and a New Destiny tenant who has greatly benefitted from their work and other specialized efforts from the city focused on survivors of domestic violence.

In 2017, I escaped my abuser with my son and entered an emergency domestic violence shelter where I lived for 3 months. I was lucky that instead of being subjected to the 180-day shelter-limit stay, I was transferred to a Tier II shelter within the domestic violence shelter system instead of DHS. My son and I lived in this shelter for three years until I was able to find a permanent home. I searched for apartments every single day.

Finally, I was able to move into a New Destiny supportive housing building. In supportive housing, my son and I have been able to rebuild our lives and find stability. I went back to school and graduated, and I now work for the City of New York, helping people access benefits and other social services. My son, who has special needs, has been able to develop in a safe environment, with wrap-around support from social workers and other service staff from New Destiny, including mental health counselors.

While this housing has changed our lives and countless others', there is only so much that New Destiny is able to do with the limited funds that they have. Our building is in need of repairs. We have suffered from severe flooding, which on one occasion led to me losing all my belongings. I am very grateful for New Destiny's help in getting my things replaced, but I know that the building needs investments to renovate and keep all the families who are housed here safe and worry-free.

New Destiny is a member of the Supportive Housing Network of NY, an organization that has invited me on multiple occasions—at their annual conference and lobby day in Albany for instance—to speak about my story and the impact that permanent supportive housing has had for me and my family. The Network has been advocating alongside the Council's Progressive Caucus and Speaker Menin for critical investments through the *Rentals Within Reach* campaign, which would unlock supportive housing and public housing for more than 20,000 New Yorkers.

In this testimony, I join New Destiny and The Network in requesting that in addition to supporting the $65.3 million ask to preserve 325 supportive housing units in the FY27 budget, the Council passes the proposed $13 million flexible expense fund for smaller repairs to help providers speed up the re-rental process.

Building more housing is not the only way to solve the housing crisis. Every supportive housing unit that is preserved and saved is a home that remains available to a New Yorker like me who needs stability, services, and dignity.

With these funds, the building where my son and I have found safety, joy and stability can be repaired to ensure that our family and all other families who have finally found safety, are no longer in a precarious situation. After all the trauma we have endured, we deserve peace of mind to know that our homes will be able to last and not face further deterioration.

I urge the council to invest $78.3 million to preserve 325 supportive housing units and renovate another 1,000 units in FY27.

Good Morning,

My name is Sharon Dagostino, and I am a parent at Wagner Middle School and Vice President of the Wagner PA.

I am here tonight because families at Wagner deserve answers about a process that, from where we stand, did not feel fair, transparent, or grounded in the actual needs of our school community.

For more than eight years, Manhattan Youth has been deeply embedded in Wagner's culture. This is not simply an afterschool provider that rents space in our building. They are mentors, coaches, tutors, music instructors, and trusted adults who understand the unique and diverse needs of our students. They built programming specifically tailored to Wagner's community over nearly a decade.

We were repeatedly told that Manhattan Youth "did not rank very high" in the RFP process. Yet at the same time, we learned that the proposal was bundled together with East Side Middle School and Yorkville East Middle School — and East Side Middle School was ultimately assigned Manhattan Youth, so this is not very consistent with the reasons why.

That raises serious questions.

If the provider was strong enough to remain assigned to one school within the same bundled proposal, then families deserve to understand:

- What criteria were used?
- How were decisions weighted?
- Why was a successful, high-performing, long-standing program removed from Wagner specifically?
- And why were school communities given so little transparency into a process that directly impacts hundreds of children and working families?

Wagner is one of the largest and most diverse middle schools in District 2. Our afterschool program was not generic. It was intentionally built over years to reflect our student body, our electives, our arts programs, our sports culture, and the social-emotional needs of our children.

You cannot simply replace relationships, trust, institutional knowledge, and years of community-building overnight through a closed procurement process and expect there to be no impact.

This is not just about convenience. It is about continuity, safety, mentorship, and equity for students who rely on these programs every single day.

We are asking for transparency. We are asking for accountability. And most importantly, we are asking decision makers to listen to the actual families and students affected before dismantling a program that has served Wagner successfully for nearly a decade.

Thank you.

Members of the City Council,

My name is Sharon Roberts, and I am a D75 New York City educator. **I urge you to baseline $200 million in the city budget to keep, grow, sustain, and improve NYC Reads and NYC Solves**.

I advocated for NYC Reads, and I support high-quality, evidence-based reading instruction. But let me also say that I serve some of the city's most marginalized and disadvantaged students. I know, from first hand experience, that this initiative requires not just sustained professional learning (PL), but improved and fully funded PL.

In District 75, you walk into some classrooms and you'll find educators dying on the inside because they had to spend three hours adapting one lesson, and their student is still throwing a fit on the floor because of struggles to access the learning that is supposed to be happening. We're having to spend hours adapting for children who sometimes have multiple disabilities. Our teachers are having to adapt so much that it's self-defeating, and sometimes that hard work isn't leading to increased student outcomes.

This is no fault of teachers, coaches, or the curriculum. If educators are spending a lot of time adapting or struggling and feeling demoralized by pacing, it's an indication that we're not providing schools with enough support and resources to teach this student population. We need stronger support, especially professional learning, to serve students with IEPs and English Learners (ELs).

And we can't do that without baseline funding from this City Council. It's extremely difficult to improve PL when these initiatives are expanding, but the pool of available funding isn't expanding, or even being guaranteed for the foreseeable future. The City Council must do its part to ensure that educators, students, and families have the resources necessary to make NYC Reads a national model of success in improving reading outcomes. We can't let the promise of this initiative go to waste.

Thank you.

My organization, It's Easy Being Green, is a member of the Forest For All NYC coalition. Our coalition has over 215 members and seeks to equitably protect, maintain, expand and promote the benefits of NYC's urban forest. We are thrilled to see the NYC Urban Forest Plan. Now is the time to fund the plan for the health and safety of citizens and to support and improve biodiversity in our urban environment.

The urban forest matters to Its Easy Being Green because the parks are NYC's lungs. They provide cleaner air much needed in our high greenhouse gas emissions environment(caused by vehicle and building emissions). Another benefit provided by trees is relief from heat brought on by the unaddressed effects of climate change which is predicted to increase in coming years. Maintaining and adding more trees throughout the city will require expanding the workforce that maintains and protects trees. NYC parks is responsible for the care of half the tree canopy in NYC. But their funding is consistently cut. Therefore we ask that the Council and the Administration work together to deliver on Major Mamdani's campaign commitment to double the NYC Parks budget, and ensure full funding for the staff and programs critical to the protection, maintenance and planting in order for the City to reach its 30% tree canopy goal. We ask for a start investment of $150 million to kickstart the implementation of the NYC Urban Forest Plan.

Finally, our streets and parks throughout the City are available to all New Yorkers no matter income level, ethnicity, race, religion etc. Access to the health benefits provided by increasing our tree canopy is a statement about the City's commitment to democracy, the health and welfare of citizens and a verifiable response to combat the negative effects of climate change. Passage of a $150 million commitment to the parks to implement the NYC Urban Forest Plan is an opportunity for the City to prove that they care about its citizens.

Look, I knocked doors for Zohran, and I still believe in what he stands for — but I can't pretend I'm not disappointed. As an Assemblyman he attended public events supporting QueensLink and said that if we want New Yorkers to use transit, it has to be the most convenient option wherever they live. Now his administration has told QueensLink advocates flat-out that it won't change course on funding the QueensWay, with final design advancing by mid-2026 and construction starting by year's end. That's a hard no to the Rockaways, to Ozone Park, to Woodhaven; neighborhoods where a "two-fare zone" commute can eat two hours each way. QueensLink supporters project the reactivated line would serve more than 75,000 daily riders. That's mobility; real, life-changing access to jobs, schools, and the rest of this city; for the most transit-starved corridor in the borough. A park doesn't get a home health aide in Far Rockaway to her shift in Elmhurst.

And let's be honest about what the QueensWay actually is: a $350 million green ribbon that provides nothing in the way of public transit or actual infrastructure; a park built, essentially, on top of a park, since Forest Park already sits right there. We've seen this movie before with the High Line, where a "linear park" became a property-value rocket for adjacent developers while longtime residents got priced out. Who profits when land along a landscaped amenity appreciates? Not the riders stuck on the Q53. Worse, this isn't a both-and: advocates maintain that building even one piece of the park adds another political and logistical obstacle to ever reactivating the line, and the city's own Metropolitan Hub designs sit firmly in areas the train would have to take over. Once the ribbon is cut, no politician rips out a park to lay track. This is our once-in-a-lifetime right-of-way, and we're about to pave it with planters.

Spay-Neuter for Pet Owners

- This funding is needed because other funding sources are underutilized.
- The NYC Comptroller's audit of the Animal Population Control Program, which provides free and low-cost spay-neuter surgeries to NYC pet owners, exposes several such problems.
- https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/review-of-the-citys-animal-population-control-efforts/
- The audit covers the 6-year contract between the NYC Department of Health (DOH) and the ASPCA. Contract value: $3 million total ($500k p.a.). Service requirements: 4000 spay-neuter surgeries p.a., divided equally by borough (800 per borough p.a.).
- The audit criticizes the DOH for lack of oversight and overall indifference in promoting and funding the program.
- The audit criticizes the ASPCA for underperforming contract requirements by 37%.
- This 37% service shortfall translates into 3927 cats and dogs which could have been fixed but were not.
- Councilmembers from Queens, Manhattan and Staten Island should be especially concerned because spay-neuter surgeries in their boroughs do not come close to 800 per year as required by contract.
- 81% of spay-neuter surgeries were for Brooklyn and Bronx pet owners (37% and 44% respectively).
- 10% for Queens pet owners.
- 5% for Staten Island pet owners.
- 4% for Manhattan pet owners.

Thank you for your attention to this.

Sheila Massey
Hard Hat Cats®, a 501(c)(3)
hardhatcats@gmail.com

For me, the library has always been more than just a building that holds books. It is a critical lifeline and the heart of our community.

I value our library because:

- It provides equal access: Everyone is welcome, and all resources—from books to high-speed internet—are free. It levels the playing field for those who cannot afford to buy their own learning materials.
- It serves as a community hub: It is a rare, shared public space where people of all ages and backgrounds gather to connect, learn, and grow.
- It empowers job seekers and students: Libraries offer quiet study areas, resume-building workshops, and crucial digital skills training that help people improve their lives.

Dear Council Members,

I am a lifelong New York City resident writing in support of QueensLink and in opposition to the proposed $14 million budget for QueensWay. QueensLink is the more effective use of the existing rail line and incorporates public parks, whereas the QueensWay project exclusively builds parks and impedes the future development of transit. Supporting the QueensWay has no benefit that QueensLink doesn't deliver and is a decision based on short-term political thinking. Queens is one of the most underserved boroughs in terms of transit, currently suffering from long commute times and heavy traffic. Transit is imperative to make the Queens community more convenient, safer, healthier and equitable. It's prudent that New York City thinks long term and removes the proposed funding for QueensWay.

The benefits of QueensLink vastly outweigh QueensWay; **QueensLink will build parks AND a transit train line**. QueensLink provides transit in addition to the proposed benefits of QueensWay. Southeast Queens is a transit desert, leading to a reliance on cars and buses. The train will reduce the burden of traffic. According to QueensLink, the project would remove approximately 4.7 million car trips from Queens roads and reduce CO_2 emissions by roughly 7,200 tons annually. This will not only save time but also lives. The environmental benefits of adding parks and reducing traffic stack up far more than a park alone. Additionally, the space already has laid rail which makes this a unique opportunity to build transit. Building the QueensLink is a generational investment, and it will more than pay itself off.

Supporting QueensWay is detrimental short-term thinking that will block the future of QueensLink. The projected phase 1 of this build will interfere with QueensLink's development. The claim that QueensWay can be built in parallel is false. According to QueensLink, the NYC Parks Department stated in public scoping meetings that the Met Hub design would not account for future rail reactivation. The claim that both projects can coexist is contradicted by the city's designs as reported by Streetsblog. These two projects compete for the same space. Building QueensLink after QueensWay breaks ground would require demolishing the new park which is an unnecessary cost of $43 million, according to QueensLink's estimate. An applicable example of a transit project failing in a similar fashion is Atlanta's BeltLine whose original vision of both rails and trails stalled permanently once the park was built.

Atlanta's BeltLine is the cautionary tale. It began in 1999 as a combined rails-and-trails vision, but the trail got built first and the rail never followed. In 2025, city and transit officials quietly voted to halt the Eastside light rail; the BeltLine's own founder called it a decision that will "go down in Atlanta history as a significant failure." Once the

park exists and the constituencies and cost estimates harden around it, the train remains forever entangled by budgetary constraints.

The MTA's own study confirmed that reactivation is feasible and that a subway connection would serve roughly 47,000 daily riders. The cost is significant and the MTA is currently apprehensive because they are already stretched thin. This is not going to last forever. The MTA is currently working on increasing their funds and is preparing to complete the 2nd Ave line. Building a park in the way is a permanent block to this project. I'm not proposing we build the QueensLink this year, or even the next; we must think long term. We left those tracks abandoned for decades; there's no rush. I propose not to spend the $14 million making a multi-billion-dollar public asset impossible to ever build.

The key motivator for QueensWay is obviously political and not practical. The supporters of QueensWay aren't even local New Yorkers. The primary driver is Trust for Public Land which is an organization based in San Francisco. Meanwhile, QueensLink is a grassroots organization made up of an all-volunteer team based in Queens. The QueensLink has overwhelming support from the local community. A 2024 constituent survey conducted by State Senator Joseph Addabbo across Central Queens neighborhoods found that **75% of residents favor QueensLink** over QueensWay, with at least 80% support in neighborhoods like Howard Beach, Ozone Park, and South Richmond Hill. Mamdani himself promised to support the QueensLink. There is still time for the Mamdani administration to support QueensLink by blocking the funding for QueensWay.

Despite the immense opportunity to enhance the Queens community, it seems this administration is prioritizing a quicker, more visible win. Supporting QueensWay is at best a marketing stunt and at worst permanently preventing the development of public transportation in a part of the city that desperately needs and wants it. It's a shame that the most transit-friendly American city has a government that is choosing to disregard its own residents to block a transit project. To love this city is to connect this city and to do so we must **say NO to QueensWay.**

Thank you for your time,
Shonel Rahim

Greetings,

I appreciate your time reading this testimony.

I am an assistant principal at Baccalaureate School for Global Education, and I want to encourage the City Council to fund all of the schools slated for funding and new spaces.

I supervise the International Baccalaureate program and Climate, Culture, and Well-Being for our 540 students in grades 7–12. I am consistently amazed at how our students and teachers manage to work within the confines of a building that has no gymnasium, auditorium, or adequately sized classrooms. We have to run four lunch periods a day because of the size of our cafeteria. Students do not have places to showcase their Town Halls and performances, which can only be held in the cafeteria during the four periods when it is not being used for lunch. We deserve a new building so we can transition to a safe, modern, and purpose-built space.

I extend the same concern to other schools that have been promised new locations in our district. All of District 30 deserves the same modern school spaces.

The City Council needs to ensure that all protective factors for students are in place. This means schools are funded, modern, and have adequate space to promote learning and healthy well-being.

I urge you to ensure funding for the promised neighborhood schools.

SIDRA AHMAD

[redacted], Forest Hills, NY 11375 | [redacted] | [redacted]

June 9, 2026

Finance Committee
New York City Council
City Hall Park
New York, NY 10007

Re: Defund QueensWay! Support QueensLink!

To the Finance Committee:

I am writing to request that you defund the QueensWay / Metropolitan Hub project and reallocate its funds to QueensLink, a rail project that will repurpose existing tracks to connect the northern and southern parts of Queens. As a lifelong resident of the world's borough and someone who doesn't know how to drive—let alone have a car—it's extremely frustrating that there are so few public transit options that connect us to other communities. The Rockaway Beach Branch corridor shouldn't be developed without additional transit.

The plans for QueensWay don't allow any room for public transportation so the park would have to be destroyed in order to add trains. This is a waste of resources when we can prioritize transit now.

For more information about QueensLink, please check the website. Thank you kindly for your time and consideration.

Regards,

Sidra Ahmad

Dear Committee Members,

I think you have made the dreadful decision to stop funding Manhattan Youth. I have had many fond memories with this program and the people who work for it, and I plan to continue making them. These people try very hard every day to plan fun activities, create a welcoming space, and grow a relationship with the students around them. You are breaking a bond that has been formed and can't be replaced. What will we do without this support?

Everyday I look forward to having afterschool and I have gained so much from this. I have taken Creative Writing, Basketball Clinic, Run/Walk club, Dungeons and Dragons, Drama Crew, Guitar Club, Pickleball, and so much more. All of these classes have given me beneficial skills, for example I would have never had learned how to play the guitar or play Dungeons and Dragons if there was no Manhattan Youth. These skills I will remember when I am older and think that was because of Manhattan Youth.

I remember in Creative Writing when Grae, our teacher, read our stories and we got to act them out. I remember watching the Drama performance, seeing the backdrop I had painted and feeling a great sense of accomplishment. I remember playing capture the flag with my friends at Run/Walk club.

The thought of replacing these memories with sadness, strikes anger through every bone in my body. And so I refuse to let this program leave. The people who work here are not objects you can move around; they are human beings who have close ties to Wagner and its community .

Sincerely,
Simon (Student at J.H.S. 167 Robert F. Wagner Middle School)

Members of the City Council,

Imagine showing up to work not knowing if funding for your salary, your company, or city was not guaranteed beyond one year. You'd feel uncertain. You'd feel anxious. You'd have a hard time focusing and feel like you need to do something about it.

That's the very predicament our schools are in at the moment, as NYC Reads and NYC Solves – the city's two permanent and popular initiatives to improve reading and math outcomes – are relying on year-to-year funding allocations and temporary philanthropy dollars.

We, the NYC Public Schools community, need this City Council to baseline $200 million in the city budget to keep, grow, sustain, and improve NYC Reads and NYC Solves.

My name is Simone Gordon, and I'm a NYC educator who has seen NYC Reads and NYC Solves drive historic gains in reading and math. But continued progress isn't guaranteed without sustained investment. **As these initiatives expand to more grade levels, funding for professional learning and implementation has not been permanently baselined**. Our classrooms need stability and funding to ensure NYC Reads and NYC Solves are positioned for success through:

- Ongoing professional learning (PL) and coaching for educators, especially PL that equips educators to serve students with IEPs and English Learners (ELs)
- High-quality, culturally responsive curriculum and materials
- Strong family engagement
- District-level implementation support
- Targeted interventions and high-impact tutoring for students who need it most

By baselining $200 million in the city budget, the Council can help ensure that educators, students, and families have the resources necessary to continue building on the progress we are seeing today, and that successful, permanent programs are not competing year after year for survival.

Thank you.

Testimony in Support of QueensLink

Improving north-south transportation access for South Queens residents

Submitted by: Sonny Petro, South Queens resident

Date: June 10, 2026

Re: Support for QueensLink and reactivation of the Rockaway Beach Branch for transit, parks, and safer community access

To the elected officials, transportation agencies, and decision-makers considering the future of the Rockaway Beach Branch:

My name is Sonny Petro, and I am submitting this testimony as a South Queens resident who strongly supports QueensLink. I am asking you to move this project forward because our part of Queens has been left with weak north-south transportation for far too long.

People in South Queens live in one of the largest boroughs in New York City, yet traveling within Queens can feel harder than traveling to Manhattan. Going from South Queens to places like Forest Hills, Rego Park, Jackson Heights, Astoria, Flushing, Queens College, hospitals, jobs, schools, shopping districts, or family obligations often requires a slow bus, multiple transfers, long waits, or backtracking far out of the way. That is not fair, and it is not how a major borough should function.

For many of us, the problem is not just inconvenience. It affects work, school, medical appointments, family care, business opportunities, and quality of life. A trip that should be direct often becomes a stressful two-seat or three-seat ride. Buses get stuck in traffic. Transfers are unreliable. Bad weather makes the wait worse. Seniors, students, workers, parents, and people without cars pay the price every day.

QueensLink is the type of solution South Queens needs because it treats transportation as a basic connection between communities. The proposal would reuse the long-abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch corridor and link southern Queens with the Queens Boulevard subway network in the north, while also adding parks, paths, and community space. This is exactly the kind of smart use of existing infrastructure that New York should be pursuing.

Why South Queens needs QueensLink

- **We need a real north-south rail connection.** South Queens should not be forced to rely almost entirely on slow buses and complicated transfers to reach northern Queens.
- **We need fair access to jobs and schools.** Better transit would open up more practical access to employment centers, colleges, commercial corridors, and services across Queens.

- **We need relief for working families.** Long commutes steal time from families, reduce opportunity, and make daily life more expensive and exhausting.
- **We need options besides driving.** When transit is poor, people are pushed into cars, which adds traffic, parking pressure, and pollution. Reliable rail gives people a real choice.
- **We need investment, not more delay.** South Queens has waited long enough for a serious transportation solution that connects us to the rest of our own borough.

A better future for Queens

QueensLink is not only about trains. It is about fairness. It is about whether South Queens residents deserve the same level of access and mobility that other parts of the city expect as normal. It is about connecting communities that have been separated by poor transit planning for generations.

I support a plan that combines transit with green space because our communities need both. Parks are important, but a park-only plan does not solve the daily transportation problem that South Queens residents live with. QueensLink offers a more complete vision: rails and trails, transportation and open space, mobility and community benefit together.

I urge the City, State, MTA, and all relevant agencies to advance QueensLink, fund the necessary studies and engineering work, and treat South Queens transportation access as a priority. Please do not let this corridor sit unused while residents continue to suffer through long, indirect, unreliable trips across our own borough.

South Queens deserves better. We deserve a faster, safer, more direct way to reach northern Queens. We deserve transportation that connects us to opportunity. We deserve QueensLink.

Respectfully submitted,

Sonny Petro
South Queens Resident

Project context included for decision-makers: QueensLink describes its plan as reactivating the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch between Rego Park and Ozone Park to create Queens' first north-south subway connection, while also providing new park space and bike/pedestrian paths.

Sources reviewed: the official QueensLink plan and FAQ; MTA Rockaway Beach Branch study page.

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am a resident of LIC. I am writing to demand that the commitments made in the OneLIC Neighborhood plan are fulfilled on time.

LIC already suffers from one of the lowest levels of open and green space per resident in New York City, and multiple public reviews of the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan acknowledge that the neighborhood's parkland and open space are already severely lacking, and will worsen with new residences without intervention, which the city has acknowledged. Despite this, the budget pushes back several commitments to open space:

- Waterfront esplanade and new open space construction, planned for completion in 2031, is not planned for funding until 2031
- Queensbridge Baby Park, planned for completion in 2031, is not planned for funding until 2032 or 2033
- Renewal of Queensbridge Park, planned for design in 2028, is not planned for funding until 2032

It also fails to fund the Parks Department at 1%, and does not baseline funding for the 115 Parks workers whose jobs expire in June or provide the 276 new jobs in Parks needed to support our existing public spaces, or provide adequate funding for GreenThumb and the Urban Park Rangers.

While many wealthy residents get to enjoy the waterfront at Gantry State Park, the city's budget does not include funding for OneLIC's plan to expand parks for the Queensbridge portion of the neighborhood.

Long Island City's schools are already failing to meet the demands of existing families. The lack of inclusion of the promised school construction and improvements in the approved budget means the existing families in Long Island City and all the new residents will be unable to guarantee nearby elementary school seats, and may be forced to leave the neighborhood or send their young children on very long commutes. The budget must include

- Funding to build the 2 promised new elementary schools and 1 middle school as part of OneLIC.

As a parent, this is an issue that is critical to me and my family.

The rezoned area requires significant improvements to provide safe connections through and beyond the neighborhood, allow people the space and infrastructure to spend time with their neighbors outdoors, and help bridge the divide between Queensbridge residents and other parts of LIC. Despite these real needs, the executive budget fails to include or significantly delays several of the promised improvements:

- Court Square Toilet not included in the budget
- Lighting Study in the IBZ not included in the budget

- Feasibility Study of Public Realm Improvements Under QBB Ramps not included in the budget
- Queens waterfront greenway delayed until 2029 + 2032
- 21st Street Intermodal Hub delayed until 2029 + 2032
- 44th Drive corridor improvements delayed until 2029 + 2032

As the City moves forward with significant new development in Long Island City, it is critical that these commitments are not delayed, deferred, or reduced. The City Council must ensure that the promised funding to allow the neighborhood to support so many new residents is not pushed off or ignored.

I believe that promises under OneLIC must be fully funded and delivered on an appropriate and timely schedule so that neighborhood infrastructure keeps pace with growth and current residents are not asked to continue bearing the consequences of decades of underinvestment in green space and schools.

We need the City to honor and prioritize its commitment to the previously promised funding by the Mayor's Office to ensure equitable development. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Levy
Resident of LIC

Dear City Council Members,

I've recently moved to Queens, New York from Long Island… I don't want to say that this is not a problem in Long Island. It is a global problem for sure… But let's make NYC different! Being here in Queens, I've seen such a rise in the amount of stray and feral cats. It absolutely breaks my heart to see these cats - struggling, looking for shelter (especially in extreme weather), fighting to survive each day, searching for their next meal. Over 75% of kittens born outside do not survive. We need to fix this overpopulation problem. Please help fund spay and neuter programs. Us volunteers will do the work to bring the cats and other animals to get spayed and neutered with your funding! This could make a huge difference for NYC.

Thank you,
Stephanie Ortiz

Hello, my name is Fiona Cheng, and I am a Teen Techie intern at BPL.

The library has been an important resource for me throughout high school. I use its computers to complete assignments, study in a quiet environment, and borrow books for school. I am also a member of the Bay Ridge Teen Tech Center robotics team, where I have had opportunities to learn, collaborate, and develop new skills.

One of the most valuable things the library provides is a safe and welcoming space for students. My friends and I work on projects there because it offers the supplies, technology, desks, and resources we need to be productive. The library is a place where young people can learn, explore opportunities, and build skills for the future. I am grateful that I have the opportunity to be a Teen Techie at the library which helps me grow my experience and prepares me for future careers.

Reduced funding would mean fewer resources, programs, supplies, and opportunities for students and families who depend on the library every day. I respectfully ask the City Council to continue fully funding Brooklyn Public Library so it can keep providing these valuable services to our communities.

Members of the City Council,

Students who are not reading proficiently by third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school.

That's why I urge you to baseline $200 million in the city budget to keep, grow, sustain, and improve NYC Reads and NYC Solves.

I'm Stephanie Vazquez, a NYC educator who has seen NYC Reads and NYC Solves drive historic gains in reading and math. But continued progress isn't guaranteed without sustained investment. **As these initiatives expand to more grade levels, funding for professional learning and implementation has not been permanently baselined**. This means schools are relying on philanthropy and year-to-year allocations to continue what are now core, popular, and evidence-based programs. Our classrooms need stability and funding to ensure:

- Ongoing professional learning and coaching for educators
- High-quality, culturally responsive curriculum and materials
- Strong family engagement
- District-level implementation support
- Targeted interventions and high-impact tutoring for students who need it most

I've seen the benefits of all of these focus areas. For example, my district had parents enroll in the NYC Reads Ambassador program, an opportunity for families to learn how to support their children as they learn to read. I have seen this benefit families throughout our district, as parents began leading workshops and initiatives that transferred new skills and knowledge beyond the classroom.

But right now, opportunities like these remain vulnerable to annual budget fluctuations. By baselining $200 million in the city budget, the Council can help ensure that educators, students, and families have the resources necessary to continue building on the progress we are seeing today, and that successful, permanent programs are not competing year after year for survival.

Thank you.

From: hotepconsulting
To: NYC Council Hearings
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public lands private developers
Date: Wednesday, May 13, 2026 12:38:09 PM
Attachments: Public_Land_Public_Wealth_f7dbc9b8.docx
Public_Land_Public_Wealth_f7dbc9b8.pdf

[redacted]

To whom its concern

Please find attached my policy paper titled “Public Land, Public Wealth,” which proposes a new framework for affordable housing development in New York City.

The central argument is simple: in order to truly address affordability, New York City must stop transferring publicly owned land to private developers while the public absorbs the cost and risk but does not retain the long-term ownership value

New York City has built and maintained some of the most sophisticated engineering projects in the world — including bridges, tunnels, subways, airports, and water infrastructure. The modern political narrative that government is somehow incapable of building housing must stop. The issue is not whether government can build. The issue is how public resources are being allocated and who ultimately benefits from publicly owned land.

My proposal does not reject private contractors or development expertise. Contractors would still build these projects. The difference is that the City would act as development manager while preserving public land ownership and transitioning projects into permanently affordable limited-equity cooperatives owned and governed by residents themselves.

Affordable housing becomes far more sustainable when residents are invested as owners rather than remaining permanent renters. Ownership

promotes neighborhood stability, better maintenance, stronger civic participation, and long-term community wealth.

The attached paper addresses:

- the shortcomings of the current public-private development model;
- the misuse of regional AMI formulas that fail to reflect neighborhood income realities;
- the long-term loss of public value from public land transfers;
- and policy solutions addressing cost overruns, financing, management, transparency, and permanent affordability.

I respectfully ask that this proposal be reviewed and shared with the appropriate housing, planning, and policy officials within the administration.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Stephen Hutchinson
Brooklyn, New York

Sent from my Galaxy

Sent from my Galaxy

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Steven Ganas, and I am a resident who challenges city, state, and local leaders to commute during peak times from Rockaway to northern Queens to experience firsthand the current state of transit service of Queens as a whole. I strongly support the QueensLink proposal and oppose permanently converting the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch into the QueensWay park-only project.

QueensLink is a rare opportunity to improve transportation using an existing rail corridor already preserved for transit use. In a city where building new transit infrastructure is extremely difficult and expensive, preserving this right-of-way for rail service is the smart long-term choice.

Queens residents face long commutes, overcrowded roads, unreliable buses, and limited north-south transit connections. Communities like Broad Channel, Howard Beach, Ozone Park, Woodhaven, and the Rockaways would greatly benefit from faster and more direct access to central Queens.

QueensLink would reduce travel times, ease traffic congestion, improve bus reliability, and expand access to jobs, education, and healthcare. It would also reduce car dependence, lower emissions, and support the city's environmental goals.

Importantly, QueensLink includes both transit improvements and new park space, meaning residents would not have to choose between transportation and recreation.

By contrast, converting the corridor entirely into QueensWay would permanently eliminate future transit possibilities and make future rail expansion nearly impossible.

As a resident directly affected by the transportation challenges in southern Queens, I urge city and state leaders to prioritize QueensLink and preserve this corridor for future generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Steven Ganas
Broad Channel, Queens

Hello City Council Members and Finance Committee members,

My name is Steven Pei. I'm writing because I've been very ill with asthma this week, but still want to take time to speak about the public library funding situation. Mayor Mamdani and many city council members promised to raise library funding to 0.5% of the city expense budget. That's a promised target of $624M. While his executive budget is better than his prelim budget, he is still $97M short of the amount he promised in his campaign trail and it's the responsibility of library enthusiasts and the city council to fight for real change here.

The executive budget was a tiny nominal increase for libraries compared to the previous fiscal year. This was spun as a big win in casual headlines, but this wasn't good news to the critical observer. To put it in everyday terms, what is your reaction if your boss gives you less than a percent raise in a year where inflation is 3.8%? That's effectively a cut.

Our libraries have been underfunded for years despite how much value and service they provide for the people. Get to 0.5% of the city budget, that's $97M more to go. This is one of the best ways you can invest in our city and people's future.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY — NYC COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE

RE: Please fund $1.5M for spay/neuter and $2M for pet food pantries

June 12, 2026
Submitted by: Susan Bercaw

For over 15 years, I've poured my heart and my own money into helping my dedicated neighbors who help the stray cats. I do TNR to keep the numbers of cats from exploding. Plus the cats' health improves and their human caretakers are so grateful. I've even ended up incorporating as a 501c3 to keep the work going. Kitten season is overwhelming -- I can't leave sick kittens on the street but I don't run a shelter. I network like crazy with the rescuers, big and small, and take care of some of the kittens myself and get them adopted. Just last week I got seven kittens to a self-funded rescuer and this week I took on four kittens myself. These out-of-pocket costs are unsustainable. The low cost vets and spay/neuter clinics are great, and I'm so grateful we have them, but there are just not enough appointments to go around!

With every TNR project I do I find several friendly, perfectly adoptable cats. This highlights a systemic failure to provide accessible spay/neuter, leading to overcrowded shelters and preventable suffering.

We TNR people and rescuers have volunteer labor, but we need the resources to do the work. No New Yorker should have to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their pet, yet I witness the results of this dilemma daily. A pet food pantry in our area would be a lifeline, keeping animals with the families who love them, and relieving pressure on our already strained rescue community.

I urge the Council to fund $1.5M for spay/neuter and $2M for pet food pantries in the FY27 budget.

Susan Bercaw, Gravesend, Brooklyn

Wed, June 10, 2026 @ 9:30 AM

Committee on Finance
Dante Damele
Luca Damele
Susan Eastwood
[redacted]

I am a PTA member at Yorkville East Middle School (YEMS). I have one son who graduated from YEMS last year and has just completed his first year at Regis High School, and a younger son who is currently a 6th grader at YEMS.

When I look at my older son, I see growth, confidence, leadership, and maturity. During his time at YEMS, he participated in fencing, debate, and Dungeons & Dragons through Manhattan Youth. As parents, we want our children to feel safe, happy, and supported. We want them to try new things, discover their interests, find their community, and be surrounded by adults who genuinely care about them. We want mentors who celebrate their successes, help them navigate setbacks, and encourage them to keep growing.

Manhattan Youth has been that for my son.

I can honestly say it changed the trajectory of his life, and I will be forever grateful.

Through Manhattan Youth, he was introduced to debate in middle school. Today, he competes on the Regis High School Debate Team in Public Forum Debate on the national circuit. This year, he was ranked 109th at the Harvard International Tournament and placed 9th at the New York State Tournament.

Without Manhattan Youth, he never would have had the opportunity to try debate. Our family could not have afforded weekly debate classes. What began as an after-school activity became a passion that he plans to pursue throughout high school and possibly college.

Parents at his high school often talk about how debate opens doors and develops future leaders. Many former debaters go on to become judges, CEOs, district attorneys, diplomats, and public servants. I do not know what the future holds for my son, but I do know that Manhattan Youth

gave him the foundation and the opportunity to discover a passion that continues to shape his life. That is something I will never take for granted.

My older son formed lifelong friendships through fencing. He found a mentor in Coach Jonah, and now my younger son fences with him as well. We have known Jonah for four years. He is kind, supportive, and genuinely cares about every student he works with.

Last year, Coach Jonah was offered the opportunity to work at another school, but he chose to stay at Yorkville because of the relationships he had built with students and families. The feeling is mutual. Over the years, he has become a trusted mentor and an important part of our school community. He introduced us to his girlfriend, and we have celebrated birthdays together. These are the kinds of meaningful relationships that develop when programs and staff remain part of a community for years.

My older son's team won first place at the Baruch Tournament, where students from 14 schools across the city compete. Baruch is also losing its after-school provider, which means these tournaments may no longer continue. The impact extends far beyond one school. It creates a ripple effect across an entire network of students, coaches, and programs.

My younger son may lose the opportunity to continue fencing and compete against students from other schools. He may lose connections with friends he has built relationships with over several years. In fencing and many other activities, 6th, 7th, and 8th graders participate together. Older students mentor younger students, creating a culture of encouragement, leadership, and belonging.

The fencing team's unofficial mascot is a yam, the "YEMS Yams." Students bring a yam to tournaments covered with the names of team members. It may sound silly, but it represents something special: a sense of belonging, school pride, tradition, and community. These are the experiences and relationships that cannot be easily replaced.

My older son participated in Dungeons & Dragons, and now my younger son does as well. For both of them, it became a place where they found their people. Through imagination, creativity, teamwork, and storytelling, they built friendships and confidence. Students across grade levels play together, and sometimes siblings participate in the same groups. It helps make the school feel like a true community. I do not want that taken away from them.

Our experience with Yorkville East and Manhattan Youth was so positive that when it came time for my younger son to apply to middle school, we ranked Yorkville as our first choice. When we learned he received a lottery number of 00, I cried with happiness. We could have chosen any school, but we chose Yorkville because of the incredible experience our family had there. We wanted to give back, which is why both my husband and I serve on the PTA.

I want my younger son and every child at YEMS to have the same opportunities that my older son had. I want them to discover new interests, build friendships, develop confidence, and find

caring mentors. Many families, including ours, could not afford many of these activities outside of school. After-school programs make these opportunities accessible to everyone.

Research consistently shows that children are most vulnerable during the hours between 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. High-quality after-school programs provide safety, structure, supervision, enrichment, and community during these critical hours.

Our school community includes children being raised by single parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other caregivers. Many families depend on after-school programs so they can continue working and supporting their households.

I have read students' letters and spoken with many of them. Several are worried that their parents may have to reduce work hours or even lose their jobs if after-school programs disappear. One of our 6th graders recently lost his father and is now worried about his mother and sister. He fears that without a reliable after-school program, his family will face additional financial hardship.

Some students previously attended schools with different after-school providers. They described those programs as little more than babysitting, with limited enrichment opportunities and few activities that sparked their interest. One student shared that he disliked his after-school experience so much that he felt anxious about going to school each day.

These are burdens that children should not have to carry.

Our children should be focused on learning, growing, building friendships, and simply being kids. As adults, it is our responsibility to put their best interests first.

What makes this situation even more troubling is that families, students, and many school communities were not given a meaningful opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. The people most affected by these changes were largely excluded from providing feedback before decisions were finalized. Families only learned that long-standing partnerships were being severed after selections had already been made, creating confusion, uncertainty, and frustration across our school communities.

The concern is not simply about change. It is about replacing a proven provider with deep experience serving middle school students and established relationships within our schools. Manhattan Youth staff are not interchangeable contractors. They are trusted mentors, coaches, and role models who have spent years building relationships with our children. Those relationships provide stability, belonging, and support during some of the most important and vulnerable years of a child's development. They cannot be replaced overnight.

The impact of Manhattan Youth cannot be measured simply in program hours or enrollment numbers. It is measured in opportunities, relationships, confidence, mentorship, and the futures of children whose lives have been changed because someone invested in them.

My older son is one of those children.

I hope the same will be true for my younger son and for every child at Yorkville East. I want them to thrive, discover their passions, try new things, feel seen, receive those high-fives after a hard day, and be surrounded by adults who believe in them and want them to succeed.

I respectfully urge DYCD, DOE leadership, and City Hall to reconsider these decisions, restore Manhattan Youth partnerships for schools seeking continuity, and ensure that future decisions involving our children are made with transparency and meaningful community input. Our students deserve proven programs, trusted relationships, and a voice in decisions that profoundly affect their daily lives.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you would like to hear directly from students, families, and teachers affected by these decisions, I encourage you to visit our PTA Instagram account, @ms177pta, where community members have shared their experiences and perspectives.

Sincerely,

Susan Eastwood
PTA Member
Yorkville East Middle School

Dear New York City Council,

I am a rising sophomore and an alumni of Yorkville East Middle School, where I was an active participant in Manhattan Youth. During my three years, I learned who I was and I wanted to do with my life. In sixth grade, I tried out four activities which were completely new to me: a basketball camp, a fencing team, a debate program, and a Dungeons and Dragons class. That year, I discovered a lot about myself. I discovered that, even though I was not really a basketball person, I loved to fence. At the six tournaments I went to that year, I learned things I never had from any other sport: I learned the value of camaraderie, of working with your teammates in order to push towards a common goal; I learned the value of perseverance, of giving it your all even if your team is fifteen points down; and I learned how to be gracious in victory or in defeat, and shake hands with your teammate. That year, I discovered that I loved Dungeons and Dragons. I met so many of my friends by playing, and I loved it when they would come alight when the ogre burst into the room, or gasp in awe when I dealt 200 damage with one divine smite. We learned how to share a story, how to narrate an epic, and how to sacrifice for a friend. That year, I discovered how much I love debate. I loved writing my four minute case, and prepping with my partner. I loved researching whether congestion pressing actually has a significant environmental impact, or if the European Union had better animal protection than the United Kingdom. I learned how to find information, how to speak publicly, how to stand up in front of a judge, your parents, and your team when all you have in your notebook is “alternative: five eyes security.”

Fast forward to now. I am a rising sophomore at Regis High School. I host Dungeons and Dragons sessions for my friends, and narrate the destructive wrath of a giant or the shining radiance of a flaming sword. I help teach my younger brother and his friends how to fence, and help them through the arduous journey of getting their gear on. Most of all, I debate on national circuits for my high school, debating at tournaments around the country. I was ranked 109th at the international Harvard tournament, and ninth in New York State. I am the only person on my team to have previous experience debating, and to have paid no money to do so. I honestly think Manhattan Youth has changed my life. The provider that would replace them, YMCA, does not offer competitive debate, nor does it offer team fencing, nor does it offer consistent Dungeons and Dragons classes.

During my three years in middle school, I had access to opportunity after opportunity at Manhattan Youth. Please ensure that others can continue to have the same experience.

Thank you,

Dante Damele

Dear New York City Council,

I am a 6th grader at my school Yorkville East Middle School, also known as YEMS. Both me and my brother have gone to YEMS and participated in the after school program Manhattan Youth, MY. My brother is currently going to Regis Highschool and couldn't have done it without the help of MY. I am currently hoping to either follow in my brother's footsteps or blaze my own path to Bronx Science. If you take MY away, you will be taking away many student's opportunities, ruining their chances of going to where they want to go. Debating has helped my brother become who he is today, and given him the chance to go to his dream school. He has also found his friendships in Dungeons and Dragons, creating bonds that have lasted for years. And, in fencing, my brother hopes to create a new club at his school, giving him the confidence to do this in his life. I am currently taking fencing and D&D in MY and hope to do debate next year. But, if you take away MY, then you will be taking away my chances of debating and maybe my chances of a good high school. Not only this, but we have built relationships with our MY teachers, and if you take away that, you will break these bonds. No teacher friends, no familiar faces, no opportunities. Don't take all of this away from us. Keep Manhattan Youth!

Sincerely, Luca Damele

Pet Food Donations: FY 2027 Budget

"Let's look at supporting the *entire* family—pets included." (George Barreto, Community Health Action of Staten Island)

Note that this document contains information collected by the Staten Island Hunger Task Force and high-school student members of St. John's University Difference Makers in 2023 regarding providing pet food for distribution at local pantries.

We suggest siting the City's pilot pet food pantry on Staten Island, since our pantry leaders have already identified a strong need on the Island. Also, rather than creating a new pantry from scratch, we suggest that the City provide pet food via one of the mobile pantries—in the case of Staten Island, Project Hospitality or Community Health Action of Staten Island. The need spans the entire borough. Finally, we suggest using existing distribution methods: Driscoll Foods, City Harvest, and Food Bank for New York City can easily add pet food to their current pantry drop-offs.

Sincerely yours,
Susan Fowler
[redacted] Staten Island, NY 10301
Past chair of Staten Island Hunger Task Force

Work with Organizations

Greater Good Charities distributes food, essential supplies, clothing, housewares, toys, and more to pets and people in need across the world. A nonprofit can become an ambassador (food hub) and distribute to recipient organizations. See requirements at https://greatergood.org/goods#our-ambassador-program. Our closest Ambassadors are in Morristown, NJ, and Middle Village, Long Island.

Pet Help Finder: Find financially friendly pet resources in their database. Nothing local—Madison, Hawthorne, Eatontown, NJ. https://www.pethelpfinder.org/

Sent email to NYACC to ask if they do any distributions on SI. https://www.nycacc.org/services/surrender.

Through the ACC Admissions Department and agreements with partnering organizations, ACC is able to offer a variety of resources to assist pet owners in keeping their pets. Resources include:

- Reduced or free routine veterinary care, including spay/neuter
- Funding for emergency veterinary care
- Behavior advice and trainer referrals
- Supplies (food, litter, harness, etc.)
- Assistance with tenant/landlord disputes, including NYCHA issues
- Assistance for individuals entering DHS temporary housing
- Assistance for military deployment
- Assistance for pet owners that are hospitalized, incarcerated, escaping domestic violence, or experiencing similar situations

"To find out if ACC can help support you in keeping your pet, please call our Care Centers at 212-788-4000 and let us know about your situation."

Strong Paw Rescue: Works with community refrigerators and does some deliveries. Emailed request@strongpawsrescue.org for more information. Also has an Amazon gift list. https://www.strongpawsrescue.org/pet-pantry

SI Center for Animal Welfare. Sent email to see if someone would want to talk at Nov. meeting. https://www.sicawsaves.org/ and sicawsaves@gmail.com, (718) 948-5623

PAWS NY: Offers house calls for older adults or others dealing with illness, plus food. Sent email to referrals@pawsny.org; phone at 212-203-4760, Ext. 306. https://pawsny.org/what-we-do/

Hungry Pets Project: Distributes food through North Manhattan Improvement Corps. Has an Amazon wish list. http://www.partnershipforshelteranimalsnyc.org/hungry-pet-project.html

Healthy Pets NYC: Says they donate food occasionally but doesn't explain how. See information on ASPCA and AMC. http://www.healthypetsnyc.org/home.html

Some local Meals on Wheels organizations have a pet feeding program in addition to their senior citizen feeding program. They get grants from Petsmart Charities. "By helping an elderly person feed his/her pet, the senior citizen and their pet can maintain the human companion animal bond critical to the senior's emotional and physical health." See https://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/learn-more/national/press-room/news/2022/09/20/meals-on-wheels-america-and-petsmart-charities-grant-in-2022

Animal Shelter Tips: https://www.animalsheltertips.com/

- How to set up a pet food pantry. https://www.animalsheltertips.com/blog/start-a-pet-food-bank/
- Finding ongoing donors and sponsors for your pet food bank. https://www.animalsheltertips.com/blog/finding-ongoing-donors-and-sponsors-for-your-pet-food-bank/
- How to find individual donors for your pet food bank. https://www.animalsheltertips.com/blog/how-to-find-individual-donors-for-your-pet-food-bank/

Animal Medical Center, Manhattan: Has an article about other sources of food. https://www.amcny.org/blog/2011/07/28/pet-food-pantries/

Work with Pet Stores and Veterinary Practices

Also ask national Purina, Chewy, and Petsmart:

- https://www.chewy.com/g/animal-shelters-and-rescues
- https://petcolove.org/events/
- https://www.purina.com/about/partnerships/animal-welfare-grants
- https://petsmartcharities.org/

Ask at pet stores on SI. They must see poor people coming in to get food for their animals. What do they do?

For pet-food stores, ask if they can become a donation site. They can put out boxes or whatever to collect food and supplies to be donated: https://petsofthehomeless.org/how-to-become-a-donation-site/

Ask local veterinary practices about donations—what do they do now to help people hold onto their animals instead of surrendering them to shelters?

Ask supermarkets (for example, ShopRite) whether the supermarket chain can help get pet food.

Local Rescue Organizations with Food for Animals

phoenixlifefoundation.org/, 177 Finley Ave | Staten Island, NY 10306, (718) 873-3294, asamo@phoenixlifefoundation.org

www.halftableman.org/, 481 Midland Ave | Staten Island, NY 10306, (917) 667-2569, katsmyname@icloud.com

March 26, 2026

To: Commission on Children & Youth
From: Susan McClure
Re: Written Testimony for 5/28/26 Hearing

Dear Committee Members,

I'm writing to advocate for the restoration of Manhattan Youth ("MY") as the after-school program provider for MS 167, Wagner Middle School. I believe all working parents would agree on the importance of quality after school programs. Even though middle schoolers gain independence throughout their time in middle school, they still need supervision and care. How this care manifests is critical at a time when youth are striving for more independence while figuring out where they belong.

As a parent of a student who is graduating from Wagner, I am so grateful for all the afternoons where my daughter is at school engaged in one of MY's programs. I am relieved to know that while I am working she is not at home alone on her phone or on the internet, getting sucked into the abyss of social media or worse, or roaming aimlessly around the City, potentially getting into trouble with her friends. Instead, through MY, she has developed new interests and forged meaningful relationships with peers, teachers and staff. My daughter first discovered stage crew, which is a MY after-school program to support Wagner's school plays in the second half of her sixth grade. Since then she has been a part of every school play at Wagner and that interest has led her to applying for and getting accepted to LaGuardia where she will be attending this coming fall.

Moreover, I have been very impressed with the variety of programs that MY consistently offers. Wagner is a very large school with kids from all different backgrounds with a wide spectrum of interests and MY has been able to deliver on a great variety of programs. This is critically important for engagement as youth can both feel comfortable and have room to grow. Finally, beyond just the variety of programs is the quality of My program leadership and staff at the site. I have witnessed the way they work with school administrators and teachers and it is truly a partnership bound by their care for the students. Wagner is a large middle school but the administrators work hard to help students feel they belong. After school is a critical extension of that effort. Students who don't have anyone to go home to at 2:50 pm have a place to go and to feel connected.

I am frankly despondent at the thought that my son who is about to start Wagner in the fall may not be able to benefit from MY's after school programs. I am even more worried for the kids who are currently in 6th and 7th grade who have already experienced MY's youth programs and how this loss will impact their middle school experience.

It is clear from the outcome of the RFP that DYCD did not value the voice of the school community in this process. An RFP application does not provide the whole picture. Some of the most telling and critical information sit with the people who have actually worked with the providers. Please listen to the school administrators, the parents, and the students who have direct experience in working with MY. I urge you all, for the sake of the students and their families, to please reconsider and reassign Manhattan Youth to Wagner Middle School. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan McClure
Wagner parent

WRITTEN TESTIMONY — NYC COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE

RE: Please fund $1.5M for spay/neuter and $2M for pet food pantries

June 10, 2026
Submitted by: Susin Garcia

My heart aches every time I see a hungry stray or a family desperate to keep their beloved pet but simply can't afford it. I've spent countless nights feeding community cats out of my own pocket, and far too much of my savings on emergency vet care for animals I've rescued, all because essential resources are scarce. These aren't just "strays"; they're New Yorkers, deserving of compassion. And the families surrendering pets because they can't access affordable care? That's a tragedy we can prevent.

My neighborhood, North Shore, desperately needs a pet food pantry. No one should have to choose between feeding their family and feeding their pet. When 75% of dogs entering ACC are unfixed, it's clear we're not addressing the problem at its root. This isn't just about animals; it's about preventing homelessness for pets and keeping families whole. Investing in proactive care now saves money and lives later.

I urge the Council to fund $1.5M for low-cost spay/neuter and veterinary care, and $2M for pet food pantries in the FY27 budget.

Susin Garcia, North Shore

Dear Council Members,

As a parent and Long Island City resident, I'm writing to ask that you prioritize the funding needed to finally complete our long-promised neighborhood schools.

Our community is growing rapidly, yet we're still facing a severe shortage of school seats. Schools like P.S. 112 and P.S./I.S. 78 are already over capacity, and the Court Square neighborhood still lacks the elementary school we were promised.

While I appreciate temporary solutions like the incubation site for Q508, our families need permanent infrastructure. We can't keep building new housing without the schools to support it. Every delay pushes more families out of the neighborhood because they simply can't count on having a local seat for their children.

Please ensure the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed so construction can move forward immediately. We need accountability and a firm timeline to get Q508 and our other planned schools built.

Schools are the foundation of a thriving neighborhood. Thank you for your leadership and for making our kids' education a priority.

Best,
Suzanna Bridges
Long Island City parent of 2 children who attend public school

Fiscal Year 2027 Executive Budget Hearing – Committee on Finance
June 10, 2026
Testimony by Sybil Thioune, Friends of Queens Public Library at South Hollis

Dear New York City Council Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Relations,

Imagine going into a community and seeing the residents painting a beautiful mural, or listening to speakers who share musical traditions with live performances and the audience being mesmerized. If you can picture that you have already seen the benefits of having Queens Public Library continue its impact with funding from you. I am writing to advocate for this meaningful difference being made every day for so many people across the board.

My community at large and my own personal experiences have been enhanced by the impact of the programs facilitated by the reading, arts, and friends groups of Queens Public Library. These programs offer safe ways to engage and strengthen communal ties. The Friends of Queens Public Library program has drawn my attention and has inspired me in so many ways with its backpack giveaway for learners in the community as well as its holiday craft activities that allow adults and children alike to enjoy. It is for these important factors that I urge your decision to provide funding for the Queens Public Library, a champion for the community.

Thank you,
Sybil Thioune

FY27 Budget Hearing
Written Testimony
Sydney Scott

To the NYC Council Committee on Finance,

My name is Sydney Scott. I am a Brooklyn resident currently enrolled in a Masters in Food Systems degree. I am writing to urge you to continue funding community composting in the FY27 budget.

In 2025, I completed the Master Composter course, which was made possible thanks to generous funding from the City Council. Continuing to fund community composting will help this program engage more New Yorkers like me. Community composting is vital in many ways: it helps keep food out of landfills, creates new soil for gardens and farms to use, and brings together the community.

Most importantly, composting is a low-effort and high-reward way to keep fighting climate change. When food is brought to landfills, it decomposes there and releases methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Food waste is one of the biggest components of landfills. If we can redirect food scraps before they reach the trash, we can help mitigate this issue at its source.

In this dark era of climate change denialism on the federal and state level, local action matters more than ever. Climate change is real and is not going anywhere, no matter how much we pretend otherwise. It is an issue that impacts us all as weather events become more severe. Composting is a simple yet powerful way to help address this problem.

Please continue to prioritize funding for community composting, and make New York City a leader in fighting climate change.

Thank you!

Hello my name is Sylvia Pizarro. My whole life has been a recovery journey and I've learned a lot about myself at Lifelinks.

I enjoy the relationships that developed at Lifelinks. My recovery has been well because of Lifelinks, since I keep busy with the work

ordered day. If I didn't have lifelinks, there would be no sense of community in me and I would isolate. There would be a sense of sadness

and despair. The way that LIfelinks has helped is not just by the kind relationships but the WORK ORDERED DAY. One example is taking care of

the reception desk and greeting the members with positivity. I like the fact the Clubhouse gives me structure. What I want to make known is

that people like me with mental health and disability issues need services from the community. Members, like me, would feel lost without the

services from clubhouses. There many reasons why people in the community need these services

and I want to thank you for listening to my testimony.

Hello my name is Sylvia Pizarro. My whole life has been a recovery journey and I've learned a lot about myself at Lifelinks.
I enjoy the relationships that I have developed at Lifelinks. My recovery has gone well because of Lifelinks.

I keep busy with the their concept of a “WORK ORDERED DAY.”

If… Then…. Statement…..

If I didn't have Lifelinks, I would have no sense of community.
Then I would isolate leading to anxiety resulting in sadness and despair.

There would be a sense of sadness and despair.

The way that Lifelinks has helped is not just by the kind relationships.

Lifelinks exposed me to the concept of the “WORK ORDERED DAY.”

My best example of the “WORK ORDERED DAY” is taking care of
the reception desk and greeting the all the members with:
- positivity
- gratitude
- kindness
- joy and a smile.

I like the fact the Clubhouse gives me structure.

What I want to make known is that people like me with mental health and disability issues need services from the community.

Members, like me, would feel lost without the services we get from Lifelinks Clubhouse @ Elmhurst Hospital Queens.

There are many reasons why people in the community need these services:
Some need to:

- go back to school (Goodard Riverside)
- go back to work (GoodTemps by Goodwill NY/NJ 25 Elm Place Brooklyn)
- find independent living arrangements (Fountain House 425 West 47th Street)
- get vocational training (Venture House Inc.)
- Express themselves thru Art Programs (in my case thru Venture House Inc. - Music

In closing bringing it back to my specific experience at Lifelinks Clubhouse @ Elmhurst Hospital Queens Socializing - Structure - and the Work Ordered Day have been Life changing and life saving.

I thank you for taking the time to hear my story and my testimony. The last thing I want to say is WE NEED THE SERVICES. And by WE I mean the Neuro Divergent community REGARDLESS of their diagnosis ethnicity religion or economic status.

Thank You again for your time and listening to my testimony.

Committee on Women and Gender Equity

Subject: Zohran’s budget fails to recognize the vital role public housing plays in advancing gender equity.

I oppose Zohran’s proposed budget for public housing. Zohran's proposed budget for public housing should alarm us all. It is the largest transfer of public monies and assets in recent history. And it will destroy the only truly affordable housing we have in NYC.

The Committee on Women and Gender Equity should recognize that public housing is fundamentally a women's issue. For decades, Section 9 public housing has served a population made up largely of women and female-headed households. Nationally, women head the overwhelming majority of public housing households, and many residents are single mothers, grandmothers raising grandchildren, caregivers, and women balancing work, family responsibilities, and economic hardship. Public housing has provided generations of women with the stability, support, independence, community, and affordability necessary to raise families, care for loved ones, pursue education, build careers, and participate in civic life.

Women, particularly women of color, continue to bear a disproportionate share of caregiving responsibilities while facing persistent wage disparities and economic barriers. Because Section 9 ties rent to household income rather than market conditions, it creates opportunities for residents to pursue employment, training, entrepreneurship, and educational opportunities without the constant threat of rent increases or displacement. Housing stability is a prerequisite for economic mobility, and Section 9 remains one of the strongest examples of that principle in practice.

The Committee should also recognize the relationship between housing stability and gender-based violence. Survivors of domestic violence and other forms of abuse often remain in dangerous situations because they lack access to safe, affordable housing alternatives. Public housing serves as a critical source of stability and independence for many survivors, providing a pathway toward safety, self-determination, and long-term security.

Beyond housing, Section 9 has historically fostered leadership, mutual aid, and civic engagement among women. Tenant associations, resident councils, community centers, and resident-led initiatives have created opportunities for women to organize, advocate, govern, and shape policies affecting their communities. Some of New York City's strongest community leaders have emerged from public housing because these developments provide not only homes, but spaces where women build networks of support, develop leadership skills, and strengthen their communities.

Zohran’s budget fails to recognize the vital role public housing plays in advancing gender equity. When public housing is weakened, it is women—particularly working-class women, single mothers, caregivers, grandmothers raising children, and survivors of violence—who often bear the greatest burden. When Section 9 is strengthened, women gain the housing security that allows them to thrive. We urge the Committee on Women and Gender Equity to support comprehensive modernization of Section 9 public housing and reject policies that condition investment on privatization. A city committed to gender equity must ensure that women have access to safe, affordable housing, meaningful opportunities for leadership, and the stability necessary to build healthy families and strong communities.

You cannot advance gender equity while allowing the housing insecurity that disproportionately burdens women, caregivers, and survivors to persist.

Dear Board,
The provision for QueensWay being built is incredibly concerning especially for the residents who live in the Rockaways. QueensWay would block all future rail service, not allowing for any further rail activations, harming many people in the long run. Southern Queens, and furthermore all of New York City deserves reliable rail service, with QueensWay that all goes away. However, QueensLink can bring a great solution to the challenge of rail travel in southern queens. Further rail access would save our city and keep a movement for better transit going. Thank you.

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident and parent to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

LIC has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, Kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, and yet most area schools are already operating over capacity: P.S. 112 at **130%**, and P.S./I.S. 78 at **111%**. What is more, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City — Court Square — still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message to families is clear: you may not be guaranteed a school seat in your neighborhood.

I would also like to express urgent concern about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed school project. In a neighborhood where families are struggling today to secure local school placements, this project, along with other promised school construction projects in LIC, cannot continue to fall behind competing priorities. While I appreciate the creation of an incubation site for Q508 (Q439Q), a temporary solution cannot become a justification for continued delays to the permanent facility. Families were promised a permanent neighborhood school, with the full facilities and long-term stability that a dedicated school building provides. An incubation site may help relieve short-term pressure, but it does not address the broader and growing need for permanent school infrastructure in LIC.

Additionally, the current lease for the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE, Q580) is set to expire in just three years. Families have been assured that the school would be relocated so that it can continue serving students without disruption. We are appreciative that the budget includes funding for BSGE. However, we want to emphasize that it is critical that the City follow through on this commitment and move urgently to secure a permanent home for the school. Allowing delays to continue would create significant uncertainty for students and families and risks the loss of an important educational institution in a neighborhood already facing a severe shortage of school seats. The City must prioritize funding and planning for BSGE's relocation now to ensure continuity and stability for the community.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has also recognized the need for additional schools to support the neighborhood's rapid growth. Specifically, commitments were made to advance development of a school at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard. Creation of two additional schools has also been promised to create 1,300 more seats in conjunction with the planned

construction of over 14,000 residential units. As more housing is developed through OneLIC, school construction must move in parallel — not years behind residential growth. Without firm commitments and accountability around these promised schools, the existing seat crisis will only intensify.

Delays to the opening of these schools are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and more families pushed out of the neighborhood because they cannot rely on access to local public schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency, accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508 and other promised schools on schedule. Schools aren't just a service—they're the foundation of a stable, thriving neighborhood.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future. Please ensure that timely funding is delivered to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority for the completion of these projects.

Sincerely,
Talia Faustin
Long Island City 11101

Testimony to Chair Linda Lee of the City Council Finance Committee
June 10, 2026
Delivered by Tammy Reed, Freedom Agenda

Good afternoon, Chair Lee and committee members. Thank you so much for allowing me to testify today. My name is Tammy Reed, and I am testifying on behalf of Freedom Agenda and member of the Campaign to Close Rikers.

My community, Southeast Queens, specifically St. Albans, started this school year off with the unfortunate death of one child by another due to gun violence. Sadly, we will end out the school year with the death of a child by another child in Roy Wilkins Park, Jamaica. These two incidences have left my community shaken, disturbed and sad. What's even sadder is that these are not the only incidences that have involved our youth throughout NYC. The sentiment in my community is that this is going to be a very hot summer if we don't find a way to get these kids work and involved in activities that will keep them off the streets of NYC. Parents are terrified as is evidenced by a FB group that I belong to. They are scrambling to find jobs and opportunities for their children, but are unable to do so because there aren't enough funds to accommodate the need.

I am constantly reminded of the fact that we taxpayers are paying out nearly half a million dollars per year to incarcerate just one person on Riker Island. Even with some vacancy reductions in the Executive Budget, the DOC is still sitting on $95.6M worth of vacancies. We need to reinvest every dollar of those resources in services that foster real community, safety and wellbeing. Given how I started off this testimony, the City should be throwing money into these communities. There are plenty of organizations that already have boots on the ground, i.e., Community Connections Family Enrichment Center, Rising Ground/Jamaica Community Partnership and the list goes on and on. All they need is the funding.

I am asking this Committee to invest in preventative care for our youth and communities. My dream would be that we never have to lose another life to gun violence. Cause the truth be told, when these situations occur, we lose two people – one to death and the other to the "system".

Finally, I would like to remind the City Council of NYC's commitment of closing Rikers Island by 2027 and would like to see the savings from this closure be recommitted/reinvested back into our communities for mental health care, housing, ATIs and preventative care, including the investments the Campaign to Close Rikers is advocating.

CLOSE RIKERS

DECARCERATE ✷ DEFEND ✷ DIVEST & REDISTRIBUTE

FY2027 City Budget Analysis & Priorities

At a cost of nearly half a million dollars per person per year, Rikers Island is the most expensive and least effective tool our City has to create community safety. The FY2027 Executive Budget includes some key steps toward reining in jail operation costs, and reinvesting those savings in true public safety. And in order to Close Rikers as quickly as possible, we'll need to do more. To align the FY2027 budget with the City's legal and moral obligation to Close Rikers, it must include:

1. **An additional $39.2M to meet mental health needs outside of Rikers,** including:
    a. **At least $66.3M, baselined, for Intensive Mobile Treatment (IMT) teams,** $22M more than the Executive Budget allocates, which should eliminate the current waitlist.[1]
    b. **At least $23.8M, baselined, for Assertive Community Treatment (ACT),** $4.5M more than the Executive Budget allocates.[2]
    c. **At least $6M, baselined, for Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT),** $2M more than the Executive Budget allocates, which provides both mental health and reentry services to people returning from jail and prison.[3]
    d. **$1.7M to establish an outpatient competency restoration pilot program** for 50-75 people who might otherwise be waiting at Rikers for transfer to a state hospital.
    e. **$3M in capital funds to support 60 new residential treatment beds** for people with serious mental illness and with co-occurring addictions.[4]
    f. **At least $8.8M, baselined, for crisis respite centers,** $6M more than the Executive Budget allocates, to open four new centers, in compliance with Local Law 118-2023.[5]
2. **An additional $47.2M for diversion and reentry services through the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ), including:**
    a. **$10M** in new funds for ATI programs and **$10M** in new funds for Reentry Services, as recommended by the ATI/Reentry Coalition, to scale up these evidence-based models.
    b. **$6.9M** to expand programs serving court-involved youth with mental health needs.
    c. **$20.3M**[6] to establish at least 150 units of low-barrier housing for people with court-involvement and mental health diagnoses.
    d. OCJ should also publish an analysis of the full need for transitional reentry housing, and conduct a data match to generate an updated eligibility list for Justice Impacted Supportive Housing (JISH), a permanent reentry housing model.[7]
3. **An additional $3.6M to restore cuts to the Board of Correction (BOC), and expand their oversight capacity.** The Executive Budget shows $605,000 in cuts to BOC's budget.[8] These cuts

[1] Per DOHMH testimony on June 5, 2026, the waitlist is 600 people. Each new IMT team can serve 27 people.
[2] The combined waitlist for all ACT teams, including FACT and SPACT, was 654 people as of June 5, 2026 per DOHMH testimony. The City should also work with the state to eliminate the waitlist for all ACT teams.
[3] For FACT teams, the City adds approximately $675,000 per ACT team to supplement state funding by adding reentry specialists.
[4] State funding through OASAS would provide operational funds.
[5] The FY2026 budget for crisis respite centers was $5.3M, but only $2.8M in the FY2027 Preliminary Budget, as reported by DOHMH.
[6] Approximately $135,000 per unit, based on similar Safe Haven models.
[7] While JISH funding would come through DOHMH, OCJ coordinated the first (and only) data match, when the program was launched.
[8] $233,000 is associated with cutting two vacancies, and $374,437 is associated with cuts to OTPS

are unwise and unnecessary. The Board of Correction has testified that they need at least 60 staff roles (29 more than the Executive Budget includes)[9] to carry out their oversight responsibilities, as a first step to rightsizing their budget.[10] Expanding BOC's capacity could not only improve conditions in the jails, but also protect the city from future liability, like the $123 million dollars paid out in FY2025 for claims against DOC.

Meanwhile, DOC remains over-resourced. With new management in place, DOC can better deploy resources, not rush to fill vacancies. The FY2027 budget should build on smart vacancy reductions announced in the Executive Budget, and:

4. **Eliminate vacancies for DOC uniformed staff, to begin to rightsize the agency**
    a. The Executive Budget authorizes 6,474 positions for uniformed officers in FY2027 (down from 7,060 in FY2026), but as of January 1, 2026 DOC employed 5,759 officers and 1,301 positions were vacant.[11] Filling DOC's remaining 715 vacancies would cost an additional **$95.6M annually.**[12] These remaining vacancies should be eliminated, in order to reduce incarceration and cut wasteful spending.
5. **Reduce overtime spending** by consolidating operations and permanently closing jails on Rikers, starting with the vacant Anna M. Kross Center, where 109 officers are still assigned.[13]
6. **Conduct and release a staffing analysis as soon as possible,** to determine how many staff DOC actually needs to operate the facilities it currently manages.

The Executive Budget also includes 580 more police officers, among a surge of low-level arrests that frequently impact New Yorkers who lack stable housing and need mental health services. These resources should instead be used for housing, healthcare, and other community-based interventions.

DOC Budget Breakdown

- The Executive Budget proposes spending at least **$2.96 billion[14] for jail operations in FY2027**. This represents a slight reduction from the FY2027 Preliminary budget, but still a 3.8% increase from last year's adopted budget.[15]
- The Executive Budget shows an authorized headcount of **6,474 uniformed DOC officers**. With approximately 6,600 people in custody, this amounts to a **staffing ratio that is still nearly 4 times higher than the national average**, and **2 times more officers** than will be required to operate the borough jails.[16]
- DOC is on track to spend **$369 million on overtime** for uniform staff in FY2026 - 229% of their adopted budget.[17]
- New York City spent at least **$485,801 annually to incarcerate one person** at Rikers in FY2025.
- Most of DOC's costs are driven by staffing. The FY2027 budget projects that 87% of DOC expenses will be staff salaries, overtime and benefits.

---

[9] Based on testimony from the Board of Correction on March 7, 2025 that approximately 60 staff are needed to fulfill their mandate. BOC's proposed staffing in the F27 budget is 33 people, and total agency budget of $3.67M, per Departmental Estimates.
[10] Board of Corrections representatives previously advocated increasing their budget to a minimum percentage of DOC's.
[11] Per Independent Budget Office
[12] Based on $133,756 per officer, as calculated by the Vera Institute.
[13] City of New York Executive Budget Fiscal Year 2027, Supporting Schedules p. 1414
[14] Including expenses, associated fringe benefits, pensions, and debt service. Expense Revenue Contract Budget
[15] DOC's FY2026 Adopted Budget was $2.85 billion. A-Look-Inside-the-FY-2027-New-York-City-Department-of-Correction-Budget.pdf
[16] The Independent Rikers Commission estimates 3,240 officers will be needed in the borough jail system.
[17] Per Independent Budget Office

Please fund $1.5 million for spay and neuter programs as this is paramount to preventing cats and dogs from reproducing when the shelters are overwhelmed and perfectly healthy animals are being euthanized. We as a society, could be preventing this cruelty. We can do better. People need education and resources as we are in an affordability crisis and people have to choose between keeping their pets and feeding their families.

Please fund the pantry program. We are in NYC, the greatest and most expensive city and we need to take care of our New Yorkers and help them keep their pets by providing food assistance for their beloved, furry family members.

June 10th, 2026

TO: Respected Leadership of the Mamdani-Samuels Administration

CC: Councilwoman Tiffany Cabán, Assemblymember Diana Moreno, Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and NYCPS and DYCD Colleagues

I am a school social worker at The Young Women's Leadership School of Astoria (30Q286), where I work primarily with our sixth-grade students. I am writing with deep concern regarding the potential loss of our longstanding after-school partner, Girls Inc. of New York City. I respectfully urge you to reconsider this decision and preserve a program that is vital to our students, families, and school community.

At TYWLS Astoria, many of our students are raised by hardworking parents and caregivers who depend on reliable, high-quality after-school care. For our families, after-school programming is not an extra—it is an essential part of the school day. Girls Inc. provides a safe, structured environment where students continue to learn, build relationships, and develop critical social-emotional skills long after the dismissal bell rings.

As a social worker, I see firsthand the impact Girls Inc. has on our students. Their staff are trauma-informed, compassionate, and deeply invested in the well-being of our girls. They work collaboratively with school staff, understand our students' unique needs, and help reinforce the behavioral and emotional supports we put in place during the school day. Knowing that our students continue to be cared for by trusted adults who understand them is invaluable.

Girls Inc. offers far more than supervision. They provide homework support, leadership opportunities, creative arts, physical activities, social-emotional programming, and experiences many of our students might not otherwise have access to. From confidence-building workshops to community-building activities, their programming aligns seamlessly with our mission of empowering young women to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Over the years, Girls Inc. has become woven into the fabric of our school community. Their staff participate in school events, build meaningful relationships with students and families, and serve as mentors and role models. Their consistency, professionalism, and dedication cannot simply be replicated by another provider unfamiliar with our students and culture.

Replacing Girls Inc. would mean losing trusted relationships and a proven program that our families rely on every day. In a time when supporting working families and promoting student well-being are more important than ever, this partnership represents exactly the kind of investment our communities need.

On behalf of the students and families of The Young Women's Leadership School of Astoria, I urge you to retain Girls Inc. as our after-school partner. Our students deserve continuity, connection, and the opportunity to continue benefiting from a program that has helped them feel safe, supported, and empowered.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Taylor Faiella
School Social Worker
The Young Women's Leadership School of Astoria

Members of the City Council,

NYC educators who receive effective professional learning have reported increased confidence in their teaching. That is why I urge you to baseline $200 million in the city budget to keep, grow, sustain, and improve NYC Reads and NYC Solves.

My name is Teresa Ranieri, and I am a NYC educator who has seen the impact of NYC Reads and NYC Solves. These initiatives are helping drive important gains in reading and math, but continued progress is not guaranteed without sustained investment. As these initiatives expand to more grade levels, funding for professional learning and implementation has not been permanently baselined. This means schools are relying on philanthropy and year-to-year allocations to continue programs that have become core, popular, and evidence-based.

Our classrooms need stability and funding to ensure:

- Ongoing professional learning and coaching for educators
- High-quality, culturally responsive curriculum and materials
- Strong family engagement
- District-level implementation support
- Targeted interventions and high-impact tutoring for students who need it most

I have seen the benefits of these focus areas firsthand. NYC Reads has worked in my school because we have had strong professional learning, clear implementation support, and a shared commitment to doing this work well. In K-2, teachers provide explicit instruction in foundational skills so students learn to decode, build fluency, and read with confidence. Across K-5, students develop language comprehension, vocabulary, and background knowledge through rich texts, discussion, and writing. Each year, more students are becoming proficient. In grades 3-5, teachers continue to provide access to grade-level texts, meaningful conversations, and writing opportunities where students learn to think critically and advocate for themselves and others.

This investment also supports educators. When teachers receive strong professional learning, coaching, quality materials, and respect for the complexity of their work, they are better able to serve students and more likely to stay. Teacher retention matters. When we retain strong educators, students benefit from more consistent instruction, stronger relationships, and better opportunities to become proficient readers, writers, mathematicians, and thinkers.

Short-term funding leads to short-term impact. We cannot afford to let professional learning disappear just as schools are beginning to build momentum. We also cannot allow initiatives that support students and educators to remain vulnerable to annual budget fluctuations. By baselining $200 million in the city budget, the Council can help ensure that educators, students, and families have the resources necessary to continue building on the progress we are seeing.

Thank you.

6/11/26

My daughter, Ani Soekoro, is a sixth-grade student at TYWLS Astoria, and over the past year she has attended Girls Inc. We were deeply concerned to learn that this program may lose funding as the school's after-school provider. I am writing to strongly urge the City Council to continue funding Girls Inc because it is an invaluable resource for the TYWLS Astoria community.

Girls Inc is the ideal after-school program for TYWLS Astoria because it extends the school's mission beyond the classroom. It not only supports academic success, but also helps girls grow into confident, capable leaders. Through Girls Inc, my daughter has built meaningful friendships, strengthened her ability to collaborate, learned new skills, and developed emotional intelligence that is so important during the middle school years.

Girls Inc also provides something every family needs: a safe, reliable, and nurturing space for children after school. For my family, it has given Ani a place where she can complete her homework, receive tutoring when needed, and feel supported every day. Most importantly, she is genuinely excited to attend. That kind of engagement cannot be overstated. Girls Inc has made a real difference in my daughter's life, and I know it has done the same for many other students and families in our community over the past 10 years. I respectfully ask the City Council to protect funding for Girls Inc so that TYWLS Astoria students can continue to benefit from this exceptional program. In my eyes and in many other families' eyes, they are the only CBO that fits the values of the TYWLS Astoria school.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Regards,

Teresa Soekoro

[redacted]

[redacted]

I am an avid bicyclist, I ride hundreds of
miles every week in all seasons of the year exploring all over the city, and I especially love checking out all the great bike paths that NYC has to offer. I am excited to see the greenway network expanding in this area of Queens, but I believe that the “Queensway” plan would be a huge mistake if implemented as currently proposed. Queens desperately needs more mass rapid transit too, and the currently accepted plan for this corridor would almost certainly ensure that the Rockaway Beach Branch will never again have rail traffic. Car traffic is at a maximum and our roads are so clogged that the buses are atrociously slow. Please reconsider supporting the “Queenslink” proposal, which also includes provisions for plenty of park space, but doesn’t close the door on the much-needed rail rapid transit to restore sorely-needed connectivity across Queens. Rail corridors are hard to come by - anyone who has watched the century-long saga of the 2nd Avenue subway knows how expensive and difficult it is to build new rail rights of way. We have a great asset here with the disused Rockaway Beach Branch - please consider supporting the Queenslink plan and let’s make the most out of this resource. I look forward to riding my bike alongside the M train someday soon.

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am Thomas Dempsey from Hunter's Point, Long Island City. I am writing to urge the commitments made in the OneLIC Neighborhood plan are fulfilled on time.

Our neighborhood is undergoing a rapid increase in population density, and strongly needs park land and playground spaces to ensure the quality of life so many families need in New York.

Hunter's Point LIC already suffers from one of the lowest levels of open and green space per resident in New York City, and multiple public reviews of the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan acknowledge that the neighborhood's parkland and open space are already severely lacking, and will worsen with new residences without intervention, which the city has acknowledged. Despite this, the budget pushes back several commitments to open space:

- Waterfront esplanade and new open space construction, planned for completion in 2031, is not planned for funding until 2031
- Queensbridge Baby Park, planned for completion in 2031, is not planned for funding until 2032 or 2033
- Renewal of Queensbridge Park, planned for design in 2028, is not planned for funding until 2032

It also fails to fund the Parks Department at 1%, and does not baseline funding for the 115 Parks workers whose jobs expire in June or provide the 276 new jobs in Parks needed to support our existing public spaces, or provide adequate funding for GreenThumb and the Urban Park Rangers.

If children in New York are to grow up healthy, they need to learn about and enjoy nature, and places to interact positively with others.

Long Island City's schools are already failing to meet the demands of existing families. The lack of inclusion of the promised school construction and improvements in the approved budget means the existing families in Long Island City and all the new residents will be unable to guarantee nearby elementary school seats, and may be forced to leave the neighborhood or send their young children on very long commutes. The budget must include

- Funding to build the 2 promised new elementary schools and 1 middle school as part of OneLIC.

Quality schools mean a higher quality of life for families.

The rezoned area requires significant improvements to provide safe connections through and beyond the neighborhood, allow people the space and infrastructure to spend time with their neighbors outdoors, and help bridge the divide between Queensbridge residents and other parts of LIC. Despite these real needs, the executive budget fails to include or significantly delays several of the promised improvements:

- Court Square Toilet not included in the budget
- Lighting Study in the IBZ not included in the budget
- Feasibility Study of Public Realm Improvements Under QBB Ramps not included in the budget
- Queens waterfront greenway delayed until 2029 + 2032
- 21st Street Intermodal Hub delayed until 2029 + 2032
- 44th Drive corridor improvements delayed until 2029 + 2032

As the City moves forward with significant new development in Long Island City, it is critical that these commitments are not delayed, deferred, or reduced. The City Council must ensure that the promised funding to allow the neighborhood to support so many new residents is not pushed off or ignored.

I believe that [parks/waterfront connections/schools/street improvements/public open space improvements] promised under OneLIC must be fully funded and delivered on an appropriate and timely schedule so that neighborhood infrastructure keeps pace with growth and current residents are not asked to continue bearing the consequences of decades of underinvestment in greenspace, playgrounds, and schools.

We need the City to honor and prioritize its commitment to the previously promised funding by the Mayor's Office to ensure equitable development. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future.

Sincerely,

Thomas L. Dempsey
Long Island City, NY

Defund the QueensWay, Support QueensLink

Written testimony of Thomas D Matte, MD, MPH

My professional background

I am an environmental epidemiologist and physician with nearly 40 years of public health practice and research experience in government, academia, and non-governmental organizations. Currently, I am an adjunct senior lecturer in Environmental Health Sciences at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. In that capacity, I was appointed by Mayor DeBlasio to the 4th New York City Panel on Climate Change (NPCC4). I led the health working group of that body, and contributed as a lead author on the health chapter of the NPCC4 climate assessment and co-author on two other NPCC4 chapters. Earlier in my career I was an assistant commissioner at the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene where I led air quality and climate and health teams that conducted policy-relevant studies and surveillance. At Vital Strategies, a global health NGO, I worked on projects to reduce health impacts of air pollution and advance healthy mobility policies in cities around the world.

I currently live in Manhattan, but have lived, worked, and commuted in and around New York City since the early 1990s and personally experienced the consequences of poor transit options and car dependence.

Show foresight, don't repeat the mistakes of the past.

Why are large parts of Queens – and indeed much of the NYC metro area - transit deserts today, forcing residents to choose between slow and unreliable transit or the high cost of car ownership or ride hail trips? Where does all the the traffic come from that chokes many neighborhoods, bridges and tunnels even after the modest local improvements congestion pricing produced?

The answer is found in decisions made years ago, when Robert Moses leveraged the public's love of parks to gain control of transportation budgets and policy. We have long been living with the consequences.

Robert Moses was swept up in the car culture of his time. His "parkways" for cars only afforded some middle-class, car-owning families better access to beaches and parks in the region. But transit riders were not among those of Moses saw as deserving better travel options to the beach or anywhere else.

Moses also ignored urban planners who urged him to acquire enough land for building the Long Island Expressway to allow for future construction of rail transit along the median as has been done in other cities. They warned that our large, dense and growing metropolitan area would be doomed to a future of congestion without greatly expanded public transit. That future is our present. And the consequences are felt not only where Moses built for cars and blocked future transit. Traffic congestion in most of our city neighborhoods is caused largely by trips originating or ending in other, car dependent places.

While Moses might be forgiven for not predicting the future, NYC leaders of today must not ignore the lessons of the past. Robert Moses' transportation legacy is not easily undone, but it should not be made worse by rushing ahead with the short-sighted, anti-transit QueensWay plan.

One could be forgiven for believing that NYC Parks, which is leading the QueensWay plan, is haunted by Moses' ghost. Moses' knew how to lock in his parkway and highway designs by establishing "facts on the ground" – starting demolition and building quickly before alternatives could be considered. In the same way, the NYC Parks-led QueensWay will forever block the foresightful QueensLink vision. By contrast, QueensLink will preserve and eventually activate a strategically located rail right of way

and provide better transit, trails, and park space mitigate many harms of car dependence and transit deserts, which I summarize below.

How inadequate transit harms New Yorkers

An oft-cited source on our traffic woes measures congestion at "the geographic scope of a city as defined by its road network density, more akin to a metropolitan area" and shows that New York City's traffic congestion is not limited to midtown or to trips to and from it. Residents of so-called "transit deserts" in the outer boroughs and suburbs experience congestion whether they commute to midtown Manhattan or elsewhere around the NYC metro area.

Traffic congestion is just one of several ways that a lack of access to fast and reliable public transit harms the wellbeing of New Yorkers.

Those unable to drive or afford a car, taxis, or ride-hail trips and who live far from the subway have less access to education, services, and better jobs to help them afford to live here.

Car-dependent households with middle or lower incomes who are also harmed by a lack of affordable, reliable, safe, and healthy transportation options. Car ownership and operation is much more costly than transit. It represents the second greatest household expense after housing.

The health and social burdens of car dependence are insidious, large, and growing. Long, congested, frustrating drives mean less time for family, socializing, sleep, and exercise. Drivers miss out on large health benefits from physical activity built into active commutes by foot, bike, and transit. The latter typically involves one of the other two active modes to get to and from stations and stops. The generous health dividend of active commuting includes greater fitness, healthier weight, reduced risk of multiple

chronic physical and mental health conditions, and mortality rates reduced by 5 to 10 percent or more.

In fact, substantial mode shifts away from driving to active mobility could yield population health benefits far greater than air quality improvements from electric cars. Car dependence also makes it harder to create streets safe for pedestrians and cyclists, depriving children of the health and learning benefits that walking or cycling to school could provide.

Our transit system is our greenest resource. By replacing many car trips and reducing vehicle miles traveled, plays a critical role in the low per-household greenhouse gas emissions in many NYC neighborhoods relative to the suburbs. But transit has not improved enough to prevent a 17% increase in passenger vehicle miles driven within the city and an 11% increase in the energy they consume from 2013 through 2023, according to NYC's own emissions inventory.

Car dependence also means more street space, land, and pavement devoted to moving and parking cars. The asphalt required amplifies the urban heat island and increases flooding risk during extreme rain events, as noted in the most recent assessment of the New York City Panel on Climate Change.

There is no reason to think that congestion pricing alone can address congestion across the outer boroughs. And while the mayor should be lauded for moving bus priority measures forward, even the best bus service cannot match the speed and space efficiency of our subway system.

Reducing car dependence and traffic congestion requires providing drivers across the five boroughs transportation options that are faster, safer, more reliable, and much less costly than the costs of owning or leasing and operating one or more private motor

vehicles. Better transit, protected cycling routes, and safer streets for pedestrians are all needed. QueensLink can enable all of that. QueensWay can't.

I urge the Council to show vision and foresight and apply the lessons of history. Defund the QueensWay and support QueensLink.

Testimony in Support of Funding for Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE) and New School Construction in Queens North

Good afternoon Chairperson and members of the Council.

My name is Tiloma Jayasinghe, and I am a parent of two students at the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE) in Long Island City. I am here today to urge the City to honor its commitments to students and families in our community.

First, I ask that the City protect the funding already allocated to ensure BSGE can successfully relocate to its new site. Families, students, and school leadership have spent years advocating for a permanent home that meets the needs of this exceptional school community. The City made a commitment to BSGE, and that commitment must be reflected in the final budget. Any reduction or delay in funding would jeopardize years of planning and undermine the trust families have placed in the City.

Second, I urge the Council to support the broader educational needs of Queens North by ensuring that the Office of Management and Budget allocates the estimated $519 million needed by the School Construction Authority to build the promised new schools in our district: a 600-seat middle school and two 650-seat elementary schools.

These projects are not luxuries—they are essential infrastructure investments. Our community continues to grow at a rapid pace, with thousands of new families moving into western Queens. Yet the school capacity needed to serve those families has not kept pace with development. Without these new seats, overcrowding will worsen, students will lose access to critical resources, and families will bear the consequences of promises left unfulfilled.

The City has repeatedly acknowledged the need for these schools and committed to delivering them. Now is the time to follow through. As you make budget decisions, I urge you to protect funding for BSGE's relocation and provide the resources necessary to build the new schools our community has been promised.

Our students deserve learning environments that are safe, adequately sized, and equipped for their success. Keeping these commitments is not only an investment in our children—it is an investment in the future of New York City.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Tiloma Jayasinghe
[redacted]

From: Gmail
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Defunding of Manhattan Youth at PPAS
Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2026 7:40:58 AM

[redacted]

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing as a parent of a student at PPAS to express my strong support for Manhattan Youth and to urge the City Council and DYCD to reconsider the decision to defund the after-school program for the upcoming school year.

The Manhattan Youth after-school program has been an essential part of our school community and Ms Andrea is a core part of our children's school experience. It provides students with a safe, structured, and enriching environment after school while giving working families reliable childcare and peace of mind. Beyond supervision, the program offers academic support, enrichment activities, social development, and a sense of community that many of our children depend on every day.

For many PPAS families, losing this program would create a serious hardship. Families rely on these services to maintain work schedules, and students benefit tremendously from the consistency, mentorship, and opportunities Manhattan Youth provides. Programs like this are not optional extras — they are critical supports that help children thrive both academically and emotionally.

We are deeply concerned about the contracting and funding decisions that have placed this valued program at risk. We respectfully ask the City Council's Committee on Finance and Committee on Children and Youth to fully examine the handling of this process and prioritize continued funding for programs that directly serve New York City families and students.

The outpouring of support from PPAS parents demonstrates how meaningful and impactful Manhattan Youth has been in our community. We hope our voices will be heard and that this program can continue serving our children next year and beyond.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to New York City students and families.

Sincerely,

Tina Gupta
PPAS Parent

Sent from my iPhone

I'm a New Yorker who cares for cats in my neighborhood, and I'm asking the city to fund $1.5 million for community cat spay/neuter programs and pet food pantries. Right now, more than half of New Yorkers can't afford a basic veterinary visit, and the gap between what our animals need and what the city provides is devastating. NYC spends just $2.98 per person on animal care, among the lowest of any major U.S. city. Meanwhile, 193,000 spay/neuter surgeries are needed annually for community cats and pets whose owners can't afford them. The city currently funds only 3,500. Families are surrendering animals they love because they have no other option, adding even more pressure to an already overwhelmed rescue community and shelter system.

This funding would change that. No New Yorker should have to choose between feeding themselves and feeding their pet. When cost barriers are removed, animals stay in their homes, adoptions increase, and preventable euthanasia decreases. Fewer cats suffer outdoors. Affordable spay/neuter and access to food keep animals where they belong, with the people who love them. This is a modest, targeted investment with an enormous return, and our communities, human and animal alike, are counting on the city to make it.

Thank you
Tori Hinn

Thank you, members of the Finance Committee and the Mental Health and Disabilities Committee.

My name is Tracy Kernan and I am here today representing YAI. We were founded in Brooklyn in 1957 and have evolved to support over 20,000 people with autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, and other developmental disabilities. Our range of support includes clinical services, crisis intervention, day services, education, employment support, socialization programs, and residential services. Although we have grown, YAI remains driven by our mission of living, loving, working, and learning.

Through your generous support, YAI provides services through 4 initiatives.

The autism initiative empowers Spanish speaking parents to know their rights. Parents and caregivers learn stress reduction, gain advocacy skills, and navigate complex service systems. Autistic artists share their passions with the world and gain employment skills at YAI Arts.

Birth parents navigating ACS develop tools, gain skills, and have a better understanding of their child's disability through the children under five initiative.

The Older Adults Mental Health Services initiative brings Young at Heart to life. Older adults with developmental disabilities find community, dance, sing, mingle, create, and connect. After all, what is life without fun!

Lastly, artists with disabilities and behavioral health needs find solace in art through YAI Arts, part of the Mental Health Services for vulnerable populations initiative. They learn to weave and sew, create short films, and explore the world of therapeutic art.

But we can and will do more. We intend to expand programs funded by these initiatives to support New Yorkers from across the city. Their backgrounds are diverse; they have a variety of support needs and are at different stages of life. But they all deserve to live, love, work, and learn in their community.

Record levels of people with disabilities are seeking support, but they face barriers to services at the state and federal level, with Medicaid funding not covering crucial programs. Your support is critical to filling service gaps. Thank you.

From: Tran Jacinto
To: Testimony; Speaker Menin; Lee, Linda
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Written Testimony for FY2026 Executive Budget Hearing - Finance Committee & General Budget
Date: Friday, April 3, 2026 12:09:48 PM

[redacted]

Apologies, I forgot to include that I am a resident of Bensonhurst, Brooklyn. I look forward to your response regarding this $1.22B budget cuts efficiency plan.

On Fri, Apr 3, 2026 at 12:05 PM Tran Jacinto [redacted] wrote:

> Dear Speaker Menin & Finance Chair Lee,
>
> To help close the $5.4 billion budget gap without austerity, I propose a $1.22B efficiency package, which the cuts and efficiency package must be as follows:
>
> Cut High-Cost Consultants ($13M)
> Audit Health Plan Dependents ($100M)
> Reduce Office Leases ($1M)
> Audit DOE Contracts ($175M)
> Freeze 1yr+ Vacancies ($860M)
> Reform OT & Merge DOCA and Parks ($77M)
>
> This "Efficiency First" shield protects Mayor Mamdani's reputation as the 112th Mayor of NYC. These cuts also prove that the City of New York can protect services while limiting any property tax increase to 3% as an absolute last resort, so I strongly urge Mayor Mamdani and the City Council to agree on these proposed cuts to help close the budget deficit.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Tran Jacinto

Hello, I am writing in opposition of the plan to fund QueensWay's existing Met Hub plan. If built as designed, adding transit later would require demolition of the park, wasting taxpayer dollars, and would likely face strong pushback from local residents.

The Met Hub should be redesigned with the path off to the side of the embankment, which would allow for a continuous connection over the LIRR tracks while leaving space for future transit.

I live in Bushwick and when I see the QueensLink plan, I see new opportunities to experience more of the city I love.

Thank you!

Testimonial Letter to the New York City Council Committee on Finance

June 10, 2026

Thank you to Chair Linda Lee and the City Council Committee members for your support and contributions on finance and budgeting across New York City. I'm writing to support Queenslink's plan – calling on the city and state to further improve transit reliability and accessibility for New Yorkers. My name is Valentino Salamanca, and I'm a resident of the District 28 area in Queens County.

The mission of Queenslink is to reduce commute times and have more options for modes of transportation. Similarly to the Interborough Express (IBX), the project uses an existing railway that would not need to cause demolition or displacement for any residents in the surrounding area, and would be off to a great start if any reconsiderations are made. Through this, Queenslink would bring the concept of rails and trails to life, with both being able to coexist in one space.

To start with the current problem, the current fastest route from the North Side of Queens to the South Side is using the Q52 and Q53 Select Bus Services, and there are often issues of delays and congestion along the route it follows on Woodhaven and Cross Bay Boulevard. Even with the "Bus Only" lanes in place on these roads, there are still issues with congestion and overcrowding on these buses.

Between here and having to commute to the south to visit family and friends, it adds more time to the commute and sometimes to the point of not being able to board the

buses due to overcrowding issues. This can be said the same way vice versa, with the North Side being a more central focal hub for Queens in the past decade, and with poor connectivity with transit between both parts.

This issue should be addressed with concerns of Queensway being the planned project between the two. It should be noted that surrounding areas that Queensway plans to add parks and more green spaces to already have a good amount of forestation, such as Forest Park and Flushing Meadows Corona Park, for instance, already exist as parks and environmentally friendly spaces. The goal should now be to focus on harmful factors that impact the environment, including carbon emissions from traffic congestion on roadways around the areas. Queenslink would help reduce the number of cars on the road and help tackle an issue that impacts the environment detrimentally.

Sincerely,
Valentino Salamanca

Written_Testimony

NYC spends just $2.98 per person on Animal Care among the lowest of any major US city. Funding spay/neuter services is a plan with long term results, fewer stray cats will be suffering outdoors.

I urge you to support funding for both a $1.5 million spay/neuter assistance program and a $2 million pet pantry program. As someone who is in the field every day caring for community cats, I see firsthand how urgently these investments are needed.

I currently feed and monitor more than 10 community cats in my neighborhood every day. I spend over $500 each month out of my own pocket on food and supplies, and I must maintain at least $1,000 in reserve for emergency veterinary care, trapping equipment, transportation, and other unexpected situations that inevitably arise. While I am committed to helping these animals for as long as i can, private citizens cannot solve this crisis alone. It is not sustainable.

Pet pantry programs help keep animals in their homes by providing temporary support during difficult times. Every family that can afford to keep their pet because of a pet pantry is one less animal entering shelters or being abandoned outdoors. Spay and neuter programs address the problem at its source and reduce future suffering, shelter intake, and taxpayer costs.

I witness the consequences of underinvestment every day: hungry animals, overwhelmed caregivers, overcrowded shelters, and preventable suffering. These proposed investments are not only compassionate, they are practical and cost-effective solutions that will benefit animals, residents, shelters, and communities alike.

I respectfully ask you to fully fund these programs and help address this crisis before it grows even larger.

Dear Members of the City Council,

I am writing to express my strong support for the after-school program at Wagner Middle School operated by Manhattan Youth and to respectfully ask that you reconsider any decision to change the current after-school provider.

For the past eight years, Manhattan Youth has been an important part of the Wagner Middle School community. As a parent, I have seen firsthand the tremendous positive impact this program has had on students and families.

Two of my children have participated in the Manhattan Youth after-school program during their time at Wagner, and I can honestly say that their school experience would not have been the same without it. The program has provided them with enriching activities, opportunities to build friendships, a safe and supportive environment after school, and experiences that helped them grow both academically and personally.

The after-school program has become a valued and trusted part of our family's life. My third child will soon be attending Wagner, and she is already excited about the opportunities available through Manhattan Youth because of everything she has heard from her older siblings. The continuity of this program is important not only for current students but also for incoming families who look forward to being part of the same positive experience.

Manhattan Youth has built strong relationships within the Wagner community over many years. Replacing a provider that has successfully served students and families for nearly a decade would disrupt a program that has consistently delivered meaningful benefits.

I respectfully urge you to reconsider any plans to change Wagner Middle School's after-school provider and to allow Manhattan Youth to continue serving our children. The program has made a lasting difference in the lives of many students, including my own, and I hope future Wagner families will have the opportunity to enjoy the same experience.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to supporting our schools and students.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Vila

Parent of Wagner Middle School Students

Thank you, Chair Lee and members of the committee, for holding this hearing on the FY '27 preliminary budget as it relates to mental health, disabilities and addiction. Please accept this in place of my inability to testify today.

My name is **Victor M Herrera,** and I am **a leader and member of Freedom Agenda**. I am here today to testify about the need for substantial investments in the behavioral health continuum of care with an emphasis on the need for Re-Entry services for the many people being discharged from Rikers Island and in ATI's and diversion.

At a cost of nearly half a million dollars per person per year, Rikers Island is the most expensive and least effective tool our city needs and must create community safety. The FY2027 Executive Budget includes some key steps toward reining in jail operation costs and reinvesting those savings in true public safety. And to Close Rikers as quickly as possible, we'll need to do more. To align the FY2027 budget with the City's legal and moral obligation to Close Rikers, it must include:

1. An additional $39.2M to meet mental health needs outside of Rikers, including:

a. At least $66.3M, baselined, for Intensive Mobile Treatment (IMT) teams, $22M more than the Executive Budget allocates, which should eliminate the current waitlist.
b. At least $23.8M, baselined, for Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), $4.5M more than the Executive Budget allocates.
c. At least $6M, baselined, for Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT), $2M more than the Executive Budget allocates, which provides both mental health and reentry services to people returning from jail and prison.

My testimony is based on my own Brother's recent experience. Currently a participant with Justice Innovations, set for a transitional plan that included his rehabilitation and entry into the Ready, Willing & Able program, the plan was met with a restrictive requirement that ended with his hopes dashed and a return to self-medicating his mental health crisis. Faced with no hope, he ventured into a terrible lifestyle of addiction and unhoused once again. Seeing no hope, he has been missing from my life since Mother's Day, May 10, 2026. I have been my brother's keeper since the inception, and he has always depended on my assistance and advocacy. As a lived experience person, I can relate with his concerns and now demand that more must be done to ensure that the necessary funding and investments are made toward:

2. An additional $47.2M for diversion and reentry services through the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ), including:
a. $10M in new funds for ATI programs and $10M in new funds for Reentry Services, as recommended by the ATI/Reentry Coalition, to scale up these evidence-based models.
b. $6.9M to expand programs serving court-involved youth with mental health needs.
c. $20.3M to establish at least 150 units of low-barrier housing for people with court-involvement and mental health diagnoses.
d. OCJ should also publish an analysis of the full need for transitional reentry housing, and conduct a data match to generate an updated eligibility list for Justice Impacted Supportive Housing (JISH), a permanent reentry housing model.
3. An additional $3.6M to restore cuts to the Board of Correction (BOC), and expand their oversight capacity. The Executive Budget shows $605,000 in cuts to BOC's budget. These cuts are unwise and unnecessary. The Board of Correction has testified that they need at least 60 staff roles (29 more than the Executive Budget includes) to carry out their oversight responsibilities, as a first step to right sizing their budget. Expanding BOC's capacity could not only improve conditions in

the jails, but also protect the city from future liability, like the $123 million dollars paid out in FY2025 for claims against DOC.

If not for the lack of identifying the specific needs of the individual re-entering, my brother would not be experiencing his current episode. Effectively informing the community requires clear communication, tailored messaging, and the use of multiple channels to reach diverse audiences. The Department of Social Services IDNYC Program:

The IDNYC Card Program is run by HRA to provide government-issued photo IDs to New Yorkers, especially those who may not have traditional ID documents.

HRA accepts a wide range of documents as proof of identity and residency, including internal verification documents from the Department of Social Services for active clients NYC Rules.

The program is designed to serve vulnerable populations, such as unhoused individuals, formerly incarcerated people, and young New Yorkers. However, the lack of communicating tailored messages has led to a failed system of prevention, and my brother is now at risk of non-compliance and re-incarceration. DOC remains over-resourced and these concerns are seriously undermining the need for resources that are suitable for the reduction of the Jail population through robust re-entry services that begin with those unhoused, detained and incarcerated people reintegrating into the community. Many other states have followed this city's model on closure and have successfully closed or stopped the construction of old ideas of detention and incarceration, transitioning to more humane centered ideas for people coming across the unfair and unjust criminal justice apparatus. Rikers Island must close, and more investment into re-entry and community resources should be this council committee conclusion. Thank you.

Victor M Herrera

June 9, 2026

Dear City Council,

My name is Victoria Law. I am a lifelong New Yorker. I grew up in Queens where my parents, who both immigrated here, didn't have a lot of money for books but still managed to instill a love of reading through constant use of the public library. My first job, while still in high school, was at the Queens Public Library which further cemented my appreciation of books and learning. This was key since I was zoned to an under-performing high school where both drop outs and gang recruitment were rampant. Were it not for this early love of reading and learning, I might have joined those unfortunate numbers.

When I had a child of my own, I too didn't have a lot of money to buy books. Instead, we visited our local New York Public Libraries first to borrow books that I would read to her and, a handful of years later, that she could pick out for herself to read at home. As I'm sure you know, libraries are crucial to instilling a love of reading and learning in young children--a love that continues into adulthood. While we are fortunate enough to have our own computers and internet, I see that many rely on the libraries for these crucial resources--for homework, job searching and other necessary activities.

Today, my (adult) daughter maintains a love of both reading and libraries.

As an emerging writer, I too relied on the New York Public Library system for research books which enabled me to publish my first book in 2009. I continue to go to NYPL for both research purposes and for more leisurely reading. Without the library, I might not be a journalist and author (of several books) today.

I am writing to ask the City Council to support the demand that the city allocate 0.5% (or half of 1 percent) of the expense budget to our public libraries annually. The proposed executive budget released on May 12th is $526 million, which is just 0.42% of the overall city budget, does not keep up with the 3.8% inflation rate and is $97 million short of Mamdani's campaign promise of 0.5% of the city budget.

I am asking our City Council to vote for increased and STABLE funding for our public library systems. Libraries are essential democratic institutions and are being asked every single year to do more with not enough funding. The current budget will mean shorter hours (which will most impact New Yorkers who already have scant resources), understaffing and fewer resources (books and other materials) within the libraries themselves.

Thank you so much for your consideration. I hope that you will vote to fully fund our libraries.

Sincerely,
Victoria Law
[redacted], NY NY 10009

From: Victoria Woods
To: Testimony
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Submitting written Testimony for Girls Inc
Date: Friday, June 12, 2026 9:25:23 AM

[redacted]

Submitting written Testimony for Girls Inc
Hearing: Wednesday June 10 9:30am Committee on Finance

I was in girls inc for 3 years, 6th through 8th grade. Girls inc was where most of my favorite memories were made in middle school. I learned so much, laughed so much, and it was truly an unforgettable experience. all the lessons I learned, I have brought them with me to high school. Sometimes, girls inc was the only reason I wanted to go to school. Girls inc developed me in a way I didn't think was possible. I became more confident, more aware, and overall more of the person I am today.

Victoria Woods
(Current 9th grade student)



Good afternoon, my name is Victoria, and I'm a youth leader with Make the Road New York. I'm an eighth grader at a middle school in Queens. Council Member Thomas-Henry represents where I live and where I go to school.

Last year I had problems with another girl in my grade, and it went on basically the whole school year. I felt so overwhelmed, and I didn't know what to do. I was in a very dark place, and what I really needed was someone to listen to me and understand me. There are more school police in than guidance counselors and social workers combined. That's not right. I shouldn't be forced to interact with school police more often than I get the chance to meet with a counselor.

Cops do not make me feel safe - not in my community and not in my school. I believe that the entire conflict with this person could have been prevented if there had been a social worker at school I trusted or a restorative justice counselor, who could have mediated things between us before things got so far. School is a space where all young people should feel safe, seen and supported. There is no evidence that school police have prevented conflicts in schools. In reality, school cops usually escalate any conflict, which makes the situation worse.

Young people like me deal with so many issues at home, and it always impacts us in school. My parents divorced when I was nine years old, and now it's just my mom, my sister, and me. When they got divorced, I stopped participating in class and stopped doing my homework. Because of that, my grades started going down. If we invested more money in social workers, guidance counselors, and restorative justice counselors, more students like me would get the help we need and deserve.

With a new mayor, we have an opportunity to do better. I'm calling on the City Council to stop hiring new school cops and cut the current hundreds of vacant school cop positions. If we did that, we could immediately have $100 million dollars. With all that money, our city could then invest in what actually helps young people feel safe: fully-funded schools, mental health counselors, and after-school programs. When we prioritize the education of young people, we build safer and stronger communities for everyone. Invest in young people, not school cops. Thank you.

Dear Committee Members,

As a voting resident and citizen of Queens for the past 20 years, I have a very deep understanding of how important it is to have good transit options. And frankly, compared to Brooklyn, the reach of our subway system is terrible, and we have very limited ways of getting to our friends in Brooklyn. I am happy to be in Queens, where I feel like my housing is affordable and I have access to a greenmarket and good food. I live in a neighborhood with multiple subway lines and an LIRR station. You'd think this would be good enough, but it takes an hour to go almost anywhere in Brooklyn. And there are parts of Queens that are basically inaccessible to me, despite having some nearby bus lines as well. To the communities who aren't sure what it would mean to have real public transit come through their neighborhoods where cars are the only way: let me point you to Forest Hills where I live. It's a testament to the way these railroad access points bring people of all kinds together and allow businesses and people to thrive without detracting from the character and beauty of the place.

To my representatives in various capacities: Queens will clearly benefit from a north-south subway line for transit purposes alone. The fact that it would come with park space and protected bike lanes makes it a no-brainer and superior to the Queens Way Please represent our interests and make the better choice in this budget. The QueensLink is what we need and deserve.

Sincerely,

Vimala C. Pasupathi

Forest Hills, Queens

6/13/2026

TO: New York City Council — Finance Committee
RE: Defund the QueensWay and support the QueensLink, preserve the Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way for both transit and parks

Dear Chairperson Lee and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Vincent Xie, and I am a native New Yorker born and raised in Southern Brooklyn. I am writing to ask the Finance Committee to defund the $43 million allocated in the budget for phase one of the **QueensWay**, a parks only proposal also referred to as the Met Hub project and put their support into **QueensLink**, a park and train proposal which would bring both new subway service and new parkland to Queens by reactivating the former Rockaway Beach Branch for north and south travel within central Queens.

Why this matters to me

As a resident of Southern Brooklyn I am fortunate in that I live in an area that has good public transportation/train access. I believe that all boroughs should also have good public transportation/train access and I recognize that there is a transit equity issue, this is why I voted for Zohran Mamdani, our current mayor as he campaigned on the promise of addressing the affordability issue of transit equity. As his team once said “Public transit should be reliable, safe and universally accessible”, running on the promise of making buses free and supporting the QueensLink. So I was immensely disappointed when I learned that not only did he abandon the QueensLink, he turned his back over to QueensWay, the parks only project purposely designed to block transit. This contradicts everything he campaigned for.

As someone who has had to attend events in areas along the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch, it is often difficult to get there because the buses are often full and cramped, prompting me to wait for another bus, hoping it isn’t full. And usually my trips to that part of Queens before I get to transfer to a bus often takes about 1 hour and 50 minutes. So I am at the mercy of the bus showing up within the next 10 minutes before my transfer expires and more often than not, it does take more than 10 minutes, prompting me to spend another fare, it shouldn’t take me 2 fares just to go in one direction.

Having the QueensLink would’ve helped me with that issue as I would be able to transfer to it and get off at 1 of their 4 proposed stations that are close to my destination venue.

How the QueensLink aligns with Mayor Mamdani's agendas

Affordability

As Mayor Mamdani stated in his campaign, "**Public transit should be reliable, safe and universally accessible.**"
https://web.archive.org/web/20260219171353/https://www.zohranfornyc.com/platform
While he's specifically using this for his free buses agenda, this quote could also apply to train access as it ultimately tackles the same issue, transit equity.

QueensLink aligns with Mayor Mamdani's transit equity agenda as:

- QueensLink aims to create 4 new train stations in areas that are transit deserts and under served from train access.
- The 4 new stations will serve a population of approximately 330,000 in 14 neighborhoods.
- Reactivation of the Rockway Beach Branch will also connect the M train to the Rockaways replacing the Far Rockaway Shuttle that serves the left side of the Rockaways, offering more 1 seat ride options.
- Furthermore, it will also connect the M train to more transfer points such as the A, J, and Z lines, creating more circumferential transit options to the overall subway system.
- Supporting QueensLink helps the Mayor's mission to make "**Public transit … reliable, safe and universally accessible.**"

Green Space/Green Initiatives

Mayor Mamdani in his campaign and during his term has pushed initiatives that tackle improving green space and climate change. Creating new and refurbishing green space allows for trees and certain plants that can absorb CO2 to convert them into O2 that we can breathe.

Back in March, Mayor Mamdani announced that he would invest $50 Million to Reconstruct 10 Parks in Underserved Neighborhoods: https://www.nyc.gov/mayors-office/news/2026/03/mayor-mamdani-announces--50-million-capital-investment-to-recons

In that article it states that "**Reduced stress levels among residents who frequently used renovated parks, suggesting that high-quality parks are a key condition for realizing the mental health benefits of regular park use.**"

Also in his campaign, he has an initiative called Green Schools for a Healthier New York City: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EE0TS9OtIn_uthXC0F831Kxoz5k2HA6G7yaXyNx_994/edit?tab=t.g1jotssk9q8x

In that Google Doc it states that "**The Mamdani administration will fight to protect New Yorkers from the present and future impacts of the climate crisis…**"

QueensLink aligns with Mayor Mamdani's Green Space/Green Initiatives agenda as:

- Building the QueensLink doesn't only build new rails and train stations, it also builds new green spaces.
- Not only will the QueensLink add new green space but also help fight the climate crisis by redirecting people who would normally do north and south travel on Woodhaven Boulevard onto trains, which would relieve vehicle congestion resulting in getting approximately 4.7 million car trips off the road annually and reduce 7,200 tons of CO2 emissions.
- Some of these new green spaces in the QueensLink will connect to existing parks such as Forest Park which resides along the abandoned right of way just like the QueensWay, adding to the overall park.
- These 4 new stations could also unlock access to these renovated green schools by providing public transit access to get to these schools.

Housing

As Mayor Mamdani stated in his campaign, “This planning will allow NYC to address the legacy of racially discriminatory zoning, **increase density near transit hubs**, end the requirement to build parking lots and proactively chart our future.”
https://web.archive.org/web/20260219171353/https://www.zohranfornyc.com/platform

He also said, “**Supporting climate sustainability and accessibility. By encouraging growth around subway stations and other public transit hubs across New York City, we will create a greener city.**”
https://web.archive.org/web/20260221204250/https://www.zohranfornyc.com/policies/housing-by-and-for-new-york

QueensLink aligns with Mayor Mamdani’s Housing agenda as:

- Creating these 4 new train stations, you could build more affordable housing around them, increasing “**density near transit hubs**”

There are also current plans to build housing on the vacant Aqueduct RaceTrack which the A Line currently serves. The A Line currently doesn’t run A trains frequently enough to meet future demand, but having the M train run along the A Line will help relieve congestion from the train platforms and make the housing complex more attractive to prospective tenants.

Mayor Mamdani has also announced the “South of Prospect Neighborhood Plan” which would rezone commercial corridors of McDonald and Coney Island avenues, as well as surrounding blocks, for taller buildings and more housing development. Mayor Mamdani could use the same logic and process, and apply it to the QueensLink.

Overall, the QueensLink proposal hits 3 birds with 1 stone, this one proposal fulfills 3 of his agendas that being Affordability, Green Space/Green Initiatives, and Housing. Meanwhile the QueensWay proposal only fulfills the Green Space agenda and not as impactful on the green/climate initiatives side. It also goes against the Affordability and Housing agendas.

There have been talks on the internet that Mayor Mamdani wants PR wins and sees this as one. This is not a PR win, in fact this is a PR loss. Back in 2024 Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. conducted a survey from his districts and found that 75% of his constituents wanted QueensLink, meanwhile only 22% wanted QueensWay and 3% said neither. https://qns.com/2024/07/addabbo-poll-neighbors-queenslink-prostitution-law/ This shows how much his constituents want and possibly need better train access. If Mayor Mamdani really wanted a PR win, he should’ve chosen the project that the majority wanted, not the project the minority wanted.

Why the QueensLink is the right choice

Two competing concepts exist for the deactivated Rockaway Beach Branch right-of-way: the park-only QueensWay, and the dual-purpose QueensLink, which combines subway and park uses. The QueensWay would be built directly on the former railbed, which would virtually eliminate the possibility of ever restoring transit there. The MTA itself recognized in its 2023 20-Year Needs Assessment that a linear park along the corridor would create a challenge for any future transit alternatives. Once a rail right-of-way is converted to other uses, it almost never returns to transit.

The QueensLink would create the first north-south subway line in Queens, extending the M line south from Rego Park to Ozone Park and then over the A train tracks to the Rockaways — increasing service to the Rockaways by up to 165%. It would also let the G train run all the way to Forest Hills, increasing capacity on the crowded Queens Boulevard local lines by 50% and connecting central Queens with north Queens and Brooklyn.

A study by the Steer Group found that the QueensLink would remove millions of vehicle trips each year, making streets safer and lowering harmful emissions, while adding up to 33 acres of new parks and trails integrated with the subway design. Over 20 years, the study concluded the project would more than pay for itself by creating jobs, saving New Yorkers time, and reducing healthcare costs tied to air pollution and traffic crashes.

Queens needs parks and trains. The QueensLink would provide both. I urge the Committee to preserve this irreplaceable right-of-way for future transit and to support the QueensLink.

If you're going to do something, do it right the first time. Build a solid foundation first. If we have to rip up the foundation in the future, then it wasn't a solid foundation to begin with.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,
Vincent Xie

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a decade-long Long Island City resident and parent of two young children to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

LIC has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, Kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, and yet most area schools are already operating over capacity: P.S. 112 at **130%**, and P.S./I.S. 78 at **111%**. What is more, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City — Court Square — still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message to families is clear: you may not be guaranteed a school seat in your neighborhood.

I would also like to express urgent concern about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed school project. In a neighborhood where families are struggling today to secure local school placements, this project, along with other promised school construction projects in LIC, cannot continue to fall behind competing priorities. While I appreciate the creation of an incubation site for Q508 (Q439Q), a temporary solution cannot become a justification for continued delays to the permanent facility. Families were promised a permanent neighborhood school, with the full facilities and long-term stability that a dedicated school building provides. An incubation site may help relieve short-term pressure, but it does not address the broader and growing need for permanent school infrastructure in LIC.

Additionally, the current lease for the Baccalaureate School for Global Education (BSGE, Q580) is set to expire in just three years. Families have been assured that the school would be relocated so that it can continue serving students without disruption. We are appreciative that the budget includes funding for BSGE. However, we want to emphasize that it is critical that the City follow through on this commitment and move urgently to secure a permanent home for the school. Allowing delays to continue would create significant uncertainty for students and families and risks the loss of an important educational institution in a neighborhood already facing a severe shortage of school seats. The City must prioritize funding and planning for BSGE's relocation now to ensure continuity and stability for the community.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has also recognized the need for additional schools to support the neighborhood's rapid growth. Specifically, commitments were made to advance development of a school at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard. Creation of two additional schools has also been promised to create 1,300 more seats in conjunction with the planned construction of over 14,000 residential units. As more housing is developed through OneLIC, school construction must move in parallel — not years behind residential growth. Without firm commitments and accountability around these promised schools, the existing seat crisis will only intensify.

Delays to the opening of these schools are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and more families pushed out of the neighborhood because they cannot rely on access to local public schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency, accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508 and other promised schools on schedule. Schools aren't just a service—they're the foundation of a stable, thriving neighborhood.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City's future. Please ensure that timely funding is delivered to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority for the completion of these projects.

We love our neighborhood and would love to be able to send our children to school where they live.

Sincerely,
Viveca Tress, Parent and Resident of Hunters Point/11109

June, 10, 2026

Dear Committee on Finance,

I am personally urging you to support funding for animals in New York City. I moved to Staten Island thirteen years ago, and began to TNR (trap, neuter, return) the cats when a mother cat left her sick and almost blind kittens in my backyard. I rescued them but had a very difficult time finding a rescue that was not full to take them. I then had the mother cat spayed and continued to trap and fix the cats. In total, over the past three years, I have TNRed over 30 cats and rescued at least 10 kittens.

I would not have been about to TNR these cats if it weren't the generous funding I received from Neighborhood Cats. The grants provide funding for the neuter/spay, rabies shot, and ear tip. If other expenses are needed (like Revolution or the distemper shot), the trapper personally covers them, but without help, the cost is prohibitory.

There are still so many homeless cats in my neighborhood and elsewhere on Staten Island and in New York in general. I have learned through my work that these cats are no different from cats that have homes. They are not meant to live in the unpredictable and cruel outdoor environment. I am urging you to provide funds so that I, along with other people who care for animals, can continue this work to help reduce the feral cat population. Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

Wendy Becker

To Whom it May Concern:

I strongly urge the Mayor's Office to reconsider the proposed elimination of the $8.9 million in funding for the New Visions Portal. As a NYC Public School Principal with over twenty years of experience of a combined middle and high school, I have witnessed firsthand the critical role this system plays in supporting student success and school operations.

The New Visions Portal provides educators, counselors, and administrators with efficient access to essential reports and data that directly inform student support and academic decision-making. Counselors rely on the portal to accurately track student credits and monitor progress toward graduation requirements. Administrators and school staff use attendance reports to identify patterns of absenteeism and intervene early with students who may be at risk. As educators know, attendance is one of the strongest indicators of academic achievement, and timely access to this information is vital to improving student outcomes.

At the middle school level, the portal is equally indispensable. It provides immediate access to state assessment results and screening data, enabling educators to identify learning gaps, target interventions, and monitor student growth. Without this streamlined reporting system, schools would face significant challenges in accessing and analyzing critical data, resulting in delays that could negatively affect instructional decisions and student support services.

The proposed elimination of funding would not simply remove a technology platform—it would weaken a proven system that helps educators make informed decisions on behalf of students every day. The loss of these reporting capabilities would create inefficiencies, hinder timely interventions, and ultimately impact the educational opportunities and success of our current and future students.

For these reasons, I strongly encourage the Mayor's Office to rethink the elimination of $8.9 million in funding for the New Visions Portal and to continue investing in a resource that is essential to student achievement, accountability, and educational equity.

Professionally Yours,

Wil Morales

June 13, 2026

To our City Council

Hello there!

I'm writing to express my support for the QueensLink project as a resident of Richmond Hill. Here, we have lots of abandoned passenger rail lines that would make getting around our neighborhood in a car-free manner more possible and preferable.

In our neighborhood and especially in those neighborhoods to the south of us, there is so much space, consideration and money spent on cars. Because of this, most feel they are the only and default option. It would be so nice to take some more cars off the road by providing excellent transit, and to move toward the goal of kids feeling safe to play again in our numerous side streets.

Train transit space should not have to compete with park space and vice versa. We have built too much space for cars. Those side-streets could become quiet places if they were only subtly redesigned. They could be considered potential sites for linear parks or made to be two-way dead ends with modal filtering for bikes and pedestrians.

The difference with the Rockaway rail right-of-way is that it's one-of-a-kind and it represents the lowest hanging fruit for a new rail line in our city. If we can't build it at reasonable expense, and in short time, how can we expect to continue any development of transit in NYC?

It's my personal belief that we could build the QueensLink now (despite an over inflated cost estimate by the MTA) and it would still be a benefit to the city. The council can drastically reduce the cost by encouraging structural changes within MTA and DOT. Because the transportation agencies are so reliant on one-time sources of funding (loans, federal and state grants), the MTA has very little to no continuous in-house engineering and construction capability. If they were able to have city funding for such teams that build and keep institutional knowledge year over year, they could begin reducing their reliance on expensive and unreliable contractors. They would have what they need to modernize and build new lines, cost-effectively addressing the

century of deferred progress that we see today.

As I walk around the city and appreciate all the joy and life here, I can't help but notice the artifacts of transit and green space from days gone by. The deficits in the public social equalizers that are transit options and park space stand in stark contrast to all the social progress that we have made in the last century. But, with QueensLink and further projects we can connect our communities, build new trains and parks to be equally as dense as the populations they serve. I would love so much to see some of our hope for better come back to our streetscape. Let's change the city by equally serving every community.

Thanks very much for reading

Dear New York City Council Members,

I am writing as a Long Island City resident and parent to underscore the urgent need to prioritize and deliver the promised funding for Long Island City schools. Our neighborhood has faced a severe school seat shortage for years, yet several promised school projects have been repeatedly delayed despite rapid residential growth and increasing enrollment pressure. I urge the City to commit to the completion of these projects on time.

LIC has been in a school seat crisis for years. In the years to come, Kindergarten seats will be reduced due to class size mandates, and yet most area schools are already operating over capacity: P.S. 112 at **130%**, and P.S./I.S. 78 at **111%**. What is more, one of the fastest-growing residential neighborhoods in New York City — Court Square — still does not have its promised local elementary school. The message to families is clear: you may not be guaranteed a school seat in your neighborhood.

I would also like to express urgent concern about the delayed timeline for Q508 at 23-10 43rd Avenue in Court Square and the need for the City to prioritize funding for this critically needed school project. In a neighborhood where families are struggling today to secure local school placements, this project, along with other promised school construction projects in LIC, cannot continue to fall behind competing priorities. While I appreciate the creation of an incubation site for Q508 (Q439Q), a temporary solution cannot become a justification for continued delays to the permanent facility. Families were promised a permanent neighborhood school, with the full facilities and long-term stability that a dedicated school building provides. An incubation site may help relieve short-term pressure, but it does not address the broader and growing need for permanent school infrastructure in LIC.

The now-approved OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has also recognized the need for additional schools to support the neighborhood's rapid growth. Specifically, commitments were made to advance development of a school at 44-36 Vernon Boulevard. Creation of two additional schools has also been promised to create 1,300 more seats in conjunction with the planned construction of over 14,000 residential units. As more housing is developed through OneLIC, school construction must move in parallel — not years behind residential growth. Without firm commitments and accountability around these promised schools, the existing seat crisis will only intensify.

Delays to the opening of these schools are not simply construction setbacks; they have real consequences for families deciding whether they can remain in this community. Every year of delay means more overcrowding, more uncertainty, and more families pushed out of the neighborhood because they cannot rely on access to local public schools.

We urgently need the City to ensure that the funding previously promised by the Mayor's Office is fully committed and prioritized so construction can move forward without further delay. Timely completion of these schools is essential to addressing the immediate seat shortage and supporting the long-term stability of Long Island City as a family neighborhood. I also ask for transparency, accountability, and a clear commitment to delivering Q508 and other promised schools on schedule. Schools aren't just a service—they're the foundation of a stable, thriving neighborhood.

I would also like to urge the City to restore funding to SEED Intensive Sensory Needs program. As a parent of a developmentally delayed child, I keep having to fight for resources to help him in school. Assessments get delayed, and even after we get the promised serviecs, it's difficult to find DOE therapists. My child constantly risks falling behind. Please do not eliminate the existing developmental programs when we already don't have enough resources to help our children.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Long Island City’s future. Please ensure that timely funding is delivered to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority for the completion of these projects.

Sincerely,

Xiao Lim Parent living in Court Sq, LIC, 11101

I wanted to testify against the inclusion of funding for the QueensWay metropolitan Hub in the current capital budget for New York City. I believe this project has severe implications against future use of the Rockaway Beach Branch to extend subway service from the Rockaways to Queens Boulevard using an abandoned Right-of-Way between Liberty Avenue and the Long Island Rail Road Main Line. The group advocating for this project, Friends of the QueensWay, has previously had on their website that they do not believe the borough needs more trains, and despite updating their talking points to state the park would not block a rail line being installed in the future, has failed to showcase how the project, as currently designed, would not block future transit. The MTA has also previously stated that a park here would need to be removed in order to accommodate a rail extension, and similar rails with trails projects (such as MARTA the Atlanta BeltLine as part of the Streetcar East extension; my aunt lives in this area and I have personally seen the effect a park on a rail right-of-way has had on transit expansion.) have had extensive difficulties getting approval for installing these types of projects with a park already funded.

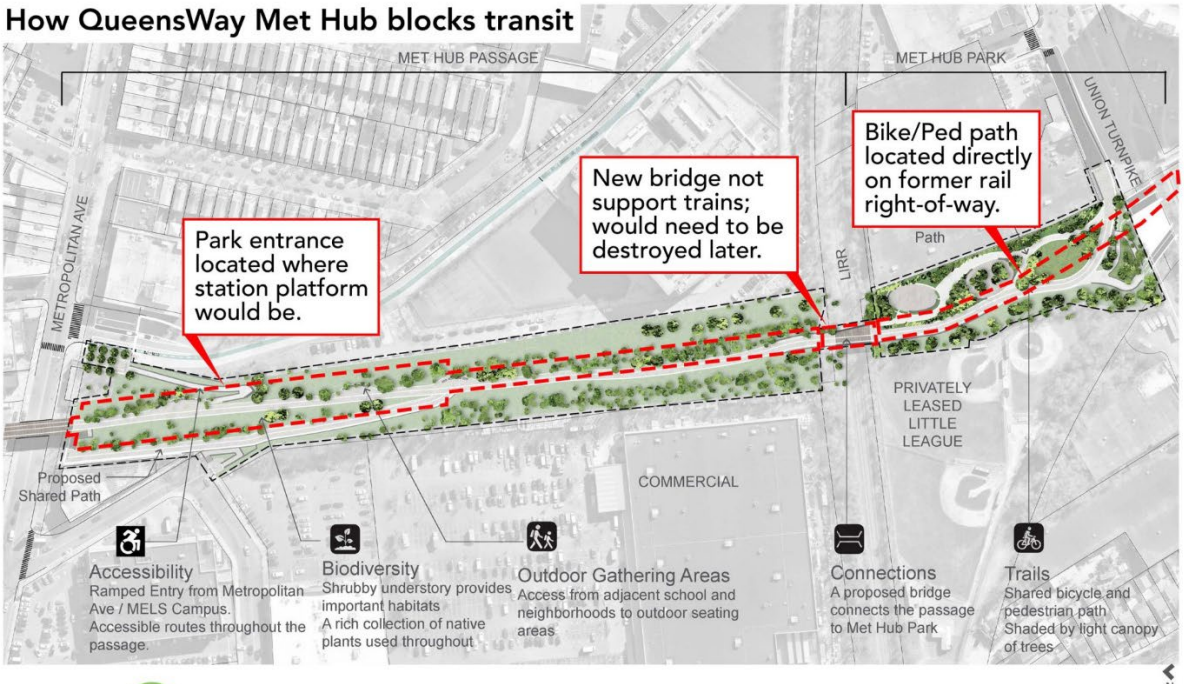
Even if the MTA were to successfully rip out Queensway as it is currently designed, $46 million dollars is a lot of money to spend on a park only for it to be ripped out later. In addition to this, Metropolitan Hub is located adjacent to Forest Park, a very large park that is currently in a poor state of repair. The money being put to fund this park should be put on a pause if it cannot be repurposed towards other parks (such as Forest Park) instead, and the design needs to include the public advocacy groups, the MTA, or (preferably) both, so that a use of the right-of-way that can allow the park to coexist with the rail line can be more easily designed.

It would be a colossal mistake to allow this right-of-way to be lost. With so much development in and around the corridor (such as Resorts World, Aqueduct, and new development on the Citi Field Parking Lots where Shea Stadium once stood), a critical piece of infrastructure that the city owns should not be repurposed as solely parkland as it would disrupt the ability to reinstall trains.

When I first began looking for residency in New York City, the Rockaways was a personal preference of mine. The difficulty of getting to and from the area (in part caused by the lack of rail service on this branch) has made me no longer wish to pursue it in the near future. The buses on Woodhaven Boulevard are crowded and slow. Queens Boulevard is congested and building this project is likely the only way to open adequate capacity, and the IBX will only increase congestion on the line. Please look at all of the factors when deciding on what to do with the right-of-way, and do a better job of communicating with current and prospective residents. A mistake of this magnitude cannot be allowed to happen in its current form.

Thank you,
Ya Sin Supreme Allah

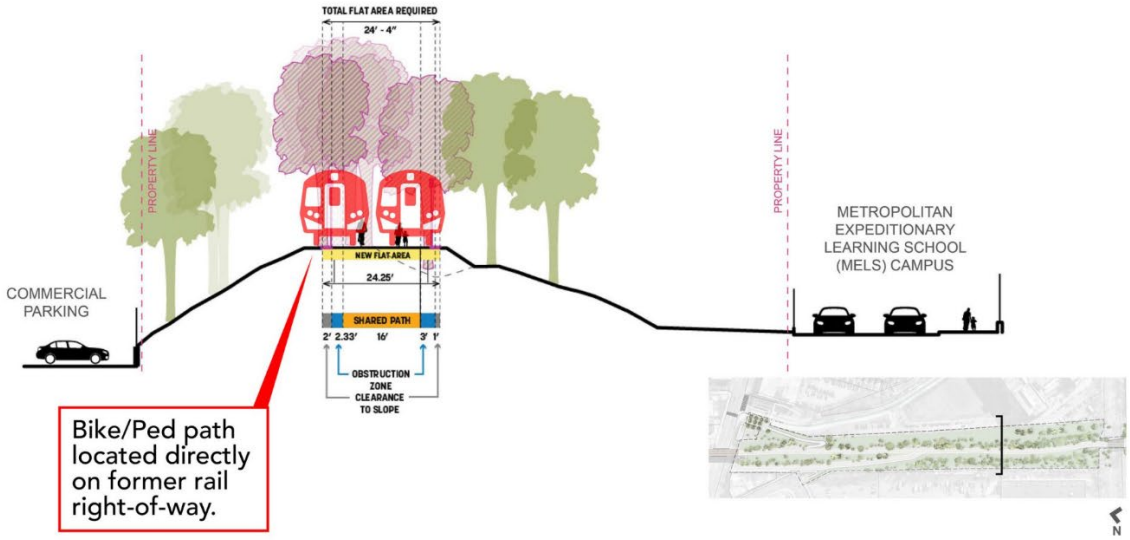
How QueensWay Met Hub blocks transit



NYC/EDC NYC Parks QueensWay: Metropolitan Hub | Key Features

TECHNO SASAKI 20

Embankment Section: 16' Shared Path



NYC/EDC NYC Parks QueensWay: Metropolitan Hub | Embankment Section

TECHNO SASAKI 27

6/10/26 Finance committee public comments on executive budget

---

Im infants parents

Child care provider are vital to our communities. They have a right to thriving wages and benefits for their time and service.

The most important are the funds for infants and children after school whose parents want them in daycare.

I urge all council members to push and vote for a final budget that includes funding to baseline education programs set to expire this year.

Dear Council Members,

My name is Yana Glemaud, and I am the parent of an 11-year-old daughter, Isabelle, who participated in Manhattan Youth at Robert Wagner after-school swimming program.

When Isabelle first joined, she was hesitant because she did not know how to swim and felt uncomfortable in the water. Over time, she has developed strong swimming skills, gained confidence, and learned to challenge herself in ways that extend beyond the pool.

What makes this program special is that it provides children with a structured, supportive environment where they can learn an essential life skill while building confidence, discipline, and resilience. Swimming is not only a recreational activity—it is a critical safety skill that can stay with a child for life.

Programs like this strengthen our community by giving young people positive opportunities after school, encouraging healthy habits, and helping them develop skills that contribute to their long-term well-being.

I have seen firsthand the positive impact this program has had on my daughter, and I hope you will continue to support it so that other children and families can benefit from the same experience.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,

Yana Glemaud



Good afternoon, my name is Yaretzi. I'm 13 years old, I am in the 8th grade, and I am a youth leader at Make the Road New York. I'm here today because I care about my classmates, my community, and making sure young people like me have the support we need to succeed.

As a student, I know what it feels like to be stressed, overwhelmed, and not know where to go for help. There have been times when I felt like no one was really listening to me. No student should feel like that at school. School should be a place where we feel safe, respected, and supported.

Yet, every day, I see police everywhere, from the streets to the train stations on my way to school. It feels like they are always around. To me, that sends a message that adults expect problems from us instead of investing in us, and that hurts. At the same time I do not see enough counselors, social workers, and mental health staff who can actually help students when we are struggling.

Because of this, I am worried about buffer zones and expanded policing around schools, especially when they could be used to respond to students who are simply speaking out and advocating for change. standing up for what we believe is part of how we make change and get our voices heard. When the city creates a law that responds with more policing or restrictions, it makes us feel like our voices are not welcome.

For me, this is personal. At a time when immigrant communities are already living with fear because of increased ICE enforcement, adding more policing does not make me feel safer. A month ago, on May 2nd, someone was detained by ICE and taken to Wyckoff Hospital. There was a lot of police activity around the area and even right outside my window. It was nighttime, and I could hear sirens, helicopters, bells, and whistles all night for hours. My mom and I were scared because we did not know what was going on. We wanted answers, but we were also afraid to ask questions or get too close because of how easily immigrant families are being targeted. I could not sleep that night. It reminded me that more policing does not make me feel safer. It actually makes me feel more scared.

What I experience is not unique. More police around schools does not make students safer. It just makes school and our communities feel more tense, especially for Black, Brown, and immigrant students who already deal with overpolicing. It is our communities that are disproportionately targeted and impacted by police.

At the same time, we are always told there is not enough money for the things we need, but there always seems to be money for policing. That is why I am asking City Hall to listen to students. Invest in us. Invest in counselors. Invest in mental health. Invest in restorative justice. Invest in our future. We do not just deserve to get through school; we deserve to actually thrive after it and not be treated like a threat for speaking up. Thank you.

To whom it may concern

I would like to request your support for appropriation of funds to help our city's efforts for safe and humane pet spay/neuter programs and pet food pantries. This critical works helps control animal populations and ensure current resources are not overwhelmed. As a pet owner living in NYC, I can personally attest to the life changing experience it has been to welcome my feline companion into my life. This was made possible by local shelters who provided early care to my cat before I adopted him - including nutrition, dental care, and spay/neuter services.

Please allocate funding to the spay/neuter program and food pantries for our community.

Thank you
Yotam Arens

“Queens residents do not need another rail line.”

The quote above was available for all to see on the QueensWay website until it was deleted several weeks ago after some transit advocacy accounts that are promoting QueensLink noticed and posted it on their social media accounts for us NYC locals and transit enthusiasts to see. It is such a shame to see this statement exist and then be deleted off the site because it speaks to city officials’ uncaring attitudes to real people who live and traverse between north and south Queens and especially the Rockaways. Queens does need another rail line to connect the entire borough and make commute times shorter. It takes so long to travel by bus and train between north and south Queens vs by car. Those who do choose to commute by car know how congested the roads are at times and that both existing public transportation options and personal vehicle rides are not ideal. As a borough with some of the highest parkland area in NYC, Queens does not need another park. However, parks and green spaces are an integral part of a good quality of life metric anywhere in the world and so is accessible public transportation. This combination metric is why we want QueensLink and NOT QueensWay. QueensLink has above ground and underground rail built into construction plans via an already existing unused freight line alongside park space and noise dampeners on the outsides of this area along the edges of homes in the area. QueensLink will pave over the existing unused rail line and make it exponentially more difficult and costly to construct new rail after the park space is created. Mayor Mamdani’s vocal support for QueensLink during his mayoral campaign played a large factor in his success over other mayoral candidates. Queens residents request that he follow through on his his campaign promises instead of alienating his south Queens constituents by following in the foorsteps of Robert Moses in 2026.

Zachary Salomo
BSGE

My name is Zachary Salomo. I attend the Baccalaureate School for Global Education, and am the 7th Grade Class President. While listening to students at BSGE and their complaints of small and uncomfortable work spaces, we plead to the NY City Council for a large and continuous budget so we may expand our school grounds. While we want our students to have a nice building to call their second home or school, we also ask that other schools that are part of District 30 get the same budget, since they ask for the same thing as us. A strong community needs and deserves fully funded middle schools and elementary to thrive and teach the next generation

Dear Mayor Mamdani and City Council,

I'm writing today to express my deep concern about the future of the abandoned Rockaway Beach Branch and why I strongly urge you to support the QueensLink vision.

Queens is the city's largest borough in area and the second-largest by population, yet it has the fewest subway miles per capita. Both the IRT Flushing Line (7 train) and the QBL (F, M, R, E trains) face severe overcrowding as the main corridors into Manhattan. QueensLink aims to solve this problem with a "rails and trails" solution consisting of 33 acres of new community parks along with an extension of the M subway train. The additional crosstown transfers enabled by this extension will lighten the crowding on the IRT Flushing Line as well as the QBL, as it will no longer be necessary to ride through Manhattan, or pack onto the also-crowded Crosstown Line G train in order to reach Brooklyn. As of March 2026, we finally have professional research from industry-leading experts showing that QueensLink would generate at least $8.9B in economic growth and "deliver up to $2.20 of benefit to wider society for every $1 of public investment." The report determines that the project would have twice as many riders per mile compared to the Interborough Express. QueensLink also reduces vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by 30 million each year, equating to 7,200 fewer tons of CO2 annually. To sum it up, QueensLink performs exceptionally well compared to other megaprojects across the country, it puts money back in New Yorkers' pockets, and it helps make our city more affordable.

However, the QueensWay plan, one that former Mayor Adams funded, aims to build ONLY a park along this corridor that explicitly does not include any plan for future rail transit. The New York City Economic Development Corporation aims to start its construction this year, and your latest budget proposal includes funding for this park, which I strongly oppose. Let me be clear: if QueensWay begins construction, it will BLOCK any hope of future rail reactivation. The MTA itself has found that the further construction of QueensLink after the initial stage of QueensWay will require demolishing the entirety of the proposed Metropolitan Hub, which in other words means that any future rail reactivation on the corridor will face pushback once currently unused land becomes allocated. The construction of QueensWay will therefore be denying Queens residents like me the rail expansion we desperately need more of. The Atlanta Beltline project planned to develop the greenspace portion of its "rails and trails" vision first, and what has ended up happening is that the rails portion was ultimately shelved. Do not repeat the same mistakes by tackling an obstructive project such as QueensWay.

Mayor Mamdani, as an assemblymember, you supported QueensLink due to the project's many benefits, which is why I find it deeply disheartening that you're taking action now to block it. Simply put, QueensLink is common sense, and I strongly urge you to support such a transformative and equitable project. This begins with removing any funding of the opposing QueensWay scheme from the city's budget and directing the New York City Economic Development Corporation to pause all work on that project. I hope that you take this information to heart and move forward with QueensLink's "rails and trails" vision for the Rockaway Beach Branch.

I’m a cat fosterer in NYC and have seen how that can help save lives. But far more life saving is preventing cats from needing fosters at all. From bodega or community cats—loved, but often overlooked when it comes to medical care—to feral cats and everything in between, New Yorkers deserve access to affordable vet care and food for their beloved animals.