

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING



As part of Participatory Budgeting this year, I set aside \$1.5 million in discretionary funding for residents to decide how to spend on public projects. From March 28-April 3, everyone who lives in the district will be able to vote for which capital projects they like best and the winning projects will be funded.

Participatory Budgeting provides an opportunity for residents to be involved in the city budget cycle. Not only will residents vote for their favorite projects, but all of the project proposals on the ballot were created by community volunteers. The ballot includes updates at public schools, park



renovations, street upgrades, and other improvements at public facilities. Visit council.nyc.gov/PB for more information about this year's ballot and see below for voting sites.

This fall, nearly 400 residents attended our neighborhood assemblies and idea collection sessions, where over 300 ideas were brainstormed. Volunteers broke up into groups and transformed the list of ideas into a ballot of fully formed project proposals with details and costs. We hope to see you at one of the voting sites below!

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL • 250 BROADWAY • 30TH FLOOR • NY, NY 10007



NEWS FROM COUNCIL MEMBER

2016

COSTA CONSTANTINIDES

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NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING



You can decide how to invest \$1.5 million of public funds into our community's parks, schools, streets, and more. Make your voice heard by voting on which projects should win funding! Visit council.nyc.gov/pb for ballot info

VOTING SITES:

- Office of Councilman Constantinides, 31-09 Newtown Ave.:**
March 28 - April 1, 9 a.m.- 9 p.m. and **April 2 - April 3**, Noon - 7 p.m.
- Bruno's**, 88-25 Astoria Blvd.: **March 28**, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.
- Urban Upbound**, 4-25 Astoria Blvd.: **March 29**, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.
- Bohemian Hall**, 29-19 24th Ave.: **March 30**, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.
- Boulevard Gardens Assembly Hall**, 51-42 30th Ave.: **March 31**, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.
- Community Board 1**, 45-02 Ditmars Blvd.: **April 1**, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.
- Bohemian Hall**, 29-19 24th Ave.: **April 2**, Noon - 7 p.m.
- Steinway Library**, 21-45 31st St.: **April 2**, Noon - 5:30 p.m.
- Urban Upbound**, 4-25 Astoria Blvd.: **April 3**, Noon - 7 p.m.
- Boulevard Gardens Assembly Hall**, 51-42 30th Ave.: **April 3**, Noon - 7 p.m.



NEWS FROM COUNCIL MEMBER

2016

COSTA CONSTANTINIDES

Dear Residents of the 22nd District:

I'd like to update you on our work in City Hall and in our neighborhood over the past few months.

We've been busy with projects throughout the district related to traffic safety and keeping our neighborhood clean and beautiful. We're also working to make our environment greener and more sustainable.

Please visit our website council.nyc.gov/Costa for more information on these important issues.

I look forward to working with you as we move forward in this session.

Sincerely,

Costa
Council Member
22nd District, Queens

A WIN FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT

As Chair of the Council Environmental Protection Committee, I have made fighting climate change and improving our air quality a top priority. This December, the City Council voted unanimously to pass my bill, INT. 609-A, which will promote the use of geothermal energy.



This bill represents the first time in City history that the "social costs of carbon," which are the savings we receive from reduced pollution, along with utility bill savings, will be used to measure cost-efficiency.

Geothermal energy systems work similarly to traditional building HVAC (heating, ventilating, and air conditioning) systems and help reduce reliance on fuel-fired burners and cooling towers. The bill will create an online screening tool that the public and private sector would use to determine whether it's geographically feasible to install geothermal systems at any given location. It ensures that city-owned buildings are retrofitted with geothermal if deemed cost-effective using a formula that considers both the financial savings from utility bills

and the social costs of carbon, such as reduced carbon emissions. It also ensures that the city recommends standards for installing geothermal systems in the private sector to protect consumers.

I have taken further legislative steps to help us meet our goal of reducing carbon emissions 80 percent by 2050. I introduced INT. 478, which makes certain that the city installs solar panels on city-owned buildings if deemed cost-effective and that buildings are re-assessed for cost-effectiveness every five years. We held a legislative committee hearing on my bill INT. 642, which would increase the use of biofuel in home heating oil. Earlier this year, the City Council passed my bill, now Local Law 92 of 2015, that mandates commercial establishments conserve energy.

COLLABORATION ON TRAFFIC SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS AROUND ASTORIA PARK



This past fall, we hosted a planning workshop with local elected officials and the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) to discuss the traffic safety along streets surrounding Astoria Park. Since 2009, there have been several deaths and over 100 injuries near the park.

Using maps, attendees broke up into working groups to collaborate on ideas for traffic safety improvements. Some of the suggestions included adding traffic lights, crosswalks, four-way stop signs, speed humps, speed cameras, protected bike lanes, and daylighting certain intersections.

This feedback will be taken into consideration by officials as comprehensive traffic safety plans are formulated.

TRAFFIC SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS COMING TO JACKSON HEIGHTS



We also hosted a planning workshop with local officials and the DOT to discuss traffic safety along Astoria Boulevard from 77th Street to 92nd Street. Since 2010, there have been several deaths and over 200 injuries in this corridor.

Community members pinpointed ideas, problem-areas, and locations where they wanted to see safety improvements made. Issues included right-of-way confusion, left-turn bays in various intersections that aren't clearly defined, signage that is difficult to understand, and confusion between buses and cars.

A comprehensive traffic safety plan will be formulated by the DOT using these suggestions.

ASTORIA'S FIRST NEIGHBORHOOD SLOW ZONE



This past September, we unveiled our first Neighborhood Slow Zone with Department of Transportation Queens Commissioner Nicole Garcia. The zone reduces the speed limit to 20 MPH on more than 55 blocks from Astoria Boulevard to 30th Avenue, and from Steinway Street to 21st Street.

We had heard many concerns from residents about cars often speeding through these residential blocks. There have been dozens of injuries due to traffic crashes in this area since 2009. With new speed humps and increased signage, pedestrians will have an easier time navigating and crossing our streets. Families living along these streets deserve peace of mind, and this Neighborhood Slow Zone will greatly improve traffic safety.

Slow Zones use a combination of gateways, 20 MPH markings, and speed humps to calm traffic and boost safety in residential areas. The DOT has found they result in up to a 15 percent reduction in speeds, 10 percent decline in crashes with injuries, and a 27 percent reduction in injuries.

KEEPING ASTORIA CLEAN



Keeping our neighborhood clean and beautiful has been a top priority for me. Litter and graffiti impacts residents' sidewalk accessibility, quality of life, and shopping habits. Since we began our Keep Astoria Clean campaign in 2014, our communities have seen a reduction in litter and improved street cleanliness.

This fiscal year, we allocated over \$200,000 to street cleaning, weeding, and graffiti-removal services throughout the community. While working on traffic safety improvements on the streets surrounding Astoria Park, we also made cleanliness along these streets and inside the park a priority.

We've allocated funding to both the Doe Fund and the Association of Community Employment

Programs for the Homeless (ACE) to sweep sidewalks along Shore Boulevard, 21st Street, Hoyt Avenue North, Steinway Street, 30th Avenue, Ditmars Boulevard, 23rd Avenue, 31st Street, and Newtown Road. We also allocated funding for an additional Parks Department maintenance staffer at Astoria Park from April through June 2016.

Along with ensuring that our streets are clean, we have allocated funding to graffiti-removal services. The Queens Economic Development Corporation and Central Astoria Local Development Coalition will remove graffiti tagging throughout the district. If you see graffiti, contact our office at **(718) 274-4500** so that we can have it removed.

HONORING OUR VETERANS

The City Council recently voted to create a Department of Veterans Services to assist members of our armed forces throughout the city. I was proud to support Local Law 113 of 2015, which will assist veterans and their families with educational training, health services, employment, regulatory matters, and other services. This new department will empower the 225,000 veterans in our city and honor them for their sacrifice to our nation.

HONORING DENNIS SYNTILAS AT ATHENS SQUARE PLAZA

This past fall, I helped pass the co-naming of 30th Avenue between 30th Street and 29th Street in honor of the late Dennis Syntilas. This stretch of 30th Avenue is in front of Athens Square Plaza, a public space and cultural center in our district which Syntilas was key in creating.

Co-naming the street gives people a place to enjoy culture and the arts while learning about the man that served as a role model for others in the district.

Dennis Syntilas dedicated his life to promoting charity and civic engagement in our neighborhoods. In addition to his work with Athens Square Plaza, he founded the Greek-American Homeowners Association, a community-based organization that connects Greek-Americans with government resources and promotes civic engagement.



A NEW MURAL ON 48TH STREET



In an important step in combatting graffiti and beautifying the district, Congressman Joe Crowley and I worked with 501(See)(Streets) to commission a mural under the bridge overpass on 48th Street. The mural contains three installations that depict iconic Astoria scenery including the Hells Gate Bridge with a large ship traveling on the East River underneath, scenes from Astoria's past, and the recognizable Jackson Hole Diner.

These types of artistic projects provide cultural installations and public art to everyone living in and visiting our neighborhoods. The artwork also serves as a meaningful and lasting response to graffiti. This mural is a win-win for everyone in the community, and I look forward to continuing this work together in the future.