

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

KEITH POWERS



June 2018

At City Hall, we have reached a final budget, with allocated funds for vital city-wide needs and community programs.

I was proud to join City Council Speaker Corey Johnson and Mayor Bill de Blasio on June 11 to announce the budget for 2018-2019. The budget includes many of the priorities the Council pushed for to improve the lives of all New Yorkers, including the Fair Fares discount MetroCard program, increased budget reserves, and prioritizing permanent housing in response to the City's affordability crisis.

Those priorities – as well as increased resources for libraries, after-school programs, trash pick-up, and summer youth employment – are the result of the Council fighting for creative solutions to protect the City's most vulnerable and the Council's commitment to provide much-needed resources to as many New Yorkers as possible.



Although this budget is being adopted in a time of prosperity, the City's finances could change. Therefore, the Council pushed for and succeeded in attaining fiscally prudent budgeting practices to protect the City's future. I hope that the City Council and Mayor will continue the trend of saving money, preparing for the future, and identifying programs that have outlasted their usefulness to ensure that we are being prudent with taxpayer dollars.

The FY 2019 budget includes:

- **Fair Fares for Low-Income New Yorkers:** One of the most significant achievements in this budget is the funding of Fair Fares. This program will make nearly 800,000 New Yorkers living at or below the federal poverty level eligible for half-price MetroCards, thereby saving them more than \$700 per year in transportation costs. In addition, 12,000 veterans enrolled in New York City Colleges will also be eligible for the discount MetroCards.
- **Increased Reserves:** The Adopted Budget will add \$225 million to the City's reserves. According to recent Finance Division analysis, there is a one-in-five chance that the current level of reserves is not enough to make it through the Financial Plan period without having to make budget cuts or raise taxes. This infusion will help the City avoid painful spending cuts or tax increases during downturns allowing New York City to instead draw on its fiscal cushions.
- **A Road to Property Tax Reform:** The Mayor and the Council jointly announced the creation of a Property Tax Reform Commission. The Commission was created to develop recommendations to reform New York City's property tax system to make it simpler, clearer, and fairer, while ensuring

that there is no reduction in revenue used to fund essential City services. The commission will solicit input from the public by holding at least 10 public hearings. The last in-depth review of the system by a government-appointed commission was in 1993.

- **Direct Education Dollars to Schools:** The Mayor and Council have agreed to baseline \$125 million for Fair Student Funding. This boosts core funding for City public schools.
- **School Accessibility:** No student should be prevented from attending their preferred school because they cannot use the stairs and no parent should have to miss a school play or a parent-teacher conference because there is no access to the auditorium or the second floor. For this budget, \$150 million will be added to increase accessibility in the City's school buildings.
- **Picking Up More Trash:** \$3.5 million for extra sanitation services. This will allow for extra days of service for pick-up on city streets.
- **Senior Affordable Housing:** \$500 million for senior affordable housing targeted at four Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) sites and two NYCHA sites.
- **Maintain Services for Parks:** \$12.3 million to increase the number of park maintenance workers, extend the open period of City pools and beaches, and finance tree stump removal.
- **Funding for Libraries:** \$60 million for new libraries in capital funds, and \$16.7 million in expense funding.

With a new budget, New York can get to work and make good on our investments to community and city programs, which will improve every neighborhood and most certainly the lives of residents in my district.

You will be hearing from me frequently as I share updates on the community, legislation, and more.

I look forward to seeing you soon,



NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

NYC Rent Freeze Program

The Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE), also known as the NYC Rent Freeze Program, must be renewed at the end of your lease year. My office is here to help with this process. On June 18 from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM, I am hosting a resource fair in the district to help residents sign up for the program. Visit <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/rentfreeze/tools/tools.page> for more.

Council Member Powers: SCRIE Resource Event

Monday, June 18, 2018, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

St. Peter's Church, 619 Lexington Avenue

RSVP to KPowers@council.nyc.gov

Upcoming Rent Guidelines Board Hearings

Each year, the Rent Guidelines Board (RGB) votes on the rent increases for rent-regulated apartments in New York City. The RGB recently held a preliminary vote, in which the board proposed a one-year lease increase of .75 percent to 1.75 percent, and a two-year lease increase of 1.75 percent to 3.75 percent. The RGB will now hold hearings throughout the city to determine the final increase. The upcoming public hearings of the RGB are on:

Tuesday, June 19, 2018, 4:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.

Public Hearing (Public Testimony)

Location: The Great Hall at Cooper Union, 7 East 7th Street at corner of 3rd Ave. (Basement)

Tuesday, June 26, 2018, 7:00 P.M.

Public Meeting (Final Vote)

Location: The Great Hall at Cooper Union, 7 East 7th Street at corner of 3rd Ave. (Basement)

If you are interested in testifying, you can sign up on the day-of or by calling (212) 669-7480 ext. 0. Find more details here: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/rentguidelinesboard/meetings/2018-meetings.page>

New York City Housing Lottery

Through Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), the city creates affordable housing opportunities across the boroughs for households at a wide range of sizes and income levels. You can find if you qualify here: <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/renters/what-is-affordable-housing.page>

There is currently an open lottery at 222 East 44th Street, with 109 newly constructed units.

How to apply: To apply online, please go to: nyc.gov/housingconnect. To request an application by mail, send a self-addressed envelope to: 222 E. 44th Street c/o Breaking Ground, PO Box 3620937, New York, NY 10129

Deadline: July 2, 2018

For more information, visit NYC Housing Connect's website: <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/renters/find-housing.page>

ConEdison Work in Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village

ConEdison and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) will begin the efforts for the manufactured gas plant (MGP) remediation wells this month around Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village. Long before Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village was built, the area was known as the "Gas House District" and was home to plants that processed chemicals. The wells will recover containments that are still in the ground below where the chemical plants were situated. ConEd will be using sonic drilling technology for these installations to allow for minimal noise disturbance, but there will be some expected disruptions. ConEd is set to begin installation of the wells later in June. My office will keep the community informed of the construction project.

Wheelchair Accessibility at 57th Street Subway

In April, the MTA announced that it will be renovating the subway station at 57th Street and 7th Avenue to make the station accessible for people with disabilities. Beginning in April 2018, there has been construction and street lane closures to allow the MTA to perform the installation of an elevator at 55th Street. The work is expected to last through 2021.

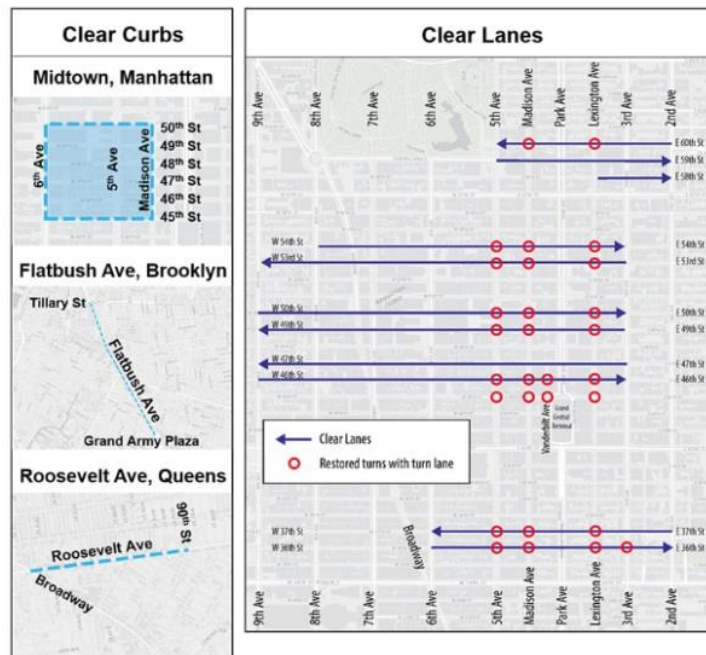
In response to concerns from local businesses, I hosted a community meeting with the MTA, Department of Transportation, Department of Small Business Services, and businesses on the block to address any potential concerns about the impact of foot traffic, the loss of street visibility, and the removal of available street space for deliveries. Our office will continue to monitor the impact of construction and ensure that the construction does not have a deleterious impact on the quality of life in the neighborhood.

Congestion Mitigation in Midtown

My office is working with business owners in Midtown who have been impacted by the new Clear Curbs, Clear Lanes pilot program introduced by the Mayor’s Office to keep traffic moving in Manhattan’s central business district, and pilot curbside access restrictions to reduce travel lane blockages. The program intends to mitigate traffic and congestion from early morning and late-night deliveries to various businesses.

While this is a worthwhile effort to reduce traffic, some businesses have reported missing important stock deliveries and losing parking space. If you are a business owner who has been affected by the new parking restrictions, please reach out to my office, as we are making sure that the Department of Transportation hears from small businesses about how to improve the program. Implementation started in April 2018 and will continue through September 2018, with a review period following the pilot program.

You can see the affected areas below:



Expansion of The Frick Museum

The Frick Museum recently announced plans to renovate and expand their facility to keep up with their growing number of visitors. The plan includes an enlargement of the Museum and Art Reference Library and for alterations to create accessible entrances. Following a May 16 vote by Community Board 8, the review moved on to the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) for final approval. The Commission was expected to reach a final decision on June 19, but the meeting has been postponed. To submit public testimony, please visit the LPC’s website: <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/lpc/about/submit-public-hearing-meeting-comments.page>. Visit FrickFuture.org for more information on the museum’s plans.



Council Member Powers and DCA Commissioner Lorelei Salas meet with local businesses in Midtown to discuss resources and regulations.



Council Member Powers meets with the HOPE Program and Sustainable South Bronx in Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village.



Council Member Powers attends ribbon cutting ceremony at Hassenfeld Children's Hospital at NYU Langone.

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Campaign Funds for Childcare

Last month, I introduced legislation that would apply the Federal Election Commission's (FEC) recent decision to allow candidates to use campaign funds for childcare expenses to New York City elections. According to a 2017 report from the Women's Caucus in the Council, women face a "political ambition gap" of choosing between a family and a career. With just 11 female members, the City Council has fewer women today than it has had at any point in the past 20 years. By applying the recent FEC ruling to local elections, this bill would benefit any primary caregiver, women in particular, interested in running for City office. The bill has gathered the support of organizations, including the 21 in '21 initiative, Planned Parenthood, National Organization for Women (NOW) NYC, the Progressive Caucus, and City Comptroller Scott Stringer.



Supporters joined Council Member Powers during a rally in support of Intro. 899, which would allow campaign funds to be used for childcare.

Earlier in 2018, I introduced a set of bills to reform our campaign finance laws to help first-time, smaller candidates run for office. My package of bills would lower qualifying thresholds for public matching funds, increase matchable contributions, create a pilot for special elections, empower small campaigns, and close a doing business loophole. The package was based on my own experience with the New York City Campaign Finance Board's public matching funds program.

Styrofoam Ban

On June 8, the State Supreme Court ruled in favor of a ban on the use of single-use Styrofoam containers, siding with the Council and the City's Department of Sanitation which found that Styrofoam containers cannot be recycled. The ban will apply to any food service establishment, mobile food truck or store that sells, or offers, polystyrene packaging. I was a supporter of the ban, as a sponsor on Intro. 135 this year. It will go into effect on January 1, 2019.

Criminal Justice Committee

This fall, as Chair of the Criminal Justice Committee, I will hold a hearing on programming at Rikers Island and other city-owned jails. I will also be hosting a roundtable this month with the Progressive Caucus of the City Council and criminal justice advocates on the Council's role in closing Rikers Island. The Criminal Justice Committee has discussed several important bills so far, including ones that would eliminate phone fees charged to incarcerated people, and to make sure that every person has access to any unspent

money at commissary when they leave a city jail. We will continue to provide oversight over the Department of Corrections, as I did recently with a letter calling on the Department to reform its system of responding to complaints from incarcerated individuals. Currently, the Department has no formal grievance process for 311 complaints, despite receiving 30,000 complaints through 311 last year. I look forward to working with the Department to make our criminal justice system fairer and safer for everyone.

Charter Revision Commission Meetings

Earlier this year, both the City Council and the Mayor's Office announced plans to create Charter Revision Commissions to review the City Charter and ensure that we are meeting the needs of New York City residents in the 21st century. The City Charter defines the functions, organization, powers, obligations and liabilities of the city's government, including land use rules, budget regulations, and balance of power. The last time the City held a comprehensive review of its charter was in 1989.

- **The City Council's Charter Review Commission:** In April, the Council passed a bill to create a Charter Review Commission with 15 members, appointed by borough presidents, Speaker Johnson, Mayor de Blasio, the public advocate, and the comptroller. The Council's Commission is tasked to broadly review the structure and functions of city government. The City Council's Commission will operate separately from the Mayor's, with a formal establishment set for 2019. Proposals to change the charter will appear on the ballot in the 2019 general election. There will be an opportunity for community and public feedback.
- **The Mayoral Charter Review Commission:** Announced as a part of the Mayor's "Democracy NYC" initiative, the Mayoral Commission will review voter participation and measures to improve elections, reforms to the city's campaign finance system, fair representation in city government, and strengthening civic engagement. The Commission will hold public hearings in the five boroughs to gather feedback and report findings on the public's requests. The Mayoral Commission's recommendations for changing the charter could appear on the ballot as early as the November 2018 midterm election. More information is available at: <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/charter/meetings/2018-public-meetings-hearings.page>

IN THE NEWS

ABC, June 7, 2018

[Protests against NYC Council's proposed Airbnb regulation bill](#)

City Council members say they want to reign in illegal shadow hotels, which are rentals under 30 days where the homeowner is not present. A city report claimed that practice pushes out low income tenants and makes housing more expensive.

City & State, May 23, 2018

[Opinion: Focusing on the seat, not a sitter](#)

Liuba Grechen Shirley, a mother of two seeking the Democratic nomination in New York's 2nd Congressional District, made a humble request to the Federal Election Commission: allow child care expenses to be a qualified campaign expense to let candidates focus on running.

Town & Village, May 21, 2018

[Opinion: The business of stopping harassment](#)

Our country is experiencing a watershed moment as women and men speak up about their experiences

of harassment, creating the era of #MeToo. As stories unfold and wrongdoings are revealed, cities and states are taking action to modernize laws and prevent any incidents in the future.

amNY, May 21, 2018

[L train shutdown plan needs 24-hour 14th Street busway, politicians say](#)

A dozen Brooklyn and Manhattan politicians are calling on the mayor to implement a 24-hour busway along 14th Street during the looming [L train shutdown](#).

SAVE THE DATES

Council Member Powers: SCRIE Resource Event

Monday, June 18, 2018, 10:00 AM-2:00 PM

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, Senior Center at St. Peter's Church, 619 Lexington Avenue

To RSVP, email kpowers@council.nyc.gov

Rent Guidelines Board: Public Hearing (Public Testimony)

Tuesday, June 19, 2018, 4:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M., The Great Hall at Cooper Union

Community Board 8 Full Board Meeting

Wednesday, June 20, 2018, 6:30 PM, The Nightingale-Bamford School

92nd Street Shred-A-Thon

Sunday, June 24, 2018, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

1st Avenue between 92nd and 93rd Streets

Rent Guidelines Board: Public Meeting (Final Vote)

Tuesday, June 26, 2018, 7:00 P.M., The Great Hall at Cooper Union

New York Public Library Carnegie Hill to Yorkville Walking Tour

Thursday, June 28, 11 AM, 96th Street Library will serve as starting point

Register at nypl.org/events

Blue Blanc Rouge French Culture Day Camp

Register: <https://frenchcampny.wixsite.com/bleublancrougeny>

Camp runs from July 2 – August 17

New York Public Library Money and Finance Programs: nypl.org/moneymatters

Various dates and time, Midtown Manhattan and across New York City

Citi and DOT Summer Streets

Saturdays, August 4 – August 18, 7:00 AM – 1:00 PM

See the route: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/summerstreets/html/route/route.shtml>