

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

KEITH POWERS



June 2019

Dear Neighbor:

On Friday, June 14, I was proud to join Mayor de Blasio and Speaker Johnson as they announced an agreement on the City's \$92.8 billion budget for FY2020. This is a budget that meets the needs of New Yorkers, while saving for the future. I look forward to sharing details.



As we head into summer, I am proud that the State Legislature has reached a historic agreement on housing that will have a remarkable impact on thousands of tenants in my district, as well as millions of New Yorkers across the city. These permanent rent stabilization reforms ensure that tenants can afford to remain in their homes.

The legislation addresses a number of issues that I have advocated for as a Council Member and tenant advocate, including eliminating practices that allow for deregulation, reforming Major Capital Improvements (MCIs), ending preferential rents, and more. As someone who grew up in a rent stabilized apartment, I know the importance that these reforms will provide to ensure that middle-class families have the ability to stay in their homes for the long-term. I want to commend my colleagues in the Assembly and State Senate for turning the tide after decades of stalled policies, and I look forward to seeing the results improve the lives of tenants.

It is also time for New York City to celebrate Pride Month. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots in June 1969, I am reminded of the historic role the City has played in advancing the rights of LGBTQ individuals. We still have work to do to ensure the city remains a welcoming place for all, but we should be proud of our progress and continue our work to uphold New York City as a leader on LGBTQ issues. I look forward to the celebrations throughout the month of June.

Don't forget: there are a number of community events that you can attend in the coming weeks, from help with housing to receiving a free bike helmet. Please remember that my office is a resource for you, and I encourage you to call or email me at any time, at 212-818-0580 and kpowers@council.nyc.gov.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith".

Keith

Helicopter Safety and Operations

On June 10, a tragic incident occurred in my district when a helicopter made a hard landing on the roof of an office building on West 52nd Street and 7th Avenue. In light of this crash and the two others that have occurred in the last two years, it is imperative that we take steps to prevent another incident. This flight originated from a city-owned heliport on East 34th Street in my district, which is run by an operator who contracts through the City's Economic Development Corporation (EDC). I have communicated frequently with the EDC about issues local residents have expressed with helicopter traffic, including noise and quality-of-life concerns, and will continue that dialogue moving forward. Additionally, I have been coordinating with Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney's office and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in an attempt to curb the proliferation of flights over parts of Manhattan. In the coming weeks, we will continue to gather information about the accident and ask our city and federal agencies to implement further safety measures.



Council Member Powers joined Mayor de Blasio for a press conference following the helicopter incident.

East Side Coastal Resiliency (ESCR) Project

As we enter another hurricane season this summer, the City is moving forward with its plans to protect more of our waterfront communities from flooding and rising sea levels. The East Side Coastal Resiliency (ESCR) Project includes plans to build a seawall up from 14th Street to 25th Street that will provide much-needed flood protections to Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village. Earlier this month, the ESCR Project team held two open house meetings in Peter Cooper Village to provide details about the plans, including the impact to local park space. The parks and playgrounds at Murphy Brothers Playground, Stuyvesant Cove, and Asser Levy Playground will be closed and renovated for extended periods between early 2020 and 2023. I am negotiating with the project team to try to stagger the construction so that we maintain as much greenspace as possible.



Council Member Powers speaks at Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village's LEED certification ceremony.

Escalator at 53rd Street-Lexington Avenue Subway Station

The subway station at 53rd Street and Lexington Avenue is the ninth busiest in New York City, with 66,000 New Yorkers traveling through the station a day. However, the escalator to the E and M lines is out of commission 86% of the time, as recently reported by *THE CITY*. Based on a special permit issued in 1984, the property owner adjacent to the subway station was given additional development rights in exchange for upkeep of the subway station, including this specific escalator. At a time when our subway system is in dire need of investment, it is critical that private owners uphold their agreements with the City. In response to this operational failure, I wrote a letter to the private operator of the escalator to request that the escalator be fully replaced. I look forward to working with the owner and appropriate agencies to have the escalator replaced in a timely manner.



Council Member Powers celebrates Pride Month at the Brooklyn Pride Parade.

Update: L Train Project

The MTA and the Department of Transportation (DOT) are currently implementing two innovative solutions that should speed up travel along 14th Street while the L train tunnel repairs continue. Beginning on July 1, the M14-SBS lines will begin operation. The M14 has historically been one of the slowest bus routes in the city, averaging a speed just above 4 miles per hour.

The all-door boarding and ticketing machines on the sidewalk will allow bus service to be more efficient, but DOT and MTA are going a step further to ensure that the crosstown bus is a viable option on 14th Street. The Truck/Transit Priority (TTP) lanes will begin operation on 14th Street concurrently with the M14-SBS lines on July 1. The TTP corridor on 14th Street will restrict car travel so that buses can get crosstown more easily. I look forward to riding the M14-SBS through the TTP corridor on 14th Street in July.

I have also been keeping close tabs on the dust levels within the tunnel to ensure that subway riders and workers are not exposed to health hazards. Thanks to successful advocacy by myself and my colleagues, you can view the public dust monitoring data here: <https://new.mta.info/l-project/construction/monitoring>.

Addressing Construction Noise in Tudor City

In recent weeks, I have heard from residents regarding the construction project currently underway at East 41st Street and 2nd Avenue. The project is led by the Turken Foundation, a nonprofit that provides housing for Turkish students studying in the United States. The 21-story building will consist primarily of student apartments with some retail on the lower floors. In response to concerns raised regarding construction, my office has asked the contractor to implement additional noise mitigation measures such as sound barriers and noise tents. We are also working closely with the Department of Buildings and the Department of Environmental Protection to track and address any violations that may be taking place. While construction is a necessary part of living in New York, we must ensure that the quality of life of residents of neighboring buildings is taken into account as these projects move forward.

EVENT ALERT Helmet Giveaway on June 29

Together with the Department of Transportation, I am hosting a free bike helmet fitting and giveaway later this month. Bike safety is critical for cyclists, and with a custom-fit, free bike helmet, you are set to ride around town. Helmets are required by New York State Law for cyclists who are 13 years old and younger. Please be sure to mark your calendar for Saturday, June 29, from 11:00 A.M. –2:30 P.M. I look forward to seeing you at the First Avenue Loop, Playground 9, between 16th and 18th Streets.



Council Member Keith Powers presents proclamation to chess champion Tanitoluwa Adewumi.

CITY HALL

Mechanical Voids Loophole: Passed

Mechanical voids are loopholes where developers fit mechanical equipment at the base or in the middle of buildings to boost height and build increasingly tall buildings that circumvent square footage restrictions. In some of the most egregious examples, buildings have up to 20 floors of large empty spaces that allow them to tower over surrounding areas. This has been a growing concern across the district, particularly on the Upper East Side. In response to our concerns, the Commission on City Planning (CPC) pledged the City would have a plan in summer 2019 for high density residential and commercial neighborhoods that addresses the issue of the mechanical voids. On May 29, the City Council voted to limit the specific allowances associated with mechanical voids, addressing the loophole. In specific zoning areas of the city, mechanical space will begin to be counted against floor area once it exceeds 25 feet. I have had longstanding concerns about the use of zoning loopholes to avoid complying with zoning of neighborhoods. Those who are looking to develop in the city should be expected to play by the rules.

Two New Bills Passed

The City Council passed two of my bills in June that will have a direct impact on the criminal justice system, as it relates to healthcare and quality of life. One bill, Intro. 1236, will help to streamline and improve how incarcerated individuals access healthcare in jail. Intro. 1370 addresses how complaints are processed. Filing a 311 complaint can be complicated, and when made within a jail facility it can often go unanswered. Intro. 1370 will allow incarcerated individuals to file 311 complaints with the assurance they will be reviewed and addressed. I look forward to continued reform of the criminal justice system.

Housing Rights: Source of Income Discrimination

Last month, I sent a letter to Mayor de Blasio with my colleagues in the Council requesting additional funding for the source of income unit at the Commission on Human Rights (CCHR). More than 60,000 New Yorkers reside in the New York City shelter system, with thousands of others living on the streets, in youth or domestic violence shelters, and in three-quarter houses. These New Yorkers rely on rental

assistance programs to find housing, but too often are met with roadblocks. Additional funding would double the size of the source of income unit at the CCHR to enable a more robust response to voucher discrimination citywide.



Council Member Powers speaks at a press conference regarding discrimination in housing access for voucher users.

Reforming Major Capital Improvements (MCIs)

Major Capital Improvements (MCIs) are designed to incentivize landlords to continually keep up and improve properties with rent stabilized tenants. For example, a landlord might pay to replace a boiler or install new windows with the ability to pass a portion of the costs onto tenants. In reality, these costs push rents higher and only exacerbate annual rent increases. I have advocated for significant reforms to MCIs, which the historic rent regulation package passed in Albany includes. Under the new law, the framework for what constitutes an MCI will narrow, and landlords will only be able to raise rents by 2 percent, as opposed to 6 percent, with qualifying projects. The tide has turned after decades of stalled policies, and I look forward to seeing the results improve the lives of tenants.

IN THE NEWS

June 11, [NY lawmakers push for tougher helicopter restrictions in wake of deadly crash](#), FOX

The deadly helicopter crash landing near America’s most-visited tourist attraction is prompting calls from lawmakers for tighter restrictions on flights around New York City, warning that the risk to the public is “just too high.”

May 31, [Opinion: Time to end runaway MCIs](#), *Town and Village*

As tenants in Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village know all too well, there’s nothing minor about a Major Capital Improvement (MCI). That’s why we’re pushing for the elimination of MCIs in Albany this June.

May 29, [Pol Blasts Company Responsible for Fixes On Subway's Worst Escalator](#), *THE CITY*
The subway system's lousiest escalator should be on track for a replacement, said a Manhattan City Council member who decried "inexcusable" constant breakdowns in the city's ninth-busiest station.

May 28, [Opinion: NYC Can't Close Rikers Until Albany Fixes Parole](#), *City Limits*
As New York embarks on the closure of Rikers Island, the city and state have focused on ways to reduce the population inside of our city jails. Bail reform, speedy trials, and supervised release are among the programs that will promise to reduce the daily census inside Rikers Island and the new borough-based facilities.

May 14, [Council passes 17 bills to protect tenants from bad landlords](#), *Real Estate Weekly*
Last fall, the City Council introduced a package of 18 bills aimed at preventing tenants from being displaced due to aggressive tactics from landlords like exploitative buyout agreements or nuisance construction. On Wednesday, May 8, all but one passed.

SAVE THE DATES

Events with Council Member Powers

Mobile District Office Hours

Sit down with representatives from my office to talk about the issues in the district you care about, and work toward solutions. This is a great opportunity to meet in-person with our constituent services team and get to know my office a bit better.

Yorkville Library, 222 East 79th Street
Thursday, June 20, 12:00 P.M. - 2:00 P.M.

Stuyvesant Town Community Center, 449 East 14th Street
Thursday, June 27, 12:00 P.M. - 2:00 P.M.

Family Law Legal Clinic with the Urban Justice Center

Make an appointment for individual and confidential legal consultations on:

- Child and spousal support
- Custody and visitation
- Orders of Protection
- Issues regarding consumer debt and identify theft
- Assistance completing crime victims' compensation applications
- Options for victims of crime
- Assistance for victims of financial abuse
- Information about domestic violence

Office of Council Member Keith Powers
211 East 43rd Street, Suite 1205
Friday, June 21, 11:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.
RSVP to snewman@council.nyc.gov

Overdevelopment Forum, co-sponsored by Council Members Powers and Kallos

Join East Side elected officials to discuss community initiatives, closing loopholes, and our fight against overdevelopment.

Thursday, June 27, 2019, 6:00 P.M.
CUNY Graduate Center, 365 Fifth Avenue

Free Bike Helmet Fitting with Department of Transportation, sponsored by Council Member Powers

Stay safe when riding around town with a custom-fit, free bike helmet. Helmets are required by New York State Law for cyclists who are 13 years old and younger, and they make for a safe trip. Certified representatives will be available.

Saturday, June 29, 11:00 A.M. –2:30 P.M.
First Avenue Loop, Playground 9, between 16th and 18th Streets

Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) Clinics at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, sponsored by Council Member Powers

Thursday, October 17, 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.
331 East 70th Street
For an appointment or information, contact us at DRIE@lenoxhill.org or 212-218-0503, option 0

Community Events

CB6 Full Board Meeting
Wednesday, June 12, 2019, 7:00 P.M.
433 1st Avenue (NYU School of Dentistry), Room 210

CB5 Full Board Meeting
Thursday, June 13, 2019, 6:00 P.M.
Xavier High School, 30 West 16th Street | 2nd Floor Library

CB8 Full Board Meeting
Wednesday, June 19, 2019, 6:30 P.M.
New York Blood Center, Auditorium, 310 East 67th St

Carnegie Hill Neighbor Sidewalk Sale
Saturday, June 15, 2019, 11:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.
92nd Street between Madison and Park Avenues
Proceeds will benefit Carnegie Hill Neighbors streetscape improvement programs

CB6 Senior Resource Fair
Thursday, June 20, 2019, 3:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.
Baruch College, Multipurpose Room 1-107
55 Lexington Avenue

Manhattan Chamber of Commerce, Community Board 8, and the NYC Department of Small Business Services
Small Business Office Hours
Wednesday, June 26, 2019, 11:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.
SBS Mobile Unit, 1491 Lexington Avenue

Church of the Covenant Coffee Talk Series
Saturday, July 6, 2019, 3:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.
Church of the Covenant, 310 East 42nd Street
Details here: <http://www.covenantchurchnyc.com/>

New York Public Library Money and Finance Programs: nypl.org/moneymatters
Various dates and times, Midtown Manhattan and across New York City

Manhattan VA Hospital Military Mondays Free Legal Clinic
First Monday of Each Month (except holidays) 1:00 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.
423 East 23rd Street | 1st Floor Atrium