

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

**KEITH POWERS**



*Summer 2019*

Dear Neighbor:

I hope that you are enjoying your summer, and getting out to explore our parks, beaches, and more.

Before the summer officially kicked off, I had the privilege of addressing graduating students at P.S. 59, M.S. 104, and Beekman High School. Each of these schools represents a different neighborhood in my district, with



students from Midtown, Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village, and the Upper East Side. The strong communities that these students live in are also reflected in their schools. At each ceremony, there was a similar sentiment: the importance of community and excitement for what's next. I look forward to seeing these bright students continue to move onward and upward.

Additionally, I was proud to play a strong role in ensuring that the priorities of our community were met during the budget process for FY 2020. The \$92.8 billion budget includes many of the priorities the Council pushed for in order to improve the lives of all New Yorkers, including a commitment to pay parity for day care providers and fair funding for parks, as well as the largest-ever investment in libraries at \$33 million. I was also able to secure funds to support all of our local public schools and to improve sanitation efforts across District 4.

I also want to remind you of various summer activities the city has to offer. I am proud to sponsor the Carnegie Hall Citywide free concerts at Bryant Park throughout July and August. You can find the schedule here: [https://www.nycgovparks.org/events/free\\_summer\\_concerts](https://www.nycgovparks.org/events/free_summer_concerts). Keep an eye out for a number of other free programs and workshops in the coming months, as well.

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 or [kpowers@council.nyc.gov](mailto:kpowers@council.nyc.gov).

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Keith".

Keith

## NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

### Rent Guidelines Board Decision

In June, the Rent Guidelines Board held its annual vote on increases for lease renewals in rent-stabilized apartments. The neighborhoods I represent contain vastly different populations, but they all have a great need for more affordable housing. This year, I once again requested a rent freeze on one or two year leases. A rent freeze would have not only helped struggling tenants remain in their apartments, but it would have strengthened the rent stabilization system that is constantly under attack. It is imperative that we protect rent stabilized tenants and the system that has allowed so many tenants to make our city what it is today. Ultimately, the Board ruled that lease renewals issued between October 1, 2019, and September 30, 2020, for rent stabilized apartments will have increases of 1.5% for a one year renewal and 2.5% for a two year renewal. You can read my testimony to the Rent Guidelines Board here: [http://bit.ly/KP\\_RGB\\_2019](http://bit.ly/KP_RGB_2019).



*Council Member Powers joins the Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village Tenants Association for the Rent Guidelines Board vote.*

### Closing the Unsafe Second Avenue Bike Lane Gap

It is critical that all New Yorkers feel safe traveling around the city, regardless of how they commute. I have long advocated for the city to fix an unsafe situation along Second Avenue, including sending a letter in October 2018 with colleagues in government calling on the Department of Transportation (DOT) to close the gap. Subsequently, DOT announced earlier this year that the nine-block gap between 68<sup>th</sup> Street to 59<sup>th</sup> Street will be completed and operational this month. This stretch has been an area with crashes involving pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles. While I am pleased that this closure will minimize the risk of injury for all who travel in the area, it is equally imperative to close the remaining gap in 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue between 43<sup>rd</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> Streets. Given recent fatalities and tragedies related to biking and pedestrian transit, we must take urgent steps to protect pedestrians and cyclists alike. I look forward to working with the DOT to complete the remainder of the bike lane.



*Council Member Powers protests decision to halt busway along 14<sup>th</sup> Street.*

### **Update: 14th Street Busway**

The Department of Transportation (DOT) proposed a bold and innovative solution to speed up crosstown bus traffic across 14th Street between 3rd Avenue and 9th Avenue: a much-needed “busway” that would improve bus service on 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Today, the M14 bus routes currently have average speeds just over 4 miles per hour – the slowest in the city. In advance of its implementation on July 1, however, a judge blocked DOT’s proposal to improve crosstown bus service. Together with transit advocates, I have called for the lawsuit to be dropped so residents and neighbors can travel efficiently across the city. Given the clear environmental benefits of making buses a more viable option along this corridor, I am hopeful for a swift resolution to the case this summer.



*Council Member Powers addresses students of the graduating class of M.S. 104.*

### **Improving Quality of Life Near the Queens Midtown Tunnel**

**Council Member Keith Powers | 212-818-0580 | 212-788-7393 | [council.nyc.gov/district-4](http://council.nyc.gov/district-4)  
[kpowers@council.nyc.gov](mailto:kpowers@council.nyc.gov) | @KeithPowersNYC**

The area around the Queens Midtown Tunnel has consistently experienced severe traffic congestion and noise issues. MTA Bridges and Tunnels, which oversees the Queens Midtown Tunnel, recently began construction work on the tunnel entrances and exit streets. This work will focus on rehabilitating the sidewalks, walls, and masonry of the entrance and exit streets and will begin on Tunnel Entrance Street between East 40<sup>th</sup> and East 39<sup>th</sup> Streets. Once this block is completed, the work will progress south toward the tunnel. While this work will provide much-needed improvements to the entrance and exit streets, it is important that it is done in a way that minimizes the impact to an area already overwhelmed by traffic and noise. My office has been in close touch with MTA Bridges and Tunnels to discuss the anticipated impacts of the tunnel upgrade project and to get a clearer timeline for its completion. To manage the project's effects on traffic, my office has asked the NYPD to provide additional traffic agent coverage in the areas affected by this construction.

### **Managing Citi Bikes in Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village**

Last month, a new Citi Bike station was installed at Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village in Playground 9. As a result of community feedback, I sent management a letter, which you can read here: [http://bit.ly/CM\\_CitiBike](http://bit.ly/CM_CitiBike). The station's placement directly in front of children's sprinklers was particularly distressing given the summer season. Prior to the heat wave in July, when temperatures approached triple digits, my office coordinated with Citi Bike, management, and the Department of Transportation to help restore access to sprinklers. We were able to help bring the sprinklers back on July 19, in advance of the most extreme days of the heat wave. The station was moved within Playground 9 so that children could cool off. It was also reduced in size, allowing residents to utilize the play area while taking advantage of several new Citi Bikes.

## **CITY HALL**

### **Passing the FY 2020 Budget**

The City Council recently approved a \$92.8 billion budget. This year, I successfully urged my colleagues to put \$250 million into our reserves and to commit to funds for the 2020 Census to ensure that we receive the federal funding owed to New York. With our new budget comes historic investments in parks and \$33 million in libraries. During negotiations, I heard from hundreds of constituents who asked us to prioritize programs that serve both our community and the city as a whole, including sanitation services and meals for seniors. Some of the highlights include:

- **Enhancing Library Funding:** This historic investment – our biggest investment in libraries to date – includes \$33 million for libraries. The Council ensured there were no reductions to libraries and has enhanced funding to support the three library systems so that they can continue to maintain, grow, and offer the programs and services they have long provided.
- **Fair Funding for Parks:** A historic investment in our parks that includes urban park rangers, parks enforcement patrol officers, and forestry management. This includes \$43 million in the City's parks that will fund 50 new Urban Park Rangers, 80 Parks Enforcement Patrol officers, 150 maintenance workers and gardeners, forestry management, and the Green Thumb program.
- **Picking Up More Trash** (\$8.6 million): This allocation is for extra sanitation services including for extra litter baskets throughout the five boroughs. This is more than double the amount allocated last year.

- I am also pleased to announce additional basket truck pickups and mechanical broom sweeping across the district through funding from the NYC Clean Up Initiative, as well as funding for local flexible support on trash maintenance.
- **Providing Senior Meals** (\$10 million): The City's Department for the Aging's budget will baseline \$10 million, growing to \$15 million in Fiscal Year 2021 for home-delivered meals and kitchen staff.
- **Increasing Social Workers in Schools:** Funding for 285 school social workers, which includes 85 social workers funded by reallocating ThriveNYC resources and 100 social workers for Bridging the Gap to support students in shelters.

In addition, the Council will be adding and restoring cultural after-school programs throughout the city, giving more students in my district a chance for activities after school and during the summer months. You can learn more about the budget at <https://council.nyc.gov/budget/fy2020/>.

### **Lowering the Cost of Renting in New York City**

Recently, the Housing and Buildings Committee considered two of my bills to address the high upfront costs tenants face in rental transactions. Intro. 1423 would limit fees that tenants can be charged to one month's rent. Intro. 1424 limits the security deposit renters can be charged to one month's rent. Far too often, New Yorkers are prevented from moving apartments due to the outrageously high upfront costs they face. According to real estate industry data, upfront costs for a Manhattan apartment with a median rental price of \$3,300 would be an average of \$14,190 in total. With support from leading housing organizations, these bills build upon the recent tenant protection package passed by the New York State Legislature and will ultimately increase transparency, consumer choice, and economic mobility for tenants in New York City.



*Council Member Powers asks questions during the Housings and Buildings Committee hearing on rental fee legislation.*

### **Closing Remaining Mechanical Void Loopholes**

Last month, the City Council voted to limit the size of large mechanical voids, addressing a notorious loophole exploited by developers. Mechanical voids are uninhabitable spaces and floors in buildings that are intended to hold mechanical equipment. Previously, developers of luxury residential towers would add

excessive and unwarranted mechanical voids to boost the height, and thus, the value of their residential units. However, due to our new regulation, mechanical voids greater than 25 feet in height will be included in floor area limitations within specific dense residential areas of the city. While I was glad the Council played a strong role in addressing the issue, it became clear how many other loopholes remain following that process. I believe that thoroughly addressing these weaknesses in our zoning code would strengthen our ability to balance the interest of developers and neighbors, which is why I submitted testimony to Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer sharing the following recommendations to address outstanding loopholes:

- Expand mechanical voids to cover both enclosed and unenclosed voids
- Include the Midtown Special District
- Include all towers with residential use
- Prohibit zoning lot gerrymandering

I look forward to the City Planning Commission (CPC) continuing to address these voids.

## IN THE NEWS

---

### **July 23, [A 10 Year Old Is Asking The City For A Speed Camera By Her School](#), *Patch***

A Murray Hill middle-schooler is asking City Council Speaker Corey Johnson and the Department of Transportation to help get a speed camera installed at her middle-school in Hudson Yards.

### **July 14, [The 2019 Manhattan Power 100](#), *City & State***

First-term New York City Councilman Keith Powers has generated as much buzz as some of his colleagues by being involved in some of this year's hottest topics, including Rikers Island, affordable housing, restricting car traffic on 14th Street and a contested proposal to limit brokers' fees that are charged to tenants.

### **July 2, [Supporters Rally to Make 14th Street Open To Buses Only](#), *CBS New York***

City transit advocates are up in arms Monday after a judge put a stop to a big part of the 14th Street busway plan.

### **June 27, [An easy way to lower tenants' cost of moving in](#), *Crain's***

It is no secret that New York City is in a housing crisis. It feels like every day we hear stories about unscrupulous practices that raise the rents or a new report on how far New Yorkers are stretching their dollars to live here.

## 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 79<sup>th</sup> Street  
Third Thursday of Every Month

Thursday, August 15, 2019  
Thursday, September 19, 2019  
12:00 P.M. - 2:00 P.M.

Stuyvesant Town Community Center, 449 East 14th Street  
Last Thursday of Every Month  
Thursday, August 29, 2019  
Thursday, September 26, 2019  
12:00 P.M. - 2:00 P.M.

### **Housing Forum on Rent Regulations, Tenant Stability, and the Passing of Affordable Housing Protections**

Thursday, July 25, 6:30 P.M. - 8:30 P.M.  
NYU Dental, 345 East 24th Street

With Assemblymembers Epstein, Glick, Gottfried, Niou, Quart, Congresswoman Maloney, State Senators Hoylman, Kavanagh, and Krueger, Borough President Brewer, and City Council Members Kallos and Rivera.

### **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 70<sup>th</sup> Street

For an appointment or information, contact us at [DRIE@lenoxhill.org](mailto:DRIE@lenoxhill.org) or 212-218-0503, option 0

## Community Events

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and the MSK Ralph Lauren Center for Cancer Care  
Free Head and Neck Cancer Screenings  
Thursday, July 25, 2019, 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.  
MSK 60th Street Outpatient Center, 16 East 60th Street, 4th Floor (Suite 405)  
Friday, July 26, 2019, 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.  
Ralph Lauren Center for Cancer Care, 1919 Madison Avenue  
NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY. For more information, call 646-497-9161

Kids Take a Stand Lemonade Stand  
All proceeds benefit Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) and Rio Grande Valley Rapid Response, which provide legal and social services for separated children and families.  
Saturday, July 27 and Sunday, July 28, 2019, 12:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.  
Ibiza Kidz, 340 1st Avenue  
<https://www.facebook.com/events/480092372746254>

Free Concerts: Carnegie Hall Citywide  
Bryant Park, Five concerts throughout July and August  
Schedule: [https://www.nycgovparks.org/events/free\\_summer\\_concerts](https://www.nycgovparks.org/events/free_summer_concerts)

NYC Department of Transportation: Summer Streets  
August 3, 10, and 17 from 7 AM to 1 PM  
Park Avenue between 72nd Street and the Brooklyn Bridge

NYPD National Night Out Against Crime  
Tuesday, August 6, 2019  
13th Precinct: 5:00 P.M.-8:00 P.M., Peters's Field Park, 2nd Avenue and East 21st Streets and 4:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M., North End Of Union Square Park, 17th Street and Union Square East  
14th Precinct: 5:00 P.M.-8:00 P.M., Columbus Circle, 59th Street and Central Park West  
17th Precinct: 5:00 P.M.-8:00 P.M., Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, East 47th Street and 2nd Avenue  
18th Precinct: 5:30 P.M.-8:00 P.M., PS 111, 440 West 53rd Street between 9th and 10th Avenues  
19th Precinct: 5:30 P.M.-8:00 P.M., Carl Schurz Park, East 86th Street and East End  
23rd Precinct: 4:00 P.M.-9:00 P.M., East 106th Street between Lexington and 3rd Avenues

Census 2020 Job Opportunities Workshop  
Thursday, August 8, 2019, 2:30 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.  
Lenox Hill Senior Center

343 East 70th Street

CB6 Full Board Meeting  
Wednesday, September 11, 2019, 7:00 P.M.  
Location TBA

CB5 Full Board Meeting  
Thursday, September 12, 2019, 6:00 P.M.  
Xavier High School, 30 West 16th Street | 2nd Floor Library

CB8 Full Board Meeting  
Wednesday, September 18, 2019, 6:30 P.M.  
New York Blood Center 310 East 67th Street (First-Second) Auditorium

New York Public Library Money and Finance Programs: [nypl.org/moneymatters](http://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