

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

KEITH POWERS



November 2019

Dear Neighbor:

As we shift into the holiday season, my office is preparing for the new year and celebrating our victories in 2019.

There has been a significant amount of dialogue lately regarding how New Yorkers move throughout the city. Congestion will be at an all-time high in the coming weeks as shoppers, visitors, and residents enjoy all the lights and sights the city has to offer at this festive time.

My office has been advocating to accommodate this influx of individuals, including creating pedestrian space around Rockefeller Center, one of the busiest holiday sites. Together with Borough President Gale Brewer, I have requested that the Department of Transportation take steps to pedestrianize the historic plaza in an attempt to make it safer and more people friendly. I look forward to conversations and progress to come.

As winter approaches, my office will be running a coat drive in coordination with New York Cares. Through December 15, you can stop by my office to drop off new or gently used coats, as well as new, packaged socks, which will be donated to New Yorkers in need. I am grateful for your support during a time when we come together and help those in need.

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.

Regards,

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

Keith



A Vote to Protect our Waterfront

On November 14, the City Council voted on unprecedented efforts to protect our waterfront from climate change through the East Side Coastal Resiliency (ESCR) Project. By providing flood protection from Montgomery Street to 25th Street, over 100,000 New Yorkers will no longer be unprotected against hurricanes and severe weather. While the project has evolved over the years and construction will take time, I am proud that we are finally taking meaningful action to prevent the next disaster.

Climate change is our new reality, and the city must be prepared for what is to come. As the *New York Times* reported [in 2018](#), we have 12 years to reverse the consequences of our actions regarding climate change, in order to avoid catastrophic floods, raging wildfires, and even food shortages.

In October, we received good news that the East River Park would not be shut down in its entirety during the construction. Under the revised plan, nearly 50% of the park will remain open at all times. This will ensure that neighborhood residents have access to playground and park space during construction.

Additionally, the new plan will bring important updates to our community, including:

- A new dog run at Murphy Brothers Playground;
- A reconstructed Murphy Brothers Playground with a comfort station and electrical hookup for a scoreboard for little league use;
- A commitment to plant 1,000 new street trees across the community;
- A new, upgraded park at Waterside Pier between 38th Street and 41st Street;
- Full funding for Solar One's new facility in Stuyvesant Cove Park;
- New pedestrian and public space on 20th Street under the FDR;
- A commitment to protect Bellevue Hospital with flood mitigation measures; and,
- A new bridge along the waterfront at 14th Street to provide improved access for both pedestrians and cyclists.

Addressing Early Voting Concerns at P.S. 116

This year marks the first year of early voting in New York. In advance of the early voting period, I heard from parents at P.S. 116 with concerns about the location of an early voting site at their school and its impact on student safety. After hearing from parents, Council Member Rivera and I sent a letter to the Mayor's Office, the Board of Elections (BOE), and the Department of Education (DOE) to express our concerns and to request additional safety measures and changes to the poll siting process for early voting. In response to parents' concerns, BOE agreed to change the poll site layout so that the majority of voters would enter through the rear yard directly into the voting location, thereby avoiding contact with students, and secured additional safety measures. While these changes worked to address security concerns and to minimize disruption to students, we have asked BOE to identify a new site for future elections.



Council Member Powers participates in "Love Your Neighborhood Day" on the Upper East Side with Council Member Kallos.

Proposed Development: Lenox Hill Hospital

In October, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and I drafted a letter to Northwell Health outlining a series of questions and points of information that we believe to be essential to understanding the proposal to redevelop Lenox Hill Hospital. We also asked that Northwell engage with the community around specific concerns and incorporate feedback into the plan. Our letter comes after hearing concerns from many neighbors and community members with regard to the scale of the project, the 10-year timeline for construction, and the need to have a conversation that includes the entirety of the project.

In the letter, we made three specific asks:

- Examining the feasibility of an as-of-right proposal, which has been requested by the community;
- Project planning that incorporates Third Avenue and other related parcels into the project;
- Providing more information related the construction timeline.

Beginning in December, I will be joining Borough President Brewer for a task force that will bring together members of the community to discuss the proposal with Lenox Hill Hospital and local elected officials. This is an opportunity for neighbors to discuss issues and to ask questions about the proposal. Thank you to all of those individuals in the community who have reached out to my office or met with us to discuss the proposal.

New Subway Entrance at 14th Street and Avenue A

On November 4, I joined the MTA to unveil a brand new entrance on the south side of 14th Street and Avenue A. This opening comes months ahead of schedule, which is good news for L Train commuters.

With the new Avenue A entrance open, the 1st Avenue entrance on the south side of the street will be closed for several months, with a planned reopening in May 2020. A similar process will occur on the north side of 14th Street later this month.

By April 2020, all four entrances to the 1st Avenue station on each side of 1st Avenue and Avenue A will be open to the public. By the end of 2020, both sides of Avenue A will have elevators to become ADA accessible.



Council Member Powers joins Janno Lieber of the MTA and members of the community at the opening of a new entrance along the L train route, at 14th Street and Avenue A.

Modernizing Rockefeller Center During the Holiday Season

There is nothing like the holiday season in New York City. One of the most highly congested areas during the holidays, Rockefeller Center is often crowded with groups of residents and tourists alike. To truly capitalize on the space, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and I recently proposed pedestrianizing the area by closing 49th and 50th Streets from 5th Avenue to 6th Avenue. The current holiday set up relies on blockades that take up large amounts of space and cause groups of pedestrians to crowd crosswalks and spill over into the street: a recipe for injuries. Each day, the setup changes, which leaves vehicles, visitors, and workers confused. With a defined setup, rules of the area would be more easily communicated and expectations clear with the holiday season upon us. I am working with stakeholders to ensure changes are made in a timely manner.

Addressing Quality of Life on 14th Street

The intersection of 14th Street and 1st Avenue has long been a concern of local residents, but recently my office has heard an increased amount of feedback.

Together with City Council Member Carlina Rivera, I have put together a working group of our offices and City agencies to address quality-of-life issues. The working group includes the Department of Sanitation, Department of Homeless Services, 9th Precinct and 13th Precinct of the NYPD, and other pertinent agencies. The purpose of the working group is to make the intersection more pedestrian friendly, enliven the streetscape, and increase safety. The group will meet on a semi-quarterly basis to measure progress.

Since the formation, our offices have coordinated with the City agencies to:

- Increase sanitation efforts near the M14 bus shelter.
- Designate the intersection of 14th Street and 1st Avenue as a “hotspot” for the Department of Sanitation, which will allow for additional garbage collection.

- Regularly engage with unsheltered individuals in the area to offer services from the Department of Homeless Services' Street Outreach Team.
- Work with local businesses to increase street cleanliness.

Repaving Park Avenue

Many of you reached out to my office regarding the paving on Park Avenue on the Upper East Side. The paving initially began in October, but was stalled due to bad weather and religious holiday activities. On Tuesday, October 22, while resurfacing a nearby street outside of my district, one of DOT's Roadway employees was struck and killed by a DOT dump truck operating at the site. My thoughts are with the family that tragically lost a loved one. In light of the extended timeline, I contacted the Borough Commissioner at the Department of Transportation (DOT) to urge DOT to pave as soon as possible, and restore the streets to safer conditions. I am pleased to report that the street has since been repaved.

Job Opportunities: New York City Census

The federal Census Bureau is hiring for the 2020 Census. Apply now to make up to \$27.50/hour and help New Yorkers get counted. The federal Census Bureau needs to recruit 40,000 people in New York City to conduct the 2020 Census. Census taker, recruiting assistant, office clerk, and office supervisor positions in NYC will pay \$20-27.50/hour based on position. The field positions are part-time and have flexible hours. Paid training is provided, no prior skills are necessary, and a 2020 Census job could be an excellent entry point to a career with the Census Bureau. It is crucial that these important jobs go to New Yorkers who reflect their communities. To apply, go to 2020census.gov/jobs or call 1-855-JOB-2020 (call 800-877-8339 for TTY/ASCII).

DONATE A COAT: Council Member Powers' Coat Drive with New York Cares

Together with New York Cares, I am hosting a coat and sock drive to provide for New Yorkers in need. Please gather new or gently used coats and new, packaged socks for donation. My office will serve as a drop-off location at 211 East 43rd Street, Suite 1205, from 10:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M. through December 15. Please contact Kana Ervin kervin@council.nyc.gov for additional drop-off locations.

CITY HALL

City Council Passes Historic Legislation for Commercial Waste Zones

The city's current commercial waste collection system services neighborhoods with more than 45 different carters, and some city blocks experience garbage trucks passing through 400 times in a single day. These routes worsen air quality, increase greenhouse gas emissions, and cause excessive noise. Additionally, the risky driving behavior and fatigue brought on by long routes have led to over 25 deaths involving commercial garbage trucks since 2010. I was proud to support Intro. 1574, passed on October 30, which will create a system of geographic zones across the city, with carters bidding for the right to operate in each zone. I believe that creating commercial waste zones will significantly reduce route lengths while allowing carters to service the same number of customers, addressing environmental, safety, and noise concerns.



Council Member Powers joins colleagues in support of Commercial Waste Zones.

New Legislation: Improving Consumer Protection for Subscriptions

Earlier this summer, I shared plans to address how New Yorkers can exit consumer relationships, including gym memberships. Currently, the majority of gyms in New York City require an in-person cancellation, or one through certified mail. I recently introduced legislation to allow consumers to cancel their memberships online. Like many New Yorkers, I have experienced the arduous process of cancelling this service. Based on data gathered by my office, nearly three-quarters of New York-based gym and fitness studio chains require cancellation in-person or through certified mail. Many facilities do not provide cancellation details on their website. This is an ongoing issue of consumer rights. It is not fair to consumers to be hamstrung in agreements and tied up financially by companies that could easily allow for an online cancellation.

Criminal Justice Reform: Closing Rikers Island

Last month, the New York City Council held a historic vote to close the Rikers Island, which has long been emblematic of a broken criminal justice system for New York and the country. As Chair of the Criminal Justice Committee, I have had the opportunity to be a part of this consequential and significant movement to not only improve the treatment of incarcerated individuals, but also to truly transform the criminal justice system. In the proposal that passed the City Council, Rikers will be replaced by four smaller, safer borough-based facilities. The proposal was accompanied by historic investments in programs that provide alternatives to incarceration, community investments, as well as the passage of my bill to ensure minimum standards for conditions in the new facilities.

Throughout this process I have stressed the importance of investing in communities most impacted by the criminal justice system. Targeted, citywide investments further indicate that closing Rikers Island is not only a land-use action, but an urgent moment to overhaul the criminal justice system. This is a very big moment for New York City.

IN THE NEWS

November 14, [What 2.5 Miles of Barriers Along the East River Mean for Manhattan](#), NY1

City Council Members Carlina Rivera and Keith Powers joined Bobby Cuza to talk about the passage of their bill that aims to protect the East Side of Manhattan from future storms like Hurricane Sandy.

November 8, [De Blasio needs to do something serious about Rockefeller Center holiday horrors](#), *New York Post*

Every New Yorker, and every tourist trekking to see the Rockefeller Center tree, knows it: The holiday streets in Midtown are mayhem.

October 28, [Getting in the Holiday Spirit of Improved Public Space](#), *Gotham Gazette*

'Tis the season for improving public spaces. The 14th Street busway has been live for just over three weeks and the accolades are already enough to deem its opening as historic. New Yorkers are now seeking more innovative ideas to improve the pedestrian and commuter experience throughout the city.

October 17, [NYC Council passes plan for borough-based jails, paving way for closing Rikers Island](#), *Daily News*

The New York City Council passed a plan to build four new borough-based jails on Thursday, marking the end of a months-long effort to push through a proposal that politicians say will ultimately end in a Rikers Island shutdown.

October 15, [One-On-One With Manhattan Councilman Keith Powers](#), NY1

It's been almost two weeks since the busway changes went into effect along 14th Street. The ban initially faced opposition, but now we're starting to see its impact. City Councilman Keith Powers stopped by "Mornings On 1" to discuss this as well as the ongoing efforts to open community based jails and shut down Rikers Island.

SAVE THE DATES

Events with Council Member Powers

[Council Member Powers' Coat Drive with New York Cares](#)

Together with New York Cares, I am hosting a coat and sock drive to provide for New Yorkers in need. Please gather gently used coats and new, packaged socks for donation.

My office will serve as a drop-off location at 211 East 43rd Street, Suite 1205, from 10:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M. through December 15. Please contact Kana Ervin kervin@council.nyc.gov for additional drop-off locations.

[Medicare Rights Center Information Session, sponsored by Council Member Keith Powers](#)

Learn about any changes to Medicare and Medicaid during the Open Enrollment Period, ending on December 7.

Monday, November 25, 2019, 11:00 A.M.
92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Avenue

Tuesday, December 3, 2019, 2:00 P.M.
14th Street Y, 344 East 14th Street

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
Third Thursday of Every Month
12:00 P.M. - 2:00 P.M.

Stuyvesant Town Community Center, 449 East 14th Street
Will resume on January 30, 2020, based on holidays.

Drag Queen Story Hour, sponsored by Council Member Keith Powers

Drag Queen Story Hour (DQSH) captures the imagination and play of the gender fluidity of childhood and gives kids glamorous, positive, and unabashedly queer role models. In spaces like this, kids are able to see people who defy rigid gender restrictions and imagine a world where people can present as they wish, where dress up is real.

Epiphany Library
Friday, February 21, 2020, 2:00 P.M.

96th Street Library
Wednesday April 22, 2020, 4:00 P.M.

Community Events

CB8 Full Board Meeting
Wednesday, November 20, 2019, 6:30 P.M.
New York Blood Center, 310 East 67th Street (First-Second), Auditorium

Shred-A-Thon, with Council Member Kallos and Assemblymember Seawright
Sunday, November 24, 2019, 10:00 A.M.-2:00 P.M.
Upper Green Side, 92nd Street Green Market on First Ave

Tenants' Rights Advice Clinic
Are you a Manhattan resident with a housing problem? Do you have questions about your lease? Is your landlord failing to make repairs or provide you with heat, hot water, or other essential services? Attend one of our Tenants' Rights Advice Clinics, offered at three convenient locations, to speak to an attorney or legal advocate for advice on your housing-related and landlord-tenant questions.

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House
331 East 70th Street
December 5, 2019
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 P.M.*
*Must arrive by 12:00 P.M.

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

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