

# District Needs Statement

## Community Board 7/Manhattan

### FY2022

November 1, 2020



Manhattan Community Board 7 (“MCB7”) serves the residents, institutions, businesses, visitors, and other stakeholders of Manhattan’s Upper West Side. We hold as our guiding context the following core principles:

**INCLUSION:** valuing diversity, consideration of others, and promotion of the common good.

**QUALITY OF LIFE:** pursuing the availability and continuous improvement of resources, infrastructure, public space, programs, services, and economic, socio-cultural, and educational opportunities that foster safe and active healthy living for all.

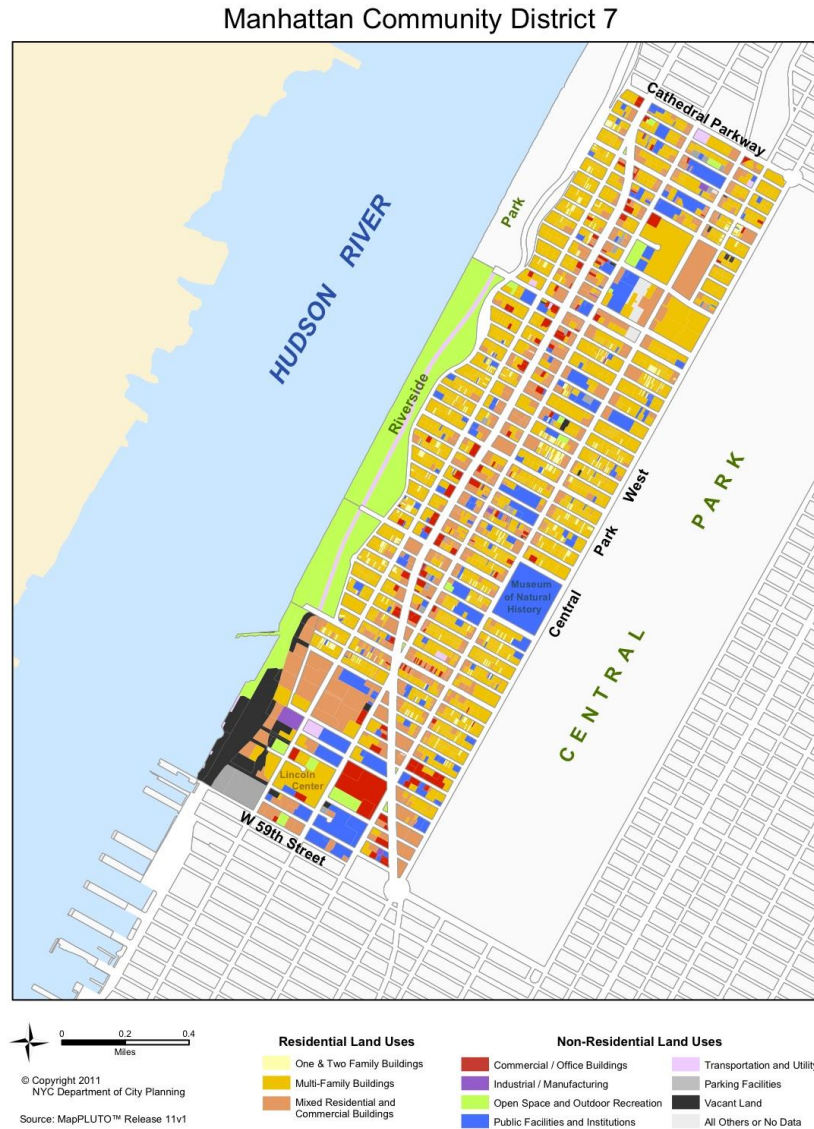
**SUSTAINABILITY:** respecting those who came before us, and those who have yet to arrive; promoting policies and practices that are economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable for generations to come.

**INTERDEPENDENCE:** understanding our place in the world, recognizing that our interests, resources, and actions connect us with communities and ecosystems across the globe; embracing policies and practices that allow all communities to thrive.

**PARTICIPATION:** fostering honest, transparent, responsive, and democratic governance, collaborative engagement, and the right of every person to be informed and heard, even in the context of respectful disagreement.

## 1.0 Geography and Demographics

Manhattan Community District 7 encompasses Manhattan’s Upper West Side, from 59<sup>th</sup> Street to 110<sup>th</sup> Street, Central Park West to the Hudson River, and includes approximately 1.9 square miles (1,222 acres) of prime New York City real estate. According to Census data, which may undercount certain demographic groups among our neighbors, our District is home to 211,073 people, supporting approximately 50% more people per acre than the average for Manhattan, and four times more people per acre than the average for New York City.



Prior to Covid, in addition to the residents who live in District 7, the Upper West Side attracts millions of visitors each year who come to enjoy its cultural institutions, parks, retail offerings, and architectural diversity. Central Park, the American Museum of Natural History, Lincoln Center, Time Warner Center, New-York Historical Society, and Riverside Park are popular destinations.

**Central Park**

**American Museum of Natural History**



**Lincoln Center**



**Time Warner Center**



**New-York Historical Society**



**Riverside Park**



## 1.1 Population Density

CB7 joined in outreach efforts to encourage robust participation in the 2020 Census. The results of the Census will not be available for several months.

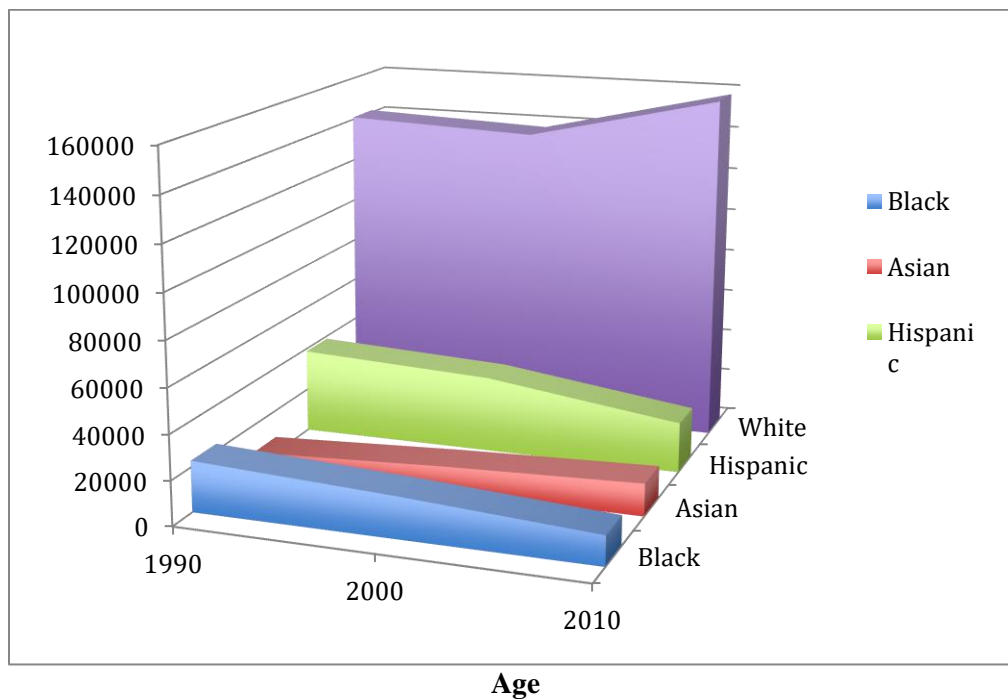
Based on data from the last decennial census, although population has remained fairly stable over four decades, the geographic distribution of residents has shifted. According to Census tract data, approximately 6% fewer people live in the central part of the district (74<sup>th</sup> St. to 96<sup>th</sup> St.), while new development in the southern and northern ends of the district has attracted enough new residents to counter-balance that loss. Reliance on census data carries with it concerns relating to populations traditionally under-counted, which in turn are historically those at the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum, and which correlate with the perceived areas of population claimed to have been lost in the last decennial census. The undercounted populations are a particular concern because the inability to count them can result in a loss of services that are already scarce in a District that is perceived as affluent and where it is already a challenge to demonstrate need. Almost half (49%) of the occupied units in the district are one-person households.

Total Population	1980	1990	2000	2010
# of Residents	206,671	210,993	207,699	211,073
% Change	--	2.1	-1.6	1.6

## 1.2 Population Distribution

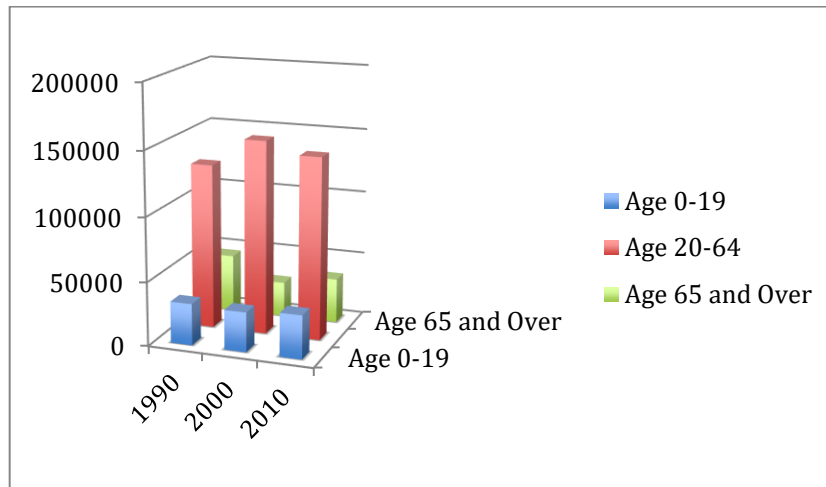
Although population has increased a modest 1.6% over the past decade, notable shifts occurred in the socioeconomic mix of the neighborhood. The decade saw an increase in the proportion of Caucasian residents (66% to 75%) and Asian residents (5.5% to 6.9%), while the proportion of Black residents decreased (9% to 6%) and Latino residents dropped (17% to 11%).

### Race



Similarly, there was a significant shift in age distribution. Overall, adults of working ages 20-64 decreased by 6%, while children under 20 increased by 10%, and seniors over 65 increased a whopping 27% since

2000. In fact, Community District 7 has the second highest concentration of residents over 65 in all of New York City.

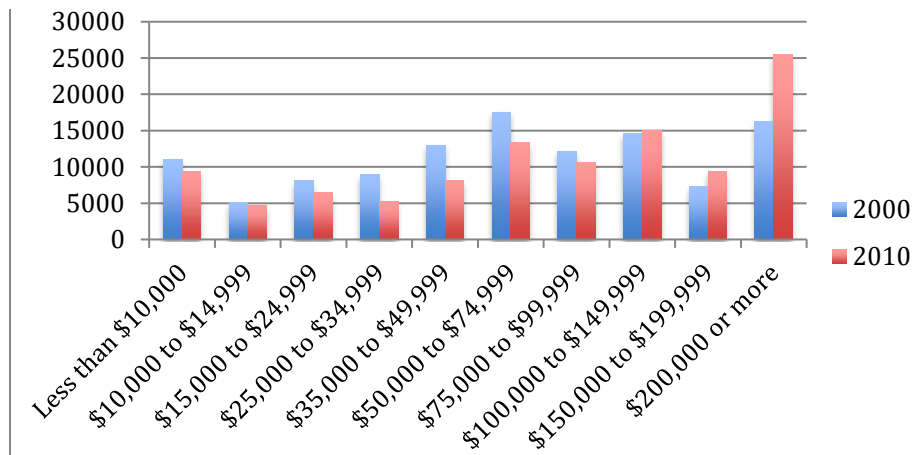


**Income**

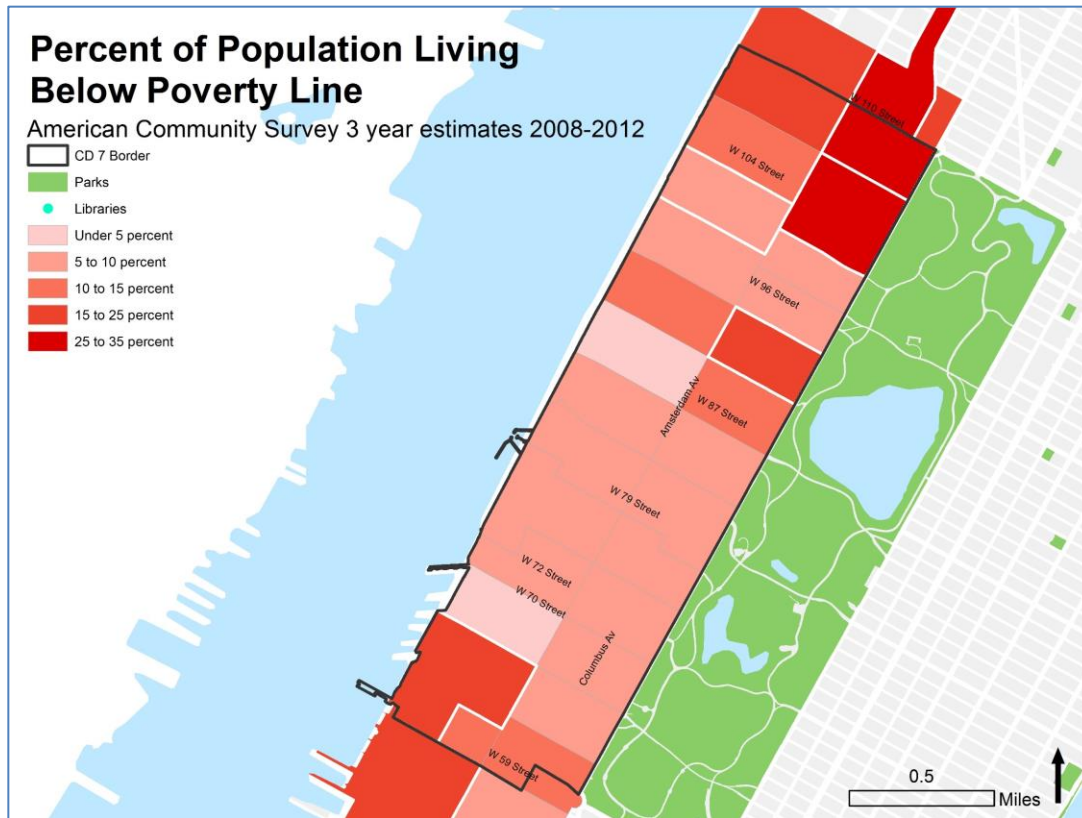
By far the most significant demographic shift occurred in the area of household income. Over the past decade, New York City has seen:

- The largest income gap in the US -- top 20% earn \$371,754, bottom 20% earn \$8,844.
- A 52% increase in homelessness from 31,000 to over 54,600.
- An increase in the poverty rate from 18% in 2007 to 21% in 2012.

In Community District 7, growth in the income gap is even more pronounced, with the proportion of top earning residents nearly doubling over the past decade. In 2012, median household income was estimated at \$99,000 for the Upper West Side, \$68,000 for Manhattan, \$52,000 for New York City, and \$58,000 for New York State.



However, despite a marked increase in average income, most residents would also confirm observable differences in income disparity, homelessness, and growing pockets of poverty.



## 2.0 Countervailing Trends: Rapid Development and Growing Pockets of Need

Since the 1980's, the Upper West Side has seen tremendous economic growth and development. Several factors, including easy access to transit (Subways 1,2,3,A,B,C,D and multiple bus lines), proximity to parks (Central Park and Riverside Park among others), strong public schools, and engaging street life make the district especially attractive to families, seniors, and people who want a short commute to Manhattan's business centers downtown.

After the recovery from the economic downturn of 2008 fueled by scandals involving mortgage-backed securities and other real estate practices, the trend toward aggressive development in the District resumed. Given the scarcity of vacant lots, much of this development involved replacing low-density buildings (often referred to as "soft sites") with new construction that is built to the maximum density permitted by existing zoning, many consisting of luxury residential or mixed-use towers. Townhouses that were long ago divided into multiple units were (and continue to be) consolidated into single-family homes. Vacant lots (what few remained) were purchased and developed into large-scale, mixed-use complexes. Plans were approved in December 2010 to develop the last significant open lot in the district (at 59<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue) into Riverside Center, a 3 Million SF mixed-use complex with 2,500 residential units, commercial storefronts at the ground floor, landscaped open space, and a 100K SF school, which complex when fully occupied will increase district population by approximately 3-4% (not reflected in this report). The first two of the five buildings approved for development are now well on their way to being occupied, and the remaining three are nearing completion. Those buildings are a block away from two additional new large-scale luxury residential towers on Fordham's Lincoln Center campus that are now fully occupied, as well as many other family-friendly new residential construction projects in the vicinity.

The construction boom continues unabated in the district. Two different developers are currently proceeding with proposals to build a residential towers that will exceed 660 feet in height on the former site

of the Lincoln Square Synagogue at 200 Amsterdam Avenue and 775 feet on the former Guild for the Blind site on West 66<sup>th</sup> Street, although there are on-going disputes about each project (discussed in detail in the Land Use section below). There is no reason to believe that this trend will subside in the foreseeable future.

### **Brownstone Conversions**



### **New Construction**



In certain areas, the average price per square foot increased from \$300/SF in 1990 to more than \$1000/SF in 2015.

Despite rapid development and related improvements, many areas throughout the district continue to languish. So called “pockets of poverty” make up at least 10% of the population and experience unemployment rates over 10%, high school graduation rates under 10%, high instances of obesity, diabetes, and other health problems, and a disproportionate rate of crime (10% vs. 25%). Historically, certain City support services for the economically disadvantaged have overlooked pockets of poverty surrounded by affluence, making the experience of this segment of our population all the more heartbreaking as well as increasingly difficult to serve. Recent efforts to more equitably allocate City support services are gaining traction, particularly in support services to infants, children and youth, and constant oversight and vigilance is needed to ensure that these gains are not rescinded in subsequent years' budgets.

### **3.0 Issues and Opportunities**

There is virtually no aspect of life on the Upper West Side, as everywhere, that has not been impacted by the Covid pandemic and the responses to it, including the closing and phased re-opening of businesses and schools.

Countless small and chain businesses have closed, leaving orders of magnitude more vacant storefronts than were the subject of concern the prior year. Other small businesses, especially restaurants, are barely hanging on thanks to the ability to serve patrons in additional outdoor settings as recommended by CB7 early on in the response to the pandemic – whether those remaining businesses can survive the winter months is an on-going source of concern.

Whether the result of the economic downturn caused by the responses to the pandemic, or a result of additional causes and influences, the Upper West Side has seen an increase in individuals living unsheltered on our streets.

Food pantries and meal distribution facilities, which pre-pandemic were already meeting ever-increasing needs, have been stretched beyond comprehensible limits. Even pop-up food distribution facilities frequently have long lines of those facing food insecurity.

It is widely speculated that the State-imposed moratoriums on evictions from residential and commercial properties are all that stands between our residents and businesses and ever greater dispossession and potentially homelessness. The ending of the federally enhanced unemployment benefits exacerbated an already tenuous situation, with many tenants able to remain in their homes or stores only by the grace of the moratoriums.

While the statistics on major crimes tracked by the NYPD have remained fairly stable during the pandemic, the incidence of lesser offenses have been the subject of increasing reports and feedback as an on-going source of concern.

The revenue shortfalls occasioned by the closing of businesses throughout the City have slashed essential services, including the NYPD, the Department of Sanitation, and Parks operations, to name just a few.

Thankfully, the community has responded by stepping in wherever possible. Our streets are cleaner thanks to volunteer efforts such as those organized by One Block UWS, the Broadway Mall Association, and other groups, who supplement the cleaning efforts routinely undertaken by the Business Improvement Districts, the Doe Fund, the Goddard-Riverside Green Keepers, and other groups.

Neighbors and volunteers are stepping in to ensure that relief efforts reach those in need. The City Get Food program is continuing to supply food to those in need, and volunteers are crucial to these efforts. For example, at NYCHA facilities throughout the Upper West Side, volunteers have organized so that the home-bound, elderly and those who are at greatest risk of the pandemic can receive food distributions.

The impacts of the pandemic, the economic shutdown it occasioned, and the difficulty in sustaining recovery going forward are expected to be with us well into fiscal year 2022 and possibly beyond.



### 3.1 Housing

#### Housing

	Total Dwelling Units	Median Household Income	Income Diversity Ratio	Median Gross Rent	Vacant Rental Units (%)	Home Ownership Rate
2000		\$102,036		\$1,499		29.2%
2006	120,652	\$112,374	6.7%	\$1,658	6.0%	35.6%
2010	113,725	\$102,248	8.6%	\$1,734	3.8%	32.0%
2016	121,595	\$115,612	8.8%	\$2,211	4.8%	35.2%
2017	117,342	\$126,257	9.2%	\$1,953	4.7%	40.2%
2018	191,222	\$123,840	8.8%	\$2,270	5.0%	37.5%

These are terrible times. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused all of us who live in New York City, a city where early lockdown enabled us to get ahead of the virus but changed our lives, to suffer severe restrictions on how we live and, for many, where we live. Many people who dwell in Manhattan Community District 7 have left the city; not just the wealthy who have vacation homes but many who have gone to double up with relatives or friends because, without a job, they can no longer pay their rent. The threat of eviction hangs over many more who risk their lives doing low-paid essential jobs or no longer have a job. In the short term, more generous eviction protections are necessary during this critical time and, in the long term, we need more affordable housing for low- and middle-income people and the homeless who live among us.

In 2018, almost half (48.3%) of low income households in our district were categorized as severely rent burdened, spending more than 50 percent of household income on rent in a neighborhood where the median household income was \$123,840. The Income Diversity Ratio (income earned by 80<sup>th</sup> percentile divided by income earned by 20<sup>th</sup> percentile) is 8.8, the third highest in New York City.

A major contributor to this disparity is the lack of affordable housing. Affordable housing increases opportunities for long-time residents to remain in their community and encourages new residents, especially younger ones, to find homes in the community.

NYC and NYS housing programs recognize that economic diversity brings strength and stability to the community. Unfortunately, the stock of affordable housing in the district has decreased at an alarming rate. In 2018, only 27.7 percent of units in MCB7 were affordable at 80 percent of Area Median Income (AMI), and only 5.7 percent were affordable at 30 percent AMI. For renters at all income levels, 20.2 percent were severely rent-burdened households and 16.4 percent were moderately rent-burdened.

The need for affordable housing has become infinitely more visible with the relocation of people from several homeless shelters to vacant hotels in the district to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Additionally, an increase in the number of street homeless has exposed the need for supportive housing. The lack of housing options available in all levels of affordability and formats force too many New Yorkers into homelessness. Housing is the answer to homelessness and Community District 7 must do our part to create housing wherever possible.

Housing affordability is essential to a good life and a stable neighborhood. Housing instability is overwhelming to the physical and mental needs of families at all times and this pandemic has shown that the need for decent housing is also a public health issue. We do not yet know the extent of the damage – to our lives and our plans – caused by the pandemic. It could return and decimate even more of our residents and providers. This crisis has shown that we have to be more innovative and flexible to prevent evictions and expand the availability of truly affordable housing.

The pandemic has caused a recession and the City is reeling from the additional expenses engendered by COVID-19 but the following proposals identify the most prevalent categories of housing in MCB7 and offer some additional approaches to create the affordable housing we need and preserve the affordable housing we have.

**New Opportunities for Affordable Housing Development** – Market rate construction in MCB7 has resulted in very tall, as-of-right buildings (due to zoning lot mergers, transfer of development rights (TDRs) and the prevalence of high-density zoning in MCB7) that have no need to provide affordable housing units in exchange for floor area bonuses. Virtually no buildings are being built that primarily provide affordable housing and the amount of affordable housing that is provided is minimal. The decline in local affordable housing requires exploration of additional supplemental sources. Additionally, the draconian cuts to the HPD budget put at risk the affordable housing projects that could potentially move forward in MCD7. Affordable housing is the answer to evictions which lead to homelessness.

***District Need:*** The City should expand the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) program throughout the city in all new residential and mixed use buildings rather than confine it to a few rezoned areas in poorer neighborhoods. New buildings would be required to allocate 20 percent of floor area to permanent rent-restricted apartments for lower- and middle-income households. We need affordable housing on a scale that doesn't exist at this time and it should be available in differing areas with differing economic structures. Sometimes known as Universal Affordable Housing, this is an idea that is starting to be discussed as a way to ensure the provision of affordable housing throughout the city. It could be the instrument to reverse the lack of economic diversity in our neighborhood.

***District Need:*** It is also necessary to stress the need to increase the availability of moderate income housing. Developers should be incentivized to include a mix of income levels in any new developments in the Community District. There has been a significant reduction in the availability of housing that is accessible to those with incomes at 100-150 percent of AMI. Rents are at an all-time high, making MCB7 virtually inaccessible to young adults (including those who cannot afford to live in the communities in which they grew up), young families and older people who have lived in the neighborhood for decades. New construction all too often creates residential units that sell or rent at luxury rates beyond the reach of many New Yorkers with moderate incomes.

***District Need:*** or; The City should look to the possibility of requiring special permits for buildings over a certain size that would require permanent affordable housing in such buildings based on the amount of additional height due to zoning lot mergers and TDFs.

***District Need:*** The City should explore the potential of funding and converting vacant and/or underutilized hotels into permanent affordable apartments, with supportive services, if necessary,

under the auspices of a local service provider. This would provide permanent housing for families and single persons.

***District Need:*** The City in cooperation with CB7 should work to identify sites that can produce affordable units and consider the establishment of a land bank.

***District Need:*** The City should survey publicly-owned land in the district and look for underbuilt lots. Lots containing one-story firehouses, police stations, libraries and other community resources could be built out with brand new facilities for these City agencies and incorporate affordable housing above. Micro units and infill development on public land should be considered.

***District Need:*** Affordable housing units are lost due to warehousing and illegal short term rentals. The City Council has passed legislation to monitor this illegal activity. MCB7 should encourage further enforcement by monitoring suspected short-term rentals in the district as well as the response to 311 complaints.

***District Need:*** The City should seek to connect faith-based organizations with trusted developers to build affordable housing on underutilized land owned by faith-based organizations.

***Projects:*** We are particularly concerned that projects in CD7 that were previously supposed to be allocated funding from the HPD capital budget will no longer be able to close on financing and proceed. Nonprofit service providers that operate supportive housing and shelters are unable to plan for their population and deal with COVID-19.

- Project FIND on West 79<sup>th</sup> Street
- Fetner project on West 96th Street
- Phase 2 of WSFSSH's 108th Street project
- Goddard Riverside

**SROs** – MCB7 is home to more than 200 single room occupancy (SRO) buildings with 13,364 dwelling units. These units are often the most affordable options for young singles, older veterans, the chronically ill, the formerly homeless and low-income persons. Economic opportunity has motivated many SRO owners to convert their buildings (often in violation of zoning regulations) from affordable permanent residential dwellings into transient hotels, thereby removing these affordable SRO units from the rental market.

***District Need:*** Those SROs that are currently threatened with conversion should be purchased by the City through the Neighborhood Pillars Program and disposed of to nonprofit housing providers. The SROs should be rent regulated through preservation financing. Regulatory agreements would ensure they are properly maintained and rented as permanent affordable housing. When feasible, the SROs should be converted into supportive housing to serve the most vulnerable of us and help reduce the homeless population.

**Senior Housing** – More than one-fifth (22.0%) of the 2018 population of MCB7 is aged 65 or older, an increase from 13.4 percent in 2010. The percentage of seniors in Manhattan in 2018 was 16.5; 14.8 percent in New York City. The Upper West Side has the third highest number of seniors in the city. A remarkable 46.8 percent of households in the district are single person households; surely many of these are seniors. Seniors need appropriate housing and social services that enable them to continue to age in place in the neighborhoods where they have spent their adult lives.

***District Need:*** The NYS Department for the Aging funds Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs), where health and social services are provided in buildings with a substantial population of seniors. The City should work with DFTA to actively promote and fund more NORCs for our growing number of senior residents.

***District Need:*** Encourage the inclusion of compact dwelling units appropriately outfitted with safety devices, such as grab bars and bannisters, in the affordable housing components in new residential buildings currently under construction in the District. These are separate from micro-units as seniors may need daily or live-in home help.

***District Need:*** In 2018, the poverty rate for people 65 and older was 14.9 percent, an increase of 3.2 percent from the previous year. Thousands of seniors and residents eligible for the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) and the Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) are not currently enrolled in those programs, and therefore may be paying more rent than necessary despite their limited income. HPD should expand community outreach to senior centers and non-profit organizations and provide more information, including informational sessions, to ensure that every qualified resident is getting proper rent increase exemptions.

**Rent-regulated housing** – MCB7 again applauds last year’s legislation in Albany that eliminated the vacancy bonus, ‘luxury’ decontrol, preferential rents, income caps, and the four-year ‘look-back’ period. Restrictions were placed on the amount of major capital improvements (MCI) and individual apartment improvements (IAI) that can be passed to tenants and the time period of such charges. Various tenant harassment and eviction practices that had been utilized against all renters were also eliminated. We have long called for an end to these practices and again thank the legislators who worked so hard to end them.

***Reclaiming Rent-Stabilized Units*** – Because rent stabilization depends on self-reporting of landlords to the Division of Homes and Community Renewal, some units have been priced higher than their legal rent or have not been re-registered after temporary destabilization. Tenants have unknowingly rented these apartments and paid illegally high rents. Many apartments were deregulated and became market-rate housing. The Housing Stability and Tenant Protections Act of 2019 sought to provide a longer period for DHCR to review rent overcharge applications, but this was reversed on appeal; tenants still have only a four year "look-back" period to address overcharges, with no provision for willful overcharge damages. Additionally, since COVID-19, with vacancy rates increasing dramatically, landlords are warehousing rent-regulated apartments to take advantage of the look-back period in order to deregulate apartments.

***District Need:*** The City should work with lawmakers in Albany to ensure that reimbursement for overcharges must be made for the entire period of those overcharges and place the affected apartments under rent stabilization again. The City should also work with DHCR to enforce existing rent regulations and maintain or reclaim as many rent regulated apartments as possible.

***Tenant Education:*** Speculation has been a problem in the Upper West Side for many years and is now affecting tenants at the northern boundary of the district. Residents of Manhattan Valley saw their buildings, which contain many rent-stabilized units, purchased for very high prices, with the

assumption that the new owners would be able to increase the rent rolls. With the recent reformation of the State's rent laws, many tenants may not be aware of their new or strengthened rights,

*District Need:* First and foremost, community-based organizations should be given the resources they need to do extensive outreach to educate community members as to the new legislation and their rights. Additionally, HPD's Neighborhood Pillars program should continue to target select buildings in Manhattan Valley for purchase by nonprofit developers for renovation. HPD should institute long-term regulatory agreements to keep rent-stabilized units affordable

**Mitchell Lama Preservation** – Many Mitchell-Lama buildings in MCB7 have already or will soon reach the end of their regulatory periods. This means the buildings no longer legally must be kept at affordable rents, and many have already opted to go market-rate. There are 11 Mitchell-Lama developments in MCB7 with 1,749 units and, on average, the buildings are almost 60 years old.

*District Need:* HPD has announced a Mitchell-Lama Reinvestment program as part of Housing NY 2.0. The median asking rate in this Community District is higher than that of Manhattan and the City. Therefore, Mitchell-Lama units in our community should be prioritized for preservation as they become vulnerable to going market-rate. We urge the NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal (HCR) to place all Mitchell-Lama building under rent stabilization guidelines without regard to their date of construction if they are removed from the Mitchell-Lama program. HPD and/or HCR should aim for the longest possible regulatory period for these properties, to ensure that they remain in MCB7's affordable housing stock and provide moderate- and middle-income housing for our community.

**Provide Tenants with the Necessary Knowledge and Resources to Fight for their Rights** – Residents remain unaware of their options for recourse in the event of an abusive or law-breaking landlord. Some residents lack knowledge of potential services, or enter into contracts with landlords known to be abusive. The recent significant changes to the Rent Stabilization Law have greatly expanded the rights of tenants. Thanks to the 2017 Right to Counsel legislation, tenants facing eviction who meet certain income tests are eligible to have an attorney represent them in Housing Court free of charge. As this program is rolled out to all of the Upper West Side, it is important that the City closely monitors the need and makes resources available to ensure the program fulfills its intentions.

*District Need;* Create a programs to rate building owners and managers in order to inform potential residents of existing problems and available services. This should include a full rollout of the Certificate of No Harassment Program in MCB7.

*District Need:* Continue outreach to tenants in MCB7 so that they are aware of the availability of free counsel in Housing Court for those who qualify.

**Housing Development Fund Corporations (HDFC) Cooperatives** – These shareholder-owned HDFC cooperatives, which benefit from reduced real estate taxes in exchange for following certain standards for the selling and renting of apartments, are an important source of affordable homeownership for MCB7. Unfortunately, there has been mismanagement of some of these HDFC cooperatives that has resulted in many being in a condition of insolvency and disrepair.

***District Need:*** HPD should provide financial management training and oversight for mismanaged HDFCs. Required quarterly check-ins to oversee building finances should be instituted. No monitor or manager should be required in HDFCs that are currently financially healthy and do not have extensive capital needs. HPD should work with the HDFCs to extend affordability and tax abatement for all existing HDFCs. HPD should provide subsidies, if needed, to replenish HDFC reserves and pay for capital improvements, provided they follow certain terms set by HPD to ensure future solvency.

**New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)** – MCB7 includes three large-scale developments managed by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA): Amsterdam Houses, Frederick Douglass Houses and Wise Towers, with a total of 6,166 (Furman cites 5,926d.u/22 buildings) units, as well as numerous individual buildings and groups of townhouses, also under NYCHA’s jurisdiction. NYCHA and its residents face myriad challenges, including: the need for improved security, facility repairs, sanitation. resident services, and inadequacies in the programs for youth and seniors. Inadequate resources as well as a dearth of accessible and accurate data, make it difficult to consistently address problems in a timely manner. Compounding these problems is a lengthy and labyrinthine process for troubleshooting and redressing on-going maintenance needs.

Lack of funding and resources for capital needs and operating expenses have contributed to multiple problems. MCB7 has identified several primary areas with the most need:

***Data collection and transparency:*** Information on NYCHA needs and responses to those needs is extremely opaque. Additionally, the large influx of City, State and Federal funding for NYCHA requires coordination and transparency such that all CDs and NYCHA developments can see an directory of reported problems, the actions being taken to remedy them and offer feedback.

***District Need:*** the City should develop an effective data collection and response system for all NYCHA developments. It should include a concrete dashboard with metrics of progress in implementing NYCHA’s strategic plans.

***Management and repairs:*** Desperately-needed maintenance and renovation have not occurred. In particular, safety and security upgrades (cameras and doors, including broken fire doors which cannot be opened), building maintenance (broken elevators, inadequate heating, electrical outages, faulty plumbing), and apartment repairs (pipes, leaks, mold, vermin, lead paint) have been ignored and neglected. Elevator failures, floods, and electrical outages are routine and no investigations are performed. Seniors, the disabled and those who have difficulty climbing stairs are often shuttered in their apartments when elevators are not working. These problems have been exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

There is a convoluted route for addressing individual maintenance needs (i.e. a leaking pipe may require 4 to 6 separate tickets and visits before the problem is fixed), Repairs are left to the residents to try to obtain on their own. No resident should be forced to live in an apartment with mold, vermin, or consistent long-term repair issues.

***District Need:*** The complaint system for repairs needs to be overhauled such that repairs are implemented quickly and residents can provide feedback as to whether an issue has actually been resolved properly in their unit and/or building. Health hazard tickets should be given high priority and receive same-day responses.

Several buildings at Amsterdam Houses are scheduled for boiler replacement, elevator replacement, playground updates and other upgrades. Several buildings at Frederick Douglass I and II are scheduled for new bulk crushers, new fire alarm systems, gas riser replacement, exterior site lighting and playground updates. These are essential, but do not adequately address the problems facing the residents of these complexes.

***Security:*** NYCHA residents in MCB7 experience threats within NYCHA developments due to lax security enforcement and the constant state of disrepair of security equipment, especially cameras. Additionally, security monitors are not routinely reviewed, unless an incident is reported.

***District Need:*** New security equipment is needed and the existing equipment must be adequately maintained. Broken or defective security cameras in NYCHA developments should be repaired or replaced immediately. Additionally, NYCHA should ensure staff are in place to routinely monitor the footage. Doors and other means of egress should be checked regularly and repaired immediately, when necessary.

***Sanitation:*** NYCHA developments in MCB7 are dependent on NYCHA employees to maintain sanitary conditions, rather than private management or the Department of Sanitation. Despite residents' best efforts to keep their units clean, the lack of adequate staffing and chronic underfunding has led many developments to be plagued by unsanitary conditions due to inadequate trash removal and pest infestations. Unsanitary conditions and lead paint cause multiple illnesses in residents especially those at greatest risk: young children, the elderly and those with compromised immune systems.

***District Need:*** Increased funding for staff and sanitation supplies and equipment should be provided to developments. It is essential to quickly and efficiently address the abatement of mold and lead paint.

***Rental Assistance Demonstration program (RAD):*** Wise Towers and the 'Brownstones' have been selected as part of RAD, a public-private partnership that will provide funding to rehabilitate these buildings.

***District Need:*** It is imperative that during the conversion to the RAD program, all tenants, local service organizations and elected officials be actively involved in all stages of the process.

***Resident Programming and Social Needs:***

***Department for the Aging (DFTA) Senior Centers:*** For NYCHA seniors who are aging in place, senior centers are a necessary lifeline for participants to receive services and have social contact. Without DFTA funding, these seniors may not maintain connections to much

needed health and social services in the community. Many are in disrepair and cannot be fully utilized.

***District Need:*** There is a large percentage of seniors in the NYCHA developments in MCD7. Senior centers must be adequately funded, kept in good repair and maintained. DFTA must always ensure that they are properly staffed.

***Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs):*** Buildings with a substantial population of seniors may be eligible to be selected by DFTA as NORCs with specific health and social services tailored to senior residents. Several NYCHA buildings are already designated as NORCs.

***District Need:*** Survey NYCHA developments in MCB7 to discover if they meet the criteria for NORC designation with all attendant services. If a building would not qualify as a NORC because the percentage of seniors is not high enough, work with tenants to establish nearby (within the development) senior centers with programming that fulfills the specific needs of seniors.

***After school and childcare programs:*** In order to work and attend school, many NYCHA residents need access to subsidized or complimentary childcare services. Without these services, many tenants would be unable to hold down steady jobs or earn an education.

***District Need:*** On-site childcare centers should be created in NYCHA developments that have available community space. For developments that lack space, or for other small NYCHA properties, tenants should be provided with referrals and connections to other nearby childcare options.

***Community Centers:*** These facilities are essential for family support services, employment and training opportunities, and recreational, cultural, and educational offerings for NYCHA residents and the entire community.

***District Need:*** Many programs at NYCHA community centers are not adequately funded to meet the demand of residents. The budgets for these centers should be increased.

### **Budget Priorities for Housing**

#### **CAPITAL PRIORITIES**

##### **Preserve NYCHA as a source of deeply affordable housing in CB7 and New York City.**

HPD and the City should work to repair and maintain NYCHA which provides truly affordable housing for working families and seniors and is a necessary component of the diversity of the City's neighborhoods. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Priority #1)



### **NYCHA – Replace Front Entrance Doors at Douglass Houses and Other Locations**

At Frederick Douglass Houses and other NYCHA locations, the front doors jam and become inoperable, creating security issues. Repairs have been ineffective, and complete replacement is now warranted. Doors and other means of access/egress should be checked regularly and repaired immediately for safety. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Priority #5)

### **NYCHA Broadband**

Free, high quality, and safe broadband for all NYCHA households in Community District 7 to access needed telehealth and social services as well as education and economic/workforce opportunities. After access is provided, CBOs can assist with providing technology training to residents. NYC is currently working to expand internet service options for New Yorkers without access. [2] 46% of New York City households living in poverty do not have broadband in the home; and 18% of all NYC residents do not have a home or mobile connection. A NYC government analysis of economic impact found that universal broadband in NYC “may result in up to 165,000 new jobs, a \$49 billion increase in personal income, and \$142 billion in incremental Gross City Product in 2045.” (F22 CB7 Overall Capital Priority # 7)

### **Create permanent affordable housing in SRO’s threatened with conversion.**

Those SROs that are currently threatened with conversion should be purchased by the City through the Neighborhood Pillars Program and disposed of to nonprofit housing providers. The SROs should be rent regulated through preservation financing. Regulatory agreements would ensure they are properly maintained and rented as permanent affordable housing. When feasible, the SROs should be converted into supportive housing to serve the most vulnerable of us and help reduce the homeless population. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Priority # 11)

### **NYCHA Senior Centers.**

There is a large percentage of seniors in the NYCHA developments in MCD7. Senior centers provide a place to go, companionship and meals. Senior centers must be made safe to reopen, adequately funded, kept in good repair and maintained. DFTA must always ensure that they are properly staffed. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Priority 12)

### **NYCHA – Security Systems**

New security equipment is needed and the existing equipment must be adequately maintained. Broken or defective security cameras in NYCHA developments should be repaired or replaced immediately. Additionally, NYCHA should ensure staff are in place to routinely monitor the footage. Doors and other means of egress should be checked regularly and repaired immediately, when necessary. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Priority 18)

### **Restore HPD Funding for Affordable Housing**

HPD funding must be restored in order to achieve the existing targets for creation and preservation of affordable housing. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Priority #28)

### **Create Permanent Affordable Housing – Manhattan Valley**

HPD’s Neighborhood Pillars program should continue to target select buildings in Manhattan Valley for purchase by nonprofit developers for renovation. HPD should institute long-term regulatory agreements to keep rent-stabilized units affordable. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Priority #29)

## EXPENSE PRIORITIES

### **NYCHA Broadband.**

Free, high quality, and safe broadband for all NYCHA households in Community District 7 to access needed telehealth and social services as well as education and economic/workforce opportunities. After access is provided, CBOs can assist with providing technology training to residents. NYC is currently working to expand internet service options for New Yorkers without access. [46% of New York City households living in poverty do not have broadband in the home; and 18% of all NYC residents do not have a home or mobile connection. A NYC government analysis of economic impact found that universal broadband in NYC “may result in up to 165,000 new jobs, a \$49 billion increase in personal income, and \$142 billion in incremental Gross City Product in 2045.” (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Priority #3)

### **Establish Additional NORCs**

The NYS Department for the Aging funds Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs), where health and social services are provided in buildings with a substantial population of seniors. The City should work with DFTA to actively promote and fund more NORCs for our growing number of senior residents.

### **NYCHA – Broadband WiFi in all Facilities**

Broadband or high speed WiFi is an essential element of habitable living, including for work, education, and remaining connected. Up-to-date high-speed WiFi must be available to all NYCHA residents.

### **NYCHA – Data Collection and Response System**

NYCHA should develop an effective data collection and response system for all NYCHA developments. It should include a concrete dashboard with metrics of progress in implementing NYCHA’s strategic plans.

### **NYCHA – Additional Trash Receptacles**

Additional trash receptacles are needed at Wise Towers, the NYCHA Brownstones, and other locations. Adequate trash disposal is a health as well as quality of life consideration.

### **NYCHA – Additional Cleaning Staff and Supplies**

Increased funding for staff and sanitation supplies and equipment should be provided to developments. It is essential to quickly and efficiently address the abatement of mold and lead paint, as well as be prepared for cleaning to address Covid.

### **3.2 Public Schools, Libraries, and Resources for Youth**

- Estimated that more than 22,000 students are enrolled in public schools in the District, from pre-K through high school
- More than 7,500 students enrolled in over 35 private/parochial pre-K, elementary and secondary schools
- Six colleges and post-secondary institutions.
- Four NYPL Branch Libraries (Bloomingdale, St. Agnes, Riverside, and Lincoln Center Performing Arts)
- Afterschool and youth programs run by, among others, Goddard-Riverside and Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center, Children's Aid, West Side YMCA, and privately run and school-run programs

## **YOUTH, EDUCATION & LIBRARIES COMMITTEE (YEL) - FY 2022**

### **DISTRICT NEED STATEMENT**

The DNS is being prepared within a framework of speculation and uncertainty due to a confluence of the Covid Pandemic and unusual social, political and economic pressures facing our institutions. It takes into consideration the current and future economic uncertainties and endeavors to be realistic given those conditions.

## **YOUTH**

The programs cited here are under the auspices of the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) and coordinated with community-based organizations and within schools as after class activities and serve the elementary, middle and high school levels, as well as young adults to the age of 24yrs. They include the BEACON, COMPASS and CORNERSTONE programs, Adult Literacy, Homeless Youth Services, Street Outreach, Drop-in Service Centers, Residential Services, Services for Immigrants and Immigrant Families and Workforce Development.

### *YOUTH EMPLOYMENT*

The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) has been a significant financial source for teens at or near the poverty level and an avenue for developing job-related skills, a work history and personal growth. Equally important, participants in the SYEP program have displayed improved school attendance and academic results. It has been demonstrated that participation in the program has helped to reduce gang association and thus reduce anti-social and criminal activity. After a 5- year period of financial drought, the SYEP program was base-lined in 2018 allowing for the employment of 74K youth. Despite this, there was still a short-fall of 89K slots.

The severe fiscal crisis facing the City again threatened the SYEP program as well as other youth and community directed services. Major cuts were predicted to the current budget allocations. However, with intense negotiation between city agencies such as DYCD and funding sources but with support from community advocacy groups, including CB7, a balanced city budget was passed in June allotting \$786 million to DYCD to include \$51 million for the SYEP program. This allows for 35 thousand young people to be productively engaged, half the number previously expected but an achievement.

It is worth noting that during this critical period, CB7 has shown strong advocacy support and collaboration with the DYCD Commissioner and Director of Inter-Agency Coordination.

Though youth employment goals are threatened not only by financial curtailment but also by a significant reduction in the number of employers. So many in the marketplace have been negatively affected by the ongoing health crisis. New sources of employment have to be developed. This year DYCD was able to secure slots in the Covid Test and Track outreach as well as the Census project. Community groups such as Community Boards could be helpful in this effort.

Additional financial relief as was reflected in the City budget with the “redeployment “of \$1 billion from the NYPD budget, of which \$430 has been directed to Youth and Social Services programming. Local and area CBO’s are in the process of applying for portions of that allocation. There are opportunities here for advocacy groups such as CB7 to work with these services providers as they develop and execute additional responsibilities.

## LIBRARIES

CB7 hosts four branches of the NYPL System to include three circulating branches—

St. Agnes, Bloomingdale and Riverside, and a research branch, Library for the Performing Arts that serves local and city-wide needs in support of the cultural activities of the City.

The CB7 cluster of branches has traditionally been among the highest ranking in the borough in circulation and program participation.

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KEY FACTORS  
According to NYPL statistics in FY 2019 the libraries in CB7 had a total of 1, 061,744 visits.

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 7		
BRANCH	VISITS	PROGRAM ATTENDANCE
Bloomingdale *	137, 779	13, 114
LPA	354, 762	30, 129
Riverside	289, 380	38, 578
St. Agnes	279, 823	39, 380
TOTAL	1, 061, 744	121, 201

\*Closed since February, 2019

The Bloomingdale Branch has been closed for extensive repairs since February, 2019. However, with assistance from CB7 , a number of programs were relocated temporarily to local CBO sites — good neighbors. Libraries are increasingly taking on the role of “community centers” adding to their traditional Role. They now serve as a resource job-searching, self- improvement, skills development, entertainment, socializing, education and a much needed respite from isolation. The services libraries provide are singularly important in low and modest income areas and at both ends of the age spectrum.

A mobile unit was recently acquired for the borough to serve areas and populations that are not accessible to libraries. This program warrants expansion.

With special reference to the Bloomingdale Branch, the basement area, about the footprint of the building, has been vacant since 2015 and has no purpose other than storage house-keeping and occasional ad hoc staff use. At a time when prime space is at a premium and community needs are increasing, the space could and should be repurposed to serve the multi-use community needs such as classrooms, including DOE pre-K space, public meeting rooms, a tech center, to name a few.

## **EDUCATION**

### *Lessons Learned from Covid-19*

The Covid pandemic has created a unique set of issues that has not been faced in our lifetime. It has challenged all areas of our educational system and as in so many other areas of civic life, called into even starker contrast and exacerbated pre-existing inequities in public education.

### *Remote Learning*

The Mayor and the Chancellor cancelled in-person schooling for all students in mid-March 2020 as a means to protect students, faculty, administrators, and all other workers and volunteers present in our public school buildings. Virtually all private, independent and religious schools also closed at or about that time.

The move to remote learning exposed the pre-existing digital divide in our District and City in a new way. Teachers, administrators and District staff made herculean efforts to transition from in-person lessons, assignments and education plans to a remote learning environment. In fact, due to an abrupt change in the platform sanctioned for use by the NYC Department of Education (which CB7, Community Education Council for District 3, and many others found to be an over-reaction and to lack appreciation for the efforts of educators and students alike to adapt to the new learning environment), both educators and students had to transition a second time to a different online platform with different (and for many, reduced) functionality.

Remote learning required access to devices from which to access the online portals. While many students in Community District 7 / Community School District 3 had laptops, tablets or other devices at the ready to make an immediate transition to remote learning, a significant number of learners in CD7/CSD3 did not have such access, and had to await the delivery or provision of such devices before they could resume their studies. In some cases, in CD7/CSD3, such devices were not made available until late April or the beginning of May.

In some circumstances, due to the enormous need for such devices, at least in the early stages of the transition to remote learning, only one such device was made available per family. Thus, students and families were forced to stagger access to remote learning platforms to meet all family members' needs.

In addition, only a small percentage of the devices provided by the DoE were capable of accessing the internet without a separate WiFi connection. A significant number of families were thus dependent upon the availability of WiFi. That need was met on a temporary basis when the major internet service providers for the CB7/CSD3 Districts and elsewhere throughout our City agreed to make WiFi available to all students who needed it free of charge (after an initial hiccup as to eligibility).

It is not clear whether the cost-free access to WiFi for students who do not otherwise have such service at home will continue through the 2020-21 academic year.

Another inequity revealed by the pandemic and the transition to remote learning was the need for a parent or guardian to be at home with the student(s). Especially for elementary grades, meaningful access to the online portals and remote learning platforms required an adult or older sibling to facilitate access, and to ensure that the younger students remained dedicated to the remote learning tasks.

Parents, grandparents and guardians whose own work was able to transition to gainfully work from home had a distinct advantage over families whose ability to continue to work required their presence at a place of employment. This included many varieties of front-line workers and essential healthcare-related workers, as well as those whose employment, businesses and industries were hardest hit by the lockdown of most aspects of the economy imposed to preserve health and safety for all.

Remote learning also had disparate impacts on learners with special needs or disabilities. Time on task via remote learning for special needs populations requires significantly greater and more personalized attention than for a general education population, and often requires specialized training and skills not routinely available in a remote learning environment.

A summary of lessons learned from remote learning based on the pandemic, in the altogether likely event that another pandemic requires a similar response (and for the continuing effects of the current Covid crisis) thus includes:

- The need to deploy rapidly a sufficient number of devices to enable all students to access remote learning platforms without undue delay.
- The need for universal WiFi availability at low- or no-cost to families who do not otherwise enjoy such access.
- Supports in safe environments so that families with jobs that require in-person attendance can continue work while their children continue with remote learning.
- Additional supports for families of special needs students using all available safe spaces and resources.

There remains a level of uncertainty and concern about the details of remote learning and what it entails. There were reports from schools in the 2019-20 year that included no live teaching as part of the remote curriculum and a high percentage of students not logging in. It is imperative to work through these issues and note the large percentage of parents want to maximize the amount of live streamed teaching for their children. This may be differing from grade to grade.

### *Re-opening of In-Person Schooling*

The move to return to in-person classroom and school experiences for at least a part of each student's educational instruction time introduces additional needs that must continuously be evaluated and addressed to ensure a safe and productive learning environment.

The initiative to return to in-person schooling seeks to balance and address a host of competing interests and concerns. Among them are the students' needs for the different form of engagement and development that occurs through in-person educational encounters with other students and with educators; parents' and care-givers' needs to have greater opportunities to return to gainful employment, either remote or in-person themselves; the heightened needs of certain special needs students to have supports not realistically available through an online or remote setting, and the social-emotional overlay of interacting in real time with real people instead of a life lived staring at a digital monitor or screen.

Against these needs, the ever-present caution that any in-person gathering be accomplished using scientifically sanctioned safe practices such as social distancing, facemasks, monitoring for symptoms, and testing and tracing. These practices are of course subject to different levels of interpretation and practical application based on the configuration and age of schools and classrooms, the ventilation system and available cleaning protocols, the age of the students and faculty, and a host of external factors such as how all present in a building commute, from what community or neighborhood, and the personal circumstances of each.

The previously documented shortage of qualified nurses to serve all schools takes on added significance during the pandemic, especially with respect to the administration of testing for the presence of Covid in students, faculty and staff, and even in relatively simple tasks such as taking temperatures of those entering the building or educational spaces.

Another potential source of disparate outcomes concerns the move to use outdoor spaces for educational purposes. While outdoor spaces are widely seen as safer environments through which the spread of Covid is inhibited, the ability to make meaningful use of such spaces can introduce additional initial and on-going costs to the operation of in-person schooling.

Such costs can vary depending on the nature of the use to which outdoor space would be put. For example, using outdoor space for recreational or recess purposes would likely entail a modest investment, whereas closing streets, erecting tents or other enclosures, and eventually providing sources of heat or other protections from the elements could entail substantial outlays. It is essential in this respect that such costs be centralized, and access to resources made equitable, to prevent further widening the long-standing inequity of resources between neighborhoods or districts able to absorb such costs through parent donations or other fundraising efforts and those that lack access to such funds.

As the current school year approaches, it is apparent that there is a shortage of teachers to manage both in-person and remote learning. This has occurred for several reasons including the UFT's position that teachers should not teach both in-person and remote students simultaneously and a delayed start to DoE planning and execution. Additionally, many schools are challenged to fully staff in-person learning with a high percentage of teachers requesting remote teaching. It is highly unlikely that the DoE will be able to hire its way out of the problem as there is a hiring freeze in place reflecting the financial uncertainties. Finding ways to maximize the time of experienced teachers makes sense, enabling them to increase the number of students with whom they interact. It would also help to take advantage of remote learning to enable teachers of electives, STEAM courses, advanced placement courses and other highly specialized areas to serve students from more than one school. In the past, certain high schools had figured out how to share instruction by having a teacher co-paid by two schools and have students at one of the schools see the lesson virtually. This might alleviate the problem of pressuring teachers to teach out of license. It is important to have continued dialogue between the DoE, Principals and the UFT to create and evolve efficient best practices of both in-person and remote learning with existing staffing levels. This is imperative in order to ensure a high quality education for all students.

### *Social-Emotional Supports*

The Covid pandemic and the responses to it highlighted the disparate needs for social- emotional supports among students and families. Pre-Covid, such needs had already become a focus of advocacy to enhance such supports in general and to ensure guidance and support for social-emotional learning were included in every school's offerings.

One aspect of the response to these needs was an initiative to include funding in the DoE budget for social workers in every school regardless of the age of students or their economic circumstances. Too often, principals and others tasked with administering a school's budget were forced to choose between traditional academic supports and the essential social- emotional components needed to address the needs of the whole child and her/his family.

The pandemic exacerbated those needs in multiple ways. Families in communities hardest hit by the pandemic, which in many cases correlated to communities of poverty or racial/ethnic minority populations, experienced the loss of loved ones and community members without access to grief counseling or other releases. In addition, the isolation from peers, grade-level cohorts as well as loved ones were a factor in the effectiveness of remote learning.

Students experiencing housing insecurity, either due to placement in foster care, or being doubled-up with other family members due to economic circumstances, or residing in City shelters, perhaps had the greatest need and least access to these crucial supports.

All students experienced the deficit in in-person contact to some extent. Inclusion of strategies to address these needs for all students is thus critical.

A key lesson learned from the pandemic thus is the need to make social-emotional supports and strategies available to faculty and students alike both during the current crisis and as an essential part of the in-person and remote learning school experience going forward.

Lastly, it is important for the student's voice to be heard, particularly at the High School level. The DOE and schools must listen to student feedback and continue to evolve and grow programs such as Restorative Justice in schools.

### *Continuing Needs*

While the Covid crisis highlighted disparities of experience among students, educators and families, it did not write on a blank slate. Resources available to support all aspects of teaching and learning and the needs of students and their families have long been recognized as varying widely based on the socio-economic status of the students, families and the communities surrounding individual schools.

These disparities of resources and opportunities frequently track the unequal racial, ethnic and socio-economic composition of student bodies at schools within CD7 and CSD3. Addressing the lack of



diversity of student cohorts relative to the overall diversity of the District was an issue pre-Covid, and will continue to require examination of all aspects of the operation of our schools once they are able to return to a full in-person experience. Among the factors to be addressed will be the sources and uses of funding; the role of admissions processes in determining the composition of student cohorts; the role of external or parental fundraising; the manner in which federal anti-poverty funding is allocated within our City; and the role and availability of alternative educational opportunities and the manner in which such alternatives are made available.

There are continued safety concerns that need be addressed including ADA compliant issue, lead paint issues in building and appropriate levels of crossing guards as in person schooling resumes and returns to normal.

### **YEL BUDGET PRIORITIES**

Budgetary priorities are purely speculations in these uncertain times. Many changes in funding and public policy have been driven by the health, social and economic challenges of the present. However, it is reasonable to assume that while some of the changes may be temporary, others may become institutionalized. Any suggestions regarding projected budget are made in that light and are aspirational.

### **YOUTH PRIORITIES**

After-school programs and summer employment, previously described, are crucial in addressing the needs of the population in question. The combination of planned, creative after school activities and selected summer employment offer a safe environment, positive interaction with peers, added academic exposure, skills building and much needed income. It is suggested:

#### **EXPENSE PRIORITIES:**

#### **Increase Funding for the number of Positions Available through the Summer Youth Employment Program and to Extend the Term and Provide Training for All SYEP youth employees.**

Summer Youth Employment Programs serve several compelling needs. They provide alternatives to gang influence for at-risk youth; provide models and pathways to employment; develop positive work habits and self-esteem; and virtually every dollar earned is spent in the community. In addition, without the availability of this work force, community-based organizations serving children and youth cannot meet their adult-to-child ratios, making those programs less effective. The SYEP program is also an effective answer for how to engage youth who would otherwise be at risk of destructive influences. SYEP was drastically slashed in FY21 (Summer 2020), and indeed was slated for complete de-funding until a compromise was reached. Given the essential role in the lives of the youth hired and the communities they serve, this crucial program should be fully restored to FY 2019/2020 levels.\*SYEP should be extended to align with the summer programs that the youth employees are hired to support and supervise, for example to be coterminous with SONYC and Compass summer programs. (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Priority #4)

#### **Restore baseline funding for Compass, Beacon, SONYC and Cornerstone after-school and OST programs in public schools and in neighborhood CBOs in MCD7.**

Afterschool programs ensure that children are safe in the hours between the end of school and the end of their families' work day, when they would otherwise be most vulnerable, and provide opportunities for remedial instruction, enrichment, and safe play. Certain of these same programs continue to provide these same safe and affirming environments during school breaks

in the summer. Education and NYPD specialists have advised CB7 that an effective means to address increased gang and “crew” activity, especially in NYCHA campuses and adjacent parks and playgrounds, would be to have safe places for youth and teens to meet and spend time outside the influence of gang activity. Compass, Beacon, Cornerstone and SONYC programs fill those needs.

The FY18 Budget as adopted provided substantial funding for afterschool and OST programs. The funding for these programs was slashed in the Covid budget for FY 2021, placing some of our most vulnerable youth at further risk.

It is therefore essential that the increased funding reflected in the FY18 Budget be restored and baselined into FY22 and beyond. (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Priority #6)

### **Maintain Funding for Baselined Early Learn Programs, including UPK and Head Start.**

Adequate child care is a necessity for working families. The Mayor's initiative to expand all-day pre-K, together with expanded Head Start programming, is funded under the Early Learn initiative, are proven drivers of achievement in school for years to come as well as stability for working families. It is essential that the funding for these programs, baselined in FY15, continue at least at the current programming levels to deliver both the services families need as well as certainty essential to good planning by service providers, families and ancillary services. In addition, many of ACS's programs are funded on a district-wide allocation based on indicia of need on a Census tract or zip code basis that continues to leave pockets of significant unmet need in our District for publicly-funded child care, pre-K and Head Start. Either an overall funding increase to the baseline, or reform of the allocation system, is needed to ensure those with equivalent needs have equivalent access to programs and services. (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Priority #18)

## **LIBRARY PRIORITIES**

The role of libraries has been expanding as the needs of the communities they serve expand. Libraries are assuming responsibilities previously held by other institutions in the community. These include polling stations, DOE classrooms for pre-K and possibly beyond based on the uncertainty of traditional school usage due to the Pandemic. Libraries have expanded their outreach to senior centers, homeless shelters, jails, Covid testing sites

to name some. To meet these needs:

## **CAPITAL PRIORITIES**

### **Renovation of the basement of the Bloomingdale Branch Library**

The basement area has been essentially vacated since 2016 except for ad-hoc staff use and housekeeping storage. The area is approximately the footprint of the building and is elevator accessible making it friendly to people with disabilities. The area is prime for development that can better serve the varied needs the community — a computer center, program space for literacy classes, wellness and fitness classes, public meeting rooms and other uses. Community input should be sought for ideas for usage and any design should include retractable dividers for flexible and adaptive uses. Consideration should be given to including rest room facilities on this level. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority # 17)

## **NYPL Bookmobile**

The request is for an additional bookmobile to serve the borough of Manhattan. After a hiatus of several decades, the mobile book concept was reintroduced to the City in 2019 with a unit provided to serve Manhattan that fall. The colorful, attractive unit operates in unserved/underserves areas where the established branch library is closed for an extended period or where there is no library. A typical unit may serve a housing development, a senior center, school, or community center. Services provided include issuing library cards, returning or renewing books, browsing a collection of approximately 1000 books, and conferring with a Librarian. The amount requested covers the acquisition of a mobile unit, staffing and stocking, and maintenance. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #21)

## **Renovation of the Performing Arts Library (Lincoln Center)**

The Performing Arts Library serves both local and City-wide needs. It is ideally located within the Lincoln Center campus, an easy walk from Carnegie Hall, LaGuardia High School and the Special Music School among many other public schools, and Fordham; is a short commute from the Manhattan School of Music, Mannes College of Music, and other colleges and conservatories. The Performing Arts Library boasts a vigorous circulation and is heavily used, and enhances the cultural identity and resources of our Upper West Side community.

The building is in need of extensive need of system-wide structural renovation, including foundation waterproofing; sidewalk replacement and drainage management; safety and security upgrades such as improved exterior lighting, replacement of exterior doors and security cameras; as well as replacement of the HVAC systems including steam pressure stations, air compressors and steam heaters.

The A/C component (a \$350K upgrade) is critical both to meet the needs of library users as well as to promote the preservation of fragile manuscripts, scores and original ephemera. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #39)

## **EXPENSE PRIORITIES**

### **Ensure 6-7 Day Service and Increase Staff and Operating Budget for NYPL.**

The role of libraries has been expanding as the needs of the communities they serve expand. Libraries are assuming responsibilities previously held by other institutions in the community. These include polling stations, DOE classrooms for 3-K and pre-K and possibly beyond based on the uncertainty of traditional school usage due to the Pandemic. Libraries have expanded their outreach to senior centers, homeless shelters, jails, Covid testing sites to name some others.

To meet these needs, a return to 6-day service, and ideally 7-day service and/or the opportunity to provide extended flexible hours. It is therefore critical that the lifeline that branch libraries represent to the entire community, from early childhood, struggling students, teens needing a safe environment outside school time, and adults learning skills or looking for work, that this funding be fully restored and baselined so that effective long-term planning can ensure these essential services are available to all. (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Budget Priority #17)

## **EDUCATION PRIORITIES**

There are numerous challenges and issues regarding educational budget needs. The priorities focus on three pressing issues.

1. **Technology** – The proper technology is important to support remote learning. DoE should budget to maintain funding and invest future funding so that all students have access to reliable connectivity and adequate electronic devices. Devices can be in the form of laptops and/or iPads. This priority will address the current conditions but an investment in technology will have long term benefits as well.
2. **Health** – The DoE committed to providing a nurse in every school for the 20-21 year and they should maintain that commitment and funding for the 21-22 year. Additional budgeting for proper levels of quality medical supplies and devices that will insure the highest levels of safety at each school.
3. **Teacher staffing** – DoE must budget and address the current staffing challenges. This includes investing in recourses that may include training, online books & software, and advanced technology (i.e. rotating cameras) that allows for an efficient and high quality combination of in-person and remote teaching.

## CAPITAL PRIORITIES

### **School Ventilation.**

Funding for improvements to infrastructure that will improve ventilation (air flow) in Community District 7’s public schools (as well as the DoE’s public reporting on air flow quality and remediation). In the fall of 2020, the Martin Luther King Jr. Educational Complex, which serves 6,000 students, was deemed unfit to open and the city has not yet finalized an infrastructure improvement plan. The DoE reports that all school buildings were surveyed by the NYC School Construction Authority [4] but criteria and data on air flow quality is either inaccessible or unclear. As one example, the DoE reports that M490: Martin Luther King Jr. High School has 276 rooms without windows, 76 without operational supply fans, and 225 without operational exhaust fans but does not offer interpretive comments to contextualize this information (and this information was found under another school’s profile instead of information for the school listed). (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #3)

### **Make at least one-third of District 3 elementary and middle schools handicap accessible by the end of the 2020-24 Capital Plan.**

The DoE/SCA 2020-24 Capital Plan includes \$750 million in new funding to make schools accessible. The goal of the Capital Plan in this regard is to convert one-third of the approximately 1,400 school buildings in the NYC DoE system to some level of accessibility. The cost to make all 1,400 school buildings ADA-compliant is prohibitive, and since many of the non-accessible buildings were built in an era in which elevators and other means of providing equitable access were not contemplated, it is simply not feasible to retro-fit all such buildings either system-wide or within CSD3.

Only 16% of the 28 separate public school buildings located within Community School District 3, which includes all of Community District 7 plus six school buildings in Central Harlem, qualify as accessible under the ADA.

Given the funding and goals of the 2020-24 Capital Plan, a reasonable goal would be to ensure that one-third of District 3 schools are fully accessible or susceptible of affording students and faculty a reasonable accommodation by the end of the Capital Plan. This would amount to converting an additional 8 buildings to accessibility, with those buildings equitably distributed throughout the District and appropriately split between elementary and middle schools. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Priority # 10)

## EXPENSE PRIORITIES

### **Provide Funding for Additional STEAM AP Courses.**

Other than the 8 Specialized High Schools, there are relatively few high schools in the system, and fewer still in Manhattan, that offer all of the Advanced Placement courses essential to students with ambitions in

the sciences (i.e. AP Calculus AB and BC; AP Chemistry; AP Biology; and AP Physics), and fewer still that combine those offerings with accomplished offerings in the Arts. The number of high schools offering this enhanced STEAM curriculum is essential to any equity and diversity program, both for the students who aspire to but do not gain admission to the Specialized High Schools, and to those who seek a different high school experience and deserve an equal opportunity for this enhanced learning program. A dedicated stream of additional funding to hire faculty and purchase appropriate supporting materials so that at a minimum all of the STEM curriculum AP courses, plus a qualified and dedicated Arts teacher and program, must be provided. High schools located in CSD3 would be an ideal place to implement the enhanced STEAM curriculum. (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Priority #19)

**Continue to Provide a Qualified Nurse in Every School Building.**

Covid exacerbated a longstanding need, as nearly one-third of DoE schools did not have an on-site qualified nurse. Students who need daytime administration of certain medications are prevented from attending schools that do not have a qualified nurse, since teachers and administrators are not permitted to administer such medications. The DoE committed to providing a nurse in every school for the 20-21 year and they should maintain that commitment and funding for the 21-22 year. Additional budgeting for proper levels of quality medical supplies and devices that will insure the highest levels of safety at each school. (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Priority #21)

**Address Teacher Staffing Needs of Remote and Hybrid Learning Models**

DoE must budget and address the current staffing challenges. This includes investing in resources that may include training, online books & software, and advanced technology that allows for an efficient and high quality combination of in-person and remote teaching. (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Budget Priority #22)

**Remote Learning Devices – Citywide Purchase of Up To 200K additional laptops or Chromebooks.**

The proper technology is important to support remote learning. The transition to remote learning impacted students in multiple ways, but a key disparate impact along socio-economic lines was between those families with access to devices and WiFi at home, who could make the transition immediately, and those families who needed the DoE to provide a device, some of whom were without the means to access remote learning for more than a month.

Even after the initial distribution, many families with multiple children were required to share devices, with the result that some students could not attend or participate in live demonstrations and synchronized online instruction.

An additional 200,000 devices – either laptops or Chromebooks – are needed so that all students have access to reliable connectivity and adequate electronic devices. This priority will address the current conditions but an investment in technology will have long term benefits as well. (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Budget Priority #26 – also a subject of a CB7 comment to the November amendments to the FY 21 budget)

### 3.3 Health and Human Services

#### Health and Human Services

*The mission of the Health and Human Services Committee is to evaluate and advocate for the quality, location, availability and appropriateness of public and private services to special needs populations in the community including the homeless, children, elderly, mentally ill, abused, persons with AIDS, the disabled, and addicted.*

#### Population Health and Quality of Life

*This includes the most recent government data available. Please see footnotes for source information. For more detailed information, see <https://data2go.nyc>.*

##### *Demographics*

Community District 7 has a population of ~215,000.<sup>1</sup> The NYC Department of City Planning describes ~22% of residents as foreign-born; ~68% as white (non-Hispanic); ~15% as Hispanic (of any race); ~9% as Asian; ~5% as Black (non-Hispanic); and ~3% as other race (non-Hispanic). ~16% are under 18 and ~21% are 65 and over.<sup>2</sup>

~77% of residents age 25 and over have earned a bachelor's degree or higher (compared to ~61% in Manhattan and ~37% in NYC). ~8% of residents self-identify as having limited English proficiency.<sup>3</sup>

##### *Financial health*

The median household income in Community District 7 is \$87,000 and \$88,000. ~9% of residents have incomes below the NYC government poverty threshold. And ~3% of the civilian labor force is unemployed. ~31% experience rent burden (i.e. spend 35% or more of their income on rent).<sup>4</sup>

##### *Health and quality of life*

93% of adults report their own health as “excellent,” “very good,” or “good,” which is higher than the rest of NYC. 83% report physical activity in the last 30 days. 10% of children in grades k-8 and 10% of adults have obesity.<sup>5</sup>

Cancer, heart disease, and suicide are the three leading causes of death in Community District 7. The infant mortality rate is 2.6 (compared to 3.4 in Manhattan and 4.4 in NYC).<sup>6</sup>

94% of households have air conditioning; 53% have homes without maintenance defects; and 89% do not report homes with cockroaches.<sup>7</sup> 100% live within access to parks. 97% of streets are rated acceptable on terms of cleanliness. 1,860 major felonies were reported in 2019 (of 26,271 in Manhattan and 92,480 in NYC).<sup>8</sup>

#### Accessibility

Universal access in public space, transportation, and schools is a challenge in Community District 7.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/data/2018chp-mn7.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://communityprofiles.planning.nyc.gov/manhattan/7>

<sup>3</sup> <https://communityprofiles.planning.nyc.gov/manhattan/7>

<sup>4</sup> <https://communityprofiles.planning.nyc.gov/manhattan/7>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/data/2018chp-mn7.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/data/2018chp-mn7.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/data/2018chp-mn7.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://communityprofiles.planning.nyc.gov/manhattan/7>

Sidewalk cuts: Research is needed to determine which sidewalk cuts need repairs in Community District 7 as numerous curb cuts and sidewalks are dangerous and inaccessible for residents with disabilities.

Traffic lights: Traffic lights should reflect the pace at which seniors, children, and people with disabilities are able to traverse streets; and sound should be used to guide people with visual impairments.

Transportation: In 2020, the MTA made 20-25 stations in NYC accessible (e.g., installed elevators). Many subway stations can be made accessible. When the MTA budget allows for resumption of the 51B capital program, the planning process to make the 81st and 96th Street B/C line stations can resume. (Both stations have wide sidewalks and can accommodate elevators.) When the process resumes, it should include community input. In addition, if the New York State legislature and Governor Cuomo supported increasing gasoline taxes, and the federal government provided information necessary to implement congestion pricing, the MTA would be able to continue basic services, including for Access-A-Ride (AAR).

Public buildings, schools, and playgrounds: All public buildings should be fully accessible, especially schools, and detailed information about a wide range of accommodations should be available to the public. When budget allows, renovations to playgrounds should meet standards for full accessibility and inclusion according to the goals of Universal Design. NYCHA playground inspections, maintenance, and renovations should meet the same standards for safety, accessibility, and inclusion as DoE and DPR playgrounds.

### **Food insecurity and its impacts**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food security as “the ability of all people at all times to access enough food for an active and healthy life.” According to the USDA, food security requires four conditions: “food must be available, each person must have access to it, the food utilized must fulfill nutritional requirements, and there needs to be stability in food access and availability.”<sup>9</sup> In contrast, those who are food insecure do not have the economic resources to access “adequate” food.<sup>10</sup>

Prior to the pandemic, NYS Department of Health (2016) reported an increase in food insecurity as well as racial and other disparities among New York residents. In NYS, “the prevalence of reported food insecurity is significantly higher among” Hispanic (~41%) and Black non-Hispanic adults (~32%) than among white non-Hispanic adults (~17%); females (~26%) than males (~21%); those with less than a high school education (~43%) than those with a college degree (~12%); and those with a disability (~40%) than those without (~19%).<sup>11</sup> The NYS DoH also reported “a statistically significant increase in the prevalence of reported food insecurity from 2013 (70.4%) to 2016 (76.4%).”<sup>12</sup>

Food security has direct and indirect benefits to individuals and the community, such as lowered health care costs. The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2012 reduced obesity by 47% by 2018.

Access to healthy food is limited in low-income areas; and fresh produce is costly in Community District 7. Prior to the pandemic, 10% of Community District 7 residents were considered food insecure.<sup>13</sup> The Meal Gap, NYC’s measure of food insecurity, represents families’ and individuals’ missing meals that result from inadequate household food budgets. In Community District 7, the Meal Gap is 3.3 million meals.<sup>14</sup>

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9 <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/international-markets-us-trade/global-food-security/questions-answers/#security>

10 <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/84467/err-235.pdf?v=9446>

11 [https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/brfss/reports/docs/1810\\_food\\_security.pdf](https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/brfss/reports/docs/1810_food_security.pdf)

12 [https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/brfss/reports/docs/1810\\_food\\_security.pdf](https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/brfss/reports/docs/1810_food_security.pdf)

13 <https://www.nycfoodpolicy.org/foodscape-upper-west-side/>

14 <https://www.nycfoodpolicy.org/foodscape-upper-west-side/#neighborhoodaccesstohealthyfood>

Since March of 2020, the number of NYC residents considered food insecure has increased from 1.2 to 2 million.<sup>15</sup> Those most affected include residents living below the federal poverty level, immigrants, and children who rely on school meals<sup>16</sup> (more than one in four children<sup>17</sup>).

The health and economic impacts of the pandemic to the NYC food system have been severe. In addition to reduced access to high quality, nutritious, and sufficient food, the food workforce has been reduced by two thirds and 1,000+ restaurants and food retail outlets have closed.<sup>18</sup>

Several factors have exacerbated NYC's food system crisis, which include pre-existing systematic challenges; insufficient preparation in terms of food policies and programs; and lack of coordination in food distribution and communication about existing resources.<sup>19</sup>

Meal programs and food pantries face ongoing increases in costs of meals (due to labor and raw food costs) without a corresponding increase in government funds and donated food. In 2020, food prices went up 4.8%. Home Delivered Meals contracts only covered about 60% of the costs of weekend meals and 64% for the week-day meal. At Goddard Riverside senior center contracts cover about half the actual cost of the meals. Senior centers have not seen increases in many years although both food and labor costs have gone up substantially (both rising prices of raw food and the mandatory increase in the minimum wage.) The demand for food now far exceeds what Goddard can give.

In response to NYC's food system crisis, researchers from the Hunter College NYC Food Policy Center, The Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy, and The CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute produced "research-based recommendations for policies and programs that support food security, retail, quality, and the food workforce as the COVID-19 crisis continues to unfold" in New York City. These are outlined in the report of their research findings, "NY Food 20/20,"<sup>20</sup> and include the following steps: strengthening and expanding the Mayor's Office of Food Policy; creating and maintaining a public dataset of all food pantries, soup kitchens, and other emergency food resources; expanding economic stimulus support; monitoring retail, institutional food, and emergency food programs' impact on diet quality and addressing nutrition-related inequities which occur because of income and race; developing food plans for future emergencies; and ensuring that all local, state, and federal benefit programs for workers are accessible to all food workers.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to these recommendations, the following is needed:

- local food purchasing by agencies such as the DoE, which saves costs by shortening the food chain;
- continued financial support and food access for all children and youth who qualify for free and reduced price lunch;
- a higher reimbursement rate for meal providers for senior citizens;
- funding for programs that address food insecurity, including West Side Campaign Against Hunger<sup>22</sup> and Get Food NYC;<sup>23</sup>
- improved access to administrative offices that provide benefits (such as SNAP);

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15 <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/05/21/860312565/in-new-york-city-2-million-residents-face-food-insecurity-officials-say>

16 <https://www.cunyurbanfoodpolicy.org/news/2020/10/5/new-york-food-2020-vision-research-and-recommendations-during-covid-19-and-beyond>

17 <https://www.cityharvest.org/facts-about-hunger/>

18 <https://www.cunyurbanfoodpolicy.org/news/2020/10/5/new-york-food-2020-vision-research-and-recommendations-during-covid-19-and-beyond>

19 <https://www.cunyurbanfoodpolicy.org/news/2020/10/5/new-york-food-2020-vision-research-and-recommendations-during-covid-19-and-beyond>

20 <https://www.cunyurbanfoodpolicy.org/news/2020/10/5/new-york-food-2020-vision-research-and-recommendations-during-covid-19-and-beyond>

21 <https://www.cunyurbanfoodpolicy.org/news/2020/10/5/new-york-food-2020-vision-research-and-recommendations-during-covid-19-and-beyond>

22 <https://www.wscah.org/#>

23 <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/contact/services/COVID-19FoodAssistance.shtml>



- accessible communications on available resources to speakers of languages other than English, those with disabilities, those without internet access, and those who do not read;
- improved access to food appropriate for specific populations (e.g., usable containers for people with disabilities, diabetic-friendly food, Kosher and Halal food);
- adequate interagency plans for providing appropriate food to those discharged from hospitals and healthcare facilities; and protection for workers from crime (i.e. robberies) that prevent food outlets from delivering food, especially for those who cannot leave their homes, as well as increasing comprehensive services and economic opportunities for community residents who may be at risk of committing crimes; and
- inclusion of restaurants in plans to improve food equity and access to New Yorkers during this crisis.

In addition, more public engagement and participation in the work of local organizations will also enable greater food security as many organizations rely on volunteers.

Get Food NYC provides a map of free food offerings (Grab & Go Meals, Food Pantries and Soup Kitchens) throughout NYC. Locations and hours of operation for each can be found here.<sup>24</sup>

### **Health care access and quality**

Medical services and benefits: In 2017, 5,322 CD7 residents were uninsured (2.6% of the total population compared to 7% citywide), with significantly higher rates of uninsured for people who are not citizens. Less than 1% (0.3%) of children were uninsured. In 2018, 5% of adults lacked health insurance and 10% needed medical care.<sup>25</sup> In January of 2019, Mayor de Blasio announced NYC Care, a NYC Health + Hospitals initiative that will connect the uninsured with a primary care provider and support enrollment of those who are eligible for the public health system’s MetroPlus insurance plan.

In Community District 7, more education and assistance with enrollment (in health insurance and public benefits) are needed. At St. Luke's and Mt. Sinai West, a “HEAL” office assists patients who do not have insurance in enrolling in insurance or Medicaid; and offers payment plans for services according to Medicare rates. The Ryan Center charges patients based upon their income.

More financial counseling and legal assistance is needed when people are unable to pay medical bills (e.g., reports to collections, litigation).

In addition, more information and access to comprehensive and preventative care is needed for patients who are low-income (such as infant nutrition and support for pregnant mothers).

Covid-19 and reimbursement for expenses: As of October 2020, New York City has a confirmed 255,000 COVID-19 cases. In most instances, these New Yorkers’ medical expenses are largely covered by the protections passed in New York requiring insurance providers to cover testing and treatment for those with policies purchased through the NY State Health Marketplace or the New York State Health Insurance Program but gaps do exist which could potentially carry catastrophic financial implications for those residents whose bills are rejected by insurance providers.

The first example of such gaps surfaced early in the pandemic, when those who were infected prior to availability of widespread testing encountered difficulty providing the necessary documentation to trigger the protections. More recently, news reports emerged that while the protections cover COVID-19-related expenses on the insurer side, other related health providers such as medical labs and ambulance services are not bound by the same agreements, and COVID-19 survivors may be receiving large bills from these sources.

<sup>24</sup> <https://dsny.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=35901167a9d84fb0a2e0672d344f176f>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/data/2018chp-mn7.pdf>

In these instances, those denied relief by insurance carriers can file an external appeal with the NYS Department of Financial Services, but this service may not be widely known; more funding is needed to increase awareness via marketing and communications efforts, both of the appeal process and providers who are positioned to help guide those in need through the process.

Covid-19 testing of staff working in congregate settings: Funding for reliable, accurate, and rapid Covid-19 testing of staff working in congregate settings (nursing homes and adult care facilities) is needed. After government-provided supplies deplete, this can cost facilities \$100 per test.<sup>26</sup> DOHMH requires that staff of nursing homes and adult care facilities must be screened weekly.<sup>27</sup> CMS supplies a limited number of tests to nursing homes and many staff do not have employer-provided health insurance. In CD7, at The Riverside facility (The Riverside Premier Rehabilitation and Healing Center) and the New Jewish Center, Manhattan campus, 46 and 47 confirmed Covid-19 deaths occurred, respectively. These were the highest number of deaths seen at any state-run facility in New York County.<sup>28</sup>

Infrastructure improvements in DoE schools: Improvements to infrastructure will improve ventilation (air flow) in Community District 7's public schools (as well as the DoE's public reporting on air flow quality and remediation). In the fall of 2020, the Martin Luther King Jr. Educational Complex, which serves 6,000 students, was deemed unfit to open and the city has not yet finalized an infrastructure improvement plan. The DoE reports that all school buildings were surveyed by the NYC School Construction Authority<sup>29</sup> but criteria and data on air flow quality is either inaccessible or unclear. As one example, the DoE reports that M490: Martin Luther King Jr. High School has 276 rooms without windows, 76 without operational supply fans, and 225 without operational exhaust fans but does not offer interpretive comments to contextualize this information (and this information was found under another school's profile instead of information for the school listed).

Nursing staff in DoE schools: All pre-k through 12 public schools should have full time nursing staff available for children and youth; and every school in Community District 3 is required to have a nurse available on site every day. There is currently a shortage, so some schools have nurses who report inconsistently and others have no nurses at all.

Lead poisoning prevention and remediation: Most children in New York City are tested for lead poisoning by the time they turn three years old (in 2017, 80%). In recent years, numbers of children with high blood lead levels have decreased across populations and areas, yet the burden is highest for children of color and children living in high poverty neighborhoods.

When children test positive for lead poisoning (with levels greater than or equal to 15 mcg/dL), Local Law 1 of 2004 requires DOHMH to conduct environmental investigations, which include inspections, risk assessments, and care coordination with health care providers. In 2019, Mayor de Blasio launched LeadFreeNYC to eliminate child lead exposure by 2029.

Community District 7 has high numbers of children testing for lead poisoning and testing positive. But research suggests that these tests may be unreliable (e.g., the false positive rate is estimated at 70%) and results need to be interpreted by medical professionals on a case by case basis (and according to reported symptoms). Doctors' input should inform whether and how to respond and remediate. In addition, remediation may cause harm (such as paint removal that causes disturbance). Remediation procedures should also be based on building conditions. More accurate and thorough testing, interpretation of results, and remediation may be needed to determine if children actually have lead poisoning and avoid causing unnecessary harm to children and their environments. In addition, the Department of Health and Mental

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26 <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/09/29/world/covid-19-coronavirus#the-us-government-sent-rapid-test-machines-to-14000-nursing-homes-but-they-came-with-unexpected-costs-and-questions-about-accura>

27 <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/han/alert/2020/covid-19-diagnostic-testing-10142020.pdf>

28 [https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/diseases/covid-19/fatalities\\_nursing\\_home\\_acf.pdf](https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/diseases/covid-19/fatalities_nursing_home_acf.pdf)

29 <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-year-20-21/return-to-school-2020/health-and-safety/building-safety>

Hygiene should collect and report more information to the public and MCB7, including any initial positive test, any retest results, and results six months later; as well as findings of investigations. DOHMH should report more data so Manhattan Community District 7 can review any unintended consequences of testing and investigations, including unfair distribution of resources.

Health care access for children and youth, especially those considered “disconnected”: 11% of youth aged 16 to 24 in Community District 7 are considered “disconnected,” meaning that they are not in school or working.<sup>30</sup> More efforts should be made to address any mental or physical health related needs that interfere with their ability to participate in school and work.

Vision screening and care for children and youth: There is a need for all students entering school in Community District 7 to have a comprehensive vision screening. Vision screening is a comprehensive eye exam that can facilitate diagnosis of visual problems. Vision screening, eye care, and free access to glasses should be available to all children. Good vision is key to a child’s physical development, success in school and overall well-being.

According to Prevent Blindness America (formerly known as the National Society to Prevent Blindness) one in four school-age children have vision problems that, if left untreated, can affect learning ability, psychological health, and adjustment in school. But if problems are detected early, it is usually possible to treat them effectively. In addition, research studies have shown that randomly supplying children with glasses significantly improves school performance because many children do not have needed glasses and therefore cannot fully participate in activities.

Upon entering early childhood programs, kindergarten or whenever a problem is suspected, children’s eyes should be screened for visual acuity and alignment by a pediatrician, family doctor, ophthalmologist, optometrist, orthoptist or person trained in vision assessment of school-aged children. Nearsightedness (myopia) is the most common refractive error in this age group and can be corrected with eyeglasses. If an alignment problem or other eye health issues is suspected, the child should have a comprehensive exam by an ophthalmologist.

Children and youth with medical conditions (e.g., Down syndrome, prematurity, juvenile idiopathic arthritis, neurofibromatosis) or a family history of amblyopia, strabismus, retinoblastoma, congenital cataracts or congenital glaucoma are at higher risk for developing pediatric eye problems. They should receive yearly vision screening evaluations.

Education and programs to prevent and reduce vaping (use of e cigarettes) and other forms of addiction, especially in the Covid-19 context: E-cigarette use causes negative health impacts (especially combined with Covid-19<sup>31</sup>) and more research is needed to understand those impacts as well as vulnerability to addiction. Vaping among children and youth continues to rise. And more education for the public (especially for youth in schools) is needed to prevent vaping and its negative impacts. NYC Smoke-Free works with schools in Community District 7 and may benefit from more support to have greater reach and impact.

In terms of rates of other forms of substance abuse, more information is needed. The binge drinking rate in Community District 7 is comparable to the citywide average.<sup>32</sup>

Physical health and online access to recreational activities: Community District 7 needs free online recreational and exercise activities for youth and adults to promote fitness and physical health.

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<sup>30</sup> <https://data.cccnewyork.org/data/map/1252/disconnected-youth-16-to-24-years#1252/a/3/1439/62/a/a>

<sup>31</sup> <https://med.stanford.edu/news/all-news/2020/08/vaping-linked-to-covid-19-risk-in-teens-and-young-adults.html> and <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/04/world/covid-19-coronavirus.html>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/data/2018chp-mn7.pdf>

Mental health services and support: Throughout the COVID pandemic, a rise in mental disorders, including depression, have been reported, particularly among young adults, women, and low income families, according to the US Census. In 2017, THRIVE reported the prevalence of depression in District 7 at 8.2%. Current data is needed to assess the rates of depression in District 7 in 2020.

THRIVE offers Mental Health First Aid. More outreach is needed to encourage police officers and workers in shelters, supportive housing, organizations, and schools to learn mental health first aid.

More research is needed to determine needs and availability of mental health services for youth, including depression, anxiety, and suicide risk assessment and prevention. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, intentional self-harm (suicide) is one of the leading causes of death for children aged 5-14 years.

More funding is needed for mental health services in jails and for justice-involved youth transitioning from jails.

Technology for health care access and other purposes in NYCHA housing: Free, high quality, and safe broadband for all NYCHA households in Community District 7 is necessary to access needed telehealth and social services as well as education and economic/workforce opportunities. After access is provided, CBOs can assist with providing technology training to residents. NYC is currently working to expand internet service options for New Yorkers without access.<sup>33</sup> 46% of New York City households living in poverty do not have broadband in the home; and 18% of all NYC residents do not have a home or mobile connection. A NYC government analysis of economic impact found that universal broadband in NYC “may result in up to 165,000 new jobs, a \$49 billion increase in personal income, and \$142 billion in incremental Gross City Product in 2045.”<sup>34</sup>

Race and economic health disparities: Racial and economic health disparities are evidenced in every aspect of New York’s complex health care system. Research is needed on integrated (interagency) approaches to addressing short- and long-term racial and economic disparities that impact Community District 7 and city residents, particularly in health and education, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and economic crisis. Covid-19 has disproportionately affected people and communities of color, due to segregation<sup>35</sup> and inequalities in housing, education, employment, healthcare, hospital access, and insurance (United Hospital Fund).<sup>36, 37</sup> The Center for Innovation through Data Intelligence could conduct this research. CIDI “is a data intelligence team in the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of the Mayor, who establishes partnerships that can leverage the analytical resources of the City of New York through an innovative inter-agency research agenda.”<sup>38</sup>

### **Housing and Services for Those Experiencing Homelessness**

*This section uses the most recent data available to assess the needs of those experiencing homelessness, the services available, and the strategies needed to address challenges. It also addresses the limitations of current data and where more information could be useful.*

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33 <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/499-20/mayor-de-blasio-taskforce-racial-inclusion-equity-accelerated-internet-master>

34 <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/010-20/de-blasio-administration-releases-internet-master-plan-city-s-broadband-future>

35 <https://www.columbiaspectator.com/news/2020/04/18/segregation-exposes-black-residents-to-health-risks-hospitals-are-disincentivized-from-treating-them/>

36 [https://uhfnyc.org/media/filer\\_public/22/4b/224bf5ba-6ab2-42f6-8744-929135f2f42b/covid\\_ripple\\_effect\\_part\\_1](https://uhfnyc.org/media/filer_public/22/4b/224bf5ba-6ab2-42f6-8744-929135f2f42b/covid_ripple_effect_part_1) [https://uhfnyc.org/media/filer\\_public/3b/e3/3be3ae10-7b6b-468b-ad45-10d8ff5ab87a/covid\\_ripple\\_effect\\_part\\_2\\_final.pdf\\_final.pdf](https://uhfnyc.org/media/filer_public/3b/e3/3be3ae10-7b6b-468b-ad45-10d8ff5ab87a/covid_ripple_effect_part_2_final.pdf_final.pdf)

37 [https://uhfnyc.org/media/filer\\_public/3b/e3/3be3ae10-7b6b-468b-ad45-10d8ff5ab87a/covid\\_ripple\\_effect\\_part\\_2\\_final.pdf](https://uhfnyc.org/media/filer_public/3b/e3/3be3ae10-7b6b-468b-ad45-10d8ff5ab87a/covid_ripple_effect_part_2_final.pdf)

38 <https://www1.nyc.gov/nyc-resources/agencies.page>

### *People Experiencing Homelessness*

Effective strategies and solutions for meeting the needs of those experiencing homelessness prioritize the safety and well being of NYC's diverse homeless population, follow public health guidelines, and respect individuals' autonomy as well as membership in a neighborhood and community.<sup>39</sup>

Current estimates of those experiencing homelessness in New York City range between 75,000 and 90,000. The majority of people experiencing homelessness in New York City are children and people of color. According to Advocates for Children, there are over 114,000 students experiencing homelessness in NYC, which has increased by 70% in the last ten years (2019).<sup>40</sup> As of November 1, 2020, there were 54,124 shelter residents in NYC (DHS).<sup>41</sup> Though this varies by family status, DHS identifies ~53-59% of shelter residents as Black non-Hispanic; ~27-40% as Hispanic; ~2-10% as White non-Hispanic; ~1% as Asian/Pacific Islander; and less than 1% as Native American (2020).<sup>42</sup>

Those experiencing homelessness are more likely to have experienced domestic violence and adverse childhood experiences.<sup>43</sup> In NYC, domestic violence is the leading cause of homelessness (and eviction is the second-leading cause). The NYC Comptroller reported that in fiscal year 2018, domestic violence accounted for more than 40% of the family population entering DHS shelters (12,541 people, including 4,500+ women and 7,000+ children). In NYC, as noted in the report, "survivors who experience homelessness in New York City are particularly vulnerable—they are overwhelmingly young women of color, they are parents to young children, and they have limited income and education, making it that much more difficult to support a family financially." To best serve them, shelters need to employ trauma-informed practices and offer voluntary services (Sullivan, 2017).<sup>44</sup> Nationally, about 80% of mothers with children have experienced domestic violence.<sup>45</sup>

A current (November, 2020) count of total shelter beds in Community District 7 is unavailable. Community District 7 is listed as being in the lowest category of total numbers of shelters and monthly shelter entries in NYC as of November, 2020 (NYC Council, 2020; NYC Open Data, 2020).<sup>46</sup> In 2018 (the latest data available), there were 716 beds in shelters and supportive housing facilities in Community District 7, which was ~1% of ~60,000 shelter residents in 2018 (DHS).<sup>47</sup>

In 2020, DHS moved shelter residents to single rooms in hotels across the city to reduce transmission of Covid-19. In Community District 7, there are three such shelters. According to media reports, the Lucerne has 235 residents.<sup>48</sup> The original population at the Belleclaire was 288 and 120 at the Belnord (Community Board 7). These data have not been verified by DHS.

Of those experiencing street homelessness, outreach teams conduct periodic counts. The most recent count in Community District 7 was 80 people (Center for Urban Community Services). The Official HOPE<sup>49</sup>

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39 <https://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/COVID19HomelessnessReportJune2020.pdf>

40 <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/11/19/nyregion/student-homelessness-nyc.html>

41 <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dhs/downloads/pdf/dailyreport.pdf>

42 <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dhs/downloads/pdf/dashboard/FYTD20-DHS-Data-Dashboard-Charts.pdf>

43 <https://nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/aces-fact-sheet.pdf>

44 <https://safehousingpartnerships.org/sites/default/files/2017-06/LearningFromResearch-Housing-NRCDV-6-2017.pdf>

45 <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/housing-survivors/>

46 <https://council.nyc.gov/data/homeless/> and <https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Social-Services/Associated-Address-by-Borough-and-Community-District/ur7y-ziyb> and <https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Social-Services/Buildings-by-Borough-and-Community-District/3qem-6v3v>

47 <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dhs/downloads/pdf/dashboard/FY2018-DHS-Data-Dashboard-revised-1'30'2019.pdf>

48 <https://www.westsiderag.com/2020/10/19/judge-rules-uws-shelter-residents-can-stay-at-the-lucerne> and

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/23/nyregion/nyc-homeless-hotel.html>

49 <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dhs/outreach/hope.page>

count for New York City totaled 3,857 individuals living outside and in the subways, including 1,283 in Manhattan. The citywide total increased by 7% from 2019 to 2020, and the Manhattan total by 55% (DHS, 2020).<sup>50</sup>

### *Needs*

**Technology:** Shelter and supportive housing residents as well as those living outside in Community District 7 need access to a) technology, including Wifi, cell service, and hardware;<sup>51</sup> and b) staff to conduct training on how to use that technology. This is urgently needed for residents to communicate with medical and mental health providers and access care as well as have educational and economic opportunities (Goddard Riverside). Children and youth experiencing homelessness need technology access for remote learning.

**Covid-19 prevention and treatment:** The Coalition for the Homeless reports that “as of June 1st, the overall New York City mortality rate due to COVID-19 was 200 deaths per 100,000 people. For sheltered homeless New Yorkers, it was 321 deaths per 100,000 people – or 61 percent higher than the New York City rate.”<sup>52</sup> Those experiencing homelessness are particularly vulnerable to Covid-19 due to lack of consistent

- access to cleaning and sanitation facilities and supplies;
- access to face coverings;
- screening upon entry to shelters;
- distance from those testing positive for Covid-19;
- ability to access DHS staff when ill;
- access to free testing;
- timely notification of test results;
- timely isolation placements when ill;
- following of protocols.<sup>53</sup>

In addition to the needs listed above, DHS should work with the appropriate agencies and healthcare facilities to provide medical services for those that do not require hospitalization and improved ventilation in shelters.

### *Best practices*

The most effective shelter and housing models are client-centered and provide high quality, comprehensive services that enable residents to integrate in communities and transition to permanent housing. A “housing first” approach assumes that people “should be stabilized in permanent housing as quickly as possible and connected to resources necessary to stay there”; and that challenges are best addressed once people are housed (National Alliance to End Homelessness). Any approach to meeting needs should be both holistic and sequential. Ideally, community members who are homeless should receive stable shelter (i.e. staying in one place) near their jobs and schools; and where high quality services that meet their individual needs are available.

**Outreach:** Manhattan Outreach Consortium (MOC), a multiagency effort established by Goddard Riverside, provides outreach to those experiencing street homelessness. Goddard Riverside dispatches MOC teams to respond to 311 calls; and Goddard’s caseload has recently increased along with 311 calls. Those living outside lack access to basic needs such as food, water, and bathrooms. In one day, outreach workers make hundreds of contacts across the city and a small number of those living outside enter the shelter system. On November 1, 2020, for example, DHS reported 234 outreach contacts and 19 placements in NYC shelters.<sup>54</sup> It can take up to 200 interactions<sup>55</sup> over months or years to develop relationships with those experiencing

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50 <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dhs/downloads/pdf/hope-2020-results.pdf>

51 <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/14/nyregion/homeless-school-reopening-nyc.html>

52 <https://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/COVID19HomelessnessReportJune2020.pdf>

53 <https://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/COVID19HomelessnessReportJune2020.pdf>

54 <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dhs/downloads/pdf/dailyreport.pdf>

55 <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dhs/outreach/outreach.page>

street homelessness and provide them with access to healthcare, counseling, nutrition, and shelter. According to Goddard Riverside, since 2007, “the MOC has placed more than 1,500 formerly homeless adults in permanent housing.”<sup>56</sup>

Safe Haven shelters: Citywide, there is a shortage of Safe Haven shelters, given the need. There are ~3,857 individuals living outside; and safe haven utilization in NYC was 1112 on November 1, 2020.<sup>57</sup> In Community District 7, the one existing Safe Haven shelter serves 33 people (19 singles and 7 doubles). Last fiscal year (July 2019 to June 2020), they placed 25 individuals into long-term, permanent housing. This exceeded the target of 17 placements set by DHS. In the first four months of this fiscal year, they have placed six, with six more approved for housing and awaiting a placement date. They expect to exceed their target for placing Safe Haven residents into long-term, permanent housing again this fiscal year (Urban Pathways).

An additional Safe Haven shelter is needed to address the rising number of those living on the street in the district. The Safe Haven model is designed specifically for those who live outside and are “unlikely to otherwise receive services” (Bloomberg). It has low-barrier, flexible admissions policies without preconditions for entry or restrictions such as curfews; includes smaller facilities (~50 beds or less); provides holistic mental health and other support services; focuses on housing plans and transitions to permanent housing; and is considered to be the most effective means by which to persuade those living on the street to accept an offer of shelter (Center for Urban Community Services, National Alliance to End Homelessness, NYC Council Speaker Corey Johnson<sup>58</sup>). Providers who do street outreach report that most people reject offers of shelter if they are not proximate to the neighborhood where they live. An additional Safe Haven shelter in Community District 7 would enable street outreach teams working to move this vulnerable population into a shelter model where they are likely to transition into permanent housing.

Supportive housing: Funding is needed to maintain current services for supportive housing facilities in Community District 7, including case management services, social work, mental health services, health services related to medication, nutrition, and social activities. Supportive housing is another effective way to end homelessness for individuals and families,<sup>59</sup> especially those living with physical and psychiatric disabilities. Even prior to the pandemic, there was not sufficient supply to meet the record demand, and state reimbursement rates for supportive housing lagged behind operational costs. Providing housing first gets people back on their feet and allows them to pull their lives together more quickly. As one example, research has shown a 50% decrease in alcoholism when people who are homeless are housed.

Housing for specific populations: Additional designated housing is needed specifically for women, victims of domestic violence, people who identify as transgender or gender nonconforming, and people with HIV. In addition, more housing is needed which would allow residents to keep pets, as animal prohibitions are often a barrier to entering shelters. And more designated space for families is needed to ensure children have the stability they need for growth, mental health, and educational equity.<sup>60</sup>

### *Prevention*

Steps can be taken to help people maintain their housing through continued rental assistance (e.g., expanded access to city rental assistance vouchers<sup>61</sup>), expansion of NYCHA housing options,<sup>62</sup> an extended hold on evictions, discharge planning for those exiting other facilities (e.g., hospitals, foster care, correctional

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56 <https://goddard.org/programs/fighting-homelessness/homelessoutreach/>

57 <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dhs/downloads/pdf/dailyreport.pdf>

58 <https://newyork.cbslocal.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/14578484/2020/01/FINAL-PAPER.pdf>

59 <https://newyork.cbslocal.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/14578484/2020/01/FINAL-PAPER.pdf>

60 <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/09/09/magazine/homeless-students.html>

61 <https://newyork.cbslocal.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/14578484/2020/01/FINAL-PAPER.pdf>

62 <https://newyork.cbslocal.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/14578484/2020/01/FINAL-PAPER.pdf>

facilities),<sup>63</sup> legal assistance, job training services, and access to benefits through ACCESS HRA. As an example, the Goddard Riverside Law Project “provides free legal services and tenant-organizing support to low-income residents . . . in order to preserve affordable housing and improve living conditions.”<sup>64</sup> In addition, more supportive services for seniors and those living with mental health issues, addiction, and other challenges will help people maintain their housing.

To maintain housing (i.e. prevent homelessness) for victims of domestic violence, the NYC Comptroller recommends the following: increase financial assistance to support survivors’ access to housing; expand residential and non-residential services; and strengthen legal protections (2019).<sup>65</sup>

### *Suggestions for system improvements*

#### 1 - Communication with shelter residents and their home communities

New York City has a legal mandate to provide shelter for anyone experiencing homelessness, which was established by the Callahan v. Carey litigation in 1979.<sup>66</sup> DHS must fulfill this task during a health and economic crisis with limited resources and residential space in 59 community districts across New York City. The residents of each community, especially those experiencing homelessness, continually seek voice and communication to understand DHS’s and the City’s decision-making calculus when it comes to shelter placements. The following may enable greater functionality and community integration in the long term:

1. DHS should work with local communities to provide opportunities for shelter residents, service providers, Community Boards, and others to engage in active and informed conversations about needs, processes, strategies, decisions, and consequences. Even in emergency situations, communities need information to mobilize services and supports and some form of a Community Advisory Board should be used to ease transitions.
2. DHS should work with service providers to produce a standard bill of rights for people experiencing homelessness and distribute this to clients upon entry to shelters and Community Boards and other civic groups for educational purposes.
3. DHS should work with local communities to strengthen public outreach and education about the rights of those experiencing homelessness, relevant city laws and responsibilities, available services and resources, causes and conditions of homelessness, population disparities (e.g., race), solutions and strategies (i.e. shelter models and best practices).

DHS’s first priority is to meet the needs of the clients they serve, those experiencing homelessness. A more transparent, client-centered community process that includes diverse voices (shelter clients, community based organizations, providers, and civic groups) could prevent the spread of misinformation, enable more community trust, and lead to collaborative initiatives that support equity and inclusion for everyone in the community.

#### 2- Quantitative data and contextual information

DHS’s data use and reporting warrants review. At minimum, DHS should report monthly statistics on shelters by type, district, resident demographics (e.g., family composition, age, gender, race, disabilities), and capacity. In addition, DHS should report statistics on Covid-19 infection, hospitalization, and mortality rates. Without data, it is impossible to act and communicate from an informed position about the needs, conditions, services, and supports for those experiencing homelessness in our community. Of concern is the disparate impact of DHS’s decisions for particular populations, such as young adults or people with disabilities, which is impossible to assess without data.

Second, the Department of City Planning and the Office of Management and Budget should consider ways to improve fair share analysis and reporting. The 1989 New York City Charter Revision Commission developed NYC’s “Fair Share” rules, which are now outdated. Fair share refers to equitable distribution of

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63 <https://newyork.cbslocal.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/14578484/2020/01/FINAL-PAPER.pdf>

64 <https://goddard.org/programs/fighting-homelessness/goddardlawproject/>

65 <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/housing-survivors/>

66 <http://council.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/2017-Fair-Share-Report.pdf>



facilities that provide basic needs and public goods (e.g., libraries); as well as equitable siting of facilities with negative social, economic, and environmental impacts (e.g. waste removal facilities). As important, fairness refers to equitable distribution across the city (not borough) and adjustments for district population size (i.e. equity does not refer to identical numbers of facilities for each district but equitable facilities to population ratios). As noted in the NYC Council Report, “Doing Our Fair Share, Getting Our Fair Share” (2017), “every neighborhood produces garbage, so it should be fairly managed, rather than over-concentrated in a small number of neighborhoods (especially when those neighborhoods are disproportionately low-income communities of color).” In addition, some facilities “cannot practically be distributed equally to every neighborhood.” Some districts have a greater need for services.

Of concern to analysts who produced the 2017 report are districts with the highest concentrations of facilities, defined as “the top 10% of [59] community districts with the highest ratios of capacity of similar facilities to district population” (The New York City Council, 2017).<sup>67</sup>

Including housing as part of fair share analysis is controversial, since residents are part of communities. Residential facilities include homeless shelters, transitional housing, correctional facilities, nursing homes, group foster homes, inpatient mental health treatment centers, and inpatient chemical dependency treatment centers. Rather than total facilities, total beds are included in fair share analysis. According to the report, from the years 1999 to 2015, the five districts with the largest increase in residential beds-to-population ratios (i.e. used to compare communities of different sizes by adjusting for population) are located in the Bronx and Brooklyn. In 2015 (the most recent data available), Community District 7 had 4,094 residential beds (if those beds were filled, ~20 per 1,000 people or ~2% of the district population of 215, 329<sup>68</sup>). As points of comparison, Queens Community District 1, which had the highest residential beds-to population ratio, had 11,943 residential beds (~69 residential beds per thousand people). Staten Island 3, the district with the lowest concentration, had ~3 residential beds per 1,000 people.

Overall, additional data from city agencies would enable evaluation of fair share claims; and criteria is outdated and needs to be revised (NYC Council, 2017). The Department of City Planning should report disaggregated (more nuanced) data generated at the agency level (without compromising privacy or confidentiality).

In addition, the Mayor should task the Algorithms Management and Policy Officer in the OMB to *review* fair share criteria, analysis, and reporting processes. The AMPO is responsible for providing “protocols and information about the systems and tools City agencies use to make decisions. The AMPO will regularly engage with the public and will work to ensure that fairness, transparency, human-centered design, and privacy protection are central to the use of algorithmic tools and systems that City agencies may use to support their decision-making.”<sup>69</sup> The AMPO should pay particular attention to human-centered and holistic analysis of equitable distribution and impact (i.e. community rankings by asset/benefit and burden); as well as the rights of all New Yorkers to fairness, equity, and justice. The AMPO, in collaboration with city agencies and representatives from every level of city government, should use broad input and evidence-based analysis to evaluate which facilities should or should not be included in an analysis; and if other frameworks might also be useful.

## Quality of life

**Sanitation:** The Department of Sanitation (DS) notes a need for continued funds for litter basket service, cleaning services, center median cleaning, vacant lot cleaning, weekly recycling, curbside e-waste program,

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67 <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3344000&GUID=A8DBA2FC-D773-41EC-AACE-5E280B1F5F42&Options=Advanced&Search=>

68 <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/data/2015chp-mn7.pdf>

69 <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/ampo/index.page>

daily collection for public schools, and NYCHA collection as well as acquisition of trucks, vehicles, and equipment. DS also expresses a need for the NYC Organics Collection Program to be continued as well as re-education when the service is reinstated; and more funding for food scrap drop off.

Hoarding and pests: Hoarding is an issue for a subset of seniors and others in Community District 7. Landlords evict people because of hoarding. Mice, rats, bedbugs and roaches are rampant where there is hoarding and open garbage exacerbates infestations. (11% of households report cockroaches in Community District 7.) Emergency services are often blocked. Case managers require special training. Cross-sector and interagency collaborations are needed to address the problem.

Rats: Community District 7 has many buildings with signs of rats and failed inspections compared to other districts. In addition to current initiatives (such as expansion of rat-proof trash cans by the Department of Sanitation), new approaches to the rat issue include working with businesses to eliminate rat-friendly conditions, shifting pickup times to make sure trash is not left out overnight, continuing and publicizing education programs like the Rat Academy, and prioritizing high-risk areas using GIS and data tracking to target trouble spots and pinpoint rat dens. In addition, education of building managers, tenant associations, block associations and enforcement by DOS are essential to controlling pest population in safe and effective manner.

Sewage: Sewage issues in NYCHA housing should be addressed quickly.

### **Seniors**

Community District 7 is home to an increasing number of senior citizens and to Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) which receive funds targeted for aging populations. A NORC at Douglass Houses (where there are more than 1000 underserved seniors) is needed.

Lack of health and household services and visitor contact contributes to the institutional placement of many seniors who otherwise would have been able to stay in their home. Extended In-Home Service to the Elderly Program, which provides homemaking for vulnerable homebound seniors not eligible for Medicaid, has seen drastic budget cut. The Adult Social Day Services Program, which provides therapeutic programs for seniors who are disabled (many with dementia) was eliminated. Funds for Elder Abuse Prevention Programs and Geriatric Mental Health Initiatives have not increased with the growing number of seniors. United Neighborhood house funding has remained stagnant. Volunteers and funds are needed to fill in many gaps.

### **Violence and Trauma**

Domestic and gender-based violence: Domestic violence includes family and intimate partner violence, sexual violence, stalking, and trafficking. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 1 in 4 people who identify as female and 1 in 10 people who identify as male have experienced intimate partner violence, including sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking. Homicide is one of the leading causes of death for children aged 1-4 in the United States.

More funding is needed to support education, intervention, and recovery programs that address domestic and gender based violence and its impacts. The Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence recently opened a Learning Lab at the NYC Family Justice Center in Manhattan to provide economic empowerment programming for people who have experienced gender-based violence.

And as referenced above, more housing is needed specifically for victims of domestic violence, including for people who identify as transgender or gender nonconforming.

Child abuse: More trauma-informed care is needed for victims of child abuse. In Community District 7, a hospital unit or community health center could work in collaboration with Safe Horizon and NYC Alliance

Against Sexual Assault to establish a child-centered clinic or child advocacy center<sup>70</sup> that provides evidence-based mental health care treatment and intervention for children who experience abuse.<sup>71</sup> Since the start of the pandemic, many children have not had access to school staff and caseworkers; and there has been an increase in health care provider reports of sexual assaults against children. 70% of assaults are directed at children, yet most funding is designated for adult victims.

In addition, more hospitals and healthcare facilities should provide training and certification for doctors, physician assistants, and nurses in trauma-informed care and forensics (in order to identify, report, and care for children who are victims of sexual assault and abuse; and use rape kits).<sup>72</sup>

Continued support is needed for Mt. Sinai's Sexual Assault and Violence intervention Program, which provides Victims Advocate Training as well as counseling.<sup>73</sup>

Also needed are low-cost or free psychiatric services for minors.

Hate crime reporting and analysis: More data is needed on reported and unreported hate crimes in New York City and Community District 7.

Responsiveness to emergency calls: More research is needed to determine consistent speed and responsiveness to emergency 911 calls across neighborhoods in Community District 7, including in NYCHA housing.

Sexual violence: More financial resources for investigations of sexual assault and rape are needed, including child sexual abuse and exploitation. In September of 2019, *The New York Times* reported that online photos and videos of child sexual abuse doubled in number in the last year to 45 million.

More funding is needed for the NYPD Sex Crimes Unit to increase staffing and reduce caseloads.

Child Victims Act: The recent passage of the Child Victims Act into law will enable more people to file claims against individuals who abused them and the institutions who enabled the abuse. Safe Horizon (SH) provides information about legal and counseling services on their website and SH partners with the Crime Victims Bar Association to offer legal services. Many claims that have been filed are against institutions, and more financial, legal, and psychological support is needed for individuals to decide whether to file claims after the one-year lookback window. The renewed focus on child sexual abuse means that even among people who do not file claims, there is a retraumatization that may occur for which supportive services are necessary. Access to resources and support is especially challenging in the Covid-19 context.

If possible, New York City Law Department/Corporation Counsel's Office should track numbers of claims filed as well as outcomes.

## **Budget Priorities for HHS**

### **CAPITAL PRIORITIES**

#### **Health clinic for abused children.**

In Community District 7, funding for a hospital unit or community health center to establish a clinic that provides evidence-based mental health care treatment and intervention for children who experience abuse

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<sup>70</sup> <https://www.safehorizon.org/child-advocacy-center/>

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.safehorizon.org/our-services/counseling/>

<sup>72</sup> <http://svfreenyc.org/training-institute/>

<sup>73</sup> <https://www.mountsinai.org/patient-care/service-areas/community-medicine/sexual-assault-and-violence-intervention-program-savi>

(there is only one in NYC). Since the start of the pandemic, many children have not had access to school staff and caseworkers; and there has been an increase in health care provider reports of sexual assaults against children. 70% of assaults are directed at children, yet most funding is designated for adult victims. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Priority #2)

### **School Ventilation.**

Funding for improvements to infrastructure that will improve ventilation (air flow) in Community District 7's public schools (as well as the DoE's public reporting on air flow quality and remediation). In the fall of 2020, the Martin Luther King Jr. Educational Complex, which serves 6,000 students, was deemed unfit to open and the city has not yet finalized an infrastructure improvement plan. The DoE reports that all school buildings were surveyed by the NYC School Construction Authority [4] but criteria and data on air flow quality is either inaccessible or unclear. As one example, the DoE reports that M490: Martin Luther King Jr. High School has 276 rooms without windows, 76 without operational supply fans, and 225 without operational exhaust fans but does not offer interpretive comments to contextualize this information (and this information was found under another school's profile instead of information for the school listed). (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #3)

### **Safe Haven**

Funding is needed to build an additional Safe Haven shelter in Community District 7 to most effectively address the rising number of those living on the street in the district. The Safe Haven model includes smaller facilities (50-60 beds) and supportive services, and is considered to be the most effective means by which to persuade those living on the street to accept an offer of shelter (Center for Urban Community Services). Providers who do street outreach report that most people reject offers of shelter if they are not proximate to the neighborhood to which they've become accustomed. Currently, Community District 7 has only one Safe Haven shelter; adding another would provide a valuable tool for street outreach teams working to move this vulnerable population off the streets in Community District 7 and into the shelter system. (FY22 Overall Capital Budget Priority #4)

## **EXPENSE PRIORITIES**

### **Food insecurity Programs.**

Funding for programs that address food insecurity, including West Side Campaign Against Hunger and Get Food NYC. The Meal Gap, NYC's measure of food insecurity, represents families' and individuals' missing meals that result from inadequate household food budgets. In Community District 7, the Meal Gap is 3.3 million meals. More than one in ten people in Community District 7 are food insecure. (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Priority #1)

**Mental Health Training.** In Community District 7 and citywide, funding for hospitals and healthcare facilities to provide training for medical providers in trauma-informed care and forensics (in order to identify, report, and care for children who are victims of sexual assault and abuse). Since the start of the pandemic, many children have not had access to school staff and caseworkers; and there has been an increase in health care provider reports of sexual assaults against children. (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Priority #2)

### **Supportive Housing.**

Funding is needed to cover services and operational costs for supportive housing facilities in Community District 7. Supportive housing is the most successful way to end homelessness for individuals and families, especially those living with physical and psychiatric disabilities. Even prior to the pandemic, there was not sufficient supply to meet the record demand, and state reimbursement rates for supportive housing lagged behind operational costs. Without additional funding support, cuts in the most recent city budget will force supportive housing centers and facilities in Community District 7 to make drastic cuts to the social work, mental health, and medical services they provide, and place some facilities in jeopardy of closure. An

anticipated 20% cut to city agencies could result in significant cuts to CB7's supportive housing facilities, such as case management services, social work, mental health services, health services related to medication, nutrition, and social activities. (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Budget Priority #7)

**Homeless Outreach.**

More funding is needed for the Manhattan Outreach Consortium (MOC), a multiagency effort established by Goddard Riverside, to provide outreach to those experiencing street homelessness. Goddard Riverside dispatches MOC teams to respond to 311 calls; and Goddard's caseload has recently increased along with 311 calls. Of NYC's 80,000+ people experience homelessness, an estimated 3,600 [16] or 5% [17] live on the street, and lack access to basic needs such as food, water, and bathrooms. It can take up to 200 interactions [18] over months or years to develop relationships with those experiencing street homelessness and provide them with access to healthcare, counseling, nutrition, and shelter. According to Goddard Riverside, since 2007, "the MOC has placed more than 1,500 formerly homeless adults in permanent housing. (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Budget Priority #8)

**Technology access.**

Funding for shelter and supportive housing residents to have access to a) technology, including Wifi and cell service; and b) staff to conduct training on how to use it. This is urgently needed for residents to communicate with medical and mental health providers and access care as well as have education. (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Budget Priority #13)

**Center for Innovation through Data Intelligence.**

Funding for research on integrated (interagency) approaches to addressing short- and long-term racial and economic disparities that impact Community District 7 and city residents, particularly in health and education, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and economic crisis. Covid-19 has disproportionately affected people and communities of color, due to segregation [and inequalities in housing, education, employment, healthcare, hospital access, and insurance (United Hospital Fund). The Center for Innovation through Data Intelligence "is a data intelligence team in the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, Office of the Mayor, who establishes partnerships that can leverage the analytical resources of the City of New York through an innovative inter-agency research agenda." (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Budget Priority #14)

**Funding for reliable, accurate, and rapid Covid-19 testing of staff working in congregate settings (nursing homes and adult care facilities).**

After government-provided supplies deplete, this can cost facilities \$100 per test. DOHMH requires that staff of nursing homes and adult care facilities must be screened weekly. CMS supplies a limited number of tests to nursing homes and many staff do not have employer-provided health insurance. There are two state licensed nursing homes in Community District 7: The Riverside facility (The Riverside Premier Rehabilitation and Healing Center) and the New Jewish Center, Manhattan campus. At these facilities, 46 and 47 confirmed Covid-19 deaths occurred, respectively. These were the highest number of deaths seen at any state-licensed facility in New York County. (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Budget Priority #20)

**Funding for Mental Health Training for NYPD internally and in relation to the public.**

Funding is needed to provide mental health training and support for uniformed officers of the NYPD both to manage internal issues in light of the devastating impact of recent suicides by NYPD personnel, and to enable NYPD uniformed officers identify and deal effectively and appropriately with mental health issues in encounters with the public. (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Budget Priority #27)

### 3.4 Transportation

- 7 Bike paths, including 2 protected bike lanes
- 50 Citibike Stations (though not all presently open)
- 14 NYC Transit bus routes
- 7 MTA subway routes, 14 stations
- Pre-Covid -- 70% of MCB7 workers travel by mass transit

Over the past years, the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) has implemented safety upgrades at many intersections, including the West End Avenue Corridor and into 2018 has proposed additional corridors for improvements.

The number of transportation-related injuries has decreased nearly 20% in the past year. While the deaths and serious injury rates have declined, we need to do better in our efforts to achieve Vision Zero.

MCB7 recommends the use of tools that will improve safety, including: curb extensions, pedestrian islands, protected bike lanes, mid-block bulb-outs, split-phase signals, leading pedestrian intervals, raised crosswalks, left turn bans, Barnes Dances, narrowed lanes, abrupt changes in road surface, and lower speed limits - all tools which, when implemented district-wide, could reduce speeding and failure to yield (two leading causes of pedestrian deaths).

MCB7 welcomes a comprehensive district-wide analysis of transportation issues, with immediate consideration given to:

- The corridor between 95th and 100th Streets, superblock west of Central Park West.
- Continued monitoring of Commercial Loading Zones - along the redesigned Amsterdam and Columbus Avenues and also along Central Park West and West End Avenue, which CB7 has extensively studied this year - to support the increased need for delivery use while reducing and hopefully eliminating the blockage of travel lanes by double parked vehicles.
- Narrow the travel lanes on West 66th Street between Amsterdam and West End Avenues, along with curb extensions in order to discourage speeding on the wide street. (A similar design was implemented on 70th Street.)
- Change the timing on the traffic signal at 66th Street and West End Ave to discourage speeding to make the light.
- Addition of crosstown protected bike lanes.
- Add signage at the 79th & 96th St interchanges of the Henry Hudson Pkwy alerting motorists of the 25 mph speed limit unless otherwise posted, NYC Law-No Right turns at red lights.
- Recommend a study of the crosstown block of West 94th Street.
- Install a 96th Street exit option for southbound traffic on the Henry Hudson Parkway. This will relieve the intense traffic on the narrower and residential 95th Street. Allowing traffic to exit onto 96th Street will provide direct travel to the Central Park transverse and provide a safer pedestrian experience on 95th Street, which was never intended to be a major thoroughfare.

Concurrently, MCB7 encourages continued measures to ensure pedestrian safety throughout the district, including:

- Data. CB7 is working to develop complete data on the top 10 collision-prone intersections/areas of the District, understanding that this need is constantly updating and evolving.
- Enforcement. CB7 requests enforcement of the 25 mile per hour speed limit, and the 20 mile per hour speed limit around all schools, which will improve pedestrian and student safety.

Specific safety measures include:

- Countdown timers at all intersections to alert pedestrians to the amount of time they have for a safe crossing of the street. This is especially important for people with disabilities and seniors.
- “Stop Here on Red” Signs for left turns on every street on Broadway to ensure that motorists know they must stop in the median of the “Broadway Malls” and wait for a green light before proceeding.
- Striping, Signage and neckdowns which alert motorists that they are entering a school block and will improve safety for students traveling to and from school
- Red Light Cameras to discourage drivers from running the lights, especially at Central Park West and 63rd, 86th, 96th and 97th Streets, West End Avenue at 66, 72, 79 and 96th Streets.
- Install radar devices alerting motorists of their current speed.
- Speed Cameras/Speed Signs to reduce speeding on our streets to reduce serious crashes and injuries - Left Turn Calming measures - more pedestrians are injured by left turning vehicles.
- Daylighting at every corner, as well as the most dangerous intersections.
- Safety improvements for Columbus Circle to enable pedestrians and bicyclists to safely navigate the circle including traffic calming measures, signage and striping
- Traffic light mid-block on 106th Street between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenue to enable seniors and those with disabilities to safely cross the street mid-block between two senior residences, the Jewish Home Life and Red Oak Apartments. DOT said they would explore the feasibility of making a light push-button activated when someone wanted to cross.
- Increased enforcement of traffic violations especially speeding, failure to yield and running red lights.
- Increased enforcement of motor vehicles standing or parked illegally in bike lanes is also a concern - Portable breath tests which the PD has stated are effective and needed in MCB7.
- Protected Bike Lane on 110th Street and safety improvements for Frederick Douglass Circle

#### Shared Streets:

The “Complete Streets” on Amsterdam and Columbus Avenues create new challenges for MCB7 to balance the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, motorists and local businesses. Loading Zones are a serious concern for local businesses and residents, because it reduces curbside parking. Some have argued that raising the price and timing of metered parking would increase turn over at available curbside spaces.

Double Parking has become a problem on all the Avenues in MCB7. MCB7 requests that DOT implement as soon as possible the loading zone plan adopted by MCB7 for Central Park West and West End Avenue to mitigate this problem.

Mixing Zones: Mixing Zones increase the risk for cyclists, who often cannot be seen by the driver of the motor vehicle and there have been some serious injuries.

Pedestrian Islands provide refuge and shorter crossing distances for pedestrians and thrill gardeners who enjoy tending the tree pits.

The mixing zones where motor vehicles enter the bike lanes to turn create a danger for cyclists who are often in the blind spot for the driver of the vehicle.

Shared Sidewalks: The increased congestion on sidewalks of local residents, tourists and visitors has emboldened street vendors to take advantage of new markets. The proliferation of food trucks and sidewalk vendors frustrates Upper West Siders because of the lack of enforcement and/or licensing.

Additionally, street furniture (newsstands, bus shelters, bike rack, news boxes, pay phones, mail boxes, benches, etc.) and sidewalk cafes overcrowd the sidewalks. MCB7 encourages a comprehensive approach to optimizing shared use and management of sidewalks to eliminate obstructions and visual clutter.

MCB7 encourages minimizing permanently enclosed sidewalk cafes especially after they have become

vacant. Except in rare circumstances, enclosed cafes unduly narrow the sidewalk and cause pedestrian congestion. Perhaps a mechanism could be created to guarantee the removal of structures when they become vacant.

#### Parking:

While car ownership by residents of MCB7 is down, MCB7 residents have strong and varied opinions about the amount of paid private garage space to be allocated in the district. Increasing the amount of free parking would likely contribute to increased pollution, congestion, frustration, etc. The goal is to balance the need for access to motor vehicles while minimizing the negative aspects.

#### Alternatives to Private Motor Vehicles:

**Emerging Technologies:** CB7 supports the exploration of emerging technologies that can be implemented in the district as a way to safely and more equitably move people, goods and services within the District and throughout the City. These technologies include, but are not limited to: bike share, pedal- assist and motorized bikes, ride share/ride hail, electric scooters, autonomous vehicles, and civilian and possibly commercial drones. In many cases, these technologies can serve as valuable "last mile" solutions to successfully transport people to mass transit, which remains the most feasible option for the majority of CB7 residents, if funding and service issues are improved. These technologies also could help more efficiently and safely move goods to retail establishments or to the elderly or health care providers. CB7 believes that the use of these emerging technologies, if regulated responsibly, could align with and potentially advance CB7's core priorities related to a clean environment, affordable housing, equity among residents, and overall pedestrian and residential safety.

**Congestion Pricing:** MCB7 continues to support congestion pricing and supports a lock box that will ensure that all funds raised go to mass transit. This will help advance the MTA's Fast Forward plan, which would raise funds for transit improvements (see below), reduce congestion and improve air quality.

**Subways:** MCB7 has the 3rd highest numbers of subway commuters in New York City. It is served by two major subway lines with 7 routes. Along Broadway the #1 serves local and the #2,3 serve express stations.

Along Central Park West the B/C lines serve local and express stations and the A/D serve express stations. On the Central Park West Line more trains after rush hour ("shoulder" periods) are urgently needed to alleviate long wait times and overcrowding. Service cuts have caused most off-peak trains to be overcrowded. While additional cars are being added to the C line, more frequent service is needed. We believe transit signal prioritization of certain key intersections can speed bus service (see below).

**Buses:** Bus service district-wide needs to improve. MCB7 supports on-street supervision to improve NYC Transit's response of actual operating conditions, especially on weekends. M104 truncated at Times Square continues to impact thousands of riders who relied on one-seat ride to E 42nd. M11 service levels are insufficient to handle growing demand, especially among the elderly M60 which connects the Upper West Side to Central Harlem and La Guardia Airport, a major success for the MTA, needs to be extended further south to Broadway/96th Street area. Select Bus Service, which is now on the M79 and M86 routes, needs to be added to the M96 route.

**Bike ridership:** Bike ridership has grown rapidly in the district, with Citibike expansion into MCB7, the protected bike lanes on Columbus and Amsterdam Avenue, and additional bike paths. More people are riding to and from work, on errands and for recreational purposes. Ensuring safety for cyclists & pedestrians is paramount, as is educating cyclists to obey the rules of the road and bike safely. We look forward to receiving DOT's further proposals to build out a comprehensive network of protected bike lanes in order to promote safe and efficient cycling.

**Additional District Needs:** Street and Sidewalk Improvements.

Heavy use by motor vehicles, combined with a high number of utility cuts and the high volume of sleet and



snow over the past few years have created poor street conditions in MCB7. Many of our blocks are riddled with ruts, potholes, faded striping and bad curbs. These conditions produce unsafe conditions for both vehicles and pedestrians. Significant resurfacing of the streets is needed, including decreasing the amount of time between milling to paving.

Sidewalks are in need of repair throughout MCB7, especially at street corners where water ponds. Many sidewalks have violations near sidewalk vaults on Amsterdam Avenue and Broadway. The replacement of a sidewalk vault requires special engineering and is often cost-prohibitive. MCB7 recommends that other methods be looked at to coat existing sidewalk surfaces over vaulted areas, when replacement is not feasible.

### **Budget Priorities for Transportation**

#### **CAPTIAL PRIORITIES**

##### **Street-scape safety improvements.**

Safety at many street intersections could be helped by simple-to-build street improvements.

Bulb-outs with sidewalk extensions help decrease the turning radius to slow turning vehicles and shorten the crossing distance for the pedestrian. Starting with those improvements identified in CB7's Nelson- Nygaard study of the West 90's, and reviewed and approved by CB7- traffic islands, curb extensions, and simple traffic guiding changes should be implemented to make this area safer. Beginning with the corners in CB7 identified as the most dangerous to cross - those reported with failure to yield crashes, violations, and those reported with vehicles turning with excessive speed - corner curb

extensions should be implemented to slow turning vehicles and shorten the pedestrian crossing. In the most dangerous intersections overall, directed lane treatments, islands, signal changes, countdown signals, and raised crosswalks should all be considered, reviewed, and implemented for what would effectively improve safety. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Priority #16)

##### **Speed cameras throughout MCD7**

Speeding near schools continues to be a problem throughout the district, with some areas, such as West 95<sup>th</sup>/West 96<sup>th</sup> Street-with nearby entrances/exits to the Henry Hudson Parkway, a particular concern.

Strategically placed speed cameras would make the areas close to schools much safer for children and all pedestrians. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #24)

##### **Red light cameras throughout MCD7**

Failure to yield & running red/amber lights with the resultant vehicular/pedestrian accidents resulting in serious injury and/or loss of life - continues to be a serious concern throughout the district. The placement of red light cameras - particularly in areas known to be at a high risk for vehicular/pedestrian conflicts - would send a strong message to operators of vehicles that speeding and improper/illegal movements will not be tolerated, and violators will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #25)

##### **Thermoplastic street markings**

With many lane markings fading, as well as lane alignments shifting, it is vitally important for safety that the Department of Transportation have the requisite funds in their budget for painting and mai

ntaining lane markings, pedestrian crossings, and no-parking zones. \*FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #26)

### **Curb-cuts**

DOT does not have funding to repair existing curb-cuts/pedestrian ramps. CB7 is conducting a survey of all curb-cuts in the district. Phase One of the survey covering 57 curb-cuts from West 60th-89th Streets identified the following conditions: 10 super-bad; i.e.: basically impassable, require immediate fix; 23 severe cases; definitely high-priority and should be repaired as soon as possible; 15 bad but not yet terrible, yet if allowed to deteriorate would probably become severe cases; 9 not great but not good; bear watching. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #27)

### **Visually Handicapped - Accessibility**

Those of our community with disabilities are frequently unable to share in a quality of life open to others and a free access to the world outside their homes. Moving along the street, the visually handicapped have to way of knowing if it is safe to cross the street. We are recommending that DOT develop audible signals to indicate red light. (FY22CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #40)

### **Signage: "NYC Law-no right on red", "NYC Speed Limit 25mph unless otherwise posted"**

There is a lack of signage where the Henry Hudson Parkway exits on to West Side streets, at the 79<sup>th</sup> Street and 95<sup>th</sup> -96<sup>th</sup> Street exits. As this may be the first place vehicles are actually on NYC streets from their point of origin, it is essential that New York City's rules & regulations be visible to motorists who may not be aware of them. Additionally, there is a paucity of speed limit signage throughout the West Side. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #42)

### **Variable traffic signal timing (Pilot)**

Many intersections have variable crowd conditions depending on time of day - for instance, when schools let out, the PM rush hour, the AM rush, etc. DOT has said they cannot at this time program traffic signals by time of day. We believe this technology is important for safety, and must be pursued. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #43)

### **Speed/red light camera pilot to enforce TLC (only) violations (Pilot)**

Pending a check of the legality of such a program, this would catch TLC-licensed vehicles who are speeding or running red lights, or other illegal movements. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #44)

### **Riverside Drive, West 104<sup>th</sup>-110<sup>th</sup> Streets (\$2.95M)**

Reconstruction of the sidewalks. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #45)

### **Pedestrian-initiated traffic crossings in Central Park**

Electric and other infrastructure, and programming capacity, to coordinate traffic signals in Central Park electronically, including providing the ability for pedestrian walk signals to be activated by "push buttons" when pedestrians want to cross the Drives. The traffic signals in Central Park were installed decades ago, essentially to govern private motor vehicle traffic, which have nearly completely been eliminated on the Park Drives. But currently, regardless of time of day and other conditions in the Park, the signals on the Drives can only be governed manually. There is a need to provide up to date functionality to the traffic signal system in Central Park, so that the thousands of recreational users -- pedestrians (including runners),

cyclists, skaters, etc. -- can be made as safe as possible from collisions on the Drives. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #46)

### **3.5 Local Commerce**

Small businesses are vital to the Upper West Side community. However, when you speak with our neighborhood shops, restaurants and bar owners, they often express frustration with the regulatory burdens posed on them by government, and how the market forces are changing the way they operate.

Fines, bureaucratic red tape, high rent, taxes, increasing labor costs and lawsuits make it challenging for our local businesses to thrive, and even survive. Online shopping, innovations and changes in purchasing behavior are transforming the business environment.

The NYC Department of Small Business Services (SBS) is an agency that serves as an important resource to this sector. Unfortunately, it is often subject to the same bureaucratic logjams as the actual businesses. If SBS were able to recommend modifications of existing regulations or appoint a dedicated watchdog division, it could coordinate more adeptly between the relevant agencies. In a landmark building or historic district such as the Upper West Side, requirements by the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) often do not comport with those of NYC Department of Consumer Affairs, nor the NYC Department of Buildings. These issues become exceptionally burdensome to many of the small businesses in our community, especially as they pertain to ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance. Specifically, because so many grade level stores and restaurants are located in older buildings in which entrances and plumbing cannot be modified, they are continuously exposed to fines by LPC and other agencies, as well as spurious lawsuits issued by private individuals.

SBS should work with Community Boards, small business owners, Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and other business associations to develop a list of proposed regulatory reforms, policies and programs that will support local businesses and eliminate bureaucratic red tape, and to designate an agency tasked with overall regulatory oversight over small businesses.

The City of New York continues to impose a tax on commercial tenants in portions of the Manhattan Central Business District who pay in excess of approximately \$250,000 per year in rent. While the logic of taxing a business based on the rent it pays rather than its profits or sales is elusive, the threshold for the imposition of the tax has not been adjusted in over a decade. In the intervening years, Manhattan store rents have climbed to a point where a modest mom-and-pop neighborhood business as well as businesses that are necessary to a sustainable community such as grocery stores and local services, are subject to the tax. CB7 in the short term supports legislation to adjust the threshold to a more reasonable level, and welcomes a broader conversation as to whether a tax on rents is the proper means raise revenue, especially in an era in which so many small businesses are struggling to survive the pandemic.

### **3.6 Public Safety**

- 3 NYC Police Precincts (20<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, and Central Park), PSA6, and Transit Districts #1 and #3
- Uniformed police officers: 133 in the 20<sup>th</sup>; 143 in the 24<sup>th</sup>; 114 in Central Park.
- Civilian Employees: 11 in the 20<sup>th</sup>; 16 in the 24<sup>th</sup>; 7 in Central Park.
- 5 Fire Stations.

**New York Police Department.** The NYPD Compstat database tracks seven major crimes as a primary indicators of the overall safety of a precinct, as well as nine additional, somewhat lower level, criminal offenses. Overall, major crime statistics in CD7's precincts, PSA6 (public housing division), and Transit show a stable trend.

There is increasing concern in constituent complaints that the major crime statistics do not tell the full story relating to safety and quality of life in the District. Conduct not comprised within the offenses tracked by Compstat are the subject of more frequent complaints. Among these complaints are those concerning acts of public lewdness and indecency (e.g. public urination, defecation and masturbation); aggressive behavior that does not rise to assault, such as confrontational panhandling and certain types of drug activity.

Cuts to the NYPD FY 2021 budget that were only in part a reaction to the catastrophic shortfall in City revenues due to the responses to the Covid pandemic have limited the staffing available system-wide. In our Precincts, the FY21 budget cuts initially caused the elimination or significant curtailment of certain units, including the dedicated homeless outreach unit that worked alongside Goddard-Riverside and other social service outreach efforts, and the plain-clothes anti-crime units. The losses of these units has made it more difficult to enforce certain of the safety and quality of life offenses noted above, especially those that require a direct law enforcement observation or participation before enforcement action can be taken.

**Staffing:** NYPD has moved to a data-based deployment and response system that utilizes specialized units and task forces. Consequently, the number of uniformed officers in precincts initially declined, although staffing levels have since stabilized. As of the most currently available data, there are 133 uniformed officers assigned to the 20th Precinct, and 143 assigned to the 24th Precinct. The number of civilian personnel, 11 in the 20th Precinct and 20 in the 24th Precinct, are also stabilizing after adjustments and cuts in previous years. PSA6, whose officers are responsible for NYCHA developments in eight precincts, has 127 uniformed officers. However, actual staffing levels are lower, due to homeland security assignments, military service, and sick leave. Recruiting, retention and civilianization are essential.

The Neighborhood Policing program, which was introduced in 2017, divides Precincts into three sectors, each with two dedicated neighborhood coordinating officers (NCOs). The NCOs are responsible for knowing and working with the residents and businesses in their sectors. Their contact information and the dates and locations of their "Build-A-Block" meetings are available on NYPD's website. CB7 welcomes this new program and is monitoring it to see if additional officers will be needed in the future.

While the important conversations are and should be on-going concerning which tasks should be taken up by the NYPD, and which tasks might be better accomplished by personnel and resources from other City agencies, the current funding structure leaves important core police functions strapped for staffing. Restoring the overtime available to Precinct Commanders so that they have more flexibility in meeting the ever-changing needs of the District and the City without further encumbering other enforcement initiatives is a sensible interim solution. It will enable the Precincts to use officers and resources already familiar to the community when issues arise that routine patrols are stretched to address.

**Fire Department.** CD7 is located in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Battalions and has 3 Engine and 2 Ladder Companies. According to the current Mayor's Management Report, system-wide in fiscal year 2020 the FDNY made incremental improvement in reducing response times to fires, with dispatch and travel times averaging at or below 5 minutes. FDNY response times for most categories of medical emergency assistance, such as FDNY ambulances and responses by fire companies, increased slightly in fiscal year 2020.

**Department of Sanitation.** The catastrophic cuts to the FY 20 and FY 21 budget due to tax revenue shortfalls due to Covid have hit the Department of Sanitation particularly hard.

For example, litter basket service was initially reduced by 63%, although recently a fraction of the reduction was restored, bringing the net reduction to approximately 54%. The litter basket service was eliminated on

Sundays and Holidays, and all supplemental litter basket service was also cut. In addition, all litter basket service associated with rat mitigation efforts and CleaNYC initiatives has been cut.

Among the other programs cut or severely reduced are the dedicated syringe litter patrol, and vacant lot cleaning.

Street sweeping/mechanical brooms have been severely cut, resulting in cutting in half the frequency of alternate-side parking in the District.

Cuts to the Zero Waste program initiatives include suspending SAFE events and household hazardous waste drop off sites for one year, suspending curbside organics recycling for participating buildings for one year, reducing funding for community composting and food scrap drop-off sites, eliminating funding for GrowNYC Zero Waste outreach and education, and eliminating the curbside electronics collection program.

The net effect of these drastic cuts to the DSNY budget have been readily observable. Litter baskets frequently overflow, especially after temperate weekends. Rats and other vermin feast on both litter basket and household trash, especially since compostables and organic waste is far less likely to be diverted from the waste stream to separate and sustainable alternatives.

The community is lucky to have grass roots and locally supported initiatives to offset some of the effects of these dramatic service reductions. Organizations like One Block UWS, the Broadway Mall Association and others are stepping up volunteer efforts to empower and coordinate volunteers to collect trash from sidewalks, streets, curbsides and other areas. The three Business Improvement Districts in the District (the Lincoln Square BID, the Columbus Avenue BID, and the Columbus-Amsterdam BID) have maintained their initiatives aimed at cleaner and more presentable streets. Programs such as the Goddard-Riverside Green Keepers and the Doe Fund also have been helpful. Sadly, these efforts while welcome still leave much to be done.

It is crucial as a first step to restore as much basket service as possible, both to reduce the presence of rats and vermin, and to address the erosion of the quality of life for residents and visitors alike. While many aspects of these vital service need to be restored, including without limitation the composting and other means of diverting organics from the main waste stream, the litter baskets are a doable and important first step.

### **Budget Priorities for Public Safety**

#### **EXPENSE PRIORITIES**

##### **Restore Overtime Allocation to NYPD**

Overtime is an effective way to supplement the ability of the police to respond to changing circumstances and create a presence when needed. With the elimination of one or more classes from the Academy, and the use of certain data models for permanent assignment of officers, the use of overtime is needed to fill in gaps of coverage, respond to exigencies, and evenly distribute workflow. (FY22 CB7 Overall Overall Expense Budget Priority 5)

##### **Increase Basket Collection to 7-day Service**

Overflowing trash bins attract rodents, insects and other vermin. They also negatively impact the quality of life and create a perception of a community at disarray. They also impact the attractiveness of our restaurants and shops, especially when so much of the re-opening of businesses must take place on the sidewalk. While the Upper West Side community has responded to the cuts in the DSNY budget by organizing private clean-up efforts, their trash bags are still targets for vermin and need to be collected more

frequently than the current budget permits.

Restoring 7-day basket collection is an important start to addressing the increasing presence of rats and other vermin, and to restoring the attractiveness and livability of our City during and post-Covid. (FY22 CB7 Overall Overall Expense Budget Priority 9)

### 3.7 Parks and Open Space

#### Major Public Parks

- Riverside Park - 267 acres
- Riverside Park South – 23 acres
- Theodore Roosevelt Park – 17.5 acres
- Central Park (shared with CB 8, 10, 11 and 5)
- 11 Public Playgrounds
- 59<sup>th</sup> Street Recreation Center (Gertrude Ederle Recreation Center)
- 6 Small Parks and Broadway Malls

#### Parks Serving Community District 7



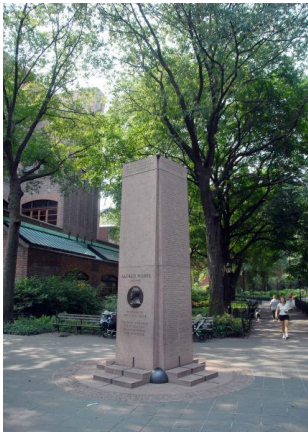
*Riverside Park*



*Central Park*



*Straus Park*



*Theodore Roosevelt Park*



*Verdi Square Park*



*Dante Park*

Community District 7 boasts access to two of Manhattan's (and New York City's) most revered parks: Central Park, which forms the entire eastern border of CD7, and Riverside Park and Riverside Park South, which forms the entire western border. Both of these parks were initially laid out by the seminal landscape architects Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, although both parks show the effects of subsequent revisions and renovations. These two parks provide space for both active and passive recreation. In addition, CD7 is home to 11 playgrounds under the jurisdiction of the Department of Parks and Recreation ("DPR"), as well as a host of playgrounds appurtenant to public schools and under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Department of Education ("DoE").

CD7 encompasses an additional 35.5 acres of parkland in smaller parks, including Straus Park at West 106th Street; Theodore Roosevelt Park at West 77-81 Street; Verdi Square Park at West 72nd Street; Dante Park at West 63<sup>rd</sup> Street; Tucker Square Park at West 66th Street; and the system of Broadway Malls. Central Park is administered through a contract with the Central Park Conservancy. Until the Covid crisis, DPR

maintained the remaining parkland with 27 full-time workers of all types, including a full-time horticulturist, as well as with seasonal workers and job-training participants, all of whom are essential to maintaining this parkland and running programs in these spaces to serve the public's needs.

### **Impacts of Covid-19 pandemic effect on NYC budget and park use and resources.**

The Covid-19 pandemic has had – as we have noted elsewhere in this DNS – drastically negative effects on the New York City budget, with enormous impacts on anticipated money available for parks maintenance and capital projects. The normal employment of seasonal workers was eliminated during the summer of 2020, litter basket emptying was reduced, and there were numerous other cutbacks. The extent to which federal or other funding will become available to New York City, and when, to make up for its massive Covid-related tax shortfall is unknown.

The effect of the Covid crisis tax/budget shortfalls on many capital projects in our District is not yet known. Two massive capital projects in Riverside Park – restoration and reconstruction of the 79<sup>th</sup> Street Rotunda (partially funded by NYC DOT, and managed primarily by its Bridges division) and restoration and reconstruction of the 79<sup>th</sup> Street Marina area (a DPR project) – are behind their pre-Covid anticipated schedules, and we currently do not know whether the scope of either of those projects will be reduced, or when the capital funds for either of them will be released, or whether such funds definitely remain intact. OMB recently authorized the start of construction of a smaller but still substantial project in Riverside Park, the long-awaited improvements at the northern end of Riverside Park South, for which construction has actually commenced. However (as of this writing) DPR's procurement process for the selection of construction contractors for active projects has been paused until further notice.

The FY2021 budget was finally adopted in mid-Covid crisis. For FY21, DPR's expense budget was cut by 14% (\$84 million from FY20. That included losing budget lines for 80 PEP officers and over 50 Forestry and Green Thumb staff, though none of those workers had to be laid off because DPR used vacancies to keep workers working. The most significant DPR budget cut was to the seasonal budget, which resulted in the loss of 1700 workers that DPR normally relies on to clean the parks during the summer season. It is uncertain to what extent these cuts might be restored for FY22.

Our District is fortunate to have major public-private partnerships between the Riverside Park Conservancy and the Central Park Conservancy, respectively, and DPR. The role of the CPC in managing Central Park, and in particular managing and largely funding with private funds major capital reconstruction projects in Central Park, is well known. In recent years, the RPC has also provided private funding for and managed numerous relatively small but important capital construction projects in Riverside Park. But both of those not-for-profit organizations may also have suffered financially from the impacts of Covid.

The other major impact of the Covid pandemic has been the increased use of our parks by large numbers of residents as a respite from the restrictions imposed by New York City's public health concerns. Not only are our parks more crowded, but the requirement for social distancing from other users, and concern about the large numbers of users – particularly runners and cyclists who are not wearing masks – has made our parks seem yet more crowded than they actually may be, which has negatively impacted the desperately needed sense of repose that they should provide during the still-continuing Covid period.

In the meantime, many invaluable recreational and other spaces such as ballfields and dog runs (“dog parks”) in numerous parks were closed for public health reasons for extended periods. If there is a strong local recurrence of the virus, it is possible that some or all of them will be closed again. As it is, there are currently numerous Covid-related restrictions on the conduct of team sports and other events and activities in our parks. Normally very highly used bathrooms (“comfort stations”) in Central Park that are the responsibility of concessionaires to maintain (notably at the Tavern on the Green and the Loeb Boathouse concessions) have remained closed because the concessions themselves have not reopened – and may not do so in the foreseeable future.



In sum, the Covid crisis has significantly increased our need for and use of our parks, while Covid-related restrictions and behavior present unique problems, and park funding has been drastically cut.

### **Impacts of the Hudson River Greenway and Increased Park Use Generally On Riverside Park**

Riverside Park has become more crowded in recent years, not only because of increased general use by neighborhood residents and others (the huge Riverside South development has added thousands of new apartments adjacent to the park, aside from many other large new residential buildings built in the neighborhood), but also because the completion of the Hudson River Greenway from the Battery northward through Riverside Park has brought large numbers of commuting and recreational cyclists and other non-pedestrians to the limited pathways in Riverside Park.

The approved plans for Riverside Park South, dating to its approval in the early 1990's and incorporated in a Restrictive Declaration, assumed that the new park would be built in defined phases. Now, almost thirty years later, Phase V, which has been under construction for several years by DPR, still (as of this writing) has not opened for use. And Phase VI, which is the responsibility of the Developer to build, has not yet started construction., which, once started, is likely to take several years. The failure thus far to create these two very important and substantial portions of Riverside Park South has exacerbated the crowding in the park.

Additionally, the plans for Riverside Park South, as included in the Restrictive Declaration, included several new bathroom facilities ("comfort stations") in the new park, including one (with a small adjacent concession structure) in Phase V and one (incorporating a DPR Maintenance and Operations facility) in Phase VI. It now appears that both of those comfort stations have been eliminated – at least for the near and foreseeable future. Phase V has been built without its comfort station having been included, and DPR is seeking very substantial funds to build both of these comfort stations. Given the very heavy use of Riverside Park South (as well as the rest of Riverside Park) by commuters and recreational users, as well as the fact that the Restrictive Declaration called for both of them to be built, they are both high priorities for CB7.

### **Issues Confronting DPR's Ability to Serve the Community's Needs**

- **Structural Funding Challenges**

Parks funding, especially for capital requirements, is an inadequate percentage of the overall City budget. For example, Chicago spends more on parks than does New York City, even though Chicago's population is one-third the size.

In addition, critical funding for both operating expenses and capital improvements for parks is left to year-by-year negotiations between the offices of the Mayor and City Council, and relies heavily on ad-hoc funding from Council Member items, the portion of the City budget under the discretion of the Borough President, and other one-off and non-baselined funding streams. Funding is not driven by an integrated needs assessment or long-term vision, but rather is frequently provided, if at all, on a project-by-project basis.

- **Equity and Inclusiveness**

Equity and inclusion are increasingly recognized as issues in park funding and management. Certain parks, most notably Central Park through the Central Park Conservancy, and to a more modest extent Riverside Park through the Riverside Park Conservancy), enjoy access to private donations and independent fundraising. Smaller neighborhood parks in CD7, like many similar spaces throughout our City, have no or limited access to such funding. Within CD7, the disparity in access to funding and its impact on the

experience in public open space can readily be demonstrated by a comparison of the overall conditions of playgrounds north of West 96th Street versus those to the south. The Community Parks Initiative instituted by the Parks Department is a first step in addressing this disparity. Like many long-term solutions, the first step is to recognize the existence of the problem. The Community Parks Initiative decentralizes the task of meeting local needs by inquiring directly of local users and neighbors of parks and playgrounds what resources they most value, and in what priority certain investments should be made. While the funding disparity of our most storied and popular urban parks will remain, this Initiative creates a mechanism for responsiveness.

- Accessibility 2.0

Inclusion issues are not limited to funding disparities. Community Board 7 has led an effort to introduce a broader approach to accessibility beyond the obligation to make open space reachable to those with mobility challenges. Through a dedicated Task Force, CB7 spearheaded a successful effort to envision a truly inclusive Bloomingdale Playground, where children of varying degrees of mobility now can not only gain entry to a common space, but can actually participate in shared activities.

- The Need for a Broader Vision

The experiences of seeking one-off funding streams for individual projects, and the effort to re-imagine how play spaces can be organized and built to include the entire population, highlights the need for proactive creativity in visioning park usage and funding. Too often park funding finds projects that continue existing programs or uses without any consideration of new opportunities or potentially unmet needs. For example, CD7 includes only one outdoor public swimming pool, located at Frederick Douglass Playground. The potential for such visioning can be found through the Summer on the Hudson initiative, which – though canceled for 2020 because of Covid – has brought exercise classes, cultural programs, movies, and innovative active and passive recreation opportunities to Riverside Park during the warmer months. Engaging in a visioning effort to capture evolving needs and the potential for our existing open space to meet them may also spawn as-yet untapped funding sources.

- Competing Needs and Users

Even before Covid caused its major impacts on our park needs, usage and funding, a separate set of issues confronting our parks and open spaces concerns competing uses that are at times at odds or even mutually exclusive. The resolution of the Covid crisis is not expected to solve such issues. For instance, in bottleneck areas in Riverside and Central Parks, the confluence of pedestrians, cyclists, skaters, runners and others can create conflicts not easily solved with the limited funding for infrastructure changes or staffing. In parkland used for public plazas such as Columbus Circle, Frederick Douglass Circle, and Lincoln Center, the use of spaces for skateboarding can compete with the more passive recreation uses for which these plazas were intended.

- The Impact of Climate Change

Re-envisioning the use of parkland and the funding to support it should include starting now to plan for the effects of climate change. Every scientific study confirms the inevitability of sea-level rises in the foreseeable future, and the entirety of CD7 is bordered to the west by the Hudson River. The vulnerability of Riverside Park to frequent storm surges and violent storms, as well as the erosion those phenomena leave behind, must be a part of our forward-looking planning. The current Master Plan for Riverside Park anticipates that its pathways along the river may be under water by mid-century.

Climate change also brings with it a much longer season for park usage, requiring a new vision for staffing and an altered maintenance schedule.

## **Budget Priorities for Parks and Open Space**

### **EXPENSE PRIORITIES:**

#### **Restore permanent and seasonal staffing for Districts #7 and #14 (Riverside Park).**

Parks full-time workforce is responsible for park maintenance and cleanliness: (Associate Park Service Workers, City Parks Workers, and Gardeners). Until cut from the FY2021 budget because of Covid, seasonal workers provided essential additional services toward maintaining the parks. Additional funds are needed to rebuild the agency's permanent, year-round workforce, as well as to restore the budget for seasonal workers. (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Budget Priority #11)

#### **Hire Additional Park Enforcement Personnel (PEP officers) for Riverside Park and District 7.**

Community District 7 is covered by the 16 city-funded PEP that report out of North Meadow in Central Park. They cover both the east and west sides of Manhattan from 59<sup>th</sup> Street to 125<sup>th</sup> Streets, and Riverside Park. They also help cover other calls that fixed post officers in Central Park cannot cover. In addition, four fixed-post officers, who are paid for under dedicated funding, patrol Riverside Park South and are available in Riverside Park only for emergency conditions. An additional eight officers and a sergeant (approximately \$60K per officer, more for a sergeant) for Manhattan would increase safety and help address graffiti and other vandalism, littering, skateboarding, homeless, alcohol, off-leash, smoking, etc. (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Budget Priority 12)

#### **Install additional solar trash compactors in CD7.**

Solar trash compactors (such as the "Big Belly" trash bins/compactors) help control the rat population. The installation of solar trash compactors has been successful in, for example, Theodore Roosevelt Park, and solar compactors in other park locations have also been very useful. Two compactors are needed for Straus Park, and approximately 13-16 compactors deployed at various playgrounds in District 7 could substantially help to reduce the rat population. (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Budget Priority 15)

#### **Dedicated enforcement staff for anti-idling law.**

There is currently no routine enforcement of the anti-idling law, and only spotty and largely unsuccessful enforcement of specific targeted violations. Drivers of commercial and individual private motor vehicles park at our curbs and run their motors continuously with impunity. The NYC idling law is intended to reduce pollution that harms our health. It also is addressed to limiting the use of non-renewable fossil fuels. The Upper West Side is particularly vulnerable to asthma and other health problems from pollution because of our high population density and the continued use of polluting fossil fuels for heating our buildings. DEP has no funds budgeted for enforcement of the anti-idling law, and similarly neither the NYPD nor Traffic Enforcement engages in routine enforcement nor responds to individual, specific complaints. 311 complaints are not followed up on, and the 311 system is not suited to addressing this problem. (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Budget Priority #16)

#### **Hire a Synthetic Turf Field Maintenance Crew.**

Establish a crew to repair and maintain the six synthetic turf fields in Community District 7. DPR's synthetic turf installations experience heavy use throughout the year, as well as the effects of severe winters. These funds would allow DPR to contract for regular service to repair and maintain these synthetic surfaces, in order to extend their useful lives and prevent injuries to the youth and adults who use them. (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Budget Priority #23)

#### **Playground Associates and Recreation Specialists.**

Eight playground associates would provide valuable programming and supervision for children, assist with park maintenance and provide a safety presence from July through Labor Day in Frederick

Douglass Playground (West 100th/Amsterdam), Happy Warrior Playground (West 98th/Amsterdam), Sol Bloom Playground (West 91st/ Columbus), Tecumseh Playground (West 77th/Amsterdam), Bennerson Playground (West 64th/Amsterdam Houses), Neufeld Playground (West 76th/Riverside Park), Dinosaur Playground (West 97th/Riverside Park) and River Run Playground (West 83<sup>rd</sup> Street/Riverside Park).

\$12,500 each for six months – includes cost of supplies and materials

In addition, two replacement Playground Associates and two replacement Recreation Specialists are needed at Gertrude Ederle Recreation Center to run various programs, including for teens and adult fitness. (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Budget Priority #24)

### **Create a Street Tree Maintenance Service.**

DPR has more than 8,400 street trees in District 7. This does not include the trees in Central and Riverside Parks. While DPR looks to adjacent building owners to maintain, including voluntary plantings, the beds of street trees, DPR itself does not have any service to maintain the tree beds. In many tree beds, the soil becomes so compacted that water and air cannot reach the tree roots. DPR should have a service that assures that all street trees will thrive. A program in MCD7 addressed, at a minimum, to maximizing the DPR partnership with private neighbors, would demonstrate the importance of tree stewardship; the diversion of rainwater away from sidewalks and sewers; and the value of disruption of disruption of rat burrows. (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Budget Priority #25)

## CAPITAL PRIORITIES

### **Build a comfort station building with a DPR Maintenance & Operation facility in Riverside Park South at 62<sup>nd</sup> Street and the Hudson River (lower level of park)**

This comfort station was always included in the designated plans for Riverside Park South. It has apparently been dropped for budgetary reasons from the plans for construction of Phase VI of the park.

This final phase of the park will include a very large multi-purpose playing field, among several other amenities. There is a very strong need for this facility for those reasons, compounded by the heavy use of the Greenway by commuting and recreational cyclists and others. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #6)

### **Renovate Sol Bloom Playground.** (West 92<sup>nd</sup> Street, Columbus-CPW; PS 84)

Funded and in process. Renovate the schoolyard, which serves P.S. 84 and the adjacent community, into a multi-purpose play area with synthetic turf that can be fully utilized by the students during the school day and neighborhood youths after school and on weekends. Council Member Helen Rosenthal has allocated \$750,000, which has been assigned to the School Construction Authority to do the work. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #8)

### **Frederick Douglass Playground. Full renovation of the playground and pool areas**

The Frederick Douglass Playground is in need of a complete renovation. Apart from a small area with swingsets, little or no investment has been made to this playground in memory. The playground is heavily used as it is adjacent to Douglass Houses, a very large NYCHA complex, and is proximate to several neighborhood schools. The work needed includes new playground facilities and amenities, renovation of the pool area, repaving the handball courts. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority \$9)

### **Build a comfort station in Phase V of Riverside Park South (West 66<sup>th</sup> Street at Riverside Boulevard)**

Build comfort station building with small concession facility in Phase V of Riverside Park South at 66th Street and Riverside Boulevard. This comfort station was always included in the designated plans for Riverside Park South. But for budgetary reasons it was not bid when Phase V was bid, and it has still never been bid. The other elements of Phase V, which were bid and constructed by DPR, are now complete. With the heavy and increasing use of all of Riverside Park, including Riverside Park South, there is a strong need for the comfort station/concession facility. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #13)

**Create or restore dock for free kayaking program in Riverside Park**

The kayak dock at 72<sup>nd</sup> Street and the Hudson in Riverside Park needs to be repaired in order to restore the free kayaking program that it serves. Non-profit volunteer groups conducted a free program from the dock was installed there in 2003 through 2015. Over 90,000 people participated. In the spring of 2016, one of the dock's pilings failed, making the launching site unusable, and the free kayaking program had to be suspended pending restoration of the dock and its underwater infrastructure. Borough President Brewer and Council Member Helen Rosenthal allocated \$195,000 and \$210,000 respectively for FY18. The final cost of the project, if the dock were reconstructed in approximately the same location, depends upon a series of factors and the involvement of various governmental agencies, and cannot be determined without additional investigation.

Additionally, CB7 has requested that, as an alternative to restoring the prior kayaking facility, DPR include a free kayaking facility in the scope of work for the 79<sup>th</sup> Street Marina restoration project. As of this writing, DPR has not responded to that request, though DPR generally supports a free kayaking facility in the 70's in Riverside Park. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #14)

**DPR New equipment for Park maintenance.**

**\$250,000 total for several vehicles**

Purchase pickup trucks with snow plow, salt spreader and Tommy liftgate, one each for Riverside Park and District 7; and Toolcat multi-purpose vehicles, including snow plow, snow brush, cleaning brush and front-end loader bucket, one each for Riverside Park and District 7; and a mini-packer for garbage collection (\$110,000). These vehicles are necessary for the park operations. They will permit far more efficient deployment of the limited number of staff personnel, reduce or eliminate waiting times for existing shared vehicles to become available and/or to be repaired, and reduce unnecessary use of fuel. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #15)

**Install water service and irrigation for planting beds in Verdi Square (West 72<sup>nd</sup>-73<sup>rd</sup> Streets, Broadway to Amsterdam Avenue).**

Installation of new water service and irrigation for two large plant beds and two small raised plant beds. Verdi Square has been spectacularly rejuvenated and replanted in the in recent years by a new advocacy group, Friends of Verdi Square, which works in public/private partnership with DPR in maintaining Verdi Square. Efficient maintenance of the plant areas is not practical without a water connection and irrigation. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital budget Priority #19)

**Reconstruction of the Cherry Walk, Riverside Park, 100<sup>th</sup> to 129<sup>th</sup> Streets, at the Hudson River.**

Full reconstruction of the existing bicycle and pedestrian path is desperately needed, including repaving the existing asphalt path and reconstructing sections of the existing rip rap edge and the landscape between the Henry Hudson Parkway and Hudson River. The Cherry Walk is part of the Hudson River Greenway. Since it was constructed nearly two decades ago, and particularly as other sections of the Greenway to the north and south of this segment have been opened, the number of cyclists using the Cherry Walk, both commuters and recreational cyclists, has exploded. The Cherry Walk is also heavily used by walkers and runners. See the Riverside Park Master Plan (2016).

Damage to the rip rap related to Superstorm Sandy is subject to a current contract paid for by FEMA, though that work is for only a few blocks of the Cherry Walk. DPR has funding for repaving the entire pathway from 99<sup>th</sup> to 125<sup>th</sup> Streets, which is anticipated to be included in the FY22 budget. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #20)

**Renovation of Anibal Aviles Playground (West 108<sup>th</sup> Street, Columbus & Amsterdam).**

Renovate the playground, including new play equipment, safety surface (the element of the playground that is in the worst condition), drinking fountain, lighting, fencing and landscaping. This playground will have access to comfort station facilities that will be incorporated into a new building being constructed immediately to the west of the site. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #22)

**Renovate Dinosaur Playground, Riverside Park at West 97<sup>th</sup> Street.**

Reconstruct the playground, including new play equipment and swings, safety surface, refurbish bathrooms in the adjacent comfort station, which would be made accessible for people with disabilities. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #23)

**Reconstruct perimeter paths and sidewalks in Riverside Park, 95<sup>th</sup> to 110<sup>th</sup> Streets**

The paths and perimeter sidewalk in these areas are badly deteriorated and have suffered severely from the past lack of routine maintenance. The project would include drainage, retaining walls and steps in this area. Most of the needed work on interior paths is between 104<sup>th</sup> and 116<sup>th</sup> Streets (though the CB7 District ends at 110<sup>th</sup> Street), with some work also needed at 95<sup>th</sup> Street and elsewhere. The sidewalk between 95<sup>th</sup> and 97<sup>th</sup> Streets has already been reconstructed. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #30)

**Rebuild the step ramp in Riverside Park at West 83<sup>rd</sup> Street.**

The step ramp leading from the Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Plaza down to the river is in need of rebuilding. The bluestone stairs are an important pedestrian route between the river level and the Promenade level of the park, and they are badly deteriorated. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #31)

**Rebuild the step ramp in Riverside Park at West 78<sup>th</sup> Street.**

The step ramp leading to the West 78<sup>th</sup> Street underpass below the northbound off ramp from the Henry Hudson Parkway is in need of reconstruction. NYC DOT is in the final design stage for a massive reconstruction project at the 79<sup>th</sup> Street Rotunda. However, that project does not include restoration or improvements to adjacent park landscapes or structures. These bluestone stairs and pathway, which provide pedestrian access from Riverside Drive through to the east side of the Rotunda, are badly deteriorated. It is highly desirable that they be restored in the same time frame as the Rotunda itself. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #32)

**Step ramps at 105<sup>th</sup> Street in Riverside Park.**

The step ramps flanking the building with Ellington's Café and leading down to the athletic fields from the Promenade need to be rebuilt. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #33)

**Renovate Happy Warrior Playground, at P.S. 163 at 97<sup>th</sup>-98<sup>th</sup> Streets.**

Repare the multi-purpose play area; rebuild and expand the Parkhouse as a district HQ for DPR M&E operations and a storage facility. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #34)

**Restore the Soldiers and Sailors' Monument, Riverside Park at West 89<sup>th</sup> Street and Riverside Drive.**

Restore the interior and exterior of the Monument, provide ADA access to the terrace and restore the plaza areas. An engineering study commissioned by OMB several years ago concluded that this 115-year old monument dedicated to the Union Army is in an advanced state of deterioration. Since that report, the upper terraces and stairs adjacent to the Monument itself have been closed off with wire fencing to protect the public from falling stonework. The entire site is literally falling apart, with loosened joints, chipped stone and various other types of damage from the passage of time and from vandalism. The estimated cost to restore only the Monument building was \$13M, but DPR and consultants recommend doing the entire project at one time. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #35)

**Matthew Sapolin Playground, West 70<sup>th</sup> Street, PS199.**

Upgrade the playground, including resurfacing the pavement around the spray shower, replacing the safety surface, and replacing the backboards. The comfort station also needs renovation. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #36)

**Restore the Transfer Bridge in Riverside Park at West 69<sup>th</sup> Street.**

The West 69<sup>th</sup> Street Transfer Bridge is Riverside Park off of West 69<sup>th</sup> Street is a unique relic of the industrial history of the Riverside Park South area as a major freight rail yard. The plans for Riverside Park South have always included restoration of the Transfer Bridge. Phase 2 of the restoration was fully funded and was in the final design phase. That final design phase continued for an unusually long time because of issues involving getting electric power to the site, as well as the federal funding source, which requires additional levels of review. The current status of Phase 2 is unclear. Phase 3 would connect the Transfer Bridge with the adjacent Esplanade, allowing members of the public to access the Transfer Bridge itself for recreational and educational uses. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #37)

**Replace Skylight in the Gertrude Ederle Recreation Center (West 60<sup>th</sup> Street, Amsterdam – West End Avenue).**

Replace skylight over the multi-purpose room, built in the early 1900s, in the old portion of the building. During heavy rains, activities in the gym and fitness room currently had to be suspended because of leaking, which were damaging the rubber floor. As of this writing, this Rec Center is closed to the public, but is being used as a remote learning center for public school children during the Covid crisis. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #38)

**Restore perimeter sidewalk - Central Park.**

The Park's perimeter sidewalks along Central Park West have buckled and present tripping hazards. Hex pavers, curbs and benches would be replaced. Columbus Circle has been reconstructed, and the CPW sidewalks in its immediate vicinity have been restored. The section of the sidewalk between 86th and 90<sup>th</sup> Streets was recently reconstructed as part of a landscape restoration project of the Central Park Conservancy. The remaining sections of the CPW sidewalk along Central Park from 77<sup>th</sup> Street to 109<sup>th</sup> Street still need funding for restoration. (FY22 CB7 Overall Capital Budget Priority #41)



## 3.8 Environmental Sustainability

### Recognition of the Problem

Our Upper West Side community and our City beyond are woefully unprepared for the accelerating environmental challenges before us, and are falling farther behind with each year. Many of the obstacles to achieving environmental sustainability are not strictly speaking budgetary issues, except perhaps insofar as budget decisions can have an impact on individual and collective behavior.

While many of the obstacles to environmental sustainability are also not unique to our Upper West Side District, local communities are at the heart of efforts to address those obstacles. The federal government's decision to "withdraw" from prior commitments enshrined in the Paris Accords has been met by corresponding pledges by the City of New York and many other cities, towns and States within our country to take up the cause on their own, albeit without a unified and cohesive national vision or the funding and strategic leadership that a national policy could summon. Marshaling localities and States to address climate change will be even more complicated by the federal government's open contempt for the scientific consensus concerning the role of human hands in creating and perpetuating the climate change crisis. The Environmental Protection Agency's own website buries any recognition for the man-made drivers of climate change, eroding both the funding for and the urgency of the call for overdue remedial actions.

Bolder action is needed at every level (from activists to government) to halt and begin to reverse the march to irreversible environmental destruction. Championing a respect for the role of science and systems engineering as a means to that end would be a welcome start, and one that can be modeled locally.

- Preparing for Climate Change

The overwhelming consensus of experts, buttressed by empirical data, establishes that the global climate is under stress and already evinces marked change. Local anecdotal evidence of annual storms and other weather conditions that were once considered once-a-century phenomena reinforce the scientific conclusions.

Policy on a local level is slow to respond. Few material changes to the New York City Zoning Resolution, and only a handful of changes to the Building Code in a handful of coastal zones, even mention let alone provide for the effects of rising sea levels from climate change. In our District, whose entire western border is composed of Riverside Park (but for one sea-level building complex now under construction), the effects of rising sea levels will be felt in the loss of active and passive recreation spaces. One need look no further than 2012 and Superstorm Sandy for the combined impact of rising sea levels and severe storm surges on residential and commercial communities. The experience of Coney Island, Staten Island and other communities in our City demonstrate that many of such impacts that are among the hardest to mitigate or recover from are visited on our poorest and most vulnerable neighbors.

- Infrastructure Challenges

Inadequacies in the infrastructure of our City make addressing the reality of climate change a herculean struggle. For example, one effect of rising sea levels and more frequent catastrophic storms is the potential that the storm sewers and drainage runoff system will be overwhelmed. Since New York City has a "common" sewer system, the dual impact of rising sea levels and violent storms is not only to back up storm drains and turn roadways and open spaces into lakes, but to cause the solid waste treatment facilities either to back up or be overwhelmed and discharge human and solid waste in the Hudson River and other bodies of water. At a minimum, reducing storm water runoff and separating it from the common sewer stream is a health as well as urban planning necessity.

- Addressing the Impact of Human Activity

Not all examples of the impact of human activity on the environment are at the macro level. The failure of our State Legislature to allow home rule in the case of erecting economic disincentives to the use of flimsy plastic

bags means that our parks and public spaces will continue to have such non-recyclable bags as detritus befouling our trees and waterways, and clogging the already-burdened storm sewers.

Human impacts on the environment also include the invisible but pernicious desposit into our common sewer system of a host of plastics and microscopic fibers, mostly man-made and with an excessively long half-life, that in turn becomes part of our water supply and is ingested by land and marine animals, including humans and our pets. Some of these microfibers are dangerous if not toxic.

The common sewer system makes weather-related storm runoff and the management of waste water more difficult when human solid waste is added to the equation. For example, the absence of a ubiquitous and easy-to-follow program for separating organic food-related matter from the storm and waste water system renders that common system more vulnerable. A system that facilitates organic material recycling and composting not only could yield benefits for urban gardeners and farmers, but would eliminate such waste from the management docket.

- **The Need To Revisit the Consequences of Urban Planning**

Complicating factors affecting efforts to address the impact of climate change on our District and City include our system which allows certain development activities to proceed as-of-right, while others must undergo discretionary review and approval – especially since the determination of whether a development project requires a discretionary approval is not driven by the scale of the project's potential impacts on the environment or community. Some of the largest scale development projects now underway in our City are being pursued as-of-right, thus evading the robust environmental review and other inquiries that are a part of our City's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure when discretionary approvals are required. Conversely, more modest projects may be stymied by the cost and intensity of scrutiny required to obtain approval. It is a given that greater height and density adds immeasurably to the value of development projects, and there is evidence to establish that the same height and density makes environmental sustainability more difficult to achieve and less likely to be realized. The time is come for a careful look at how and when the types of review and analysis currently associated with discretionary approvals should be required.

- **The Role of Energy Sources**

One of the key elements of the Paris Accords and of similar measures to rein in the runaway effects of human enterprise on long-term environmental conditions is the goal of achieving defined reductions in the release of carbon and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

In our City, where public transit already contributes to reducing our collective carbon footprint, the richest vein for mining for reducing carbon emissions is reform of our HVAC systems and related residential and commercial building management techniques.

An all-too-often overlooked solution to the release of carbon for HVAC needs is thermal exchangers in ground-source heat pump systems. By using the Earth's own internal temperature gradients with heat exchangers, technology is already providing developers and the governments to whom they are accountable with a means to reduce, possibly drastically, the energy needed to heat and cool and protect our living environments, and with it the greenhouse and other toxins released into our air and water.

- **Pursuing Solutions**

Tackling the consequences of human impact on environmental sustainability, particularly given the lack of leadership on this issue at a national level, requires reform of the Zoning Resolution and the Building Code to embrace the difficult steps required to import the scientific consensus on the issue into doable steps.

Those solutions must also include funding for these initiatives, recognizing that research and development must be made available to those whose means barely allow them to conform to current regulations let alone a new vision for individual and collective action.

## **Additional Specific Issues and Trends**

- **Transportation Emissions.**

Many Upper West Siders feel overwhelmed by traffic congestion, especially in terms of truck traffic and emissions. There is an increasing desire to reduce road traffic, including idling trucks and buses, and to create more access to energy-friendly transportation alternatives such as walking, biking, and mass transit. Many groups are interested in limiting parking both on-street and off-street to reduce the number of private cars in our District, adding protected bike lanes, and redesigning intersections to make the pedestrian experience more inviting and safer. Many have also sought more frequent transit service on busy routes.

- **Building Efficiency**

New residential construction in the District creates opportunities to implement sustainable building systems, but as noted above existing zoning and building codes are limited and difficult to enforce. Most new buildings have glass facades, which constrict natural airflow and afford little room for energy-saving insulation, and typically depend on HVAC heating and cooling even when ambient temperatures are comfortable. Few new buildings take advantage of solar or other renewable energy sources, which CB7 encourages and believes should be incentivized.

- **Building Emissions**

With strong early support from CB7, our City has eliminated the use of the highly toxic "No. 6" heating oil in most buildings (other than, shamefully, New York City school buildings). A large portion of those buildings which have eliminated the use of No. 6 oil have switched to systems that can use No. 4 oil, which is nothing more than a blend of cleaner No. 2 oil and the toxic No. 6. In effect, the new regulations have only cut No. 6 use in half. CB7 encourages the completion of the effort begun with the elimination of No. 6 oil by immediately requiring the phase-out of No. 4 oil on an accelerated timetable and rid our air of the particulate matter that still befouls our air.

### **Budget Priorities for Environmental Sustainability**

#### **EXPENSE BUDGET PRIORITIES:**

##### **Department of Environmental Protection**

##### **Dedicated enforcement staff for anti-idling law.**

There is currently no routine enforcement of the anti-idling law, and only spotty and largely unsuccessful enforcement of specific targeted violations. Drivers of commercial and individual private motor vehicles park at our curbs and run their motors continuously with impunity. The NYC idling law is intended to reduce pollution that harms our health. It also is addressed to limiting the use of non-renewable fossil fuels. The Upper West Side is particularly vulnerable to asthma and other health problems from pollution because of our high population density and the continued use of polluting fossil fuels for heating our buildings. DEP has no funds budgeted for enforcement of the anti-idling law, and similarly neither the NYPD nor Traffic Enforcement engages in routine enforcement nor responds to individual, specific complaints. 311 complaints are not followed up on, and the 311 system is not suited to addressing this problem. (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Budget Priority #16)

### 3.9 Land Use and Preservation

- Nine Historic Districts, including over 1100 Buildings
- Seventy Four Individual Designated Buildings
- Four Interior Landmarks
- Four Scenic Park Landmarks

#### Land Use

**Excessive Height Non-Contextual Buildings and Zoning Lot Mergers:** Recently, developers at two sites in the District – 200 Amsterdam Avenue (West 69<sup>th</sup> Street) and 36 West 66<sup>th</sup> Street (Central Park West – Columbus Avenue) – have proposed to construct and have begun work on extremely tall buildings (overall heights of 668 feet and 775 feet, respectively) which dwarf their neighbors and jarringly depart from the context of the streets and neighborhoods in which they are located. These proposals have been met with vigorous community opposition and appeals to the Board of Standards and Appeals and subsequent Article 78 litigation, in each case contesting the legality of the proposed construction.

The excessive height of these buildings is made possible by advances in construction design, materials and techniques, by a desire to provide excessively high ceiling heights, and large zoning lots, often assembled from many tax lots through zoning lot mergers that allow developers to use unused floor area of a portion of the lot to stack height on another portion of the lot. The excessive height of these buildings is also fueled by the use of design tactics such as excessively tall “void” spaces such as 150-foot ceilings in mechanical spaces whose sole function is to push the most desirable residential units even further into the sky.

The litigation over these two sites has resulted in two court decisions in each case invalidating construction permits. Those decisions are or are expected to be appealed.

The construction of these excessively tall buildings was unanticipated even a few years ago and raises the specter of the existence of other “soft sites” in the CB7 District not protected by appropriate zoning controls or historic district designation status. One such site is the ABC site along West 66<sup>th</sup> Street which for years housed offices and studios for ABC but which announced plans to sell the site to a real estate developer. With a lot of 2.6 acres, and high-density C4-7 zoning, and with the lot situated outside the Lincoln Square Special District, a tower could rise on the ABC lot that could be twice as tall as any currently proposed structure in the District.

There is thus an urgent need to address aspects of the disturbing trend to build taller buildings, including rules governing zoning lot mergers, the imposition of height restrictions tailored to the context of specific neighborhoods or blocks, or requiring a special permit if prescribed maximum heights are to be exceeded. In connection with this effort there is a coordinate need to undertake a new study of the District to identify potential soft sites that could take advantage of one or more of the tactics outlined above.

**BSA Reform:** During the past year several proposed amendments to the City Charter were reviewed by the Land Use Committee. In general the CB7 Land Use committee believes that BSA procedures need to be rationalized, made more efficient and made more transparent. The Committee will continue to follow up on the status the proposed amendments and offer testimony where appropriate.

**Proliferation of Multiple Construction Projects:** Building or rehabilitating structures in a crowded urban environment, of necessity, impedes traffic, is noisy and may attract rodents. These inconveniences are multiplied where more than one such project is ongoing on a single block. Special rules need to be developed to avoid such multiple projects or, at a minimum, provide additional safeguards so as to ensure minimum disruption.

**DOB Enforcement and Permitted Construction Work Hours:** Many construction projects find it advantageous to engage in construction activities after permitted hours or on Sundays, in violation of city rules pertaining to hours of work. Enhanced DOB enforcement is required to police these projects and to impose meaningful penalties in the event of violations, particularly repeat violations. Additionally, DOB should enforce restrictions contained in BSA variances, the Zoning Resolution and restrictive covenants. Copies of the documents related to permitted construction bulk, materials and other features should be readily available to the public at construction sites.

**Affordable Housing:** Community Board 7 places emphasis on the availability of affordable housing alongside luxury housing, and seeks to encourage new construction and preservation of affordable housing in the district. The Community Board should proactively communicate with HPD and City Planning to ensure that funds which are available for affordable housing are leveraged to the extent possible and as quickly as possible to bring about an increase in affordable units. Where affordable housing is planned in luxury buildings, Community Board 7 insists that there can be no discrimination in terms of amenities, entrances, or apartment sizes against tenants occupying affordable units.

**Sidewalk Bridges and Scaffolding:** Scaffolds, while a necessary evil, should be is reasonably necessary to allow for timely completion of work. Too often, scaffolds are left in place for unreasonably long periods during which no work is done. Whether this results from poor planning or a desire not to spend money on repairs, the proliferation of scaffolds and sidewalk bridges represents a blight on our sidewalks.

**Environmental Impact of Construction:** Residents have complained that construction-related refuse, including hazardous materials, is not being disposed of properly within the district. MCB7 requires additional investigation on the impact of construction and the need for additional enforcement, especially demolition and disposal of refuse from construction sites.

**Columbus Avenue Beautification:** Columbus Avenue is a major commercial thoroughfare. In the 60's and 70's its stores, restaurants and cafes brighten and enliven the street and pedestrian traffic is heavy. North of about 83d Street, the streetscape changes visibly. There are more vacant stores or storefronts with temporary occupants who pay little or no attention to their external appearance. In the old West Side Urban Renewal area (from 86th to 96th street buildings are set back and building walls are bleak and uninviting. North of 97th Street, the Avenue is marked by construction of new buildings which impart an air of sterility. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to the problems posed by Columbus Avenue, but Community Board 7 believes that an imaginative and collaborative approach might yield a more inviting streetscape.

**Inadequate Public Trash/Recycling Receptacles:** Inadequate street receptacles for trash lead either to overflowing garbage or disposal of garbage on the street. This is a quality of life issue of high importance. No matter how vibrant our neighborhood and its residents, a dirty and trash-ridden sidewalk is unattractive and depressing. It is unclear whether the problem results from too few receptacles, too infrequent collection, or citizen neglect, but the problem appears to be remediable with relatively little additional expenditure.

## Preservation

**Historic Districts and Individual Landmarks.** Community Board 7 is located between 2 historic parks, Central Park and Riverside Park, both of which are designated scenic landmarks. The avenues and side streets are filled with a variety of buildings of diverse architectural styles. In scores of blocks, rows of brownstone townhouses line the side streets, and elegant apartment buildings cap the blocks at the avenues. Many of these buildings were designed by the most outstanding architects of their times.

More than 11,000 buildings have been included as part of nine historic districts, but many significant buildings are still unprotected and threatened with demolition or inappropriate changes. While CB7's call for protection of the Con Edison Power Plant on 59th Street and West End Avenue, designed by McKim, Meade and White, was answered in part by the designation of the building as a landmark, the Landmarks Preservation Commission made its designation subject to various conditions that could easily have the effect of materially altering the landmark structure without the customary review and community input typical for individual landmarks.

The District also boasts many outstanding individual landmarks, from the iconic Dakota apartments to the Ansonia Hotel to the Marseilles apartment building among residential structures, as well as the American Museum of Natural History campus, St. Michael's, West End Collegiate and West End Presbyterian churches, and the Broadway Fashion Building, not name but a few.

**Rear Yards.** One area of concern with respect to Preservation is of the incursions into and treatment of the open space in the so-called "donuts," the rear yards of townhouses located throughout the area. Greenery and open space - part of the individual residents' property enjoyed by all who face these open areas. Businesses, schools and other not-for-profit users are developing these areas, reducing the amount of greenery and open space, and changing the character of neighborhood. Others seeking more space are building up and out without regard for their neighbors and to the light and air they are altering. A committee of preservationists, land use experts and environmental advocates with the help of public officials are working to address this issue. Some of the solutions may include tax incentives, currently offered for green roofs, and the need for DOB permits for installation of concrete. PlanNYC emphasizes the importance of sustainability and we are working toward that end.

**Maintenance of designated buildings.** An on-going challenge is the maintenance of non-profit designated buildings such as churches and synagogues, who are frequently faced with the dilemma of how to avoid draining their limited resources without resorting to redevelopment either by modifying the existing structures or abandoning them altogether to generate funds. MCB7 encourages efforts to identify the needs of these designated buildings and provide support to maintain them.

**West End Avenue Preservation.** MCB7 was an early supporter of the creation of a West End Avenue Historic District to protect the rich architectural fabric of buildings from 70<sup>th</sup> to 107<sup>th</sup> Streets west of Broadway. The effort, led by the West End Preservation Society in collaboration with many other preservation organizations, succeeded in securing designation of many of the buildings sought to be protected through a series of extensions of existing historic districts. There remain a series of buildings left unprotected by the West End Avenue initiative – mostly structures on the west side of Broadway above West 96th Street, which were withdrawn from consideration at the last minute prior to designation. Further action is needed to protect these worthy structures.

### 3.10 NYC Administration and Finance

**Tools for public access and action.** Community Board 7 maintains a strong commitment to informing residents, businesses, and organizations about community actions, municipal applications, and evolving regulations. Often times, software and hardware resources are not sufficient to keep pace with the growing availability of data relevant to the community. In particular, CB7 requires software and hardware to make use of available data and to analyze statistical trends for engagement and planning purposes.

**Communications.** Communication is the conduit of community engagement. It is a top priority of MCB7 to apprise the community about meetings and to inform the public of issues pertaining to the Upper West side. The forms MCB7 uses to reach our constituents are: [nyc.gov/mcb7.org](http://nyc.gov/mcb7.org) website, email, local media, paper flyer postings when possible, and social media including: Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

Many potential participants are not reached by these methods or are unaware of how MCB7 can impact them. As such, the goal of the Communications Committee is to develop ways that extend the Board's outreach to make it as inclusive and informative as possible. Under-engaged groups which require direct outreach include seniors, immigrants, low wage earners, homeless and those without internet or computer access.

Flyers are the primary means for micro-communities to learn about applications for: liquor licenses, outdoor cafe, landmark questions, and other similarly-themed meetings. Flyers are produced by the MCB7 office and posted according to New York City's criteria. MCB7 committee members voluntarily implement site review to ensure the flyers have been correctly posted. This is marginally effective, and fliers are either ignored or not seen due to weather, vandalism or poor posting. It will be helpful to have names of contacts that will print and post flyers for display for its constituents.

In addition, the committee should work with local media, including print community-based broadcast network, such as Manhattan Neighborhood Network (MNN), in order to provide regular updates of MCB7 meetings and events. This content should focus on items of direct consequence to the community, and be presented (especially in the case of local media) in a simple and regularly-formatted digest which can serve as a "first stop" resource for the community and local press.

Most importantly, MCB7 should update its lists of contacts for individuals, community centers, institutions, buildings, schools, libraries, and businesses. In particular, MCB7 should cultivate a list of partners—including tenant leaders, block association presidents, NYCHA representatives, and senior center administrators—who will actively publicize meetings relevant to their respective communities, and serve as a conduit for important issues.

### **Budget Priority for NYC Administration and Finance**

#### **EXPENSE PRIORITY**

##### **Restore Community Board Budget.**

Community boards have not received a baselined budget increase for non-personnel costs in more than fifteen years, and due to a PEG budget cut, lost \$12K in funding for FY2021. In addition, the additional funding provided in FY 2019 and FY 2020 through Council initiatives was eliminated in FY 2021. Meanwhile, costs and demands for services have increased dramatically. While Community Boards need and deserve an increase in baselined funding to acquire the professional and tangible resources needed to complete our work, at a minimum the Community Board Budget should be restored to its FY 2019 level. (FY22 CB7 Overall Expense Budget Priority #10)

*Community Board 7 welcomes comments and recommendations. Please visit [www.nyc.gov/mcb7](http://www.nyc.gov/mcb7) for more information. Special thanks to the standing committees and members of MCB7 for their contributions.*