



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 3
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Capital and Expense Budget Priorities

What are budget priorities?

Every October the CB votes on a list of 25 prioritized expense items and 40 prioritized capital items to recommend for allocation by city agencies in our district. Expense items are programs, salaries, supplies, small equipment. Capital budget items are physical improvements to infrastructure: (sewers, roads, buildings), land acquisition, major park improvements, and major equipment (trucks).

Every year the Community Board consults with agencies that deliver local services by community board and then submits this prioritized list before November 1 for the following fiscal year. The fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30. We will start fiscal year 2015 in July, 2014 and we are now planning for the fy2016 budget.

What is the procedure?

First, we submit agendas to the agencies of what items we would like to consider as priorities. We meet with some agencies as a group with all other Manhattan Community boards. These agencies are: Administration for Children's Services, Human Resources, Dept of Homeless Services. Aging, Fire, Sanitation, NYPD, Parks, Dept. of Transportation, and Buildings. These group meetings are held in the morning at the end of September. Committee chairs and other interested board members are encouraged to attend. At the end of October we also have individual meetings with agencies if we choose to do so. It is very important for committee chairs to attend these meetings. It is also very informative for committee members. This is the only occasion during the budget process to truly connect with the agencies, hear their responses first-hand, and get a feel for what is realistic. Agencies will indicate which programs and capital items are funded, which need funding, agency plans and constraints. The submitted priorities are to advocate funding for programs and projects that we need and are not funded adequately.

Committees will vote in October on priorities in their area, such as parks, housing. Priorities should be for services, programs, or capital projects that need funding. Programs that are funded are already in the budget. Items should always be researched first. For example, we do not want to ask for capital funding to save a firehouse in response to community concern, but find out later that firehouse cannot be used because it is too small for new fire trucks. If we say that a program is not providing enough slots or services for the community—we should have research to back this up. Except for an exceptional last minute committee item, this research is accomplished mostly through agency consultations. Each priority is accompanied by a statement explaining the need for funding. (Ex: The playground equipment in this well-used park is very old and potentially dangerous. Or, the Board receives many complaints regarding rats and the current program has not resolved this problem.)

After committees vote on their priorities, the committee chairs meet before the executive committee meeting to collate the priorities into one recommended list. Committee order for items is respected. This "straw poll" list is then brought to the executive committee for a vote and then to the full board for a vote. No new priorities are introduced at the full board because there is not opportunity to research the items.

How are the budget priorities used?

This list is very widely used by agencies and for many other uses. Some examples: council members designating "member" funding refer to this list. Lower Manhattan Development Corp. has used our prioritized list as a guideline in awarding grants.