



New York City Council Member

COREY JOHNSON



Wednesday, February 4, 2015

Community Board 4 Report

Dear Friends:

2015 is already off to a busy start! I'd like to use this opportunity to share with you some recent accomplishments and initiatives on the part of both my office and our greater community.

As always, my staff and I are here to help. You can reach our District Office at 212-564-7757. You can also email me directly anytime at district3@council.nyc.gov.

I hope your New Year has been equally wonderful thus far!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "CJ" with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Corey Johnson
Councilmember, 3rd District

Introduced Legislation: Reforming the Rent Guidelines Board



Rallying in front of City Hall

It's hard to muster a kind word about the Rent Guidelines Board (RGB). But you've got to hand it to them for being consistent: year after year they meet, and year after year they raise the rent on rent-stabilized tenants. This must not continue. To that end, at this month's Stated Meeting, I introduced legislation in the NYC Council that calls upon Mayor de Blasio to reform the process for calculating rent increases at the Rent Guidelines Board.

The RGB uses unreliable data to determine landlords' expenses. They use a measure called the Price Index of Operating Costs (PIOC). One of the only things you need to know about the PIOC is that *it overestimates landlords' expenses by as much as one third.*

Instead, the RGB should use the actual numbers on landlords' income & expenses - data it already has in the form of annual filings that many owners of income-producing property submit to the Dept. of Finance. Tenants deserve a fair shot. These reforms, if adopted, would give them a fighting chance against the real estate industry.

Introduced Legislation: Meatless Mondays

At today's Stated Meeting, I was proud to introduce a resolution with Council Member Rosenthal which urges the City

Council to endorse the Meatless Monday campaign.

By cutting meat out of our diet, even for one day a week, we're not only helping the planet, but ourselves. Studies have shown that red meat in particular has a carbon footprint similar to that of automobiles. And if New Yorkers cut out meat just one day of the week, we could potentially make a dent in rates of obesity, cancer, and diabetes.

Many institutions - including forty schools, universities such as Columbia and reputable restaurants - have already successfully cut meat out of their meals on Mondays. We hope to encourage even more New Yorkers to personally start their weeks off right while simultaneously catalyzing collective positive change.

Advocating for Youth Sports Safety

At a joint Health Committee/Education Committee hearing last month, my colleagues and I examined the issue of safety in youth sports. I am the co-sponsor of two bills introduced by Council Member Steve Levin that would provide additional safeguards for young football players. The legislation would require teams to have trained medical personnel at games and full-contact practices in order to receive a permit from the Department of Parks and Recreation, as well as establish requirements for a standardized concussion assessment.

As a former high school football player myself, I can personally speak to the risks involved in youth football. These steps would enhance the safety of our young athletes in immediate and long term ways. Additionally, the bills would serve to create a special Youth Sports Health & Safety Task Force to study injuries sustained in youth sports generally and how these injuries affect the young student-athletes' education.

Testimony on the Cross Harbor Freight Movement Project

On Friday, January 23, I submitted testimony on the Tier I Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Cross Harbor Freight Project.

In my testimony, I stressed the need for a freight-rail system that can better serve the New York region. A cross harbor tunnel that connects New York City with the continental rail system would remove an estimated 120,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions from the air annually.

In addition, when emergencies happen, first responders must contend with heavily trafficked streets. A new cross Hudson River freight line will take trucks off the streets and decreased the time first responders can reach those in need.

Congressman Jerold Nadler has been a leader on this project and his advocacy has gotten us to where we are today. At the end of this report is a copy of my testimony.

Participatory Budgeting Expo!



At a PB Neighborhood Assembly at Our Lady of Pompeii Church

This past year, my office launched Participatory Budgeting (PB), a new democratic process that gives residents an opportunity to decide how to spend a portion of our City's capital budget.

In PB, residents of the 3rd Council District decide how to spend at least \$1 million in capital funds. The money can be

used for improvements to schools, streets, parks, public housing, and other community spaces. Volunteers have begun developing these ideas into proposals, and come spring 2015, a public vote will be held to determine which projects get funded!

To learn about the projects you can vote for, please come to the Participatory Budgeting Expo on **Thursday, March 19 at 6:30 pm at the Heiskell Library located at 40 West 20th Street**. If you would like more information about PB and want to get involved, please contact Matt Green at 212-564-7757, or by email at mgreen@council.nyc.gov.

Responding to a Water Main Break



On Friday, January 23, a significant water outage affected the neighborhoods of Hell's Kitchen, Chelsea and the Times Square area. This was caused by a major water main break at 48th Street and 11th Avenue. My office was in communication with affected constituents and we worked closely with relevant government agencies to ensure a swift response. I am happy to report that as of January 26, the water main was repaired, the DEP emergency crew has completed backfilling the excavation and the restored roadway was reopened to traffic. I thank the City for

its quick response and restoration of water service to our neighborhoods.

MLK Day of Service



Painting at the Chelsea Rec Center

On Monday, January 19 I celebrated the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by volunteering my time at three different community sites in my district. At the NYC Parks Department's Chelsea Recreation Center, I joined NYC Service volunteers to paint the Center's stairs. Next, I went to Holy Apostles NYC and helped serve over 1,000 meals to the needy with volunteers from the NYC Coalition Against Hunger. I finished my day by cleaning at Xavier Mission. I would like to thank these organizations for furthering Dr. King's legacy daily; it was an honor to join you.

Free Monthly Legal Housing Clinic

My office helps constituents around my district with a wide range of issues. However, housing issues – particularly those that have to do with landlord harassment/disputes – account for an outstanding number of these constituent cases.

We have therefore begun to offer housing clinics at my district office (224 West 30th Street, Suite 1206) on the second Tuesday of every month from 5:30-7:30 pm. **The next clinic will be on Tuesday, February 10.**

At these clinics, you can receive free legal advice from housing attorneys who will be volunteering their time. You will be seen on a first come, first serve basis.

PS3 PAC Workshop: Speaking Out Against Standardized Testing



Photo with Dr. Ravitch

Last night, on January 21, I attended the PS3 Parent Action Committee's (PAC) working strategy session entitled, "Join the Movement Against a Test-Obsessed System: How Do We Put the Focus Back on Learning In Our Schools?"

I was honored to speak before Dr. Diane Ravitch, who summed up the feelings of many in the room when she said "Standardized tests distribute privilege to the privileged." I recalled having protested the state's standardized English tests with many of you last spring – as they were poorly written and not in line with Common Core standards. I stood by my assertion last night that this test-obsessed system is flawed. From stifling creativity in curriculums and discouraging our best teachers, to hindering the effective learning of our students by emphasizing hours of test prep for evaluations that are often illogically worded, we must demand better.

Following Dr. Ravitch's remarks, attendees engaged in breakout sessions. This community organizing is crucially

needed, as it's the input of educators, students and parents that should truly be shaping our education system.

Health Department Launches New PrEP & PEP Campaign

I am very grateful to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene for launching a new outreach program that will help health care providers give their patients what they need to stop the spread of HIV. The program focuses on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), which are two effective treatments that can curb infection rates.

As part of this important program, Health Department representatives will be visiting doctors and clinics citywide, to give training and support on how PrEP and PEP can be effectively used to prevent infection. According to the Health Department, 3,000 New Yorkers are diagnosed with HIV every year. Our goal is to bring that number down to zero, and this program is a critical step in that effort.

On January 15, I was proud to be part of an event hosted by the Health Department and the Bureau of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control. It brought together members of the community to discuss where we have been, where we stand now, and where we are going in terms of combatting HIV/AIDS. I am proud of my colleagues at the Health Department for continuing to fight for those who have HIV/AIDS, as well as those who have high-risk factors for contracting it in the future.

Affordable Care Act Outreach Efforts

All New Yorkers have a right to quality, affordable health care. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has extended health insurance coverage to over a million more New Yorkers. Yet many remain unenrolled because they are not aware they are eligible or because outreach has not

touched them in a culturally competent way.

This month we are spreading the word to New Yorkers on the West Side and in all five boroughs: Get enrolled, get covered! As Chair of the City Council Health Committee, I have been working with my colleagues to increase awareness about the ACA and the **February 15** deadline for applying for health insurance coverage.

On January 12, I was proud to stand with LGBT advocates at Callen-Lorde as we announced an outreach campaign directed to the LGBT community. On January 14 I joined my fellow Council Member Rosie Mendez for an informational event that was co-sponsored by Henry Street Settlement.

I am proud to be part of this effort and I thank everyone involved in this important cause.

DOT to Expand Citi Bike Program Uptown

The Department of Transportation (DOT) has announced their northern expansion of the Citi Bike program so that as of 2015, New Yorkers can dock the shared bikes north of 59th Street in Manhattan. DOT has not yet determined the northern boundary of this expansion.

On Thursday, January 29, my office took part in a Citi Bike Expansion Planning Workshop to gain community input on the roll-out. Public events are so important to this effort, and I am glad to see that DOT and Citi Bike's sponsors are going about the Upper West Side expansion in a community oriented way."

Get Involved in the NYC Debate League!

The New York City Debate League has a mission: every school should have a debate team and every student should have access to the best debate education opportunities. Housed right in my district,

this wonderful organization recently met with my office to inform us of their initiatives in the community. Open to students at the elementary, middle and high school level, the League provides practices every day, tournaments every weekend, workshops every month, and summer debate camps from the first day of summer to the last day of summer. For more information about getting involved – whether you are an educator looking to start a club at your school or a student looking to join an existing program – visit <http://www.nycudl.org/>.

Opportunities for Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises

The New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) has launched initiatives to identify affordable housing development opportunities for Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBEs).

On December 2, 2014, HPD released a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for M/WBE developers. This RFQ will be used to establish a pre-qualified list of M/WBE developers who will then be eligible to respond to a forthcoming Request for Proposals (RFP) to develop a number of City-owned sites.

The RFQ may be viewed here: www.nyc.gov/html/hpd/html/developers/MWBE-RFQ.shtml.

Get Your Child into a Great New York City Kindergarten

The Department of Education (DOE) is accepting Kindergarten enrollment applications for any child born in 2010. With just one form, families can apply to up to 12 schools. Available in 10 languages, these applications can be submitted online, over the phone, or in person. The application period began on **January 7 and will end on February 13.**

Visit the Department of Education website at www.schools.nyc.gov, or call the Advocates for Children helpline at (866) 427-6033 for more information.

Get Involved: PTAlink

PTAlink supports and connects parent organizations across NYC public schools. The website, www.PTAlink.org, is a resource for parent leaders and parent organizations, and contains information on parent leadership opportunities, PTA development and administration, fundraising, and parent-run school activities and events.

The organization is more than simply a website, however; PTAlink also plans to add a moderated forum to the site so that parents have a place to ask one another questions, or to exchange information and ideas. PTAlink also plans to develop a partner program that would match experienced PTA officers with newer ones – both providing personal gain in benefiting from one another’s knowledge as well as building a real community of public school parents from across the City.

New York City Now Offers Municipal Identification Cards

New York City is now offering municipal identification cards, which is an exciting and important development for all New Yorkers. IDNYC is a free, government-issued card that grants cardholders access to City services, and can also be used as valid identification at private businesses.

To apply for IDNYC, you must be 14 years of age or older, and you must be able to provide four points of documents. You must appear in-person to one of several designated locations throughout the city in order to apply. For more information on this program and how you can apply, please visit the web address listed here: <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/idnyc/index.page>.

Snow Sculpt-Off

Beat the winter blues by participating in the High Line's Snow Sculpt-Off! Each time it snows through February 28, you'll have the opportunity to create a snow sculpture on the High Line and enter it into our contest.

Join for a chance to win prizes from The Standard Grill and Ice Rink, Chelsea

Piers, REI, Melt Bakery, La Newyorkina, Blue Bottle Coffee, People's Pops, and L'Arte del Gelato.

<http://www.thehighline.org/activities/snow-sculpt-off>



**STATEMENT FROM COUNCIL MEMBER COREY JOHNSON REGARDING THE CROSS HARBOR
FREIGHT MOVEMENT PROJECT TIER I DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

Friday, January 23, 2015

My name is Corey Johnson and I serve as the Council Member representing District 3, which includes Manhattan's Hudson Yards. I want to thank the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey and the Federal Highway Administration for the opportunity to provide comments on the Tier I Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). I also want to extend my deep appreciation to Congressman Jerold Nadler for the leadership and advocacy that has brought us to where we are today.

I also want to thank Senator Charles Schumer and former Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton for their part in directing \$100 million in Federal funds to the Port Authority - support which led us to where we are today.

Over the last three decades, the New York metropolitan region has desperately needed a freight-rail system that can serve the Port District, which is uniquely separated from the nation's freight-rail network via the Hudson River. As a consequence, the New York region has lagged behind the rest of the country in its freight-rail capacity. This has taken a toll on our economy, our environment and our public health.

Initial plans to build a tunnel under the Hudson River were wrought with political challenges from the start. But today, we are equipped with the knowledge that building more highways will not solve our traffic congestion problems. We now know that we must look towards our rail system to make the transfer of goods efficient and sustainable. We also know that this will improve our air quality by taking trucks off the street.

Today, there is virtually no way for rail freight to cross the Hudson River. As a result, an estimated 95% of all goods destined for New York City come in by truck via the George Washington Bridge.

The public health benefits associated with building a new cross harbor tunnel are particularly important to me as Chair of New York City Council's Health Committee. A cross harbor tunnel that connects New York City with the continental rail system will remove an estimated 120,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions from the air annually. In addition, when emergencies happen, first responders must contend with heavily trafficked streets. A new cross Hudson River freight line will take trucks off the streets and increase the time first responders can reach those in need.

The draft EIS that has been released has confirmed that this project would be extremely successful - a solid public investment for our future. The Cross Harbor Rail Freight Tunnel will offer a safer, more sustainable way to move goods through New York City.

I want to extend my deep thanks, again, to Congressman Nadler for his leadership over many years to improve our region's transportation infrastructure and also to the Port Authority and Federal Highway Administration for their work on this Tier I Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Thank you for incorporating input from the public and stakeholders throughout this process.