

FY 2026 Borough Budget Consultations

Manhattan - Department of Environmental Protection

Meeting Date:

The purpose of holding the Borough Budget Consultations is to have a straightforward and frank conversation about each agency's budget needs and requests. Unlike other venues, such as City Council Hearings, these consultations are not open to the public nor are they recorded. The information provided assists Community Boards in drafting our own Statement of District Needs and Budget Priorities and it facilitates the opportunity to do so in a way that supports the Agency's goals. Community Board Members often lack expertise about funding sources and the processes within Agencies regarding funding of various programs and initiatives. However, they are very knowledgeable about what local services are needed in their neighborhoods and the effectiveness of Agency programs.

This year's Manhattan agendas have three sections:

I. General overview of current and outyear agency budgets

1. What is the overall budget increase or decrease for the Agency in the FY 25 adopted budget? How does that compare to the FY24 budget? Does the Agency anticipate a budget shortfall for FY 25, FY 26 or further out years?

The NYC DEP FY 2025 adopted operating budget was \$1.677 billion as compared to \$1.662 billion for the FY 2024 adopted budget, a small increase of \$15 million. At this point, NYC DEP is not anticipating significant shortfall for FY 2026 and the out-years.

2. What are your priorities, operational goals, and capital goals for FY25 and projected priorities, operational goals, and capital goals for FY26?

As highlighted in our NYC DEP 2018 Strategic Plan, DEP holds the critical mission of enriching the environment and protecting public health for all New Yorkers by providing high quality drinking water, managing wastewater and stormwater, and reducing air, noise, and

hazardous materials pollution. Our goal is to provide world-class and sustainable water and wastewater services now and for future generations. DEP conducts frequent facility inspections to assess the resiliency and long-term preparedness of our water and wastewater infrastructure. DEP's continuous facility inspections, includes evaluating all fourteen of our Wastewater Resource Recovery Facilities (WRRFs), the majority of pumping stations, and critical water supply locations. Over the last few years and continuing into the future, the results of the inspections are incorporated into a new business case submittal process for funding requests, enabling asset conditions to inform our capital plans.

NYC DEP has had success with increasing our capital commitment rates for the last two fiscal years and we will work to sustain that achievement in FY25 and beyond.

3. What, if any, programs are affected by the end of COVID relief funds?

Most of NYC DEP's funding is derived from the charging of water rates and are not affected by the end of Covid relief funds.

Our NYC DEP projects that are currently in design and scheduled for fiscal years 2025 and 2026 mainly address replacement of aging water mains, and reduction of chronic flooding and sewer repair.

Project ID	FY
MED619	26
MED667	25
MED673	25
MED679	26
MED682	26

MED683	26
SEN002183	25
SEN20008	26

II. Specific Program Funding.

1. What programs within the Agency will see a significant increase or decrease in funding overall in FY 25 and anticipated FY 26? To what extent, if any, is the increase or decrease in funding related to non-recurring federal funding allocations?

Given the small increase in the budget from FY2024 to FY2025, spending is expected to remain stable heading into FY2026. There were no non-recurring federal funding allocated to NYC DEP's budget.

Our NYC DEP Bureau of Water & Sewer Operations will target more sewer work, it will be included based on newly developed tools to determine priority areas, in addition to continuation of watermain replacements and upgrades, catch basins modernization, outfall replacement and/or upgrades, more incorporation of Bluebelts, and continuous coordination with other agencies on resiliency projects in lower Manhattan.

2. Which programs will be new? eliminated entirely?

In regards to our NYC DEP Bureau of Water & Sewer Operations No new programs, and nothing is eliminated.

3. What are your benchmarks for new and existing programs and what are your benchmarks/key performance indicators for measuring success?

Our NYC DEP Bureau of Water & Sewer Operations projects will be delivered on time within budget.

III. District-specific budget questions.

We request that the Agency respond in writing, but have any further discussions on these items with the Community Boards outside of the consultation.

AGENDA ITEM [1]: Staffing

Similar to other agencies, DEP is impacted by staffing shortages. Which divisions are most acutely impacted by these shortages? Are these shortages due to a reduction or freeze in hiring or other factors?

AGENCY RESPONSE:

Yes, our NYC DEP Bureau of Water & Sewer Operations has been impacted by staffing shortages caused by headcount reductions and hiring freezes. These staffing constraints have affected our ability to carry out our mission. The current staffing shortages are impacting every facet of the bureau's operations and limit our ability to maintain and protect these essential infrastructure and services effectively. We are actively working on increasing our levels to better support our mission and ensure that we can meet the high standards expected for the operations, maintenance, and protection of the City's drinking water and wastewater infrastructure.

MEETING NOTES:

NEW INFORMATION:

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

AGENDA ITEM [2]: Air quality and noise complaints
With the success of the citizen idling and citizen noise complaint programs the response time to close out complaints has increased. Did/will DEP request for more funding for inspectors to respond to this surge in complaints? Are there other obstacles to hiring more air and noise complaint inspectors?
AGENCY RESPONSE:

The Mayor's Administration and NYC DEP have worked hard to implement the Citizen Idling Complaint program.

The Citizen Complaint Program is a useful tool in reducing vehicle emissions by reducing the act of idling. Pursuant to Local Law 58 of 2018, DEP has established a formal Citizen Air Complaint Program that invites civilians to report potential idling violations. Anyone can submit evidence of an idling violation (including a video and incident description) to DEP through our website.

Our DEP Bureau of Environmental Compliance, Air & Noise inspectors review all of the submissions. If the inspectors determine that the evidence is sufficient, they issue a summons. DEP pursues the vast majority of complaints, which are those that we believe are valid and fully documented.

The program has grown exponentially, with reports increasing from 9,000 in 2019 to over 80,000 in 2023. We have already surpassed 80,000 this year. In 2023, 95% of the cases NYC DEP brought to NYC OATH resulted in a violation.

The Mayor's Administration has invested resources in this program, including increasing the number of Bureau of Environmental Compliance staff to process these complaints. At the direction of our DEP Commissioner Aggarwala, our Bureau of Environmental Compliance has also adopted automation processes that have accelerated processing times. Altogether, we have increased our processing capability by five times. However, the number of complaints submitted has gone up nearly ten times. As a result, our processing times have nearly doubled. We continue to pursue efficiencies in our processing, but the fact is that each video must be watched by one of our DEP inspectors, which places a limit on how many we can process.

Our goal is not to issue more fines. Our goal is to reduce air pollution, so we must use the civilian complaint program and idling violations as a tool to do that.

Here are our NYC DEP air & noise inspectors, staff levels.

FY 2024: 65

FY 2025: An additional 8 hires

FY 2026: N/A

MEETING NOTES:
NEW INFORMATION:
FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

AGENDA ITEM [3]: Cost of Climate Change
As reported by DEP, the increase in rainfall has impacted both sewer backups and blocked catch basins. What other divisions or infrastructure will be negatively impacted by increased rain and the results of climate change? What is the funding status of recommended programs and next steps in the DEP's 2024 Stormwater analysis report?
AGENCY RESPONSE:
<p>Climate changes affects all kinds of infrastructure starting with catch basins and ending with treatment plants, consequently affecting all residents in one way or another. We are incorporating the principles of the new stormwater plan (increased use of green infrastructure), in addition to The Climate Resiliency Design Guidelines analyses in our future designs to combat climate change.</p> <p>The Climate Resiliency Design Guidelines (“the Guidelines”) provide step-by-step instructions to go beyond building code and standards, which are informed with historic climate data, by also looking to specific, forward-looking climate data for use in the design of City facilities. These Guidelines were developed by the Mayor’s Office of Climate and Environmental Justice (MOCEJ) in collaboration with NYC DEP & City agencies.</p> <p>All proposed projects currently in design are fully funded.</p>
MEETING NOTES:
NEW INFORMATION:

FOLLOW-UP COMMITMENTS:

AGENDA ITEM [4]: Water Main Breaks

What is the funding status of DEP's proactive leak detection program? Has/will DEP request funding to further expand the program?

AGENCY RESPONSE:

The funding for NYC DEP's proactive leak detection program started in FY2022. However, DEP did not receive full funding until last year in FY2024.
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As part of this year's FY2025 Executive Budget, a request was submitted to NYC OMB in January 2024 for the expansion of the leak detection program. However, DEP did not receive approval for this request.

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