



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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Chair

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District Manager

April 7, 2011

Hon. Michael Bloomberg
Mayor
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: Statement on the Preliminary Budget, Fiscal Year 2012

Dear Mayor Bloomberg:

Thank you for the opportunity to review your Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2012. Manhattan Community Board Four examined the budget carefully and while we find areas of agreement, we view others with concern.

The confines of the board is defined by its homegrown, unique characteristics, both physical and social; its symbiotic relationships with surrounding neighborhoods; and our communities' reaction to the unique characteristics, both physical and social, of those surrounding neighborhoods.

In the current setting of recession, Manhattan Community Board No. 4's priorities are (1) preventing long-term residents and businesses from displacement, (2) maintaining neighborhood character, stability and quality of life, and (3) attracting development that enhances diversity and positive neighborhood relations among disparate groups. Concrete efforts to realize these priorities include advocacy for increased supply and access to affordable housing, affordable rents for small businesses, support of local cultural organizations, improvement of the area's physical infrastructure, and adequate delivery of social and public services. These are the guidelines the board uses when making its recommendations.

Our major concern at this time is that the laws and regulations be stringently enforced by all agencies, particularly those related to non-eviction law, non-harassment laws, building code, noise code, traffic enforcement, and pedestrian safety. In the city efforts to further develop from the recent recession, we believe keeping our neighborhood well maintained is the first step to recovery and to maintaining the quality of life.

**REACTIONS TO AGENCY RESPONSES RE OCTOBER 2010 CAPITAL AD
EXPENSE FY12 BUDGET REQUESTS:**

We appreciate the time and care that the agencies and the Office of Management and Budget take in looking at our requests and responding. We have reviewed these responses and were pleased overall with responses. We do, however, have a few comments.

1) We are disappointed that the agency response back to our budget requests failed to address the inadequate funding to the Community Consultant Program and the fact that the Neighborhood Preservation Consultant Program, although not in the confines of CD4, is also poorly funded. Last year, the Community Consultant Program (which is a council initiative) was cut approximately 60%. We request that this not happen again and that full funding be restored.

2) Our capital budget request section lists priority 05 (3304201105C) as a request for the Department of Parks and Recreation to provide funds for parks, specifically 1) for the DEP property on Tenth Avenue between 48th and 49th Streets. The agency response is that "Parks is awaiting a decision by DEP as to whether the site will be made available to this agency for use as parkland." CB4 has already been informed by DEP and the office of NYC Council Speaker Christine Quinn that the decision has been made for parkland at the site. We request that this response be corrected in the Executive Proposed FY12 Budget.

3) In addition, continuing support priority 304201002C, to continue to fund the Ninth Avenue Plaza, received a response of "not recommended for funding". This is very confusing because the project is already included in the capital plan approved in calendar year 2010 and should remain so. The only portion which is not in the plan is the inclusion of 15th Street and we ask for a clarification.

FURTHER COMMENTS FOLLOW BY AGENCY:

Department of Youth and Community Development

In neighborhoods such as ours, which include many low-income working families, quality, publicly-funded day care - including school-age child care - is a primary concern. The Board urges the City to take steps to restore the core youth services infrastructure for this district. For example, in the agency response we are concerned that there was no restoration of funds for affordable after-school care for low-income working families.

Plus, there are significant risks to this population, going forward, since there is no funding for City Council Discretionary Funds (which funds over 1000 community based youth organizations), Homeless Youth Shelter Prevention, Cultural After-School Adventure, After-Three Program by TASC, or Beacon Program Expansion.

With regard to other youth needs, we urge that housing for homeless and run-away youth be maintained and expanded, and that alternative to violence and creative justice programs, as well as job training and placement programs be maintained and expanded. CB4 is home or adjacent to two of the primary magnet areas – Port Authority and Times Square area—for homeless and runaway youths in the city.

The Department for the Aging

CD4 is disappointed in the proposed budget cuts for funding for senior programs. We note with continued alarm that core funding for senior programs have been disastrously neglected for many years, and this year's proposal takes no steps towards addressing those years of neglect. A five year summary shows a significant decrease in proposed funding in FY 2012, an almost 35% decrease from FY 2008 spending levels.

In addition, we are seriously concerned that a number of senior programs that were restored or enhanced in prior year budgets are not included in the FY 2012 proposal: Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCS), Meals on Wheels, weekend meals, Rent for Senior Centers, City Council Discretionary funding and Borough President Department for the Aging funding.

More importantly, Title XX funding for senior centers is slated to be eliminated completely, resulting in the closure of over 100 senior centers citywide. The closure of these centers would have a detrimental effect on seniors who depend on the social services offered at these centers. Senior centers serve as a safe environment for socialization, meal programs and activities, which is critical to the well-being of the elderly.

There is an urgent need to stabilize and enhance funding for service models designed to address the needs and desires of seniors to age-in with dignity and security in their own homes. We would also urge that funding to address the mental health needs of seniors be baselined into the city budget. In general, consistent with our desire to maintain the diversity of our district and ensure that it is "senior friendly", we believe a comprehensive range of services, including community centers, in-home supports, transportation, supportive housing, and preventive health and social services, are essential to assuring that they can live out their lives with dignity within their home communities.

Administration for Children's Services

We are very concerned that more money was not given to the caseload reduction initiative to child advocacy centers. We are also concerned about the continued vulnerability of day care slots and the elimination of school-age child care in our district. In addition, with regard to child welfare, we believe there is a need for much improved coordination with local service providers regarding the needs of children and families who are or may be at risk. Furthermore, our district continues to be concerned about the welfare of older youths, and those youths who go without services as they age out of the foster care, or LGBT teens who neither live at home nor are in foster care.

Department of Homeless Services

Homelessness has long been and continues to be a major factor in our Board area. While we have productively welcomed numerous and varied homelessness-related services to our district, these facilities must be *properly sized and adequately funded* to fit seamlessly into our residential community. We are further concerned that there be adequate funding for those service components directed at preventing homelessness. We urge full funding of the adult rental assistance program; the anti-eviction and SRO legal services programs, which provide free legal services to low- and moderate-income people faced with eviction from their homes, as well as services for low-income Single Room Occupancy housing tenants; and aftercare services, which prevent families placed in permanent housing from returning to shelters.

We are also deeply concerned about the inadequacy of family shelter slots, especially for victims of domestic violence, as well as the lack of adequate resources for homeless youth. It is especially troubling that the needs of women, children, and youth at risk are still far from being met.

Department of Housing Preservation & Development

We agree with Mayor Bloomberg that “affordable housing is fundamental to our long-term economic prosperity” and continue to applaud the new [Ten Year New Housing Marketplace Plan](#) and especially [the preservation strategy for government-assisted affordable housing](#).

The overall goals and specific targets we articulated in the last four years continue in effect: this Board has an overall goal that 30% of new housing units should be permanently affordable. Since both the 421(a) and Inclusionary Housing Bonus programs are targeted only to low income citizens, the Board urges that the City's other programs include flexibility that would allow the overall achievement of our stated goals. This logic would apply to New HOP, the Brownfield Program, and the development of government-owned sites. These additional units should be mixed income housing that is available to people with the range of incomes detailed below:

- 20% of the units should be available to people with incomes up to a maximum of 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI);
- 50% of the units should be available to people with incomes up to a maximum of 125% of AMI; and
- 30% of the units should be available to people with incomes up to a maximum of 165% of AMI.

The current 80-20 formula used in most new housing construction ignores the needs of middle-income families who are essential to healthy, stable neighborhoods, but who are

forced to leave their neighborhoods in search of affordable housing. Furthermore, the program's time limited affordability fails to provide what we desperately need – housing that is permanently affordable.

In addition to our concerns about new affordable housing, we also believe that the City must commit additional funds to the preservation of existing units in order to prevent loss of affordable housing through expiring Section 8 contracts, expiring-use programs, displacement from harassment, and an increasing number of de-regulated units. In a community such as ours that relies heavily on rent-regulated apartments to provide affordable housing, vacancy decontrol, de-regulation and expiring affordability create the potential for a crisis.

We continue to witness tenant harassment, and expect it to increase as the housing market rebounds. We must emphasize the importance of increasing HPD's code enforcement budget, and therefore its ability to inspect and enforce its regulations in the board and everywhere in the city where tenant harassment takes place. We also strongly urge that efforts be made to better coordinate enforcement of regulations between HPD and the Department of Buildings in the interests of efficiency. Eviction prevention services are also needed.

The city should step up its collection of fines levied by HPD for code violations. We suggest that the funds from some of these fines be earmarked for code enforcement or rehabilitation of affordable housing and that more funds be dedicated for low-cost financing to building rehabilitation.

New York City Housing Authority

Adequate capital and expense funding is needed to assure that the quality of life for tenants living in New York City Housing Authority developments is maintained and improved. More personnel, funds and police intervention must be made available to address persistent security, drug dealing, gangs, graffiti, garbage storage and collection, and cleanliness problems. The agency response was for us to look at the RFP procedure. However, the RFP process is driven by money and inadequate funding seriously compromises the ability to contract out when building and/or maintaining developments.

Department of Buildings

Of equal importance to HPD is the Department of Building's ability to provide a level of code enforcement necessary to protect existing low-income housing stock. More inspectors are needed to ensure compliance with zoning bulk and use requirements in order to preserve community character at a time when self-certification is being more widely depended on, and we note with regret that the preliminary budget provides for no increase in DOB staff. Funds are also needed to train plan inspectors including training on the zoning regulations applicable to special districts.

Funds are also needed for additional inspectors to monitor compliance with special district regulations and to stop illegal use of rent regulated apartments for transient use. The need for additional inspectors will increase this year, as the new NYS law prohibiting rentals of less than 30 days that will go into effect on May 1, 2011. Private apartments and SROs continue to be used as “bed and breakfast” rooms, which both deprives the community of affordable apartments that would otherwise be rented on a long term basis, and secondly, the nature of such short term use compromises the security and habitability for those living in the building.

We ask that the needs of CD4 – which consists almost entirely of special districts – be addressed when allocations of these funds are determined, after adoption of the budget.

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene needs to increase funding for education, outreach, prevention and treatment programs to address this problem. CB4 is home to a significant population who suffers from mental illness, particularly among our homeless population in and around Port Authority Bus Terminal and Times Square. As noted in the comments regarding the Department for the Aging, there is a need to baseline funding to meet the growing mental health needs of our older adult population.

New York Public Library

Libraries are places for young children to learn the joy of reading, for students to receive assistance with homework, for immigrants to learn English, for adults to learn parenting skills, and for entrepreneurs to find information about starting small businesses. Therefore, we feel it is essential that funding for libraries is not decreased.

Cultural Affairs

CB4 is very concerned that proposed funding cutbacks for the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs (“DCA”) will dramatically reduce program support that this vital City organization provided to hundreds of performing and visual arts organizations throughout the City in 2010/2011. While CB4 acknowledges the severe budget considerations facing the City, and considering the overall breadth of other funding cut-backs already documented in State (NYSCA), corporate and individual sources, CB4 has a significant interest in advocating for equitable and consistent public funding of small to mid-sized non-profit performing arts companies, visual art businesses and other cultural organizations which reside within our community and contribute greatly to Manhattan Community District 4's character and commerce.

From The Baryshnikov Arts Center, to the Orchestra of St. Luke's to the Theater Building on West 36th Street, MCD4 is home to the largest concentration of small to mid-sized non-profit performance art spaces in New York City^[1]. However, in 2008, New York Innovative Theatre Foundation (now "Innovative Theatre Foundation") released a widely

publicized study (featured in the New York Times) that evaluated trends regarding the loss of performance venues in the City of New York. The study found that in the confines of MCD4, twenty-six percent (26%) of all small to mid-sized performance space inventory has been lost over the past five years.^[2] That trend has accelerated in the past two plus years.

In particular, the theater/dance/performing art companies that make a home in MCD4 produce thousands of performances a year and provide affordable and professional rehearsal and production space for thousands of artists and hundreds of other non-profit theater and performing art companies (from all over New York City) that do not have the ability to sustain a creative home. As a result, these companies create an undeniable and substantial positive economic impact for our neighborhood businesses and the community at large.

The gains made by the introduction of artists and new audiences in underserved areas also create incalculable social and tax revenue benefits for the City of New York. For example, over the past ten years, Manhattan's Garment Center ("The Fashion Center") - a locus of new theater and visual arts and gallery activity in New York City - now teams at night and on weekends with new audiences and attendees, many of whom had never ventured to this underutilized neighborhood before.

An increase in the overall budget of the Department of Cultural Affairs with a subsidy program that could ensure permanent locations and/or support for existing and displaced nonprofit arts entities is an ongoing need for this community. MCB4's Theater Task Force led a successful all-Manhattan Community Board effort in 2010 by proposing an innovative tax abatement proposal to support those small to mid-sized non-profit performing arts organizations, throughout New York City, that offer professional and reasonably priced performance space to the hundreds of performing arts organizations that do not have access to permanent performance space of their own. All 12 Manhattan Community Boards voted overwhelmingly in support of this resolution. In addition, MCB4's Theater Task Force has successfully help formed a coalition of the major performing arts advocacy organizations in the City, including A.R.T./New York, Innovative Theater Foundation, Institute for Culture in the Service of Community Sustainability and The League of Independent Theater, in support of this property tax relief initiative.

Manhattan Community Board 4 urges the City to work with all the NYC Community Boards, State agencies and the public in supporting future legislative action that will strengthen vital common cultural goals that proposals such as this tax relief legislation represent.

Department of Education

The Department of Education is the largest youth service agency in New York City, providing free primary and secondary school education to more than one million students. It also offers an array of necessary support services including meals, safety,

recreation, guidance, health and transportation. For children from low-income or troubled families these services are not frills, they are essential to child development.

For the past few years, the City has needed to allocate more of its budget towards education due to increased funding cuts at the State level. City funding will be \$13.6 billion in FY 2012, as opposed to \$5.9 billion in FY 2002. While we applaud the City's continued commitment to education in these difficult times, the school system needs more money to address problems of overcrowded classrooms, school safety, special education and at-risk students. In order to make up the ever-growing gap between the State and City's education funding and DOE's growing budget, more than 6,000 teaching positions could be eliminated, 4,666 of these positions coming via layoffs. Class sizes are continuing to grow and these positions are needed to ensure that every child receives a personalized education.

In addition, there is currently inadequate funding for:

- Making salaries competitive with surrounding communities to attract and retain the best;
- Repair, renovation, maintenance, and new construction of school buildings, including upgrading electrical systems for computer use;
- Art music and physical education courses from elementary through high school;
- Additional security within schools;
- Books, materials, and classroom supplies;
- Lowering class sizes in grades K-12;
- Implementing and carrying-out quality HIV/AIDs mandated education.

The City budget must also contain substantially more money for school infrastructure. In particular, we are concerned about the delays in funding school renovation and construction, especially given the expected growth in our community's school-age population due to the recent rezonings of West Chelsea and the Hudson Yards.

Police Department

We commend the continuing reduction of crime in the City through the truly exemplary efforts of the NYPD. We are concerned, however, with the reduced number of officers at our precincts, all of which remain below full strength despite increased demand for safety and enforcement in Community District 4.

The number of nightclubs and bars in our District places extra demands on all four of our precincts, Midtown North, Midtown South, Thirteenth and the Tenth. Counter-terrorism efforts have increased the workload for officers at all our precincts. These combined with the exponential acceleration of new building construction in and around Hudson Yards calls for the creation of a new precinct and a redistribution of territory.

CD4 neighborhoods have a pressing need for increased enforcement of many laws and regulations related to the safety of pedestrians. We support a continuing emphasis on

traffic enforcement efforts, and urge that more existing traffic enforcement officers be reassigned specifically to enforce the laws and issue gridlock summonses, truck violations, idling, noise, and yield to pedestrian summonses, and address conditions in residential areas where many side streets appear to have become arteries of the Interstate Highway System. Gridlock laws are not respected, impeding the flow of EMS vehicles and obstructing pedestrian crossings. Trucks and charter buses are increasingly avoiding traffic by racing through narrow residential streets, often speeding and failing to yield the right of way to pedestrians. As noted in last year's Truck Study, increased enforcement is needed for trucks illegally using residential, instead of designated through streets.

Side streets signed as no parking or no standing zones have become free parking lots for black cars and limos, trucks and charter buses, all of which often idle beyond permitted time. Extra traffic enforcement personnel are needed to address these conditions. More enforcement is especially needed for the midtown West 42nd Street corridor and the increasingly dangerous Ninth Avenue stretch from 49th to 37th Street. In Chelsea, more no-honking enforcement is needed for the community between 15th and 18th Streets from Thursday to Sunday throughout the night caused by the concentration of nightlife in the Gansevoort area. CB4 favors the addition of five traffic officers to the NYPD for enforcement and the addition of as many traffic agents. We also suggest a retraining of all traffic officers and agents to focus more on pedestrian safety.

Department of Transportation

Citywide

While cuts are made in fundamental city services like sanitation, homeless and head start, it appears as if the vehicular budget is spared from cuts or legitimate fees and fines increased. Here are some suggestions to better match expenses, investments and revenues in that sub-ledger.

The budget list tax revenues of \$ 76 million annually for motor vehicles; and the capital dedicated to bridges and highway amounted to \$ 1.7 billion in 2010 and continues at an average of \$ 1.250 billion each in 2011 and 2012. In addition the Department of Transportation will spend \$ 670 million annually and a portion of NYPD's \$ 4.4 billion budget will be dedicated to traffic enforcement.

Capital: FY 2011-2014 Capital commitment plan (\$ in Millions)

Mass Transit: While mass transit commitments are substantially increased over the preceding period, it continues to be massively underfunded compared to highways and bridges which are three times higher in 2011 and six times higher in 2012. There is no question that Mass transit should get a larger proportion of funding when one considers that over 80% of new Yorkers commute by mass transit to work.

Capital investments for the Police Department are needed: While New York State is reducing its funding for the City, it should allow the city to substitute technology, for example to improve enforcement and safety at lower cost. As part of the budget, the city

should negotiate for approval of 500 cameras for red lights and speeding enforcement; this will save lives and increase revenues.

7,500 miles of Street Reconstruction: This will be a good investment only if the 7,500 miles of highway and bridge reconstructed result in Complete Streets, available to all users, including sidewalks, bike lanes, bus lanes, automated speed and red light enforcement, automated parking enforcement and will be ADA compliant with accessible audible signals at intersections. For example, Manhattan Community Board (CB4) requests that the construction of a green street/ plaza at 36th Street between Dyer and Ninth Avenues be included in the capital budget. The administration had committed to Speaker Quinn as part of the Hudson Yards rezoning follow up actions (WRY negotiations) that the project would be completed in 2010.

ADA compliance: CB4 is pleased that a significant budget is allocated citywide to installing pedestrian ramps across the city. This should allow the City to fulfill its commitment to Speaker Quinn to install ADA compliant ramps at all intersections of Dyer Avenue with 34th, 35th, 36th, 40th, 41st and 42nd Streets and reduce the radius of 35th Street turn at Dyer Avenue and Ramp C at 9th Avenue (Hudson Yards rezoning follow up actions, WRY negotiations).

Safer Routes to School and Safer Routes for Seniors: We applaud the fact that significant funds are reserved for safer routes to schools and safe routes to seniors. We request that specific funds be reserved for design modifications at 42nd Street at 8th and 9th Avenues, which are the two most dangerous intersections in New York and qualify for safe route to schools funds.

Revenues:

Parking Rates: While CB4 applauds the increase in parking meter rate, the target rate of \$ 1 per hour seems- depending on locations - not commensurate with the value of the service provided. The rate should not be unified across the city as a parking space on the Upper East Side has a different value and customer base as one in Brooklyn, East Harlem or the Bronx. As implemented successfully in other cities, the rate should be market driven, specific to each neighborhood and aligned with the current real estate value of the space provided. In the various business centers, a demand driven component could be added to the price to reduce cruising. An additional \$ 26 million¹ in annual revenues could be generated.

Parking garages taxes: The exemption for New York residents could be removed and the taxes increased proportionally to the rate increase in curbside parking.

Parking fees for Tour and Charter Buses: today these commercial vehicles park at curbside for free. Assuming \$1 per passenger, this could generate up to \$ 1.3 million in parking fees².

¹ Assuming a \$ 1,50 per hour average resulting parking fee

² Based on MMCC's Tour and Charter Bus Parking Initiative, dated January 2011.

Placards: \$ 360 million³ in annual revenues could be generated by cancelling the 60,000 parking placards currently used by city employees to park illegally, and by collecting parking fees for these spaces. When Head Start, a crucial program for working mothers, is being cut for lack of funds it is the right time to ask city and official employees to sacrifice and pay for their parking, or for their agency to reduce their budget to compensate for the loss of revenue to the city and the public.

Curbside Loading fees for Long distance Buses and Shuttle Vans: drivers idle their engines and companies abuse large swath of sidewalk for hours at a time without paying for the real estate. On Ninth Avenue, at all hours of day and night, there is a 200 ft long, two or three people deep-line, which blocks the entrance to businesses. They could be charged \$ 1 per traveler, per stop, a charge that can be easily absorbed by their customers. In CB4 only, we have identified up to 450 arrivals and departures per day. This represents \$ 8.2 million in potential revenues per year⁴.

Increased fines and enforcement of violations that have safety or health impact: Idling, gridlock and honking, and in particular moving traffic violations like red light, speeding, which can be automated with the installation of cameras. We wonder how the increase in fines over the years compares with the CPI? At a minimum it should match it and potentially be higher considering the high societal cost of these infractions.

Increased franchise fees for Sidewalk cafes – The fees have not been adjusted since 2007 and are low enough that some operators use sidewalk café as advertisement, obstructing the sidewalk with furniture well past the season, whether it snows or rains. The fees should be consistent with market rate, i.e. either the commercial rent paid by the operator and should be adjusted annually to reflect the increase in taxable property values which have increased between 30 to 50% in certain neighborhoods.

Department of Parks and Recreation

A major thrust for Community Board 4 in FY 2012 will be to continue to secure additional funding for upgrades in DeWitt Clinton Park. The DeWitt Clinton Park Conservancy has been working with elected and park officials to identify park needs and has helped to secure funding for ball field renovation and other improvements. However, additional funding will be needed to complete further upgrades, including repairs to the historic staircases at the west end and other upgrades.

Chelsea Recreation Center continues to be the most utilized public recreation center in New York City. Given its high level of use, systematic maintenance of this center is a crucial issue in avoiding costly repairs and in keeping future costs low. In particular the exercise equipment is showing age and needs to be upgraded.

³ @ \$ 3 per hour, 8 hours a day, 5 days a week, 50 weeks a year.

⁴ @\$ 1 per person, 50 person a bus , 450 arrival and departures, 365 days a year

Community Board 4 was pleased to see the opening of the High Line Park, but hopes that the northern extension that loops around the rail yards can be added soon, and that the possibility of a connection to Hudson River Park over Route 9 can be seriously explored.

Finally Community Board 4 is pleased that the greening of the area between Ninth and Tenth in Hell's Kitchen South (Dyer Avenue & vicinity) is now being seriously discussed, with coordination between DPR, PANYNJ & DOT and Hudson Yards Greening Task Force, and urges all involved to precede with this much needed greening plan.

Hudson River Park

The City, in concert with the State, needs to fund the following portions of Hudson River Park: the removal of the heliport at West 36th Street, completion of the esplanade and park from about 28th street north to Pier 76, completion of the long planned amenities in the eastern portion of Chelsea Waterside, and completion of the new esplanade in front of Pier 81 and 83 (Circle Line / World Yacht), plus Piers 54 and 97 (now that Pier 97 is planned to be available for park development in 2010 as the DOS facility is now complete.)

In addition, as we have noted many times, the Hudson River Park Act calls for the City to use its best efforts to find a new location for the existing tow pound so that Pier 76 can be developed as 50% parkland and 50% compatible commercial use. We urge the City to consider alternatives as soon as possible so that Pier 76 can take its rightful place as part of Hudson River Park.

Finally, now that a developer has been identified for Pier 92/94, now is the time to explore funding for a pedestrian bridge between those piers and DeWitt Clinton Park to the east.

Landmarks Preservation Commission

The Preliminary Budget request for the Landmarks Preservation Commission includes funding at a level comparable to last year's request but does not include the additional funds added by the Council. These funds have enabled the Research Staff and the Commission to begin sorting through and clearing up the backlog, accumulated over many years, of requests for designation of buildings and districts that deserve preservation. This funding level should become the baseline in the future in order to provide a balance between the current extraordinary pressures for development and the need for preservation of valuable historic resources in many areas of the city, among them West Chelsea and Clinton.

Department of Environmental Protection

We urge the City to include in the budget funds for studies to determine the effect of air pollution on the community around the Lincoln Tunnel traffic corridor. According to the

Environmental Protection Agency, New York City and its suburbs are in violation of new air quality health standards. The EPA identifies the problem as dangerous microscopic soot from diesel engines in trucks and buses.

Because of the locations of the Chelsea and Clinton/Hell's Kitchen neighborhoods close to the Lincoln Tunnel and to the Port Authority Bus Terminal, this community likely suffers particular risk from unhealthy air. According to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, this community suffers the second highest incidents of chronic lung disease of any community in Manhattan south of Harlem.

Public Hearing

The board held a public meeting during its April 6, 2011 Full Board meeting. In addition, the board office contacted numerous civic groups and block associations and posted notice of the public hearing. The input provided has been incorporated in the above response.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

John Weis
Chair
Manhattan Community Board Four

cc: Mark Page, Director of OMB
Christine Quinn, NYC Council Speaker
Gale Brewer, Councilmember
Scott Stringer, Manhattan Borough President