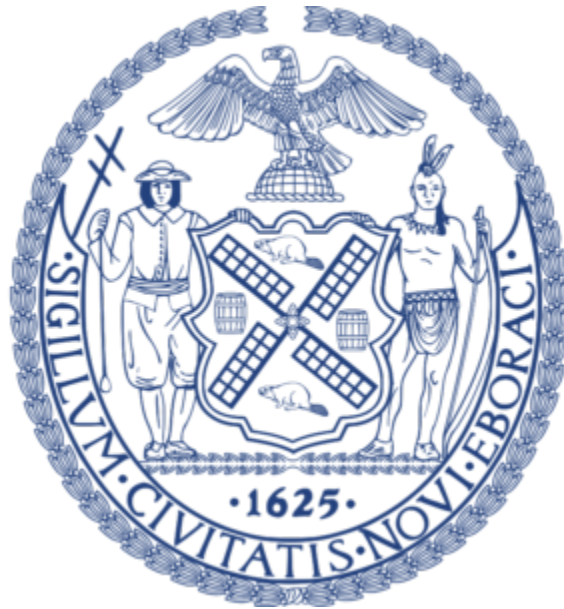


MANHATTAN BOROUGH BOARD BUDGET PRIORITIES REPORT
FISCAL YEAR 2027

March 19, 2026



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Manhattan Borough Board Budget Priorities Report; Fiscal Year 2027

Section 241 of the New York City Charter requires each Borough Board to submit a comprehensive statement on the budget priorities of the borough to the Mayor, City Council and the Director of Management and Budget. In accordance with this section, the Manhattan Borough Board submits the following statement, voted on and adopted by the Manhattan Borough Board on March 19, 2026.

Overview

Manhattan enters FY2027 at a moment of compounding fiscal pressure. The City carries a budget gap estimated to be \$10 billion in FY27¹ and a budget shortfall of \$2.2b for FY26², the product of years of underbudgeted essential services that deferred the true cost of government rather than resolving it. At the same time, the federal government has enacted the largest cuts to the social safety net in a generation, reducing federal spending on Medicaid by approximately \$880 billion³, and SNAP by approximately \$186 billion⁴, over the next ten years from FY25 to FY34. New SNAP work requirements took effect March 1, 2026, immediately affecting an estimated 123,000 New Yorkers⁵. The Essential Plan, which provides health coverage to 1.7 million New Yorkers,⁶ is being restructured under federal pressure, with 470,000 New Yorkers at risk of losing coverage by July 2026⁷. A proposed HUD rule would terminate housing assistance for mixed-immigration-status families, threatening to displace an estimated 80,000 people nationally, with New York among the most affected states⁸.

These fiscal impacts are arriving now, in all the neighborhoods this Board represents, in housing courts, shelter intake offices, school classrooms, NYCHA developments, and senior centers. Communities that have already endured decades of disinvestment are being asked to absorb more.

Before drawing down the rainy day fund or cutting services, the City should pursue every available administrative efficiency and identify savings at a higher level than

¹ <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/fy-2027-budget-preview/>

² <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/newsroom/comptroller-levine-projects-2-2-billion-budget-shortfall-in-fiscal-year-2026-and-10-4-billion-in-fiscal-year-2027/>

³ <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R48586>

⁴ https://thehill.com/homenews/nexstar_media_wire/5606295-snap-is-back-but-these-cuts-and-changes-are-taking-effect-immediately/

⁵ <https://www.thecity.nyc/2026/02/27/snap-work-requirements-trump/>

⁶ https://www.health.ny.gov/press/releases/2025/2025-09-10_federal_funding_cuts.htm

⁷ Fiscal Policy Institute, *Regional Impacts of the July 2026 Essential Plan Cliff*, February 12, 2026

⁸ <https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/12-12-25hous.pdf>

those currently reflected in the preliminary budget. Only after exhausting those options should reserve funds or service cuts be considered.

This response to the Mayor's FY2027 Preliminary Budget reflects what Manhattan's twelve community boards heard from residents during this budget season. Across every district, the same themes recur: rents that exceed what working families can pay, public services that are stretched past capacity, and institutions, libraries, parks, senior centers, community boards themselves, that operate under inadequate resources year after year.

Our city has weathered difficult fiscal periods in the past by choosing to protect the most vulnerable among us rather than retreat from our obligations to our fellow New Yorkers. The priorities that follow reflect that conviction, and this Board looks forward to working with the Mayor and City Council to see them reflected in the Enacted Budget.

The ordering of sections in this response does not reflect a ranking of priorities. All areas addressed herein are of significant concern to Manhattan's Borough Board and the residents they serve.

Housing Affordability and Tenant Protections

Affordable housing is the issue Manhattan's community boards cited most consistently and most urgently. The borough faces a severe and worsening shortage. The median monthly rent in Manhattan just hit a new high of at least \$5,000.⁹ More than 60% of Manhattan residents are renters.¹⁰ In community districts across the borough, between 40% and 50% of renters are cost-burdened,¹¹ paying more than 30% of household income on housing, and a quarter or more are severely cost-burdened, spending over half their income on rent. Even homeowners are not insulated; in many Manhattan districts, nearly half exceed the 30% cost-burden threshold.¹²

Every parcel of city-owned land represents an opportunity to produce deeply affordable housing that the private market will not generate. The City must commit to

⁹ <https://www.corcoran.com/api/ecorcoran/files/february-2026-manhattan-rental-market-re/1668b6c9-8be7-4ba5-b94c-7ca73b2b7e9a/view>

¹⁰ <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/spotlight-new-york-citys-rental-housing-market/>

¹¹ <https://www.osc.ny.gov/files/reports/osdc/pdf/report-17-2024.pdf>

¹² <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/documents/Spotlight-New-York-Citys-Homeowner-Housing-Market.pdf>

maximizing affordability on every public site, with enforceable income targeting rather than simply declared intent.

Affordable housing production has been inequitably distributed across the borough. Gentrifying neighborhoods and communities of color, including but not limited to Harlem and Upper Manhattan, have absorbed disproportionate displacement pressure and the burdens of high-density development, while other Manhattan neighborhoods have underproduced or lost affordable housing stock relative to their capacity. The capital budget and the planning process must address that imbalance directly.

The City does not currently track the loss of affordable and stabilized housing stock in a systematic, publicly accessible way. This gap makes it very difficult to evaluate the trends of affordability over time. The City should establish and maintain a public tracking mechanism for the loss of rent-stabilized and other affordable units, with regular reporting to the public.

The Right to Counsel (RTC) program, the first in the nation when enacted in 2017, is at risk. Citywide tenant representation in housing court has dropped from a peak of 71% to 42%.¹³ Contract reimbursement rates are insufficient to recruit and retain attorneys, and caseloads are unsustainable. The City must move RTC reimbursement toward full cost coverage.

As federal civil rights enforcement retreats across multiple domains, the Commission on Human Rights is increasingly the only recourse available to workers and tenants seeking redress for discrimination. It must be funded at the level the work demands.

HPD and DCP staffing shortfalls also delay housing production. Capital commitments are not meaningful unless they can move through approval and contracting processes with adequate staff to execute them. The City must advance plans to fill vacancies to increase the capacity of these critical agencies.

New York City Public Housing

NYCHA houses over 500,000 New Yorkers¹⁴ and represents approximately 7% of available rental units in many Manhattan districts, an irreplaceable source of affordable housing for low-income residents. By any honest measure, it is a system in managed decline. The time to turn over a vacant apartment for re-occupancy has reached nearly

¹³ <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/evictions-up-representation-down/>

¹⁴ https://www.nyc.gov/assets/nycha/downloads/pdf/NYCHA_Fact_Sheet.pdf

400 days. There are approximately 6,740 vacant units as of May, 2025.¹⁵ A 2025 Physical Needs Assessment found that NYCHA requires \$78 billion over two decades to reach a state of good repair,¹⁶ a figure that renders current investment levels inadequate by definition.

Residents face chronic heat failures, mold, lead hazards, and broken building entry systems. These are serious public health and safety threats. Heat, mold, and lead conditions must be treated and funded as such, with defined remediation timelines. Community boards with NYCHA developments have specifically requested dedicated capital funding for public safety improvements, cameras, lighting, and increased patrol presence, as integral components of development-level investment.

NYCHA residents in developments undergoing RAD-PACT conversion must have access to language-accessible legal services. These conversions involve complex changes to residents' rights and living arrangements; without independent legal counsel provided in residents' primary languages, meaningful participation in that process is not possible. The City must also require robust financial disclosures from RAD-PACT management companies, and dedicate funding for independent oversight of PACT conversions.

Looming federal cuts make supporting and reforming NYCHA more urgent. Federal funding for NYCHA remains under sustained pressure, and the city cannot treat any single appropriations cycle as a permanent reprieve. A proposed HUD rule would end prorated housing assistance for mixed-immigration-status families, threatening the housing stability of an estimated 80,000 people nationally, including 37,000 children, with New York among the most affected states.¹⁷ A change at that scale would be catastrophic and requires a proactive city and state response now, including conducting a thorough assessment of potential impact to New York City families and a commitment to support families at risk.

¹⁵ <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doi/reports/pdf/2026/05NYCHAREclaim.Release.Rpt.03.03.2026.pdf>

¹⁶ <https://www.nyc.gov/site/nycha/about/physical-needs-assessment-faqs.page>

¹⁷ <https://www.thecity.nyc/2026/02/20/immigration-families-mixed-status-hud-housing-development-rule-change/>

Homelessness and Supportive Services

More than 100,000 New Yorkers slept in a city shelter on any given night as of January 2026, a figure that has grown 78% since 2019 and includes over 33,000 children.^{18 19 20} The Street Health Outreach and Wellness (SHOW) mobile units and Bridge to Home sites, initiatives designed to reach New Yorkers living with severe mental illness and connect them to care and supportive housing, are meaningful commitments that should be implemented expeditiously. We also urge the City to expand medical respite bed capacity, which bridges the dangerous gap between hospital discharge and stable housing and reduces the burden on emergency departments that should not be serving as de facto shelter.

The City's 15/15 supportive housing program does not currently serve chronically homeless single adults or adult families unless they have a head of household who has a serious mental illness, a substance use disorder, or co-occurring SMI and SUD. This leaves out a significant population in dire need of services. The program should be expanded to include all chronically homeless single adults or adult families. Housing instability is itself a crisis, and eligibility for supportive housing should reflect the full scope of who needs it.

Federal cuts will put severe additional pressure on the homelessness system. SNAP work requirements that took effect March 1, now applying to homeless individuals and veterans who were previously exempt, will destabilize households at the margin of housing stability. Research projects that approximately 70,000 additional New Yorkers per year will fall into poverty from SNAP cuts alone.²¹ The City cannot absorb that caseload without commensurate investment in shelter, outreach, and homelessness prevention. We urge the administration to anticipate this pressure and resource accordingly.

City agency systems alone cannot absorb this need. Community-based organizations, neighborhood nonprofits, congregations, and mutual aid networks that have built trust with the people hardest to reach, must be meaningfully resourced as partners in the outreach and shelter strategy. This requires dedicated funding and coordination infrastructure.

¹⁸ [Coalition for the Homeless. "Basic Facts About Homelessness: New York City."](#)

¹⁹ [City of New York, Local Law 79/2022 and 136/2024 – Temporary Housing Assistance Usage, NYC Open Data.](#)

²⁰ [DiNapoli Report Analyzes Increases in NYC's Unsheltered Population and Spending | Office of the New York State Comptroller](#)

²¹ <https://robinhood.org/reports/poverty-tracker-annual-report-vol-8/>

Effective shelter and resource siting requires genuine community partnership from the outset. The City should ensure funding streams incentivize and enable local and community engagement before new resource sites are selected so that facilities can be chosen and designed to meet both the needs of the prospective clients and the capacity of the surrounding neighborhood to support them well.

Asylum Seekers, Immigrants, and Civil Rights

New York City's immigrant communities are navigating a federal environment that has become actively hostile in ways that have no recent precedent. Enforcement actions near schools, houses of worship, and social service sites; the elimination of legal pathways; the withdrawal of work authorization for hundreds of thousands of people²²; and the defunding of federally supported legal and social services. This impacts a significant portion of Manhattan's population, and is destabilizing for all families, schools, and neighborhoods.

The City must fund the legal services, healthcare, social supports, and educational resources that immigrant families need to stay stable. This means ensuring that community-based legal organizations have the capacity to meet the surge in demand for immigration legal services. It means ensuring that schools have the resources to support students whose families are in crisis. It means ensuring that social service agencies can serve clients regardless of immigration status, with culturally and linguistically responsive staff. And it means ensuring that the Commission on Human Rights, which enforces the city's human rights laws in an era when the federal civil rights infrastructure has retreated, is funded at the level necessary to investigate complaints, enforce judgments, and make clear that New York City's civil rights laws will be enforced regardless of what the federal government does.

Health Care Access and Behavioral Health

Federal Medicaid cuts enacted through reconciliation will begin flowing through to New York's health system over the coming months. Essential Plan funding cuts threaten coverage for 1.7 million lower-income New Yorkers.²³ NYC Health + Hospitals (H+H), which absorbs the majority of uncompensated care in the city, must be resourced to

²² [National Employment Law Project, *Understanding Your Rights When Losing Work Authorization: FAQs for Immigrant Workers and Advocates*, December 22, 2025.](#)

²³ [New York Health Foundation, *Comments on New York State's Request to Terminate the Section 1332 State Innovation Waiver and Return to the Basic Health Program*, October 10, 2025.](#)

handle an anticipated surge in uninsured patients. The City must commit proactively to stabilizing H+H funding before those cuts fully materialize.

Community boards report growing unmet behavioral health needs across the borough, particularly among young people, older adults, and recently arrived immigrant families. The Enacted Budget must include restorative justice programs and school-based mental health services. Young people, particularly in communities experiencing housing instability and family disruption from immigration enforcement, need access to mental health support. These programs must be restored and baselined.

Culturally and linguistically responsive care ensures primary care actually reaches communities of color and immigrant communities; the budget must fund it accordingly. Gender-affirming care must be actively expanded through new public funding. As private providers face federal pressure and reduce services, NYC Health + Hospitals must step in to fill the gap. Community health centers in underserved neighborhoods must not be allowed to close because federal funding evaporates. The Adopted Budget should also substantially increase funding for addiction services. And harm reduction services must be distributed equitably across the borough, with genuine community engagement as a standard for provider siting.

Many New Yorkers are confronting serious mental illness and mental health challenges. While the City and State have committed to reopening badly needed psychiatric beds that closed during the pandemic, the City must ensure New Yorkers get connected to services and supports at well-funded, peer-led mental health programs. In addition to building and expanding access to supportive housing, we must ensure that funding in this and future city budgets continue to go towards recruitment and retention of behavioral healthcare professionals, especially in mobile care services like IMT teams, clubhouses, supportive housing and our public hospitals. Strengthening coordination between healthcare providers, outreach teams, and social service agencies will also be critical to building a more responsive behavioral health system for Manhattan residents.

Public Safety and Emergency Readiness

Public safety remains among the top concerns residents raise with community boards across the borough. Overall crime reductions in recent years are real and meaningful. At the same time, felony assaults have increased slightly both citywide and in specific Manhattan districts,²⁴ and multiple boards report that the number of officers on the beat

²⁴ [NYPD, “NYPD Announces Safest Year Ever for Gun Violence and Fewest Shooting Incidents in Recorded History,” January 6, 2026.](#)

in their neighborhoods has declined. Precinct staffing levels must be maintained and, in many neighborhoods, restored to ensure officers are present and responsive to community needs.

The physical condition of precinct facilities is also important for the safety of the public. Deferred maintenance at precincts has reached a point of operational impairment in some cases. The City's capital plan must address precinct infrastructure as a basic responsibility to maintain functional and safe public facilities, without obstructing public access.

The surge in hate crimes against Black, Jewish, Muslim, Asian, and LGBTQ+ New Yorkers requires a sustained and urgent response. Houses of worship, cultural institutions, and community gathering spaces have increasingly become targets. The City must substantially increase funding for the protection of these spaces; not only through capital security improvements such as lighting, cameras, and physical hardening, but through dedicated personnel and community liaison capacity that builds ongoing relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve. The City must ensure that NYPD precincts are adequately staffed to respond promptly to calls for service while also investing in the community policing strategies that build trust over time.

Addressing public safety in Manhattan also means investing in the programs that prevent violence before it occurs. Violence interrupter programs, job training, youth programming, and mental health services are essential components of public safety. The City must also ensure that school safety personnel are trained in trauma-informed approaches, and that emergency preparedness systems, including coordination between NYPD, FDNY, and the Office of Emergency Management, are adequately resourced to respond to the full range of threats our communities face.

Street safety is public safety. As the enforcement arm for rules of the road, NYPD must evolve and expand its enforcement to meet new potential dangers of the public realm, including illegal sidewalk riding, speeding mopeds and e-bikes, and the full range of lightly regulated electric vehicles that now operate on city streets. Crossing guard coverage must be adequate at schools across the borough, particularly at older buildings with inadequate pedestrian infrastructure.

Community Board Funding

Community Boards are an essential part of local government, providing a critical avenue for community input into planning and budget decisions. The City must

provide more funding for Community Boards to allow them to hire adequate staff and procure the technology, resources, and space necessary to conduct public business and hold public hearings effectively.

New York City's 59 community boards total expenditures have grown 29% while employee salaries have increased by only 23% since 2014.²⁵ Over that period, the cost of living has risen by nearly 40%,²⁶ the City's housing pipeline has accelerated dramatically, and the Charter has been revised twice, adding new mandates and tighter review timelines. These growing demands have put additional and acute pressure on community boards at precisely the moment when the need for robust community engagement is greatest. The City must recognize the growing duties and needs of community boards and fund them accordingly.

The Office of Technology and Innovation currently provides only a single staff member to support all 59 community boards, a ratio that is wholly inadequate to the actual technical demands placed on boards. OTI must substantially expand its dedicated support capacity for community boards, providing robust assistance for hybrid hearings, ULURP filings, and digital records management.

The City should provide each community board with access to dedicated urban planning support so that boards can meaningfully engage with land use applications, zoning proposals, and planning processes that require specialized expertise.

The City should provide community boards with cost-of-living adjustments that keep staff compensation in line with the rest of the city workforce, and baseline sufficient operating funds so boards can reliably hire staff, procure technology, and maintain the space and resources needed to serve their communities. The funding should expand to include resources for community boards to conduct meaningful outreach within their communities, to proactively engage residents who may not otherwise participate in the civic process.

Climate Resiliency and Environmental Infrastructure

Climate change is an existential threat facing Manhattan. As extreme weather events become more common, including hurricanes and nor'easters that cause coastal flooding

²⁵ [New York City Independent Budget Office, Fiscal History: Community Boards.](#)

²⁶ [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers \(CPI-W\): New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA \(CWURS12ASA0\)](#)

and historic rainfall, extreme heat that kills an average of 500 New Yorkers a year,²⁷ and severe drought conditions that have caused fires in city parks, the City must act with urgency to address these hazards.

Making Manhattan more resilient in the face of climate change requires a comprehensive approach, with environmental justice as a guiding principle. The City needs to fund coastal resiliency projects across the borough. We are making some progress on advancing Lower Manhattan Coastal Resiliency as we continue to recover and rebuild from the impacts of Hurricane Sandy, but more must be done across Manhattan's more than 30 miles of coastline to protect residents, businesses, and office workers, and also safeguard critical transportation and economic infrastructure. This is especially important given dwindling federal investment from climate commitments, making the city's own investments more important than ever.

The City must also invest in resiliency infrastructure in our borough's inland areas. Capital work on streets, in parks, and on public property should integrate green infrastructure and stormwater management wherever possible. This has already started with the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Cloudburst Management program, and it is time to build on its early success. Additionally, expanding the borough's tree canopy, sufficiently funding NYC Parks to care for trees and green spaces, and providing more shade infrastructure will help combat the effects of extreme heat. As these projects move forward, the City must ensure that resiliency infrastructure is designed in a way that maintains accessibility and supports safe mobility for residents of all ages and abilities.

The City must take proactive steps to address the risk of Legionnaires' disease and other waterborne health hazards. Recent outbreaks have underscored the need for more rigorous and regular inspection of cooling towers, building water systems, and other potential sources of bacterial contamination. The City should increase resources for proactive water system monitoring and build out resources for impacted New Yorkers when outbreaks occur.

Parks, Open Space, and Recreation

Manhattan has less parkland per capita than most major American cities, and what it has is under-maintained and under-staffed. The Parks Department has absorbed disproportionate budget cuts over the past four years and entered this administration with a backlog of deferred capital work, a thinned-out maintenance workforce and

²⁷ [New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, 2025 New York City Heat-Related Mortality Report,](#)

parks enforcement staff, and park facilities, restrooms, playgrounds, and recreation centers that are in worse and less safe condition than they were a decade ago due to deferred maintenance and reduced enforcement. We're already seeing the results of this anemic workforce, including in Fall 2024 when uncleared brush and detritus provided the perfect conditions for wildfires to spread during historic drought conditions. Despite this, the Mayor's preliminary budget leaves Parks funding at only 0.5% of total city spending. We urge the City to commit to 1% of city spending allocated to Parks.

Dedicating 1% to Parks must be accompanied by plans for the Department to be staffed adequately to maintain facilities, program spaces, and ensure that every New Yorker can use them safely. Community boards in multiple districts have specifically requested dedicated park personnel and increased patrol capacity, particularly in neighborhoods where parks are heavily used and serve as primary public space for residents without private outdoor space. Restrooms must be operational and maintained. Playgrounds must meet safety standards.

Additionally, the City must allocate sufficient funding in the Capital Budget to renovate and rehabilitate parks and park facilities that are in disrepair. Infrastructure like retaining walls in many parks is at risk of collapse and many other parks are inaccessible. It is time to invest in repairing and improving parks for New Yorkers to enjoy for generations to come.

Arts, Libraries, and Cultural Infrastructure

Manhattan's arts and cultural sector is one of the City's defining assets and a core economic engine. The creative sector employs 326,000 New Yorkers, a larger workforce than finance and insurance combined; yet it remains under pressure.²⁸ New York's share of the national creative workforce has declined from 9.3% to 8.6% since 2019, and creative workers here earn significantly less than the national average on a cost-of-living adjusted basis.

The federal retreat from arts funding has compounded these pressures. Thousands of previously approved NEA grants have been canceled or rescinded since May 2025. The proposed elimination of the NEA and NEH entirely, agencies that have funded arts organizations in every congressional district since 1965, would leave community-based organizations in particular with no comparable alternative. The City must treat federal withdrawal not as a reason to hold steady, but as a reason to step up.

²⁸ [Center for an Urban Future, *Creative New York* \(New York: Center for an Urban Future, 2025\).](#)

The City must also address the affordability crisis facing working artists directly. Affordable art studio and rehearsal space has been lost to commercial pressure across Manhattan. The City should support programs and institutions that offer working space and accommodations to freelance working artists.

Public libraries are among the most heavily used city institutions in most Manhattan neighborhoods, providing internet access, early literacy programming, after-school services, and connections to city benefits. The annual cycle of proposed cuts followed by negotiated restorations is damaging in its own right: it creates uncertainty that disrupts programs and drives out staff. The City must restore full library funding, establish a clear path to seven-day service at every branch, and commit to a capital plan that addresses the backlog in building systems, accessibility, and facades.

Transportation Safety and the Public Realm

Manhattan's streets are among the most complex transportation corridors in the country. Pedestrians, cyclists, transit vehicles, deliveries, and private vehicles all compete for limited space, making safety and mobility improvements a central priority across the borough.

The Vision Zero initiative is now more than a decade old. While 2025 saw a 19% decrease in fatalities,²⁹ that is still 205 deaths we can avoid through daylighting, upgraded signals, and improved street designs that reduce conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians. These investments are particularly important near schools, transit hubs, and commercial corridors where large numbers of residents and visitors navigate busy streets each day.

At the same time, the public realm has become more dynamic as outdoor dining, micromobility, and evolving curbside uses reshape neighborhood streets. Managing these competing demands requires stronger coordination between infrastructure investments and enforcement capacity so that safety improvements are supported by clear rules and consistent oversight. This includes a thorough review of the scope of work of the City's traffic enforcement workforce, which has not kept pace with new transportation modalities including electric bikes, e-scooters, and delivery vehicles. Ensuring that Manhattan's streets function safely and efficiently requires sustained

²⁹ [New York City Department of Transportation, "Traffic Deaths Reach All-Time Low: New York Ends Year with Fewest Traffic Fatalities Ever Recorded," January 2, 2026.](#)

investment in both design improvements and the operational capacity needed to manage them.

The proliferation of illegally operated mopeds and e-bikes on sidewalks is a persistent safety concern that is not currently adequately enforced. Ensuring every moped is properly registered and operating legally is a reasonable and achievable goal. The city should also continue expanding protected bike infrastructure, bus lanes, and pedestrian space, both because these investments improve safety and because they reflect how more and more Manhattan residents move through the borough.

The City should also consider the cumulative impact of large-scale infrastructure construction on neighborhoods that absorb outsized disruption over long periods. Proximity to major port facilities, transit infrastructure, and construction projects creates chronic quality-of-life burdens for residents that must be factored into project planning. The City should develop a more robust framework for recognizing and mitigating these cumulative impacts, including meaningful consultation with the affected community boards.

Sanitation and Neighborhood Cleanliness

The mandatory composting program is now citywide, but outreach and compliance infrastructure has not kept pace with the mandate. Many building managers and tenants, particularly in buildings without adequate space for organic waste separation, are not in compliance, not because they are unwilling, but because they have not received clear guidance or adequate support. The City must fund robust multilingual outreach, ensure that Smart Composting bins are distributed equitably rather than concentrated in already well-resourced areas, and baseline the community composting programs that were restored in FY25 but remain vulnerable to future cuts.

Dog waste on sidewalks and in parks is a persistent and widespread sanitation concern cited by community boards across the borough. The City should strengthen enforcement of existing pooper-scooper laws, expand outreach reminding dog owners of their obligations, and expand waste bag and receptacle availability.

Rat infestations also remain a serious public health and quality-of-life concern across Manhattan. The City invest further in and expand its rat mitigation programs.

Containerization of residential and commercial waste has meaningfully improved these and other conditions on some blocks. The City needs to expand this practice to include larger buildings to keep the trash off our sidewalks. Predictable collection schedules

and real enforcement of disposal requirements are necessary complements to the containers themselves. Targeted cleaning in high-traffic areas around transit stations, parks, and commercial corridors must be sustained. And the city should expand its graffiti removal program and apply it to city-owned property first, leading by example on the cleanliness standard it asks of everyone else.

Older Adults and Age-Friendly Communities

Older New Yorkers are facing a compounding set of pressures: rents that consume most of a fixed income, federal proposals to reduce Medicaid and nutrition assistance, and the steady attrition of the neighborhood institutions, senior centers, NORCs, and home-delivered meal programs that allow people to age in place rather than in institutional settings. The City should be equitably expanding senior housing and aging services in all community districts, especially in light of federal cuts and threats to Medicare and Medicaid funding.

SCRIE and DRIE enrollment remains far below the eligible population. Every qualifying senior who is not enrolled is paying more than the law requires them to pay. The City must make proactive, targeted outreach and publicize information to enroll every eligible senior a measurable administrative goal, not a passive offer. Culturally responsive programming and multilingual benefits counseling help these resources reach the population that needs them most. Additionally, age-friendly infrastructure, accessible crossings, maintained sidewalks, and reliable public facilities is foundational to aging in place and must be maintained as a capital priority.

Senior accessibility is not just physical, it is digital. This population of New Yorkers is both more reliant on the benefits of expanding technology practices, such as telehealth, and more vulnerable to their pitfalls. The proliferation of sophisticated scams targeting older adults, increasingly powered by generative artificial intelligence, demands a proactive City response: robust funding for digital literacy training through DFTA, NYPL, and nonprofit partners, and dedicated programming to educate and protect older New Yorkers from fraud and exploitation.

Nonprofit Funding and Contracting

Nonprofits deliver a substantial share of the city's social services, from early childhood education to legal services to mental health care to emergency food distribution. The city's ability to serve New Yorkers depends on the health of this sector, and right now the sector is suffering. Federal contract freezes and the withdrawal of federal funding

streams are placing organizations that have served Manhattan communities for decades under extraordinary financial strain. Some are drawing down reserves. Some are taking out high-interest bridge loans. Smaller organizations are weighing whether they can continue to operate at all.

The contract registration and payment system remains a chronic source of dysfunction. Nonprofits providing services under city contracts frequently wait months to receive payment for work already performed. This forces them to maintain lines of credit as operational infrastructure, drives away staff who cannot absorb payroll uncertainty, and places the smallest and most community-rooted organizations at greatest risk. The administration must make timely contract registration and payment a measurable operational priority, including reducing the amount of time nonprofits wait to be paid.

Small Business Vitality

Small businesses are central to the economic and cultural life of Manhattan's neighborhoods. Yet many continue to struggle in the face of rising rents and a complicated regulatory environment. The City must strengthen its commitment to supporting local entrepreneurs by expanding programs that provide technical assistance, legal support, and direct services to small businesses.

The City must increase funding for the Commercial Lease Assistance Program (CLAP) administered by the NYC Department of Small Business Services (SBS), which provides small businesses with free legal assistance to help negotiate leases, resolve disputes, and avoid displacement. As commercial rents continue to rise across Manhattan, CLAP remains an essential tool for helping small businesses remain in their communities and maintain stable neighborhood retail corridors.

The City should undertake a review of the Commercial Rent Tax to understand its impact on Manhattan small businesses and consider whether targeted reforms could reduce barriers for small and independent businesses in affected areas. The City must also continue to support the Small Business Resource Network (SBRN), which has played an important role in helping small businesses recover from the economic disruptions of recent years. The network provides small businesses with access to variety of operation support, including financial counseling, marketing assistance, legal guidance, and operational support. Programs such as these help entrepreneurs gain direct access to resources and opportunities they need to thrive.

The City must also maintain strong support for Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), which provide essential services that strengthen Manhattan's commercial districts. BIDs support sanitation, public safety coordination, marketing, and streetscape improvements that help attract customers and sustain vibrant neighborhood economies.

Supporting these initiatives will help preserve the vitality of Manhattan's small business corridors and ensure that neighborhood businesses remain a defining feature of the City's economy.

Small business support resources should be bolstered to address two persistent and underserved challenges: the proliferation of counterfeit goods vendors operating immediately outside legitimate businesses and the economic disruption caused by nearby construction activity.

The City must also improve its outreach to small businesses to help them navigate available resources. City-run websites and information portals for small businesses are frequently outdated, hard to navigate, and not available in the languages spoken by many business owners.

Education and Youth Development

Traditional public schools remain the foundation of neighborhood life throughout Manhattan and the best pathway for our children to build fulfilling futures. This Administration must prioritize solving the issues in both the built environment, security infrastructure, and safety personnel that provide a healthy, safe, and constructive space for our students, as well as the programmatic shortfalls that impact quality of education and class sizes. Above all, we must maintain and upgrade school facilities so that they remain safe, accessible, and capable of supporting modern educational needs.

As the City works to comply with class size requirements and to improve our class environments, aging building systems and accessibility challenges are persistent issues warranting attention through the City's capital program. Such improvements entail, but are not limited to, elevator replacements, air-conditioning, building system upgrades, and technology upgrades such as SmartBoards, laptops, and connectivity. On a district-wide scale, assessing staffing needs and classroom reconfigurations have become a critical task as traditional public schools work to comply fully with New York State class size requirements by 2028.

The City must also address the following programmatic priorities in traditional public schools:

- Reinvest in technology infrastructure both within school buildings and at students' homes, so learning can continue when in-person attendance is not possible.

- Increase funding for special education services to ensure continuity and consistency of services K–12, so students with disabilities do not experience gaps as they advance through the system.
- Develop and fund clear guidance on appropriate use of AI tools in schools.
- Fund evidence-based anti-bullying curricula, staff training, and family resources, with attention to bullying targeting students based on race, immigration status, religion, and gender identity.
- Fund physical, arts, and music education as core curriculum components with equitable access across all districts.
- Prioritize capital investment in camera systems, building access controls, and adequate school safety personnel at older buildings with the most inadequate infrastructure.

Youth unemployment is a persistent challenge with consequences for public safety, economic mobility, and community wellbeing. The City must fund year-round employment opportunities for young people, not only summer programs, so that youth have sustained access to income, mentorship, and professional development throughout the year.

After-school programming is also vital to the development and wellbeing of young New Yorkers. These programs provide safe and structured environments where students can build relationships, explore interests, and receive additional academic support outside the classroom. They also complement the social and emotional learning that has become an increasingly important component of education in recent years. Ensuring that these programs remain equitably distributed and reliably funded is an important part of supporting children and families across Manhattan.

Conclusion

New York City's strength has always run through its diverse and resilient communities, and the priorities in this document represent the investments required to keep them that way. The Manhattan Borough Board thanks the Mayor and the City Council for the opportunity to submit these priorities and looks forward to continued engagement as the budget process moves towards adoption.