

Chair Report
September 16, 2021
General Board Meeting

The Busiest Time of the Year

I always face September with excitement and a hard-learned dose of trepidation. September is the month when we return to school and, of course, Community Board meetings, with all of the excitement it brings. September also is a time where big, ambitious plans are made, some of which may be forced by reality to be downsized somewhat by late October. For CB9, our top priority is of course our charter-mandated responsibility to provide the Department of City Planning, the Mayor's Office of Management and Budget, and all City agencies an understanding of the challenges facing our community and our priorities for expense and capital budgets to address those challenges, which take the form of our annual District Needs Statement and Budget Priorities.

This month and into October, our Committees will be reaching out across the District to understand how our communities challenges have changed in the past year, and what investments our City agencies can make to try to meet and overcome those challenges. If you or anyone on your block, at your house of worship, or otherwise in our community knows of elevators or HVAC systems in a school, library, senior center, or other non-profit or City-owned space that need upgrading, a City Park playground that need resurfacing or new equipment, a community center program that needs more funding, or any other non-profit or government-owned site that needs investment, please reach out to the appropriate committee. We will be scheduling our Public Hearing on our proposed budget priorities for the last week in October.

Additionally, I wanted to once again encourage everyone in our community to speak with their physicians and healthcare providers about vaccines and other ways to stay safe as the delta variant continues to sicken our community members and take the lives of those in West Harlem. While deaths have dropped significantly since the worst days of the pandemic, our community remains one of the hardest-hit in Manhattan and New York City. While almost all deaths in the latest surge have been among the unvaccinated, it is important for people who have been vaccinated to continue to wear masks indoors and limit their risk of contracting and spreading COVID. Of course, there is no vaccine currently authorized for children under the age of 12, so they also remain at elevated risk of infection. We must continue to be vigilant in this new phase of the pandemic, even as we begin to see light at the end of the tunnel.

With gratitude and thanks as always,

Your Chair,

Barry Weinberg

COVID Rates Very Low, But Manhattan Community Board 9 ZIP Codes 10027 and 10031 Still Lag Behind Other Manhattan Neighborhoods in Vaccination Rates

Our neighborhood continues to suffer from the delay by Mayor De Blasio earlier this year in opening COVID vaccine sites in West Harlem while other neighborhoods began receiving vaccination sites. While the overall average percentage of adults who have received at least one dose of the COVID vaccine is

86% in Manhattan and 80% Citywide, ZIP Codes 10027 and 10031 are still below or hovering at 70% and 73%, respectively. When children 12 years and older are included in the data, we fall further behind, with 60% and 64% of the total eligible population having received one dose in 10027 and 10031, respectively, compared with 78% in Manhattan as a whole and 68% Citywide. While our positivity rates are low, 10031 is still above Manhattan as a whole, with 10027 at 1.77% and 10031 at 2.83%, significantly higher than in June. We must continue to answer our neighbors' questions about the vaccines and, for those of us who have been vaccinated, tell our stories and experiences. As the delta variant continues to ravage our community, I cannot stress enough the importance of getting vaccinated and maintaining vigilance around indoor mask wearing.

Manhattan Community Board 9 Welcomes New Governor Kathy Hochul and Lieutenant Governor Brian Benjamin, Looks Forward to Continued Partnership with Governor's Office

On August 24th, 2021, Governor Andrew Cuomo resigned and then-Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul was sworn in as New York State's 57th Governor. On September 9th, Harlem's State Senator Brian Benjamin was sworn in as Lieutenant Governor. Manhattan Community Board 9 welcomes Governor Hochul and Lt. Governor Benjamin, and we look forward to continuing the close partnership with the Governor's Office in combatting the COVID-19 pandemic. Our partnership with the Governor's Office began when Governor Cuomo assisted Manhattan Community Board 9 in setting up pop-up vaccination sites after Mayor De Blasio refused to include any sites in West Harlem for the initial vaccine rollout, despite West Harlem having two ZIP codes, 10027 and 10031, that the City Department of Health designated as priority ZIP codes for the vaccine because they were among the hardest hit by COVID and had high levels of underlying conditions. MCB9 has enjoyed working with Lt. Governor Benjamin in the past when he served as one of our State Senators, and we look forward to working with him as our new Lt. Governor.

New York State Launches Emergency Rental Assistance Program applications for Tenants Who Owe Back Rent and Utilities

The New York State Office of Temporary Disability Assistance is now accepting applications for grants of up to 12 months of back rent for residents of New York City who have fallen behind in their rent since March 2020 and qualified for unemployment benefits, have lost income or experienced increased expenses due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and have a monthly gross household income at or below 80% of AMI. Certain groups will receive priority during the application process for the first 30 days. The money is paid directly to landlords and utility companies to whom the debts are owed under the condition that late fees and fines are waived the debt is wiped clean. The funding for this program was part of the American Rescue Plan passed by Congress and President Biden in March. The application can be found at <https://nysrenthelp.otda.ny.gov>

Catholic Charities Community Services (1-888-744-7900) and University Settlement (212-453-4500) have received contracts from the government to assist people with applying for ERAP. P.A.'L.A.N.T.E. Harlem (212-491-2541) at 1411 Amsterdam Avenue on W 130th Street is also assisting people in our neighborhood.

New York City Funds Capital Project to Repair 12th Avenue Street Collapse, Improve Pedestrian Safety and Storm Drainage

The City Department of Design and Construction is beginning to define the scope for a capital project to repair the portion of 12th Avenue that collapsed several years ago. The current plan is to repair the damaged sewer infrastructure below the street, ensure adequate drainage for stormwater, repair the sidewalk on the east side of 12th Avenue from W 135th Street to W 138th Street, and extend the sidewalk on the west side of 12th Avenue south from W 138th Street and Jenny's Garden to connect it to the sidewalk at 701 W 135th Street, the former site of Body Lounge, Covo, Phuket, and other businesses. CB9 will continue to update the community about opportunities to give input to the project scope and design.

New York State Independent Redistricting Commission Releases Draft Maps of State Assembly, State Senate, and U.S. House of Representative District Lines; Still Taking Public Feedback

For the first time since the new process was authorized by a State Constitutional Amendment in a ballot referendum in November 2014, New York State will have the initial proposed legislative district lines drawn by the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission. The redistricting happens every 10 years, after the Census, and adjust district boundaries to reflect population changes. Sadly, New York State was 97 people short of keeping its Congressional seats, and we lost one House of Representatives seat. I strongly encourage all members of the public to attend their public hearing on Manhattan's (New York County's) districts on Wednesday, November 10th, at the Hunter College (CUNY) Cafeteria at 695 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10065. For more information, visit www.nyirc.gov

NYPD Narcotics Bureau and Manhattan DA Arrest 48 Individuals, Accuse them of Running Drug Distribution Activities around West 135th Street and Broadway

The New York Police Department and the Manhattan District Attorney's Office arrested 48 individuals on indictments totaling 78 counts of criminal activity on and around the block of West 135th Street between Broadway and Riverside, recently designated by the NYPD as the most dangerous block in Manhattan. While MCB9 has long been concerned about the drug dealing and shootings on the block, we are mindful that the accused are innocent until proven guilty. We encourage the DYCD, the DA's Office, and the Mayor's Office to continue to invest in providing violence interruption and youth development resources in the area to give our young people alternative, constructive activities for their time.

New York State Launches Business Pandemic Recovery Initiative, a Suite of Grants, Loans, and Credits to Help Businesses Recover Post-Pandemic

The Empire State Development Corporation is now offering a number of small business loans and grants for businesses that need assistance reopening and surviving after the pandemic. These include the New York Small Business Recovery Grant Program which will award up to \$50,000 for small business that experienced a drop of revenue of at least 25% for calendar year 2020 when compared to calendar year 2019 and have not received federal COVID relief money. Also included is the New York State Restaurant Resiliency Program, where restaurants receive contracts to deliver food to vulnerable populations, the Restaurant Return-To-Work Credit to help restaurants that had been in orange or red zones for 30 consecutive days hire staff, the New York City Musical and Theatrical Production Tax credit, and the New York Forward Loan Fund for small businesses, non-profits, and landlords with fewer than 50 full time employees. HDFCs should look into the NYFLF to see if they qualify as corporations that own residential units. For more information, please go to <https://esd.ny.gov/business-pandemic-recovery-initiative>

Federal Small Business Administration's Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program is Making Low-Interest Loans to Small Businesses and Non-Profits Affected by COVID-19

The Small Business Administration is accepting applications for low-interest, 30 year loans for small businesses and non-profits experiencing a temporary loss of revenue due to COVID. The interest rate on the loans is 3.75% for small businesses and 2.75% for non-profits, with a maximum loan amount of \$500,000. The loans are to be used for working capital expenses including rent, utilities, debt payments, healthcare benefits, and more. For more information please visit <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/covid-19-relief-options/eidl/covid-19-eidl>

Funding Restored for Environmental Assessment Study of Community-Led Morningside Heights Rezoning After Being Cut from FY21 Budget Due to Pandemic Impact

The funding for an Environmental Assessment Study, a necessary step in the long-sought neighborhood rezoning of Morningside Heights, was restored to the City's budget this summer. This will allow for paid experts to be contracted to analyze the environmental, traffic, and other community impacts of the rezoning. We would like to thank Councilmember Mark Levine and Council Speaker Corey Johnson for their continued support of this important initiative.

Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer Food Assistance (SNAP) Program for New Yorkers

The Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) food benefits for all households with children who receive free lunch under the National School Lunch Act will continue through June and July. Additionally, Congress has passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, which temporarily expands SNAP food assistance to eligible students of higher education. For more information, please visit <https://otda.ny.gov/SNAP-COVID-19/>

Free Summer Meals for All New Yorkers at Department of Education Community Meals Sites through Summer 2021

The NYC Department of Education will once again be distributing free meals through its Community Meals Sites this summer. These meals require no registration or identification. For more information, please visit <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/food/community-meals> or text "NYC FOOD" (for English) or "NYC COMIDA" (for Spanish) to 877-877 (texting and data rates may apply).

President Biden's Child Tax Credit Needs Our Help to Enroll Eligible Families

As part of President Biden's American Rescue Plan passed by Congress in March, eligible families will now receive expanded, fully-refundable Child Tax Credits of \$3,600 per child under 6 and \$3,300 per child between 6 and 17 years old through December 2021. Households will be eligible to receive the tax credits in monthly installments. Some families may be automatically enrolled in the payments if they file taxes with the IRS or if they are non-filers who provided their information to the IRS to receive the 2020 Economic Impact Payments (COVID stimulus payments). The payments will be deposited monthly via direct deposit to eligible families with bank account information on file at the IRS or will be mailed by paper check if such bank account information is not on file. You do not need to have any income to qualify, and the payments will not affect other public assistance benefits. If you believe you are eligible for the payments but have not yet received any payments, or would like more information, including to enroll, visit <https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/advance-child-tax-credit-payments-in-2021>

Zoning for Accessibility Proposal Expands Opportunities for Subway Elevators, But Brings Risks of Overdevelopment on Affected Lots

The Department of City Planning has proposed a Citywide Zoning Text Amendment called “Zoning for Accessibility” that would require owners of lots within 1500 feet of a subway station or other mass transit rail site to allow the transit authority to require an easement on their site for new stairs, elevators, and other improvements when applying for Department of Building Permits for development or enlargement on the site. Additionally, the text amendment offers up to 20% in bonus Floor Area Ratio (the square footage than can be constructed on a lot) if the developer pays for the subway improvements and their maintenance.

While CB9 wholeheartedly supports greater subway accessibility, we remain concerned about the proposal to allow additional FAR for things that include “beautification” and “providing daylight.” CB9 voted to recommend approval of the ZTA with conditions, all of which were incorporated into the resolution approved by the Manhattan Borough Board this morning on June 17.

Mayor Announces Senior Centers Reopening

The Mayor has announced that Department for the Aging senior centers may now reopen for in-person activities. Manhattan Community Board 9 would like to thank Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and her office, especially April Adams, for their important advocacy on this issue. Our Senior Issues Committee Co-Chair Anthony Fletcher and Martin Wallace are to be commended for their efforts on this issue.

Small Business Administration is Distributing Grants to Restaurants, but Funding is Gone

The American Rescue Plan included \$28.6 billion in grant funding for restaurants, delis, bars, breweries, bakeries, cafes, food carts and trucks, and other food establishments affected by the pandemic, with a 21 day priority period for establishments owned by women, veterans, or socially and economically disadvantaged minorities. The application opened on Monday, May 3rd at [restaurants.sba.gov](https://www.sba.gov) ([sba.gov/restaurantes en español](https://www.sba.gov/restaurantes)). However, the demand for grants and the number of applications has been so large that already applications for amounts totaling in excess of the \$28.6bn have been submitted. All establishment owners should still apply for the grants, as some of the existing applications may not be granted, and Congress may choose to allocate additional funding to the program. While the program is still accepting applications, certain revenue tiers had completely exhausted their funding as of May 24th. Interested small business who did not apply for RRF grants or did not receive one should consider applying to the Temporary Economic Injury Disaster Loan program and the New York State Pandemic Recovery Initiative mentioned earlier in my report. I would also like to thank Yuien Chin and Harlem OneStop for helping spread the word among the small business in the community about this important program and many others.

Citywide Text Amendment for Special Hotel Permits Offers Community Input on New Hotels

The Department of City Planning today, Thursday, May 13th, certified as complete a proposal to amend the process by which new hotel permits are issued. Under the new proposal, all new hotels in manufacturing, commercial, and other applicable areas would require a special permit to open

(residential areas do not permit hotels). Manhattan Community Board 9 will hold a vote on this proposed text amendment at tonight's General Board Meeting, after which the matter will go to the Borough Board.

Planning Commission Overrides CB9's Unanimous 'No' Vote on Proposed Development at W 142nd Street and Riverside Drive; Application Now Before City Council

On Tuesday, April 27th, Manhattan Community Board 9's Housing, Zoning, and Land Use Committee held a public hearing on a proposal by a developer seeking to build a 17 story residential tower on the north corner of W 142nd Street and Riverside Drive as required by the City's Universal Land Use Review Process (ULURP), filed under ULURP Number [C210261ZMM](#). The proposed tower would contain 81 apartments, 21 of which would be affordable. In order to develop the site, the owner would have to destroy two of the historic townhouse on the site. The development would require an upzoning on the site from the current R6A designation (which has a 70 foot height cap) to R9A, which has a 170 foot height cap.

11 Community Board 9 members were in attendance, along with over 50 members of the public. The CB9 members in attendance voted unanimously to recommend the proposed rezoning not be approved by the City Planning Commission, the City Council, and Mayor. Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer also opposed the application, and it was laid over at the public meeting of the City Planning Commission on July 14th after strong public opposition. However, on August 24, the City Planning Commission voted to approve the application with a modification to R8A, which would allow a 14 story building.

MCB9 held an emergency discussion on the evening of Tuesday, September 7th to gather public feedback on an R8A rezoning. Over 60 people attended, including State Senator Robert Jackson and Assemblyman Al Taylor, and the community was unanimously opposed to an R8A designation. On Thursday, September 9th, the Executive Committee of MCB9, acting on behalf of the full board, voted to oppose the R8A designation. On Friday, September 10th, the Zoning and Franchises Subcommittee of the New York City Council Land Use Committee held a hearing on the application, and once again MCB9 members and community members attended to voice their opposition to the application. The application was laid over, and the next hearing is scheduled on September 24th. The City Council has until October 12th to approve or reject the application. If no action is taken by October 12th, the City Planning Commission's designation of R8A will take effect.

The rowhouses from 633-637 West 142nd Street may be torn down even without a rezoning to build a 7 story building as-of-right (with no rezoning needed). However, the West Harlem Community Preservation Organization has filed a Request for Evaluation to the City Landmarks Preservation Commission for a West Harlem Historic District that would encompass the block and prevent demolition of the buildings. If you support the approval of the West Harlem Historic District, you can contact the LPC at <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/lpc/about/email-the-chair.page>, by calling 212-669-7855, or by mailing a letter to New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, David N. Dinkins Municipal Building, 1 Centre Street, 9th Floor North, New York, NY 10007.

If you are interested in this proposed development on W 142nd Street, please email mcb9housing@gmail.com to sign up for the HZLU Committee mail list and plan on attending the upcoming meetings of the Committee, which meets the first Tuesday of every month at 6:30pm.

Funding for Arts, Museums, Libraries and Restaurants included in American Rescue Plan

The American Rescue Plan included \$135 million in funding for the National Endowment for the Arts, \$200 million for the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and \$28.6 billion for grants to restaurants impacted by the pandemic.

Information for libraries and museums can be found at the New York State Libraries page at <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/stateaid/>.

Information for artists and arts organizations can be found at <https://www.arts.gov/american-rescue-plan-and-arts-and-creative-industries-faqs>

FDA and CDC Approve Pfizer COVID Vaccine for Children 12 Years and Older

The Centers for Disease Control on Wednesday, May 12th, approved the use of Pfizer and BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine for use in adolescents 12 years to 15 years old after the Food and Drug Administration approved the application on Monday. The vaccine was already approved for 16 and 17 year olds. In the 2,000 children between 12 and 16 who participated in the Pfizer vaccine trial, there were zero (0) serious adverse events reported. Schoolchildren are frequently the main vectors for many respiratory illnesses like the cold and flu, so getting our young people vaccinated may go a long way towards preventing a resurgence of COVID when schools reopen this fall. Mayor De Blasio has announced that City vaccination sites will soon accept 12-15 year olds for vaccination, but minors will still need to be accompanied by a guardian.

Congressional Earmarks in West Harlem: Columbia, City College Included in Funding Requests

In much-overlooked news, the House of Representatives voted to reclaim its Constitutional power of the purse and allow individual representatives to direct federal agencies to fund specific projects, a practice commonly known as "earmarking," under the program of "Community Project Funding Requests" or "Member Designated Projects." This practice allows Congressional Representatives to more specifically and directly meet their district's needs, rather than force local governments to apply for the project to the federal agency. West Harlem has a dire need of repairs to our NYCHA public housing, investments in transit improvements and accessibility at our subway stations, repairs to City College and our public schools, and much more.

The initial list of funding requests made by Congressional Representatives is now public. Our Congressman Jerrold Nadler (NY-10, including Morningside Heights south of W 122nd Street) requested funding for 10 projects totaling ~\$13.36 million, with the following project in MCD9:

- **Project Name:** High School Training Program for Small Business Accounting
Request Amount: \$134,000
Intended Recipient: Columbia University
Purpose of Request: The project would launch a new summer training program in accounting for low-income, first-generation, college-bound high school students from all over the Manhattan to meet small business owners' need for accounting services and to provide students the skills to become accountants.

Our Congressmen Adriano Espaillat (Hamilton Heights, Manhattanville, and Morningside Heights north of W 122nd Street) requested funding for 10 projects totaling ~\$11.9 million, with the following project in MCD9:

- **Project name: Charles B. Rangel Center for Infrastructure Workforce Training**
Request Amount: \$1,500,000
Intended Recipient: City College of New York, City University of New York
Project summary: The Charles B. Rangel Center for Infrastructure Workforce Training will train for construction and operations across multiple infrastructures – transport, energy, communications, water and wastewater, food, health in built environments – with emphasis on digital skills for advanced forms of project management, system supervisory control and operations management. Experiential and simulation-based curriculum developed with industry stakeholders, extensive lab and remote-learning use of computers, smart phones, digital tools and apps. Coverage of GIS, BIM, SCADA, sensors and sensor arrays, working with data, AI and robotics. Community-based recruitment of trainees. Multi-media learning to facilitate the success of nonacademic learners. Focus on both entry-level positions and career paths. Opportunities for continuing work-study through CUNY programs. The Center addresses our country's and region's vast and diverse infrastructure needs using 21st-century tools and methods. The basic objective of the Center is to train and prepare women and men of underserved communities for meaningful jobs and lifelong careers.

Montefiore Park Plaza Area Walkthrough Held With Neighbors, Mayor's Office, Parks, NYPD, and Other Agencies on June 4th

On Friday, June 4th, members of Community Board 9 convened neighbors and members of the parks associations of Montefiore Park and Jacob Schiff Park to meet with the Parks Department, the 30th Precinct, and other government agencies to discuss issues of open drug use, narcotics sales, trash, unlicensed vending, and other issues affecting the area from roughly 134th Street to 139th Street between Riverside Drive and Amsterdam. The community is invested in taking a holistic approach to bring services to individuals affected by substance abuse disorders or experiencing homelessness while also requesting that the 30th Precinct increase its presence and investigate violent attacks that have occurred in the area. If you are interested in joining this conversation, please contact Michael Palma.

New Residential and Commercial Small Business Eviction and Foreclosure Moratorium Allows for Hardship Declaration to Delay Proceedings Until January 15, 2021

In December, the State Legislature Passed and the Governor signed the COVID-19 Emergency Eviction and Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2020. This act stays pending eviction proceedings and residential mortgage foreclosure actions for 60 days, stays actions and proceedings first filed in December for 30 days, and allows tenants or mortgagors to file hardship declarations that will further stay any proceedings and actions until May 1st. The State Legislature and Governor recently acted to further extend the moratorium through August 31st while rent relief programs like ERAP are being set up. After a court struck down portions of the moratorium, the State Legislature and Governor voted to extend the moratorium again until January 15, 2022. The legislation also places a moratorium of foreclosures on residences or small landlords who own 10 or fewer residential dwellings. The legislation also places a

moratorium on the eviction of and foreclosure proceedings against commercial businesses with 100 or fewer employees that can demonstrate a financial hardship. If you are facing eviction or foreclosure, I strongly urge you to consider going to <http://www.nycourts.gov/courts/nyc/SSI/images/corona/HardshipDeclaration.pdf>, download the Hardship Declaration form, and send it to your landlord or mortgage holder. More information can be found at <https://www.nycourts.gov/covid-eefpa.shtml>. Please note that this does not constitute legal advice, and I am not an attorney.

Tax Lien Sale Delayed Until 2021, Measure Up for Renewal

When property owners do not pay their tax and water bill debts owed to the City, those unpaid debts become liens on the property. Since a law passed during the Giuliani administration went into effect, the City can choose not to take possession of those properties and instead can sell the liens to private Wall Street financial institutions for cash upfront. The financial institutions that purchase the liens can then attempt to collect the debt on an accelerated basis and with higher fees and rates. This process is called a tax lien sale.

The tax lien sales have been delayed until at least 2021 by Executive Orders issued by Governor Andrew Cuomo. Additionally, the City law allowing such sales is due to expire, requiring a renewal from the City Council. Given the dearth of real estate available for affordable housing and other priorities, this is an important opportunity to rethink and potentially end the practice of selling tax liens. Intro 2166-2020, introduced by Councilmember Adrienne Adams of Queens, would delay any future tax lien sales through at least December 31, 2024 and change what properties are subject to the sales. CB9 will be exploring proposed changes to the tax lien sale ourselves to submit to the City Council for further review.

NYCHA Blueprint for Change Proposes Privatization of NYCHA, Erodes Tenant Protections

With the public comment period for NYCHA's Blueprint for Change ending on December 28th, it is of the utmost importance that NYCHA residents and the public in CB9 give their feedback on the plan. The Blueprint proposes to turn NYCHA over to a private Preservation Trust, led by Mayoral appointees, that will have the ability to borrow money against the properties to make repairs. Borrowing against public housing is prohibited by law, which is why the buildings would have to be first transferred to a private trust. As with all debt, there is a danger that if the new Preservation Trust is unable to repay the debt, then New York could lose its public housing that have kept hundreds of thousands housed for generations.

Public housing is an integral part of any housing strategy that can meet the needs of a 21st century New York. The nearly 30 year deliberate disinvestment and austerity campaign, begun by Congressional Republicans in the 1990s, has starved NYCHA of previously-available federal funds for repair and maintenance. The resulting long, slow decline of our public housing stock was specifically engineered to bring about the privatization of this housing. Community Board 9 will work together with NYCHA residents and others to make sure that NYCHA and our federal officials are held accountable and stop the march to privatization and, potentially, erosion of tenants' rights. Additionally, CB9 is very concerned about the transfer of air rights from Manhattanville Houses to the former site of the supermarket and laundromat at 1440 Amsterdam Avenue, which could result in a development as high as 26 stories.

The feedback page is: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/nycha/about/contact/transformation-plan-public-comments.page>

Free City COVID Testing at 21 Old Broadway Converted to Mobile Unit as Delta Variant Ravages West Harlem

The increase in cases brought on by the delta variant has been matched by a reduction in the City's investment in easily accessible, free testing capacity in CB9. The closure of the testing site at 21 Old Broadway immediately before the delta variant surge is the latest actions from the City administration demonstrating the low priority they have for lives in our community in West Harlem. The testing site has been switched to an NYC Health + Hospitals mobile testing unit. This means that, instead of a stable site open 7 days a week in one location with regular hours, people wishing to get tested must have internet access and digital literacy to be able to check the website at <https://www.nychealthandhospitals.org/covid-19-testing-sites/> and find out where the mobile unit is on which days. It is frequently parked in a hard-to-find space at the back of the Manhattanville Houses NYCHA Parking lot at 549 W 126th Street, off Broadway. Once at the van, people must use their smartphones to fill out an online application that is different from the MyChart application that was used by the 21 Old Broadway site.

St. Luke's Episcopal Church Potential Sale and Redevelopment

The Episcopal Diocese of New York is exploring a sale of the property and building of St. Luke's Episcopal Church on Convent Avenue and W 141st Street. CB9 has engaged in preliminary discussions with the Hamilton Terrace Block Association about the future of the site, which is in a Historic District. If you are interested in being part of the research and discussion around the site, please email mcb9housing@gmail.com and mention St. Luke's Church in the subject line.