



Manhattan Borough President
Scott M. Stringer

**2006
Strategic
Policy Statement**

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September 1, 2006



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

SCOTT M. STRINGER
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

September 1, 2006

Dear Friend:

I am pleased to share with you the 2006 Strategic Policy Statement for the Office of the Manhattan Borough President. This document outlines the borough's most pressing policy issues and how my administration plans to address them over the next four years. This document is mandated by Section 82-14, Chapter Four of the New York City Charter and will be presented to the Mayor, the New York City Council and Manhattan's twelve Community Boards.

Since taking office eight months ago, I have traveled to each part of Manhattan to discern the most critical issues facing our borough. I have spoken with residents, business owners, community and religious leaders, advocates and many others. Every meeting confirmed that Manhattan has substantial challenges before it, including access to affordable housing, health care and jobs, and the need for a 21st century transportation system, just to name a few. But these discussions also manifested the dynamic spirit of Manhattan's residents and their will to support their families and their borough.

My office has already undertaken many borough-wide initiatives, including reforming and empowering Community Boards, equipping them with urban planning experts, spearheading Manhattan's first-ever count of abandoned buildings and vacant lots, voicing the parental concerns of our public schoolchildren, and convening transportation experts from New York City and around the world for an expansive transportation conference. We have accomplished much in a short amount of time, but there is still plenty to do. I will continue to bring attention to Manhattan's vital issues – through my investigative reports, task forces, town halls, and policy and community initiatives – and always with the goal of meaningful results.

The attached analysis is not a rundown of each and every concern of the people of Manhattan; rather, this document is a blueprint of what I hope to achieve in the coming years. Each policy statement identifies critical issues and how my office can effectively address them. As we work towards the goals detailed herein, we welcome your feedback.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Scott M. Stringer".

Scott M. Stringer
Manhattan Borough President

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Acknowledgements

The Borough President would like to thank his staff, especially his Policy Unit, for their hard work and dedication in preparing this Strategic Policy Statement.

Executive Summary

Policy goals to be accomplished by Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer:

Affordable Housing

- ✓ Empower community boards so that they may proactively plan for potential development in their communities, including the building of affordable housing.
- ✓ Use the Borough President's vote on the NYCERS pension fund to direct Economically Targeted Investments (ETIs) towards the development of affordable housing projects.
- ✓ Convene the Borough President's Mitchell-Lama Task Force to address the depletion of the affordable housing stock and to strategize with the community on preserving the existing stock of affordable housing.
- ✓ Work to halt the high number of subsidized buildings opting out of their programs.
- ✓ Be a strong voice in the fight for Home Rule.
- ✓ Work with New York City Housing Authority residents and advocates to preserve and maintain the level of affordability and quality of public housing.
- ✓ Work with special populations to ensure that their housing needs are met.

Community Board Reform

- ✓ Revamp recruitment efforts to encourage Community Board member applications.
- ✓ Establish an independent screening panel for Board appointment and end ad-hoc removals.
- ✓ Develop a more thorough application process to become a Community Board member.
- ✓ Incorporate feedback from the Borough President's Community Board Questionnaires.
- ✓ Introduce legislation to make conflicts of interest laws enforceable.
- ✓ Provide ongoing training and support for Community Board members and their staff.
- ✓ Strengthen accountability of Community Board operations.

Domestic Violence

- ✓ Offer resources to individuals at risk for or encountering domestic violence.
- ✓ Advocate for policy and programmatic initiatives that will help eradicate domestic violence.

Economic Development and Workforce Development

- ✓ Increase access to jobs, job training and career advancement opportunities for Manhattan residents.

- ✓ Promote access to responsible business retention and business support programs.
- ✓ Advocate for access to new and expanded job opportunities and retention through responsible development.
- ✓ Increase economic renewal across the borough by promoting Northern Manhattan and Downtown Manhattan as significant cultural and tourism destinations.
- ✓ Re-empower Lower Manhattan businesses by increasing access to information and services regarding the redeveloping residential, commercial and retail landscape.

Education

- ✓ Provide Manhattan's at-risk students with the support they need to be successful.
- ✓ Eliminate the obstacles hindering parent involvement and facilitate active parent participation.
- ✓ Expand non-instructional programming for public school children.

Environment

- ✓ Make building green a reality for our city by providing access to information and incentives.
- ✓ Focus on recycling to lessen New York's solid waste.
- ✓ Ensure that vehicles use cleaner fuels and cleaner burning technologies.
- ✓ Treat park space in Manhattan as a valuable commodity in need of investment.
- ✓ Increase access to the waterfront for all communities.

Health Care and Public Health

- ✓ Engage in borough-wide community-based health planning.
- ✓ Strengthen Manhattan's health care infrastructure.
- ✓ Expand and enroll Manhattanites in public health insurance.
- ✓ Invest in public health and ensure Manhattan families get access to the health information they need.

Land Use, Planning, and Development

- ✓ Empower Community Boards and communities to play a major role in the City's land use approval process, and to work proactively and effectively to achieve community planning goals.
- ✓ Work with communities and all stakeholders in Manhattan's future to articulate a progressive vision for urban planning and development, and to advance that vision through the land use approval process.
- ✓ Ensure that major development plans move forward in a way that meets citywide and community planning goals by bringing together stakeholders in collaborative dialogue.
- ✓ Preserve and protect the physical and social character of Manhattan's neighborhoods.
- ✓ Research and enact innovative land use and planning initiatives that will update the City's Zoning Resolution to meet new challenges.

Transportation

- ✓ Promote transportation alternatives to deal with the problems of traffic congestion, safety and air quality.
- ✓ Advocate for a fully funded public transit system.
- ✓ Ensure that our buses, subways and commuter rail lines are working at their most efficient and effective capacity.
- ✓ Ensure that public and private parking is properly priced.
- ✓ Fight for a public transit system that promotes complete accessibility to people with disabilities.

Affordable Housing

Accessing affordable housing is one of the biggest challenges facing our borough and our city. Across incomes and populations, residents are struggling to find and maintain housing. The number of rental units available to low- and moderate-income households has fallen significantly over the past three years. At the same time, 29% of New York City residents pay more than half of their incomes in rent. People come to our borough from around the world to pursue opportunities as teachers, actors, entrepreneurs, financiers, and artists. Those who came years ago, who helped Manhattan grow and thrive, are left fearing buy-outs, opt-outs, demolitions, major capital improvements, rent increases, condo conversions, and any number of other threats, while new New Yorkers are struggling to find first homes.

The problems and solutions of preserving and creating affordable housing are broad and complicated. Policy analyses on the overall state of housing in New York, as well as reports in our daily media, tell with increasing urgency the story of our affordable housing crisis. However, the Borough President is in a unique position to influence the housing debate and to undertake initiatives that will lead towards the goal of increasing the supply of affordable housing in Manhattan.

GOAL: Empower community boards so that they may proactively plan for potential development in their communities, including the building of affordable housing.

- The Manhattan Borough President's office has already spearheaded a targeted street-by-street survey of abandoned buildings and vacant lots in six of the Community Board Districts in Manhattan. Joined by volunteers from the community and community-based organizations, our office created an inventory of underutilized properties, and we will be completing the entire borough by year's end. By understanding where there is room for development and what properties might be brought back on line as affordable housing, communities will have the necessary tools to proactively plan for and, if desired, court housing development.

GOAL: Use the Borough President's vote on the NYCERS pension fund to direct Economically Targeted Investments (ETIs) towards the development of affordable housing projects.

- Our office will convene key stakeholders to direct Economically Targeted Investments towards already established and new affordable housing projects.

GOAL: Convene the Borough President's Mitchell-Lama Task Force to address the depletion of the affordable housing stock and to strategize with the community on preserving the existing stock of affordable housing.

- Borough President Stringer's Mitchell-Lama Task Force continues to convene on a regular basis and to provide a forum for Mitchell-Lama tenants and shareholders to network and share information.
- Guest speakers, including representatives of the Department of Housing, Preservation and Development, the Housing Development Corporation, the New York City Comptroller's Office, and community housing organizations, have and will continue to provide Task Force members with the opportunity to learn of new programs and initiatives that are designed to keep Mitchell-Lama units in the program.
- Beyond the Task Force, our office will develop forums in which tenants and shareholders may express their concerns and share their "insider knowledge" with elected officials and other housing stakeholders, such as Mitchell Lama Town Halls.
- Where appropriate, our office will advocate for tenants and shareholders and hold government agencies accountable for the preservation of the Mitchell-Lama housing stock.

GOAL: Work to halt the high number of subsidized buildings opting out of their programs.

Recent reports have emphasized the increasing numbers of subsidized buildings opting out of programs such as project-based Section 8, Sections 221 and 236 federal mortgage interest programs and Mitchell-Lamas, as well as the increasing loss of rent-regulated units.

- Our office will lend policy assistance on a case-by-case basis to buildings whose owners are considering opting out of subsidized programs.
- The Borough President will advocate for the Department of Housing, Preservation and Development (HPD) to create a "Buy-out Office" to provide expertise and serve as a liaison for tenants who are facing buy-outs. This issue is too large for a piece-meal solution. Policy must be developed to consistently deal with opt-outs and to clarify the need to preserve the existing affordable housing stock in New York City.

GOAL: Be a strong voice in the fight for Home Rule.

In order to preserve the remaining stock of rent-regulated housing it is essential that the City have control over its rent laws. It makes no sense for non-City legislators to decide New York City rents while our borough faces a growing housing crisis.

- Our office will be a presence at Rent Guidelines Board hearings and will testify in support of Home Rule when possible. Additionally, the Borough President will lend his voice and use his bully pulpit to fight for City control over rent regulation.

GOAL: Work with New York City Housing Authority residents and advocates to preserve and maintain the level of affordability and quality of public housing.

During the first half of 2006, the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) has introduced a number of measures to increase the resident burden in public housing.

- To date, the Borough President has been a strong advocate for public housing residents, speaking out against:
 - Increases in resident fees and rents
 - The use of Section 8 Vouchers in City and State-funded developments
 - NYCHA’s application to the federal “Moving to Work Program”
- Our office will continue to weigh in on the issues affecting both public housing as a whole and the daily lives of individual residents and developments by:
 - Attending Resident Association meetings
 - Testifying at public hearings on NYCHA’s Annual Plans
 - Regularly communicating with advocates and tenants
 - Undertaking critical research projects and offering policy solutions.

GOAL: Work with special populations to ensure that their housing needs are met.

The affordable housing crisis in Manhattan is wide in scope—it touches many people and many populations throughout the borough.

- Our office will meet with special populations, such as seniors, people with disabilities and those with HIV/AIDS to understand their housing needs and to help them access necessary services.
- The Borough President’s Task Force on Immigration Rights will explore the issue of language barriers in accessing housing.
- The Borough President will continue to advocate for higher eligibility thresholds for seniors seeking the assistance of Senior Citizens Rent Increase Exempt and parity for people with disabilities seeking Disability Rent Increase Exemption assistance.
- Our office has and will continue to assist with the development of affordable housing through our capital budget.

Community Board Reform

One of the greatest sources of power to leverage change in Manhattan comes from the residents, specifically, from the twelve Community Boards in the borough. Community Boards are the most local units of New York City government. In Fiscal Year 2005, the city spent more than \$2.6 million on the operations of Manhattan's Community Boards. Community Boards should and can be the conscience and voice of our neighborhoods.

The full potential of Community Boards has not yet been realized. Notwithstanding their achievements, these boards have been historically undermined by inefficiency and a lack of accountability and diversity. In 2005, an examination of Manhattan Community Board operations found that:

- The Community Board appointment process was overly politicized and unsystematic;
- Boards operated with ongoing vacancies;
- Undisclosed lobbying was commonplace;
- Conflicts of interest laws were not enforced;
- Boards operated without any external requirement of assessment and evaluation.

Our office has taken the initiative to reform and empower Manhattan's Community Boards. Some of these reforms are immediate; others require long-term planning and oversight. Ultimately, however, these reforms will restore each Board to its rightful place on the frontlines of community planning and advocacy.

GOAL: Revamp recruitment efforts to encourage Community Board member applications.

- To ensure that Community Board members embody the diversity and expertise necessary to fight for all local residents' needs, we are strengthening the yearly recruitment and application process. Specialized community liaisons from our office meet with a range of groups and community-based organizations throughout the borough to raise awareness of our revitalized Community Boards. We are handing out applications to everyone interested in becoming a board member.

GOAL: Establish an independent screening panel for Board appointment and end ad-hoc removals.

- Our office has formed a Community Board Reform Committee that will function as an independent screening panel for all board applicants. This Committee is comprised of community-based organizations and has established a standard set of criteria by which

board applicants will be assessed. Furthermore, just as members are now systematically appointed, they will no longer be removed on an ad-hoc basis. In this administration, Community Board members will be appointed and serve according to merit.

- The community-based organizations represented on the screening panel are: The Brennan Center for Justice, Citizen's Union, the Hispanic Federation, the League of Women Voters, the Municipal Art Society, the NAACP, the New York League of Conservation Voters, NYPIRG, Partnership for NYC, Regional Plan Association, West Harlem Environmental Action, the Women's City Club of NY, and the Urban League.

GOAL: Develop a more thorough application process to become a Community Board member.

- Because of our reforms, the Community Board application process is now more thorough than ever before. Our office has drafted a new application that provides comprehensive information on applicant backgrounds. This application will provide the Community Board Reform Committee the means to assemble the most representative and diverse board memberships possible. Each applicant, including those seeking re-appointment, must submit an application to be appointed to a Community Board.

GOAL: Incorporate feedback from the Borough President's Community Board Questionnaires.

- Neighborhoods know best. That is why in December 2005 the Manhattan Borough President solicited questionnaires from all of the Community Board members, District Managers and Chairs to get their feedback on how Community Boards should be reformed. The results gave our office key insights into the priorities, satisfactions and dissatisfactions of Manhattan's Community Boards. Our office plans to do an abbreviated version of this questionnaire on an annual basis.

GOAL: Introduce legislation to make conflicts of interest laws enforceable.

- Without records of financial interest, the Conflicts of Interest Board (COIB) is forced to rely on the honor system, greatly compromising its ability to regulate potentially harmful conflicts of interest on Community Boards. Our office has worked to draft legislation on the state level to allow the COIB to create and accept a shortened financial disclosure form, which Community Board Chairs as volunteers can fill out to make the conflicts of interest law truly enforceable. In the interim, we have updated the Community Board application to include questions regarding conflicts of interest.

GOAL: Provide ongoing training and support for Community Board members and their staff.

- Following the appointment of Community Board members, our office continues to serve as a resource and a guide for the operations of every board. We will work with each Community Board according to its specific needs and collaborate with each Board to

develop ongoing training services for Board members on issues including budgeting, land use procedures, conflicts of interest and parliamentary procedure.

GOAL: Strengthen accountability of Community Board operations.

- By coordinating with each Community Board office, we will set minimum district requirements as it relates to service delivery and require annual reports addressing board finances, operations and progress. Our detailed attention to Manhattan's Community Boards is unprecedented and will result in unparalleled achievements by the Boards for their communities.

Domestic Violence

Even one case of domestic violence is one too many. While overall crime rates continue to decline in New York City, reports of domestic violence have actually increased. Domestic violence disproportionately impacts low-income and immigrant women. According to a 2004 New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene report, black women comprise approximately 50% of all women killed by their intimate partners, while Hispanic women accounted for 27% of homicides. In addition, researchers found that 51% of women killed by an intimate partner were foreign born. Statistics also indicate that police precincts in Northern Manhattan receive a large percentage of the Domestic Incident Reports (DIRS) filed in the borough.

GOAL: Offer resources to individuals at risk for or encountering domestic violence.

- In January 2006, the Borough President's office served as the lead applicant for a \$1.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women to create the first ever Manhattan Domestic Violence Criminal Justice Services Project. If funded, this project would provide for unprecedented collaboration between a Borough President, the New York County District Attorney's Office, the New York Police Department and community-based organizations such as Harlem Legal Services and CONNECT.
- Our project, when actualized, will provide a continuum of services for victim/survivors of domestic violence through implementation of early intervention strategies. Focusing on the neighborhoods in Manhattan which have experienced the highest rates of intimate partner homicide and filings of DIRs, this project will advance the model of providing comprehensive, multidisciplinary, prosecutorial, civil legal and supportive services for victims/survivors in northern Manhattan.
- The Borough President's office will collaborate with Legal Services for New York City to ensure that victims and survivors throughout the borough will have access to civil legal services and representation in Supreme and Family Court.

GOAL: Advocate for policy and programmatic initiatives that will help eradicate domestic violence.

- Under the direction of the Deputy Borough President, our office will continue to convene the Borough President's Domestic Violence Task Force, comprised of advocates and leaders working in communities throughout the borough, to eradicate domestic violence.

- Our office's Task Force will work on a wide range of issues impacting victims of domestic violence, including housing, translation/cultural issues, family court, and education and prevention outreach to youth. Through this results-driven Task Force, we will advocate for policies that will protect women and men from abuse.
- Through the annual budget process, our office will fight for funding for community-level programs that provide safe havens and legal help for survivors of domestic violence.

Economic and Workforce Development

Manhattan is often cited as the economic engine of New York City, New York State, and a large portion of the Northeast. Nonetheless, within Manhattan, there are numerous areas that suffer from intense poverty, high unemployment rates and a lack of the critical services needed to address such issues. In some places, poverty and unemployment reach as high as 37% and 18% respectively, as compared to the borough's average of only 19% and 8.5%. To address these discrepancies, and to help maintain Manhattan's position as one of the world's top economic engines, the Borough President will focus on supporting policies and strategies that increase access to comprehensive economic and workforce development initiatives throughout the city.

GOAL: Increase access to jobs, job training and career advancement opportunities for Manhattan residents.

Low-wage and disenfranchised workers must have access to job training, employment, and career advancement opportunities in order to break the long-standing cycles of poverty.

- The Borough President's office will identify and employ models and programs that are supposed to connect low-wage workers to viable employment and training opportunities, with a particular focus on the most disenfranchised populations, including formerly incarcerated persons, limited English speaking, people with disabilities, black men and the homeless.
- Our office will collaborate with city, state and federal programs to promote outreach, widen entry points, and increase participation in available job assistance and readiness programs.
- Our office will support and increase the services of non-profit workforce development agencies by serving as local government partners for funding and grant opportunities through our Budget Unit.
- Our office will serve as a referral center for constituents who lack information on the types of services located in their neighborhoods.

GOAL: Promote access to responsible business retention and business support programs.

Businesses, both large and small, often require technical and financial assistance in order to remain viable enterprises, retain productive workforces, and succeed in New York's extremely competitive environment over the long-run. Gaps and inefficiencies in the provision of such support threaten Manhattan business communities and may frivolously waste millions in taxpayers' dollars.

- Our office has and will continue to work with leading city and state agencies that provide publicly subsidized tax incentives to businesses to expand outreach and intake strategies, reform and update policies to reduce the abuse of subsidies, and codify progressive procedures to increase the impact of their services. Additionally, our office will ensure transparency, equity and accountability in the use of publicly supported discretionary funding by serving as a watchdog of city and state agencies.
- Our office will serve as a comprehensive referral center for businesses, both large and small, requiring services and work with local area Chambers of Commerce, Business Improvement Districts, and city agencies to develop and distribute information crucial to the success of small businesses.
- Through our grant opportunities, we will provide financial support for key initiatives and projects that will benefit local area businesses and generate job opportunities for Manhattanites.
- In an effort to promote creative solutions and measures, our office will examine and identify potential faults in models and programs aimed at providing equitable contracting opportunities and other business services to enterprises across the city.

GOAL: Advocate for access to new and expanded job opportunities and retention through responsible development.

Large-scale commercial, real estate, and residential developments hold the potential to create significant job opportunities. However, if left unchecked, developments can move forward without offering any benefits to local communities, and, in fact, hurt local area businesses. The Borough President will work to help communities access and retain jobs as new developments are built by promoting the ideals of responsible and progressive development.

- The Borough President and his Land Use staff will leverage the recommendation powers afforded through the Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP) to promote fair and equitable job creation and protection. We will also work with communities in the development of Community Benefits Agreements that create quality jobs, paying particular attention to minority and women workers.
- Our office will advocate for the addition of employment commitments and job benefits to the 421-a eligibility requirements. The 421-a program offers 10 years of tax breaks to developers on new construction and can be used to leverage the inclusion of affordable housing units and other community give-backs.
- The Borough President's office will work to ensure and advocate that businesses and surrounding developments receive all legal services required to be provided by developing companies/government agencies, and that negative impacts on job opportunities are mitigated. We will also help support and evaluate the development of much needed business enterprises in underserved areas, including full service banking institutions in some of the borough's more distressed areas.

GOAL: Increase economic renewal across the borough by promoting Northern Manhattan and Downtown Manhattan as significant cultural and tourism destinations.

New York City is the number one destination for overseas travelers to the United States. Each year travelers pour into New York City to enjoy the sights, the restaurants, and the cultural offerings of Manhattan, and help bolster the city's employment, economic, and tax revenue base. In 2004 alone, tourism in the City supported over 240,000 jobs and generated over \$5 billion in tax revenue. Such positive economic and employment impacts are accrued by traditional tourist destination areas, such as Midtown Manhattan, yet Harlem and Upper Manhattan have not been promoted as tourism and cultural destinations despite the wealth of historic landmarks, parks, museums, world-famous restaurants, and sites that the neighborhoods offer.

- Our office is committed to working with community groups to encourage promotions and special "Nights Out." Individual neighborhoods can be highlighted – for example, an El Barrio Night Out or a Lower East Side Night Out – where restaurants offer specials and artisans showcase wares.
- Our office seeks to collaborate with partners to create cultural districts – designated areas that could be revitalized by an artistic presence. Galleries and performance spaces that want to open in these districts would be introduced to these areas to garner public support.
- Through our Manhattan Borough Cultural Tourism program that we manage in partnership with NYC & Company, we will fund outreach and marketing efforts for Northern Manhattan groups that offer cultural programming. In 2006 our office funded outreach and marketing for the "Summer Nights" concert series at El Museo del Barrio and the Dance Harlem Festival in Marcus Garvey Park.

GOAL: Re-empower Lower Manhattan businesses by increasing access to information and services regarding the redeveloping residential, commercial and retail landscape.

Five years after the September 11th terrorist attacks, downtown Manhattan is still struggling to regain its pre-9/11 strength. More office towers are on the way, yet few tenants have agreed to move into existing spaces. As Lower Manhattan continues to develop itself into a residential community, it is important to ensure that small businesses have the opportunity to serve the burgeoning population. The Borough President is committed to helping facilitate access to the recovery and redeveloping landscape in Lower Manhattan, especially for the small business owners who helped rebuild their neighborhood.

- Our office will convene forums and roundtables with local community organizations and businesses to develop policies and procedures that will address the needs of both residents and businesses in Lower Manhattan. It is important that through these events, small business owners can express their concerns and ideas to secure a viable economic future.

Education

Serving more than one million students, New York City's public school system is the largest in the United States. There are six community school districts in Manhattan serving a total of more than 165,000 students. In addition, thousands more students attend schools that are located in Manhattan but administered by the citywide alternative high school and special education school districts.

Access to a sound education is not only a fundamental right, but also, often serves as the foundation for the economic and social achievements valued by society. The Borough President's education agenda will celebrate the diversity of the borough's student population, seek to address the inequities that prevent every student from having access to a sound public school education, and eliminate the barriers that prevent parents from being active and effective participants in their children's education.

GOAL: Provide Manhattan's at-risk students with the support they need to be successful.

Although many of the most esteemed public schools and programs in the City are located in Manhattan, the borough is nonetheless home to many schools that are struggling academically. In addition, many of the borough's schools serve high need student populations; while 65% of students live below the poverty line citywide, 69% of Manhattan students live at or below the poverty level. In the 2004-2005 school year, approximately 16,500 - or roughly 10% - of students in Manhattan received some kind of special education services. Additionally, in that same school year, 25,000 of the borough's students had limited English proficiency. Because of the varying needs of our student population, it is imperative that the Borough President's office assist Manhattan's neediest schools and the most at-risk students.

- Our office has established an education grants program to identify and channel additional funding to support both instructional and non-instructional programming in the borough's highest needs schools. Over the next several years, we will continue to match needy schools with funding from private and public sources. Additionally, we will provide technical assistance to parent leaders at both the school and district levels on how to identify and apply for funding.
- The Borough President's office will work collaboratively with parent and community representatives from underserved communities to address educational programming needs.

GOAL: Eliminate the obstacles hindering parent involvement and facilitate active parent participation.

Despite the placement of a staff person in every school who is responsible for addressing the needs of parents and the creation of parent-dominated councils that are charged with the responsibility of providing advice on capital and instructional matters, there continues to be widespread sentiment that parental and public involvement is not a priority of the officials leading the City's public school system. In fact, those most closely tracking public education in New York City largely agree that parental involvement has declined in recent years. The Borough President will support parents in becoming more active and integral players in the New York City public school system.

- As a follow up to the Borough President's June 2006 report, "Parents Dismissed: An Analysis of Manhattan's Community Education Councils and the New York City Department of Education's Role in Engaging Parent Leaders," our office will sponsor trainings, roundtables, and forums for parents aimed at providing them with the tools necessary to successfully navigate the education system and to advocate on behalf of their children's needs.
- Our office will establish a parent leader training program through which parents serving on Parent Associations, School Leadership Teams, and Community Education Councils can obtain the training, resources, and support necessary for them to fulfill their duties and responsibilities and to be effective and proactive leaders in our public school system.
- Working with the City, we will convene a citywide task force to identify the barriers to active parent participation and to develop a set of recommendations, both legislative and non-legislative, aimed at removing the obstacles hindering parent participation.

GOAL: Expand non-instructional programming for public school children.

With the strong focus on standardized test scores, many educators and parents believe that inadequate resources are being channeled towards areas outside of reading and math instruction and that, as a result, students have increasingly fewer opportunities to participate in sports and arts programs.

- To expand extra-curricular opportunities for students, the Manhattan Borough President will establish a Youth Sports League that will provide young people the opportunity to engage in sports, including basketball and softball. Our office will also work to ensure that existing youth sports leagues are given priority for Manhattan's limited field space and will work collaboratively with developers and others to create more playing space. In addition, our office will help improve access to sports programs, leagues, facilities and equipment for young women and girls who still face discrimination because of their gender.
- Our office will work collaboratively with school administrators and parents to identify non-instructional programming needs, such as sports and arts, and, utilizing the Education Grants Program, assist them in identifying and securing funding to support these needs.

Environment

The environment is not merely a public policy issue, but rather a priority that impacts each and every person who lives, visits, or works in our borough. For example, according to both the *American Lung Association State of the Air: 2006* report and the federal Clean Air Act guidelines, New York City receives poor grades for air quality. This is just one issue of many that demands our attention if we are to make Manhattan a leader in progressive environmental policy and sustainability. The Borough President is committed to improving the environment of New York City by increasing the quality and longevity of the lives of Manhattan residents. He will work to ensure cleaner air and water, more open space, and long-term solutions for urban sustainability.

GOAL: Make building green a reality for our city by providing access to information and incentives.

Green building technology already readily exists; however, access to information and incentives for such technology is not as readily available. Fostering the creation of high-performance buildings is a top priority in this administration. Environmentally friendly construction and renovations can create jobs, enhance worker productivity, better the environment and improve the city's economic health.

“Green” buildings are buildings that are built environmentally responsibly and create a healthy space for living and working. It is in both the economic and environmental interests of cities to promote green building technologies. However, such new construction is not the only way to reduce the negative impact on the environment. Existing buildings can reduce energy reliance through high efficiency lighting, green roofs and cogeneration, amongst other methods.

The largest barrier to more green building is the lack of knowledge about its benefits and costs. The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) has several programs, including technical assistance, low interest loans, and feasibility study grants, to promote energy-efficient measures for both major renovations and scaled-down construction on existing buildings.

Fostering bottom-up solutions to use less power can be achieved by sponsoring educational forums for building owners and developers, as well as co-op and condo board members, to learn more about these cutting edge technologies and existing financial incentives. Offering access to this information is vital to its implementation on both the consumer and developer level.

- The Borough President will dedicate capital funds to projects which include green building elements. Our office has already committed \$2.65 million in capital funds to projects including green roofs and green residential programs.

GOAL: Focus on recycling to lessen New York's solid waste.

In July 2006, the City approved the Solid Waste Management Plan, which incorporates waste reduction, re-use and recycling, especially in the context of economic development. Commercial garbage below 59th Street accounts for 40% of the entire city's commercial waste. Companies and city government must work together to reduce the amount of waste produced by focusing on sustainable products and recycling.

In this high tech age, our electronics choices change rapidly. Businesses and individuals are constantly upgrading their equipment, often leaving many electronics from cell phones to computers headed to the dump. Coordination is needed to ensure these electronics are recycled to schools, shelters, or other community groups that could benefit from such equipment.

- Through the Borough President's Solid Waste Advisory Board, our office will increase procurement of sustainable products and materials, work to advocate for the establishment of electronics recycling centers, and create coordination between businesses and non-profits to reuse electronics efficiently through donation programs.
- Our office will fund innovative projects to promote solar use and efficient trash collection.

GOAL: Ensure vehicles use cleaner fuels and cleaner burning technologies.

Currently, cars are the number one contributors to air pollution, exacerbating the already high asthma and cardiovascular disease rates in New York City. As a result, New York City has been taking steps towards requiring and encouraging the conversion of various vehicle fleets to clean fuels and cleaner-burning technologies. However, some buses, commercial-waste hauling trucks, ambulances, on- and off-road construction vehicles, and ferries do not use clean fuels. Stationary sources like power plants and wastewater treatment plants also do not use clean fuels.

- Our office will urge timely compliance with the new fuel regulation for city-owned vehicles and will identify specific vehicle fleets that contribute disproportionately to the overall emissions burden. We will develop incentives and other strategies for improving fleet performance.
- We will advocate for the conversion of city-owned stationary sources, such as power plants and wastewater treatment plants, to the best available technologies, including ultra-low sulfur fuel or natural gas.

GOAL: Treat park space in Manhattan as a valuable commodity in need of investment.

Manhattan's 2,686 acres of parkland have long been considered a beautifying amenity, but well-preserved parks are equally essential to improving the quality of our air and environment. Parks have been credited with reducing crime as well as serving as an essential aid to the city's public health by providing a refuge from urban life and improving the physical and mental health of residents.

With 17.8% of the borough devoted to parkland, including 204 playgrounds, 251 Greenstreets, and 371 basketball courts, a significant amount of support is needed to keep our parks and community gardens clean, well-maintained and safe for our residents and visitors. As the population of Manhattan continues to grow, parkland becomes an ever more precious commodity. Manhattan faces challenges in providing enough parkland for its residents regardless of socioeconomic status. According to a study by New Yorkers for Parks, the ratio of kids to the number of playgrounds and parks is the highest in Chelsea while the Upper East Side has the lowest acreage of parkland per 1,000 people in the entire city. Adequate funding is essential to meet these challenges. Over the past 15 years, city funding for parks has declined by 25%, resulting in a 50% decline in parks staff.

- Through the annual city budget process, the Borough President will advocate for the Parks Department to keep the roughly \$40 million earned from concession revenue in addition to its other city funding.
- Balancing commercial and residential interests in city parks is always a contentious issue. Our office will continue working with neighborhoods to discern what is best for each community and to strategize about how to keep our parks sustainable as well as accessible.
- Through our budget process, our office will commit Borough President capital dollars to street-tree planting, maintenance, and development and renovation of our borough's parks.

GOAL: Increase access to the waterfront for all communities.

Manhattan's waterfront continues to receive serious attention from developers, civic organizations and government officials. From Washington Heights to Battery Park, new parks are being developed while other proposals call for commercial and institutional uses. This is a critical moment for our borough's waterfront, and it is one in which the Borough President plays a vital role.

Although there have been many successes, too many New Yorkers still have limited access to the waterfront. Serious and consistent investments are required to restore the health and vitality of Manhattan's waterfront and to make it fully accessible. These investments must focus both on improving access and on ongoing maintenance. Specific projects and issues that will demand the close attention of the Borough President are: Hudson River Park, Harlem River Park, the East River waterfront, Harlem Piers and the West Harlem waterfront, Riverside Park North, Randall's Island, Roosevelt Island, Battery Park, and Governors Island.

Specifically, our office will work on the following waterfront items:

- Push for immediate access to the East Harlem waterfront and for waterfront amenities for the community. The community should be compensated for its decade-long lack of access.

- Support community efforts to redesign the Harlem River Drive flyover so as not to degrade the quality of life of nearby residents.
- Ensure follow-up to the promise that Governors Island serves as a recreational resource to all while preserving the historic structures on the island. Our office has dedicated \$500,000 to a Visitor's Center and has applied for a \$350,000 grant from the Department of State to further these goals. We have partnered with the Governors Island Alliance and the National Park Service to apply for the Department of Environmental Conservation's Hudson River Estuary Fund Grant to support coastal educational programming on the island.
- Complete the Bridge the Gap study of the feasibility of a pedestrian bridge to Randall's Island and explore the possibility of its construction and/or enhance pedestrian access to the island.
- Support the relocation of New York City's Department of Sanitation-managed salt piles and other municipal uses from the waterfront to more suitable locations.
- Identify funding sources to implement the recommendations of the Take Me to the River study of Riverside Park North.
- Support the development of the East River Waterfront Park.
- Work to complete the Manhattan Rim Walkway by identifying holes in access to Manhattan's waterfront and partnering with organizations to create access.

Health Care and Public Health

A strong public health infrastructure in New York is critical if we are to ensure access to affordable, quality health care for all Manhattanites. Too often, we forget that although our borough has some of the best public and private hospitals, clinics, and community-based service providers in the country, Manhattan is a place where great disparities exist: between those who can afford health care and those who cannot, and those who know how to access services and those who go without care. Almost always, the lack of access to care and education about health information is most acute among communities of color, immigrants and low-income New Yorkers.

GOAL: Engage in borough-wide community-based health planning.

Manhattan should lead the city and the nation in addressing the wide-ranging problems in public health, whether they concern disease, preventive care, access to services, or support programs that encourage healthy living. The first step to achieving this goal must come from an analysis of what each community in Manhattan needs to improve the health status of its residents. Community based health planning, a tool that allows community needs to shape and direct health planning for an area, is an appropriate and necessary first step to addressing neighborhood- and borough-wide health problems and barriers to access. Furthermore, this kind of ground-level attention to health needs will help address an issue long-plaguing our borough, our city and indeed the entire country – disparities in care in communities of color.

- Our office will convene key community and health care stakeholders to identify community needs for Manhattan's neighborhoods; work with residents, health advocates, providers, and city officials to collect data and pertinent information about community health needs in order to identify policy goals and solutions; and offer policy proposals to ensure greater access to care for those most at risk of not receiving care, especially seniors, people with disabilities, low-income New Yorkers, children, and immigrants.
- Through our budget unit, we will fund community-based organizations and programs that address health care needs in neighborhoods and throughout the borough.

GOAL: Strengthen Manhattan's health care infrastructure.

If Manhattanites are to access care, hospitals and clinics need to be attentive to the needs of the communities in which they serve and to be supported in their efforts to remain in those communities. Manhattan's public hospitals, including Gouverneur, Metropolitan, Lincoln, Harlem, Bellevue, Roosevelt, Coler-Goldwater, and the Renaissance Diagnostic and Treatment Center, are required to provide care to all New Yorkers, despite ability to pay or language

spoken. While our public hospitals have done their best to keep pace with growing health care costs, more must be done in order to help our institutions adapt to the changing faces of New York's patients and the growing numbers of uninsured who seek treatment in our hospitals.

Child Health Clinics, which are located in various communities throughout Manhattan, have been serving the needs of children in New York City for almost 100 years by providing free or low-cost medications, immunizations and checkups. Many children these clinics treat are from immigrant families and/or those who live in substandard housing conditions. A majority of the families that use these clinics do not have access to health care, have children with multiple health conditions and are extremely low-income. Despite their vital role, each year, increasing numbers of child health clinics are on the chopping block.

- The Governor's Commission on Health Care Facilities in the 21st Century may be proposing hospital closures and/or downsizing in Manhattan. The Borough President will oppose the closing of health institutions, which would limit access to care for our borough's communities. Services, whether provided at the VA Hospital, child health clinics, or at one of our city's outstanding public hospitals, must be available for New Yorkers.

GOAL: Expand and enroll Manhattanites in public health insurance.

According to the United Hospital Fund, nearly 25% of New York City residents are uninsured, many of whom live and work in Manhattan, and seek medical attention in our borough. Data show that children and adults without health insurance are more likely to experience financial hardship, receive less effective health care services and suffer from more medical ailments than those who have insurance. Free or low-cost public health insurance, such as Child Health Plus, Medicaid, and Family Health Plus, are offered in New York to help people access the care they need, when they need it. But, according to data, nearly a million New Yorkers are eligible for this help but are not enrolled. Clearly, initiatives that will spread the word and get people signed up for the health care they need and deserve should be a priority.

- Through the Policy, Community Affairs and Constituent Services units, the Borough President's office will educate communities in each part of the borough about the availability of low-cost or free health insurance and will partner with advocates, providers and community-based organizations to spearhead initiatives that will advertise the availability of health insurance.
- Our office will push the City to simplify the enrollment processes for public health insurance so that more New Yorkers can access this coverage.

GOAL: Invest in public health and ensure Manhattan families get access to the health information they need.

There is a public health crisis in several of our borough's communities – high rates of diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and HIV/AIDS are disproportionately hitting neighborhoods like East Harlem and Washington Heights. Asthma, obesity and lead poisoning, almost always

preventable, are plaguing our children in areas that tend to lack access to health care. There are direct links among lower-income neighborhoods, high prevalence rates of disease, and lack of access to preventative care and treatment.

These adverse health conditions take their toll on New Yorkers. For example, asthma is the leading cause of childhood hospitalization and missed work and school in New York City. Unbelievably, one in four children in East Harlem has asthma – the neighborhood has the highest rate of childhood asthma hospitalization in New York and in the entire United States. And HIV/AIDS is still a public health crisis in this city – the rate of HIV/AIDS is seeing a troubling growth among communities of color and among women.

- Working with coalition partners, our office will fight for assurance that the New York City Department of Education is implementing the new HIV curriculum that will teach all students, at age-appropriate levels, about HIV prevention. Through this coalition, we will also advocate for a revised and appropriate sexual health education curriculum for city schools.
- Our office will sponsor community forums and town halls in impacted communities to allow residents to voice their concerns about the state of public health in their communities. Working with community-based providers and safety net hospitals, we will disseminate health information and resources in key neighborhoods.
- The Borough President's office will be a leader in the City to ensure women have access to reproductive health information and the resources they need to make decisions about their health care choices.

Land Use, Planning and Development

As the engine of the region's economy, and the unofficial capital of the world, Manhattan has been under tremendous development pressure for more than a century. But that pressure has never been greater than it is today, with a booming real estate market bringing an unprecedented level of new development – and with it, development's inevitable discontents.

Development in Manhattan is necessary and desirable because it is the way that a great city grows. But if development proceeds without proper planning, it will overwhelm Manhattan's neighborhoods, overburden our infrastructure, and make the borough unaffordable and unlivable for the very people who built it up to be the attractive place to which people from around the world want to come.

Now, more than ever, Manhattan needs a proactive, progressive urban planning agenda that can effectively channel development energy towards meeting important citywide and community goals, such as creating and preserving affordable housing and providing economic opportunities for those who need it most. To strike the proper balance between growth and neighborhood preservation, communities must be empowered to play a role in the land use process, all stakeholders must work collaboratively on major development projects, and the City's zoning regulations must be updated and reformed to meet the challenges of a rapidly growing city. The Borough President's Office will be a place where communities from across the borough can achieve their own community goals and unite as a larger Manhattan community to shape development in a way that reflects the principles and priorities of the borough's residents.

GOAL: Empower Community Boards and communities to play a major role in the City's land use approval process, and to work proactively and effectively to achieve community planning goals.

To ensure an appropriate balance between citywide goals and neighborhood needs, communities themselves must be forceful spokespeople and effective advocates for their priorities. One of the Borough President's top priorities for the office is to ensure that communities have access to the tools that can make them effective players in the land use and planning process.

- Our office is establishing an **Urban Planning Fellowship program** with New York City universities that will place graduate-level urban planning students in each of Manhattan's Community Boards. With training and supervision from the Borough President's office as well as from their universities, the Fellows will work on community planning projects identified as priorities by the Board, such as researching and implemented community-based planning initiatives in a specific neighborhood, or enhancing and supplementing the day-to-day planning and development capacities of the Board. Our office will

continue to work with the Mayor and City Council to secure additional funding to support such full-time planning assistance.

- The Borough President's Land Use, Planning and Development unit has begun a series of land use training seminars for Community Board members and for community leaders. These seminars provide a basic guide to the history and mechanics of zoning, environmental review, and the City's land use process, and will be the first step towards equipping communities with the tools they need to "speak the language" of planning and zoning.
- The Stringer administration has, for the first time in many years, revamped the planning capacity of the Borough President's office by adding to the staff several trained urban planners to work on land use and planning activities. These planners are directly available to provide technical assistance to Community Boards and communities in their planning activities.

GOAL: Work with communities and all stakeholders in Manhattan's future to articulate a progressive vision for urban planning and development, and to advance that vision through the land use approval process.

Manhattan can lead the nation, as it has in the past, by setting high standards for how development should serve progressive ideals such as environmental sustainability and economic justice. By working with communities to define and unify behind common principles for development across the Borough, we will use the Borough President's and the Community Boards' roles in the City's land use approval process to raise the standard of development projects in the borough.

- Working through the Community Boards and the Borough Board, we will develop a comprehensive set of shared principles for land use and development that embody the progressive ideals of the borough and that will be held up as a standard on every application that proceeds through the land use process. While each of Manhattan's diverse communities has its own individual priorities, there are many common goals that unite nearly every community in the borough, such as environmental sustainability, adequate infrastructure investment, economic opportunities for local residents, and development contextual with neighborhood character.
- Our office will work with environmental experts, community leaders, and the development community to develop strong standards for environmentally sustainable development, adapting the U.S. Green Building Council's "Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design" (LEED) standards for Manhattan's unique conditions. A high standard of environmental sustainability will be held out as a standard on every development project that proceeds through the land use approval process.
- The Borough President's office will bring together Manhattan's community leaders and New York's labor leaders to develop shared principles on hiring and contracting practices

and on opportunities for minority- and women-owned businesses on development projects. For too long, labor and communities have been divided on development issues. But both have a great deal in common when it comes to supporting good-paying jobs, safe construction sites, and job and career opportunities for local residents and businesses. With common shared principles, labor and community can stand together as a powerful voice in the land use approval process for responsible development that provides economic opportunities for all New Yorkers.

GOAL: Ensure that major development plans move forward in a way that meets citywide and community planning goals by bringing together stakeholders in collaborative dialogue.

Manhattan is a place where bold visions can become reality. In order to ensure that major large-scale development plans succeed, it is important that communities and other stakeholders be engaged in collaborative dialogue with project proponents at the earliest possible point in the process.

- Our office is uniquely positioned to play a leading role bringing together all stakeholders on large-scale development plans currently on the drawing boards in Manhattan, including the redevelopment of the World Trade Center, the expansion of Columbia University, the development of Governors Island, “Uptown New York,” Moynihan Station and the ongoing implementation of the Hudson Yards plan, the former Con Edison First Avenue properties, Sherman Creek, and the 125th Street River-to-River rezoning, to name just a few. Sharing information and identifying community priorities at the earliest possible point in the process can ensure that these and other important large-scale projects move forward by meeting, rather than obstructing, community goals.

GOAL: Preserve and protect the physical and social character of Manhattan’s neighborhoods.

While some areas of Manhattan present opportunities for significant new growth and development, other neighborhoods need restrictions on growth, or they will rapidly lose their essential character. Many neighborhoods have outdated zoning that does not adequately reflect their built character and must be rezoned to shape development contextually.

- Our office will study, pursue and enact comprehensive contextual rezonings of certain low-scale neighborhoods, like the Lower East Side, the Upper West Side between 96-110th Streets, and others, to control out-of-scale development and shape development in a way that respects neighborhood character.
- With input from the preservationist community and neighborhood leaders, our office will develop and implement a long-term borough-wide preservationist agenda for historic and architecturally significant buildings and neighborhoods. The agenda will go beyond specific buildings and will address the comprehensive reform that is necessary to ensure that the Landmarks Preservation Commission, the City Council and the Community Boards are fully capable of preserving the architectural heritage of the City’s most historic borough.

GOAL: Research and enact innovative land use and planning initiatives that will update the City's Zoning Resolution to meet new challenges.

Many important goals can be accomplished through the City's existing Zoning Resolution. But many of the new challenges the City now faces invite reconsideration and reform of the way our current zoning works.

- Over the past few years, the City has reformed and expanded its Inclusionary Housing program on a piecemeal basis by adapting the program specifically to different enacted rezonings. These reforms, which include broadening income levels and making Inclusionary Housing bonuses available in less dense districts, have not yet been applied to the citywide program. We will undertake a comprehensive review of the City's Inclusionary Housing program and pursue reforms that will maximize affordable housing opportunities for low-, moderate- and middle-income New Yorkers, while preserving the social character of Manhattan's mixed-income communities.
- Manhattan's multiblock planned communities were planned well before the creation of the City's current Zoning Resolution. With development pressures increasing, these planned communities now face the specter of infill development that was never anticipated at the time the communities were planned. The office will review the state of development potential in Manhattan's planned communities and propose policy solutions that will shape future development in an appropriate way.
- Section 13 of the Zoning Resolution requires public parking garages to be approved via special permit, as part of an effort to control car traffic into Manhattan and comply with environmental standards. However, the permits are granted routinely, and it is widely believed that there is very little enforcement of whether parking garages operate according to the zoning. Our office will review the current state of enforcement of these regulations and consider reform of the City's parking policies. Our City's zoning should prioritize mass transit access to the Manhattan core and discourage excessive vehicular traffic.
- The City has begun planning regularly for affordable housing through its land use and zoning processes, but housing is not the only necessary component of an affordable neighborhood. Our office will research and pursue zoning solutions that go "beyond affordable housing," by supporting the affordable retail and neighborhood amenities that are necessary to fully sustain diverse, mixed-income communities.

Transportation

With nearly 19 million residents in the metropolitan area, New York City has exceptionally high demands on its public transportation system. For the 3.7 million people who work in the City each day, 2.1 million of whom work in Manhattan, an effective and accessible transportation system is fundamental to keeping the economic engine of the region humming and to maintain the City's economic influence worldwide.

GOAL: Promote transportation alternatives to deal with the problems of traffic congestion, safety and air quality.

While mass transit is the primary mode of transportation for New Yorkers, our network of highways, roads and streets is at capacity, and it is clear that even if we had the space to build more, the solution to an easier commute and a more environmentally sound and healthier city is to encourage residents who drive to find transportation alternatives.

- Our office will host a major borough-wide transportation conference on October 12, 2006, convening the most noted and respected transportation experts in New York City and internationally. We will receive guidance and recommendations from conference participants and will explore innovative techniques for reducing congestion that have been tried and proven in other large cities around the world.
- Concurrently, the Borough President will research and write critical reports on exploring innovative ways to reduce vehicular traffic in Manhattan. Our office will explore issues including congestion pricing and alternative delivery times, as well as ways to encourage alternate modes of transportation.
- Our office will work with the City to enforce spillback violation and to deter gridlock and congestion on city streets.

Currently, it is estimated that 120,000 New York City residents travel to work everyday by bicycle making 400,000 unique bike trips per day. While this number seems high, it makes up only 0.4% of all commuters. Understandably, it is hard to encourage more people to travel to work by bicycle when New York City lacks a sufficient amount of bike lanes on streets, a lack of inside and outside bicycle parking, and too few incentives to curtail double parking. In conjunction with many bike-safety advocates, our priorities are to make cycling on the city streets safer and more accessible.

- With the community's help, our office will advocate for the implementation of traffic calming techniques, which will include various ways of creating the perception that the

road is more like a residential street and less like a highway, causing drivers to slow down and be more aware of their surroundings; push for incentives to curtail red-light running, which is on the rise; and advocate for a completed circumferential greenway in Manhattan, which will encourage walking and bicycling.

- Our office will also partner with the City to clarify the availability and security of on-street bike parking and support the enactment of legislation allowing bicycles to be brought into commercial buildings by bike commuters.

GOAL: Advocate for a fully funded public transit system.

It has taken over \$40 billion to bring our subway system back from the dilapidation of the 1970's and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is consequently saddled with bond debt service that continues to eat up more of our operating revenues every year. Subway fares in New York now cover 53% of operating expenses, more than any other mass transit system in the country. Additionally, the ongoing funding inequities between the city and state, as well as within the MTA, add to the financial strains on the MTA.

- Our office will work to create adequate and reliable dedicated funding streams that will allow the MTA to reach a state of good repair and expand our transit system in order to reduce overcrowding and delay in the system.
- Working with advocates and experts, the Borough President will push for the funding and creation of Intelligent Transportation Systems, such as real-time updates on the location of subways and buses. These 21st century improvements will allow for a more efficient and customer-friendly transit experience.

GOAL: Ensure that our buses, subways and commuter rail lines are working at their most efficient and effective capacity.

With Manhattan cross-town buses among the slowest in the city, spending only 54% of the time in motion, it is important that street space and traffic priority be given to buses over private vehicles. The MTA and NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) are collaborating on a study of bus rapid transit, which is actually an array of techniques for speeding bus service in an effort to provide an environmentally sound, higher quality of transport while maintaining cost effectiveness.

- Our office will demand a speedier implementation of bus rapid transit. The Borough President is already on record supporting the implementation of both proposed Manhattan study lines.

GOAL: Ensure that public and private parking is properly priced.

Parking of motor vehicles of all kinds on city streets and in private garages raises the issue of equitable allocation of public space. Pricing strategies, such as the Muni-Meter experimental commercial pricing programs in Midtown, help create movement at the curb and help to fairly allocate scarce public space. Double parking and ticketing of delivery trucks are symptoms of

the failure to properly price space at the curb. The availability of parking in garages is another factor in encouraging or discouraging car use in congested areas of the city.

- Our office will conduct a comprehensive review of parking policy to better discern the actual market price for parking and to advocate for policies that will reduce the number of cars coming into Manhattan and parking.

GOAL: Fight for a public transit system that promotes complete accessibility to people with disabilities.

Our transportation system trails other cities, such as Washington, DC and Los Angeles, when it comes to making public transportation fully accessible to people with disabilities. Even with the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, which requires all forms of public transportation to be accessible or a comparable alternative provided, these basic civil rights have been ignored rather than enforced.

- The Borough President released a report in August 2006 showing the MTA's negligence in inspecting and repairing subway elevators and escalators. Our office will work with disability advocates to push for transportation policies that consider the special needs of people with disabilities and will advocate for the MTA's timely compliance in making the public transit system ADA compliant by 2020.