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Helen Rosenthal

Council Member, 6th District



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Dear neighbors,

I hope you're having fun in the sun! I had a great time at yesterday's Pride parade with my colleagues, Council Members Carlos Menchaca, Ritchie Torres, and Antonio Reynoso.



(Credit: William Alariste for New York City Council)

Mayor Bill de Blasio signs Cooper's Law

Last Monday Mayor Bill de Blasio signed **Cooper's Law**, my first bill to become part of

NYC law. I introduced Cooper's Law in the Council in response to the wave of pedestrian tragedies in January, and specifically the death of nine-year-old Cooper Stock, who was struck and killed by a taxi while crossing the street at 97th street and West End Avenue. Current law for these collisions is abysmally weak; indeed, the driver who killed Cooper was charged with a maximum fine of \$300 and 3 points to his TLC license -- despite the fact that the driver failed to yield to Cooper, who had the light and was walking in the crosswalk. Cooper's Law will change all of that. If a taxi driver kills or critically injures someone, the Taxi & Limousine Commission will immediately suspend the driver's TLC license, and if the police confirm that the driver broke a traffic law and caused the accident, his TLC license will be revoked. Cooper's Law, and the ten other bills that form the Vision Zero initiative, will go into effect 90 days after the Mayor's signature. You can learn more about the bill on my [website](#), and in news coverage of the signing by [CBS](#), [the Daily News](#), [NY1](#), [Gothamist](#), [Streetsblog](#), and [Crain's](#).



(Credit: William Alatrisme for New York City Council)

Rally with Seniors at the Williams Residence

The Salvation Army plans to sell the Williams Residence, home to over 200 seniors on 95th & West End Ave, and relocate the tenants to a building in East Harlem that is not yet built. The organization has filed with the New York State Attorney General's office to sell the building for \$108 million to a private developer, who would convert it to a high-

rise of luxury condos (an epidemic in our neighborhood, as you well know). Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, Public Advocate Letitia James, and I rallied with seniors a couple of weeks ago, and we called on the Salvation Army to sell the building to a non-profit that would keep the seniors in their homes. You can learn more about the Williams Rally from press coverage by [Fox 5](#), [NY1](#), [the New York Observer](#), [DNA Info](#), [the Real Deal](#), [Epoch Times](#), and [the West Side Rag](#).



Call for a Senior Housing Task Force

Affordable housing is hard to find across the board, but seniors, living on a fixed income and with rising medical costs, have a particularly hard time in the face of our housing crisis. Not to mention that our senior population is growing rapidly; by 2030 – in 15 years – one in five New Yorkers will be a senior. Council Member Brad Lander (D-Brooklyn) and I co-wrote an op-ed in CityLand on the need for a Senior Housing Task Force, which would develop a road map for exactly how we can create and maintain more affordable housing for seniors. Read the [op-ed](#), and let me know what you think.

Rent Guidelines Board Votes to Raise Rents

Despite calls from elected officials (myself included) for a rent freeze, the Rent Guidelines Board voted last week to raise rents on rent-stabilized apartments by 1% for one-year leases and by 2.75% for two-year leases. This vote was a missed opportunity to alleviate the relentless burden of growing rent, and it will impact the 30,000 rent-regulated tenants on the Upper West Side. You can read my testimony to the board and statement following their vote on my [website](#).

The New Beacon: The West End Secondary School for Urban Studies

Breaking news! The new school that will be in the former home of Beacon High School has a name: the **West End Secondary School for Urban Studies**. The school, which



will serve grades 6 - 12, will be listed in the Middle School directory and helmed by Interim Acting Principal Jessica Jenkins. Thanks goes out to the Beacon working group, who made all of this possible and continues to work towards getting West End off to a great start.

More UPK seats on the UWS

Families interested in UPK seats within our district, or those that may currently be on waiting lists for UPK seats, please note that new programs will be opening up in our area throughout the summer. Two new programs have recently opened and they have seats available. These are UPK seats (free PreK education) run by a community

based program or non-profit organization. Please contact St. Gregory's school at 138 W 90th st, 212 362-5410 or Goddard Riverside Early Childhood Programs at 212 873-6600. I will continue to post about any new programs that are added to our district on my website and anyone can access the DOE website to see a list of programs available throughout the city. For more information, visit [here](#).

Call to Raise Eligibility Cap on DRIE (Disability Rent Increase Exemption)

You may have heard that the state legislature recently voted to raise the eligibility cap on DRIE (Disability Rent Increase Exemption) from \$29,000 to \$50,000. The next steps are for the Governor to sign the legislation, the City Council to pass comparable legislation, and Mayor to sign it. I will be one of the people on the steps of City Hall calling for the Council to raise the eligibility cap and help more of our disabled neighbors, many of whom cannot work and cannot afford rent increases, to be exempt from them.

Senior Food Bag Program

I am happy to announce that I have partnered with Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer to continue the Senior Food Bag program that she started several years ago. For just \$8 seniors and their caregivers can receive a bag filled with produce from local farmers along with tips and recipes on how to cook that week's produce. If you belong to a senior center, please ask them whether they are participating. The program

is flexible, and a Center can join at any time in the season. If you don't belong to a Center, you can still sign up through Goddard Riverside Community Center located at 88th st and Columbus Ave. The Senior Food Bag program will run bi-weekly from July through October. Please call my office at (212) 873-0282 x.200 for more information.

City Council Passes the Budget for Fiscal Year 2015

After several rounds of negotiations and late nights, the City Council has passed the budget for Fiscal Year 2015!

It's a fair and balanced budget, with a lot of wins for the Upper West Side. The Museum of Natural History will receive double the funding for its Urban Advantage



after school program, which teaches STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) skills to children of all ages. I secured funding to expand the amazing work of several anti-eviction non-profits that work on the UWS: the Goddard Riverside SRO Law Project, the Urban Justice Center, Tenants and Neighbors, Housing Court Answers, and Housing Conservation Coordinators. Two local senior centers, JASA Club 76 and DOROT's Lincoln House Outreach, were in jeopardy of losing all of their funding, but they will now receive full funding for another year. You can read about these and many more exciting programs that will receive funding in my upcoming op-ed in the West Side Spirit. We'll list all funded programs soon on the "Budget" page of my website.

Open House & Make Music NY

My first Open House was a big success -- thank you to all of you who came out and said hello. An excellent latin jazz band, [La Ensalada de Pulpo](#) led by Gilberto "Pulpo" Colon, Jr., played outside of my office at 87th & Columbus, and they drew in an appreciate crowd of hundreds! People even salsa danced on the sidewalk (see below). The concert at my office was just one of the 1,300 (!) concerts in NYC that day (June 21st) as part of Make Music NY.



Printed Newsletter Now Available Online in 50 Other Languages

The Summer Bulletin you received in the mail is now available on our [website](#), and you can use the Google translate button on the right side of the page to translate it into Spanish, French, Mandarin, or any one of 50 languages! (This is true for the entire website, by the way.)

Warmly,

Helen



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