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# Helen Rosenthal

Council Member, 6th District



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Dear Neighbors,

In addition to the work my office has been doing in the community, I want to highlight some events at City Hall. I invite you to attend upcoming hearings about issues ranging from legislation on reducing plastic bags to addressing contract cost overruns.

### Central Park Loop

Today the Department of Transportation, Parks Department, NYPD, and the Central Park Conservancy announced [exciting new safety improvements to the Central Park Loop](#), including lowering the speed limit to 20mph and adding signs and barricades to key locations. [Council Member Mark Levine and I have renewed our call to remove cars from the loop](#), and we will continue to work towards establishing a car-free Central Park this summer.

### Medicare Information Session

Join me, the Medicare Rights Center, and B'nai Jeshurun for a [Medicare Information Session](#) on Thursday, November 20, 5pm-7pm at B'nai Jeshurun (257 West 88th Street, between Broadway & West End Avenue). Learn about changes to Medicare in 2015 and programs that can help you pay for the Medicare costs.

### Recent Crimes

I know we're all a little shaken by the stabbing last week at 94th and WEA. The officers of the 24th precinct apprehended the suspect moments after the crime occurred, and he has been charged. This man is suffering from mental illness, and he periodically visited his mother at Freedom House. He was and is in clear need of services, and I will work with the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) to see how best to access and support these individuals as they interact with family and community as we work on creating effective security measures. I also want to thank the 20th precinct for their quick work in apprehending the four men who committed violent acts recently in Riverside Park and the 24th for their response on the stabbing at Rustin House. These

violent crimes are rare on the Upper West Side, but I nonetheless encourage all of you to report any safety or quality of life issues to 311. The NYPD uses 311 data to inform their patrol decisions and security decisions, so it really does make a difference.

### **Community Advisory Board (CAB) for Freedom House**

I am pleased to announce that a new Community Advisory Board (CAB) for Freedom House will begin regular, monthly meetings starting in December. The CAB will be composed of elected officials, the Department of Homeless Services (DHS), Community Board 7, and neighborhood representatives. These meetings will address issues around the facility itself and its impact on the community. In light of recent events, security will be on the top of the agenda of our very first meeting.

### **Street Safety Event**

On Saturday, November 15th I joined the NYPD Highway Patrol and Transportation Alternatives for a street safety event at 96th & Broadway. We spoke to drivers about the new 25mph speed limit and to bikers about rules for safe riding. You can read TA's [Biking Rules Handbook](#) online (also available in [Spanish](#) and in [Mandarin!](#)) This is the first in a series of events to be held around the UWS focusing on safe driving and riding. It will include a training session for local businesses to ensure delivery bicyclists know and follow the rules of the road.



### **DOT Street Safety Program in Schools**

DOT offers a free seminar for students K-12 on street safety. [Learn more about the program here](#), and parents, ask your school to contact DOT and request the program.

### **Helicopters on the UWS**

Helicopter noise has a negative impact on the quality of life of Upper West Siders. Elected officials from City, State and Federal offices have been working on the issue for many years, and there have been hard fought accomplishments. However, the issue continues to plague our neighborhood and others around the city. We continue to work on it, and you can follow updates on my website under the Issues

section. You can also read [my recent op-ed in the West Side Spirit](#) on this issue.

## Rats

Combating a rat infestation can be overwhelming, but my office is here to help. My website now has a [rat page](#), where you can learn the steps to take to tackle the issue, download rat meeting flyer templates (from West 80's Neighborhood Association Secretary Melissa Elstein - thank you, Melissa!), and get a rat expert from the Department of Health to come to your block for a free, half-day "Rat Academy."

## Participatory Budgeting Update

Thanks to everyone who attended our Neighborhood Assemblies and contributed ideas online. We are now entering the next phase of Participatory Budgeting, where PB volunteers will examine all of the ideas suggested in the neighborhood assemblies and develop the eligible ideas into proposals. [You can see a full list of the capital ideas that were suggested on my website.](#) If you'd like to get involved in narrowing down the list and determining which projects will make it to the final ballot get involved and become a Project Delegate! Our final orientation is on November 24th at 6:30pm at our District Office. Email [district6pb@gmail.com](mailto:district6pb@gmail.com) to RSVP and to get involved in the process.



## City Hall Update

- **10-Cent Plastic Bag Fee**

The City Council is considering a bill to charge 10 cents for plastic bags to

encourage New Yorkers to switch to reusable bags. You can [learn more about the bill](#) on Council Member Brad Lander's website, and the bill will be heard by the Council's Sanitation committee on [Wednesday, November 19 at 1pm in City Hall](#).

- **Housing Justice Forum: Right to Counsel in Housing Court**

Less than 10% of tenants in housing court have lawyers to represent them. The City Council is considering legislation that would make New York City the first place in the US to establish a right to counsel in eviction proceedings. Come to the [Housing Justice forum](#) on Dec. 5 at the New York Law School to learn more ([RSVP by Dec. 1](#)).

- **The Future of Bicycling Policy**

The Department of Transportation will present their plan on the future of bicycling in NYC later this week at a City Council Transportation Committee hearing. The hearing, titled [Oversight—Leading the Way for Bicycling in America: Where is NYC Now and How Can We Improve](#), will take place on November 20th at 1pm in City Hall. Anyone is welcome to come testify to express their concerns.

- **City Time**

NYC lost hundreds of millions of dollars to fraud when one consultant and many subcontractors obfuscated unnecessary or non-existent work charged to the city. In July [the City's Department of Investigation \(DOI\) released a report](#) with specific recommendations to stop this from happening again. My Committee on Contracts will hold a joint hearing with the Committee on Investigations to examine the recommendations and the Administration's efforts to implement them. Although we don't have a specific date, we are planning for a December hearing to review the DOI Report and recommend changes to Vendex.

- **The Mayor's Affordable Housing Plan**

Last Monday, November 13th the Council took a first look at the Mayor's Affordable Housing Plan at a hearing held by three City Council Committees: Housing and Buildings, Community Development, and Land Use (I'm a member of the first two). I asked questions about fair wages and corrupt contractors, which was [covered in the Daily News](#). My questions about preservation will be in a follow up letter to the HPD Commissioner. The Council will hold additional hearings on the Mayor's Plan in the next few months.

Please note that hearing dates can change. Check the city council website frequently to [confirm the hearing date, time, and location](#). I hope to see you at one of these hearings, but if you can't make it to City Hall, you can watch the hearings through live

streaming or see the video after the hearing, at your convenience.

Hope your Thanksgiving is plentiful!

Warmly,

Helen



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