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Helen Rosenthal

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Dear Neighbors,

Hope you are enjoying the summer and getting some time to relax. Here is a summary of some of the work my office is engaged in, both downtown at City Hall and uptown at my District Office.

City Hall



Helen speaking at a press conference to regulate tourist helicopters with Council Member Margaret Chin, State Senator Liz Krueger, Assembly Member Jo Anne Simon, and advocates (July 23, 2015).

Since my first week in office, I've heard complaints from residents about relentless helicopter noise and the impact it has on their quality of life. In fact, it's an issue that resonates far beyond the Upper West Side; helicopter noise impacts everyone who lives, works, or uses public parks along helicopter tour routes citywide (and across the Hudson). A few weeks ago I joined Council Members Carlos Menchaca of Sunset Heights and Margaret Chin of the Financial District to introduce legislation to **limit tourist helicopters based on noise**. We wrote an [op-ed in Crain's](#), and I wrote another for the [West Side Spirit](#), to discuss the issue and the legislation. Dozens of residents and advocates voiced their support at our press conference, including

Senator Liz Krueger of Midtown East, Council Member Stephen Levin of Brooklyn Heights, Council Member Debi Rose of the North Shore of Staten Island, the Harbor School on Governor's Island, and even residents from New Jersey. Stay tuned for a committee hearing, and learn more about the issue from coverage in the [New York Daily News](#), [DNA Info](#), the [West Side Spirit](#), and [New York Business Journal](#).



Helen announcing her three bills to increase accessibility at a press conference on the steps of City Hall (August 13, 2015). Left: with Council Member Mark Levine; right: with Monica Bartley from Center for the Independence of the Disabled, New York (CIDNY).

Twenty-five years after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), **people with disabilities continue to face barriers to the City's civic and cultural life**. Last week I introduced legislation to address this issue, and I made sure that the press event was accessible to people with hearing loss and people in wheelchairs; it included a hearing loop, two American Sign Language interpreters, and Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) service. (Much gratitude to everyone who made it happen: my staff, hearing loss advocate Jerry Bergman, Leo Garrison from Universal Access Associates for installing a hearing loop, and Accurate Communication, Inc. for providing CART and ASL.) At the press conference I announced three new bills (co-sponsored by Councilman Ritchie Torres) to help people with disabilities: 1. require an ADA coordinator at every City agency, 2. require publicity materials for every event held or sponsored by the City to include accessibility information, including a contact name and deadline for additional services needed, and 3. install hearing loops in spaces where City government meetings are held for the public. You can learn more about the bills [on my website](#) and in coverage by [WCBS 880](#) and [Politico](#).

When the City decided in 2013 that all of its vehicles should run on biodiesel blends (clean diesel with 5%-20% biodiesel, usually made from vegetable oil), school buses were left out. Last week I introduced legislation to **require all New York City school buses to run on B5 biodiesel**, or fuel with 5% biodiesel. Using B5 biodiesel would reduce health risks to the over 150,000 New York City public school children who ride school buses to school. It's also an easy change: biodiesel costs about the same as diesel, and any vehicle built after 1993 can use B5 biodiesel with no modifications to their engines. Learn more about the bill in [Politico](#).



Helen speaking on CNBC's Squawk on the Street about increased funding to combat illegal hotels (July 20, 2015).

We face a severely limited housing supply, and the situation is made worse by landlords who use residential apartments as hotel rooms. Upon my and Council Member Jumaane Williams' urging, the City allocated **an additional \$1.2 million to combat illegal hotels** for Fiscal Year 2016 (which started July 1 of this year). I talked about the issue on [CNBC's Squawk on the Street](#) on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

Our neighborhood is particularly afflicted by rats. Right now building owners with repeated rat violations are given fines but no requirements to change their behavior. Last week I introduced legislation that would require building owners with two or more rat violations to use **rat-resistant garbage bins**. Rats are able to chew through the soft plastic of garbage bags, and these bins, made of hard plastic or metal with a tight-fitting lid, would keep rats away. You can read the bill language [here](#).

District News

Over the past month many of you contacted my office regarding the **homeless** in our neighborhood, concerned for their safety and your own. I share your concerns and desire to help those who are living on our streets. Several members of our community, including Goddard Riverside's Homeless Outreach Team, our police precincts, Community Board 7, elected leaders, and religious institutions are actively engaged, and my office joined them to discuss our experiences working with the homeless. As many of you know, no one may be forcibly removed from the street unless he or she has been shown to be dangerous. Goddard Riverside reported that very few homeless people want to go into shelter. The religious institutions reported seeing many more people waiting at the soup kitchens — if you want to help, they can always use volunteers and donations to support their efforts. In addition, please remember to call 311 when you see a homeless person and include the location, date, and time; the NYPD and advocacy groups use 311 data to find the homeless and offer them support. In addition, Mayor de Blasio recently announced a mental health initiative to help address the issue of the chronically homeless. You can learn more about the initiative [here](#).



National Night Out Against Crime (August 4, 2015). Left: Helen with Detective Cordell Cheatham and Captain William Burke of PSA 6. Right: Helen with Captain Marlon Larin and Detective John McDonnell of the 24th Precinct.

National Night Out Against Crime is an annual event to recognize the importance of community and local police precincts working together to keep neighborhoods safe. This year I recognized three officers for their excellent work: Detective Cordell Cheatham of PSA 6, Detective John McDonnell of the 24th Precinct, and Officer Joshua Vincek of the 20th Precinct. These officers have served the community for years, and we're lucky to have them.



Left: NYCHA Family Day at Harbor View Terrace (August 15, 2015). Right: NYCHA Family Day at Amsterdam Houses (August 1, 2015).

I was delighted to allocate city funds for the **NYCHA Family Day** events at Amsterdam Houses and Harbor View Terrace that took place this past month. These events bring the community together, and they're a lot of fun. The events included a live band, dancing, face painting, great food, popcorn, and a water slide!

In the wake of the worst outbreak of Legionnaires' Disease in New York City history, the City passed and signed into law a requirement to **register buildings with cooling towers and evaporative condensers** – identified as the likely source of the recent outbreak – in order to make sure they are properly maintained and cleaned. Inspectors from the Department of Buildings will be making surprise visits to ensure all qualified buildings are registered, so if you live in a building with a cooling tower or evaporative condenser, ask your building management to register online. [Learn more.](#)



Helen with Yankees Manager Joe Girardi, NYC Parks' First Deputy Commissioner Liam Kavanagh, Council Member Mark Levine, NYC Schools Deputy Chancellor Elizabeth Rose, and NYC Coalition Against Hunger Director Joel Berg at Laskar Pool in Central Park to promote Free Summer Meals for kids (August 6, 2015). Photo credit: Glen Teitell, American Dairy Association & Dairy Council.

Recently Council Member Mark Levine and I joined Yankees Manager Joe Girardi to [give out free, healthy lunches and raffle Yankees tickets to kids](#) at Laskar Pool in Central Park. His emphasis on "fueling" your body with nutritional food was inspirational. More than a few kids took a selfie with Joe Girardi when they got their lunch, and I confess I jumped in the pool when the event was done! The event was part of the City's **Summer Meals** program, which gives kids 18 and under free breakfast and lunch throughout the summer at schools, pools, parks, libraries, and NYCHA locations. The program runs through September 4, so look [here](#) to find a location near you.

The NYC Department of Small Business Services is offering two free **Commercial Lease Review Legal Clinics**. A pro-bono attorney can review your lease and discuss specific negotiation strategies to serve your interests and minimize your risks. To be eligible, participants must have a potential or existing commercial lease for the lawyers to review before the clinic. The clinics will be on [September 9 in Jamaica, Queens](#) and on [September 24 on W. 125th Street](#).

Warmly,

Helen.



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