



**Helen  
Rosenthal**  
Council Member, 6<sup>th</sup> District



## EXPANDING ACCESS FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED

In a major step forward for both accessibility and civic engagement, Council Member Rosenthal's legislation requiring that "Hearing Loop" technology be installed in new and renovated public assembly areas was signed into law on March 22.

Council Member Rosenthal wrote the legislation after constituents with hearing loss described being unable to fully participate in public meetings and hearings. The law

requires the installation of Hearing Loop systems in City-funded capital projects with one or more public assembly areas. Under the City's current capital plans, close to 300 projects will be looped across New York City.

A hearing loop is a wire surrounding or crossing a room which transmits sound electromagnetically to telecoils in hearing aids and cochlear implants, eliminating background noise and providing a dramatically clearer signal to the wearer.

New York City is the first major municipality in the country to enact such legislation. According to the Hearing Loss Association of America, about 1 in 5 of Americans report some degree of hearing loss.



# Making City Services Accessible For All

Ensuring equal access to City services is one of Council Member Rosenthal's top policy priorities. In 2016, the City Council passed two of her bills which enable far more New Yorkers to take advantage of City services.

Local Law 27 of 2016 requires every City agency to designate a "Disability Service Facilitator". The Facilitator is responsible for coordinating the agency's efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other federal, state, and local laws concerning accessibility for people with disabilities. Agencies are required to post contact information for their Facilitator on their websites.

A second piece of legislation (Local Law 28 of 2016) requires that all advertisements, posters, invitations, and other materials for public events hosted by city agencies contain: 1.) an accessibility contact; 2.) a deadline by which requests for accessibility accommodations must be received by the event's organizer; and 3.) precise accessibility information.



As a result of this legislation, the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities is now required to distribute a guide to assist agencies in complying with these requirements.