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Helen Rosenthal

Council Member, 6th District



563 Columbus Avenue @ 87th St. (212) 873-0282 Helen@HelenRosenthal.com

Dear Neighbors,

Spring weather is finally here, and with it, the second annual Love Your Street Tree Day festivities – a new West Side tradition! – and ways we can make our City safer and more environmentally friendly.

DISTRICT

Many of you have contacted our office and I agree that the amount of garbage on our streets is not acceptable. I have funded [The Doe Fund](#) to target sections of the district with enhanced clean up efforts, and we have seen real improvements. I continue to work with the Department of Sanitation to see what can be done about overflowing garbage cans and more frequent pick-ups. Our office hears from residents regularly about dog owners who still don't pick up after their dog. We've found that education is critical – to remind people to not litter and care for the trees and tree beds on their own blocks. On Sunday, May 22nd the Upper West Side will host the **Second Annual Love Your Street Tree Day**, a day where we can clean up street tree beds, learn community gardening and sustainability practices, get a free reusable bag, a tree bed toolkit, signage, and even free snacks from Jacob's Pickles and free coffee from Irving Farm Coffee Roasters! It all starts at noon at the Urban Assembly School for Green Careers garden on Amsterdam Avenue and 84th Street. Everyone is welcome. [See the flyer](#).

There is also an opportunity to **recycle electronics** that Sunday from 10am-4pm outside of the JCC (Amsterdam between 75th and 76th). They accept working & non-working computers, monitors, printers, scanners, keyboards, mice, cables, TV's, VCR's, DVD players, phones, audio/visual equipment, and cell phones. As a friendly reminder, electronics recycling is required by New York State law as of January 1, 2015. [See the flyer](#).

My office held our **second bike helmet giveaway**, and over 500 people went home with a new bike helmet! Nearly 40 helmets went to local restaurant delivery bikers. Thank you to the Department of Transportation for fitting everyone for a bike helmet

and educating bikers on rules and safety on the road, and thank you to all of you who came out to take part in the giveaway. We plan on holding another one next Spring.

If you are a rent stabilized or a rent controlled tenant, your rent increase is determined by the Rent Guidelines Board which is scheduled to vote in late June. Learn about "**The Importance of the Rent Guidelines Board and How You Can Get Involved**" at a [presentation and breakout session](#) hosted by the Rent Justice Coalition and my office on Wednesday, May 18, from 6pm-8pm, at Goddard Riverside on 88th Street and Columbus Avenue.

If you have any questions about your lease, no matter what type of housing you live in, I urge you to come to our final Housing Clinic of this season on June 1st. The June clinic will focus on **Succession Rights**, which can be a complicated and confusing issue for many and may effect the future of your family's housing security. You can find details about the clinic [here](#). We will not be holding housing clinics over the summer, but you can always come in and speak to my staff at our District Office on 87th and Columbus with any housing questions you have. Next season's Clinics will start up again in early Fall.



Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer, Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, Helen, Council Member Daneek Miller, and Children's Museum of Manhattan Executive Director Andy Ackerman Tour the Museum (May 2, 2016)

Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito came to the Upper West Side recently to visit the new exhibit at the Children's Museum of Manhattan (CMOM), [America to Zanzibar: Muslim Cultures Near and Far](#). At a time of xenophobia in our nation's political discourse, we are lucky to have a museum that **teaches our children the importance of diversity and inclusion** and to have it in our neighborhood.

There's another **phone scam** going around, this time from someone claiming to call from the U.S. Treasury Department threatening legal action and using the phone number 206-204-5022. The U.S. Treasury Department is aware of the scam and is looking into it. Please know that no government agency would ask for your personal information or demand payment over the phone. If you have experienced a similar

scam, you can report it to the Treasury Department at OIGCounsel@oig.treas.gov.

Teens Take the Met is a night of fun for teens 13 years and up at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Activities include art making, music, performances, gallery activities, snacks, a dance party, and more. The event is on Friday, May 20 from 5pm - 8pm at the Met. The event is free. [Learn more.](#)



Helen takes a selfie with the Mendelssohn Glee Club (May 10, 2016)

The longest running independent men's chorus in the United States rehearses on the Upper West Side! The **Mendelssohn Glee Club** performed at the 1888 dedication of the then newly constructed Metropolitan Museum of Art, and [it just celebrated its 150-year anniversary](#). I was happy to honor them with a proclamation for their ongoing contributions to the community.

CITY HALL

Recently the City Council passed a bill ([Int 209A-2014](#)) that will charge a **five-cent fee on plastic and paper bags** at the check-out counter at retail and grocery stores. It does not apply to plastic bags used for produce found in the aisles at the supermarket, purchases from a street vendor selling food, paper bags used for prescriptions, take out bags for restaurants, or any purchases using SNAP benefits (formerly known as "food stamps"). Plastic bags can't be recycled economically, and every year New York City spends \$12.5 million sending 90,000 tons of plastic bags to landfills – that is, if they don't get trapped in trees or our waterways first. I voted in support of the bill, because we can no longer afford to ignore the effects of climate change. We must reduce our usage of plastic as much as possible, and similar bills have been shown to be extremely effective in other cities. The bill goes into effect in

October, and should reduce plastic bag use by 60%. If you're in the market for a reusable bag, you can pick one up for free at the Love Your Street Tree Day event on Sunday, May 22nd (see above for more info).

When pedestrians cross the street, they compete with cars that are turning on to the street – and it can be particularly dangerous. According to the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT), **1 in 4 crashes killing or injuring pedestrians happen when they are in the crosswalk with the signal.** I introduced legislation ([Int. 1177-2016](#)) with Council Members Mathieu Eugene and Ydanis Rodriguez that would require the DOT to do a study on implementing the "Barnes Dance" at the City's 25 most dangerous intersections. The Barnes Dance would change the light signals so that pedestrians could cross in every direction while vehicle traffic comes to a full stop. Likewise, when vehicle traffic is in motion, pedestrian traffic would be at a full stop. If the DOT study called for implementing the Barnes Dance crossings, they would impact only 25 of New York City's over 47,000 intersections. You can learn more about the bill in coverage from the [New York Daily News](#), [CBS 2 News](#), [SI Live](#), and [Next City](#).

Last week the Mayor released the [NYC Digital Playbook](#), a framework for how the City will **restructure and redesign City agency websites to make them more user-friendly.** As part of the new initiative, the Mayor's team will coordinate pop-up hubs in public libraries and public housing to get user feedback as the City develops its applications and websites. In the meantime, feel free to send your suggestions for improving City agency websites to me at Helen@HelenRosenthal.com.

Warmly,



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Our mailing address is:

563 Columbus Avenue
New York, NY 10024
(212) 873-0282

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