

Contact: Adriana Espinoza
NYC Program Director
aespinoza@nylcv.org
212-361-6350 x203

NYLCV FY19 NEW YORK CITY BUDGET PRIORITIES

The New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV) strongly supports budget priorities that will advance New York City's sustainability agenda and make our people, our neighborhoods and our economy healthier and more resilient. With ambitious goals set under OneNYC in the energy, buildings, transportation, and waste sectors, it is imperative that the city's budget reflect a concerted effort at realizing its goals. After consulting with coalition partners made up of NYC's leading environmental, transportation, and public health organizations, NYLCV recommends the following changes to the Mayor's Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2019:

SANITATION AND WASTE

The Department of Sanitation's Preliminary FY19 budget invests heavily in personnel, exporting waste, and infrastructure. However, only a fraction of the Department's budget -- \$60.3 million, or about 3.5% -- is dedicated to waste prevention, reuse, and recycling. This number represents an almost 10% decrease from the FY18 adopted budget, and is in stark contrast with the 25% of the budget being used to export our waste.

Moreover, these figures are inconsistent with the City's stated goal of Zero Waste to landfills by 2030 (0x30). In FY17, the total curbside and containerized recycling diversion rate was 17.4%, an increase of just 2% from FY14. If we continue at this pace, diversion will be a meager 25.4% in 2030. DSNY's waste prevention budget should reflect a more aggressive attempt to achieve our 0x30 goal.

If we are to reach our goal of Zero Waste to landfills by 2030, the City should invest \$5 million in public engagement around the organic waste and recycling programs available to residents. It is imperative that New Yorkers know not only the options available to them, but also the environmental significance of participation and instructions on proper disposal of organic waste and recyclable materials.

ENERGY

Under Mayor de Blasio's *One City: Built to Last*, the Administration committed to an ambitious timeline on the adoption of renewable energy. The plan called for retrofits to all city-owned property with significant energy use and installation of 100 megawatts of renewable power on City-owned buildings by 2025, with \$1.2 billion allocated over ten years to achieve it. As of March 2018, only 10 megawatts have been installed.

In a recent hearing by the City Council's Committee on Environmental Protection, leaders from the Mayor's Office of Sustainability indicated they were going to ramp up their efforts to reach the goal, and start 100 new solar projects this year. However, funding for the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) does not reflect this acceleration. ***NYLCV joins the New York City Council in calling for the allocation of \$789 million in the DCAS capital budget to accelerate the pace of solar installation on City buildings.***



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PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) maintains and cares for a 29,900-acre municipal parks system that encompasses over 1,900 parks, 1,000 playgrounds, 36 recreational centers, over 2.6 million street and park trees, and 7,300 acres of forested natural areas in New York City. The Department's Fiscal 2019 Preliminary Budget totals just \$501.9 million; this represents less than 0.6% of the City's total Preliminary Budget. With soaring population growth, and over 100 million visitors each year, park use in New York City is surging to record levels. It is imperative the budget for our Parks Department keep pace with these trends.

Sufficient resources to properly care for our parks is critical. Park maintenance should not be seen as seasonal as parks are utilized year-round. However, the FY19 Preliminary Budget failed to provide funding for 100 City Parks Workers and 50 Gardeners who care for parks across the city. In FY19, ***the City must include \$9.6 million for these 150 workers and funding for their positions should be baselined in the Mayor's budget.***

Fortunately, the City Council has stepped in to fill this budget gap for three consecutive years, but we cannot continue to rely on the Council to add this funding. Restoring and baselining these vital positions not only helps to keep our neighborhood parks well maintained, but will also prevent 150 New Yorkers from this recurring uncertainty about their employment status.

Beyond park maintenance, protection of our city's natural areas is an integral part of the City's Parks budget. Urban greenery is our city's most valuable environmental asset; the canopy mitigates climate change, provides clean air and habitats for native wildlife, and contributes to the well-being of our residents and our economy. A comprehensive long-term management plan is essential to ensure proper restoration and sustainability of our city's forests. The first objective of an effective management plan is to determine the appropriate restoration needs, including mitigation of existing threats such as invasive species and illegal trash dumping. Beyond restoration, the plan should include recommendations on new conservation and monitoring strategies. NYLCV urges the Administration and DPR to support the implementation of a long-term forest management plan.

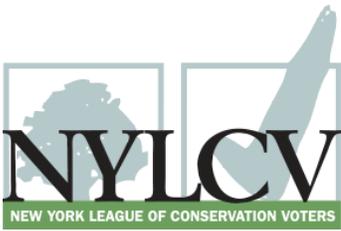
In the FY19-22 four year Capital Plan, the Administration should prioritize restoration and protection of NYC's urban forest with the following allocation:

- ***FY19 - \$3.5 million (secured)***
- ***FY20 - \$3.5 million (secured)***
- ***FY21 - \$5.751 million (requested)***
- ***FY22 - \$6.711 million (requested)***

TRANSPORTATION

New York City's public transportation system is in crisis. While most of the focus has been on the subway system, our city's bus system is failing New Yorkers and bleeding ridership. While a majority of the critical upgrades to our transit system will need to come from the MTA, NYC's DOT has the power to drastically improve bus service.

Since 2012, NYC's Department of Transportation has worked with the MTA to implement Transit Signal Priority (TSP) on 7 corridors in the city, with excellent results. On average, TSP has reduced bus travel times



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by 14 percent during weekday rush hours. In a report released in 2017, DOT committed to accelerating the implementation of TSP to 10 routes by the end of 2020. Simply put, this is not enough. DOT needs to drastically increase the pace of TSP rollout to 20 routes by the end of FY19, and commit to a timeline of 10 new routes per year moving forward. ***We urge the Administration to allocate an additional \$6.5 million to NYC's DOT in the FY19 budget for an accelerated rollout of Transit Signal Priority.***

ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

NYLCV promotes a thriving and sustainable local foodshed and efforts to ensure every New Yorker has access to fresh, healthy, local food. In the FY19 budget, the City should support programs that incentivize both the sale and purchase of healthy food.

New York State has had success in expanding the sale of healthy food through the Healthy Food, Healthy Communities Fund, an initiative that garnered private investment and provided low interest loans and grants for the establishment and retention of neighborhood grocery stores in underserved communities. The program resulted in 20 new food markets across the state, and 441 permanent employees, but is no longer being funded in the State's budget.

We believe the City should implement a similar healthy food financing initiative with a \$10 million investment in the FY19 budget to expand and improve food retail establishments in neighborhoods with insufficient access to fresh produce. An investment of this size on the state level leveraged over \$150 million in investments, and we believe that success could be replicated in New York City.

Addressing affordability is a pivotal component to expanding access to healthy food. With 1 in 5 New Yorkers enrolled in SNAP benefits, the City should continue to explore ways these benefits can be used to promote the purchase of fruits and vegetables while also reducing food insecurity.

SNAP programs in the form of coupons or POS discounts have demonstrated success in incentivizing the purchase of healthy foods. ***NYLCV supports an investment of \$15 million to expand SNAP incentive programs to serve more New Yorkers.***

To date, the Health Bucks program has led to the purchase of more than \$2 million in fresh produce, a figure we believe could grow exponentially if such programs were expanded for use beyond farmers markets to places closer to where families live and shop, including bodegas, supermarkets, and other retail venues.

To that end, NYLCV supports Healthy Corner Store Initiatives, including Shop Healthy NYC and other programs led by local community-based organizations. These programs educate New Yorkers about the availability of healthy options through community engagement and provide incentives such as grants and equipment to bodega owners to follow through on commitments to provide healthier foods. ***In FY19, the Administration should support healthy corner store initiatives with an additional \$3 million to increase the amount of healthy food offered in corner stores in low- and moderate- income neighborhoods around the City.***