

Assemblymember MARYJANE SHIMSKY



DISTRICT 92 - 2024-25 BUDGET UPDATE

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This was a challenging budget year, due to rising need in many areas and the loss of federal Covid aid. Despite these challenges, the Assembly, Senate, and Governor agreed on a \$237 billion budget for Fiscal Year 2024-25.

This newsletter highlights some of our major accomplishments, particularly in the areas of education, infrastructure, the environment, housing, and child care. As in any tough budget year, our accomplishments were often measured in preventing cuts to needed programs, rather than in creating new initiatives.

As our work in the Legislature continues, I will keep fighting for the programs that will help New Yorkers in our region and throughout the State, whether to assist our transition off fossil fuels; to expand health and mental health care; to improve services for residents with disabilities and chronic illness; and (to support all of those things and more) the maintenance and modernization of our infrastructure.

INVESTING IN OUR ROADS

I successfully advocated for an additional \$100 million for local roads in last year's State budget, and for the restoration of this funding following proposed cuts in the 2024-25 Executive Budget. I also have worked with the Assembly's Westchester representatives in demanding a greater investment by the New York State Department of Transportation in the Hudson Valley (NYSDOT Region 8).



At the Local Roads Day press conference in Albany

With the warmer weather comes the resumption of road repair and construction projects. Current NYSDOT work in our area includes:

- Route 9 (Broadway) resurfacing, Yonkers to Tarrytown
- Replacement of Saw Mill River Parkway bridge at Route 119, Elmsford
- Rehabilitation of Ardsley Road bridge at Sprain Brook Parkway, Greenburgh
- Rehabilitation of Hospital Road bridge at Sprain Brook Parkway, Mount Pleasant
- Elevation of Saw Mill River Parkway, Mount Pleasant
- Reconstruction of I-287 ramp to Saw Mill River Parkway, Greenburgh
- Reconstruction of I-287 bridge deck over Metro-North Railroad, Tarrytown
- Traffic and mass transit improvements to I-287 corridor, Tarrytown and Elmsford
- Catch basin and drainage pipe clearing at multiple sites

In addition, the following projects are in development:

- Complete Streets preliminary engineering for Route 9 (Broadway), Hastings-on-Hudson to Sleepy Hollow
- Intersection safety improvements for Route 119 (Tarrytown Road) at Routes 100 (Central Park Avenue) and 100B (Dobbs Ferry Road)
- Preparation of Briarcliff-Peekskill Parkway modernization scoping report
- Pedestrian safety updates to signals, crosswalks, and curb ramps at multiple sites including Greenburgh and Irvington
- Rehabilitation of culverts on Route 9 in Tarrytown

PROTECTING THE HUDSON RIVER



Calling for a cleanup of PCBs in the Hudson River

2024 GRANTS FOR HUDSON RIVER PROJECTS

New York State's Hudson River Estuary Program works with nonprofit organizations and municipalities to support our understanding and stewardship of the river. This year, grants were awarded for these local projects:

- \$150,000 to Riverkeeper for dam reconnaissance on 12 Hudson River tributaries
- \$75,000 to Hudson River Watershed Alliance for watershed planning and implementation
- \$75,000 to Hastings-on-Hudson for its North Broadway/Zinsser drainage project
- \$59,384 to Ardsley for a natural resources inventory
- \$49,811 to Pace University for its flood resilience and land use training program

FIGHTING FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION



Advocating in Westchester and Albany for school funding, universal pre-kindergarten, and school meals

The Legislature succeeded in restoring the Governor's proposed Foundation Aid cuts — which would have impacted Ardsley, Briarcliff Manor, Dobbs Ferry, Greenburgh, Pocantico Hills, and the Tarrytowns — and raised total school funding by 4.3% to \$35.9 billion. Yonkers schools, where 73% of students are economically disadvantaged, will get an increase of \$38.4 million. We also allocated \$2 million for a much-needed study to assess whether the current Foundation Aid distribution formula is fair to all districts.

Support for public higher education came to \$20.7 billion, with \$1.3 billion to SUNY and \$858 million to CUNY for opportunity program aid. This includes a \$55.7 million increase for the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). SUNY Downstate Hospital, where many medical professionals serving the New York metropolitan area are trained, will receive \$400 million in capital and operational funding to stay open, with spending and planning decisions to be made by a new community advisory board.

IMPROVING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE



Working with State and local partners to address road funding, the green energy transition, and Saw Mill River flooding

The budget invests \$7.7 billion in transportation infrastructure, including roadways, rail, aviation, and public transit outside the MTA. Of this, \$4.5 billion will fund the core program for State roads and bridges, and \$1.3 billion to fix local roads and bridges. Local road aid includes \$60 million for local roads and \$40 million for the State Route NY Program — restorations I fought for in response to proposed cuts in the Executive Budget.

The MTA will receive \$7.9 billion, including \$20 million for critically important resiliency projects for Metro-North's Hudson Line. The Hudson Line will require vastly more funding over the coming decades, as sea level rise caused by climate change will make track flooding a regular occurrence.

Our \$2.5 billion investment in environmental infrastructure

includes \$500 million for clean water projects (doubling the Executive Budget's proposal) and \$400 million for the New York State Environmental Protection Fund (another cut we successfully restored). Funding of \$1 billion for the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation includes \$300 million in capital improvements to State parks, and \$15 million to help plant 25 million trees by 2033.

Aid and Incentives for Municipalities (AIM) funding will increase by \$50 million, for a total of \$765.2 million. This is the first increase to AIM in over a decade, and something we hope to maintain in future years. In addition, \$100 million will fund another round of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative — the same program that awarded \$4.5 million to Sleepy Hollow last year.

ADVOCATING FOR NEW YORKERS WITH DISABILITIES



Supporting disability rights and services with Jawonio, Westchester Disabled on the Move, and New York Disability Advocates

The Legislature added a 1.7% salary increase to the Executive Budget's 1.5% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for direct service providers (DSPs), support staff, clinical staff, and non-executive administrative Human Services staff, including in the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities. We will continue to push for paying these essential workers the wages they deserve — wages that will enable them to continue helping

many of our most vulnerable New Yorkers. We will also oversee how reforms to the Consumer-Director Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP) will be implemented.

I am very pleased to share that Assemblyman Nader Sayegh and I were successful in securing \$3 million for Elizabeth Seton Children's in Yonkers, which cares for medically fragile children and young adults.

SUPPORTING OUR WORKFORCE & ADDRESSING AFFORDABILITY



Meeting and rallying with our unions for New York's workers

To ease the burden on families, the enacted budget includes \$1.78 billion for the New York State Child Care Block Grant (an increase of \$754.4 million) and \$350 million for the Supplemental Empire State Child Credit.

Reforms to Tier 6 of the State pension system will help equalize retirement benefits for our public workforce, part of a multi-year package to help our State government recruit and retain quality staff with needed technical expertise.

To address New York's housing crisis, the budget includes \$600 million in capital funding to support housing statewide, and \$150 million for a new program to build affordable housing on State and municipally-owned sites. Public housing authorities outside of New York City will receive \$75 million, with another

\$50 million for Land Banks to redevelop blighted or abandoned properties.

Also included is a new opt-in construction or commercial conversion tax exemption for affordable homes and rentals, and real property tax exemptions for accessory dwelling units (ADUs). New tenant protections prohibit removal by eviction or refusal to renew a lease without good cause within New York City, and by local option in the rest of the state.

As the Legislative session continues, the Assembly is investigating proposals, including a Mitchell-Lama 2.0 to build more affordable owner-occupied housing throughout the State in the coming years.



ADDITIONAL BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- \$800 million for financially distressed and safety-net hospitals
- \$347 million for gun violence prevention and reduction
- \$150 million to build swimming pools in underserved communities
- \$84 million to increase reimbursement for mental health services
- \$36 million for abortion providers and nonprofit organizations, to increase access to care
- \$35 million to protect houses of worship, religious schools, and other at-risk sites; plus the addition of 28 hate-crime eligible offenses to State law
- \$31.1 million to provide mental health care and services to individuals in the criminal justice system
- \$8 million for Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer-to-Peer Support
- \$7.5 million for the Hudson River Estuary Management Program
- \$3,000 tax credits for small business investments in retail theft prevention
- Amendment distinguishing squatters from rightful tenants in State housing law
- Provisions to allow the Office of Cannabis Management to padlock illegal cannabis businesses

THE WORK AHEAD

Every budget session closes with an acknowledgement of how much more remains to be done, and this year was no different. Our future agenda must include the following:

- To fight climate change and make energy costs more affordable, I will continue to work for passage of the NY HEAT Act and Climate Change Superfund legislation.
- Oversight of Executive reforms to CDPAP, which provides services to physically disabled and chronically ill New Yorkers, is critical to maintaining quality services.
- It is imperative that we expand our workforce for healthcare and mental healthcare services — all of the mental health programs in the world will not do any good, if there are not enough trained professionals to staff them.
- Last, and not least, we need far higher investments in our infrastructure, to keep up with the rate of decay to our roads, bridges, and other facilities; to make our state more resilient to climate change; and to modernize our energy and other systems.

To see the enacted budget, visit budget.ny.gov.

If you need assistance finding specific information, please email shimskym@nyassembly.gov or call my district office at 914-631-1605.



NEW SENIOR HOUSING IN FAIRVIEW

Congratulations to the Town of Greenburgh and the Fairview community on the completion of the Manhattan Avenue Senior Apartments!

The transformation of an old 30-unit public housing complex into 70 units of modern, affordable senior housing took nearly 12 years of concerted effort by the Greenburgh Town Board, Greenburgh Housing Authority, Georgica Green Ventures, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, New York State Homes & Community Renewal, and other partners. Most importantly, the residents who cooperated with temporary relocation for the duration of construction — and their new neighbors — are now home!

To find out more about affordable housing opportunities in our area and across New York State, visit the Division of Homes and Community Renewal at nyhousingsearch.gov.



LOCAL JOURNALISM TAX CREDIT PASSES!

*Particularly timely in our Assembly district is the **Local Journalism Tax Credit**, providing \$30 million in tax credits for eligible print media and broadcasting companies, to support our struggling local media and help to mitigate the spread of news deserts in New York State. I co-sponsored and advocated for this tax credit, which took on greater urgency after three local newspapers in Westchester (including the Rivertowns Enterprise) were closed in January. Kudos to the municipal governments that issued resolutions requesting its passage, as well as the many community members who communicated their concern and support.*



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LET'S STAY IN TOUCH

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Navigating State agencies ▪ **Accessing government benefits and forms**
Addressing community problems ▪ **Learning about State government**

Feel free to reach out to my district office at **914-631-1605** or email shimskym@nyassembly.gov.

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