



Community Board 12

The City of New York

Borough of Queens

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Community District Needs Statement

FY2010

Introduction

Community Board 12 is bounded by Hillside Avenue (South), the Van Wyck Expressway (West), North Conduit Avenue (South), and Francis Lewis Boulevard/Springfield Boulevard (East) encompassing the communities of Jamaica, South Jamaica, South Ozone Park, Hollis, St. Albans, and North Springfield Gardens, all of which constitutes Community Board 12, Queens. It is one of the fastest growing boards in population of all of the 59 Community Boards. It is the second largest Board in the borough of Queens and takes up a large portion of the southeastern corner of the Borough. Officially, according to the 2000 census, we have a total population of 223,602 people. The number does not reflect an acknowledged undercount, especially among the undocumented residents of Community Board 12. Actually, when the acknowledged undercount is factored in Community Board 12 has well over 270,000 people with all the additional houses built in the district within the last ten years. The District has become a more culturally and ethnically diverse community. It is situated in the well-known flood basin of the world's largest dam, John F. Kennedy Airport. The Airport, built on wetlands, which was our natural drainage area, has greatly contributed to a lack of adequate rainwater run off in our community. Compounding our problem, is the fact that our major trunk line sewer system has been completed. The Thurston Basins system is crucial for the community. We continue to state that Community Board 12, suffers from serious infrastructure problems, our roads and sewers are inadequate to serve our community needs. A great deal of street repair has been done in Board 12, much more remains undone. Yet until these projects are completed, the residents of our community will continue to live with flooded basements, flooded streets, and a potential health emergency waiting to occur.

Economically, the residents of Community Board 12 range from poor to the upper middle class. However, a segment of Board 12's population continue to have incomes below the poverty level, or receive public assistance. Even though there has been a large decrease in public assistance our district continues to be a "target area" eligible for many different social service programs and grants. While, to a large extent these programs are needed and welcomed, there have been more than a few instances of duplication of services, and a lack of coordination among various agencies has led to areas of over saturation. This causes the residents to feel put upon and dumped on. We desire and would welcome a dialogue involving the city, state, federal and private agencies that run residential facilities to develop a coordinated effort that both serves the needs of these populations and is fair to the communities involved.

Parks & Recreation

Community Board 12 have a large amount of Parkland. We have been successful in getting the majority of our parks reconstructed at this time. Adequate maintenance and clean-up should be a seven day-a-week operation during the summer because our parks are heavily used. Seasonal employees should be hired on a five day work week basis. Trees beautify an area, we are getting more and more request for trees from homeowners, capital projects; but, we have not gotten an increase in service regarding pruning of the trees and stump removals. The Queens Forestry Division must be expanded to provide service to address these problems. There must be a pruning contract for every five years, not every ten years. We are requesting additional funding for personnel and equipment.

Human Resources Administration – General Social Services

The use of various services under HRA/DSS continues to be very high, and demand outpaces resources by large margins. There is a clear need for more coherent policy regarding the Homeless in the city in general and Community Board 12 in particular. We have the most shelters in Queens County. There are 17 shelters in the Borough of Queens, 9 of them are in community board 12. More community input is needed in regard to conditions of housing, and new techniques other than “warehousing”. The board continues to be concerned about the closing of the Emergency Assistance Unit (EAU) in Jamaica, thus forcing clients to travel out of the borough for services. This adds an intolerable burden to persons who are already traumatized by their emergency. This policy regarding group homes in Board 12 (and Queens in general) need to be re-examined. There is no comprehensive plan to review and consider residential facilities from all agencies (state, city, and private) when sites for homes are selected. These factors create intolerable burdens on certain communities of the city, such as ours, and causes community residents to oppose services that are legitimately needed out of sense of frustration. Our area has for years been unfairly targeted and as a result we house far more than our fair share of homeless and individuals in need of mental health residential programs. We must control the continuing expansion of group homes and shelters in our area.

Health Services

Our communities continue to remain medically undeserved and that issue must be addressed. We, in Jamaica, Queens have our own ongoing battle with the AIDS epidemic. Nearly twenty-five years after the start of the AIDS epidemic, the rate of HIV/AIDS infections continues to rise throughout the borough of Queens even as it continues a downward trend in “epicenter” boroughs like the Bronx and Manhattan. Jamaica, Queens continues to have a high number of HIV/AIDS cases, the second highest in the borough. The need to address this menace, to explore and implement innovative interventions presently not available in Jamaica, has never been greater.

Queens accounts for approximately 14% of all the HIV/AIDS cases in NYC and Jamaica has the highest cumulative AIDS case rate in Queens. Alarming, the CDC estimates that for every person with AIDS there can be up to five persons with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. When we consider that an estimated one out of every three persons with HIV are not even aware of their status, the results can be staggering to imagine and will impact our community for years to come.

Department of Housing Preservation and Development

We no longer have our Neighborhood Planning Office in its district; the office has been closed, and

is now staffed at 100 Gold Street in Manhattan. New Housing program and infill housing continue to be crucial elements in meeting housing needs in our district.

Since 2000 to present Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) started and completed the following projects in Board 12 district:

New Construction	
Habitat for Humanity	6 Units
New Foundations	8 Units
Partnership New Homes	122 Units
Allen Senior Residence	330 Units

Gut Rehab	
Homeworks	14 Units
Neighborhood Homes	3 Units
Store works	7 Units

Moderate Rehab	
Approximately	214 Units,

The following are the related Program Article 8A Loan
HIP/HIP Options/HIP Senior
NHS
SCHAP

The final phase of the South Jamaica fourth (4) Amendment hopefully will be moving forward soon, at the following locations – Guy R. Brewer North A and B proposed 22, two family homes, ten 2-family homes, eleven 2-family homes, for a total of 42. Proposed 47 units for South Road and Sutphin Boulevard, 21 homes, two will be 3 family homes.

The Jamaica Plan was adopted by the City Council 368 blocks 341 blocks in Community Board 12 district, 27 blocks in Community Board 8 district, Hillside Avenue the dividing line between the two boards. With the plan approved it includes the development of 5,200 units of housing. All parties involved should be applauded for this: however, there remains a strong concern that housing being built and proposed to be build planned too often does not “Match” the income levels of the people in the surrounding community. The residents of a community must not be made to feel that they are being priced out of their community. The challenge for all parties involved is to strike a proper balance while building housing in Community Board 12.

The Jamaica Plan is proposed to protect nearly 160 blocks by preventing the construction of homes and buildings that are out of scale in areas with single family homes.

Department of Transportation (MTA)

Street maintenance at this time, has improved. We continue to feel that a work gang specially assigned to Community Board 12, would be in the best interest of this Community. There continues to be miles of streets in the district in the residential area in a state of disrepair, they are tied up in capital projects, some more than twenty-five (25) years on the books and still not completed.

Department of Design and Construction (DDC)

Community Board 12 infrastructure has been neglected for years. Many of our capital projects were delayed due to budget cuts, only a few are completed, some are in progress, and some continue to remain in limbo ineligible for resurfacing or other maintenance while awaiting construction.

Experience has shown that the lowest bidder on a capital project does not guarantee the best job.

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Flooding, poor drainage, and a high level of ground water are a major problem in Community Board 12. We continue to receive complaints from homeowners and businesses about street flooding so severe that basements and properties are damaged. Existing overflow facilities and outlets are insufficient to handle all the storm water that flows to us above and below ground. Some parts of the district have no storm drainage system at all, and where some storm sewers exist, they are inadequate or ineffective, because a large section of the district have seepage basins; they function for five years the most.

Station 6, located at 110th Avenue and 164th Place; the project is on hold. DEP was designing a new facility there to pump, treat and discharge into the drinking water distribution system approximately 10 MGD, which will assist in lowering ground water throughout the area:

- Design is scheduled to begin again in late 2007
- Construction contract bid in 2009
- Completion of Construction in 2013, now we are being told the completion will be 2014. This Project must move forward. The Department of Environmental Protection has numerous projects submitted to DDC, hopefully will be moving forward. We have been informed that with the Jamaica Plan it will also significantly upgrade sewer and water infrastructure in the district.

We continue to be in need of ongoing routine maintenance of catch basins. DEP is increasing its efforts to address the serious flooding condition in the district, because poor drainage and flooding has been a long standing problem in some areas of our Community District.

Sanitation

Community Board 12 sees no justification for our street cleaning crews being eliminated, hundreds of additional homes have been built in the district, but we have not received any additional service. We are disturbed that Sanitation is unable to service the islands dividing some of our major thoroughfares on a regular basis. Dumping is an increasing problem, and we ask that the Department of Sanitation increase its stakeout presence in our area. We need additional manpower for street cleaning, dump-outs, and litter basket operations. Archer Ave and Parsons Boulevard is one of our busiest transportation hubs, it's not part of the Business Improvement District (BID), and the litter baskets are always overflowing. Some of our streets are serviced everyday, but they continue to be dirty in some of the areas.

This is devastating to our community. Our sanitation garage is in Community Board 10; it should be in the district in which it service. We have seven waste transfer stations. The Transfer stations

in Community Board 12 are not used for the garbage coming from our community; they are used for the garbage coming from other districts. The community is not aware of what type of garbage is being transported through their community. The community is advancing for a more stringent set of guidelines for the Transfer Station to abide by. Other issues revolving around the Transfer Stations are constant noise of 18-wheelers, odors from the stations, moving of particular waste through residential areas along with a host of other issues. The residents in community Board 12 believe that Waste Transfer Stations are prevalent issues facing the community; New York City Department of Sanitation needs to take a more proactive role enforcing the codes and rules set by New York City.

Police

We have two Police Precincts in the district, the 103rd Police Precinct and the 113th Police Precinct. Tremendous revitalization has occurred in Jamaica and its surroundings. Our police precincts continue to show a drop in crime. The 103rd Precinct has gotten an increase in manpower and the Impact Zone, because of the 7,000 to 8,000 high school students that flow through Jamaica Avenue five days per week and the Air Train.

The 113 Police Precinct continues to receive a disproportionate number of Police Officers out of classes graduating from the police academy.

We are justly proud of our community. The Police Department has thrown a vast array of manpower and other resources into Southeast Queens to fight crime.

Subway Service

There are four subway lines (E, J, Z and F). The “F” train terminates at 179th Street on Hillside Avenue. Passengers wishing to travel further east have to transfer to a bus. Jamaica Center Transportation Study found the “E” train serves approximately 95,000 daily passengers (source: NYCT turnstile data) at the Jamaica Center and Sutphin Boulevard, Archer Avenue subway stations. Riders of the New York City Transit system primarily use the system to commute to and from work in Manhattan.

Long Island Railroad

The Long Island Railroad (LIRR) station is located at the corner of Sutphin Boulevard and Archer Avenue. This station serves as a transfer point for several LIRR trains, buses, and subways, and services mainly commuters traveling to and from Nassau and Suffolk counties.

Air Train

The Air Train is a light rail service that connects downtown Jamaica with JFK International Airport and Howard Beach. The Air Train loops through the Central Terminal Area at JFK, it runs above the Van Wyck Expressway connecting to the Long Island Railroad and the subway at Jamaica Station.

Fire Department

In recent years, the incidence of fire and other related problems has decreased. The Fire Department, a number of years ago, instituted a strong and permanent community-based fire prevention program,

the Fire Safety Education Fatal Fire Reduction Program, and the Smoke Detector Program. We once had the highest rate of fatal fires in the City of New York, an additional Fire Engine was added, Ladder 133, Engine 275. Interagency cooperation in the area of fire prevention worked.

With all that has been done, the result has been exceptional. Hopefully, the Fire Department will continue to institute the strong and permanent community-based fire prevention program. The Fire Safety Education, Fatal Fire Educational Program and the Smoke Detector Program. These Programs certainly have been effective.

Education

Overcrowding continues to be a problem. With all the additional housing and proposed housings, only one new 650-seat Primary/intermediate School Facility in school district no. 28 is proposed to be built on a portion of P.S. 48's grounds located at the southeast corner of 155th Street and 108th Avenue. The proposed site is currently occupied by a Transportable Classroom Unit that will be removed to allow for construction of the proposed new permanent facility. The new facility will serve the existing P.S. 48 school organization.

Our Community district has 52,054 children enrolled in preschool to high school, and increasing. This is an overwhelming number, and we need more schools to be built so that we can properly place and educate these children; the portable classrooms that are now being used for classes in our schools are not properly assessed to educate our children in our community. This is a major concern in our community. Community Board 12 students deserve the same amenities and services extended to other students in the City of New York. Our schools need funding from the government to expand the buildings and make larger classrooms for our children. We have 4,075 children coming out of nursery and preschool and 3,370 children coming out of kindergarten. These numbers are increasing every year.

Youth Services

Our youth needs must be addressed. Efforts must be made to improve and increase the availability of health care for the Youth of Community Board 12 Adolescent Health Services. Aids Outreach for youth and more domestic violence and child abuse prevention programs. We need space for youth programs. Youth employment program addressing the high school dropout rate. There is a need for more jobs for youth, during the summer and at other times of the year. Locally and City Wide businesses should make a special effort to provide jobs for our youth. Each year the summer your programs suffer. There is a growing need for an additional latch key program, we have only one type program in the district. Among the most important of our youth needs are more supervised after school programs for our children to attend. We have two Beacon Schools in the district providing after school and evening recreational programs and activities. Some of our youth needs are being addressed, but they are by no means enough.

Department of Buildings/Codes Enforcement

We need additional buildings inspectors to address illegal conversion, working without a permit and on working on the weekends; these problems are escalating. Illegal uses, must not just be cited, they must not be allowed to continue. There continues to be a lack of enforcement in Community Board 12, a proposed Task Force is being set up, but this is to enforce and monitor the area of the Jamaica Plan Rezoning; this is not the entire district. We must have at least two full time

Building and Consumer Affairs inspectors, plus a processor server. To seriously combat the problems of illegal conversions, illegal buildings, driveways, and land use must be evidenced by those agencies charged with enforcement. Local Law 6, the Padlock Law, must be used vigorously in Board 12, where illegal businesses proliferate.

Zoning

Zoning is an issue in the district that certainly needed to be addressed, developers are coming in and demolishing one family homes and building five (5) and eight (8) family homes, changing the make up of a communities.

The Jamaica Plan Rezoning is the larges rezoning in New York City's history, covering 368 blocks. It is the first rezoning for the area since 1961. 341 of these blocks are in community board 12, twenty-seven (27) in Community Board 8, we were informed that the rezoning will spur the creation of 9,500 jobs, 5,200 housing units and three million square feet of Commercial Space around the Air Train Station while protecting adjacent lowered scale neighborhoods; we hope this will happen.

The St. Albans and Hollis rezoning consists of 317 blocks, and we stall have a large portion of board 12 that has not been rezoned and the developers are extremously busy demolishing homes. A number of people have worked long and hard to develop a plan that will protect the character of our communities.

Economic Development

Presently we are getting prepared for a development spurt with a number of proposed large projects, one is in progress, the old former Queens Family Courthouse will be developed - mixed-use project consisting of 380 units of market-rate and affordable rental and ownership housing, 18,500 of retail space, 25,000 of community facilities, and public parking. The 168th Street Garage is proposed to be developed for mixed-use. With growth it presents considerable infrastructure and service challenges, also which require more immediate mitigation by the city especially for parking and traffic flows.

We are concerned, and hope that with all of the proposed projects and new development proposed for the district it will offer an opportunity to address the unemployment in the district.

Finally

We will continue at Community Board 12 fighting for our fair share of City services that we are not receiving, that must be provided to maintain the quality of life for all the residents within the district.