



**CITY OF NEW YORK**  
**Community Board No. 2**

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**Fiscal Year 2013 Statement of District Needs**

Community Board 2 strives for a district that provides equal services, access and resources for all of its residents. To inform budget decisions for our district, we have prepared this statement as a description of where we are, where we would like to be and how we envision getting there.

The following statement presents the state of our district, problem areas or needs and potential solutions for these problems. It is arranged by the functional areas of land use and historic preservation; parks and recreation; youth, education and cultural affairs; health, environment and social services; transportation; and economic development and job creation. We intend for our insights and recommendations to encourage balanced and sustainable development in Community District 2 that meets the needs of our residents.

*Key Findings*

Land use in Community District 2 has been profoundly affected by recent rezonings and nationwide fluctuations in the housing market. A significant upzoning in Downtown Brooklyn in 2004 led to a substantial increase in residential development. Tighter controls will be needed in the future to ensure vacancies are minimized and development proceeds at a responsible pace.

The community district has an insufficient supply of open space per resident. However, the pending completion of Brooklyn Bridge Park is altering this ratio. Beyond quantity, there is a need for consistently high quality in our open spaces. For instance, basketball courts along the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway require paving and lighting and Fort Greene Park is in need of upgrades to drainage systems and landscaping. Also, the length of time to renovate parks is troublesome, for example, Commodore Barry Park was scoped over three years ago and renovation has not yet begun.

Educational services in our district could be augmented. Out-of-school time programming is an important accompaniment to any child's education. Through the bolstering of this service and addition of critical educational programs to assist children who are falling behind, we know that more of our students can perform at grade level.

Community District 2 is a major transit hub with connections to 13 subway lines, 17 buses, the Long Island Rail Road and an expanding bicycle network.

Opportunities exist to improve connections between various modes of transit and create a safer and more user-friendly experience. We encourage the Department of Transportation (DOT) and Metropolitan Transportation Authority to work together to implement improved network connectivity. Additionally, with many DOT projects underway in the district, we encourage safe and timely completion.

Health and social services in our district should meet the needs of all our residents. A greater supply of small-scale health care services that are accessible to low-income communities should be provided. Currently, one in five of our residents do not have a regular doctor.

Striking disparities exist in the rates of joblessness throughout the district. Job training and placement programs should be increased in locations where unemployment rates are highest. Additionally, city agencies should look to their own projects and programs to employ those who are currently unemployed. An example of this is New York City Housing Authority's (NYCHA) Section 3 construction trades work program.

### Land Use and Historic Preservation

#### *State of Our District: Density, Land Use and Stalled Development*

Ours is a comparatively dense community district, with over 37,400 residents per square mile. The average across New York City is 27,000 per square mile. We anticipate this density will increase in the coming years. In 2007, we had the fourth highest number of new dwelling units (1,228 units) authorized by Department of Buildings (DOB) permits. Currently, the predominant land use (21.9 percent) is multi-family residential, then institutional use (13.7 percent). These are followed by industrial, commercial/office, one-two family residential and open space/recreation, ranging from roughly 8.9 to 7.5 percent.

The built environment of Community District 2 has undergone many changes in the last decade. In 2007, there were 1,139 certificates of occupancy issued, as compared to 84 issued in 2000. In 2009, there were only two dwelling units authorized by new building permits. Almost three thousand were authorized in the previous year in Community District 2. Additionally, there are currently 27 stalled sites in our district, much higher than the citywide average.

*Introduction: Land Use*

The Fort Greene and Clinton Hill rezoning of 2007, the Downtown Brooklyn Development Plan (DBDP) approved in 2004 and the 2009 Dumbo rezoning have had varying impacts on our community. The new construction envisioned by these plans has yet to occur due to the national credit crisis and depression of the real estate market. In some cases, in particular the DBDP, the results of these changes have not matched the stated goals of the plans. The rezonings that have been most effective to date are those where one objective was preserving neighborhood scale and character, for instance in Fort Greene and Clinton Hill.

*Needs and Solutions: Land Use*

The high number of incomplete projects in our district is of particular concern to the community board. An exuberant real estate market and the DBDP drove development to occur at a higher rate in and around downtown but with the collapse of the market; many projects are now stalled or abandoned. According to the Department of Buildings there are 704 stalled construction sites citywide, with 27 of those in our district, more than double the average of community districts citywide. Therefore, the average number of stalled sites per community district is 12, less than half that of our district. We encourage the city to take action in the future to prevent such heavy saturation of the local real estate market. Additionally, requiring developers to present proof of full financing for the project and commitment to its completion before demolition or ground breaking could decrease the frequency of abandoned development sites.

The built form of Community District 2 varies considerably from neighborhood to neighborhood and, accordingly, the needs and proposed solutions also vary.

Downtown Brooklyn

Approved in 2004, the DBDP upzoned much of the central business district to competitively retain jobs at risk of leaving New York City. However, because of market conditions and the absence of stronger controls, the plan led primarily to the development of new luxury residential mid-rises. As of March 2010, there has been 7 million square feet of new development built in Downtown Brooklyn yielding 5,000 new residential units, 1,000 hotel rooms and 620,000 square feet of office and retail space.

The majority of new retail space has been on the ground floor of new residential buildings, a requirement of the DBDP, is now beginning to be leased after being empty for some time. We support the development of affordable food vendors and the exploration of other such projects to remedy the current land use imbalance.

Since 2004, Downtown Brooklyn has lost much of its affordable commercial retail space. It was reported that over 200 independent businesses have left the area, many of whom were tenants in the former Albee Square Mall and along Willoughby, Fulton and Duffield Streets. The change in retail market is excluding both small business owners and low-moderate income consumers while encouraging national retailers.

Prior to the downturn, the district experienced a dramatic increase in new construction. In its own right, this represents an opportunity that was present throughout our district—to increase density and preserve character through the appropriate use of land, building stock and historic sites. DBDP was intended to activate and fully realize the value of the city’s third largest central business district. Unfortunately, it has yet to do so. Community Board 2 requested the Department of City Planning (DCP) revisit the plan with the goal of creating a truly mixed-use community, but that request was turned down.

There have been efforts by organizations such as the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership to stimulate commercial investment in the area. The organization’s president, Joe Chan, believes the core of Brooklyn’s downtown will soon be a lively residential neighborhood. Population in this area has increased from 400 residents in 2000 to 3,500. It was projected that the population will be around 7,800 by the end of 2010. It is the hope of this board that the services and amenities required to adequately serve these residents will be provided.

The delayed City Point project is underway, albeit smaller than originally planned. The current phase will establish 50,000 square feet of the planned 1.5 million square feet of retail, commercial and mixed income housing. The remainder of the space has been converted into a marketplace for small businesses. Community Board 2 remains concerned that retailers displaced from the site will not be given the opportunity to participate in the temporary market.

#### Fort Greene and Clinton Hill

The Fort Greene and Clinton Hill rezoning of 2007 was intended to preserve built character and historic housing stock while encouraging increased density along commercial corridors. The onset of the economic downturn has meant less development along Myrtle Avenue and Fulton Street than was anticipated. The board realizes the full impacts of this rezoning remain to be seen but commends the DCP for its preservation of the built character of this neighborhood and for incentivizing affordable housing.

#### Dumbo

It is too early to see significant impact from the Dumbo Rezoning. The plan, which came into effect in 2009, now permits residential development in the

eastern part of the neighborhood. Since its completion, only one new building, located at 205 Water Street, has begun construction. However, residential conversions of industrial space are occurring. The influx of new residents has not been matched by complimentary retail and commercial development. Again, the board hopes to see the attraction of appropriate businesses and services for the residents of this neighborhood.

#### *Introduction: Historic Preservation*

In 2011, over forty percent of our residents lived in one of our many historic districts. Community District 2 is proud to be home to nine of the 25 historic districts in Brooklyn. The nine are the Boerum Hill, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Dumbo, Clinton Hill, Fort Greene, Fulton Ferry, Brooklyn Heights, Vinegar Hill and most recently, Wallabout historic districts. The value that these districts contain and generate is a benefit to our residents and visitors. Across the city, historic districts have been shown to increase home price premiums by 21.8 percent and to improve the economic performance of an area.

#### *Needs and Solutions: Historic Preservation*

To this end, we look forward to soon seeing the extension of the existing districts in Fort Greene and Clinton Hill and the establishment of a skyscraper historic district in Downtown Brooklyn. Sites such as 16 Court Street, 180 Remsen Street and 185 Montague Street are among the suggested buildings for this district.

### Parks and Recreation

#### *State of Our District: Conditions and Space*

Bounded by Myrtle Avenue, DeKalb Avenue, Washington Park and Ashland Place, Fort Greene Park is the district's largest park. Currently, Fort Greene Park provides the district with one quarter of its open space; smaller parks and public spaces dotted throughout the district provide the remainder. Over the coming years, the even larger Brooklyn Bridge Park will continue to open on Piers 1-6 on the East River waterfront. The amount of open space per person in our district will change drastically with the opening of the Brooklyn Bridge Park. While the park will be a regional destination, it is also a local asset and the community board looks forward to maintaining its relationship with the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation as it completes construction.

Even with the addition of Brooklyn Bridge Park, Community District 2 lacks

sufficient open space for its residents and day workers. (At least 70,000 people enter Downtown Brooklyn each day to go to their place of employment.) The city's guideline recommends two acres of passive open space and half an acre of active open space per 1,000 residents. According to City Planning's calculations of land uses in our district, 7.5 percent is open and recreational space, far below the recommended guidelines. We welcome the addition of open space in our district. However, the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) must maintain and repair the existing inventory of parks throughout our district.

*Need: Consistently Improved Conditions*

Since 2000, some small neighborhood parks have been successfully renovated. The majority of these park rehabilitations, however, have occurred in areas with higher median incomes. We would like to see improvements occur equally throughout our district. For instance, Bridge Park 3 and other parks along the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway (BQE) consist primarily of poorly maintained pavement. Bridge Park 3 is located in a census tract that has a median household income of \$9,876. Not too far away, in Clinton Hill, Underwood Park has benefited from local community investment. There, residents came together to improve the condition of the park. As of 2000, the household median income in that park's census tract was \$48,885. An imbalance exists between the conditions of our parks that need to be addressed.

*Solutions: Innovative Solutions for Improved Parks Service*

Innovative solutions are improving our parks and are bringing new park spaces to our district. Concessions, development bonuses and independent fundraising are potential sources of additional funding for parks. These tools can work but have only been seen in select areas of our district. Currently, the Watchtower Society is preparing to renovate a park as part of the approval of a rezoning of a parcel it owns in Dumbo. Fort Greene Park has benefited from the efforts of Fort Greene Park Conservancy, particularly in its preservation of the Prison Ship Martyrs Monument.

We would like to see the necessary funding and tools in place in Community District 2 to improve our parks and provide an equal level of service to our residents. Outlined below are goals we hope to see realized in the near future.

1. Basic maintenance and repair of our parks.

Our district has grown from its 2000 census population of over 98,000, of which 18 percent was school aged. Community Board 2 is not ignorant of the cuts made to the parks budget. Nevertheless, the lack of adequate space for

outdoor recreation in our district demands that the space we do have be adequately repaired and maintained for use. We stress that repair and maintenance needs be implemented in an equitable fashion district-wide and encourage the parks department to involve local community members in this effort.

2. Meet PlaNYC's open space goals to open local schoolyards as parks.

This goal was implemented for three years at PS 38 in Boerum Hill when funding through the Trust for Public Land provided afterhours access to the school playground. Unfortunately, the grant has expired and the school yard is once again closed except when school is in session. We would like to see playgrounds open after hours for use as parks. They offer an alternative to a resource that is in short supply, especially in Boerum Hill. Parks and playgrounds could share resources for this purpose. For instance, with the opening of Sixteen Sycamores in the near future, there might be an opportunity to share staff and maintenance between it and PS 261.

3. Reclaim streets for people by installing additional public plazas and Greenstreets.

DOT has implemented at least 37 Greenstreets in our district and there are plans for three public plazas. These provide welcome respite for pedestrians, encourage public interaction, generate business activity and help to beautify our streets. We look forward to the implementation of more of these and other public plazas on our streets.

4. Identify lots or areas for new parks.

Our district has a wealth of diverse land uses. However, there are large vacant parcels and little-used parking lots. Turning them into parks and public spaces would improve our urban landscape and bring much needed open space to our constituents. We encourage DPR to look at land use in our district to find sites where such repurposing is feasible. For instance, in Clinton Hill there may be private underused sites that could be turned into temporary publicly-accessible open spaces.

We look forward to working with DPR, DCP and DOT on the above projects and goals. Our parks and open spaces may be limited, but with a little help and creative energy the city and the people of our district can work together to provide clean, safe and functional open spaces for all of our residents.

### Youth, Education and Cultural Affairs

#### *State of our District: Under-Performing Schools*

The 2000 Census registered 18.1 percent of our population as under the age of 18. The performance of our students in reading is behind the level of performance in 35 other city community districts. Similarly, our students' math performance ranked 37th out of the 59 community districts in the city. Of our students, 38 percent are reading at grade level and 60 percent test at grade level in math.

In Community District 2 there are 15 public and 13 private elementary schools, including K-12 schools in both cases. The number of middle and high schools present is smaller but their school populations are greater. As the New York City school system does not assign intermediate and high school students by district, it is more applicable to look at the performance and graduation rates of the students who live in our district. Community districts and school districts are not coterminous; most of Community District 2 is in School District 13. Class sizes in the district typically range from 21–29 pupils. Of the students in this district, 62 percent are eligible for a free lunch.

#### *Needs: Youth and Education*

The quality and delivery of education for youth in our district could be improved. Out-of-school-time programming and extra-curricular activities are important components of every child's education. Likewise, special needs and English as a Second Language programs should be ubiquitous in educational settings. Certain ethnic groups and students with disabilities, those with limited proficiency in English and the economically disadvantaged often did not make "adequate yearly progress" by several measures. Adequate yearly progress is defined by the New York State Board of Regents as "satisfactory progress by a district or a school toward the goal of proficiency for all students." This shows a clear need to equally provide all students with the educational resources that they require to succeed.

Many of our students do not have access to acceptable out-of-school-time programming opportunities. Programs such as those in JHS 113/Old 294 Edmunds Center and PS 20 Clinton Hill schools, the Department of Youth and Community Development's Beacon Programs, and Citizen Schools are examples of enriching, positive learning environments that should be readily available to all of our students. As sources of important educational services, Head Start and after-school are important educational services, therefore the reduction of these programs is alarming to the board.



In light of the pending school closures, the community board is concerned about post-elementary school choice. Additionally, the availability of seats in our district is unevenly distributed. For instance, there are no middle schools in Brooklyn Heights. This limits educational options for our residents.

Ten percent of our population is not proficient in English. Our adult population deserves accessible and appropriate educational opportunities. English language classes should continue to be made available for our adult population.

#### *Solutions: Youth and Education*

Funding and resource allocation for increased capacity in our schools, more local school locations and attention to the needs of non-native English speakers and students with disabilities are required. In this regard, the expansion of PS 8 now underway is promising. It will provide necessary school seats and help meet demand for this high-performing elementary school.

Budget shortfalls frequently make such projects difficult to initiate. In the absence of such capacity we encourage schools, community centers and other educational and cultural outlets in our district to use existing resources in new and innovative ways and to share resources and learn from one another. We hope the city will promote cross-communication between these programs and provide support and guidance to encourage such methods.

The Dumbo rezoning, which allowed residential development as-of-right, may lead to a change in the demographics of the neighborhood. The New York City Department of Education (DOE) may be well positioned to meet these demographic changes by construction of a new middle school there. More attention needs to be paid in the future to the shifts in the composition of populations in other neighborhoods. We encourage DOE to continue to track projections of population increases, especially in Downtown Brooklyn and to respond with sufficient school seats for the anticipated number of children.

#### *State of our District: Cultural Affairs*

Community District 2 has a wealth of cultural amenities within its borders. Theatre for A New Audience (TFANA) broke ground on a new home in the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) Cultural District, BAM is building a black box theatre and Roulette a music performance company. These institutions along with others such as Mark Morris Dance Group, Brooklyn Music School and MoCADA stimulate and preserve culture in the district. With a long tradition of arts and artistry, our community is also proud to be home to numerous smaller arts organizations that reside within our borders. For example, 22 small and

emerging theaters work with the Alliance of Resident Theaters/New York, a service and advocacy organization with offices and performance space in Fort Greene. On the Brooklyn Art Council's website, 31 organizations are listed in our district but as this is a self-posted list, the total may be larger.

#### *Needs: Cultural Affairs*

Development and land use changes in Community District 2 have had an impact on the availability of performance and studio space within our community. Spaces for artists and cultural events have become an expensive commodity. The BAM Cultural District, including the BAM Fisher Building and Theater for a New Audience, are examples of urban arts projects that provide a welcome boost to the cultural life of downtown Brooklyn.

#### *Solutions: Cultural Affairs*

Cultural elements enhance the appearance, safety and appeal of public space. They can stimulate investment and encourage use, bringing people more readily from other places and improving the perception of the value that a community places on its shared outdoor spaces. We enjoy the public art exhibits throughout our district. In addition to the creation of the BAM Cultural District, we would like to see more attention paid to the overall look and feel of our district. There are many opportunities to install, promote and display works of art in our district. We would like this to occur more frequently and invite all parties to engage the community board in a discussion about how to do this.

### Health, Environment and Social Services

#### *State of Our District: Imbalanced Services*

Brooklyn's central business district is at the geographic core of Community District 2. Within it are the federal and state courts, municipal offices and a variety of social service centers. These centers provide vital services, care and treatment for thousands each month.

Institutions occupy 13.7 percent of the land in our district. In the district profile prepared by DCP, there are 65 "selected community facilities." Of these, six are senior centers, 42 are private day care centers, 10 are public day care centers and two are head start day care centers. There are also 28 mental health service centers; 26 hospitals, nursing homes and ambulatory programs; 24 chemical dependency service centers and 20 residential programs and food facilities for adults and families. By way of comparison, our demographically and

geographically similar neighbor to the south, Community District 6, has 4.5 percent of its land dedicated to institutional uses and is home to only eight mental health service centers and seven chemical dependency service centers.

Our population increased by 4.3 percent between 1980 and 2000. A decreasing death rate and increasing birth rate mean this trend is likely to continue. According to the Census Bureau's American Community Survey data for 2008, our population is estimated to be a little over 114,000 people and the median age in our district is 35 years. Roughly one-tenth of our residents receive Medicaid support, double the amount five years ago. This represents a shift in the type of assistance people are receiving, as there are an almost equal number of people on income support in total in our district.

#### *Need: Greater Access to Suitable Care*

The majority of the community services and health facilities in Community District 2 serve people in catchments extending beyond the district borders. On behalf of our residents, we ask that neighborhood-scale services for our community also be provided. Residents also need to be fully informed about their health and social service options and to have access to outlets for healthy living.

According to "Take Care New York," the city Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's community profiling document, the health of residents in the Northwest Brooklyn United Hospital Fund (UHF) neighborhood, which includes Community District 2, is underperforming compared to the city as a whole. Heart disease is 10 percent more likely to be a cause of death here than in the rest of New York City. Likewise, our death rate is 15 percent higher than the city average. In terms of access to care, one in four of our residents went without health insurance in 2009. Seventeen percent of our residents rate their health as fair or poor. This last figure is better than the Brooklyn average of 23 percent but we aspire to more.

Too many people utilize the emergency room as their primary care resource. According to "Take Care New York," there are more avoidable hospitalizations in Northwest Brooklyn than the Brooklyn average. In the UHF neighborhood, roughly one in five people do not have a regular doctor and 6 percent go to the emergency room whenever they are sick.

#### *Solutions*

1. Extend service hours and limits cutbacks.

The board is particularly concerned by the possible closure of Head Start

programs in our district. We are also concerned about the potential effects of closing the Farragut Day Care Center and Duffield Children's Center. Our residents need facilities such as these and we hope, at a minimum, they are replaced. Similarly, the hours of the Fort Greene Health Clinic should be extended to include hours outside of the standard business day.

2. Facilitate service provider cross-communication, information sharing and collaboration.

In the wake of service reductions and the closure of facilities, other measures should be taken to address the needs of our populations. Information sharing between resource centers should be facilitated and encouraged. Education is a key component of service delivery, both in its ability to improve the effectiveness of care received by patients and because it can raise people's awareness of the services that are available to them. Information sharing at community health centers is helping to engage people in the services they need. We hope to see these efforts furthered by guidance and oversight from City leadership.

3. Encourage major facilities to understand their local communities and the needs they serve.

Through conscientious planning, large health care centers can provide preventative care and better services to their local communities. The Brooklyn Hospital Center's 2008 Community Service Plan is an example of such planning. It evaluates the health of the population it serves and outlines its priorities, along with a three-year plan of action. Community District 2 represents only one-tenth of the catchment area of the hospital, which according to the Community Service Plan is 1.2 million people. The plan highlights many of the problems mentioned above and also documents the high asthma rates in our district as a concern. The hospital's asthma program is currently evaluating patient management, education and care. We support The Brooklyn Hospital Center's efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of their care. We are also encouraged by their emphasis on preventative care, education and access. It is important that these are all addressed if the health of our district is to be improved.

In addition to direct services, we realize that outlets for physical activity and access to healthy food are important components of building a healthy community. For this reason, we encourage the continued development of bike paths in our district, the permissible placement of green carts and farmers markets and the sponsorship of festivals and outdoor events. There is an opportunity for our district to benefit from further dispersion of fresh produce and quality food

items. We hope to see an analysis of the opportunity for expanding the Green Carts and FRESH markets programs in our community. Providing resources for healthy living is the best preventative care. We hope to be a place where necessary care is accessible and leading a healthy lifestyle is possible.

### Transportation and Public Safety

#### *State of Our District: High Presence of Public Transit*

Community District 2 has many public transportation choices. Our 18 subway stops and 12 bus lines provide our residents with a full network of transit options to take them to the furthest reaches of New York City. Over 70 percent of our population commutes to work daily via public transportation; only 13 percent use a car to reach their jobs. These numbers are much higher than the national and city averages of 56 percent. Many people also walk to work within our district or use the Brooklyn Bridge and Manhattan Bridge pathways to commute to Manhattan.

One of the busiest bus routes in the City, the B41, travels through our district. It had close to 13 million riders in 2008. However the proliferation of illegal transit vans along the B41 route suggests that service can be expanded. Community Board 2 would like to see more enforcement of the “bus only” routes on Fulton and Livingston streets.

Also in 2008, three of our subway stops saw a combined total of 10 million riders. These were Atlantic Avenue/Pacific Street, Court Street/Borough Hall and Jay Street/Borough Hall. That number may have increased with the opening of the connecting passageway between the former Jay Street-Borough Hall and Lawrence Street, now referred to as Jay Street-MetroTech station.

#### *Needs: Transit Options and Reliability, Road Design and Enforcement*

The high level of use of our public transit network demands a highly performing and carefully maintained transportation network. While journeys to and from our district are well accommodated, travel within it is less manageable. The community board looks forward to the completion of the Downtown Brooklyn Surface Transit Circulation Study. The wealth of subway stations in our district provides an opportunity to create connections between them—connections not currently fully realized. Additional exits at stops would also improve accessibility. Slow movement and poor on-time service decreases the level of service on our buses. The B54 in particular faces many challenges on its route.

Improved highway geometry and enforcement will help improve traffic within our district. Too fast moving vehicles are a complaint in our low-density residential neighborhoods. Trucks also drive too frequently off designated routes. Merchants on commercial corridors require additional loading zones for their purposes. The designation of bike lanes is often undermined by illegal parking that needs better enforcement. Similarly, the continued abuse of City employee and union permits needs increased enforcement.

Streetscaping has vastly improved many parts of our district. We request that these improvements be extended more broadly. For example, sections of Atlantic Avenue are nicely planted and furnished, while others are grey and dreary. A continuous aesthetically pleasing appearance along Atlantic Avenue would improve and smooth the divide between residential and downtown commercial neighborhoods. More benches and consistent tree beds should be part of such an approach.

Roadway design and traffic management can improve safety on our streets. Key hot spots for pedestrian and bicycle crashes are Myrtle Avenue and Flatbush Avenue Extension, Adams and Livingston Street, Adams Street and Tillary Street, Flatbush Avenue and Fulton Street, and Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues.

New traffic calming measures have been implemented and are helping to slow down the flow of traffic. Bike paths have increased safety on the streets. However, nuanced planning of this network is required. Road conditions are substandard on streets such as Vanderbilt Avenue. This is hazardous for bikers.

Bike lanes have been widely developed in our district, to a large degree because they converge on the Brooklyn and Manhattan bridges. The city's 2011 annual bike census conducted during spring counted 2,000 new Brooklyn to Manhattan bike commuters. Almost 1,000 of those use the Manhattan Bridge crossing. Bike lanes function not only as a safety feature for alternative transportation but also as an economic generator. The Fulton Area Business Alliance, a district management association, is advocating for more bike lanes, as their merchants are asking for more racks on the sidewalks. Likewise, the Myrtle Avenue Revitalization Project is exploring ways to provide bike storage or simply to add additional bike racks.

Street lighting can improve safety on our streets. Certain blocks in Fort Greene and Clinton Hill are particularly concerned about inadequate lighting. Street lighting needs to be reviewed and more lighting should be added. Examples of blocks where more lighting is needed are Carlton Avenue, between DeKalb and Myrtle avenues, and on Clifton Place, both of which are in the Clinton Hill neighborhood.

*Solutions*

There are three main areas in which we see opportunities for improving transportation service and safety in our district. They are listed below along with specific interventions:

1. Safety and enforcement: Slower progressing signals on Atlantic Avenue, timed pedestrian countdowns, safety cameras, parking permit enforcement and truck use regulation.
2. Network improvements: Bike lanes should interconnect better, pedestrian and bus connections should be created with the new Brooklyn Bridge Park, Lawrence Street Station improvement needs to be completed as soon as possible, subway entrances should be improved and repaired, connections between subways and buses should be readily identifiable through the use of clear and consistent signage.
3. Funding: An annual issue for which regular and reliable sources should be found, equalization of tolls on the East River bridges and Brooklyn Battery Tunnel could be implemented, muni-meters could and should be used more widely.

An additional measure that is improving streets throughout the city is DOT's Public Plaza program and other traffic calming initiatives. The reconstruction of "Seven Corners," at Hanson Place and Fulton and South Oxford streets, is an example where streetscape improvements and traffic calming measures have been implemented concurrently. Albee Square Plaza was recently completed and affords passer-bys in Downtown Brooklyn an attractive outdoor space to sit, read or eat. We look forward to the same results at Pearl Street, Putnam and Fowler Triangles. Widened sidewalks, speed humps and street furnishings are design tools that help mitigate traffic hazards and provide a safer and more pleasant experience for all users.

Many of the needs we describe have solutions outlined in the Downtown Brooklyn Transportation Blueprint. Some of these solutions have been implemented; others are ongoing. We support the goals of the blueprint to simultaneously accommodate travel demand growth, manage congestion, balance through and local traffic, and improve street management and safety. The board hopes to see the full execution of its priority initiatives.

### Economic Development and Job Creation

#### *State of Our District: Pockets of High-Unemployment*

Overall, unemployment in our district is on a downward trend. The American Community Survey found it to be 4.7 percent in 2008, whereas in 2007 it was recorded at 6.6 percent. In the same year the district's median household income was \$64,046. Additionally, college degrees are held by 58 percent of our residents who are 25 and older.

These figures reflect an area that is improving its economic performance and capacity. However, breaking down these figures shows a very different story. The highest median income in any one census tract in our district, as of the 2000 Census, was \$112,414. The lowest was \$9,876. Similarly, a census tract in Clinton Hill had unemployment of 39.7 percent. This was one-third higher than the district average. On a positive note, a higher percentage of people in Community District 2 are employed in professional and related occupations than in the rest of Brooklyn and New York City.

Funding for economic development projects in our district comes from various sources. The Economic Development Corporation sponsors several programs applicable to businesses in Community District 2. At the federal level, two development projects in our district have received stimulus funding. These are City Point, which received \$20 million for the phase of construction, and the Brooklyn Navy Yard, where \$1 million was allocated to support development of a "green" manufacturing center.

#### *Needs*

Levels of unemployment vary drastically across our district. Our labor force population is largely skilled and marketable and all members of it should be given equal exposure to opportunities. Local enterprises need to be supported and encouraged—their hiring and that of new businesses should focus within the district whenever possible. Addressing joblessness across our district is our primary economic development concern.

The obvious precursor to employment is job creation. Economic stimulation through investment can lead to job creation. Projects such as the development of the BAM Cultural District and the commercial revitalization of Fulton Street and Myrtle Avenue are crucial to the economic state of our district. Additionally, funding should be increased for youth after-school and development programs such as Helping Encourage Leadership Potential. Not only is education an important part of adolescent development, it is at the core of workforce



development. Its complete and consistent provision across our district is essential for the prosperity of all of our residents.

NYCHA has set up specific programs to address unemployment within their tenant populations. We applaud the intentions of these programs and would like to see them more widely utilized. In our district, it is alleged NYCHA has not adhered to the Section 3 and the Residential Employment Programs. The latter is a program that requires the authority to employ people from within developments to work on construction projects at those properties. Our sources indicate less than ten residents were hired for the extensive and continuing Whitman and Ingersoll Houses renovations. The isolation of these communities within the district is stark. Economic empowerment is an essential tool that can bridge this divide.

### *Solutions*

#### 1. Workforce Development:

Downtown Brooklyn is a burgeoning economic center. Available jobs in this district should be connected to local residents. We are aware of a number of programs to address economic development in our district. Better connections need to be made between resources such as these and the residents that can benefit from them. On the ground programming and outreach is a foundational approach to addressing joblessness in the community district. We see the Brooklyn Navy Yard's efforts in this regard as exemplary. If there is a way to replicate and broaden the scope of such work, we believe it will be of enormous benefit to the parts of our district with far too high joblessness.

#### 2. Business Development:

Economic development efforts across the district can and should be coordinated. "Shop Brooklyn" is an example of this cooperation. As a district that is home to numerous business improvement districts, we see them as potential connectors and vehicles for holistic economic development. The work of the Myrtle Avenue Revitalization Project engages community residents. This engagement is essential if economic development is going to benefit our residents. The makeup and mix of our commercial sector is changing. The diversification of the "antique alley" on Atlantic Avenue is an example of such an evolution. Promotion and exposure for our local businesses helps them to grow. We encourage the Brooklyn Economic Development Corporation and the Fulton Avenue Business Alliance's work to bring dynamic businesses to our district. Diversification on our commercial streets is crucial to stability.

The Greenlight Bookstore in Fort Greene is an example of a successful attempt to respond to the needs of the community with appropriate businesses. They were a recent winner of the annual Brooklyn Public Library business plan contest. Their business model coincided with a request by the local community for a neighborhood bookstore. Innovative attempts to match market demands are smart and we would like to see more conscientious business developments like this throughout the district.

### 3. Infrastructure Improvement:

You cannot have a successful economic development effort without viable infrastructure. Indeed, it can drastically improve the marketability of a business district. In this regard, Downtown Brooklyn is fortunate to have a high concentration of public transit options, urban outdoor space and Class A office space. With a dynamic market, however, local infrastructure must be revisited to ensure that it meets the needs of that market. During this period of heavy street construction, we encourage contract and construction managers to ensure the timely completion of work.

Design elements can be used to enhance the appeal of the public realm. We would like to see more public art throughout our district. Providing appealing outdoor spaces attracts people and businesses alike. Our built fabric is essential to our marketability as a district. We hope to see it preserved in our lower density areas and grown and guided to a diverse mix of uses in our central business district, Downtown Brooklyn.

### Acknowledgements

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Respectfully submitted,

*John Dew*

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