



**CITY OF NEW YORK
COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN
3 Washington Square Village New York, New York 10012-1899
(212) 979-2272
FAX (212) 254-5102**

STATEMENT OF NEEDS

PREFACE

Each year Community Board #2, Manhattan updates its original Statement of Needs (hereinafter referred to as the "Statement"), which is submitted pursuant to the implementation of and in accordance with the Charter changes of 1977. Each year the Statement represents the needs of all of our residents.

The needs of this Community Board, as expressed in this statement, have been brought to our attention by our residential and business communities, agencies, local elected officials and the large number of complaints logged at our office or discussed at our monthly District Service Cabinet meetings. Once these needs are identified they are investigated by pertinent Community Board committees and reviewed by our full Board membership.

The above procedure was again followed in past years and the following is the result.

It is noted that we submit this Statement of Needs with a sense of frustration, for as we go through this process, we are also watching the impact on our community of the New York City Administration's drastic service cuts and worrying about the decline in our minimal capital budget. Our community has sought and will continue to seek financial resources material and to help restore the expense and capital cuts, in an attempt to reduce the impact of the reductions. Several years ago, a group of neighborhood parents with young children raised funds to keep our local mini-pool open. That same year the landlord of women's mental health program in our district offered to defer part of the rent to help keep the program going; groups of parents and other concerned residents raised money to renovate playgrounds in Washington Square Park and James J. Walker Park and to construct a sitting and play area on a strip of land owned by the Highways Department. Another group of West Village residents raised funds for an on-going project employing a privately funded agency to work with homeless people in our parks.

New York University has continued to meet the needs unfilled by the Parks Department in Washington Square Park, from supplying toilet paper to the purchase of a mechanical sweeper.

The Friends of Washington Square Park donated funds to hire young people to clean and care for Washington Square Park. The Lower Manhattan Neighborhood Organization (LMNOP) has cleaned and painted DeSalvio Park. This is only a small listing of the ways in which residents, institutions and businesses in this community have joined together in an attempt to close the service gap let by the drastic cuts in municipal services.

HISTORY

Community Board #2, is a diverse district, bounded on the north by 14th Street, the south by Canal Street, the east by the Bowery/Fourth Avenue, and the west by the Hudson River. It is a unique and rapidly expanding community that includes the neighborhoods of Little Italy, SoHo, Greenwich Village, the West Village, the South Village and Hudson Square. Within Community Board #2 are five designated Historic Districts—Charlton-King-Vandam Historic District, Greenwich Village Historic District, SoHo Cast Iron Historic District, Cast-Iron Historic District, MacDougal-Sullivan Gardens and the newest addition, the NoHo Historic District.

This historically rich community is graced by well over two thousand century-old dwelling. Row houses constructed in the early 1800's, on what then farmland, still stand in Greenwich Village and the Charlton/King/VanDam Historic District. Cast-iron buildings that were bolted together in SoHo from 1859 to 1872 still line the streets today.

Much of this architectural beauty has been maintained by residents who are determined to preserve their neighborhoods' past. But needs are changing drastically. Manufacturing and commercial areas, once used almost exclusively during the working day, have turned into twenty four-hour residential areas. In addition, hordes of tourists and other visitors add to the extremely heavy burden placed on diminishing services and an antiquated city infrastructure, which has long been in need of an overhaul.

COMMUNITY USE

A. Population

In assessing local needs it is necessary to understand what the increased shift in building use means to the community, and how the massive amount of new and bulkier construction has added, and will continue to add, more residents to a population count and neighborhood character not reflected in the 1990 census.

While figures from the 2000 census will not be available for sometime, the West and Central Village, from 1960 to 1990, had a population increase of twenty-two per cent (22%). In the Far West Village – an area bounded by Hudson River, Gansevoort Street and Leroy Street – many large construction projects were completed in the last few years. Almost 1,000 new residential units were constructed at nine of these sites, in addition to other structures that are considerably larger than those in the area. New York University dormitory sites have also added thousands more people to the Community Board #2 area, and the New School is in the midst of its expansion program, as is Cooper Union. In addition, a private developer is proposing a massive development in Cooper Square.

In NoHo and SoHo, completed and proposed conversions to residential use have changed and will further change the character of these neighborhoods. The population of SoHo increased thirty-five per cent (35%) from 1960 to 1990. However, the largest in over the same 20-year span was in NoHo, which grew by one hundred and fifty per cent (150%). Hundreds of loft dwellers – residing in NoHo and SoHo – continue to bring their loft space into compliance with legal residential requirements and their numbers will greatly inflate the population figures. In addition, major new apartment projects along the north and south sides of East Houston Street, east of Broadway have or will add hundreds of new residents.

According to a City Planning Commission report on the percentage change in 0-17 year old population; between 1980 and 2000, this district will have seen an increase that may approach 15% percent. This trend has already begun to manifest itself in increased numbers of children under five years of age in the SoHo and West Village neighborhoods of our district. There has also been a marked increased in demand for day care services and outdoor play space for this age group. While for-profit day care services are expanding to meet this demand, low-cost day care services do not have affordable space in which to expand. Our outdoor play space is extremely limited, and has reached the saturation point. Recently, the Children's Aid Society sold some of its outdoor playground space, which has placed an additional burden on our already over-used playgrounds. This critical need for outdoor play space brings additional urgency to this community board's insistence on the transformation of the Hudson River waterfront in the Greenwich Village area into a green, open space park.

This change in neighborhood character is not only dramatic but well-documented: according to the New Telephone Company, residential accounts have sharply increased in Community Board #2 while manufacturing accounts have declined.

Nevertheless, the New York City Administration continues to overlook the needs of our changed population, and has not provided essential services to encourage a viable, safe, mixed-use community for residents, businesses and tourists.

B. Tourism/Visitors

Within the boundaries of Community Board #2 are some of the most popular tourist attractions in New York City, with millions of tourists visiting the restaurants and cafes of Little Italy, the galleries and boutiques of SoHo, the jazz clubs and Off-Broadway theaters of Greenwich Village, as well as the gourmet shops and bookstores of the entire area. A walk through our Landmark Districts is an historic delight with many well-preserved buildings dating back to the early part of the 19th Century.

However, part of our community, particularly SoHo and Hudson Square have also seen an explosive increase in late night (and early morning) visitors who patronize new bars, clubs and restaurants and who have severely strained the quality of residents' life. Community Board #2 has noted that there is quite a difference between retail daytime use and retail nighttime use, and has gone on record to call upon the City to amend Use Group 6 to require special permits for bars, restaurants and clubs.

There are six major higher educational institutions located in Community Board #2 – New York University and its law school, Cooper Union, Benjamin Cardozo Law School, Hebrew Union College, The New School and Parsons School of Design – they draw tens of thousands of students, professors and other staff who commute to or live in the Village. New York University's campus expansion in the Village area has created thousands of dorm residents in the Greenwich Village area (and last year it expanded to SoHo), and to a lesser extent the New School and Cooper Union are following suit. Not to be overlooked is St. Vincent's Hospital and Medical Center, with its students, nurses, doctors, patients and visitors, all of whom add greatly to our transient population. In addition, the Lesbian and Gay Community Service's Center operates 300 citywide programs

that draw thousands of members and participants each year.

In addition to the extraordinarily high volume of pedestrian traffic, trucks make many local commercial deliveries, and use our narrow streets to travel from the Hudson River to the F.D.R. Drive, south to the financial district and to the outer boroughs. Our fragile network of narrow streets is clogged with trucks skirting the one-way toll on the Verrazano Bridge in order to use the toll-free Manhattan Bridge to access the Holland Tunnel. In addition, the fleet of trucks operated by wholesalers of perishable goods that have opened in the past ten years in Chinatown, Little Italy and SoHo (turning parts of the area into a terminal market), plus the oversized trucks of their suppliers and customers have added to already illegal levels of air pollution. Added to this situation are mega-stores in our M-districts, and proposed diesel-truck dependent operations that will exacerbate the already high levels of health damaging diesel fumes in the area. Trailer trucks endanger pedestrians and also cause damage to our landmark buildings. Community Board #2 has been working with the Dept. of Business Services to find an alternative location for these truck-intensive businesses.

Our parks, from the world-famous Washington Square to our other twenty-six sitting areas and vest-pocket parks, are all heavily used by local citizens and visitors. Community Board #2 has been unable to cope with the inordinate strain on diminishing city services, which occurs almost twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

We are greatly concerned that city planners have ignored the impact of these changes and have neglected to urge the creation of ancillary services, which these changes require. During these years of conspicuous residential growth in NoHo and SoHo our planners have not provided for the necessary amenities which make for a health and growing residential community, i.e.: schools, open space and parks, and consumer products and service retail space. Our budget priorities for the past few years have focused on servicing our new as well as our old population. More specific assessments of services will be set forth throughout this Statement.

Additionally, the growth of tourism in SoHo, which is visited by more people on weekends than is Midtown, has not been met with an increase in street garbage pick-up or Police coverage. Both are sorely needed.

C. The Hudson River Waterfront

The entire Hudson River waterfront area within the boundaries of Community Board #2, both piers and bulkhead, has been dealt with poorly by the New York State and New York City administrations. From the city which once floated a prison barge off Pier 40 to a State Administration, which also claims to be committed to a park along the same waterfront, we witnessed the construction by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey of an above-ground-rather than below ground emergency egress/access for its PATH system at Morton Street, obstructing precious open space.

Community Board #2, along with the Greenwich Village community and our elected officials, is currently working to convert a long-awaited dream into the reality of green, open space for the entire Greenwich Village Hudson River waterfront, making use of our open piers for pedestrians to enjoy. We have continued to oppose inappropriate construction in the water or for pedestrians to enjoy.

MUNICIPAL SERVICES

A. Public Safety

Public safety has always been high on our list of priorities, and the demand for adequate 24-hour police coverage has never been greater. We receive continuous complaints from both the residential and business communities, regarding the need for additional police coverage. Law enforcement problems reach not only into our homes and busy streets, but also into the many sites where tourists, residents and theater-goers gather for enjoyment. Drug dealing in our parks and streets hurts our residents and seriously damages our neighborhoods. Residents are justifiably angry that the city has not moved quickly to curtail these activities. The current police coverage of Washington Square Park gives us some comfort, and we hope that these efforts will not be short-lived. But some of this activity has moved elsewhere within our cachement. Groups of beer-drinking and crack-using young adults invade the park's adjacent residential streets and remain for many hours, often traveling as far as the West Village where they engage in anti-social activities. We note however that the sharp increase in drug dealer on Sullivan Street & Thompson Streets south of Houston Street, has been met with a vigorous response from the First Precinct and from Manhattan South and we applaud this action.

But we are outraged at this ongoing failure of government (Federal, State and City) to provide treatment services for drug addicts who seek help.

Community Board #2 overwhelmingly supported the Safe Cities-Safe Streets project. However, when we did so, we did not support terminating non-police clericals who would have to be replaced by police officers, nor did we support cutting back on school crossing guards, who later would be replaced police officers. These changes translate into fewer officers on the street. Instead, we had acted under the assumption that the Safe Cities police project would include additional officers from midnight to 6 a.m. to monitor and protect the bar, club, and theater crowd, and create some peace for residents who have a right to sleep at night. However, even with the additional officers from Safe Streets, we seem unable to give our residents a feeling of public safety protection.

While we are pleased that the First Police Precinct has added its own bar and club enforcement team to that of the 6th's regular cabaret enforcement team, we are displeased that on weekends, the busiest, most crowded time in our area, we are unable to obtain police coverage. We are told that the officers who work Fridays and Saturdays are given off Sundays and Mondays. But what about the others who do not work those days?

With our support, the Police Department received the bulk of expense funds, stripping other agencies of many important functions. We recognize the outstanding job being done on a daily basis by our local police precincts but they need additional officers and special units added to their precincts. With that in mind, we repeat the constant comment of our residents: "Where are the cops?"

And, with respect to bars, clubs and cabarets, we would like to see the Department of Buildings more vigilant when issuing permits for change of use. Too many times it is clear that the Department of Buildings has not read the zoning resolution.

Fire Department

We still require additional fire fighters to ensure public safety. The issue of public safety in Community Board #2 manifests in other areas as well. Timely inspections and their resolutions by enforcement agents from various regulatory agencies are essential to the well-being of our residents and preservation of our Special Districts. More careful attention must be paid to the zoning regulations regarding building plan examiners and sidewalk café application certifiers. Illegal construction continues in Community Board #2, we require additional, properly trained inspectors. Building owners, restaurateurs and café entrepreneurs have found it easy to build in complete disregard of local laws. New businesses are opened and profits are reaped while complaints sit on agency desks. Illegal and unlicensed operations continue without inspections and penalties; and citizens continue to complain to the board office.

There is a strong need for coordination among the many agencies. One agency approves a use; while another issues violations and a third agency (and sometimes a fourth) issues licenses of approval. Effective enforcement is a critical factor in protecting our pedestrians. "The City's control of sidewalks is so divided among different agencies, each limited to a separate kind of private or commercial sidewalk use, that the overall public concern – to keep the sidewalks clear for pedestrians – is lost. They belong to no one." So said our report, "Sidewalks are for people".

For many years numerous restaurants in SoHo have placed unenclosed cafes in front of their establishments, even though outdoor sidewalk cafes are disallowed under the SoHo zoning. And while the Department of Consumer Affairs tells us that these café owners who violate the law will apply for a zoning change, this had not happened as of the beginning of FY 2001 and they continued to operate illegally. We must raise the penalties for such continuing abuse of the law so that it will be more painful to continue the violations, but first, we must get enforcement and coordination with the State Liquor Authority. In other areas, where outdoor cafes are permitted, many operate without a license and without inspection. So, from these businesses there is no City revenue, and neighboring restaurateurs that do comply with the law are furious that their fees are raised while others pay nothing. It is only logical that the City should try to collect violation penalties.

Through a series of policies, this City is at war, perhaps unintentionally, with its citizens over the simple issue of their ability to walk unobstructed on city sidewalks. Through a maze of confusing and sometimes conflicting regulations, guidelines, administrative directives and policies, the City has allowed and often encouraged newsstands, newspaper vending machines, fruit and vegetables stands, vendors, flea markets and the like, to choose our sidewalks and again abuse our residential and commercial neighborhoods. For these indignities the City charges the businesses a mere pittance, but all citizens pay in terms of a reduced quality of life. We wonder why each of our heavily trafficked corners requires newsstands, which are more like low priced outlets for general- merchandise. These matters have long needed corrective action. Once again, we refer to our "Sidewalks Are for People" Report: "The City must begin to view the public and private uses of its sidewalks as a unified issue. A comprehensive City policy must set priorities among those private uses that can be accommodated while still protecting the primary public use of sidewalks by pedestrians. This policy should be developed by a task force consisting of public officials, Community Board members, and private citizens. Community Boards should participate in decisions granting private uses of sidewalks, always with the purpose of safeguarding their primary public uses."

To continue securing pedestrian safety efforts within our community, a number of meetings have been held with the cooperative efforts of the community, Community Board #2, and the NYC DOT. Documented changes in our neighborhood character – increased residential, institutional, business and transient populations – have created extremely high volumes of pedestrian traffic, which are in constant conflict with vehicular traffic. The vast majority of Community Board #2 accident fatalities are pedestrians.

The city must continue to encourage improvements for pedestrian and alternative transportation modes with emphasis on design and regulation of streets, including traffic calming approaches, lighting and directional information for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic, improved safety, enforcement as well as aesthetic improvements. Facilitating pedestrian movements and access between the six major subway lines, bus routes, hospitals, commercial districts, open space, schools, universities, historic districts and residential communities' needs implementation. The community has already identified areas for consideration, with research from the DOT Pedestrian Mobility Unit.

Because Community Board #2's Greenwich Village, SoHo, NoHo, Little Italy & Chinatown areas are internationally known tourism destinations and encourage heavy nighttime and weekend usage of Community Board #2's Streets, and heavier usage of private automobiles, a major effort must be made to increase the use of mass transit by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Transit Authority, by making transit use more comfortable and convenient and transit more accessible, and frequent. Mass transit makes much more efficient use of space and energy and significantly reduces air and noise pollution and minimizes pedestrian/vehicular conflicts.

Safety approaches to be examined are:

- Providing more space for pedestrians at high traffic corners through moving bus stops and/or parking spaces, telephones, vending machines and newsstands off corners;
- Prohibiting some turns to minimize pedestrian and vehicular conflicts;
- Delineating pedestrian safety areas at large intersections;
- Creating direct crosswalks and clearly delineating all crosswalks with painted striped lines at major intersections, and institutions (hospitals, schools, places of worship, parks, etc.);
- Changing traffic light cycles to simplify crossings adding more space for non-polluting modes of transportation.

Examples of areas that the community and Community Board #2 have identified which need immediate attention by the city include:

- Washington and Greenwich Street

- Sheridan Square East Area and Waverly Triangle
- Houston Street Corridor at: 7th Avenue, 6th Avenue, LaGuardia/West Broadway, Broadway, Lafayette, and Bowery;
- Mercer Street from 8th Street to Houston, traffic calming especially at West 3rd Street playground;
- Bleecker Street Corridor from 6th Avenue to Bowery especially at Lafayette Street and NoHo – Mulberry Triangle at Lafayette Street;
- Broadway Corridor at: Astor Place, Bleecker, Houston (subway), Prince (subway), Broome and Canal;
- Canal Street Corridor and Holland Tunnel Accesses: (All of it) especially in light of 5-years construction beginning;
- Mott and Mulberry Streets in Little Italy and Chinatown.

We have consistently pressed for and are pleased that the Buildings Department and the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) have begun to place inspectors in decentralized locations, and that we have been able to begin to get evening inspections by Consumer Affairs and the Department of Environmental Protection, and that police officers are now issuing “unnecessary noise” summonses.

B. Landmarks Preservation

The strength of the Landmarks Commission is essential to the unique quality of this district and remains evident in the value of properties here and the vigor of tourism. Landmarks enforcement must be expanded, as we have long insisted.

C. Quality of Life Issues

We were shocked to learn that after years and years of ranking Parks and Sanitation the highest expense priority items by all Boards, the City has reduced the forces in these agencies.

The reduction in cleaning and collection, efforts has already impacted very negatively on our busy commercial strips and residential blocks. Our residents take pride in their historic neighborhoods, as well as those adjacent to them, as part of New York City’s heritage. In the past few years, since we have been monitoring Service delivery, complaints about lack of or late collection had declined. Considering that this was our highest complaint category, compliments were in order, with special kudos given for planning and implementing service improvement for our citizens. But recently more and more complaints about uncollected refuse and overflowing litter baskets are being received concerning both inland areas and the Hudson River waterfront. This overwhelmingly true in our heavily tourist areas, including Greenwich Village and SoHo, where the number of litter baskets and the amount of pick-ups is entirely insufficient.

New residents replacing the manufacturers, who previously hired private carters, must now rely on city sanitation collection. The local sanitation forces must keep pace with the increasing twenty-four-hour population. District #2's small and diminishing staff cannot meet the community's growing needs.

Our parks have not fared well. Limited staffing cannot possibly maintain our sitting areas and popular parks. While many of our parks have been adopted by local volunteer groups, their members cannot be expected to give up their regular jobs to remove the refuse each day.

Through a tax fund provided by the privatizing of the Federal Archives Building, three park vehicles, plus other grass-cutting and snow-removal machinery, had been purchased several years ago for this district. Similar funding was also allocated to refurbish some parks and playgrounds. We have helped the Parks Department, and will continue to do so, but it is unacceptable, considering the abuse taken by our parks, that we are without adequate personnel and equipment. We urge the City to provide this community with more funds for the Parks Department.

The consequences of reduced parks and sanitation forces have been severe in all parts of our community. Residents and businesses are complaining in an alarming number about the recent enormous growth in the amount and size of our rat population. We commend the Health Department's Pest Control unit for its consistent attention, but this unit has lost practically its entire staff, and preventive measures have been virtually discontinued. Thus, our streets and parks have become 24-hour soup kitchens for our rat population.

To sum up, we need visible uniformed police officers, more parks workers, sanitation cleaning and collection workers, HPD, Consumer Affairs and Buildings inspectors and plan examiners - to improve the quality of life for Community Board #2 residents, merchants and visitors. One of our district's most pressing needs is the establishment of a new Greenwich Village Waterfront Historic District along the Hudson River without which the Greenwich Village Historic District may be walled in by high-rise luxury development, Port Authority ventilation towers, and a sanitation garage for the whole West side.

PUBLIC FACILITIES/THE INFRASTRUCTURE

Community Board #2 takes pride in its historic landmarks, yet fears for the future in light of the current state of our antiquated public facilities. A Few historical facts can best illustrate our need:

- The first sewers built in New York City were constructed over a century ago; Community Board #2's sewers were among those initially constructed.
- Broome Street, which cuts through Little Italy and the South Village, was first paved in 1809;
- Carmine Street was opened 1816.
- The Seventh Avenue subway was constructed in 1918; the Sixth Avenue line was built barely more than a decade later.

The increasing number of unrepaired gaping potholes is evident. Some of our many requests for capital repaving projects, street reconstruction, improved traffic conditions and other needed improvements have been heeded, but there is still much to be done. Maintenance will always be an urgent item on the community's agenda.

Subway service to our community must be improved. Stations such as Bleecker (downtown) and Spring Street (downtown) require the return of a token clerk. Without a token clerk, riders will avoid using the station because of dark, dangerous corridors and stairways. However, we take strong exception to the planning and upgrading of several of our subway entrances and exits without handicapped accessibility or early consultation with us. A few years ago, renovations were planned executed at the Christopher Street #1 and #9 station without our input. We are working with Community Board #4 to improve the lighting, ventilation sanitation at the 8th Avenue and 14th Street station, and we again request that no renovations be undertaken in our area without community input during the planning and design stages.

We are disappointed that the plans for the Broadway/Lafayette Station did not yet include connecting all lines in the station, escalators, improved signage and a twenty-four-hour token booth at the new Houston Street/Crosby Street entrance, despite our strong advocacy for such features. After years of protesting the replacement of token clerks with unreliable "high-wheel" turnstiles. We are pleased that the TA has installed electronic turnstiles to improve access.

We are pleased with the swift implementation of full metro-card service, and that our suggestion of, only as part of a system which creates opportunities for reduced fares for frequent ridership, elimination of multiple fares for bus and subway services, and other innovations which will attract more riders, thus enhancing safety and improving the fiscal condition of the system has been achieved.

We are pleased that the MTA has decided to view the Union Square/East 14th Street station as an integrated unit in planning its revamping. We earnestly wish that the same approach be used at the other multi-line stations in our community, i.e. Canal Street, Bleecker Street/Broadway-Lafayette, West 14th Street/8th Avenue. Failure to do so results in serious difficulty for passengers – such as the inability to make transfers.

The needs of the children in our district are of prime concern to the community. One such area of concern is the overcrowding and deteriorating plant at Chelsea Vocational High School. For 20 years, Community Board #2, has struggled with the Board of Education to save this school-which services a citywide population. Chelsea Vocational is housed in an old elementary school meant to service 500 pupils. At present, 1200 teenagers are enrolled. The maintenance problems are serious; major renovation and repairs are needed. In recent years, the Board of Education has indicated a willingness to provide this overcrowded school with an annex, largely as a result of Community Board #2's prodding over many years. However, this capital improvement project has never moved out of the site selection process. Rather than wait many more years, Community Board #2 has intensified its efforts to see that renovations and repairs are completed and additional space becomes a reality as soon as possible.

Another high school, the High School for the Humanities, lies just north of the Board #2 area and has been a vital education outlet for our district's feed schools. Its creation as a liberal arts school with several "magnet" subject areas was fostered by community leaders with strong

The Human Resources Department, the Division of AIDS Services, the Department of Homeless Services, the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Alcoholism Services and the Department for the Aging have all been devastated by budget cutbacks in recent years. We must make sure that any further budget cuts or new social services policies do not further diminish humanized comprehensive and continuous care which will best serve our most needy neighbors.

ARTS

Our district is one of the City's most popular art centers, with thousands of tourists visiting art galleries, theaters, and other art attractions every day. However, over the last few years, due to the influx of retail, dining and shopping, more and more art galleries and other places of art are disappearing from our district. There is a need for increased support of these organizations by the City in order to preserve our district as an arts center.

CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

Within the next few months, the Office of Management and Budget will receive our specific Capital and Expense Budget requests and priorities. At that time, numerous agencies will judge those requests and provide answers in a few words designed to fit on forms. Over and over we are told that our needs must be subjected to feasibility studies – which often are not carried out. We cannot stress enough – as we have done so often before – the particular needs we have enumerated that deserve special consideration.

We believe that the city, which reaps the benefits of our large tax base, enjoying the profits of thousands of tourists daily, should reciprocate. City action is long overdue in funding the requests we have made, year after year.

Ours is a community of preservationists: our block and community associations' plant and care for trees; friends' groups care for our parks; merchants' associations help local park and City groups; civic organizations clean their streets, and residents get involved and help. The fact that the historic beauty and integrity of our six neighborhoods has survived is clearly due to their efforts.

It is time that the City make as much of a commitment to our area as have our residents. We strongly urge your assistance in protecting and improving the special quality of Community Board #2.

Our first slate of officers to serve under the 1977 Charter envisioned the Community Board office as the locus of all Board activities. This has happened. All citizens – young and old, Democrat, Republican or Independent poor or rich, associations or individuals – seek and receive help at our Board office. This is in addition to the numerous other mandated responsibilities which the board staff assists our members in carrying out.

Each year, we reiterate our request for increased funding for our staff. This is even truer this year than in the past. Due to the city's decision in the 1990's to slash community board budgets, we are still without an Assistant District manager and our office staff is over-extended, without appropriate funding this office is hard-pressed to serve the needs and answer the complaints of a population that is larger than many towns and villages. The money that this administration has appropriated for FY 2001 is woefully insufficient to staff our over-burdened but effective Board office. We also continue to be concerned that, with all of our planning responsibilities and involvement in the ULURP process, our limited budget has precluded any possibility of employing a City Planner to assist us in our work, a requirement clearly mandated in the current Charter Revisions.