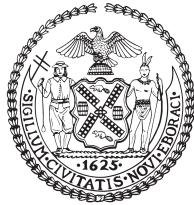


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THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD SIX  
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NEW YORK, NY 10017

August 1, 2014

Dear Reader:

Attached you will find the Statement of Community District Needs for Fiscal Year 2016 for Manhattan Community District Six.

This document is the culmination of countless committee meetings, public hearings, agency reports and discussions with our many community-based organizations. While it is not meant to be a comprehensive list of every issue our neighborhoods face, it highlights many of the salient ones.

The needs statement serves as a road map by which various city and state agencies and non-governmental organizations may better prioritize their work to meet the specific needs of Community District Six. We look forward to working with the various agencies and organizations to achieve our mutual goals.

Respectfully Submitted,

Handwritten signature of Sandro Sherrod.

Sandro Sherrod,  
Chair

Handwritten signature of Richard Eggers.

Richard Eggers,  
First Vice Chair and Chair, Budget and  
Governmental Affairs Committee

Handwritten signature of Dan Miner.

Dan Miner,  
District Manager



**Manhattan  
Community Board Six**

**Statement of  
Community District Needs**

**for**

**Fiscal Year 2016**

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## District Profile

Community District Six encompasses the East Side of Manhattan from 14<sup>th</sup> to 59<sup>th</sup> Streets, from the East River to Lexington Avenue and farther west in some areas to include all of Gramercy Park and all of Murray Hill. Additional well-known neighborhoods lie within the district boundaries: Sutton Place, Beekman Place, Turtle Bay, Tudor City, Kips Bay, Rosehill, Phipps Houses, East Midtown Plaza, Stuyvesant Square, Waterside, Peter Cooper Village and Stuyvesant Town.

The district is a mixture of residential, commercial, medical, educational and international use with major office buildings, including the Citicorp Center and the Chrysler building, and retail shops lining the avenues. There are several medical facilities, used by all New Yorkers: Mt. Sinai Beth Israel Hospital, VA Medical Center, Bellevue Hospital, NYU Langone Medical Center including the Ambulatory Care Center and Center for Musculoskeletal Care, and NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases. Numerous substance abuse, mental health, and ambulatory care clinics as well as some facilities of the New York Eye and Ear Hospital are located in the district. The district includes Baruch College, including the Zicklin School of Business and its graduate business school facilities, the School of Visual Arts, the NYU School of Medicine, the NYU College of Dentistry, and the Beren Campus of Yeshiva University, Stern College and other facilities. Community District Six is also home to the United Nations as well as hundreds of missions and diplomatic residences.

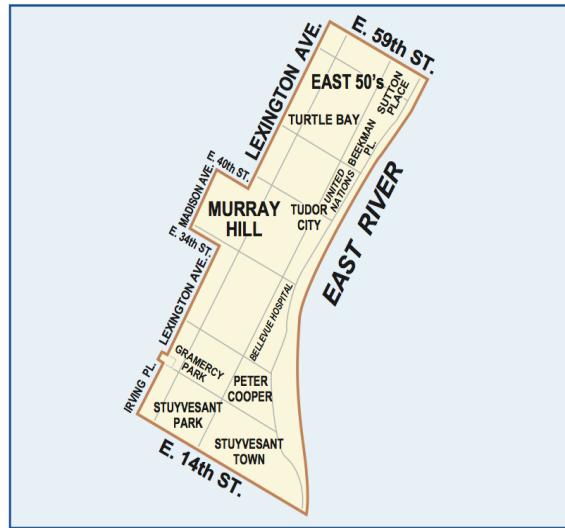


Figure 1 - City Planning District Profile Map

While recognizing the diversity of residential and commercial use, the district is primarily a middle-income community that has significant numbers of low-income residents and a large elderly population, many living on fixed incomes. We are always mindful that data about the neighborhoods of affluence in the district must not mask the very real need for access to affordable housing, homeless and general social services, and adequate measures for personal safety and overall well-being for all our neighbors.

There are five Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) within the district or at our borders: The Grand Central Partnership, 34<sup>th</sup> Street Partnership, East Midtown Association, Union Square Partnership and the Flatiron/23<sup>rd</sup> Street Partnership. These BIDs continue to improve the quality of life within the district and we encourage the city to continue to endorse new BIDs.

On October 29, 2012, Superstorm Sandy had tumultuous effects on New York City and the entire region. A large portion of Community District Six was especially hard hit and experienced an extended period without electricity and basic services. Hospitals were forced to close for a significant amount of time and took months to get back to full operations. Area businesses experienced significant losses in revenue, and severe flooding affected the Waterside, Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village developments and the surrounding public realm. The city has begun to address the potential impact of future storms and it is critical that Community District Six is not overlooked in planning and rebuilding. Preparing for natural and man-made disasters must become part of the fabric of planning for the future whether that be in transforming our coast lines, redesigning structures, or caring for the disabled,

children, and seniors in times of emergency. We therefore recognize this need throughout this document.

We also must draw attention to the two 197-a plans prepared by Community Board Six and adopted, with modifications, by City Planning and the City Council. These long term planning documents should guide future action of all city agencies and are integral to the understanding of the needs of our district. This is particularly true in planning related to the waterfront and for the medical corridor that is anchored by First Avenue from 14<sup>th</sup> Street to 38<sup>th</sup> Street. Community Board Six is committed to seeing that the planning guidelines and specific proposals of the 197-a plans are fully implemented.<sup>1</sup>

**Data Driven Analysis:** As we prepare this document, it is clear a data driven analysis of community conditions helps us make the case for our stated needs. Unfortunately, we run into some roadblocks along the way. First, communications between some city agencies and the Board need to be improved. Consultation on district capital projects is required by the NYC Charter but too often the Board is informed about decisions without appropriate advance consultation. As a result, the Board is unable to provide timely information to community-based organizations and loses community feedback on some of the most important projects in the district.

Second, community boards often do not have ready access to the information needed to conduct the appropriate analysis. Access to demographic information about our residential population is much improved through the efforts of City Planning, DOITT and other city agencies and as a result of the Open Data Law. However, a large data set that is missing is the number of people who enter this district on a daily basis to work, to shop, and to visit our institutions. Central and east midtown forms the commercial hub of Manhattan. The businesses provide jobs for many of our district's residents. However, the daily influx of workers, as well as tourists who shop and visit the district also presents strains on streets and highways, transportation services of all kinds, public safety, and infrastructure. We have yet to see adequate measures of how commercial and touristic activity impact services within the district.

Third, in order for the Community Board to conduct a useful analysis, we must have greater access to district level data in usable form. While there have been significant improvements here as well, the city's community district-level budget related data can be difficult to navigate. Most agencies provide the data by census district, police precinct, borough, or citywide, all of which are difficult to use when making community district wide conclusions.

Fourth, appropriate funding for the Community Board office is essential to provide the level of analysis we require. Community boards are operating on budgets that have not had a noticeable increase in over 20 years and many previous cuts have never been restored. We have been forced to reduce administrative costs to a bare minimum and may have difficulty retaining professional staff. It is our understanding that the placement of full-time planning assistants at community boards is being considered. We strongly urge that this be accomplished and that the personal services segment of the boards' budgets take into account a salary reflecting a high level of expertise for such a position.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://cbsix.org/projects/197-a-197-c-plans>

## Housing

**Housing Trends and Affordable Housing:** Before the economic turn down, Community Board Six saw rapid building growth, with over 2,000 additional residential units and several million square feet since the 2000 U.S. Census. Our community also saw expansive growth in commercial construction, with nearly 2 million square feet of new office space and over 100,000 square feet of new retail space. It now appears that New York City as a whole, and specifically our community district, is poised for an upsurge in development. There are several major residential and mixed commercial/residential developments pending along with some potential rezoning efforts. An informal survey by a CB6 member revealed 20 properties planned or in construction with an estimated 3,609 units. Some properties include affordable units but most do not.

The rapid growth in the recent past and the planned development in coming years have consequences on our existing infrastructure. A growing population requires additional open space for our residents, new schools for our children, rehabilitation of our existing roads and mass transit services, and more police officers and firefighters to serve and protect the community.

Affordable housing in our district is disappearing and we seek to remedy the situation. Due to the loss of Mitchell-Lama and Section 8 housing and fewer rent controlled and rent regulated housing units, areas in Community District Six are becoming increasingly income segregated. This segregation is aggravated when 421a related construction transfers the affordable housing units to areas outside the community district. In order to support and retain population and economic diversity, Community Board Six calls on the City to commit funds to provide new or reclaimed low and moderate-income housing within Community District Six.

**Micro Units Pilot Program:** In 2012, the Department of Housing Preservation & Development (HPD) issued a Request for Proposals for a pilot program located at 335 East 27<sup>th</sup> Street to develop a new type of housing to address the city's changing demographics. Community Board Six initially opposed the ULURP application which provided 1) designation of the site as an Urban Development Action Area Project as justification to sell city-owned property, 2) sale of City-owned property, and 3) a zoning map amendment to extend an existing commercial overlay from First Avenue to Mount Carmel Place to allow commercial use on the first floor of the proposed development. The development required seven mayoral zoning overrides, which the Board found to be excessive. Our opposition did not stop the project from going forward. However, the Board recognized the need for affordable housing in our district and took note of the increasing number of one and two-person households. As a result, the Board, with invaluable support from City Council Member Rosie Mendez, became actively involved with ensuring that a substantial portion of units will meet affordability criteria and that other objections raised by Community Board Six will be addressed. As of early 2014, representations were made that the project will make forty percent (40%) of the 55 total units affordable at a variety of levels. The city is committed to making 11 of the 55 units permanently affordable for households whose incomes are up to 80% AMI. Eight units will be available under the Veteran Affairs Supported Housing program and three units will be affordable to households whose incomes are up to 130% of AMI. There are a number of details that still need to be resolved but construction has begun.

**Housing and Services for Homeless:** Our community has demonstrated great compassion for the homeless in its midst, and is aware of the enormous demands for service needed by this population. Community input and involvement in the Department of Homeless Service's (DHS) determination of the location of 9,000 units, comprised of 7,500 units for single adults and 1,500 units for families, under the New York/New York III program is essential to implementation of this objective. These units will

be developed by New York City and New York State under the terms of this program and will be rolled out through 2016. In June 2014, as NY/NY III is reaching a successful conclusion, a follow-up effort being referred to as NY/NY IV received support from Governor Cuomo and would address the continuing need for supportive housing for the homeless mentally ill in New York City.

The most recent information indicates that the 30th Street Shelter has 14% of the sheltered male beds in the city (850 beds). The 30<sup>th</sup> Street Homeless Men's Shelter, which occupies the former Bellevue Psychiatric Building, is operating at full capacity. DHS hopes to open an intake facility in Brooklyn and Manhattan, the two boroughs that contain the highest concentration of street homeless. The Request for Proposal for redevelopment of the Bellevue site was temporarily abandoned. As a result, Community Board Six **will** be working to create a community-based redevelopment that meets the guidelines of its 197-a Plan.

The shelter at 215-225 East 45th Street has beds for one hundred and thirty women and ten churches and synagogues in the district have opened their doors as private shelters. Community Board Six worked with DHS and operator Samaritan Village with the establishment of a 127 bed single adult men's shelter at 53<sup>rd</sup> Street between First and Second Avenues. A Community Advisory Board has been established and the center is operating without complaints from the community. Despite these successful operations, homelessness continues to be a major concern for the area. Additional efforts must be made to address permanent housing for homeless families. There is an insufficient supply of such housing in our district. DHS should consider allocating an increased portion of the city's affordable housing resources to this population.

## Land Use and Development

Before the recent economic turn down, Community Board Six saw rapid building growth, with over 2,000 additional residential units and several million square feet since the 2000 U.S. Census. Our community also saw expansive growth in commercial construction, with nearly 2 million square feet of new office space and over 100,000 square feet of new retail space. It now appears that New York City and specifically our community district is poised for an upsurge in development.

Such rapid growth in the recent past and the major developments and potential rezoning efforts pending in Community Board Six have consequences on our existing infrastructure. And, a growing population requires additional open space for our residents, new schools for our children, rehabilitation of our existing roads and mass transit services, and more police officers and firefighters to serve and protect the community.

**East Midtown Rezoning:** As we prepare this report in July 2014, plans for rezoning our district and in Community Board Five are under active consideration and scrutiny. The Department of City Planning seeks to rezone a 70-block area surrounding Grand Central Terminal identified as East Midtown. The area in our district extends roughly from 40<sup>th</sup> to 57<sup>th</sup> Street between Lexington and Third Avenues, with an additional portion extending to Second Avenue from 40<sup>th</sup> to 48<sup>th</sup> Street. Community Board Six agrees with the stated goal of the plan, to preserve East Midtown's global competitiveness in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. However, the Board has concluded that greater study and review of the current proposal is required to produce a more comprehensive, thoughtful strategy to strengthen the city's most important business district. The Multi-Board Task Force on East Midtown, comprised of Community Boards Six, Five, Four and One, considered the proposal. Community Board Six believed that the initial timeline for this proposed rezoning was needlessly rushed despite multiple

requests from elected representatives, community boards, and advocacy groups to slow the process down to allow for a more thorough, complete plan for the future of this vital office district. The plan has been resubmitted by the current administration and representatives of CB6 are fully engaged in the review and planning for the area. The first phase of the rezoning effort focuses on Vanderbilt Avenue and is under active consideration as of the summer of 2014.

A commitment to infrastructure, as represented by the building of Grand Central Terminal, is what allowed East Midtown to become the premier business district it is today. East Midtown's transit, pedestrian and surface transportation systems are currently at overcapacity. Before a change in zoning, the city needs to conduct a study of projected increases in pedestrian, transit, and vehicular traffic as well as a district wide traffic study. Additionally, upgrades and improvements to the area's subsurface infrastructure (including utilities) will need to be thoroughly reviewed.

The plan so far also lacks specificity for public realm improvements, particularly widening of sidewalks along Lexington and Madison Avenues. Although the public realm was not addressed in the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) application,

the Department of City Planning has commissioned a study that will result in a public realm plan for the area. At the time of this document's drafting, CB6 is participating in visioning sessions for the development of the plan.



Figure 3 - Southern portion of City Council Approved 197a Plan. The proposed location for a sanitation garage is outlined in red. (<http://cbsix.org/projects/197-a-197-c-plans>)

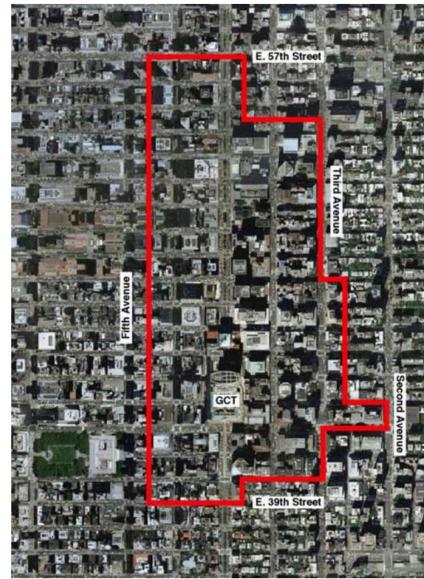


Figure 2 - East Midtown Rezoning Proposed Boundaries

**Proposed Sanitation Garage:** The Department of Sanitation has presented a proposal to rezone the property formerly occupied by the Brookdale Campus of Hunter College for the purpose of erecting a sanitation garage. The proposed rezoning would change the property from residential to manufacturing zoning and would involve what many consider to be "spot zoning," an unfavorable use of zoning authority. The property is located between the Bellevue Hospital and the VA Medical Center and therefore is included in the area designated as a medical corridor in the 197-a plan approved by Community Board Six and the City Council in 2008. At a scoping hearing held in June of 2013, elected representatives, representatives of Community Board Six acting in their individual capacities as members of the community, neighborhood advocacy groups, and individual residents testified against the proposal and asked that, at a minimum, the process of consideration be slowed down to take the many

community objections into account. The ULURP process is expected to begin in the fall of 2014. Considering the strong community opposition to the garage and its placement being in direct contradiction to the intent of the 197-a plan, CB6 considers this proposal to be of great concern.

**New York University Langone Medical Center (NYULMC) Expansion:** NYULMC has begun site preparation for its new Kimmel Pavilion on East 34<sup>th</sup> Street east of First Avenue, adjacent to the Tisch Hospital building. The Kimmel Pavilion will be an acute care facility and include a lobby level concourse; a dedicated entrance and space within for a Children's Hospital; united imaging and connecting procedure floors; all private impatient rooms and common amenities shared with the adjoining Tisch Hospital. A new energy building currently being built, alongside the eastern portion of the NYULMC superblock, will provide cogeneration capability for better resiliency.

NYULMC is planning a 14-story science building on East 30<sup>th</sup> Street east of First Avenue, primarily for research labs. East 30<sup>th</sup> Street in this location does not appear on the official city map, thus is technically not a street. In the 2008 197-a plan, CB6 stated its desire to re-map this street. NYULMC has stated it has no objection as long as it does not affect the variances required to construct its new science building.

There is a new NYU School of Nursing building under construction at the southwest corner of First Avenue and East 26<sup>th</sup> Street. The new 11-story building will contain space for the NYU College of Nursing, NYU College of Dentistry, and the NYU Bioengineering Institute.

**Bellevue Hospital Campus:** For decades, Community Board Six has been advocating for a strategic plan to determine Bellevue's immediate and future health care and land use needs prior to any disposition of property. No such study has ever been conveyed to the Board.

Community Board Six continues to advocate for the renovation and repurposing of the former Bellevue Psychiatric Building. Several years ago, the NYC Economic Development Corporation issued an RFP, and received proposals for the redevelopment of the building. No selection of the responses was made. The 2008 197-a Plan explicitly calls for scientific, medical, and institutional uses for this building. CB6 continues to advocate for these uses, and for the restoration of the building. It is our understanding that the building is eligible for listing by the state as a landmark and it contains numerous Works Progress Administration murals that are in need of restoration.

**East River Science Park:** Construction of the first building of the East River Science Park located on the northern part of the Bellevue Hospital campus and just south of the NYU Langone Medical Center was completed in 2010. The second building is now welcoming tenants and construction should begin soon on a third building. The three new buildings comprise the Alexandria Center for Life Science – New York that is devoted primarily to biotechnology facilities and contains core research facilities, a library, local retail, parking and other uses including 300,000 square feet of biotech laboratory space. Funding for this project was a public/private arrangement including money from the City of New York, the State of New York, Former Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer's Office, the New York City's business community, Alexandria Real Estate Equities, and some federal funding.

We welcome these research and technology facilities, the expansion of research facilities at NYU Langone Medical Center, and the creation of the Cornell NYC Tech Campus on Roosevelt Island, which, while located outside our community district, may have a significant impact on our district. A study in 2001 estimated that the companies emerging from the city's academic research centers would generate a demand for approximately 1,000,000 square feet of space designed for bio-tech firms over

the next few years, of which about 40,000 square feet is needed as incubator space for start-up firms. We are pleased that these sources of highly skilled jobs and the economic stimulus they provide are located in and near our district.

**Con Edison/Solow Development Site:** Several years ago, the New York State Public Service Commission mandated the divestment of many of Con Edison's assets. These included four sites along First Avenue between 35<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> Streets that collectively amount to 8.9 acres. Buildings on these properties have been demolished and excavation has been completed. A portion of the property at 626 First Avenue was used to build a new school, PS 281, which opened in the fall of 2013, and construction of two residential buildings on the remainder of the block has begun. The remaining Solow property from 38<sup>th</sup> Street to 41<sup>st</sup> Street on the east side of First Avenue and between 39<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> Street on the west side of First Avenue is slated for an anticipated commercial and residential complex. There is no up to date information available about the plans and timing of development at these sites. The Community Board was heavily involved in the initial planning of the entire development and will be vigilant in ensuring that the construction meets community expectations in all regards.

## Waterfront Development, Resiliency and Sustainability

The entire eastern boundary of Manhattan Community Board Six, stretching from 14<sup>th</sup> Street to 59<sup>th</sup> Street, is the East River. Superstorm Sandy had damaging effects along our waterfront with some areas suffering severe consequences. As a result, all new initiatives and the evaluation of current and future conditions along the waterfront must include efforts to prevent or minimize damage from future storms.. Measures to comply with FEMA guidelines and resiliency planning have become part of the discussion of every project along or near our waterfront.

The map at right shows the hurricane evacuation zones with the evacuation center at Baruch College designated by a large blue dot. Of particular importance is that the medical zone, including the VA Hospital, Bellevue Hospital, and NYU Langone Medical Center, as well as major portions of the residential areas of Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village are all in the highest risk zone (designated by the dark red-orange areas).

**East River Esplanade:** CB6 has long worked for development of a continuous esplanade along the waterfront as a highly desirable open space and its 197-a Plan, approved by the City Council in March 2008, provided the framework for development.<sup>2</sup> Among the critical issues that need to be addressed are:

- The FDR Drive, with both elevated and at-grade highway segments along the entire length of the East River in CB6, creates physical and visual barriers to the waterfront. Other impediments to waterfront access are parking facilities, which should be relocated, the

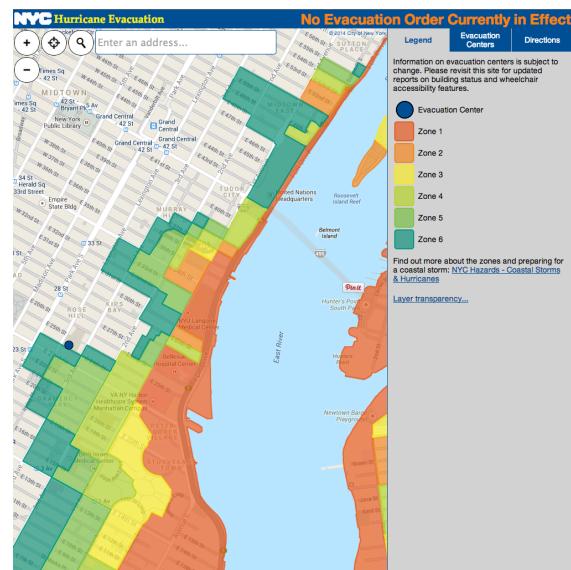


Figure 4 - Hurricane evacuation zones in Community District Six (<http://maps.nyc.gov/hurricane>)

<sup>2</sup> The 197-a Plan can be found at <http://cbsix.org/projects/197-a-197-c-plans>

heliport, a difficult narrowing of the esplanade at 14<sup>th</sup> Street (see Blueway section below), and the absence of needed pedestrian bridges over the FDR in a number of key locations. These issues represent challenges that CB6 will continue to pursue with appropriate entities.

- Connections are needed for major gaps in the pedestrian and bicycle segments of the existing East River esplanade, at East 34<sup>th</sup> to East 41<sup>st</sup> Streets.
- There are opportunities to incorporate major institutions (such as the UN, the United Nations International School, Solar One, Bellevue Hospital, NYU Langone Medical Center and the East River Science Park) into a continuous esplanade, for example through construction of pedestrian bridges at 27<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Streets.
- Ferry service and water taxis are increasingly popular and should be considered for expansion from the single terminal at East 34<sup>th</sup> Street to other sites such as at East 23<sup>rd</sup> and East 42<sup>nd</sup> Streets. Please see the section "Transportation and Community Mobility" for additional information about ferry services.

Building on this long effort by CB6, and with advice and assistance from CB6's locally elected representatives, in October of 2011 a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by representatives of New York City and New York State providing a legal and funding framework for the Eastside Greenway and Park project (EGAP) - stretching from the East 38<sup>th</sup> Street pier to the northern limits of CB6. The MOU addresses the potential funding for a continuous esplanade, as well as the UN's longstanding need to expand and consolidate its operations in a single building being considered for construction at 41<sup>st</sup> Street. Some of the provisions of the MOU have already become activated (a \$3 million payment by the United Nations Development Corporation associated with Asser Levy Park has been placed in the EGAP Fund). Improvements within St. Vartan Park is also being funded through the MOU. The United Nations General Assembly is expected to decide in September 2014 whether to move forward with a consolidation building. The UN's decision will be a critical component on the future of the agreement contained in the MOU.

CB6 will continue to work with all agencies to ensure that current and future capital and expense budget requests for open space development, placement of pedestrian bridges, and other projects facilitating access to the waterfront will grow from the framework of the MOU. It is expected that the eventual reconstruction of the FDR Drive within CB6 by the New York State Department of Transportation will also play a critical role in esplanade design and connectivity to the waterfront. Please consult the MOU for additional information.<sup>3</sup>

Among the major components of the Eastside Greenway and Park project are three sections, served by a number of potential upland connections:

- Waterside Pier, a city-owned existing structure between 38<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> Streets, was used by Con Edison until its lease expired in June 2010. As part of the lease provisions Con Edison paid \$13 million to the city to restore the pier to its original condition. After review of the pilings and pier conditions, EDC decided that demolition and total reconstruction of the pier would be the better long-term solution, and in Spring 2014 work began, with completion of the new pier expected in 2015. Progress was aided by a \$1.25 million grant from Councilmember Dan Garodnick to design amenities for the pier's surface and its eventual use as a park. However, there is no upland connection at the 41<sup>st</sup> Street end of the pier, and funds for its creation are not expected to be available for some time. An interim solution will be sought to provide a second exit for the new park. An upgrade of the East

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<sup>3</sup> MOU - <http://www.scribd.com/doc/67634613/Eastside-Greenway-and-Parkland-MOU>

River Esplanade (Glick Park) also remains an issue. The park requires lighting, plantings, and repair of crumbling stonework, as well as restoration of its fountains which have suffered from their proximity to salt water. The lighting under the FDR overpass used to access the park urgently needs repairs and a pedestrian crossing signal.

- UN Esplanade – to be designed and constructed - would run outboard of the existing UN campus from East 41<sup>st</sup> through 53<sup>rd</sup> Streets. The approximate construction period is estimated to be 2020-2024. Security concerns in this portion of the esplanade may have an impact on design considerations and cost.
- ODR Esplanade – To be designed and constructed from East 53<sup>rd</sup>-60<sup>th</sup> Streets, this northern section of the Esplanade in Community District Six will make use of in-water caisson structures that were retained from the Outboard Detour Roadway (ODR) reconstruction of the FDR Drive. The approximate construction period is estimated to be 2016-2018.

Public input will inform various stages of design for the future esplanade. CB6 and neighborhood groups have joined the discussion in a number of charettes, first to seek ideas, then to provide feedback on potential design concepts.

**East River Blueway Plan:** The East River Blueway Plan is a separate study, alongside the Eastside and Greenway Park, covering the area from the Brooklyn Bridge to East 38<sup>th</sup> Street, and involved both CB3 and CB6. Funded by a New York State grant and administered through the office of the Manhattan Borough President, the study sought ideas for a series of sites along the East River where people can get into and onto the water for canoeing, kayaking, and fishing. Swimming, has been proposed for selected areas around Stuyvesant Cove using protected pools containing filtered river water. Environmental education, ecological restoration projects, storm tidal surge suppression and a number of other features have been suggested by the community. Here too, impediments to waterfront access were examined. The Plan was published in March of 2013.<sup>4</sup> Included in the plan is a design for a pedestrian bridge at East 14<sup>th</sup> Street, which will solve the very narrow pathway (“pinch point”) at East 14<sup>th</sup> Street. It is currently unfunded. Former Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer and Assemblymember Brian Kavanagh pursued Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery Funds. One of the projects contained in the grant request is an intertidal salt marsh at Stuyvesant Cove as a bulwark against storms and to improve the recreational experience of all who come to the water’s edge.

**Rebuilding by Demand (“The Big U”):** In June 2014, the federal government announced a project to develop protective barriers along the Manhattan waterfront from West 57<sup>th</sup> Street down to the Battery and up to East 42<sup>nd</sup> Street.<sup>5</sup> The affected waterfront of Community District Six is from 14<sup>th</sup> Street to 42<sup>nd</sup> Street. The plan is intended to protect 10 continuous miles of low-lying geography in a large and high-risk flood plain encompassing a densely populated and vulnerable urban area. The first phase of the project, to be funded by \$335 million would focus on building a flood and storm water protection “bridging berm” in East River Park from Montgomery Street up to East 23rd Street. Funds have not yet been allocated, and plans are still in the conceptual stage. We will actively follow and hopefully soon participate in this major project.

<sup>4</sup> The East River Blueway Plan is available at <http://www.eastriverblueway.org/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.rebuildbydesign.org/project/big-team-final-proposal/>

## Transportation and Community Mobility

**Pedestrian and Traffic Safety:** We eagerly anticipate positive results from the Mayor's Vision Zero initiative. Community Board Six has advocated for increased efforts to ensure the safe use of our city streets for some time. In our densely populated District, pedestrian safety is a particularly high priority. We are pleased with the initial efforts being made to install accessible (audible and countdown) signals and urge a continuation in the effort to identify additional locations in District 6 for such devices, with particular attention to the medical corridor. We have provided suggested locations in our annual budget requests.

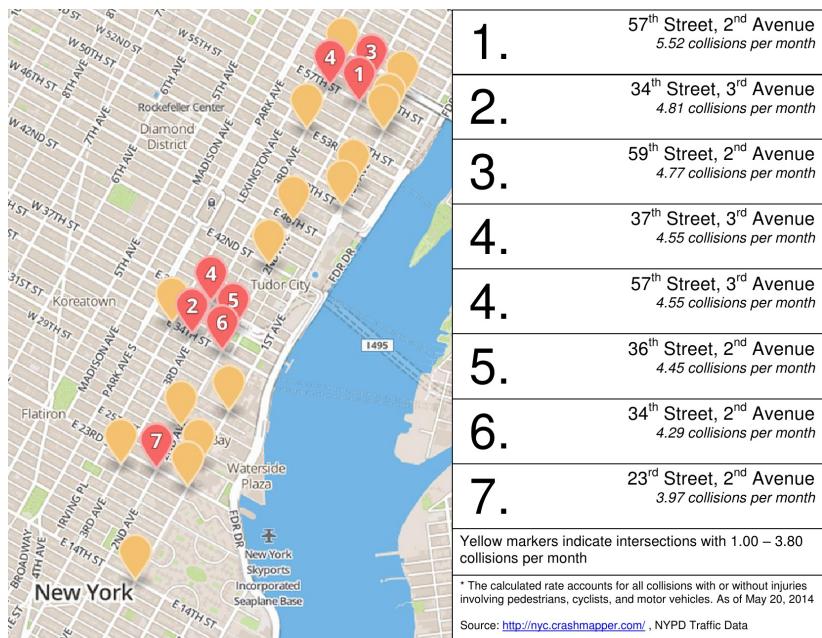


Figure 5 – Marked district intersections with 47- 66 collisions annually from NYPD Traffic Data (<http://nyc.crashmapper.com/>)

Traffic incidents occur throughout the district but some locations, as identified on the map at left, are of greatest concern.

Re-engineering has improved the conditions of the intersection at 24<sup>th</sup> Street and Lexington Avenue. However, other intersections remain problematic. The Community Board has heard from residents concerning the intersection at 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and Second Avenue, which has had a substantial history of pedestrian-automobile incidents and at 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and Third Avenue which often backs up traffic and clogs streets. Over the last few years 57<sup>th</sup> Street and Second Avenue had the highest number of accidents in

Manhattan and continues to be of concern. In addition, the area near the ferry terminal at 34<sup>th</sup> Street and the Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) Service Road consistently has one of the highest accident rates in the district. We believe that these intersections require engineering attention.

Pedestrian-automobile incidents must be addressed. Left turn signals are necessary at several major intersections on Lexington Avenue. Of particular concern are intersections at 23rd Street, 34th Street, 42nd Street, 57th Street, 24th Street, 33rd Street, 36th Street, 50th Street, and 59th Street. In addition, Community Board Six asks the Department of Transportation to consider traffic calming measures, such as leading pedestrian intervals, speed bumps, all-red stop phase or other methods to improve safety for pedestrians crossing Second Avenue, particularly at East 53<sup>rd</sup> and East 49<sup>th</sup> Streets. For the sake of pedestrian safety, we would like to see traffic calming measures implemented on all of the district's wide avenues as soon as possible.

Also of concern to CB6, and what we hope will be an integral part of Vision Zero, are pedestrian-bicycle incidents. There has been a noticeable increase in the use of bicycles for commuting, deliveries, and recreational use. With the implementation of the bike share program, the concerns of bicycle safety have become even more apparent. Community Board Six supports the development of appropriate bicycle pathways throughout the district. These pathways are now in place along First and

Second Avenues and elsewhere. Additional street markings and various levels of bike paths have also been added to crosstown streets. However, we must recognize that pedestrians can be harassed and injured by illegal, unsafe, or inconsiderate bicycle practices. Principle among these are bicycles on the sidewalk, bicycles crossing intersections against the light, bicycles entering the crosswalk at the light, and bicycles traveling against traffic. We believe that most of the problems could be alleviated by increased enforcement of existing bicycle regulations as well as educational efforts for both bicycle riders and pedestrians. We have also noticed that throughout the District bicycles are chained onto city trees, parking signs and other city property, at times making it difficult for pedestrians to safely navigate the sidewalks. Illegal bicycle parking also has a negative impact on the aesthetics of our neighborhoods.

In addition to pedestrian safety, safety for bicycle riders must be addressed. In large portions of the district, bicycle riders must deal with lanes shared by buses, taxis, delivery trucks, and both illegal and legal parking. Major gaps in the East River Pedestrian Bikeway force bicycles into some of the most congested and dangerous traffic conditions in Manhattan. Motorists and pedestrians alike must adjust to the presence of an increased number of bicycles and all parties concerned bear responsibility for the safety of all. Completion of protected bike lanes along the east side of the district is a critical component to protecting bike riders and pedestrians.

**Second Avenue Subway:** Community Board Six considers the full-build Second Avenue Subway as a one of our most urgent needs. Parts of the district have only limited access to existing subway service and what is available suffers from extreme overcrowding. Our local streets are at or beyond traffic saturation during business hours. The Second Avenue subway is essential to alleviate the existing overcrowding on the subways and congestion on the streets. One of the most important ways to improve access to jobs, shopping and housing in a rebounding economy is the prompt construction of the full-build Second Avenue subway. Completion of Phase 1 of the construction is estimated as December 2016 but will not extend to our district. The portion in Community District Six is included in Phase 3 and completion of the entire route is not expected until 2029. We recognize that the primary authority for the construction is the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), and we are grateful for the invaluable assistance of Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney in obtaining federal funding, but we urge all elected representatives and city agencies to do all in their power to see that construction is accelerated.

**Bus Services and Traffic Issues:** The Board welcomes the Select Bus Service as an attempt to speed up north/south public transportation in the eastern section of the district. However, the M15 local and SBS service going north on First Avenue and south on Second Avenue has the highest ridership in the city with over 17 million riders per year, two million higher than the next line, the B46 in Brooklyn.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the effects of cutbacks in cross-town bus routes should be reviewed and monitored to ensure that our residents continue to have convenient cross-town access. This is particularly critical for seniors, the disabled, and the less affluent for whom options are limited.

We are pleased, with reservations, about the implementation of Select Bus Service on 34<sup>th</sup> Street as an attempt to improve east/west travel times on this important cross-town corridor. We always seek community involvement to ensure that there are no negative impacts on the surrounding neighborhood. For example, in light of community input, Community Board Six strongly urges the MTA and NYC Transit to restore the Lexington and Madison Avenues bus stops for both eastbound and westbound service on the 34<sup>th</sup> Street route.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://web.mta.info/nyct/facts/ffbus.htm - routes>

**East River Pedestrian Bikeway (ERPBW):** The development of an eastside bikeway and esplanade is urgently needed. The promised ERPBW would provide a safe transit way for bicycle commuters and recreational riders. The bikeway and walkway at Stuyvesant Cove is an excellent example of what can be accomplished. However, north of Stuyvesant Cove from 23<sup>rd</sup> Street to 59<sup>th</sup> Street there is often no bikeway and frequently there are only poor walkways. Bikers are often directed into dangerous traffic situations and have to share bus and delivery lanes. For example, the one block long southbound bike lane connector running on the FDR Drive Southbound service road between East 38<sup>th</sup> Street and East 37<sup>th</sup> Street shares a poorly marked roadway with speeding motorists. A DOT proposal in 2014 attempts to address this problem, and we look forward to an improvement in safe traffic flow for both motorists and bicyclists. We urge the city to close the gap in the promised Manhattan Greenway as a more permanent and appropriate solution and to review the placement of existing signage so that bicycle riders are not directed into some of the worst traffic conditions on the east side.

In addition, the East River Greenway bike path between East 25<sup>th</sup> Street & East 37<sup>th</sup> Street might be improved in the following ways: 1) complete the protected bike path adjacent to Waterside Plaza (it presently is Southbound, only); 2) address the unusual hazards of bicycling in the area of The Water Club; 3) improve the bicycle path (and pedestrian walkway) under the FDR Drive adjacent to the Heliport; 3) make better provisions for a bike lane at the 14<sup>th</sup> street and FDR Drive choke point.

Fixing these problems is now more important than ever with the implementation of the NYC Bike Share program. Community Board Six will be monitoring the Bike Share program to ensure that docking stations conform to DOT's specifications, that the locations and size of the docking stations are appropriate and that they are properly maintained, and that safety of both riders and pedestrians is of primary concern. We are pleased that police enforcement of the safe use of bicycles has increased, however this is an issue of great concern to the neighborhood and additional on-going enforcement efforts are required.

**Impact of Water Main Construction:** The Department of Environmental Protection has a project underway to route a water main in the East 50s between First and Third Avenues. Community Board Six and local neighborhood organizations expressed serious opposition to the suggested routing, which creates additional transportation problems for this already severely impacted neighborhood, including more years of construction and traffic congestion on the streets and the 59<sup>th</sup> Street Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge. Community Board Six provided detailed information showing that the proposed East 56<sup>th</sup> and East 58<sup>th</sup> street routes were not acceptable. Nonetheless, agencies have ignored both the data and community opposition and are planning to place the water main on east 58<sup>th</sup> Street. Community Board Six calls for a district wide analysis of the impact of the water main routes before any similar future projects are planned, so that the impact on traffic and public safety corridors could be better mitigated.

**East River Ferry Service:** Community Board Six has pressed for the aggressive development of expanded ferry service along the East River.. The East River Ferry has been successful in attracting a dedicated base of riders, with a current average of over 3,000 daily riders in the 12 month period from July 2012 to June 2013 (or over 3,250 daily).<sup>7</sup> Suitable, comfortable and attractive ferry terminals should be considered in the very near term for 23<sup>rd</sup> and 42<sup>nd</sup> Streets, with an emphasis on full mass transit

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<sup>7</sup> The final version of the study is due in late 2014, after the preparation of this document. Ridership figures referenced may be found in the 2013 version of the document found here:  
[http://www.nycdc.com/sites/default/files/filemanager/Resources/Studies/2013\\_Citywide\\_Ferry\\_Study/Citywide\\_Ferry\\_Study\\_2013\\_final.pdf](http://www.nycdc.com/sites/default/files/filemanager/Resources/Studies/2013_Citywide_Ferry_Study/Citywide_Ferry_Study_2013_final.pdf)

intermodality, passenger convenience, and comfort. At the same time as advocating for expanded ferry service, we also urge the city to require that the ferry boats are as quiet as possible so not to disrupt the residents as the boats arrive and depart from the dock whether at 34<sup>th</sup> Street or additional east side locations.

**Street and Highway Surfaces:** The physical condition of our community's streets, including local tunnels and bridges as well as the FDR Drive from 14<sup>th</sup> to 59<sup>th</sup> Streets has declined in recent years. Driving and merely trying to walk across the street can be difficult and dangerous. The corrugated surface of many streets is a menace to pedestrians and a threat to drivers. It is also destructive to vehicles using those streets. It is estimated that the unsatisfactory surface of city streets shortens the useful life of city owned vehicles by about ten percent. The financial impact to the city just considering police cars, fire trucks, ambulances, sanitation vehicles, and MTA buses must be significant. More frequent re-surfacing is necessary to keep the streets, highways, bridges, and tunnels in Community District Six in minimum serviceable condition.

The Board has advocated for a traffic pattern study since the closure of a portion of East 14<sup>th</sup> Street and the FDR East 15<sup>th</sup> Street south bound exit. That closure has resulted in backups on the small East 23<sup>rd</sup> St south bound FDR exit and the exit now must be upgraded. Furthermore, the removal of left hand turns at the end of the north bound FDR Exit 7 ramp forces drivers to proceed several blocks north before they can go south. In response, drivers too often make illegal and dangerous maneuvers. The major crosstown streets of East 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and East 34<sup>th</sup> Street are increasingly congested resulting in neighborhood complaints. There are frequent and long-lasting back ups in the area of the Midtown tunnel as well as in the area leading to the 59<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge. The addition of numerous bike lanes and designated bus lanes throughout the district has had a direct impact on pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic flow and safety. As a result of all these concerns, a district wide traffic study is in order.



Figure 6 - Unsafe conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists north of 36th Street at the Midtown Tunnel entrance.

**Parking and Traffic Enforcement:** Much of Community District Six suffers from severe traffic congestion aggravated by double parking, impermissible use of bus stops and bus lanes, obstruction of pedestrian crosswalks, and other similar violations. We believe that to relieve the congestion and to protect pedestrian safety a stronger and sustained effort at parking and traffic enforcement in this district is necessary. In addition, portions of our district become a veritable parking lot for "black cars" and other livery vehicles in both prohibited and metered parking spaces. According to complaints from neighborhood residents, the drivers of these cars do not seem to pay meter fees, they create noise, leave garbage on our streets and sidewalks, and use public spaces to urinate.

**Pedestrian Traffic Flow:** Members of the Community Board spend a great deal of time carefully reviewing all sidewalk café applications and continue to work with DCA in making the review process more meaningful. Unfortunately, in several portions of our District, there is an increasing

encroachment on sidewalk space meant for the use of pedestrians. The Board conducted a study that found many of our cafés, bars, and restaurants do not meet the minimum eight foot clearance requirement in front of their establishments and the useable space requirements are not met, e.g. in regard to flush tree beds. As a result, pedestrians frequently resort to walking in the street. Sidewalk cafés should be permitted only when the remaining sidewalk space is sufficient for pedestrian traffic and is free of publicly or privately placed obstructions. The rules determining useable space should be reconsidered including expanding the definition of “obstruction” to include anything that blocks pedestrian passage whether privately or publicly placed. Also, CB6 has a long-standing position that the clearance should be ten feet rather than eight feet.

**34<sup>th</sup> Street Heliport:** Community Board Six has long opposed the operation of a heliport at 34<sup>th</sup> Street. The noise, odors and air blast impacts have drawn criticism from local residents and necessitated replacement of costly air filtration equipment at NYU Langone Medical Center. Although CB6 has been successful in lobbying for a limit to the number of daily flights and restricting the days of operation to weekdays, the heliport’s continued operation has been judged by the city administration to be essential to the business community. CB6 will try to persuade the city to incorporate new operating regulations and methods of their enforcement as part of the lease renewal.

## Public Safety and Environmental Concerns

**Sub-Surface Infrastructure:** The gas explosion in East Harlem on March 12, 2014 was a painful reminder of the state of the aging citywide subsurface infrastructure. In our own district, we had serious steam explosions in July 2007 at Lexington Avenue and East 41<sup>st</sup> Street and a particularly destructive explosion in the Gramercy Park area in 1989. We also had manhole explosions and fires on Second Avenue in the vicinity of 23<sup>rd</sup> Street in 2008. Members of the community are losing confidence in the basic safety of the city infrastructure. Considering the potential for street-closures, traffic diversions, injuries and even loss of life, the Board needs more information on the potential problems that have been identified and the remediation projects planned for our district. Additionally the Board would like information on the age of the general steam pipe system, the methods of inspection and an inventory of scheduled maintenance.

The Board urges the city to take an inventory of all sub-surface infrastructure to determine its condition and develop maintenance schedules that would keep it in good repair. Complete mapping should be the goal. Efforts should be coordinated with the utilities and telecommunications industries making sure that their assets too are kept in good repair. We believe that having this information would allow for better planning on various city and private projects and ultimately reduce construction time and costs.

**Sanitation:** The Board is pleased that the district’s streets are relatively clean. However, we continue to note that additional enforcement of alternate sides of the street regulations is needed to facilitate regular maintenance. Some sidewalks in the district do not fare as well as the streets and are continuously littered. Existing litter baskets often fill to overflowing. Additional city litter baskets and a review of the frequency of pickups would be helpful. Commercial and residential garbage can sit on the street for many hours in advance of pickup creating an odor and unsightly mess that also attracts rodents. We support the addition of sanitation trucks and crews to increase pickups and address both the litter problem and improperly handled commercial and residential garbage. Additional pickup days also seem needed to handle the increase in mandated recycling efforts. Small and medium sized buildings do not have space to store the added volume between once-weekly pickup times.

The Sanitation Department has proposed that a garage be located at the former Brookdale campus of Hunter College, 425 East 25th Street, between First Avenue and the FDR Drive. While the Community Board recognizes the principle of locating such facilities in or near the district being served, we have objected to the siting of a sanitation garage in the middle of the medical corridor and near major residential developments and schools. The location is in clear opposition to our 197-a plan and entails spot zoning to convert the location from residential zoning. We have further objected to the lack of planning for the entire parcel of land not just for the location of the garage. The issues concerning the proposed sanitation garage are described in this document under the section "Land Use and Development."

**Quality of Life Issues:** The Board is concerned about quality-of-life and safety issues that arise from the operation of some bars, nightlife venues, and restaurants in our district. There have been many concerns voiced by the community about the oversaturation of bars along Second Avenue and Third Avenue, particularly in parts of the East 20s, East 30s and East 50s. These areas are heavily congested and extremely noisy when patrons congregate outside the venue or leave the venue. Some owners allow for music blaring far beyond their own establishments. Residents and community groups have found calls to 311 frustrating as law enforcement has many hours to respond to non-emergency complaints and, therefore, there is limited response to these issues when they are actually happening. There also is some concern about whether certain buildings, especially tenement buildings, are safe enough to host a bar or restaurant. Due to a lack of coordination between the State Liquor Authority (SLA) and DOB, a particular location could have multiple DOB violations and SLA may still issue or renew a license. We continue to be concerned about commercially sponsored "pub-crawls" in our district. Frequently organized outside of the district, advertised through social media, and starting early in the day, these pub-crawls can result in drunk and disorderly behavior and destruction of property. Pub-crawls have made portions of the district, even primarily residential areas destinations for excessively boisterous social activities both night and day.

Also in need of oversight are the many illegal "hotels" or hotel-like units operating all over the district, primarily as a result of short-term sublets or simply short stay availability of furnished apartments. We believe this illegal occupation of properties increases the potential of economic crime and personal safety issues to tenants and to condo and co-op owners, and makes it difficult to enforce rules aimed at protecting the quiet habitation of legal owners and renters.

### **Environmental Concerns:**

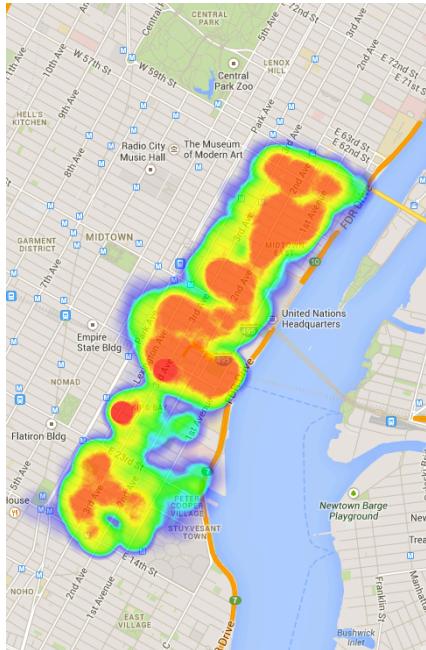
Water Quality: According to the previous Mayor's 2020 waterfront plan, prepared by Department of City Planning and issued in March of 2011, aging infrastructure is affecting East River water quality. Storm water runoff, which occurs when the sewage system is overwhelmed during heavy rain, pollutes our waterfront by forcing untreated sewage into our rivers. Recently we partnered with others to create a comprehensive waterfront road map entitled The East River Blueway Plan.<sup>8</sup> The plan includes alternatives for how we could better use our waterfront for public activities such as running, boating, fishing and swimming as well as certain additional commercial activities. Tidal surging and storm water runoff make many of these activities unsafe for a period of time after a strong rainfall. We urge the administration to fund storm water treatment options like those included in the East River Blueway Plan to make our waterfront healthy once again. The Blueway Plan contains proposals for improvement in storm water runoff with plantings, etc. to absorb some of the effects of a major storm.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.eastriverblueway.org/>

Storm water treatment plants would be more effective on the runoff but they require major capital investment.

**Air Quality:** Air quality in Community District Six, as reported in the Environmental Public Health Tracking system of plaNYC, is the worst in all New York City community districts on some measures and among the worst on all others. While some of the problems will be addressed by the conversion of heating oil used in high rise buildings, there is much more to be done to protect the district's residents and visitors from asthma, lung disease and other health conditions related to the polluted air.



**Figure 7 - Heat Map of Noise Complaints from 2/1/2014-8/1/2014**  
[\(<http://cbsix.org/resources/mapping-311-requests-cb6>\)](http://cbsix.org/resources/mapping-311-requests-cb6)

**Noise Complaints:** Noise complaints continue to be among the top source of 311 calls. Of particular concern in our district is late night noise from bars and other establishments. We also need to address noise from traffic congestion especially along Second Avenue and the cross streets in the neighborhood of the Queens Midtown Tunnel, but also in other areas. Response to noise complaints can take 8 hours and do not address the situation as it occurs. We ask that DEP and NYPD coordinate activities to provide a timely response to address on-going violations.

**Construction Site Safety:** New high-rise construction, can be a nuisance for immediate neighbors and frequently disrupts traffic flow and pedestrian movement but it generally does not present a threat to the community. These multi-million dollar projects are built by experienced contractors and are closely supervised by the Department of Buildings. However, the tragic crane accident at Second Avenue and 51<sup>st</sup> Street a few years ago illustrates the need for constant oversight. We recognize and commend the response the Department of Buildings has made to improve safety at construction sites and emphasize the need to follow through on improvements in procedures and in expanding the inspection effort.

We would also like to see that when construction is suspended at a work site, the site remains safe and any objects on site be secured to prevent injuries to persons and property nearby. DOB should conduct an on-site inspection, within a reasonable time frame, to ensure all sites are safe and secure and then provide community boards with the result of these inspections.

For many years, the Board has been concerned about the length of time sidewalk sheds surrounding buildings are allowed to stay up. In some instances these sidewalk sheds remain in place for 10 or more years. When these sheds are left for extended periods, questions arise concerning the sheds' stability, possible falling debris, street and sidewalk cleanliness, and appropriate under-shed lighting. The sheds also create a safe haven for illegal activities. The Board would like to see legislation passed that would require the timely filing and advancement of jobs with the DOB before an extension of a shed permit is issued.

Many building owners appear to disregard the permit process and building code regulations. Much work is done without any building permits, or with a permit that does not begin to cover the full scope of the work being performed. It appears that work is being done in the evenings and on weekends when the Department of Buildings has only a few inspectors to cover all five boroughs. Additionally, hazardous illegal uses and occupancies need to be addressed. We need more building inspectors to address all these issues.

## **Public Facilities and Services for the Most Vulnerable**

**Senior Centers and Services for the Elderly:** There are now just two city supported senior centers in the district. The Community Lounge, formerly located at 155 East 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, closed in December 2012. The Stein Senior Center has attempted to accommodate those who used the Community Lounge services. However, as of July 2014, it is our understanding that the City has not renegotiated the payment for meals provided by the Stein Center in response to the increased demand. The reduction in senior center locations is clearly unfortunate since, according to the 2010 Census, 15.6% of the district population is age 65 or older. In CB6 there were 22,293 persons age 65 and over, a growth of almost 10% since the 2000 census, and of these, 10,179, or over 45% were 75 and older. The Community Board capital budget requests for additional senior centers and adult daycare services dating from a decade ago continue to go unmet.

It is vital that senior centers are located in modern facilities and that they have the funds to provide services, not just for the frail, but also for supportive programs for active seniors. Computer labs with Internet access provide a wide range of opportunities so all seniors may participate in healthy activities, keep informed of programs targeted for seniors, and expand their skill set. Seniors are increasingly expected to navigate the Internet to participate in prescription drug plans and manage their Medicare and Medicaid benefits but without the adequate facilities or tools to do so. Education on how to manage benefits online should lead to improved quality of life as well as greater use of the federal programs and less reliance on city funds. For many years now, the Board has included a Lifelong Learning Center in the Board's budget requests to provide on-going continuing education for seniors in a variety of fields including computer skills. The Board would like to see this type of center placed midway in the district so that the entire district may have easy access to such a facility. A major hurdle, in addition to funding, has been finding a suitable space for such a center. Recently, members of the Board have investigated the possibility of offering programs for seniors in shared space such as at an educational facility. We hope that we can count on the Department for the Aging (DFTA) and other city agencies to help in pursuing this option.

In order to encourage innovative programming and increase utilization of our senior centers, we urge the city to provide funding that looks beyond just the number of meals served and focuses instead on the services seniors seek for social and mental stimulation. We are pleased by DFTA's efforts to introduce "innovative senior centers" which do look beyond the meals served. However, none of the centers are located in Community District Six. The Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, located in Community District Eight, is one of the innovative centers and operates a satellite senior center at St. Peter's Church just inside the border of our district. However, it is not clear that the more than 3,000 members of the center at St. Peter's Church have sufficient access to the programming available through Lenox Hill. We also urge the city to investigate the possibility of intergenerational centers where individuals of various ages could interact with and learn from each other.

Services for seniors are not limited to meals and programs at a senior center. Additional support is needed for homecare, a cost-effective way to meet physical needs when compared to a nursing home or extended care facility, and escort assistance so that seniors remain engaged in daily activities. Respite assistance for caregivers also is needed. Emergency preparedness must take into account the identification of and assistance to homebound seniors.

We are grateful that the FY 2015 budget did not contain cuts to senior centers and other services and that there was no “budget dance” concerning these essential services. However it is time to expand support for the needs of our growing senior population.

**Services for the Disabled:** Community District Six has within its boundaries and in close proximity to it, numerous hospitals as well as specialty institutions for the hearing and visually impaired. In addition, over 15% of the district population is age 65 or over and many of these residents are limited in mobility. Because of these factors, many persons with decreased mobility or disabilities travel through the district and have informed the Board that at times they face perilous and congested Midtown traffic conditions. Improvements must be made in traffic patterns, signage, enforcement, bus loading/unloading areas and pedestrian signaling devices to improve safety. Some advances have been made in updating standard crossing signals to become accessible signals. Additional accessible signals are needed throughout the district but especially in the medical corridor along First Avenue and part of Second Avenue and adjacent streets from 14th Street to 39th Street.

The reduction in public transportation options significantly hampers the ability of those who have reduced mobility to get to and from their treatment facilities and social centers. Restoration of bus lines, as well as accessible taxis are critical for these residents of the community.

Superstorm Sandy provided a valuable lesson in the need to provide adequate emergency planning for the disabled community. Mobility and communication issues can hinder rescue, evacuation, or support for this at-risk group. Our concern extends to individuals with acute or chronic health issues, such as those requiring dialysis or need access to life-sustaining medications, whether those issues are dealt with in a health facility or at home.

**Schools and Services for Youth:** School seats and insufficient afterschool and support services for children continue to be a problem in Community District Six. Schools in the district are at maximum capacity with no room to grow with increased demand. The Board’s ability to address overcrowding is hampered by the lack of adequate communication about proposed educational plans and resource allocation. We are pleased that PS 281 opened in September 2013 and will be adding grades over the next few years. However, issues have already arisen, including child safety concerns due to recent changes to traffic patterns and construction on the adjacent site, as well as the concerns about the anticipated lack of sunlight in the schoolyard and the potential degradation of St. Vartan Park, directly across the street, from overuse .

To keep our schools up to date, the schools need appropriate computer cabling and Wi-Fi internet access. Electrical wiring upgrades are also needed to meet current requirements for computer use and to allow for air conditioning that would provide for more effective year-round utilization of school facilities. Some schools in our district have obtained an upgrade and we urge that the needs of all schools be addressed. Also, in the 2015 fiscal year budget process the city rejected our request to repair and renovate auditoriums at three schools, PS 40, PS 116, and the High School for Health Professions and Human Services. Air conditioning, upgrading of audiovisual equipment, new seating and the like would enhance educational and theatrical uses, including after school uses. Refurbished facilities would also be available for community events providing year-round multi-purpose utilization of school buildings.

We understand that the removal of dangerous PCBs from fluorescent light ballasts at PS40/IS104, PS47/247, and PS318 has begun. Our schools should be constantly monitored for air quality to protect our children from exposure to toxic substances.

Community Board Six continues to urge that the current Police Academy location on East 20<sup>th</sup> Street should be considered a possible location for a school once the Police Academy is relocated. It is our current understanding that the Police Department does not have immediate plans to vacate the building, but we urge the administration to include the Board, and the community at large, in any future planning for this site as is required by the New York City Charter.

The Board has a stated position that any future private charter schools not be placed in current public school facilities as this undermines the efficacy of these institutions. In addition, CB6 supports the establishment and continuation of a capital fund, similar to the funding provisions negotiated for the Solow site which resulted in the construction of the building housing PS 281, to address the increased collateral needs, such as new schools, created by new residential developments in New York City.

We welcome the Mayor's agenda to provide universal pre-K throughout the city. We have been advocating for pre-K for many years now. The 2010 census showed a 13.5% increase over 2000 in the number of children under 5 years old in CD6. We are concerned that the needs of many in our community will still not be met. Parents have had to look beyond their immediate neighborhood to find suitable pre-K programs. As parents must accompany children to and from the pre-K location, programs located some distance away create a burden on working parents. We are also being vigilant in ensuring that pre-K programs do not place additional strains on K-12 school facilities.

CB6 asks for the development of youth services targeting to children in our district. The at-capacity and potentially overcrowded conditions in our schools require that we provide every opportunity possible to focus on the needs of our school-age children. We recognize that federal and state funding are critical components for financing such projects but we ask that the City take greater responsibility for providing youth services and increase efforts to procure the necessary funding from state, federal and private sources.

**Health Facilities and Health Services:** There are several major hospitals in the district, used by all New Yorkers, including Mt. Sinai Beth Israel Medical Center, VA Medical Center, Bellevue Hospital, NYU Langone Medical Center, and the NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases. Numerous substance abuse, mental health, and other ambulatory care clinics as well as some facilities of the New York Eye and Ear Hospital are located in the district. We look forward to continued cooperation with these medical facilities as they expand and modernize their operations in the district.

For decades, Community Board Six has been advocating for a strategic plan to determine Bellevue Hospital's immediate and future health care and land use needs, especially prior to any potential disposition of property. No such study has ever been conveyed to the Board. In the meantime, Bellevue sustained serious damage from Superstorm Sandy and is still addressing measures necessary to prevent future damage as well as prepare for effective response under any emergency circumstances. The Board supports the essential mission of Bellevue as the city's premier public hospital. We will continue to support updated facilities, state of the art equipment, and improved services at Bellevue.

The Community Board has taken note of the lack of high quality skilled nursing facilities in Manhattan and especially within Community District Six. Also, the number of hospice beds is woefully inadequate. The NYC Department of City Planning projects that Manhattan's elderly population, aged 65 and over, will grow by 57.9% between 2002 and 2030 adding 108,000 elderly persons. In Community District 6 we have seen an increase in the number of persons age 65 and over of 9.8% just since the 2000 census – and more than 45% of these individuals are 75 and older. We therefore must plan for the additional health and other support services needed by this population.

Consistent with the 197-a Plan, we are looking at development of health-related facilities within the area referred to as the “medical corridor.” Among other options, we would welcome a sub-acute facility or multiple use facility that would allow for a continuum of care for seniors and others. Consistent with the 197-a Plan, any non-medical related use within this corridor, such as the proposed sanitation garage (see below) would be subject to the greatest scrutiny.

**Library Buildings and Services:** The Grand Central Branch of the New York Public Library (NYPL) has been a well-appreciated expansion in services available to the previously underserved northern end of our district. We encourage the NYPL to consider making this a permanent facility, especially in light of the continued closure of the Donnell Library Center at 20 W. 53<sup>rd</sup> Street.

The Epiphany Branch Library is in need of renovation of its interior spaces including meeting ADA compliance and the replacement of windows. Kips Bay Library is in need of a complete renovation including replacement of HVAC, boiler and radiators. Renovation of interior spaces including ADA compliance, replacement of an elevator and addressing water infiltration in the basement all need to be addressed. A restoration of the façade is also required.

A survey by the Gates Foundation found that one-third of Americans now rely on libraries for computers and Internet access.<sup>9</sup> New York Public Library Director Paul LeClerc testified on June 4, 2010, that one in four people say they have no alternatives to services like those they receive at NYPL. The city has restored funding for five and six day library availability but must continually assess the number of days and the hours libraries are open to ensure that the schedules meet the needs of residents. We ask that funding for library services be expanded to keep up with the ever changing demands and opportunities provided in our electronic information society and so that resources are available to all members of our community regardless of their socioeconomic status. We also urge that the library branches are fully staffed with qualified professional librarians. Community Board Six strongly supports full service libraries at the Kips Bay, Epiphany, and Grand Central Branches.

## Parks, Recreation and Open Space

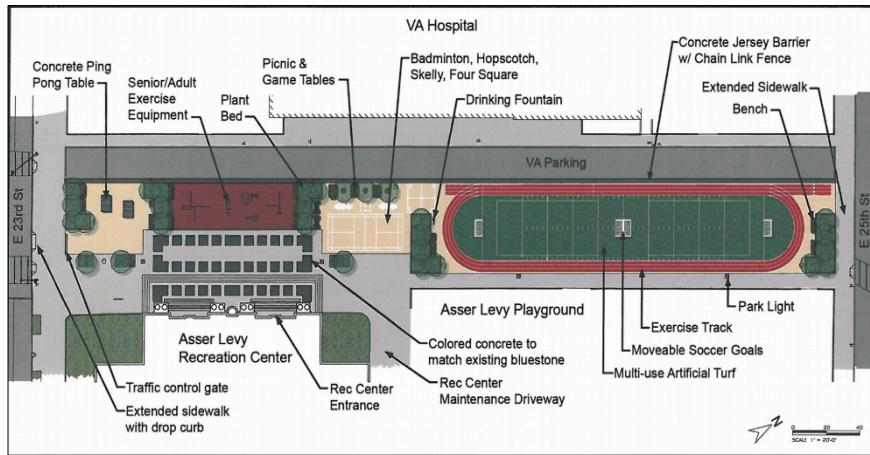
**Parks and Recreation:** Community District Six has the least amount of parkland (especially parks designated as active use) of any community district in Manhattan. This disproportionate allocation is further exacerbated by its population being at the median of community district size for both Manhattan and all of New York City. Furthermore, recent census data shows a 30% increase in the population of very young children in Manhattan. For these reasons, the city needs to develop new active park space within the district. Community District Six, with its scarcity of parkland, should be a high priority in the development of new space.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), discussed in more detail in the section “Waterfront Development, Resiliency, and Sustainability,” provided for the possibility of funding for an esplanade along the East River and other amenities. As part of the arrangement, Robert Moses Playground would be alienated and a new playground constructed at Asser Levy Place in close proximity to the Asser Levy Recreation Center. The new playground is nearing completion and, as a result of delay in other aspects of the MOU, Robert Moses Playground is still in operation and has been resurfaced. An upgrade of St.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Media-Center/Press-Releases/2010/03/Millions-of-People-Rely-on-Library-Computers-for-Employment-Health-and-Education>

Vartan Park is also being funded through the MOU. Community Board Six looks forward to the creation of the new open space represented by the esplanade and is monitoring the design of the various elements, as well as the community's voice in planning and decision-making. A series of design charettes, competitions and forums were

held to solicit ideas for the esplanade, resulting in ever growing interest.



**Figure 7 - Schematic Plan of the Asser Levy Playground Expansion –**  
[\(http://cbsix.org/files/Asser%20Levy%20Playground%20Schematics.pdf\)](http://cbsix.org/files/Asser%20Levy%20Playground%20Schematics.pdf)

Through efforts by CB6 and our elected representatives, some of the parks in our district have been reconstructed. Recently, the city has made available additional funding for park workers. However, with all the capital improvements in our parks and recreation centers, we continue to emphasize the need for adequate maintenance, operation, and protection of our rehabilitated parks. We must emphasize that our parks are generally small in size and do not have the advantage of public donations for their maintenance such as are available through larger park conservancies. We also stress the importance of making our parks accessible to all our neighbors. We believe that all our parks, including the comfort stations in those parks, should comply with both the requirements of and the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Even in instances where the city is not legally required to update certain facilities at this time, we urge that modifications be made as soon as possible. We also note that the Asser Levy and the 54<sup>th</sup> Street Recreation Centers are two of the three most heavily used centers in the city. Unfortunately, they do not have adequate personnel to meet the needs of the many people they serve nor do they have sufficient funds for maintenance and supplies. Asser Levy sustained significant damage from Superstorm Sandy. Based on our most recent information, among other projects at Asser Levy needing immediate attention, are the replacement of a boiler and the replacement of windows.

Repair work on a portion of the Stuyvesant Square historic fence has begun and we will continue to push for the completion of this much-delayed project. Other long-standing capital priorities remain unaddressed - such as the restoration of the Stuyvesant Square Park's comfort stations, repair of slate steps in Peter Detmold Park, and the rehabilitation of Glick Park, which includes restoration of the fountains as well as installation of new lights.

**Open Spaces:** Open space is of vital importance to the Board. According to a report conducted by an urban fellow and confirmed by the Department of City Planning, there are only 26 acres of open space within the district, including our public plazas. This means there are well over 5,000 persons per acre of open space, the highest density in Manhattan. These numbers do not take into account the thousands of people who commute to Midtown businesses, people shopping at our many retail establishments, or tourists coming to enjoy our attractions and institutions such as the United Nations.

We are encouraged by the efforts to add parkland and publicly accessible areas for recreation citywide through the plaNYC initiative, but we have not seen much attention yet to Community District Six. One of the stated goals of plaNYC is to create or enhance a public plaza in every community. A proposal for a public plaza on the east side of Second Avenue between East 30<sup>th</sup> and East 33<sup>rd</sup> Streets ran into unexpected opposition as well as lack of funding. Nevertheless, we look forward to working with the city to establish appropriately sited public plazas throughout our district.

We also have focused our attention on another type of open space: Privately Owned Public Space (POPS). We are particularly concerned about developed properties that were granted zoning “bonuses” in exchange for creating and maintaining such public

space. A report prepared in 2008 by the Board’s community planning fellow examined the 77 privately owned public spaces in the district and found 30 of those spaces to be out of compliance with applicable zoning requirements. Based on this survey, DOB has issued 13 violations, DCP has issued 9, and they have written letters to the property owners. During the summer of 2014, CB6 updated the status of POPS in the district for compliance as well as on-going or new violations. The Board continues to work with DCP to monitor this situation.

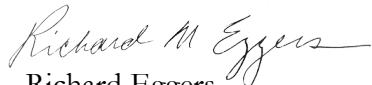
Building address/name	Violation Types	2008 Description	2014 Description
240 47th Street/Dag Hammarskjold Tower.	Access	“Two gated entrances to public plaza pedestrian thruway closed and locked at time of site inspection. City-issued public space plaque apparently has been altered (possibly illegally) and now reads “Closed To Public.”” (Keane, 37)	The signage, which reads ‘Closed To Public’, is still posted on the north entrance of the POPS
	Amenity	NA	NA
	Encroachment	NA	Storage of construction equipment in western portion of the POPS
<b>Comments and Suggestions:</b> There is comfortable and well-shaded seating area on the southeast corner of the POPS but there still is a significant area closed to the public.			
  			

Figure 8 - Excerpt from 2014 CB6 POPS Condition Report; p.37

Respectfully Submitted,



Sandro Sherrod,  
Chair



Richard Eggers,  
First Vice Chair and Chair, Budget and  
Governmental Affairs Committee



Dan Miner,  
District Manager