



# **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD No. 10**

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## **DISTRICT NEEDS STATEMENT FOR BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #10**

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### **Opening Statement**

Bronx Community Board #10 serves the diverse neighborhoods of Throgs Neck, Co-op City, Pelham Bay, Country Club, City Island, Schuylerville, Spencer Estates, Edgewater Park, Westchester Square and Zerega. It is one of the largest Community Boards in the City of New York, featuring Co-op City, New York State's largest housing cooperative, the nautically themed City Island, the birthplace of many of the America's Cup Yachts, Pelham Bay Park, home to the Orchard Beach and the Bartow-Pell Mansion and gardens. Over the past ten years, the areas served by Community Board #10 have undergone a tremendous growth in housing. In order to check rampant growth, an historic zoning resolution was adopted that limited new construction to two stories and required at least three parking spaces.

### **History**

The areas that comprise Bronx Community Board #10 were once part of the Village of Westchester and before that, were the private estates of the Bartow and Pell families. The area saw one of the first successful engagements for Washington's Continental Army with British Forces during the Revolutionary War, at the Battle of Pells Point, near present day Orchard Beach. Later the area became home to St. Peter's Church in Westchester Square, one of the oldest Episcopal Churches in the City and one that received its Charter from King George III. The area is also host to the historic Huntington Free Library and the Ferris Family Cemetery, whose descendents date back to the 17th Century.

### **Today**

The neighborhoods that comprise Bronx Community Board #10 are characterized by well maintained, tree shaded streets featuring 1-3 family homes, tidy multiple dwellings, vibrant commercial strips along Tremont, Crosby, City Island Avenues, Westchester Square and the Bartow, Dreiser and Einstein Loops in Co-op City. The area is also home to a regional shopping center known as Bay Plaza, featuring well known retailers and a multi-plex theatre complex.

### **Boundaries**

North-New England Thruway, Eastern Prolongation of Park Drive, Park Drive, Long Island Sound, City Line; East-Western boundary of Pelham Bay Park, Eastchester Bay, Long Island Sound (including City Island and Hart Island); South-East River; West-Westchester Creek, Northern Prolongation of Westchester Creek to Waterbury Avenue, Waterbury Avenue, Westchester Avenue,

Castle Hill Avenue, East Tremont Avenue, Silver Street, Eastchester Road, Blondell Avenue, East Tremont Avenue, Hutchinson River Parkway, New England Thruway.

## **Public Safety**

The 45th Precinct services one of the largest geographic areas in the City. The Precinct's station house had undergone an exterior and interior renovation several years ago. However, it is time to re-visit it once again. The Precinct lacks a modern information and retrieval system and effective e-mail service. This must be addressed, in order to facilitate greater communication between the Police and community groups. The Precinct also serves Co-op City, a community of 50,000 residents. While Co-op City has its own Public Safety Department, its role within the community would be greatly enhanced, if it were to partner with the NYPD, in the form of a satellite station.

## **Transportation**

Community Board #10 is served by the IRT #6 train and a series of buses operated by the MTA New York City Transit. The buses often connect with each other and fan out to serve other parts of the Board's service area. However, there are few if any linkages between the Board's communities that involve a one seat ride. To get from one community to another, or the central business district in the Bronx or Manhattan, a commuter would have to take one bus to another and wait for transfers. This adds significantly to trip times. Perhaps the MTA New York City Transit's BRT, ( New York City Bus Rapid Transit) study may address the issues of scheduling, but the agency should consider the possibility of creating opportunities for one seat rides.

The mainline for Amtrak runs through Co-Op City's Section #5. This line services Pennsylvania Station in Manhattan. Commuters could reach Pennsylvania Station from Co-Op City within a half an hour, as opposed to an hour or more on the express bus or subway. Therefore, the Board supports the establishment of Metro-North Commuter Railroad station and ancillary services such as parking and bus linkages within Section #5.

Bronx Community Board #10 is surrounded by waterfront. The establishment of ferry service would go along way to easing road congestion. This is an option that should be examined by the relevant government agencies.

The New England Thruway or I95 runs through the Board's service area. Not a day goes by where a truck wanders off of the highway onto the adjacent Hutchinson River Parkway or a city street, and is involved in an accident. I95 serves as the principle road running North and South. The roadway is choked with trucks causing air and noise pollution, as well as congestion. Inasmuch as railroad freight trains pass through the Board's service area on Amtrak's right of way, more attention should be paid to shifting the burden of the transportation of large items to the railroad.

## **Health and Human Services**

Bronx Community Board #10 is serviced by Bronx Municipal Hospital Center (Jacobi Hospital). This hospital has recently received a new structure, that was added onto the existing buildings. This impressive structure is a welcome addition to the community. The Board's service area is also served by a New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene facility in the Westchester Square community. While the Board acknowledges and respects the fine work of the above institutions, they are geographically separated from most of the Board's communities. Therefore, the Board advocates for the expansion of health fairs, preventive medicine seminars and health educa-

tion in the Board's service area, and urges the appropriate governmental agencies to explore the establishment of outreach programs in these areas.

## **Housing and Zoning**

Bronx Community Board #10 has undergone a housing boom in the past few years and as a result of the combined efforts of the Board, the City Council and the Mayor, the entire Board was down zoned, preventing rampant development in the future. The challenge now facing the Board, is the illegal conversion of one to three family homes, into larger structures, housing more people, through creation of basement apartments. Increased vigilance is needed by the appropriate governmental agencies at both the administrative and legislative levels in this regard. These illegal conversions lead to overcrowded conditions that will have a very negative effect upon the communities within Community Board #10.

## **Education**

Bronx Community Board #10 is home to many fine elementary and intermediate schools. It is also home to Harry S. Truman and Herbert H. Lehman High Schools. However, the high schools are not enjoying the high levels of graduation that they had in the past, leaving significant numbers of young people with little opportunity for their futures. The Board urges the Department of Education to create programs that partner with the private sector and other governmental entities, that will allow young people to recognize the importance of education, provide academic tutoring and life skills, receive mentoring services and job skills.

The Board will work with these schools in order to provide support to these efforts.

## **Parks and Recreation**

Bronx Community Board #10 is the host community board for Pelham Bay Park, as well as many fine smaller parks and green spaces. Unlike its sister parks, Prospect Park in Brooklyn and Central Park in Manhattan, Pelham Bay Park is a natural setting with little engineering or architectural enhancement. This park has a spectacular shoreline and is home to bird sanctuaries, the Bartow-Pell Mansion and Orchard Beach. The Board would be supportive of efforts on behalf of the Department of Parks and Recreation to bring the Metropolitan Opera or the New York Philharmonic to the park to allow the residents of Community Board #10 an opportunity to enjoy the performing arts. In addition, the Board would like to see the extensive wildlife and natural trail offerings sponsored by the Urban Park Rangers receive more publicity, fostering increased awareness among the Board's residents.

## **Emergency Management**

Bronx Community Board #10 has many shoreline communities, which are vulnerable to damage from major storm events. The Office at Emergency Management has embarked upon an education program and worked to establish Civilian Emergency Response Teams or CERT in Throgs Neck. Others are needed, particularly in City Island. The Board supports OEM's work to disseminate information and welcomes the opportunity to work with it, as more CERT teams and meetings are scheduled.

## **Quality of Life**

The Board Office receives a series of service requests on a daily basis covering everything from environmental concerns to public safety. The Board Office has to file each of these complaints

with the 311 line. Often 311 has difficulty accommodating a Board request because its computerized maps do not contain the streets that are the subject of the complaint. There have been several instances where 311 operators, because the map does not show the street, have experienced difficulties in logging in the complaint. The Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) should upgrade its systems to reflect all street names in each community board.

### **Economic Development**

Bronx Community Board #10 is home to several vibrant shopping districts along Tremont Avenue, Crosby Avenue, Westchester Square, the Dreiser, Bartow and Einstein shopping centers in Co-Op City and City Island Avenue. These are older shopping districts that are populated by sole proprietors offering an eclectic mix of goods and services. The properties that house these businesses are older and in varying degrees of physical condition. The street scenes tend to have limited plantings and while clean, lack environmental enhancements that would attract customers. What is needed is a comprehensive analysis of these areas, through a coordinating body such as the Department of Small Business Services to give these areas a unique marketing identification and an opportunity for them to compete effectively in the market place. To this end, the Board would like to see the establishment of Business Improvement Districts in these areas.

### **Conclusion**

The statement of District Needs has been submitted by Bronx Community Board #10, in an effort to familiarize the appropriate governmental agencies with the needs of our communities. This Board represents vibrant communities that are economic and social backbone of the Borough and the City. The preservation and enhancement of the communities is of paramount importance. Therefore, the Board and its staff look forward to working with its partners in government to insure the continued viability and growth of the neighborhoods that comprise Bronx Community Board #10.

Submitted Respectfully,

*Kenneth Kearns*  
District Manager