



Eric Adams
Borough President

COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

1291 ST. MARKS AVENUE • BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11213

TEL.: (718) 467-5620 • FAX: (718) 778-2979

Nizjoni Granville
Chairperson

Robert Matthews
Chairperson Emeritus

Michelle T. George
District Manager

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS Fiscal Year 2016

District Overview

Community Board No. 8 encompasses the neighborhoods of Prospect Heights, north Crown Heights, and Weeksville. The community is bounded by Atlantic Avenue on the north, Ralph Avenue on the east, Eastern Parkway on the south and Flatbush Avenue on the west.

District 8 is one of the most rapidly evolving neighborhoods in Brooklyn. In addition, it remains one of the most populated according to land mass despite a small decrease in population according to results of the 2010 Census. The dynamically changing population is creating both new challenges and needs. Once an economically and culturally diverse community, there are noticeable shifts in economic status as well as ethnic and cultural make-up. An increased number of luxury condominium developments and other large-scale development projects such as the Atlantic Yards Development Project, are leading to shifting racial and class dynamics of the community. The historical designation of much of the District in the forms of the Crown Heights North Historic District, Prospect Heights Historic District, and newly proposed Crow Hill Historic District, have all contributed to the changes and challenges as well.

District 8 has become one of the latest “hot” destinations in Brooklyn. The numbers of new bars and restaurants have tripled in the last five years and business patronage is also at an all time high. Competition for affordable commercial space is causing additional chasms to form between upper and lower tier businesses and creating an influx of businesses that require alternative money making strategies such as possession of a liquor license to meet the overhead operating costs. Additionally, competition between market rate and rapidly declining affordable housing options is also contributing to the rapidly changing demographic, with fewer and fewer affordable options available. In fact, Crown Heights leads the city in rent increases, thus creating a further requirement to maintain an affordable housing stock for long-time residents that are being priced out.

We are hoping that the recently approved Crown Heights West Rezoning Proposal and historic designations will preserve our beautiful historic community while also addressing the glaring need of affordable housing. A community with a solid housing foundation, good transportation connections, and with easy access to a number of cultural facilities such as Brooklyn Botanic Garden, the Brooklyn Children’s Museum, Brooklyn Museum of Art, the

Brooklyn Public Library at Grand Army Plaza, Jewish Children's Museum, and Weeksville Heritage Center, more positive growth should be on the horizon. Despite the many positives within the District, there are many blaring challenges that must be faced and overcome. Included in these challenges are the enormously high poverty rate amongst minority and foreign born residents; the glaring unemployment rate of adult minority males; the alarming discomfort of residents because of police and safety uncertainties in certain areas; a dearth of affordable housing for seniors and low and middle-income residents; lack of medical services and hospital coverage; and an uncertain public school situation due to constant school closures. These issues require special consideration and priority from government officials, and Community Board No. 8 is committed to participating in the formulation of plans to address the service delivery, housing, and infrastructure needs of our residents.

The strategy detailed below will facilitate achievement of Community Board No. 8's goals for Fiscal Year 2015 and beyond.

POLICE

Community Board No. 8 applauds the efforts of the 77th and 78th Precincts and PSA#2 and urges the NYPD to assign additional police officers to cover these precincts once recruits graduate from the academy. However, recruits coming from the police academy and all current officers must be equipped with the necessary skills to interact with citizens with the proper respect. The NYPD's CPR, or Courtesy, Professional, and Respect initiative, appears to be forgotten during interactions with minorities. If officers maintain the Department's CPR edict of being courteous, professional, and respectful, it will reduce tensions between officers and minority residents that arise because of racial profiling and blatant disrespect. In addition, to quickly solve crimes, it is essential that the number of officers in the detectives squad investigating crimes be increased and commensurate with the rate of crimes and unsolved felonies.

We thank the 77th and 78th Precincts for their efforts in attempting to curb crimes of opportunity. Safety guides have proven effective in helping residents protect themselves from robberies and muggings in the District. The issue of adequate protection in certain zones, primarily the eastern end Impact Zone covering the area of Schenectady to Ralph Avenues from Prospect Place to Eastern Parkway, has been partially addressed. However, and most unfortunately, gun activity is increasing in the district despite department claims that the amount of gun and violent crimes have not increased, while it is only additional press coverage making it seem otherwise. Also, there are grumblings with the NYPD and a few misguided members of the public that believe that the increase in gun violence across the City is a direct result of the elimination of the controversial Stop and Frisk tactic. This is simply not the case. An increase in officers in higher crime areas as well as early violence intervention programs such as Save Our Streets (SOS), an organization that sends former gang members and youth offenders into the streets when word of gang disputes are spread, will greatly enhance police officers' ability to stop crime. Programs like SOS have an unseen impact and not only do they help prevent gun violence, they inform youth that gang

membership is not the only way they can obtain lacking aspects such as a sense of family or belonging, financial security, and the like in their lives. We at Community Board 8 believe the NYPD should further enhance the program by implementing a version of SOS in every community where either gun violence or gang membership is rampant.

Additionally, while we would love to see an increase in police officers in our district, an increased number of officers is not sufficient to fully curb these rising trends by itself, however. Fortunately, there are other tools that can be utilized to partially dispel the negative effects of the lack of police protection. For instance, NYPD cameras have proven to be an effective tactic in fighting crime. Additional cameras on St. John's and Sterling Places between Troy and Ralph Avenues, as well as on Nostrand, Buffalo, Schenectady, Kingston, Utica, and Franklin Avenues would be valuable to the command. Former Councilmembers Letitia James and Albert Vann allocated funds for the placement of cameras along Nostrand Avenue; however, the cameras have not been installed as of yet. We urge the NYPD to install the cameras as soon as possible so that Nostrand Avenue can have a similar resurgence as Franklin Avenue.

While District 8 does not have a large portion of our District dedicated to NYCHA housing developments, we are home to a particularly large development in Kingsboro Houses. As more criminal activity is detected in Kingsboro Houses, we continue to urge the NYPD to install closed circuit video cameras to add another asset to fighting crime in the development, as they have proven to be in Albany Houses. These cameras, and the installation of cameras in all of New York City's housing developments, would be beneficial in getting illegal substances and the guns used in violent crimes off the streets.

We strongly urge the city to acquire land for a parking facility to garage police vehicles. Currently, NYPD personnel over-take the streets around the local precinct houses (77th on St. Marks Avenue between Schenectady and Rochester Avenues, Dean Street between Utica and Rochester Avenues, and the 78th Precinct on Bergen and Dean Streets between 6th Avenue and Carlton Avenue) with personal vehicles, police cruisers, trucks, impounded vehicles tagged but not yet taken to the tow pound, and other equipment. They double park and park on the sidewalk, thus forcing community residents to navigate around these vehicles and homeowners to bear the expensive burden of sidewalk repair. A major concern raised with this is that the streets around the precinct houses do not get cleaned on Alternate Street Parking (ASP) days because the vehicles are not moved during ASP hours to allow the mechanical broom to sweep the street. Consequently, we urge the Department to identify property suitable for parking police vehicles. Such a facility for each precinct will help alleviate congestion in the area of the two precincts and foster a better relationship between the officers and community residents.

FIRE

Community Board 8 is displeased that there have not been discussions on reinstating the fifth crew member on Engine companies and of re-opening the partially or completely

closed fire houses across the city. The fifth firefighter is essential to Engine Companies because they help decrease the time it takes to dispel a fire's wrath. Adequate fire protection is essential for protecting the housing stock of the city, not only in fire prone areas, but upsurge areas where landlords and property owners are desperate to get rid of protected tenants in rent stabilized units to profit from the higher rents they could legally charge if the rent controlled and stabilized units were vacated. It will not be long before fire is used as a tactic to eliminate the rent controlled tenants and force evacuation of the units as was done in the not so distant past in the City. In addition, we urge the Department to hire additional fire marshals to investigate the causes of fires in a timely manner.

Home fire safety training for our children and adult residents has proven to be an effective tool for educating residents in what to do in the event of a fire or other emergencies. Unfortunately, with the spate of lives lost because residents did not have access to this information, we urge the Department to increase funding for Fire Safety and Prevention programs. Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors have also proven to save lives. Unfortunately, many residents fail to maintain their devices by changing batteries regularly. We urge the Department to continue and expand the smoke detector, carbon monoxide detector, and battery distribution program so that at risk tenants can receive their benefits. These programs have proven to be valuable life saving tools and also reduce the amount of damage and loss resulting from fires.

Finally, we encourage the Fire Department and City Council to consider the adverse effects that dilapidated engine companies can have on our firefighters' morale and productivity. Most firehouses are extremely old and require new roofs, window replacement, waterproofing, pointing, electrical upgrades, apparatus floor replacement, and new kitchens and bathrooms. We urge the provision of funding to make necessary repairs to all firehouses in District 8 and throughout New York City.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

With the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, all of New York City's residents should have access to quality healthcare close to their home. The current situation in District 8 is far from reaching this goal, unfortunately. There is a major healthcare crisis affecting the residents of Central Brooklyn due to budget cuts on various levels, and consequently, citywide, the healthcare system has been decimated with the number of hospitals closed or presently slated for closure. Hospitals strapped for cash are reducing services or lack the equipment necessary to treat some patients, leaving many without medical attention for so long that their ailments become worse and even more difficult to treat. Adequate government funds should be allocated to keep hospitals, specifically SUNY DownState and Interfaith Medical Center, open and fully functioning after the closure of Long Island College Hospital.

Central Brooklyn is still considered the epicenter for HIV/AIDS infections. As such, adequate education should be provided regarding the use of prophylactics and engaging in

safe sexual practices. District 8 especially is also plagued by other health ailments including diabetes, heart disease, asthma, stroke, obesity, and many other conditions that require substantial medical care for those afflicted. The inability to afford healthy food options only compounds these problems. Residents should be trained in healthy living without exceeding their budget as obesity continues to plague the less wealthier residents of our community and also those that do not have the means or access to healthy food options. Programs stressing proper nutrition should be provided for families. Students should also have health and nutrition studies added to their educational curriculum to inform them of the dangers of poor health practices so that residents can reduce their propensity for some of these avoidable health ailments. A food cooperative similar to the Park Slope Food Coop should be made available to Central Brooklyn residents so they do not have to travel so far out of their community for healthier food options.

Out-patient health clinics that cater to women's health are scarce in the community. Lack of sufficient gynecological, pre-natal and post-natal care, cancer screening, and attention to other women's health issues forces women to wait longer than necessary for care. In many cases, this prolongs treatment and contributes to unwarranted suffering and unnecessarily early death. Ample health provisions and treatment centers for women in each neighborhood is crucial.

As the number of dementia and Alzheimer's disease cases grow in the community, additional funds to maintain services are required. Asthma education and care programs are still needed. Conditions within the community (i.e. massive construction projects, demolition, and renovation efforts) have created harsh breathing conditions for current asthma patients and are increasing the number of individuals that suffer from the malady. Therefore, longer clinic hours need to be initiated so that patients do not have to go to the hospital for treatment.

There is a growing need for outpatient mental health services among children and adults alike. Primarily for minorities, the stigma of the admission to having a mental illness such as depression, anxiety, or bipolar disorder is great, thus preventing those suffering from symptoms to seek help. Mental health services and education that mental health disorders are not "all in the mind," or that they affect "only weak people," must be implemented in urban areas. People should not be forced to suffer in silence lest they be stigmatized by their family and peers. Educational and support services are essential to maintaining the well-being of our citizens regardless of age. Services geared toward assistance coping with mental stresses from a myriad of sources should be instituted. These services should include treatment and counseling for grief and bereavement issues, societal stress, sexual abuse recovery, depression, low self-esteem, anger problems, and other areas of concern.

DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING

As a growing and occasionally neglected population, the elderly require special services and care that should come automatically to a well-deserving class of citizens. We need to

recognize and reward the efforts and hard work of our senior population by providing them the fundamental means of existing above the median poverty line. As proponents of elderly care and in recognition of the special needs of the elderly in District 8, we appeal to a course of action that will make this goal possible. More services focused on improving the quality of life, residential opportunities, home-care and health-care need to be provided by City-operated and neighborhood based agencies. Services should focus on the forgotten population that earns too much to be eligible for Medicaid, and consequently do not qualify for Medicaid paid services as well as those that earn too much to qualify for low income senior housing opportunities. The home-care emphasis will help reduce costly institutional care and the burdens placed upon kin and will also provide additional freedom to relatively self-sufficient individuals. Services should include innovative senior centers, easily accessible and reliable transportation, truly affordable housing, prescription drug coverage and assistance, and other social and recreational activities.

The Home Delivered Meals program has proven to be a success. To make sure the program continues, funds for car insurance and additional vehicles to deliver the meals are needed. Also, diabetic and Long Term Care Resources for seniors should be expanded as should Alzheimer's Prevention and Treatment programs.

EDUCATION

We urge the Dept. of Education to provide funds to upgrade the interior and exterior of our schools so that students will not be preoccupied or disheartened by dilapidated conditions, thus reducing their focus on academics. Studies have shown that students in decrepit buildings typically do more poorly than their peers in well-kept and more modern buildings. As such, regular maintenance and modernization of our schools is essential to provide a positive learning environment.

We encourage smaller class sizes for all grades as they are necessary to give each student an equal and ample amount of individual attention and one-on-one interaction with his/her teacher. Also, smaller class sizes would alleviate some of the strain and pressure on teachers and allow them to conduct lessons more efficiently as well as evaluate and assess student learning and comprehension more effectively.

The availability of universal Pre-K programs is a great asset to New York City. Parents of school age children without the funds needed to send them to day care and Headstart programs will have a great burden lifted as they will have a free and meaningful tool for enhancing their children's educational opportunities with qualified licensed teachers.

Our children require a well-rounded education that includes not only the fundamentals of math, language arts, and reading comprehension, but also science, social studies, art, dance, and music. Each area of instruction should be assimilated in the curriculum of New York City's schools as this would greatly enhance students' active desire to participate in their learning and instruction. We support academic enrichment through creative expression,

including but not limited to literature, crafts, dance, music or fine arts. Incorporating all of these disciplines helps to stimulate and enhance brain and logical thinking development, which fosters a more profound learning process in all areas. Furthermore, a broadened curriculum for foreign languages should be implemented in public schools to enhance an appreciation of the various cultural mores and customs that students will encounter throughout life, including the workforce.

In order to be effective, teachers must have at their disposal the necessary tools to properly teach students. Dept. of Education funding should include the most up-to-date instructional aides and materials. Our teachers also need additional staff development days to better assist them not only with traditional lesson planning and classroom management, but also in the use of modern technology for both.

The role of concerned adults in education cannot be emphasized enough. Parents and parental figures play a critical role in the academic success of students. It is a well known fact that increased parental involvement in the educational process, leads to less likelihood of dropping out of high school, and conversely, an improvement in test scores and grades. What parents do in assisting their children serves as a bridge to what already has been covered in the classroom. Furthermore, given the numerous immigrant children in the NYC public school system, programs need to be implemented that will assist immigrant parents in learning the function and protocol of schools in which their children attend.

As the contentious issue of the diminishing number of black and Latino students accepted into the specialized high schools is of great concern, we must make available all necessary resources that will provide these students with every opportunity possible to succeed not only in the required entrance examination, but throughout their academic lives. To this end, we support the *Dream Project*, which will enable all students within our District to take advantage of a free enrichment program to assist them in the preparation for these exams. However, at the same time, we must recognize that there are many fine and notable schools which do not carry the specialized high school label. We must not continue to send the message that students in these schools and their efforts are held in any less regard as ultimately, we seek to work for the success of all of our students who attend NYC public schools.

There is, moreover, a glaring need for parents of middle school aged children in Prospect Heights. The greatest municipal need is for a zoned middle school in District 13 to serve the western part of Community District 8. According to Census data, in 2012, there were 613 children of middle school age living in the census tracts of Prospect Heights, and the population of the neighborhood will continue to grow as the Atlantic Yards buildings are completed and other infill development in the eastern part of Prospect Heights becomes occupied.

The Dept. of Education's Directory of Middle Schools for District 13 says, "It is extremely important to consider where schools are located in relation to your home." However, the only middle school option in Prospect Heights is the Brooklyn East Collegiate Charter

School, whose admissions are by lottery serving a much larger catchment area. Under the Bloomberg administration, Brooklyn East Collegiate was allowed to co-locate in the PS9 building at 80 Underhill Avenue, depriving PS 9 of the opportunity to use the space being vacated by MS 571 to expand to offer a zoned middle school option.

The Dept. of Education (DOE) has for many years allocated MS 340 (at Sterling Place and Vanderbilt Avenue) to District 17, so it also is not available for neighborhood middle school students. Although there are plans to include a DOE school in Building 15 at Atlantic Yards currently expected to be occupied in the coming years, the programming of that school has not been committed. In other words, the proposed facility will not necessarily be used for District 13.

In addition, we urge the Mayor and City Council to allocate funds for after-school programs that will reinforce what students are learning in school and provide supplemental tutorials for struggling students. "Out of School" time programs require additional funding to occupy our youth during those segments of the year when they do not have an educational facility to attend. Programs that will enhance our youth's technical and computer skills, make them aware of job and leisure opportunities outside of New York City and the United States, and that will train and prepare them for the workforce are also direly needed. Mentorship programs not only for high potential youth, but also for at risk youth are needed.

Of course, the adult population should not be neglected when it comes to education. Adequate adult literacy and GED programs should be provided for those that have become statistics seeking to improve their social condition. While a high number of people in the community lack high school diplomas and basic reading skills, District 8, unfortunately, has only one organization that provides adult literacy, GED preparation and GED obtainment, and adult continuing education programs. In addition we request training for residents with limited skills, especially those residing New York City Housing Authority developments, in the areas of licensed trades such as construction, electrician, and plumbing. Our residents are forced to travel to surrounding locales for necessary services. We must not forget that education is not strictly limited to children, and must be reminded that adults need educational services as well.

YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

There is a growing need for group and family Daycare services in District 8, spurred by the growing population of working parents moving into the community as well as the number of working parents already in the community. Additional *affordable* daycare slots for all work shifts, not just the traditional shifts of 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM, need to be created to accommodate this growing trend of working parents and their need for services. In addition, child care slots for home-based and center-based programs should be restored.

The Administration for Children's Services (ACS) replaced child care service contracts with EarlyLearn NYC. This change has created much upheaval to families and communities.

EarlyLearn NYC drastically cut the total number of child care slots, closed centers, and required free standing family day care programs to merge with center-based operations to keep public funding. We request a review of current operations and results, and increase in the number of slots available, as well as a call for alternatives to EarlyLearn NYC.

As the number of children in the foster care system rises, allowances must be made for resources for kinship care and foster parent training and recruitment services. The family reunification process must be immediately instituted to counter-balance the effects of intervention by Protection Services. As the number of children presently in the foster care system greatly exceeds the number of homes available, increased efforts must be made to provide the proper mental health care to prevent children from further losing a sense of self-image and self-worth. Efforts must be made to assure children that their lives have meaning despite a lack of parental and familial influences.

In addition, programs for youth who are aging out of the foster care system are needed. These programs assist in the critical adjustment and transition period for youth who are forced to live and survive on their own with minimal to no supervision. In order to assure that these individuals are able to live successfully without resorting to crime, programs must be instituted to assist them with job training and placement, money management, higher learning, and the like.

Early intervention is the key to saving the future of our youth. It is well documented that inner-city children have a higher risk for crime, dropping out of school and other educational deficits, gang involvement, drug use, and incarceration. We urge funding for activities that target at-risk youth. Funding for youth development and delinquency and prevention programs is necessary to serve our youth and quell the growing trend toward life-ruining activities. Historically the focus has been on at risk young males but more attention is required for young women. Since women are the primary nurturers for the future, it is imperative that they be given the skills needed to serve that role. In addition, parenting programs for young mothers (as well as fathers) need to be implemented to instill family values in individuals that may not have been reared in a stable family home so that the cycle does not continue to propagate.

For youth that unfortunately find themselves entangled in the criminal justice system, the Close to Home program was started in 2012 as an alternative to sending New York City youth offenders to upstate facilities which separate them from family and familiar surroundings. Rather, Close to Home keeps youth offenders in NYC-based facilities and provides various services to the youth and their caregivers. We ask for quarterly reviews of current operations and results as well as public hearings to ensure the program realizes its mission and objectives as it is better that the youth learn how to adapt and function effectively in their community.

Community building exercises should be practiced to validate the "It Takes A Village" approach to childrearing. Too often, young parents reject the advice of a dwindling population of older nurturers, thus leading to a burgeoning violent youth culture. Youth

without strong role models in the home need to have access to role models from elsewhere, and neighbors are a great place to look. Adults need to assume their role as parents, guardians, and mentors to our youth. Basic socialization requires that informal authority figures be active social agents.

The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) has proven to be invaluable to our youth in terms of the job experience, training, and responsibility given to its participants. Jobs, along with participation in the arts, music, dance, theater, and sports help foster higher self-esteem, positive self-motivation, and elevated levels of self-confidence. It is our firm belief that our youth will excel as a result of their experience with the SYEP. Therefore, we recommend that baseline funding should be adjusted annually to allow for inflation and the number and type of jobs available through SYEP be increased.

Each year, there is no shortage of youth participating in the program; however, there is a shortage of quality jobs. Public Service Announcements (PSA's) are needed to get more and broader companies participating in the program to increase the different experiences youth can obtain. PSA's also will increase word of the SYEP program to youth that might need the money and experience. NYC Transit is a perfect place to enact SYEP PSA's and garner participation.

Finally, there is an increase of illicit use of over the counter substances sold for different purposes that are utilized as a legal substitute for certain drugs. As a result, regulation and closer scrutiny is needed to stem the abuse of harmful substances such as K2, Spice, and Bath Salts, which are detrimental to our youth and must be regulated in some manner or at least not made readily available. Educational services similar to the campaign against illegal drugs should be used to warn youth about the dangers of these "legal" substances that can cause just as much or greater damage as illegal ones.

HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION

The Board supports expanded funding for existing Domestic Violence Victim and Intervention Programs. It is extremely important that we protect our families' welfare and well-being from destructive forces within the community, regardless of whether it comes from the home or local environment. Preventive, protective, and counseling services for families must be provided in order to maintain the health and security of our youth, elderly, and overall family structure.

Funding should be provided for preventative services to educate women and men of *all ages* on the telltale signs of all forms of abuse—physical, emotional, sexual, and psychological—and how to exit a situation that could be potentially life threatening, not only for her- or him-self, but for any children in the home as well. This will provide pre-emptive services and prevent further destruction of familial ties and bonds.

We must keep in mind that our elderly population is at risk for abuse as well from family

members and home health aides seeking to take advantage of their frail emotional and physical states. Our elderly population is the most vulnerable and often forgotten. They require considerable attention to maintain their safety and well-being, thus preventing them from being subjected to unnecessary hardship, pain, and mental aggravation in the form of fear.

Additional services are needed for the homebound elderly to limit the burdens placed on kindhearted friends, significant others, spouses, and other relatives who assume complete responsibility for the care of their loved ones. Support services must be provided to these individuals who do an invaluable service to the community. These additional services will reduce the stress of having to care for semi-incapacitated individuals and can also reduce the risk of abuse by overworked and anxious relatives and friends encumbered with the financial and mental cost of care. We urge the Department to restore funding for the Kinship and Caretaker care programs.

PARKS & RECREATION

The need for safe and well-maintained parks and playgrounds are essential for the children in District 8. A regular maintenance program with adequate manpower is crucial. Currently, maintenance staff needs to be increased for all of our Parks and Playgrounds, malls along Eastern Parkway, and the St. John's Recreation Center. Additional Playground Associates, Park Enforcement Officers, and other personnel are required to keep children at play free from harassment and dangerous elements that lurk in unguarded areas. It has been proven that with personnel in our parks, they are cleaner and safer for those that utilize them.

In addition, organized sports and exercise programs in our parks should be strongly considered. Organized sports activities will not only keep our youth grounded and occupied while fighting the obesity epidemic, but they will also contribute to a structured nurturing environment and a healthier lifestyle. In addition, organized activities should be structured for adults as well to encourage community building and a stronger neighborhood foundation. We urge funding for organized activities in some of our larger parks such as Brower Park and Lincoln Terrace Park.

We press upon our elected officials to give special consideration to the playground equipment at Lincoln Terrace Park and Stroud Playground. Presently, outdated playground and fitness equipment, and faulty groundwork and drainage systems mar Lincoln Terrace Park. In addition, the playground equipment at Stroud Playground is also outdated, posing health hazards for the individuals that utilize the park. Furthermore, our residents complain of the overall lack of cleanliness of our parks and playgrounds resulting from a lack of Park Enforcement Personnel (PEP officers) to enforce no littering and rules about no dogs in the park. Funding must be provided in order to rectify these problems and make our parks and playgrounds safe and enjoyable for all.

We have seen an increase in dogs in the District with the changing demographic over the

years. We strongly urge the Parks Department to consider making one of our larger parks dog friendly by installing a dog run. We believe that this will bring neighbors together, creating a dual benefit of opening dialogue between residents and also providing dogs with valuable exercise.

With the numerous benefits of trees, we are appreciative of the Million Trees Initiative, which will increase the number of trees planted throughout the City. Unfortunately, there are problems with existing trees that have been neglected over the years. A good portion of trees in the residential areas and parks of District 8 are in dire need of pruning and care. We urge the City to provide adequate funding for the pruning of trees so that they can be pruned and maintained on a more frequent basis. We also urge the use of city-owned vacant lots for development of public and open spaces. Open spaces are crucial for the mental well-being of city dwellers.

SANITATION

Community Board No. 8 is pleased that the decision to restore Dept. of Sanitation Section Supervisors has been made and we eagerly await their re-assignment to fieldwork. Section Supervisors are an essential tool for the Department in ensuring proper service delivery and the cleanliness of our streets, and also are a tool that should be used to ensure that drivers and vehicle owners adhere to alternate street parking rules.

Undercover Sanitation Police officers are required to conduct surveillance of known dumping grounds and vacant lots to apprehend those responsible for the illegal dumping. With undercover officers, our streets and lots will not be subject to as much illegal dumping and other infractions as they currently are. In addition to vacant lots, open and unguarded vacant buildings and construction sites are also the scene of illegal dumping. For instance, the building that used to house St. Mary's Hospital has blighted the community since it closed in 2005. The loading dock and ramp of the hospital are now havens for illegal dumping and abandoned vehicles. It is our firm belief that additional undercover officers will help to dispel and deter these types of detrimental activities.

The District office has received numerous complaints of dog feces strewn about the community. It is imperative that Pooper Scooper laws be enforced and that signs alerting dog owners that it is their responsibility to clean up after their dogs are installed. As a result, we are asking that funding to re-instate the signage unit be provided. Furthermore, additional Sanitation Police Officers are also needed to issue summonses to dog owners who do not clean up after their dogs.

Finally, funding for litter instruction in schools is direly needed. Our streets, sidewalks, and beaches would remain cleaner and we would require fewer cleaners to maintain cleanliness if our children are taught at a young age (with constant reinforcement) the dangers of littering.

HOUSING

Permanent affordable housing for varying income levels remains one of our highest priorities. Both low and middle income single individuals and families, seniors, and disabled alike, require additional resources for housing. This need is more prevalent in District 8 now more than ever due to gentrification. If additional units of affordable housing are unable to be constructed, existing property owners need to be given incentives to maintain affordable rent rates for their existing units. District 8 is one of the City's leaders in rent increases and lack of affordability. Fewer options and owner greed is helping to push long term residents from their apartments. We must ensure that our residents are not victims of landlord harassment because they reside in rent controlled or stabilized apartment that keeps the rate collected at below market rate for that sized unit.

Homeowners in District 8 and the adjacent areas have been seriously affected by the foreclosure crisis. In order to re-stabilize our community, funding above the current level is needed to provide an array of services to mitigate this problem. Services needed to better assist homeowners and potential homeowners are: credit counseling, loan packaging, mortgage/grant organization assistance, and housing court assistance. Furthermore, anti-abandonment services need to be provided and HPD's Pro-Active Preservation Program should be expanded. This will help stem the number of abandoned properties that blight the community.

Community Board No. 8 urges continued funding for capital improvements to city owned properties. We also support continuance and expansion of HPD's basic loan programs—home improvement, small homes private, participation loan, owner services, article 8-A, and senior citizen housing assistant programs. We also urge continued funding for the seal-up and demolition program as well as the third party transfer program.

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

We urge the City to continue its financial support for the renovation of our cultural institutions. The Brooklyn Children's Museum (BCM) is one of New York City's unique educational and cultural treasures. Since its inception in 1899, it has been recognized for educational excellence and innovation and has had strong local and national impact while attendance continues to grow. Funding is required to complete necessary repairs and upgrades, and is also needed to maintain operating hours for the museum and staff levels at a livable wage.

Weeksville Heritage Center (WHC) is another cultural jewel in District 8. The newly completed educational center and office space should further enhance the eastern end of the District. WHC is a multidimensional museum dedicated to preserving the history of the 19th century African American community of Weeksville, Brooklyn. Using a contemporary lens, the center activates this unique history through the presentation of innovative, vanguard and experimental programs. The educational center will enhance this capability.

In recent years, the three public library systems serving NYC have been threatened annually with drastic cuts. Libraries provide job seekers assistance, adult literacy, English as a Second Language, computer training, tax preparation, US Passport processing, fine arts exhibits, access to the internet, and serve as a repository of Brooklyn historic material. Taken as a whole, the Brooklyn Public Library system requires its full funding due its multi-service delivery to youth and adults alike. Specifically for District 8, additional funding for the Brower Park Library branch is necessary as many students utilize the library's resources for school projects, term papers, and supplementary education means. Additional hours of operation are necessary to allow students and other residents to utilize the library's resources. Furthermore, in the spirit of equality, the building that houses the library should be brought to code with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Financial/economic literacy programs for teens are direly needed. Learning to save and invest is essential for economically disadvantaged residents. This information needs to be learned during adolescence so that as adults, residents will be financially stable. The Brooklyn Public Library should engage residents with financial literacy programs and make such programs accessible by different populations.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Recently, a number of streets in District 8 underwent sewer and trench replacement work. Some projects continue. Unfortunately, there are still some streets in dire need of such repair. The lack of an adequate on-going water- and sewer-main inspection program has created and contributed to the acute sewer and water problems in District 8 that is beginning to affect our housing stock. Our residents have brought to our attention many locations where the sewer lines are too narrow to handle the output of water during heavy rainfall, and this defect leads to the influx of water into many homes. Also, a number of streets are severely in need of reconstruction as a result of the horrendous number of sewer, trench, and water main defects. Subsequently, it is imperative that funding be increased for proper investigations into the causes of sink holes, trench restoration, and sewer maintenance, reconstruction, and expansion in the District.

TRANSPORTATION

Over the last few years, District 8 has had several traffic calming studies performed that have proven to be an effective tool in slowing vehicular traffic, thus making our district safer for its residents. Traffic calming measures were implemented along Eastern Parkway at the Grand Army Plaza Circle, and Vanderbilt, Washington, Franklin, and Classon Avenues. We recommend the continued performance of traffic calming studies and their implementation on streets that have not had a survey done. We also support the installation of countdown traffic signals at high-traffic intersections and the Vision Zero Initiative to improve pedestrian safety.

Community Board No. 8 is fortunate to have had a large portion of the District resurfaced in the last few fiscal years. However, many of our streets still require resurfacing or reconstruction due to hazardous defects. We request that funds be allocated in District 8 for street reconstruction and resurfacing. Potholes should be handled promptly and properly, thus minimizing the damage to vehicles and the out of pocket costs for vehicle owners.

Street lights are a major deterrent to crime in the District as they illuminate our streets and provide residents with visibility in the dark to avoid potential hazards as well as identify illegal activity. We support the use of LED bulbs, which create a brighter and better illuminated street while cutting back on electricity usage. Funding is necessary to maintain street lighting crews and speed up the repair process when a malfunctioning or burned out street light is reported to DOT.

We urge DOT to expand the Sidewalk Repair Program, thus creating a quicker response to investigate defective sidewalk complaints. Many of our streets have broken sidewalks due to large street trees uprooting the sidewalk from its foundation. Homeowners should not be held liable for defective sidewalks and damage caused by City street trees.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SMALL BUSINESS

The revitalization of our commercial strips is one of our top priorities. We request that Small Business Services and the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce continue to work with District 8 for the revitalization of Utica, Kingston, and Nostrand Avenues, each between Atlantic Avenue and Eastern Parkway. These under-developed strips have the same potential to be as vibrant as Flatbush, Vanderbilt, Washington, and Franklin Avenues.

Funding is important for the development of active and successful merchants associations in the District. It is important for agencies to assist the associations in formalizing their structures for targeting individual economic standing to be able to enhance economic development in creative ways. Moreover, funding is required for the retention and expansion of business development programs for small businesses in District 8. Particular emphasis should be devoted to expanding minority and women owned business initiatives. Affordable work spaces for businesses and entrepreneurs should be created via incubators of varying types (such as creative, small scale manufacturing, and construction) to promote business development.

Grant and tax incentive programs must be implemented to attract manufacturing businesses to our manufacturing (M1-1) district. Technological capacities of the M1 district need to be increased as well. These in turn can assist in closing the jobless gap for young men and women in the District and also assist recently released felons in obtaining gainful employment and stemming the criminal element in the less affluent section of the District.

COMMUNITY BOARDS

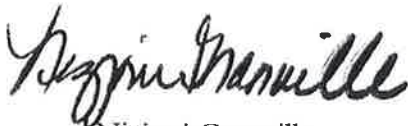
Community Boards are the first advocates for community residents facing issues with other city agencies. It is our charter mandated duty to interface with community residents and city municipalities to ensure service delivery in a timely and proper fashion. 311 is not an adequate substitution for the interaction of community boards and community residents. Residents increasingly complain about the difficulty of obtaining useful and accurate information from the 311 system concerning resolution of complaints submitted via the central hotline and other general questions. The net result of the 311 hotline has been stagnation in service delivery and complaint resolution.

Community Boards in general lack adequate operational funding. The meager budget provided for each of the fifty-nine boards citywide has not kept up with inflation and any increased operating costs. Community Boards possess the only budget that has not seen an increase in the past two decades despite increases in operation costs. We operate on a miniscule budget yet perform a valuable service to the community and city. With recent directives and proposals by the city council that demand that we conduct voter registration drives and webcast our monthly general meetings, operational costs are going to increase and additional staff training will be needed to ensure that we are capable of performing our new duties. We urge the Mayor and the City Council to consider a much needed increase for operating costs and staff maintenance for all Community Boards. We hope the City Council and Borough President's office will continue to battle with us to keep the voice of local government alive in every community.

CONCLUSION

Community Board No. 8 is committed to maintaining and enhancing the quality of life for the residents of our community. We are asking that the Mayor and our elected officials reconsider proposals to cut operating budgets of agencies that provide vital services to our residents. Due diligence is required to bring the needs and requests in this Statement to fruition.

Sincerely,



Nizjoni Granville
Chairperson



Michelle George
District Manager