



# COMMUNITY BOARD NUMBER 9

1967 TURNBULL AVENUE, SUITE 7

BRONX, NEW YORK 10473

1(718) 823-3034

FAX 1(718) 823-6461

ENRIQUE VEGA  
*Chairperson*

FRANCISCO M. GONZALEZ  
*District Manager*

## SERVING

## STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS

### COMMUNITY BOARD #9, BRONX

BRONX RIVER

CASTLE HILL

HARDING PARK

PARKCHESTER

PARK STRATTON

SOUNDVIEW/BRUCKNER

UNIONPORT

WESTCHESTER SQUARE

### BOARD GEOGRAPHY POPULATION

Community Board #9 is a peninsula, situated south of Tremont Avenue between the Bronx River on the west and the Westchester Creek on the east. The East River forms the southern boundary of the five-square mile district. Its natural barriers of water set this Board apart from other Boards in the Bronx.

The Bruckner and Cross Bronx Expressways and the Bronx River Parkway divide the community into several distinct areas. The section north of the Bruckner Expressway consists of a mixture of housing types ranging from single family detached homes to the 129 acre Parkchester community built in 1941. Interspersed throughout the various waves of building activity are what earlier decades was a series of towns and villages. Since 1950 more than a dozen high rise, publicly-financed developments were constructed in the northern tier.

The southern portion of the peninsula prior to 1960, consisted mostly of framed and masonry homes. It, too, evolved into a mixture of low rise, single family units and patches of publicly-financed towers.

Community Board #9 is one of three Bronx Boards that has had an increase in population, based on the 1990 census figures. There are 165,745 residents in Board #9.

### INFRASTRUCTURE

A large portion of Community Board #9 was formerly marsh and swampland which has been landfilled and significantly developed within the past 10 to 15 years. However, infrastructure improvements have not kept up with the rapid commercial and private homes development. The existing system is greatly burdened due to the increased traffic flow and usage.

Improvements to infrastructure have been implemented in a piecemeal fashion and have not addressed the growing needs of our community. This approach has left some areas with pockets of inadequate sewer services, a traffic network which is incomplete, sidewalks which are undeveloped or underdeveloped requiring

immediate capital improvements. The aforementioned problems are compounded by poor drainage and traffic congestion.

Nowhere in this community is this problem more evident than in the Clason Point area where no sewers exist and residents are utilizing antiquated cesspools and septic tanks. The usage of such systems poses a serious and potentially dangerous health hazard.

Capital Improvement Infrastructure is of the foremost concern to this community, priority should be given to the development of street construction, re-construction and resurfacing; a schedule of short range and long range capital improvements should be developed and implemented. Additionally, traffic flow studies are required at White Plains Road and Bruckner Blvd; Castle Hill Avenue from Cross Bronx Expressway to Bruckner Blvd. It is our opinion that with the addition of new homes and increased population that there is a greater need for traffic devices throughout our community.

Please note that special attention should be given to I.S. 174, P.S. 119 and J.G.S. 125 and schools throughout our district, for placement of traffic devices other than 4 way Stop signs which presently exist at these locations.

## **EDUCATION**

The growth of population in Community Board #9, especially in the elementary age group, has caused grave operational problems due to inadequate space. Faced with the overcrowded classroom students and teachers find it impossible to carry out their mission, to learn and educate.

With the advent of future housing developments in Soundview and Castle Hill, we wish to re-emphasize the need for a new high school (Academy 2000) to address our already over-crowded facilities; proposals have been submitted and approved for a school to be developed on a parcel of land adjacent to Soundview Park. The Academy 2000 educational facility would address overcrowding; we anxiously await its development.

James Monroe High School is being reconstructed and redefined; its reconstruction will begin in September of 1994. Its redefinition will create six small mini schools focusing on specialized courses and curriculum. The schools will be:

### **Monroe Academy of Business and Law**

### **Monroe Academy of Visual Arts and Design**

### **The New School for Arts & Sciences**

**Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School** – is named in honor of Mississippi sharecropper who became a local and national leader of the civil rights movement through her demonstration of courage, sacrifice, understanding, and commitment to her community. The school's science/math and humanities interdisciplinary academic program stresses justice, democracy, and the political and legal system. The intellectual development of students will be emphasized and they will be challenged to become politically and socially involved both through community service/internships and through direct action.

**Wings Academy** – is a small, personalized learning environment focused on preparing students for the challenges of the 21st century. Its rigorous academic program and career internships are designed to develop critical thinkers, thoughtful and persuasive communicators, and cooperative human beings with a strong sense of self and a true perspective of their role in the community.

Supported by a school community of caring adults, students will be encouraged to explore new ways to learning and develop a high degree of personal initiative that will provide them with the wildest possibilities for success in college and beyond.

**The New School for Arts & Science (NSAS)** – Will be a community of learners which will explore the arts and sciences to develop good habits of mind and work. Students will have the opportunity for experiential learning (community service, internships) external learning (museums, zoos, colleges) and performance based course work and assessment (projects, portfolios, presentation, experiments). NSAS will be a community of learners and doers, and its graduates will be lifelong learners who will have the options of the world open to them.

Furthermore, children born with physical limitations and from substance abuse families require special education programs and facilities. Many schools within our district have not retrofitted their physical plants to service our youth.

## **HOUSING**

The existing housing stock in Community Board #9, unfortunately, is hardly adequate to meet the needs of its current recorded population. Therefore, there is an urgent need to maintain stable dwelling units from deterioration. We must upgrade rehabilitate housing where necessary and develop and implement programs or new construction.

There has been a concentrated effort to implement various programs to address the housing needs in our area. It is essential that availability of these programs continue to insure the vitality and viability of the community. This would prevent the kind of decay which has destroyed so many neighborhoods in the Bronx. The need to have a Neighborhood Preservation Program (N.P.P.) within our Board is crucial; therefore, we are requesting that the (N.P.P.) Office be located within Community Board #9. Also, the Code Enforcement Division should be reinstated.

Some of our multi-family dwellings are in acute need of moderate rehabilitation. If such housing is to survive, the Participation Loan Program and Article 8A Loan Program must continue to receive funding. Section 8 assistance, where possible, should also continue to be allocated. The smaller homes in community Board #9 are of mixed age. Most are in good condition, but are in need of minor rehabilitation.

Several existing vacant city owned parcels are designated for various housing initiatives to include NYC Housing Partnership, Housing Preservation and Development, Small Homeowners Program. Story Avenue and Bruckner Boulevard are being constructed for 100 families and should be completed by Fall of 1994.

There are presently two planned housing developments will bring in an estimated 1,900 units of condominium apartments overlooking the east River waterfront area. At present and due to the economic problem the construction of this site has halted.

The housing shortage is city-wide and, therefore, the continued existence of our housing activities and the problems which support them are crucial to the future well-being of Community Board #9.

## **POLICE**

Safe streets are a concern of residential and commercial businesses of Community Board #9. Protecting the life and property of our residents by reducing and preventing crime is a major priority.

We are as many communities, faced with a growing problem of drug and substance abuse, to address this problem we have instituted a multi-agency task force comprised of Federal, state and City Police agencies led by the Bronx Borough President and joined by the Bronx D.A.'s office.

Contributions to our efforts are local business groups, community leaders and clergy. They have become our eyes and ears, local block watchers have been locally successful in preventing the spread of crime. Many of our local arrests and seizures are attributed to our community resources.

With our anticipated increase in population and commercial development the demand on police services are expected to rise accordingly; therefore we are requesting the acquisition of equipment, patrol cars, two 4 wheel drive vehicles and bicycles. Such equipment and manpower increase the effectiveness of policing; a high density district such as ours will aid the patrolling of difficult areas.

## **SANITATION**

Our Sanitation Department is being burdened beyond capacity. There is a dire need to construct a new sanitation garage within our Board in order to comply with the Charter mandate of "co terminality".

Currently, the sanitation facility within Community Board #9 is serving communities located outside our Board area. There has been site selection, plans and monies allocated for construction. We would like to see this project moved along quickly in order to begin construction.

Additionally, there is a need to create and equip a mini mobile cleaning unit to service our district. We need to fully complement the Clean Team, Community Services, Litter Basket Programs and the Neighborhood Intensive Cleaning Team.

## **FIRE**

This area was once considered to be a brush fire problem, with block after block of vacant land. Today, it is the home of shopping centers, high-rise apartment complexes, private homes and an industrial center.

Fire companies responding to incidents in this area are faced with many problems including an increased fire response workload, long responses, numerous highways, bridges that open, traffic delays and traffic overflows add to our response delay. In addition, due to our fire companies supplementing other areas, portions of our Board are left without adequate coverage.

With new housing at Soundview and Castle Hill Avenues and an expected increase in population, it is essential that Fire Department coverage be adequate. There is a need for additional fire protection in this community due to its build-up of population, housing and commercial structures. The establishment of a new Fire House in the areas of White Plains Road and Lacombe Avenue is warranted. The continual installation, repair and maintenance of ERS boxes are warranted and recommended.

## **HEALTH**

Due to our natural water boundaries and numerous scattered vacant lots, parts of Community Board #9 are plagued by various infestation problems including: rodents, ticks and mosquitoes. Several summers ago we were faced with a health crisis due to the death of a youngster as a result of Rocky Mountain spotted fever. This disease is transmitted through the bite of a tick.

The problem is particularly severe in Soundview, Harding Park, Clason Point and our designated parkland areas. We desperately need to establish an Infestation Program that includes inspection, clean-up and extermination of the affected areas. An education program which would enable residents to participate in the efforts to control the problem should also be included. Additional health inspectors are a necessity in order to facilitate the undertaking of this task.

The expected completion and further development of Soundview Park would resolve many of our health concerns (mosquito and rodent dilemma).

Although there has been a tremendous increase in population, little if anything has been done to provide necessary health facilities and health-related programs. Due to the lack of facilities, our sick and injured must be transported outside our district.

At present the ambulance, para-medical and E.M.S. service to our areas are on such a level as to constitute of continual threat to the health and general well-being of our constituents.

### **PARKS AND RECREATION**

There are approximately 200 acres of mapped parkland within Community Board #9, with only 25% actually developed. The major undeveloped sites are Soundview and Pugsley Parks. These sites have been budget priorities for several years and continue to be important projects of the Board.

Soundview, Clason Point, Pugsley Creek and Castle Hill Parks form our waterfront corridor, providing excellent opportunities for recreational uses. Public access to the waterfront by recommending the Greenway Plan and an esplanade along Soundview Park, Harding Park, Clason Point Shorehaven, Pugsley Creek continuing to the YMCA at the end of Castle Hill Avenue.

These parks have been left in neglect for too many years. The construction of Soundview Park has been further delayed due to cost overruns. The YMCA is proposing an environmental education program at the Castle Hill Park, which we support. This program would teach school-age children about fauna and flora of marshland, utilizing the natural environment of this park. In addition, this park will be developed by the developers of the Castle Hill Estates.

There are also numerous playgrounds and recreational facilities which need physical improvements. Along with the improvements of these parks and playgrounds there is a need for personnel and equipment to properly maintain them.

There is also a need to reassess certain properties for mapping as additional park land, such as land located south of Soundview Park, commonly known as the lagoons, and part of Ports and Trade.

According to statistics, Community Board #9 is seriously deficient in neighborhood park acres, while community parks acres merely meet minimum standards.

Community Board #9 is deficient by 44 acres to meet minimum NYC Standards for total parks and open space. This deficiency is nearly the size of Soundview Park (156 acres). It is, therefore, incumbent upon these responsible for parks/open space planning in this community to acquire new parks and open space land to bring the community to the minimum recommended acreage.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Much of Community Board #9 is a two fare zone; however, bus service is extremely inadequate. This is due to routing of bus lines without concern to concentration of population, compounded by

decaying roadways. Consequently, bus routes are grossly under serviced. This situation creates greater usage of private car service which ultimately decreases revenue to the city and caused numerous problem with illegal unlicensed vehicles, dumping etc.

Subway service throughout the district has been centered on transporting residents from other areas to Manhattan, without regard for the need of Community Board #9 commuters. The result is that our residents find it increasingly difficult to travel to clinics, service agencies and shopping districts within the borough. New development in housing and manufacturing has created a greater need for additional bus service in Zerega and Soundview Avenue areas. Our subway stations are all in deplorable condition and poorly maintained, and require capital improvements.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Community Board #9 will be continuing its efforts in the revitalization of its commercial and industrial district: Westchester Avenue, Castle Hill Avenue, White Plains Road, Archer Avenue, Parkchester, East Tremont and the Zerega Industrial Park. As part of a beautification program, the elevator structure on Westchester Avenue could use a "face lift" with a clean-up and a painting. The lighting that was installed underneath the elevated structure should be extended from Harrod Avenue to White Plains Road. These beautifications and general improvement programs would also be instrumental in maintaining our commercial strips' viability. Upon the anticipated completion of the Westchester square redevelopment project the commercial strip and district will take on a new and revitalized appearance increasing the appeal and market value of East Tremont and the Westchester Square.

The resurfacing of streets, fencing and maintenance of Commercial and Industrial Park areas is also conducive to promoting economic development within our Board. We are requesting that Trail Blazer signs be placed to insure recognition and promote the Zerega Industrial Park as our hub for large businesses.

Should any city agency undertake a feasibility study for the use of our waterfronts for transportation purposes, Community Board #9 should be included in plans and development inasmuch as these plans will dramatically impact on our community.

### **AGING**

As our older population grows, so does the rising size and proportion of minority elderly living in Community Board #9, many of whom are low income women, living alone, in poor health, with some limitation or inability in major activities. These demographic changes indicate an ongoing increase in demand for community-based in-home supportive social services, including home delivered meals and homecare.

Even though Community Board #9 has the largest elderly population meeting the Department for the Aging's criteria for home delivered meals, the allocation for the community-based in-home supportive social services, including home delivered meals, as well as homecare hours, is not equitably distributed borough wide. As a result, Community Board #9 has the longest waiting list for both services.

Congregate meals at senior centers should be increased or at least maintained at the current level to insure the nutritional well-being of elderly residents.

It is equally important to insure that community-bound elderly especially minority, or their caregivers, those with language or cultural barriers, have local access to entitlements and benefits at bi-lingual one-stop multi purpose centers in their community.

Crime and elder abuse have escalated. The community must address mental health issues affection the senior population. We must assist and protect our most vulnerable and also find ways to protect the dedicated workers who service them. Transportation for the elderly and the handicapped is also very limited and should be increased. Safe and affordable housing for elderly residents is critical. Community Board #9 needs to develop more senior housing to meeting this demand.

## **YOUTH**

Community Board #9, according to the 1990 census, has a population of 165,743. However, it is interesting to note that a significant portion of our population is under the age of 18. Our youth population, under 18 years of age within Community board #9, is 45,974. The number of young people in Community Board #9 further stresses our need for increased youth services because there are seven New York City Housing Authority projects where families waiting for apartments double up. As a result of this overcrowding, unreported numbers of young people are not included in these statistics. In addition, there are many immigrant families that are moving into the community with children that are also not represented in the 1990 census statistics.

Due to the large number of young people within Community Board #9, Castle Hill Community Center and Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club are hampered by a lack of space. Castle Hill Community Center serves many low income youngsters in our community. The agency has implemented many innovative and successful programs, however due to their limited space they are finding it difficult to accommodate the large numbers of youth seeking services. The construction of the second floor of the center would alleviate this problem and allow the Castle Hill Community Center to expand its innovative and successful programming. The Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club has opened adjunct program sites which include the use of Public School buildings.

There are also six areas within Community Board #9 which are underserved in the area of programming for youth. Of these six areas, Parkchester has a high density of youth per land mass. Several years ago, residents in the Parkchester Condominium Development and the 43rd Precinct began to organize the youth in the development to form a Youth 'Advisory Council. Through the efforts of Community Board #9, Parkchester Management, and the Police Athletic League there is an evening program providing services for the youngsters in Parkchester. Unfortunately, more funding is needed due to increasing participation of youngsters and increased cost to use school facilities.

While adequate services or larger facilities are needed throughout Community Board #9, the five areas listed below, in the addition to Parkchester, have virtually no youth service providers.

| <b><u>AREA</u></b> | <b><u>YOUTH POPULATION</u></b> |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Soundview/Bruckner | 10,322                         |
| Soundview          | 8,878                          |
| Park Stratton      | 3,205                          |
| Clason Point       | 1,081                          |
| Harding Park       | 807                            |

After school programs are a means of alleviating the strain on the limited amount of youth services. Most of Community Board #9's schools fall within the boundaries of School District #8. Although a new after school program, the Rainbow After school program has opened, there are still not enough after school programs available. The schools in School District #11 have two programs and School District #12 does not have any after school programs. Due to the large youth population, increased after school programming is essential in order to address a larger portion of the needs of our young people.

To add to Community Board #9's need for services, in February, 1986, after renovation of 1104 Elder Avenue, Housing Preservation and Development began housing families from the city's hotels. In addition to the families who now reside in the 1104 Elder Avenue apartment building, 139 homes have been completed all of them were sold. These homes are part of the St. Andrews Village Development and are currently occupied. Along with the renovations and building of the 1104 Elder Avenue apartment building and the St. Andrew's Village Development, condominiums will also be built in three sites in this area in the near future.

The new housing being built in the community is causing an influx of families. The Shorehaven Development will house 1200 families by June 1995; approximately 160 families have already taken residency. Thus the present funding allocations which are inadequate due to the large number of youth, presently in the area, will be more of a concern in the near future. Due to the new housing being built in the area, causing an increase of families with young people, we feel Community Board #9 will need to be seriously considered for a larger portion of the city's funding allocations if the community is to effectively provide adequate services for its youth.

Additional funding and programming will enable the community to address the following issues within our Board:

**Youth Employment**

**Drug Abuse**

**Adolescent Pregnancy**

**Teen Violence**

**Health Awareness**

A greater awareness of crimes that actually have happened to young people could prevent similar crimes from occurring and breakdown the false sense of security that sometimes is part of being young. A crime prevention program focusing on the dangers of joining a cult or a gang might be helpful. It is evident by the recent, racially motivated attacks on young people that violence is a reality. Ideally, if this information is geared specifically to teenagers and delivered in the schools, it would be most effective and wide reaching.

Teenage suicide is also an issue which the community would like to see receive additional funding and programming. While it may not be a prevalent problem in this area as the other, it is a serious problem that deserves attention.

We are very proud of the service providers that are currently operating programs for youth with such meager resources. The youth population of Community Board #9 is presently underserved and with the influx of families our need for services is sure to increase if these needs are not addressed.



## **CONCLUSION**

As this community turns the centennial corner into the 21st century, it is our greatest goal to secure the quality of life. The foremost issues are Education/Youth, Police protecting, Sanitation, Infrastructure and Housing.

We wish to continue our projected growth patterns and attract new residents through housing opportunities, growth in business and increased services.

Community Board #9 one of the most affordable and attractive communities in the Bronx, but this can only continue with the assistance of City, State and Federal agencies and programs. Residents with Community Board 9 have made a substantial financial commitment to live here, and wish to be part of its future planning and development, they have planted their roots and firmly, they stand committed to their homes, families and future.