



# COMMUNITY BOARD 10

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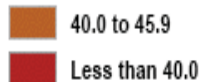
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**Karyn Petersen**  
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## **STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS** **FISCAL YEAR 2011**

Community Board 10 is located in Southwest Queens. The district is bounded by Liberty Avenue/103rd Avenue on the North, Van Wyck Expressway on the East, 165th Avenue and JFK International Airport on the South and the Brooklyn/Queens Line on the West. Within the Board's boundaries are all of the Howard Beach communities located within Zip Code 11414; all of those communities located within Ozone Park Zip Code 11417; all of the South Ozone Park Zip Code 11420 communities; and approximately half of the Richmond Hill South Zip Code 11419. Community Board 10 encompasses 6.25 square miles and has 6.9% of the 2441 miles of Queens streets.

According to the 2000 Census, Community Board 10 is home to 127,274 persons. That population reflects an approximately 15% increase which took place during the years between 1990-2000. That increase in population was among the largest in Queens during that decade and the actual increase may well be greater due to undercounting which may have occurred during the 2000 Census. The map below indicates a less than 50% response rate to the Census in some areas of Community Board 10. There is a need to heighten census awareness and participation in 2010 to insure a more accurate enumeration.

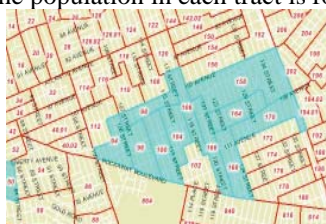


Source: U.S. Census Bureau  
Population Division - New York City Department of City Planning

No single group comprises a majority population in Community Board 10 as a whole. The 2000 Census reported that the population was 34% White; 17% Black; 21% Hispanic; 13% Asian; 10% of two or more races; and 6% of other races. Data found in NYU's Furman Center publication, *State of New York City's Housing and Neighborhoods 2008* estimates our population to be 138,052, and the Census Bureau's 2005-2007 ACS demographic estimates indicate Community Board 10's population to be about 129,000 (with a 5.5% margin of error). Estimates are that our population is now approximately 29% White; 18% Black; 20% Hispanic; and 19% Asian. It should be noted that about 11% of our population reports to be "of some other race." The population in Community Board 10 is diverse, but is more balanced, in terms of race/ethnicity, than are some other areas in Queens. According to the Furman Center publication, *State of New York City's Housing and Neighborhoods 2007*, we are "the most racially diverse community district in the city," and our area "witnessed the second greatest increase in percentage of immigrants of any district in the city" between 1990 and 2006. In its *State of New York City's Housing and Neighborhoods 2008* publication, the Furman Center data again reports that Community Board 10 is the city's most racially diverse district.

We will likely see another significant population increase reported after the 2010 Census. The Asian population in Community Board 10 consists primarily of persons of Indian ancestry who migrated here from countries in South America and the Caribbean region. It is very likely that many of those who responded to the 2000 Census as being of “other races” would add to the district’s Asian population. We believe a more accurate estimation of that part of our population would be approximately 28-30%.

In 2000, about 40% of our population was reported by the Census as being foreign-born with approximately the same percentage of the population indicating a limited proficiency in the English language. The 2005-2007 ACS data reported that approximately 46% were foreign-born with 32% speaking a language other than English. Estimates are that Spanish is spoken by 17% of our residents. According to ACS data for 2005-2007, approximately 54% of those speaking a language other than English, speak Spanish. Estimates are that 76% of those foreign-born migrated from Latin America. That would include most of our foreign-born Hispanics and many of our non-Hispanic foreign-born whose native country is Guyana which is located on the continent of South America. ACS data for 2005-2007 estimates 80% of our foreign-born residents entered prior to 1990 and 57% have sought and become U.S. citizens. The map below indicates the census tracts within Community Board 10 where a majority of the population in each tract is foreign-born, as reflected by the 2000 Census data.



Given the continuing growth in the Queens’ foreign-born population, it is reasonable to assume Community Board 10’s foreign-born population has also grown since 2000 and that both our Asian and Hispanic populations will show increases.

In 2000, Census data indicated that approximately 15,000 residents in about 11,000 of our homes were over the age of 65. ACS data for 2005-2007 reports that approximately 11% of the population is over age 65 and approximately 16% is over age 60. The largest concentration of persons over age 65 is in the Howard Beach neighborhood. About a quarter of our population is under age 18 with 4 of our census tract areas showing more than 30% of their populations as under age 18 in 2000. Three of those are located in South Ozone Park and one is in Ozone Park. Data indicates that a higher percentage of our households include children under age 18 than many other Community Board areas do.

Dividing the overall geographic area of Community Board 10 into segments gives a clearer understanding of the community’s demographics. For the purposes of this Needs Statement, we have divided the Board into three geographic zones.

The area in the map that follows is the northeastern segment of the board. It is bounded by 103<sup>rd</sup> Avenue on the north; Van Wyck Expressway on the east; Rockaway Blvd. on the south; and Crossbay Blvd. on the west. (A small part of the area extends just west of Crossbay Blvd.) This segment is comprised of 19 census tracts. The northern portions of tracts 112 and 106, which jut out on the map, are part of Community Board 9. The area depicted on this map includes the Richmond Hill South community as well as parts of Ozone Park and parts of South Ozone Park.



Approximately 44% of the Board’s (Census 2000) population resides in this area. The majority (approximately 55%) of the residents throughout this area are foreign-born. Eleven of these 19 tracts each have a majority foreign-born population. There is no single group, though, that comprises a majority population within this geographic area according to 2000 Census data. Approximately 21% of the population is Hispanic, approximately 24% is Black, and probably 45% is Asian, predominantly of Indo-Caribbean backgrounds. Both the Asian and Hispanic populations in this area will likely show increases after the 2010 Census. This area of

Community Board 10 saw the largest growth in population between 1990-2000. Between 1990 and 2000, the population of two census tracts in this area increased by more than 40% and five others each showed a population increase of more than 30%. Half of the tracts in this area have more than 20% overcrowded housing units. The population, overall, in this area reflects the least number of elderly (approximately 8%) within Community Board 10. About 27% of the population is under age 18, higher than the Board area as a whole. There is very limited parkland and/or open space in this area. There is a need for additional support for youth services in this area.

The next map depicts the western segment of Community Board 10. It depicts the area that is South of Rockaway Blvd. between the Brooklyn/Queens borough boundary and Aqueduct Racetrack's eastern boundary (114 St.). There are 11 census tracts in this area. (Most of census tract 864 is the landmass of Aqueduct Racetrack. A part that tract in its northwest section is outside the racetrack and is populated.) The area includes all of Howard Beach and most of that part of Ozone Park that is located in CB10.



Approximately 39% of the Board's (Census 2000) population resides in the area shown above. The majority population in this area is White (68%). About 18% of the population is Hispanic and about 12% is Asian. The population within this area increased less dramatically than the northern segment of the Board did between 1990-2000, but appears to be increasing more at present. Two census tracts increased by approximately 30% and two other tracts increased by 27-29%. Only one tract (50) shows a rate of overcrowded housing units over 20%, but complaints of illegal conversions are increasing, particularly in the northern sections of this segment. Future data will probably reflect more overcrowding. This area has the Board's highest concentration of

residents over age 65 and the smallest concentration of those under age 18. There is a need for additional support for services to the aging. In the spring of 2009 New York State selected Catholic Charities to redevelop a building in this area, heretofore utilized for the developmentally disabled, into affordable senior housing. Community Board 10 hopes the Department for the Aging will work with Catholic Charities to incorporate a Senior Center in it to serve the facility's residents and the senior population in the surrounding neighborhood.

The next map depicts the southeastern segment of Community Board 10, which is located south of Rockaway Blvd to the east of Aqueduct Racetrack. There are six census tracts within this area, all of which are in South Ozone Park.



About 17% of the Board's (Census 2000) population resides in this area. About 40% of the residents in this area are foreign-born. One census tract (840) showed an increase in population from 1990-2000 of 41%. One other tract saw an increase of 37%. The population is approximately 17% White, 30% Black, 25% Hispanic, and 28% Asian. Only one census tract shows that more than 20% of the housing units are overcrowded. Approximately 10% of the population is over age 65 and about 27% is under age 18. There is a need for additional support for youth services in this area.

## Overview

Ozone Park, Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park and a portion of Howard Beach started to attract small home construction during the latter half of the 19th Century and developed gradually. About a third of the area's homes were constructed prior to 1939. Another spurt of development took place in the newer sections of Howard Beach during the 1950s and 1960s and to a lesser degree in South Ozone Park. Homes and streets in many parts of area were constructed below grade. When sewer construction and street reconstruction projects move forward, there are many grade problems to carefully resolve in order to mitigate, as much as possible, adverse conditions for both residential and commercial communities.

New construction took place throughout the Community Board and many existing homes were completely renovated in recent years. The current economic climate seems to have slowed the rate of new construction and renovations. There are approximately 41,500 housing units with about 64% of them owner-occupied. Over the last decade housing units within the Community Board area have increased by approximately 15%. We believe the number of housing units (many statistically not evident as they are the result of illegal conversions not authorized by building permits) may be higher. It is imperative that delivery of city services keeps pace to meet the needs of these new residents, many of whom are immigrants.

Residential structures are mainly (55%) one and two family homes with some cooperative low and hi-rise apartments (limited to six stories), and low and hi-rise condominium apartments (also limited to six stories).

Affordable rental apartments are minimal. Generally, housing stock has been well maintained over the years because of the high percentage of owner occupancy, but that seems to be changing. More of what were once owner-occupied housing units are now rental units. In 1970, about 69% of our housing units were owner-occupied as opposed to about 64% now. There is concern that property maintenance may deteriorate especially on properties where there are absentee landlords. The high rate of residential foreclosures is of concern. Some data indicates that the notices of foreclosure rate per 1,000 1-4 family properties is over 25% and there has been a high rate of high-cost home purchase/refinance loans in our Board area. The actual number of foreclosures has increased. There are indications of abandoned as well as vacant bank-owned properties in disrepair in our area.

Stores on the commercial strips provide the amenities homeowners look for within convenient proximity of their homes. People who live in the Community Board area own many of these stores. Crossbay Blvd., Rockaway Blvd., Liberty Avenue, and Lefferts Blvd. are the major commercial strips.

The area is serviced by four public libraries and a wide assortment of houses of worship. There is concern that when new houses of worship are built in established residential areas sufficient parking is not provided to minimize negative impacts. There is also concern when existing residential properties are converted to become houses of worship also not making provision for parking of vehicles.

Many of our schools are severely overcrowded. There are neighborhood parks and jointly operated playgrounds adjacent to some of the schools. New schoolyard play spaces are planned. There is concern that appropriate inclusion of community residents beyond the school community is lacking in the planning stage as these new schoolyard play spaces move forward. There are also some ballfields, which service many of the South Queens baseball, soccer, and football teams. There is a need to develop fields for additional sports activities, such as cricket, played by many new residents.

### **AGING**

Services to seniors need to be increased as the “baby boom” generation ages. We anticipate an increase in our elderly population in coming years. The number of meals served should not be the determining factor regarding a Senior Center’s performance. Many of our seniors attend and enjoy our centers without the need for a meal being the driving force behind their desire to attend and participate in each center’s activities. Centers for seniors must continue to serve small geographic areas and be located within the neighborhoods familiar to our elderly populations. The practice of locally provided home delivery of hot meals to the frail elderly must continue to be available. An additional senior center needs to be developed at the soon to be constructed senior housing facility in our Board area to better serve our senior population.

### **BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT/CODE ENFORCEMENT**

Illegal residential conversions continue to escalate to an alarming degree throughout the Community Board area. Service delivery deteriorates as a result because the people living in illegal apartments often do not statistically exist. The significant population increase during the 1990s (107,768 to 127,274) is clearly one indicator of this problem. School overcrowding is another indicator of the same problem. The levels of overcrowded housing units reported are also indicators of the problem. It is essential that this very serious problem continue to be recognized as such and, more importantly, that it be better addressed. Illegal uses, whether commercial or residential, must not just be cited; they must not be allowed to continue.

In all parts of the district, building code and zoning violations are a main concern for residents. There is extreme dissatisfaction expressed among residents and a general perception exists that building code violations are not being adequately addressed. There must be personnel provided sufficient to insure adequate building inspections of all buildings on an ongoing basis. There is also a need for additional inspection and enforcement personnel to insure that all building alterations, both residential and commercial, are properly permitted, constructed to code, and are actually being constructed in accordance with the approved plans.

Another issue of significant concern is the construction of new homes on lots where existing homes have been



totally or partially demolished. Residents continue to report that oftentimes what is newly constructed purportedly as a two-family home is in reality a three or four family dwelling. Sufficient personnel is needed to insure adequate inspections during construction. Residents also continue to report that renovations said to be alterations are, in fact, demolitions followed by new construction. There is a need to review and further alter the current practice of self-certification. It is imperative that the Buildings Department ensure that what is actually constructed is that which is indicated on the plans and permits and that the actual construction is safe. When what is constructed is found not to be that which was permitted, the Buildings Department must order and make sure that the illegal construction is removed in a timely manner. Residents continue to report that even when violations are issued, the illegal conditions remain uncorrected.

During FY2001-FY2008 a total of almost 17,000 Priority B complaints were made to the Buildings Department via contacts by residents to the agency directly, through 311, through elected officials, or through the Community Board. The majority of those complaints dealt with illegal conversions or issues such as work without permits.

There is a need to better communicate the safety issues that the city's Building Code seeks to address. Given the high rate of immigration into Queens from other countries, many of the dangerous occupancies and some of the "do-it-yourself" dangerous construction by owners may not be intended to skirt the rules, but may well just reflect the acceptable practices common in their home countries. A better effort is needed to educate those newly arrived as to the necessity in New York City for the rules and codes that exist and the obligation of a property owner to comply with those codes.

To some extent, it is our view that much of the push to downzone residential areas in Queens is driven by the failure to appropriately enforce and gain compliance with existing building code and zoning requirements. New housing is needed. However, that need should not be met by destroying the character of existing communities, which lack the necessary infrastructure to accommodate all of their one family housing units becoming two, and in many cases, three and four family units.

## **COMMUNITY BOARDS**

The City Charter mandates input from the Community Boards on many items as regards land use, community planning and related professional skills. This requires a degree of knowledge on an ongoing basis that most Boards do not have. Department of City Planning and Borough Hall staffs are not always available for ongoing dialogue. While the Charter states that Community Boards may have the services of a planner, there is no provision to pay for these services. The ability to afford such professional staff without our reducing other staff or OTPS spending would enhance land use decisions.

Each Community Board must of necessity acquire the language and operation of each Mayoral Agency. Community Boards very often deal with more than one agency at the same time regarding community issues and capital projects. Ongoing dialogue could move each capital project through faster thereby decreasing residential inconvenience. Ongoing dialogue could also save money by preventing delays due to lack of proper knowledge about a construction site.

Community Boards have been "treading water" in regard to operating expenses and service contracts. Now we are in danger of "drowning." Telephone use costs, postage, equipment service contracts, and other costs are ever increasing which leaves little room, among other things, for essential upgrading and expansion of our computer system to today's standard. It is essential that Community Boards have the necessary technology and training to maximize use of that technology in order to communicate more effectively with other city agencies.

Individual Community Board offices are mainly in locations isolated from other government offices. When equipment is out of order it is not possible for Community Boards to utilize a fellow governmental office located upstairs, downstairs or the building next door. Our ability to operate effectively ceases when equipment is not functioning properly. Removal of service contracts, telephone and postage costs from the Community Board budget would assist us in fulfilling our charter mandated functions. Community Board budgets have not kept pace with increasing costs. Across the board budget cuts, while perhaps fair in concept, in actuality impact on our ability to

provide service more than they impact on larger agencies. Our budgets are small in relationship to other agencies and our work is carried out not only with city dollars in our budget but by the pro-bono service to the city of our members as well. There is a need to not diminish our ability to serve our communities by cutting our small budgets.

With the initiation of the 311 complaint system a need has developed for a system to better coordinate its function with that of Community Boards. Information needs to be shared with Community Boards on a timely and regular basis as to the type and number of complaints received by the 311 system along with what action was taken by the agency to which complaints were referred. That need has been partially addressed by the response of DoITT to the requirements of Local Law 47. However, while useful, those reports are not sufficient. More detailed information would be helpful. It is difficult for Community Boards to adequately assess community needs, identify trends exhibited by complaints, or prevent duplication of effort if complete information is not available to us in a timely fashion. At present, information provided can only be evaluated from a geographical perspective to the Zip Code level. In order for us to utilize much of the information to better assist residents, addresses of complaint locations, not information regarding the complainant, would be helpful. Historically, Community Boards have tracked long-standing problems and provided agencies with local knowledge related to such problems, many of which involve more than one agency. With the institution of the 311 system it is difficult for Community Boards to do that type of follow-up on such complaints. The 311 system should also have operators dedicated to and specifically trained to deal with calls initiated by Community Boards. Community Board staff time is often unnecessarily consumed by having to repeat information during contacts with 311. Our staffs know which agency a complaint must be directed to and should be able to be connected with appropriate agency personnel without delay or difficulty.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Our local development corporations and business groups are making strides in moving their local projects forward on our commercial strips. Security, regular street cleaning, daily household and basket collection, the need for additional parking, improved lighting, and infrastructure improvements are on their agendas. They seek ways to attract additional businesses compatible to the abutting residential communities. Additional support from government would assist them in making more progress.

### **EDUCATION**

A quarter of our population is under age 18. The influx of families with school age children continues, particularly in the northern and eastern parts of the area. Our youth population continues to increase. The school buildings are overcrowded and parents see a diminished range of what is being offered to the students at the elementary school level. Parents are concerned with the quality of education and the safety factor as students move to the Middle Schools and the High School. It remains to be seen if the recent addition of more K-8 schools and smaller high schools lessens those concerns. Parents continue to express dissatisfaction with the high school application process. Many are seeking to relocate for better educational opportunities and safety inside and outside the school buildings. The physical plants of many of our school buildings still need attention. Additional Headstart and/or Pre-Kindergarten services are needed. Most of the schools in our area have had their play areas diminished in recent years by the placement of transportable classrooms and/or modular additions. School enrollment projections indicate that many more school seats will be required. It is not uncommon in our district for families with young school children to have two or three children in two or three different schools as a result of no seat being available in their neighborhood school. Sites for new school construction must be located and construction must be expedited to ensure adequate educational facilities for our children. Every child in our Community Board area must have a seat in his or her neighborhood school and each school must provide a full range of educational services. Residents in our community do not desire to see any school zoning changes that cross county lines. Queens students must be provided with school seats in Queens schools.

### **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

The destruction wreaked in the southern part of our country by Hurricane Katrina and the questions raised by the response to that disaster heightened concern among our residents about hurricane preparedness. There continues to be significant concern among our residents as to the adequacy of plans for such an occurrence, however unlikely, in

our area. A category 2 coastal storm in this region of the country could result in an evacuation of people living in what OEM has designated as Zone B areas of the city. A category 3 storm could result in an evacuation of those who live within designated Zone C areas.

Approximately 30,000 of our residents live within Zone B. Almost 40% of those residents are either senior citizens or children. Roughly 40% of all of Community Board 10 residents over age 65 live in areas designated as Zone B. Approximately 40,000 more of our population lives in Zone C designated areas. In the event that any major coastal storm occurs here necessitating an evacuation of both those in Zone B and C, we could see more than half of our residents from roughly 60% of our households having to evacuate. Such an evacuation would involve roughly half of our area's children and more than two thirds of our elderly population.

Although OEM has engaged in efforts to educate people, we believe there is a need for a far greater effort. Such an evacuation has never been necessary in Community Board 10. Should such an eventuality occur, people must know what to do and what to expect. Much more detailed information is needed at the Community Board level regarding processes which will be utilized to effect such an evacuation. Much more detailed information is needed in regard to the plans for sheltering. There is a need for far better consultation between OEM and the Community Boards as we oftentimes have detailed local knowledge that other agencies may not possess which could be helpful in mitigating potential problems. The mass movement of people, many of whom will utilize private vehicles, in the event of an evacuation presents many potential problems. While routes to evacuation reception centers are marked, there is little information available beyond that to our citizens to incorporate into their personal planning.

The designated evacuation reception center for our area is Aqueduct Racetrack. This is of concern to us and there may be a need to reevaluate that location. The planned development of a video lottery terminal gambling facility at Aqueduct Racetrack and the proposed construction of a hotel and retail uses on the racetrack land may render it not suitable for use as an evacuation center. There is a need to review this.

Also of concern to our residents is the city's response to their needs during coastal storms that are not catastrophic. There is a need for improved attention at such times. Virtually any significant "nor'easter" causes tidal flooding to occur in some areas within Community Board 10 exacerbating stormwater flooding conditions at times of high tide. In particular, homes in the Hamilton Beach and Ramblersville areas of Howard Beach are impacted by such storms, as well as some homes in some other parts of "Old" Howard Beach. In recent years there has been new construction of homes in the Lindenwood section of Howard Beach bordering the Spring Creek Park addition area. Some of those homes are also vulnerable to tidal flooding from less than catastrophic storms. Many of the streets in the Howard Beach area east of Crossbay Blvd. become impassable during times of high tide when such storms occur. Such storms often entirely cut off vehicular access to Ramblersville and Hamilton Beach.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

We are in need of ongoing routine maintenance of catch basins, all connections to the sewers, and the sewers themselves. Since we are a poor drainage district, we hope that a process has been established to insure that sufficient new basins are being installed as street reconstruction projects move forward to assure proper run-off and that construction waste is being properly disposed of to prevent clogging of existing catch basins. There are still areas of the Community Board area not served by storm sewers.

The rising water table is of major concern to the Howard Beach and Ozone Park areas of our district. That situation started after the Woodhaven Utilities and Industries Water Company take over by the City of New York. The City has also taken over the Jamaica Water Company. There are the same concerns now in South Ozone Park and Richmond Hill. Without proper planning, we could one day be flooded out by ground water. Prior to any additional building on the large tract of Aqueduct Racetrack land, there is a need to evaluate the impact in regard to potential exacerbation of ground water issues and regional drainage problems.

## **HEALTH**

We are experiencing an escalation of rat infestation in lots and in the streets of all areas of the district. It is almost

impossible to keep ticks, mosquitoes and rats under control if there is no way to mandate that owners maintain their unimproved lots or land with an unoccupied structure upon it. We would hope that some way could be devised to penalize owners of such properties who cannot show that they have contracted for the necessary service on a semi-annual basis. City-owned property should be handled the same way by Pest Control. Nurse services should be increased in all schools, both public and private, because of the escalation of contagious diseases and their expertise in the recognition and prevention of problems. There is no hospital facility located within Community Board 10.

## **HIGHWAYS**

Streets in sections of the Board area not designated for capital improvement are deteriorated to the point where filling of potholes will no longer suffice. We are rapidly reaching the point where it is dangerous for vehicles to navigate our district. Where streets have had wear and tear or strip paving for years, high crowns are a major problem. Milling machine services are necessary. Where a grid of streets is identified for milling and in-house/contract resurfacing, all streets should be checked to ascertain that each street has been dedicated in order to assure that no street is eliminated because that process has not been done prior to approval. Further, the time span between milling and resurfacing is much too long, thereby creating hazardous driving conditions. One week between milling and resurfacing should be the maximum allowable. Ongoing consultation between Department of Environmental Protection and Department of Transportation, Street and Arterial Maintenance Division, as well as the Department of Design & Construction is necessary during street reconstruction projects to assure that existing drainage is not disrupted.

Weed growth on grassy areas that obstruct vision when entering or exiting a major artery continues to be problematic. Such areas along the Belt Parkway, the Nassau Expressway, and North and South Conduit Avenues should be charted and be cut on a regular basis throughout the growing season. Beautification efforts to improve the appearance of these grassy areas are needed, as well as desired. These areas along our highways are among the first views many visitors to our city see when they arrive at neighboring JFK Airport. A beautification effort would serve our residents and would enhance the aesthetic presentation of our city to its visitors.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION**

There continues to be a need for a staffed HRA office to serve as a single point of entry for our district. There is also a need for a multi-service center to provide senior activities and affordable day care. There are more than 9,000 children in the area under the age of 5. Many live in single-parent households. In homes where there are two parents both are, in most instances, working. About 15,000 residents are older than 65. A single point of entry unit could be established in such a building. Barring that, there is no way for Community Board 10 residents to enter the system without hardships of transportation. Absent such a facility in the district, knowledgeable staff must be out-stationed at a reasonably accessible site.

## **LIBRARIES**

Full library services, year round, with expanded programs geared for pre-school and early childhood youth are needed. We find that our communities are having an influx of families with young children who have need of such services. Our severe school overcrowding has placed limitations on library services in our schools, which makes it more imperative for public library service to increase in order to serve the needs of our children. A lack of after-school programs or affordable day-care appropriate for school age children have made our libraries de facto after-school day care centers.

## **PARKS**

Many capital dollars have been expended in our district for reconstruction of parks. However, if there is not to be a maintenance person assigned to each completed facility on a daily basis, then it seems to us that these dollars are being wasted. While we do not have a regional park in our district, our ballfields are fully utilized by teams from many parts of Queens. Our smaller parks provide the only recreational sites for the residents of our district because public transportation is not readily available to regional parks. Therefore, if these park sites cannot be properly



maintained by our mobile crews with appropriate equipment, our residents are disadvantaged.

An ever increasing number of families are moving into our communities with young children. We find that during the summer, there is nothing readily accessible for the 4 to 6 years old age group and we would like to see a summer day camp installed. Some schools have programs in their buildings for youngsters from 6 years of age on up. Our pre-school children are under served.

We have had a large enthusiastic audience for those cultural events that have taken place in our parks in prior years. We look forward to more in the coming years as well as recreational year round and summer programs.

Forestry services are still lagging. Data provided by DoITT in response to Local Law 47 for FY2009 continues to indicate that 94% of the calls to 311 from our area for the Parks Department were forestry related. In FY2009, approximately 46% of those requests for service involved damaged or dead trees which is an improvement over that of FY2007 and FY2008. However, tree removal, stump removal, and pruning continue to be problems. Sidewalk hazards continue to exist in many areas as a result of uncontrolled tree root growth which must be better addressed.

For several years our budget requests have included site identification for a Department of Parks recreation center. Our population cannot avail themselves of many programs and activities in existing centers because of the distance between program sites and our community. It is necessary to recognize that families with more than one child must be able to transport each of the children back and forth to their various destinations (school, after school and religious programs, pre-kindergarten programs, etc.) in a timely fashion. Therefore, travel time must of necessity be short in order to accommodate them.

At the FY 1995 budget consultations, when this subject arose, the then Commissioner Oliver Spellman suggested a collaborative effort spearheaded by Borough President Claire Shulman, the Parks Department, Department of Real Property, and other agencies regarding property in Broad Channel, which could accommodate both Board 14 and Board 10. To date there is no forward movement for a recreation center to serve our Board's youth and the need for a place for recreation and cultural programs continues to grow. The Furman Center *State of New York City's Housing and Neighborhoods 2008* reports almost 53% (lowest percentage of the city's 59 Community Boards) of Community Board 10's housing units are not located within a quarter mile of a park larger than a quarter acre. That same report indicates Community Board 10 is among the five Community Boards with the highest percentages of households with children under age 18 in the city. There is a significant need for increased services to youth. In that portion of our Board north of Rockaway Blvd. and east of the subway tracks there are only two parks (DeMuttiis and Judge). One is located at the western end of that segment of the Board and the other is located near the eastern end. In between is that area of our Board with the largest concentration of children and the least amount of play space. A parcel of land or a building within that area of Community Board 10 should be developed as a recreational center to meet the needs of our youth.

The complete restoration of the ballfield at Judge Park has been requested by community youth. The Community Board fully supports that much-needed request and urges that it move forward in a timely manner now that it is funded. The soccer field at Southern Fields and the Lefferts Playground project have been completed. The restoration of the ballfield which sits between those two areas is eagerly awaited now that it is funded. There is a need for the creation of additional Green Streets areas. There is a need to create more playground areas to serve our youth especially since many of their schoolyard play space has been lost to transportable classroom space or modular additions to schools.

## **POLICE**

While citywide statistics indicate that we receive our fair share of manpower and equipment based on the percentage of crime in our district, ongoing complaints from residents continue to indicate that they disagree. Statistics seem to indicate that our area is served by less officers in relationship to our population than other areas. Our police precinct continues to show an overall drop in crime, but there have been increases in some categories since FY2003 that give rise to concern. Although serious crime continues to drop overall, the perception of many of our residents is that their quality of life is again deteriorating. Ongoing requests are made for more police visibility in the form of foot

patrols as well as quality of life/conditions cars. There is a particular need for additional manpower, especially on weekend nights, during the warm weather months.

Community policing has the interest of our residents and their support. The community has stated there have been too few “beat” officers in the past and that their assignment areas were too large for them to be readily accessible to the residents of their posts. Those officers that did provide community policing have been reassigned to other duties in the precinct and the Community Policing Unit seems to be no longer functioning. Our community complains that quality of life complaints often receive no response in the form of an officer appearing at the scene in a timely manner.

Each year during the warm weather months noise complaints resulting from large and disorderly parties being held at residences in parts of our area require that enforcement of noise restrictions increase. In FY2006 there were more than 3,200 noise complaints made through the 311 system that were referred to our police precinct. In FY2007 there were over 3,500 noise complaints received by the 311 system. The overwhelming majority (70%) of those complaints were about residential noise. In FY2008 there were over 3,800 noise complaints and of those, 76% were about residential noise. As of May 31<sup>st</sup> in FY2009, there were 2861 noise complaints of which 77% were of residential noise. Every Monday throughout the warm weather months our office receives numerous calls from residents complaining about the weekend’s noise. From May 1, 2005 – Sept. 30, 2005 there were more than 2,100 noise complaints made to 311. From May 1, 2006 – Sept. 30, 2006 there were more than 2,400 such complaints. From May 1, 2007 – Sept. 30, 2007 there were more than 2800. From May 1, 2008- Sept. 30, 2008 there were 2330 noise complaints made. The decrease in the number of noise complaints for FY2009 was due to the major enforcement effort of our precinct personnel, especially during the summer of 2008. However, despite the continuing enforcement effort indications are that the number of complaints is again increasing. This leads us to conclude there will again be well more than 2,000 such complaints during the warm weather months of 2009. Despite this strong, much appreciated, effort by our precinct to address the problem we believe additional resources must be provided in order that needed noise enforcement continues without negatively impacting on the precinct’s ability to address all the other crime and quality of life concerns it must respond to. Manpower levels at the police precinct **must be increased, especially on weekend nights**, to address this continually growing problem as well as other crime and quality of life concerns. Our residents have the right to be able to enjoy their homes without disturbance from inordinate noise and their complaints must receive a timely response. They also have the right to a precinct with sufficient manpower to provide all other necessary services as well.

The current economic climate has given rise to another growing quality of life problem. over-the-road tractor trailer trucks and other commercial vehicles parked on our local streets. Enforcement efforts must increase in order to prevent this practice on the part of truckers to save on parking costs from taking hold and impacting negatively on our residential communities. Resources must be provided to bolster precinct level efforts.

As of the end of the third quarter of FY2009, Community Board 10 had the highest number of complaints reporting derelict vehicles to 311 in relationship to population in the city. In terms of the actual number of such complaints we ranked seventh in the city. It should be noted that of the seven boards with the highest numbers of complaints of derelict vehicles, four abut our airports. This gives rise to concern among our residents that this is a potentially serious security issue as well as a quality of life issue.

The people who reside in Community Board 10 deserve to be served with the same number of officers from Operation Impact that have been assigned to precincts adjacent to it in recent years. When precincts surrounding Community Board 10’s 106 Precinct are flooded with additional officers (e.g. 103 Pct., 102 Pct., 75 Pct.) our residents and neighborhoods are negatively impacted.

While we agree that beaches, regional parks, etc. need additional manpower during the summer, the number of officers each precinct had years ago to help meet those needs no longer exists. Therefore, in the summer months when we need more officers we have fewer. Indications are that there are fewer cars on patrol, higher response times, and more backlogs in responding to calls for service. Available Compstat data should reflect backlog numbers so that Community Boards can adequately assess the effects they are having on service delivery.

Graffiti continues to be a problem on both public and private property throughout the area and incidents seem to be increasing. Improper use of motorcycles and ATV's is a major problem in this Board area. People have expressed total frustration regarding this matter.

There is an ongoing problem with unruly bars and clubs. Sufficient resources are needed to provide regular enforcement to avoid further negative impacts on nearby residential areas. Increased Operation MARCH activity is desirable to help eliminate problem conditions.

We find that three wheel scooters have proved to be very effective and look forward to more of them being allocated to our precinct (106th). Bicycle Patrols have been effective in the past. Community residents are concerned that reduced manpower levels will affect their continuance. This is particularly upsetting since it was the community, which raised the necessary funds to purchase more than 20 bicycles for the precinct's use and the community would like to see them fully utilized.

**Given our proximity to JFK Airport, the presence of the Buckeye Pipeline in our community, the presence of AirTrain, the many acres in our community of essentially unpatrolled shoreline beneath existing flight paths along with the heightened sensitivity of our residents to security issues, it is imperative that police manpower levels in our precinct be increased to insure enough visibility so that people perceive that they are safe.** Our precinct should be staffed to a level that allows for every "beat" to be covered daily along with full radio car coverage in each patrol sector. Our residents are well aware that our airport neighbor is critical to our nation's international and interstate commerce. They are well aware that it is a prime terror target. Their expressed perception is that the areas surrounding it get less policing than those near other such targets in other parts of our city. We believe a permanent Sky Tower observation post should be created to provide for monitoring of the essentially unpatrolled shoreline land areas. We believe the shoreline area in our Board, which is all directly below JFK flight paths, should be visually or electronically monitored at all times. The presence of large tracts of undeveloped federally-owned land along our shore essentially minimally patrolled by National Park Police where terrorist activity could easily occur at any time also requires our police officers be able to respond rapidly to those areas. For that reason the 106<sup>th</sup> Precinct should have at least two four wheel drive vehicles assigned and actually present in the confines of the precinct at all times.

**Our proximity to JFK Airport and its critical infrastructure, as well as the fact that most passengers and much of the trucking moving cargo in and out of the airport pass through our area, presents some overall security concerns we believe must be better addressed.** We believe the security of our city could be enhanced if a camera observation system, perhaps similar to that which exists in London, was installed along all the roadways, both highways and local streets, in our community leading to and from the airport. Installing such a system in this area could serve as a model to determine how effective such systems could be in other areas of the city. In addition to assisting in the counter terrorism effort of our city, such a camera network could prove to aid in reducing crime in our community and could serve to offset the lack of available manpower.

### **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

The perception among residents that they lack safe, reliable subway and surface transportation within this Board area has resulted in residents utilizing their automobiles. Census data indicates that more than 50% of our residents commute by automobile. Almost 40% of our residents live more than a half mile from a subway entrance. When subway service is utilized, many residents drive to north Queens to take the "E" or "F" to Manhattan. Journey to work data indicates that about 40% of our residents work in Queens also resulting in residents using their cars. The majority of our residents do not work in Manhattan. This results in more vehicles per family, parking problems, street cleaning problems, etc. Express bus service to Manhattan, although improved since the takeover of the private bus companies, is still inadequate as is express service to locations within Queens or Brooklyn. The community would like to see more reliable surface transit, especially to other areas within the borough, and safe, reliable subway service. If that were to become available the residents, in preference to using their own autos, would utilize it. Institution of express subway service, a "Super A" train providing service similar to the former "Train to the Plane," is desired by many and is seen as feasible by them since the AirTrain connection to the A line is operational.

The takeover of the private bus lines serving the area by the MTA has generally been positive, but there is still concern about insuring existing routes are not truncated or eliminated. Express bus service has been expanded, but the need for further improvements continues. Further improvements are needed for the Liberty Avenue "el" infrastructure.

## **SANITATION**

When people are researching an area to live in, not only do they look at the condition of the streets but also as to how clean they are and how the empty lots are maintained. Lot cleaning has totally deteriorated because of cutbacks and we are back to square one with a great increase of complaints about overgrown dirty lots which harbor ticks, mosquitoes and rats.

Street cleaning on commercial strips at specific times on a regular basis is an essential service. This service must be provided often enough to make a difference. Rockaway Blvd., Coleman Square, Liberty Avenue, Lefferts Blvd., and Crossbay Blvd. are in dire need of regular sweeping. There is a need for expanded basket pickup on Liberty Avenue.

Alternate side of the street parking would create many problems and cannot be utilized in our area. Street cleaning services on a regular basis for metered arteries, no parking streets and access routes, etc. is necessary on an ongoing basis.

On commercial strips, wherever there are apartments above the stores, there is a need for daily household collection and daily basket collection since it is impossible to legally provide storage for tenant garbage, which is often placed at the curb other than on collection days. Bags are ripped open and attract vermin, mice and rats. Daily household and basket collection is especially needed on Liberty Avenue and Rockaway Blvd.

## **SCHOOLS MUST CONTINUE TO HAVE YEAR-ROUND 4-12 PICK UP BECAUSE THEY ARE OPEN AND IN USE WITH FOOD PROGRAMS.**

The Sanitation garage at 130th Street and 150th Avenue in South Ozone Park continues to house the manpower and vehicles for more than our one district. It also stores many vehicles other than collection trucks on the outside. Complaints continue to come in from local residents regarding the storage of numerous rusted, inoperable vehicles. There is a need for our Sanitation garage to house only our district's sanitation vehicles.

Dumping has increased on any open space, large or small, since the closing of the Fountain Avenue Landfill. When not removed promptly, more garbage, furniture, etc. is quickly added and another dumpsite is born.

## **TRAFFIC**

Street sign replacement takes a very long time. Missing name signs are of particular frustration when mail persons or emergency vehicles encounter difficulty. Missing one-way signs constitute a danger. Restrictive signage is often illegible.

The signal system on Cross Bay Boulevard from 103rd Avenue to 165th Avenue is often out of sync causing heavy traffic backup for both Northbound and Southbound vehicles. There is a need to improve the signal system north of Community Board 10 on Woodhaven Blvd. Residents complain that congestion, both southbound and northbound, is increasing. At this point, no recommendations for improvements have been put forth from the Woodhaven Blvd. Congested Corridors Study.

The intersection of Cross Bay Boulevard, Rockaway Boulevard and Liberty Avenue is included in that study to determine how to change the traffic patterns there for the better. This intersection has many accidents and nothing tried to date has been successful. That Woodhaven Blvd. study needs to be followed up with an additional study to incorporate the roadway as far south as the Belt Parkways interchange area, so that the Woodhaven/Crossbay Blvds. corridor is evaluated in totality.

Residents continue to make requests for additional stop signs, traffic signals, and one way street conversions. Many of the requests are predicated by the residents' view that they will effectively control speed on local streets. There is a need to develop effective strategies to deal with excessive speed on local streets beyond just the installation of speed bumps or humps. Enforcement for speed and stop sign violations must increase.

Traffic enforcement agents should be hired by the NYPD and assigned to specific intersections as needed for moving violation enforcement. To date, Police Department personnel do not consider this to be a top priority and there is little enforcement on residential side streets. However, we find that because of lack of enforcement people are no longer driving safely, resulting in accidents.

Infrastructure contracts should have stricter inspection and enforcement of safety controls during daytime operation and night visibility of barricades and signs to assure vehicular and pedestrian safety. The practice of having a contractor provide for Traffic Enforcement Agents at construction projects, which impact major streets, must continue. The city must continue to require all contractors doing work on roadways and bridges to incorporate traffic mitigation strategies into their projects.

An escalating problem is the number of SUVs, vans and trucks being parked at corners, which means that anyone seeking to cross must move well into the street to see whether there are oncoming vehicles. Where there are no traffic signals, a distance from the corner at all intersections should be marked with signage as restricted, at least for anything large enough in height to prevent safe visibility, to provide better safety for pedestrians trying to cross a street and drivers approaching an intersection.

Surveys and studies are regularly requested because of dangerous conditions that exist. Since "Stop" signs are not considered to be speed control devices, requests by residents for their installation are often denied. An effective means to address these issues must be developed. Federal traffic warrants are cited when requests for traffic control signs and devices are requested and denied. Warrants appropriate to residents' concerns may be necessary. Increased speed limit signage is necessary throughout the community.

Although it is not the general practice to post "No Truck" signage, we feel that this is necessary to prevent trucks from trying to bypass construction delays and traffic congestion by using local streets that are not truck routes. Such signage should become standard practice.

Parking regulations require clear posting and evenhanded constant enforcement in all parts of the area. No intervention from a single business person or community special interest entity should result in changes to parking regulations. All stakeholders' views must be considered before any adjusting of regulations. All proposed changes to parking regulations should be reviewed by the Community Board before implementation.

### **TRANSIT AUTHORITY/M.T.A.**

South Queens needs express service like the JFK Express to get people into and out of the Manhattan area within a reasonable time frame. With the completion of the AirTrain connection to the Howard Beach MTA station, restoration of such a service would be advantageous. South Queens continues to be without sufficient safe, reliable express bus service. There is a need for new bus routes, at least some to be express routes, **within** Queens as it is often far easier for our residents to get to other boroughs using public transportation than it is for them to get to other parts of our borough. Recent data provided by the Department of City Planning's Population Division indicates that 43% of Queens residents who work are employed in Queens. Only about 35% of Queens resident workers work in Manhattan. There is a need to provide more and better public transportation options within Queens.

### **TRANSPORTATION/CONSTRUCTION**

Infrastructure improvement is needed. As projects are planned and move through the process, we find that there is still a lack of ongoing communication and consultation among agencies, utilities, outside consultants, etc. before and during the construction process. This impedes planned improvements moving forward as expeditiously as possible. For example, when the project boundaries are determined, and dollars approved for scope and schematics, each



street should be checked for map/title/dedication status and the necessary process initiated so that when construction does take place streets are not eliminated because that process has not taken place.

Experience has shown that where sections of an area designated for capital improvement have problems in drainage or grade, which create design difficulties, those streets are left for last and delayed year after year. Agency policy should be established to address the problematic section first and then proceed with the remainder of the project. Contracts in residential areas do not include enough nighttime precautions to permit drivers to see barricades, depressions, etc. often resulting in accidents or damage to vehicles.

Over time we find that each completed highway reconstruction project generates more owner complaints than prior projects produced. We therefore request that a quality of work clause be integrated into each contract and that quality control on the site be such that infractions would initiate work stoppage and immediate correction.

## **YOUTH**

The youth population of Community Board 10 Queens represents approximately 25% of the total district population. Funding and site resources for youth programming needs are limited. Currently, the New York City Department of Education and the Department of Youth and Community Development provide limited after school and evening programs to the Board area. Some programming exists in local religious institutions. However, much of the Board area is not eligible for Community Development funds and has few community based organizations eligible to apply for the funds that do exist.

The "Beacon" school for Community School District 27 in our Board area is located in the South Ozone Park community at M.S. 226. This needed youth service and community resource provides an opportunity to offer a menu of diversified services to meet the many needs of this community. There is a need to insure the community is fully aware of activities offered and is involved in planning for those activities.

The South Ozone Park Youth Community Center serves approximately 600 teens in Community Board 10. Additional space is needed for youth programs particularly in those areas of South Ozone Park and Richmonds Hill with large youth populations. There is a need for expansion of existing teen programs and new programs for teens are needed. Funding is desperately needed to continue to offer teen programming at John Adams High School. The South Queens Boys and Girls Club, physically located in Community Board 9, provides services to both Community Board 9 and Community Board 10 youth. It continues to see its funding diminished which results in less service for an already highly underserved youth population. Funding to it must increase.

A local review process must be utilized for determining where available youth dollars are spent. Local groups such as the Community Board and can often pinpoint better the program needs of the community. Programs in local communities are providing the front-line youth service programs available to all children in all communities throughout the city. They must be supported and the community's recommendations respected by city officials and the agencies that serve youth.

Among the needs in our area are expanded year round recreation and leisure time activities. There is a growing need for latchkey type programs; educational and career choice counseling; youth employment; programs addressing the high school dropout rate; substance abuse prevention counseling; support programs to help resolve personal and family problems and the need for expansion of appropriate education and prevention programs addressing health needs and the growing threat of AIDS to the youth population.

In years past Community Boards had the services of full time Youth Coordinators who assisted in planning for youth services specific to a board area. Restoration of that position is desired.

All school building day and evening programs should be able to operate without opening fees and space costs. Public buildings should be available for public use.

Increased attention should be paid to program evaluation, and structured training and technical assistance programs

for youth services agencies stressing program improvement and enhancing administrative capabilities.

There should be an increase in special programming offered at the four libraries serving Community Board 10 to provide cultural arts, remedial assistance and counseling programs on a regular basis. Our libraries are currently serving as community resource alternative youth program sites. Staffing hours and programming must be increased to utilize this resource in new and nontraditional ways.

There is a need for continued emphasis on comprehensive education initiatives addressing the issue of AIDS and increased programming addressing teen pregnancy and other health related issues. There is a need for the expansion of both State and City funds for drug prevention programs in schools and in communities in order to combat drug and alcohol abuse citywide.

### **JFK AIRPORT AND AQUEDUCT RACETRACK**

Although neither of these facilities are city operated, they are located in our area. The airport is on city owned land and the racetrack is state owned. Actions involving both are of concern to our residents. A large tract of land, more than 20 acres, owned by the PANYNJ within the existing fenceline of Aqueduct Racetrack is part of the airport leasehold. The Community Board should be consulted regarding any change from its current use as an airport-related parking area to any other use.

The PANYNJ agreed to provide the city with 20 million dollars over a five year period to be devoted to capital projects in Queens when the airports' lease was renegotiated. There is a need to insure that the people living near the airports who suffer many of the negative effects of the airports' presence see a benefit from what this money is expended on. Unfortunately, although the funds spent to date have been expended on worthy projects, most local residents in the neighborhoods near the airport do not perceive that they derived any benefit. There is a need for a far more open discussion of what this money was spent on and how the projects were selected. There is a need for the development of a funding source and the establishment of a residential soundproofing program for our areas impacted by flights to and from JFK Airport.

Since the completion of AirTrain an unintended consequence has become prevalent in the neighborhoods closest to its Lefferts Blvd. station and its Howard Beach station. In the 50 years that the airport was our neighbor prior to the completion of AirTrain, airport and/or airline employees did not park their personal vehicles on local streets. They utilized on-airport parking facilities. Now, many airport employees, especially those of TSA, are essentially commuting by car to the airport perimeter, parking their vehicles on local streets, and boarding AirTrain. AirTrain was intended to encourage people to take public transportation to the airport not as a means to avoid on-airport parking fees. A workable residential parking program needs to be developed by the city in the two areas impacted.

The franchise agreement between NYRA and New York State expired on 12/31/07. In 2006, the State sought a new operator for the racetrack. A "new" NYRA entity is now the racing franchisee. Legislation was enacted at the State level to allow for the construction of a video lottery terminal gambling facility at the racetrack to function in conjunction with horseracing there. It is anticipated that the Governor will soon select an operator for the VLT facility. **Community Board 10 is very concerned about the future of Aqueduct and desires that the city, wherever possible, work with State officials to insure that there continues to be appropriate consultation with the surrounding community regarding any future development on Aqueduct Racetrack land.** Its size, inappropriate zoning, and its location virtually in the middle of our community are cause for great concern among our residents. Community Board 10 concurs with residents' views that they desire to see the facility remain with horse racing as its primary use and VLT gambling as an ancillary use. Should other uses be considered for this land, community consultation and review must be an integral part of the processes used to determine development in order to insure there are no deleterious effects on the surrounding residential communities.

***Elizabeth Braton***

Chairperson