



BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD No. 10

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DISTRICT NEEDS STATEMENT FOR BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD # 10 FY 09

Opening Statement

Bronx Community Board #10 is characterized by tidy well kept private homes and multiple dwellings situated in the neighborhoods of Pelham Bay, Throgs Neck, Country Club, City Island, Zerega, Westchester Square, Spencer Estates, Locust Point, Schulyerville.. The Board's service area includes the historic sites of St. Peter's Church, the Huntington Free Library and the Ferris Family Cemetery. Additionally, the Board is home to Pelham Bay Park, the largest park in the City's system, miles of shoreline and the State's largest cooperative housing complex, Co-op City.

Geographic Boundaries

North-New England Thruway, Eastern Prolongation of Park Drive, Park Drive, Long Island Sound, City Line; East-Western boundary of Pelham Bay Park, Eastchester Bay, Long Island Sound including City Island and Hart Island; South- East River; West-Westchester Creek, Northern Prolongation of Westchester Creek to Waterbury Avenue, Waterbury Avenue to Westchester Avenue, Castle Hill Avenue, East Tremont Avenue, Silver Street, Eastchester Road; Blondell Avenue, Hutchinson River Parkway, New England Thruway.

Economic Development

The Board has within its boundaries a portion of the Westchester-Zerega Industrial Business Zone or IBZ. The IBZ is home to several hundred businesses. The concept of the IBZ was created under an initiative established by the City, to stimulate economic development and job growth in areas of the City formerly designated as industrial parks.

The Westchester-Zerega IBZ consists of several hundred sundry industries ranging from fuel supply to metal fabricators. As the Westchester-Zerega IBZ works to establish itself as an economic engine in the Borough, Bronx Community Board #10 stands ready to be of assistance to it in its mission of attracting and retaining businesses. To this end, the Board will advocate for the improvement of the roads, the streetscape and signage with the appropriate agencies.

Board #10 is also home to a vibrant and historic shopping districts along Crosby, East Tremont and City Island Avenues, the Einstein , Bartow and Dreiser Centers in Co-op City and the regional mall

at Bay Plaza, featuring several anchor stores, a multi-plex theater and office complex. The challenge for the Board is to maintain viability of the older shopping districts, while working to see that Bay Plaza remains a vital economic force with the community. To this end the Board is seeking active partnerships with relevant City and State agencies on road access, the creation of local development corporations, streetscape improvements and regulatory reform with such Departments as Sanitation and Traffic Enforcement.

Environmental Issues

The Mayor's PlaNYC seeks to plant hundreds of trees in the next twenty years. Bronx Community Board #10 is already endowed by a large number of trees and welcomes the Mayor's initiatives. However, the present trees and future trees will require pruning and the stumps of older trees will require removal. The Board supports the efforts of the Department of Parks and Recreation to acquire the necessary staff to accomplish these tasks.

The Board's service area is equally endowed by the presence of two bodies of water, the Hutchinson River and Westchester Creek. These water bodies are susceptible to discharges from the City's combined wastewater and storm water systems. During major storm events, excess waste and storm water that the Hunt's Point Water Pollution Control Plant is unable process, is discharged into these waterways. The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) had considered the possibility of installing large retention tanks on the shorelines of the Hutchinson River Westchester Creek. However, DEP has changed its policy and determined that sewers should be cleaned more efficiently and that netting should be installed over the storm water outfalls to capture any debris, known as floatables. The Board will continue to work with DEP to ensure that this process will facilitate cleaner water bodies.

Pepsi-Cola will be constructing a major distribution facility on the 600 Block of Brush Avenue. This will create additional truck traffic on Brush Avenue, in a mixed residential and commercial area. During the construction phase of this facility, the neighborhood should be protected from the onerous effects of construction activities through the employment of Best Management Practices or BMPs. Through the Board suggested use of BMPs, noise and dirt problems will be mitigated. Additionally, the Board is working with the Department of Parks and Recreation to route the truck traffic off of Brush Avenue through the use of the "ring road" underneath the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge. The use of this road routes trucks away from the neighborhood, sparing it from noise and air pollution.

Significant areas of the Board's service area such as Country Club and City Island still require sewers to address drainage problems. The Board will work with the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to designate areas for drainage studies and sewer installation.

Parks and Recreation

Board #10 is experiencing resurgence within its parks. The Board has historically taken a lead role in the advocacy for its parks. This has resulted in planned shoreline improvements in Pelham Bay Park, the re-design of, and greatly enhanced Ferry Point Park West and the preservation of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) art deco era pavilion buildings at Orchard Beach. Additionally, the conditions at Orchard Beach have been dramatically improved. The challenge before the Board is to support the Department of Parks and Recreation's efforts to maintain the positive momentum.

The Board has taken a strong interest concerning the creation of a linked golf course at Ferry Point

Park East. For over ten years, the designated site was operated as a landfill and the golf course was not built. The Department changed concessionaires and issued a Request for Proposal (RFP). As the host community board for the proposed golf course, the board hopes to have a meaningful dialogue concerning the site's future, through the establishment of Citizens Advisory Committee to work with the Department on the golf course site.

As the Mayor's PlaNYC program goes forward, the Board looks forward to working with the Department of Parks and Recreation in maintaining its current inventory of parks and setting priorities for planned parks, such as Rodman's Neck.

The Board will continue to monitor the progress of the Department of Parks and Recreation to ensure that Pelham Bay Park and the cultural treasures within it, such as the Bartow-Pell Mansion and the existing golf courses are well maintained. Additionally, the Board is concerned that such amenities as comfort stations within areas such as Pelham Bay Park are expanded.

Health and Human Services

Bronx Community Board #10 is serviced by the Jack D. Weiler Hospital of Montefiore Hospital and Medical Center, Bronx Municipal Hospital Center and Westchester Square Medical Center. In 2006, the Berger Commission recommended the closing of Westchester Square Medical Center. The Board took an active role in protesting this closure, through correspondence to the Commission members and attendance at a rally. It is not known whether Westchester Square Medical Center will remain open. It is the Board's position that it should, because it is a valued community resource. The Board will continue to monitor the situation and take appropriate action to preserve the hospital.

Many of the communities serviced by the Community Board are not located near the hospitals. In the coming year, the Board will seek out sponsors to bring more health fairs to its communities.

Housing and Zoning

Bronx Community Board #10 has undergone substantial development in the past few years. This development was not consistent with the existing community. As a result, the Board was down zoned. The Board will continue to work with relevant agencies to preserve the community's character.

Public Safety

The Board has an excellent working relationship with the command of the 45th Precinct. Its officers and command structure have been very sensitive to the requests for the Board for service. In the future, the Board will work with the NYPD to increase the number of officers on foot patrols, especially within the Board's commercial areas. The Board applauds the efforts of the 45th Precinct to curb the scourge of graffiti, through increased enforcement efforts.

Equally important, are the fire companies and EMS commands serving the Board area. Many of the FDNY facilities are over fifty years of age and in need of renovation. The Board hopes to work with the FDNY to ensure that these facilities are returned to service, as soon as possible. The same situation applies to EMS services, the Board will work with FDNY to ensure that the EMS ambulances and facilities are up to date.

Education

The Board has two high schools located within its service area and numerous grammar and middle schools. The performance of these schools has improved, but more needs to be done, especially in the area of Out of School Programs. Numerous studies have proven that the tutoring and enrichment programs offered by Beacon Schools or Out of School activities, have proven to be effective in increasing students' performance on standardized tests, enabling them to perform at higher levels in school. The Board will work with the relevant agencies to expand these programs.

Transportation

The Board is serviced by buses from the New York City Transit, MTA Buses, and the IRT #6 Train. The buses connect the various neighborhoods of the Board with each other and carry commuters to the IRT #6 Train at various stations. The equipment on the #6 Train has been upgraded considerably. Commuters are treated to a ride that is heated in the winter and air conditioned in the summer. The cars are clean and attractive in appearance and station announcements are provided by an automated system.

The stations while old, have been painted and in some cases undergone moderate rehabilitation. Currently, the elevated structure itself is being painted. Work is still needed on the Pelham Bay Station structure, which requires the painting of its exterior, improved lighting, the cleaning of the pigeon droppings. The site that that station occupies, Amendola Plaza is characterized by broken concrete, sparse tree plantings and absence of signage. This area is a major intermodal transportation center, serving as a transfer point between the #6 Train and five bus lines. A comprehensive approach by the MTA, its constituent agencies, the Department of Transportation and the Department of Parks and Recreation to develop this site as "gateway" for commuters is needed. New Trees must be planted, the asphalt bus push-ups must be removed, the area recently received a new bus shelter, but others are needed, the area should be planted with flowers and trees and better lit. The Board will work with relevant agencies to upgrade the area.

Co-op City is scheduled to receive a Metro-North Station in Section #5. This long awaited and vitally needed transportation alternative will dramatically reduce commuters' travel times to the central business district in Manhattan. However, in order to ensure maximum use, the MTA should sponsor jitney bus service from the other four sections of Co-op City and the parking lot by Orchard Beach. This type of service is provided by a contractor in the Riverdale community within Community Board #8, which operates a jitney service from different locations to the rail stations in the neighborhood.

Recently, in Brooklyn, it was announced that ferry service would be inaugurated to Manhattan. The shoreline communities of Co-op City, City Island or Throgs Neck could easily accommodate ferry landings, this option should be explored.

For over fifty years, the community of Pelham Bay has been walled in by two highways, the Hutchinson River Parkway and the New England Thruway. This has caused cars seeking short cuts from the highways to use the community's streets, increasing noise and air pollution and creating traffic safety issues. The change of direction on one street, and the routing of traffic on another, had caused considerable concern among area residents. This combination of factors had prompted the Board to request a comprehensive traffic study of the entire Pelham Bay area taking into consideration the impact that the highways and congestion along local streets has had on the community. With the assistance of the community's elected officials and the New York City and State Departments of Transportation, the Board is hopeful that the traffic problems will be alleviated.

Quality of Life

One of the most pressing issues that affect the quality of life in the communities of Board #10 is graffiti. This is a problem throughout the Board's service area, and the City in general. The Mayor's Office, Borough President's Office, and other elected officials have established graffiti eradication programs. The Board Office has worked with these programs in forwarding information about graffitied sites. The Board has also lent its support to neighborhood associations, who are working with law enforcement agencies to overcome this problem.

Conclusion

This statement of District Needs has been submitted Bronx Community Board #10, in an effort to familiarize the appropriate governmental agencies and decision makers with needs of our communities. This Board represents the vibrant communities that are the social and economic backbone of this City. The preservation and enhancement of these communities is vital to the continued viability of our City. While the Board applauds the renaissance of our neighbors to the South, we remind the decision makers that the communities in the North Bronx require equal attention and look forward to working with them for the goal of uplifting the entire Borough.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kenneth Kearns

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District Manager