

The City of New York

Borough of Queens

COMMUNITY BOARD 11

*Serving the communities of Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston,
Hollis Hills, Little Neck & Oakland Gardens*

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**STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS
FY 2016**

Community Board 11, located in Northeast Queens, is bounded by Nassau County on the east, Little Neck Bay and 26 Avenue on the north, Utopia Parkway and Fresh Meadows Lane and 210 Street on the west and the Grand Central Parkway and Horace Harding Expressway on the south. The District covers 9.4 miles comprising the neighborhoods of Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston, Hollis Hills, Little Neck and Oakland Gardens.

The 2010 census count was 116,431. As in other areas of the city, we believe this may be an undercount since the number change is only 27 since the 2000 census. Other counts estimate 120,000 to 123,000 people. CB 11 is an upper, middle income community with a median household income of about \$72,500. The District has a mixed white, non-Hispanic (47.0%) and a growing Asian (39.3%) population. Over the past 10 years, the Asian population grew from 26% to 39.3% of the population with a decreasing white population from 60% to the current 47%.

Neighborhoods in CB 11 are residential in zoning and character with the major portion of the district comprised of 1- 2- and 3-family owner-occupied houses and several, low-rise cooperative

and condominium apartment complexes, developed 50-60 years ago. About 30% of the housing stock is comprised of rental apartments. Douglas Manor and Douglaston Hill are landmarked communities. These areas were developed about 100 years ago.

BUILDING AND ZONING

The Department of City Planning (DCP) rezoned 350 blocks of Bayside in 2004, 135 blocks of Douglaston and Little Neck in 2006, 50 blocks of North Flushing/Auburndale in 2009 and 418 blocks of Auburndale, Hollis Hills and Oakland Gardens in 2010. The goal of rezoning was to curtail overdevelopment and maintain the low density nature of the district. New zoning designations were also introduced for single family homes, R2A and R1-2A, to limit the size of homes.

New homes continue to be built in the district along with the enlargement of existing homes to accommodate an increasing population of families attracted by the educational opportunities in the district. Many of the new homes are much larger than the existing housing stock. There are also many new, larger commercial developments along the commercial overlays.

There has been an increase in complaints to the Dept. of Buildings for illegal commercial use in a residential zone and illegal conversions. Residents are still frustrated by the perceived inability of the Buildings Department to stop illegal construction, violation of zoning laws and illegal occupancy. DOB must continue to be funded to maintain an adequate number of plan examiners and inspectors. Many times, inspectors do not obtain access to the premises they must inspect. Access warrants are difficult to obtain in the courts, and the complainants feel that nothing is being done to stop illegal conditions. Unfortunately, in many cases this may be true, but balancing private property rights with government enforcement continues to be a dilemma.

Time and time again, fines that are levied by the Office of Administrative Tribunals and Hearing, in response to building

violations, are unpaid by the owners. The City must do something to stop this flagrant disregard of the law and pursue the payment of fines. In some cases, we have seen this amount to \$80,000 to \$150,000 on a single unit.

Community Board 11 opposes any proposal by the Administration that would circumvent current zoning laws, by legalizing any basement or garage apartments, where zoning does not allow for multiple families.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The shopping needs of the residents are met by the commercial strips, all of which are C-1 and C-2 zoning overlays in residential districts including Francis Lewis Boulevard, Bell Boulevard, Springfield Boulevard, Northern Boulevard and the Horace Harding Expressway. There is a shopping center anchored by Macy's, Toys-R-Us, Modell's and Fairway Market on Douglaston Parkway, and a small shopping plaza at Horace Harding Expressway and Little Neck Parkway.

Bell Boulevard, between Northern Boulevard and 35 Avenue, is a Business Improvement District (BID). The BID helps fund improvements along the Bell Boulevard commercial strip. The Economic Development Corporation, working with the BID, will be starting a streetscape project on Bell Boulevard. The BID also sponsors events to attract new businesses and shoppers to the boulevard. This strip is known for the diversity of ethnic restaurants and nightlife in its various bars and restaurants. A concern of the residents is the continued closure of small businesses on Bell Boulevard being replaced by only bars and restaurants. The scarcity of parking spaces is also an issue that has been raised since it is necessary to attract customers.

Adjacent to the Douglaston LIRR Station, on the north side of the tracks, many businesses closed. The Douglaston Local

Development Corporation, formed by local residents, is working to revitalize the area. This year, the LDC applied for and was approved for a DOT Public Plaza on the north side of the LIRR station. It is hoped that the plaza can attract people to stay in the area and create businesses.

Three years ago, a vacant M1-1 property, on Little Neck Parkway, was purchased by Steel Equities, a real estate developer. The E. Gluck Watch Company has leased the site, moving out of their Long Island City location. The old building is being renovated and enlarged. The community was very upset with the size of the building and by working with the elected officials and the Community Board, the company agreed to lower the height of the facility adjacent to this low-density, residential neighborhood.

Along Northern Boulevard, several new commercial retail stores are being developed. They have replaced old gas stations and car dealers. Many of the new developments are built with additional space for community facilities such as medical offices or day care centers. A majority are being developed by the Korean business community. While many of the stores have been leased, there seems to be a lot of turnover and many stores remain vacant. In the meantime, businesses are also closing in the older storefronts along these commercial strips.

On Booth Memorial Avenue at the Horace Harding Expressway, a developer has built 18 attached, two-family homes and plans to build two Marriott hotels fronting the Expressway. Area residents have been concerned that this large development is changing the character of the neighborhood and impacting negatively on existing difficult parking conditions.

EDUCATION AND YOUTH

This school year, approximately 12,000 students are enrolled in School District 26 in its 19 public elementary and secondary

schools located in CB11. This district is known for excellence in education and is a very desirable community to live in, in part because of the schools. Students in District 26 perform exceptionally well with approximately 85% of the students meeting state reading standards and 95% meeting state math standards.

The Dept. of Education identified the need for a new 416-seat elementary school. The School Construction Authority purchased a site, formally a garden center, on 48 Avenue in Bayside. At the Board's public hearing for this site selection, residents voiced opposition due to the already crowded area with two other schools within blocks of this site. The Board Members echoed their concerns, and voted overwhelmingly against the placement of a school at this site. However, the City Council voted in favor of the acquisition and the School Construction Authority is designing the building. Construction should start next year with an opening in 2017.

There are three high schools in the district; Bayside, Benjamin Cardozo and Francis Lewis High School with a total population of approximately 11,000 students. The population in all three high schools has increased greatly with utilization rates at 158%, 144% and 186% respectively. With students housed in buildings meant for significantly less people, the already overutilized schools have become dangerously overcrowded. Since high school entrance citywide is based on an application process, these higher performing schools attract students who apply from outside the district. Cardozo HS and Bayside HS have transportable classrooms, but permanent building space should be added to the schools, or a new school built or leased, to relieve overcrowding. We have brought this concern to the attention of the Chancellor over the past few years.

Queensborough Community College, located on a 37 acre campus in Bayside, continues to grow and be a premier community college serving the diverse population here in Queens.

They have upgraded computer and science classrooms, an art museum and the Kupferberg Holocaust Resource Center and Archives. There are 15,000 students enrolled in associate degree programs and another 10,000 are enrolled in continuing education classes.

The only Beacon Program in CB 11 is located at Middle School 158 in Bayside. The Beacon at Middle School 172 (located in Floral Park in CB 13) serves a small section of CB 11. They are operated by the Samuel Field “Y”, and continue to be successful serving the youth and community groups of our district. There are no other after-school programs funded by the City in this community board. All Out-of-School-Time programs are located in schools in other parts of School District 26. Any other after-school program is self-sustained by the parents or operated in District 75 schools only. We appreciate the Administration’s long term plan to expand programming for middle school students. We await details for District 26.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

A clean and safe environment is a high priority for CB 11. Since the Combined Sewer Overflow tank and new pumping station went into operation on Northern Boulevard in 2011, the Dept. of Environmental Protection has been developing the Alley Creek Long Term Control Plan, a state and federal mandate to reduce combined sewer overflows and improve water quality in the bay and wetlands. The Community Board and community leaders are working with DEP to identify issues.

Sewer complaints account for the most service requests to DEP in CB 11 and in many districts in Queens. Most have to do with catch basin repair and street flooding. Following constant requests for more funding, DEP did increase funding to clear the backlog of catch basins in need of repair and we have seen an improvement in that area.

There are several projects planned for the district in 2014 and 2015. They include water main installations in sections of Bayside Hills and Little Neck and new sewer and catch basin installations in sections of Hollis Hills and Douglaston.

The district also has many seepage basins which have failed leading to flooding. The only solution is the funding of projects to install basins connected to the sewer system. One area of concern is on Union Turnpike in Hollis Hills from about 218 Street to Hollis Hills Terrace (adjacent to Cunningham Park) and the Clearview Expressway. The water flows down, westward toward the Clearview Expressway underpass. We asked for a bioswale study for Hollis Hills Terrace near Union Turnpike but were advised that no bioswales were being considered for CB 11. We believe this is a location that would benefit from a bioswale.

DEP has also not funded sewer trench restorations for a few years. With shoring being undermined, the streets sink and continue to do so. The CB has requested funding for these projects, which include a section of Douglaston Parkway near 65 Avenue that is hazardous for drivers.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

CB 11 supported the funding for electric generators for every firehouse. Currently, only the Battalion Station on Springfield Boulevard has a generator. Last year, we were advised that more firehouses will be provided generators supported with grant funding. As of this writing, no other firehouse in our community has been provided with one.

LIBRARIES

There are five library branches in CB 11. We have supported the Friends of the Douglaston/Little Neck Library, the Little Neck Pines

Civic Association and the Douglaston Women's Club to garner support and funding from the Queens Public Library System (QBPL), the Mayor and our local legislators for a new library building in Little Neck. The present, small library has only 5,700 square feet. We have also advocated for a bigger building for the Bayside branch. New libraries are now 18,000 to 21,000 square feet to accommodate more computer stations and community rooms. CB11 continues to ask QBPL to revise their hours of operation to be open more in the evening and on weekends to accommodate those who work, even if this results in fewer weekday daytime hours. This year, the City Council added funding to the QBPL to support six-day a week library service. We hope our local libraries will benefit from this funding soon.

PARKS & RECREATION

The District is known for its approximately 800 acres of parkland. Alley Park, which is a large, regional park, has areas under Federal and State tidal and fresh water wetland protection, as does Udall's Cove and Aurora Pond in Little Neck and Douglaston. Over the years, the City has acquired lots bordering Udall's Cove so that they cannot be developed and the wetlands preserved. The CB continues to advocate for the acquisition of the remaining eleven lots since at least three have been offered for sale by the owners.

The shoreline in Bayside is part of the Greenway system and supports a marina for recreational boating and fishing and a bicycle and jogging path. Adjacent to this shoreline, is Crocheron Park and John Golden Park which have large, open spaces with ball fields, playgrounds and tennis courts. The historic Vanderbilt Motor Parkway, now a pedestrian and bicycle trail, runs through Alley Pond Park. Additionally, there are smaller parks and playgrounds, a golf course, a golf driving range and numerous Greenstreets throughout the district. Oakland Lake, in Bayside, is a natural spring-fed lake and hosts a large population of turtles,

geese and ducks. The Alley Pond Environmental Center, located at the base of Little Neck Bay, is an education center focusing on the preservation of the wetland areas.

The former Borough President funded a project, requested by this Community Board, to mitigate flooding on the walkway of Oakland Lake Park caused by the natural springs that feed the lake and repair the asphalt walkway which has been undermined. The project was funded three years ago but still has not started as yet. It is anticipated that construction will start by the end of 2014.

Several playgrounds adjacent to schools need various improvements. Francis Lewis Playground needs new fences, safety surfaces and handball court rehabilitation. The Challenge Playground at PS 811 needs the removal of an old wading pool, the installation of a new sprinkler system and the rehabilitation of the existing park house. The Underhill Park basketball court on Peck Avenue and 189 Street and the four baseball fields on Underhill Avenue from 189 Street to 192 Street flood and need sewer repair and reconstruction.

Joe Michael's Mile, the greenway along Little Neck Bay, needs to be resurfaced and new lights installed from the Bayside Marina to Northern Boulevard. This is a popular scenic route for walkers, bikers, joggers and skaters. The former Borough President funded this project and it is currently in design. However, after the scope meeting, it was clear that more funds are needed in order to accomplish the improvements required.

Dermody Square in Bayside needs new walkways and benches and after years on our "wish list", State Senator Tony Avella is providing funds for the project.

We have supported funding for the new Alley Pond Environmental Center building and the project is to start this year. We will

continue to request additional funds which will be needed to complete the project.

The Douglaston Golf Course is a beautiful public course. Unfortunately, the residents across the street had errant golf balls hitting their property and vehicles causing extensive damage. We are pleased that Council Member Mark Weprin obtained funding for high safety netting and it is now installed.

Forestry complaints account for the greatest number of 3-1-1 calls from our district residents. The Parks Department still has an enormous backlog of stumps to be removed; The City Council, this year, did add funds for stump removal citywide that target 2,300 more stumps, there are approximately 1,000 in CB11 alone.

The Queens Forestry Division must be funded at an adequate level to maintain street and park trees. However, the pruning cycle keeps being extended due to budget reductions. Despite this, the City is planting more trees under the Million TreesNYC project and, therefore, there is a genuine concern as to how the Parks Department will be able to maintain the existing trees and all these additional trees. Public safety is being compromised by ignoring hazards caused by trees that are not pruned regularly. The FY 2015 budget increased funding to try to maintain less than a ten year cycle.

Tree roots account for the lifting and destruction of many sidewalks. The Tree and Sidewalk program, which provides for the reconstruction of sidewalks, is the answer for many homeowners; however, it needs to be funded at a higher level to meet the need.

This park district has insufficient personnel and vehicles to clean and maintain our parks. With over 800 acres of park and Greenstreets, more park workers are needed just to maintain Alley Pond Park and additional staff is needed for playground and Greenstreet maintena

POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

The 111th Precinct, which is located on Northern Boulevard in Bayside, patrols the 9.4 square miles of CB 11. The area is considered a safe, low crime area. Historically, the precinct has always been understaffed, placing a greater burden on the officers. It is the position of the Board that more officers are needed in order to maintain this level of safety.

Burglaries of private, residential homes and auto thefts remain the predominant and troubling crime statistic in the precinct. The theft of expensive car tires and rims has become a big problem in the district. Youth-on-youth crime has been on the increase, especially the theft of expensive electronic devices and cell phones.

A new problem has arisen in the confines of the 111th precinct, illegal massage parlors and houses of prostitution. Several arrests have been made by the Vice Squad. This is an issue that will have to continue to be monitored and addressed by the addition of more Vice Squad officers.

The interior of the precinct house is in desperate need of renovation and remodeling. Money has been in the budget for years for renovations, but the work has never been started.

The precinct does have an active Community Precinct Council and works with the Community Affairs officers every year on a successful National Night Out program in August.

SANITATION

The CB 11 Sanitation garage does a great job, with our residents keeping the streets and sidewalks clean. The district is always rated 98% to 100% clean. In order to maintain this good record, the district must have broom service and dedicated litter basket collection in the commercial areas. CB11 has no regular broom

services and limited litter basket collection. Brooms are available only on an as-needed basis along the commercial corridors. These areas have become busier with higher pedestrian traffic. Brooms must be available at least once a week. Litter basket service must be increased from two days to six days especially on our busy commercial districts along Springfield Boulevard, Bell Boulevard, Northern Boulevard, Horace Harding Expressway, LIRR stations and at busy bus stops.

In addition, our District contains several miles of street malls and triangles which need to be cleared of weeds and litter during the summer and autumn months. Weeds interfere with visibility and they must be cleared regularly for pedestrian and vehicular safety.

SENIORS AND AGING

The 2010 Census indicated that there are almost 20,000 seniors aged 65 or over representing about 17% of the population living in CB 11. As the baby-boom era population continues to age, the City must be prepared to meet the needs. 25% of our population is between the ages of 45 and 64. Therefore, within ten years, a majority of them will be senior citizens. The Bayside Senior Center was the only senior center in our district, funded by the Dept. of the Aging. CB 11 advocated for more funding and was then identified by DFTA as an area lacking senior services. S.N.A.P. (Services Now for Adult Persons) located in CB 13, now has case management services available for CB 11 residents. This year, SNAP also received DFTA funding for an “Innovative Senior Center” to provide more health-related services that will attract a new generation of seniors and outreach has been made to CB11.

The Samuel Field YM-YWHA operates the C.A.P.E. program, (Community Advocacy Program for the Elderly), for homebound seniors and Alzheimer patients and their families. The “Y” runs the Deepdale NORC (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community)

senior program. They also received new DFTA funding for a senior center and started that service this year.

TRANSPORTATION

Public transportation in CB 11 is provided by bus lines from the district to terminals at Flushing and Jamaica subway lines and express bus routes to Manhattan. The Port Washington line of the LIRR is a major transportation link to Manhattan for district residents.

CB 11 has advocated for more express bus service, limited stop service, and during rush hours, additional buses to the LIRR stations. The only north/south bus route linked to the Port Washington branch of the LIRR at the Little Neck Parkway station and the Hempstead branch at the Floral Park station was restored after advocacy by the Queens Civic Congress and Councilman Mark Weprin. The Q36 on Jamaica Avenue now continues north on Little Neck Parkway to the Little Neck LIRR station.

Many residents look forward to the planned addition of a LIRR station on the east side of Manhattan at Grand Central Terminal which obviously will provide a great convenience to those working on the east side of Manhattan.

Four major highways intersect through CB 11, the Grand Central Parkway, Long Island Expressway, the Clearview Expressway and the Cross Island Parkway. Arterial highway maintenance is a challenge here and the on and off ramps, in particular, must be cleaned more frequently.

There are two major through truck routes and no local truck routes in CB 11. DOT no longer posts truck route signs so we would like to see new truck signage on the highways to warn truckers not to exit on non-truck routes. Truck enforcement is often requested for our local streets.

Street traffic has become a serious problem. There are more cars and trucks on our roads. With increased building development and with an ever-increasing population, neighborhoods are starting to experience more local traffic congestion. We receive many requests for various traffic safety measures, stop signs, speed humps, traffic signals etc. There is a “Slow Zone” in Auburndale. Traffic studies are taking well over six months to complete. There is a very long lag time between the times that we approve the installation of a speed bump or one-way street until the installation. We have waited as long as two years. It appears, therefore, that DOT is in need of more personnel to conduct traffic studies and more crews for installation and maintenance. With the advent of the Vision Zero initiative, we are hoping to see some of our requests to help safeguard pedestrians expedited.

Our commercial areas are underserved by lack of available parking spaces. The most severe condition exists in the area of Bell Boulevard and the LIRR station. Commuters and shoppers compete for very limited muni-meter parking. One request made by the BID members, and adopted by DOT, was to extend the time allowed on muni-meters to two hours in order for shoppers to enjoy more time on Bell Boulevard. The areas of Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston and Little Neck, adjacent to the Long Island Railroad stations, are also congested during commuting hours and parking is at a premium. The Bayside Village BID has obtained funds this year to conduct a feasibility study to convert the current NYC DOT municipal lot into a multilevel parking facility for Bell Boulevard.

Curb repair and replacement is not funded by DOT except in conjunction with sidewalk repair of private residences. However, we have deteriorating curbs along the center island malls of Union Turnpike from Hollis Hills Terrace to Springfield Boulevard and along the 42 Avenue mall. It is especially hazardous in crosswalks. Metal rebar sticks out of the curbs on Union Turnpike causing a serious safety hazard and a potential for significant personal injury

and claims against the City. Curbs also provide a course for rain water runoff. Without curbs, areas adjacent to the street wash away especially along 42 Avenue where the mall is planted. DOT surveyed Union Turnpike with CB 11 and identified the locations most in need of repair. However, we are told there are no funds for this project. We maintain that this basic repair to the infrastructure must be funded.

In Douglas Manor, a capital project in conjunction with the Department of Environmental Protection, is now funded and designed to reconstruct a section of Shore Road that is collapsing. The project is due to start in 2014. The streets, in general, in the Manor are in terrible condition and according to DOT in need of total reconstruction. However, we have asked for simple resurfacing of the worst sections for safety reasons.

Since last year, Bayside residents have complained about aircraft noise after the FAA instituted a new take-off pattern from LaGuardia Airport. CB11 members rallied with elected officials and met with FAA representatives to discuss their dissatisfaction. An Aviation Roundtable was formed that includes our elected City, State and Federal representatives, the FAA, NY/NJ Port Authority and Community Board representatives. They will also conduct a Part 150 noise study that was demanded of them by the community and local, elected officials.

RESILIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Last year, the City Council approved the Flood Resiliency Zoning Text Amendment which will affect the northern parts of CB 11. Parts of Douglaston and Little Neck lie within FEMA flood insurance zones and new homes will have to be built to new standards in order to obtain flood insurance. Residents in existing homes would have an option to raise their homes to a designated flood resistant level or face higher insurance rates. FEMA is still reevaluating flood prone areas and the NYC Office of Emergency

Management also amended their flood zone maps which includes more area considered prone to flooding.

Following Superstorm Sandy, the City has taken a closer look at flood resiliency. Although the north side of the borough was largely spared during this storm, the potential for flooding exists. We have requested that DEP study the Douglaston shoreline area more closely to determine what can be done to ensure that these shores are also protected from extreme storms.

In conclusion, Community Board 11 continues to work with City agencies and community groups to enhance the neighborhood's quality of life. Our enhanced website provides up-to-date information regarding what is happening in the district. The Board has worked to maintain programs and services and a better quality of life for its residents. We look forward to continuing to advocate for the community.

Respectfully submitted by:

Christine L. Haider
Chair

Susan Seinfeld
District Manager