



Community Board 17

39 Remsen Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11212-1536
(718) 467-3536 FAX (718) 467-4113

STATEMENT OF

Executive Officers:

COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS FY' 09

Lloyd Mills
Chairperson

INTRODUCTION

Ms. Sherif Fraser
District Manager

Community District 17 hereby submits the following Statement of Community District Needs in accordance with §2800-d(10) of the Charter of the City of New York. The contents of the statement result from local citizen complaints and testimony given at public hearings, as well as long-standing and, yet unmet needs and priorities.

Community District 17 is comprised of the following neighborhoods: East Flatbush, Northeast East Flatbush, Rugby, Farragut/Hyde Park, Remsen Village, Distmas Village and the Erasmus area. The geographic district encompasses East New York Avenue from East 98 Street to Utica Avenue, south on Utica Avenue to Clarkson Avenue, west on Clarkson Avenue to Bedford Avenue, south on Bedford Avenue, zigzag south on Bedford Avenue to the Long Island Railroad, east along the railroad to East 98 Street, then north on East 98 Street to East New York Avenue, the point of origin.

Roughly 70% of Community District 17 consists of one and two family homes, about 20% are walk-ups, 3.6% is used commercially, 1% for industrial uses, and only 2.5% or less is vacant land. The industrial area is located adjacent to the Bay Ridge line of the Long Island Railroad but threatens to spill over onto abutting property. The commercial strips consist primarily of small shops, medical offices, a few large dry goods stores and senior day care service centers, private day care and pre-school, restaurants and auto repair shops.

According to the 1990 – 2000 census count, our population has risen by about 15,000. However, we strongly believe that we have many undocumented residents who, if counted, would probably double the estimated increases. The black –non-Hispanic population continues to grow, the census count shows that approximately one-third of our population is under 18 years of age. There has been an increase in our Asian and Caucasian population. Additionally, members of the orthodox Jewish Community have been acquiring property strategically in CB 17 and CB 15 to the East.

Community District 17 needs additional resources and services by all city agencies, individually and collectively, to satisfy the needs of its constituents as all other communities within New York City and New York State.

Email: bkbfd17@optonline.net

BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

We support the Brooklyn Public Library's increase funding to provide the much needed services, supplies and equipments for our Branch libraries so that the needs of our students and adult population can be met.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Community is concerned that more than eight years have elapsed and the dangerous floors at Engine Company 310 located at 5105 Snyder Avenue, Brooklyn, has not been repaired. The City and the Fire Department should make this request a top priority to avoid a crisis in the near future.

The Board is overly concerned about the tardiness of addressing this issue and once again reiterates the importance of prioritizing this project.

We have received many allegations of homes occupied illegally, often in rooms with flimsy dividers, crowded conditions with overloaded electrical wiring that creates fire hazards. In 1998 we requested a pilot program to permit the NYC Fire Department to inspect multiple dwellings as they inspect places of business for violations. This may be done in conjunction with the Buildings Department which usually cannot gain entry without a warrant and have to discontinue multiple dwelling inspections for many, many years.

Once again we reaffirm our support for the Fire Prevention Inspection Program, Fire Prevention Inspection Team and the Juvenile Fire Setter Intervention program.

HOUSING PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

We are requesting that the New York City Housing Preservation and Development re-institute the inspection of multiple dwelling buildings.

We have asked for a feasibility study and after years of gentle persuasion demanded an urban renewal program and development of land near the LIRR. There is currently a salvage yard directly behind a new school and an early childhood learning center. This yard, and an abandoned car lot with car parts and other debris creates an unhealthy surrounding and are harmful to the health of our children. Please include this request as an emergency item in the fiscal year 2009 Budget.

Community Board #17 supports Flatbush East Community Development Corporation, Neighborhood Housing Services of East Flatbush Inc. and Erasmus Neighborhood Federation in their request for funding a Youth Arts, Culture and Literacy Center under the Neighborhood Preservation Consultant Contract. We hope they will be designated recipients. This community needs all the help it can receive to improve its housing stock. Also, there is a need to work more closely with the community to facilitate community needs/goals.

We also support additional funds for code enforcement, demolition/seal-up and the Narcotics Control Unit.

The community is in desperate need of C2 Housing for our aging population. Central Brooklyn has a very large population of persons 65 years and older one of the largest population concentration in the State of New York. The lack of affordable housing for our senior population presents a very serious problem.

OFFICE OF BUSINESS SERVICES

Nothing has been done in Community District 17's industrial commercial areas, primarily along the Long Island Railroad. Local groups such as the Flatbush East Community Development Corporation and Flatbush gateway are not sufficiently funded and lack staff to reach out to local businesses. Community District 17 has great potential for a flourishing industrial park-like development. We also ask for agency outreach to Community District 17's businesses.

DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS

There has been an increase in the amount of commercial activities taking place in residential areas, such as, restaurants, bakeries, car repair shops operation out of private garages, retail stores and offices in homes. Efforts must be made by this agency to enforce all buildings and zoning codes. Building code violations make tenants and neighbors justifiably angry and concerned for their safety and quality of life.

The Department of Buildings in the past ten years or more has not met its responsibility of inspecting multiple dwelling buildings. It is incumbent upon this agency, that, given the unabated increase of the illegal renovations/apartments throughout the city, that the Buildings Department re-institutes inspection of multiple dwelling houses. The wanton lack of inspection has indeed created a clear and present danger in our community and other communities during the last decade resulting in displacement of residents and insurmountable personal losses.

The Department of Buildings and New York City Government must recognize that self-inspection of new construction and violation removal is not a workable solution to the agency's responsibilities of "Building Inspections." In the past five years, New York City has experienced more than its fair share of collapsed buildings, new in-progress construction and falling debris. This agency must re-institute massive bi-annual inspections of multiple dwellings and commercial properties and the timely inspections due to complaints. Additionally, some non-offending renovations should be Grand Fathered in as done in DUMBO years ago.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Problems related to water meter billing continue to plague District 17. Many residents who had meters installed have received very high water bills, which are subsequently found to be in error. It is often difficult for them to have these bills rectified. They are understandably confused. The self-metered and installation cost reimbursed by this agency is unfair and punitive to homeowners. Homeowners have paid for meters over a decade through special rate increases for this purpose.

There is a long delay in answering complaints about clogged catch basins. This indicates a need for more frequent preventive maintenance. Many catch basins in CB17 are imploding due to a lack of repair. Throughout the community, the smell from the sewer has reached an intolerable and hazardous level. This agency has not responded adequately to complaints. We implore this agency to act responsibly and address these unhealthy conditions.

DEP must work with the officials (when necessary) to improve on drainage and remedy these troublesome and very dangerous problems that continues to exist in our community.

Our District is saturated with auto repair shops which discharge large amounts of volatile organic

solvents and volatile organic compounds into the air which contributes to respiratory diseases. DEP must do a study and provide Community Board #17 with a corrective action plan to address these dangerous and increasing health issues. These health issues have been ignored over the past eight years and needs to be expeditiously addressed.

We are extremely grateful that the long awaited reconstruction of Church Avenue from Flatbush Avenue to Rogers Avenue has been approved for re-construction. We support DDC's efforts to expedite this project and hope it will be completed within the mandated timeframe.

HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION

We continue our support for the various preventive/family programs, the family day care network furnished by the Erasmus Neighborhood Federation and the Flatbush Haitian Center and the Torah Head Start programs.

All programs funded by HRA are sorely needed in Community District 17 and funding should be provided, increased and expanded where needed.

DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION

The Sanitation Department and staff does an excellent job of collections and street sweeping. However, daily complaints regarding dumping on streets, in vacant lots, remain constant. Monthly reports of the cleanliness of our streets and sidewalks continue to show some areas with a cleanliness rating of 85%. These areas need to be monitored and improved. The Sanitation Department has the ability to effect positive changes. Also, enforcement efforts need to be quadrupled to address blocked sidewalks by businesses. Sanitation should coalesce with the Department of Consumer Affairs to improve cleanliness compliance by businesses and to also address sidewalk clutter.

While it is important to remove the dump-out promptly, we believe it would be more cost effective to prevent this illegal activity by posting police and installing surveillance cameras to apprehend the perpetrators and confiscate the vehicles used for illegal dumping.

Illegal postering continues to be a problem. During Fiscal Year 2005, 2006, and 2007, this activity has increased more than 100%. Illegal postering is being done with impunity. In addition to the large posters, construction advertisements are often nailed to trees and poles. Smaller signs are glued to poles, street signs, walls and all available areas, even painted on sidewalk creating an eyesore. The Sanitation Inspectors who perform daily inspections, Sanitation Enforcement and the citywide postering team must make a concerted and consistent effort to reverse this trend.

Five day collection at public and private schools must remain a high priority, especially at those schools with a breakfast program and several lunch hours. Collections must be made around schools that put out garbage on Friday past the regular pickup. Also, the Sanitation department must clean-up all debris spilled when pick-up are made at public school locations.

On weeks when there are holidays, a regular two-day a week pickup becomes a one day scheduled pick-up. This diminution of service is even worse for recyclable materials and the problems of vermin and rodent infestation multiplies.

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Community District 17 appreciates the Department of Park's Greening Project. During the past ten years, Community District 17 has had limited success with tree pruning. Therefore, we are requesting that our schedules for pruning and planting be prioritized due to the years of deliberate neglect. Our waiting list for tree planting and pruning has increased. Tree pruning and planting must be given top priority for Fiscal Year 2008 and beyond. The greening of our community is very important because of the high rates of respiratory diseases. Community District 17 has made multiple requests to the Parks Department and the Parks Commissioner for Tennis Court permits for off-hours usage by our community youths at no charge. Community District 17 has the fewest parks and/or recreational areas in New York City. The issuance of these free permits will cost the Parks Department zero dollars. However, they will provide an hour of meaningful recreational time for our community youths.

We appreciate the efforts of the WEP workers; and hope that their efforts would continue and that the City will recognize the same and hire them permanently as full-time paid employees. We are requesting deployment of WEP workers to our Community Board area in Fiscal Year 2009 and beyond.

There is also a great need for a multi-service community center. This District lacks every amenity considered routine necessities by other communities.

The Board is terribly disappointed that the sidewalk reconstruction project on Albany Avenue between Foster Avenue and Farragut Road has taken so long to be completed. The deterioration of the sidewalk and the ponding during inclement weather continue to affect the quality of life of residents in the immediate area and the children and teachers attending PS 198 (adjacent to the park). The reconstruction project for this location needs to be prioritized.

DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING

Community Board #17 would like to applaud Commissioner Santiago and staff of the Department For the Aging for approving a Senior Center in our community. The center is in operation since July 1, 2007, and the seniors are extremely grateful and ecstatic to return to their community. However, there is dire need for a Seniors' Bus and a driver to accommodate the seniors experiencing difficulties utilizing public transportation. Mr. Commissioner, please use your good office and make this possible for our seniors.

Our population continues to age like the rest of the country; the frail and elderly are growing more numerous. They need the services provided by the programs funded by the Department for the Aging more than ever. There is a desperate need for C2 housing to meet the needs of our community's aging population namely: assisted living, independent living and dependent living.

There remains a great need for additional senior centers throughout Community District 17 to meet this growing population. It is to be noted that there were four senior centers in this district and currently there is only one. Additional funding is needed to continue the current programs and to expand where current and additional senior services can be provided. Sincere efforts must be made to promote greater outreach to the shut-ins who depend on the Meals on Wheels program. We are requesting that the Commissioner address these concerns of our seniors.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

The Department of Transportation must erect "Local Traffic Only" signs throughout Community District 17 in areas that are illegally utilized by commercial vehicles, as there are too many pass through commercial traffic in District 17. There is a need for additional enforcement to curtail the abuse of large trucks using local residential streets as Interstate highways and parking garages. These large oversized tractor trailers, because of their gross weight including freight, do considerable damage to our streets and homes on residential streets.

We continue to be troubled by the congested and dangerous traffic conditions along our streets, namely Church Avenue/Bedford Avenue to East 98th Street; Nostrand Avenue/Empire Boulevard to Flatbush Avenue; Rogers Avenue/Glenwood Road to Empire Boulevard; Utica Avenue from Empire Boulevard to Glenwood; entering from both the southern and western side of Linden Boulevard from Kings Highway to Flatbush Avenue; Remsen Avenue from East New York Avenue to Foster Avenue. Most of our major intersections are choked with traffic. A comprehensive traffic study is imperative to alleviate this terribly dangerous traffic situation in addition to Traffic Calming studies to alleviate speeding on residential blocks. These conditions also contribute to asthma and other respiratory health problems due to huge amounts of auto exhaust caused by stalled traffic.

We admire DOT's "schoolxing" signs throughout the community. However, Community District 17 again requests the erection of the appropriate signage throughout the community and especially around our schools, both public and private. In some commercial areas of the district, the new sweeping signage does not reflect the customary commercial hours. All non-confirming signs must be replaced as soon as possible.

The Board is requesting more bicycle routes throughout the district and that the appropriate street markings be painted on the street to reflect the already designated locations.

We have requested construction of curb cuts throughout Community District 17. The first request originated in 1983. We need curb cuts throughout our district to meet the needs of our young children, seniors, the disabled and physically challenged. This is a top priority and one that will bring the city into compliance with the American with Disabilities Act passed by Congress. There is a chronic problem with double parked vehicles on the major thoroughfares throughout Community District 17.

DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

There is no more important priority for the future of our city than services for our youth. The need for youth services must be provided to the youth of Community District 17, whose needs are the same as those in every community throughout the city, yet Community district 17's requests have been neglected and ignored for decades and continues to be blatantly ignores.

The children in our district, some from one-parent families, most from families where both parents are wage-earners, and many for whom English is a second language, all need after school and serious meaningful year round youth and after school programs.

We are in dire need of Youth Centers and publicly funded recreational facilities. DYCD must double its funding and efforts to provide for more Adult Job Training, Youth Education and Youth

Job Training in Brooklyn District 17. We ask that this agency live up to its mandate to provide youth programming that will satisfy the needs of our youths mental, physical, educational and social needs.

We hope that funding will be reinstated for Youth Delinquency Diversion Programs, Summer Youth Recreation Programs, and after school and evening programs in Community District 17.

The Beacon Program, at three of our schools, is most welcome. We would like to see these programs continued and expanded. We need additional funding to support and expand the Music Outreach Program in our community schools.

Employment programs for our youth is an indispensable necessity for Adults and Youths in our community not only during the summer but all year and in perpetuity.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Our school buildings, though old, are cherished by all. The replacement of missing floor tiles, broken window panes, leaking roofs and other minor repairs should never be classified as Capital improvements to be placed on the Department of Education's ten year plan. It cost very little to make these minor repairs versus what it usually costs to renovate or close down school buildings and then lease and renovate private property. We are requesting that our needs be given serious consideration and be expeditiously addressed.

The Board is extremely concern about the education and needs of our children and would appreciate the opportunity of being notified in advance of any future school closing. We are also requesting that the Board's office be apprised of all future planning for new schools and to be involved in the pre-proposal process.

We are encouraged to learn that the Department of Education now has new accountability tools that will enable parents, teachers, principals elected officials and Community Board members access to the progress report and quality review of our schools.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Community Board 17 is deeply concerned about the disproportionate deployment of rookie police officers from the Police Academy. It is to be noted that of the One Hundred Forty-Two (142) rookie police officers deployed from the Academy recently to Brooklyn South, the 67th Precinct despite reporting the most murders and felonies received only 12 rookies. Interestingly, one precinct in Brooklyn South reported two (2) murders year to date received seventy (70) rookies to satisfy a special Impact Zone initiative. Up to recently, an Impact Zone initiative was in the 67th Precinct, but was discontinued despite its effectiveness in CRIME PREVENTION. Respectfully, we urge the Commissioner to look closely into this matter and address our concerns accordingly. There is a direct relationship between the absence of police officers patrolling our community and crime in the community. Deployment of officers after training must adequately address the safety needs in our District.

We applaud the 67th Precinct for its community involvement. Our community demands the implementation and expansion of a "Safe Corridor for Seniors Programs." This program is financed by a specific tax levy.

Based on numerous complaints from residents, we are requesting that the police department step up enforcement efforts to address truck trafficking, especially along Linden Boulevard.

There is an urgent request for acquisition of property to facilitate parking for agency personnel. The present parking condition makes it impossible for pedestrians to walk on the sidewalk. Additionally, the 67th Police Precinct is desperately in need of three wheel scooters.

NEW YORK CITY TRANSIT

Every effort must be made by this agency, to provide adequate transportation for our community residents. We reiterate the need for a rush hour bus route for Remsen Village which is serviced mainly by dollar/commuter vans. There is a need for additional bus service along the following routes: B17 and B47. Additionally, more local busses must be added to the B 46 bus route during rush hours.

There have been numerous complaints regarding the bunching of busses, and delay by drivers who are ahead of their schedule. We are requesting that the MTA implement procedures that will eliminate these types of practices.

The Board urges the MTA to revisit the study of the Franklin Avenue Subway Station to address the numerous complaints regarding the infrequency of trains (#2 & #5) going towards Flatbush Avenue versus the frequency of trains (#3 & #4) going towards Utica Avenue Subway Station.

The Transit Authority must extend the daily hours of use of all buses and subway passes for all high school students. Additionally, Community Board #17 is requesting a fair consideration for an additional bus to service the students at PS/IS 109 located at 1001 East 45 Street. We are requesting that the students receive the same treatment as the children at IS 278. The New York City Transit Authority in the past chose to single out one group of students for special consideration while ignoring the needs of the majority of students for the special services desperately needed by all New York City students.

RE- ZONING

Based on the numerous complaints Community Board 17 has received regarding overdevelopment in certain areas of the District, the Board has embarked on a re-zoning project in an effort to preserve the character of the neighborhood.

In light of the City's surplus for Fiscal Years 08' and 09' we are requesting that additional funding be allocated to the Community Boards budget to assist with special projects such as the rezoning projects being undertaken by most Community Boards.

Lloyd Mills
Lloyd Mills
Chairperson

Sherif Fraser
Sherif Fraser
District Manager