



## **THE CITY OF NEW YORK COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 16**

444 Thomas S. Boyland Street -Room 103  
Brooklyn, New York 11212

**HAZEL A. YOUNGER**  
Chairperson

**VIOLA D. GREENE-WALKER**  
District Manager

### **STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS FOR FY' 2008**

#### **OVERVIEW**

Community District #16 is located in East Brooklyn and encompasses the neighborhoods of Ocean Hill and Brownsville. It is comprised of 1,230.6 acres of land and is bounded on the north by Broadway, on the east by Van Sinderen Avenue, on the south by the Long Island Railroad, and on the west by East 98th Street, East New York Avenue, Ralph Avenue, Atlantic Avenue and Saratoga Avenue.

Ocean Hill-Brownsville is home to 85,343 people of which 78.2% are Black, 18% are of Hispanic origin, and 3.8% are of another descent. Our population continues to increase with the ongoing construction of housing units.

Our residential properties are comprised of one-to three-family homes, 4-story multiple dwelling walkups, Section 8 housing, Mitchell-Lamas, cooperatives, condominiums, New York City Housing Authority buildings, SRO housing, single and family shelters.

On the commercial strips of Broadway, Pitkin Avenue, Rockaway Avenue, Belmont Avenue, and Mother Gaston Boulevard, you will find personal service shops, small retail clothing, appliance and furniture stores, fast food eateries, supermarkets and bodegas.

As in previous years, we find that our needs for Fiscal Year 2008 remain unchanged. We continue to need more permanent and affordable housing, safe community facilities, improved infrastructure and transportation, sanitation services, more commercial and industrial revitalization, and quality health care and support services.

#### **HOUSING**

Affordable housing is becoming a misnomer. As the price of real estate escalates, housing is becoming less affordable for many of our residents. Even with government subsidies, the cost of a new home is unattainable for many of our hardworking families whose incomes have not appre-

ciably increased with the cost of living. Rental housing costs are also skyrocketing, thus making it difficult for families and single adults to maintain permanent housing.

Permanent and affordable housing continues to be a high priority for our community to meet the needs of senior citizens, families, and single adults with minimum wage jobs.

As the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) continues with plans to build affordable and permanent housing on the remaining City-owned vacant lots in Community District #16, we ask that subsidies be provided to truly make the units affordable to residents of Community District #16.

The New York City Housing Authority's HOPE VI project to rehabilitate Prospect Plaza Houses and construct townhouses on adjacent vacant lots has been at a standstill for several years. We need the Housing Authority to move forth on this project and return much needed housing for the tenants who were displaced and are anxiously waiting to return to their homes.

Where there are small irregularly shaped City-owned parcels that are not suitable for housing construction, we urge HPD to dispose of these parcels to adjacent property owners.

We are pleased to see new homes being built on privately-owned vacant lots throughout the community. We encourage developers to make them affordable to residents of the community.

### **COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

Our playgrounds and parks provide the only recreation for many of our residents. We need regular maintenance to prevent their deterioration from normal wear and tear of daily use. Several of our facilities are in dire need of rehabilitation:

- The Betsy Head Park ball field needs to be reconstructed with durable material such as astroturf. The running track also needs to be resurfaced. The sidewalks abutting Livonia Avenue and Dumont Avenue need resurfacing.
- Betsy Head Playground needs new play equipment, backboards for the basketball courts, and resurfacing of the handball court.
- The central air condition system at the Brownsville Recreation Center needs to be repaired. Air condition units for the weight room need to be installed.
- The Brownsville Recreation Center Playground needs new play equipment. The basketball and handball courts need resurfacing. The basketball courts also need new backboards. The sidewalk around the playground needs resurfacing.
- Dr. Richard Green Park needs new play equipment and the basketball courts need new backboards.
- Howard Playground basketball courts need resurfacing and new backboards.

- Ocean Hill Playground needs new backboards for the basketball courts.
- Newport Playground needs new play equipment. The basketball court needs resurfacing and backboards. The sidewalks around the playground need resurfacing. In addition, a new chain link fence is needed.
- The handball court at Shiplacoff Park needs resurfacing.
- The basketball courts at Callahan Kelly Park, along with the water fountains, and benches need repair.
- Fire damaged the comfort station at Chester Playground over 3 years ago. We need this facility repaired and opened for the public.
- Nehemiah Park needs new play equipment. The basketball and handball courts also need resurfacing.
- Zion Triangle needs new benches and the monument needs refurbishing.
- Floyd Patterson Field needs to be reconstructed to include a comfort station and installation of astroturf for multi-purpose uses such as baseball, football, and soccer.

Playground Assistants are needed during the summer months to provide structured activities in our parks. We urge the Department of Education to continue with plans to rehabilitate our school buildings and provide a safe environment for our children and teachers.

Our day care centers also need capital improvements to make them safe for our children. Additional day care services are needed to meet the growing needs of working parents.

We need job training centers and vocational schools to equip our young adults with skills to enhance their employability.

Many of our gifted youngsters and adults are unable to display their creative talents while others lack exposure to the artistic resources of our community. We encourage the development of a comprehensive cultural and performing arts center where our residents can display their talents, learn about cultural diversities, and foster better community relations in our neighborhood and City.

The importance of providing adequate and well-equipped educational facilities and programs cannot be over emphasized, especially in our attempt to attract middle-income families with children. The educational facilities, coupled with quality programming, are important determinants for those families contemplating residence in a community.

### **PARK AND STREET TREES**

A districtwide pruning of street trees as well as trees in our parks is needed. Tree limbs are blocking street lights and hanging low in the path of pedestrians on many of our streets. Trees are becoming top heavy and limbs are frequently breaking off which present a hazard to pedestrians and motorists.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION**

We continue to need regular maintenance of catch basins. During heavy rainfall, flooding and ponding conditions are common at a number of heavily trafficked locations throughout the district.

Potholes and depressions continue to imperil traffic. The Departments of Transportation and Environmental Protection need to jointly inspect these locations to identify the origin of the roadway condition and repair them in a timely fashion.

With the new housing construction, the volume of traffic is increasing. It is imperative that the Department of Transportation conduct a districtwide survey to determine locations for new traffic lights and All-way stop signs.

Some of our streets are dimly lit and create an atmosphere conducive to criminal activities. The intensity of our street lights need upgrading, especially underneath the elevated train lines along Broadway and Livonia Avenue, and along bus routes.

Street light outages are increasing as well as the time it takes to repair the lights. More collaboration is needed between Consolidated Edison, the street light repair contractor and the Department of Transportation to resolve complaints in a timely fashion.

Truck traffic is increasing throughout the district. Residential blocks, instead of designated truck routes, are being used by 18-wheelers which are destroying our streets and creating congestion.

The Sutter Avenue, Livonia Avenue, and New Lots Avenue stations on the "L" line are elevated structures and are not accessible to the physically challenged. We are requesting that they be made handicap accessible.

We call upon the Metropolitan Transit Authority to appropriate needed funds to construct a connecting passageway between the "L" line and the IRT "3" at Junius Street and Livonia Avenue to enable commuters to freely transfer between the stations.

Extensive repairs are needed on the #3 line stations. Large sections of platform have been replaced with plywood at the Saratoga Avenue Station. Sections of the stairway at the Rockaway Avenue Station have deteriorated and are endangering the safety of commuters. In addition, the Sutter Avenue, Saratoga Avenue, Rockaway Avenue, and Livonia Avenue stations need painting.

Peeling paint from the columns, trusses, and transverse girders along the elevated IRT "3" from Sutter Avenue/Rutland Road to Junius Street is an environmental hazard to our community. We urge the Transit Authority to abate this condition.

The Broadway Junction station which has connections to 3 train lines and 5 bus lines needs to be made handicap accessible. The station has a series of steps that prevent the physically challenged from using the facility.

The East New York Station of the Long Island Railroad is in need of updating. Cameras are in place on the platforms and should also be placed in the tunnel connecting the stairwells leading to the service roads of Atlantic Avenue. The stairs on the eastern end of the westbound platform

should be converted to a ramp to provide access to wheelchair-bound passengers.

### **SANITATION AND PEST CONTROL SERVICES**

New housing construction is bringing new families to the community. We need more Sanitation personnel to pick up garbage and clean our streets.

Community District #16 continues to remain at the bottom for recycling. We need ongoing community outreach to educate our residents about the benefits of recycling.

Illegal dumping in vacant lots and on sidewalks in front of vacant buildings and lots continue to obstruct pedestrian traffic and create a nesting place for rodents. We need regular Sanitation Police patrol of chronic dumping locations to apprehend violators. We also need manpower and equipment to keep these areas clean.

Our schools and New York City Housing Authority buildings generate tons of garbage and they have limited storage space on site. Consequently, bags of garbage are placed on the sidewalks daily. We need daily pick up of this garbage.

We also need more bulk collections to prevent the dumping of household debris on sidewalks in front of vacant buildings and in vacant lots.

Large rats are attracted by garbage on our streets and in vacant lots. Excavations for housing units are also unearthing them. We need Pest Control to bait these areas.

### **COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL REVITALIZATION**

Revitalization is needed along our commercial strips of:

- Rockaway Avenue between East New York Avenue and Newport Street.
- Broadway between Saratoga Avenue and Eastern Parkway.
- Livonia Avenue between Mother Gaston Boulevard and Junius Street.
- Atlantic Avenue between Howard Avenue and Mother Gaston Boulevard.
- Fulton Street between Saratoga Avenue and Van Sinderen Avenue.
- Saratoga Avenue between Atlantic Avenue and Eastern Parkway.

We appeal to the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development and the New York City Economic Development Corporation to market City-owned parcels and work with private owners who are in need of financial assistance to develop their properties.

As our housing stock grows, so does our need for banking services, quality supermarkets, meat

markets, bakeries, dry cleaners, pharmacies, hardware stores, family restaurants, and clothing stores. We appeal to businesses to come into our community and request that tax incentives be given to developers to encourage their investment.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

Statistics reflect a decrease in the major crime categories in the 73rd Precinct. However, unreported crimes and injuries from street justice continue to impact on our community. Gun violence is an increasing problem. We need continued police presence on our streets, in the subways, and in our New York City Housing Authority buildings.

We have witnessed the positive effects that an impact zone has had in reducing crimes in our community. We encourage its continuation.

After hours and social clubs in basements on residential blocks continue to be a problem in the community as they generate loud noise and large crowds. These establishments need to be identified and property owners made to comply with noise, fire and building codes.

## **SUPPORT SERVICES**

Many people have lost their homes and ended up in shelters due to loss of a job or a medical emergency.

We need homeless prevention programs to assist those at risk of homelessness from losing affordable housing by linking them to needed resources such as job training, childcare, and substance abuse programs. Community-based social service agencies that can give these families the long-term support they need must receive sufficient funds to outreach to this population.

Many of our elderly and infirm adults who live alone need escort services to accompany them on shopping trips and medical appointments. They also need assistance with personal care, housekeeping, and financial management as they strive to live independently in their own homes.

We need continued funding of senior citizen centers which provide daily meals and socialization for many seniors who do not have the family support and would be left isolated in their homes.

## **HEALTH CARE SERVICES**

Many of our residents are uninsured and underinsured. We need health insurance companies to continue their outreach in the community to enroll individuals and families in health plans.

We seek assistance for adults who are experiencing financial hardship due to escalating costs of prescription medication. Our senior citizens, in particular, are finding it most difficult to pay out-of-pocket costs for prescriptions.

A healthy diet is paramount to the well-being of an individual. We need nutrition education outreach in the community to identify and assist persons who are not eating properly and are at-risk

of becoming obese and developing circulatory and respiratory conditions.

Teenage pregnancy continues to be a major concern to us. We need programs to outreach to our adolescents and educate them about the consequences of engaging in premarital sex. We also need resources to identify and assist those in need of prenatal care. Infant mortality is one of the leading causes of death in our community.

Asthma is also on the rise in our community and we need services to address this problem.

There is also a need to expand obstetric, pediatric, geriatric, mental health, HIV and AIDS services.

### **SUMMARY**

As our population continues to increase, we must meet their needs for police and fire protection, garbage collection and street cleaning, parks and playgrounds, day care centers and public schools, and other resources for a healthy community. Therefore, we call upon the City Administration to work with us and provide those services that we so desperately need.

We also encourage the private sector to come and do business in our community where there is a need for quality goods and services and employment opportunities.

Respectfully submitted,

*Viola D. Greene-Walker*

**VIOLA D. GREENE-WALKER**  
**District Manager**