



**COMMUNITY
BOARD TWO
BOROUGH OF
STATEN ISLAND**
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COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2- STATEN ISLAND DISTRICT NEEDS STATEMENT FY 2008

Community Board 2, Staten Island, submits the following Statement of Needs as outlined by the City Charter which will include a brief description of the district, the Board's assessment of both current and probable future needs and recommendations to achieve these assessments.

Our district is approximately 24 square miles in area encompassing the entire mid-island section of Staten Island. It is comprised of many small towns such as Midland Beach, South Beach, New Dorp, Grant City, Dongan Hills, Arrochar, Grasmere, Old Town, Lighthouse Hill, Manor Heights, Willowbrook, Richmondtown, Heartland Village, New Springville, Bulls Head, Bloomfield, Chelsea and Travis. Each is very proud of their unique qualities and individual characteristics, which residents strive to maintain.

The boundaries are from the Staten Island Expressway from Verrazano Narrows Bridge south along the narrows to New York Harbor (which include Hoffman and Swinburne Islands) to Ebbitts Street west to Jason Street. Tysens Lane to Amboy Road, Richmond Road to St. Patricks Place to Clarke Avenue across Arthur Kill Road, to eastern boundary to LaTourette Park, and southern and eastern boundary to Richmondtown Restoration to southern boundary of LaTourette Park, to West Shore Expressway, half mile north on Expressway to Fresh Kills Creek including Prall's Island to Arthur Kill.

Community Board 2 is one of the city's last growth areas. The district area consists of single and two family homes, townhouses, duplexes, three city housing projects, several six-story apartment complexes, co-ops and garden apartments.

Transportation

Traffic congestion is the Community Board's number one problem. The population on Staten Island continues to grow but our roadways continue to remain the same. Many of Staten Island's major arterials are two-lane country roads, that is, one lane in each direction.

Intersections need to be improved with turning lanes and storage bays especially on Hyman and Victory Boulevards.

Some of the one lane roads such as Rockland Avenue and Forest Hill Road need to be reconstructed now so that traffic can flow instead of sitting in major traffic back ups.

1. The reconstruction of Rockland Avenue (HW1160) from Meisner Avenue to Richmond Road should not be held up for any reason (DOT has held up this project for over 5 years). Badly needed sanitary and storm sewers have been delayed for hundreds of homes. The intersection of Rockland at Manor / Meisner (HW1146) needs to be widened and moved over so that traffic can flow, and the existing culvert moved over, otherwise, the roadway on Rockland Avenue will collapse into the culvert. The new roadway will be shifted in some parts. This new roadway will be one lane in each direction with shoulders. Presently, there are no shoulders and no streets that have outlets, so when a vehicle breaks down, or an accident occurs, or someone wants to make a left turn, traffic just sits there. Emergency vehicles have a difficult time responding to any emergency in the area because of the narrowness of the existing road. There are no sidewalks making the road unsafe for pedestrians or those waiting at a New York City bus stop. The Department of Transportation design plans that were presented to the Community Board in 2001 were approved by the board members. The existing Rockland Avenue is in the mapped bed of the Willowbrook Parkway, which is mapped at 400 feet in width. The Rockland Avenue roadway improvements and sewer work will be to use only 57 feet of the 400 foot width – 44 feet paved, one travel lane in each direction, one shoulder in each direction, and a curb and sidewalk on one side, (13 feet) total 57 feet. All New York City minimum width of mapped streets, including private streets, is 60 feet. 38 feet paved, and curbs and sidewalks on both sides. Technically, Rockland Avenue between Manor Road and Richmond Road will end up being mapped less than the minimum width of a required city street.

New York City Department of Parks is to design a beautification plan for the left over property (343 feet wide), including the part of Rockland Avenue that will no longer be in use – so that Rockland Avenue between Manor Road and Richmond Road can become part of the Greenbelt. What's wrong with this plan? Nothing. It should move forward now! No more excuses from DOT.

The Board would like all the utilities on Rockland Avenue to be installed underground and the portions of Rockland Avenue that are no longer part of the new road to be restored in a park-like design as part of the Greenbelt. This is another project Department of Transportation is holding up because an Environmental Assessment Study hasn't been completed and then an Environmental Impact Study must begin.

2. Improvements to the intersections along Forest Hill Road (HW986B) and the roadway reconstruction of Forest Hill Road (HW986C) from Richmond Hill Road to Willowbrook Road must be done now but it can't because Department of Transportation again never started the Environmental Impact Study. It takes at least fifteen minutes or more to drive this one mile section of Forest Hill Road because of its narrowness, no shoulders, and vehicles trying to make right and left turns. Forest Hill Road is a major thoroughfare connecting to Richmond Avenue, the Staten Island Mall, the College of Staten Island, and the Staten Island Expressway. New townhouse communities are being built along Forest Hill Road and the new residents want bus stops installed. But, the Transit Authority cannot install bus stops because the road is too narrow for commuters to stand in the street waiting for a bus. There also seems to be a problem with the acquisition process.

3. The Board would also like to see roadway improvements along Snake Hill Road in order to prevent accidents, by elimination of the hazardous curves and elimination of the extremely steep roadway. As part of this project the intersections of Clarke Avenue and Richmond Road at Arthur Kill Road need to be improved so traffic can move freely in the area. The Board approves of Department of Transportation's Roundabout plan, which addresses all of our concerns.

4. Year round pothole repair crews are a necessity. Having pothole repair crews available only during the off-season for milling and paving is unacceptable. The roads get potholes year round and there-

fore must be fixed year round. Staten Island should have at least 3 pothole repair crews year round.

5. Another important capital budget priority is the extension of Father Capodanno Boulevard thru Miller Field from Midland Beach to at least Bay Terrace. We have been requesting this since FY'86. Traffic needs to be alleviated along Hylan Boulevard especially in the Midland Beach/New Dorp area. The Police, Fire and EMS have tremendous difficulty responding to emergency situations and an alternate route is needed to alleviate congestion for the welfare of our residents and those who travel throughout Staten Island. As an alternative, the board suggests investigation of an elevated roadway on Hylan Blvd. from Midland Beach to Guyon Avenue in New Dorp. In this way vehicles not needing to access local residential streets can bypass the commercial district entirely.

6. Something also needs to be done to improve traffic congestion along the Staten Island Expressway such as truck climbing lanes, and a fourth lane that can be used as an HOV lane during rush hour.

7. Improvements are needed along the West Shore Expressway such as installation of service roads and a third lane along the entire length and safety improvements at exit and entrance ramps.

8. As stated previously traffic congestion is one of Staten Island's major problems. Everyone wants new roads so that traffic can move, but not in their neighborhood. Staten Islanders are also looking forward to the closing of the Fresh Kills Landfill. This would be the perfect opportunity to make use of the existing landfill roadways.

The Community Board is recommending that a new interchange be built off the West Shore Expressway south of the Fresh Kills waterway as the connection to the landfill roadways. The Board recommends using the landfill roadways, to connect at various locations along Richmond Avenue and making a connection at Arthur Kill Road at the closed 2/8 section of the landfill.

The use of these roads, which were built to Federal Guidelines, would greatly help to alleviate traffic congestion along the West Shore Expressway, Richmond Avenue, Victory Boulevard, Travis Avenue and Arthur Kill Road.

What makes the project very doable is that no neighborhood will be impacted since, as you know, there are no homes within the landfill. The only impact would be positive in that Staten Island local traffic will have alternative routes instead of driving on local residential streets or sitting in backed up traffic polluting our air.

Of course safety and security is a major concern. Therefore the Community Board recommends that N.Y.C. DOS install walls or jersey barriers along all the roadways. The Community Board would also like DOT to begin the process of mapping the existing landfill roadways.

9. Another way to help alleviate traffic congestion during rush hour would be using high-speed ferries along the waterfront.

Department of Environmental Protection:

Community Board Two is still in need of the installation of storm sewers in flood-prone areas and sanitary sewers in areas that have failing septs. We realize that this is a difficult assignment (but not impossible) in areas of South Beach and Midland Beach where the streets were built way below grade level. The Community Board was pleased that DEP has begun moving forward with

Bluebelt plans for Midland Beach and South Beach.

In order to alleviate some of the flooding conditions DEP has begun installation of dry wells and or seepage basins at problem intersections. So far the seepage basins/dry wells have been working and we look forward to additional seepage basins being installed.

The Board is pleased that the Department of Environmental Protection has completed sewer projects such as SE-740A in Richmondtown, Lighthouse Hill but cannot understand why SE-740B is at a standstill. We also need to begin designing storm sewers between Quintard St. and Linwood Avenue. (HWR1132B).

The Community Board would like additional money in the budget for personnel to do culvert and catch basin cleaning to alleviate flooding conditions that occur where the basins and the culverts are clogged especially in the fall when leaves clog the top of catch basins. The Board would also like to see the continued funding for our SE-200 jobs.

Fire Department

Year after year we have requested a firehouse on our west shore in the Staten Island Mall area. Every year the Fire Department turns down our request for a fire station to cover this area. The Board has had this as a top priority since 1985. As you know, the mall area is the most heavily and densely populated area in our district and continues to grow. The response time also continues to grow. We need the Fire Department to finally agree to fund this project.

Parks and Recreation

An extremely important priority to the Board is construction of a pedestrian crossing at LaTourette Park across Richmond Hill Road. Construction dollars are needed for the safety of the golfers and pedestrians that cross Richmond Hill Road. In order to play golf at LaTourette Golf Course (city owned) you must cross the road by foot or by golf cart. If you want to use the driving range you park your car on one side and cross Richmond Hill Road to the range. Last year over 75,000 rounds of golf were played at LaTourette. This does not include others using the driving range or taking lessons. We are very lucky no one has been killed. Every golfer who plays LaTourette would be grateful to either the Mayor or Borough President Molinaro or our Councilmen James Oddo, Andrew Lanza or Michael McMahon with a commitment for construction dollars. You should be aware that the design had been completed and all that is now needed is construction dollars.

Once again we must say that the Parks Department has been extremely responsive to the community needs and has done a great job with so little resources. Our #2 expense budget request is for increased park workers. Every year the number of workers for the Parks Department is reduced-enough is enough- we need more workers not less. If our parks fall apart and deteriorate, we'll have no place to go. What good is all the money for Capital Projects if you can't use the parks because they are not maintained?

The Board continues to be very pleased with the Borough President's continued funding for South Beach and Midland Beach welcoming visitors to the beach and boardwalk. Without a doubt more visitors used the beach this season. The Board would like to see continued efforts along the beach front for all our residents to enjoy.

The Board continues to support the Greenbelt Master Plan. In fact two of our capital priorities reflect this. The recreation center is expected to open this fall. The Board was please with the opening of the Greenbelt Nature Center. This was the first phase of the master plan.

Tree planting continues to be a priority for Staten Island residents. However, now money needs to be placed into stump removal.

Police

The Board is very satisfied with the job the Police Department is doing on Staten Island and at the 122nd Precinct, especially with crime figures going down, but of course we want more attention with the increase in the number of officers assigned to the 122nd Precinct.

The Community Board looks forward to the opening of the fourth Precinct.

Finally the number of school crossing guards has been increased. However there are too many dangerous intersections that children must cross to get to school but there never seems to be enough crossing guards. Our children's safety should come first.

Department of Youth and Community Development

Additional funding for recreation and prevention programs for the youth on Staten Island is needed. It has been documented that for every dollar we spend in prevention we save seven dollars in other social services or criminal justice program.

The Community Board is pleased with the success of the Beacon School at IS2 in Midland Beach.

Sanitation

The Community Board is pleased with the closing of Fresh Kills Landfill and hopes it stays that way. However Fresh Kills continues to emit odors that are offensive to the surrounding communities. Therefore additional odor controls are needed (especially on hot, humid days) to improve the quality of life on our Staten Island residents.

Community Board 2 would like the Department of Sanitation to begin preparing the existing roadways within the Fresh Kills Landfill for public use to help alleviate traffic congestion on Staten Island.

Weekly recycling must continue. The Self-help Disposal Site must be re-opened on a daily basis otherwise illegal dumping which is a problem now will only get worse.

Staten Island also needs the Clean Team restored. This has been one of our expense budget requests since the Clean Team was cut from the budget. It is imperative that our streets and empty lots be kept litter free. Additional funds to hire enforcement police for illegal dumpers would also help keep the Island clean.

Sanitation Enforcement Police for the "Illegal Dumping Task Force" cannot be cut because of Staten Island's open spaces, wetlands, empty lots and parks. People continue to dump garbage all over the borough. Sanitation police cut down on the amount of illegal dumping by issuing violations. Fines for these violations bring in money to NYC. Why would you cut the number of enforcement officers to save money when they collect fines for NYC?

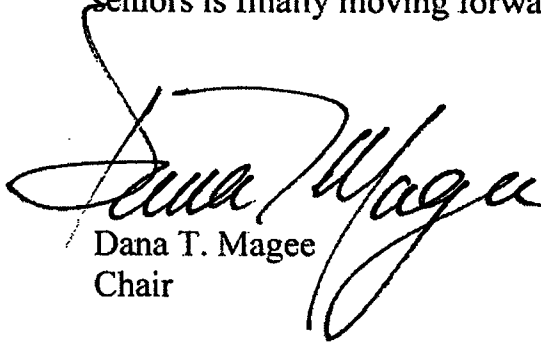
Health

Every year the Board asks the Department of Health to establish a program for mosquito and tick control including aerial spraying. Staten Island has miles of natural waterways. Water in many areas becomes stagnated making it a perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes and ticks. Even though the Health Department claims Staten Island doesn't have ticks that carry Lyme disease the number of Lyme disease cases goes up every year. Something should be done. The Community Board hopes that the Health Department continues to spray for mosquitoes even when the West Nile Virus is no longer a threat.

The Board would like the Health Department to cyclically bait continuous complaint areas for the Rodent Control Program. These are areas that always need baiting because of continuous rodent problems. It would be much simpler to have these areas baited on a regular schedule instead of waiting for complaints to come in.

Health and Hospitals

There is a need to restore Sea View Hospital and Home's abandoned buildings. As you know, Sea View is the only city hospital facility on Staten Island. The Community Board would like the Nurses Residence to be converted to assisted and independent living for our seniors. We support Sea View's Development plan which includes various types of housing for seniors. This housing plan for seniors is finally moving forward.



Dana T. Magee
Chair

Respectfully submitted,



Kathy Dodd
District Manager