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STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS

INTRODUCTION

Community Board #4-Bushwick is located in the northeast section of Brooklyn, its boundaries are: Broadway, Flushing Avenue, Eastern Parkway Extension, and the Brooklyn/Queens borough line.

We have seen our community's potential for survival based on the work of the Bushwick residents, and the city's commitment through the first Mayoral Task Force. Although we have begun to turn the corner, the city must continue to provide resources to allow the community to experience further improvement.

The overall needs of Bushwick can only be described as "INTENSE". Our request for addressing these needs are by no means exaggerated. We look forward to the restoration of the neighborhood through the effort of the city to provide the assistance and the services that are so desperately needed.

HOUSING

Community Board #4 has gone on record supporting the building of affordable one and two family houses in scattered infill sites throughout the district.

It is our intention to work with Housing Preservation and Development and outside developers to target and develop sites for homeownership opportunities for our residents. The need for acquisition and site preparation funds are imperative.

The Bushwick community has been selected to house facilities for homeless families. It is our strongest desire to witness the construction and renovation of city-owned buildings for permanent apartments for Bushwick's homeless population. We are sensitive to the homeless plight, however, providing permanent apartments for those homeless people who are from the "BUSHWICK COMMUNITY". We feel that this is done best by providing permanent apartments as opposed to the transitional type which is being proposed.

City-owned housing units represent a valuable resource in our neighborhood and it is essential that they be managed in the best way possible. The city must provide sufficient funds and personnel to ensure that this is done. In addition, innovative alternative management initiatives like community management should be expanded in Bushwick. Community Board #4 strongly opposes consolidation of city-owned properties. Among the Board's concerns is the rehabilitation of abandoned buildings that can be managed by a community group.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Bushwick commercial shopping strips have started to make a comeback after the devastation caused by the Blackout some years ago.

The Local Development Corporation of Broadway in Brooklyn has been successful in securing funds from the city of New York which has had a positive impact on that portion of the strip. Many merchants have improved their facades and vacant buildings have been sealed. More funding is needed to re-fund these efforts. The other end of the commercial strip is of major concern to the neighborhood. We encourage the city to fund the newly formed L.D.C. so that they may begin the work necessary to develop and market the commercial properties located on that portion of the strip. Myrtle Avenue from Broadway to Cypress Avenue, a commercial strip where there has been little attention and focus could become quite valuable with proper marketing and development. The community welcomes the development of the former Rheingold Brewery site. We would like to see the surrounding portions developed, thus creating additional jobs for community residents.

YOUTH

Community Board #4 had the services of a Youth Coordinator for approximately one year. Unfortunately, the monies coming to the district from the NYC-Youth Bureau don't begin to meet the demands for services, programs and counselling needs. There is thus a critical need to provide comprehensive services to address the myriad problems that plague our youth. Youngsters are faced with challenges very early in life; most prevalent is that of drugs, which may lead them to commit crimes and find themselves in trouble with the law. Concentrated efforts in the area of drug education and other youth related programs are needed.

Recently, a community agency sponsored a "One Day Forum" on child abuse and neglect. Many of the professionals who attended voiced their frustration and confusion with the system. In Bushwick the high risk cases are growing rapidly. The Community needs more professionals to work with the families who are at risk. As it stands, waiting lists are far too long, meanwhile, the children are suffering.

POLICE

The crime rate is on a rise, heavy drug traffic still remains a major problem which requires the establishment of special enforcement initiatives. Clearly, there is a need for more police manpower, especially foot patrolmen and undercover officers. To provide funds to support the efforts of civilian patrol programs may offset some of the crime activity. Additional police vehicles are a must in order to assure that emergency calls are answered in a timely fashion.

HEALTH/ HUMAN SERVICES

The entire community of Bushwick lacks the most basic health services and has the most serious health problems. Statistics indicate that education and nutrition for pregnant women is very much needed since many women are giving birth with little or no prenatal care. Statistics also reveal that comprehensive primary care and screening of outstanding community health problems such as tuberculosis, cirrhosis and diabetes are desperately needed.