

*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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District Manager*

**STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS  
FY 2015**

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 Asian (39.3%) population.

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 cooperative and condominium apartment complexes, developed 50-60 years ago. Only 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.

The board recently was presented with the Flood Resiliency Zoning Text Amendment proposal from the DCP to review. 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 high 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 areas considered prone to flooding.

CB11 still has seen an ever-increasing number of new homes and expansions of homes to accommodate an increasing population attracted by the positive quality of life and educational opportunities in the district. Many of the new homes are much larger than the existing housing stock and many questions are raised about zoning. There has also been a lot of new, larger commercial development along commercial overlays that has also raised questions about zoning.

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.

Additionally, time and time again fines that are levied by the Environmental Control Board, 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.

### **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 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 smaller center at the 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 the bars.

Adjacent to the Douglaston LIRR Station, many businesses closed. In response, local residents formed the Douglaston Limited Development Corporation to organize a revitalization effort in the area. The Douglaston Village Chamber of Commerce is also trying to revitalize the area. A Greenmarket, sponsored by the

Chamber and GrowNYC, however, withdrew this year due to lack of vendors signing up for this location.

Three years ago, a vacant M-1-1 property, on Little Neck Parkway, was purchased by Steel Equities, a real estate developer. We met with the owners and the Borough President to discuss possible future plans for the site and raised concerns of area residents about the use of the property. At the time of this writing, there has been no further information about development.

Another large grocery store closed on Francis Lewis Boulevard last year. H Mart, a Korean owned grocery store, has leased the space but as of this writing, there has been no opening date announced.

Along Northern Boulevard, several new commercial retail stores were developed. While many of the stores have been leased, there seems to be a lot of turnover and many stores remain vacant. The old Scobee diner closed three years ago at Little Neck Parkway. A developer has plans for a new, two-story commercial building on the site. Next door, Staples closed this past year and future plans for this site are unknown.

On Horace Harding Expressway at Booth Memorial Avenue, 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 already difficult parking conditions.

### **EDUCATION AND YOUTH**

This school year, approximately 16,500 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 has signed a tentative contract with the owners of Keil's Brother Garden Center on 48 Avenue in Bayside to purchase the property for the school. 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 final purchase will be decided by the vote of the City Council.

There are three high schools in the district; Bayside, Benjamin Cardozo and Francis Lewis High School with a total population of approximately 12,000 students. The population in all three high schools has increased greatly with utilization rates at 151%, 138% and 170% 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 high 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 school, 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 Beacon Programs at Middle School 158 and Middle School 172 (located in CB13), operated by the Samuel Field “Y”, continue to be successful serving the youth and community groups of our district. Last year, the program at MS 158 was threatened with closure. Parents, community members and the Community Board rallied to save the program. The City Council saved the program during budget negotiations, along with other Beacon programs slated for closing. Additionally, the City Council continued to fund Out-of-School Time Programs. These after-school programs operate in several schools in District 26, PS 115, PS 186, PS 178, PS 188, PS 169 and PS/IS 266. This year, once again the programs were saved from proposed budget cuts.

### **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. The time frame from identification of necessary projects to design, fund and complete, takes an excessive number of years. There are several projects planned for the district in 2014 and 2015. They include water main installations in sections of Bayside Hills and new sewer and catch basin installations in various areas of the district. Started in 2013, new water mains and catch basins are being installed in Little Neck north of the LIRR. This will also include the installation of an outfall tank into Little Neck Bay.

Repairs to catch basins are backlogged and often take over a year from the time of complaint to repair. Broken and sinking catch basins pose a hazardous condition at corners. More funds and personnel are needed for catch basin cleaning and repair. The district also has many seepage basins which fail over time leading to flooding. The only solution is the funding of projects to install basins connected to a sewer system. DEP has also not funded sewer trench restorations for a few years. With shoring being undermined, the street sinks and continues to do so. The CB has requested funding for these projects.

Following Superstorm Sandy, the City has taken a closer look at flood resiliency. Parts of Douglaston and Little Neck lie in the FEMA flood zones and City hurricane evacuation zones. Although the north side of the borough was largely spared during this storm, the potential for flooding is there. We are closely monitoring maps issued by the Office of Emergency Management and FEMA in order to advise our residents accordingly. (Also see Building and Zoning)

### **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.

### **HEALTH**

Mosquitoes continue to be a big problem in the District. Anticipating infestations again this year following a wet and hot Spring and a hot, humid summer, DOH sprayed larvicide in the Alley Pond Park marsh areas and placed larvicides in catch basins in order to stop the spread of West Nile Virus. DOH also conducted ground spraying in neighborhoods in the district when West Nile Virus was detected in mosquitoes. District Managers in

Queens have urged that more funding be made available for more preventive treatments.

After five years of sponsoring a flu vaccine clinic with St. Mary's Hospital and the NYC Department of Health, this past year the DOH could not supply the vaccine due to budget restraints. Therefore, we were unable to sponsor the clinic. In the past years, we were able to vaccinate about 100 people. We look forward to providing this service should funds become available again.

### **LIBRARIES**

There are five library branches in CB 11. Renovations have just been completed at the Bayside branch and the Douglaston/Little Neck branch will have its roof repaired. 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. This 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. The QBPL system and the local libraries campaigned this past budget cycle to maintain their funding. The City Council continues to support library funding and has saved the libraries from cuts. 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.

### **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.

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 Borough President funded a project, requested by the CB, two years ago to build a raised walkway around portions of the Oakland Lake Park to mitigate flooding on the walkway around the lake caused by the natural springs that feed the lake and repair the asphalt walkway which has been undermined. The project is still in design much to our disappointment since it was expected to be completed Spring 2013.

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; approximately 1000 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 severe storms the City has experienced over the past three years has highlighted this need. Therefore, it was gratifying to read in the Mayor's Report "A Stronger, More Resilient New York", that Initiative 11 relates to the urban forest and the need for a seven-year tree pruning cycle and that DPR would use funding to hire more foresters to perform tree risk assessment. In light of that, the FY 2014 budget for pruning was increased.

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.

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 177 needs the removal of an old wading pool, the installation of a new sprinkler system and the rehabilitation of the existing park house.

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 and skaters. The Borough President has dedicated funds for this project. Dermody Square in Bayside needs new walkways and benches. We have supported funding for the new Alley Pond Environmental Center building. It has now been fully funded and is in design. The Community Board members also proudly dedicated a section of Old Oak Pond, on Douglaston Parkway near Northern Boulevard, to former CB 11 member Joseph Hellmann. Funds have been identified by the Parks Department to create an overlook and install benches and railings.

The Douglaston Golf Course is a beautiful public course. Unfortunately, the residents across the street have errant golf balls hitting their property and vehicles causing expensive damage. We are pleased that Council Member Mark Weprin obtained funding for high safety netting; however, after two years we are still waiting for the installation.

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 maintenance.

### **POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

The 111<sup>th</sup> 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.

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.

CB 11 has had an active CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) team despite no funding from the Office of

Emergency Management. There has also been concern expressed by the team that they are not deployed appropriately during emergencies.

### **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. Litter basket service must be increased to six days especially in our busy commercial districts.

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. The district has the second highest median age in the City, 41.6. As the baby-boom era population continues to age, the City must be prepared to meet the needs. 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.

The Samuel Field YM-YWHA operates the C.A.P.E. program 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. They are currently in the planning stages and starting new programs.

### **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. Two years ago, the NYCTA terminated the Q79 bus line on Little Neck Parkway, the only north/south 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. After meeting with the MTA and advocacy by the Queens Civic Congress and Councilman Mark Weprin, the MTA agreed to restore service by continuing the Q36 on Jamaica Avenue 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 Expressway. 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. A Truck Traffic Study, initiated six years ago, made recommendations to improve signage, develop new routes and educate truckers on the City regulations. The promised new signage has not been installed due to design problems with the NYS DOT. CB 11 still wants to see new truck signage on the highways to warn truckers not to exit at non-truck routes.

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. The DOT needs more funds to conduct studies in a timely fashion and funds to implement these measures once approved. An application for a "Slow Zone" was submitted by the local civic association in Auburndale, and approved by DOT. Slow zones, in a defined area, lower the speed limit to 20mph and include the installation of speed humps.

Our commercial areas are underserved with available parking. 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.

Curb repair and replacement must be funded. Curbs are deteriorating and causing trip hazards. 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. The only curbs that have been installed are in conjunction with sidewalk projects. DOT surveyed Union Turnpike with CB 11 and identified the locations most in need of repair. However, there is no funded contract for this project.

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, due to start in 2012, has been delayed due to design disagreements.

Since last year, Bayside residents have complained about aircraft noise after the FAA instituted a new take-off pattern from LaGuardia Airport over that neighborhood. CB11 members rallied with elected officials and met with FAA representatives to discuss their dissatisfaction. An Aviation Roundtable has been requested that includes our elected City, State and Federal representatives, the FAA, NY/NJ Port Authority and local residents to work to improve the situation.

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:

*Jerry Iannece*  
Chair

*Susan Seinfeld*  
District Manager