

*The
Borough
of
Brooklyn*



COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 5

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Statement of Community District Needs 2015 Community Board #5- East New York

Serving the needs of more than 184,000 residents composed of a variety of ethnic and income groups that reflect in a true sense the mosaic mirror of the City of Brooklyn. Its boundaries are from the North: Jackie Robinson Parkway (Queens Border) to the south: Belt Parkway; from the East: Queens City line (border) to the west: Van Sinderen and Louisiana Avenue.

Within our district there are several diverse and distinct neighborhoods such as Cypress Hills, Highland Park, City Line, The New Lots Central Area, and Spring Creek. The need of these neighborhoods varies but their demands are consisted with overall district needs for affordable housing, economic development, health and social services, education, infrastructure, and public safety.

HOUSING

Affordable housing still remains the #1 priority in this district. We will continue to advocate for more development and building of affordable housing including condominiums and co-op apartments. We continue to promote the rehabilitation of the few existing vacant housing for use as co-ops or condominiums so that we can enhance stability in our community.

The Department of Housing Preservation and Development must continue the ongoing communications with the board regarding the planning and selection of developers for the development of housing in "Gateway Estates". A good example of community board and the city agency is the Nehemiah Houses East of Pennsylvania Avenue/Spring Creek and the partnership homes in Cypress Hills.

Spring Creek Towers formally known as Starrett City remains a bastion of middle-class housing for another generation. In July 2009 Governor Paterson signed into law legislation that extended affordable housing for another 30 years to the tenants of the 5881 units housing complex in the district and the complex remains in the Mitchell-Lama affordable housing programs.

We are very proud of all of our "Affordable Housing Complexes" that open in the last few years.

We are now awaiting the completion of phase III of the Nehemiah homes in the Spring Creek area which is scheduled to be completed in 2013. Phase I & II of the Nehemiah homes in spring Creek area have been completed and yield a total of 223 units. The Nehemiah Spring Creek Homes at Gateway Estates is being developed over five phases. When completed, there will be 2219 units of housing, in a combination of one, two and three family homes, 90 eight-unit buildings.

We have consistently sympathized with the city homeless problem by our willingness to accept more than our fair share.

At this time, we are saturated with: three large Homeless Shelter: five Transitional housing: several Residential Care facilities and many illegal halfway and three quarters homes. One women shelter with a capacity of up to 200 sponsored by Samaritan Village opened in 2011 and another shelter sponsored by Services for the Underserved (SUS) with a capacity of 164 single men open in late 2012.

The Institute for Community Living (ICL) held a ground breaking on February 2, 2011 for 82 units of supportive housing for single adults with a completion date of late 2012.

As in comparison to other community districts we have had more than our fair share and therefore request “zero” allocation.

Livonia Avenue Commons: (Livonia Avenue west of Pennsylvania Avenue) On June 26, 2013 the Community Board approved the ULURP applications to start the process on portions of ten blocks along Livonia Avenue between Van Sinderen and Pennsylvania Avenues. The proposed action would facilitate the redevelopment of the city owned properties with approximately 515 new affordable housing units and 83,700 gross square feet of ground floor and or second floor retain and or community facility space. There will be a 60,000 gross square foot stand along community facility operated by the Boys’ Club of New York. Martin Dunn Developer was chosen by the City to do this project.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development and revitalization of commercial and industrial areas is extremely vital for the economic growth of our community. The opening of Gateway Mall in November 2002 was a great start in that direction, with its employment of local residents and its sale is a plus for the local economy. We now wait for phase II of Gateway. We continue to advocate for completion of the revitalization of Fulton Street and New Lots Avenue commercial area and shopping district.

Since the conversion of Pitkin Avenue, Pennsylvania Avenue to Crescent Street as two-way traffic, (September 1998) prime consideration should be given to the development of a commercial corridor along this strip. EDC, DBC, Local LDC’s in conjunction with this board need to set-up long range planning objectives and goals for marketing initiatives if the vacant parcels along the strip.

It is imperative that the State of New York maintain funding for administration of the Empire Zone and our commercial and industrial areas.

YOUTH EDUCATION

Community Board #5 has an increasing need for youth, education, and recreation programs ranging from pre-school to after school programs to summer camps programs. We have three Beacon schools IS 166, 218 & 302 among other recreation programs.

Our Beacon schools in the district have proven to be very successful. These beacon schools are the hallmark programs of the Department of Youth in our community and must be continuously funded. However, the amount of youth programs that the Beacon school served does not meet the demands for the amount of youth services and programs needed in this community with such a large housing density.

We will continue to advocate from DYCD to sponsor or help arrange for sponsors to construct a multi-purpose recreational youth center in this community district. The (PAL) Police Athletic League which housed a youth program closed its door at 127 Pennsylvania Avenue in 2008.

We need to continue to serve our youth. We continue to suffer from the city’s decision to eliminate the position of youth coordinator. Our young people would greatly benefit from expanded employments opportunities, training and mentoring programs. Computer and new technology training programs must be expanded to keep preparing our youth for employment. We need recreational programs that are open past 10 pm during the out of school time. We believe that these types of programs will keep our youth out of trouble.

We now awaits the Boys Club that will be built on Livonia Avenue and Van Sinderen which will be 60,000 square feet containing a gymnasium, auditorium, in-ground swimming pool, music rooms, computer lab, dance theatre, art studios, games rooms, classrooms and a cafeteria.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Our parks are very special to our residents and it is obvious that the Parks Department has a great responsibility in maintaining ours parks. The few staff members are over worked and they have to be commended for the amount of work they do. The maintenance and upkeep of our parks and playgrounds continues and remain a major concern. We have volunteers ready to play a major part in maintaining the parks but we need to help of staff that the Department do not have. An example of this is it takes too long for grass to be cut in order for volunteers to do their part. We are happy that the renovation of both the Robert Venable “State of the Art” and the Sperandeo Brothers Playground are completed. We also need a soccer field that will serve the many youth especially on the north side of the district.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Health and Social Services continues to be one of our highest priorities. There is an increase in “demand use” at our Health and Hospital facility located at 2094 Pitkin Avenue due to the fact of new housing and shelters housing a large homeless population are in need of specialized care.

Our Social Services programs continue to be compounded; currently 42% of our total population received some sort of income support, such as SSI, Public Assistance, Medicaid, AFDC, etc.

We are still in need of a Day Care and an additional Health Care Center west of Pennsylvania Avenue to accommodate the many residents in the area.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Community Board #5 is fully committed to maintaining grace with the officers working in our district and will continue to expand our current relationship with the 75th PCT, PSA #2, and transit polices. The commanding officers are quick to respond to our concerns. We have always supported increase training as a significant measure to increase trust between the people of our community and the Police. We feel that no part our community should be targeted because of the way they look or speak. We believe that individual officers must be held accountable for their actions and behavior.

We have a very large precinct district and our major concern is that we do not have enough officers to sufficiently patrol our district. Our population has increased substantially due to the fact that we have new homes throughout the district and the allocation of police personnel has remained the same.

Now that the new census count is finalized, our district have 184,000 documented residents. We continue to build affordable units and a second phase of Gateway Mall shopping center. At the present time we have only two Community Affairs officers which is not enough to service our district the way it should be serviced. We need Community Affairs officers to be available seven days per week plus available for the many evenings meetings that take place in our community.

Finally our precinct is in need of additional space for the various departments and a state of the art parking lot that will accommodate all the officers’ cars. This will free up parking all over the area and will give visitors places to park closer to the precinct (75th). We support Community Policing and would like to see more police officers on the street, this will eradicate the pack of persistent drug trafficking and usage.

SENIORS

The elderly population in Community Board #5 is increasing. The city must not lose sight of the special needs of our seniors. It is imperative that long range comprehension planning include housing, health and mental care, home care, and senior centers. Only in this way can we ensure continued quality of life and prevent the isolation which places many of our elderly at risk of poor health, unacceptable living conditions, poor nutrition and inaccessible services. The developers

broke ground for forty Coretta Scott-King Senior Apartment during the month of July of 2013 and eighty Senior's apartment being sponsored by St. Paul's Community Baptist Church.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

District wide residents continue to report sewer back-ups during heavy rains. An assessment of the conditions of sewer pipes and catch basins need to be conducted. Defective equipment should be replaced. A regular repair and cleaning schedule should be set up and maintained. Reconstruction of catch basins and sewers along our major thoroughfare (Linden Blvd, Atlantic Avenue) must be given a priority.

We have been successful on conserving water through the Hydro-Lock program. We request that the special wrenches be made available to all agencies so that hydrants can be closed expeditiously.

There is a need for a weekend unit in Department of Environment Protection for noise complaints since most noise occurs during weekends.

TRANSPORTATION-INFRASTRUCTURE

The infrastructure in East New York is one of the worst in the entire City of New York as every street and all major thoroughfares in this community are in need of some kind of repair. In some cases there is need for resurfacing in others its reconstruction or just merely filling potholes. A huge problematic area is the placement and replacement of street signs, traffic and parking signs. It takes an average of five to six months to get signage replaced. We need to get better service in this area.

We consistently rank funding for street repairs and maintenance high on our list of priorities. Due to many years of neglect, many of our streets present hazardous conditions. We support increase staffing to highway operations for maintenance crews to repair potholes and cave in's. The quality of material and work should be more consistent, thereby eliminating the immediate reoccurrence of the conditions. All efforts must be made to implement previous projects and repairs.

There is a major problem in getting a street light fixed. Streets lights are so important because they illuminate our streets and provide a safe environment. Funding must be a major priority to maintain the broken street lights.

CONCLUSION

Community Board is the first level of city government responsibility for the delivery of municipal services in this district. Our ability to perform depends on the amount of cooperation from the city Agencies and allocated funding for the provisions of essential services.

We look forward to the continued support from the Community Assistance Unit (CAU) in their efforts in resolving problematic issues in this district and making it possible for our board to function efficiently.

This Statement of Need highlighted some of the most pressing needs or concerns of our district. Our requested needs are by no means overstated; however, we believe there is much more to be done to enhance the quality of life for current and future residents. The Board will continue to work with City Agencies and Elected Officials to address the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Nathan Bradley

Nathan Bradley
Chairman

Walter Campbell

Walter Campbell
District Manager