



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 3
59 East 4th Street - New York, NY 10003
Phone: (212) 533-5300 - Fax: (212) 533-3659
www.cb3manhattan.org - info@cb3manhattan.org

Gigi Li, Board Chair

Susan Stetzer, District Manager

District Needs Statement for Fiscal Year 2014

Community Board 3 (CB 3) Manhattan covers the Lower East Side and part of Chinatown. CB 3 is bounded by 14th Street to the north, the East River to the east, the Brooklyn Bridge and Fourth Avenue to the south, and Bowery to the west, extending to Baxter and Pearl Streets south of Canal Street. This community is filled with a diversity of cultures, religions, incomes, and languages. Its character comes from its heritage as a historic first stop for many immigrants, which is still represented today. Community Board 3 is one of the largest and most densely populated districts; it has the third highest population density in the city, with over 163,000 people. Community Board 3 residents are very proud of their historic, diverse, and densely populated neighborhood; however, the very characteristics that make it unique also make it challenging to plan and ensure services for all our residents and businesses.

The population of CB 3 is changing in many ways. The 2000 census reported that 38,000 of our residents required income support -- 23% of our population. In 2010, more than 82,000 people received income support -- 50% of our population. This increase may be partially explained by the number of people who receive Medicaid only. Approximately 29% of our residents have household incomes under \$19,000 while over 18% are over \$110,000; the latter illustrating increasing numbers of higher-income households since 2008. The district now has the seventh highest income-to-diversity ratio in the City according to the Furman Center report. While the district has fallen from the 2009 ranking of the fourth highest percentage of seniors living below the poverty line, there is still a poverty rate of 22%, with seniors comprising 20% of that population in 2010. The district continues to attract more people and businesses that support the growing market-rate housing and high-end retail, but many people within this community continue to live on the edge of homelessness and economic survival.

Our demographics illustrate our diversity; CB 3 is tied as the fourth highest racially diverse neighborhood in the City, which reflects our immigrant population of 35.2%. The District's population is approximately 32.4% white, 33.8% Asian, 24.6% Hispanic, and 6.9% African American according to 2010 Census Data.

Community Board 3 has worked to retain its affordable housing stock and its local businesses while still serving the needs of the newcomers to this community; CB 3 recognizes that the displacement of long-time residential and commercial residents has caused great loss to this community. Many small family-owned stores, especially those that serve local retail needs, arts businesses, and nonprofits, have closed and have been replaced by an ever growing number of bars and restaurants. Families have been displaced from their homes because they cannot afford increasing rents. Community-based organizations, which provide essential services for community residents, struggle

to provide more services and to afford their own costs with fewer resources. The growing need to provide for our lower income residents in a gentrifying district as well as provide services for all residents under the most dire budget cuts continues to create a challenge for Community Board 3.

The changing economy into a nightlife destination district has also had the result of quality of life complaints due to nighttime noise becoming the most frequent complaint to the community board office. Community Board 3 continues year after year to lead all community boards with the most commercial noise complaints. These complaints are very difficult to resolve as they span state and local enforcement, with no agency having mandated jurisdiction over the quality of life side of enforcement for most of these complaints.

Economic Development

For the past several years Community Board 3 has watched its local economy change from a diverse retail economy to a destination nightlife area. In residential areas of the district, businesses once served local retail needs; in commercial areas, there was once a variety of niche destination retail, such as lighting, restaurant supply and diverse goods stores. These stores largely no longer exist, and the ones that survive are threatened by rising rents. Rents for commercial properties have exponentially increased with the proliferation of nighttime establishments, resulting in the demise of many retail businesses and leaving streets with little or no daytime foot traffic because storefronts are now shuttered during the day. The Center for an Urban Future identified District 3 neighborhoods as having at least 227 chain stores, with the East Village having the third most chains in the entire City. This continued proliferation of chains has also resulted in fewer storefronts for independently-owned businesses.

CB 3 has conducted several surveys to assess storefront vacancy rate and the percentage of liquor-licensed establishments. Based on a survey completed in July 2012 and compared to our 2009 survey, on Avenue A alone, 8% of storefronts are currently vacant compared to 9% in 2009, while 35% of active businesses in 2012 are liquor-licensed establishments compared to 36% in 2009. Consequently, these depressed areas of empty storefronts during the daytime offer little attraction to new daytime tenants and our residential areas are devastated by this lack of local retail services. Our property owners share in perpetuating this condition by allowing storefronts to remain vacant rather than renting them to retail tenants at lower but still profitable rates. This Community Board has observed that it is possible to rent these storefronts. Commercial properties owned by cooperative residential buildings are renting storefronts to daytime retail businesses successfully and achieving the preferred solution for this community, that being more butchers, bakers, greengrocers, shoe repair stores, dry cleaners, and other stores that provide retail goods and services for residents.

CB 3 has also surveyed merchants and discovered that rents, taxes and utilities present the biggest challenges to their maintenance of viable businesses. In particular, property tax increases passed along to commercial tenants have proven to be a heavy burden, often resulting in the inability to continue operating.

CB 3 needs programs and solutions to attract a diversity of retail businesses and to allow for affordable storefront rents. We have studied the economic development efforts of our

federal, state and city economic development agencies and have worked with local agencies. However, we have not found programs and services productive for our businesses. We encourage our local officials to work with CB 3's Retail Diversity Subcommittee to establish alternative programs to assist our local businesses.

Housing and Land Use

The crisis in affordable housing in Community Board 3 continues to worsen. The Furman Center's State of New York City's Housing and Neighborhoods 2011 report notes that the median rent for all renters in our community district has increased an astoundingly high 27% in the six years since 2005 (from \$745/month to \$946/month). With a rental vacancy rate of 2.6%, units are very hard to come by and affordable units even harder. The Furman Center report ranks this board's vacancy rate 49th out of 55 New York City neighborhoods. This phenomenon is attributable to a number of factors including the deregulation of rent-restricted existing housing units, government cut-backs in subsidized housing and rent vouchers, increasing rents in New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments and the expiration of restrictions on former Section-8 and Mitchell-Lama housing.

Significant governmental action is necessary to curb the alarming change in the community's profile from the most historically important immigrant community in the United States of America – where low-income people from every corner of the world were able to gain a foothold in this county – to a neighborhood which is increasingly stratified and upper income. The Furman Center report says “renter households in Community Board 3 who have lived in their units for four years or less pay more than twice as much as their neighbors who have lived in the units longer.” We call for all of the following actions to slow the growth of gentrification and to ensure that long term residents can remain in decent affordable housing:

Increase the Stock of the Subsidized Affordable Housing – Over the last decade, federal, state and local government have drastically reduced funding available for the construction or renovation of new affordable housing. CB 3 was once a prime beneficiary of new subsidized low-and moderate-income housing, but the rate of this production has now slowed to a trickle. Virtually no new Section-8, public housing or Mitchell-Lama housing has been built to replace lost housing stock. The almost complete elimination of Section-8 vouchers has also made it vastly more difficult for low-income and homeless families to find decent affordable housing on the private market.

Preserve Existing Public Housing – The over 14,000 NYCHA housing units in CB 3 and the approximately 164,000 units elsewhere in NYC are threatened because of the chronic federal underfunding of this essential housing resource. The cutbacks in funding over the past decade have resulted in under - and deferred -maintenance, raising rents and fees, and threats of land sales. Full federal funding is a key to the preservation of this critical housing resource, but the city should also augment the extremely tight NYCHA budget. The current practice of requiring NYCHA to pay for police services and of charging Payments In Lieu Of Taxes (PILOT) should end immediately.

Although NYCHA has proposed the sale of underdeveloped land they own as a revenue generator, we believe that any such transaction should be through a long-term lease rather than outright sale and only after a community notification process which allows for meaningful local input. The housing that results should be majority affordable with

preference going to current NYCHA residents. Any sale of NYCHA property in this community board should have a 50% local preference.

We also are concerned about some public-private partnership initiatives and new programs being developed nationally to modify the basic nature of public housing – such as the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) and the Moving to Work Program (MTW). Any use of the RAD program must be implemented with significant public input, and although MTW Basic could be useful, Community Board 3 opposes NYCHA participation in the Enhanced MTW program.

Reverse the Trend of Deregulating Rents –The Furman Center reports that over the past 30 years, rent regulated units declined from 62.7% of the rental stock to only 47.2%. That loss of affordable housing has tremendous repercussions because, in CB 3 alone, the median market rent in 2011 was \$2,680/month, while the regulated rent was less than half that amount, \$1,205. The loss of this housing stock has had a profound effect on our community. We must reverse the deregulation that has been seriously eating away at our stock of affordable housing since 1993.

Upgrade Enforcement of Housing and Building Codes and Fund Community-Based Housing Organizations – Because affordable housing is as threatened as it is, we must fully utilize available governmental enforcement tools to assure that existing housing is maintained adequately and that developers do not alter the housing stock in ways that threaten existing tenants or force them from their homes. The City Housing Preservation and Development and Buildings must vigorously enforce the Housing, Building and Zoning Codes. HPD needs to ensure that residential structures are adequately maintained safety standards are met at all times, and that threats to children's health from asthma triggers, lead and vermin are eradicated. DOB must make sure that that buildings are not overdeveloped beyond the legal limits and fire safety regulations are not sidestepped when additions are built on tenement buildings. More effective plan examination and increased enforcement is necessary so that non-compliant development does not go unchecked. DOB must systematically follow up on violations and ensures that all violations, including those overseen by the Environmental Control Board, are corrected and the fines are not merely absorbed by developers as part of their cost of doing business. Legislation is needed to increase these fines to a level that that makes them a real deterrent to over-development.

We fear that federal cutbacks in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, which has long been used to support HPD and DOB enforcement, will diminish these essential code enforcement services and further threaten our housing stock. We cannot support such cuts.

Adequate funding to community-based non-profit housing advocacy and legal organizations is essential to safeguard existing affordable housing. These groups provide essential assistance to tenants who are fighting the lack of basic services, building code violations, and threatened evictions. Without the work of these community-based organizations, harassment of rent-regulated tenants will be unchecked and long-term residents displaced. The city must increase funding of these groups that provide the first line of defense to community residents.

Legal Reforms to Increase Privately Developed Affordable Housing – Although CB 3 is now located in the economic exclusion zone of the 421-a tax abatement program, we

continue to support revisions to the 421-a program that would produce more affordable housing. We believe that the program should be altered to:

- 1) Eliminate the use of negotiable certificates;
- 2) Mandate that only 30% of on-site affordable housing satisfies the abatement requirements; and
- 3) Mandate that developers taking advantage of both 421-a tax abatements and inclusionary zoning bonuses should allocate 40% of the on-site units for affordable housing.

Make Buildings Green – City policy needs to provide greater incentives to low-income housing providers to reduce energy usage. NYC's 2030 plan sets the goal of reducing greenhouse gases by 30% and since buildings account for 94% of electricity use, energy audits can identify retrofits to reduce waste in lighting, heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems. Federal weatherization funds have been cut 40% in the current fiscal year according to local program administrators, leaving the weatherization program unable to serve many low-income buildings that have applied. The City should provide matching grants to low-income HDFCs to encourage energy upgrades that will reduce energy costs for low-income buildings, thereby preserving affordable housing while also reducing carbon emissions.

Nightlife and Licensing

Community Board 3, especially the Lower East Side and East Village, has been a nightlife destination for people for many years. As a result, there has been a great influx of people from other areas of the City and outside the City to our neighborhoods to patronize nighttime businesses. Hundreds of licensed restaurants, cafes, bars, lounges, clubs, music and multi-level venues are now located in much of the East Village, Lower East Side, and many parts of Chinatown. Increasing numbers of hotels are being developed which include destination nightlife businesses. Many offer rooftop and other outdoor areas that add to the noise impacting residents in their homes. Eating and drinking establishments continue to replace small retail businesses on avenues and residential side streets, with a resulting decrease in daytime foot traffic throughout the District due to the late operating hours of these establishments. Existing businesses seek to upgrade their liquor licenses, alter or expand their operating methods, and commercially use outdoor areas, such as backyards, side yards and rooftops, in an effort to attract more patrons.

While eating and drinking establishments provide economic, cultural and other benefits to the City and State, the density of these businesses in the District has caused increased late night noise, vehicular and pedestrian traffic, rodent and sanitation problems, and other quality of life concerns for residents and other businesses. Further, while sidewalk cafes add vitality and movement to streetscapes, an increase in sidewalk café permits issued to eating and drinking establishments in CB 3 has also resulted in increased sidewalk congestion and noise, especially in evenings when residents are trying to sleep. Residents complain to 311, the police and the Community Board about noise and congestion from patrons standing in front of nighttime businesses and moving between businesses, and from music emanating from businesses. Storefronts on residential side streets, which were grandfathered as non-compliant commercial use for local retail needs, now contain eating and drinking establishments with attendant noise and traffic, causing great tension between residents and businesses. Consequently, some of the benefits derived from these licensed businesses are offset by the cost to community residents and the City from the increase in service delivery issues resulting from these conditions.

Issues of noise, disorderly conduct, traffic congestion and overcrowding are severely taxing the resources of overburdened City agencies, such as the New York Police Department, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Sanitation, and Department of Transportation. With 1,580 311 calls in the period of June 2011 through May 2012, CB 3 has the highest number of commercial noise complaints in NYC. Yet budget cuts and increased use of the overtaxed 311 system has resulted in wait times of a half hour to an hour on weekend evenings. This district is also the third highest in Manhattan for failing rat inspections. According to the Department of Health, garbage from the numerous eating and drinking establishments is a contributing factor to the rodent problem. Police officers are expected to respond to the majority of these growing complaints and conditions, yet the staffing at our precincts continues to decrease yearly. The police are not equipped to address the noise and congestion from the many people moving between businesses at night, and noise from the cars, taxis and buses overwhelming the street infrastructure cannot be addressed as service delivery issues.

Given that this district is suffering from such conditions while the City is capitalizing on the reputation and revenue that the nightlife industry has provided, the City needs to implement more effective policies governing enforcement, and provide more staffing and resources to its enforcement agencies. This includes increasing police staffing and returning specialized units such as cabaret units to all police precincts, in order to address the growing noise, congestion and other issues resulting from the growth of nighttime businesses. Allocating resources for increased weekend and nighttime enforcement by all agencies would better address complaints regarding specific establishments when they are made, as well as noisy and congested weekend conditions generally. Precincts also need to receive training in implementing the “6 in 60” law which allows them to document non crimes, such as violations of operating stipulations. The City should create legislation that would restrict sidewalk cafés in areas whose use cannot accommodate them, rather than allowing them on any sidewalk where there is an eight foot clearance. CB 3 also urges the City to create legislation to differentiate between businesses seeking to obtain permits to extend food service to sidewalk seating and those seeking to extend their bar space outdoors. Businesses should also be required to create waiting areas within their sidewalk café boundaries to ensure clear sidewalks for pedestrians where cafes operate.

CB 3 spends most of its time and resources reviewing nearly 1,000 liquor license applications each year. While CB 3 will attempt to resolve complaints about businesses and minimize the potential impacts of new businesses through agreement, its office does not have the resources necessary to address enforcement issues, process the 1,000 liquor license applications it receives and address all of the community concerns regarding businesses and applications. The most numerous complaints in this Community Board, as well as increasing numbers of community boards throughout the City, are quality of life complaints associated with nightlife businesses. The Community Board office spends more time addressing noise complaints from nightlife businesses than on any other issue, which results in less staff and time available for other community issues. Most of these complaints are not the result of illegal activities by businesses or their customers, but the result of bad or no city planning for areas where late night businesses are allowed to coexist with residential neighbors. The City has yet to address these issues through urban planning or enforcement.

Youth

School-aged youth and their families rely on community-based programs such as Out-of-School Time (OST) and Beacon community centers after-school hours, on weekends, and on holidays. These programs are vital in providing youth a safe place to learn and grow, promoting positive self-esteem, fostering youth development, and developing leadership skills. There are currently three Beacon centers located within Community Board 3, the Chinatown YMCA Beacon (at MS-131), Grand Street Settlement Beacon (at 80 Pitt St.), and University Settlement Beacon (at East Side Community HS). According to the 2011 Furman report, 47.4% of households residing within Community Board 3 have a household income of \$38,189 or less. If free afterschool programs were to close, these families would not be able to afford private afterschool care.

Older youth and at-risk youth particularly need employment and job training opportunities such as the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) and the Young Adult Internship Programs (YAIP). The number of SYEP job slots available citywide continues to decrease yearly while youth unemployment rates are at record highs. Community Board 3 hosts several SYEP contractors, including Chinese American Planning Council, Henry Street Settlement, and Grand Street Settlement. Providing as many youth as possible with job opportunities will help produce critically important and positive outcomes, – such as higher lifetime earnings, higher rates of high school graduation and higher rates of school attendance.

Child Care –Parents of young children are also struggling. Citizens Committee for Children estimates that 34.5% of children under 18 in Community Board 3 live in families with incomes below the federal poverty standards. While our district has many strong child care providers, all operate with long waiting lists of eligible children. Community Board 3 needs additional subsidized child care to support low-income working parents and to provide educational opportunities for their children.

Youth Aging Out of Foster Care –Teens in foster care age out without having acquired the skills needed for a successful transition to independence. According to the NYC Administration for Children Services, in March of 2011, a total of 288 children from Community Board 3 were placed in foster care. When they reach the age of majority, they are presumed to be productive, self-reliant and fully self-sufficient. However, these young people leave the foster care system, according to the Children's Aid Society, "without the knowledge, skills, experience, attitudes, habits, and relationships that will enable them to be productive and connected members of society". It is necessary to maintain and expand programs to help these young people make this transition.

Youth Violence – The past two years have seen continuing criminal activity involving guns and knives activity in Community Board 3. This is reported to be mostly geographically (turf) based and includes younger teens. The NYPD, NYCHA, the District Attorney's office, and community non-profits are currently grappling with this problem. Problematic areas such as Campos Plaza, Smith Houses, Baruch Houses are in the vicinity of these locations. All agencies working with this population agree that proactive programs are needed, particularly for at-risk youth, such as employment and training opportunities, and programs other than sports. Families of these youth are also in need of intervention and support system programming. Community centers are vital to

promote positive self-esteem, youth development and leadership skills among young adults in our community.

Without family or any other dependable adults to rely on for assistance, these young people are, not surprisingly, at high risk of homelessness, joblessness, illness, incarceration, welfare dependency, early childbearing, and sexual and physical victimization. Youth aging out of foster care should be provided with a set amount of funding that they could access for a variety of needs, including school, housing, health, etc.

Education

District 1 Community Education Council and part of District 2 Community Education Council are within Community Board 3. In District 1, a recent survey of parents by the CEC identified the top 3 needs as follows:

Enrichment – There has been a loss of music, art, theater, movement, yoga, dance, and science programs due to decreasing discretionary funding and a greater emphasis on the English Language Arts and Math state exams by which students, teachers, administration, schools, districts, cities and states are judged.

Building Issues – Overcrowding plagues District 1 schools, given that many buildings are 70 to 100 years old and more than 85% contain one or more schools. There is a need to improve facilities to include elevators/barrier-free buildings, gyms, libraries, science labs and facilities for art, dance, movement, music, academic intervention and support therapies.

Budget – As budgets have been cut or remained the same despite increasing costs, schools are struggling to fund courses, curriculum, supports, materials and supplies. Additional school budgets cuts will result in a reduction of teachers and non-teaching support personnel, as well as a continuation of long-standing shortages of funding for basics such as paper, postage and classroom supplies.

Additional District 1 needs include:

- 1) Decreasing class sizes, especially in our early grades where small class size is of such great importance for improved long-term academic outcomes, and closing the achievement gap;
- 2) Expanding and improving Middle School choices, especially for high performing students in the district; and
- 3) Increasing Dual Language programs, especially Spanish and Mandarin, at the elementary and stand-alone middle school levels.

In District 2:

Serving English Language Learners is a priority, particularly for meeting the needs of those who arrive in this country at middle school-age or above. This community needs supportive services to address the emotional and adjustment issues of some students who are raised abroad and move to the United States when they are school-age to live with parents they hardly know.

In both districts:

There is a need for data to determine the future need for additional school facilities as co-locations and new housing starts/housing development continue on the Lower East Side, especially related to SPURA. We find that there is a demonstrable need for a shared District 1 and District 2 Pre-K to 8th grade school to be built as part of the Seward Park Mixed Use Project Site. The ULURP for the SPURA project lays out the full justification for the inclusion of a school.

Health

The United Hospital Fund's Health Districts for Union Square and Lower Manhattan (309/310) overlap with the borders of Community Board 3. Much of the data collected in this district shows significantly greater disparities in health outcomes depending upon race and economic status than other districts. Caucasians and Asians constitute approximately one-third of the population, Hispanics make up about one-quarter, and Blacks/African Americans and Other Races comprise the remainder. In 2010, 50% of Community Board 3 residents were receiving some form of income support compared to 23% in 2000. Accordingly, we fear plans to eliminate DOHMH's Office of Health Disparities, and feel that greater attention must be paid to data collection and analysis as well as implementing evidence-based interventions in our community.

Diabetes – Diabetes disproportionately impacts Community Board 3 because of its racial and economic profile. According to the DOHMH's 2009 Community Health Survey, this geographic area had among the highest rates of diabetes diagnoses in Manhattan, despite some improvement in the results from 2010 and the fact that approximately a third of New Yorkers are not aware that they have the disease. The district also ranked in the second highest quartile for smoking, which is a risk factor for diabetes complications. This district needs culturally appropriate ongoing and targeted efforts aimed at helping our residents manage their weight to help prevent the onset of diabetes, including more and better outlets for increased physical activity; education about and access to affordable, healthy foods and how to prepare them; and regular healthcare with preventive care and early screening. The Board also calls for expanded and enhanced outreach to help residents stop smoking.

Alcohol Use – The 2009 Community Survey found that Community Board 3 ranked in the second highest quartile in Manhattan for binge drinking. The 2010 survey showed that both heavy drinking – defined as an average of more than 2 drinks per day for men and more than 1 drink per day for women and binge drinking – 5 or more drinks on one occasion in the last 30 days – has reached epidemic proportions in this community. Excessive alcohol use is associated with premature death, injury, absenteeism and other medical and social problems. These statistics exist alongside other risk factors, such as the demographic profile of community residents, and environmental factors, such as the high number of bars and other outlets that serve alcohol located within this district. A more comprehensive public health effort is needed that seeks to address the interaction of multiple factors to reduce the incidence of alcohol-related problems.

HIV/AIDS – The area was in the second lowest quartile for reported rates of condom use at last sexual activity and HIV testing in the past year. In 2010, the community was in the highest third for men who had sex with at least one man (MSM) in the last year. Among

MSM diagnosed with HIV in 2009, 68% identified as black or Hispanic. Hispanic respondents were more likely than black or white respondents to report unprotected anal intercourse. Given Community Board 3's large Hispanic population, it is essential that this community receive culturally appropriate awareness and education efforts targeted at promoting correct and consistent condom use during anal intercourse to prevent the spread of HIV among men who have sex with men. Moreover, there is a continued need for access to needle exchange programs, and funding is needed to enhance existing programs and to develop better linkages between programs in order to reduce fragmentation of service delivery.

Mental Health – According to DOHMH's EpiQuery for 2010 Community Health Survey, the community ranked in the middle third for use of counseling or prescription medication for a mental health problem and in the highest third for a diagnosis of depression. There is a significant need in this district for culturally competent mental health services for residents, particularly for the Chinese and Latino populations. There are limited mental health services for pediatric and adolescent populations and for the LGBT community. Funding for the Children Under Five Mental Health Initiative, currently provided by University Settlement in Community Board 3, has been threatened each year and should be made permanent. Community Board 3 needs more providers with appropriate training to meet community needs, particularly for our under-served populations.

Asthma – The Community Survey found that our area ranked in the highest third for adults reporting one episode of asthma or an asthma attack within the past 12 months and in the middle third for those reporting attacks for which no medical visit was required. This community needs funding to reduce known asthma triggers, such as poor housing conditions and rodent and insect infestation, as well as to increase education and awareness of how to reduce these triggers and thereby reduce the incidence of asthma.

Access to Care – As the community board with the fourth highest poverty rate in Manhattan, with 22.2% of Lower East Side adults living in poverty in 2010 and a child poverty rate of 30.9%, access to high quality, affordable health care is among the highest needs in this community. According to United Hospital Fund, the uninsured rate for non-elderly adults for our neighborhood was 15.6%, the fifth highest rate in Manhattan and 50% to 100% higher than surrounding community boards. More than a third of residents were receiving Medicaid, compared to 20% for the borough as a whole. Almost 69% of births in CB 3 were paid for by Medicaid, compared to 60% citywide and 38% in Manhattan. The Mayor's Office of Health Insurance ranked Community Board 3 in the second highest quartile for adults eligible for public health insurance but not enrolled and ninth for the City overall. Being uninsured, under-insured or having public health insurance is a known barrier to obtaining health care and results in poorer health outcomes. Community Board 3 needs increased funding for community-based health providers that serve low- and moderate-income residents with and without insurance. These providers need to offer culturally and linguistically competent medical services, expanded evening and weekend hours and an emphasis on targeted, ongoing outreach, care coordination, health education that includes how to access appropriate medical attention, and preventative screenings and treatments. DOHMH must help providers and residents undertake community needs assessments and community health planning. Increased efforts are needed to enroll eligible residents in Medicaid and related programs, such as Family Health Plus and Child Health Plus.

Seniors

According to the Furman Center, Community Board 3 ranked 14th for population 65 and over in 2010-2011, which is an increase from its 17th rank in 2000. More than half of those 60 and over in our board are foreign born, the second highest ranking in Manhattan. Spanish and Chinese are the two most popular primary languages other than English. Given the growing senior population, CB 3 strongly calls for the continuation and strengthening of culturally and linguistically appropriate supports and services that allow senior citizens to remain in their homes and communities, such as congregate and home-delivered meals, case management and coordination, home care services, including non-Medicaid funded homecare, safe and reliable van transportation, healthcare, recreational activities, programs like Visiting Neighbors that provide much-needed companionship and assistance with essential activities such as grocery shopping and affordable, accessible housing. The closing of additional senior centers cannot be an option.

Among older community residents, fall-related hospitalization rates per 100,000 for those aged 65 and older were in the second highest quartile based upon 2007 to 2009 Statewide Planning and Research Cooperative System data. The study found that Asian Pacific Islanders, whom make up more than a quarter of our population, have the highest fall-related death rates among the oldest adults. The Union Square-Lower East Side had the highest fall-related deaths among women and the second highest rate in Manhattan. Services like Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (“NORC”) provide critical supports to help seniors age safely at home, and funding for existing programs should be maintained while opportunities to expand the NORC programs in our community should be explored.

Homeless Services

We continue to see homeless adults in the area of the district north of Houston Street. Because not all of this population fit into the chronically homeless category, it is important to conduct outreach that can focus on all homeless individuals instead of the current policy of outreaching to only chronically homeless individuals. This focus on people who have been homeless for over two years does not allow for concrete outreach to newly homeless while they may be more willing to accept services.

Police Department

Community Board 3 is within the jurisdiction of the 5th, 7th and 9th Precincts, and Public Service Area 4 (PSA 4). Our district is an increasingly popular nightlife destination and CB 3 has the dubious distinction of having more 311 commercial noise (bar) complaints than any other community board in the City. Dedicated cabaret units are needed as part of all the local precincts to focus on this problem, as well as supplementary police staffing on weekends. This would benefit the owners/operators of nightlife establishments as well as the neighbors. Common sense enforcement is more likely to be routine if specialized officers are dispatched to deal with complaints. Their ongoing relationship with the establishments would allow cabaret unit officers to distinguish between problematic operators and nuisance complaints, to the benefit of everyone.

For some occasions, the City needs to expand the force of Traffic Enforcement Agents (TEAs) deployed by NYPD's Lower Manhattan traffic command. Increased infrastructure construction (water tunnel, East Houston reconstruction, etc.) is causing/will cause congestion due to constricted traffic patterns and construction movements. TEAs are also needed to support DOT's initiatives – bike lanes, bus lanes, and pedestrian safety measures.

There has been a significant increase of bicycling in recent years, so there is now a need for enforcement of traffic laws regarding dangerous and illegal cyclist behavior such as driving against traffic, sidewalk cycling, red light running and failure to yield to pedestrians.

We support the Auxiliary Patrol Units (APU) and the Auxiliary Patrol Support Units (APSU). The APSU are specialized Rescue Units which cover multiple precincts in support of the NYPD Emergency Service Unit (ESU). There are never enough trained, uniformed volunteers in times of crisis – particularly during this time of decreased staff.

Fire Department

The response area of nine fire companies in four battalions currently serves Community Board 3. The neighborhoods of the Lower East Side and Chinatown are some of the most densely populated areas of the city and contain hundreds of tenements over a century old that are structurally vulnerable. In light of multiple alarm fires in our district in recent years, as well as the thousands of emergencies that the FDNY respond to on a normal basis, CB 3 opposes any cuts to first responders, including potential fire house closures. Public safety depends on it.

Sanitation

The serious rat infestation problem in Community Board 3 is a public health and safety issue. We are the third highest community board in Manhattan for failing rat inspections, and we have the third lowest percentage of acceptably clean streets for all community boards. This points to the great need of increased service in CB 3, such as complete replacement of baskets with rat proof baskets as well as increased cleaning and pick up. Our district is growing as a destination nightlife district, but we do not have the sanitation infrastructure to accommodate this. The Department of Health has stated that the number of eating/drinking businesses contributes to this problem, but there is no plan to deal with the problem. The City considers that this unplanned business growth contributes to the tax base, but the revenues are not used to provide services to accommodate this growth. We are also a very densely populated and still growing residential area. There are many old tenements without access to indoor storage or compactors. Because of the residences and nightlife, we are left with many plastic bags of garbage as well as overflowing baskets and open "rat-restaurant" baskets. Enforcement is needed for garbage storage and removal by street vendors. Policy concerning vendors must be reviewed and modified so that vendors are able to operate consistent with regulations.

Public Transportation

The Community Board 3 district is underserved by public transportation. This problem is exacerbated by the heavy traffic on our street. The closure of Park Row and the congestion through and around Chatham Square continues to be a major challenge. CB 3

urges the City and its various agencies to improve the environment for public transportation within CB 3 by taking strong, creative measures to reduce traffic congestion.

We continue to oppose cuts in service on any bus route within the district. Despite the district's density, many of our residents are poorly served by the subway system and live more than half a mile from the nearest subway stop. The eastern and southernmost residents of the district will continue to be denied public transportation until the MTA restores or extends cross-town bus routes, especially on 8th Street on the weekend and at night and on Grand Street. The recent implementation of bus service cuts (June 2010) has had an immediate and negative impact on the already limited transportation options in the district and further reduced access to the disabled. Some of those service cuts have recently been partially restored.

Private Bus and Van Services

There is a striking need for a bus storage plan to accommodate the bus layover needs of various types of coach buses and vans that provide private services in our district. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of companies providing transportation services with coach buses using the streets in Chinatown and the surrounding neighborhoods to layover and to load and unload passengers. The use of passenger vans contributes to traffic and parking congestion, especially in Chinatown. The operation and idling of diesel buses on the narrow streets of the district creates health and safety problems. Community Board 3 welcomed the narrowing of South Street, which has reduced bus layover there and increased public access to the waterfront, but it is critical that the City implement a realistic bus storage plan to avoid unplanned dispersal of coach buses in our neighborhoods.

CB 3 needs regulatory/enforcement reform at all levels of government to manage the interstate bus industry (generally referred to as "Chinatown buses") and its inevitable growth. In order to improve traffic flow and public safety, the City needs a plan to manage several overlapping issues – bus storage (parking/layover), operations (loading/unloading) and inspections (safety/pollution). Successful management of these issues will only succeed if the plan is comprehensive and enforceable. CB 3 believes the City should limit the number of bus companies and buses allowed to operate in the area. In addition, locations for loading and unloading must be restricted and designated.

Illegal Parking

Produce wholesalers and private limousines routinely violate parking regulations and monopolize small streets and sidewalks, causing sanitation, parking, safety and transportation problems. Enforcement is needed as well as a plan to allow these wholesalers and limousines to comply. They are all small businesses that serve the community and cannot be driven out of business by targeted enforcement without giving them an option to comply with regulations.

Sidewalk and Road Surface Conditions

Sidewalks and curb cuts are in disrepair, which is a particular hardship for people who rely on wheelchairs for mobility. It is very disappointing that the City was not able to

meet their agreement to make pedestrian walkways handicapped accessible by 2010. We encourage an expedited schedule for the remaining installations, since missing curb cuts reduces access to mass transit and causing safety issues by forcing people to travel in the street where there is busy traffic. Curb cuts that do not meet smoothly with the street bed should be repaired and missing curb cuts should be installed.

Problems with ponding and with storm drain blockage make it difficult for pedestrians to cross some streets in the district. Some process improvements are necessary to identify and address these problems.

Pedestrian Safety near Bridges

The areas around the entrances to the Williamsburg and Manhattan Bridges and the FDR Drive are particularly dangerous for pedestrians. Recently there has been improvement along Delancey Street for pedestrian safety. The next step along Delancey Street should be for NYPD to assign a crossing guard, especially at Clinton and Delancey Street, given the number of nearby schools. Similar safety improvements are needed on other traffic corridors, such as Essex and Canal Street.

TLC Enforcement

The destination nightlife areas in Community Board 3 have become areas of severe traffic congestion on the weekends, particularly Saturday nights. Much of this traffic is comprised of taxis and CB 3 has continued to receive numerous complaints of taxi horn honking that continues into the early morning hours and disturbs the quality of life of residents who cannot sleep. This is another situation in which unplanned business growth contributes to the tax base, but the revenues are not used to provide services to accommodate this growth and maintain quality of life for residents.

Bicycle Facilities

There has been a significant increase of bicycling in recent years, largely as a result of progress implementing the 1997 NYC Bicycle Master Plan. DOT should continue to include reduction of pedestrian-cyclist conflicts as a design consideration of all bicycle facilities. The increased use of bicycles citywide has given rise to the need for bike parking. The lack of adequate bike parking facilities is an impediment to bicycle usage and also results in bicycles chained to public street fixtures and obstruction of sidewalks. DOT should augment its CityRacks Program, which allows the public to request bicycle racks one at a time, with planning efforts to systemically identify areas with a need for more bicycle parking and suitable locations for installation.

Environment

Illegal diesel idling of trucks and buses is a serious public health problem in Community Board 3. The NYPD does not enforce idling laws, and the 311 system cannot generate a timely response. Further, DEP violations for idling are often dismissed. The city must have an enforcement mechanism that will focus and enforce idling regulations.

The demands of climate change and environmental health needs require community participation in concert with a re-orientation of government agencies towards environmental planning. Community Board 3 has few City resources allocated to reduce

air pollutant exposure and asthma triggers despite a disproportionate amount of air pollution sources from the expanded 14th Street Con Edison fossil fuel power plant and vehicular congestion from its three bridges, transportation corridors (e.g., the FDR Drive and Canal Street), vehicle idling, and curb-side "Chinatown Bus" operations. Air pollutant exposure is compounded by the heat island effect of roads, artificial turf, and bare roofs, which raise temperatures and elevate ozone levels. Shockingly, unlike other areas of the City, the extent of these environmental health hazards within our district is largely un-documented.

Parks/Recreation/ Cultural Affairs/ Landmarks

Community Board 3, like most districts in New York City, does not meet the City Planning Commission's guidelines for per capita open space. The open space/population ratio is approximately 0.7 acres per 1,000 people. By comparison, the Governor's Open Space Report recommended 2.5 acres per 1,000; and NYC averages 1.5 acres. The open space that we do have is not evenly distributed throughout the district. The area west of Avenue A and the Chinatown area lack adequate open space. Exacerbating the problem is the increased use of existing parks by individuals and groups for organized events from both inside and outside the community. Increasingly, groups from outside of our district are using CB 3 parks. While we do not seek to exclude outside groups from our parks, we do feel that priority should be given to local groups. Our emphasis on local groups includes a re-examination of Park Department policies that restrict the use of parks and play areas during daytime hours.

A few community gardens under the Spitzer Agreement have been transferred to the Parks Department, but at the same time, the fate of many others is still uncertain. For sites not being transferred to Parks, the City should consider transferring them to local community land trust organizations that can maintain the locations as permanent open community space. Once open space is lost to development, it is very unlikely that it will ever be replaced.

It is one thing to have land set aside as a park, but our parks also need constant maintenance by trained DPR professionals. The number of full time park workers is down 25%, and the welfare to work job training Parks Opportunity Program is down 25% to 50% according to figures given by Parks staff in June 2012. Likewise, funding for park maintenance is equally scarce. Many of the parks in our district have suffered from years of neglect and deferred maintenance, and now are experiencing increasing levels of usage. Increasing the number of full time, permanent park workers and staffed playgrounds will allow for fuller use of our parks and play areas.

CB 3 has found that Parks Department buildings in our community have been used as storage for equipment and supplies for Citywide Parks operations. Given that CB 3 already has so few open space and community facilities, our local parks should not bear this unfair burden of being storage for other neighborhoods. Parks Department should allow the public to reclaim use of the Parks buildings (particularly those within Sara D. Roosevelt Park) by redistributing storage more fairly to outside areas and programming public use of those buildings.

CB 3 has the third highest failure rate for rat inspections, and has continued to be over-run with rats year after year. Cutbacks in the Parks Department have worsened the problem, with the two worst parks being Columbus Park and Tompkins Square Park. The

Parks Department has only one full time exterminator, which does not allow for adequate baiting.

Although many of the Parks Department staff has been trained to meet the need of more extermination, they do not have the years of experience and expertise that comes with experience. More full-time experienced extermination and staff to maintain and clean the parks is necessary to protect the health and public safety of the community. Until it has enough staff to adequately deal with the problem, Parks should work with the Health Department for regular and frequent strategic baiting. The rodent problem is also exacerbated by the Parks practice of leaving garbage in plastic bags on the sidewalk for pickup – sometimes for hours or overnight. Parks should work with other agencies to resolve this issue as well as provide better storage for garbage. Attention should be given to rat-proof wastebaskets and working with food vendors and providers to ensure clean up.

The permitting procedure for recreational permits has improved in having fields accessible to local groups and for fair distribution. However, CB 3 asks that Parks increase transparency in the permitting process, as well as revisit public procedures for reviewing and re-approving light usage for night use of fields. CB 3 asks that Parks continue to maintain this fair distribution of park permitting time for local groups and to upgrade its computer system to improve its permitting process.

Also, Parks needs to ensure review from the NYPD and the Community Board for larger events. A concert permitted for the same day as a large parade that requires police staffing might end up with potential problems. Additional Parks Enforcement Police and sound monitoring equipment are needed to deal with the negative effects of these events on the residents surrounding Tompkins Square Park. PEP officers, on a regular, sustained basis, need to be assigned to the major CB 3 parks. All events need to be monitored by decibel meters with trained staff.

Toilets in CB 3 parks and playgrounds are badly needed. There are several locations of which the Parks Department is already aware, but some of the longest standing needs are the toilets in Luther Gulick Park, Corlears Hook Park, and Sol Lain Parks. The lack of functioning toilets in this park is exacerbated by its proximity to the East River Park amphitheater. The numerous concerts in the amphitheater and the continuing overflow of pedestrians through Corlears Hook Park during concert season make this a higher priority. Since 2008, Parks has not yet advised CB 3 of progress concerning toilets in most parks.

In recognition of the history of the whole CB 3 area, a Landmark Subcommittee was created to address the various issues concerning the possible landmarking of individual properties or designation of historic districts. CB 3 anticipates working closely with all parties involved in this issue, including: community organizations, government agencies, and officials.

CB 3 asks that the Landmark Commission expand its survey of ideal sites for landmark preservation similar to the one it has already done for the East Village. Such landmark studies should include Chinatown and the Lower East Side.

New York City Libraries

Community Board 3 has five branches of the New York Public Library (NYPL) system: Chatham Square, Hamilton Fish, Ottendorfer, Seward Park, and Tompkins Square. While we appreciate the renovation of our libraries, private donations and discretionary funds from our elected officials have paid for much of the work; CB 3 branches have the highest levels of use in the City, and preserving library openings to six days a week and restoring full operating hours is an utmost need. The libraries are especially necessary to our many low- and moderate-income residents who depend on the libraries for access to books and film and who use the library as their only quiet place to read or do homework or other work. In addition, we are seeing many residents who have laptop computers, but cannot afford internet fees, use the library for internet access. According to NYPL statistics, in fiscal year 2011 there were 1,127,098 visits to CB 3 libraries. This is a decrease of 7% over the previous year – due to the busiest branch, Chatham Square, being closed for 37 days. We believe this shows that while the libraries are open, they continue to be increasingly well used and very important to our community. It is not only imperative to keep our libraries open six days a week to serve our residents; we need to expand funding for expansion of collections, automation, staffing, and programming. In light of continuing youth violence experience by the community in the past year, CB 3 requests more youth programming in libraries as a way to engage youth in meaningful activities. Certain programs, such as the art space in Tompkins Square Park, should be supported with more programming and expanded to other libraries. The arts and cultural programming for local libraries in this neighborhood is extremely important to many neighborhood residents, particularly families with children and seniors, who cannot otherwise afford access to commercial venues. The libraries offer free access to the arts that many could not afford to experience or participate in otherwise. Including arts programming, funding for the libraries will benefit many of the underserved low-income communities of the Lower East Side.

Waterfront

Community Board 3 established a Waterfront Task Force in 2003 to formulate a viable plan for the area from the Brooklyn Bridge north to East River Park. The Task Force recognized that our waterfront has been a focal point for generations of Lower East Side families, but also an area that has been long neglected by the City. We now have an East River Park esplanade that is being improved to make it safe and attractive. But large portions of the CB 3 City-owned piers are under-utilized; and the esplanade south of the piers is in need of repairs to improve safety and add amenities to increase its usefulness. We would like to reclaim the waterfront for public use, keeping in mind the primarily residential nature of the adjacent community.

Through a series of community meetings begun during the latter part of 2003 and continuing through early 2005, the many constructive and creative ideas expressed by community members for the waterfront were shared with the New York City Economic Development Corporation, Department of City Planning and other City agencies. These ideas were generally approved by the Community Board in July 2004, and the City's Concept Plan was approved by the Board in September 2005. This approval was given with the understanding that CB 3 will be treated equally and equitably with Community Board 1 in all waterfront planning. Many of the community's ideas have been incorporated in a broad waterfront plan encompassing the area from Battery Park to East River Park to be funded by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation.

It was anticipated that the long-term portion of the plan would be completed over a three to five year period ending in 2010. Unfortunately, the City is behind schedule. Some areas are in design stage and construction has started in one area. A few improvements have been provided along the esplanade, including the removal of Jersey barriers, the installation of planters, and the widening of the esplanade – accomplished by the narrowing of South Street.

CB 3 is very concerned about the future of Pier 42, the only sizeable area in this community that extends over the River. We are pleased with the first phase of Concept Plan, that the shed area of Pier 42 should be removed and allow for community revisioning to move forward. We strongly urge and expect that the relevant City agencies will raise the necessary funding, fast track, and complete this improvement and stabilization, within the 2014 timeframe, so that Pier 42 will never be lost as a crucial amenity to this community.

CB 3 recently supported the long-awaited design concept for the esplanade between Pier 35 and Pike Slip. This design reflects CB 3's input, based on results from many facilitated community meetings described above to gather input from the community at large; for amenities, lighting, plantings, grading, a pavilion with community use space, ball courts and game facilities, and passive recreation uses. CB 3 continues to prioritize improvement and access to its waterfront as a necessity for the community. We look forward to working with relevant City agencies on the esplanade from Pike Slip to the Brooklyn Bridge, most of which is now being used as a temporary staging area for several projects to improve the Brooklyn Bridge.

Arts & Cultural Affairs Task Force

Our district has historically been an incubator of the performing and visual arts, with a higher concentration of artists and arts organizations than most districts. The arts serve as an important means of expression, preservation and exploration of our diverse community and cultures – the Eastern European Jewish, the Irish, the German, the Dominican, the Puerto Rican, the Asian, the African-American, and many others. District arts venues, including libraries, remain closely tied to our diverse cultures and balance the scales of gentrification by providing local, often low cost, access to arts expressions that arise from the community's unique cultural characteristics. These expressions of ethnic and cultural factors are crucial, not just as a nod to ethnic pride, but as a means to growth, cultural reinvention, and new syntheses of varied cultural elements.

Cultural venues have a powerful synergistic relationship with neighborhood small businesses, and are economic drivers to our local neighborhoods. Fourth Arts Block alone, using the US Department of Commerce's conservative economic multiplier of 2.01, estimates that their member arts organizations generate more than \$24.8 million in annual economic benefits for local restaurants, shops, and support services. When networked across the Lower East Side, the economic impact of neighborhood arts groups is over \$50 million. Yet the district, while it has gained a great many galleries, has lost many arts venues in the last decade, the statistics and economic implications of which have been analyzed by such advocacy organizations as the New York Theater Awards. With the East Village and the Lower East Side being a locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally recognized performing and visual arts destinations, artists and

organizations must be present at the table when economic impact and quality of life issues are brought before elected officials and City agencies.

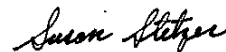
Community Board 3 calls on City agencies to include commercial and nonprofit arts venues and organizations in their economic planning and development policies to provide ideas for community access and help prepare a changing work force to think and act flexibly. It recommends that City agencies work in public-private partnerships to provide reasonably priced electricity and water to community gardens so that they become true community centers for culture. It recommends continued lobbying for the expansion of subsidized rehearsal space for music, dance, theater, and performance art so that artists and their audiences are attracted to the district, and retained, not driven from it. CB 3 also asks that financial incentive for outreach be available to local venues to promote partnerships with local community-based organizations and use of space to increase public and resident benefit.

Apart from economic impact, the effect of the arts on quality of life in the district cannot be underestimated. In fact, access to the arts has been included in an amendment to the U.N. charter as a human right. Arts in the schools and in after-school programs in the district exist under extremely fragile conditions. In a Town Hall on the subject organized by CB 3 at Rutgers Houses, it emerged that the need for more programs, and the stabilization of existing programs, is the lynchpin activity of the Task Force. Arts and arts organizations are sometimes unaware of policies or resources that can sustain artists and organizations. Collaboration with non-traditional allies of cultural policy, such as the Federal Justice Department and the NYPD, can have an impact in the areas of education, crime prevention quality of life, and organizational stability. Creative cities are those which attract and retain not only the best artists and creative industries, but also the best businesses and their employees. CB 3 calls for the building of coalitions among arts and cultural organizations, other not-for-profit organizations, community and senior centers, elected officials, and government agencies in order to identify the conditions ideal for artists and arts organizations and prevent the instability or loss of this the community. Linkages exist among arts and non-arts agencies and organizations, and individual artists. Funding to turn these linkages into viable projects cannot be further reduced without negative consequences for artists, youth, seniors, the educational system, small businesses, visitors, and others. On the contrary, funding, whether from traditional, e.g. New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, or non-traditional sources, e.g. the Department of Justice, should address the conditions that support the artistic community and foster a healthy creative economy.

The arts community believes that we cannot have a healthy, balanced and open-minded society without support for creativity and activities that inspire the human spirit. Difficult economic times cannot justify threatening the creative arts.



Gigi Li
Chair



Susan Stetzer
District Manager