



CITY OF NEW YORK Community Board No. 2

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Fiscal Year 2016 Statement of District Needs

Community Board 2 strives for a district that provides equal services, access and resources for all of its residents. To inform budget decisions for our district, we have prepared this statement as a description of where we are, where we would like to be and how we envision getting there.

The following statement presents the state of our district, problem areas or needs and potential solutions for these problems. It is arranged by the functional areas of land use and historic preservation; parks and recreation; youth, education and cultural affairs; health, environment and social services; transportation; and economic development and employment. We intend for our insights and recommendations to encourage balanced and sustainable development in Community District 2 that meets the needs of our residents, businesses and visitors.

Key Findings

Land use in Community District 2 has been profoundly affected by rezonings and nationwide fluctuations in the housing market. A significant upzoning in Downtown Brooklyn in 2004 led to a substantial increase in residential development. Inadequate checks and balances have resulted in the construction of minimal office space or affordable housing.

The community district has an insufficient supply of open space per resident. However, the pending completion of Brooklyn Bridge Park is altering this ratio. Beyond quantity, there is a need for consistently high quality in our open spaces. For instance, basketball courts along the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway require paving and lighting and Fort Greene Park is in need of upgrades to drainage systems and landscaping. Also, the length of time to renovate parks is troublesome. The reconstruction of the Willoughby Avenue entrance to Fort Greene Park was scoped over six years ago and renovation has still not begun.

Educational services in our district could be augmented. Out-of-school time programming is an important accompaniment to any child's education. Through the bolstering of this service and addition of critical educational programs to assist children who are falling behind, we know that more of our students can perform at grade level.

An increased residential population in downtown has been shown to necessitate a new school or an alternate strategy for safely accommodating those students elsewhere in Community School District 13.

Community District 2 is a major transit hub with connections to 13 subway lines, 17 buses, the Long Island Rail Road and an expanding bicycle network. Opportunities exist to improve connections between various modes of transit and create a safer and more user-friendly experience. We encourage the Department of Transportation (DOT) and Metropolitan Transportation Authority to work together to improve network connectivity. Additionally, with many DOT projects underway in the district, we encourage safe and timely completion.

The launch of the Citi Bike program should prompt the Department of Transportation to review the bike lane network to maximize safety and reduce road-user conflicts. Concurrently, the Police Department needs to increase enforcement across all user groups.

Health and social services in our district should meet the needs of all our residents. A greater supply of small-scale health care services accessible to low-income communities should be provided. The unsettled financial state of the hospitals within and near to the district can potentially endanger the lives of our residents. The ongoing reduction of medical services including emergency care is resulting in substandard care. Striking disparities exist in the rates of joblessness throughout the district.

Job training and placement programs should be increased in locations where unemployment rates are highest. Additionally, city agencies should look to their own projects and programs to employ those who are currently unemployed. An example of this is New York City Housing Authority's (NYCHA) Section 3 construction trades work program.

Land Use and Historic Preservation

State of Our District: Increasing Density

Ours is a comparatively dense community district, with over 37,400 residents per square mile. The average across New York City is 27,000 per square mile. We anticipate this density will increase in the coming years. An analysis of residential development activity using data from Department of Building permits over a three year period October 2009-September 2012 show 2,831 new dwelling units. The predominant land uses (21.9 percent) are multi-family residential and institutional use (13.7 percent).

Development within Community District 2 has been boom or bust in the last decade. In 2007, there were 1,139 certificates of occupancy issued, as compared to 84 issued in

2000. In 2009, there were only two dwelling units authorized by new building permits. The current trend is accelerated construction, particularly in Downtown Brooklyn.

Introduction: Land Use

The Fort Greene and Clinton Hill rezoning of 2007, the Downtown Brooklyn Development Plan (DBDP) approved in 2004 and the 2009 Dumbo rezoning have had varying impacts on our community. In some cases, in particular the DBDP, the results of these changes have not matched the stated goals of the plans. The rezonings that have been most effective to date are those where one objective was preserving neighborhood scale and character, for instance in Fort Greene and Clinton Hill.

Needs and Solutions: Land Use

An exuberant real estate market and the DBDP spurred development to occur at a higher rate in and around downtown but the collapse of the market in 2004 left 27 projects stalled or abandoned. Fortunately, the reinvigorated economy has reactivated most of the stalled projects. Still, we encourage the city to take action in the future to prevent such heavy saturation of the local real estate market.

Recent residential construction in the district preferences smaller units for individuals or couples without children; a fully functioning community includes a range of household compositions and developers should build more two and three bedroom units, especially in the neighborhoods beyond Downtown Brooklyn.

Downtown Brooklyn

Approved in 2004, the DBDP upzoned much of the central business district to competitively retain jobs at risk of leaving New York City. However, because of market conditions and the absence of stronger land use controls, the plan led primarily to the development of new luxury residential mid-rises.

The majority of new retail space has been on the ground floor of new residential buildings, a requirement of the DBDP, and is only now beginning to be leased after remaining empty for some time. We support the development of affordable food vendors and the exploration of other such projects to remedy the current land use imbalance.

Since 2004, Downtown Brooklyn has lost much of its affordable commercial retail space. It was reported that over 200 independent businesses have left the area, many of whom were tenants in the former Albee Square Mall and along Willoughby, Fulton and Duffield streets. The change in retail market is excluding small business owners and low-to-moderate income consumers while encouraging national retailers.

Prior to the downturn, the district experienced a dramatic increase in new construction. In its own right, this represents an opportunity that was present throughout our district—to

increase density and preserve character through the appropriate use of land, building stock and historic sites. DBDP was intended to activate and fully realize the value of the city's third largest central business district. Unfortunately, it has yet to do so. Community Board 2 requested the Department of City Planning (DCP) revisit the plan with the goal of creating a truly mixed-use community, but that request was turned down.

The delayed City Point project is underway. Phase one created 50,000 square feet of retail space and the second phase, currently under construction, with 650,000 square feet and 690 apartments will be the largest retail component of the three phase project. Due to a ground lease, this site is one of the few opportunities for the city to ensure development of office space.

Fort Greene and Clinton Hill

The Fort Greene and Clinton Hill rezoning of 2007 was intended to preserve built character and historic housing stock while encouraging increased density along commercial corridors. The onset of the economic downturn has meant less development along Myrtle Avenue and Fulton Street than was anticipated. The board realizes the full impacts of this rezoning remain to be seen but commends the DCP for its preservation of these neighborhoods and for incentivizing affordable housing.

Dumbo

The Dumbo rezoning, which became law in 2009, now permits residential development in the eastern part of the neighborhood. Redevelopment of under-utilized sites was slow to start but has progressively accelerated. Real estate in Dumbo held its value better than other Brooklyn neighborhoods during the recession. The influx of new residents has not been matched by complimentary retail and commercial development. Again, the board hopes to see the attraction of appropriate businesses and services for the residents of this neighborhood.

Historic Preservation

In 2011, over forty percent of our residents lived in one of our many historic districts. Community District 2 is proud to be home to nine of the 25 historic districts in Brooklyn. The nine are the Boerum Hill, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Dumbo, Clinton Hill, Fort Greene, Fulton Ferry, Brooklyn Heights, Vinegar Hill and most recently, Wallabout historic districts. The value that these districts contain and generate is a benefit to our residents and visitors. Across the city, historic districts have been shown to increase home value by 21.8 percent and to improve the economic performance of an area.

Parks and Recreation

State of Our District: Conditions and Space

Bounded by Myrtle Avenue, DeKalb Avenue, Washington Park and Ashland Place, Fort Greene Park is the district's largest park. Currently, Fort Greene Park provides the district with one quarter of its open space; smaller parks and public spaces distributed throughout the district provide the remainder. On an ongoing basis, the even larger Brooklyn Bridge Park will continue to open on the East River waterfront. The amount of open space per person in our district is changing drastically with the opening of the Brooklyn Bridge Park. While the park will be a regional destination, it is also a local asset and the community board looks forward to maintaining its relationship with the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation.

Even with the addition of Brooklyn Bridge Park, Community District 2 lacks sufficient open space for its residents and day workers. (At least 70,000 people enter Downtown Brooklyn each day to go to their place of employment.) The city's guideline recommends two acres of passive open space and half an acre of active open space per 1,000 residents. According to City Planning's calculations of land uses in our district, 7.5 percent is open and recreational space, far below the recommended guidelines. We welcome the addition of open space in our district. However, the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) must maintain and repair the existing inventory of parks throughout our district.

Needs: Consistently Improved Conditions

Since 2000, some small neighborhood parks have been successfully renovated. The majority of these park rehabilitations, however, have occurred in areas with higher median incomes. We would like to see improvements occur equally throughout our district. For instance, Bridge Park 3 and other parks along the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway (BQE) consist primarily of poorly maintained pavement. Bridge Park 3 is located in a census tract that has a median household income of \$9,876. Not too far away, in Clinton Hill, Underwood Park has benefited from local community investment. There, residents came together to improve the condition of the park. As of 2000, the household median income in that park's census tract was \$48,885. An imbalance exists between the conditions of our parks that need to be addressed.

Trees and Tree Maintenance

Severe weather has damaged tree cover on streets and in parks. Uneven tree canopy makes the district less aesthetically pleasing, increases air pollution and incidents of respiratory illnesses. Also, tree stumps remain in pits months after having fallen. Tree maintenance needs to occur on a shorter cycle to keep our trees healthy and to reduce the possibility of passerbys being hurt by falling limbs.

Personnel

Department of Parks and Recreation has had its operations effectively undermined by a continued reduction in personnel over a period of decades. Our parks need administrative, operations, enforcement and maintenance staff to ensure they are clean, safe, and updated.

Solutions: Innovative Solutions for Improved Parks Service

Parks, open spaces and trees provide us with immeasurable physical and mental benefits, yet remain consistently underfunded. Traditional and non-traditional budget augmentation is required to improve our parks and bring new open spaces to our district. Concessions, development bonuses and independent fundraising are potential sources of additional funding for parks. These tools can work but have only been seen in select areas of our district. Although long overdue, the Watchtower Society is preparing to renovate a park as part of the approval of a rezoning of a parcel it owns in Dumbo. Fort Greene Park has benefited from the efforts of Fort Greene Park Conservancy, particularly in its preservation of the Prison Ship Martyrs Monument.

We would like to see the necessary funding and tools in place in Community District 2 to improve our parks and provide an equal level of service to our residents. Outlined below are goals we hope to see realized in the near future.

1. Basic maintenance and repair of our parks.

Our district has grown from its 2000 census population of over 98,000, of which 18 percent was school aged. The limited amount of space for outdoor recreation in our district demands that the space we do have be adequately repaired and maintained for use. We stress that repair and maintenance needs be implemented in an equitable fashion district-wide and encourage the parks department to involve local community members in this effort.

2. Meet PlaNYC's open space goals to open local schoolyards as parks.

This goal was achieved for three years at PS 38 in Boerum Hill when funding through the Trust for Public Land provided after-hours access to the school playground. Unfortunately, the grant has expired and the school yard is once again closed except when school is in session. We would like to see playgrounds open after hours for use as parks. They offer an alternative to a resource that is in short supply, especially in Boerum Hill. Parks and playgrounds could share resources for this purpose. For instance, with the opening of Sixteen Sycamores, there might be an opportunity to share staff and maintenance between it and PS 261.

3. Reclaim streets for people by installing additional public plazas and Greenstreets.

DOT has implemented at least 37 Greenstreets in our district and four public plazas. Construction of two additional plazas, on Myrtle Avenue and at Fox Square, will begin in fall 2014. These provide welcome respite for pedestrians, encourage public interaction, generate business activity and help to beautify our streets. We look forward to the implementation of more of these and other public plazas on our streets.

We look forward to also working with DPR, DCP and DOT on the above projects and goals. Our parks and open spaces may be limited, but with a little help and creative energy the city and the people of our district can work together to provide clean, safe and functional open spaces for all of our residents.

Youth, Education and Cultural Affairs

State of our District: Under-Performing Schools

The 2010 Census registered 18.2 percent of our population as under the age of 19. This statistic indicates a significant number of residents require educational and developmental amenities. Historically, the performance of our students in reading and math has lagged behind most of the city's community districts.

In Community District 2 there are 15 public and 13 private elementary schools, including K-12 schools in both cases. The number of middle and high schools present is smaller but their school populations are greater. As the New York City school system does not assign intermediate and high school students by district, it is more applicable to look at the performance and graduation rates of the students who live in our district. Community districts and school districts are not coterminous; most of Community District 2 is in School District 13. Class sizes in the district typically range from 21–29 pupils. Of the students in this district, 62 percent are eligible for a free lunch.

Needs: Youth and Education

The quality and delivery of education for youth in our district could be improved. Out-of-school-time programming and extra-curricular activities are important components of every child's education. Likewise, special needs and English as a Second Language programs should be ubiquitous in educational settings. Certain ethnic groups and students with disabilities, those with limited proficiency in English and the economically disadvantaged often did not make "adequate yearly progress." Adequate yearly progress is defined by the New York State Board of Regents as "satisfactory progress by a district or a school toward the goal of proficiency for all students." This shows a clear need to equally provide all students with the educational resources that they require for success.

Many of our students do not have access to acceptable out-of-school-time programming opportunities. Programs such as those in JHS 113/Old 294 Edmunds Center and PS 20 Clinton Hill schools, the Department of Youth and Community Development's Beacon Programs, and Citizen Schools are examples of enriching, positive learning environments that should be readily available to all of our students. As sources of important educational services, Head Start and after-school are important educational services, therefore the reduction of these programs is alarming to the board.

It has been confirmed by the School Construction Authority that an elementary school will be needed in Downtown in the near future to accommodate the new and growing residential population, which includes a significant number of families with elementary aged children. There is currently no elementary school physically located in Downtown Brooklyn. A 2013 study managed by the district office estimates 821 children will reside in the units constructed between 2009 and 2014. Imminent construction projects are expected to add another 749 children in the following years.

The community board is also concerned about post-elementary school choice. The availability of seats in our district is unevenly distributed. As an example, there are no middle schools in Brooklyn Heights. This limits educational options for our residents.

Ten percent of our population is not proficient in English. Our adult population deserves accessible and appropriate educational opportunities. English language classes should continue to be made available for our adult population.

Solutions: Youth and Education

Funding and resource allocation for increased capacity in our schools, more local school locations and attention to the needs of non-native English speakers and students with disabilities are required. Budget shortfalls frequently make such projects difficult to initiate. In the absence of such capacity we encourage schools, community centers and other educational and cultural outlets in our district to use existing resources in new and innovative ways and to share resources and learn from one another. We hope the city will promote cross-communication between these programs and provide support and guidance to encourage such methods.

The Dumbo rezoning, which allowed residential development as-of-right, may lead to a change in the demographics of the neighborhood. The New York City Department of Education (DOE) may be well positioned to meet these demographic changes by the current construction of a new middle school there.

The DOE should include development data in its projections to accurately forecast the need for new school construction. More attention needs to be paid in the future to the shifts in the composition of populations in other neighborhoods. We encourage DOE to

continue to track projections of population increases, especially in Downtown Brooklyn and to respond with sufficient school seats for the anticipated number of children.

State of our District: Cultural Affairs

Community District 2 has a wealth of cultural amenities within its borders. In fall 2013, the Theatre for A New Audience (TFANA) moved into its first permanent home in the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) Cultural District. The BAM Fisher building and Roulette, a performance venue, also recently opened in the district. Project Issue Room, a performance center, has moved into 22 Boerum Place, and will function while construction modifies the building.

These institutions along with others such as Mark Morris Dance Group, Brooklyn Music School and MoCADA stimulate and preserve culture in the district. With a long tradition of arts and artistry, our community is also proud to be home to numerous smaller arts organizations that reside within our borders. For example, 22 small and emerging theaters work with the Alliance of Resident Theaters/New York, a service and advocacy organization with offices and performance and rehearsal space in Fort Greene. On the Brooklyn Art Council's website, 31 organizations are listed in our district, however, this is a self-subscribed list and the total may be larger.

Needs: Cultural Affairs

Development and land use changes in Community District 2 have had an impact on the availability of performance and studio space within our community. Spaces for artists and cultural events have become an expensive commodity. The Downtown Brooklyn Cultural District, including the BAM Fisher Building and Theater for a New Audience, is an example of an urban arts project that provides a welcome boost to the cultural life of downtown Brooklyn.

Solutions: Cultural Affairs

Cultural elements enhance the appearance, safety and appeal of public space. They can stimulate investment and encourage use, attracting people more readily from outside the area and improving the perception of the value that a community places on its shared outdoor spaces. We enjoy the public art exhibits throughout our district. In addition to the creation of the cultural district, we would like to see more attention paid to the overall look and feel of our district. There are many opportunities to install, promote and display works of art in our district. We would like this to occur more frequently and invite all parties to engage the community board in a discussion about how to do this.

Health, Environment and Social Services

State of Our District: Imbalanced Services

Brooklyn's central business district is at the geographic core of Community District 2. As a transportation hub, it is home to a variety of social service centers. These centers provide vital services, care and treatment for thousands each month.

Institutions occupy 13.7 percent of the land in our district. In the district profile prepared by DCP, there are 65 "selected community facilities." Of these, six are senior centers, 42 are private day care centers, 10 are public day care centers and two are Head Start day care centers. There are also 28 mental health service centers; 26 hospitals, nursing homes and ambulatory programs; 24 chemical dependency service centers and 20 residential programs and food facilities for adults and families. By way of comparison, our demographically and geographically similar neighbor to the south, Community District 6, has 4.5 percent of its land dedicated to institutional uses and is home to only eight mental health service centers and seven chemical dependency service centers.

Our population increased by 4.3 percent between 1980 and 2000 but the 2010 Census recorded a mere one percent increase. However the combination of a decreasing death rate and increasing birth rate along with intense residential development means this trend is likely to continue. Roughly one-tenth of our residents receive Medicaid support, double the amount five years earlier. This represents a shift in the type of assistance people are receiving, as there are an almost equal number of people on income support in total in our district.

Hospitals across the state and city are undergoing financial restructuring and one locally has closed. The impact is being directly felt at the one hospital within our borders. The staff and facility is strained and patient care may eventually be undermined. Residents should not have to travel long distances to access emergency or regular medical care.

Need: Greater Access to Suitable Care

The majority of the community services and health facilities in Community District 2 serve people in catchments extending beyond the district borders. On behalf of our residents, we ask that neighborhood-scale services for our community also be provided. Residents also need to be fully informed about their health and social service options and to have access to outlets for healthy living.

According to "Take Care New York," the city Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's community profile, the health of residents in the Northwest Brooklyn United Hospital Fund (UHF) neighborhood, which includes Community District 2, is underperforming compared to the city as a whole. Heart disease is 10 percent more likely to be a cause of death here than in the rest of New York City. Likewise, our death rate is

15 percent higher than the city average. In terms of access to care, one in four of our residents went without health insurance in 2009. Seventeen percent of our residents rate their health as fair or poor. This last figure is better than the Brooklyn average of 23 percent but we aspire to more.

Too many people utilize the emergency room as their primary care resource. According to “Take Care New York,” there are more avoidable hospitalizations in Northwest Brooklyn than the Brooklyn average. In the UHF neighborhood, roughly one in five people do not have a regular doctor and six percent go to the emergency room whenever they are sick.

Solutions

1. Limits cutbacks.

The board is particularly concerned about the defunding of programs that provide services to children and the elderly in our district. Conveniently located, affordably priced day care services provide many families the flexibility to enter the workplace and step up the economic ladder. Likewise the provision of comprehensive services for the aging will allow our seniors to “age in place”.

2. Facilitate service provider cross-communication, information sharing and collaboration.

In the wake of service reductions and the closure of facilities, other measures should be taken to address the needs of our populations. Information sharing between resource centers should be facilitated and encouraged. Education is a key component of service delivery, both in its ability to improve the effectiveness of care received by patients and to raise people’s awareness of the services that are available. Information sharing at community health centers is helping to engage people in the services they need. We hope to see these efforts furthered by guidance and oversight from City leadership.

3. Encourage major facilities to understand their local communities and the needs they serve.

Through conscientious planning, large health care centers can provide preventative care and better services to their local communities. The Brooklyn Hospital Center’s 2008 Community Service Plan is an example of such planning. It evaluates the health of the population it serves and outlines its priorities, along with a three-year plan of action. Community District 2 represents only one-tenth of the catchment area of the hospital, which according to the Community Service Plan is 1.2 million people. The plan highlights many of the problems mentioned above and also documents the high asthma rates in our district as a concern. The hospital’s asthma program is currently

evaluating patient management, education and care. We support Brooklyn Hospital's efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of their care. We are also encouraged by their emphasis on preventative care, education and access. It is important that these are all addressed if the health of our district is to be improved.

In addition to direct services, we realize that outlets for physical activity and access to healthy food are important components of building a healthy community. For this reason, we encourage the continued development of bike paths in our district, the permissible placement of Green Carts and farmers markets, and the sponsorship of festivals and outdoor events. There is an opportunity for our district to benefit from further dispersion of fresh produce and quality food items. We hope to see an analysis of the opportunity for expanding the Green Carts and FRESH markets programs in our community. Providing resources for healthy living is the best preventative care. We aspire to be a place where necessary care is accessible and leading a healthy lifestyle is possible.

Transportation and Public Safety

State of Our District: High Presence of Public Transit

Community District 2 has many public transportation choices. Our 18 subway stops and 12 bus lines provide our residents with a network of transit options to take them to the furthest reaches of New York City. Over 70 percent of our population commutes to work daily via public transportation. Only 13 percent use a car to reach their jobs. These numbers are much higher than the national and city averages of 56 percent. Many people also walk to work within our district or use the Brooklyn Bridge and Manhattan Bridge pathways to commute to Manhattan.

One of the busiest bus routes in the city, the B41, travels through our district. It had close to 13 million riders in 2008. However the proliferation of illegal transit vans along the B41 route suggests that service can be expanded. Community Board 2 would like to see more enforcement of the "bus only" lanes on Fulton and Livingston streets.

Also in 2008, three of our subway stops saw a combined total of 10 million riders. These were Atlantic Avenue/Pacific Street, Court Street/Borough Hall and Jay Street/Borough Hall. That number may have increased with the opening of the connecting passageway between the former Jay Street-Borough Hall and Lawrence Street, now referred to jointly as Jay Street-Metrotech station.

Public transportation options have increased with the introduction of bike sharing. Community District 2 was included to participate in phase one of the Citi Bike program. The utility of the program is dependent on a geographically disperse system of docking stations. The community board encourages the city to secure the funding to expand to all neighborhoods where Citibike is desired.

Needs: Transit Options and Reliability, Road Design and Enforcement

The level of use of our public transit network demands a highly performing and carefully maintained transportation network. While journeys to and from our district are well accommodated, travel within it is less manageable. The wealth of subway stations in our district provides an opportunity to create connections between them—connections not currently fully realized. Additional exits at stops would also improve accessibility. Slow movement and poor on-time service decreases the level of service on our buses.

The intense commercial nature of many streets results in almost constant traffic congestion. Merchants on commercial corridors require additional loading zones for their purposes. Fast moving vehicles are a complaint in low-density residential neighborhoods. Trucks also drive too frequently off designated routes. The growth of cycling as a commuting option complicates user conflict on the roads. The designation of bike lanes is often undermined by illegal parking that needs better enforcement. Motorists and pedestrians need to include the cyclist as a legitimate road user. Similarly, the cyclist and other road users must obey the rules of the road to contribute to overall safety. Areas in Downtown Brooklyn are overwhelmed by the continued abuse of city employee and union parking permits. Improved highway geometry and enforcement will help improve traffic within our district.

Streetscaping has vastly improved many parts of our district. We request that these improvements be extended more broadly. For example, sections of Atlantic Avenue are nicely planted and furnished, while others are grey and dreary. A continuous aesthetically pleasing appearance along Atlantic Avenue and Fulton Street would improve and smooth the divide between residential and commercial neighborhoods. More benches and consistent tree beds should be part of such an approach.

Roadway design and traffic management can improve safety on our streets. Key hot spots for pedestrian and bicycle crashes are Myrtle Avenue and Flatbush Avenue Extension, Adams and Livingston Street, Adams Street and Tillary Street, Flatbush Avenue and Fulton Street, and Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues.

New traffic calming measures have been implemented and are helping to slow down the flow of traffic. Bike paths have increased safety on the streets. However, nuanced planning of this network is required. Road conditions are substandard on streets such as Vanderbilt Avenue. This is hazardous for bikers.

Department of Transportation's fall 2012 bike census counted 6,317 bike commuters crossing both East River bridges in a 12-hour period. Bike lanes function not only as a safety feature for alternative transportation but also as an economic generator. The Fulton Area Business Alliance, a district management association, is advocating for more bike lanes and their merchants are asking for more racks. Likewise, the Myrtle Avenue

Revitalization Project is exploring ways to provide bike storage or add additional bike racks.

Intra-district transportation, such as the trolley proposed by the Tech Triangle Coalition, would also stimulate economic activity.

Solutions

There are three main areas in which we see opportunities for improving transportation service and safety in our district. They are listed below along with specific interventions:

1. **Safety and enforcement:** Slower progressing signals on Atlantic Avenue, timed pedestrian countdowns, safety cameras, parking permit enforcement and truck use regulation. Also, the implementation of Slow Zones in low density residential neighborhoods will reduce speed limits to 20 miles per hour and include traffic calming features.
2. **Network improvements:** Bike lanes should interconnect better, pedestrian and bus connections should be created with the new Brooklyn Bridge Park, subway entrances should be improved and repaired, connections between subways and buses should be readily identifiable through the use of clear and consistent signage.
3. **Funding:** An annual issue for which regular and reliable sources should be found, equalization of tolls on the East River bridges and Brooklyn Battery Tunnel could be implemented, muni-meters could and should be used more widely.

DOT's Public Plaza program and other traffic calming initiatives are improving streets throughout the city. The reconstruction of "Seven Corners," at Hanson Place and Fulton and South Oxford streets, is an example where streetscape improvements and traffic calming measures have been implemented concurrently. Willoughby Plaza was recently completed and like Albee and Fowler Squares, Pearl Street and Putnam Triangles, affords passer-bys in Brooklyn an attractive outdoor space to sit, read or eat. Widened sidewalks, speed humps and street furnishings are design tools that help mitigate traffic hazards and provide a safer and more pleasant experience for all users.

Many of the needs we describe have solutions outlined in the Downtown Brooklyn Transportation Blueprint. Some of these solutions have been implemented; others are ongoing. We support the goals of the blueprint to simultaneously accommodate travel demand growth, manage congestion, balance through and local traffic, and improve street management and safety. The board hopes to see the full execution of its priority initiatives and use of the document as a "living document," regularly consulted and updated as originally intended.

Economic Development and Job Creation

State of Our District: Pockets of High-Unemployment

Overall, unemployment in our district is on a downward trend. The American Community Survey found it to be 4.7 percent in 2008, whereas in 2007 it was recorded at 6.6 percent. In the same year the district's median household income was \$64,046. Additionally, college degrees are held by 58 percent of our residents who are 25 and older.

These figures reflect an area that is improving its economic performance and capacity. However, breaking down these figures shows a very different story. The highest median income in any one census tract in our district, as of the 2000 Census, was \$112,414. The lowest was \$9,876. Similarly, a census tract in Clinton Hill had unemployment of 39.7 percent.. On a positive note, a higher percentage of people in Community District 2 are employed in professional and related occupations than in the rest of Brooklyn and New York City.

Funding for economic development projects in our district comes from various sources. The Economic Development Corporation sponsors several programs applicable to businesses in Community District 2. At the federal level, two development projects in our district have received stimulus funding. These are City Point, which received \$20 million for the first phase of construction, and the Brooklyn Navy Yard, where \$1 million was allocated to support development of a "green" manufacturing center.

Needs

Levels of unemployment vary drastically across our district. Our labor force is largely skilled and marketable and all members of it should be given equal exposure to opportunities. Local enterprises need to be supported and encouraged—their hiring and that of new businesses should focus within the district whenever possible. Addressing joblessness across our district is our primary economic development concern.

The obvious precursor to employment is job creation. Economic stimulation through investment can lead to job creation. Projects such as the development of the Downtown Brooklyn Cultural District and the commercial revitalization of Fulton Street and Myrtle Avenue are crucial to the economic state of our district. Additionally, funding should be increased for youth after-school and development programs such as Helping Encourage Leadership Potential. Not only is education an important part of adolescent maturation, it is at the core of workforce development. Its complete and consistent provision across our district is essential for the prosperity of all of our residents.

NYCHA has set up specific programs to address unemployment within their tenant populations. We applaud the intentions of these programs and would like to see them

more widely utilized. In our district, it is alleged NYCHA has not adhered to the Section 3 and Residential Employment Program. The latter is a program that requires the authority to employ people from within developments to work on construction projects at those properties. Our sources indicate less than ten residents were hired for the extensive and continuing Whitman and Ingersoll Houses renovations. The isolation of these communities within the district is stark. Economic empowerment is an essential tool that can bridge the divide.

Solutions

1. Workforce Development:

Downtown Brooklyn is a burgeoning economic center. Available jobs in this district should be connected to local residents. We are aware of a number of programs to address economic development in our district. Better connections need to be made between resources such as these and the residents that can benefit from them. On the ground programming and outreach is a foundational approach to addressing joblessness in the community district. Several initiatives proposed in the 2013 Brooklyn Tech Triangle strategic plan are intended to leverage the emerging tech sector for new job training programs.

2. Business Development:

Economic development efforts across the district can and should be coordinated. As a district that is home to numerous business improvement districts, we see them as potential connectors and vehicles for holistic economic development. The work of the Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership engages the community. This engagement is essential if economic development is going to benefit our residents. Promotion and exposure for our local businesses helps them to grow. The makeup and mix of our commercial sector is changing. The diversification of the “antique alley” on Atlantic Avenue is an example of such evolution. Diversification on our commercial streets is crucial to stability.

The Greenlight Bookstore in Fort Greene is an example of a successful attempt to respond to the needs of the community with appropriate businesses. The owners won a Brooklyn Public Library business plan contest. Their business model coincided with a request by the local community for a neighborhood bookstore. Innovative attempts to match market demands are smart and we would like to see more conscientious business developments like this throughout the district.

3. Infrastructure Improvement:

Downtown Brooklyn is fortunate to have a high concentration of public transit options, urban outdoor space and Class A office space. With a dynamic market,

however, local infrastructure must be revisited to ensure that it meets the needs of that market. The Tech Triangle Master Plan includes numerous recommendations to improve infrastructure of all types. During this period of heavy street construction, we encourage contract and construction managers to ensure the timely completion of work.

Design elements can be used to enhance the appeal of the public realm. We would like to see more public art throughout our district. Providing appealing outdoor spaces attracts people and businesses alike. Our built fabric is essential to our marketability as a district. We hope to see it preserved in our lower density areas and grown and guided to a diverse mix of uses in our central business district, Downtown Brooklyn.

Acknowledgements

Brooklyn Community Board 2 is grateful to Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer and the Mayor's Community Assistance Unit for funding and administering the Community Planning Fellowship Program and the community board's 2009-2010 planning fellow, Galin Brooks. Ms. Brooks, a May 2010 graduate of the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, wrote the Fiscal Year 2012 Statement of District Needs of Brooklyn Community Board 2 under the supervision of District Manager Robert Perris, who edited the document. Subsequent revisions were made by Carol-Ann Church, a planner on the district office staff.

Respectfully submitted,

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