



# THE CITY OF NEW YORK

## BOROUGH OF THE BRONX

### COMMUNITY BOARD 7

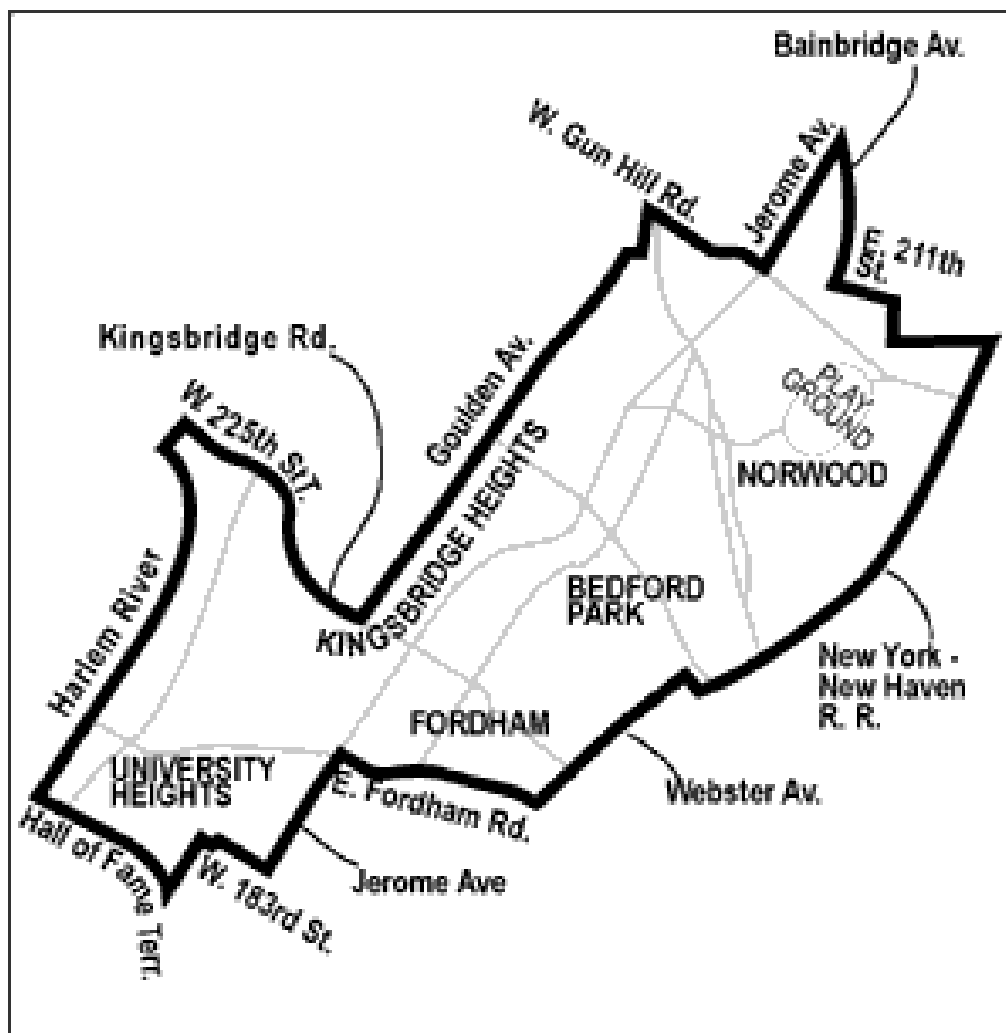


RUBEN DIAZ, JR., BOROUGH PRESIDENT

DUSTIN ENGELKEN, DISTRICT MANAGER

ADALINE WALKER-SANTIAGO, CHAIRPERSON

## *STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS: FISCAL YEAR 2016*



## **INTRODUCTION**

Bronx Community Board 7 (the Board) is located in the northwest section of the borough and is comprised of all or part of the neighborhoods of Bedford Park, Fordham, Jerome Park, Kingsbridge Heights, Mosholu, Norwood, University Heights, and a portion of the Marble Hill section of Manhattan. We are bordered by Webster Avenue to the east, Woodlawn Cemetery and Van Cortland Park to the north, Goulden Avenue to the northwest, the Harlem River to the southwest, Hall of Fame Terrace to the south, and Fordham Road to the southeast.

There are many attractions in or near the district that make it desirable to live, shop and visit including the New York Botanical Garden, Van Cortland Park, the Bronx Library Center, the Kingsbridge Armory, the Lehman Center for Performing Arts and the Lehman Art Gallery, the Bronx's Education Mile, the Hall of Fame for Great Americans, Bronx Historical Society, Montefiore Medical Center, and Bronx High School of Science. The district is home to many post-secondary educational facilities such as Lehman College and Monroe College and adjacent to other institutions such as Fordham University and Bronx Community College. The district is also centrally located to major highways and roads, as well as crucial public transportation connections such as both NYCT and Westchester bus lines, trains, and several Metro North Railroad lines.

The district has a total land area of 1.9 square miles and as per the 2010 census, a population of approximately 140,000 persons, making the district the second most densely populated district in the borough (more than double the borough's average density). This has created a variety of conditions that affect the quality of life of residents in our neighborhoods, ranging from overcrowded schools (the district is within School District 10, the most overcrowded district in the Bronx and the 3rd most overcrowded school district in the city), to a lack of affordable housing for low- and middle-income families and overburdened municipal services.

This statement of district needs represents the various concerns our office has received from community residents, groups, and organizations within the district and includes recommendations by the Board to the Mayor's office, the various city agencies, and our elected officials for their consideration in Fiscal Year 2016. These issues are organized by the committee assigned to monitor, evaluate, and respond to them and in most cases is directed to the city agency responsible for delivering those services. In general, each section lists broad issues first and neighborhood-specific issues second and by no means does the order of issues denote its priority.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### *Job Development and Placement*

According to 2010-2012 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Community District 7's unemployment rate stands at approximately 10.3% percent, higher than the city, state and national averages and fourth-highest amongst all Bronx Community Districts. Many other residents are underemployed and forced to rely on government benefits to make ends meet. In fact, nearly one-third of our residents currently receive SNAP benefits and nearly

<b>Community District</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate (As estimated by the 2010-2012 American Community Survey)</b>
Bx-1	9.1%
Bx-2	9.1%
Bx-3	10.6%
Bx-4	10.3%
Bx-5	13.1%
Bx-6	10.6%
Bx-7	10.3%
Bx-8	7.6%
Bx-9	7.4%
Bx-10	7.1%
Bx-11	9.1%
Bx-12	10.2%

half our residents are on Medicaid. We believe that these statistics are indicative of the broader issues our communities face in providing economic opportunity for our residents.

The Board strongly supports Governor Cuomo's initiative, known as Unemployment Strikeforce, as a means of targeting employment resources to our district's unemployed and underemployed populations. Unfortunately, this program is only temporary and we therefore call on the City to follow the Governor's lead by examining opportunities for addressing these chronic issues in our community.

We believe the City's Workforce 1 Program, which is designed to provide assistance in the form of job training, placement, skill development and recruitment needs an overhaul in order to more effectively provide these services. Additionally, we feel that City investments into infrastructure improvements, affordable housing developments, etc. should come with strict local employment requirements so that, where available, we can guarantee that projects carried out in our community provide employment opportunities for our community members. We also call on the City to provide additional resources for programs such as Summer Youth Employment (SYEP), which provide employment placement services for our youth and the Parks Opportunity Program (POP) which provides job training and placement services in our Parks for those who receive government benefits.

The Board has worked hard to partner with local institutions, businesses and government agencies to address the issue of unemployment by connecting residents to job opportunities here in our community, but we cannot do it alone. We call on the City to team with the Board to evaluate additional opportunities for connecting our residents with job training and placement services.

#### *Small Business Services and Support*

As our community continues to recover from the recent recession, it is important that services that help promote small business development continue to be made available through the Department of Small Business Services (SBS) to help foster a new generation of entrepreneurs, especially amongst minority and woman-owned businesses. Chief amongst these services is the assistance in identifying lenders to provide credit and in increasing incentives for small businesses to startup in our district.

The Webster Avenue Vision Plan also hopes to attract many new restaurants and shops to the area from Fordham Road to Gun Hill Road and the Kingsbridge Armory project will almost certainly lead to the development of new business opportunities along that corridor. We ask that the City to continue to work with the Board and other stakeholders to provide assistance to existing businesses as they adjust to the changes occurring across our district. As well, we ask for the City to assist in the development and placement of new businesses, particularly along Webster Avenue, through the development of business incubators and a commitment of the relevant agencies to a retail recruitment strategy.

Under the previous administration, many businesses complained of the heavy-handed fines and the generally negative environment for small businesses. We ask that the new administration work with small business communities to seek common-sense reforms that will ease the regulatory burden and allow these businesses to thrive.

### *Webster Avenue Vision Plan*

The Webster Avenue Vision Plan focuses on the approximately 1.5-mile long section between Fordham Road and Gun Hill Road, located in Community Board 7, where a convergence of City initiatives and private investment is poised to transform Webster Avenue into a vibrant mixed-use district that serves the needs of both our culturally and economically diverse neighborhoods, as well as our world-class institutions.

During the development of the Vision Plan, the City committed to a number of laudable goals such as the creation of a business incubator, the development of a purchasing pilot program that facilitates existing business development to serve institutional needs, expanding and improving local food access and promoting mixed-income housing throughout the corridor. We ask that the City continue to work with the Board and other stakeholders, such as the Four Bronx Institutions Alliance (FBIA), to ensure that these goals are being achieved and the overall development of the corridor occurs as envisioned in the Webster Avenue Vision Plan.

### *Development of the Former Fordham Library*

The former Fordham Library is a city-owned property located on Bainbridge Avenue, near Fordham Road in the southern section of Community Board 7. The 25,000-square-foot facility has long been targeted by the community as a potential site for some kind of community center that caters to youth and seniors, something the immediate area lacks. The Board strongly supports the conversion of this property into a community center. We would also ask that the center include educational and job development components to assist the unemployed and underemployed residents of our district. It is our belief that by combining these types of services in one facility that we can create a thriving inter-generational center that would serve the needs of our constituents.

### *Development of the Kingsbridge Armory*

The Kingsbridge Armory is a unique property that has long sat idle, creating a host of problems for the surrounding community and preventing the area from realizing its true potential. Last year, the Board was pleased to provide its approval for the development of a world-class ice sports center, as proposed by KNIC Partners. We ask that the City continue to work with KNIC Partners to ensure that this proposal comes to fruition and that the promises made by the developers in the country's most comprehensive Community Benefits Agreement are delivered upon. Moreover, we ask that the City work with the Board to help neighboring residents and businesses who may be displaced or otherwise negatively-affected by this project. It is critically important that we work together to ensure that all residents enjoy the benefits of this exciting new development.

### *Retail Space at MTA Stations*

For years, the Board has advocated for the development of commercial space at the East Fordham Road B/D Station. This request is driven by the Board's observation that the station features thousands of square feet of undeveloped space in what is one of the Bronx's most heavily-utilized stations. Last year alone, the station was utilized by 3,655,007 commuters, but in spite of the high volume of commuters, there are currently no businesses or services available at this station. We believe that this offers

entrepreneurs a unique opportunity to drive economic development and job creation in our district by capitalizing on the high volume of commuters to offer services currently lacking in the area. We understand that the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is currently evaluating the feasibility of such a proposal, but we want to reiterate the Board's commitment to this proposal and ask that the MTA continue to work to ensure that commuters at this station receive access to the types of businesses that are commonplace in other stations across the City.

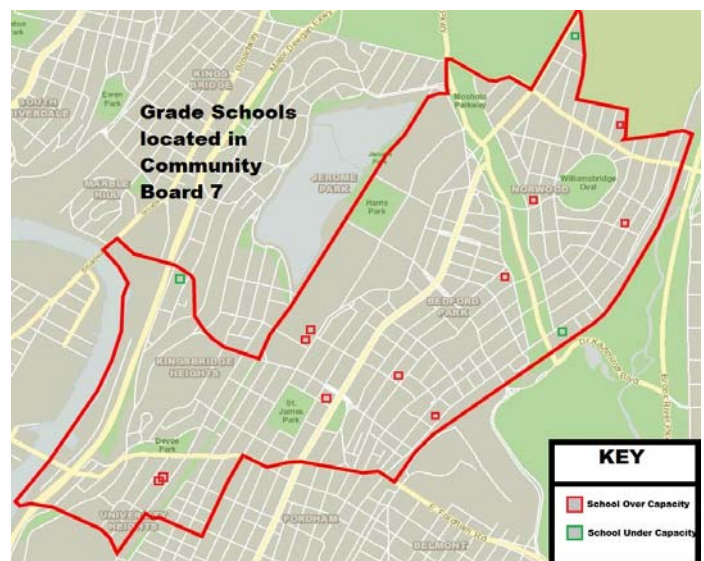
## **EDUCATION, YOUTH AND LIBRARIES**

### *School Construction*

The Board calls on the Department of Education (DOE) and the School Construction Authority (SCA) to conduct a thorough evaluation of current capacity and usage of public schools in our district, particularly of grade schools, which continue to operate far above capacity. In fact, as the table to the right indicates, only three out of our fourteen grade schools are currently operating under-capacity and many of the other schools are severely over-capacity. Furthermore, nine of those fourteen schools already operate annexes, trailers or other additions which are themselves experiencing overcrowding. Suffice to say, the number of school seats has not kept pace with the increase in residential development in our community over the last decade.

School	Address	Capacity	Enrollment
PS 15 Institute for Environmental Learning	2195 Andrews Avenue	436	528
PS 20 PO George J. Werdan III	3050 Webster Avenue	1132	1100
PS 246 Poe Center	2641 Grand Concourse	632	746
PS 291	2195 Andrews Avenue	539	678
PS 310 Marble Hill	260 W. Kingsbridge Road	846	767
PS 340	25 W. 195 <sup>th</sup> Street	483	653
PS 46 Edgar Allen Poe	279 E. 196 <sup>th</sup> Street	1005	1288
PS 56 Norwood Heights	341 E. 207 <sup>th</sup> Street	312	665
PS 8 Isaac Varian	3010 Briggs Avenue	807	1196
PS 86 Kingsbridge Heights School	2756 Reservoir Avenue	1288	1655
PS 94 Kings College School	3530 Kings College Place	1006	1198
PS 54	2703 Webster Avenue	430	486
PS 280 Moshulu Parkway	3202 Steuben Avenue	580	872
Bronx Dance Academy School	3617 Bainbridge Avenue	353	237

As if the current situation is not dire enough, the anticipated construction of 950 new units of housing along Webster Avenue means that many new families will be moving to the area, further over-burdening our schools. These new units are in addition to the over 400 units currently being built on Webster Avenue, "Webster Commons", just north of Gun Hill Road. These units are just outside our district but are close enough to have an impact on the delivery of services and the use of resources in our district. As the map to the right indicates, the areas of anticipated growth correspond to the areas which already have overcrowded schools. The opening of PS 177 for the 2015-2016 school year will begin to address this issue, but the anticipated 640 seat capacity will not be enough to alleviate all the overcrowding issues at surrounding schools and the fact that the school will be phased in over a number of years means that overcrowding will



continue at surrounding schools for years to come.

#### *School Resources*

It is important that our children are provided with opportunities to grow and learn beyond the subjects included in standardized testing. We urge DOE to maintain funding and, wherever possible, implement new programs to introduce children to the arts and music.

Additionally, the lack of time or appropriate facilities for physical education can have negative impacts on a child's ability to learn and to live healthy lives. It is strongly recommended that provisions are made to ensure that children in our schools are meeting the state-mandated guidelines for physical education while also meeting the City's goals to reduce childhood obesity.

#### *Libraries*

The Bronx Library Center is a beacon for learning located in our district and is one of only a handful of libraries that offers a full seven day a week service in the Bronx. It offers a wide array of programming, lectures, internet access, and other activities that would be otherwise inaccessible to area residents. We request that the City maintain its commitment to keeping the Bronx Library Center open seven days a week while providing the necessary resources to allow their supplemental programming to continue to flourish.

In the northern sections of the district, the Mosholu Branch is the only library available and, like the Bronx Library Center, it is heavily utilized. However, like many of the smaller library branches across the City, funding has been slashed in recent years, resulting in shorter hours of operation. We urge the City to restore funding to this branch so that it can extend hours of operation and expand programming options.

#### *Recreation Centers*

Currently, Community Board 7 is home to only two recreation centers, located at St. James Park and Williamsbridge Oval. In light of high youth unemployment rates, the lack of SYEP slots and similar programming, and especially considering recent increases in crime in our area, we believe that additional avenues must be explored for youth engagement. One potential opportunity is the development of additional recreation centers in areas of the district which have trouble accessing the current recreation centers, particularly those in the central and eastern portions of the district. In particular, we would ask the City to explore opportunities for establishing a center that would serve the central and eastern sections of the district.

#### *Youth Employment and Mentoring Services*

A major concern for the community, especially in these troubled economic times, is the lack of employment opportunities for youth and young adults in our community. It is apparent that there are still too few opportunities for skill development that would prepare these individuals to enter the workforce. We need the city to provide leadership by encouraging mentoring programs that will prepare



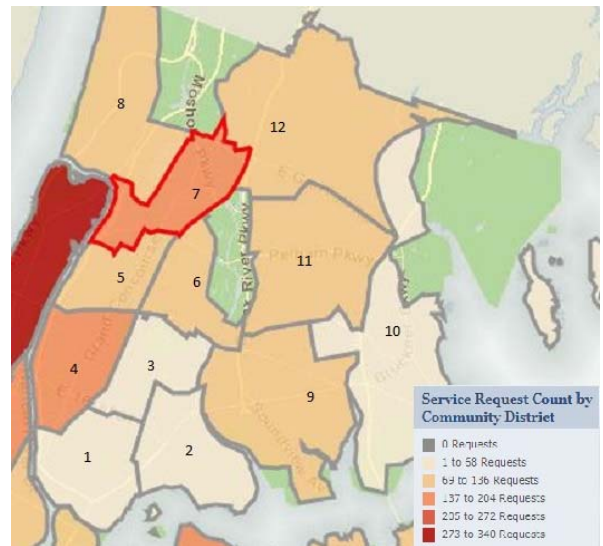
our youth by teaching them the skills necessary to thrive in the workplace.

Therefore, the Board recommends that the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) promote existing programs to a greater extent in economically distressed neighborhoods throughout the district. Furthermore, we implore the city to expand funding for existing DYCD initiatives such as SYEP and the Neighborhood Advisory Boards (NABs).

## **ENVIRONMENT AND SANITATION**

### *Enforcing Environmental Regulations*

There are many concerns by community residents over the perceived lack of enforcement of environmental issues in our district. While the Board understands the difficulty in enforcing certain issues (i.e. noise or hydrants), we strongly recommend that the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) increase the number of enforcement officers and redouble its efforts to address our quality of life issues. In addition to increased personnel, we encourage the City to provide additional decibel meters for DEP officers responding to noise complaints. We believe that this need is clearly illustrated by the 311 Service Complaint Map, which indicates that Community Board 7 has the most noise complaints of any district in the Bronx.



### *Enforcing Sanitation Regulations*

Like with environmental regulations, we recognize the inherent difficulties of enforcing certain sanitation regulations (i.e. dog waste or illegal dumping). However, we are continually told by members of the community that these are some of the most persistent issues affecting quality of life in our district. We would therefore recommend that the Department of Sanitation (DSNY) increase the number of enforcement officers and increase coordination with the NYPD to ensure proper enforcement of existing regulations. Additionally, we would ask DSNY to reconsider its decision to stop printing signage that explains the regulations and potential penalties for violations. We would also ask that DSNY work with the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to identify areas where additional waste baskets or doggy-bag stations may be appropriate and assist with addressing these issues. Finally, in areas where responsibility for maintenance is shared by multiple agencies (i.e. subway entrances on overpasses), we implore DSNY to work closely with those agencies to maintain basic levels of cleanliness for the district.

### *Increased Garbage Pickup and more Garbage Bins*

One of the most persistent complaints that the Board receives from residents is related to garbage pickup in our parks and along our commercial corridors. We encourage DSNY to evaluate these areas to determine potential locations for additional garbage bin locations. We would also ask that the City

consider purchasing BigBelly systems for high-traffic locations to help alleviate waste build-up. Finally, we ask that, where necessary, DSNY and DPR work to coordinate pickups to ensure that each and every park and recreational space is receiving daily garbage pickups.

#### *Inclusion in the HEAT Program*

Since 2007, the City has sponsored the Hydrant Education Action Team (HEAT) Program to educate communities about the dangers of opening fire hydrants illegally during summer months. Unfortunately, this program is currently only available in Community Boards 4 and 5 in the Bronx, despite numerous abuses that occur across our borough and specifically in our district. We thereby request that the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) extend the HEAT program to include Community Board 7. During the summer months, our office receives many complaints related to hydrant use and we believe that implementing HEAT in our district would offer the perfect opportunity to proactively address the issue improving safety and preventing water shortages in our neighborhoods.

### **HEALTH AND HOSPITALS**

#### *Health Insurance Enrollment*

According to 2010-2012 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Community Board 7 has an extremely low-rate of health insurance enrollment. In fact, according to the figures below, over 19% of the population currently has no health insurance, including over 4% of children. The implementation of the Affordable Care Act has undoubtedly begun to address this situation, but we would call on the City to target resources to our district to assist with enrollment. Specifically, we ask that the Human Resource Administration (HRA) work with the Board to identify areas within the district of low-enrollment and target outreach to these communities to inform them about available options through the New York State Health Exchange and to ensure that all eligible individuals are participating in public health insurance options.

Subject*	NYC-Bronx Community District 7--Bedford Park, Fordham North & Norwood PUMA 3706, New York			
	Estimate	Estimate Margin of Error	Percent	Percent Margin of Error
HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE				
Civilian noninstitutionalized population	121,182	+/-4,733	121,182	(X)
With health insurance coverage	97,683	+/-4,134	80.6%	+/-1.8
With private health insurance	40,518	+/-3,201	33.4%	+/-2.2
With public coverage	64,387	+/-3,614	53.1%	+/-2.4
No health insurance coverage	23,499	+/-2,506	19.4%	+/-1.8
Civilian noninstitutionalized population under 18 years	32,654	+/-2,219	32,654	(X)
No health insurance coverage	1,374	+/-471	4.2%	+/-1.4

#### *Access to Healthy Food*

The Board continues to support to the Department of City Planning's (DCP) F.R.E.S.H. text zoning amendment to encourage developers to take advantage of development incentives in exchange for putting new supermarkets in their commercial spaces. This provides residents with a greater variety of healthier food options and reduces the time and expense related to shopping outside of the district.



Moreover, studies have shown that access to food - including the availability, quality, and price of healthy foods, and the presence of supermarkets and advertising - affect the food choices of residents, many of whom shop close to home.

*NCBH Maternity Ward*

Last fall, our community was devastated to learn of the closure of the maternity ward at North Central Bronx Hospital (NCBH). During the last year, hundreds of families have been forced to travel far from home to receive critical prenatal services, as well as for labor and delivery. After a widespread public outcry from community members regarding the closure, the City's Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) agreed to reverse the decision and plans to reopen the facility in September 2014. We ask that HHC provide the necessary resources to NCBH to ensure that this facility is positioned to provide top-notch services to our community well into the future.

## HOUSING AND LAND USE

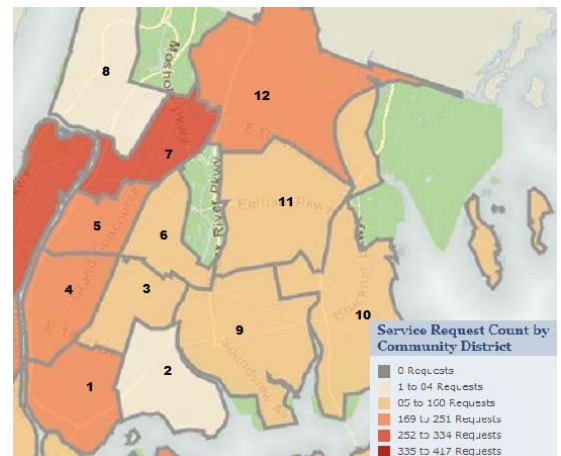
## Affordable Housing

Housing affordability continues to be the primary housing issue facing residents of the district. While the district has some of the most affordable private market rental housing throughout the city, many rent-stabilized and rent-controlled apartments are disappearing necessitating strong City actions to protect these housing stocks. Additionally, there is great need for capital to build new rental and home ownership opportunities for working class residents. There is also a need for housing with a higher maximum income level for young people starting their careers and the many city workers unable to meet the income cap on many affordable units.

The district is fortunate to have community-based nonprofit affordable housing developers that are using resources available through the city, state, and federal government to increase affordable housing stock. However, we believe there are additional opportunities for the Department of Housing Preservation & Development (HPD) and the New York City Housing Development Corporation (HDC) to take an active role in developing affordable rental and ownership units across the district. Finally, we ask that when the City does invest in these developments that it works to ensure mixed-income development to ensure healthy neighborhoods and prevent concentrations of poverty from developing.

### *Housing Quality*

Our office continues to receive a high number of complaints related to the quality of housing in our district with conditions such as mold, rat infestations and heat and hot water issues being the most persistent complaints. In addition to the complaints received by our offices, a review of the 311 Service Complaint Map indicates that our district currently has the most 311 complaints related to property and building conditions. We believe this is indicative of a broad issue affecting our community.



The Board strongly encourages HPD and the Department of Buildings (DOB) to work diligently to address the high volume of complaints about building conditions, particularly in residential developments. We urge both agencies to increase their current code enforcement personnel numbers and increase the use of Emergency Repair Program contractors that they are better-prepared to immediately evaluate problem areas and when necessary engage in emergency repairs.

#### *Concerns about Cluster Site Housing*

We remain concerned with Department of Homeless Services (DHS) sponsored cluster site transitional housing programs in the district, where the agency partners with local property owners to convert individual apartments into temporary homeless residences. Dedicating permanent market-rate affordable housing units to meet rising demand for transitional shelters removes the very affordable units needed to move individuals and families from shelter to permanent housing. The City must work to return these units to the rent-stabilized affordable housing stock as soon as possible.

Furthermore, the Board is concerned that property managers enrolled in this program are not being properly vetted by the agency. Some buildings used in this program have hundreds of DOB and HPD violations, some very critical, yet they are able to participate without first correcting these violations. Because the agency pays the owner of these establishments a significant rate, the Board is concerned that unscrupulous and irresponsible property owners may be taking advantage of this program to fund repairs mandated by other city agencies.

We ask that the agency develop more stringent criteria to determine which buildings can be used as temporary facilities and that all community boards are notified well in advance whenever any cluster-site program is being implemented in their district, regardless of the size or number of units involved.

#### *Rental Assistance Programs*

The City used to operate a program called Advantage, a subsidy program that helped transition families from the shelter system into permanent housing. During the years that the program was active, thousands of families were able to transition out of the shelter system. Unfortunately, in 2011 state funding for the program was cut leading the City to terminate the program. Since then, the homeless population has continued to rise, hitting record numbers in 2014, and further burdening an already overcrowded shelter system. In Community Board 7, this has meant that residents who seek DHS assistance have been left in limbo without a real opportunity to get back on their feet. It has also forced DHS to construct new shelters across the City and our district is now poised to receive at least one new large facility, as a result. In order to better serve the homeless and to prevent the proliferation of new shelters, we encourage DHS and the City to work with relevant stakeholders to develop a new rental assistance program that will address the homeless crisis in New York City.

Around the same time that the Advantage program was terminated, Section 8 stopped providing new vouchers for families looking for rental assistance. For all intents and purposes, these moves have essentially ended rental assistance for low-income individuals and families. The development of new affordable housing options will address this issue to a degree, but for the extremely low-income, it is simply not enough. We therefore call on HPD and the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) to

identify funding streams to reopen the application process for Section 8 Vouchers to ensure that these families are given an opportunity to access safe and affordable housing.

#### *Saturation of Supportive Housing Facilities*

The Bronx has taken on more city-financed supportive housing in the past decade than any other borough and there is a prevailing feeling in our district that we have received a disproportionate share of this housing stock. We recognize that these developments provide needed support services for high-need populations, but we would ask the City to develop a mechanism for distributing these facilities as fairly as possible across the City. Furthermore, we would ask the City to reevaluate financial incentives that have all but ensured that supportive housing facilities are the most financially lucrative development projects in our borough. Finally, in those cases where supportive housing fulfills a demonstrated need, we would ask that the City work with developers to produce mixed-use developments that allow for the supportive housing component to more seamlessly be integrated into the existing neighborhood.

### **PARKS AND RECREATION**

#### *Parks Enforcement and Security*

Security issues remain a major concern in our parks. Based on the NYPD CompStat reports and community complaints, what should be a welcoming setting for our youth is often times the reverse, a hostile environment where disorderly youth, vandalism, and other negative quality of life issues occur on a frequent basis.

Lack of lighting on many paths in the parklands adjacent to Mosholu Parkway is a great concern. These paths are very dark and provide ample opportunity for illegal dumping, loitering at night, and vehicle vandalism for those who park along the parkway. These paths are used by hundreds of school-age children and residents going between Bedford Park and Norwood and lighting, particularly during the winter months, would provide an additional level of security to these individuals. The Board asks that the agency submit an official request to the Department of Transportation (DOT) to conduct a lighting study along sections of the parkway to determine which areas can benefit from additional lighting.

The community implores DPR to increase the number of Parks Enforcement Personnel (PEP) officers and patrols at our parks to assist in making our parks a safer environment for all of us. Additionally, the Board recommends that more lighting and security cameras be installed where necessary, parks and playgrounds be properly closed at the appropriate times, and that there be more collaboration with the Board and the NYPD to address situations as they arise.

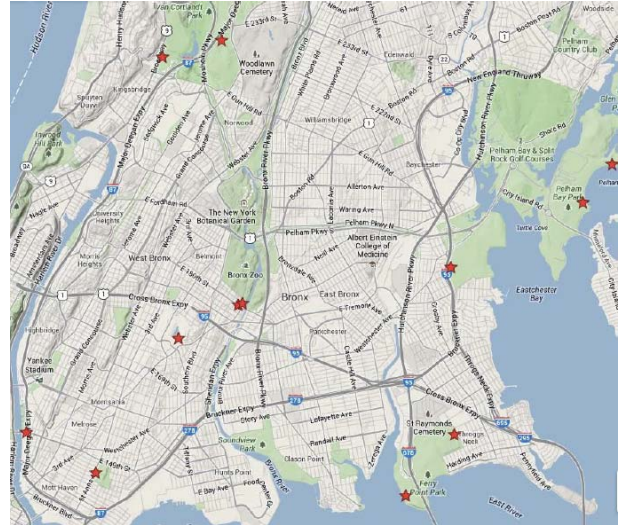
#### *Parks Maintenance*

Parks are one of the real assets in our district as Community Board 7 is home to more park space than the average district across the City. However, in order for our parks to reach their potential, they need to receive regular maintenance and cleanup. According to many residents of our district, this is not currently happening and in many of our neighborhoods, our parks and green space are some of the most unseemly areas of the neighborhood due to the accumulation of litter and household trash, fallen tree branches and dog waste. In order to address these and other maintenance issues, we call on the City to

increase the budget for DPR maintenance workers. We would also ask that DPR increase the number of gardeners serving our district.

### *Designated Barbequing Areas*

During the summer months, Community Board 7 receives a high volume of complaints related to barbequing, both within our park and green spaces, as well as in our neighborhoods. Currently, the Bronx has a number of designated barbequing areas within City Parks, but as the map to the right indicates (locations are starred), not only are there very few of these locations, but there are none within the footprint of Community Board 7. In order to provide residents with safe and accessible barbequing space, we would encourage DPR to evaluate potential space in our community and work with the Board and other stakeholders to find appropriate space for the establishment of designated barbequing areas. We believe that this offers a cost-effective option for the City to address these persistent complaints and to provide safe space for families looking to enjoy the outdoors.



### *Renovation of Mosholu Parkway and Adjacent Parkland*

Mosholu Parkway intersects through our district and serves as a greenway between our major parks, a connector to our major roadways, and a scenic respite from the surrounding urban environment. Unfortunately, Mosholu Parkway is facing many longstanding issues which we request the City begin to address. During and after rain or snow storms, the intersections along Mosholu Parkway become flooded and impassible for many residents. Several agencies must collaborate to remediate this situation, starting with DEP, so that further damage does not occur to the parkway and for the safety of our residents. Soil erosion from the adjacent park lands is the major cause of the flooding on the parkway. Lack of proper maintenance and enforcement of quality of life issues (i.e. dumping of charcoal and other contaminants) has caused many barren areas, allowing dirt and debris to flow onto the parkway and obstruct the catch basins. These parklands desperately need maintenance and we implore the city and specifically DPR to remediate the issues affecting our parkway.

### *Fordham Landing/Kingsbridge Heights Waterfront*

Currently, the district does not have access to most of the waterfront because it is underdeveloped or used for manufacturing purposes. The Board supports a plan to create waterfront recreational waterfront access for community residents at Fordham Landing and along the Harlem River. If the creation of a full-fledged park at this location is not feasible due to planned development, we would ask that our partners in government work with us to ensure that development plans include local waterfront access as a condition for development.

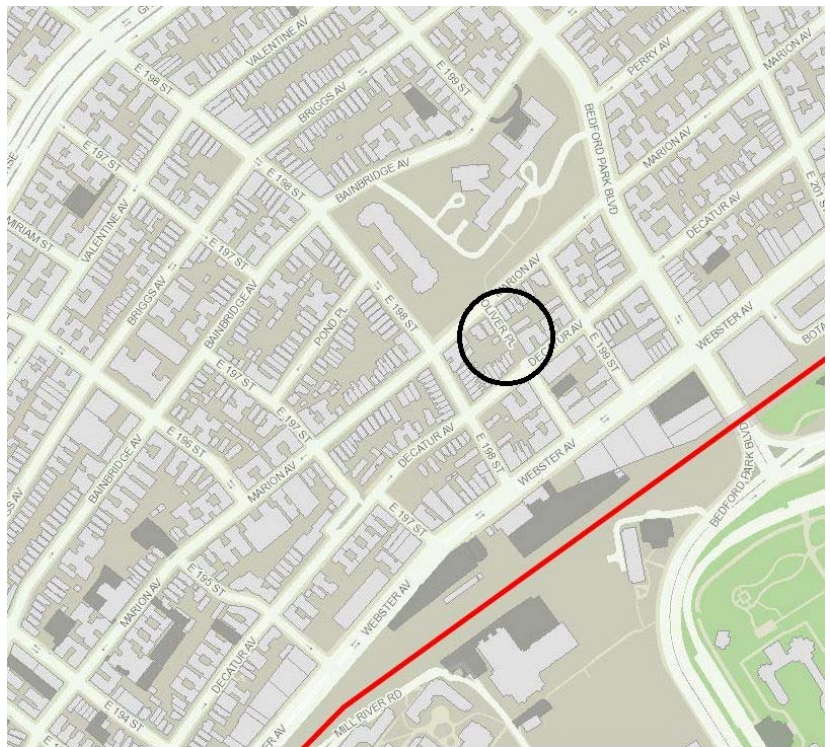


### *Access to Jerome Park Reservoir*

Jerome Park Reservoir is an asset not only to New York City's water supply, but also to the neighborhoods which surround it, providing a waterfront view and for many years, an active recreational space. However, in the aftermath of 9/11, access to the Reservoir was tightened as a security precaution. While we understand and appreciate that there are security concerns associated with public access to the Reservoir, the Board believes that DEP should work closely with the affected community boards, local elected officials and other stakeholders to find a middle-ground solution that would provide for some sort of public access while still adequately securing the facility.

### *Recreational Space on Oliver Place*

Oliver Place is a small side street located between Marion Avenue and Webster Avenue. One section of the street, between Marion and Decatur Avenue was never completely developed due to a steep grate between Marion and Decatur Avenues. Unfortunately, the section of the street that could not be completed was instead left as a vacant lot which has for many years attracted illegal dumping, loitering, and illicit activities. There is currently only a small, poorly lit pathway running up the hill for residents to travel between Marion and Decatur. The Board recommends that this space be turned into an active-use recreational space such as a playground, community garden or step street. As the map to the right



illustrates, there is currently no recreational space located anywhere in the area, decreasing the quality of life for local residents. Any of these projects would transform the rundown, vacant city-owned property into a community asset, alleviating many of the quality of life issues while filling a void in recreational space in this neighborhood. We also believe that the development of this lot can serve as a template for dealing with other problematic lots across our district.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY AND QUALITY OF LIFE**

### *Police Personnel*

In 2014, the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct, which covers most of Community Board 7, again received a designation as an Impact Precinct through Operation Impact. This designation brought with it an additional 57 officers, who have helped fulfill a pressing need, particularly in the southern section of our district, which has traditionally experienced more crime. However, despite the increase in uniformed personnel, our

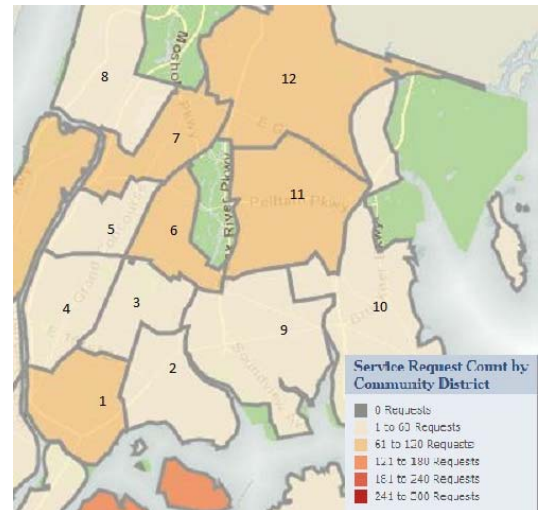
district, like many across the City, has experienced an increase in a number of crime categories. It is critical that the 52<sup>nd</sup> Precinct continue to be included in Operation Impact and we would ask that the City consider committing additional officers in the next fiscal year to ensure that the rise in crimes is met with an appropriate rise in personnel numbers.

### *Crime Prevention Tools*

The presence of police on the beat is always the most effective deterrent to crime. However, we recognize that it is impossible to have police everywhere making it imperative that the police have the tools necessary to extend their presence. In years past, our local elected officials have committed discretionary funding to the purchase and installation of cameras in high-crime areas. However, in certain cases, these cameras have not been installed despite the allocation of funding to do so and we therefore call on all agencies to coordinate their resources and to work to ensure that cameras are being installed and properly monitored. Additionally, we understand that the NYPD will be administering a pilot-program using gunshot recognition technology to provide real-time monitoring and response to shootings. We ask that the City consider using all or part of Community Board 7 as a testing ground for this pilot program to improve police response to shootings and provide safer neighborhoods for residents.

### *Improved Graffiti Removal Services*

According to statistics provided by the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit (CAU), there is currently a wait-time of at least 35 days for the City to address graffiti complaints through Graffiti-Free NYC. The long wait period means that residents and neighborhoods are forced to suffer these eyesores, which often then contribute to increased graffiti in the surrounding areas. This issue is of particular importance in our district, where, as the 311 Service Complaint Map indicates, we have among the most complaints of any district in the Bronx. In order to address this pressing quality of life issue, we call on the City to increase the resources dedicated to combatting graffiti through this and other programs. We would also encourage the City to partner with Community Boards and other local groups to proactively identify and address these issues as quickly as possible.



## **SENIOR SERVICES**

### *Funding Formula for Existing Centers*

The Board believes that the Department for the Aging (DFTA) continues to set unrealistic and unattainable benchmarks for determining how well senior centers are being utilized. Many senior residents feel that the City has used these benchmarks as a way to justify the potential closing of centers, as was proposed in years past for both Tolentine Zeiser and RAIN Bailey centers, which now operate entirely on discretionary funding from the City Council. Senior advocates cite that the criteria for



determining center utilization limits itself to how often seniors use the onsite meals program and does not include other programming that might take place throughout the day. Additionally, centers are under new pressures to provide programming as a condition to receiving their current funding.

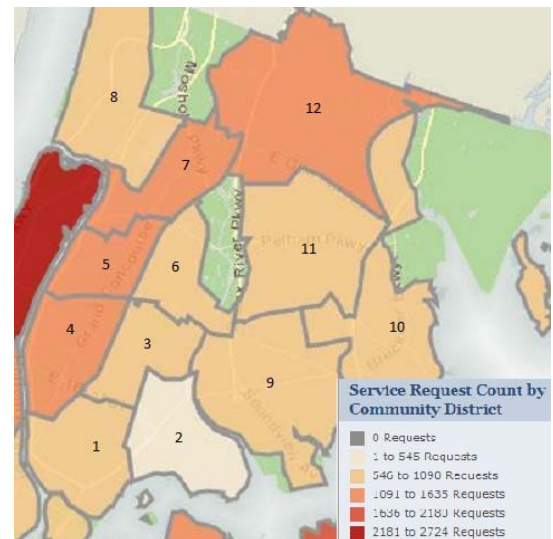
The Board continues to support the position that the proposed funding formula does not take into account the true utilization of our centers and voices its opposition to the agency's constant revamping of criteria for funding our centers. The Board recommends the allocation of additional funding to match the rise of expenses to our centers to offset previous reductions and to decrease each center's reliance on having to solicit outside funding.

Our centers are often times the only available resource for information, meals, and socialization for many seniors in our community and more must be done to ensure that they are able to weather the current economic downturn. We implore DFTA and our legislators to work to provide the necessary funding to maintain all of the city's senior centers.

## **TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION**

### *Maintenance Issues*

The Board continues to work closely with the Department of Transportation (DOT) to address sidewalk and street maintenance issues. The district has many major commercial corridors and roadways, including the northern end of the Grand Concourse, which are heavily utilized. However, appropriate funding to repair our major roadways is insufficient considering the number of vehicles and buses that utilize our roads, especially in light of the population growth we have been experiencing and are projecting in the coming years. According to a 311 Service Complaint Map, our district has among the most service requests of any Community District in the Bronx. In the best interest of maintaining our roadways, it is recommended that DOT reexamine the amount of funds allocated to the district for street milling and repaving to determine if additional monies are warranted.

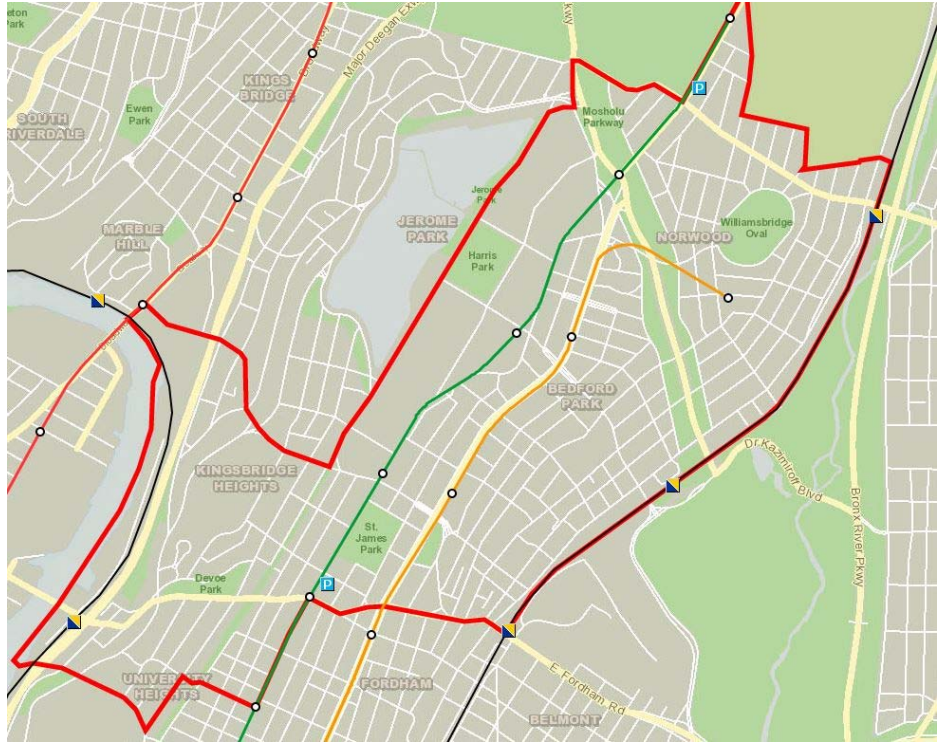


### *Parking Issues*

Parking continues to be one of the main complaints of Community Board 7 residents and the problem is anticipated to get worse as increased development occurs across the district. As illustrated in the map below, Community Board 7 is home to three subway lines which combined feature ten stations in our district. Additionally, we have four Metro North Stations serving our community and numerous bus stops along many lines. Unfortunately, many of these mass transit options do not have parking options available, making them inaccessible for many residents of our district. In fact, only two of the nine subway stations are located near municipal parking garages and none of the Metro North Stations. We

believe that one opportunity for encouraging mass transit use would be the construction of municipal parking garages near mass transit, where feasible, to encourage people to park-and-ride.

In addition to parking issues at mass transit stations, many residents complain that due to the high housing density of our district that street parking in their neighborhoods is increasingly scarce. As the district continues to experience a high volume of new development, we anticipate that this will only become a bigger issue in the coming years. We encourage DOT and MTA to conduct thorough evaluations of current parking regulations and bus stop locations to identify potential parking spaces in residential neighborhoods. We further encourage DOT to examine opportunities for angle-parking or other enhancements which can increase the availability of parking in our district. Finally, we encourage our legislators to examine current building codes and regulations which allow many developments to be constructed without including on-site parking.



#### *Accessibility Improvements at MTA Stations*

In the summer of 2014, the MTA is expected to officially unveil new elevators at the Kingsbridge Road B/D station, a long overdue move that will improve accessibility along the B/D subway line. Unfortunately, even with the addition of these new elevators, Community Board 7 will still have only two accessible stations: the Fordham Road 4 Station and the Kingsbridge B/D Station. That means that both the 4 and B/D subway lines include only one accessible station in our district. Worse yet, the only other station along either line that includes an elevator is the 161<sup>st</sup> St-Yankee Stadium Station where the two lines meet. We encourage the MTA to work with the Board and other stakeholders to find other opportunities to expand accessibility along both lines while continuing to work towards a goal of making every station accessible in the future.

#### *Extension of Bx41 to LGA and along Webster Avenue*

Over the last few years, the Board has worked with the MTA implement Select Bus Service (SBS) along the Bx41 route on Webster Avenue. While SBS has greatly increased the efficiency of both bus and general vehicular traffic along this corridor, we believe there are two opportunities to further enhance this bus service.

First, during the planning stages of the new Bx41 route, a proposal was announced to extend SBS to include service to LaGuardia Airport. We wholeheartedly support this proposal and we encourage the City to work with the MTA to identify the necessary resources to implement this proposal.

Second, with the new development occurring on Webster Avenue, we believe that it is imperative to extend bus service beyond Gun Hill Road on the northern end of the bus route. While this service would not technically be located in our district, it would connect many of the new developments occurring in that neighborhood to the rest of Webster Avenue, enhancing access for those new residents while providing an increased customer base for the new businesses opening along Webster Avenue in Community Board 7.

### **CLOSING STATEMENT**

Community Boards were developed for the purpose of allowing residents to participate in government locally to address their immediate needs. Community Board 7 is committed to working to achieve the goals laid out in this document and to the deliver the services that our residents need and deserve. We ask for the support from the Mayor's office, the city agencies, and our elected officials in ensuring that the needs listed in this document are considered and addressed.

Respectfully submitted,



Adaline Walker Santiago  
Chairperson  
Community Board 7



Dustin Engelken  
District Manager  
Community Board 7

