



COMMUNITY BOARD No. 18

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STATEMENT OF NEEDS AND PRIORITIES FISCAL YEAR 2014

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District Manager

Within the boundaries of Community Board #18 are many communities that comprise the "southern tier" of Brooklyn which can be classified as multi-ethnic, middle income neighborhoods with a solid tax base.

Throughout our communities there exists a network of volunteer civic, parent, religious, and service organizations working in a harmonious atmosphere of partnership with our elected officials to enhance the quality of life for all of our residents. It is that spirit that makes the neighborhoods of Community Board #18, perhaps, some of the finest places in which to live and raise a family.

The communities that comprise Community Board #18 are truly representative of the city as a whole and must be maintained in order to attract and keep families, business, and industry in the city. Only through a comprehensive program of improvement and long-range planning can we attempt to fulfill these planning objectives. Every effort must be made by the city to grant our Capital and Expense Budget requests and recognize the priorities that we have attached to these funding recommendations. Unfortunately, at the present "bare-bones" funding level, we can barely maintain the basic and essential facilities and services.

We urge the **Mayor's Community Affairs Unit (CAU)**, the **Office of Citywide Event Coordination and Management (CECM)**, and the **Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT)** to continue the strong working relationship between their centralized staff and our Community Board to assist in the resolution of issues and problems. We commend their expansion of internet access and support. Computer support services are even more crucial since the use of the internet has become the means for conducting business.

Data report listings posted on NYC.gov was an important

step toward sharing **311 Citizen Service Center** complaint collection data. However, we still need to be informed about specific complaint collection data encompassing location, tracking, and the resolution process. Interaction and sharing of information between the Community Board and city agencies enhance service delivery and coordinate efforts to improve the quality of life for our residents.

GATEWAY NATIONAL PARK/JAMAICA BAY AND ITS TRIBUTARIES

Jamaica Bay is one of the largest and most productive coastal ecosystems in the northeastern United States, and includes the largest tidal wetland complex in the New York metropolitan area that serves as flood protection and shoreline erosion control for the homes and businesses of the bordering neighborhoods. More than 500,000 people live within the Jamaica Bay watershed. Jamaica Bay bordering on Brooklyn, Queens, and Nassau County includes 26,645 acres consisting of open water, meadowland, marshes, dunes, and forests. Its inlets are under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, Gateway National Recreational Area. Sixty one percent (61%) of Gateway is water. By the year 2017, without remediation, the sea level is expected to increase by six feet as a result of global climate changes.

Gateway National Recreation Area, one of our nation's 391 national parks, plays host to more than 80 species of fish and 400 species of birds and butterflies (nearly 20% of North America's bird species) which live in or visit during seasonal migrations. The bay is a critical stopover area along the Atlantic Flyway migration route and is one of the best bird-watching locations in the western hemisphere. The National Audubon Society and the American Bird Conservancy designated Jamaica Bay as an Important Bird Area.

It is well documented by various scientific investigations that the tidal marshes that occur in Jamaica Bay are disappearing at an unprecedented rate. From 1924 to 2009 more than 50% of the bay's marshes disappeared. The Bay is being overloaded with nitrogen from NYC's DEP waste treatment plants, discharging 30,000-35,000 tons a day of nitrogen into the bay -- destroying aquatic life and the marshes at the rate of 35-40 acres of marshlands a year. At this rate, without remediation, this important community resource will cease to exist in our lifetime. Although marsh plants require nitrogen to thrive, too much can kill them.

The future of this ecosystem, including wildlife, local homes, and infrastructure is of deep interest to conservation groups and

environmentalists as well as community organizations and residents. It is our combined goal to bring Jamaica Bay water quality to levels that meet and, hopefully, exceed Federal standards for recreational use and ultimately preserve this lush, natural resource.

Currently, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in partnership with the N.Y.C. Department of Parks and Recreation and the N.Y.S. Department of Environmental Conservation, began work in December 2009 on an \$8 million Gerritsen Creek/Marine Park Ecosystem Restoration Project. The project plan is to rebuild approximately 32 acres of marshlands; approximately 20 acres of coastal grassland; more than 240,000 cubic yards of beach; removal of invasive species of plants and transplanting more than 750,000 native marsh plants. The vegetation acts as filters for the area's water, improving water quality and lessening the negative impact caused by run-off and other contaminants. The marshlands restoration will provide the public a place for recreation and access to wildlife. The creation of observation points along the restored nature trails, with signage posted along the paths, will provide education for the visitors about the area's variety of species and plant life and the tension that occurs when ecological and human environments intersect.

Floyd Bennett Field opened in 1931. From 1941 to 1971 it operated as a Naval Air Station and became part of the Gateway National Recreation Area in 1972. It is an historic treasure -- the first municipal airfield and an aerial hub for fighter planes during World War II, where the sounds of the departing aircraft of Wiley Post, Amelia Earhart, and Douglas "wrong-way" Corrigan stand as a testament to times past. Views from the control tower at Floyd Bennett Field gave clear vision to the criss-crossing runways of New York's first municipal airport. Now...the legendary runway is a barren pothole-ridden road. The field is dotted with abandoned buildings and structures, ruinous hangars, and dilapidated roads. The field's coast is a polluted cemetery for destroyed boats and debris.

On May 5, 2012 park rangers cut the ribbon on the newly renovated William Fitts Ryan Center, once the main arrival and departure terminal at Floyd Bennett Field. A portrait of the field's namesake, pilot Floyd Bennett, the first man to fly over the North Pole. The restoration project, contracted and managed by the National Park Service's Denver Service Center, was funded in large part by a \$4.8 million grant from the Department of Defense. Additional funding was provided by the National Park Service.

The Board continues to urge the restoration of Floyd Bennett Field's water access to its original prominence. The restoration of the boat docks at Floyd Bennett Field and at Canarsie Pier would allow for the use of the on-again, off-again use of water taxis at peak times to facilitate the movement of participants of large outdoor events as well as visitors to the Park, the islands off the coast of Canarsie, and the sports entertainment complex. It would enable connection with other parts of the borough and city aboard service which is already prepared to provide stops in Red Hook, Fulton Ferry Landing in DUMBO, and Governors Island where the public can enjoy summer programming and concerts or take a car-free bike ride.

The Historic Aircraft Restoration Project (HARP) is a National Park Service Volunteer In Park program dedicated to preserving the aviation history of Floyd Bennett Field for future generations. Since 1995, volunteers have dedicated thousands of hours of their spare time to restore vintage aircraft. Many of the volunteers are retired airline mechanics who have specialized knowledge of the technology used in the vintage aircraft that modern mechanics do not have. They work with volunteers whose goals are to pass the information down to the next generation. HARP is located in Hangar B, which was constructed by the U.S. Navy during World War II. After World War II, it was used as a training facility to help keep the nation's naval aviators prepared for national emergencies. Today, Floyd Bennett houses one of the finest aircraft restoration facilities in the United States as well as an NYPD training facility and a Marine Corps Reserve Battalion.

Occupying four (4) of the eight (8) airport hangars is a "mega" community-based sports and entertainment complex known as "Aviator Sports & Recreation" complete with a football field, ice rinks, and a climbing wall.

The historical integrity of some of the hangars has been compromised by this conversion and in contradiction to the protection in place by their inclusion on the National Register and under their management by the National Park Service. Promoting commercialization and excessive delegating of public responsibility to private concessionaires jeopardizes this natural treasure.

This fall, Transco/National Grid are planning to commence a two-phase gas pipeline project that will be installed parallel to the Marine Parkway Gil Hodges Memorial Bridge and will connect to National Grid's gas system infrastructure on both sides of the Rockaway Inlet. A new meter and regulator station, to measure, condition and control the flow of natural gas before it enters the local

natural gas distribution system, is proposed to occupy Hangars A and B in the southern part of Floyd Bennett Field. Phase 1 will begin September 2012 and projected completion by May 2013. Phase 2 will begin in 2013 and completion by November 2014.

Partisan Legislation in Washington seeks to allow Floyd Bennett Field to house this station, labeled by the NYPD as a “potential terrorist target” and, consequently, a high risk factor for the facility and surrounding communities. Have they forgotten that Floyd Bennett Field is a designated Historic District on the New York State and National Register of Historic Places (S/NR) and is visited yearly by tens of thousands of adults and children?

At a regularly scheduled meeting of Community Board #18 held on January 18, 2012, a Motion was made and passed, unanimously, to oppose the building, maintenance, and operation of this high-pressure National Gas Line at Floyd Bennett Field in Gateway National Park and its prolongation along Flatbush Avenue.

In April 2010 a "Blue Ribbon Panel Task Force" was formed for Gateway to establish a shared vision for the future of the country's third most-visited national recreation area. The Panel, an esteemed group of federal, state, and local agencies, and experts, recently released their final report on how best to revitalize Floyd Bennett Field and help make Gateway National Recreation Area an iconic urban national park. The report, “The Next Jewel In New York’s Urban Park Crown,” is a forty-page report that calls for a significant re-investment in the 1,400 acre Floyd Bennett Field, the largest waterfront property in New York City. It contains specific and achievable recommendations for actions on education, environmental restoration, transportation and infrastructure, public programming, park design, and a new management partnership.

On July 17, 2012 New York City and the National Park Service formalized the management partnership to jointly manage more than 10,000 acres of parkland in and around Jamaica Bay. Under the agreement, city and federal officials will work together to implement the recommendations to improve access, foster research, run education and recreation programs and plan restoration projects for the bay. Jamaica Bay is an unusual patchwork of private, city, state and federal lands.

City parks in the bay area total 3,300 acres and include Canarsie, Marine, Paerdegat Basin and Spring Creek Parks, as well as Rockaway Beach and Idlewild. The federal holdings, which span 7,300 acres, include Floyd Bennett Field, Fort Tilden, Jacob Riis Park, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge and a smattering of salt-marsh islands, all

making up part of the Gateway National Recreation Area. This partnership will improve our city's great natural treasure. We look forward to continuing to engage our elected leaders in revitalizing Floyd Bennett Field. Nowhere else in the world is there the potential that exists at Gateway, and specific guidance will be provided to the National Park Service as to how this vision can be applied.

Paerdegat Basin, on the Northwestern edge of Jamaica Bay, is one of the largest remaining coastal ecosystems in the New York City area. Portions of the Gateway National Recreation Area are on both banks at its mouth and dot the landscape. The area surrounding the head of Paerdegat Basin supports New York City infrastructure. The Department of Transportation (DOT) operates a maintenance and storage facility at the northwest corner, and DEP also operates a maintenance and storage facility at the northwest corner, and a Pumping Station at the headwater terminus.

The tributary watershed to Paerdegat Basin includes 6,825 acres spanning portions of the Canarsie, Brownsville, Crown Heights, Flatbush, East Flatbush, Marine Park, and Flatlands neighborhoods of Brooklyn. The Bay is the depository of the city's treated wastewater -- approximately 300 million gallons a day.

DEP, as part of the 1997 Paerdegat Basin Water Quality Facility Plan ULURP Application, committed to upgrade the Pumping Station at the base of the shoreline and built a thirty-million gallon underground Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Retention Facility, coupled with a twenty-million gallon "in-line" retention, to hold and treat the overflow until the Knapp Street Sewage Treatment Plant could properly process the sewage. The completed project became operable on May 12, 2011 and, as part of the ULURP Application, includes DEP maintenance and personnel facilities and a "new home" for Community Board #18.

More than a decade ago, as part of the Paerdegat Basin Water Quality Facility Plan, the ULURP Application also included the conversion of approximately 177 acres of Paerdegat Basin shoreline and submerged land to parkland. As a result of that action, DEP designed and presented a proposed Paerdegat Basin Natural Area Park and Ecology Park. The project has been developed and coordinated with the Department of Parks and Recreation and is now under construction.

The Natural Area Park is a restoration of a coastal grassland community over much of the project site. Public access is restricted as its goal is to promote habitat restoration and ecological improvement. The Ecology Park, a 5-acre section of the project, will highlight many of

the plant community types that exist or once existed in New York City. The Ecology Park will be equipped with a trail and viewing platforms for public access and will be used as an educational resource to promote awareness of the various environments found throughout the city.

The **New York State Department of Environmental Conservation** (NYS DEC) has included Jamaica Bay on its Section 303(d) impaired water list since 1998 because of violations of water quality standards relating to pathogens, nitrogen, and oxygen demand. In November 2009 a project costing more than \$11 million began to restore 35 acres of disappearing marsh lands and coastal wetlands in Jamaica Bay by reducing the amount of nitrogen and reducing the impacts from contaminated sediment in the water to prevent further loss of wetlands and protect a host of endangered and threatened species.

The future of this ecosystem, including wildlife, local homes, and infrastructure is of deep interest to environmentalists and conservation groups as well as area community organizations and residents. It is our combined goal to bring Jamaica Bay water quality to levels that meet and, hopefully, exceed Federal standards for recreational use and ultimately preserve this lush, natural resource.

This Administration and its successors need to continue to act upon a plan to protect the city's waterfront from the effects of sea level rise and storm surges. We applaud the City Council's Waterfront Planning Legislation, which requires the Department of City Planning to file a waterfront plan with the Mayor, the Council, the Public Advocate, the Borough Presidents, and the Community Boards by December 31, 2010, and to repeat the filing not less than every ten (10) years thereafter. The purpose of the plan takes into account the changing needs of the waterfront. The plan, "Vision 2020," released in March 2011 provides a sustainable framework for more water transport, increased public access to the waterfront and economic opportunities that will help make the water part of New Yorker's everyday lives.

ADMINISTRATION PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Each year, the Mayor proposes further "attacks" on the Community Boards by reducing our meager budgets...only to be restored by the City Council during Budget negotiations. The Boards continually struggle to fulfill their Charter mandated obligations under its paltry budget allotment. The Mayor would be better served if he left the operating budgets intact and cut the tens (10's) of millions of taxpayer dollars spent each year on unnecessary and often duplicated

studies contracted to outside sources.

The Board urges increased funding to allow Community Boards to function -- to hire planners and consultants to provide the essential tools to the community to address pressing and necessary zoning expertise and resources for effective neighborhood planning. The concept of community-based planning was the reason Community Boards were created when Mayor Wagner took his "Community Planning Council" concept city-wide in 1963. The boards were envisioned as town halls for community based planning, equipped with a full-time professional urban planner. Almost four (4) decades later, despite the tireless efforts of their members and staff, Community Boards and community-based organizations have few real opportunities to engage in proactive planning and even fewer opportunities to ensure that development suits neighborhood needs. Funding, training, and resources must be provided to assure active and meaningful participation.

We urge the **Department of City Planning** (DCP) to develop a new text amendment that would strengthen rules and zoning regulations for the placement of communication towers and poles, especially in residential neighborhoods, on city-owned housing projects and commercial properties. The outdated Federal Telecommunications Law of 1996 does not restrict the placement of cellular transmission devices based on health concerns since no hazard has been established. The Board of Standards and Appeals Special Permits for non-accessory towers in residential districts, ZR 73-30, only looks at the effect of the utility on the "privacy, quiet, light, and air of the neighborhood." With the proliferation of cell phone antennas and towers, we must use zoning laws to regulate the location, size, design, and operating characteristics of the proposed use to be compatible with adjacent uses, residences, buildings, or structures. The Federal Appeals Court (Sprint Telephony PCS v. San Diego, 2008) upheld the right of the municipality to regulate towers and poles as long as they do not actually prohibit wireless service or create significant service coverage gaps. New Zoning Regulations would insure the least intrusive placement of communication towers and poles that are sensitive to the nature and character of the community.

On June 30, 2009 the City Council approved the DCP ULURP Application for lower density and contextual zoning map changes for the Canarsie neighborhood. Community Board #18 unanimously supported the ULURP Application.

It is the sense of this Board that all of the communities within our Board be rezoned to create a rational up-to-date zoning plan that reflects natural residential, commercial, and manufacturing boundaries. The current land use is largely an artifact of historical urbanization. Future land use must be controlled by zoning, public policy, and land use regulations intended to promote activities appropriate to preserve the neighborhood character and infrastructure for those who live and work there.

A partner in the planning process is the **Board of Standard and Appeals (BSA)**. BSA's original mission was to provide a relief valve for property owners in those **rare** circumstances where existing zoning regulations prohibited them from reasonably developing their property. BSA is frequently misused to circumvent the existing zoning text. They repeatedly demonstrate their indifference to the views of the community and its concerns respecting the character of its unique neighborhoods by granting zoning variances in favor of development, construction, and other related industries. BSA should base their decisions on the responses to the following: ...does the unique condition of the property prevent reasonable development? ...would unique property conditions prevent an owner from obtaining a reasonable financial return?...Does the variance, if granted, alter the essential character of the area?...Is the situation a self-imposed hardship? (buying or overbuilding on the property knowing the restrictions and then claiming hardship) ...Is the variance requested the minimum necessary to afford relief?

For the protection of generations to come -- we must continue to fight to maintain and preserve our natural resources and the unique character of the diverse neighborhoods of our city. We must continue to examine and revise zoning laws

Community Board 18's housing stock basically consists of well-maintained owner-occupied one and two family homes with scattered co-op and large-scale condominium development. Additionally, there are several high-rise buildings and three (3) **N.Y.C. Housing Authority (NYCHA) Projects**, Bayview, Breukelen, and Glenwood, within our boundaries. These Housing Projects require continuous upgrading and modernization.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Transportation needs, particularly total reconstruction, contract resurfacing, and scheduled repair of the roadways within the Board area, presents an ever increasing need. Canarsie and surrounding communities were built on landfill that rapidly deteriorate and require an

aggressive street and sewer reconstructive program. The Community Board urges the Department of Transportation to advance our Board's meager Capital Project requests. Street resurfacing is a temporary costly "fix"...not a solution.

As our communities age, it becomes increasingly essential that the Capital Budget needs of the area be met if we are to maintain public structures and facilities at acceptable levels. Emphasis must be placed on long-term infrastructure rebuilding as well as short-range improvements.

The desperately needed "Reconstruction of the Seven (7) Bridges on the Belt Parkway" commenced with minimal impact in November 2009 with the first of three contracts - Fresh Creek Bridge, Paerdegat Basin Bridge, two (2) separate bridges eastbound and westbound, and the Rockaway Parkway Bridge. The second contract - Mill Basin Draw Bridge, a fixed structure with 60-foot clearance over Mean High Water obviating the need for opening and closing the bridge, is now scheduled for duration from 2013 to 2017. The landscaping contract will follow and complete the project in 2019.

Transportation issues persist to rank high on the problem list for our Community Board. Pedestrian, cyclist, and motor vehicle occupant safety at many of the intersections and streets within our Board area are the source of major concern.

As a component of the Mayor's PlaNYC, NYCDOT recently created a Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs. With no enforcement of regulations in place, and without consultation, they recently completed an unprecedented three-year plan to expand the city's on-street bicycle network by 200 miles. Included in their plan is an extensive design for the streets within our board area, in general, and in Canarsie, in particular.

Bicycle lanes clearly offer both an environmental and practical benefit in areas served by adequate mass transit alternatives and a more bike-friendly population. Bike lanes will only create hazardous conditions in our board area and jeopardize pedestrians, cyclists, and motor vehicle occupants.

We urge the Mayor and NYCDOT to recognize the highly unusual transportation challenges inherent to our community as well as the unique needs of the population we serve. Unlike most other areas of the City, Community Board #18 is simply not accessible to the New York City subway system. Residents must take at least one bus to reach the nearest subway station. Our neighborhoods are largely

residential with a major shopping mall, Kings Plaza, and small shopping areas/strips interspersed throughout, so there are no direct truck routes. This means that we constantly have a large number of buses and commercial truck traffic on our residential streets. The addition of bike lanes would impede traffic even further and pose a hazard to everyone who uses that roadway, pedestrians and bicyclists included.

Additionally, our board's population, historically and currently, includes one of the largest constituencies of senior citizens in the City. With or without designated lanes, it is safe to expect that this population is not going to jump on the bike-riding bandwagon. We, therefore, join with our local elected officials, community civic associations, and area residents in opposing the proposed expansion of on-street bicycle lanes to include streets within our communities.

Kings Plaza Shopping Center, built on city-owned land, is the cause of constant consternation. Numerous costly and time consuming studies have been performed by outside consultants, the Departments of Transportation and City Planning, as well as the Borough President's Office, in an effort to improve pedestrian, vehicular, and bus circulation problems at the intersections and along Flatbush Avenue and Avenue U. The studies continue to identify the same problems and continue to propose a myriad number of improvements including changes in bus stop locations and operations, directional signage, street configuration with the widening of Avenue U and Flatbush Avenue, and the **installation of pedestrian safety fencing** along the South side of Avenue U, from Flatbush Avenue to East 55th Street, and on the center traffic island on Flatbush Avenue, between Avenues U and V. Our Community Board also included in our Capital Budget Priorities and Requests a request for the construction of an elevated pedestrian overpass at this intersection. -- **To date... nothing of consequence has been done**, except for the creation of a major bus layover in front of the Kings Plaza Shopping Center causing buses, leaving the layover, to sharply propel across five (5) lanes of traffic on Flatbush Avenue to accomplish a left-hand turn onto Avenue U...and the widening of the traffic islands on Flatbush Avenue which have created additional confusion, danger, and further bottleneck this dangerous intersection!

All the studies performed...All the dollars spent...All the changes suggested...All the promises made...All the time and money wasted -- **To date...nothing of consequence has been done**. The problem is self-evident -- the solutions have been proposed -- implement the recommendations.

EMERGENCY SERVICES - FIRE

We are optimistic that funds will be increased to establish an even greater emergency service presence for the improvement of service deliveries to battle fires, reduce crime, and enhance quality of life conditions within our Community Board area.

Fire protection in a residential community, comprising tens of thousands of frame dwellings, is obviously of paramount concern. The theory used by the Fire Department for "manning" decisions includes statistics that **do not** include literally thousands of homes and tens of thousands of area residents that have become part of the Board area since that statistical information was compiled decades ago. Consequently, analysis of the Department's decision should be the subject of "up-to-date" review not budgetary constraints.

POLICE

We have praiseworthy day-to-day "line" contact with the two area Police Precinct Commanding Officers from the 63rd Police Precinct, Commanding Officer, Captain John Rowell, and from the 69th Police Precinct, Commanding Officer, Deputy Inspector George Fitzgibbon. Special praise must be given to their prudent command decisions in police utilization. Active participation at the Community Council level further improves community relations. The Auxiliary Police continue to play a vital role in the day-to-day operations of both Precincts. We commend these vital groups of community volunteers.

Our Community Board is frustrated, however, in our attempts to address the following specific areas of concern that we and other neighboring Community Boards continue to identify time-and-time-again with little or no positive results. We ask the Police Department to increase their staffing to provide for continual enforcement of the laws to maintain the quality of life for all city residents. Special attention must continue to be given by law enforcement agencies to aggressively address the following violations:

- The rampant illegal street parking of commercial vehicles, delivery trucks, 18 wheelers, car carrier trailers, the well-defined "4-Sale" cars, and the autos/SUV's, with and without license plates, left all day at metered parking and on the sidewalk in front of the various Auto Malls on Utica Avenue, Ralph Avenue, Avenue U and Kings Highway.

- Double parking continues to plague our neighborhoods, in general, and at the "Kings Plaza" shopping area, schools and places of worship, in particular.
- The proliferation of illegal "dollar" vans particularly at and around the Kings Plaza Shopping Center, on Flatbush Avenue, Avenue U, Remsen Avenue, Ralph Avenue, Utica Avenue, and Flatlands Avenue, and all the routes leading to the Kings Plaza Shopping Center and the Gateway Shopping Complex in East New York.

To add to traffic problems and pedestrian hazards, in May 2012 the Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) granted permission to Kings Plaza Car and Limo, Inc., to operate from a kiosk station in the Kings Plaza Shopping Center Mall under a pilot program and without Community Board consultation or notification. The Community Board, the surrounding community, and the Mill Basin Civic Association opposed their previous and subsequent applications because the location is overburdened with vehicular and pedestrian traffic, illegal vans, illegal parking, and illegal pick-ups and drop-offs on Flatbush Avenue, Avenue U, East 55th Street (adjacent to the Mall) and on the surrounding residential streets.

The Administration must establish stronger enforcement with severe penalties for operation of licensed, unlicensed, and "renegade" vans illegally operating and parking in our communities. Rather than develop a strategy to shift the illegal parking and van problems from block-to-block we must adhere to a strong commitment of interminable rigorous enforcement of these "quality of life" violations.

The need for a new 63rd Precinct Stationhouse continues to be an absolute necessity. Although the Department allocates funds for rehabilitation of the antiquated Stationhouse to meet staffing needs and patrol requirements, the poor conditions and problems still exist. Funding must be set aside for relocation. Modern, adequately sized police precincts are essential to good policing. We urge the NYPD to aggressively explore the acquisition of city-owned properties.

TRANSPORTATION & THE METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY

In this time of rising out-of-control fuel costs we urge the MTA to develop a long-term strategy for meeting the public transportation needs of our area and for all city residents.

We were pleased to receive your announcement of July 19, 2012 that \$29 million in service restoration will be added to your budget

to restore services that were reduced or eliminated as part of the MTA's 2009-2010 budget-balancing cuts. One of the proposed service restorations that will positively affect our area is the weekend service to Kings Plaza Mall via Avenue R. We anxiously await its implementation.

We remain frustrated in our efforts to provide adequate public transportation to other parts of the Borough due to the lack of speed, curtailed, changed and/or eliminated service on the surface bus lines. The speed and traffic flow can be easily improved by strict enforcement of regulations prohibiting the use of illegal vans on bus routes.

We continue to ask for attention to, and relief from, the constant parking, double and triple parking of idling buses outside the Flatbush Bus Depot, 4901-23 Avenue O, on Fillmore Avenue, Utica Avenue, and along Flatbush Avenue. The buses regularly block the street and the Flatbush Avenue entrance/exit to the adjacent Floridian Diner and Burger King. They create hazardous pedestrian, vehicular, and environmental conditions. The TA's lack of vigilance and action underscores their unwillingness to work with the community, city and state agencies, and our elected officials. Our thanks to NYSDEC for their dedication, commitment, and tireless efforts in responding to this offense.

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

The maintenance and upkeep of our parks and playgrounds continues to remain a major area of concern due to insufficient staffing and funding. Some parks and playgrounds in our District are in various stages of design, scope and reconstruction. The Board fully supports the continued funding of these projects. Several of our smaller parks and playgrounds require reconstruction or "in-house" spruce-up. We urge that these projects as well as increased staffing be addressed through the Capital and Expense Budget.

The Greenstreets Program provided us with an opportunity to beautify our barren neighborhood triangles and traffic islands. We wholeheartedly support and commend the continuation of this program. We encourage strategies for additional conservation and beautification programs to include sorely needed maintenance provisions

On June 20, 2012, our Community Board voted unanimously to recommend approval for the disposition of city-owned property located at 2875 Flatbush Avenue, a/k/a Mill Basin Project with the following conditions:

- That the proceeds of the sale of these properties be allocated by EDC to map and develop, with the appropriate City and State Agencies, the adjacent property including the Four Sparrow Marsh “Forever Wild” natural habitat as dedicated Parkland and based upon a development plan approved by the community in partnership with the environmental advocates to preserve the property in perpetuity.

The premise behind the redistribution of these proceeds is well-established by other projects such as the Community Board Office and the mapping and development of the adjacent parkland along both sides of Paerdegat Basin. This development plan, discussed on page 6, was included and made part of the approval process for the ULURP application for the DEP Sewer Retention Facility.

We urge the Administration and the Department of Parks and Recreation to support our quest to maintain this precious, endangered “open space” for generations to come.

Parks' Department equipment and personnel are always in short supply. We urge that our requests, as well as Departmental requests, be given a high priority in budget negotiations for adequate maintenance and operation of our parks. The park areas within Community Board #18 provide recreational and cultural outlets for all ages, and are truly a valued natural resource that must be protected and maintained. Marine Park comprising 798 acres, and Seaview Park comprising 540 acres, are regional facilities that serve a large population outside our local neighborhoods. We anxiously await completion of the construction for the Marine Park Community/Senior Center. This facility will provide sorely needed recreational activities for our vital seniors and active youth population.

Department budget cuts have historically negatively impacted the Forestry Division of the Department of Parks & Recreation and continue to cause great consternation for the residents of our community. The large geographic area of our Community Board and its residential neighborhoods are the “home” to the largest street tree population in the Borough. Consequently, we must cope with a Parks' Division that falls behind in its protracted pruning and dead tree/stump removal schedules. We are hopeful that additional funds will be allocated to this desperately needed service.

DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION

Sanitation Commissioner, John Doherty, brought a life-time of

experience to the job. We urge the Administration to give him the manpower necessary to do the job.

The supervisory staff of BK18; Assistant Borough Superintendent, George McLean, Superintendent, Michael Lorenzo, and Luis Otarola and Barry Widelock, Supervisors, have been exemplary in their willingness and demonstrated ability to work with the Board in developing the maximum potential of their limited manpower and equipment to deliver quality service to a community experiencing ever-increasing population growth.

Increased manpower is also needed to maintain the numerous center malls along our roadways. Neglected and unattended they grow into breeding grounds for vermin and illegal dumping creating a community nuisance and safety hazard.

DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS

Increased staffing for the Department of Buildings is critical. Code enforcement personnel are a crucial component in enforcing the Zoning Resolutions and Building Codes. Unchecked greed and neglect will lead to gross abuse in many instances, and dangerous code violations in some instances.

YOUTH

The Board continues to direct its attention to the needs of our area youth by developing and supporting broad outreach after-school and evening recreational, cultural, and educational programs within the community. We are currently working with our local elected officials, community and youth organizations, to secure funds for special programs designated to address identified youth problems.

The State Legislature gave the Mayor broad authority in running the retooled Board of Education as the Department of Education. Reading and math scores reflect a distorted picture of the crisis in our local schools. Fancy slogans such as "no child left behind" and "children first" become the advertising campaign of a failed system. Closing schools to reopen new schools and "Charter Schools" is costly and ineffective. We urge the State Legislature and the Mayor to continue to examine the direction that public education is going and recognize the role of the teacher and the need for parental involvement as the first line of defense in providing a sound basic education...That formula puts "children" first rather than "control" first.

IN CONCLUSION.....

Notwithstanding the drastic budget cuts suffered by the Community Board, we continue to make a major impact in implementing our Charter mandated obligations. We look toward the continued support of our elected officials as key ingredients in restoring these funds so that we may be even more responsive in addressing the needs of our community. The partnership that has developed between government and community is best exemplified by our Statement of Needs and Priorities for Fiscal Year 2014 -- a true product of that joint cooperation.

Respectfully submitted,



Saul Needle
Chairperson



Dorothy Turano
District Manager