



Community Board 12

The City of New York

Borough of Queens

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District Needs Statement

FY2012

Introduction

Community Board 12 is bounded by Hillside Avenue (South), the Van Wyck Expressway (West), North Conduit Avenue (South), and Francis Lewis Boulevard/Springfield Boulevard (East) encompassing the communities of Jamaica, South Jamaica, South Ozone Park, Hollis, St. Albans, and North Springfield Gardens, all of which constitutes Community Board 12, Queens. It is one of the fastest growing boards in population of all of the 59 Community Boards. It is the second largest Board in the borough of Queens and takes up a large portion of the southeastern corner of the Borough. Officially, according to the 2000 census, we have a total population of 223,602 people. The number does not reflect an acknowledged undercount, especially among the undocumented residents of Community Board 12. Actually, when the acknowledged undercount is factored in Community Board 12 has well over 270,000 people with all the additional houses built in the district within the last ten years. The District has become a more culturally and ethnically diverse community. It is situated in the well-known flood basin of the world's largest dam, John F. Kennedy Airport. The Airport, built on wetlands, which was our natural drainage area, has greatly contributed to a lack of adequate rainwater run off in our community. Compounding our problem is the fact that our major trunk line sewer system has been completed. The Thurston Basins system is crucial for the community. We continue to state that Community Board 12, suffers from serious infrastructure problems, our roads and sewers are inadequate to serve our community needs. A great deal of street repair has been done in Board 12, much more remains undone. Yet until these projects are completed, the residents of our community will continue to live with flooded basements, flooded streets, and a potential health emergency waiting to occur.

Economically, the residents of Community Board 12 range from poor to the upper middle class. However, a segment of Board 12's population continues to have incomes below the poverty level, or receive public assistance. Even though there has been a large decrease in public assistance our district continues to be a "target area" eligible for many different social service programs and grants. While, to a large extent these programs are needed and welcomed, there

have been more than a few instances of duplication of services, and a lack of coordination among various agencies has led to areas of over saturation. This causes the residents to feel put upon and dumped on. We desire and would welcome a dialogue involving the city, state, federal and private agencies that run residential facilities to develop a coordinated effort that both serves the needs of these populations and is fair to the communities involved.

Education

Overcrowding and the Transportable Classroom Units continue to be a problem; permanent space should be added to the schools considering all the additional housing and proposed housings. The School Construction Authority (SCA) has moved forward with plans for two new primary/intermediate schools planned for District 28.

The construction of the new PS/IS 48 building is moving ahead; the complete school cost is to be \$52 million and it is expected to be completed by November 2010, it is located at 108-29 155th Street. The new school will be south of the existing P.S. 48 creating 611 new seats. The old P.S. 48 will remain. The new facility will serve the existing P.S. 48 school organization.

The second proposed school is PS/IS 277 to be located at 153-26 Hillside Avenue, it will provide 665 new seats. The cost is to be \$53.5 million.

Our Community district has 53,054 children enrolled in preschool to high school, and increasing. This is an overwhelming number, and we need more schools to be built so that we can properly place and educate these children; the portable classrooms that are now being used for classes in our schools are not properly assessed to educate our children in our community. This is a major concern in our community.

Our students deserve the same Amenities and services extended to other students in the City of New York. Our schools need funding from the government to expand the buildings and make larger classrooms for our children. We have 4,075 children coming out of nursery and preschool and 3,370 children coming out of kindergarten. These numbers are increasing every year. We need good schools with small classes. We will continue to advocate for quality education.

Youth Services

Our youth needs must be addressed. Resources and funding sites are limited; efforts must be made to provide more. We have two Beacon schools in the district providing after school and evening recreational programs and activities.

There is a growing need for an additional latch key program. We have only one in the district. One of the most important needs of our youth is more supervised after school programs for our children to attend. The two Beacon Programs are full to capacity. Efforts must be made to improve and increase the availability of health care for the Youth of Community Board 12 Adolescent Health Services. Also Aids Outreach for youth and more domestic violence and

child abuse prevention programs. We need space for youth programs. Youth employment programs addressing the high school dropout rate. There is a need for more jobs for youth, not just during the summer, and in some cases after school. Locally and City Wide businesses should make a special effort to provide jobs for our youth. Each year the summer youth programs suffer. Some of our youth needs are being addressed, but they are by no means enough.

Department of Buildings/Codes Enforcement

We need additional buildings inspectors to address illegal conversion, working without a permit and on working on the weekends; these problems are escalating. Illegal uses, must not just be cited, they must not be allowed to continue. There continues to be a lack of enforcement in Community Board 12. A proposed Task Force was set up to enforce and monitor the area of the Jamaica Plan Rezoning; this is not the entire district. We must have at least two full time Building and Consumer Affairs inspectors, plus a processor server. To seriously combat the problems of illegal conversions, illegal buildings, driveways, and land use must be evidenced by those agencies charged with enforcement. Local Law 6, the Padlock Law, must be used vigorously in Board 12, where illegal businesses proliferate.

Health Services

Our communities continue to remain medically underserved and that issue must be addressed. We, in Jamaica, Queens have our own ongoing battle with the AIDS epidemic. Nearly twenty-five years after the start of the AIDS epidemic, the rate of HIV/AIDS infections continues to rise throughout the borough of Queens even as it continues a downward trend in “epicenter” boroughs like the Bronx and Manhattan. Jamaica, Queens continues to have a high number of HIV/AIDS cases, the second highest in the borough. Death rate due to HIV in Jamaica has dropped by 75% in the past decade. One thousand thirty eight (1,038) people per 100,000 are living with HIV/AIDS in Jamaica.

Alarming, the CDC estimates that for every person with AIDS there can be up to five persons with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

Human Resources Administration – General Social Services

The use of various services under HRA/DSS continues to be very high, and demand outpaces resources by large margins. There is a clear need for more coherent policy regarding the Homeless in the city in general and Community Board 12 in particular. We have the most shelters in Queens County. There are 17 shelters in the Borough of Queens, 9 of them are in Community Board 12. More community input is needed in regard to conditions of housing, and new techniques other than “warehousing”. The board continues to be concerned about the closing of the Emergency Assistance Unit (EAU) in Jamaica, thus forcing clients to travel out of the borough for services. This adds an intolerable burden to persons who are already traumatized by their emergency. There is no comprehensive plan to review and consider residential facilities

from all agencies (state, city, and private) when sites for homes are selected. These factors create intolerable burdens on certain communities of the city, such as ours, and causes community residents to oppose services that are legitimately needed out of sense of frustration. Our area has for years been unfairly targeted and as a result we house far more than our fair share of homeless and individuals in need of mental health residential programs. We must control the continuing expansion of group homes and shelters in our area.

Department of Housing Preservation and Development

We no longer have our Neighborhood Planning Office in its district; the office has been closed, and is now staffed at 100 Gold Street in Manhattan.

The final phase of the South Jamaica fourth Amendment is almost complete, in progress is the project on 150th Street and South Road, will consist of twelve (12) 2-family homes and two (2) 3-family; a total of 30 units. Guy R. Brewer North A and B corner of 108th Avenue, and Union Hall Street twenty one (21) 2-family homes with a total of 42 units, these units are complete.

New construction – the Dermot Project (Moda) located at 88-14 parsons Boulevard 340 units.

In Community Board 12 district we are experiencing a foreclosure crisis. Housing Preservation and Development is rolling out two programs to address the foreclosure crisis by way of acquisition of foreclosed properties that are made available by lottery to eligible New Yorkers and the Mortgage Assistance Program, another way which will attempt to stem the crisis by preventing foreclosure before it happens. HPD is attempting to address the crisis head on by launching new initiatives to meet our three critical goals of strengthening neighborhoods, expanding the supply of affordable and sustainable housing, and stabilizing families by keeping them in their homes.

In South Jamaica and the rest of southeast Queens, HPD is implementing new programs aimed at countering the impact of the foreclosure crisis.

Department of Transportation (DOT)

We have areas in the district where the streets are too narrow to handle the large volume of traffic that goes through. We are requesting a study to examine vehicular and parking patterns in the areas.

Street maintenance at this time needs to improve. We continue to feel that a work crew is specially needed in Community Board 12. There continues to be miles of streets in the district in the residential area in a state of disrepair, they are tied up in capital projects, some more than forty (40) years on the books and still not completed.

Community Board 12 infrastructure has been neglected for years. Many of our capital projects were delayed due to budget cuts, only a few are completed, some are in progress, and some

continue to remain in limbo ineligible for resurfacing or other maintenance while awaiting construction.

Department of Design and Construction (DDC)

Experience has shown that the lowest bidder on a capital project does not guarantee the best job.

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Flooding, poor drainage, and a high level of ground water are a major problem in Community Board 12. A large portion of the district has Seepage Basins instead of Catch Basins. Seepage Basins normally function five to six years. We need an ongoing routine maintenance of catch basins. We continue to receive complaints from homeowners about street flooding so severe that basements and properties are damaged. Existing overflow facilities and outlets are insufficient to handle all the storm water that flows to us above and below ground. Some parts of the district have no storm drainage system at all, and where some storm sewers exist, they are inadequate or ineffective.

Station 6, located at 110th Avenue and 164th Place; the project is on hold. DEP was designing a new facility there to pump, treat and discharge into the drinking water distribution system approximately 10 MGD, which will assist in lowering ground water throughout the area:

- Design was scheduled to begin again in late 2007 - Cancelled
- Construction contract bid in 2009 - Cancelled
- Completion of Construction we were being told would be in 2013, now we are being told this project is now on hold. It's important that this project move forward. The Department of Environmental Protection has numerous projects submitted to DDC, they are not moving forward. We were informed that with the Jamaica Plan it would significantly upgrade sewer and water infrastructure in the district.

DEP needs to increase its efforts in addressing the serious flooding condition in the district, because poor drainage and flooding has been a long standing problem in Community Board 12 District too long.

Zoning

Zoning continues to be an issue in certain parts of the district that needs to be addressed, developers have come in and demolished one family homes and built five (5) and eight (8) family homes, changing the makeup of a community.

The Jamaica Plan Rezoning was the largest rezoning in New York City's history, covering 368 blocks. It is the first rezoning for the area since 1961. 341 of those blocks are in community board 12, twenty-seven (27) in Community Board 8, we were informed that the rezoning will spur the creation of 9,500 jobs, 5,200 housing units and three million square feet of Commercial

Space around the Air Train Station while protecting adjacent lowered scale neighborhoods; we hope this will happen.

The St. Albans and Hollis rezoning consists of 317 blocks, and we still have a large portion of board 12 that has not been rezoned.

The South Jamaica rezoning consisting of 530 blocks is in progress, we are waiting for the Environmental Impact Study to begin.

The Springfield Gardens rezoning consisting of 68 blocks was the beginning of rezoning in the district by United Neighbors Civic Association. A number of people have worked long and hard to develop a plan that will protect the character of our communities.

Economic Development

Presently we are getting prepared for a development spurt with a number of proposed large projects, one is in progress, the old former Queens Family Courthouse located at 88-14 Parsons Boulevard, being developed-mixed-use project consisting of 340 units of market-rate and affordable rental, 18,500 of retail space, 25,000 of community facilities, and public parking. The 168th Street Garage proposed project is on hold due to the economics.

With growth it presents considerable infrastructure and service challenges, also which require more immediate mitigation by the city especially for parking and traffic flows.

We are concerned, and hope that with all of the proposed projects and new development proposed for the district it will offer an opportunity to address the unemployment in the district; in which it has not.

Fire Department

In recent years, the incidence of fire and other related problems has decreased. The Fire Department, a number of years ago, instituted a strong and permanent community-based fire prevention program, the Fire Safety Education Fatal Fire Reduction Program, and the Smoke Detector Program. We once had the highest rate of fatal fires in the City of New York, an additional Fire Engine was added, Ladder 133, Engine 275. Interagency cooperation in the area of fire prevention worked.

With all that has been done, the result has been exceptional. Hopefully, the Fire Department will continue to institute the strong and permanent community-based fire prevention programs like the Fire Safety Education, Fatal Fire Educational Program and the Smoke Detector Program. These Programs certainly have been effective.

Sanitation

Community Board 12 sees no justification for our street cleaning crews being eliminated, hundreds of additional homes have been built in the district, but we have not received any additional service. We are disturbed that Sanitation is unable to service the malls dividing some of our major thoroughfares on a regular basis. Dumping is an increasing problem, and we ask that the Department of Sanitation increase its stakeout presence in our area. We need additional manpower for street cleaning, dump-outs, and litter basket operations. Archer Ave and Parsons Boulevard is one of our busiest transportation hubs, it's not part of the Business Improvement District (BID), and the litter baskets are always overflowing. Some of our streets are cleaned everyday, but they continue to be dirty in some of the areas.

This is devastating to our community. Our sanitation garage is in Community Board 10; it should be in the district in which it provides service. We have seven waste transfer stations. The Transfer stations in Community Board 12 are not used for the garbage coming from our community; they are used for the garbage coming from other districts. The community is not aware of what type of garbage is being transported through their community. The community is advancing for a more stringent set of guidelines for the Transfer Station to abide by. Other issues revolving around the Transfer Stations are constant noise of 18-wheelers, odors from the stations, moving of particular waste through residential areas along with a host of other issues. The community; New York City Department of Sanitation needs to take a more proactive role enforcing the codes and rules set by New York City.

Police

We have two Police Precincts in the district, the 103rd Police Precinct and the 113th Police Precinct. Tremendous revitalization has occurred in Jamaica and its surroundings. Our police precincts continue to show a drop in crime. The 103rd Precinct has gotten an increase in manpower and the Impact Zone, because of the 7,000 to 8,000 high school students that flow through Jamaica Avenue five days per week and the Air Train.

The 113 Police Precinct continues to receive a disproportionate number of Police Officers out of classes graduating from the police academy.

We are justly proud of our community. The Police Department has thrown a vast array of manpower and other resources into Southeast Queens to fight crime.

Subway Service

There are four subway lines (E, J, Z and F). The "F" train terminates at 179th Street on Hillside Avenue. Passengers wishing to travel further east have to transfer to a bus. Jamaica Center Transportation Study found the "E" train serves approximately 95,000 daily passengers (source: NYCT turnstile data) at the Jamaica Center and Sutphin Boulevard, Archer Avenue subway

stations. Riders of the New York City Transit system primarily use the system to commute to and from work in Manhattan.

Long Island Railroad

The Long Island Railroad (LIRR) station is located at the corner of Sutphin Boulevard and Archer Avenue. This station serves as a transfer point for several LIRR trains, buses, and subways, and services mainly commuters traveling to and from Nassau and Suffolk counties.

Air Train

The Air Train is a light rail service that connects downtown Jamaica with JFK International Airport and Howard Beach. The Air Train loops through the Central Terminal Area at JFK, it runs above the Van Wyck Expressway connecting to the Long Island Railroad and the subway at Jamaica Station.

Parks & Recreation

Community Board 12 has a large amount of Parkland. We have been successful in getting the majority of our parks reconstructed at this time. Adequate maintenance and clean-up should be a seven day-a-week operation during the summer because our parks are heavily used. Seasonal employees should be hired on a five day work week basis. Trees beautify an area, we are getting more and more request for trees from homeowners, capital projects; but, we have not gotten an increase in service regarding pruning of the trees and stump removals. The Queens Forestry Division must be expanded to provide service to address these problems. There must be a pruning contract for every five years, not every seven years. The City is planting more trees under the Million Trees NYC project; the community residents are concerned about the pruning of the existing trees. We are requesting additional funding for personnel and equipment.

Finally

We will continue at Community Board 12 fighting for our fair share of City services that we are **not** receiving, that must be provided to maintain the quality of life for all the residents within the district.