



Community Board No. 8

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STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS Fiscal Year 2008

Community Board No. 8, located in north Crown Heights, encompasses the neighborhoods of Prospect Heights, Crown Heights, and Weeksville. The community is bounded by Atlantic Avenue on the north, Ralph Avenue on the east, Eastern Parkway on the south and Flatbush Avenue on the west.

The total population in North Crown Heights was reported at approximately 96,076 individuals during the census count in 2000. However, there are many large scale development projects slated for the District that will have an immediate impact on the population and the ethnic makeup of the community. With projects such as the Brooklyn Atlantic Yards Development Project, the population is expected to increase by a significant percentage, and the racial diversity in the District is bound to change as well, with a decreasing minority population. There is also an effort to make the older and more aesthetic sections of Crown Heights a historical district to preserve the integrity of the structures and the surrounding areas. This will have a direct effect on the price of rentals and home-ownership in the community and will also contribute to the changing ethnic population.

Overall, the neighborhood has a solid housing foundation, a good transportation infrastructure, and easy access to a number of cultural facilities such as the Brooklyn Museum, the Brooklyn Public Library at Grand Army Plaza, the Brooklyn Children's Museum, Brooklyn Botanic Gardens, and the Society for the Preservation of Weeksville, all of which have recently undergone or are currently undergoing capital expansion and/or renovation projects.

Despite the many positives within the District, there are many blaring challenges that must be faced and overcome. Included in these challenges are the enormously high poverty rate amongst minority and foreign born residents; the glaring unemployment

rate of adult minority males; the alarming and increasing rate of crime after years of downward spirals; a shortage of affordable housing for seniors and low- and middle-income residents; lack of medical services and hospital coverage; overcrowded schools; the need for additional fire marshals to combat a rash of suspicious fires; and a dire need for improved economic development. These issues require special consideration and priority from government officials, and Community Board No. 8 is committed to participating in the formulation of plans to address the service delivery, housing, and infrastructure needs of our citizens.

The strategy detailed below will facilitate achievement of Community Board No. 8's goals for Fiscal Year 2008 and beyond.

FIRE

Certain segments of District 8 have been bombarded by a recent upswing in suspicious fire activity. These fires are compromising the structural integrity of the community as well as destroying the affordable housing market. It is imperative that additional fire marshals be hired and assigned to investigate fires of suspicious natures.

Fire marshals provide an invaluable service to the community with quick investigations of fire related incidences and clear determinations on the cause and motive of these fires. Additionally, they can identify and dispel arson fires for fraudulent or recreational purposes by reporting immediately any trends or patterns noticed. Fire marshals are also needed to assist victims of fire damage so that they can complete insurance claims in a timely fashion to begin rebuilding their lives. There services are most needed in District 8 along the Pacific Street corridor (where there have been a number of suspicious fires in the past year and numerous human lives were lost), as well as the Eastern Parkway, Bergen Street, Dean Street, and St. Marks Avenue corridors as well. Therefore, based upon the reasoning above, Community Board No. 8 urges that funding to restore the ranks of fire marshals be provided.

As the FDNY continues to recover from 9/11 and the after effects on the men and women who provided invaluable search and rescue and clean-up efforts, it is imperative that the Department continue to replenish the ranks by hiring additional personnel. Also, to improve community relations, diversity training and efforts to continue trying to diversify the Department are necessary. Studies have shown that the Explorers and Cadets programs have both proven to be effective means of garnering interest in the FDNY by the City's diverse ethnic youth groups, and subsequently, these programs should be continued.

As New York City has successfully overcome its fiscal straits, we firmly believe it is due time to restore the funding in the Department that was slashed in a cost saving attempt after 9/11. The restoration of funds should include the re-opening of Engine Cos. 204, 209, 212, and 278, and also the restoration of the fifth crew member to each Engine company. Re-opening the four firehouses will help to eliminate the burden on the responding fire companies and provide for more efficient fire protection in the communities the houses are located. The addition of the fifth crew member will decrease the time it takes to dispel a fire's wrath and will limit the damage done by the blaze by allowing firefighters to work quicker and more efficiently in doing their duties.

In addition to home fire safety training for our children and adult residents, we recommend additional life-saving training in the area of Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). In a district where obesity and as a result, heart disease is at a high level, it is imperative that residents know how to respond in emergency situations to perform life-saving techniques prior to emergency medical technicians arriving. Additional CPR kits are required to train residents more effectively in this life-saving procedure. The kits also provide a more sanitary means of training and can be dispersed to class members for practice and for them to train their family members and neighbors.

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors have been proven by the FDNY to save lives. Unfortunately, many residents have not been trained in their use and have not received these life-saving electronics that are supposed to be provided by landlords. We insist on expanding and continuing the smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector distribution program so that at risk tenants can receive their benefits.

Furthermore, we encourage the Fire Department and City Council to consider the adverse effects that dilapidated engine companies can have on our firefighters' moral and productivity. The firehouse buildings are extremely old and require new roofs, window replacement, waterproofing, pointing, electrical upgrades, apparatus floor replacement, and new kitchens and bathrooms. It should be kept in mind that the firehouse is a firefighter's home during work hours, and our firefighters must have a comfortable dwelling site to call home to ease the rigors of a strenuous occupation. Funding is urged to make the necessary repairs to the City's firehouses.

POLICE

As a densely populated community, there is a fundamental need for additional police presence. There are a number of large apartment buildings clustered within a small space, thus creating the potential for tension among the diverse ethnic backgrounds of our residents. It is a known fact that tension can cause crime to escalate unless checked regularly and pre-empted by policing. Additional patrol officers are required to prevent tensions from rising, crime from increasing, and harm being done to a community on the rise.

The areas of Nostrand and Franklin Avenues are especially crime riddled and have perplexed the 77th Precinct's command for years. The commanding officer has had a notoriously difficult task trying to provide coverage to the area and ending the streak of violent crime and rampant narcotic trafficking without neglecting to provide coverage to other portions of the District. During the two years that the 77th Precinct was designated an Operation Impact community, the additional resources provided assisted with coverage and allowed the commanding officer to maintain a steady stream of police presence in the most crime riddled portion of the District as well as preventing the logical spread to other locations. This blissful time led to a record decrease in crime and our residents felt safer and the community experienced economic growth and development. However, this joy ceased when the 77th was removed as an Impact Zoned community and crime has once again soared, not only in the Impact Zone area of Franklin and Nostrand Avenues, but throughout the entire community. Therefore, it is urged that the 77th Precinct be re-instated as an Impact Zoned community.

Also, additional crime fighting tools such as non-descript unmarked vehicles, most notably vans, sports utility vehicles, and passenger cars are necessary to staunch the crime wave affecting the District. These resources will allow for better patrol of the District's streets by the 77th Precinct and for better patrol of the housing developments by officers from PSA #2. They will also provide vehicles of transport for our Narcotics, Domestic Violence, and Truancy units among others. Additionally, police surveillance cameras along our most troublesome strips of Nostrand, Franklin, and Kingston Avenues, as well as our commercial strips of Washington and Utica Avenues, and St. John's Place should be increased. Closed circuit video imaging in our housing developments would also prove beneficial and useful in reducing crime.

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Children are our most valuable and cherished commodity, and therefore, they must be given the opportunity and encouragement to grow into responsible adults that will lead the nation and prepare future generations to do the same. The foundation to make this dream successful begins at an early age and entails the proper environment favorable for learning and social development. Consequently, the Board recommends and supports an increase in funding for Headstart programs as this program has been proven to provide the stimulating atmosphere necessary to instill in our

youth a thirst for knowledge and better social capacities.

In addition to Headstart programs, there is a growing need for group and family Daycare services in District 8. This need is spurred by the growing population of working parents moving into the community as well as the number of working parents already in the community. Quality, low cost childcare is crucial to the development and maintenance of the community's workforce; unfortunately, the waiting list for State regulated and approved centers is excessively long, creating difficulties for parents with young children. Additional daycare slots for all work shifts, not just the traditional shifts of 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM need to be created to accommodate this growing trend of working parents and their need for services.

Also, with the growing number of children already in and vying to participate in Headstart and Day Care programs, it is imperative that groups offering these services receive an increase in "cost per child" allotments. This increase would allow each child to receive further instruction and additional benefits from the program that he or she is enrolled in.

Whereas our children must be protected from harm not only from their peers but also from their parents, it must be taken into consideration that a good portion of our District's residents (as well as the population of New York City as a whole) are foreign born and have different customs and practices as pertaining to child rearing. Efforts must be made to strengthen family ties and links, not destroy them. Family reunification processes must be immediately instituted to counterbalance the effects of intervention by Protection Services. We also need to fortify parents with the additional tools to help govern their children when they begin to participate in activities that deem them "out of control" or problem children.

As the number of children in the foster care system rises, allowances must be made for resources for kinship care and foster parent training and recruitment services. Institutionalized children also tend to suffer from lack of self-esteem and deflated levels of self-worth. It is imperative that efforts committed to the cause of obtaining a family life for all children be provided, regardless of the circumstances of their cases. As the number of children presently in the foster care system greatly exceeds the number of homes available, increased efforts must be made to provide the proper mental health care to prevent children from further losing a sense of self-image and self-worth. Efforts must be made to assure children that their presence is warranted despite a lack of parental and familial influences.

In addition to the foregoing, programs for youth who are aging out of the foster care system are needed. These programs assist in the critical adjustment and transition period for youth who are forced to live and survive on their own with minimal to no supervision. In order to assure that these individuals are able to live successfully without resorting to crime, programs must be instituted to assist them with job training and placement, money management, higher learning, and the like.

HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION

It is imperative that we protect our families' welfare and wellbeing from destructive forces within the community, regardless of whether it comes from the home or local environment. Preventive, protective, and counseling services for families must be provided in order to maintain the health and security of our youth and family structure. In view of the foregoing, the Board supports expanded funding for existing Domestic Violence Victim and Intervention Programs. These intervention services should come from different fronts, including houses of worship, fraternal orders, schools, and public agencies.

It should be noted that violence in the home affects homosexual couples and teenagers as well adult heterosexual couples. Funding should be provided for preventative services to educate women and men of all ages on the telltale signs of all forms of abuse—physical, emotional, sexual, and psychological—and how to exit a situation that could be potentially life threatening, not only for her- or him-self, but for any children in the home as well. This will provide pre-emptive services and prevent further destruction of familial ties and bonds.

Domestic abuse stemming from not only an individual's partner, but members of the extended family as well has become a prevalent issue in the City. We must keep in mind that our elderly population is at risk for abuse as well from younger family members and home health aides seeking to take advantage of their frail emotional and physical states. The elderly population—the most vulnerable and often forgotten—requires considerable attention to maintain their safety and well-being, thus preventing them from being subject to unnecessary hardship, pain, and mental aggravation in the form of fear.

Additional services are also needed for the homebound elderly to limit the burdens placed on kind-hearted friends, significant others, spouses, and other relatives who are forced to accept complete responsibility for the care of their loved ones. Support services must be provided to these individuals who do an invaluable service to the community. These additional services will reduce the stress of having to care for semi-incapacitated individuals and can also reduce the risk of abuse by over-worked and anxious relatives and friends encumbered with the financial and mental cost of care.

EDUCATION

Our children require a well-rounded education that includes not only the fundamentals of math, language arts and reading comprehension, but also science, social studies, art, dance, and music. Each area of instruction should be assimilated in the curriculum of New York City's schools as this would greatly enhance our students' active desire to participate in their learning and instruction. Also, our children's educators should be able to relate to them and their experiences. It should be noted that teachers with the ability to relate to their students will have fewer obstacles in the way of reaching their pupils and commanding their attention in the classroom.

It is essential that additional assistance is provided to our teachers to allow them to focus on lesson preparation and delivery as well as classroom management and discipline. Also, our teachers need additional staff development days to better assist them not only with traditional lesson planning and classroom management, but also to assist them with using modern technology in their lesson planning so that our youth are able to incorporate that which they learn in their every day activities.

It must be remembered that education is an extension of the home and parents must be informed how best to assist the education of their children by reinforcing what teachers do in a classroom setting. Therefore, programs geared toward increasing parental involvement, thus making them further involved in educational activities must be initiated for the benefit of our school-age children. Furthermore, as there are numerous immigrant children in the NYC public school system, programs need to be implemented that will assist these parents in learning the function of school agendas and protocol. Programs of these natures will assist in bridging the communication gap between parents and educators.

Gang violence is a growing concern in a District where a number of youth are forced to rely on alternative activities to keep them occupied as there is a shortage of adult supervision and structured activities for them to participate in. Because the majority of homes in District 8 have working parents, it is essential that alternative forms of supervision and guidance are provided to our youth to keep them from participating in illegal activities. In seeking acceptance from their peers, youth often do things they would normally shy away from if they had access to wholesome activities and the watchful eye of concerned adults. Intervention and early education is required to inform youth of the potential consequences of joining gangs, premature sexual activity, drug use—both recreational and hardcore, and other silly behavioral patterns that may make them a target for violence and retribution. Therefore, we urge an expansion of the present gang intervention programs within the NYC public school system so that outreach is provided to more youth than at the present time as well as additional school sanctioned recreational activities available for participation.

It is imperative that sex education be continued and expanded in schools as the average age of sexual activity continues to lower. Recent surveys have discovered that two out of every five middle school age children have participated in some form of sexual contact that could potentially put them at risk for contracting HIV and other infection sexually transmitted diseases. Early education is the best prevention method and quite possibly the most cost effective, despite the criticism and outrage that efforts to provide such instruction in schools may encounter.

The City's maintenance of the condition of our students' schools and classroom environments is essential. Interior environments are not conducive to learning as children are often forced to assemble in crowded and cramped spaces with insufficient ventilation (especially in the warmer months), and also in spaces that have not been renovated in many years. Funding must be provided to upgrade the interior and exterior of our schools so that dilapidation will not preoccupy our students. Moreover, the fact that many students do not have their own workbooks and/or textbooks and are forced to share also hinders their education. Funds need to be provided to ensure that all students have their own workbooks to practice the skills they have learned in school.

We promote smaller class sizes for all grades as they are necessary to give each student an equal and ample amount of individual attention and one on one correspondence with his/her instructor. Also, smaller class sizes would alleviate some of the strain and pressure on the instructor and allow her/him to conduct lessons more efficiently as well as evaluate and assess student learning and comprehension more effectively. We also recommend the continuance of the Universal Pre-K program as studies have proven that the earlier children receive educational stimulation, the less likely they will be to fall behind in their later school years.

YOUTH, FAMILY SERVICES, AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The services provided to youth portion of the population are limited despite the high number of individuals under the age of 18 living in the District. With the exception of the over-crowded St. John's Recreation Center, there are few activities available for youth to participate in to keep them out of the path of urban risks. Structured athletic events should be organized to build discipline, responsibility, leadership qualities, social and group skills, and self-esteem. It is essential that another recreational center be opened within the borders of District 8 to service our youth as well as adult residents. Also, additional funding for youth oriented programs operated by not-for profit organizations is needed as well.

Early intervention is the key to saving the future of our District's youth. It is well documented and researched that inner-city children have a higher risk for crime, dropping out of school and other educational shortfalls, gang involvement, drug use, and incarceration. We urge funding for activities that target at risk youth, especially minority males between the ages of 12 and 19. Services for females between the same ages are important as well, as this is the target age of pre-mature pregnancy, gang involvement, and crime.

As marijuana and other illegal drug usage among inner city minority youth continues to rise, our children and young adults must be made aware of the painful side effects of drug use to deter them from experimentation and abuse of these damaging substances. It is imperative that funding for substance abuse deterrent and treatment programs for youth ages 12 through 23 be provided to quell drug usage. Also, as gang activity is becoming a prevalent issue facing our community, diversion programs are needed to prevent the lure and luster of gang violence from recruiting too many of the District's youth.

We urge the Mayor and City Council to allocate funds for after-school programs that will reinforce what students are learning in school and provide supplemental tutorials for struggling students. Out of school time programs also require additional funding to occupy our youth during those segments of the year when they do not have an educational facility to attend. Programs that will enhance our youth's technical and computer skills, make them aware of job and leisure opportunities outside of New York City and the United States, and that will train/prepare them for the workforce are also direly needed.

Career- and goal- oriented activities such as organized fieldtrips to business agencies and professional offices along with classroom speakers from corporate and local government agencies to assist the youth in planning and functioning in the work environment should be provided. Our children should be encouraged to obtain their High School Diploma rather than settling for a General Education Degree (GED). However, as many of our youth have unfortunately already quit school and are struggling to find employment, GED courses for individuals ages 18 and older should be provided as an alternative to the dim future of an uneducated individual prompted to lead a life of crime, or have very little hope for job and financial security.

The Summer Youth Employment Program has proven to be invaluable to our youth in terms of the job experience, training, and responsibility given to participants of the program. Given higher levels of responsibility, it is our firm belief that our youth will accept their responsibilities in other aspects of their lives and will excel. Jobs provide this, and thus help to foster—along with participation in the arts, music, dance, theater, and sports—higher self-esteem, positive self-motivation, and elevated levels of self-confidence. We therefore recommend that funding be allocated for these types of activities in our District.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

With the closing of St. Mary's Hospital, Community Board 8 residents have been left bereft of health services. St. Mary's was the only institution that provided acute diagnostic and long term care to our residents. Adequate healthcare is vital as there are many issues such as diabetes, wide-scale HIV/AIDS infection, obesity, heart disease and stroke, and other maladies that afflict our residents.

Crown Heights is at the epicenter of HIV infection; in recent years, it had been proclaimed that

as many as one in every 35 residents was afflicted with the disease. These numbers continue to rise as the foreign born population continues to grow and as education services are underutilized. Additional HIV/AIDS related services are needed for these residents and educational services are direly needed to staunch the unnecessary spread of the virus. Tools for safe sex should be readily available as well as educational information on how the disease is transmitted and ways to prevent or reduce your chances of becoming infected. Additional healthcare services and centers specially equipped to handle the needs of AIDS patients are also needed.

Comprehensive substance abuse prevention and treatment services are direly needed as these programs logically assist in stemming the spread of HIV and violent crime in the community. Educational services about the dangers of experimentation with drugs are essential to ceasing the growing number of addicts while also decreasing crime.

As the number of dementia and Alzheimer's disease cases grow in the community, additional funds to maintain services for dementia and Alzheimer's cases are required. Research funds are also necessary along with accessibility to the medication on the market to attempt to reduce the progression of the disease among those already diagnosed with it.

Asthma education and care programs are still needed. Conditions within the community (i.e. massive construction projects, demolition, renovation efforts, and building collapses) have created harsh breathing conditions for current asthma patients and is increasing the number of individuals that suffer from the affliction. Therefore, longer clinic hours need to be initiated so that patients do not have to go to the hospital for treatment.

Obesity continues to plague residents of our community. Children especially are suffering the horrendous effects of being overweight as they suffer stigmatization from their peers, low self-esteem, poor self-confidence and a slew of early-onset health concerns. Programs stressing proper nutrition should be provided for families and students should also have health and nutrition studies added to their educational curriculum to inform them of the dangers of poor health practices. Emphasis should be placed on education reporting the dangers of obesity such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart attack, stroke, asthma, and other illnesses. With education comes prevention, and our residents need to be made aware that they are at risk for many preventable diseases and illnesses.

There is a growing need for mental health services among children and adults alike. These services are essential to maintaining the well-being of our citizens regardless of age. Services geared toward assistance coping with mental stresses from a myriad of sources should be instituted. These services should include treatment and counseling for grief and bereavement issues, societal stress, depression, low-self esteem, anger problems, and other areas of concern.

DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING

As a growing population, the elderly require special services and care that should come automatically to a well-deserving and vocal class of citizens. We need to recognize and reward the efforts and hard work of our senior population by providing them the fundamental means of existing above the median poverty line. As proponents of elderly care and in recognition of the special needs of the elderly in District 8, we appeal to a course of action that will make the aforementioned possible. More services focusing on improving the quality of life, residential opportunities, home-

care and health-care need to be provided by City-operated and neighborhood based agencies. The home-care emphasis will help reduce costly institutional care and the burdens placed upon kin and will also provide additional freedom to relatively self-sufficient individuals. Services should include senior centers, easily accessible and reliable transportation, truly affordable housing, prescription drug coverage and assistance, and other social and recreational activities.

Studies should be done to determine if an increase in the maximum income levels to qualify for government programs. Values such as out of pocket health-care costs, prescription medications, housing, transportation, and food should be taken into consideration when determining whether one is eligible to receive subsidies. These costs can range to significant levels and reduce the amount of monthly earnings that can be applied to standard living expenses. Subsequently, an increased maximum income level will greatly assist a number of District 8's residents and well as a large population of struggling seniors throughout the City.

The Home delivered meals program has proven to be a success. However, in order for the program to continue, funds for car insurance and additional vehicles to deliver the meals are needed. Also, Long Term Care Resources for seniors should be expanded as should Alzheimer's Prevention and Treatment programs.

PARKS & RECREATION

The need for safe and well-maintained parks and playgrounds are a high priority for District 8. A regular maintenance program with adequate manpower is essential. Currently, maintenance staff needs to be increased for our Parks, malls along Eastern Parkway, and St. John's Recreation Center. Additional Playground Associates, Park Enforcement Officers, and other personnel are required to keep children at play free from harassment from dangerous elements that lurk in unguarded areas. It has been proven that with personnel in our parks, they are cleaner and safer for those that utilize them.

Special consideration must be given to the playground equipment at Lincoln Terrace Park and St. John's Recreation center. Presently, outdated equipment, faulty groundwork on our basketball courts, and poorly lit play areas tarnish our playgrounds. Funding must be provided in order to rectify these problems and make our parks and playgrounds safe and enjoyable for those that utilize them.

The trees in the residential areas and parks of District 8 are in dire need of pruning and care as evidenced by the unsightly and gloomy look of many trees that have been neglected for the past few years. The Pruning and Stump Removal Program should be expanded and adequately funded to maintain beautification efforts and lessen the possibility of injury to body or property resulting from falling tree limbs. Additionally, continued and additional funding for the Forestry and Tree Planting Programs is required, as there are still multiple blocks in our District that are not ecologically sound since they either have very few trees or no trees at all. Our residents should be made further aware that trees can be planted at no cost to them by the City at their request and they should also be made aware of the benefits that sidewalk trees have on their health and property values.

As funding has been provided to complete the renovation of the Eastern Parkway Malls, renovation of the Dean Street Playground and St. John's Recreation Center and Playground, we await completion of the projects.

SANITATION

The cleanliness of the streets and sidewalks of the District is a matter of great concern to us. The Department must have sufficient personnel and equipment to keep the streets clean. As our District is one of the most populous in the City, it is mandatory that Motorized Litter Patrol and street cleaners be provided on a daily basis to assist with street cleaning. The supervisors of the local Sanitation garage also require additional vehicles to assist them with their duties in the District and we are in need of additional permanent Sanitation Enforcement personnel and vehicles for residential and commercial area routing.

Undercover Sanitation Police officers are required to conduct surveillance of known dumping grounds and apprehend those responsible for the illegal dumping. People see vacant lots and commercial zones as a money saving device so that they do not have to go through legal and costly avenues to dispose of their waste products. With undercover officers, our streets and lots will not be subject to as much illegal dumping and other infractions as they currently are.

The District office has received numerous complaints of dog feces strewn about the streets. It is imperative that pooper scooper laws be enforced and that signs alerting dog owners that it is their responsibility to clean up after their dogs are installed. As a result, we are asking that funding to re-instate the signage unit be provided so that we may have the signs at our disposal when they are requested.

In addition, funding for litter instruction in schools is direly needed. Our streets and beaches would remain cleaner longer and we would require fewer cleaners to maintain cleanliness if our children are taught at a young age (with constant reinforcement) the dangers of littering.

HOUSING

The need for permanent affordable housing in District 8 is one of our highest priorities. Our residents, low- and middle- income, seniors, and disabled alike, require additional resources for housing.

Presently, many of our former manufacturing sites are being utilized for housing projects. These projects are creating market rate housing and contributing to gentrification by pricing out minority and non-upper income residents. Whereas we appreciate housing initiatives in our District, we would prefer to maintain some of our manufacturing sites for manufacturing purposes so that there can be a supply of jobs for residents. A study must be done to ascertain which areas would be best kept for manufacturing and which ones would be best utilized for residential purposes and/or mixed use. This is a highly complicated interpretation project and funds for consultants are direly needed to assist with the process.

Community Board #8 urges continued funding for capital improvement to city owned properties. We also support continuance and expansion of HPD's basic loan programs—home improvement, small homes private, participation loan, owner services, article 8-A, and senior citizen housing assistant programs. We also urge continued funding for the seal-up and demolition program as well as the third party transfer program.

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

We urge the City to increase its financial support for the renovation of our cultural institutions.

The Brooklyn Children's Museum (BCM) is one of New York City's unique educational and cultural treasures. Since its inception in 1899, it has been recognized for educational excellence and innovation, has a strong local and national impact, and attendance continues to grow.

The Brooklyn Children's Museum (BCM) is presently undergoing a major capital renovation and expansion project. Post-expansion goals are to serve 400,000 visitors annually from Brooklyn, the remaining four boroughs, and beyond. Additional funding is required to complete the following: construction of a parking facility, which would make it easier for visitors to access the facility via personal transportation; streetscape enhancement, which would beautify the area; a collections care climate control system to protect the artifacts and exhibits; an enhanced lighting and electrical system for safety and energy efficiency; replacement of the 30 year old boiler system with a new, energy efficient system capable of performing for a 100,000 square foot building; completion of the theater in the expansion wing; rooftop performance area to allow for year-round programming options; and upgrading the roof in the performance area for safety and protection of the facility infrastructure.

We also recommend additional funding for the construction of a new education and cultural center for the Society for the Preservation of Weeksville as this will allow them to expand their services to children, families, and tourists.

Funding for the Brooklyn Public Library (Brower Park Branch) is also necessary as many students utilize the Library's resources for school projects, term papers, and supplementary education means. Additional hours of operation are necessary to allow students and other residents to utilize the library's resources. Funds should be allocated for land and building acquisition for the Brower Park Branch Library. The building is presently being leased by the city and it is essential that the City purchase the building to make the necessary amendments to the site to make it compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and meet all accessibility guidelines.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The lack of an adequate on-going water- and sewer-main inspection program has created and contributed to the acute sewer and water problems in District 8. Our residents have brought to our attention many locations where the sewer lines are too narrow to handle the output of water during heavy rainfalls, and this defect leads to the influx of water into many homes. Also, a number of streets are direly in need of reconstruction as a result of the horrendous number of sewer, trench, and water main defects. Subsequently, it is imperative that funding be increased for trench restoration, sewer maintenance, reconstruction, and expansion in the District.

TRANSPORTATION

Roadway maintenance is of great importance to our residents. Unfortunately, many of our streets require resurfacing or reconstruction due to deep and hazardous defects. We request that funds be allocated for arterial upkeep in District 8 and Citywide and urge additional funding for street reconstruction and resurfacing. Potholes and other defects should be handled promptly and properly, thus minimizing the damage done to vehicles and the out of pocket costs for vehicle owners.

Street lights are a major deterrent to crime in the District as they illuminate our streets and provide residents with visibility in the dark to avoid potential hazards as well as identify illegal activity. However, there are a number of malfunctioning street lights as well as burned out lights in the District.

Residents in the areas where these problems exist are the victims of unnecessary offenses on the darkened streets and have become immersed in fear. Funding is necessary to maintain street light crews and speed up the repair process when a malfunctioning or burned out street light is reported to DOT.

Funding should be provided to improve or separate the lighting situation along the Eastern Parkway. As it is currently, the lights along the main road control the lights along the service road, and if one light on the main road goes out, multiple lights on the service road are affected and it is then engulfed in darkness. This creates dangerous conditions for pedestrians and heightens criminal activity. An extensive study should be done to rectify this situation.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Funding is important for the development of active and successful merchants associations in the District, primarily along Bedford, Troy, Utica, Underhill, Nostrand, and Schenectady Avenues. Funding is needed to assist the associations in formalizing their structures for targeting larger commercial centers and enhancing economic development by providing expense monies to facilitate development into legal entities.

Funding should also be allocated for an in-depth study of the current state of retail service offerings in the District 8 area to identify business sectors that offer business opportunities or sectors that require improvement. Grants should be provided to local organizations such as the Washington Avenue Merchants Association, Vanderbilt Avenue Merchants Association, the North Crown Heights Nostrand Avenue Merchants Association, and the Crow Hill Merchant Association to respond to their appeals for grass-roots high tech and entrepreneurial training programs as well as technical assistance services. These funds would greatly benefit each association to maximize the positive impact on the community and the businesses they represent.

Our greatest recommendations are perhaps, that capital funds be directed toward business development in the Crown Heights province and toward the development of strong relationship ties with national business chains to increase the economic input and output of residents while increasing our financial status in the economic realm.

CONCLUSION

Community Board No. 8 is committed to maintaining and enhancing the quality of life for the residents of our community. As the City exits its past financial straits, the necessity to restore program funding has never been greater. There is no longer a need to cut back direly needed or life saving services. We strongly urge our elected officials to reconsider funding limitations on many of the programs that our residents require for safety, education, and their general well-being.

Sincerely,

Robert Matthews

Robert Matthews
Chairperson

Doris A. Alexander

Doris A. Alexander
District Manager