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**Community Board 8**

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**Statement of Community District Needs and Priorities FY 2009**

Community Board 8, Queens is bounded by the Long Island Expressway to the north, Hillside Avenue to the south, Van Wyck Expressway to the west, and the Clearview Expressway to the East. It includes the communities of Briarwood, Flushing Suburban, Flushing Heights, Fresh Meadows, Hillcrest, Hillcrest Estates, Holliswood, Jamaica Estates, Jamaica Hills, Kew Gardens Hills, Utopia and West Cunningham Park. These communities are overwhelmingly residential with several commercial strips.

The 146,594 residents of Community Board 8 are middle income, multi-ethnic, multi-racial who own their own homes and co-ops or are renting. The residences consist of one and two-family homes, garden apartments, large apartment buildings such as the Fresh Meadows Development and Cunningham heights, co-ops such as Electchester, Hilltop Village and the New York City Housing Authority complex, Pomonok. The Community Board 8 residents are concerned with quality of life issues, personal safety and security, education and maintaining their fair share of city services.

Community Board 8 houses major facilities such as Queens College, CUNY Law School, St. John's University, Queens Hospital Center, Cunningham Park, and many public and private schools.

**Police**

Community Board 8 has consistently designated the funding of additional police personnel as one of its top Expense Budget Priorities. There are currently 157 officers at the 107th Precinct; an additional 15 to 20 officers are needed. It should be taken into account when police personnel are allocated to the precincts that Community Board 8 has over 40 private/public schools. Furthermore, Community Board 8 has many institutions within its boundaries, including St. John's University, Queens College, CUNY Law School, Queens Hospital Center and Holliswood Hospital (Mental Health Facility). In addition, a drug rehabilitation program is proposed for the former site of the St. Joseph's hospital. We have a great number of houses of worship serving many denominations. People are entitled to worship in peace whenever they chose and know that they are protected from terrorists.

There are approximately 95 auxiliary police officers in the Auxiliary Police Program. A van is needed to transport these officers to many community events that occur in the Community Board District including National Night Out, Big Apple Circus, the New York Philharmonic and Metropolitan Opera. Bullet proof vests are vital.

The 107th Precinct has been very effective in enforcing the laws regarding liquor sales to minors, graffiti and bias attacks. We commend the men and women who work so diligently and put their lives on the line every day on our behalf.

- To keep our subways safe, we require an additional 20 officers and supervisors for Transit Bureau District 20. New computers are needed for the administration area located at the Briarwood station.

### **Sanitation**

Although Community Board 8 has relatively clean streets, there are still several Sanitation issues that require more attention:

1. Streets that are not covered by Street Cleaning Regulations need to be cleaned regularly.
2. The paved center malls require year-round cleaning and seasonal weed-control.
3. Retain the five day-a-week pick-ups at public schools and extra pick-up at Pomonok Houses.
4. Sanitation Police are needed for night patrol to discourage illegal dumping.
5. A CB8 dedicated seven-day a week pick-up truck for litter baskets in commercial areas.
6. Increased enforcement of Sanitation regulations along the commercial strips.
7. Dedicated Bulk pick up trucks for large apartment/Co-operative Developments

### **Parks**

One characteristic that has attracted residents to Community Board 8 is its suburban nature, which is derived from the open space of its parks and street trees.

1. Hire personnel or contractors to maintain, prune, and remove dead trees and tree stumps, both in the parks and streets.
2. Park Maintenance Workers are needed to provide security and to protect the City's capital investment in renovated playgrounds.
3. Cunningham Park is Community Board 8's major park and as such is heavily utilized. Working in conjunction with the Friends of Cunningham Park, we have prioritized our requests for the rehabilitation of Cunningham Park.

- Erosion control throughout the core area
- Landscaping throughout the core area, shrubs, trees, hardy perennials and bushes
- Reconstruction of paths throughout the park's core interior especially around the oval and restoration and/or construction of bicycle path from Francis Lewis Boulevard overpass of Vanderbilt Motor Parkway to the underpass at the Clearview Expressway
- Reconstruction and restoration of ball fields 1-5 including backstops
- Redesign picnic area (including signage) Location maps and directional signs at major entrances and additional flora identification signs for trees
- Seeding, sodding and an underground irrigation system for the core area
- Installation of catch basin in the entrance roadway from Francis Lewis Boulevard to correct serious flooding
- Fencing around the transfer station

### **Environmental Protection**

- Hire sufficient personnel for regular catch basin cleaning and repair work to prevent flooding. The Board received an increase in flooding complaints due to the recent increase in precipitation and clogged catch basins
- Increase funding for trench restoration and sewer reconstruction to repair impaired lines and streets.
- Enlarge sewer lines to accommodate increased development.
- Construction of storm sewers on Hillside Avenue from Van Wyck Expressway to Clearview Expressway.

## **Fire**

Community Board 8 is concerned about the adequacy of fire protection, not only within its boundaries but also throughout the entire Borough of Queens. We support restoration of Fire Marshals dedicated to Queens and five-person staffing for all engine companies. There is an urgent need to educate the public on fire prevention and to expand the Fatal Fire Reduction Program and Mobile Fire Safety House.

## **Highways**

We continue to request increased asphalt allocation for street resurfacing. Some areas would benefit from Contract and Engineered Resurfacing projects. The service roads of the Van Wyck Expressway, Grand Central Parkway, Long Island Expressway and Clearview Expressway must be maintained and cleaned on a regular schedule.

## **Housing/Buildings**

Much of Community Board 8's housing stock is residential, with many one-family homes. Additional Buildings Department inspectors and plan examiners are necessary to enforce existing regulations and quality of life violations. Elimination of self-certification by architects and engineers or stricter oversight by the City would address the major problem of illegal construction in Community Board 8.

There are very few rent stabilized and/or rent controlled apartments within Community Board 8. This is a housing crisis. The lack of affordable regulated housing has caused a larger numbers of homelessness, overcrowding in neighborhoods and illegal apartments. Government must start to build additional affordable housing and encourage the private community to do so as well. Everyone should have the right to a home, be it private, co-op, condo or an affordable apartment.

Pomonok Houses, although one of the better public housing developments in the city, has several issues that have to be addressed. The infrastructure has to be continually upgraded. Residents need the ability to transfer to a larger apartment if they have children of different sexes. A family resource center that will offer educational programs, job training and placement services as well as support programs to help residents achieve self-sufficiency would be welcome. There is a definitive need to increase the number of officers at PSA9 to better address a recent spike in criminal activity.

## **Human Services**

Community Board 8 has many human service needs, particularly among the elderly, single parent families, youth, the unemployed, new Americans and recent immigrants. Several issues that need to be addressed are education, outreach and preventive programs dealing with domestic violence, AIDS, parenting skills, family preservation, child abuse and affordable quality day care.

## **Youth**

Youth programs and services have always been one of the top priorities of Community Board 8. The Beacon Schools are a welcome oasis providing many after-school and evening recreational programs and activities. Additional funding is required for summer youth employment positions.

Services to address youth unemployment and develop job programs to serve youngsters from middle-income families are also needed. The problem of gangs, graffiti, youth substance abuse and truancy affect youngsters in the district. The District needs increased mentoring program for boys and girls to help them resolve issues that arise during pre-teen and teenage years. Dollars invested in youth today will save more funds that may go to the justice system tomorrow.

## **Seniors**

Community Board 8 is in need of an additional Senior Center to provide nutritious meals and socialization to accommodate the Board's growing senior population. The 2000 Census shows an

increase of 14.2% in the senior population versus an 11% increase in the general population. In addition, both seniors and youth would benefit from an intergenerational program.

It is vital that we maintain the delivery of a daily hot meal for our seniors. A program of transportation, home care, and Meals-On-Wheels for homebound "frail elderly" is administered by the Northeast Senior Assistance Center.

### **Health & Hospitals**

We will continue to monitor development on the Queens Hospital Center campus. We are concerned with the treat of the West Nile Virus. We need a concerted effort to control the mosquito population.

### **Libraries**

It is imperative that all of our libraries are open seven days a week to service the needs of our community. Furthermore, we seek increased morning and evening hours. We seek additional computers and services (youth, immigrants and seniors) at the six branches of the Queens Borough Public Library located within Community Board 8. Many individuals do not possess a computer and the libraries are the only venues where they have access to the web. The Briarwood and Kew Gardens Hills buildings need expansion or new buildings to cope with the increase demand for service. In addition, the Hollis Branch requires rehabilitation.

### **Education**

Community Board 8 is within Region 3. Good schools with small classes are vital to CB8. We will continue to advocate for new schools and quality education to accommodate the Board's growing school aged population. Households with children under eighteen years of age have increased by 20.1% according to the latest census. There are not enough seats or classrooms for our children in all levels of education.

### **Community Board**

Mayor Michael Bloomberg has shown his support for community boards and we continue to thank him for all that he does for community boards. We are often the first line of communication for community residents to New York City agencies. We cut through red tape and bureaucracy, functioning as a little City Hall located in the community--a one stop shopping center where residents can access numerous City services. We monitor the delivery of City services, resolve thousands of complaints each year, and hold public hearings on zoning, ULURP and budget matters. We publish a monthly Newsletter that is widely distributed throughout our community and fulfill all of our charter-mandated responsibilities. Our budget covers payroll, office supplies, telephone, postage, meeting space, office equipment, etc. We are requesting that our already small budget not be cut.

### **Conclusion**

Community Board 8 continually strives to deliver services to its residents, which is mandated by the City Charter. We continue to fight for our fair share of City services owed to the diverse population of our Community District

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