

COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 18



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Statement Of Needs And Priorities Fiscal Year 2012

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 an 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 problems and issues. 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 government 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 NYS 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 became part of the Gateway National Recreation Area in 1972 when the park was established. 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.

Floyd Bennett Field currently houses 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.

Throngs of visitors travel to the park to attend large outdoor concerts and major events as well as to utilize the numerous facilities at the sports and entertainment complex. By virtue of its Federal Jurisdiction, the National Park Service is immunized from impact studies concerning pedestrian/vehicular traffic and city infrastructure. Consequently, negligible attention has been given to accommodate the visitors or to alleviate local traffic congestion and further destruction of the surroundings.

In April 2010 United States Senator Charles Schumer and Congressman Anthony Weiner announced the formation of a “Blue Ribbon Panel Task Force” for Gateway to establish a shared vision for the future of the country’s third most-visited national recreation area. The goal of this Panel is to identify ways to improve the recreational, ecological, and educational aspects of the park, as well as examine access to the park in context of its urban setting and its relationship to regional transportation needs. 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.

The Board continues to urge the Department of the Interior to restore Floyd Bennett Field and its 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 the New York Water Taxis and their “Hop-on, Hop-off” service which is already prepared to provide stops in Red Hook, Fulton Ferry Landing in DUMBO, and Governors Island a National Historic District where the public can enjoy summer programming and concerts or take a car-free bike ride.

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 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.

More than a decade ago, in 1997, as part of the Paerdegat Basin Water Quality Facility Plan, the ULURP application 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.

DEP is also committed, as part of the Paerdegat Basin Water Quality Facility Plan ULURP application, to upgrade the Pumping Station at the base of the shoreline and build 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 project, due for completion this September, includes DEP maintenance and personnel facilities and a “new home” for Community Board #18 with a separate, state-of-the-art, building equipped with offices and a conference center.

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, approximately \$4 million of Federal Stimulus Money, began a project 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 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.

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, approved on October 7, 2008, 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 is to take into account the changing needs of the waterfront. The plan will include an assessment of waterfront resources, a statement of planning policy, and proposals for implementing such policy. This Legislation will ensure that New York City never turns its back on the waterfront and will allow the city to assess the different ways our entire city waterfront can be used for leisure, employment, and industry.

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. – **Concepts are no substitute for action!**

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. More than 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 and on city-owned housing projects and commercial properties. The 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 Standard 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, residents, 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 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.

Comprehensive planning is essential for zoning for the future. Out-of-scale development is a city-wide concern. The objectives of our housing priorities are to support continued development of vacant land suitable for housing with designs that are consistent with the residential nature and character of the communities. Zoning must be made to protect the infrastructure and the extraordinary neighborhoods of our city.

The Zoning Resolution must be reformed to restrict community facilities from imposing non-conforming structures in residential districts. The non-restrictive Zoning Regulations for "community facilities" date back to 1961 and are no longer sensitive to current conditions. They must be revised to reflect today's needs. Communities with low population and low density must not be redeveloped in the image of Manhattan's high-rise, mixed-use zoning.

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 neighborhood? ...is the situation a self-imposed hardship? (buying 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, when necessary, current 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) **New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)** Projects, Bayview, Breukelen, and Glenwood, within our boundaries -- all of which have been upgraded using **Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** allocations. NYCHA received over \$423 million in Federal Stimulus Funding in June 2009 for construction, modernization, and other related infrastructure upgrade.

We are concerned about efforts to create "Retail Subdistricts" throughout the city. Our communities do not need the added heavy commercial burden on our streets and in our neighborhoods. Additionally, the tenuous economic condition of our local "strip" shopping centers, as well as our network of "Mom & Pop" stores, could not endure the "heavy-handed" competition of large discount "mega" stores. We continue to work with merchant groups to develop strategies for commercial revitalization programs. "Strip" shopping is vital to the economic stability of our communities, and special attention must be paid to their well-being.

The Community Board questions the Application by the **NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC)** and the **Department of Small Business** for the Change in the City Map for the "Mill Basin Projects (Kristal Auto Mall and Toys "R" Us)." The property, totaling 5.5 buildable acres, fronts on the east side of Flatbush Avenue to the Mill Basin bulkhead line, and south by the Belt Parkway Right-of- Way, north of the interchange of Flatbush Avenue with the Belt Parkway. We question the process that was followed by EDC and the Department of Small Business Services to market this property as two (2) parcels - totaling 5.5 acres. There is, as they are well aware, a third (3rd) parcel, totaling approximately twelve (12) buildable acres, for sale next to this tract of land adjacent to the Four Sparrow Marsh land. Why isn't that parcel being considered at this time? **We respectfully urge the Department of Business Services and EDC to advance this project when all parcels are combined....and allow for one ULURP Application.**

We question Vornado's future plans for Toys "R" Us and/or the property. A toxic relationship exists between Vornado Realty Trust and the community. Its management and unkempt condition of Kings Plaza Shopping Center's perimeter, coupled with their nefarious attempts to circumvent existing zoning to allow for the development of the Lowe's Home Improvement Complex in their former adjacent parking lot, raise serious questions as to their credibility as it relates to any further negotiations with our community.

The Community Board strongly opposes the proposal which includes the "demapping" of the mapped portion of Flatbush Avenue, from the Belt Parkway to Avenue U, from the subject property, to provide sufficient property for the construction of the "Kristal Auto Mall" parcel which is projected to be built

in front of Toys “R” Us. This strategy will narrow city-owned Flatbush Avenue and eliminate the future contemplated widening of Flatbush Avenue to create a bus lane. **How will we plan to accommodate the current and anticipated massive increase in traffic and bus ridership upon completion of this complex?**

Department of Transportation

Transportation needs, particularly total reconstruction, contract resurfacing, and scheduled repair of the roadways within the Board area, present 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.

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, will begin the end of 2010. The three (3) remaining bridges within Community Board 15 -- the Gerritsen, Bay Ridge, and Nostrand Avenue Bridges will begin in September 2012. The entire project will be completed by August 2014. The landscaping contract will then follow and is scheduled for completion during 2016.

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. Without consultation, they recently completed an unprecedented three-year plan to expand the city’s on-street bicycle network by 200 miles and included in their plan is an extensive design for the streets within our board area, in general, and in Canarsie, in particular.

Although 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, already taking a lane away from other vehicles. The addition of bike lanes would impede traffic even further and post 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 and leased to Vornado Realty Trust, 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 Avenue U 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 movement of bus lanes on Flatbush Avenue and Avenue U causing buses to sharply propel across five (5) lanes of traffic on Flatbush Avenue from Kings Plaza 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 the intersection!

The intersections around the Kings Plaza Shopping Center, and the congested junction of the "Home Depot" and "Lowe's Home Improvement" complex on Avenue U adjacent to Kings Plaza, present special challenges and are only a few examples of Board requests to this Agency for pedestrian/vehicular traffic safety **solutions, not more studies**. A coordinated effort must be made to implement the suggestions of the costly studies already completed and not initiate new studies -- **concepts are no substitute for action!**

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. Remember, -- **concepts are no substitute for action!**

Emergency Services - Fire

We are optimistic that funds will be increased to establish an even greater emergency service presence for the improvement of service delivery 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.

Police

We have praiseworthy day-to-day "line" contact with the two area Police Precinct Commanding Officers and Community Affairs Officers; from the 63rd Police Precinct, Commanding Officer, Captain Michael Deddo, and from the 69th Police Precinct, Commanding Officer, Deputy Inspector Miltiadis Marmara. Special praise must be given to our Borough Chief, Joseph Fox, who works closely with the Commanding Officers in making 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, 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, 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.

The Administration must establish stronger enforcement with severe penalties for operation of licensed, unlicensed, and “renegade” vans illegally operating 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. We look forward to working together to bring these obnoxious blights on our communities under control.

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

Fares continue to rise, service continues to deteriorate, equipment becomes outdated, and no light appears on the horizon! 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 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 and adjacent streets.

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 NYS DEC 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. Many of the 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. Special attention should be paid to the traffic islands along Kings Highway -- they are in desperate need of reconstruction and inclusion in the Greenstreets Program.

Parks’ Department equipment and personnel are always in short supply. We urge that our requests, as well as the Departmental requests, be given a high priority in budget negotiations for adequate maintenance and operation of our parks. The park areas of 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 listen closely to his advise and suggestions, and implement many of the management proposals he has advanced. Most particularly, give him the manpower necessary to do the job.

The supervisory staff of BK18, Assistant Borough Superintendent Gary Falconer, Superintendent Rosario Morrone, and Supervisor Louis Otarola, have been exemplary in their willingness 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 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. Additional Salt Spreaders must also be provided for the maintenance of safe negotiable streets. BK18 is currently equipped with five (5) spreaders, which are not operational at all times, for the maintenance of seven (7) Sections. Barely enough to adequately cover primary street maintenance.

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 securing funds for special programs designated to address identified youth problems.

The State Legislature has given 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 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 2012 -- a true product of that joint cooperation.

Respectfully submitted,



Saul Needle
Chairperson



Dorothy Turano
District Manager