



Daniel A. Murphy  
Chairperson

Jeremy Laufer  
District Manager

**THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN  
COMMUNITY BOARD #7**

Eric Adams  
Borough President

**Statement of Needs**

Community Board 7/Brooklyn submits the following "Statement of Needs" in compliance with the procedures for the establishment of a budget for the City of New York. The contents of this statement result from local citizen complaints and testimony given at prior year budget and committee hearings, information from CB7 Committee Chairpersons as well as from various forms of analyses of City agency service delivery.

Community District 7, located in the western section of Brooklyn, is a mixed residential, industrial and commercial area. The home of an ethnically and economically integrated population, the District is comprised of two main communities: Sunset Park and Windsor Terrace, but recently other community identities have gained popularity and become more established, including Greenwood Heights, South Park Slope and East Windsor Terrace.

Sunset Park consists of a strong residential community, two viable commercial strips, 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenues, as well as a large industrial area. It is bifurcated by the Gowanus Expressway and is bordered to the south by the Long Island Rail Road cut. The 23-acre facility, Sunset Park, has an Olympic-sized swimming pool, a recreation center and a large open space with spectacular views of the harbor.

Windsor Terrace and the northern part of our community consist of a smaller residential community than Sunset Park, with three commercial strips on 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenues and Prospect Park West. Windsor Terrace is surrounded by the natural boundaries of Prospect Park and Green-Wood Cemetery, which has the highest elevation in Brooklyn. The Gothic Brownstone "gatehouse" at the cemetery's entrance is a New York City landmark and the most widely known symbol of the community.

Traditionally, the District has been home to generations of immigrants, Irish and Italian and Scandinavian in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and before. Mid-century saw an influx from Puerto Rico, then the Dominican Republic and from central and South America. The 1980s saw the beginnings of a great increase in residents from China and the 90s began a large influx from Mexico and, to a lesser extent, the Middle East. Our community is extremely diverse (fourteenth of the fifty-nine Community Districts, according to the New York University Wagner School) and yet our populations live mostly in peace, making for a family-friendly neighborhood.

For years our community was the back end of political districts for elected officials who lived outside of our borders and our community suffered with the placement of negative-impact facilities, such as power plants, sanitation facilities and a federal prison. Beginning in the early 1990s that started to change as  
4201 Fourth Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11232 (718) 854-0003 FAX (718) 436-1142

E-mail: [Communityboard7@yahoo.com](mailto:Communityboard7@yahoo.com)

Twitter: @BKCB7

Facebook Page: Board Seven Brooklyn

*Serving Sunset Park, Greenwood and Windsor Terrace*

local leadership began to come from our community and we were able to defeat a plan for a municipal sludge facility proposed for the waterfront.

Our community has learned to organize to fight for resources and demand change and our collective action have produced positive results. We defeated a floating power plant in 2004 that would have been taller than any building in the area and longer than the Titanic. We rezoned most of our residential community in 2005 and 2009. After a 40-year effort, we finally built a local high school in 2009 and followed that up the next year with a new elementary school. Our waterfront park should be open within weeks. We finished our 197-a Plan, which calls for the enhancement of our industrial waterfront, improved environmental performance and additional recreation opportunities on our waterfront and it was passed by the City, with the Chairwoman of the City Planning Commission calling it a "tour d'force." New businesses are bringing investment and jobs to our waterfront. The Community Board, along with six community organizations, negotiated a reduction in emissions from two of our local power plants. We are home to a bio-technology center, enormous economic development investments at Industry City, Liberty View Plaza, the Brooklyn Army Terminal, Bush Terminal and the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal and we have the capacity to continue to grow our industrial sector with good-paying jobs for local residents. We have led the local effort to improve pedestrian safety and redesign our streets for safety and mobility improvements. The Brooklyn Nets will open their new practice and training facility along our waterfront in 2015. Clearly, positive changes and investments are being made in our community, but more needs to be done for a community that had been left behind in the past. Our Board has been forward-looking and aggressive in our pursuit of investments and infrastructure improvements that will enhance the lives and livelihoods of our residents, workers and business owners.

However, there continue to be sections of our community that have not received sufficient investments and improvements and this continues to leave some of our residents behind. Our community has overcrowded schools, an insufficient amount of parkland, the second oldest housing stock in NYC, according to NYU, and not nearly enough affordable and senior housing. Our waterfront access is extremely limited. Many of our streets remain dangerous to cross and have crumbling infrastructure. Public transportation does not extend far enough and is in need of upgrades. We do not have fiber-optic cable and more than 20% of households in Sunset Park do not have internet service, according to a survey by Sunset Park Promise Neighborhood. The Gowanus Expressway is under constant construction and continues to bring 50 million emission-spewing vehicles through our community every year.

Community Boards have had to endure reduced budgets for more than a decade. Despite additional costs, such as increased postal rates, new computers, websites and occasional unfunded, but approved, raises, we have had to self-fund all of these costs and reduce our staff. Every year we have been asked to do more with the same amount and we believe it is finally time for Community Boards to receive a budget increase, which we have not received since 1990, other than the occasional cost of living adjustment for staff. Since our last OTPS (non-personnel budget) increase our staff has been reduced from seven to three to accommodate increased costs for running the office.

The culmination of the Community Board's Statement of Needs, and the subsequent budget prioritization, will reflect our vision of an improved quality-of-life for our residents, merchants, elderly and our children.

## Public Safety

Deputy Inspector James Grant was recently transferred after commanding the 72<sup>nd</sup> Precinct for two years. We were impressed with Captain Grant's openness and communication and we believe these personal attributes had a positive impact on the precinct and have helped to drive major crime down (as measured by CompStat) to record lows in our community. Major crime rates have been driven down nearly 38% in the past dozen years and the murder rate is down more than 72% since the City's highest rate in the early 1990s. We applaud Captain Grant and his officers for their hard work and dedication to public safety. Today we have the fourteenth lowest major crime rate of the fifty-nine community districts. However, we believe that there are still areas in which the NYPD can make significant improvements, particularly with quality-of-life violations, traffic safety and mobility and visibility and we look forward to working the DI Grant's successor, Captain Tommy Ng, on continuing the advances made by the precinct.

Our beat officers serve many important functions in our community. Not only do they protect the public, but they also promote positive police/community relations and the visible presence gives a positive perception of a safe environment where people might want to open a business or raise their families. Economic development and a growing, healthy community cannot take hold without the visible presence and responsiveness of our officers. Although cameras and other technologies can help deter certain crimes and behaviors, we believe a visible police presence, although not overwhelming, lends a greater air of security. In addition, cameras also present Constitutional questions for those who have no intention of committing any crimes that a benign police presence does not.

A pattern of groping incidents in the community three years ago brought to light a deficit of personnel resources, particularly as our population increases and local night life becomes more popular. Our manufacturing zone, which did not have much weekend and night time activity in the past, is starting to see an increase in off-peak hours recreation, work, education and entertainment options, creating a more heavily used waterfront community which inevitably needs increased patrols and police resources. The past decade has seen the number of officers at our precinct reduced dramatically and resources have been stretched. Residents would like to see an increase in visible patrols and we believe that only way to do that without harming the rest of the community by moving resources is by increasing the number of officers at our precinct.

It should be noted that while many populations of our community want to see more vigorous policing, a poll last year of young people in our district showed a concern about overzealous policing and stop and frisk policies. This makes community outreach and communication vital by the precinct and NYPD.

Drug dealing and prostitution continue to be a concern in Sunset Park. Aggressive policing and arrests have forced much of these activities indoors, making enforcement more difficult. Our Board appreciates the strong efforts made by the NYPD to arrest the perpetrators, but more needs to be done, especially with the proliferation of adult entertainment establishments along 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. We also note the recent prostitution arrests at numerous massage parlors in our neighboring community of Bay Ridge and we have similar concerns in our district. We have recently shared information on a suspect massage parlor and a new hotel with hourly rates to the precinct and we strongly believe these businesses, and others, aid and abet prostitution in our community. Additionally, we are greatly concerned that some of the sex workers may also be the victims of human trafficking and we strongly urge the District Attorney to vigorously prosecute anyone involved in this modern slavery.

Gang and gang-related crime and violence continue to be a concern. Often gangs are associated with a certain ethnic group or national origin, sometimes making investigation and infiltration difficult. The City must provide additional resources for gang enforcement in our community. However, other strategies must be implemented to keep youth away from gangs. Additional age-appropriate facilities must be brought to our community, including youth programs and recreation areas.

CB7 is pleased that the State Liquor Authority has been pursuing more cases recently, but we are still unhappy with the number of problem businesses that continue to get liquor licenses and renewals despite community and local opposition. The people in the community are the best judges as to whether or not a business is a nuisance and more emphasis should be placed on the community's input when making a determination on licenses. Additionally, we call upon the precinct to more vigorously enforce quality-of-life complaints surrounding popular nightlife establishments in the community, particularly public drunkenness and fighting, vandalism, public urination and noise. We have noted an increase in these types of quality-of-life complaints in areas of increased night life.

For years we have been told that crossing guards are assigned to communities based on a particular formula. This seemed strange to us as our population has increased by 50% of the past 20 years and the number of schools increased and yet we still receive the same allocation of crossing guards. Last year we asked for the formula the NYPD uses to make assignments and, suddenly, there is no formula, but the local commander can request additional crossing guards from One Police Plaza. This year we have advocated for an increased budget for crossing guards city-wide, but unfortunately there was no increase in the budget. The NYPD has had to assign precinct personnel and traffic agents to problem locations in the past, including at least two locations in the past year where children have been hit by cars a block away from their schools. This is much more expensive and a waste of personnel resources than hiring additional school crossing guards. We call on the Administration to include an increase in the number of crossing guards under Vision Zero. This is vital to our community as so many of our schools are located on truck routes with increasing truck volumes. Two new schools have opened on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue since 2009 and two additional schools, one on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and one on Caton Avenue, are being built and we anticipate them opening in the next year. If we do not receive an increase in our crossing guard allocation, crossing guards have to be taken from other schools in our district, stretching resources and putting children's lives in danger. Vigorous enforcement of traffic laws around our schools must also be undertaken.

Enforcement of traffic laws on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and near sensitive sites, such as senior centers, schools and playgrounds, in particular, is of great interest. Community Board 7 recently approved changes to 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue to promote pedestrian safety and to slow speeding vehicles. However, this must be coupled with speeding and double parking enforcement to ensure safe streets. Although the precinct has claimed hundreds of double parking summons on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, we do not believe this effort has had an impact on drivers' behavior, as of yet, and we call for an increase in enforcement.

Speeding on residential streets and trucks wandering off of designated truck routes have become two of our most prevalent constituent complaints, which is why so many constituents have petitioned for speed humps on their blocks. This must be prioritized as we have had too many residents killed in the past few years by drunk drivers, trucks and speeding vehicles. This cannot be tolerated and the precinct must make major improvements in traffic enforcement. A car can kill just as many people as a gun. Drivers understand that the chance of being caught is minimal, increasing a perception of poor enforcement activities and dangerous roads. Private buses, especially ones that travel to Atlantic City,

have also been growing in number in our community and we often receive complaints of them traveling off designated routes as well.

We are pleased to note that the Administration has embraced more vigorous enforcement, particularly for speeding and failure to yield to pedestrians, under Vision Zero.

### Transportation

Transportation issues continue to be amongst our most pressing. This is because we are home to two major highways, a large industrial area that requires trucks and because transportation issues have a strong impact on public safety and the quality-of-life in our community.

Nowhere is this more evident than on 20<sup>th</sup> Street, a narrow, two-way truck route that suffers because of the lack of highway entrances. 20<sup>th</sup> Street is the legal truck corridor for vehicles to travel to the Prospect Expressway entrance on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and to and from central Brooklyn via Caton Avenue. The two-way truck route is only 33-feet wide and is dangerously narrow, compared to adjacent one-way, non-truck routes, which are 30-feet wide. This section of 20<sup>th</sup> Street is now mostly residential and the subsurface of the street is still cobblestones, which cannot handle the weight of modern trucks. We have great concerns about the street's integrity as well as the effects of the vibrations on homes. Three years ago, after much hounding by the Community Board, DOT undertook a study to find an alternative to 20<sup>th</sup> Street. Due to strong community opposition, however, our Board turned down that plan. We were pleased to learn that DOT has not only recommitted to studying this corridor, but has expanded the project to look at all the truck routes in our community (and beyond) and we are hopeful that this study will develop into a plan that will improve efficient travel while lessening impacts on pedestrians and residential sections of our community. We strongly urge DOT to conduct a comprehensive study that does not short shift our community as the laughable Brooklyn Truck Route Study, completed six years ago, did. Of course, without enforcement the chances of a positive impact are terribly lessened and we urge DOT to find resources and to help the NYPD crack down on trucks travelling off-route.

State DOT also plays a crucial role in how trucks access our community as most come via the Gowanus and Prospect Expressways. Unfortunately, constant repair of the Gowanus and terrible traffic on both highways encourages drivers to get off the highways and travel local streets. In addition, a lack of appropriate highway entrances and exits, coupled with our large industrial area, mean that we constantly have problems with off-route trucks looking for ways to get around traffic. These additional trucks on our streets, with more coming due to welcomed economic development along our waterfront, mean additional conflicts with and dangers for pedestrians.

City DOT, however, has recognized these conflicts and has worked with the Community Board and others to develop a traffic and pedestrian safety plan for 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue that has reduced the number of traffic lanes from three to two (north and south), widened the pedestrian medians and vehicle turning lanes, added high visibility paint and plastic bollards and promises aesthetic enhancements in the near future. We have been pleased with the rapidity in which changes were implemented, after a year of community workshops and study and ultimate approval by our Board. Additionally, our neighbors in Board 6 have approved a similar plan for their section of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Previously, DOT added pedestrian count-down clocks to 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenues and we anticipate more count-down clocks throughout the community. We have asked for, and not yet received approval for, expediting the installation on Caton Avenue and Prospect Park Southwest.

Now more than a year after these changes to 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, we were pleased to learn that these infrastructure improvements have reduced speeding by 38%, pedestrian injuries by 29%, total crashes by 13% and crashes with injuries by 8%. This has been accomplished with minimal increases in travel time. Although we believe additional improvements can be made for safety and mobility purposes, these statistics are very encouraging.

We are pleased that DOT will continue safety improvements at 39<sup>th</sup> Street and other intersections near MS 136 under the Safe Routes to School program and that the State has agreed to fund the first phase of building out and landscaping the 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue medians, between 33<sup>rd</sup> and 47<sup>th</sup> Streets, in 2017. We believe that the design of our rebuilt medians should be informed by a community-based planning process.

State DOT has also committed to improving the pedestrian crossing at six intersections beneath the Gowanus Expressway. Needless to say, our Board is very happy that DOT has prioritized pedestrian safety in our community. We would like a similar prioritization by State DOT in improving the lighting beneath the Gowanus Expressway for drivers and pedestrians alike. This is especially important as the number of job opportunities increases in our industrial community.

Our Board is proud that these discussions on pedestrian safety began in our community before the new Administration announced the Vision Zero plan and we believe our efforts fit neatly with Vision Zero's goals. Our Board has recently created a Vision Zero Task Force to look at other problem intersections and corridors in our community and to make recommendations for improved safety. We look forward to working with DOT, the NYPD and the Mayor's Community Affairs Office to realize our collective goal of zero pedestrian fatalities in NYC. DOT has some important new technology tools which will help our community achieve this goal. Our Task Force is certain to look at high volume pedestrian crossings, particularly along 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Caton Avenue.

The devastation by Hurricane Sandy two years ago opened our eyes to a host of infrastructure deficiencies which need to be addressed. Mobility was severely limited as much of the subway system was shut down, tunnels were closed and streets were clogged with private vehicles. This situation was exacerbated locally by the lack of ferry service and the elimination of the B-37 bus two years earlier. The hurricane highlighted the need for redundancy and alternatives in our public transportation infrastructure. Last year the R line subway, due to repairs necessitated by the hurricane, was truncated with no direct travel to Manhattan for 14 months, creating a hardship for local commuters.

We have asked the MTA and the City for expanded public transportation options for our residents. In June, the MTA brought back the B-37 bus along 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, but additional east-west bus service leading to our waterfront and its recreation and employment resources is vital to our continued growth. We are also facing the potential loss of our ferry service at the 58<sup>th</sup> Street pier due to a lack of funding this autumn. Community Board 7 has long advocated for more ferry service, including a new landing at 39<sup>th</sup> Street.

There are other improvements which need to be made to our public transportation system to improve public safety and mobility and to make the option more attractive to those who may be convinced to leave their private vehicles at home. Each of our stations should have bright lighting and security cameras and, ideally, be staffed. Additionally, Community Board 7 has long called for secondary egress at all of our subways stations for safety and mobility purposes. CB7 calls upon MTA to use the

upcoming station rehabilitation at 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue in 2016 to reopen the 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue egress to cope with heavy commuter volume at this station, as well as for public safety reasons. Additionally, the rehabilitation should include elevators for accessibility.

We also call on MTA to install elevators, particularly at the 59<sup>th</sup> Street, 36<sup>th</sup> Street, Prospect Avenue and 15<sup>th</sup> Street stations. MTA currently plans only one elevator in our community, at 59<sup>th</sup> Street, by the year 2020. Until more elevators are installed the options of our constituents with mobility issues will be significantly limited.

Our Board is happy that we are finally part of the process for approving bike lanes and note that, while we may have questions or suggestions, we have approved every lane that was presented to us by DOT. Sometimes, however, we request certain changes, as we did on 15<sup>th</sup> Street, where we asked that the lane be moved to the opposite side of the street so as not to conflict with the bus. We believe that necessary, redundant transportation options require viable bikeways. We are happy to host the office and shop of Citibike, NYC's bike sharing program, although there are no bike share stations in our community, an incongruity which must soon be addressed. We are also pleased that private companies are examining bringing car sharing businesses to NYC, including within our district, as well.

After years of waiting (and another year of construction behind schedule) the City finally finished the second phase of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue reconstruction three years ago, between 24<sup>th</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> Streets. This long awaited project was absolutely necessary for a street in terrible shape and finally allows for an efficient, safe and smooth roadway. The next phase, encompassing 34<sup>th</sup> through 64<sup>th</sup> Streets, through the business corridor, is currently scheduled to begin in FY22. We have no confidence that the project will begin on time as it has been delayed many times since it was originally supposed to begin in 1988. When the project finally begins, the department must take the needs and concerns of the businesses along our major commercial corridor into account. Our Board is concerned about the potential harmful effects on businesses that could come during the construction period. Special attention must be paid to other major roadway projects, including the Gowanus Expressway, to ensure that the construction periods do not overlap and thereby create additional burdens on our community and infrastructure. In the past year, for the first time in over 20 years, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue between 36<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> Streets was repaved. Repaving had not been allowed in all that time as the avenue was always less than five years away from major reconstruction (which hasn't taken place). This silly City policy does not take project delays into account and must be changed.

2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue is another corridor calling out for attention, particularly the major pedestrian crossings around Lutheran Medical Center and Brooklyn Army Terminal in the 50s and near Liberty View Plaza and Industry City in the 20s and 30s. The old train tracks in 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue between 30<sup>th</sup> Street and 43<sup>rd</sup> Street must be removed and the street needs to be resurfaced, as was promised by EDC in their 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue Rail Improvement project, before it was scaled back.

CB 7 has also called upon DOT to reconstruct 32<sup>nd</sup> Street between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenues, between Industry City and Liberty View Plaza. This sinking cobblestone street is an important corridor for heavy trucks in our industrial community but the old infrastructure is not sufficient for modern vehicles.

## Sanitation

Our Community Board finally realized our long-advocated policy to reduce the number of street sweeping days in much of the district in 2012. However, as was anticipated, less street sweeping has led to a slight reduction of our cleanliness rating from the low 90s to the high 80s. DSNY believes that the areas adjacent to our commercial corridors on 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenues have had the greatest deterioration and need additional attention. We have suggested enlisting the Sunset Park 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue BID and individual business owners to join the adopt-a-basket program. Additionally, we suggested printing DSNY code books in Chinese for merchants on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and having enforcement personnel meet individually with business owners to help teach them about cleaning sidewalks and sanitation routing times. Of course, this would be in the interest of their customers, as they would have more days on which they could park locally. We have also requested public baskets on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue now that the B-37 bus has returned to this route.

Ours was the first community to reduce its street cleaning days due to legislation and it was gratifying to hear the Sanitation Commissioner, in the press conference to announce this change, acknowledge that reduced street sweeping days can mean less congested streets and less air pollution, an argument we've made for years.

The reduction of our cleanliness rating may also be tied to DSNY's discontinuation of night time enforcement. Two years ago the MTA spent thousands of dollars cleaning out decades worth of trash from the Long Island Rail Road cut, but even as this work was taking place, illegal dumping continued unabated at night, sometimes leaving workers to clean areas they had already completed. We asked DSNY Enforcement to keep an eye on these areas at night, only to learn there was no more night time enforcement. In our community, with many chronic illegal dump out areas: LIRR, the Green-Wood Cemetery fence, beneath the Gowanus Expressway, alongside the Prospect Expressway, our large industrial area, night time and weekend investigations and enforcement is essential and must be brought back.

It is important to note that the reduction in street sweeping did not result in a reduced budget for our local sanitation department, but a reallocation of our resources to better meet the cleaning needs of the district. Our Board understands that we can revert to the old regulations if our streets become dirty again and we take that as a challenge to work with DSNY, our elected officials and the local community to make sure that we keep our streets clean.

Our Board was amongst the first in the City to join the pilot program to reduce waste by recycling organic material. The program was rolled out in Windsor Terrace in the autumn of 2013 and in Greenwood Heights and the northern part of Sunset Park this past spring. Many in the community have embraced this program enthusiastically and we have received calls from larger buildings and the southern part of our district as to why they are not involved. Our Board therefore calls on DSNY to expand the pilot program to our entire residential community and to make information and enrollment more easily available for buildings with more than nine units, which are not automatically a part of the pilot.

Community District 7 continues to host more than its fair share of sanitation facilities. In addition to numerous private carters and recyclers, we are also home to the SIMS Municipal Recycling Facility, which will take most of NYC's metal and plastic recyclables; the garage for BK-7 and BK-10 (which serves CB10); the Hamilton Avenue Marine Transfer Station, which is expected to reopen in 2015; IESI, a



private company that takes 1000 tons of city residential trash. We recently learned that the Economic Development Corporation has accepted a proposal to put an industrial grease recycling facility in our community, as well. All these facilities require additional trucks in our community and, unfortunately, sometimes we are taken advantage of. Many of the private municipal waste truck drivers take liberties by parking beneath the Gowanus Expressway, along 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue or next to Green-Wood Cemetery. This illegal, and potentially health-hazardous behavior, must be curtailed by vigorous and sustained enforcement.

We also acknowledge that a change in City leadership and policy could result in DSNY not fulfilling its promises to our community. Just three years ago, DSNY threatened a change in the City's Solid Waste Management Plan during budget negotiations which would have meant delaying some new sanitation facilities in other parts of the City while moving full steam ahead on the Hamilton Avenue MTS in our district. This would have meant even more garbage for our community as the City would have been forced to continue to send residential garbage to private facilities, such as IESI, while bringing the MTS back online. While this did not come to be, we do not appreciate being used as a pawn by DSNY during negotiations. Our community deserves better from DSNY. We endure enough from this agency.

DSNY must make an effort to shore up the salt shed on the 52<sup>nd</sup> Street pier in our community. The shed is open and has many obvious holes in the roof and building. We are concerned that the salt can easily find its way into the local water. Immediately adjacent to this facility is the new Bush Terminal Piers Park, which contains important and delicate tidal ponds. It would be tragic if the lack of maintenance on the salt shed was responsible for destroying this fragile, recovering eco-system.

### **Parks and Recreation**

All too often in times of fiscal restraint, the Department of Parks and Recreation is the first agency to realize drastic cuts. It is the belief of some that if recreational monies were drastically increased, there would be no need for increases in the Police and Corrections Departments. It is with this in mind that Community Board 7 requests increases in funding for recreation programs, especially at the Sunset Park Recreation Center. Furthermore, the recreation center itself needs major rehabilitation work that is estimated to cost around thirty million dollars. Most of our parks capital funding comes through our elected officials and this dollar figure represents multiple years' worth of investment from this source. Therefore, CB 7 calls upon the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Administration to find other sources (grants, private donations, State and Federal funds, etc.) to rehabilitate this important, landmarked building.

Community Board 7 is pleased that DOPR has undertaken a project to move the lockers from inside the recreation center to a new facility on the pool deck itself, as this will allow for a reuse of the current locker space and allow the center to remain open during the summer months. Much of the space within the center doubled as the locker rooms. This, however, emphasizes the need for the rehabilitation of the center, since we are expecting expanded use.

Our parks are oases within the concrete City where people of all generations, socio-economic statuses and ethnic and national backgrounds can gather, relax, play or simply enjoy a more pastoral setting within the City. They are for mental rejuvenation, physical fitness and stress relief. However, during difficult economic times our parks see an increase in use because of limited personal recreation funds, but often experience a decrease in programming and upkeep. Together these facts spell trouble for our

parks as overused equipment falls into disrepair or natural settings are overtaxed. Unfortunately for local parks, the City's main parks seem to get all the attention while our facilities become eyesores. Facility upgrades are left to our Councilmembers' discretion and ability to negotiate and while our elected officials have done a great job bring these funds to the community, we believe it is unfair to them to have to concentrate funds in parks that should be funded directly by the agency. As such, we call upon the City to establish a capital program for local parks that does not rely on limited discretionary funds from elected officials.

However, we would be remiss not to acknowledge former Councilwoman Gonzalez' largess in this regard. In the past few years we have seen the rehabilitation of the Sunset Park soccer/softball field and Slope Park, the beginning of reconstruction to the Sunset Park spray shower and the anticipated expansion of the playground next year.

These upgraded facilities are vital for our community because the district has a desperate need for additional park space and recreation programs. Our community has only 0.45 acres of parkland per thousand residents, well below the City's standard of 1.5 acres. We insist that our limited parks are maintained regularly and their space used for maximum efficiency due to our critical need. Additionally, although the Department of City Planning lists more than 25% of our District as open space/parkland, more than 95% of that total is the privately owned Green-Wood Cemetery, which provides no recreation space. This categorization by DCP seems laughable, insulting and extremely misleading.

The lack of parkland is why our board so eagerly anticipates the opening of Bush Terminal Piers Park, hopefully in the next few weeks. Once the park opens, we must work with EDC, DOPR and our elected officials to find funding for the previously announced children's playground, environmental center, secondary egress and cultural pier at Bush Terminal Pier 5, all of which were removed from the park due to budget problems. In addition, we should be looking north to piers 6 and 7 and south to the 51<sup>st</sup> Street pier for possible park expansion or ancillary use, such as a ferry landing.

Community Board 7 calls upon EDC and DOPR to publicly disclose any agreement they have for the provision of funds for park maintenance and enhancement and we call upon EDC to negotiate a percentage of local industrial leases for park maintenance/enhancement/expansion. This had been previously promised by the agency, but has not been publicly disclosed.

Over the past few years several community groups have been formed to plant gardens and to clean and invigorate our parks throughout the community. This is most obvious in Sunset Park and at Butterfly Garden and a few community gardens. Our Board applauds these volunteer efforts and we ask the Department of Parks and Recreation to support these organizations as much as possible. Volunteers for the South Slope Dog Run did a remarkable job organizing, with more than 200 active members, and lobbying to create a dog run along the Prospect Expressway. It was an impressive effort in creating a community facility. We note, though, that the space used for the dog run was unused parkland. It is difficult to approve of other proposed dog runs, such as one proposed for Sunset Park, because of the relative lack of local park space. While we would like to accommodate dog owners and see the merit in dog runs, we do not want to take precious space away from our parks' human users.

CB7 is also pleased that, after years of discussion, construction has been completed on the Park Slope Armory which is another recreation center that serves our community, although it is located across the street from our District, and will also provide opportunities for local schools to use their facilities as well.

Sunset Park High School was build next to John D'Emic Park on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, which we note has a play area for young children. We do not believe this is appropriate in its current facility considering the ages of the young people attending school right next door. We urge DOPR to work with the Department of Education to re-imagine and rehabilitate this park to serve the needs of the older children, perhaps with facilities that can enhance the physical education programs at the school. Facilities for younger children should be maintained, but access should be restricted by fencing it off.

Several other parks in our community are in great need of rehabilitation as well, including Martin Luther Playground, Rainbow Playground, Sgt. John Allen Payne Playground, Sherman Street Playground and portions of Greenwood Playground.

### **Environmental Protection/Resiliency**

The sewers, watermains and catch basins in this community are among the oldest in Brooklyn. There are a number of sewer collapses and undermined roadways reported to the Board each year. Several street reconstruction projects have been on our roster of Capital Budget requests for more than twenty years. The heavy volume of traffic, particularly on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 8th and Caton Avenues, major thoroughfares and truck routes, causes severe wear and erosion on these streets and off-route trucks put an additional heavy burden on our side streets, which were not meant to accommodate such heavy vehicles.

Our old streets and infrastructure are crumbling and additional contracts and resources must be made available for trenching activities. While the City occasionally paves streets, we are fearful that the underlying causes of the street degradation are not being addressed and repaving merely covers over the problems. We believe that DOT and DEP must address these concerns much sooner and more comprehensively, otherwise it may simply be a waste of funds as streets keep sinking despite new asphalt. In the past year, a pipe thirty feet below 43<sup>rd</sup> Street broke leaving residents and businesses on the block without water, sewer and other city services, months of construction and a lack of access, as well as other hardships, on the block.

Our Parks and Environment Committee will soon be meeting to discuss flooding issues in the East Windsor Terrace section of our community. This is a small, seven block section of our community that has seen significant increases in development and expects hundreds of new residents due to the development of two huge residential properties and a new 750-seat school being built in neighborhood. Our residents are very concerned about the impact these new developments will have on an already overburdened sewer system. Many, including several of our board members, are intrigued by the potential of bio-swaes for the community, which may alleviate some of burden on the system during heavy rain.

The topography of our community is such that all waste water, above and below ground, runs downhill from 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the waterfront, putting an abnormal strain on existing sewers and roadbeds, as well as clogging catch basins along this route with street debris.

During heavy rain events, much of the water in these pipes will go into the harbor through combined sewer overflows (CSOs), rather than to the Owl's Head Sewage Treatment Plant. One of these CSOs is located within the boundary of the future Bush Terminal Piers Park. Our Board believes this CSO must be relocated instead of being allowed to continue to dump untreated sewage and runoff within a public

recreation and environmentally-sensitive area. We note that five CSOs in Brooklyn have been shut as part of a pilot program, but none in our district.

Our Board wants DEP to intensify their catch basin cleaning program in our community, particularly along 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenues. These high volume avenues collect an inordinate amount of garbage that clogs the catch basins, which is responsible for flooding the roadways. Residents adjacent to 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue are particularly concerned about the catch basins and downspouts from the Gowanus Expressway in the 50s and 60s. State DOT has cut many of the pipes which ran from the expressway to the sewers below and now this run off ends up on Third Avenue, often in pedestrian crosswalks, such as at 60<sup>th</sup> Street. CB 7 calls upon SDOT to either relocate these downspouts from crosswalks or, ideally, create bio-swales or water gardens beneath the expressway to collect the water in a more environmentally-friendly manner. If these strategies aren't feasible, the downspouts need to be reconnected to the City's sewer system.

We often receive complaints about amplified noise originating from both businesses and private residences. Unfortunately, both the NYPD and DEP are responsible for investigating noise complaints and often they do not have the manpower, equipment or training to handle these concerns. This is a growing problem as nightlife increases in our community, particularly during the summer months. DEP and the NYPD must do more to ensure that every precinct has noise meters and has numerous officers, especially during the night shift, who are trained to use them. These agencies must be vigilant in enforcing the law with regard to this increasing quality-of-life concern. Our office received complaints that the NYPD and DEP are unresponsive to these complaints and sometimes use the other agency as an excuse.

DEP must also monitor and keep the community informed about the emissions spewing into our air and the cumulative impact from the Gowanus Expressway, our garbage facilities, power plants and many other negative-impact facilities. Our community straddles a major asthma and lead poisoning corridor and the City must do more locally to combat these diseases, educate the public and reduce and eliminate the major sources. Similar worries have also been expressed by residents about electro-magnetic fields from our power plants and cell phone towers. Our Board requests that the department monitor and study these impacts, as well.

While we are happy that the City takes climate change and adaption very seriously, and EDC does make accommodations within their property contracts along our waterfront, we are concerned that such efforts are not necessarily comprehensive and seem to be done in a piecemeal fashion that only seems to take into account properties that are up for sale or lease. For example, while the turbines of the Astoria and Narrows Power plants, at 28<sup>th</sup> and 53<sup>rd</sup> Streets, are located on barges and rise and fall with the sea level and a new land-based turbine is being built above the flood plain, the power substation on 28<sup>th</sup> Street is land-based and without flood protections. So, in a future flooding event, we may be able to produce electricity at our power plants, but we may not be able to send it anywhere.

We believe a single agency should develop a comprehensive climate change/adaption/storm surge plan for our waterfront and other communities and think DEP would be an appropriate agency to work with local populations and develop such a plan. Many of our waterfront facilities are sensitive sites containing power plants and transformers, garbage and sewer facilities, fuel and chemical storage and biological agents. Hurricane Sandy has shown us the great urgency for flood barriers, bioswales, pumping stations and more appropriate building designs, particularly for our mostly industrial waterfront. Although topography will protect most of our residential community from storm surges, we

have seen that water from heavy rain rushes down the hill toward the waterfront, undermining street infrastructure.

### Education

Community Board 7 wishes to acknowledge the retirement of Corrine Vinal, the only principal Sunset Park High School has known since it opened in 2009. The creation of the high school, a realization of a dream more than 40 years in the making, was only one step in providing secondary education in our community and it is the school's leadership under Ms. Vinal that made the school into a success with the highest quality review rating in the City last year.

The high school was advocated for and its curricula designed by the community and, through the leadership of Ms. Corrine Vinal and Center for Family Life's Co-Executive Director Julie Bröckway, we have a quality school with high standards for achievement and a higher graduation, college acceptance and attendance rates than average in the City. This wonderful institution is a tribute to the dedication of our constituents to the betterment of their community, particularly our children and was worth every hearing, argument and indignant letter sent to City and State officials.

The year after SPHS opened, we opened PS 971 on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 63<sup>rd</sup> Street. Two other schools are under construction: PS 333 for more than 400 elementary school students located on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 43<sup>rd</sup> Street and PS/IS 437 for 746 K through 8 grade students on Caton Avenue and East 8<sup>th</sup> Street. School District 15 is also looking at sites in Sunset Park for another elementary school. We note that our Board's Site Selection Committee found all these locations for the Department of Education and School Construction Authority and has been diligently collecting sites for potential future school construction over the past year. This school building bonanza belies the fact that our schools are overcrowded and we have not kept up with our needs, as our community's population has grown 50% in 20 years.

Additionally, Universal Pre-K is coming to NYC this year. Our lack of seats in public schools puts additional pressures on and creates economic opportunities for our not-for-profit community. The lack of seats makes the search for additional school sites even more urgent and we believe some of the smaller sites we have identified may be appropriate for Pre-K programs and perhaps even charter schools, which can help alleviate the burden on our overcrowded facilities.

We recognize the vital importance of early childhood education and this deficit of seats leaves our children, who are mostly poor and/or from immigrant families, at a terrible disadvantage. New seats also sometimes have negative consequences, as well. The new PS 333 will open in the building that used be home to the Sunset Park Head Start program, which had to move and whose 400 student population was cut in half. Appropriate space is often difficult to find in this community and there is much competition for space, as the numerous charter school programs that have presented to our Board over the past few years can attest. Few have opened in our community, despite their intention to do so.

The Education Department and School Construction Authority must work with us to improve our school infrastructure in addition to finding sites for new state-of-the-art schools in our community. Recent projects have been started that make necessary repairs to PS1, PS 154 and MS 88 facilities, but, of course, these funds are not enhancing the education of our children, they are merely rehabilitating older facilities. We recognize this necessity, but it is not a substitute for education funding.

With the ever-growing and diverse immigrant populations within our community, there is an immediate need for augmented bilingual/ESL education for our Latino, Asian, Middle Eastern and Eastern European populations. Additionally, English proficiency programs, perhaps through our schools using the very students who are mastering language skills, for older residents would serve a great need for our community.

With more and more emphasis being placed on computer literacy and language skills in the job market, it is imperative that funding for specialized education programs be augmented. Our Education Committee recently received a presentation by the NY Foundation for Computer Science on the Bootstrap and Scalable game design coding programs for middle schools and wishes to see such innovative programs expand to all middle school students in our community.

Work skills and experience programs, such as SYEP and internships, must be expanded to prepare our students for the job market. We are very pleased that our high school's curriculum embraces such learning outside the classroom and that two AmeriCorps programs serve our community through the Red Hook Community Justice Center and Lutheran Family Health Care.

### **Health and Mental Health**

The Gowanus Expressway and other factors, including poverty, contribute to a high rate of asthma in the Sunset Park community. Air quality monitoring and particulate matter standards must be implemented to keep the community informed about dangers and to fight the continued placement of undesirable and negative-impact facilities in the community. Additional resources must be made available to educate the public and help combat asthma and lead poisoning. The multicultural/multi-lingual nature of this District must be taken into account as well.

The Board requests that the department undertake a study of the air quality in the community and makes the major sources of our pollution public, as well as the amount and kinds of emissions that each major source emits over the course of a year. This will allow the board to better advocate for green technologies and mitigation strategies in appropriate parts of our community.

Our Board would like to see the same effort put forth in identifying and mitigating our local sources of air pollution as the department puts forth to combat West Nile Virus. The same holds true for anti-asthma programs. Many more in our community suffer from and die from respiratory illness than WNV.

Our Board recognizes that there are populations within our district that need access to drug and alcohol treatment outpatient and residential programs. We are very concerned, however, that State funding for these programs may not last and have a devastating impact on recovering addicts. Three years ago an important program closed in the community and while another program picked up the pieces and opened a new clinic, we have no data on the impact on patients of the shuttered facility.

Access to medical services has become easier in our community in recent years. We note that Lutheran Medical Center has opened a new full service clinic on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue last year and have been operating a school-based health clinic at Sunset Park High School since the school opened. However, the closure of Victory Memorial Hospital and the significantly scaled back services at Long Island College Hospital place

additional burdens on our remaining local hospitals that must now stretch resources further. In addition, we are concerned about the impact of reduced Medicaid reimbursement (Federal legislation) rates and the potential of a mandated reduced nurse to patient ratio (State legislation) may have on the economic viability of our remaining hospitals.

An issue that has been raised recently in several forums has been access to healthier foods. While our community now has at least three farmers markets over the summer, these are not necessarily accessible to all residents. Other times of the year, shopping opportunities for healthier foods are limited in our community, which does seem to have a variety of fast food options. We understand that there is an effort to start a food co-op in Sunset Park and Bay Ridge, but this will not solve the problem for all. We believe efforts should be made to encourage more and healthier food markets, such as fruit and vegetable stores, within our community. Additionally, the Health Department should do more to help educate residents, particularly parents, about nutrition.

Last year our Health and Mental Health Committee held a meeting to discuss the City's response to West Nile Virus and our concern about the liberal use of pesticides and larvicides and the potential impact those chemicals may have on our residents. The use of defoliants in and around parks was also a point of concern. Our Board would like more information on the chemicals used in public places and their potential impact on people and animals.

Our committee also met this year to discuss the use of opioids, the tragic deaths of several young people in our neighboring community of Bay Ridge and the prevalence of such drugs in our own neighborhood. We are pleased that the City is training workers to deal with overdoses. Our Health and Mental Health Committee is currently planning to do a local training and distribution of overdose kits for local not-for-profits.

### **Social/Human Services**

We have been very impressed with the work being done by Promise Neighborhood, a working coalition started by Lutheran Family Health Centers to create a multi-organization continuum of services from the cradle to career, using the organizations that already exist in our community and to develop programs to fill in the gaps in the continuum. PN has already identified Early Childhood Services and GED programs as needs in the community that are not being met at the rate necessary for our large community and is planning accordingly.

Promise Neighborhood has come about because of the eponymous federal grant that allows communities to plan for and seek funds for community improvement. PN is currently working with local parents and students and dozens of local and regional organizations to develop such a plan and is seeking millions of dollars in implementation funds from the federal government a future round of grants. Their efforts have been unprecedented in many ways, including holding meetings in four languages, trying to encompass the entire community. Last year PN has opened its first Promise Center in PS 503 to provide additional services to children and families and we are hopeful this program can be expanded to other schools in the community in the near future. Of course, without the Federal funding, these programs will be dependent on private grant funding.

Our senior center programs are also vital to our community as is our senior housing. Despite numerous programs and locations, they do not meet the great need in this community. Until recently, we were

very concerned that we were going to lose one important program, United Senior Citizens of Sunset Park because of a dispute with their landlord, who did not want to replace an elevator after a senior died of a heart attack climbing stairs. Without the elevator or a viable place to move, USC may have had to close. However, DFTA and the Administration did a remarkable job of working with the leadership of the center and, thankfully, the program was saved and the elevator replaced. USC is a very active and community-oriented center, even starting the neighborhood's first Community Emergency Response Team, and would have been a terrible loss for the neighborhood. USC's failure to find an alternative site locally highlighted the dearth of viable sites for schools and social programs in the community.

Sunset Park Head Start is another vital program serving almost four hundred local families that we could have lost this year. After forty years at St. Michael's, they were informed that their lease would not be renewed. Fortunately, the program found a new home at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, but the number of seats has been cut in half due to space limitations and it is no longer located in the center of our community, making for longer commutes for some.

An increase in voucher slots for day care services continues to be a major priority for our District. Working parents in this community need to be served immediately with regard to their day care needs and this community board will continue to cooperate with ACS to locate suitable sites for additional facilities, but more programmatic funds must be found, as day care slots and programs have been reduced city-wide over the past few years.

Many on our Board are concerned about the increasing prevalence of for-profit adult social day care programs in our community. These facilities look to Medicaid funding for their services and may not provide for the needs of our seniors as our not-for-profit senior centers do. In fact, in a recent presentation by one such business, it seemed they offer little more than a place to sit and talk and a place to nap. Our seniors deserve better services than that and we call upon the City, State and Federal governments to regulate such for-profit businesses to ensure that our seniors needs are being met as opposed to these businesses taking advantage of this vulnerable population. The prevalence of this type of business shows the great need for additional not-for-profit senior centers and services.

### **Housing and Buildings**

We can see evidence of an improving economy and housing market by the number of active building permits in our community. There are currently more than 100 active sites, including some which have been dormant for years. Clearly, there is money being invested in local properties, but we are finding that it is often not on site home owners, but investors, who are driving these changes. Furthermore, it seems the rezoning of the bulk of Sunset Park in 2009 has changed the type of alterations that some are making to their properties. Prior to the rezoning we saw many more developers who looked to build taller. Now, often, we see properties where the basement has been dug deeper and buildings have been extended into backyards. This has led to concerns about the safety of living spaces in some of these renovated buildings and questions of legality under the zoning resolution.

Last year our Buildings and Construction Committee held an open forum on Illegal Construction and SROs and heard many complaints and concerns from residents. DOB, HPD, FDNY and the Mayor's Illegal Occupancy Task Force listened to our constituents and gave advice on what to look for and the best way to report specific suspected building violations. They also explained which suspected violations are prioritized, what constitutes evidence and how the 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment protects those who do not wish to



allow access to their properties with a warrant and how difficult it is to receive a warrant for a buildings complaint.

Our Board was happy to learn that the Mayor's Task Force has expanded from a pilot program to a city-wide program. The program has DOB working with the FDNY to visit properties to ensure greater compliance with the building and fire safety codes for buildings with suspected illegal construction and divisions. We are often frustrated along with our constituents to learn that, despite complaints, cases are closed because an inspector was not able to gain access to a property. This policy unfortunately accommodates bad actors, those who do illegal work, by allowing them to bypass inspection simply by saying no. Hopefully, this program will eventually lead to the elimination of this problem as property owners are more apt to allow the FDNY onsite, as was explained at our forum.

Our Board is greatly concerned about the continued affordability of our community. More than 400 units of building-based Section 8 housing are in jeopardy because the owners may choose to opt out of the program. City, State and Federal incentives should be made available to these owners to compel them to keep these buildings affordable to our residents.

Additionally, we are displeased that the non-mandatory inclusionary zoning implemented on 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenues when the community was rezoned in 2009 has produced no affordable apartments. We insist that any future upzoning includes mandatory affordable housing, as it seems the bulk incentives provided in the voluntary program are not enough of an incentive to compel developers to build affordable units. Additionally, when affordable units are created, more emphasis should be placed on two and three bedroom units, as it is more often families, not singles, who cannot find affordable homes and larger units tend to be set up for market rate or luxury apartments leaving poorer families at a significant disadvantage. This can lead to overcrowded, unhealthy living situations. The Department of Housing Preservation and Development recognizes that more than 35% of Sunset Park residents live in overcrowded situations.

Illegal subdivision is a big problem in our community as many apartments and houses have been illegally converted into multiple dwellings without proper permits and safeguards. A vigorous inspection regime must be implemented in our community otherwise more tragedies will occur, when emergency service personnel are unaware of haphazard construction and illegal walls. At the same time, we must recognize that it isn't the tenant, who is often poor, who is at fault, but the property owner. Unfortunately, it is the tenant that ends up homeless while the property owner receives a fine and vacate order, should DOB actually make this finding. Reasonable accommodations must be made for the tenants in these situations, perhaps using the money paid to the City by the property owner. To not help the tenant with housing would be to victimize them a second time.

Furthermore, it is also very frustrating to learn that a property owner who did not allow for an inspection of his property has been granted another building permit for the same property. We would suggest legislation that would prevent issuance of building permits for any property where a buildings inspector has not been granted access in the past until an inspector is allowed onsite to inspect. The issuance of such permits despite ongoing inspection problems is one reason why people get very frustrated with DOB and stop making complaints about properties, as it appears to some that DOB is more interested in building than safety.

Property values have more than doubled in our community in the past decade and housing prices have fallen at a much lower rate than most of the city in the recent housing downturn, according to a recent

NYU Furman Center study. Together with having the second oldest housing stock in the city and a recently rezoned 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, we believe that sections of our community may be ripe for development once capital is available again. We urge DOB to be careful and deliberate in auditing and inspecting plans and properties as another building boom appears to be occurring in our community. We do not want to have to monitor all of our construction sites again during the boom because of a lack of inspectors. We are pleased, however, that some self-certifying architects have lost privileges due to skirting the law.

We are also pleased that the Administration is focusing on development of more affordable units around the City. Our community has a great need for these units based on the growth of our population. Unfortunately, there are few sites available and there are competing interests, such as the need for space for additional schools. Our Housing Committee is working with our Site Selection Committee's list for potential school sites and will soon use the locations that have been deemed too small or inappropriate for a school to create a list for potential affordable housing development in our community.

### Youth

The population of the District has a large percentage of young people and programs for youth are greatly needed. Since our District has a minimum of public recreation space our children must rely on afterschool and other community-based programs for arts, entertainment, sports and academic help. Many of our residents fall beneath the poverty line and parents often have to work more than one job to support their families. These programs are vitally important to the life, learning and social skills of our youngest residents. The City must do more to support our children and our community-based organizations by providing additional funds.

It is imperative that we seriously consider the need for afterschool and vacation care for children whose parents work. Additional funds must be available to support organizations that provide these services and the City must find a way to create more day care slots for the local community and local day care facilities. This could have an added benefit of creating jobs.

Our local SYEP program is run through a program located at our high school and the school has an aggressive internship program for upperclassmen, but these options are not enough for a community with such a large youth population. The approximately 1600 SYEP slots are the same amount we had a decade ago, when our population was smaller. When the economy turned bad, there was increased competition from older workers for precious few jobs, increasing youth unemployment. These programs provide some of the few opportunities our young people have to gain work experience. They probably are even more critical under current circumstances.

CB7 held two gang awareness forums in the recent past for youth and parents to make people aware of the local gangs in the community and alternatives. NYPD and former gang members provided dozens of people with stark information. Awareness, avoidance and alternatives are keys to combating this problem in our community and another reminder of the necessity of support and programs for our younger residents.

Our Youth Service Committee is currently working on Youth Conference for the young people in this community similar to the conference CB14 has hosted for the past seven years. We anticipate

workshops about job and life skills, connecting our young people to local programs and resources and connecting them to employment opportunities and training.

### **Economic Development**

Our Board welcomes economic development along our waterfront, but insists that any development immediately adjacent to the water be limited to water-dependant and community uses. Our waterfront is our greatest physical asset with spectacular views and large areas ripe for development.

We strongly believe that any development in our community must be sensitive to our current residents and businesses. Should businesses be required to move as part of a major development, priority should be given to relocating the businesses within the community. Our priority is to bring additional jobs to the community, not to force some businesses to leave.

Our community has seen much of its potential wasted in the past from the placement of negative-impact facilities, such as the Metropolitan Detention Center, power plants and waste transfer stations. The community has received a disproportionate number of these facilities while many of the other neighborhoods in the City receive money to lessen the impact of such facilities or relocated them altogether. In the interest of equity of City services, we must insist that a moratorium on such negative-impact facilities be placed in the community so that we have the opportunity to determine how we may best develop some of our assets in the interest of the community and City. We must insist that fair-share principles are respected and that a local public hearing must take place and community benefits agreements are negotiated for each proposed facility before any new facilities are allowed.

However, the past few years have seen unprecedented public and private investments in our industrial sector. Salmar has invested more than one hundred millions dollars into Liberty View Plaza. Jamestown Associates has invested 250 million dollars into Industry City. NYC recently announced an additional hundred million dollars for Brooklyn Army Terminal and tens of millions have been invested in Bush Terminal, the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal and other local sites. The Brooklyn Nets recently announced a forty million dollar investment to build a new practice/training facility in our community. We believe the jobs created in our community will have a significant, positive impact on the lives of our residents if we are able to connect them to available employment and to training programs. So far, we have been quite pleased with our new industrial neighbors willingness to work with local job training programs and to hire from within the community.

These investments should lead to infrastructure improvements that would benefit the industrial and residential community. Additional transportation options, fiber optic cables, modern sewer and roadway infrastructure, green and climate-resilient buildings, modern loading docks, fire suppression systems, modern elevators all need significant public and private investment to make our community attractive to business. We have the space and the zoning, now we need to modernize the infrastructure.

The Economic Development Corporation, which owns most of the land along our waterfront, has a willing and often, like-minded partner in Community Board 7, but often, and shockingly, not only leaves us out of decision-making, but purposely keep us out of the loop. We were kept out of the discussion to bring BioBat, our biotechnology center to the Brooklyn Army Terminal and even left us out of ceremonial aspects, such as a ribbon cutting, in addition to meetings, despite the fact that this is exactly

the type of use our board has promoted for our community through our 197-a Plan, a document often cited by EDC.

Furthermore, while CB7 has been a strong proponent of the rehabilitation of the 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue railway, the project has substantially changed since it was first approved by the board in 2005. First the northern part of the project, on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, was eliminated. Then, the scope of the sewer project on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue was scaled back so that it just includes 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue near 40<sup>th</sup> Street, not all of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue from 39<sup>th</sup> to 58<sup>th</sup> Streets as we were originally told. EDC has deliberately chosen to withhold this information from us.

While we are heartened that EDC recognizes that we deserve the same access to our waterfront that other communities enjoy we are very disappointed that EDC has scaled back our park currently under construction at Bush Terminal. At a time when hundreds of millions of dollars are being found for the creation of the High Line and Brooklyn Bridge Parks, it is insulting that our playground, environmental center, active pier and secondary egress have been taken out of the first phase of the park due to a \$2 million dollar cost overrun in the environmental cleanup of the site. Adding to this insult is the fact that the City was responsible for the environmental problems because of a lack of oversight in the 1970s, when toxic materials were allowed to be dumped here. Furthermore, we note that no funds have been identified for the second phase of the park, calling into question EDC's intention of following through with their promise to the community. We call upon EDC to fulfill its promises to the community and provide and identify capital funds for the full, promised build out of the park. We recognize that the Parks Department does not have the capital funds to build this long-delayed park.

Another opportunity for public recreation space lies at the waterfront side of the Brooklyn Army Terminal. This space is immediately adjacent to the 58<sup>th</sup> Street Pier, which is often used for fishing and public events, and is the only point of public access currently along our waterfront. Our Board has recently heard from EDC that they are proposing using the south side of the pier for fuel barge storage for a private company, Vane, which would necessitate the potential loss of public access to nearly fifty percent of our pier, which is currently this community's only point of public access to our waterfront. EDC has stated that Vane's investment in the pier would allow for greater opportunities for active programming at the site, but our Board Members are wary about the potential loss of our limited public space and wish to learn more concretely about such possibilities before we agree to any loss of public space.

Additionally, another location for potential public access may be available at the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal if some space, such as the proposed Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway, can be integrated into the economic development plans of EDC. We have discussed greening the edge of this facility, perhaps all the way to the water. This property is next to the under-construction Bush Terminal Piers Park, thereby allowing a link of green spaces along our waterfront. We believe this integration of green space and economic development will be a model for similar development around the City.

### **Zoning and Landmarks**

Our office has worked very closely with the Department of City Planning over the past few years to rezone large areas of our community. In 2005, we were successful in rezoning the Greenwood Heights and South Park Slope sections of our community. In 2009, we succeeded in rezoning the bulk of the Sunset Park residential community, all of the residential properties in East Windsor Terrace and we also passed our 197-a Plan to protect and enhance the manufacturing zone along our waterfront.

There are, however, three other areas in which we would like to see some changes. In 2011, our Board sent recommendations to DCP requesting a study of changing the zoning on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, the last part of the residential community of Sunset Park that was left out of the 2009 plan. This was because 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue straddles two community boards and it was necessary for Board 12 to actively pursue changes as well. Our Board has asked DCP to institute a height limit for all buildings on the avenue, but also allow for larger commercial buildings, reflecting the same zoning as the 5<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue commercial corridors and reflecting the reality of a booming commercial strip. Additionally, we have asked for a reduction of the commercial overlays allowed on adjoining residential blocks and have asked the agency to look at the possibility of rezoning the southern part of 39<sup>th</sup> Street between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenues from manufacturing to residential use, reflecting the substantial use change that is already taking place on the block. Since this block is only a block away from the subway, we felt it would be an appropriate location to promote smart residential growth. Our Board also requested the DCP looking into instituting new tools for developing affordable housing. We realize zoning is not a great tool for promoting affordability, as the building size bonus allowed on 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenues in previous rezoning has resulted in zero additional affordable units in our community. We are asking DCP to revisit the tools that they use. Unfortunately, we have been told by DCP that they do not have the resources to conduct the study at this point. Many rezoning efforts are pending throughout the City and, since we have had three rezoning in the past decade, they have other priorities at this point.

A second potential change would also need to include Board 6, as we are interested in protecting the view corridor from the Minerva statue in Green-Wood Cemetery to the Statue of Liberty. This would mean more changes in District 6 than it would for District 7 and so it is vitally important for Board 6 to be committed to such as plan, possibly through the City's 197-a process, to see it through.

Additionally, while our Board Members were happy that DCP is promoting a more active streetscape along the northern part of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue through the Enhanced Commercial District, many were confused why it did not take the whole of the avenue within our community. We have recently written to DCP asking them to consider expanding the ECD south to 65<sup>th</sup> Street. We are concerned that the same conditions that were created during the redevelopment of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Park Slope could creep into Sunset Park, should developers decide to make similar investments further south.

A new community organization, Sunset Park Landmarks Committee, has sprung up and received a grant from the Historic Districts Council to study the potential to landmark certain properties or blocks in the community. This group has emerged because of the numerous private housing redevelopment projects around the community that do not take into account historic preservation, often destroying the facades of beautiful, century-old limestone buildings. Zoning does not take aesthetics into account and perhaps the only way to preserve portions of our community is through the landmarking process. Earlier this year our Board voted to support the comprehensive plan and we await the decision of the Landmarks Preservation Commission on the application for an historic district.

We would also like to see the Landmarks Preservation Commission take a more active role in preserving a beautiful but deteriorating landmark in our community. We are gravely concerned about the condition of the old 68<sup>th</sup> Precinct on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, a one hundred and fifty year old building that has been in disrepair for nearly 40 years. Landmarking can make a property much more expensive to maintain and in poorer communities, such as ours, it is more difficult to find those dollars. Therefore, we believe that LPC has a special responsibility to poorer communities to help ensure the maintenance of landmarked properties, otherwise they are quite likely to become eyesores or dangerous.

CB7 is also concerned that hotels are allowed as-of-right in manufacturing districts, as we believe this is a back door way to promote housing expansion. We have spent almost two decades promoting and trying to safeguard our industrial waterfront, through our 197-a study and plan, and wish DCP would close this loophole, which could have devastating consequences for businesses and local employment if additional hotels are allowed to open in our manufacturing area.

### Consumer Affairs

Over the past few years our community has seen an increase in the number of applications the Board receives for internet cafes. Many of these businesses operate 24-hours-a-day and some are located within the commercial overlays on residential blocks. At times, these businesses can become hangouts or hiding places for truants. One business owner at a committee meeting even admitted that he takes ten dollars a night for people who have no home, which would mean he's operating a transient motel. Last year there was a homicide from a fight that spilled out from one of these businesses.

Although community boards are allowed review of internet café applications, we only have fifteen days for review, whereas other agencies are given forty-five days. We do not believe fifteen days is enough time to schedule a public meeting with an applicant and have instituted a blanket policy of denial for all internet café applications until community boards are given more time for review. We believe at least thirty days are necessary, the same review period we are allowed for liquor licenses. The quality-of-life concerns of our local community must be addressed and the community's voice should have a much stronger say. Unfortunately, the community is given very little time to respond to the Department of Consumer Affairs.

### Summary

We are of the opinion that this Statement of Needs reflects the basic requirements of our residents. The people of our community and the citizenry of New York are among the most heavily taxed population in the nation and, even so, forecasted budget deficits threaten to force budget cuts, which may force service delivery cuts. Our Board will not accept service cuts and this Statement of Needs serves as a blueprint for the improvement of services in our District.

We sincerely hope that agencies will give serious consideration to our needs and suggestions and that blatant rejection of programs and new policies will cease. It is our hope that individual agencies will stop telling us that something "can't be done" but will seriously pursue ways to implement our suggestions. Only in this way and with improved dialogue can we ensure the quality-of-life for our residents and the vital continuation of the City of New York.

Sincerely,



Daniel A. Murphy  
Chairman



Jeremy Laufer  
District Manager