



City of New York
Community Board #1, Queens
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INTRODUCTION

Community Board 1 is the most ethnically diverse district in Queens with 118 nationalities. It is also one of the most industrial and commercial districts. We have a large immigrant, senior and youth population and we are ranked the second/third largest Community Board in Queens.

We are seeing a tremendous increase of housing construction. This growth and development has created a daily struggle to maintain our community.

We are very concerned about the N train extension to LaGuardia Airport. If the MTA chooses to extend the N train up 31st Street, it will destroy the commercial and residential area and will devastate the 19th Avenue industrial area. Excavation and construction will take an estimated eight years driving many businesses out. We strongly urged the MTA to go through Flushing, Willets Point. This is all park land and will not impact negatively on anyone. All our elected officials agree with our position.

DISTRICT NEEDS STATEMENT

Our priorities in the Capital Construction Budget are:

1. The Potts Cove residential and industrial area is in desperate need of City services. New sewer and street construction are needed in order to bring this area up to date. Large industries will move in employing more local residents when this is accomplished.
2. Storm sewer construction and rehabilitation throughout our community is needed. Our systems are old and were built for a lesser population. Because of the tremendous increase in housing and population growth these systems must be updated to accommodate the increased.

BUILDINGS

Inspectors should visit the auto repair shops to see if they have proper Certificates of Occupancy, many do not. These shops are often a nuisance to our community, especially in the Long Island City area.

Due to our growing population and the shortage of affordable housing, we are seeing a rise in illegal apartment conversions. The State should consider legislation to permit building standards to legalize some of the illegal uses and add them to the tax roll. Those that do not qualify should face stiff fines since these landlords are making a tax-free profit and endangering lives.

CITY PLANNING

Our housing boom is real. There is new construction throughout our community, making this the second biggest growth since the 1930s. We need to consider new zoning to better define what would serve our community best. The current zoning was established in 1961, it must be updated.

Our waterfront has the best views of our City. We need high rise along our waterfront as is being done in Long Island City and the Hunters Point area. We should build fishing piers at 31st Avenue/Vernon Boulevard, next to Societies Park and a marina at Potts Cove and Halletts Cove.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

We have the highest number of licensed unenclosed sidewalk cafes in Queens, presently 49. In addition, many are operating without a license. We urge Consumer Affairs to crack down on these violators.

We also ask that those small establishments that wish to put out up to 4 tables pay a standard fee making it easier for them to get a permit. The Community Board should have these applications.

We ask for a nuisance law that can strike a license for 30 days to any business that continues to ignore quality of life concerns, such as garbage, loud music, loitering, etc.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Our district, like many in Queens, has a high graffiti rate. We urge our District Attorney to prosecute graffiti to the fullest extent of the law. Mandated sentencing must be given to those committing this quality of life crime.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Our district has the largest number of commercial businesses. Our commercial strips are in need of continual support in order to be maintained and upgraded. The Astoria Boulevard area, west of 21st Street, must be improved if business is to survive there. A traffic study of this area should be made. The Queens Plaza area must be made a priority in order to attract business.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

There is a great need citywide for air, noise and water inspectors to address quality of life issues. We need an independent air inspection to monitor our power plants and airport. Catch basins are not cleaned on a routine schedule due to a lack of manpower. Running hydrants waste up to 60,000 gallons of water per hour. Violators should be arrested and fined.

We need "Do Not Honk" signs posted in many locations such as senior housing, schools and the hospital. We need loud motorcycles and automobiles to be fined and confiscated for excessive noise.

FORESTRY

Queens has more trees than all the other boroughs combined. We have an astonishing number of dead and dying trees. There is a tremendous backlog of trees removal and pruning. The Department of Forestry must be given top priority in the Expense Budget. Trees beautify our community and they do need continual maintenance.

HOUSING

The New York City Housing Authority should better screen tenants before admission into the developments. Community Board 1 has the most developments in Queens. Tenant leaders have made their concerns known to us and insisted on a tenant screening committee for each of the four developments in the area. They also want to see evictions of those convicted of crimes while living in any development. Also, there must be better follow-up for those homeless people who were placed in the development by court order

HUMAN SERVICES

We have a growing need for affordable housing, especially for seniors. Our youth populations and those new immigrants to our community need career training. Programs that offer these training services should be increased in funding to meet this need. We need shelters for homeless adults that are safe and preferable to living in the streets.

PARKS

We need better clean-up of our parks. The personnel should be increased. Vandals who maliciously destroy park property must be prosecuted. Athens Square Park, located on 30th Avenue/30th Street, has become the focal point of our community with ethnic cultural entertainment taking place three nights a week during the summer months. This is a 9PM curfew, which should be enforced.

Police and park enforcements should confiscate skateboards if they continue to violate park rules. Roller-skating, bike riding and alcoholic beverage drinking, where prohibited, should be strictly enforced. We need to build a skateboard park and a full hockey rink to accommodate our youth.

POLICE

We urge our Police to summons cars with loud radios and taxi cabs that honk their horns for passenger pickup, especially during the evening hours. Stiff fines for disturbing the peace should be issued. Loud motorcycles should be confiscated. We also need enforcement of the barbecuing at Astoria and Ralph DeMarco Parks because they always leave their garbage behind.

The 114th Precinct is located on Astoria Boulevard So/35th Street. Police angle park on Astoria Boulevard, which is a truck route, and on 36th Street. We must build a parking lot over the Grand central Parkway to accommodate the 114th vehicles and commuters who park in the area travel to Manhattan by train.

SANITATION

Sanitation must improve services to commercial strips. Daily pedestrian sanitation pick up must be made especially on weekends when shoppers are out. Fines should be issued to those pedestrians caught littering. To often the storeowner is fined but never the violators. We need to fully restore the clean team lost by cutbacks and we want stricter enforcement of the Canine Law. Queens Plaza should be a priority in monitoring clean streets since it is the gateway to Queens.

TAXI & LIMOSINE COMMISSION (TLC)

We have the most base stations in Queens. We feel this agency gives no consideration to our objections, especially when these stations are located in busy commercial areas. The TLC does not

properly monitor these stations for violations when reported to them. Community Boards should be permitted to submit restricted zones for base stations or for over saturations.

TRANSPORTATION

We have seen an upsurge in street construction. We now point to the need for tow services to combat deplorable conditions created by auto repair shops that park unlicensed vehicles on sidewalks. This service will also aid Police in other areas as needed, such as removing stalled vehicles. We need a location for a car pound in order to get this service. We also need to expand the exit ramp at Steinway Street off the Grand Central Parkway, one lane to turn left, one to turn right and the center onto the service road. This will alleviate the backup of traffic on the parkway.

We need additional angle parking, as we have on 31st Street between Ditmars Boulevard and 21st Avenue, to accommodate motorist and shoppers.

This agency should identify choice locations for bidding out to street food vendors, as the Department of Parks and Recreation does. Vendors would pay high prices for choice locations, such as the Wall Street area and theater district. These vendors would be free of harassment and the monies generated would benefit the City. Street food vendors presently pay nothing to sell on city streets.

There should also be a 15 MPH speed limit posted at narrow streets and around schools. Right now the speed limit is 30 MPH citywide where not posted. Community Boards should be able to submit locations for the reduced speed.

George Delis

George Delis
District Manager