



COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 11

*Serving Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston,
Hollis Hills, Little Neck & Oakland Gardens*

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STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS **FY 2009**

Community Board 11, located in Northeast Queens is bounded by Nassau County on the east; Little Neck Bay and 26 Avenue on the north; Utopia Parkway and Fresh Meadow Lane and 210 Street on the west and the Grand Central Parkway and Horace Harding Expressway on the south. The District is comprised of the neighborhoods of Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston, Hollis Hills, Little Neck and Oakland Gardens. These neighborhoods are residential in zoning and character with the major portion of the District comprised of 1, 2 and 3 family houses and several cooperative and condominium apartment complexes, developed 50-60 years ago, and a scattering of rental apartment buildings. Douglas Manor and Douglaston Hill are landmarked communities within Board 11. The shopping needs of the residents are met by the commercial strips, all of which are C1 and C2 zoning overlays in residential districts. Bell Boulevard officially became a Business Improvement District (BID) with the help of dedicated business owners and the Small Business Administration. The BID will help channel funding into improvements along the Bell Boulevard commercial strip.

The District is an upper middle income community of approximately 116,400 residents representing a population increase of 7.7% since the 1990 census. The District remains a culturally and ethnically diverse community. According to the 2000 census, 35.9% of the population is now foreign born, the majority of which are Asian.

This school year approximately 16,500 students are enrolled in School District 26 in its 19 public elementary and secondary schools located in CB 11. There are three high schools in the district with a total population of approximately 12,000 students. Queensborough Community College, located in Bayside, continues to grow and be a premier community college.

2000 Census figures indicate that there are almost 20,000 seniors aged 65 or over representing 17.2% of the population living in Community Board 11. Although there has been a decrease in population of 60-75 year range, there is an increase in seniors over 75 years of age. Senior programs and services must be available to a senior population with possibly greater needs. As the baby boom era population continues to age, the City must be prepared to meet the needs. There is only one major senior center in our District, Bayside Senior Center and a smaller center at the Samuel Field YM-YWHA which also operates "CAPE" with programs for homebound seniors and Alzheimer patients and their families, and the Deepdale NORC (Naturally Occurring Retire-

ment Community) Senior program. The Little Neck Pines Civic Association has been working with the Borough President's office and the Department for the Aging to establish a new center in Little Neck.

The District is known for its approximately 775 acres of parkland. Alley Park, which is a large regional park, has areas under Federal and State tidal and fresh water wetland protection, as does Udall's Cove in Little Neck. The shoreline in Bayside is part of the Greenway system and supports a marina for recreational boating and fishing and a bicycle and jogging path. Adjacent to this shoreline is Crocheron Park and John Golden Park which have large open spaces with ball fields, playgrounds, tennis courts and a concert area. Additionally there are smaller green parks and playgrounds, a golf course and numerous greenstreets throughout the district. The preservation and maintenance of these natural areas has been a priority of this Board for years.

All public transportation is provided by bus lines terminating at the Flushing and Jamaica subway lines and the Port Washington branch of the Long Island Railroad, both of which are used primarily as commuter transportation to Manhattan. The areas of Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston and Little Neck adjacent to the Long Island Railroad stations are congested during commuting hours and parking is at a premium. With increased building development and with an ever increasing population, neighborhoods are starting to experience more local traffic congestion.

BUILDING AND ZONING:

CB11 has undergone major zoning changes over the past two years in response to complaints by residents that developers were changing the low density character of the area through demolition and new construction. The Department of City Planning (DCP) rezoned 350 blocks of Bayside and 135 blocks of Douglaston and Little Neck. A new citywide R-2A zone was created to limit the development of "McMansions", oversized single family homes that are out of character with the surrounding neighborhood. The

R-2A zone for single family homes limits floor area and provides new height limits. We have been urging DCP to rezone other areas of our board including Auburndale, Hollis Hills and Oakland Gardens. Many residents are concerned that further development will continue to negatively affect the character of these neighborhoods.

The Buildings Department added more inspectors and plan examiners last year and a prompt response to complaints has increased. Owners must be held responsible when they circumvent the law and work without obtaining a permit or build beyond the scope of the zoning regulations. DOB has increased the cost of many types of fines; higher fines should help to be a deterrent. The frustration of "no access" reports in illegal conversion and occupancy complaints continue to upset residents. Access warrants are difficult to obtain and the complainants feel that nothing is being done to stop illegal conditions. Unfortunately, in many cases this may be true but balancing private property rights with government enforcement continues to be a dilemma. Greater cooperation through a multi-agency task force comprised of the Department of Buildings, the Fire Department and Police Department personnel would help with illegal conversion and illegal building enforcement.

EDUCATION AND YOUTH:

There are three public high schools in CB 11, Bayside, Benjamin Cardozo and Francis Lewis High School. The populations in all three schools have increased greatly with utilization rates at

151%, 138% and 170% respectively. With students housed in buildings meant for half the number, the already overutilized schools have become dangerously overcrowded. Despite the addition of transportable classrooms a few years ago to Cardozo, permanent building space should be added to the school. The School Construction Authority added transportable classrooms at Bayside High School.

The Beacon Programs at Middle School 158 and Middle School 172 operated by the Samuel Field “Y” continue to be successful ,serving the youth and community groups of our district. Additionally, Out of School Time Programs operate at four schools and City Council funds have helped provide programming at four other locations. There are several sports groups run by volunteers that are funded privately and in some cases with support from our local officials.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The Alley Creek Drainage project, which has been a Board priority since 1972, is in the final stages. The project is now concentrated north of Northern Boulevard with the installation of water retention units in Alley Creek. A wetland mitigation, know as Phase III, for the Oakland Ravine Area and Oakland Lake by DEP with the Department of Parks and Recreation will commence in 2008. This plan that will not only improve drainage but enhance the beauty of the ravine and lake.

Street cave-ins and depressions account for the most frequent service complaint to DEP. We are pleased that some trench restoration projects are commencing or planned over the next few years. In particular, Gaskell Road trench restoration is scheduled for 2008. More funds are needed as the wait for the commencement of these projects, once the need is determined, takes an excessive number of years.

Throughout the remainder of the District, there are areas of intersection flooding. Catch basin flooding complaints always account for the second highest number of service complaints to DEP from our district. Repairs are backlogged often over a year from the time of complaint to repair. Broken and sinking catch basins pose a hazardous condition at corners. More funds and personnel are needed for regular catch basin cleaning and for repair. It is important that catch basin and sewer installation projects be ongoing in cases of flooding conditions. The district has many seepage basins and the installation of new ones have been stalled, as DEP has found that many seepage basins fail after a short time. We urge DEP to find a solution to this problem through combined sewer projects.

A major concern is the poor storm water drainage on 223rd Street between 37th Avenue and 42nd Avenue. Presently, storm water runs along a ditch along the eastern edge of 223rd Street. This project will require joint planning with Department of Transportation since capital reconstruction of the street is necessary. It is now in the planning stages.

HEALTH:

This past winter for the second time, Board 11 sponsored a flu vaccine clinic with St. Mary’s Hospital and the NYC Department of Health. It was very successful and we were able to vaccinate 125 people. We look forward to providing this service again this year especially as we continue to face threats of flu. Once again this past summer, the DOH sprayed areas of Alley Pond Park with pesticides to prevent mosquito infestations.

LIBRARIES

Community Board 11 has started a campaign for a new library to replace or add to the Little Neck/Douglaston Library. Its space is inadequate to meet the needs of the residents. We are working with the Little Neck Pines Civic Association, Friends of the Library and the Douglaston Women's Club to garner support and funding from the Queens Public Library System, the Mayor and our local legislators.

PARKS & RECREATION:

The acquisition of designated lots in Alley Park and Udalls Cove Ravine continue to take place. Pressure to develop these lands from the owners and potential developers are increasing and therefore the City must continue to dedicate funds for further acquisition.

Crocheron Park is in need of a complete rehabilitation. It is the second largest park in the District and is the link to one of only two pedestrian bridges over the Cross Island Parkway to the Bayside Marina and Joe Michael's Mile. The paths, benches, and gazebos need to be thoroughly restored, along with associated drainage work needed to restore the Crocheron Park Pond. The adjoining John Golden Park is in need of a new bathroom facility to accommodate the large number of park patrons. The Borough President provided a portion of the funds last year to start this renovation.

Community residents met with CB 11 this year to gain support for the Parks Department to acquire from the City Dept. of Housing, Preservation and Development, a strip of land in Doug Bay for a park. This park district has insufficient personnel and vehicles to clean and maintain our parks. With over 775 acres of park and greenstreets, the two crews assigned to our district struggle to meet the demands.

It is imperative that the Queens Forestry Division be funded at a greater level for street and park tree pruning and maintenance. Forestry complaints account for the greatest number of "311" calls from our district. With the ten year cycle pruning contract coming to an end we are hopeful that these additional funds will provide for a contract better suited to meet the demands in our district with its great number of street trees. Public safety is being compromised by ignoring hazards caused by trees when not pruned regularly. Additionally, the Parks Department has an enormous backlog of stumps to be removed; approximately 1000 in CB 11.

Tree roots account for the lifting and destruction of many sidewalks. The Tree and Sidewalk program is the answer for many homeowners; however, it needs to be funded at a higher level to meet the need.

POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

The 111th Precinct, which is located on Northern Boulevard in Bayside, patrols 9.4 miles of Community Board 11. This precinct has seen a decrease in crime and is a safe, low crime area. However, burglaries of private residential homes remain the predominant and troubling crime statistic in the precinct. Although the numbers of uniformed officers has increased, more civilian staff will help free more officers for patrol.

There is a concern with the alarming increase in graffiti, since the Police Department states that this often leads to future criminal activity. The precinct is actively working on enforcement, eradication and education to combat this quality of life crime. Another concern of residents is the growing number of establishments that have liquor licenses invoking the 500' rule at the State Liquor

Authority. We work closely with the Police to review and comment on these establishments. The Precinct is aggressively cracking down on owners of establishments that serve to minors and violate other public safety ordinances.

The 111th has had an active Community Precinct Council for years but they receive no funds and the fundraising they can do is insufficient. In the past the city has provided funds for councils and they should do so again. The Council has advocated more foot patrols and bicycle patrols. There is no money funded for bike repair and not enough officers are receiving the special training required. The interior of the precinct house is showing its age and is in desperate need of renovation and remodeling.

SANITATION:

CB 11 continues to be among the top rated Community Board in the borough for cleanliness. However, in order to maintain the good record we must have a dedicated litter basket crew six days a week. The adopt-a-basket program is thriving in CB 11 and contributes to the high street cleanliness ratings the Board receives. CB 11 receives three day a week broom crews in our commercial area. There are no regular broom services in residential areas and we need sweeping in these areas also, particularly in the autumn, with the falling of leaves from street trees. The board urges DOS to maintain broom service at least three times a week and provide brooms for residential areas also.

Our District contains several miles of street malls which need to be cleared of weeds and litter during the summer and autumn months. Weeds interfere with visibility and they must be cleared regularly. Public safety depends on good visibility at all intersections.

TRANSPORTATION:

Curb repair and replacement has been non existent. Curbs are deteriorating and causing trip hazards. Curbs provide a course for rain water runoff. Without curbs, areas adjacent to the street wash away. The Department's lack of interest in dedicating some of its budget to curb work is unacceptable.

CB 11 has asked repeatedly for the reconstruction of the streets between Francis Lewis Boulevard and the Clearview Expressway and between Northern Boulevard and 48th Avenue. While DOT has acknowledged the need, they consistently do not fund the project. We urge DOT to make this a priority in FY 2009.

In Douglas Manor a capital project, in conjunction with the Department of Environmental Protection, is urgently needed to reconstruct a section of Shore Road that is collapsing.

The Board has been working with residents who live close to the Long Island Railroad at Little Neck for help to establish a "Quiet Zone". The federal government initiated new rules regarding horn blowing requirements at grade crossings. In order to establish a "Quiet Zone", CB 11 has been working with NYC DOT for almost two years to design a Federal Railroad Administration approved grade crossing that will be cost effective and safe and provide the needed relief to the homeowners. Congressman Ackerman recently requested \$125,000 in the appropriations bill for the Quiet Zone.

Traffic has become a serious problem. There are more cars and trucks on our roads. Safety concerns are growing. Many requests for traffic controls are denied and residents are frustrated. NYC DOT should look at creative traffic calming methods as illustrated by the advocacy group, "Transportation Alternatives",

and used in other parts of the country. We look forward to the improvements the Truck Traffic Study has recommended to improve signage, develop new routes and educate truckers on the City regulations.

Our commercial areas are underserved with available parking. The most severe condition exists in the area of Bell Boulevard and the LIRR station. Commuters and shoppers compete for very limited muni-meter parking and greatly impose on the adjacent residential streets for parking. The new Business Improvement District will be working on this matter with DOT to find solutions. This becomes more important if the Mayor's plan for congestion pricing becomes effective. The LIRR stations could become busier as will our bus and express bus lines. The City must provide assistance to the outer boroughs to develop parking areas.

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