



MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD SIX

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DISTRICT NEEDS STATEMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2012

Community District 6 encompasses the East Side of Manhattan from 14th to 59th Streets, from the East River to Lexington Avenue and farther west in some areas to include all of Gramercy Park and all of Murray Hill. Additional well-known neighborhoods lie within the board boundaries: Sutton Place, Beekman Place, Turtle Bay, Tudor City, Kips Bay, Rosehill, Phipps Houses, East Midtown Plaza, Stuyvesant Square, Waterside, Peter Cooper Village and Stuyvesant Town. The District is a mixture of residential and commercial use with offices located in Citicorp Center, the Chrysler building and other major structures, with retail shops lining the avenues. Community District 6 is home to the United Nations as well as hundreds of missions and diplomatic residences. There are several major hospitals in the District, used by all New Yorkers, including Beth Israel, VA Medical Center, Bellevue Hospital, NYU Langone Medical Center, and NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases. Numerous substance abuse, mental health, and other ambulatory care clinics as well as some facilities of the New York Eye and Ear Hospital are located in the District. The District includes Baruch College, including the Zicklin School of Business and its graduate business school facilities, the School of Visual Arts, Brookdale Campus of Hunter College, the NYU School of Medicine, the NYU College of Dentistry and the Baren Campus of Yeshiva University including Stern College and other facilities.

The assessed value of commercial and residential properties, the daily influx of workers, and tourists who shop and visit the District all contribute significantly to New York's economic base.

There are five Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) within the District or at our border: The Grand Central Partnership, 34th Street Partnership, East Midtown Association, Union Square Partnership and the Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership. We applaud these BIDs for continuing to improve the quality of life within the District. We encourage the City to continue to endorse new BIDs.

For some, the District is defined by the commercial energy of East Midtown and the sedate apartments on Sutton Place, the brownstones of Murray Hill and the charm of Gramercy Park, but in reality, the District is primarily a middle-income community that also has significant numbers of low-income residents and a large elderly population living on fixed incomes. There are five SRO and sixteen residential facilities within the District. The most recent information indicates that the 30th Street Shelter has 14% of the sheltered male beds in the City. The shelter at 215-225 East 45th Street has beds for one hundred and thirty women and ten churches and synagogues in the District have opened their doors as private shelters. However, homelessness continues to be a major concern for the area; homeless people sleep under the FDR, on the streets and in area parks.

To address the needs of this vibrant and diverse community, the Board has grouped our issues into four broad categories of major concern: 1) services for the vulnerable, 2) a healthy and safe environment, 3) a livable City for all, and 4) continuing the commitment to District needs.

SERVICES FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE

Services for the Elderly

The Department of City Planning Community Profile shows that there are three senior centers in the District serving 20,000 elderly residents. This level of service is clearly inadequate since, according to the 2000 Census, 14.9% of the District population is over the age of 65. More recent survey information (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey – 2006-2007 data) estimates that in CB6 there were 21,083 persons age 65 and over (a growth of 5% over the 2000 census) and of these 10,400, or almost 50%, were 75 and older. The Community Board capital budget requests for additional senior centers and adult daycare services dating from a decade ago continue to go unmet. Additionally, it is vital that senior centers are modernized with supportive programs for those who are not frail and equipped with computer labs with Internet access so today's more active senior may participate in healthy activities, keep informed of programs for seniors, and expand their skill set. With the closing of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services only walk-in center in New York City a couple of years ago, seniors lost a valuable opportunity for in-person assistance in obtaining and managing their benefits. Now seniors are increasingly expected to navigate the Internet to participate in prescription drug plans and manage their Medicare and Medicaid benefits but without the adequate facilities or tools to do so. Education on how to manage benefits online should lead to improved quality of life as well as greater use of the federal programs and less reliance on City funds. Over the last few years, the Board has included a Lifelong Learning Center in the Board's budget requests to accomplish just this. The Board would like to see this type of center placed midway in the District so that the entire District may have easy access to such a facility. The Board is concerned about recent budget reductions that will close or curtail services provided to seniors. The existing programs in our District meet the needs of the frail elderly but fail to provide any service to others. Three centers that border our District have been shuttered. Despite the temporary program to transport the affected seniors, there is concern that the existing programs in our District may become an even greater magnet to non-residents and continuing support of those programs will be even more important.

Services for the Disabled

Community District 6 has within its boundaries and in close proximity to it, numerous hospitals as well as specialty institutions for the hearing and visually impaired. In addition, almost 15% of the District population is over the age of 65, half of who are limited in mobility. Because of these factors, many persons with decreased mobility or disabilities travel through the District, at times under perilous, congested Midtown traffic conditions. Improvements must be made to traffic patterns, signage, enforcement, bus loading/unloading areas and pedestrian signaling devices to improve safety. The reduction in public transportation options, especially that of the cross-town bus service, significantly hampers the movement of those who have reduced mobility to and from their treatment and social centers. Restoration and expansion of transportation for those of reduced mobility is critical for these residents of the community.

Youth and Education

There is a substantial shortfall in school seats for children as well as for after school and support services for children within Community District 6. A recent report demonstrated this severe overcrowding of schools showing PS 116 had 824 students enrolled in September 2008 in a building designed to accommodate 700, which leaves the school at nearly 120% capacity. Our ability to address this situation and plan for the future is aggravated by a lack of current information about the school age population. While over 2,100 apartments have been built in the District since 2000, the population data available at the New York City Department of Planning is still based on the

2000 Census. In addition, several new residential projects are either being built or planned. The lack of adequate information and failure to adjust plans in light of changing conditions has resulted in wait-lists for kindergarten and overcrowded schools.

We are pleased that work has begun on the new High School of Art and Design and PS 59 and that the City has begun planning for a school to be located at 616 First Avenue, part of the Solow development, on the former Con Edison site. However, it appears that the school at the Solow site will only provide enough additional school space for the additional apartments planned for that site, therefore providing no relief to the current situation and potentially putting an extra burden on existing schools within the District. Furthermore, the City has not provided for sufficient community input on the type of school, the design of the facility and the coordination with other development projects in the area.

Community Board 6 has passed a resolution advocating for the Police Academy located on East 20th Street to be considered as school space once the Police Academy is relocated. We have not been included in discussions of the future of this location and ask that the use of the facilities as a public school be given serious consideration.

Homeless Services

East Midtown is one of the nicest areas in the City with one of the lowest crime rates. Consequently, homeless people have little fear of being robbed of their few possessions as they sleep on the streets or in our parks. This community has demonstrated great compassion for the homeless in its midst, and is aware of the enormous demands for service needed by this population.

Community input and involvement in DHS' determination of location of 9,000 units under the New York/New York III program is essential to implementation of this objective. The Housing, Homeless and Human Rights Committee is considering City Council Intro. 0079-2010; passage of this law will codify DHS' obligation to give Districts appropriate notification and the use of Fair Share analysis prior to any shelter placement within the Districts.

The 30th Street Homeless Men's Shelter, which occupies the former Bellevue Psychiatric Building, is operating at capacity. DHS is decentralizing its intake system from a one-center system to a two-center system. DHS hopes to open an intake facility in the two boroughs with the highest concentration of street homeless individuals, Brooklyn and Manhattan. The Request for Proposal (RFP) for redevelopment of this site was temporarily shelved. As a result, Community Board 6 is working to create a community-based redevelopment that meets the guidelines of its 197-a Plan and include new shelter facilities.

A HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITY

Health Facilities

There are several major hospitals in the District, used by all New Yorkers, including Beth Israel Medical Center, VA Medical Center, Bellevue Hospital, NYU Langone Medical Center, and the NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases. Numerous substance abuse, mental health, and other ambulatory care clinics as well as some facilities of the New York Eye and Ear Hospital are located in the District. We look forward to continued cooperation with these medical facilities as they expand and modernize their operations in the District.

Bellevue Hospital is in the midst of a major modernization of some of its existing facilities. For

decades, Community Board 6 has been advocating for a strategic plan to determine Bellevue's immediate and future health care and land use needs prior to any disposition of property; no such study has ever been conveyed to the Board.

The Community Board has taken note of the lack of high quality skilled nursing facilities in Manhattan and especially within Community District 6. According to the Visiting Nurses Association of New York City there are only 53 permanent inpatient Hospice beds in Manhattan. The NYC Department of City Planning projects that Manhattan's elderly population, aged 65 and over, will grow by 57.9% between 2002 and 2030 adding 108,000 elderly persons. In Community District 6 we have seen an increase in the number of persons age 65 and over of 5% since the 2000 census – and almost 50% of these individuals were 75 and older. We therefore must plan for the additional health and other support services needed by this population.

Community Board 6, through its own redevelopment plan of the Bellevue Psychiatric Building, is focusing on health-related uses consistent with its 197-a plan, such as a sub-acute facility or multiple uses that would allow for a continuum of care for seniors and others in need of such care.

Pedestrian Safety

In our densely populated District, pedestrian safety must be an important concern. We are pleased at the efforts being made to install audible and countdown signals and urge a continuation in the effort to identify additional locations in District 6 for such devices.

An area of pedestrian safety that is not being addressed, however, is protection from unsafe use of bicycles. Community Board 6 strongly supports the development of bicycle pathways through the District, and these pathways are now being developed along First and Second Avenues. At the same time, we must recognize that pedestrians can be harassed or even injured by inconsiderate and illegal bicycle practices. Principle among these are bicycles on the sidewalk, bicycles crossing intersections against the light, bicycles entering the crosswalk at the light, and bicycles traveling against the traffic either in the lane or on one-way streets. We believe that much of this could be alleviated by enforcement of existing bicycle regulations and ask that the NYPD take action to correct these threats to public safety.

Another area of concern is that of pedestrian-automobile incidents. Re-engineering has improved the conditions of the intersection at 24th Street and Lexington Avenue. However, other intersections remain a high concern to members of the District. The Community Board has heard from residents on 23rd Street concerning the intersection at 23rd Street and Second Avenue, which has had a substantial history of pedestrian-automobile incidents and at 23rd Street and Third Avenue which often backs up traffic and clogs streets. Pedestrian safety at the intersections of 57th Street and First Avenue and 57th Street and Second Avenue also continues to be of concern. We believe that these intersections require engineering attention. Also, a mechanism may be appropriate to make residential concerns about intersections easier to communicate with the Department of Transportation.

Sanitation

The Board is pleased that the District's streets are relatively clean and thanks the District Superintendent and his crew for all of their assistance. However, we do note that additional enforcement of alternate sides of the street regulations is needed to facilitate regular maintenance.

Some sidewalks in the District do not fare as well and are continuously littered. Existing litter

baskets often fill to overflowing. Additional city litter baskets and a review of the frequency of pickups would be helpful. In addition, commercial and residential garbage can sit on the street for many hours in advance of pickup creating an odor and unsightly mess that also attracts rodents. Trash bags that are torn or deliberately opened, or, in some cases, carelessly handled by sanitation workers, can exacerbate this problem and have a negative impact on a neighborhood's quality of life. We respectfully request that the Sanitation Department rigorously enforce its own guidelines for regular, careful sanitation pickup activities.

Sub-Surface Infrastructure

The July 18, 2007 steam explosion that occurred on Lexington Avenue and E. 41 Street and the steam explosion that occurred in Gramercy Park in 1989 are two of the most extreme examples in Community District 6 of serious threats posed by our aging infrastructure. The net effect of these and other events such as manhole explosions and fires on Second Avenue in the vicinity of 23rd Street in 2008 is that the members of the community are losing confidence in the basic safety of the city. Considering the potential for injuries and even loss of life, as well as street closures, traffic diversions and the like, the Board needs more information on the potential problems that have been identified and the projects planned for our District. Additionally the Board would like information on the age of the general steam pipe system, the method of inspections and an inventory of scheduled maintenance.

The city needs a policy issued that would require mapping the city's sub-surface infrastructure of agency and private sub-surface facilities. The Board understands the sensitivity of this information; that is why we would recommend that a separate division within a city agency, such as DEP, be created to take inventory of all sub-surface infrastructures to determine their condition and develop a maintenance schedule that would keep the infrastructure in good repair. This division could coordinate with city agencies that have direct control of city assets making sure that repairs are funded and performed. The division should also coordinate with private industry such as Con Edison and Verizon making sure that their assets are kept in good repair. We believe that in the long term the value of having this information would expedite various city and private projects and would, over time, pay for itself. Recent discussions with the City have proven to be unproductive and we urge that this be explored further.

Construction Site Safety

New high-rise construction, while certainly a nuisance for immediate neighbors, generally does not present a threat to the community. These multi-million dollar projects are built by experienced contractors and are closely supervised by the Department of Buildings. However, the tragic crane accident at Second Avenue and 51st Street illustrates the need for constant oversight. We recognize and commend the response the city has made to improve safety at construction sites and emphasize the need to follow through on improvements in procedures and in expanding the inspection effort. We are also concerned that in these economic times, construction is suspended at several work sites without sufficient supervision to ensure that the site remains safe and secure. Therefore, the Board has asked and our legislators have produced LL #70 that requires a developer to inform DOB when work on a site is suspended. This legislation requires that DOB conduct an on-site inspection, within a reasonable time frame, to ensure the site is safe and secure.

The Board continues to be concerned, year after year, about the length of time sheds surrounding buildings are allowed to stay up. In some instances these sidewalk sheds remain in place for 10 or more years. The public becomes concerned over the sheds' stability, falling debris, street and sidewalk cleanliness, and

failing or no under-shed lighting. The Board would like to see legislation passed that would require the timely filing and advancement of jobs with DOB before an extension of a shed permit is issued.

Many building owners appear to flagrantly disregard the permit process and building code regulations. Much work is done without any building permits, or with a permit that does not begin to cover the full scope of the work being performed. It appears that more and more work is being done in the evenings and on weekends when the Department of Buildings has only a few inspectors to cover all five boroughs. Additionally, illegal uses and occupancies need to be addressed. We need more building inspectors to address the issues raised above. We also need more crane inspectors at building sites to make sure that all cranes are safe and used properly.

A LIVABLE CITY FOR ALL

Parks and Recreation

Community District 6 has the least amount of parkland of any community District in New York City – just 26 acres compared to an average of 198 acres in other Manhattan Districts. At the same time, its population is at the median of Community District size both in Manhattan and in all of New York. Furthermore, recent census data shows a thirty percent increase in the population of very young children in Manhattan. For this reason, the City needs to develop new active park space. Community District 6, with its scarcity of parkland, should be a high priority in the development of new space.

The Board is concerned about suggested City plans to alienate Robert Moses Playground and build a United Nations consolidation building on a portion of the site. Community Board 6 has been in discussions with the Economic Development Corporation and our elected officials but has not reached an agreement for a replacement park acceptable to the Board. The mitigation element required for the construction of the U.N. consolidation building will be an esplanade outboard from the FDR Drive from East 41st Street to East 51st Street with connectors at East 42nd Street, East 48th Street, and East 51st Street (existing). Discussions are continuing.

Through the efforts of our elected officials, some of the parks in Community District 6 have been reconstructed. However, with all the capital improvements in our parks and recreation centers, we continue to emphasize the need for adequate maintenance, operation and protection of our rehabilitated parks. The need for additional maintenance workers continues to be a high priority within Board Six and throughout the city. We also stress the importance of making our parks accessible to all our neighbors. We believe that all our parks, including the comfort stations in those parks, should comply with both the requirements of and the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Even in instances where the City is not legally required to update certain facilities at this time, we urge that modifications be made as soon as possible. We also note that Asser Levy and the 54th Street Recreation Centers are two of the three most heavily used centers in the city. Unfortunately, they do not have adequate personnel to meet the needs of the many people they serve nor do they have sufficient funds for maintenance and supplies.

We are pleased by the promise of funding for repair of a portion of the Stuyvesant Square historic fence and will continue to push for the completion of this much-delayed project. Other long-standing capital priorities such as the restoration of the Stuyvesant Square Park's comfort stations and the rehabilitation of Glick Park, which includes restoration of the fountains, remain to be addressed. Furthermore, Robert Moses Playground is in immediate need of a complete resurfacing in order to have safe enjoyment of this active use area. We understand that funds have been found to perform some of the work, but we are concerned that it be a proper overall resurfacing and not just patching, which can result in unsafe conditions.

Open Spaces

Open space is of vital importance to the Board. According to a report by the Department of City Planning, there are only 26 acres of open space within the District, which means that there are 5,237 persons per acre of open space, the highest density in Manhattan. These numbers do not take into account the thousands of people who commute into Midtown businesses, people shopping in our many retail establishments, or tourists coming to enjoy our attractions and institutions such as the United Nations. We are encouraged by the efforts to add parkland and publicly accessible areas for recreation citywide through the plaNYC initiative, but we have not seen much attention yet to Community District 6. One of the stated goals of plaNYC is to create or enhance a public plaza in every community. The Board is presently exploring implementing a public plaza on the east side of 2nd Avenue between E. 30th and E. 33rd Streets; we look forward to working with the City to establish this and hopefully other public plazas in Community District 6. We also have focused our attention on another type of open space: privately owned public space. We are particularly concerned about developed properties that were granted zoning “bonuses” in exchange for creating and maintaining such public space. A report prepared in 2008 by the Board’s Community Planning Fellow examined the 77 privately owned public spaces in the District and found 30 of those spaces to be out of compliance with applicable zoning requirements. Based upon this survey, DOB has issued 13 violations, DCP has issued 9, and they have written letters to the property owners. The Board is working with DCP to determine what the next steps will be.

Waterfront Development

The entire eastern boundary of Community Board 6, stretching from 14th Street to 59th Street, is the East River. Since much of the most valued and well used open space in the District is located along or in close proximity to the river, the improvement of public access has long been an important goal of Community Board 6. The Manhattan Community Board 6 197-a Plan, approved by the City Council in March 2008 provides comprehensive guidance for future development in our waterfront area. That plan specifically identifies the following critical issues, among others, that need to be addressed:

- A continuously growing residential and working population.
- Scarcity of high quality open space.
- The need for a continuous waterfront esplanade, which requires building connections between segments of the existing East River waterfront esplanade and \ improving access to the waterfront by building pedestrian bridges over the FDR Drive.

Existing waterfront parks and esplanade areas provide some open space amenities. Due to the area’s complexity, the presence of the FDR Drive, areas given over to parking, and the other facilities that line the waterfront, many sections of the Greenway are interrupted and public access to the waterfront esplanade is limited. The FDR Drive, with elevated viaduct and at-grade highway segments, makes access to the waterfront esplanade difficult and even hazardous for pedestrians, creating physical and visual barriers in many areas. In light of this, Community Board 6 has identified the following needs:

- Community Board 6 would like the City (specifically DCAS and EDC) to phase out leases allowing parking directly on the waterfront and eventually to prohibit all parking. This is consistent with the 197-a Plan approved by the City Council.

- The lease between DCAS and Con Ed covering the now-abandoned parking lot stretching from 38th Street to 41st Street and the East River expired in June 2010. CB6 strongly recommends that this property be repaired by Con Edison (as is required by their lease with the City) and then turned over to the Parks Department for conversion into a permanent public park.
- Waterside has an existing pedestrian bridge at 25th Street. Gedeon GRC Consulting is presently working on a rehabilitation/ reconstruction design report for DOT that includes handicap accessibility, something the Community Board has repeatedly requested. Once this report is completed, DOT will make the determination if the job (Contract No. HBQ1221/BIN 2-23207) goes forward. The Board believes the reconstruction of this pedestrian bridge is a necessity, and requests that the City move ahead with this project. In addition, Waterside was designed to receive a second pedestrian bridge at 27th Street. We would like to see construction of the 27th Street pedestrian bridge as soon as possible since it would provide a convenient connection between Bellevue Hospital and the elevated public plaza in Waterside. It is our understanding that this project is included in the City's Ten-Year Plan.
- Continued study of alternatives regarding lowering or eliminating the 42nd Street exit ramp on the FDR Drive when it is being rebuilt is necessary so that, when the former Con Ed parking lot site is redeveloped, its northern end can be used for pedestrian bridges or a landscaped deck can be built above the FDR Drive connecting 39th & 40th Streets to the esplanade along the East River. An enhancement which can be more immediately achieved is to put in place a pedestrian and bicycle ramp to connect the 41st Street end of the new pier (the so-called 38th Street pier) to 42nd Street.
- The City, currently in litigation with Skyport Garage, should explore a regular schedule of care and maintenance of the Skyport Garage at 23rd Street and the East River since its removal does not appear likely in the near future. Public access to this pier should be strongly considered as well.
- Community Board 6 is concerned about the safety of pedestrian crossings to the waterfront at 18th, 20th, 23rd, 34th and 35th Streets and asks that they be reviewed to determine how improvements can be made for pedestrian safety.
- The East River Science Park is being built with its ground level elevated on a deck at approximately the level of First Avenue and is one story above the FDR Drive and its service roads. In the future, when the FDR Drive is rebuilt and the southbound lanes are brought to grade at about 31st Street, CB6 recommends a pedestrian bridge or landscaped deck be built above the FDR Drive connecting 29th Street and the Bellevue Science Park to the esplanade along the East River.
- Installation of an Irrigation System in Stuyvesant Cove Park is essential for the creation of a "green space" and for the survival of the vegetation used in conjunction with the environmental programs conducted by Solar One.
- Restore fountains in East River Esplanade Park (Glick Park) – The water recirculating and electrical systems need to be replaced. Glick Park is underutilized, and the lack of working fountains contributes to the air of neglect in this Park.
- Community Board 6 and the elected officials representing the District are actively advocating for making the "temporary" caissons used to construct the Outer Drive Roadway permanent. The Board is also working to create an esplanade along the river, which would be supported by the caissons running from E. 60th Street to E. 52nd Street.

Library Services

The Community Board welcomes the arrival of the Grand Central Branch of the New York Public

Library. This new outlet is available to the previously underserved northern end of our District. We encourage the NYPL to consider making this a permanent facility, especially in light of the continued closure of the Donnell Library Center at 20 W. 53rd Street.

The Community Board is disappointed by the drastic budget cuts that will affect days and hours of operation as well as services at public libraries in our District and across the City. A recent survey of the Gates Foundation found that one-third of Americans now relies on libraries for computers and Internet access. New York Public Library Director Paul Le Clerc testified on June 4, 2010, that one in four people say they have no alternatives to services like those they receive at NYPL. The City must restore the number of days the libraries are open and the number of hours they are open each day. We ask that funding for library services be expanded to keep up with the ever changing demands and opportunities provided in our electronic information society and so that resources are available to all members of our community whether rich or poor. We also urge that the library branches are fully staffed with qualified professional Librarians. Community Board 6 strongly supports full service libraries at the Kips Bay, Epiphany, and Grand Central Branches.

Transportation and Community Mobility

Second Avenue Subway: Community Board 6 has established the full-build Second Avenue Subway as a most urgent need. This District has only limited access to existing subway service and what is available suffers from extreme overcrowding. Our local streets are at or beyond traffic saturation. The Second Avenue subway is essential to alleviate the existing overcrowding on the subways and congestion on the streets. One of the most important ways to make access to jobs, shopping and housing in a rebounding economy is the prompt construction of the full-build Second Avenue subway. The announcement in July 2009 of additional delays in construction is unacceptable. While we recognize that the primary authority for the construction is the MTA, we urge elected officials and City Agencies to do all in their power to see that construction is accelerated.

East River Pedestrian Bikeway (ERPBW): The development of an eastside bikeway and esplanade is also of urgent need. The promised ERPBW would provide a safe transit way for bicycle commuters and recreational riders. The bikeway and walkway at Stuyvesant Cove is excellent and represents the best along the East River. However, north of that from 23rd Street to 59th Street in District 6 there is often no bikeway and generally poor walkways. Bikers following Greenway signs are often directed into dangerous traffic situations and have to share bus and delivery lanes. We urge the City to close this gap in the promised Manhattan Greenway and to review the placement of existing Greenway signs so that bicycle riders are not directed into some of the worst traffic conditions on the east side. Additional considerations and specific recommendations are detailed above in the discussion of Waterfront Development.

Bus Services and Traffic Issues

The Board welcomes the Select Bus Service as an attempt to speed up north/south public transportation in the eastern section of the District. However, the effects of recent cutbacks in cross-town bus routes must be reviewed and monitored to ensure that our residents continue to have convenient cross-town access. This is particularly critical for seniors, the disabled, and the less affluent for which options are limited. We are interested in the development of proposals for the 34th Street Transitway as an attempt to improve east/west travel times on this important cross-town corridor. We look forward to significant community involvement to ensure that the project does not result in negative impacts on the surrounding neighborhood. Similarly, we note that the Department of Environmental Protection is studying alternative routes for the placement of a distribution water main on the East Side of Manhattan and will include projected traffic impacts,

time and cost of the available alternatives in the analysis. We will continue to be involved with reviewing the findings and helping to find the best alternative. All these projects and other city initiatives have the potential for serious disruptions in neighborhood traffic patterns and pedestrian safety; most of our cross-town corridors have been or will be affected by these projects. We therefore favor a District-wide traffic study to assess the overall impact.

East River Ferry Service: The entire eastern boundary of Community District 6 is the East River. We have pressed for the aggressive development of expanded ferry service along the East River, including expansion and improvement of the unsatisfactory 34th Street ferry terminal. As of August 1, 2010, the City approved funds for upgrading the 34th Street Ferry Terminal. Community Board 6 has seen the design of the new terminal, but is awaiting additional information from EDC as to whether the upgrade will include a comfort station. Suitable, comfortable and attractive ferry terminals should be considered in the very near term for 23rd and 42nd Streets, with an emphasis on full mass transit intermodality, passenger convenience, and comfort.

Street and Highway Surfaces: The physical condition of our community's streets, including local tunnels and bridges as well as the Franklin D. Roosevelt Drive from 14th to 59th Streets has declined. Driving and merely trying to walk across the street can be difficult or even dangerous. The corrugated surface of many streets is a menace to pedestrians and a threat to drivers. It is also destructive to vehicles using those streets. It is estimated that the unsatisfactory surface of city streets shortens the useful life of city owned vehicles by about ten percent. The financial impact to the City just considering police cars, fire trucks, ambulances, sanitation vehicles, and MTA buses must be significant. More frequent re-surfacing is necessary to keep the streets, highways, bridges, and tunnels in Community District 6 in minimum serviceable condition.

Parking and Traffic Enforcement: Much of Community District 6 suffers from severe traffic congestion aggravated by double parking, impermissible use of bus stops and bus lanes, obstruction of pedestrian crosswalks, and other similar violations. We believe that, to relieve the congestion and to protect pedestrian safety, a very much greater and sustained effort at parking and traffic enforcement in this District is necessary. In addition, portions of our District become a veritable parking lot for "Black Cars" and other livery vehicles in both prohibited and metered parking spaces.

According to complaints from neighborhood residents, the drivers of these cars do not seem to pay meter fees; they create noise, leave garbage on our streets and sidewalks, and use public spaces to urinate. Thus far there has been no systematic effort to address these problems or to improve the TLC's enforcement capability and standards.

Pedestrian Traffic Flow: Members of the Community Board spend a great deal of time carefully reviewing all sidewalk café applications and continue to work with DCA in making the review process more meaningful. Unfortunately, in several portions of our District, there is an increasing encroachment on sidewalk space meant for the use of pedestrians. Too often sidewalks have become extensions of cafés, bars, and restaurants forcing pedestrians into the street. Sidewalk cafes should be permitted only when the remaining sidewalk space is sufficient for pedestrian traffic and is free of publicly or privately placed obstructions. The rules determining useable space should be reconsidered including expanding the definition of "obstruction" to include anything that blocks pedestrian passage whether privately or publicly placed. Community Board 6 has long advocated that, if at all possible, there be ten feet of sidewalk clearance where there is a café.

34th Street Heliport: There is no joint Federal-New York City effort to govern the use of the 34th Street Heliport. Its operation is the source of dislocation in the Community. We are told that the

by-products of its operation have caused damage to a local business and the expensive replacement of air filtration equipment at the New York University Langone Medical Center. The noise, odors, and air blast impacts have also drawn justified criticism from local residents. Agreed operating regulations and methods of their enforcement must be put in place as part of the lease renewal of the heliport in 2011, or the facility should be closed, a position the Board has taken and favors.

Development for the Future

There are five major development sites pending in Community Board 6 that will have a major impact on community resources:

- Con Edison/Solow Development site along First Avenue between 35th and 41st
- East River Science Park on the Bellevue Campus.
- Disposition of the former Bellevue Hospital Psychiatric Building by EDC.
- 950,000 square foot building being proposed by the United Nations for development on the Robert Moses Playground site (42nd Street and 1st Avenue)
- Proposed closing of the Police Academy on 20th Street

Since the 2000 U.S. Census, Community Board 6 has seen rapid building growth; 2,100 residential units totaling almost 2.5 million square feet have been built in that span. Our community has also seen expansive growth in commercial construction, with nearly 2 million square feet of new office space and over 100,000 square feet of new retail space.

Such rapid growth has its consequences on our existing infrastructure. A growing population requires additional open space for our residents, new schools for our children, rehabilitation of our existing roads and mass transit services, and more police officers and firefighters to serve and protect the community.

Con Edison/ Solow Development Site: The New York State Public Service Commission mandated the divestment of many of Con Edison's assets. These included four sites along First Avenue between 35th and 41st Streets that collectively amount to 8.9 acres. These properties have been demolished and the developer has begun excavating for an anticipated commercial and residential complex. Development along this corridor continues to have a major impact on the community.

During the 2008 fiscal year, the development plans for the Con Edison Waterside properties were approved by the City Council. Community Board 6 is prepared to vigilantly monitor the development to assure that it conforms to all agreements. While the plan provides modest public space within the site, it does not provide substantial relief to the need for public space or services that exist within the broader community. Currently, the project is not under construction.

Community Board 6 is requesting that the City obtain a fully developed site plan of the 616 First Avenue site. No detailed site and landscape plans currently exist. This must be completed prior to construction of the proposed new school located at the southwest corner of the site at East 35th Street and First Avenue.

The Bellevue Campus: Bellevue is in the midst of a major modernization of some of its existing facilities. For decades, Community Board 6 has been advocating for a strategic plan to determine Bellevue's immediate and future health care and land use needs prior to any disposition of property; no study has ever been conveyed to the Board.

Phase I of the East River Science Park on the northern part of the Bellevue Hospital campus is now under construction. Phase II is on hold. The Science Park will include the development of three new buildings devoted primarily to biotechnology facilities and also containing core research facilities, a library, local retail, parking and other uses. Phase I will produce a total of 300,000 square feet of biotech laboratory space.

Most scenarios for developing the biotechnology industry in New York City focus on capitalizing on the City's existing assets to jump-start biomedical companies. While the biotech industry is assumed to be a potential source of high-wage jobs, the pay-off may come slowly and at the cost of significant investment of much needed public resources.

The February 2001 report of the New York City Investment Fund ("Market Demand Study for Commercial Biotechnology, Biomedical and Bioinformatics Facilities in New York City") estimated that the companies emerging from the City's academic research centers would generate a demand for approximately 1,000,000 square feet of space designed for bio-tech firms over the next few years, of which about 40,000 square feet is needed as incubator space for start-up firms.

The NYC Economic Development Corporation issued an RFP to solicit proposals for the redevelopment of the former Bellevue Psychiatric Building. Proposals were for a principal use of hotels. This use is not in conformance with the 2001 rezoning of the northern two blocks of the Bellevue Hospital campus (E. 28th Street to E. 30th Street) nor with the 2008 Community Board 6 197-a plan. The 197-a Plan explicitly calls for scientific, medical, and institutional uses. Community Board 6 requested the inclusion of medical uses including a sub-acute facility and a continuum of care center for senior citizens. Now that EDC has shelved its plans, the Board itself is actively pursuing additional development proposals for the former Psychiatric Building, which will preserve the historically significant building and will conform to the 197-a requirement for medical, scientific or institutional uses.

Robert Moses Playground: If Robert Moses Playground is made available to the United Nations, as has been suggested in the past, there is a requirement to find open space to relocate the playground's active space area. The United Nations had proposed an extension of the esplanade between E. 42nd and E 48th Streets as mitigation for the proposed interim U.N. Building at Robert Moses Playground. In addition, a replacement site for the use of Robert Moses Playground must be found.

Brookdale/Julia Richman Exchange: Although the Brookdale campus exchange for Julia Richman is controversial, the process for exchange continues. An RFP for development was issued for the Hunter/Brookdale site at First Avenue and E. 25th Street, but respondents have not been made public. It appears at this time that the project is on hold. The Board will remain active in the process and expects to be kept informed of any activity.

Police Academy: The City has announced the intention to relocate the Police Academy. Disposition of the existing property has not been discussed publicly. The Community Board reminds the City that they are Charter mandated to consult with the Board on the disposition of this property. Specifically, the Board has called for consideration of using this space to relieve the pressing need for an additional school space.

CONTINUING THE COMMITMENT TO DISTRICT NEEDS

The Need for Better Statistical Data

Although demographic data on our residential population is fairly comprehensive, we have no statistics on the number of people who enter this District on a daily basis to work, to shop, and to visit our institutions. The relationship of the quantity of such populations to the number of service

delivery personnel allocated to Community District 6 is crucial to its quality of life and should therefore be carefully analyzed by the City Administration.

The City's Community District level budget data are spotty at best. Police precincts only partly coincide with Community Districts, but at least precinct level data are available. Most other departments do not provide the sort of data that inform the Community Board of the level of effort the City performs within the Community District. This problem should be corrected.

The Community Board has been unable to obtain adequate information on complaints made to the 3-1-1 complaint system. Consequently the Board is unable to follow up for correction nor able to examine complaints for patterns that may reflect larger needs.

The Community Board would like to request support for enhanced development of GIS based information concerning the District. While we are interested in city services that are currently supported by the Department of City Planning, we would also like to see other maps that focus on local concerns such as dilapidated buildings, construction sites, and police incidents. Map resources are becoming easier to obtain. The Board would like to put them to constructive use.

Funding for the Community Board Office

We were pleased that proposed cuts to the budgets of Community Boards were not implemented in the final Executive Budget and we are guardedly optimistic in the assurance that cuts will not occur in the subsequent two years. In these difficult financial times, we acknowledge the need to do more with less. However, we still must point out that Community Boards are operating on budgets that have not had a noticeable increase in 20 years. We have been forced to reduce administrative costs to a bare minimum and may have difficulty retaining professional staff.

At a time of rising unemployment, challenging financial markets, and City budget cuts, we can reasonably predict that city services will be tested to their limits. Oversight and redress of service shortfalls, as well as praise for valuable and efficient initiatives, becomes critical – and these functions are essential elements of the Community Board mission. In effect, the Community Boards are the eyes and ears of the city government and can help ensure that resources are deployed efficiently to meet the needs of the community.

Each year that the budget is not increased, it is in effect reduced by the loss of purchasing power and an increased demand for services. We will continue to advocate for appropriate funding of the City's 59 Community Boards.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Thompson
Mark Thompson
Chair

Richard Eggers
Richard Eggers, Chair, Budget &
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