



The City of New York Brooklyn Community Board 15



MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG
MAYOR

PEARL BURG
DISTRICT MANAGER

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BOROUGH PRESIDENT

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CHAIRPERSON

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS FISCAL YEAR 2010

District Overview

Community Board 15 is a mixed-use community of 4.7 square miles. The District is bordered to the north by the large commercial strip of Kings Highway, to the west by the industrial area of McDonald Avenue, to the south by the beachfront community of Manhattan Beach and to the east by the year round recreational community of Gerritsen Beach. Other residential areas include Gravesend, Homecrest, Madison, Midwood and Plumb Beach. This District has seen a continuous increase in population density, economic resurgence and ever-changing demographics.

It is the policy of Community Board 15 to see to the needs of the local residents it serves and ensure the delivery of services to the District. Open communication between residents and the Community Board is an essential part of maintaining public safety, development and prosperity for all.

LAND USE

According to the Department of City Planning (2006), the District includes: one and two-family residential units (51.1%), multi-family residential units (18%) and mixed residential-commercial units (3%). Non-residential land use in the District includes: commercial-and-office units (6.1%), industrial regions (0.5%), transportation/facility (2.7%), institutions (8.0%), open-space recreation (2.8%), parking facilities (1%) and vacant land (6.5%).

POPULATION

According to the statistics supplied by the most recent United States Census conducted in 2000, the overall population of Community Board 15 (Brooklyn) increased by 11.7%. In the decade, birth-rate remained almost constant, death-rate dropped slightly and infant mortality dropped drastically. The largest percentage change occurred in the District population receiving income support either by Social Security or Medicaid.

The District is ethnically diverse including but not limited to: African, Chinese, Hispanic, Irish, Italian, Israeli, Japanese, Korean, Pakistani, Russian and Turkish.

OFFICERS

DR. ALAN DITCHEK
FIRST VICE –CHAIRPERSON

RITA NAPOLITANO
SECOND VICE-CHAIRPERSON

JACK ERDOS, ESQ
TREASURER

HON. ANNE M. DIETRICH
SECRETARY

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

ROBERT GEVERTZMAN
MORRIS HARARY, ESQ
SUSAN JACOBS
DR. OLIVER KLAPPER
SHEILA NELSON
HON. EILEEN M. O'BRIEN
ALLEN POPPER, ESQ
HELEN SARUBBI
RONALD TAWIL
IRA TEPER

HON. JEREMIAH P. O'SHEA
PAST CHAIRPERSON

Economic Development and Business Services

COMMERCIAL STRIPS

Community Board No.15 (Brooklyn) is home to many commercial areas (Kings Highway, Avenue U, Sheepshead Bay Road, Nostrand Avenue, Coney Island Avenue, McDonald Avenue, Avenue X, Emmons Ave and Gerritsen Avenue.) These commercial areas are crucial to the economic vitality of Community Board 15, yet each shares similar problems (parking, sanitation issues and interference with quality of life.)

PARKING

Many of our main commercial strips are serviced by major train lines and bus lines compounding the already traffic congested areas of Community Board 15. Blocked bus-stops and blocked fire hydrants are chronic problems in this District. Double parking is an additional annoyance that greatly interferes with the constant flow of heavy traffic. Many two-lane Avenues are reduced to one lane by the proliferation of illegal parking. The 61st Precinct has been attentive but does not have the man-power to police all of these areas. It is the feeling of Community Board No.15 that, Traffic Enforcement Agents should be given the authority to issue summonses for any of the illegal parking infractions.

SANITATION ISSUES

A well-manicured shopping area is both an excellent advertisement for both buyers and sellers alike. Department of Sanitation through enforcement must insist on storefront cleaning by merchants and should also implement crews of street-sweepers to further enhance the cleaning of our City streets. Trash receptacles must be strategically placed and regularly emptied along these commercial avenues.

INTERFERENCE WITH QUALITY OF LIFE

Along Coney Island Avenue many establishments have opened in recent years. The overwhelming majority of these establishments serve alcoholic beverages, offer music and must not be allowed to disturb the Quality of Life of the area residents. A similar situation exists on Emmons Avenue. Sidewalks are blocked by unlicensed cafes, loud disturbing noise from both within the establishment and outside on the sidewalks by the hordes of people congregating on the sidewalk smoking. Community Board 15 believes a compromise can be achieved by designating well ventilated smoking areas in these establishments. It is also the feeling of this Board that Consumer Affairs conduct periodical, evening patrols of these known problematic areas to enforce regulations.

NON-COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

A problem beginning to evolve, along many of the commercial strips throughout Community Board No.15, is the development of residential units along many of the commercial strips. On Avenue U, what once was a supermarket today stands as a 6-story condo development. The community's future economic development is dependent on new businesses coming to the area as opposed to more residential units being erected, killing our economy.

SIDEWALK CAFES

The Community Board should have a greater voice in the approval process of Sidewalk Café Licenses. Who better than the area residents to know the harmful effects of blocked sidewalks in ones own community? The Department of Consumer Affairs

seems to unilaterally approve Sidewalk Café Licenses (enclosed/ unenclosed) even with the objection of the Community Board.

LIQUOR LICENSES

Community Boards must have more than an advisory role in the granting and renewal of Liquor Licenses within the District. For the Community Board to receive notification of a renewal of a license or a first application is not sufficient enough information to make an informed decision. The Community Board should be given the authority to delay, deny or question any application before the Liquor Authority. Community Boards work closely with NYPD and if an establishment is known for unlawful activities the Community Board, in conjunction with the NYPD should have the right to deny any application.

Environmental Issues

DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION

Community Board No. 15 appreciates the consistent service received throughout the District by the Department of Sanitation. With the increase in the number of homes and businesses in the District, we expect sufficient funding to be made available to maintain the personnel and equipment needed to service our area. We believe enforcement along commercial strips should be maintained and additional enforcement should be placed in known illegal dumping areas. Several locations in this District have seen high incidents of illegal dumping. These locations should be red-flagged and patrolled to violate these illegal dumpers. Community Board 15 supports legislation that would fine, deter or prohibit the distribution of flyers placed on all motor vehicles, residential gates, thrown into yards or placed on steps, etc. The neighborhood is inundated with unsolicited flyers which end up on our sidewalks and streets. The long awaited Sanitation garage at the old Keyspan location is still a top priority on our list and completion should be a priority of the city.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Community Board 15 has one of the highest numbers of 311 sewer backup complaints in the city. The response time to these complaints is not acceptable. Within the District, severe sink holes are reported constantly. The Department of Environmental Protection needs the manpower to clean these sewer lines periodically and repair, in a timely fashion, the many sinkholes in the District.

CONEY ISLAND WATER TREATMENT PLANT

Despite many complaints about the odor from the Treatment Plant in the past, we haven't received any complaints recently and applaud the staff at the Plant for their diligent work in keeping the plant safe and clean. Gratitude goes out to the many Elected Officials of the District, who were instrumental in helping get DOT to place "No Standing Anytime" signs around the perimeter of the Water Treatment Plant, to ensure the safety of the Plant and area residents.

Health and Human Services

DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING

In recent years, Medicaid subscribers in this District tripled. This is indicative of

the increase of our aging population. This district is in need of Affordable Assisted Living Residences. Programs must be implemented to educate our seniors as to what services are available for them. With a large immigrant population, translators should be available at all Senior Centers to help them maneuver the bureaucratic system of New York. To ensure the Mental Health of our seniors we must foster both, educational and social skills. Volunteer Mentor Programs can be formed between local senior centers and local schools. This will allow our seniors the opportunity to give back to their Community with their vast wisdom.

CONEY ISLAND HOSPITAL

On the border of our District lies Coney Island Hospital located on Ocean Parkway. It sits adjacent to the Belt Parkway on the westbound side. Due to its physical location it would be the Hospital of choice for accident victims. But with the lack of a trauma center, severe medical emergencies are forced to be transported to Hospitals many miles away. The residents of our District utilize this facility and adequate funding must be allocated to ensure Coney Island Hospital remains a valuable Health Care Provider and becomes a complete care facility.

Housing and Land Use

DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS

Our District has been over run with construction. Many locations where a single family home once stood are now occupied by multi-family dwellings. A severe strain has been put on an already burdened infrastructure and because of the lack of parking spaces many homeowners have resorted to illegal parking pads in front of their homes. These illegal parking pads have created less green space in our Community and violations should be strictly enforced. Due to the desirability of this neighborhood, developers have used every open lot and spot of green space for more and more construction.

With the inordinate amount of construction in our district the Department of Buildings must be supplied with an adequate amount of field inspectors. These inspectors must have the equipment and the clerical support needed to carry out their duties. Funding must be made available for evening and weekend inspectors. Community Board 15 has seen a surge in issued permits, complaints, violations and stop work orders. With added personnel each issue could be handled more expediently. The Department of Buildings must be given the ability to criminally charge these violators who chronically ignore Zoning ordinances.

Community Board 15 is urging a change in the uses allowed in R Districts. We are trying to prevent medical facilities from being “as of right” in these areas. Our residential communities are inundated with medical facilities opening adjacent to private homes. These facilities are destroying the character of our Community. Narrow one way streets are congested with ambulettes creating obstacles beyond tolerance.

HOUSING COMPLEXES

Community Board No.15 is home to 2 housing complexes; the Nostrand apartment buildings and the Sheepshead apartment buildings. They are both publicly built and operated housing developments. Adequate funding must be allocated for the maintenance and security of these residential units.

Parks and Recreation

Ranking as third lowest in green space, Community Board 15 needs to develop Brigham Street Park, located at Brigham Street and Emmons Avenue. This barren land could be an oasis for the many seniors who live in the Nursing Homes surrounding the property. The nearest green space is Plumb Beach located off the Belt Parkway and is a far walk and does not offer a park setting.

Department of Parks and Recreation is in need of additional personnel to shorten the tree pruning cycle, to make repairs necessitated by uprooted trees, to adequately handle repairs to benches and other equipment in parks and playgrounds and maintaining the parks across our District on a daily basis.

On several open ball fields in the District, the replacement of existing grass by artificial turf would make it ideal for both baseball and soccer games, alleviating the problem of soccer players uprooting grass on ball fields. Also, the artificial turf would not require expensive maintenance.

The Sheepshead Bay Marina, a popular fishing and boating local, has in recent years experienced a severe change in water depth. This reduction in depth poses many navigational issues. Dredging of this waterway is imperative to maintain this historical, landmarked area and the only way possible to maintain the natural character of the Bay. The dredging would ensure the safety of our boaters.

An integral part of Manhattan Beach is the Art-Deco Manhattan Beach Bathhouse, which is in disrepair and unused. This building is reminiscent of times gone by. The rehabilitation should be a priority of the Parks Department. With the sky-rocketing cost of construction today this building could be renovated at a fraction of the cost of erecting a new building.

Public Safety, NYPD/ FDNY

61st POLICE PRECINCT

With major crime at an all time low, Quality of Life issues have become a priority in this District. Noise complaints, double parking, blocked driveways, loitering and commercial vehicles parking on residential streets have become important issues to the area residents. In order for the 61st Precinct to carry out their responsibilities effectively, our Police Officers need the proper equipment and vehicles. The 61st Precinct must be provided with all terrain vehicles (ATV's) to aid in patrolling our beaches and parks. Due to the large area of the Precinct additional sector cars and unmarked cars should be designated for the Officers.

With the many beaches in the 61st Precinct's District, additional Officers should be assigned to this Precinct, during the summer months, to accommodate the many beach-goers in the District.

The 61st Precinct is home to the largest Auxiliary Force in the City. Funding is needed for the equipment for these brave volunteers.

TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT

In addition to patrols by 61st Precinct Officers, Community Board No.15 should have a detail of Traffic Enforcements Agents assigned to the District to patrol the commercial

strips, the major thoroughway avenues and in the summer months the “No Parking” zone of Manhattan Beach. Strict enforcement would help alleviate traffic back-ups on major cross streets.

FIRE DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK

Fire companies and battalions should not be removed from our neighborhood for training purposes. In doing so, this leaves our community without the best possible fire protection available. It requires personnel and apparatus from outside of our area to respond to a fire or other emergency in an area that they may not be familiar with.

With our large waterfront area under constant redevelopment, it is imperative that we have additional coverage along the shore with another 22 ft. fire boat moored in our bay.

With a large immigrant population, the Fire Department should help ensure their safety with educational information, translators and Fire Marshalls to inspect the many illegal apartments housing this immigrant population.

Transportation

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

With marked growth of population in Community Board No.15 many issues have arisen. The additional traffic moving through our streets has caused traffic back-ups on major Avenues and parking problems all over our District. Several intersections in our community are in need of traffic turning signals. Kings Highway and Coney Island Avenue is in need of a left turn signal. Guider Avenue and Coney Island Avenue is in need of a left turn signal. Additional traffic signals are warranted on East 9th and Avenue U, Gerritsen Avenue and Gotham Avenue and Oriental Boulevard and Irwin Street. The change of the flashing yellow signal on Ocean Avenue and Oriental Boulevard to a traditional signal light. Since the installation of the left turn signals on Ocean Parkway, traffic has flowed more smoothly and less accidents have occurred. Community Board No. 15 believes that with all the additional moving traffic DOT should conduct an overall review of the traffic patterns in the District. Included in this review should be the un-used bicycle lanes along Oriental Boulevard in Manhattan Beach.

Community Board No.15 believes the process of repairing street light outages, missing signs and pothole repairs should be streamlined. The length of time needed for these minor repairs causes frustration to the area residents. Many of the major streets in this community are in dire need of reconstruction due to the many utilities digging up these roadways.

A priority of DOT should also be to find parking solution alternatives to ease the congestion in this District.

During a presentation by the Department of Transportation concerning the reconstruction of 7 Bridges on the Belt Parkway the DOT representatives specified that the Contracting Companies responsible for the reconstruction would be penalized for any delays and added incentives for completing the project sooner than expected. DOT must ensure that residents of the Community have easy access to the Belt Parkway and not face hours of grueling traffic snarls.

MTA

In late 2008, the reconstruction of Avenue U and Gravesend Neck Road on the B and Q Train Lines is expected to begin. It should be a priority of MTA to complete these projects as soon as possible and in the interim help commuters maneuver the system easily.

The antiquated buses being used to service this District must be replaced. Many of the older buses were used for express service. They make it extremely difficult for users to get on and off the bus and they must be replaced with more modern, energy efficient vehicles.

Youth Services and Education

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Within the confines of the District there are 27 Elementary Schools, 4 Junior High Schools, 11 High Schools and 1 College. Improvements to our schools physical conditions and updating technology is vital to our communities future success. Therefore, we request the necessary modernization of all schools within our District.

Kingsborough Community College continues its reputation as a premier institution of higher learning in the District and a leading provider of higher education for all New Yorkers. Over the years, Kingsborough has also served residents by hosting numerous community events. Kingsborough needs support in it's Capital and Expense Budget in order to keep pace with the continuing growth of the community it serves.

DYCD

With the current state of the economy and children coming from homes where both parents work, it is essential for funding to be supplied to maintain after school programs in this area.

Conclusion

Community Board No.15 is a thriving community and with the help of the various agencies the quality of life in this District could be heightened. It is the goal of Community Board No.15 to make our Community a safe haven where life runs smoothly.

Theresa Scavo

Theresa Scavo

Chairperson

Pearl Burg

Pearl Burg

District Manager