



MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD SIX
866 United Nations Plaza—Ste. 308, New York, NY 10017
Phone: (212) 319-3750 - Fax: (212) 319-3772
e-mail mn06@cb.nyc.gov
Website: www.cbsix.org

Lyle Frank
Chair

Toni Carlina
District Manager

DISTRICT NEEDS STATEMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2011

Community District 6 encompasses the East Side of Manhattan from 14th to 59th Streets, from the East River to Lexington Avenue and farther west 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. East Midtown 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 five major hospitals in the district, used by all New Yorkers - Beth Israel, Joint Diseases, Veterans, Bellevue and NYU Medical Center. Numerous substance abuses, mental health, and other ambulatory care clinics are located in the district. The district includes Baruch College, the School of Visual Arts, Brookdale Campus of Hunter College, the NYU School of Medicine, the NYU College of Dentistry and some facilities of Yeshiva University.

The assessed value of commercial and residential properties combined with the daily influx of workers, as well as tourists who shop and visit the district contribute significantly to New York's economic base.

There are five Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) within the district, or on 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 improving, and continuing to improve the quality of life within the district. We encourage the City to continue to endorse new BIDs.

The commercial energy of East Midtown and the sedate apartments on Sutton Place, the brownstones of Murray Hill and the mansions surrounding Gramercy Park may overshadow the needs of this primarily 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 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 and recently have taken up residence at inactive construction sites.

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 VULNERABLE

Services for the Elderly

The Department of 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. 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, find where to get the best values for their dollar and expand their skill set. 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 in the mid portions (E. 30's) of the district so that the entire district may have easy access to such a facility.

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. Because of these factors, many persons with decreased mobility or disabilities travel through the district, at times under perilous, congested mid-town traffic conditions. Improvements must be made on traffic patterns, signage, enforcement, bus loading/unloading areas and pedestrian signaling devices to improve safety.

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 Solow development, on the former Con Edison site, will generate an estimated 800 additional students. Recent approval of the development site appears to include only 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. 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.

Recently, Community Board 6 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 ask that this be given serious consideration.

Homeless Services

For several years, the most serious service delivery issue in Community District 6 has been created

by the large numbers of homeless people on our streets and in our parks. East Midtown is one of the nicest areas in the city with one of the lowest crime rates. Homeless people need not fear that local residents will rob them of their few possessions as they sleep. People engaged in panhandling have an easy commute to the Central Business District. 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. Persistent outreach continues to be necessary to provide service to the existing homeless and to prevent the tragedy of increased homelessness.

We acknowledge how very difficult it is to site any facility serving homeless people. However, creative avoidance of the issue by claiming contract agencies are not subject to ULURP even when the lease or purchase of a building is funded in full by New York City tax dollars is not an appropriate response. As painful as it is, Fair Share must be respected and community review must take place. Community input and involvement in DHS' determination of the location of 9,000 units under the New York/New York III program is essential to the implementation of this objective.

As we prepare this report, the 30th Street Homeless Men's Shelter, which occupies the former Bellevue Psychiatric Building, is under transition. DHS is decentralizing its intake system from one center to three centers. It is DHS' hope to open an intake facility in each of the three boroughs with the highest concentration of street homeless individuals, Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Manhattan. In order to close the 30th Street shelter and proceed with this project, the City must create additional beds at alternate sites. The Doe Fund has developed and opened a 400-bed shelter in East Williamsburg, Brooklyn. A second proposal for a shelter in the Bronx was rejected by the local community.

DHS continues to cite a goal of decentralization of the adult intake system. However, there is little evidence of community review and consultation in this process.

A HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITY

Health Facilities

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 study has ever been conveyed to the Board.

The use of the former Bellevue Psychiatric Building once DHS ceases operation of the Homeless Men's Shelter currently on the site should be in line with the approved 197-a Plan and provide for continued use as a facility that supports the important healthcare mission of Bellevue Hospital.

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. 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. Recent 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. In the past year, 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. We believe that this intersection requires engineering attention and a mechanism may be appropriate to make residential concerns about intersections easier to communicate to 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. A separate division within a city agency, such as DEP, should 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.

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 for legislation that would require a developer to inform DOB when work on a site is suspended. This legislation would then require 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 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 lowest penetration 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 existing parkland, in particular the threat to close Robert Moses Playground. While the United Nations had proposed to extend the esplanade between E. 42nd and E. 48th Streets, in part as mitigation for the proposed interim U.N. Building at Robert Moses Park, a replacement for this active park space must be found if the current park will no longer be available. Happily, through the efforts of our elected officials, many 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.

Despite the improvements we have seen, some long-standing capital priorities, such as the repair of the Stuyvesant Square historic fence and restoration of the Stuyvesant Square Park's comfort stations have yet to be funded. The restoration of the fountain at Glick Park remains to be addressed. Furthermore, Robert Moses Playground is in immediate need for a complete resurfacing in order to have safe enjoyment of this active use area.

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 city-wide 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. We look forward to working with the City to establish a public plaza 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. The Board has established a task force to address this issue and will continue to work with the City to address violations.

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 connections between segments of the East River waterfront esplanade and improved access to the waterfront.

Existing waterfront parks and esplanade areas provide some open space amenities. Due to the

area's complexity, the presence of the FDR Drive, parking areas, 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 on 38th Street and the East River will expire in June 2010. CB6 strongly recommends that this property be turned over to the Parks Department for conversion into a permanent public park.
- Waterside has an existing pedestrian bridge at 25th Street which should be modified to allow handicap access at its western end. In addition, this bridge 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.
- 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 site is redeveloped, 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 esplanade (the so-called 38th Street pier) to 42nd Street.
- The City should explore a regular schedule of care and maintenance of the Skyport Garage at 23rd Street and the East River since its removal is unlikely. 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
- The Bellevue 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
- 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.

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. We also acknowledge that the recent budget action has assured six day service at the library branches, despite initial threats of cutbacks. At the same time, the Board is concerned about budget actions which in previous years reduced the library services budget. The Community Board looks for restoration and expansion of funding for library services and for increased capacity to provide for our electronic information society. We also urge that the library branches are fully staffed with qualified professional Librarians. Community Board 6 fully 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.

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. 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 of 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. City agencies should be active in issuing citations. Frequently businesses treat the fines as a cost of doing business. Fines should be increased for repeat violators and, where obstructions remain, seizure procedures should be prompt and effective.

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 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 six 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 Psychiatry Building by EDC.
- 950,000 square foot building being proposed by the United Nations for development on the Robert Moses Park site (42nd Street and 1st Avenue)
- Hunter College Brookdale Campus exchange for the Julia Richman Education Complex and anticipated development.
- Recently 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, 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.

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. It will also include the renovation of the former Psychiatric Building. 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 has issued an RFP to solicit proposals for the redevelopment of the former Bellevue Psychiatry 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 the 2008 Community Board 6 197-a plan. The 197-a Plan explicitly calls for scientific, medical, and institutional uses. Community Board 6 is requesting the inclusion of medical uses including a sub-acute facility and a continuum of care center for senior citizens.

Robert Moses Park: If Robert Moses Park 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 park's active space area.

The United Nations had proposed to extend the esplanade between E. 42nd and E. 48th Streets, as mitigation for the proposed interim U.N. Building at Robert Moses Park. In addition, a replacement park for the use of Robert Moses Park 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.

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 at all. 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 which 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 are grateful for the City Council's recognition of the important role the Community Boards play in serving the needs of New York City neighborhoods. By restoring the proposed cuts in the

2010 budget, the City Council has ensured that we will be able to meet our responsibilities under the City Charter. However, even with this timely assistance from the City Council, Community Boards are operating on budgets that have not had a noticeable increase in 20 years and in fact are operating with \$11,000 less than what was available in 2008. As a result, we already 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.

Community Boards should not be forced to face these budgetary assaults every year. In fact, we continue to ask that the budgets of the City's 59 Community Boards be increased to the reasonable level of \$250,000.

Respectfully submitted,

Lyle Frank

Lyle Frank,
Chair

Dan Williams

Dan Williams,
Chair, Budget & Governmental Affairs

Toni Carlina

Toni Carlina,
District Manager

Richard Eggers

Richard Eggers,
Vice Chair
Budget & Governmental Affairs