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Greenwich Village • Little Italy • NoHo • Hudson Square • Chinatown • Gansevoort Market

STATEMENT OF NEEDS Fiscal Year 2010

PREFACE

Each year Community Board 2, Manhattan updates its original Statement of Needs (hereinafter referred to as the “Statement”), which is submitted pursuant to the implementation of and in accordance with the City Charter changes of 1977. Each year the Statement represents the needs of all of our residents.

In FY 2010, the City has proposed a daunting ten percent (10%) cut to our community board budget. This amount, equal to almost \$20,000 would essentially eliminate the money expended on basic operating expenses. To compensate, our only alternative would be to lay off staff, thereby making it impossible to perform some of our City Charter-mandated responsibilities. Community boards have not received increases to their operating budgets in eighteen years, so we view this proposed cut as both draconian and grossly unfair.

HISTORY and EVOLUTION

Community Board 2 is a diverse district, bounded on the north by 14th Street, the south by Canal Street, the east by the Bowery/Fourth Avenue, and the west by the Hudson River. It is a unique and rapidly expanding community that includes the neighborhoods of Little Italy, Chinatown, SoHo, NoHo, Greenwich Village, the West Village, the South Village and Hudson Square. Within Community Board #2 are nine designated historic districts: Charlton-King-Vandam; Gansevoort Market; Greenwich Village; Greenwich Village Extension; SoHo Cast Iron Historic District, MacDougal-Sullivan Gardens; NoHo; NoHo Extension; NoHo East; and SoHo-Cast Iron.

This historically rich community is graced by well over two thousand century old dwellings. Indeed, District 2 Manhattan has the oldest housing stock in the entire City with the median age of residential buildings at 94 years. Rowhouses constructed in the early 1800's, on what was then farmland, still stand in Greenwich Village and the Charlton/King/VanDam Historic District. Cast iron buildings that were bolted together in SoHo during the last half of the nineteenth century still line the streets today.

Much of this architecture and history has been maintained by residents who are determined to preserve the middle class, live-work, merchant and artisan atmosphere of our neighborhoods,

past and future, but socio-economic patterns are changing drastically. Median income in 2004 was \$75,000; in 2006 it increased to \$94,871. At the same time, CB 2's income diversity ratio went from 4.8 to 6.7: Incomes in the bottom two quintiles accounted for 19% of the population in 2004; by 2006 those quintiles represented 23%. The third quintile (\$35,752 to \$60,839) dropped from 18% to 12%. The fifth quintile, \$100,000+ increased 3%.

During this same period, serious housing code violations per 1,000 rental units went from 11.3 to 22.6, while in median monthly rent Community Board 2 ascended to the highest in the City to \$1,691. Rental units that are rent-regulated are 54.6% More than 1,300 buildings are registered with rent-stabilized units; Community Board 2's rank in severe overcrowding rate in rental unit conditions has been elevated from 28 in the City to 19. The poverty rate is 11.9%.

Manufacturing and commercial areas, once used almost exclusively during the working day, have turned into twenty four-hour commercial, entertainment, and residential areas. Community Board 2 reviewed and passed resolutions regarding 137 applications for liquor licensed establishments in 2007, compared to 115 resolutions that were passed in 2006. Thus far (through October), Community Board 2 has reviewed and passed resolutions concerning 105 new on-premise liquor license applications in 2008. Most of these establishments are in manufacturing/artist live-work areas, driving up the cost of small manufacturing/repair spaces, increasing Board of Standard and Appeals variances for other uses, and effectively driving out small businesses that have been the mainstay of CB 2 economics. On the institutional front, the necessary expansions of hospital and health service facilities to accommodate increased population and overall City needs and the growth of education and research facilities as core business categories for New York City growth as the Finance and Insurance industries contract, is rapidly stretching our District's historical references – economic and socially. Adding to this evolution is the continued growth of tourism in CB 2 and the allied increase in street-renting activities: in 2007 we hosted 125 street fairs and other City approved public events. All of these factors have created an extremely heavy burden on district services, an antiquated city infrastructure, and City services.

COMMUNITY USE

A. Population

In assessing local needs it is necessary to recognize the development boom that District 2 has experienced over the last 10 years. Change of use applications are among the highest in the city, the rapid influx of new development along the eastern, western and southern borders of the district have added to density of both people and built environment disrupting both neighborhood character and density.

The population in Community Board 2 has increased by seven percent (7.0%) between 1980 and 2000. However, between 2000 and 2006, CB 2's population has increased another 15.4%. Since January 2006, the concentration of new development and change of use permits in Greenwich Village, the West Village and SoHo is the highest in the City. The Department of City Planning lists CB 2 among the eleven highest areas of growth in the entire City through 2010.

New York University sites have also added thousands more non-resident traffic to the Community Board 2 area. Both the New School and Cooper Union are in the midst of large-scale expansion programs.

In NoHo and SoHo, a continuing growing population is evident as existing residents living in converted buildings see new neighbors moving into newly constructed buildings that were built on former parking lots. In NoHo and SoHo, since 2005, seventeen previously vacant lots now

house residential buildings, adding hundreds of new residents. Community Board 2 will continue to work with the Department of City Planning to insure that these buildings fit into the character of the neighborhood. Hundreds of loft dwellers residing in NoHo and SoHo continue to bring their loft space into compliance with legal residential requirements and their numbers are also inflating the population figures. Major new apartment projects along the south side of East Houston Street, in the northern portion of SoHo have added hundreds of new residents there, as well, transforming what was once a commercial traffic corridor to the Holland Tunnel into a highly dense pedestrian traffic area simultaneously. The Community Board is working with our elected officials to examine what zoning changes are necessary in the adjacent M1-6 District that will help preserve the neighborhood's unique character and address increased pressure on local infrastructure and the need for affordable housing.

According to a City Planning Commission report on the percentage change in 0-17 year old population, between 1980 and 2000, this district saw an increase approaching fifteen percent (15%). From 2000 to 2006, number of households with children 0-17 has increased an additional 38%. This trend has already begun to manifest itself in increased numbers of children less than five years of age throughout our district. There has also been a marked increase in demand for day care services and outdoor play space for this age group. While for-profit day care services are expanding to meet this demand, low-cost day care services do not have affordable space in which to expand. Our outdoor play space is extremely limited, and has reached the saturation point. This increase in school age population has not been matched by an increase in elementary and middle school classroom space. Currently, the schools in CB 2 are operating well above one-hundred percent capacity, which puts all of our students at a serious educational disadvantage.

B. Tourism/Visitors

Within the boundaries of Community Board 2 are some of the most popular tourist attractions in New York City, with millions of tourists visiting the restaurants and cafes of Little Italy and Chinatown, the galleries and boutiques of SoHo, the jazz clubs and Off Broadway theaters of Greenwich Village, as well as burgeoning nightlife, night club and cabaret spots of the entire area. A walk through our Landmark Districts is an historic delight with many well-preserved buildings dating back to the early part of the nineteenth century. A weekend evening stroll through the Meatpacking and waterfront districts in the west, along West 4th Street and Bleecker St. toward the east, through SoHo, Chinatown and Cleveland Circle in the south and on the western edge of the Bowery from Houston to 14th St reveals the nightlife that is attracting record numbers of tourists.

Tourists are extremely welcome in our neighborhoods. However, the proliferation of tour buses on our small, historic streets has produced a host of negative impacts, including hazardous conditions for pedestrians, air and noise pollution, traffic congestion, and broken street beds. CB 2 calls for increased regulation, enforcement, and relocation of tour bus routes to larger, more accommodating thoroughfares.

Several areas in our board, in particular the Bowery area and the Meatpacking District, are experiencing a dramatic increase in late night (and early morning) visitors who patronize new bars, clubs and restaurants. This trend has severely strained the quality of life for residents. Community Board 2 has noted that there is quite a difference between retail daytime use and retail nighttime use, and has gone on record to call upon the City to amend Use Group 6 to require special permits for bars, restaurants and clubs.

There are five major higher education institutions located in Community Board 2 New York University, Cooper Union, Benjamin Cardozo Law School, Hebrew Union College, and The

New School (which includes the Parsons branch), and they draw tens of thousands of students, professors and other staff who commute to or live in the Village. New York University's campus expansion in the Village area has added thousands of dorm residents to the Greenwich Village area and SoHo, and The New School and Cooper Union are following suit. Not to be overlooked is St. Vincent's Hospital and Medical Center, with its recent plan to rebuild a new hospital and its students, nurses, doctors, patients and visitors, all of whom add greatly to our transient population. In addition, the Lesbian and Gay Community Service's Center on West 13th Street operates 300 citywide programs that draw thousands of members and participants each year, along with Housing Works on West 12th Street, which provides services for hundreds of people living with HIV/AIDS from around the City.

In addition to the extraordinarily high volume of pedestrian traffic, trucks make many local commercial deliveries, and use our narrow streets to travel from the Hudson River to the F.D.R. Drive, south to the Financial District and to the outer boroughs. Our fragile network of narrow streets is clogged with trucks skirting the one-way toll on the Verrazzano Bridge in order to use the toll-free Manhattan Bridge to access the Holland Tunnel. This congestion has resulted in high levels of toxic particulate matter in the area.

Our parks, from the world famous Washington Square, to our other twenty-six sitting areas and vest pocket parks, are all extremely well-used by local citizens and visitors, however, there is a dearth of open space in the district. In fact, our total provision of open space is only .40 acres per 1,000 people, far below the required minimum of 2.5 acres per 1,000.

We are greatly concerned that city planners have ignored the impact of the district's rapid changes and have neglected to urge the creation of ancillary services, which such changes require. During these years of conspicuous residential growth in NoHo, SoHo, Chinatown and our Hudson River waterfront, planners have not provided for the necessary amenities which make for a healthy and growing residential community, e.g.,: public schools, open space and parks, and consumer product and service retail space. Our budget priorities for the past few years have focused on servicing our new, as well as our old, population. More specific assessments of services will be set forth throughout this Statement.

Additionally, the growth of tourism throughout our district, particularly on weekends, has not been met with an increase in street garbage pick-up or police coverage. Both are sorely needed.

C. Hudson River Park

In general, Community Board 2 is pleased with the development and popularity of Hudson River Park. However, there are still significant issues that must be addressed. Front and center is the development of Pier 40. CB 2 is on record as supporting the continued use of the pier as an open space, including athletic fields, that can be used by the community-at-large. In addition, we feel strongly that a portion of Pier 40 should be allocated as public school space. At the Christopher Street Pier, we recognize the challenge of striking a balance between its use by the large number of LGBTQ youth who flock to it on the weekends and the interests of the surrounding community. Both the 6th Precinct and The Door, with strong support from Speaker Christine Quinn and other elected officials, have made great strides in attaining that balance.

MUNICIPAL SERVICES

A. Public Safety

Public safety has always been high on our list of priorities, and the demand for adequate 24 hour police coverage has never been greater. We receive continuous complaints from both the resi-

dential and business communities, regarding the need for additional police coverage, which has been reduced in recent years. Law enforcement problems reach not only into our homes and busy streets, but also into the many sites where tourists, residents and theater-goers gather for enjoyment. Drug dealing in our parks and streets hurts our residents and seriously damages our neighborhoods.

The issue of public safety in Community Board 2 manifests in other areas, as well. Timely inspections and their resolutions by enforcement agents from various regulatory agencies are essential to the well being of our residents and preservation of our Special Districts [???]. More careful attention must be paid to the zoning regulations regarding building plan examiners and sidewalk cafe application certifiers. Illegal construction continues in Community Board 2, we require additional, properly trained inspectors. Building owners, restaurateurs and cafe entrepreneurs have found it easy to build in complete disregard of local laws. New businesses are opened and profits are reaped while complaints sit on agency desks. Illegal and unlicensed operations continue without inspections and penalties, and residents continue to complain to the Board office. Often, pedestrian safety is not considered the first priority when issuing permits for the disposition of streets and sidewalks at construction sites.

Community Board 2 continues to receive complaints regarding illegal sidewalk café operations throughout the district. Specifically, there are several restaurants, located in residential zones in which sidewalk cafes are banned, that have been operating sidewalk cafés for years. In many cases, inspectors from the Department of Consumer Affairs (“DCA”) have issued violations for the illegal activity. However, DCA’s legal division has inexplicitly and continually adjourned the administrative hearings, thereby allowing the illegal activity to continue unabated. In addition, we think that it is time for the City to review the current sidewalk café rules, which were instituted in March 2003. Currently, the City makes no distinction between a restaurant and a bar when issuing a license for a sidewalk café. Unfortunately, residents living in close proximity to the establishment must have their quality of life suffer when bar customers are allowed to imbibe on the sidewalk until the early morning hours.

In a walking community like Community Board 2, with a populace that spends much of its time out and about on the streets, the city must continue to encourage improvements for pedestrian and alternative transportation modes with emphasis on design and regulation of streets, including traffic calming approaches and more pedestrian-oriented redesign of complex intersections, lighting and directional information for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic, improved safety, enforcement, added bicycle parking both on sidewalks and in selected street spaces, as well as aesthetic improvements. Facilitating pedestrian and bicycle movements and access between the six major subway lines, bus routes, hospitals, commercial districts, open space, schools, universities, historic districts and residential communities, needs implementation. Increased enforcement for pedestrian and bicyclist safety and to keep traffic moving is another must, e.g., at approaches to the Holland Tunnel, as well as to avoid “blocking the box” at intersections, to reduce idling and congestion, and to control truck traffic.

Because Community Board 2’s Greenwich Village, SoHo, NoHo, Little Italy and Chinatown areas are internationally known tourism destinations and encourage heavy nighttime and weekend usage of Community Board 2’s streets, and heavier usage of private automobiles, a major effort must be made to increase the use of mass transit by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, by making transit use more comfortable, convenient, accessible, frequent, and transit access points more user friendly for both visitors and residents. Mass transit makes much more efficient use of space and energy and significantly reduces air and noise pollution and minimizes pedestrian/vehicular conflicts. Therefore, opportunities must be explored and followed through in providing new transit access and routes in areas of need, e.g., by extension of the M8 bus to Pier 40.

B. Landmarks Preservation

The strength of the Landmarks Commission is essential to the unique quality of this district and remains evident in the value of properties here and the vigor of tourism. Landmarks enforcement must be expanded and we will continue to advocate for it, as well as for the creation of a new South Village Historic District.

C. Quality of Life Issues

New residents, replacing the manufacturers who previously hired private carters, must now rely on City sanitation collection. The local sanitation forces must keep pace with the increasing twenty-four-hour population. Sanitation District 2's limited staff is increasingly hard pressed to meet the community's growing needs.

Our parks have not fared well. Limited staffing cannot possibly maintain our sitting areas and popular parks. While many of our parks have been adopted by local volunteer groups, their members cannot be expected to give up their regular jobs to remove the refuse each day.

In addition, opportunities must be sought and identified to reclaim streets for public space that both supports pedestrian activities and builds community life. The DOT is beginning to achieve this through its Plaza program in such areas as Gansevoort Plaza and Astor Place, and other initiatives would be welcome, including a permanent reconstruction of pedestrian friendly improvements on 9th Avenue between Gansevoort Plaza and 14th Streets. An opportunity to add significant open space is being lost at Mulry Square, where the MTA intends to build an above ground subway fan plant, whereas an underground facility, although more costly, would allow for substantial public/green space at the site that would benefit the community in perpetuity.

PUBLIC FACILITIES/THE INFRASTRUCTURE

Community Board 2 takes pride in its historic landmarks, yet fears for the future in light of the current state of our antiquated system of public facilities. A few historical facts can best illustrate our need:

- The first sewers built in New York City were constructed 80 to 100 years ago; Community Board #2's sewers were among those initially constructed.
- Broome Street, which cuts through Little Italy and the South Village, was first paved in 1809;
- Carmine Street was opened in 1816.
- The Seventh Avenue subway was constructed in 1918; the Sixth Avenue line was built barely a decade later.

Individuals using wheelchairs have a basic right, pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, to use our city streets. In May 2007, the Community Planning Fellow assigned to our Board by the Borough President, presented a pedestrian ramp study to our Traffic & Transportation Committee. The study found that twenty-three percent (23%) of all street corners in our district do not have pedestrian ramps. In addition, another fifteen percent (15%) of all corners have pedestrian ramps that are uneven with the adjacent roadbed, or degraded, making them unusable or a safety hazard. It is imperative that the City take the necessary action to remedy this injustice immediately.

The degraded condition of our district's streets, particularly those paved with Belgian blocks, is an ongoing concern and, at times, presents a hazardous condition. Some of our many requests for capital repaving projects, street reconstruction, improved traffic conditions and other needed improvements have been heeded, but there is still much to be done. Maintenance will always be an urgent item on the community's agenda.

A. Public Education and Health Services

The needs of the children in our district are of prime concern to the community. One such area of concern is the overcrowding and deteriorating plants at our local public schools. This has reached a crisis level, as recognized by all community parents and local elected officials.

The level of funding allocated to our excellent programs falls short of what is needed. No new schools have been built for fifty years, while our school population has doubled. Funding for our schools has not kept pace with inflation. One consequence is decaying after-school resources denying many of the children in our community essential recreational, educational and vocational activities. This is particularly true of the southeastern section of the Community Board 2 where a full service youth center is overdue.

Although positive steps have been taken in recent years to address this issue, a source of ongoing concern is the sizable increase in the number of homeless youth congregating in the West Village, on the piers and in the surrounding neighborhood. To help these young people, there is an urgent need for additional outreach services on HIV education and substance abuse (particularly to address the crystal meth epidemic), 24-hour drop-in centers, and short-term emergency housing.

B. Libraries

The local library picture has taken a turn for the better, with the opening of the new SoHo branch on Mulberry Street. In addition, we are gratified that funding has been restored for full six-day service at the Jefferson Market (as well as funding for the renovation of its historic exterior) and Hudson Park branches. However, we have requested that additional funds be provided to increase the activities for toddler-aged children at the Hudson Park branch.

C. Seniors

Community Board 2 has long fought for the rights of our young to safe conditions, and the same has been true of our concern for our elderly residents. Our elderly have not only been neglected, but even pushed out of a community that has been their home for decades. The City must not allow the elderly to be forced to leave the community which they helped build and to which they have given character and stability. Seniors continue to live in rent-regulated walk-up apartments in our area, which do not serve their health and social service needs. More appropriate housing for the elderly is needed. We also urge the City to continue its support of the Title XX, Title V and the Older Americans Act Programs, and to supplement Federal funds, which have been jeopardized. In addition, physical repair and improvements to our senior centers in the district are urgently needed, as are full-funding for meal programs.

ARTS

Our district is one of the City's most popular art centers, with thousands of tourists visiting art galleries, theaters, and other art attractions every day. However, over the last few years, due to the influx of retail, dining, and shopping, more and more art galleries, theaters, performance spaces

and other places of art are disappearing from our district. There is a need for increased support of these organizations by the City in order to preserve our district as an arts center.

CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

Within the next few months, the Office of Management and Budget will receive our specific Capital and Expense Budget requests and priorities. We cannot stress enough as we have done so often before the particular needs we have enumerated that deserve special consideration.

Ours is a community of families and preservationists: our block and community associations plant and care for trees; friends' groups care for our parks; merchants' associations help local park and City groups; civic organizations clean their streets, and residents get involved and help. The fact that the historic beauty and integrity of our six neighborhoods has survived is clearly due to their efforts.

It is time that the City make as much of a commitment to our area as have our residents. We strongly urge your assistance in protecting and improving the special quality of Community Board 2.