



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
COMMUNITY BOARD 12

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BROOKLYN COMMUNITY BOARD 12
STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS
FY 2008

INTRODUCTION

Community Board 12 is comprised of the neighborhoods of Borough Park, Dahill, Kensington and Midwood.

In the past few years, we have had a sizeable increase in population. Since many of our residents are Orthodox and Chasidic, large families are the rule rather than the exception. The birthrate is above average with eight to ten children per family being the norm. In addition to increased family size, new families are locating in our District. We have also experienced an influx of many new immigrants, i.e. Chinese, Russians, Polish, Pakistani and Bangladeshi.

The Chinatown of Brooklyn is located on 8th Avenue, which is the boundary between Community Board 7 and Community Board 12. This area is comprised mainly of immigrants from mainland China. The influx has been steadily increasing and now numbers approximately 30,000, which represents a significant percentage of our total population. The Borough Park West section of our District now hosts many Chinese businesses, medical offices and outreach centers as well as property owners, tenants and students.

The Pakistani and Bangladeshi immigrant population has continued to grow in leaps and bounds in the Kensington/Dahill area of our District as have the immigrants from India. In addition, with 100 new housing units on the former Culver El site and a projected 100 more new housing units to be built on that site within the next 2 years; that area has had a significant increase in population. Also, Kensington, particularly the Ocean Parkway corridor, is hot to Russian immigrants who are replacing the senior population of that area who formerly occupied the high-rise apartment buildings along this corridor.

In addition, our Polish immigrant population, as well as the Hispanic population is located in the Borough Park section of our District.

The Midwood section is in the throes of change with more and more construction of larger homes to accommodate the needs of the Sephardic community.

Borough Park continues to be the most densely populated section of the District. Because of religious constraints, the large families remain within walking distance of their houses of worship and each other.

All areas of our District are experiencing resurgence in immigrants. All of this is contributing to the density of this District as a whole.

The Community Board 12 District, mostly through its Community efforts has become a much desired area in which to live.

Since Community Board 12 does not have a proliferation of large conglomerates, nationwide chains, or corporate structures in our District, the small business and property owner has been our mainstay. People work and live in our District thereby assuring the viability of our area and keeping the dollar flow in the community.

At present, our residents retain a commitment to our area. The City, State and Federal Government must allocate fair-share funding to urban communities to encourage and foster this commitment.

Through various means of development, the Community Board 12 District has remained a viable tax base. However, City response to genuine needs of this area must be addressed.

The Community Board 12 District is an area that dates back to 1900. Many of our structures, streets and sewer systems date back to that era.

BROOKLYN COMMUNITY BOARD 12
STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS

This document will endeavor to explain, rationalize and describe the needs of our area, so that Community Board 12 can receive proper consideration in the Fiscal Year 2007/2008 Budget.

POLICE

Community Policing Program should be expanded to insure a Police presence in every neighborhood.

Specialized Drug Units should be assigned to every District to curtail and/or eliminate the drug scourge that is in every Community.

The Crime Prevention Unit should be expanded. There should be sufficient personnel and equipment to have an adequate number of condition cars to address the needs of the District.

Station House – 66th Precinct – Present Location 5822 – 16th Avenue

The need for a new facility to house the 66th Precinct is crucial and imperative.

During more than 28 years that this budget request has been pending, the situation at the 66th Precinct has exacerbated.

Generations of Police Officers have had to “live” in a decrepit, antiquated “House” with absolutely no amenities and with conditions that would be considered substandard and inferior for the criminals and derelicts, but are accepted and condoned at this Station House as suitable for our Police Officers.

Although some reconstruction has occurred at the Precinct, these modest renovations are only band-aid in nature and do not suffice. Much more is needed to improve working conditions at this Precinct. Good working conditions are conducive to fostering good police work. Further and extensive reconstruction is needed. Additional space is needed to house Police Officers. Consideration should be given to add additional floors to accommodate same. Underground parking to accommodate police personnel is needed.

A new 66th Precinct Station House is the oldest budget request on record. Although Community Board 12 has explored various locations for a new Station House, there never seems to be any suitable location, or monies have been taken out of the budget. There is no private or city owned property available in this district which would be adequate to house a new Precinct.

The money saved by not having to acquire land and build from scratch, would erect a state-of-the art-building for New York’s Finest.

The need to completely renovate and upgrade the present facility for the 66th Precinct at present is imperative and continued outreach to find a suitable site to accommodate a new 66th Station House must be ongoing.

FIRE

Firehouses must be adequately equipped and maintained. Arson investigation particularly with respect to abandoned buildings and cars must be expanded.

There must be no further deterioration of service to our District. Fire fighting is not to be viewed lightly nor should our residents be put at risk because of fiscal constraints.

Fire is indiscriminate. It does not differentiate between socioeconomic groups, ethnic groups, and it does not vary from location to location. Fire can affect everyone at any time. To place the dollar before the safety of our people is unconscionable. Engine Co. 278 which served our District must be reopened as well as all the other Fire Houses closed throughout this City.

After the tragedy of 9/11, we must assure that our brave fire-fighters, who gave their lives when our City was attacked by Terrorists, have equipment that is tested, workable and reliable regardless of cost. This includes Generators for every Fire House in the City. During the 2003 summer blackout, many of the Fire Houses were rendered helpless and could not respond to emergencies because of lack of emergency power. The lives of the citizens of New York should not be put in harms way because of budget constraints. Every Fire House in this City must have a Generator to respond to emergency situations in the event of a major occurrence.

PARKS

OCEAN PARKWAY MALLS

Ocean Parkway is a main thoroughfare and is highly trafficked. In addition, Ocean Parkway is a Special District. The beauty of Ocean Parkway must not be allowed to deteriorate.

Some of our elected officials have designated monies for the upgrade and beautification of the Malls. Maintenance must be ongoing to make sure the upgrades and beautification remains intact.

In order to maintain this arena in a sanitary and groomed condition, a crew should be assigned to maintain the malls of this thoroughfare. An additional crew cab truck is requested to transport the men the length and breathe of this roadway. The Malls and trees must receive regular and concentrated attention so that the Parkway can be properly maintained. Trees damaged by accidents, storms or acts of nature must be replaced.

It is essential that there be increased utilization of Park Enforcement Personnel (PEP) in the Parks of Community Board 12, as well as on the Ocean Parkway Malls. PEP should enforce various regulations on Parkland such as, dog litter, unleashed dogs, bike riding on Malls on North side of Ocean Parkway where bike riding is prohibited and use of mopeds in Parks and on Ocean Parkway Malls.

BRIZZI PARK

The Bacci Court is never used to play Bacci Ball. Instead, this court is being used as a urinal and for defecation by the homeless who are inside the Park at night. This Park is used by

many children including disabled youngsters from a nearby school for autistic children. This Bacci Court is not conducive to a safe or healthy environment for the many using this Park. As new families have moved into the area, this playground has become very popular. What is desperately needed is to make this a Comfort Station Park/Maintenance area which is staffed with full time personnel. This would greatly benefit the entire neighborhood and at the same time allow the site to be a fixed post playground.

COL. MARCUS PARK

A Comfort Station in the Playground area is needed. Children must cross back and forth from the Playground to the Ball field on a very busy trafficked street to use the Restrooms. This is a major safety issue and one that Parks must address.

DOME PARK

Total refurbishing and redesign of this Park is needed. The Park is old and does not meet the needs of the many new families who have moved into the area. This Park should be a Comfort Station Park. A state of the art spray system is needed for the many young children who are there daily. The Playground needs to be upgraded and relocated to the other side whereby it would be away from the residential homes that abut this Park.

PARKS PERSONNEL, EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

We need a full complement of Parks personnel for our District to insure that each facility will have an attendant on a full-time basis.

Comfort Stations cannot be utilized without Parks personnel present. Therefore, many remain closed and not utilized. It is imperative that personnel be assigned to these locations.

Parks should be cleaned on a day-to-day basis, especially those with Children's playgrounds. All Parks must be provided with signage – Park Closes at Dusk – or 9:00 PM

Increased lighting must be provided in every facility.

Recreation

District 12 needs more regularly scheduled programs for pre-school youngsters, young adults and senior citizens.

Trees

Dead or diseased trees should be routinely removed and replacement should be made as soon as possible. Tree pruning should be regularly scheduled.

Preventive spraying for mosquito, beetle, gypsy moth and West Nile Virus infestation in target areas should be done on a seasonal basis, before waiting for confirmation of West Nile Virus.

TRANSPORTATION

Since Community Board 12 serves an “old” community and many of our Streets need re-surfacing or reconstruction, intermittent pothole repair is a temporary remedy and does not alleviate the real problem.

THIRTEENTH AVENUE

Thirteenth Avenue is the commercial shopping district in Community Board 12. People come from all over to shop Thirteenth Avenue due mainly to its’ ethnic flavor. On any given Sunday, more than 10,000 people traverse this shopping strip.

Parking is at a premium. Traffic is congested, especially on Sundays; it can take up to an hour to traverse the 23 blocks of this shopping mecca.

Thirteenth Avenue has not been reconstructed in more than 20 years, and is in dire need of redesign and reconstruction.

Some commercial strips that have been redesigned have had arms installed at the end of the street thus allowing cars to angle park, which in turn affords more parking spaces. This in turn helps alleviate some of the traffic congestion. We are requesting that this, along with other design alternatives be considered for this viable commercial strip.

NEW UTRECHT AVENUE

New Utrecht Avenue is a commercial strip located under an extremely low elevated structure. Because the structure is so low, conventional light poles could not be used. Consequently, short stem globe lights illuminate the strip from Fort Hamilton to 61st Street. These globe lights should be installed on the remainder of this strip, i.e., from Fort Hamilton to 41st Street at which point the elevated structure curves and continues on 10th Avenue. The unlit area is extremely dark.

HIGHWAYS

There should be closer scrutiny of a contractor’s performance. Contracts must not be signed off until it has been satisfactorily established that the work was properly performed. This would eliminate the problems of ponding, improper grading, etc. that so often arise after the contract has been signed off.

Traffic and Street Signs

Traffic control signs and Street signs should be replaced, as needed, within a reasonable time.

DEPT. OF EDUCATION

As the Dept. of Education is now a City agency, there should be more open communication with the Community Boards. A liaison should be assigned to attend District Cabinet meetings.

The Community Boards should have the same kind of advisory input with the Dept. of Education as they do with other City agencies.

All school buildings should be equipped with complete security systems to effectively secure buildings, eliminating the need for replacement of valuable equipment lost through frequent burglaries.

HOUSING PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Continuation of HPD programs is essential for the continued rehabilitation and development of our Community. HIP, 8A, PLP and 202 loans are vital in order for this work to continue.

Continuation of funding for additional consultant contracts to those organizations that are addressing needs that heretofore were not being addressed.

BUILDINGS

Additional inspectors should be hired and trained so that buildings can be inspected on a regular basis. Assignment of inspectors to the Community Board would be a cost-effective way in which buildings could be inspected. Funding for building code research of new materials and building techniques is also necessary to evaluate new construction.

A more efficient system must be devised to handle "Stop Work Orders" – correct and current information must be disseminated to enforcement agencies. Full-time Inspectors, assigned on a regular basis to each Community Board would provide much need inspections, expertise and at-hand knowledge of current Buildings Department rules and regulations.

SANITATION

For many years, Sanitation housed BK11 garbage in our District. Once BK11 moved to within the boundaries of Community Board 11, this facility became the Annex for BK12. Because the building was deemed unsafe some years ago, the building was recently demolished. With the demolition of the Annex building, work has been contracted to make this a parking lot for BK12 trucks. It is imperative that a sound barrier be built on the back of this lot which abuts the private homes on Dahl Court. Complaints have been non-stop concerning the noise created by the truck engine revving up especially in the early morning hours. Many of the homes were purchased when the Annex was still on this site and all trucks were housed therein. Homes were expensive and owners put a lot of money into these homes. They were not aware at the time that they purchased there homes, that this lot abutting their homes would become a parking lot for Sanitation trucks. Without this sound barrier noise pollution will become a major problem and will greatly affect the quality of life of these homeowners. As construction is still ongoing, a sound barrier would be both feasible and doable at this point and is a necessity.

In Community Board 12, there are over 200 private and 16 public schools serving 175,000 or more children. Many of these schools have year round lunch programs with perishable foods. Daily pick-ups are essential because tons of garbage is generated daily at these facilities. We must

have additional trucks and manpower to do daily pick- ups in these schools.

In our densely populated District, there is a need for a minimum of 20 men for Street cleaning purposes. It is also important that a full complement of men be maintained at all times.

Lot cleaning should be provided for all lots located in our District. Garbage strewn lots in an otherwise stable area, create an aura of blight and deterioration. In addition, garbage-strewn lots attract dumpers; become rat harborages, with roach infestation. The Sanitation Task Force should have sufficient personnel to address the ever-present illegal dumping problem prevalent in our District. Sanitation Police must be assigned to 11:00 P.M. to 7:00 A.M. shift when most dumping occurs. The seriousness of illegal dumping problem should not be underestimated. At the several sites in the community Board 12 District where illegal dumping is ever present, we have experienced dangerous and hazardous items that imperil the health and well being of our residents, i.e., medical waste, asbestos, chemicals, contaminants and poisons. All this is in addition to the regular construction materials, dead flowers, rotted fruit and vegetables, auto parts, scrap materials, etc.

A Basket Truck and twice daily pick-ups are necessary to collect the overflowing litter baskets. The same Basket Truck can also be used as MLP throughout the District. Overflowing baskets on the corners give the perception of a deteriorated neighborhood. Collection of litter basket refuse must be done on a regular, twice daily basis.

Serious consideration must be given to this most reasonable request.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development is a prime concern to our area.

Community organizations must receive private and public agency support. Successful economic development depends on the dollar structure remaining in the community. Leakage of funds through absentee ownership of housing and businesses does not generate dollars back into the Community. Small businesses that employ local people and the owner occupied dwelling help to insure that funds will remain in a Community.

Local banks must encourage making mortgage loans, home improvement loans, business loans, etc. to the local community, thereby insuring that investment dollars remain in the Community.

With this formula, houses are better maintained; businesses flourish and growth investment in the Community is assured.

MAJOR COMMERCIAL STRIPS

The need to organize Merchant's Associations on our major commercial strips is vital to their stability. Those strips are 13th Avenue, 16th Avenue, 18th Avenue and Church Avenue.

These commercial strips are experiencing new vitality due to the influx of the new immigrants. Economic assistance should be made available for revitalization of these strips. Monies should be made available for new storefronts, increased security, and improved lighting and sidewalk restoration. This would encourage new shops to locate here and would encourage existing

businesses to expand, thereby creating additional jobs and boosting the economy. All of our major commercial strips are comprised of family-owned and operated businesses with a commitment to the area. These merchants live and work in the community so that the dollar-flow remains in the community. This type of economic dollar usage maintains the area as a viable tax base.

HEALTH AND HOSPITAL SERVICES

Maimonides Medical Center is the major health facility in Community Board 12 District.

There is a definite need for expanded maternity, gynecological, medical, surgical facilities. A nighttime clinic and nutritional program should be available. The health needs of the sick must be addressed.

Adequately staffed preventative services must also be readily available.

Maimonides Medical Center has a catchment area of 800,000 people, which includes mostly working, lower and middle-class residents. This service area has a very large Orthodox Jewish population and large Italian, Polish, Hispanic, Russian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Asian populations, as well. The area of District 12 has the highest birthrate in New York City where Hasidic families have as many as ten children.

Twenty-seven percent of the population are Senior Citizens.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The rapid deterioration of the City's infrastructure must be addressed. Our Streets, sewers, catch basins, water mains, railroad overpasses, elevated subway structures and subway roadbeds must be repaired before collapses and other major catastrophes occur.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

HYDRANTS

State of the Art fire hydrants should be installed through the Community Board 12 District. Present hydrants are over 80 years old and many are in disrepair, leaking, knocked down or inoperable. These damaged, old hydrants present a threat to the safety and well being of our community. Hydrants should be inspected on a regular basis. Summer use of hydrants is abused. Spray caps are rarely utilized. Most of the time, the hydrants are opened to full capacity, with extensive water waste that creates hazardous conditions for drivers and pedestrians. Open hydrants are not toys and the public abuse of it should be curtailed or eliminated entirely.

SEWERS

In as much as the installation of the sewers in Community Board 12 District was done approximately 80 years ago, many sewer lines in our Board need rehabilitation and/or replacement. In some instances, defective sewers have caused sagging roadbeds. This condition must be corrected before a major catastrophe occurs.

Several of our existing sewers are in poor condition and in imminent danger of collapse.

THIRD WATER TUNNEL

Construction of new tunnel to supplement present water supply is essential to the increased population of our area.

CATCH BASINS

Catch Basins must be installed at every intersection.

All Catch Basins should be cleaned on a regular scheduled basis. Deteriorated Catch basins should be repaired or replaced.

WATER MAINS

The Lifetime of a Water Main should be established; periodic inspections, after the projected life span, should be made in order to determine the condition and regular maintenance instituted.

SUBWAYS

On-going maintenance should be done. The system is almost 90 years old and deferred maintenance must be abolished. Regular scheduled maintenance is a must for this deteriorated antiquated system.

HUMAN SERVICES

Ambulatory and homebound Senior Citizens must be assured of support services for their needs. Medicare, Medicaid and Home Care under human Resources Agency programs should be expanded to provide adequate services to homebound seniors.

The problem of the handicapped must be addressed and services rendered in a simple uncomplicated manner. Regulations have to be revised so that assistances and services can be obtained more efficiently.

Adequate funding to Community based organizations to keep programs going must be addressed.

SOCIAL SERVICES

While many social services are needed, few are implemented because the Community is not aware of the programs that are available. A concerted outreach program to apprise area residents of special services would be very productive.

In addition, some provisions must be made for unexpected crisis situations where expedient assistance can be obtained with a minimum of red tape.

Adequate funding to Community based organizations must also be addressed in the social services areas.

YOUTH SERVICES

Adequate funding is needed for the Community based programs that are youth oriented. Many worthwhile summer and/or after school programs are abandoned because of lack of funding.

Job opportunities should be made available to the youth of the Community. Federal eligibility guidelines relative to summer employment should be revised to realistically reflect the economy so that youths are not denied the opportunity for gainful employment.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

ACS should assign a representative to the Community Board, in accordance with City charter mandate. ACS should provide statistical data on child abuse and neglect as it relates to Community Board 12 without breaching client confidentiality.

A special Child Abuse/Neglect Hot Line should be established for Brooklyn, It is ludicrous that a borough of more than 2-1/2 million people must report incidents of child abuse and neglect to Albany while small cities in New York State with modest populations have "Hot Lines".

With the steady increase in population in the Community Board 12 area, there is a definite need for additional Day Care, particularly for toddlers 2-3 years of age.

Increased emphasis should be given to the Head Start Program with many more slots made available to accommodate our ever- increasing population.

In the past, by its own admission, HRA who formerly had jurisdiction over children's services had massive failings in its care of foster children. The child casework system, as investigated by "Newsday" documented that thousands of lapsed foster care files were missing and in general, record keeping was poor. Caseworkers do not follow-up on missed visits and 100 of the Brooklyn cases lacked a required assessment of the child's ability to take care of him.

Community Board 12 has addressed the problem of child abuse and neglect, together with foster care since 1987. From that date to present, the system presently in place has not been improved in any way. ACS must revise the entire system without further delay.

Since these evaluations are crucial to the welfare of the children, strict guidelines should be established and monitored when reviewing, assessing or investigating a situation.

ADULT SERVICES

Programs to give much needed assistance to frail elderly must be implemented and/or continued and expanded. In the Community Board 12 District, we have one of the largest senior populations in the country.

There is an unmet need for adequate home care, particularly if the seniors live alone.

Since people are living longer, additional assistance must be available. Services must be increased and not reduced. Eligibility for public assistance needs to be re-evaluated.

LONG ISLAND RAILROAD

The Long Island Railroad and most recently acquired by New York Atlantic Railway runs through a major portion of Community Board 12 District. As a quasi-government agency, Con Rail, Long Island Railroad and now New York Atlantic Railway are delinquent in the maintenance of this roadway. The site of the railroad tracks was allowed to completely deteriorate. The Rail line is the location of tons of garbage providing a harborage for rats, fencing is damaged and never repaired or non-existent – the tracks are not lighted and no security is present. These factors have all contributed to making these Railroad tracks blight in the Community. Immediate measures must be taken to remove this condition from our area. The City must put pressure on New York State Department of Transportation to address this problem.

The New York Atlantic Railroad must become more responsible for the properties and the areas they encompass. In recent months, conditions along this railway track throughout our District have deteriorated to a new low, which includes numerous homeless along this railway line.

With all the concern of underground bombs going off in the subways, attention should be given to safeguarding this area from entry to any unauthorized personnel mainly due to its' accessibility to the New York City Transit system.

LIBRARIES

The three Libraries located in the Community Board 12 District have a combined book circulation of over 800,000 with a vast registry of borrowers. Sufficient monies should be allocated for increased service and expanded programs.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

For the most part, cultural activities in the Community Board 12 District are the domain of groups from the private sector. With the advent of "tight money", many of these activities have been abandoned or diminished. A concerted effort must be made by the City to have cultural activities allotted to each Community Board District.

311 SYSTEM

Community Boards must have an open dialogue and communication with the 311 system. The Boards must be given a summary of complaints and/or inquiries registered with 311 that pertains to their Board. The Board must also be notified of the outcome of same. This Office has seen more and more of our constituents coming in to us stating that 311 failed them. In many cases 311 referred the constituent back to the Community Board. If a problem was not resolved within 10 days, and a new complaint was registered, the old complaint number was wiped out and the complaint process started anew. This is especially true with street lights. The outcome is that a street light can take weeks or even months to repair. This is not acceptable.

The failure of communication can have an adverse effect on the quality of life for residents in a particular area. An open communication will allow the Community Board to address issues and have consultations with area residents before any action or studies are initiated thereby saving the City time and money.

By working together, we can strengthen the Citizen Complaint System and can advocate and deliver a full comprehensive approach to the monitoring and delivery of services to the citizens of New York.

COMMUNITY BOARDS

As awareness of Community Boards became more apparent, the role of Community Boards broadened. Community Boards are charged with greater responsibilities, interacting with other agencies, they disseminate vital information, make inspections and act as a catalyst between agencies and the Community. In addition, Community Boards are charged with the responsibilities to assure that every resource is utilized to the fullest extent.

Because of the limitations of the budget allocated to Community Boards, minimum staffing is used to handle the ever-growing volume of work and responsibility.

In 1995, the Boards budgets were depleted by 20%. This greatly effected the general day to day operations of the Community Boards. This money was never fully recouped.

The Boards had to fund part of the collective bargaining salary increases as well as the Mayor's Personnel order for salary increases for managerial employees. This further depletion of our budget along with salaries, goods, merchandise and services increasing - have made the day to day operations of the Community Board strained to say the least.

Adequate funding should be made available for Community Boards to insure that increased cost of goods and other expenses as well as hiring additional staff are met. Collective bargaining increases should be added to the internal budget as settlements with Unions are reached and when the Mayor issues Mayoral Personnel orders for pay raises for managerial employees. Monies should not be taken out of the internal budget for Community Boards for the above mandates.

CONCLUSION

The needs of Community Board 12 are many. However, in preparing our Capital and Expense Budget requests for Fiscal year 2008, we will be very selective and prioritize those needs that will benefit the greatest number of residents and are most essential to the District. However, funding for all of our requests and needs is critical.

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