



Chairman, Alvin Warshaviak

The City of New York
Borough of Queens

Community Board 8
197-15 Hillside Avenue
Hollis, NY 11423-2126
Telephone: (718) 264-7895
Fax: (718) 264-7910
Qn08@cb.nyc.gov



District Manager, Marie Adam-Ovide

Statement of Community District Needs and Priorities FY 2016

Community Board 8, Queens is bounded by the Long Island Expressway to the north, Hillside Avenue to the south, Van Wyck Expressway to the west, and the Clearview Expressway to the east. It includes the communities of Briarwood, Flushing Suburban, Flushing Heights, Fresh Meadows, Hillcrest, Hillcrest Estates, Holliswood, Jamaica Estates, Jamaica Hills, Kew Gardens Hills, Utopia and West Cunningham Park. These communities are overwhelmingly residential with several commercial strips.

There are about 150,000 residents of Community Board 8 who are middle income, multi-ethnic, multi-racial who own their own homes and co-ops or are renting. The residences consist of one and two-family homes, garden apartments, large apartment buildings such as the Fresh Meadows Development and Cunningham Heights, co-ops such as Electchester, Hilltop Village and the New York City Housing Authority complex - Pomonok. The Community Board 8 residents are concerned with quality of life issues, personal safety and security, education and maintaining their fair share of city services.

Community Board 8 houses major facilities such as Queens College, CUNY Law School, St. John's University, Queens Hospital Center, Cunningham Park, and many public and private schools.

Police

Community Board 8 has consistently designated the funding of additional police personnel as its top Expense Budget Priorities. The 107th Precinct's officer count has been dwindling for several years. It is not always possible to do more with less; especially, when it comes to the safety of our community.

It should be taken into account when police personnel are allocated to the precincts that Community Board 8 has over 40 private/public schools. It has many institutions within its boundaries, including a great number of houses of worship serving many denominations with growing memberships. People are entitled to worship in peace whenever they choose and know that they are protected from terrorists.

The 107th Precinct has been doing its best with very limited resources; however, more officers are needed. The Board commends the men and women who work so diligently and put their lives on the line every day on our behalf.

A van is needed to transport officers from the Auxiliary program to many community events that occur in the Community Board District including National Night Out, Big Apple Circus, the Community Board 8 Annual Health Fair and the New York Philharmonic. Bullet proof vests are a must. To keep our subways safe, we require enough officers and supervisors for Transit Bureau District 20. They must have up-to-date computers in the administration area located at the Briarwood station.

Environmental Protection

Flooding continues to be an issue for Community Board 8. Very little has been done to alleviate this problem. We continue to advocate for the following:

- Enlarge sewer lines to accommodate increased development throughout Community District 8.
- Hire sufficient personnel for regular catch basin cleaning and repair work to prevent flooding.
- Increase funding for reconstruction to repair the impaired lines.
- Construct storm sewers on Hillside Avenue from Van Wyck Expressway to Clearview Expressway.

Sanitation

Although Community Board 8 has relatively clean streets, there are still several Sanitation issues that require more attention:

1. Streets that are not covered by Street Cleaning Regulations need to be cleaned regularly.
2. The paved center malls require year-round cleaning and seasonal weed-control.
3. Retain the five day-a-week pick-ups at public schools and extra pick-up at Pomonok Houses.
4. Sanitation Police are needed for night patrol to discourage illegal dumping.
5. Additional agents for Sanitation Code Enforcement are needed to address the quality of life complaints that we receive.
6. Unlike other community boards, CB8 has no dedicated pick-up truck for litter baskets for our commercial areas. This must be provided to ensure the cleanliness of our commercial strips in addition to more baskets (especially on Hillside Avenue). The Adopt-a-Basket program must be better promoted to encourage public and private sector partnerships.
7. Increased enforcement of sanitation regulations along the commercial strips.
8. Dedicated bulk pick up trucks for large apartment/co-operative developments.

We commend our sanitation workers for the work that they do in spite of the lack of resources.

Parks

One characteristic that has attracted residents to Community Board 8 is its suburban nature, which is derived from the open space of its parks and tree-lined streets.

1. Hire personnel or contractors to maintain, prune, and remove dead trees and tree stumps, both in the parks and streets. A gardener or assistant gardener is needed for the parks in CB8. Park maintenance workers are needed to provide security and to protect the City's capital investment in renovated playgrounds.
2. Rehabilitate play areas at Freedom Square, Weinstein Playground and the playground at P.S. 165Q. A new sprinkler system (*water on demand or on a timer*) is needed at P.S. 26 to conserve water. In addition, Playground 75 needs to be rehabilitated (*new safety surfacing, play equipment and sprinkler system needed*).
3. Flushing Meadow Corona Park borders Community Board 8 and is utilized by many of our residents. A 16 cubic yard packer truck is very much needed.

4. Cunningham Park is Community Board 8's major park and as such is heavily utilized. Working in conjunction with the Friends of Cunningham Park, we have prioritized our requests for the rehabilitation of Cunningham Park.
- We continue to support erosion control throughout the core area – seeding, sodding and an underground irrigation system.
 - Landscaping throughout the core area, shrubs, trees, hardy perennials and bushes
 - We continue to support reconstruction of paths throughout the park's core interior especially around the oval and restoration and/or construction of bicycle path from Francis Lewis Boulevard overpass of Vanderbilt Motor Parkway to the underpass at the Clearview Expressway
 - Installation of sidewalk abutting the park on 199th Street between 67th Avenue and 73rd Avenue is needed.

Fire

Community Board 8 is concerned about the adequacy of fire protection, not only within its boundaries but also throughout the entire Borough of Queens. We support five-person staffing for all engine companies.

There is an urgent need to educate the public on fire prevention and to expand the Fatal Fire Reduction Program and Mobile Fire Safety House. Funding is needed to purchase smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors to distribute to the public. Golf-cart gators need to be replaced, as these gators are used to maneuver through large crowds at events throughout the City.

Furthermore, we request funding to renovate the fire houses within our boundaries and those that service Community Board 8.

Transportation

We continue to request increased asphalt allocation for street resurfacing and for speed hump installation. Approved speed hump locations remain undone for more than three years after approval. Increase funding for trench restoration. We are also requesting the replacement of the cobble stones on Clover Hill Place. This is necessary to prevent cars from sliding when there is snow and ice on this steep section of Holliswood.

We request stand alone funding for curb installation and replacement. There has been a backlog for curb repair and curb installation for over a decade. Currently, DOT repairs curbs only where there is a sidewalk violation. Instead of repairing their own sidewalks within 45 days of receiving the notice of violation, homeowners choose to wait for DOT contractors to do the work. This is the only way to ensure that DOT repairs their curbs. As a result, sidewalks remain damaged for a longer period of time and the danger to the pedestrians is also prolonged. In addition, this will cost the City more funds for lawsuits.

Housing/Buildings

Much of Community Board 8's housing stock is residential, with many one-family dwellings. Additional Buildings Department inspectors are necessary to enforce existing regulations and quality of life violations. There is currently dedicated part-time inspector to address Community Board issues; a full time inspector is needed as the number of complaints has increased.

DOB introduced the Development Challenge Process initiative a few years ago. Additional plan examiners are needed to review and respond to these challenges. In addition, more plan examiners would eliminate the self-certification by architects and engineers.

There are very few rent stabilized and/or rent controlled apartments within Community Board 8. The lack of affordable regulated housing has caused a larger number of homelessness, overcrowding in neighborhoods and illegal apartments. Government must start to build additional affordable housing and encourage the private community to do so as well. Everyone should have the right to an affordable home, be it private, co-op, condo or an affordable apartment.

Pomonok Houses, although one of the better public housing developments in the city, has several issues that must be addressed. The infrastructure needs to be upgraded. A family resource center that will offer educational programs, job training and placement services as well as support programs to help residents achieve self-sufficiency would be welcomed. There is a definitive need to increase the number of officers at PSA9 and add additional security cameras to prevent criminal activity.

Human Services

Community Board 8 has many human service needs, particularly among the elderly, single parent families, youth, the unemployed, new Americans and recent immigrants. Several issues that need to be addressed are education, outreach and preventive programs dealing with domestic violence, AIDS, parenting skills, family preservation, child abuse and affordable quality day care.

Youth

Youth programs and services have always been one of the top priorities of Community Board 8. Every year the beacon programs are threatened with budget cuts. The Beacon Schools are a welcome oasis providing many after-school and evening recreational programs and activities.

Additional funding is required for summer youth employment positions. Services to address youth unemployment and develop job programs to serve youngsters from middle-income families are also needed. The problem of gangs, graffiti, youth substance abuse and truancy affect youngsters in the district. It needs increased mentoring program for boys and girls to help them resolve issues that arise during pre-teen and teenage years.

Over a quarter of Community Board 8's general population is under the age of 21. Dollars invested in youth today will save more funds that may go to the justice system tomorrow.

Seniors

Community Board 8 is in need of an additional Senior Center to provide nutritious meals and socialization to accommodate the Board's growing senior population. As of the last census taken in 2010, fourteen (14%) of the population is 65 years old or over. Therefore, both seniors and youth would benefit from an intergenerational program. It is vital that we maintain the delivery of a daily hot meal for our seniors.

Hospitals

We are concerned with the threat of the West Nile Virus, as mosquitoes infected with WNV were detected again this summer within Community Board. We need a concerted effort to continue the control of the mosquito population before the virus is found in humans. Our residents find it almost impossible to enjoy the outdoors due to the increase in the mosquito population. We welcome funding to spray for nuisance mosquitoes.

Libraries

It is imperative that all of our libraries are open seven days a week to service the needs of our community. Furthermore, we seek increased morning and evening hours. We seek additional computers and services (youth, immigrants and seniors) at the six branches of the Queens Borough Public Library located within Community District 8. Many individuals do not possess a computer and the libraries are the only venues where they have free access to the web.

We continue to support the rehabilitation of the Kew Gardens Hills Library and the Hollis Branch. The Briarwood Library building needs expansion or a new building to cope with the increase demand for service. Additional computers are needed at the Hillcrest and Fresh Meadows libraries. These libraries could also use smart boards for the conference rooms. This year we are also requesting an annex for the Queens Borough Public Library at Queens Hospital Center.

Education

Community District 8 is within Region 3. Good schools with small classes are vital to CB8. We will continue to advocate for new schools and quality education to accommodate the Board's growing school aged population. There are not enough seats or classrooms for our children in all levels of education.

P.S. 173 and P.S. 26 must be upgraded to 220 wiring to accommodate smart boards and additional computers requested. We continue to support the upgrades at M.S. 216.

Community Board

We are often the first line of communication for community residents to New York City agencies. We cut through red tape and bureaucracy, functioning as a little City Hall located in the community - a one-stop shopping center where residents can access numerous City services. We continue to solve issues that 311 cannot, especially issues involving more than one agency. We monitor the delivery of City services, resolve thousands of complaints each year, and hold public hearings on zoning, ULURP and budget matters. We publish a monthly Newsletter that is widely distributed throughout our community and fulfill all of our charter-mandated responsibilities. We hold an annual health fair that brings health screenings to our residents. We are requesting that our budget be maintained at least at its current level.

Community Board 8 continually strives to deliver services to its residents, which is mandated by the City Charter. We continue to fight for our fair share of City services owed to the diverse population of our Community District.

Alvin Warshaviak, Chair

Marie Adam-Ovide, District Manager

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