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The City of New York Brooklyn Community Board 15



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MAYOR

PEARL BURG
DISTRICT MANAGER

DISTRICT NEEDS STATEMENT FISCAL YEAR 2016



District Overview

Community Board 15 is a vibrant mixed-use community. The District is bordered to the north by the large commercial strip of Kings Highway, to the west by the industrial area of McDonald Avenue, to the south by the beachfront community of Manhattan Beach and to the east by the year round recreational community of Gerritsen Beach. Other residential areas include Gravesend, Homecrest, Madison, Midwood and Plumb Beach.

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The District is still recovering from the effects of Superstorm Sandy with many areas such as Gerritsen Beach, Plumb Beach and Manhattan Beach rebuilding with current resiliency measures.

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

POPULATION

According to the statistics supplied by the most recent United States Census conducted in 2010, the overall population of Community Board 15 (Brooklyn) has decreased by .4% to 159,650. According to the 2011 Department of City Planning vital statistics, the birth rate increased since 2005, at 12.5 %. The death-rate dropped 8.2%, and infant mortality rate increased from 1.6% to 2.1%. Statistics from 2013 show that the largest percentage change occurred in the District population with 37% of people receiving income support either by Social Security or Medicaid.

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

LAND USE

According to the Department of City Planning (2013), the total land area of Community Board 15 is 4.7 square miles. The District includes: one and two-family residential units (50.6%), multi-family residential units (17.8%) and mixed residential-commercial units (3.6%). Non-residential land use in the District includes: commercial-and-office units (6.3%), industrial regions (0.5%), transportation/facility (2.6%), institutions (8.2%), open-space recreation (2.6%), parking facilities (.8%) and vacant land (6.6%).

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Economic Development and Business Services

COMMERCIAL STRIPS

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

Businesses are still struggling in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy but with help from the local Elected officials and the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, events have been held such as the Summer Stroll through a DOT initiative to help merchants along Sheepshead Bay Road and Emmons Avenue attract new customers.

PARKING

Many of our main commercial strips are serviced by major train lines and bus lines compounding the already traffic congested areas of Community Board 15. Blocked bus-stops and blocked fire hydrants are chronic problems in this District. Double parking is an additional annoyance that greatly interferes with the constant flow of heavy traffic. Many two-lane Avenues are reduced to one lane by the proliferation of illegal parking. Along most of the commercial strips in the District, taxi/limo cars block bus stops and park in front of train stations waiting for fares creating havoc along the main routes.

The 61st Precinct has been attentive but does not have the man-power to police all of these areas. It is the feeling of Community Board No.15 that, Traffic Enforcement Agents should be given the authority to issue summonses for any of the illegal parking infractions.

SANITATION ISSUES

A well-manicured shopping area is both an excellent advertisement for both buyers and sellers alike. The Department of Sanitation through enforcement must insist on storefront cleaning by merchants and should also implement crews of street-sweepers to

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further enhance the cleaning of our City streets. Trash receptacles must be strategically placed and regularly emptied along these commercial avenues. The lack of a permanent basket truck creates many sanitation issues throughout the district.

INTERFERENCE WITH QUALITY OF LIFE

Along Coney Island Avenue many establishments have opened in recent years. The overwhelming majority of these establishments serve alcoholic beverages, offer music and must not be allowed to disturb the Quality of Life of the area residents.

A similar situation exists on Emmons Avenue. Sidewalks are blocked by unlicensed cafes, loud disturbing noise from both within the establishment and outside on the sidewalks by the hordes of people congregating on the sidewalk smoking. These establishments cause many sleepless nights to the residents that live in the area. It is also the feeling of this Board that Consumer Affairs conduct periodic, evening patrols of these known problematic areas to enforce regulations.

Also, with the addition of the party cruises (booze cruises) on Emmons Avenue, local residents are facing loitering as well as noise issues along Emmons Avenue. Police patrols must be part of the daily routine to avoid further disturbances.

NON-COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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

SIDEWALK CAFES

The Community Board working closely with Department of Consumer Affairs in both the approval process and with follow up reviews strives to keep businesses thriving in the community. Yet, Community Board 15 will not tolerate businesses who infringe on pedestrian sidewalks. When the Community Board receives a

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sidewalk café license it is announced that the General Board Meeting and if anyone has any questions, comments or concerns they are voiced at that time.

LIQUOR LICENSES

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

Environmental Issues

DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION

Community Board No.15 appreciates the extraordinary work done by the Sanitation Department in the weeks and months following Superstorm Sandy. With an increase in the number of homes and businesses in the District, we expect sufficient funding to be made available to maintain the personnel and equipment needed to service our area. We believe enforcement along commercial strips should be maintained and additional enforcement should be placed in known illegal dumping areas. Several locations in this District have seen high incidents of illegal dumping. These locations should be red-flagged and patrolled to violate these illegal dumpers. Community Board 15 supports whatever investigative work is needed to track and arrest those responsible for illegal postings. The district is plastered with illegal flyers on poles, mailboxes and gates.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

CB 15 has seen a sharp increase of sinkholes throughout the District. With the effects of Superstorm Sandy and the very harsh winter our streets are showing signs of decay and collapse, posing a dangerous condition. The Department of Environmental Protection needs the

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manpower to repair sinkholes as well as clean sewer lines periodically.

CONEY ISLAND WATER TREATMENT PLANT

Despite many complaints about the odor from the Treatment Plant in the past, we haven't received any complaints recently and applaud the staff at the Plant for their diligent work in keeping the plant safe and clean. We believe the plant must be kept up to date with maintenance so the odor problem does not return.

Health and Human Services

DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING

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

CONEY ISLAND HOSPITAL

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

Coney Island Hospital is still rebuilding from the damage it sustained from Superstorm Sandy. All the necessary funding must be

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allocated to make sure Coney Island Hospital is completely repaired and made flood resilient.

Housing and Land Use

DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS

The District is always evolving with new construction and renovations to existing homes. Many locations where a single family home once stood are now occupied by multi-family dwellings. A severe strain has been put on an already burdened infrastructure and because of the lack of parking spaces many homeowners have resorted to illegal parking pads in front of their homes. These illegal parking pads have created less green space in our Community and violators should be forced to replace green space. Due to the desirability of this neighborhood, every open lot and spot of green space has been used for new construction. The severe flooding from Superstorm Sandy is proof positive of the need for more green space.

With the inordinate amount of construction in our district, after Superstorm Sandy, the Department of Buildings must be supplied with an adequate amount of field inspectors. These inspectors must have the equipment and the clerical support needed to carry out their duties. Funding must be made available for evening and weekend inspectors. With added personnel each issue could be handled more expediently. The Department of Buildings must be given the ability to criminally charge these violators who chronically ignore Zoning ordinances.

Community Board 15 is urging a change in the uses allowed in R Districts. The Community Facilities designation must be revisited and certain limitations must be placed on the allowable locations. We are trying to prevent medical facilities and community facilities from being "as of right" in these areas. Our residential communities are inundated with medical facilities opening adjacent to private homes. These facilities are destroying the character of our Community. Narrow one way streets are congested with ambulances creating obstacles beyond tolerance.

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HOUSING COMPLEXES

Community Board No.15 is home to 2 housing complexes; the Nostrand Houses and the Sheepshead Houses. They are both publicly built and operated housing developments. Adequate funding must be allocated for the maintenance and security of these residential units. Much needed Security Cameras and a Back-Up generator must be installed and any repair work must be completed after Superstorm Sandy.

Parks and Recreation

Community Board 15 must look for areas throughout the District to add the much needed green space. The lack of green added to the flooding from Superstorm Sandy.

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

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

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

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

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Funding has been allocated through the Governor's New York Rising Program and implementation must be a priority for this community. Such projects as the Emmons Avenue Green Streets and the Manhattan Beach Bathhouse should be put at the top of the priority list.

Public Safety, NYPD/ FDNY

61st POLICE PRECINCT

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

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

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

TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT

In addition to patrols by 61st Precinct Officers, Community Board No.15 should have a detail of Traffic Enforcements Agents assigned to the District to patrol the commercial strips, the major thoroughway avenues and in the summer months the "No Parking" zone of Manhattan Beach. Strict enforcement would help alleviate traffic back-ups on major cross streets.

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FIRE DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK

After Superstorm Sandy it was imperative to have first responders ready for any event and it is necessary for each Fire House to have backup generators so that they could maintain power in the event of another diaster. Firehouses should be equiped with the latest communication systems as well.

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

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

Transportation

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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

Community Board No.15 believes the process of repairing street light outages, missing signs and pothole repairs should be streamlined. The length of time needed for these minor repairs causes frustration to the area residents. Many of the major streets in

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this community are in dire need of reconstruction due to the many utilities digging up these roadways.

A priority of Department of Transportation should also be to find parking solutions to ease the congestion in this District.

MTA

With local express service on the B and Q lines, there must be better coordination so local commuters can easily change for express service.

The MTA must work on scheduling bus service throughout the District where “bunching” is a problem (Coney Island Avenue line, Avenue U line, Nostrand line, Kings Highway, etc.)

Youth Services and Education

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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

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

DYCD

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

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Conclusion

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

Theresa Scavo

Theresa Scavo
Chairperson

Pearl Burg

Pearl Burg
District Manager