



## **COMMUNITY BOARD # 4Q**

Serving: Corona, Corona Heights, Elmhurst, and Newtown

**46-11 104<sup>th</sup> Street**

**Corona, New York**

**11368-2882**

Telephone: 718-760-3141

Fax: 718-760-5971

e-mail: [qn04@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:qn04@cb.nyc.gov)

**Helen Marshall**  
Borough President

**Louis Walker**  
Chairperson

**Barry Grodenchik**  
Deputy Borough President  
Director of Community Boards

**Christian Cassagnol**  
District Manager

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## **STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS**

### **FISCAL YEAR 2015**

Community Board # 4Q (CB#4Q) is a culturally diverse community that encompasses the areas of Corona (south of Roosevelt Avenue) and Elmhurst. The total land area of Community Board # 4Q is 2.4 square miles, bounded by Roosevelt Avenue to the North, Flushing Meadow Corona Park to the East, Horace Harding Expressway to the South, and New York Connecting Railroad (CSX) to the West.

According to the 2010 Census, at the time the population of CB #4Q was 172,598 a 3.3% increase from the 2000 Census. With the steady growth in population over the past twenty years and the vast amount of new building permits issued, the actual population has more than likely exceeded the 200,000 mark. Due to the fact that service levels are based in part on Census information, it is imperative that adequate funding be provided to the residents of CB#4Q. Service agency budgets must be increased to keep pace with our growing population.

The ongoing problem of overdevelopment continues to grow within CB#4Q. It is not uncommon that older housing stock, (one and two family homes) are demolished and replaced with new buildings that house three and four family homes. The current levels of service and infrastructure can no longer absorb the additional housing units. In order to secure the future stability of CB#4Q, careful consideration must be given to the rezoning of our community.

The over-usage of already limited City Services will only continue to have a detrimental effect on our youth population. Overcrowded schools are common ground, after school programs are overcrowded, and the few libraries within our vicinity are used far beyond capacity. Our youth cannot become responsible adults without the proper resources provided to them.

We cannot turn a blind eye, and will continue to advocate for a safe, affordable, and well balanced environment for our residents.

The following is a statement of needs and priorities focused on improving the quality of life for all of the residents in the Community Board #4Q district.

#### DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING (DFTA)

According to the population counts of the 2010 Census, 23.1% (39,833) of the residents in the CB #4Q area are 45 to 64 years old and 9.4% (16,180) are 65 years and over.

These numbers would now be substantially greater taking into account the steady growth in population within CB#4Q. Senior citizens are in need of special services, such as Meals on Wheels, homecare, and help with shopping and home cleaning. Our senior population is also in need of social activities and programs that are supplied by senior citizen centers. Community Board # 4Q is in need of at least two additional senior centers, one to be located in the area of Corona Avenue and 108th Street and one to be located in the Lefrak City area to address the needs of the current senior population and be prepared to address the needs of the future senior population. With the vast wealth of life experiences that seniors have to offer, they could act as mentors to our youth in intergenerational programs. Let us not forget the caregivers. The caregivers require some relief from their daily responsibilities. An increase in services is necessary for this segment of the population. The Department for the Aging must also monitor all senior programs to insure that the services provided are in the best interest of our senior population.

#### DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS (DOB)

The issue of DOB not actively following through on inspections and violations continues to be detrimental to CB#4Q. In order to perform inspections and enforcement in a professional and timely manner, the hiring of additional qualified personnel is of utmost importance.

New building permits should be issued only after it is determined that the existing infrastructure can accommodate an increase in new housing units; in addition, new building permits and applications for major alterations and enlargements must not be issued until all prior violations and payments of fines are answered.

#### DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING (DCP)

It is a fact that the infrastructure of CB #4Q was built mainly for low-density housing. The addition of larger housing units at double and in some cases triple the size of the preexisting structure places an undue strain on our infrastructure.

Such overdevelopment without proper planning affects CB4Q and its residents on all facets. The Dept. of Sanitation is overwhelmed with the increase in trash generated by the larger units; Police and Fire department response times are up due to the increase in traffic clogging our roads, already overused schools and hospitals are stretched beyond capacity, and reports of flooding and sewer backups are at an all-time high.

Community Board #4Q is requesting that The Department of City Planning evaluate the current zoning in CB#4Q. We are requesting that residential areas in need of down zoning and areas where affordable housing can be built be identified. New zoning regulations must include additional off-street parking provisions for each unit built.

On the note of overcrowding and overdevelopment is the commercial corridor along Queens Boulevard. Existing commercial one story buildings are being replaced with high density buildings at a rate too fast to be kept up with. A planned balance between residential and commercial buildings along the boulevard is necessary so Queens Boulevard does not continue to be a boulevard of haphazardly placed buildings.

We look forward to providing and helping DCP to achieve a balance between development and what is healthy for the future of CB#4Q

#### DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS (DCA)

The streets of CB #4Q are plagued with “cars for sale” parked on our street corners. Cars are parked without plates or with out-of-state plates that are moved from car to car and a telephone number is written on the vehicles' windows advertising the vehicle for sale. When the vehicles without plates are tagged by the Department of Sanitation as derelict vehicles the so-called owners move the vehicles to a different location to avoid the tow. These second hand car dealers continue to use our streets as their showrooms.

We call on the Department of Consumer Affairs to enforce the second-hand-dealer regulations in our district.

A continuing and fast growing problem is the sudden proliferation of street vendors. With the substantial growth and new venues sprouting in CB#4Q, ie: Corona Plaza, the spike in street vendors within the district is at an all-time high. We adamantly ask that careful consideration be given in the issuance of licenses to street vendors. Furthermore, more aggressive enforcement is also required to assure that vendors not be located where they impact the operations of a store. Store owners have a high enough overhead (rent, utilities, wages, and taxes.) It is an injustice to a store owner when a vendor sets up in front of or adjacent to their establishment selling the same goods that they stock in the store.

#### QUEENS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (QEDC)

The Pedestrian Plaza located at Corona Plaza (Roosevelt Avenue, National Street to 104th Street) is currently functional, and has seen a large amount of activity. We congratulate and thank our Council Member, DOT, and QEDC in their joint effort for very successfully providing our residents with a great public space they can enjoy.

The proposal to convert the plaza to a pedestrian mall was presented to a joint committee of CB #4Q's Land Use, Transportation, and Parks Committees on April 15th, 2008. The proposal was then presented to the full membership of CB #4Q on June 3rd, 2008.

It must however be noted that despite its success, street vendors are slowly trickling onto the plaza at an alarming rate. Proper enforcement must be taken into consideration to assure that all the vendors using the plaza are in fact legally licensed, and are following regulations.

#### DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DOE) SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY (SCA)

Although New York City as a whole will experience a downward trend in school enrollment in

the next ten years, the school district encompassing CB#4Q will see an upward trend in enrollment. Schools cannot be built fast enough. We will continue to support the Department of Education and the School Construction Authority in their efforts to identify additional new sites for schools.

The SCA has begun the first phase of the construction of PS315 which will house 1,100 students, and is expected to be completed by 2015.

CB#4Q will continue to work with the SCA as well as monitor any decisions made within the district with reference to the safety of our youth, and locations for newly built/proposed schools.

## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (DEP)

For some time now, CB#4Q has been requesting that a more aggressive campaign be undertaken to upgrade the water delivery and sewer system. The overbuilding of the community is detrimental to our sewer systems.

From the time a request for service for a collapsed and/or broken catch basin is logged to the time the actual repair is performed needs to be shortened.

Additional inspectors and repair crews are necessary to relieve the back log of service requests. We welcome the use of "Bioswale" tree pits, but concern should be brought into just how much soil is being put into these pits as there is a possibility that trees may not fully mature. Additional research may be needed.

Queens Boulevard from the Long Island Expressway to the CSX Line has experienced an inordinate amount of development. High rise commercial and residential developments have replaced the typical low rise development along Queens Boulevard and many new high rise developments are in the planning stages. Business owners and residents have reported flooding that is progressively worsening each year. The sewer drainage system currently in place is not able to process the demand placed on it. A complete study, reconstruction, and upgrade of the existing sewer infrastructure should be implemented.

Junction Boulevard from the Long Island Expressway to Roosevelt Avenue, 57th Avenue from Queens Boulevard to 99th Street, W/B Horace Harding Expressway from 108th Street to Queens Boulevard. The above areas flood on a routine basis, which is progressively worsening each year, especially in the Lefrak City area (Junction Boulevard, W/B Horace Harding Expressway, 99th Street, and 57th Avenue). A complete study, reconstruction, and upgrade of the existing sewer infrastructure should be implemented.

111th Street from Corona Avenue to Roosevelt Avenue: Numerous reports of flooding from residents along 111th Street with flooding conditions worsening every year. A complete study, reconstruction, and upgrade of the existing sewer infrastructure should be implemented. We have noted that several markings for Bioswale sites have been seen along 111th Street, but this is by no means a permanent solution, and is a system that should work in conjunction with sewer upgrades, not as a replacement. How well Bioswale pits will work remains to be seen.

## FIRE DEPARTMENT (FDNY)

A budget increase for the Fire Department is necessary to meet the additional demands placed on our fire companies due to an increase in population. The Fire Safety Education Outreach unit provides valuable information on fire safety to our residents. This program must be maintained and be funded for the purchase of additional smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.

Overcrowding and illegal conversions have caused a number of fires in the CB#4Q District; FDNY should be part of a task force with DOB, NYPD, and DoHMH that investigates illegal occupancies and unsafe building conditions.

We will continue to hold our fire houses in the highest regards and thank them for their help in keeping our community safe.

#### DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & MENTAL HYGIENE (DoHMH)

As of late, the DoHMH is overwhelmed with complaints concerning mobile food vendors and rodent infestations.

Mobile food vendors are rapidly increasing, and so careful consideration should be given to issuing licenses to mobile food vendors; inspections should hold food vendors accountable to the same standards as restaurants.

Rodent infestations are more common ground mostly due to the vast amounts of vacant undeveloped properties within the confines of CB#4Q.

While we thank the agency for its help, additional personnel are needed to maintain consistent levels of inspections. We support the continuation and enhancement of programs that address the health needs of our growing population.

#### QUEENS LIBRARY

CB#4Q is one of the most ethnically diverse communities in the world. The budgets for our libraries must reflect the growing demand of our diverse population. We will continue to support the expansion of operating hours necessary to accommodate the needs of the public.

The rebuilding and expansion of the Elmhurst Branch continues. On July 26, 2012 a ceremonial pouring of the foundation's concrete was held. The \$27.8 million project will be 30,000 square feet and scheduled for completion in 2014.

CB #4Q requests construction of a new reference library in the vicinity of 108th Street and Corona Avenue, which will help service the South East portion of CB #4Q which is currently lacking Library services.

#### DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION (DPR)

Trees are a vital component of our environment.

At the very least maintain the recently approved seven year pruning cycle and restore pruner and climber positions to the DPR. Additional funds are needed in order to reduce the pruning cycle to five years. A five year pruning cycle will produce stronger, healthier, and better looking trees.

Safety is also of major concern. CB#4Q was lucky enough to not have been too affected by Hurricane Sandy, but branches from unpruned trees did in fact leave a substantial amount of damage in their wake.

CB #4Q receives many complaints of dead and/or diseased trees, branches breaking, and branches that are low to the ground forcing pedestrians to walk around the trees. Tree pruning needs to increase, with an emphasis on emergency service. We support and increase in DPR's budget to allow for a five-year pruning cycle.

A number of the parks in the CB #4Q area are also in need of re-design and renovation including,

but not limited to Newtown Playground (ID #Q041), and Louis Simeone Park (ID #Q474). CB#4Q would like to thank our Council Member for a generous amount of funding given to aid with the renovation of Veterans Grove (ID #Q013.) We look forward to seeing this project come to fruition.

We will continue to support the completion of the renovations to the five remaining Center Islands located on 111th street between 45th Avenue and Corona Avenue, in front of Flushing Meadows Corona Park.

The US OPEN at the USTA National Tennis Center and NY METS' baseball games at Citifield need to be coordinated. There should not be any home games scheduled for the NY METS when the US OPEN is at the USTA National Tennis Center. The surrounding communities cannot absorb the traffic impact of the two events at the same time.

#### POLICE DEPARTMENT (NYPD)

Currently the 110th Precinct is housed in an antiquated building with no facilities for parking of police vehicles. A new Precinct house along with adequate parking is a necessity. We will continue to support the relocation and building of a new precinct house for the 110th Precinct, which should be located as close as possible to the geographic center of Community Board #4Q. After the opening of the new Precinct, the existing Precinct house could be utilized for NYPD special operations.

With the limited resources allotted to the 110th Precinct, the agency is doing a great job protecting the public. The population of CB #4Q is growing daily, and so additional funding is necessary in order to increase staffing levels in the 110th Precinct to keep pace with our rapidly-growing population.

The 110th Precinct is not coterminous with CB # 4Q; the precinct covers Willets Point (CB # 7Q) and Flushing Meadows Corona Park which is home to the NY METS at Citifield, the USTA National Tennis Center, Queens Theater In The Park, The Hall of Science, The Queens Zoo, The Queens Museum, and the Aquatic Center. The Park is also host to many large cultural events and it is used by the residents of Queens on a daily basis, with weekends seeing the largest concentration of park visitors.

In order to protect New York City's investment in this park permanent Police presence must be established to serve Flushing Meadows-Corona Park and Willets Point exclusively.

#### DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION (DSNY)

CB#4Q commends the DSNY for their hard work in trash pickup, street cleaning, and snow pickups. It does not go unnoticed.

We ask however that budget increases reflect the increase in housing units in the CB#4Q area. It is imperative that education be enhanced regarding the laws and rules for recycling. Too many residents in CB#4Q do not understand the constantly changing rules and regulations of recycling. Before residents receive summonses, they should first be educated.

An increase in education and enforcement of DSNY regulations on commercial streets should also be addressed.

## TAXI AND LIMOUSINE COMMISSION (TLC)

While For-Hire Vehicles (FHV's) are necessary to fill the small gap not covered by public transportation, CB #4Q is well served by train and bus lines. Community Board #4Q is saturated with For-Hire Vehicles; they are everywhere competing for street hails. Street hails as they exist must be stopped; they are a danger to the passenger and the public. Many of these drivers constantly violate Vehicle & Traffic Laws, cutting off other motorists, making illegal u-turns, going through stop lights & signs, and harassing other motorists. We have witnessed drivers sleeping overnight in their vehicles, and throwing trash out of their vehicles onto our streets. These actions must cease, and enforcement must be consistent and enhanced.

Yellow Cab service is almost non-existent in Queens. If FHV's cannot or will not abide by TLC and NYS Department of Motor Vehicles regulations, perhaps incentives could be given to Yellow cabs to stay and work in Queens.

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (DOT)

Due to the rapid increase in population CB #4Q is experiencing comes an increase in traffic. Staff increases are necessary to keep pace with the repair requests generated by our heavily used roadways.

Increase and maintain funding for the curb and sidewalk replacement program.

Increase Staff for Roadway Maintenance (reconstruction and pothole crews).

Reconstruction of Streets:

- 41st Avenue from 72nd Street to Broadway including 78th Street, 79th Street, & 80th Street from 41st Avenue to Roosevelt Avenue are in need of reconstruction.

- Reconstruct streets bounded by 57 Avenue, Long Island Railroad, Grand Ave. and Queens Blvd.

- Milling and repaving on Broadway from Queens Blvd. to Baxter Avenue.

CB #4Q is pleased to see Corona Plaza, (Roosevelt Avenue, from National Street to 104th Street) underway. The Pedestrian Plaza located at Corona Plaza is an exciting development. With the first phase already completed, the area is now filled with chairs, tables and umbrellas for residents to enjoy. With this implementation, business has gone up. We look forward to the next steps. The proposal to convert the plaza to a pedestrian mall was presented to a joint committee of CB #4Q's Land Use, Transportation, and Parks Committees on April 15, 2008. The proposal was then presented to the full membership of CB #4Q on June 03, 2008. Additionally there were other meetings with the local councilperson regarding the conversion.

Thank you is extended to our legislators and all those involved in the process to make this much needed plaza an exciting community development. Corona means "crown" in Spanish and this is truly a jewel in the crown and will be enjoyed by future generations for many years to come.

## METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (MTA)

Due to the population increase, and new commercial developments in the Community Board #4Q district, the 7, E, F, M, and R lines are heavily used. An increase in service must be implemented to meet the demand, specifically around the corridor of Queens Blvd.

We are also very happy to see that the first steps have been taken to re-implement the LIRR Port Washington line on Broadway in Queens.

## YOUTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (DYCD)

The 2010 Census states that within CB #4Q resides 42,152 (24.5 % of our population) children under the age of 19 years. The need for additional youth services, such as After School Programs, ESL courses, day care centers, intergenerational programs, graffiti prevention, and gang activity prevention has never been greater. An increase in the budget for youth services is necessary to meet these additional demands. Community Board input into the funding process for these programs must be re-established.

## NEW YORK STATE LIQUOR AUTHORITY (SLA)

While the State Liquor Authority is a New York State agency, an increase in enforcement of SLA Regulations in New York City is a necessity. Additional investigators must be hired for the upcoming fiscal year to address the growing demand for SLA licenses in NYC. The SLA should also be required to provide written explanations to Community Boards of their decisions that are not consistent with those of the Community Board.

Furthermore, we are requesting that the time for restaurants to notify the Community Boards of their intent to renew be extended to 60 days, and not 30.

We fully support our Assemblyman's pending legislation in initiating this.

## COMMUNITY BOARDS

### Pending Budget Cuts

In the mid 1990's, Community Boards received a budget cut of \$28,000. We were reimbursed \$18,000 but never received the \$10,000 shortfall. Through the years, the only money allocated to the Boards was for union raises. Community Boards never recovered from those drastic cuts.

We are operating on a less than adequate budget. All of our expenses have risen: contracts, supplies, postage etc. It is unfair to ask the Boards to take the same cut percentage wise as the larger agencies.

It is vital for the Mayor and the City Council to exempt Community Boards from the latest round of cuts so that we can continue to serve our communities.

The Chairperson, District Manager, Members, and Staff of Community Board #4Q wish to thank all of our agency representatives for their help in resolving many of the issues encountered during the year.

Sincerely,

*Louis Walker*

Louis Walker  
Chairperson, CB4Q