



# COMMUNITY BOARD No. 1

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July 11, 2006

## BROOKLYN COMMUNITY BOARD No. 1 STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS

### Fiscal Year 2008

Pursuant to the requirements of the New York City Charter, Brooklyn Community Board No. 1 (Greenpoint/Williamsburg) submits its Statement of Community District Needs for the upcoming year. It is our hope that the items identified in this document will be given priority consideration by the City of New York in order to further enhance the development of a cooperative planning process and insure an improvement in the quality of life for all of our residents.

#### OVERVIEW

There is a wave upon us.

Not a wave of destruction, but a wave of construction.

Yet, the undertow of this wave will negatively impact the lives of the residents of Greenpoint-Williamsburg for generations to come.

This tide of grief has already created a climate of highly inflated rents, denied lease renewals to both residential and commercial tenants, and a forced exodus of longtime commercial tenants into the less desirable areas and even out of state.

And the erosion of the existing community has not stopped there!

Like the construction of the Brooklyn Queens Expressway in the 1940's which split communities and demolished the Mt. Carmel Cathedral (for the so called betterment of the transportation network) this wave destroys dreams for the homesteaders, the poor, middle working class of this community – the people who chose to stay, when it not was not trendy or chic.

**Without a guarantee of affordability they have been forgotten.**

And as the flood waters move inland, developers continue to swoop down upon our small stable communities and create havoc by demolishing our quaint existing structures, building upward and straining our limited services plus an already overburdened antiquated infrastructure.

As you know, planning for our community and waterfront has been in our sights for the last 15 years, culminating with the NYC Council approval of our two 197A plans.

This was an Olympic undertaking by our Board that was the direct result of much sacrifice and voluminous hours of dedication to our community.

The infusion of approximately 40,000 persons (and at the least 8,780 dwelling units) in our community will place even greater burdens on the already overtaxed city services addressing the needs of our community.

Plans developed by HPD to protect our constituency have yet to be implemented and residents are being displaced on a daily basis. **HPD must document this population and allow these stakeholders a preferential status when low income units are available.** Approximately one year after the approval of the Waterfront Plan, "O" units of affordable housing have been built in the plan area and the devastation caused by upland development has had an irreversible effect on the entire district. **By the time the trickle down effect of affordable units come on line, the community will have been resettled by new faces from other areas and the displaced residents a mere memory.**

We further note the following needs:

- A. Need for increased space at the 94<sup>th</sup> Precinct
- B. Need for a new firehouse to serve the Northside and Waterfront community as a result of a closure in 2003
- C. Need for modernized services at the Greenpoint Station - service is obsolete at this station of the US Postal Service
- D. Need to alleviate overcrowding of the train service - especially the Bedford Avenue "L" Station, and continued cuts in service at the "G" train
- E. Need for a hospital or emergency facility within the confines of Community District #1 area – none exists now!
- F. Need to create a shuttle bus and express bus service along Kent Avenue and Franklin Street – to ease transportation to Manhattan
- G. McCarren Park Pool – this facility still lies dormant and derelict since 1981. The entire complex needs reconstruction to bring to fruition the agreed upon concept for a multi-purpose facility which includes an Olympic size pool.

Existing commercial activities have also been put at risk, while landowners are certainly attracted to higher rents and dividing rental units into more profitable ventures, businesses are crying out for safe havens to conduct their business with a degree of stability and the opportunity to expand. Existing jobs must be retained in the community and the Administration must accommodate these industries that chose to stay when many others left!

Especially these jobs created in latter years by businesses such as "Citistorage" who has become a staple in our community. These employment opportunities must be protected. Local employment strategies are the foundation of our success.

And we will address additional needs in this document as we read on!

However, we would be remiss if we did not recall the City's own standards regarding open and green space.

The citywide average for open and green space is 3.5 acres per 1,000 residents. Community District 1 ranks near the bottom of the list in terms of open space per capita, with 0.6 acres per 1,000 residents.

With the increase of population expected from the rezoning (25%) the new ratio (0.7) would still fall far below what the New York City Department of City Planning has as its own guideline (2.5 acres).

We therefore urge you to adopt these recommendations of Community Board No. 1.

We now present the specific components of this **Statement of Community Needs**:

## **HOUSING**

Housing in Community Board No. 1 is a top priority that must be addressed as a critical need. If our neighborhoods are to remain viable and attract/retain jobs and a stable work force, an adequate supply of decent and affordable housing must be available at various income levels.

Community Board No. 1 generally supports the policies articulated by the City, that provides an unprecedented portion of City Capital Budget funding for housing in a manner that gives increased priority to the development of low and moderate income housing. As we have stated in previous years, three general principles must be incorporated into any equitable comprehensive housing plan:

**FIRST**, those currently funded housing programs that have proven successful must be held harmless from the reduction in past federal assistance, even if an increased City Tax Levy contribution is required to achieve this end.

**SECOND**, in allocating additional housing funds between the poor and middle class economic segments of our society, it is essential that the first priority be assigned to the poorest segment of our population, those who must bear the brunt of the housing crisis. However, we strongly support the need for affordable housing for all economic groups.

**THIRD**, any additional housing funds must be allocated in a fair and equitable manner that responds to the most critical housing needs of each Community District, with a clear and largely advertised marketing throughout the district.

We will now apply these principles to the major housing concerns of Greenpoint/Williamsburg:

We are extremely encouraged by the Administration's "Points of Agreement" with the NYC Council and its consideration of the Greenpoint-Williamsburg zoning and related ULURP actions. Several points were noted in this document, including affordable housing, which the Administration agrees to significantly increase through a variety of mechanisms including inclusionary zoning, financial and tax incentives. In addition to increasing the number of affordable units in the district, the Administration agreed to anti-harassment provisions to be provided separately, as part of a follow-up corrective action. This anti-harassment initiative must be delivered on a community grassroots level, through a Northside group with a significant track record of achievement. There are plans to create a Greenpoint-Williamsburg Affordable Housing and Infrastructure Fund of up to \$10 million, to be managed by HPD, using proceeds received from the sale of air rights from the MTA site on Commercial Street in Greenpoint. A Greenpoint-Williamsburg Tenant Legal Fund (\$2 million) is also to be established from these same proceeds – the fund will primarily serve to protect existing tenants from displacement and harassment. Harassment and displacement has already begun.

We applaud the Deputy Mayor's newly established Greenpoint-Williamsburg Community Advisory Board and will embrace participating on the committee with a representative. The newly appointed Advisory Board is charged with monitoring adherence to these points of agreement, including but not limited to, the development of affordable housing units, the development of open space, the implementation of industrial preservation and the periodic review of social infrastructure needs and mitigations in the Greenpoint-Williamsburg Community. **While their agenda is lengthy, we wish them well in their endeavors and hope that they will be proactive with their charge.**

We urge that the Williamsburg Urban Renewal Area Cross Subsidy Fund (\$2,984,000) be democratically administered and dedicated to the maintenance of the balanced development of this community. HPD must be innovative in the distribution of these already stagnant funds. **We have made this statement for several years now and the Administration has not responded!** Perhaps these dollars should be used to purchase the vacant Pfizer Pharmaceutical property and develop badly needed affordable housing on this site.

All efforts must be made to implement those previously proposed projects that have yet to be funded. It is essential that the City realizes the need for low income rental housing and provide the much needed funds that will help compensate for the past tragic loss of Federal housing subsidies. The inclusion of such programs by the Mayor, an overall comprehensive housing program, is an absolute necessity for our district. Homeownership in low-income communities is seriously weak. In other areas of the country, Section 8 subsidy is utilized for home purchasing. We urge that if a similar pilot program is ever brought to NYC, that Greenpoint and Williamsburg be considered for inclusion.

It is understood that several developers have already proclaimed their desire to build "affordable housing", however, affordable by AMI is not necessarily affordable to our constituency, **these residents who have vested sweat equity in our district and colonized this community when others chose to stay away must not be forgotten.** Affordable housing must be constructed "on site" at the waterfront and not scattered into less desirable pockets of the district.

## **PUBLIC HOUSING**

The District contains nine housing developments with 6,656 dwelling units administered by the NYC Housing Authority (NYCHA). These represent an extremely valuable low income housing resource. Additional City Tax Levy revenues must again be allocated to compensate for federal budget cutbacks, and provide for the best possible maintenance of these facilities. We continue to support the needed renovations to these various developments. Community Board No. 1 continues to oppose the NYCHA's plan to meet their budgetary requirements by implementing drastic increases to fees for service, maintenance and rent for the low income tenants of public housing developments.

## **SENIOR CITIZEN HOUSING**

We note that there is a great need for housing of the elderly. An increasing senior citizen population in Community Board No. 1 (over 20,000) remains of paramount concern. In the past, we have been successful in obtaining Section 202 (federal) funding for various senior housing developments in the district: Jennings Hall, Monsignor Vetro Houses, Metropolitan Houses, Monsignor Jarka Hall, Los Sures Senior Citizens Development, Dupont Street Mary D'Angelis Senior Housing) and Huron Street Senior Housing. We urge that similar efforts continue in Greenpoint/Williamsburg, with additional Section 202 sites submitted by private and City sources and evaluated by Community Board No. 1 prior to being recommended to the City. Where there is a shortage of senior citizen, assisted living housing and nursing homes (**A nursing home was targeted for construction at the former Greenpoint Hospital campus**) in the district, we hope that the City will develop this targeted housing as promised by a previous administration with a said issuance of a letter of site control.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

With the infestation of new construction throughout the entire district we need a commitment from the City for the monitoring of construction safety and abatement of construction-related nuisance(s). We also need increased enforcement of environmental-related issues to ensure that new residential sites (conversions) are safe for habitation.

Demolition often poses additional threats to older and existing adjacent structures. This explosion of new construction in our district has resulted in a rise of adjacent property damage complaints at these sites, as well as building collapses. We propose the establishment of a new "Construction Task Force" under the Department of Buildings, that will double check certification for construction plans and also double check individual sites for compliance and adherence. This pilot program could be funded through a surcharge made for any new construction in CB #1. This would provide the dollars necessary to implement a task force, and should result in the criminal prosecution of engineers/architects who knowingly certify any errant plans.

## **POLICE DEPARTMENT STAFFING**

Adequate police protection is a basic public right, and we urge that Community Board No. 1's two local precincts - the 90<sup>th</sup> and 94<sup>th</sup> - receive their fair share of any additional police staffing.

Community Board # 1 is experiencing a renaissance. Current population statistics topple over census figures as new faces fill our streets as we become the trendy place to live and new residences are constructed or lofts are converted. While we are enjoying this popularity, it comes with a cost.

Our two police precincts, the 90<sup>th</sup> and 94<sup>th</sup>, have become severely overburdened with addressing the many quality of life issues that arise with the many different lifestyles of our new and existing populations. For example, Bedford Avenue (between Metropolitan Avenue and North 12<sup>th</sup> Street) has become a Mecca for bars, eateries -- and on the whole -- a new venue for nightlife in Williamsburg. Policing is a necessary ingredient for this venue to be successful, not only for the City as a tax revenue base, but being able to weave this trend into an existing community. Likewise, the introduction of clubs, bars and galleries in Greenpoint has also created a greater enforcement need - - constituents are walking the street at later hours whereas past trends of earlier bedtimes drew less police action. In lieu of this ever-changing scenario Community Board No. 1 seeks immediate action in the assignment of additional police officers to the 90<sup>th</sup> and 94<sup>th</sup> Police Precincts.

We continue to support the pilot installation of surveillance cameras within the City's subway stations. The cameras have aided the police in deterring crime and apprehending criminals. We support requests made by our local precincts commanders to install these cameras, monitored by NYPD personnel, in our district's stations (G, L, M/J/Z lines).

This should result in the assignment of adequate police officers to each facility to maintain the recently reduced crime rate and maintain around the clock coverage of all police sectors in each precinct. In addition, it is essential that the number of police officers assigned to the nine NYC Housing Authority developments located in Community Board No. 1 be significantly increased.

### **ADULT ESTABLISHMENT ZONING, LIQUOR AND CABARET LICENSES**

In 1995 Community Board No. 1 opposed the City's efforts to regulate and restrict the operation and conduct of Adult Establishments by allocating them to exist only in manufacturing districts. This change in zoning allows for an unfair share of these establishments to have the ability to relocate to communities, such as Greenpoint and Williamsburg that possess large manufacturing areas. We seek the City to progress a strategy addressing this issue to prevent such establishments from opening in a newly developed area.

There has been a sudden sharp increase in the number of applications made to the NY State Liquor Authority for locations in CB #1. The Board is highly concerned about the proliferation and concentration of bars in the district. As its role is only one of advisory capacity, CB #1 urges the Police Department, the Department of Consumer Affairs and the State Liquor Authority to aggressively examine these locations prior to granting or renewing any licenses, and urge that both the 500-foot hearing and 200-foot rulings be used to ascertain an establishment's appropriateness. It appears that the SLA uses this permitting process as a fundraising effort for the State and takes little interest

in the cumulative effort of these drinking establishments on communities. There are currently 1023 licenses in zip code 11211, 476 in 11222, 706 in 11206 and 715 in 11237. We are pleased that the City Council is seeking to step up enforcement by requiring stricter hiring regulations and background criminal checks for employees hired as bouncers at clubs and bars.

Furthermore, Community Board No. 1 pre-warned the Administration that the "Smoking Ban" would project bar-goers into the streets and rear yards of communities to smoke and that must be addressed in any legislation. Unfortunately we were right and we receive voluminous complaints about bar patrons outside bars smoking and sidewalks riddled with cigarette and cigar butts. This quality of life concern must now be addressed by the Administration.

The State should declare a moratorium on all new licenses until a proper review process could be put in place.

### **ANTI - DRUG TASK FORCE**

We note the valuable contribution of the anti-drug SNEU (Street Narcotic Enforcement Unit, housed at the 90<sup>th</sup> Precinct). We urge continued efforts by the NYPD to deter illegal drug dealing in our community and reduce crime.

### **FOOT PATROL**

The foot patrolman is a valuable public safety resource and more personnel must be put on patrol to increase efficiency and address quality of life type complaints. We strongly support the efforts by NYPD and urge that the resources be increased for foot patrol at the various NYCHA developments in the District.

### **OLD 87th PRECINCT BUILDING**

To date the building remains empty and abandoned by the City, having been relinquished by the NYPD to DCAS. Community Board No. 1 recently endorsed (in concept) a plan to convert this building for housing. We support North Brooklyn Development Corporation's efforts to restore this landmark site and maintain the building's character while providing much needed housing.

### **ANTI - ARSON PROGRAMS**

Community Board No. 1 unfortunately, has the distinction of being in the top three of the community districts with the highest suspicious fire rates. For 2005, the Fire Department's statistics for CB #1 show that there were: 6 civilian fire fatalities 3,860 medical emergencies (fire unit only); 3,718 nonfire and nonmedical emergencies, 705 nonstructural fires and 556 structural fires. For 2006, for the first half of the year, CB #1 tied with CB #3 – each having 10 suspicious fires). The recent devastating 10+ alarm fire at the Greenpoint Terminal Market (remarked as rivaling the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center) shows too dramatically the need for fire protection and the full complement needed to investigate and solve suspicious fires. We must not forget that a large percentage of housing stock was lost in our communities during the arson ravages of the 1970's. It was only through prevention, education, investigation and the bringing to justice those persons criminally responsible, was the spread of dire damage stemmed. We continue to rank within the top five community boards in terms of total incidents. As

long as this intolerable situation continues to exist, it is essential that a team of Fire Marshals be specifically assigned to serve community Board No. 1 on a full time basis.

We are concerned that the consolidation, re-deployment and continuing attrition of Fire Marshal personnel has greatly decreased the efficiency of this unit and its ability to effectively perform its role. Today, there are only 80 Fire Marshals and 19 Supervisors for the entire City of NY. In 2002 the FDNY had four Marshal Bases (one in each Borough, except Staten Island). Today there is just one Fire Marshal Base in the entire City!

We seek the Red Cap Program (called this because its 50 Fire Marshals wore red caps to make their presence known in the neighborhood) to be reinstituted. These "Red Caps" worked in two-person teams around the clock responding to every fire. The advantage of the Red Cap is that investigators are on the scene immediately, not waiting to be notified that a blaze was suspicious. Teams of Marshals and Police Detectives worked to investigate arson-related fires and to prosecute the criminals that started them.

### **FDNY/EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**

We continue to be in "shock and awe" with the Mayor's decision to close Engine Company 212 that we are compelled to once again reiterate our extreme and vehement opposition to any Fire Station closings. The future of our community depends on this essential service.

With the closing of St. Catherine's Hospital in 1964 and the Greenpoint Hospital shutdown in 1982, the Greenpoint/Williamsburg community remains void of any hospital facility within its confines. Although vibrant and expanding, the communities of Greenpoint/Williamsburg have an older population, and thus rely on the Fire services, EMS, Engine Companies with defibrillators to be the "man on the spot" when needed. In 2005, fire companies responded to 3,860 emergencies as "Certified First Responders-Defibrillators" in Community Board No. 1 and for the first 6 months of 2006: a total of 4,621 Emergency Medical calls were answered, ranking our district as the second highest in Brooklyn with EMS responses.

As a community in renaissance we have seen a rise in population by 2.8% during the year 2000 census. We believe that this figure is far short of the actual increase (the notable growing population includes many new families with young children, and there is a boom in the restaurant/bar type businesses with many patrons attracted from both inside and outside the community). An increased risk of fire is connected with restaurant operations, as well as possible food/choking hazard emergencies. Many of these restaurants are located on the first floor of wood frame buildings that have residential units above them. We remain concerned about the lack of fire and emergency medical service coverage in our district.

This exodus of the commercial use to that of residential is extremely problematic mainly because most -- if not all -- of the properties are wood beam construction with an extreme potential for fire. Additional projects already completed or are in the works that will create further housing units includes the: HPD - Schaefer Brewery Site: 350 units; Domsey Site: 540 units; Kedem Winery: 450 units. The former Domino Sugar site (11 acres) at our waterfront's edge is being considered for development by the Community Preservation Corporation (we look forward to a dialogue toward developing the site as a



major source of affordable housing). Pending variance requests currently under review, if approved, will create additional housing units. This is just a preliminary compilation of how the population and land use is changing on a daily basis in our area, especially with the recent zoning. The rezoning of the Greenpoint/Williamsburg waterfront and specific inland areas will most certainly create a catalyst for what will most likely result in extremely ambitious housing projections for our waterfront and other areas in the district.

In the time to come, as the waterfront evolves, we will most certainly call upon the Mayor to create services in this area that is most certainly void of fire stations, hospitals, and other essential City services including infrastructure and public transit systems.

How did we close a firehouse on the heels of a major rezoning plan that reportedly will create several thousand additional housing units to an already overburdened area. **Surely someone in the Administration advising the Mayor did not do the math!**

We applaud the Fire Department's efforts to bring better service via the concept of housing EMT bases strategically located in the community. A location was identified and secured within Community Board No.1 (332 Metropolitan Avenue). However, we are distressed that 332 Metropolitan Avenue has yet to have a groundbreaking and that The FDNY has made little attempt if any, to site a location to serve the northern portion of Greenpoint .

The FDNY recently collaborated with the DOT (in Staten Island) on addressing speed bump concerns. The increase in these barriers caused many FDNY personnel and residents to worry that there may be considerable increases in response times for ambulances and fire apparatus. The initial study proved that these mounds yield an increase in response time. DOT routinely seeks our Board to support requests for speed bumps. We therefore, must oppose any such requests until a proper study is conducted demonstrating the safety of this alleged speeding deterrent. We request that further study be done specifically in our district to evaluate these areas of concern.

## **PARKS & RECREATION**

### **INCREASE STAFFING**

The over 91 acres of parkland situated in Community Board No. 1 represent an extremely valuable resource, the potential of which, however, remains to be realized due to the continued erosion of Park Department staff. Clearly, 17 "real" (1 manager, 4 supervisors, 12 full time workers) maintenance workers cannot begin to supply even minimal coverage of our heavily utilized parks, and underscore the need to provide for the proper maintenance of these facilities. We currently have six slots for workers who provide recreational services for youths and administer programs in the district. Although three are located in playgrounds and three at the newly renovated Metropolitan Pool -- this number is insufficient to fully serve Community Board No. 1's district. According to the 1990 census, our District contains over 51,600 residents who are 19 years of age or less, and hosts a heavily used regional park (McCarren Park). We have found that the number of children in the district is steadily increasing as can be seen with the corresponding increases of public and private school enrolled pupils (kindergarten - 8<sup>th</sup> grade). A minimum of 5 more supervisory staff positions and 30 employee staff positions are badly needed. Specifically, additional maintenance staff must be

assigned to the following facilities: McCarren Park, Cooper Park, Sternberg Park (Lindsay Park), Sgt. Dougherty), P.S. 84 Playground, Martinez Playground, La Guardia Playground, Bushwick Houses Pool. Beyond this, it is essential that adequate recreation staffing be assigned to Metropolitan Pool and such major facilities as McCarren, McGolrick and Sternberg Parks. Finally, firm commitments to secure adequate, year round, recreation, security and medical first aid staffing at McCarren Pool, after the facility reopens, is essential and must be made a very high departmental priority.

### **McCARREN PARK AND POOL (P-819)**

Since its opening in 1936, McCarren Pool has been a valuable Summertime resource to the youth of our community, and North Brooklyn, and it is imperative that its reconstruction proceeds, as promptly as possible. Community Board No. 1 is pleased that a community consensus was reached in February 2001 regarding the derelict facility. We support the feasibility plan presented by the consultant firm, Vollmer Associates, to redevelop the site to include an Olympic size pool, a multi-purpose year round facility and an ice skating/inline skating rink. This concept has gained support from the Community and the Board's McCarren Park Pool Task Force and we look forward to achieving funding for the project. As of August 2005, the project's cost estimate was just above \$40 million for the plan supported by CB #1. The Board has supported a feasibility design that was presented by the Parks Department regarding the site in 2001. We continue to urge funding for this project and support an interim plan to create a useful temporary space at the pool site. We were pleased to learn that the Mayor provided \$1 million dollars for capital budget appropriations for an interim use. However, it is extremely distressing to see that the \$1 million dollars has neither been spent nor developed as a plan to be spent. **This poor attempt merely reflects smoke and mirrors as the Administration continues to neglect and shun its responsibility toward this North Brooklyn regional facility.**

**We believe that yet another Administration has abandoned this project and has projected a new vision. A vision not aimed at recreation, but aimed at creating a convenient performance venue for "L" train riders who reside in Manhattan.**

Most of the acreage, especially the adjacent Abate Playground has received benefits of renovation or upgrading. These efforts have restored the majority of this park's recreational uses. In fact, these areas are now more heavily used than ever. In fact, parents of children who use the facility ("Park Moms") take an active role in the playground and make recommendations to the Parks Department for improvements. The pool's derelict and abandoned condition does not provide any positive use and has become a severe problem for public safety.

McCarren Park is basically divided into three large parcels with different park uses. Each parcel is separated by roadways from each other. We seek the Parks Department to address the need for additional comfort station facilities as the only one available is in the existing Park Field House located in the portion with the baseball field. The walk is too far for the children at the playground and isolated from the handball courts, running track and soccer field.

Although a community consensus has now been reached, funding has not yet materialized and the **Parks Department must take an aggressive lead and own up to their problem as they did with another deteriorated pool in Flushing Meadow Park.**

We continue to urge funding for the other portions of the park that have been approved by the Board.

We thank Council Member David S. Yassky for scheduling funds for a portable ice skating rink to be located in McCarren Park, and for funding the newly completed renovation project in the park's Oval Track & Field, which included installation of a state of the art synthetic turf and improvements to the area's drainage. As part of the rezoning, the Administration has put money in the budget for lighting the soccer field and we look forward to its implementation. Preferences for its use must be given to bonafide Greenpoint/Williamsburg youth groups.

### **METROPOLITAN POOL (P-986)**

Met Pool now serves Community Board No. 1 in a more effective manner than ever before. The City should further support the valuable voluntary efforts of the Friends of Met Pool by assigning additional recreation staff to this facility and extending hours of operation to further meet the needs of the community.

### **OTHER PARK PROJECTS**

The Board supports the City's funding of renovations for the various playgrounds. In our view, the upgrading of these deteriorated recreation areas constitutes a major need.

We reinforce our past support for those additional park reconstruction projects: Greenpoint Playground, La Guardia Playground, Classon Playground, any additional projects in the inception stage. The Tennis Courts at McCarren Park are heavily utilized during the warmer season. As dusk approaches, play is made easier by the cool of the evening. Players have requested that lighting be placed in the park to allow practice and matches to continue into later hours. The courts are in need of immediate resurfacing. Lighting at the handball courts in McCarren Park will allow play to extend into early evening.

### **GRAND FERRY PARK**

The New York State Power Authority's offer of \$300,000 to revamp the park must be expeditiously embraced by the New York City Parks Department. **This money, which was secured by Community Board No. 1 and donated by NYPA in 2004 has yet to be spent. Continued foot dragging by Parks has resulted in inferior service to residents of our district.**

### **MANHATTAN AVENUE STREET END PARK**

As part of the Manhattan Avenue reconstruction, a park was designed where the street meets the bulkhead and we look forward to construction being completed soon.

### **SAND PARK**

The Williamsburg Bridge reconstruction project is progressing rapidly and we look forward to the rehabilitation of Sand Park, the mapped park playground beneath it. Community Board No. 1 demands the restoration of this mapped parkland to its "pre-destruction" use by the NYC Department of Transportation in reconstruction of the Williamsburg Bridge. Once this park is completed, it will serve the community with additional recreational space and begin a connection between the waterfront and the upland blocks. The Williamsburg Waterfront 197-a plan seeks the development of a waterfront promenade circumnavigating the DOT property under the Williamsburg Bridge and providing an additional "greenway" for the community. We call upon the Mayor to intervene on our behalf and restore this park in as much as the DOT and Parks have failed to begin a meaningful dialogue.

### **STERNBERG PARK**

We thank Council Member Diana Reyna for funding projects to reconstruct the Sternberg Park and Playground, including a new comfort station and installation of a state of the art synthetic turf opening in Summer 2006.

Community Board No. 1 continues to support the valuable work that volunteers do to help our neighborhood parks and we hope that the Parks Department will increase their efforts in this area. Efforts to instill pride about our parks are applauded. We look forward to the resuming of the Parks Department efforts to display historical markers and educational plaques in the District's inventory.

In efforts to address public safety, lighting in each of the Board's parks need to be evaluated and enhanced. Increased lighting will allow better visibility at their perimeters and interiors.

Convenient location of comfort stations is a constant request made by park users. We urge upgrading of facilities that now exist and the introduction of new ones in those parks that greatly need them. **We are pleased that the Department of Environmental Protection has funded a station in Greenpoint Playground. We urge the Parks Department to monitor these comfort facilities and keep them well maintained.**

### **BEDT SITE PARK**

A State park has been designated for a portion of the former BEDT site (Kent Avenue/North 7<sup>th</sup> Street) and funded by New York State. **While designated in 2000 by the NY State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation has yet to open this nearly 9 acre park.**

### **GREENPOINT MONITOR MUSEUM**

Community Board No. 1 is pleased to learn that the NYS chartered Greenpoint Monitor Museum received donated land at the Bushwick Inlet (where the historical iron clad ship was birthed) for the construction of a museum in honor of the USS Monitor. The ship's construction here was a major event in the community's history – we support the museum's efforts to keep alive the memory of the USS Monitor. The museum seeks to retain its donated property as it will act as a catalyst for additional donations as it

moves forward with founding a home at the site. At this current time a proposal is moving forward at the Department of City Planning, in conjunction with the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, to demap streets in this area around the Bushwick Inlet, from North 9<sup>th</sup> Street to Quay Street, for the purpose of establishing parkland. These entities must respect the issues raised by the Greenpoint Monitor Museum and partner to make their dream a reality.

### **RETENTION AND EXPANSION OF PARKLAND**

As the pertinent City Planning Department studies indicate, Community District No. 1 is one of the most under-served area with regard to park and recreation services. Thus, we would strongly oppose the elimination of any currently mapped parkland in our district or usage/renting of same for other than parkland/recreation unless as per current City policy, equivalent space is developed as parkland in the immediate vicinity. We also strongly support the establishment of additional parks and playgrounds within our borders.

Community Board No. 1 continues its support for the development of appropriate small parks on triangles. The Southside and South Williamsburg have few local parks, and the triangles, such as where Heyward, Wallabout and Wythe Avenue come together, should be given such consideration.

We are delighted to see that the Administration proposes the expansion of the Waterfront Park to the Bushwick Inlet. This proposal will provide much needed recreational space to our residents and insure some greening of the waterfront. The proposal also suggests the inclusion of a Waterfront Access Plan (WAP). While we support this concept, we most certainly want to be directly involved in the design process. The Administration should commence the condemnation procedures to demonstrate a good faith gesture to our community while carefully retaining jobs and relocating existing businesses.

### **THE GREENPOINT-WILLIAMSBURG WATERFRONT ACCESS PLAN**

The Department of City Planning proposed a Waterfront Access Plan (WAP) tailored to the specific conditions of our district's waterfront and to establish a coordinated framework for public access to the Greenpoint-Williamsburg waterfront in advance of development. This plan takes advantage of this opportunity to enlarge existing waterfront park spaces and to mandate connections to the neighborhood at important locations. In addition, the zoning text changes allow the WAP to combine public access requirements on parcels spanning multiple blocks, allowing several smaller spaces to be combined into a single, larger and more useful public access area, which is not possible under existing waterfront zoning regulations. Community Board No. 1 looks forward to the various elements of this open space network which include: existing and proposed waterfront parks (including Newtown Barge, the former NYC transmitter site, the planned state park/former BEDT site, street end park at end of Manhattan Avenue); mapped parkland at Bushwick Inlet; a continuous shore walkway; public access to piers; supplemental access areas; upland connections and visual corridors. As internal mechanisms continue at the Parks Department, we look forward to a preliminary review of the Parks Department's "Master Plan" and the opportunity of hold public hearings in the community to review same.

### **WNYC TRANSMITTER SITE**

We look forward to the work proposed for the WYNC Transmitter site. Conceptual designs denote a passive park, recreational area, gardens, benches and lawns as well as renovation of the 1930's World's Fair house as well as access to the "Floating Pool". This site represents the first stage of development for a waterfront promenade and Community Board No. 1 urges that this work to reconstruct the park begins soon.

## **TREES**

In the Fall of 1996 Community Board No. 1 was dealt a devastating blow with the discovery of the Asian long horned beetle found infesting many of its street and backyard trees. In an effort to contain this foreign pest which has a voracious appetite for sugar maple trees, the US Department of Agriculture and the State Department of Conservation/Forestry Division along with the New York City Park's Department studied methods employed by China for eradication. An area of infestation was identified and "quarantined", a heavy infestation was found in the heart of Greenpoint (a significant number of trees in McCarren Park fell to the beetle) spreading towards adjacent neighborhoods of Northside, Southside, Central, East and South Williamsburg.

The most effective method was to cut down infected trees and remove them. In the period of 1997 and 1998 over 1000 trees in parks, on the street and in backyard/private property had to be destroyed. This represents a large portion of the district's green canopy and efforts to replace it are a high priority for this Board. This year, a new method of eradication, using a pesticide, is being tested. We hope that this method will work and help to halt the spread of the beetle.

The Community Board's Ad Hoc Committee on Asian Long Horned Beetle Infestation worked diligently with residents, community leaders, groups, elected officials and agencies to develop a Strategic Plan For The Regreening of Greenpoint-Williamsburg which was subsequently adopted by Community Board No. 1 in August 1 1997. This plan received support of elected officials and the Mayor's Office. The plan's vision is "Greenpoint-Williamsburg will be a greener, healthier and more beautiful community" with a goal to make every street in Community Board No. 1 a "Tree Lined Street". To further preserve our greenery it is important that our parks and street trees receive the utmost attention and maintenance from horticulturists and forestry personnel.

We urge that all efforts to regreen our community be maintained and that the strategic plan be used to implement such efforts. Community Board No. 1 supports an increased allocation for street tree planting as well as funding for maintenance of this vital resource. We urge that additional programs, such as DEP's grant initiative under federal funding to do tree planting in specific areas that they have identified as recipients of heavy truck traffic (i.e. BQE corridor), be utilized to help accomplish this effort.

Community Board No. 1 seeks the Parks Department to immediately remedy hazardous problems with the multiple plantings of Bradford pear trees along Graham Avenue. These trees are notorious for having weak forks with resultant falling limbs, a condition that has been noted by the Director of Forestry, who has related that these trees have weak branch connections, and it is the most common call for limbs down across the city. Forestry no longer plants them, but uses new varieties that are less

susceptible to limb breakage. The removal of these old Bradford pear trees are necessary for the public's safety. Each removal must include immediate replacement with a more suitable and stable tree species.

### **HUMAN SERVICES**

### **YOUTH SERVICES**

More than 51,600 residents of Community Board No. 1 are 19 years of age or less, and a very high percentage of this population resides in the poorest portions of the district. Unless an effective network of youth service programs is established, many of these youths will never have a fair opportunity to succeed in life, and will instead be attracted to the alternate lifestyles of crime and drugs. In light of this, the appallingly small allocation for delinquency prevention and after school programs funded by the Department of Youth and Community Development remains a perpetual source of frustration to the Board's Youth Service Committee.

The Beacon program located at 850 Grand Street Campus has offered a valuable resource, but is not enough to service the approximately 51,625 youths of our district. Unless the City and State agree to substantially bolster this modest allocation, and a 100% increase is not-out-of order, its impact upon the youth of Community Board No. 1 will remain slight. We were pleased that the City expanded Beacon Programs citywide and, as a result, additional Beacon programs for our area have been made available at JHS 126 and JHS 50. The Beacon Program at JHS 126 has served as an anchor for a newly formed "Greenpoint-Williamsburg Youth Soccer League" that has over 500 youths. There is extremely limited open space to accommodate these youngsters to play concurrent games and we urge that additional space be made available for this use.

### **YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**

The Department Of Employment must continue to develop and expand local sponsorship within Community District No. 1 for the City's "Summer Youth Employment Program". The Department of Employment must take a more aggressive role in addressing program sponsorship in each Community Board area. We urge the City to increase its outreach within the community to obtain non-profit agency sponsors who will adequately service our youths.

### **TEEN PREGNANCY**

One of the most serious problems involving youth is adolescent pregnancy, which had reached epidemic proportions throughout North Brooklyn. We are pleased to learn that statistics in this area are starting to show a decline. It is essential that a systematic approach to this problem is continued aimed at preventing unwanted pregnancies from occurring in the first place and providing educational and social services to the teen mothers in order to prevent long term welfare dependency.

### **DAY CARE AND SENIOR CENTER SERVICES**

Community Board No. 1 is served by 30 Day Care/2,956 slots 9 Head Start/799 slots, 18 Group Day Care/2,100 slots, 2 Day Care-Voucher Sites/8 slots and 1 LPOS/49 Slots and 9 Senior centers serving an average of 1,083 daily meals.

We strongly urge continued support of the City's extensive tax levy commitment to maintain day care and senior center services at least at their current levels despite devastating budget cuts, and urge that it be maintained as long as the need exists. In particular, the need for new day care centers, head start program and an increase in meals-on-wheels program is rising in the District, especially in the South Williamsburg area.

We recommend that the City promptly act to meet the unmet needs that currently exist in the District: the lack of adequate day care services in Greenpoint and the lack of a full senior center to serve the Southside/South Williamsburg. Although we acknowledge the severe funding constraints that the City faces in this area, we must also note that these needs are real and accelerating, and cannot be adequately addressed by existing resources.

### **SOCIAL SERVICES**

The New York City Department of Human Resource Administration reports that during the period of fiscal year 2005-2006 there are nearly 73,000 persons assisted by the agency in Community Board No. 1 (59,159 Medicaid only; 72,310 total Medicaid enrollees; 10,979 Public Assistance; 38,763 Food Stamp Recipients, and 8,806 SSI). We rank third (3rd) highest in the Borough and rank seventh (7th) Citywide in the number of persons receiving Medicaid, and rank second (2nd) in the Borough and rank fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) City wide with the number of persons receiving food stamps. Because of the quantity and complexity of the social service needs that exist in Community District No. 1, we believe that it would be most appropriate for the establishment of a multi-service center in the community. (We believe that the 30 Thornton Street "Job Center" facility complies with the requirements specified by the Human Resources Administration for such a Center.) The continuing need for a K-1 OFS Office requires immediate attention. We are extremely disappointed in the closure of the Marcy Avenue office as users at this facility will now have to travel further out of the district to obtain services.

Community Board No. 1 supports increased funding for Managed Care education (such as through the Managed Care Consumer Assistance Program) in Greenpoint and Williamsburg. In addition we support an increase in funds for vocational training, job placement and workforce development in low-income areas of the District.

### **HOUSING FOR THE HOMELESS**

We continue to support and urge a continuation of the reduction in the census at the remaining temporary shelter at the former Greenpoint Hospital. The positive positions taken by the Community Board are well known to the City. We applaud the revised policy changes by the City and look forward to the eventual results, a reduction/elimination of the "warehousing" of the homeless in our Community District and throughout the City. Expensive temporary housing must be replaced with permanent low-rent housing, including housing for single individuals, in each Community District. We also urge the expansion of support services to identify and address individual medical/social needs of homeless individuals residing in city and private facilities.

### **HOMELESS SERVICES**



Community Board No 1. approves the downsizing plan that decreased the census at the former Greenpoint Hospital Site, as the City has agreed to do at all other "armory" type shelters. We agree with the City's decision to limit the overall census at any one site to 200 persons or less, and we hope that this number can be further reduced.

In the past, Community Board No. 1 supported the development of compassionate and effective programs for the homeless. We share the City's basic policy to provide shelter to those who request it and, in 1983 were the only Board in Brooklyn to positively respond to the Mayor's appeal to suggest potential shelter sites.

Our recommended location, the former Most Holy Trinity Convent, was initially identified as a shelter for homeless women, and subsequently opened as a model S.R.O. facility. We have supported this excellent private shelter administered by Most Holy Trinity Parish, and stand ready to assist the efforts of other local community groups to establish similar programs.

In the past we opposed this facility because (1) its unduly large size both incapacitates it from providing adequate resources to its clients and negatively impacts the surrounding community, and (2) other community oriented uses for this site, such as the one endorsed by Community Board No. 1, as proposed by the Greenpoint Renaissance Enterprise Corporation (GREC) are far more appropriate. The Board has supported the City's efforts to downsize the temporary men's shelter to a census of 200 (the City had agreed to do this downsizing at all other armory type shelters. Opposition to the shelter, and all renovations that will further entrench this use, remains strong. The Board stands ready to work with DHS to ensure the proper operation of this facility (now named "Barbara S. Kleiman Residence") and a total phased-out elimination of this temporary facility to more permanent affordable housing.

The City should review regulatory policies toward private facilities, in which, homeless individuals reside such as, the Greenpoint Hotel. Also, the City must insure that adequate support services are provided to maintain the safety of surrounding residents and to minimize quality of life problems.

CB #1 vehemently opposed the Department of Homeless Services' and the Doe Fund's advancement of a shelter at 89-111 Porter Avenue. We are truly saddened that the Appellate division failed to find merit for appeal when the City found a loophole in the ULURP process and sited this "homeless" shelter in the heart of a city designated "in place industrial park"

## **HEALTH**

### **WOODHULL MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH CENTER**

The Board believes that all steps must be taken to improve the quality of services delivered at the facility. We also urge that Health and Hospitals Corporation's Brooklyn Regionalization Plan continues in such a way that it will not in any terms undermine the integrity of Woodhull as a full fledged hospital.

### **AMBULATORY CARE**

With the closure of Greenpoint Hospital came a strong commitment to this community from HHC to provide medical services to the district by maintaining two clinics within the confines of Community Board No. 1. As a result of this commitment, two satellite facilities were established by the Woodhull Medical and Mental Health Center. As we stated in previous years, we believe that the clinic at 960 Manhattan Avenue presented "a positive action that was, providing a valuable health resource in the North Greenpoint Community". To the dismay of CB #1, this satellite facility was closed as its lease expired. The Board strongly advocated for its reopening in the immediate community. The Greenpoint satellite was eventually located to a newly renovated facility at the ground floor of 875 Manhattan Avenue.

The 279 Graham Avenue location of the Williamsburg Satellite with bigger quarters and expanded services has worked well. The under-served Southside community could also greatly benefit by having a clinic within its confines and HHC should explore establishing an additional site for this segment of the district.

### **PEST CONTROL**

Community Board No. 1 remains concerned about an increase of the rodent population in the district. The City must promptly address this epidemic on a community-by-community level. Steps should be taken to regularly bait problem areas and coordinate efforts with the MTA/NYC Transit and other city agencies that are responsible for their own pest control. The Health Department must initiate aggressive programs to address the urgency of this dilemma and install checks and measures to monitor and insure that the MTA/NYC Transit are in fact involved in a pest control program.

Demolition, new construction, and street reconstruction have greatly increased in our district. These activities are known for creating problems with rodents and other pests. It is vital that pest control measures are strictly adhered to and that these sites are monitored for compliance.

It has been noted Community Board No.1 has several transfer stations located within its confines and these facilities are seen as a major draw for rodents and other pests.

We continue to support the Department of Health's efforts to inhibit the growth of mosquito infestation and combat the spread of the deadly West Nile Virus. The constant flow of water in the bowels of the abandoned McCarren Park Pool facility poses a recurring threat of West Nile Virus to the Greenpoint/Williamsburg and surrounding community.

### **RECENT HEALTH TRENDS**

Community Board No. 1 ranks third out of the 59 districts citywide with a high number of asthma cases. We remain concerned about the epidemic rise in cases of asthma in the district. Funds must be earmarked for additional testing, education and specialized treatment. Several years ago there was a CDC cancer and asthma study conducted in this District and we strongly support a new, updated study be carried out. In addition, the DEP ought to conduct a study of air and traffic pollution (which is particularly bad in our District) and their environmental and health impacts.

We continue to support efforts by the Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, DEP and HPD to thwart lead poisoning as it is a very serious condition, especially for children. Children with lead poisoning may develop health, learning and behavior problems. Education about lead poisoning is important so that people can make their homes safe and healthy as well as learn about treatment and access to testing.

Recent reports about AIDS in New York City have yielded the following figures for Community Board No. 1: the rates of new HIV diagnosis in Greenpoint and Williamsburg-Bushwick health districts range 0.50 & 1.30 per 1,000 persons/population. The combined rates for our district are above the rates for Brooklyn (0.68), New York City (0.84) and the US (1.14). Rates of people living with HIV & AIDS show Greenpoint at 5.5 and Williamsburg-Bushwick at 12.1 per 1,000 persons/population which again, is above the rates for Brooklyn (6.4), NYC (9.2) and US (3.2). We urge that the medical community continue addressing this grave disease and that additional programs be developed toward prevention, education and treatment. As the only New York City hospital within blocks of Community Board No. 1 Woodhull Hospital must be aggressive in addressing the needs of all of our constituents.

We raised concern about contagious diseases which could spread from localized outbreaks such as meningococcal disease (meningitis), shigellosis, tuberculosis, and hepatitis. We urge our health officials to carefully document these cases, provide curative measures and conduct public education to increase awareness about recognizing symptoms, carrying out prevention and accessing treatment.

We urge that additional resources be allocated to prepare for outbreaks of avian influenza (bird flu) which is being noted by world health officials as a possible pandemic.

Community Board No. 1 is also deeply concerned about the rising instances of diabetes, cardiovascular, heart disease, high cholesterol and osteoporosis in Greenpoint and Williamsburg. We urge the City to provide additional funds and programs for diet therapy, nutritional support and education for our district. Additional women's health services (such as a clinic with birthing rooms) are needed in our community.

## **TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **TRANSPORTATION BLUEPRINT STUDY**

Community Board No. 1 requests that a comprehensive transportation blueprint study (preferably one similar in scope and purpose to the current "Downtown Brooklyn Transportation Blueprint") be conducted in our district. This type of comprehensive study is needed to create transit and traffic projections, aid in developing policy and also project recommendations using the recent rezoning action's build-out scenario. It would surely provide a clearer picture of the mass transit, street, and parking issues that Greenpoint and Williamsburg will need to come to grips with in the future

### **BRIDGE IMPROVEMENT**

Since Community Board No. 1 is nearly surrounded by the East River and the Newtown Creek, it is not surprising that the quality of our local bridges remain continuing concerns. Emphasis must be placed on adequate continued coordination (access/egress) to our community during any upcoming construction work. We must express deep concern about traffic impacts on the community during any bridge

reconstruction. We urge that such construction proceed with on-going monthly maximum community input. There have been repeated delays on work to reconstruct the Grand Street (Penny Bridge). We urge that this work progress and that every effort is made to ensure that there is adequate safety measures and detours in place. The Grand Street bridge is particularly dangerous as the narrow width of the bridge does not allow for two lanes of vehicles, especially trucks, to pass at the same time. Community Board No. 1 supports the alternative which is a Steel "Basket Handle" Tied Arch design. The Metropolitan Bridge's reconstruction is underway.

The City-Wide need to upgrade its East River bridges is of great concern to the Board as it relates to the Williamsburg Bridge. Its closing in 1988 caused both traffic and economic hardship to the surrounding community. This century old landmark literally opened North Brooklyn to Manhattan and, through the implementation of the extensive repairs contained in BR-253, will continue to serve the people of the City for at least a century to come. An issue of particular concern is the upgrading of the pedestrian walkway that serves as a vital link with the Lower East Side. Work on the both walkway and bikeway is nearing completion.

All efforts must be made to ensure the implementation of improvements, which should, as much as possible, aim to enhance security on these paths. This includes installation of emergency call boxes and cameras on these stretches. Community Board No. 1 requests the City to directly involve it with all discussions on repair, design and plans for all bridges in the district as they are being developed, not after the fact. We continue to support the safer methods and construction protocols that have come forward to remove lead paint, including testing and clean-up of any contaminants needed with this type of construction work. We urge continued adherence to these strict and comprehensive protocols in order to provide the best protection for our community's residents as well as those who work here.

### **BROOKLYN-QUEENS EXPRESSWAY (BQE) RENOVATION**

Community Board No. 1 is actively involved in both the review of plans and construction phases of the renovation of the Brooklyn Queens Expressway situated between Metropolitan Avenue and Kingsland Avenue. We have found that the inclusion of an independent engineer for the community in this project was a valuable resource.

Through a carefully structured partnership of Community Board No. 1's Ad Hoc Committee, City and State agencies, elected officials, Ombuds office and the independent engineer, this project was delivered on target, without extensive cost overruns while meeting a multitude of community concerns. This partnership is a model that must continue in future projects. We particularly look forward to a similar relationship with New York State DOT in reconstructing the Kosciuszko Bridge (inclusive of a drainage plan). The New York City Department of Transportation must also conduct immediate detour studies so that this project could commence with little impact on vehicular traffic/pedestrian flow including, but not limited, to the widening of the Grand Street Bridge.

Community Board No. 1 remains opposed to condemnation of any property with the implementation of the Kosciuszko Bridge's reconstruction.

There are continued serious problems with the BQE at Vandervoort Avenue because the radius for turns is insufficient, especially the left turning point. The intersection of Morgan Avenue and Meeker Avenue (westbound) needs serious re-thinking as the fork condition creates a hazard for both pedestrians and motorists.

Continued maintenance of the BQE is extremely lacking, decking of the viaduct and rutting of the asphalt on both the roadway and exit/entrance ramps is obviously apparent and severely lacking of regular maintenance.

## **STREET RECONSTRUCTION/PLANNING**

The deplorable physical state of our local streets is a problem. It is essential that the City responds to the priority street reconstruction projects submitted by the Board.

The Board is pleased to learn that the work planned for the section of Manhattan Avenue between Ash Street and the Newtown Creek bulkhead is underway with the inclusion of a park at the bulkhead area. Additionally, the Department of Design and Construction must mandate the Department of Transportation (including other agencies that have decision making on parking restrictions such as the Department of Sanitation) to prepare parking moratoriums on "all projects" to allow relaxed restrictions to permit local residents ample parking. This is the least they can do to compensate constituents for the dilemmas of street reconstruction.

Reconstruction of Flushing Avenue and the Kent Avenue/Franklin Street project have both commenced. Planning and coordination with projects such as these should be initiated early on because of the heavy impact of local vehicular and truck traffic.

One area of possible expansion is the industrial zone situated beneath the Kosciuszko Bridge. Although presently prime M1-3 industrial space, the development potential of this area is severely restricted by a totally inadequate infrastructure. To put it bluntly, some streets have never been either paved or had sewers constructed beneath them. Over the past few years, the Board has worked closely with all affected City agencies to develop a plan for the comprehensive revitalization of this area, and we urge that components of this plan be included in the budget.

Last year again there were a number of cave-ins that have occurred in Community Board No. 1. These constitute a high rate-not-potholes. Borings should be done to determine cause(s). Reportedly, fill material previously added to close excavations at some locations proved inadequate or wood shoring was never removed. Either DOT or DEP has recommended some of the sites for trench restoration. The following locations have been forwarded by CB#1 to receive attention: Eckford Street, between Norman and Nassau Avenues; North 6<sup>th</sup> Street, between Driggs Avenue and Roebling Street; Division Avenue, between Berry Street and Wythe Avenue; Powers Street, between Catherine and Olive Streets; Skillman Avenue, between Humboldt Street and Graham Avenue; Conselyea Street, between Graham and Manhattan Avenues; Grand Street, between Humboldt Street and Morgan Avenue; Clymer Street, between Wythe and Bedford Avenues; Ten Eyck Street at Lorimer Street; Scholes Street, between Morgan and Union Avenues; Rutledge Street, between Bedford/Marcy/Lee Avenues; Olive Street, between Grand and Powers Streets;

Montrose Avenue, between Union Avenue and Bushwick Place; and Withers Street between Woodpoint Road and Humboldt Street. This work has been greatly delayed and should be scheduled immediately.

## **SEWER CONSTRUCTION**

As one of Brooklyn's oldest communities, Community District No. 1 naturally suffers from a terribly outdated and inadequate sewer system. The continued upgrading and replacement of our sewers remains an on-going necessity. The stretch of Graham Avenue, from Meeker Avenue to Metropolitan Avenue, continues to be plagued by foul sewer odors that emanate from the catch basins. To date, DEP has not been able to resolve the condition.

In another portion of the District, the area directly under and north of the Kosciuszko Bridge continues to be forgotten and floods constantly with the free-fall drainage from the BQE. This item also needs to be promptly addressed by the responsible environmental agencies of both the City and State.

## **THE ENVIRONMENT**

### **WATER QUALITY**

Because of our extensive waterfront, Community Board No. 1 has in the past, vigorously supported all efforts to clean the waters of the East River and Newtown Creek. The success of these efforts is indicated by the substantial water quality improvement that has occurred in the East River, a development that greatly enhances the recreational potential of the waterfront. In recent years, ducks, geese and swans have been observed to be nesting along North 13th Street. Looking ahead, our commitment to the goals of high water quality remains as strong as ever, and the Board will vigorously oppose all efforts to retreat from this principle.

Community Board No. 1 has not changed its position to oppose any expansion of the Newtown Creek Water Pollution Plant that would allow for an increase in the capacity of secondary treatment. We have recently reviewed items under ULURP regarding DEP's plans to upgrade the facility. This complex undertaking to upgrade the plant was approved by Community Board No. 1 with conditions and an amenities package to be included. A monitoring committee chaired by former Councilman Fisher has spearheaded the Board's commitment to this process. Kingsland Avenue was to be widened from Greenpoint Avenue towards the northern end of the street as part of slated improvements to enhance traffic flow and safety. However, this reconstruction work has not occurred and this lack of progress is of paramount concern for CB #1. Any contract penalties should be directed to the Community and not funneled into the DEP's general fund.

We understood that DEP intends to demolish the sludge storage tank at Dupont Street. Per previous plans, the material was to be pumped away via an underground pipe system. However, in April 2006, CB #1 learned that DEP changed its position and instead plans to continue a barging operation to remove sludge from the Greenpoint WPCP. This MTS operation will utilize new specially designed barges and tugboats that will reportedly fit under the Pulaski Bridge. Community Board No. 1 maintains its vehement opposition to any reactivation or retro-fitting of the marine transfer station at

our water's edge. We have written to the Commissioner on this matter and have yet to receive a response.

### **MOBIL OIL UNDERGROUND SPILL**

Community Board No. 1 urges the continued monitoring by NYC DEP and NYS DEC of the 1990 Mobil Oil Consent Order to remediate the free product plume in the Greenpoint area of Brooklyn.

As required by the Consent Order, in 1990 and 1991 Mobil performed a site assessment to determine the magnitude of the free-product plume and subsequently developed a remedial action plan to recover the free-product. The Off-Site Product Recovery System was designed from 1991 through 1993. Permits and approvals for construction of the facility were obtained from the NYS DEC, the NYC Department of Buildings and the NYC Fire Department in 1993 and 1994 at which time construction of the facility began. The Off-Site Free Product Recovery System began operation on September 1, 1995 and over 643,246 gallons of free-products have been recovered by the system as of Fall 1997. Between 5 and 10 million of gallons of groundwater are pumped and treated monthly.

Additionally, since the 1980's, product recovery booms have been installed in Newtown Creek along the Peerless Importers bulkhead and since 1979 Mobil has been recovering free-product from on-site monitoring wells. By January 1999 6,706,654 million gallons of free product was recovered from on-site operations (with 1,564,326 gallons recovered of the cumulative product for off-site product plume). NYS DEC relates that 9 million gallons have been recovered to date. In 2004, Riverkeeper (an independent, member-supported environmental organization founded 40 years ago) has filed suit in federal court against Exxon/Mobil for a the spill.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation reports that there has been a noticeable slow down of seepage into the Newtown Creek at the end of Meeker Avenue and that product recovery is expected to continue for a few more years. Community Board No. 1 demands that recovery activities must continue until all of the spilled product is removed from beneath Community District No. 1 and that the board be updated quarterly by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation as to the removal progress.

Revenues from the recovery of the petroleum products should be directed to the Community.

### **SANITATION**

### **ENFORCEMENT STAFFING/ILLEGAL DUMPING**

Over the past years over 41 transfer stations have been opened within Community District 1. Today 53% of all C&D, fill and putrescible waste transfer stations in Brooklyn and 25% in New York City exist in Community Board No 1. These numbers translate into a population of 17 permitted transfer stations presently doing business in the district. This makes our district the most heavily impacted area in the entire City.

We urge that strong regulatory policies be developed, enforcement be strict and unpermitted stations closed. Environmental impact area reviews should also be required, not only site reviews. We consider the newer threat to our environment posed by the transfer stations to represent an immediate challenge that must be addressed by government, and urge, that a policy be developed that requires Special Permits and require Environmental Impact Statements. These statements need to look at the cumulative impacts, not just the impact of a proposed facility. As we have far more than our fair share of the garbage industry, we seek to have no new transfer stations sited and built in our District.

To aid with the enforcement of truck traffic and pertinent regulations, we urge the use of additional weighing stations in the District.

Community Board No. 1 has reached out to elected officials to declare a moratorium on the siting or expansion of any existing or future facilities in the district and on any land on the waterfront as a marine transfer station.

One of the major sanitation problems facing Community Board No. 1 is illegal dumping, which in many portions of the district, has reached epidemic proportions. It is essential that sufficient Sanitation Police be assigned to our community to vigorously combat these problems. No other Sanitation enforcement issue should be given higher priority in Community Board No. 1 than illegal dumping, on both streets, vacant lots and into waterways, including the policing of transfer stations. Additional enforcement police must be assigned to end illegal dumping. We have strongly urged that the Department of Sanitation reopen our neighborhood Self-Help Dump to provide access by residents as this will deter illegal discarding of household materials.

We oppose any reduction in staff and urge upgrading of the present street collection policy. We applaud the policy to initiate/increase refuse collection at public housing sites and large Mitchell Lama Development (Lindsay Park Houses). The establishment of a special unit to handle refuse collection at schools is also strongly supported by the Board. This program should be expanded to parochial schools and other not-for-profit organizations.

### **RECYCLING AND WASTE MANAGEMENT**

We continue to support the weekly collection schedule for recycling. Any consideration of a new Solid Waste Management Plan, including the Marine Transfer Station in Greenpoint, should be done in close consultation with the Board.

DOS must aggressively pursue the abuse of corner wire baskets. Many baskets are overflowing on a daily basis thus detracting from the area's scorecard ratings.

Illegal postering is out of control and can be seen on the district's streets (light poles, traffic sign rails and vacant wall spaces). The practice proves to be unsightly and promotes litter. Enforcement has been requested to help stem the proliferation, however, there appears to be little response by the Department of Sanitation.

### **SANITATION GARAGES**



The construction of a new garage to serve Community District 1 and 4 continues to go forward and we look forward to its completion. At the same time, the Department of Sanitation must expeditiously act to relocate the K-3 Sanitation Garage into a new location in Community District #3 and no longer be situated in our district. Sanitation trucks serving BK3 can be seen parked in residential areas including in front of fire hydrants on/about BK3. We have repeatedly stated these concerns about the BK3 facility and called for this practice to cease immediately. As it now stands, our district hosts no fewer than three sanitation garages, and the K-3 facility negatively impacts the adjacent residential community to an intolerable degree. The Department of Sanitation must take immediate corrective action to relocate these garages to their respective districts as per co-terminality guidelines and not juggle them within the confines of Community Board No. 1. The DOS projected relocation of BK3 to the old BK4 site is completely unacceptable.

### **CHERRY STREET SALT PILE**

The relocation of the Cherry Street Salt Pile must be done as expeditiously as possible. This open storage of salt had impeded a local business deal with the City's Office of Economic Development and has prevented a business expansion and creation of new jobs for our local community. **In addition it is there illegally with no formal approval to use the site contrary to ULURP.**

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

#### **COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

In the past Community Board No. 1 has greatly benefited from the excellent activities of no fewer than seven commercial revitalization programs, Grand-Metro, Graham Avenue, Bedford Avenue, Havemeyer-Grand, Broadway West, Lee Avenue and Manhattan Avenue which have done much to further stabilize and strengthen these active shopping-strips. In addition, the Moore Street Market has received extensive renovations and is open for business activities. We urge continued support for these endeavors in future years.

Without question (jobs) industry constitutes the economic backbone of Community District No. 1, and a substantial percentage of our residents are still employed by local industries. While Greenpoint/Williamsburg has shared in the City-wide decline of manufacturing jobs and suffers from chronic security, sanitation, facility and infrastructure problems, the core itself is strong and, with proper governmental support, should endure and prosper in the coming years. Undoubtedly, along with new residential development should come accommodating and appropriate commercial services to sustain the fundamental growth of all mixed-use neighborhoods (such as grocery stores, affordable eating establishments and clothing shops/boutiques). Such support could include capitalizing on local economic empowerment zones and tax credit programs to provide incentives for businesses to remain in the District.

### **EDUCATION**

We continue to support our area schools and their needs that were previously related to our Board: outfitting each school with a science laboratory and to provide wireless computers and stations for the schools within the Community School District.

We continue to support (1) After School, Saturday, Summer Instructional and Recreational Programs; and (2) Repair, Refinishment of our area's School Buildings. In the past, budget cuts to several capital projects caused them to be eliminated in a number of schools and many educational programs were either ceased or reduced as well as staff connected with those programs.

We are concerned about the need for student protection and support all recognized security programs approved by the Department of Education to protect our children.

In recent reports released by the Department of Education we were pleased to see an increase in the reading and math scores in the district.

A major push by parents, community residents and teachers to reorganize the academically declining Comprehensive Eastern District High School proved to be quite successful as the 850 Grand Street Campus facility was instituted. In 1996 the Board of Education started three smaller schools, also called academies, that focused on particular themes of study (Progress HS for Professional Careers; Enterprise Business HS; and the School for Legal Studies), and eventually phased out Eastern District High School. Since that time, several other smaller schools were established in our district: The Academy for Young Writers; Williamsburg Preparatory School; Williamsburg HS for Architecture and Design; El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice; Harry Van Arsdale HS GED; Green School: An Academy for Environmental Careers; and charter schools: Williamsburg Collegiate Charter School; Williamsburg Charter HS ("Beginning with Children" was a pioneer charter school in our community for elementary school age youngsters. It grew out of a private partnership with Pfizer and opened its doors in September 1992). We look forward to our educational facilities having future success in serving the educational needs of our children.

It has been reported by the Department of City Planning that according to the 2000 Census, out of the total district's population, in the group 5 years and over: 89,085 persons are proficient and 57,775 are not proficient in English. Those persons not proficient in English had another language spoken at home. Roughly 46.5% spoke Spanish/Spanish Creole; 20.8 % spoke Polish; 20.5% spoke Yiddish (with the remainder percentage scattered in other categories). We encourage programs that will assist persons with attaining better English proficiency skills.

## **PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

Community Board No. 1 contains four public libraries (Greenpoint, Bushwick, Leonard and Marcy Avenue branches) which provide a variety of services for the community. We support their needs for enhanced equipment, computer linkages, increased book budgets and physical improvements.

The Leonard Branch is seeking to construct a ramp and elevator as well as other sorely needed improvements for this aging Carnegie branch. We support their efforts to have the facility wheelchair accessible. Greenpoint Branch is an existing facility that can no longer accommodate the growing needs of the community in terms of function and programming and the construction of a new facility, on its current footprint, is being sought. It is most encouraging to see that these facilities are being highly used by both

young and older residents alike. CB #1 strongly opposes cuts to the budgets for our libraries.

## **MASS TRANSIT**

Mass transit is inadequate to meet the needs of our district. Over time, deterioration and poor maintenance have had a devastating effect upon our local subway network, which, if properly run, would offer an extremely valuable resource to the entire community. We continue to urge the City and Metropolitan Transit Authority to involve Community Board No. 1 in all discussions on any plans to modify any services, prior to the decision/policy reaching point.

The MTA/NYC Transit's plan to discontinue the "G" line at Court Square, has virtually cut the line in half. This plan was vehemently opposed by Community Board No.1 and its area residents. Community Board No. 1 advocates for the retention of "G" line so that it remains servicing the ridership full-time. The Board advocates for the full restoration of the "G" line through to Forest Hills so that it services its ridership. We are dismayed that the subway train itself has been cut to four cars. The line should have a full compliment of cars that usually numbers 6-8 cars.

We also raise concern about changes in the district's bus schedules that extend the headways thus resulting in longer waiting time for service. Siting for new bus shelters should be coordinated with the Department of Transportation so that those areas in need will be added to the next installation contract. We encourage the use of the newer (smaller) designs so that areas that could not support a shelter before could be reconsidered. One of the newer designs, which include seating, has been requested for some locations. Consideration for such a design must be looked at for the Washington/Bridge Plaza area. This major hub for buses always has a number of riders who wait at the shelters. Seating would help the elderly or handicapped.

With the increase of population in the district, especially in the Northside area that has become the new home for those in exodus from Manhattan, ridership on the "L" train continues to dramatically increase. We are requesting that the MTA/NYC Transit address this increase and improve service on the line. Consideration should be given to the purchase of additional subway cars (as well as retaining the best of the older cars for refurbishment, to be used to relieve overcrowding on the line) The recent institution of computerized train spacing was made with the goal to increase service on the "L" subway line. We urge that the MTA fully test this service to ensure the public's safe and expeditious commuting on this line.

Transportation along the District's waterfront needs to be created. The MTA must take a proactive approach to improving revenue generating programs to its resume and not continue its current position whereby it reduces services and thusly reduces costs. The implementation of a new bus route along Kent Avenue would provide a much needed service to our district and create minimal service (planning should include the enhancement of the B61 bus route; as well as the establishment of a Bus Rapid Transit – BRT – corridor to supplement subway and bus service). The addition of water transportation, such as ferries and water taxis, must be encouraged with any new development on the waterfront. We again urge that the B24 and the B48 buses not be cut in their respective service.


## **COMMUNITY BOARDS**


Community Board No. 1 still lacks adequate funding. The meager budget provided for our board does not keep pace with inflation and any increased operating costs. The costs for acquiring much needed newer technology, computer software, upgraded hardware as well as internet/web access capabilities is expensive. Our only restorative measure for our budget was in 1997, when a portion of the funds were restored by the New York City Council; however, it did not provide the Board with a full complement. In order to continue delivering the Board's mission per the 1989 revised City Charter, we oppose any cuts to the Board's budget, and instead, advocate strongly for increased allocations.


## **CONCLUSION**

Community Board No. 1 is prepared to discuss each of the items addressed in this **Statement of Community District Needs**. Please do not hesitate to contact us. In closing, we trust, that the City of New York will act favorably upon the items contained in this report or advise reasons for not implementing the needs of the Greenpoint-Williamsburg Community.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Chairman

  
Del Teague  
Third Vice Chairperson  
Capital/Expense/ Community  
Development Committee

  
Gerald A. Esposito  
District Manager