



# CB9M

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## COMMUNITY BOARD #9, MANHATTAN STATEMENT OF NEEDS

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The "West Harlem" neighborhoods' of *Morningside Heights*, *Manhattanville* and *Hamilton Heights* comprise Community Board No. 9 Manhattan (CB9M). Our boundaries are Cathedral Parkway (110<sup>th</sup> Street) on the South; 155<sup>th</sup> Street on the North; Manhattan/Morningside Ave/St. Nicholas/ Bradhurst/Edgecombe Avenues on the East; and the Hudson River on the West.

Each neighborhood is a district community, Morningside Heights in the southern portion of the Board contains many of the area's numerous institutions: Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, Bank Street College of Education, Columbia University, Barnard College, Teacher's College, Manhattan School of Music, Union Theological Seminary, Jewish Theological Seminary, The National Council of Churches, Riverside Church, Grotto of Notre Dame, and the St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center. At the northern end of Morningside Heights are two large housing complexes: the General Grant Public Housing Development and the limited equity cooperative Morningside Gardens.

Manhattanville begins at roughly 123<sup>rd</sup> Street and extends northward to 135<sup>th</sup> Street. This area includes the City College south campus of City University of New York, the Manhattanville Housing Development, Riverview Towers/Riverside Community Housing at 3333 Broadway, (a former Mitchell-Lama cooperative), a number of small commercial establishments. Manhattanville is also the site of Columbia University's planned new Campus.

The northern most section of Community Board No. 9 is comprised of Hamilton Heights (part of this area is designated the "Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Historic District"). Hamilton Heights is home to a substantial number of owner-occupied brownstones and, also includes the city-owned Audubon houses and, a large number of Housing Development Fund Cooperatives. There are very few vacant structures. The majority of the small businesses in this area are operated by a diverse group, including Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern, Caribbean and Asian. Hamilton Heights is also home to the North River Pollution Control Plant with the Riverbank State Park on its Roof.

These three neighborhoods form the Board area, each reflecting the potential and promise of the community, as well as problems.

SERVING HAMILTON HEIGHTS/MANHATTANVILLE & MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS



## HOUSING

### Existing Housing Stock Not Adequate

The existing housing stock in Community Board 9 is not adequate to meet the needs of its current recorded population. The US Census 2000 report states that there were just over 43,000 units of housing in CD9, a drop from 1990 in contrast to Manhattan's and New York City's overall gains. Over the last decade (1991-2001) CD9 was one of the community districts with the smallest number of new housing units built during this period at 195 out of a total of 94,000 new unit (measured by final certificates of occupancy) in New York City.

There are less than 40 city controlled buildings in the District in addition to vacant lots. Many are in various stages of disrepair but are either being rehabilitated or in preparation for major rehabilitation. We are deeply concerned about the need for timely rehabilitation of deteriorating and often over occupied housing stock. As such, the Board supports the continuation of initiatives to coordinate the necessary repairs, rehabilitation and contract monitoring. The Neighborhood Entrepreneur Program (NEP), Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP), and Anti-Abandonment Program have potential to remedy these matters; however CB9M has reservations about the effectiveness of these programs. The track record of the entity chosen to oversee a site is of greatest importance, as many current residents fear displacement in the name of renovation.

### Need for the Creation of New, and Preservation of Existing, Affordable Housing

The need for affordable housing has become a major problem for low, medium and middle income families. A significant portion of CD9 renter households are under financial burden to pay rent. Technically, this includes households who have to use 30% or more of their income towards rent. There are concentrations of such households where almost half the households are "rent-burdened." CD9 also has 23% of its residents paying more than 50% of their income in rent.

As a result of the expiration of public subsidy contracts for affordable housing, and of rapid private development, long-term residents of public and rent-regulated and subsidized housing face the threat of displacement. River View Towers and Riverside Park Community is a recent example of a lost Mitchell Lama property with over 2,000 apartments. We encourage the City to take all steps necessary to protect NYCHA, HPD and Mitchell-Lama properties from privatization.

We support the completion of the Tenant Interim Lease (TIL) Program, as well as expansion of programs to create more HDFC's with more stringent guidelines to guarantee major repairs for tenants associations before the sale of such designated buildings, along with built-in requirements for more thorough tenant education around purchasing and maintaining these tenant controlled cooperatives. We continue to encourage the early identification of HDFC's in jeopardy due to lack of performance and the establishment of specific remedies to cure problems that these HDFC's are suffering.

CB9 is undergoing a rezoning of the northern section of the District. It is imperative that all opportunities for the creation of new affordable housing units are exploited through Inclusionary Zoning and any other City initiatives. These units must however be affordable within the context



of the incomes of the residents of our District. We plan to continue discussions with all pertinent city agencies and developers seeking support for our efforts to facilitate the creation of new affordable housing units.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Like many other communities in the city, West Harlem is changing. Our population has grown approximately 12% between the years of 2000 and 2009. About 90% of our working residents still commute outside of the area, which our board would like to change. Almost 22% of our households in Community Board 9 earn \$25,000 dollars or less. Unemployment over the age of 25 mirrors the nation's average. And we have a high illiteracy rate in English and Spanish that effects employment for a large percentage of our resident population.

The economic downturn has narrowed new opportunities for small businesses in the area and services for residents. A number of shops have closed. Nonetheless, we still believe that it is in everyone's best interest to support more retail businesses and professional office spaces wherever we can in our community.

One unique characteristic is our large sidewalks and boulevards. This distinct feature can lend itself for future street fairs, promotional events and art installations that could attract residents, tourists and fellow New Yorkers to our community. Now, that we have more access to our local waterfront with new piers, we hope that excursion boat operations and water taxi services will begin soon. Such activity would help sustain both our budding restaurant row on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue and established restaurants in Morningside Heights along Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue.

Re-zoning will be necessary in order to realize new economic potential in a proposed mixed-use district between Amsterdam and Convent Avenue from 126<sup>th</sup> Street to 130<sup>th</sup> Street. An assemblage of old manufacturing buildings could be transformed into a hub for creative professionals, artists, high tech manufacturing and digital communications. This would be very similar to other communities around the country who understand that diversification is the new "future" for urban cities. With new streetscaping in the works for more trees, larger pedestrian sidewalks, bicycle racks, new lighting and transportation hub along West 125<sup>th</sup> Street, from Marginal Street to Old Broadway, West Harlem could position itself well as an attractive community for new or displaced businesses from downtown needing a new home. A plan to further stretch streetscaping to Morningside Avenue on West 125<sup>th</sup> Street would complete the transformation beginning with a refurbished triangle that is home to a Richard Hunt sculpture. And the expansion of the 125<sup>th</sup> Street Business Improvement District to Marginal Street would engage property owners and business owners to work together and develop branding strategies that would attract more customers.

Our most challenging area economically is Upper Broadway, Amsterdam Avenue, St. Nicholas Avenue and West 145<sup>th</sup> Street. Though Upper Broadway has many small businesses, open spaces and good transportation, the range of retail and business services are limited. Many of these

businesses are locked into agreements with suppliers that make it difficult to expand offerings and improve facades. Support from the City would be welcomed to allow some experimentation and/or enhancements. Landlords are so concerned with acquiring rent and making mortgage payments, that many are not financially able to be risky. A solution could be to support “Pop Up” stores in unusual spaces to create the room needed to determine what new product or services would work in the northern section of West Harlem. For Amsterdam Avenue which has less foot traffic, support to bring more professionals – architects and lawyers, needing office space or meeting spaces as well as after school enrichment programs (i.e. Kaplan) could help bring some vitality to the boulevard. Mixed with City College, some park spaces, elementary schools and residential apartments on the street level, this could help enliven the strip that is also very dark at night. And 145<sup>th</sup> Street still struggles with development plans that cannot determine what direction it wishes to take in spite of excellent transportation and views of the Hudson River.

### **Small Business Retention**

The Community Board conducted a series of surveys beginning in 2007. We tracked businesses via zip codes – 10027, 10030 and 10031. Our local business analysis found that over 80% of the businesses in our neighborhood have fewer than 10 employees and over 50% earn less than \$1 million in annual revenue. On the retail side, these businesses are concentrated in a few industries including food service, beauty salons and locksmith shops. On the service side, most of our local businesses are in the healthcare and real estate industries.

The Community Board feels that it is important to encourage a wider range of industries and services in the area to improve overall quality of life. Having access to information technology is among the most important factors for many small businesses in today’s digital economy. For that reason, we surveyed businesses in the area to determine their present computer and internet usage. Our findings show that over 70% of businesses in the area use computers in their daily operations, but only 54% have or use the internet. Of those who do use the internet, there is an even split between those that have DSL as compared to cable internet service. We feel that better internet access would encourage business growth and diversity in our community. More wifi and broadband access is necessary so that all of our retail shops would have point of sale registers, means to computerize their inventory and provide online delivery service.

### **Adult Education & Literacy**

Though much deserved attention is paid to elementary and secondary education, the Community Board understands that adult education and literacy needs to be apart of the conversation for our community. Community Board 9 has a large population of residents who were born in a foreign country. Many traveled to the United States so that their children would be able to get a good education. Nonetheless, the family suffers if the parents are not able to navigate life in the United States and offer the support that is necessary to help their children. Unfortunately, for many of



these individuals, they did not receive a quality education in their native homeland and so it's important that we push for more literacy programs in West Harlem. ESL programs are great for those persons who just need to learn English, but it's not as helpful for someone that cannot read at all. This is directly tied to economic survival, development and sustainability. Job preparedness demands a basic skill level. Our Community Board has many people who are willing to work but lack the necessary skills. Therefore we need Workforce One services in our District to address the language and skill challenges facing our residents. Many of our small businesses employ local residents to help and support the community but could benefit from the small grants from the Business Solutions programs to improve customer service and develop specialty services.

### **Access to Capital**

Businesses in Community Board 9 need access to more capital. A rallying cry around the city but nonetheless it's true. Our businesses and cultural institutions are underfunded. Investments for industrial parks, incubators, hubs for new media are being discussed all over the city but not for West Harlem. Our community needs an integrative, economic mix. Though West Harlem is home to many educational institutions, they are self-contained economies. Leveraging those economies to the rest of the district is most difficult. Educational institutions are large bureaucracies that move slowly. Infusing more capital will help alleviate some hardships. Naturally, we have to encourage better business practices and savings. Yet, there is a gap that needs to be filled. Community Board 9 does not have incubators, a financial empowerment center, micro-loan lenders, Workforce One office or industrial business coordinator.

### **WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT**

Community Board 9 is most fortunate to have the West Harlem Piers and Park completed -- a collaborative vision by the community that took time but was finally realized. Now, our attention must turn to the former 135<sup>th</sup> Street Marine Transfer Station on the Hudson and further north above 145<sup>th</sup> Street to end of the district which is at 155<sup>th</sup> Street. The former Marine Transfer Station will require a huge investment for its stabilization and re-development. Whatever vision is developed, sustainability must be at the center. The Community Board would not like to see any luxury housing, hotel or parking lot on the site. Several recommendations have been researched and discussed. A mixed use framework that would examine business, tourism and recreational opportunities would be desired.

Plans along the waterfront above 145<sup>th</sup> Street have been studied extensively in both the private and public sector. Construction for improvements on the upland, are moving along. But plans for additional fishing piers, kayak launches and pedestrian bridge are on hold. The Community Board would like to increase access to the waterfront and water-based recreational opportunities for residents as much as possible. For over fifty years, West Harlem has been cut off from its waterfront. Therefore, we wish the City to stop delaying the design approvals for a pedestrian



bridge that would provide handicap accessibility to local residents and the development of plans to replace the kayak launch that never functioned near 148<sup>th</sup> Street and a new fishing pier nearby.

## **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

CB9M is greatly concerned by the City's attitude about Health Services in our area. For almost a decade, despite the availability of funds, Manhattanville Health Station has not been rehabilitated. Programs originally on site have dispersed with no guarantee of their return.

Threatened cut backs in space and services at the Sydenham Clinic and local in school sites were maintained only through the efforts of Community and local council members.

CB9M believes that the high incidence of rats in this community is directly related to many illnesses, the elimination of 3 inspectors and 2 exterminators in the latter part of 2001, as well as massive private construction of late without monitoring by the Dept. of Buildings as to mandated baiting account for the very visible rodent population explosion. Even with added Personnel the Department of Health will not be able to keep up. We urge that staffing for upper Manhattan be tripled. In addition agencies with their own Pest Control units such as HPD and Parks staffing should be increased so they can be more responsive to complaints.

CB9M will strive to assure that the City adheres to the Fair Share guidelines in the Charter as to the placement of Social Service Facilities. More importantly the Board needs the assistance of our State elected officials as well as local elected officials due to the fact that the majority of programs sited north of 125 th Street are funded through New York State with no local oversight or comments mandated.

The City must continue to lobby and demand from the federal and state government's money that will sponsor permanent low and moderate-income housing. In the meanwhile, day/child care, job training and placement, and permanent housing assistance must be a top priority while these families remain in this socially unacceptable situation. The majority of the day/child care facilities are too expensive for Community Board 9 residents to afford. There are currently over 400 children on waiting lists. Funding for free/affordable day/child care programs for pre-school age children must be increased to address the need.

The increase in homeless families is a critical issue for Community Board 9. In order to help these families break the vicious cycle of poverty, it is imperative that the appropriate agencies coordinate their services to meet the multitude of problems confronting their clients.

The increase in ambulatory care services for prenatal care, for addicted mothers and teenagers continues to be a pressing need in the CB9M District.

Another shelter for battered women is urgently needed within CB9M area. Such an institution would provide the resources for a woman and her children to start over without having to go into a welfare hotel or move with family friends. Currently, we have no such facility.



WestSide Harlem has been ranked among the highest in the incidence of lead poisoning cases in the City. Health officials are not examining Forty percent of our children. Mandatory screening for lead poisoning should be done at all day care centers and elementary schools in order to correct situations.

## **SENIORS**

The elderly population in CB9M is increasing. During this time of budget constraints we must not lose sight of the special needs of our seniors, it is imperative that long range comprehensive planning includes housing, health and mental care, home care and senior centers. Only in this way can we ensure continued quality of life and prevent the isolation, which places many of our elderly at risk of poor health. Unacceptable living conditions, poor nutrition and inaccessible services.

The astronomical cost of health care today takes an especially heavy toll on seniors, many of whom, while above the Medicaid eligibility level, cannot afford large out-of-pocket medical expenses. The Seniors Issues Committee of CB9M strongly urges support of a National Health Bill, that unlike the current prescription bill actually works, which would guarantee access to community based, affordable, quality, and health care.

A priority need of the seniors of CB9M was an additional van for the Hamilton Grange Senior Center, which was delivered. So that it can be effectively utilized, funding to cover the salary of a driver must be included in the package, which DFTA is unable to fund. Board 9 needs the assistance of City and State Legislators to secure the funding for vital personnel. In order to encourage the independence of our seniors and facilitate their ability to maintain their social networks, it is imperative that accessible safe reliable means of transportation is made available. The escalators at the 125<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway IRT line and the 145<sup>th</sup> Street 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue line subway station are all too often not operational, making it impossible for the frail, elderly, mother with young children, and physically handicapped adults to use these stations. While both escalators were allegedly reconstructed they continue to break down on almost daily basis. It is completely unacceptable that CB9M residents around 125<sup>th</sup> Street should have to walk twelve blocks down to Broadway and 116<sup>th</sup> Street to access the subway. Reliable access to the subway is an essential needed Senior service. The job must be done right this time and then the experience must be replicated at 145<sup>th</sup> Street .

In response to the increasing number of seniors and disabled persons in our community it is imperative that immediate attention be given to facilitating access to public places, affordable housing and other needed senior services.

## **YOUTH**

The youth of our community is primarily African-American and Hispanic and Latino. Many of their families require public assistance and have limited access to basic services such as hospital, education, and libraries, as the population has grown, services have remained at the same level or in some strategically impacted areas, and it has been drastically reduced.



There are almost no programs that will accommodate school-age youth when schools are closed during the school year, except the Beacon School. Working parents, at-risk of losing their employment when they struggle to find child care programs and UPTOWN summer activity programs. These must be provided WITHIN our community. In addition, these opportunities must be made available for disabled children. The lack of a full Summer Youth Employment Program which as recently as 2001 employed 42,000 youngsters was reduced in the summer of 2005 to 11,500 citywide, which is devastating and only slightly increased in 2006. The City should work with State and Federal Law makers to restore **all** cuts on an annual basis, and not subject to last minute negotiations.

We support the efforts of Region 10 in providing students opportunities to learn Work Force skills: typing, computer skills and being able to think critically, calculate, spell accurately and have good reading comprehension. School District 6 students have an additional education barrier to overcome: language. We support their efforts to foster the options of education strategies that will provide effective acquisition of English (WITHHOUT restricting usage of their native languages), basic to being able to compete in the general Workforce.

While we are concerned about the lack of employment opportunity for our youth, we are more intensely concerned about their lack of employable skills. In the "selected" five Manhattan High Schools, the graduation rate barely out pointed the drop-out rate and the stay-in-school percentage. We must improve the quality of available effective education strategies so that the dropout rate is reduced and the graduation rate increased.

To improve the quality-of -life for our community youth, we require:

1. Programs that provided counseling, academic tutoring for remediation enhancement: access to college scholarships;
2. Job training, career planning, and computer classes;
3. Safe Corridors' while traveling to and from school;
4. Family supports services that encourage the continuity of the family unit.

Despite these needs, many of our young people continue to reach out, stay in school, join available youth programs and hope for a better future. They must be supported.

We encourage and actively support youth participation in the decision making process at the Community Board. We WELCOME youth as equal partners on the Board and especially on the Youth Services Planning Committee.

## **POLICE**

We had until recently been pleased to a point with efforts of the Department with the Upper Manhattan Initiative which includes the 30 th Precinct. However recently that coverage had dropped and while crime numbers are down, by comparison to ten years ago Drugs remains a major problem. Many of the dealers have moved inside and taken over multiple apartments making under cover arrests more difficult. Increasingly Gang activity has flourished. In a briefing by the Harlem Drug Task Force in 2001 Board 9 learned that 60% of the identified Gang



members lived in the Manhattanville and Grant Houses. The problem is still present although more localized in various focal points in the community.

As the only local employers are these criminals, CB9M urges full utilization of the Trespass Affidavit Program on every block to combat this situation.

The Board urges an increase in both Precinct Uniformed personnel with concerns that the Initiative in the adjoining 28 th Precinct will drive Drug Dealing into the 26 th Precinct at our Eastern Border.

More manpower is needed for the Housing Police to facilitate sweeps so that Officers from the 26 th and 30 th Precinct can remain on the street as a visible presence Civilian Personnel have returned due to CB 9's efforts to bring staffing to pre 1994 levels we urge the Department to maintain these levels.

## **SANITATION**

While the drastic Sanitation cutbacks of the mid 1990's have been somewhat restored, problems with trash collection can negatively impact the quality of life in our community. This is especially true north of West 125 th Street. .

This is in part due to the population 20% higher (including undocumented) than reflected in the 2000 Census. The staffing does not reflect the actual tonnage of garbage handled by Community Board 9 Sanitation Crews. Pick-ups along the Commercial Strips of Broadway, Amsterdam Avenue (W 135<sup>th</sup> – W 155<sup>th</sup> Streets), and 125<sup>th</sup> Street cannot keep up with utilization. We urge the City to increase staffing to facilitate three pick-ups in these locations a day.

For lots and trouble locations we need the Clean Team Restored. Recycling figures have greatly improved since 1997 however the Public Schools and City owned buildings or agencies are the greatest violators. The Office of the Mayor must reach out to local agencies to follow the rules.

We need, if not increased then, consistent Sanitation Enforcement in our Area. Board 9 has recommended Flex Shifts to reflect or findings that the majority of violations occur in the afternoon when Enforcement Officers are finished their Tour. Super block structures require special attention for health reasons the health and integrity of our community **MUST** be a top priority.

## **FIRE**

CB9M strongly requests that Fire Marshals be located in Manhattan to respond effectively and quickly to arson inspections. Community Board 9 requests that all the ambulances covering our area be upgraded or replaced.

CB9M requests the restoration of the five-man team to the engine companies. The deficiencies in our area are not limited to manpower alone. Community Board 9 request the timely restoration of our Engine Company 69 and Ladder 28, which burned down in 2007. Also, that Ladder 23 and



30 must receive a hurst tool, air bags and chain saw; and Ladder 28 must receive air bags. There is also a need for the Red Cap Program in upper Manhattan. A long-term goal is to have resident sprinklers for all multiple dwellings. CB9M also requests the timely restoration of our much needed Fire House

Although our request for a Juvenile Fire Setters Intervention Unit has not been funded, we strongly recommend the creation of such a Unit in Manhattan. Because of the constantly growing population in the area there will be many children that need and would benefit from the resource that this unit can provide.

## **PARKS**

CB9M is blessed with extraordinary park resources. Over 100 acres of our district are parkland. The need for safe, well maintained parks and open spaces is a high priority for this Board and much work remains to be done to see that our parkland receives the care and resources it deserves. All our residents including our youngsters (29% of our residents) and our seniors (12% of residents and ever increasing) deserve the very best opportunities for recreational use and passive enjoyment of our parks. Park properties, facilities, programs and maintenance in our district deserve the same level of investment, programming and maintenance as those of more affluent districts in the city.

Healthy parks encourage a healthy lifestyle and we prioritize the creation of new recreational programs and facilities in our parks. Except for Riverbank State Park, the rest of the parks and playgrounds in our district have too few recreational activities or sponsors. At the same time there are a number of park structures that remain unused or underutilized that could house gardening and healthy living programs, these include a facility on Amsterdam Ave. at 135<sup>th</sup> Street and the Croton Aqueduct Gatehouse on Amsterdam Ave. at 119<sup>th</sup> Street. Such programs would not only promote health but would have the added benefit of promoting intergenerational and intercultural activity in our diverse community. Team youth sports programs in our parks also need to be expanded. Providing our youth with the facilities and the staff to engage them in these team sports would afford them an opportunity to develop skills in team cooperation and problem solving; thus raising their self-esteem. Recreation supervisors and more park rangers are needed to engage children in urban laboratories and teach environmental values, urban gardening and training in horticulture. Since there are so few day care centers and many of our schools are poorly equipped, our parks must be programmed to provide alternatives, which can stimulate career opportunities for our older youth.

Our district is also in dire need of increased and more effective park maintenance. During the summer weekends our parks have arguably the highest usage per acre in the city yet are chronically under resourced leading to recurring complaints from residents about trash strewn parks and the destruction of landscapes. The under funding of park maintenance would not be tolerated in other districts and we will not tolerate it in ours.

For the safety of our residents our parks need to be better lit and patrolled. While Morningside Park is due to get enhanced perimeter lighting, that project has taken more than five years to implement and has yet to be realized. Similar projects on an expedited schedule are a priority for



St. Nicholas and Upper Riverside parks. The level of Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) presence in our district is inadequate and certainly does not match the level afforded to more affluent parks in the borough. We need to see this discrepancy erased.

Parks built on rocky terrain flank our district. Access to and through them is often difficult. It is made more so by the crumbling and dangerous condition of many park stairways including the stairs to St. Clair Place in Riverside Park (closed for years but with the potential to afford easier access to the waterfront), the stairs at 122<sup>nd</sup> Street and 113<sup>th</sup> Street in Morningside Park (both heavily used by pedestrian commuters) and in St. Nicholas Park at 134<sup>rd</sup> Street and 140<sup>th</sup> Street on the upper path. Access too much of Upper Riverside Park from points east is also severely limited. New pedestrian access routes over the railroad tracks are required as well as the completion of the renovation of the existing crossing at 148<sup>th</sup> Street.

Park Benches are crucial to the passive enjoyment of our parks by young and old alike. In the summer months many of our residents spend long summer evenings socializing on our park benches. The parks are literally their front yards. However the number of benches in certain locations is woefully inadequate to the need. This is especially true along the eastern edge of Morningside and St. Nicholas Parks. There is also a need for additional benches within both of these parks.

Our district offers many opportunities for the planting of additional street trees. Unfortunately, even with the city's million tree initiative these potential sites (which are more fully outlined in our budget requests for FY2011) have not been planted. We look forward to trees going into these sites in the next planting season.

Our districts park and recreational needs are acute and we look forward to having them addressed thoroughly and promptly.

## **EDUCATION/LIBRARIES**

Elementary schools in Community Board rank among the bottom ten percent in reading and mathematics. A contributing factor to this condition is the lack of adequate facilities. At P.S. 192 the restoration of classroom space through the installation of portable partitions in the gymnasium is not satisfactory.

Board 9 wants to emphasize that the request for a public high school in our area is not new. We strongly believe that by having our children attend a school in our area, a sense of community involvement and pride will grow. The staggering dropout rate among African American and Latino children is not acceptable and must no longer be tolerated. We recommend that a needs assessment be conducted and followed by a plan which will address the needs of the high school population in Community Board 9. The Board strongly supports the funding of capital priorities determined and proposed by the local school district.

The mis-education of our youth and the deplorable illiteracy for many of our adults keeps the cycle of poverty, deprivation and pain intact. The cuts to the literacy programs are most unfortunate and must be restored. The basic educational infrastructure for youth continues to



exist but at a level that undermines the future economic well-being of the community. All the schools in the Community Board ranked in the bottom 25% in reading and mathematics in the latest citywide test results with 66% below grade level.

The City's libraries are also a vital tool for education, advancement and cultural enrichment. At Board 9's George Bruce and Hamilton Grange and Columbia branch libraries there has been a continual decrease in book circulation and services. The means must be found to increase or maintain hours of operation and fill vacant personnel positions. Forty-five percent of all books borrowed from our branches are not returned. The New York Public Library must find the resources to restore all non-returned books in order to serve our public better and to develop a better tracking system in order to reduce these losses. It is also imperative that more modern technical equipment, such as new computers, be allocated to our libraries. Programs such as English as a Second Language, CLASP Adults Literacy and citizenship prep should be established in our libraries. We also want to assure that each branch has a Children's Librarian.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

The need for an increase of inspector personnel to assure good quality drinking water is a vital need in our community. We are pleased that the Department of Environmental Protection has shared our concern and hope that it will continue its demonstrated support when additional funds become available.

The staffing has to be maintained at the mandated levels at the Sewage Treatment Plant. Board 9 strongly requests the assistance of our elected officials to prevent DEP's plans for the removal of air quality monitors. The failure of the back up generators during the August 2003 Northeast Blackout almost led to disaster. Board 9 calls for an expedited delivery of the new equipment as well as coordinated training of the staff during emergencies.

Complaints about air pollution and noise are handled by DEP with a staff of nine Inspectors citywide in the evenings and weekends that is entirely too small. This is especially true since they are expected to respond also to calls from 311 about late night or illegal construction. It often takes months to arrange an inspection for noise or fume complaints that can entirely disrupt a neighborhood. DEP must have its inspection forces increased significantly, especially in light of our North River Pollution Control Plant.

Flooding of catch basins in CB9M is a constant problem along St. Nicholas and Morningside Drive; it is commonplace to see "mini lakes". This has become an intolerable situation that must be addressed immediately as in light of West Nile Virus concerns it creates a health hazard and makes it especially difficult for our senior citizens to "navigate" the cross walk.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

The City has recognized the fact that deferred maintenance often results in higher costs than yearly upkeep with so much roadway improvement scheduled and deferred, it is necessary for the Mayor's Traffic Construction Coordinating Council (MTCCC) to monitor this activity closely to ensure a minimum amount of traffic congestion negative impact on the small businesses and



residents in our area. For our community, the availability of convenient and reliable mass transportation is a requirement. Most of our workers have low paying jobs and cannot afford alternative forms of commutation; they need subways and buses that deliver them to their place of employment on time. The failure of the MTA to increase services that correspond with the 15% growth in mass transit utilization causes delays that make our residents travel more difficult.

CB9M has been able to maintain (M18, M4, M5 & M104 or extend (M60) service, however the lack of additional buses on a regular basis is causing buses to by pass bus stops southbound to expedite schedule adjustments for lower Manhattan leaving our community stranded. CB9M is also in the need for bus pads along the route of Amsterdam Avenue and 153<sup>rd</sup> Street as well as a Bus Shelter. Reconstruction efforts both within and without our Board area has placed undue strain on other of our arteries. For instance, the work on Columbus Avenue for the Frederick Douglass Circle to our south has resulted increased heavy truck traffic on Broadway; and the rebuilding of the 155<sup>th</sup> Street entrance/exits to the Miller Highway [Westside Highway] has significantly increased usage of Amsterdam Avenue and the 125<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor. Additionally, the junction of Broadway and 125<sup>th</sup> Street, has become heavily congested; given the many differing objects of the drivers entering the intersection, it has become increasingly hazardous. During peak period, traffic enforcement is required for this area.

There is a desperate need for adequate need for parking facilities. Board 9 successfully coordinated with Sanitation to change street sweeping signage reducing lost parking time. One branch of the Department of Transportation removed over 90 spaces for HPD of which to this date only 50 are used without the knowledge or input of either CB9 or the Manhattan Borough Commissioner.

Board 9 recommends that a method" of coordination be "created so that all changes are routed through the Manhattan Borough Commissioners Office, with subsequent input from the Board before implementation.

The conditions of our road surfaces north of West 135 th street require reconstruction, NOT RESURFACING, on Amsterdam Avenue, St. Nicholas Avenue, as well as Broadway.

## **197A PLAN**

As early as the 1980's, this Board recognized the need to identify comprehensive and integrative approaches to improve the quality of life in CB9M.

After modifications to the original Plan, City Council adopted CB9's 197A Plan in December 2007. In 2009, the Department of City Planning undertook the West Harlem Rezoning Project. This Project is key to the implementation of goals and objectives articulated in the 197-A Plan, specifically the creation and maintenance of affordable housing, support of Economic Development, and the preservation of neighborhood character. Notwithstanding, there are many other goals and objectives to be met.



We are aware of the budgetary restrictions affecting all phases of government funding. We want to do our part in conserving these resources and utilizing them in a way that will be beneficial to all *in* the community.

Working together does make a difference!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patricia Jones', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Patricia Jones  
Chair