



## BROOKLYN COMMUNITY BOARD 5 THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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"ONE COMMUNITY, ONE VOICE"

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### **Statement of Community District Needs 2016 Community Board #5-East New York**

Servicing the needs of more than 184,000 residents composed of a variety of ethnic and income group that reflect in a true sense the mosaic mirror of the City of Brooklyn. Its boundaries are from the north: Jackie Robinson Parkway (Queens Border) to the south: Belt Parkway; from the east: Queens City line (border to the west: Van Sinderen and Louisiana Avenue.

Within our district there are several diverse and distinct neighborhoods such as Cypress Hills, Highland Park, City Line, New Lots Central Area and Spring Creek. The need of these neighborhoods varies but their demands are consisted with overall district needs for affordable housing, economic development, health and social services, education, infrastructure and public safety.

#### **HOUSING:**

Affordable housing still remains the number one priority in our district. We will continue to advocate for more development and building of affordable housing including condominiums and co-op's apartments. We continue to promote the rehabilitation of the few existing vacant housing for use as co-op's or condominiums so that we can enhance stability in our community. As it has been said "every New Yorker deserves a safe and affordable place to live, in a neighborhood that provides opportunities to get ahead. The market along is not always able to meet that need, and, accordingly, governments at all levels must work together to help. Mayor Bill de Blasio has made affordable housing a top priority of his administration and has committed the City to build or preserve nearly 200,000 affordable units and help both tenants and small landlords preserve the quality and affordability of their homes."

The Department of Housing Preservation and Development must continue the ongoing communications with the board regarding the planning and selection of developers for the development of housing in the Gateway Estates. A good example of community board and the city agency is the Nehemiah Houses east of Pennsylvania Avenue/Spring Creek and the partnership homes in Cypress Hills neighborhood.

Spring Creeks Towers formally known as Starrett City Housing Complex remains a bastion of middle-class housing for another generation. In July 2009 Governor Paterson signed into law legislation that extended affordable for another thirty years to the tenants of the 5881 units housing complex in our district and the complex remains in the Mitchell-Lama affordable housing program.

We are now awaiting the completion of the Nehemiah Spring Creek III-Phase 3B homes in the Spring Creek area. The last Informational sessions were held during the early part of 2014 for the disposition of 81 newly constructed affordable single family homes which is to be constructed and sold in 2015. The Nehemiah Spring Creek homes at Gateway Estates is being developed over five phases. When completed there will be a total of more than two thousands units of housing in a combination of one, two and three family homes plus ninety buildings consisting of eight-units each.

The Coretta Scott-King housing complex located at McClancy Place between Jerome & Schenck will consist of 51 senior housing units. This is a full amenity apartment building for seniors 62 and over. The anticipated completion and grand opening is December 2014.

On April 7, 2014 the ground breaking ceremony took place on Livonia Avenue for the first phase of affordable housing units. Phase one will consist of four residential buildings which will include approximately 279 rental units. The building will be developed under the Quality Housing Program and building heights will vary along the street wall from approximately 62 feet to 80 feet. Building number one (six stories) will be located on Livonia Avenue at the corner of Sheffield Avenue and will have 52 residential units. Building number two (eight stories) will be located on the north side of Livonia Avenue between Sheffield and Georgia Avenue and will consist of eight-four residential units. Building number three (seven stories) will be located on the south side of Livonia Avenue between Georgia and Alabama Avenues and will have approximately 91 residential units. The last of this phase of buildings will be building number four (seven stories) and will be located on the south side of Livonia Avenue between Williams and Alabama Avenues and will consist of approximately 52 residential units. This phase is scheduled to be completed by March of 2016.

The Pitkin-Berriman affordable housing development will be located at 2501 Pitkin Avenue at the corner of Berriman Street. The build will contain 58 environmentally sustainable affordable rental units designed largely with families in mind with 2 and 3 bedrooms making up the majority of the unit. The construction of this housing complex is scheduled to start early 2015.

Cypress Hills Senior Housing will be 54 units, environmentally friendly affordable senior housing rental development. The project is to be located at 137 Jamaica Avenue near Pennsylvania Avenue. The building will feature 53 one bedroom units and one two-bedroom unit for a superintendent which will be affordable for tenants at 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI). The construction of this senior complex is schedule to start during the early part of 2015.

The Institute for Community Living (ICL) opened its 82 new units of supportive housing for single adults on Livonia and Vermont on November 8, 2012.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Economic Development and revitalization of commercial and industrial area is extremely vital for the economic growth and a prime concern to our community. We welcome the second phase of Gateway Mall that will be opening in late summer of 2014. This property comprises 40.23 acres of vacant land located directly adjacent to Gateway Center Phase I in the Spring Creek section of East New York. There are two strong anchor tenants and they are: Shoprite Supermarket and JC Penny Department Store which represent best-in-class operators with excellent credit. This will be the first JC Penney in Brooklyn and Shoprite will be the largest full service

supermarket in Brooklyn. We are really happy about this because more jobs opportunities for the people of East New York.

When the Livonia Avenue Common is completed it will have a total of 25,318 square feet of commercial space which will provide more jobs for the community.

East New York is one of the Sustainable Communities selected because of its existing transit resources, it vibrant, diverse community and committed local organizations and its potential to contribute to a more sustainable New York City. The study area extends two miles east to west and is roughly bounded by Fulton Street to the north conduit Avenue to the east, Pitkin Avenue to the south Van Sinderen Avenue to the west. With new housing and growth in East New York's residential population would expand the local customer base and create opportunities for new stores and other commercial ventures. The Department of City Planning would work with the Department of Small Business Services to support new and existing businesses as the demand for local services such as grocery stores, banks and restaurants is projected to increase. The East New York Development Corp. has identified all the vacant property on Pitkin Avenue from the Conduit to Pennsylvania Avenue and show case all vacant store front once per year. It is imperative that the State of New York maintain funding for administration of the empire Zone and our commercial and industrial areas.

Our local banks must encourage making mortgage loans, home improvement loans, business loans etc. to the local community, thereby insuring that investment dollars remain in the community.

## **YOUTH EDUCATION**

Community Board #5 has an increasing need for youth, education, and recreation program ranging from pre-school to after school programs to summer camps programs. We have three Beacon schools; IS 166, IS 218 and IS 302 among other recreation programs.

Our Beacon schools in the district have proven to be very successful. These Beacon schools are the hallmark programs of the Department of Youth & Community Development in our community and must be continuously funded. However, the amount of youth programs that the Beacon school serves does not meet the demands for the amount of youth services and programs needed in our community with such a large housing density.

We will continue to advocate from DYCD to sponsor or help arrange for sponsors to construct a multi-purpose recreational youth center in our district.

We await the Boys' Club of New York (BCNY) building which will be located on the north side of Livonia Avenue between Hinsdale Street and Williams Avenue. The building will be a 4 or 5 story community facility building. The building will consist of approximately 60,000 square feet of community facility space and will include a gymnasium, an auditorium, an in ground swimming pool, music rooms, a computer lab, dance theatre, art studios, game rooms, classrooms and cafeteria.

We need to continue to serve our youth. We continue to suffer from the city's decision to eliminate the position of youth coordinator. Our young people would greatly benefit from expanded employments opportunities, training and mentoring program. Computer and new technology training programs must be expanded to keep preparing our youth for employment. We need recreational programs that are open past 10:00 pm during the out of school time. We believe that these types of programs will keep our youth out of trouble.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION**

Our parks are very special to our residents and it is obvious that the Parks Department has a great responsibility in maintaining our parks. The few staff members are over worked and they have to be commended for the amount of work they do. The maintenance and up keeping of our parks and playgrounds continues and remain a major concern. We have volunteers ready to play a major part in maintaining the parks but we need to help of staff that the Department do not have. An example of this is: it takes too long for grass to be cut in order for the volunteers to do their part. We are happy that the renovation of the both the Robert Venable “State of the Art” and the Sperandeo Brothers Playground are completed. We await the new parks in the Spring Creek area of our district. We also need a soccer field that will serve the many youth especially on the north side of the district. The parks that have unfinished portions (such as Lions Park) need to be made usable. This can be done by keeping the grass cut on a regular bases and or by putting gravels or asphalt on all unfinished portions of the parks. All parks must have signage at all entrances indicating the time of closure.

All trees especially located at bus stops and other emergency signs should be pruned every season to make sure that they are not obstructing driver’s visibility in any manner.

## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

Health and Social Services continues to be one of our highest priorities. There is an increase in “demand use” at our Health and Hospital facility located at 2094 Pitkin Avenue due to the fact of new housing and shelters in our district. There is a large homeless population in need of specialized care.

Our Social Services programs continue to be compounded; currently 42% of our total population received some sort of income support, such as SSI, Public Assistance, Medicaid, AFDC, etc.

We are still in need of a Day Care and an additional Health Care Center west of Pennsylvania Avenue to accommodate the many residents in the area especially with the Livonia Avenue Common opening in March of 2016.

## **POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Community Board #5 is fully committed to maintaining grace with the officers working in our district and will continue to expand our current relationship with the 75<sup>th</sup> Precinct, PSA #2, and Transit police. The commanding officers are quick to respond to our concerns. We have supported increase training as a significant measure to increase trust between the people of our community and the police. We feel that no part of our community should be targeted because of the way they look or speak. We believe that individual officers must be held accountable for their actions and behavior.

We have a very large precinct district and our major concern is that we do not have enough officers to sufficiently patrol our district. Our population has increased substantially due to the fact that we have new homes throughout the district and the allocation of the police personnel has remained the same.

We have over 184,000 documented residents and I am sure there are many that is undocumented. We continue to build affordable units and the second phase of Gateway Mall shopping center will be completed by late summer of 2014. At the present time we have only two Community Affairs officers which is not enough to

service our district the way it should be serviced. We need Community Affairs officers to be available seven days per week plus available for the many evenings meetings that take place in our community.

Finally our precinct is in need of additional space for the various departments and a state of the art parking lot that will accommodate all the employees' cars. This will free up parking all over the area and will give visitors places to park closer to the precinct. We continue to support Community Policing and would like to see more officers on the street, this will eradicate the pack of persistent drug trafficking and usage.

### **SENIORS**

The elderly population in community Board #5 is increasing. The city must not lose sight of the special needs of our seniors. It is imperative that long range comprehension planning include 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 seniors at risk of poor health, unacceptable living conditions, poor nutrition and inaccessible services. The 51 units of the Coretta Scott-King senior apartment will be ready by the end of 2014 and the eighty senior units sponsored by St. Paul's Community Baptist Church will be opening around the first part of 2015. The construction of fifty-four units of senior housing sponsored by Cypress Hill Local Development Corporation will start during the early part of 2015.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

District wide residents continue to report sewer back-ups during heavy rains. An assessment of the conditions of the sewer pipes and catch basins need to be conducted. Defective equipment should be replaced. A regular repair and cleaning schedule should be set up and maintained. Reconstruction of catch basins and sewers along our major thoroughfare (Linden Blvd, Atlantic Avenue) must be given a priority.

We have been successful on conserving water through the Hydro-Lock program. We request that the special wrenches be made available to all agencies so that hydrants can be closed expeditiously.

There is a need for a weekend unit in Department of Environmental Protection for noise complaints since most noise occurs during weekends.

### **TRANSPORTATION-INFRASTRUCTURE**

The infrastructure in East New York is one of the worst in the entire City of New York as every street and all major thoroughfares in this community are in need of some kind of repair. In some cases there is need for resurfacing in others its reconstruction or just merely filling potholes. A huge problematic area is the placement and replacement of street signs, traffic and parking signs. It takes an average of five to six months to get signage replaced. We need to get better service in this area.

We consistently rank funding for street repairs and maintenance high on our list of priorities. Due to many years of neglect, many of our streets present hazardous conditions. We support increase staffing to highway operations for maintenance crew repairs potholes and cave-ins. The quality of material and work should be more consistent, thereby eliminating the immediate reoccurrence of the conditions. All efforts must be made to implement previous projects and repairs.

There is a major problem in getting a street light fixed. Street lights are so important because they illuminate our street and provide a safe environment. Funding must be a major priority to maintain the broken street lights.

## **CONCLUSION**

Community Board is the first level of city government responsibility for the delivery of municipal services in this district. Our ability to perform depends on the amount of cooperation from the city Agencies and allocated funding for the provisions of essential services.

We look forward to the continued support from the Community Assistance Unit (CAU) in their efforts in resolving problematic issues in this district and making it possible for our board to function efficiently.

This statement of Need highlighted some of the most pressing needs or concerns of our district. Our request needs are by no means overstated; however, we believe there is much more to be done to enhance the quality of life for our current and future residents. The Board will continue to work with City Agencies and Elected Officials to address the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

*Walter Campbell*

Walter Campbell  
District Manager