



The City of New York
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The City of New York
Bronx Community Board Four
“The Capitol District”

DISTRICT NEEDS STATEMENT, FY' 2010



The Bronx Museum of The Arts



Bronx County Building



Bronx Lebanon Hospital Center



Yankee Stadium



The Highbridge



The Lorelei Fountain at Joyce Kilmer Park



The Bronx Hall of Justice



Gateway Retail Center



Bronx School for Law, Government and Justice



153rd Street Bridge

Ms. D. Lee Ezell
Board Chair

Mr. José Rodriguez
District Manager

FY '2010 DISTRICT NEEDS STATEMENT OF BX. COMMUNITY BOARD # FOUR

Community District # Four, the Capital District is made up of the following Bronx neighborhoods: Mt. Eden, Highbridge, West Concourse, East Concourse, and Concourse Village. Our strong, vibrant neighborhoods encompass East 149th Street on the South, East 174th Street on the North, The Harlem River on the West and Webster to Park Avenue on the East. Nearly 140,000 thousand residents celebrate our resurgence, and welcome new cultures, languages, hopes and dreams of the many new Americans making this district their home, from around the globe. We celebrate their distinct and varied positive contributions.

Ours is a great place to visit, work and live. We are the host community to the world renown, Yankee Stadium, The Terminal Market Gateway Center, the Borough's Court System, the Bronx Museum on the Arts and many Art Deco buildings along the Grand Concourse Historic District. Soon our community will enjoy newly renovated recreational facilities, such as, tennis courts, a state of the art track & field and a new water front park. We continue to attract public and private sector economic development opportunities, again District #4 is an ideal location to do business and reside.

We are at the very center of the metropolitan region, only minutes from Manhattan, New Jersey, Long Island, and Westchester. We are the administrative center of the County, housing the offices of the Borough President, The District Attorney, the Courts and the County Clerk. There is easy access through major rail lines, roadways, and public transit, both surface and underground. We are a community of contrasts. Sleek silhouettes of art-deco buildings are a short stroll away from lovely small homes. Acre for acre we have more parks throughout our two square miles than any other district. All of our residents and guests get the "green carpet" treatment.

Community District # Four has experienced a commercial, residential and economic revival, making it a very exciting time for us here. We are excited about the roster of ongoing capital improvement projects and completed development projects earmarked for our district, projects we have fought long and hard for. Although we are at the brink of an economic down turn, we believe that our urban revival will continue and the fruits of years of advocacy will bear to sustain us as we move forward. Many of the capital improvement projects underway or slated for development, are part of Community Board Four's effort to include budget priority items, year after year, that will benefit the district.

Although we have prospered during the time of good and plenty we are mindful of what is to come. We will remain vigilant that Community District #4 receives its "fair share" of charter-mandated resources. The service demands of each neighborhood and constituency in our district needs to be matched with the appropriate response from the agencies for all categories of service and resources to create healthy conditions in this fast-growing community. We have a responsibility to care and plan for every segment represented in our district, including the young, the elderly, the native born, the foreign born, the poor, the disabled and the illiterate.

Community Boards must continue to be a voice for the voiceless and a strong advocate for every constituency. It is the responsibility of municipal government to provide the services and resources to the community districts in this city that will enable them to thrive and meet their goals.

EDUCATION: The problems of our educational system are well known, they include: high enrollment rates, class overcrowding conditions (the issue of size becomes extremely important since our school system is responsible for educating 1.1 million students in 1,200 schools), students with special needs, high dropout rates, at-risk youth, and issues with academic under performance in critical areas, i.e. reading, math and the sciences.

FY '2010 DISTRICT NEEDS STATEMENT OF BX. COMMUNITY BOARD # FOUR (Contd.)

Bronx Community District #4 is home to many fine schools however, the Board urges the Department of Education to create programs that partner with the private sector and other governmental entities, that will allow young people to recognize the importance of education, provide academic tutoring and life skills, receive mentoring services and job skills. The Board will work with these schools in order to provide support and advocacy. We believe that any formula for educational excellence would necessitate the Mayor's continued support and focus in the following areas: upgrading teacher quality standards, reforming high schools and middle schools, reinforcing math and science achievement goals, providing better "customer service" to parents, enhancing safety in and around the schools, improving the physical and social climate of our schools and cutting unnecessary bureaucracy and administrative costs. When we commit ourselves to providing adequate school facilities, adequate educational tools and resources and attract the best educators, then we can say that we have "done the right thing" by our children. They certainly deserve no less.

Chancellor Klein has repeatedly stated that he wants to "hear from advocacy groups, parent groups, community groups and business groups." We urge him to engage us as partners in the educational reform planning process to address some of the school reform issues we referenced earlier. This open and inclusive process will afford the community to contribute to the renewal process. Now that Community School Boards are outdated, the Department of Education must be accountable to parents and community residents by allowing them to play a meaningful role in deciding the future of our educational system. In addition, we need the Department of Education to engage the Community Boards more fully and to send a permanent liaison to its District Services Cabinet Meetings and Education Committee Meetings.

While there is a need for more schools in the district, there is a great need for middle school in the Highbridge section of our district. The concern is great in this community where a middle school child must take, in many cases a bus, a train, and a bus to attend school. A Child in this community will wake up early arrive home late only to be too tired or unable to focus on their studies. We urge the Department to meet with the community and have a serious dialogue with the School Construction Authority and discuss building a new middle school for the Highbridge community. We have voiced our concerns over the siting of schools over brownfield areas. The addition of four new schools over the Old Mott Haven Rail yard, posed a real concern to the surrounding neighborhood. Some of these concerns are health and environmental safety, traffic congestion, public safety and the need for additional transportation service. We were particularly concerned with an already congested area that cannot safely accommodate over two thousand students and support staff that will come to this school campus. Since voicing our concerns we

Requested the Administration and State Agencies to meet with the community to discuss the concerns and provide assurances regarding outlined above concerns. We remind the SCA that we have requested meeting several times as stipulated by the City Council regarding reporting mandates. The SCA has not responded.

TRANSPORTATION: Traffic along the East 161st Street corridor has been unbearable. However, with the completion of the new Bronx Criminal Court House, Lou Gehrig Plaza, the ongoing East 161 Street Underpass renovation project, and the new Yankee Stadium project coming to a close the situation will be exacerbated. The upcoming new Metro North Station, and the great number of businesses and schools in the immediate area, the situation will prove to be very problematic. That said, we are deeply saddened at the Administration's decision to cancel the construction of the East 153rd Street Bridge scheduled to commence this year. The project received

FY '2010 DISTRICT NEEDS STATEMENT OF BX. COMMUNITY BOARD # FOUR (Contd.)

the Art Commission Award for Excellence in Design and excellence in inter-agency coordination. The proposed bridge, a single tower cable stayed bridge, over the Old Mott Haven Rail yard, connecting Concourse Village West at the west end and Park Avenue at the east end. This would have been the first new bridge built in 50 years and it would have been the first cable-stayed vehicular bridge in New York City. We believed that the bridge would have eased traffic congestion along 149th and 161st Streets, as well as the alleviate some of the congestion on local streets in the neighborhood. Although, our office was not officially notified on the decision to delay the bridge, we hope the appropriate agency will soon notify us that they are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the properties purchased to make way for the bridge.

The residents of this community district long ago voiced their anxieties and concerns about today's traffic conditions. Transportation and traffic are of particular importance to us since aside from being the "Capitol District" of this County; Community District # 4 is also the geographic center of the metropolitan region.

Consequently, this community is calling for clarity on a traffic reconfiguration plan for the "Court Corridor." The City needs to place permanent traffic control agents in the "Court Corridor" area for traffic relief assistance.

We continue to urge the expenditure of increased funds for sidewalk repair for property adjacent to city or federally funded housing, as well as privately owned property that has been abandoned and as a result negatively impacts the surrounding community. Said repairs should occur every two years, as opposed to the current four-year schedule. Community Board # Four fully supports the increase of additional Highway Repairers for maintenance in general and for pothole and cave-in repairs specifically. The quality of materials and work should be more consistent, thereby eliminating the immediate reoccurrence of poor road conditions. We request the funding for milling work to support the agency's current in-house resurfacing program.

However, we would be remiss if we failed to note a major concern of this community, the lack of adequate parking throughout our commercial districts. We urge that this agency undertake a joint effort to evaluate the crisis being brought about by the ever decreasing parking space, causing a surge in parking fees for motorists, resulting in illegal parking because of the city's failure to put in place a comprehensive plan that addresses both private and commercial parking needs. In many communities, such as Community District # Four, the City's failure in this regard, results in the loss of residents and businesses due to the economic hardship they have to endure. In addition, the community is adamant in its request for continued discussions and studies toward a "Residential Parking Permit Program" for the Yankee Stadium area in the Civic Center.

With the Grand Concourse Restoration project, slated for the Grand Concourse, between 161st and 171st Streets almost completed the concern of maintaining the greenery is a priority to Community Board Four.

There are sixteen "Step Streets" in Community District # Four. As a result, repeated requests concerning maintenance and repairs are received at the district office. With no clear agency jurisdiction, we continue to "beg and plead" in order to have a given agency address the problem. Accordingly, we are still waiting for the results/recommendations from a NYCDOT funded Engineering Survey & Analysis on the district's Step Streets, to determine the need for rehabilitation. Additionally, we need to revisit the outdated "Leventhal Agreement," so that a clear determination

FY '2010 DISTRICT NEEDS STATEMENT OF BX. COMMUNITY BOARD # FOUR (Contd.)

can be made as to what city agency has jurisdiction over what area and for respective agencies to allocate the appropriate funds and resources to get the job done. This request has been outstanding for several years. In addition, we are making a firm appeal to NYCDOT to fund a traffic study to ease heavy and unsafe traffic conditions in the areas leading to the West bound and East bound I-95 N/S egress/ingress ramps at Jerome Avenue and the surrounding area. A bridge or overpass could connect Townsend Avenue South and North and Inwood Avenue South and North over the Cross Bronx Expressway.

DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS: Community Board # Four supports funding requests for this agency to maintain and increase safety inspection personnel, improve inspector training and recruitment, with continued expansion of the database and computerization records. The agency's inspection and enforcement process is an essential support function to local community preservation efforts. Complaints through 311 from our District are not forwarded to our office.

HOUSING PRESERVATION & DEVELOPMENT: Our community in the past decade has undergone substantial rehabilitation of its housing stock and new housing growth. With this housing boom, we have experienced an influx of new residents to the area. Many of these new residents were either in the low-income range, formerly homeless families or new immigrants. This will require HPD to carefully monitor all properties falling under their jurisdiction, either directly or indirectly. A comprehensive strategy for the care and disposition of city owned property would strengthen our future stability as a community and protect the significant public investment in housing in Community District # Four.

To increase the District's economic index, we support the development of affordable housing for moderate and middle-income individuals and families as an added element to our new housing stock. The lack of affordable housing is contributing to the flight of moderate and middle-income people from our district. It is in the interest of our Community District to promote economic diversity within our community. The development of the Bronx Civic Center should go hand in hand with the development of moderate and middle-income housing, which will also provide housing for workers in the Civic Center. We are strongly advocating for City and State funds for the middle-income new construction program. We are calling for new codes for new construction to require green and sustainable elements to match the expected life of the building. Further, we call for new codes requiring owners of existing buildings to upgrade and retrofit to meet green and sustainable standards the City must provide funding for these upgrades.

The vacant land along District #4 Waterfront provides an excellent opportunity for the development of new middle to moderate income condos and/or co-op apartments. This area is primed for housing development particularly adjacent to the upcoming Gateway Center and new Yankee Stadium. We urge NYC HPD to aggressively pursue the possibility of building this type of housing along the waterfront.

Community District # Four has one of the largest stocks of Art Deco buildings in the nation, and we should make it our obligation to preserve them for historical and artistic reasons. Accordingly, we urge NYC HPD to employ the adequate resources available under the Anti-Abandonment Program or establish a new program to preserve and improve the Art Deco buildings in district #4. We also urge HPD to continue their outreach program to the owners of these buildings to encourage them to participate in the varied Rehabilitation Loan Programs. We cannot emphasize enough the need for continued and increased funding for preservation activities and for NYC HPD's active involvement with the Grand Concourse Historical District. Lastly, we urge the City to be creative as it plans toward rezoning in our District to seek innovative ways to further meet our building needs.

FY '2010 DISTRICT NEEDS STATEMENT OF BX. COMMUNITY BOARD # FOUR (Contd.)

DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: We continue to advocate for the increase in funding of Community District # Four's youth program and services. Statistics show that there are over 37,000 youth between ages five and nineteen needing services in our District #4

In addition, we strongly urge this Administration to take the necessary steps both to assure that DYCD complies with the spirit as well as the letter of the Charter by consulting with Community Boards on budgetary matters. Also it cannot be stated that our youth are our future and at the same time because of decisions made that reflect persistent failure to our youth they are not providing them with the economic, educational and social opportunities they need to compete in an ever-changing global market and to remain productive, fully engaged participants in society. The East side of the district is grossly neglected in services and programs for the youth. We need a youth center or a beacon school in the area.

With the increase in population, we are experiencing an influx of youth coming into our district. It becomes our obligation to provide them with the life skills they need to mature into adulthood. Consequently, the lack of adequate funding for the Summer Youth Employment Program is a continual concern for the youth of our district. Year after year, summer job opportunities become less and less, which makes it very difficult to assure teens the life and work experience skills they need to enhance their development. Without these opportunities, our young people will be relegated to hanging out in the streets causing disruption to the quality of life of our community residents. In the end, the cost of addressing problems associated with at-risk youth will be far greater than providing them with the resources they need to enhance their productive growth.

DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING: One of the areas DFTA is responsible for is to ensure that seniors receive equitable and quality services. What are DFTA's short and long-term strategies to better meet the needs of the elderly population, in a changing environment? We kindly request that DFTA formulate and execute a plan to build stronger partnerships with consumers, community partners, advocates, private and public organizations. Sufficient funding must be allocated to service providers to adequately address service demands and to renovate senior service centers, where appropriate. Accordingly, we want DFTA to support all of Community Board # Four's Budget Priority Requests for senior services.

POLICE DEPARTMENT: As always we thank the continued efforts of the Officers and Leadership of the 44th Precinct, who have been a vital part of the crime reduction efforts. As one of the most populous Bronx districts, we continue to urge that our need for Public Safety be measured against our service area and high-density population. Particularly, because of our unique status as the "Capitol District," we house Yankee Stadium, the Civic Center, several commercial strips, and more, which adds to an unusual and extensive drain on city resources. We were pleased with programs that brought about the crackdown on drug related activities particularly "operation impact".

With gang activity on the rise, it becomes imperative that sufficient funding be provided to place additional School Safety Officers in the confines of the 44th Precinct.

We thank Mayor Bloomberg and Commissioner Kelly for their efforts and concentration of increased police presence in Community Board Four. We commend 44th Precinct's outgoing Commanding Officer, Inspector James Essig and in coming Deputy Inspector Dermont Shea for up-

FY '2010 DISTRICT NEEDS STATEMENT OF BX. COMMUNITY BOARD # FOUR (Contd.)

holding the high standards set at the 44th Pct. This community oriented standard will serve to enhance the partnership between the community and the police. This is what is most needed now and what has proven to be the most effective “weapon” that NYPD has.

This community is “alive” with activities, events and programs that take place on an almost daily basis. As a result, the burden placed on our 44th Precinct Community Affairs Unit has increased as our population continues to grow. To improve communication between our agencies and to provide better outreach to our community residents, we ask that this agency consider the necessity to provide funding for technological and other upgrades for improved operational efficiency in the 44th Precinct Community Affairs unit. We also urge Deputy Inspector Shea to increase the number of Youth Officers now serving that unit. Additionally, we are requesting funding to support the Cadets and other youth oriented programs which have proven success and acclaim.

FIRE DEPARTMENT: We continue to strongly support an appropriate increase in FDNY & EMS personnel as well as additional equipment and protective gear.

We are also requesting adequate funding for terrorism training and wholeheartedly support funding to the FDNY for their equipment needs in order to improve service delivery to our community.

Community Board #4, through its Municipal Services Committee, concurs that funding is needed to expand fire safety education and to duplicate additional learning centers for our borough. We call on the City to allocate adequate funding for FDNY public education programs that includes CPR training and to purchase smoke and carbon monoxide detectors to distribute yearly to the public.

We continue to urge the Department to restore the Bureau of Fire Investigations Bronx-based Office. The ability of Fire Marshals to investigate fires in the Bronx, already jeopardized by the initial move, will continue to be further impaired. And so we request that this agency provide us with a full statistical account on the impact these actions have had on Fire Marshal operations here in our district, with a view towards increasing Fire Marshal personnel to our community.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION: This agency has been unable to reach a highly successful level of water conservation through its Hydro-Lock program. Although a decrease has been observed, this summer, we again witnessed many open fire hydrants dispensing huge quantities of water. As a result, we recently experienced a fatality of a young child due the inability to properly secure our hydrants. We commend DEP for the innovative “HEAT” program.

We have repeatedly advocated for the local police precinct (44th) to be in possession of the “special” wrenches so that they may expeditiously close all open hydrants. In the past, when contacting the agency we were advised that the agency’s policy is to distribute these wrenches only to the Fire Department and sparingly at that. We again have been told that the Police Department had wrenches but that they had received orders from 1 Police Plaza not to engage in the process of closing open fire hydrants but to leave that responsibility to DEP and the Fire Department. What steps DEP will take to prevent the public from opening fire hydrants? Improved technology is needed with the installed hydro locks; they are not working. The effective closure of these fire hydrants can assist in water waste and water pressure preservation, critical to putting out fires.

Community Board # Four urges an increase in field operations personnel in order to meet the current need for service delivery. We are requesting that adequate funds be allocated to hire additional

FY '2010 DISTRICT NEEDS STATEMENT OF BX. COMMUNITY BOARD # FOUR (Contd.)

Enforcement personnel to identify and initiate action against violators of the air pollution code.

DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION: We are pleased to observe that our Scorecard ratings have significantly improved. Yet, in order to maintain our current standing and to upgrade our cleanliness level. After all, the cleanliness level, or lack of in our streets, characterizes our district. We want to ensure that our image is a clean one. As such, we urge the restoration of D.O.S. personnel, including “hand” cleaners, to adequately maintain our streets and sidewalks.

We commend the agency for their outreach efforts and public education campaign highlighting the benefits of recycling. We need DOS to continue reminding city residents and property owners about the recycling program in effect, through a sustained public education campaign.

Community District #4 experiences difficulties having no regular cleaning and maintenance schedules for the extraordinary number of underpasses, step streets and sitting areas. The problem is the need for clarity in agency jurisdiction. Our repeated requests have been that DOS revisit the “Leventhal Agreement”, which is ambiguous at best, so that a clear determination can be made and funding allocated accordingly. Additionally, we request the funding for additional Sanitation Enforcement Personnel and Sanitation Police.

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS SERVICES/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORP: Our community has a good number of small businesses and we strongly believe that those city agencies responsible for business development need to provide the kind of leadership, technical assistance and funding sources to improve the commercial landscape in our district and to assure the success of our merchants with their businesses.

We are delighted that the Bronx Terminal Market Gateway Center is well on its way to being completed. The hope of this development, for this area retail center is to generate hundreds of jobs for Bronx residents. Community Board # Four continues to believe that the development of the Bronx Terminal Market will result in the following benefits and opportunities:

- An excellent opportunity to create an accessible market for outlets and other retailers.
- Construction of a Waterfront mall with restaurants and shops to attract tourists.
- Creation of a harbor district for tourists to travel via ferries and boats
- Availability of business opportunities for all Bronx residents.
- Will promote the development of a major hotel to compliment the newly developed waterfront area.
- Generate new tourism for the area in the form of Bronx tours as well as tours of the immediately adjacent Yankee Stadium complex.

Community Board # Four, through its Economic Development Committee, has long advocated for and will strongly support waterfront development in District # Four. We believe that such a project could be implemented in conjunction with the Borough President’s Yankee Neighborhood Vision Plan, which addresses many of the concerns expressed by Community Board # Four.

There is very little vacant land remaining in this community district and as a result, it becomes

FY '2010 DISTRICT NEEDS STATEMENT OF BX. COMMUNITY BOARD # FOUR (Contd.)

crucial to use any available remaining space to its fullest capacity. Economic Development is a priority for this district; therefore, we recommend that agencies supporting economic development in partnership with the Bronx Borough President's Office and local development corporations, such as, B.O.E.D.C. and S.O.B.R.O. initiate a search for potential developers for a Waterfront project in Community District # Four. We conclude that a Waterfront project, with the indicated amenities, will strengthen and highlight not only this community, but the Borough of the Bronx as well.

We are hopeful that the Economic Development Corporation will work in conjunction with the Department of Business Services, to assist the Community Board in calling for the needed funding for the development of tying in economic development and tourism. Our district could serve as a catalyst for increased development and local entrepreneurship, resulting in job creation and business development opportunities and services to our community residents.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELESS SERVICES: A popular phrase came into prominence several years ago, which was interpreted in a variety of ways and often misinterpreted. It is called "Fair Share." It was created on the assumption that it would assure that communities would get a reasonable amount of the "goodies" and an equitable amount of the "Bad (NIMBY) stuff". Despite good intentions, it has not benefited most Bronx districts. It certainly has not made District #4 community residents happy. On the contrary, we continue to receive far more than our fair share of facilities serving the homeless. This agency's policy continues to be "One City, One E.A.U." This policy places an unduly heavy burden on the people it serves as well as the district it is located in. It is unfair to both and it is deeply resented by both.

The placement of the EAU facility in our district and the plans to build a new EAU facility at this site is the single most spectacularly negative impact to our community. This EAU has been a magnet, attracting homeless from all boroughs and other states to our district, at all hours of the night. This dynamic creates the opportunity for homeless encampments in different parts of the district, including underpasses, step streets and commercial strips, when they are ineligible for homeless services and are rejected by the EAU. This detracts from the overall quality of life of our community. The presence of homeless on the streets poses a serious health threat to themselves and to the residents of the community. The continued failure to correct this problem leaves the city poorer, both in fiscal and in human resources.

Furthermore, we state for the record that our position on this issue is not based on a "NIM-BY" attitude. We have welcomed many projects for this population and we offered a different site for the EAU in our District. The location is not suitable. We categorically reject this Administration's plans to build a new multi-million dollar facility on the current East 151 Street EAU site. A larger EAU facility will only drain an already limited police force in District #4. This area will soon be blooming and booming with new doors opening to greater tourist attractions, i.e., the new Yankee Stadium, Gateway Center Mall, access to the waterfront, etc., which is in the midst of our civic and cultural centers. Furthermore, we believe that the City did not do its part in their fair share analysis and based on this we are appealing to the Mayor to rescind the plans to invest millions of dollars in building a new EAU site and instead consider revitalizing this facility for mixed use multi-dwelling housing for artists, for instance.

PARKS DEPARTMENT: We thank Commissioner Adrian Benepe, Borough Commissioner Aponte and their agency, as well as Borough President Adolfo Carrion, Jr. and our local Council Members for their continued support of the Joyce Kilmer Park Renovation Project. The

FY '2010 DISTRICT NEEDS STATEMENT OF BX. COMMUNITY BOARD # FOUR (Contd.)

Heinrich Heine Fountain has been rededicated at its original location on the Grand Concourse. We continue to request for the completion of Joyce Kilmer's perimeter fencing work, to preserve the natural beauty and add to the security of this newly renovated centerpiece park. The Grant Avenue Park will provide much needed and essential open space and it will enable children to play in a secure and attractive surrounding. We urge the fast-tracking of Grant Park and for the appropriation of adequate funds for the continuation of the Grand Avenue Park Master Plan for which missed its April 2008 completion date. With the advent of the new Yankee Stadium and the replacement parkland program, we strongly urge for the fast-tracking of such programs and other key park construction projects in District #4. We appeal to the Department to review the use of synthetic turf, in depth, for the health and safety of the users. The re-seeding of grass, tree and bush pruning as well as park bench and other equipment repair continues to be a concern in our district. We continue to be distressed at progressive financial cuts suffered by this agency limiting both its capital and expense budget. We particularly deplore the losses experienced re: Parks Enforcement Patrol. Providing adequate Parks Enforcement personnel is essential to the entire Park program, coupled with an appropriate amount of funding for public safety enhancement. It makes no difference how beautiful and well maintained the parks are if people are afraid to go into the park and enjoy its beauty. Money spent on maintenance upgrades should be matched with an equal amount spent on safety enhancements. They both go hand and hand.

Community Board #4 strongly supports adequate funding for street tree maintenance, for the placement of additional trees and to replace dead trees, for additional maintenance personnel, assistant gardeners, climbers and pruners, PEP Officers, city park workers, and for additional equipment for improved service delivery efforts. We are excited and grateful for the trees coming to our district through the replacement program and the Citywide "One Million Trees" program which started in District #4.

THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE: We recognize and appreciate the efforts undertaken by this agency for joining doctors, clinics, hospitals and community organizations to make HIV testing available to everyone in the Bronx. We are pleased that this agency understood our message and put a proper mechanism in place in order to continue the level of communication achieved by our mutual agencies, i.e., representation on the Board's District Service Cabinet meetings, etc., or else, all their good deeds will go unnoticed. This dynamic partnership affords us the ability to better inform the public on health-related concerns and at a faster rate.

Adequate funding must be provided in order to meet future challenges for it is critical that funds be available to enhance Health services where the needs are great with special attention to HIV/AIDS. Failure to allocate sufficient funds to this agency will not move an agenda that will assist in meeting their mandated mission. But specifically, to mitigate the impact of health problems affecting minority groups and to provide educational outreach services, i.e., HIV/AIDS prevention program, Immunization Efforts, and School Based Health Centers and Clinics.

Community District #4 continues to support the agencies overall health goals especially insuring individuals who are HIV-negative stay that way and those that are positive, receive the support needed to feel better, live longer and protect their partners.

Lastly, as the destination in the throes of replacement parks due to the new Yankee Stadium, we have growing concerns with the use of synthetic turf. We understand that this is a rela-

FY '2010 DISTRICT NEEDS STATEMENT OF BX. COMMUNITY BOARD # FOUR (Contd.)

tively new resource by the Parks Department but, since there is much unknown regarding these materials, we need assurances that it is safe.

COMMUNITY BOARDS: The City Charter states with vigor the importance and obligations mandated to Community Boards. Experience has taught us that intended programs are without meaning when they are without funds. We are currently operating on an internal budget of \$180,558.00 for a district with nearly 140,000 residents. Actually, the financial figure is far less than that since much of the Board's budget is pre-allocated for fixed expenses. Community Boards provide direct and almost immediate access between

community residents and city government. That link must be strengthened. Instead, we are being weakened because as many city agencies are reducing services, we are being called upon with greater urgency to fill the gap produced by the reduction of services from other agencies but without the adequate financial resources. We recognize existing difficulties but we believe that Community Boards are the best thing that has happened for New York City.

We are gratified that Mayor Bloomberg spared Community Boards from budget cuts this time, but while we have regained an inch, we are still miles behind when it comes to an equitable allocation of city funding. Let us conclude this portion of our commentary by saying that with the adequate fiscal support, Community Boards can provide the proverbial "ounce of prevention" that makes it unnecessary for the city to pay dearly for the "pound of cure" often needed. We recommend that each agency provide Community Boards with a quarterly progress report on our requests expressed in the District Needs Statement, which continues to receive no attention or consideration. The community should have a clear understanding of what resources we have, what we do not have and why.

IN CONCLUSION: As always, we take this moment to reflect on the past year and even the years preceding. All too often, we find ourselves in an adversarial position with agencies' policies, but we have never considered their representatives as our adversaries. On the contrary, we have often found the agency representatives to be cooperative, responsive and helpful. We could never achieve our successes alone...It has always been a joint effort of New York's best and brightest and for that the people of Community District # Four are most grateful.

As we encounter new challenges, we believe that together we can succeed and come up with creative solutions that will improve the quality of life of our residents. MAY OUR PURPOSE CONTINUE TO BE THE WELL-BEING OF OUR CITY'S INHABITANTS!

Submitted by: _____


José Rodriguez, District Manager

In collaboration with:

Ms. D. Lee Ezell, Board Chair

Ms. Martha Reyes, Economic Development Committee Chairperson

Mr. George T. Robinson, Sr. Health & Human Services Committee Chairperson

Rev. Earl McKay Housing & Land Use Committee Chairperson

Ms. Kathleen Saunders Municipal Services Committee Chairperson

Mr. Maynard Charles Youth & Education Committee Chairperson

Mr. Robert Garmendiz Parks Committee Chairperson