

## Community Board 7/Manhattan District Needs Statement for Fiscal Year 2011

Community Board 7/Manhattan covers the Upper West Side from West 59th to 110th Streets, Central Park to the Hudson River. This document provides highlights of our district's needs and interests. We anticipate that these and other emerging concerns will present new challenges as our community works together to shape the future of the Upper West Side. We welcome the opportunity to plan with government, the private sector, and our neighbors to address the needs of our community. You can find our capital and expense priorities for the NYC Budget for Fiscal Year 2009 and district demographics at [www.nyc.gov/mcb7](http://www.nyc.gov/mcb7).

### SUSTAINABILITY

Residents of the Upper West Side are eager to address environmental issues, especially those related to land use, transportation, and waste management. MCB7 has established a Green Committee to promote sustainability by engaging residents in education, advocacy, and direct efforts to reduce the carbon footprint of the Upper West Side. The committee also acts as a conduit for coordinating local initiatives, including PlaNYC 2030 programs that reduce carbon emissions and accommodate growth in environmentally responsible ways.

New development in the district creates opportunities to implement sustainable building systems, but existing building codes are limited and difficult to enforce. Most new buildings have glass facades, which constrict natural airflow and afford little room for energy saving insulation. Few new buildings take advantage of energy enhancements like solar panels and high-efficiency boiler systems. The community supports the use of incentives to encourage Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification for new buildings. Furthermore, CB7 encourages developers to contribute by supporting local parks and other open spaces.

Residents of older buildings are looking for easy ways to assess and reduce their energy consumption. They want low-cost access to engineers and consultants that can help identify opportunities for energy savings and waste reduction. Residents want concise information about energy alternatives and how to implement them in their homes.

West Siders are overwhelmed by traffic congestion, especially in terms of truck traffic and emissions. There is an increasing desire to reduce road traffic (including idle standing) and also create more access to energy friendly transportation alternatives like walking, biking, subways, and buses. Many groups are interested in limiting parking slots, adding bike routes, and redesigning intersections to make walking easier and more attractive. Many have also expressed interest in more frequent buses and subway trains along busy routes (Buses M104, M7, M11, Trains A, 2, 3)

Numerous residents have expressed the need to step up recycling in parks and schools, where recycling guidelines are not enforced. Furthermore, people are interested in broader efforts to reduce use of plastic bottles and bags and encourage the use of biodegradable alternatives.

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## PLANNING AND LAND USE

The Upper West Side has been – and continues to be – a focus of interest for new development, for conversion of older buildings to new uses, and for restoration and adaptation of landmark structures. In light of this development, there is a continued need for comprehensive planning and realistic measures to guide development, to conserve our architectural heritage, and to mitigate potential strains on traffic, infrastructure, and municipal services.

### **West 97th -110th Street Rezoning**

After months of study and deliberation and unprecedented public involvement, MCB7 voted approval of a series of zoning changes for Broadway, the mid-blocks, Manhattan Valley and other sub-districts above West 97th Street. The rezoning has the goal of encouraging development that respects the built character of the various neighborhoods, encourages a variety of housing types, and provides for a residential mix of affordable-, moderate- and middle-income housing as well as market-rate housing. The City Planning Commission unanimously adopted the proposed rezoning, and the New York City Council unanimously approved it on September 26, 2007.

While the rezoning effort was inspired by two extreme examples of air-rights transfer in what had been an extensive R-8 zone, MCB7 used the opportunity to address another issue of concern as well – the large swath of R7-2 with the potential to be developed disproportionately for community facilities (an oddity of that particular zoning designation, and one that is long overdue for attention from the City Planning Commission). Considering the lamentations of various not-for-profit groups at the loss of development value since the rezoning, MCB7's action came not a moment too soon.

In fact, a major institution in the area, the Jewish Home & Hospital (JHH) on West 106th Street between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues, brought major political pressure to bear to get itself carved out of the rezoning at the eleventh hour and pursue modernization plans to be financed in part by a market-rate residential development that depended on the R7-2 community-facility floor-area bonus. As the City Council prepared to vote on the rezoning, JHH, MCB7, and community residents came to an agreement about JHH's development. Through a variety of clever design solutions, the as-of-right R7-2 buildings (both the new nursing facility and the market-rate residential building) will be constructed to simulate as closely as possible, in terms of height, setback, and yard requirements, the new zoning (R8A on West 106th Street and R8B on West 105th Street) surrounding the JHH site. Under the circumstances, this was a successful outcome. However the experience highlighted both the problem of the R7-2 zoning designation and the real likelihood that an open and public process could be derailed by political considerations.

### **Park West Village**

Even now a large area of R7-2 zoning remains in the northern part of MCB7's district. Because of the built plant in place, Department of City Planning (DCP) professionals were unable to recommend a new zoning designation for the area between West 97th and West 100th Streets and between Amsterdam and Columbus Avenues, occupied by the middle-income Park West Village (built in the pre-1961 "tower in the park" model).

Park West Village's new owners began construction of five mixed-use buildings on its perimeter: 29-story building the west side of Columbus Avenue, 13-, 14- and 15-story buildings on the east side of Columbus Avenue, and an 11-story building on Amsterdam Avenue at West 100th Street that are viewed by the community and MCB7 as being out of context and inappropriate. The buildings will contain close to 200,000 square feet of space for commercial and community facil-

ity uses, including a 56,000 square foot Whole Foods Store. The new development has been done without planning for traffic and other impacts. MCB7 is leading a Park West Village Coordinating Committee to help address planning and development issues.

### **Amsterdam and Columbus Avenues**

Towers set back from the street are not limited to the Park West Village neighborhood. Amsterdam and Columbus Avenues from West 86th Street to West 96th Street, the core of the expired West Side Urban Renewal Area, are dotted with such buildings. In 2007 Leader House Associates, owner of 10 West 93rd Street, proposed amending Section 78-06 of the Zoning Resolution, in order to allow the use of available unused commercial and community facility floor area in parcels at least 50% located within a C1-9 or C2-8 district, located in the previously approved West Side Large-Scale Residential Development (LSRD) plan. After some modifications, MCB7 approved this proposal, thus making available approximately twenty sites with avenue frontage to development of commercial and community-facility space. MCB7 anticipates that development of retail along these corridors will encourage the influx of needed services and a more vibrant urban experience.

### **Lincoln Square Area**

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts' campus is now 40 years old. The Center is looking to upgrade a great deal of its infrastructure, public spaces, and backstage facilities, as well as to integrate its campus more successfully into the community. It has committed to keeping all public spaces public, including Josie Robertson Plaza and Damrosch Park, open up the Amsterdam Avenue frontage, and enhance West 65th Street to West End Avenue. Construction of the first development phase, a pedestrian-friendly 'Street of the Arts' along West 65th Street and the expansion of the Julliard School of Music, is underway. MCB7 applauds Lincoln Center's successful pursuit of a midblock crossing for West 65th Street, and continues to urge it to drop plans for a new pedestrian bridge over the street. In conjunction with West 65th Street project, the Department of Transportation (DOT) installed traffic-calming measures in the Lincoln Center 'bowtie' (intersection of Broadway, Columbus Avenue, and West 65th Street).

Lincoln Center is creating an information and public performance space in the Harmony Atrium at Broadway and West 62nd Street, which will change the design and use of this privately owned public space. MCB7 recently endorsed design plans for the ground floor, but remains concerned about the security of restrooms isolated on the floor above.

The need for broad-scale planning for this area of the district is made more urgent by Fordham University's plan to expand its Lincoln Center campus. Fordham controls almost the entire superblock bounded by West 62nd Street, Columbus Avenue, West 60th Street, and Amsterdam Avenue. Over a two-phase, multi-year period, Fordham proposes to build a 30+ story wall of university buildings along the Columbus Avenue block front and lower solid walls along the side streets. The university plans to fund its ambitious plans in part by selling parcels on the Amsterdam Avenue side of the campus to private entities for development of high-rise residential towers. MCB7 is troubled about almost every aspect of the proposed project and urges Fordham, DCP, and all other interested agencies to work together to plan a reasonable expansion and intelligent design that balances Fordham's educational needs with those of the surrounding community.

### **Development activity west of Broadway**

An area of major development potential is the west side of Amsterdam Avenue. The American Red Cross property at West 66th Street was sold to a developer who is building a 41-story rental building. The rest of this strip (i.e. north to West 70th Street) is owned by a single developer,

who is beginning construction of a series of buildings along the Avenue. A third developer has completed construction of a 30-story tower on West End Avenue at West 70th Street.

The construction of the Abraham Joshua Heschel High School, at West End Avenue and West 60th Street, marked the beginning of major interest in the southwest corner of MCB7's district. It was followed by the Lander Women's College of Touro College, a large mixed-use structure on West 60th Street between West End and Amsterdam Avenues. The privately developed project has market-rate housing above a condominium that contains the College's non-dormitory facilities. The mid-block area between West 59th and West 61st Streets, east of West End Avenue, has been rezoned to allow mixed-use, high-rise development.

Meanwhile, development of Riverside South continues apace, from West 72nd to West 59th Streets, with seven buildings completed and two more under construction. In 2005, the Extell Development Corporation and the Carlyle Group purchased the undeveloped land. CB7 is particularly interested in the contemplated uses for this area between West 63rd and West 59th Streets that would substantially increase the approved number of residential units and commercial development. These proposals will require major participation and consultation with the community.

## **Development Rights**

**Community Facilities.** Existing zoning was designed with the expectation that low-density community facilities would continue in place (similar to schools, firehouses, etc.), affording spacious relief to the concentrated residential and commercial development surrounding them, and providing important public meeting grounds for the community. It would be unfortunate to lose community services, as well as the low density, to high-density residential development. MCB7 urges the administration and City Council to address this issue.

**Air Rights.** Another source of unpredictable and out-of-scale development is the transfer of development rights, whether by direct sale/trade, merger of zoning lots, or other means. MCB7 urges DCP to study the use of these mechanisms, and offers itself as an exemplary study subject.

## **HOUSING**

Over the past decade, the Upper West Side has emerged as one of the City's most active and desirable housing market and this change is altering the district's long-established character of social, cultural, racial and economic diversity. For the past decade, CB7 has been in the top five neighborhoods in the City in new housing units (7,000+), new mortgage loans, and refinance and rehab loans (major renovations). These have amounted to more than \$1 billion per year in recent years. In the past five years, median sale prices have doubled.

CB7 has 120,650 housing units, a net decline of more than 8% in the last decade that reflects the loss of about 13,000 small apartments and single-room-occupancy units. Those who have departed were older and had low- to moderate-incomes; those who arrived are significantly wealthier. Similarly, ownership, at almost 35.6%, is rising steadily: 38,467 units are owner occupied, 28,000 of these are co-ops, 5,565 are condos, 840 are Mitchell-Lama Co-ops, and 875 are single-family brownstones, many previously subdivided as small apartments and now recombined.

As housing values have increased, so has the median income of the occupants. Median household income has risen to \$90,633—about 80 percent higher than the median for the City. These averages hide a difference between owners and renters. Interestingly, a significant number of both renters and owners spend more than 50% of their income on rent or maintenance fees.

## **Preservation of affordable housing**

It is particularly important to CB7 that the 5,125 units of public housing and the 1,654 units of Section 8 housing be adequately maintained. In addition, enforcement of regulations can assure continuing availability of affordable private-sector apartments, including rent-regulated, Mitchell Lama, Tenant Interim Lease (TIL), 80/20, LISC, and inclusionary bonus apartments as well as single-room-occupancy (SRO) units. CB7 urges the State to pass legislation repealing the Urstadt Law, thereby allowing NYC to assume direct responsibility for managing its affordable housing crisis, rather than leaving the job to legislators in Albany.

## **NYCHA**

Three public housing developments in CD7 are managed by the New York City Housing Authority. NYCHA housing stock is increasingly troubled, with back-logs of repairs, continuous vandalism, and growing security issues. We are in the process of investigating the following issues: maintaining security of the buildings and the residents; quickly accessing funds available for repairs, security and maintenance; and expediting the time it takes for repairs to occur. CB7 urges the City to commit funding necessary to sustain current programs for (1) DFTA's senior centers and NORCs, (2) Space for after school and child care programs, and (3) Community Center programming. In addition, CB7 urges the City to convene a federal/state/local task force to address comprehensively NYCHA's persistent structural deficit.

## **Rent-regulated apartments**

There are about 85,000 rental apartments in CD7, including 46,500 rent-stabilized and 6,300 rent-controlled units--the fourth highest proportion in the City, at 7.4%. (The City's average is 2.8%.) An additional 12,325 units are under other forms of regulation, including public housing (5,100+), Section 8 housing (1,500+), and other assisted housing.

The number of rent-regulated rental units is declining steadily due to natural movement and attrition and decontrol policies that effectively permit the decontrol of apartments upon vacancy, if the owners make modest investments. On average, rent-controlled rents double every 10 years, and can increase as much as 25% in any one year because of special "capital improvement" related assessments. Rents in stabilized apartments increase at a lower, but steady rate, doubling every 15 years on average, and have increased by as much as 12% in one year (in recent years.)

The changes that introduced "luxury" decontrol—the elimination of rent protections for current occupants when rents reach \$2,000 and a tenant's income reaches a threshold amount—make no allowance for the age of the tenants. As tenants approach 60 years of age, they are frequently at the height of their earning power, and may be removed from rent protections. But they are likely also on the verge of retirement or reduced income, and would be unable to sustain the market rents in the future, and unable to become first-time co-op or condo purchasers because lending policies take into account future earnings.

These new developments mean that 1) regulated rents are unavailable to most new renters, with insignificant exception; and 2) that lower- and moderate-income tenants in currently rent-regulated apartments face escalating rents that will make their apartments increasingly unaffordable in the near future.

## **Mitchell-Lama**

Twenty years ago, the Mitchell-Lama program was developed to expand affordable hous-



ing opportunities by encouraging private sector investment through a program of tax relief. Apartments were rent regulated during the term of the program, and that program is now expiring, or being terminated by the owners. The loss of all this affordable housing is of great concern to our community. CB7 urges the state to develop an orderly transition that would protect those currently under rent regulations, allow the owners to decontrol apartments on vacancy, and develop alternative affordable housing programs to replace what is lost. CB7 urges the state to pass legislation mandating that all buyouts be subject to rent stabilization, that Mitchell-Lama buildings remain in the program for the duration of their mortgage, and that tenants be given at least a one year notice of a buyout (currently the law is six months).

## **80/20 and Inclusionary Housing**

Various programs encourage construction of “affordable housing” units through tax benefits or zoning “bonuses.” Some new affordable housing has been built in CD7 as developers utilize the provisions of the 80/20 program in which 20% of the rental units are affordable and a 20-year tax abatement is given to the building. CB7 is concerned that the 80/20 certificates awarded in this program run out in 20 years, and believes they should continue for a longer period. CB7 also urges the City to mandate that at least 30% of the low- and affordable- income residents of any one building come from that community district.

An inclusionary housing bonus (additional square footage) can be obtained when affordable units are built on-site, or “off-site” in a separate development within ½ mile of the development receiving the bonus. Monitoring of this program is inadequate and lacks a mechanism to enforce the “affordable housing” component in to the future. Additionally, CB7 requests a review by DCP of the Inclusionary Housing bonus in R10 areas, with a view to overhaul the program. CB7 calls for an adequate compliance mechanism to ensure the off-site units are constructed, rented to the category of tenants intended, and are maintained as “affordable units” into the future based on the current economic profile of the community.

## **SRO Hotels**

The Upper West Side was, in the last decade, home to the greatest concentration of SRO hotels in the City. Long-term tenants received a form of rent stabilization. However, owners are converting the SROs, most often illegally, into transient hostel-like hotels. As they renovate rooms, they push permanent tenants out or move them to substandard units. CB7 supports the proposed legislation of the Illegal Hotels Working group, co-chaired by City Council Member Gale Brewer and State Senator Liz Krueger, and the Office of Special Enforcement to investigate and prosecute illegal conversion of residential space into transient hotel rooms throughout Manhattan. CB7 believes the SRO hotels are an important part of the housing stock, and that quality SRO housing should be maintained.

## **Code Compliance**

Inspectors at the Department of Buildings (building structures) and at HPD (building interiors) enforce the NYC Building Code. Inspections can curtail façade and structural failure, overcrowding, illegal usage, failing elevators, and illegal construction. Inspectors respond to complaints, but due to administrative court hearings at the Environmental Control Board (ECB), responses take six months or more and don’t have much effect on property owners. CB7 supports enhanced technology and training for DOB and HPD inspectors and a stream-lined, more effective ECB. CB7 also believes that the code standards applied to the private sector housing should be applied, equally, to housing owned, or supported by city agencies, such as NYCHA.

# **YOUTH, EDUCATION & LIBRARIES**

## **Community Development**

In FY 2005 The Department of Youth and Community Development's (DYCD) allocation formula for federal "anti-poverty" funds that directed funds to neighborhoods with high concentrations of low-income populations, and continues to under fund the portion of CD7; limiting funding to two Census tracts, As a result, funding continues to lag behind demand, leaving important segments our district underserved. CB7 places a high priority on these anti-poverty programs and requests additional funding and a reconsideration to fund census tract not presently eligible.

## **Day Care and Head Start**

Statistically, families in CD7 have adequate day care and Head Start programs. The data are deceptive because they are based on district-wide demographics. In our high-need census tracts, 30 to 40% of the population is eligible for public assistance, but does not have access to these programs. Children's Aid Society's reports that it has a Head Start wait list of one full class. CB7 urges a more targeted calculation of day care need, based on census tracts rather than community districts. The needs of working families should be taken into account as well as those of welfare and former welfare parents. Specifically, we urge an expansion of ACS vouchers in private nursery schools.

## **After-School Programs**

After-school programming provides a range of educational, social and recreational services in a supervised community-based setting, and is essential for many working families. In FY 2005 DYCD consolidated after-school programs into the Out-of-School Time (NYC-OST) program. A new request for proposals (RFP) gave priority to the neediest youth populations. At least 13 programs in CD7 have not funded and remain unfunded, leaving nearly 800 children without after school programs. CB7 requested an additional \$1.7 million for FY09 for after school programs in our district. During core after school time periods, there remains greater demand than the available space can accommodate CB7 encourages collaboration among agencies, schools, and civic associations to better utilize our school facilities after hours.

## **Youth Employment**

DYCD is now treating youth employment funding with the same allocation criteria as poverty funding and after-school-programs funding. DYCD funds are targeted to the "highest need" neighborhoods; for the most part CD7 does not meet the criteria. Manhattan Valley (97th to 110th streets) does meet the criteria for a "high need" neighborhood. However, none of the programs to place teens is located in our District. CB7 recommends that that the public and private sectors address youth training and employment and develop programs to provide jobs in the local business sector. CB7 is hoping to work with Lincoln Center and the various museums in CD7 to contract low-income teens to work in the summer, particularly if these institutions are receiving public funds for their renovations or their operations. There is a need to expand youth employment slots for low-income teens living in CD7.

## **Public Schools**

CD7 has more than 25,000 students in its: 24 public elementary and middle schools and 5 public high schools, which are part of the Department of Education's (DOE) Region 10/District #3; 34 private and parochial elementary and secondary schools; 4 colleges and post-secondary schools.

Public accountability on school construction projects and line-by-line and school-by-school

budget allocations is currently inadequate. The School Construction Authority should hold regular public forums on the status of District 3 school projects included in the five-year Capital Plan and provide an opportunity for parent and community comments. District 3-DOE Operations should present this information to parents and the community. In particular, we are concerned that class reduction funds for pedagogical lines not be used to fund administrative lines. Science labs in middle schools were funded by the City Council; school libraries (not just in the classroom) are needed especially in District 3 middle schools.

New schools are needed in CD7 to remediate current overcrowding and to address anticipated increased demand from significant new development and the increased birth rate in CD7.

Under Mayoral control, the system of admissions and choice in Community School District 3, that was working well to meet the needs of the community, has been replaced with a centralized system that causes numerous problems, especially with school choice and admissions for children and parents. The fair funding system that has been established has not been transparent and has strong potential for destabilizing some schools. The mid-year budget cuts, made with no prior notice and consultation, negatively impacted our schools and parents and the community strongly state that their concerns are not taken into consideration when the NYC Department of Education (DOE) makes policy decisions. Test preparation and excessive testing have replaced creative curriculum and educating the whole child and DOE has manipulated data, such as the drop-out rate, to get the appearance of success at the expense of accountability. The increase in charter schools in Community School District 3, and the manner in which charter schools have been sited, have resulted in increased crowding, and loss of educational resources and opportunities for some students. We recommend that the law be amended to provide that either the Chancellor or his/her Deputy for Teaching and Learning must be an educator and that the law fully reflect that the chancellor is to be the voice and advocate for New York City Public Schools' students and families and communities, and not the voice and advocate of the Mayor.

### **The New York Public Library (NYPL)**

CD7 residents consider public libraries an essential service. In FY 2007 more than 724,000 people used NYPL's Bloomingdale, St. Agnes, and Riverside Branches. 83,000 registered borrowers took out more than 775,000 books, above the citywide average and an increase since the previous year.

The Bloomingdale Regional Branch Library at 150 West 100th Street needs a complete renovation and computer system upgrade. Sufficient capital funds are included in the City's budget for the St. Agnes branch renovation; however, operating funds are required. CB7 calls upon the City Council continue funding full 6-day a week service and continues to recommend a seven-day per week schedule, with expanded evening hours, at branch and research libraries, as well as continued upgrading of materials.

## **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

### **Loss of Services**

CB7 is about to lose the broad array of services which makes it such a good place to live. City agencies are talking about cutting back community services completely, or moving to a concept of "regionalization" which would take the place of neighborhood programs. The NYC Housing Authority, (NYCHA), is proposing to eliminate all community centers, senior centers, day care programs, head start programs and after-school programs which are in their buildings, and which make life more meaningful and fruitful. Ironically, New York's public housing has always been



considered a good example because it provides more than a roof over people's heads.

The Division for the Aging, (DFTA) has proposed the concept of regional-ization, which would centralize programs and services and take them out of the neighborhoods which have created them. Meals on Wheels would no longer be brought to the homebound by people from the local community, who could keep them in touch with the outside world, and insure that their problems could be addressed. Meals would be delivered from a central location. If people need help, they would have to contact a separate agency, which was unlikely to be in their neighborhood.

Senior Centers are being considered outmoded, and not ready for the modern seniors who would be coming to them in twenty years. They no longer would be a place in the neighborhood where the elderly could meet with their friends and take part in the activities they had initiated over the years. They would have classes, medical services, activities which would take them out of their neighborhood to a reduced number of centers, and to which they would probably have to take a bus or subway.

These concepts were developed without any real discussion with existing programs, and would have already taken place if there had not been a storm of protests from those who used the services, the providers of services, and legislators. A slow-down of DFTA's process was achieved, but it is not known if the agency will draw back from its drive to centralize programs, and to take away from the sense of community that has been developed over the years. The Community Board is working with the programs towards insuring that those using the services have a voice in saying what they will be.

## **Hunger**

Our lower- and fixed-income neighbors are struggling to keep up with steadily and steeply rising food prices. Food available in our food pantries and soup kitchens has been greatly reduced by the fact that FEMA no longer has large farm surpluses available to distribute, as food products are now being converted to energy sources. City government has greatly reduced the budget formerly set aside for hunger programs.

There is a genuine risk of escalating hunger and food insecurity, (the fear of being able to afford needed food) in our midst, as in other communities across the country. Food costs have risen, on average, more than 7.2% nationwide over the past year. Staples such as eggs are up 20%. The price of bananas has tripled, and food insecurity has grown by 14 %. The loss of thousands of acres of crops in the Midwestern floods in June will further exacerbate these problems. In CB7, food pantries are currently only able to give recipients sufficient food for three days a month and their clients keep increasing.

Residents need to be better informed about, and encouraged to seek assistance. Seniors, particularly, continue to be the lowest users of Food Stamps for which they are eligible. Their reluctance to apply for benefits indicates that much more education is needed. Application processes need to be greatly simplified. Eliminating the requirement of finger printing would lessen the stigma.

Public schools should be encouraged to serve nutritious "grab and go" breakfasts, rather than require the unpopular early arrival at school for the early morning meal. More generous funding is needed to increase the quantity of fresh fruits and vegetables on our school lunch menus. Developers should be encouraged to provide retail space for affordable food markets, which have become regrettably scarce in many neighborhoods in CD7.

## **Affordable Housing**

Well-maintained, affordable housing is necessary for the well-being of the community. Building code violations in existing buildings are not followed-up until the owner wants to sell the

building. Affordable housing, within the reach of low and middle income people, is fast becoming non-existent, while luxury condos are taking their place. Development is rampant, without any apparent concerns by the City as to the destruction of neighborhoods. Since 1990, 44% of the existing affordable housing stock in CB7 has been lost. By 2024, 37% of the remaining housing stock will be lost if the present pattern continues. The City needs to take more responsibility in preserving vital communities. Contributing to the loss is the conversion of existing affordable housing into tourist hotels.

### **AIDS Education**

Our inquiry into the teaching of the new HIV/AIDS curriculum in the public schools has shown that this mandated curriculum has not been as widely taught as had been assured, and as it should have been. Infections in our young people are among the highest in the current AIDS epidemic. We must do better to promote and provide AIDS education.

### **City Agency Placements in Commercial SROs**

An ongoing problem has been that City agencies place clients in commercial SROs, (at high reimbursement rates), and provide little on-site services to address the problems that caused the placement. Although this has improved, we will need to maintain oversight.

### **Aging in Place**

The senior population in our district is increasing rapidly and substantially. Greater support is needed for local groups involved in Aging in Place initiatives. Block associations and building complexes are currently exploring how neighbors can improve the quality of life for older people. The successful government funded NORC at Amsterdam Houses should serve as a model for other NORCs in our district particularly at Douglas Houses. Greater funding is needed to assure the continuing success of these organizations and their projects.

### **Bicyclists and Traffic**

Irresponsible bicyclists, who ride on our crowded sidewalks; against traffic; through red lights; without bike lights or any warning signals to alert pedestrians, threaten the safety of seniors, in particular, and of all pedestrians, in general. More aggressive monitoring of these transgressors is needed to protect us all. Action is needed BEFORE a serious accident occurs. When asked, residents express more fear of being hit by a bike than by a car. Timing of traffic lights should also be monitored to insure that pedestrians have time to cross the street.

### **Rats**

Rats are an ever-present problem in the community. As the Health and Sanitation Departments know how to eliminate them, ways have to be found to better educate the community so they will take advantage of this knowledge. Using the assistance of those residents who have successfully eliminated their rats to encourage others, may be helpful. If it is found that the increased excavations for new buildings in the area are stirring up rat packs, developers should be required to pay a fee towards an abatement program.

## **SAFETY AND QUALITY OF LIFE**

### **311 Citizen Complaint Line**

311 provides round-the-clock access to City services. Over 70% of calls are for information; 30% are complaints or requests for City services, which are referred to the appropriate agency for resolution. As required by Local Law, the Department of Information, Technology and Telecommu-

nications (DoITT) publishes district-wide 311 data. While these data are informative, they do not provide community boards with problem locations needed for planning and follow-up. Without data that give problem locations, we can't take steps to address root causes. CB7 will continue to pursue a mutually beneficial plan with DoITT.

## **Department of Sanitation**

CB7 supports the goals of the Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP), including that Manhattan should assume as much responsibility as possible for its waste. CB7 believes Plan's reliance on the West 59th Street marine transfer station (MTS) for commercial waste is flawed on legal, logistical and public policy grounds. Manhattan's commercial waste could also be addressed through (1) expanded commercial waste source separation, (2) use of anaerobic digesters, (3) a targeted lifting of the ban on commercial waste food waste disposers, and (4) a rapid conversion of the commercial carting fleet to less polluting and quieter alternatives.

Residential garbage would continue to be transported to New Jersey by truck. CB7 continues to ask for a new environmental impact statement and ULURP for West 59th Street as well as participation in solicitations for its commercial use. In addition, CB7 does not support NYS legislation proposed in 2007 that would authorize the creation of a recycling MTS at Gansevoort in the Hudson River Park and thereby attempt to facilitate the conversion of the existing 59th Street MTS from a paper recycling marine transfer facility to a commercial waste marine transfer facility.

In FY2007, DSNY collected, on average, 233 tons of household garbage per day. MW7 trucks export garbage to New Jersey for disposal, which is costly, takes a toll on vehicles, and reduces hours personnel are in CD7. Annually, MW7 collects 24,000 tons of paper and 7,500 tons of metal, glass and plastic, for a diversion rate of 21.9% of the waste stream. More effective outreach and education could increase the diversion percentage and further reduce residential tonnage. Over 3,970 recycling summonses were issued.

DSNY plays an important role in keeping sidewalks and streets clean. In FY07, 94.8% of the streets and 99.5% of the sidewalks were rated 'acceptably clean'. Enforcement agents issued over 4715 health and administrative summonses, most for dirty sidewalks and failure to clean 18 inches from the curb. CB7 recommends funding for 7-day coverage. DSNY completed 100% of its mechanical broom routes and serviced over 1,000 street litter baskets with two pick-ups per day. The three business improvement districts and the Doe Fund help by removing and replacing bags while many local businesses and residents misuse baskets meant for litter by discarding their garbage in them. CB7 finds enforcement of rules prohibiting household and business use of baskets and more frequent service, especially on weekends and holidays, are needed.

## **Police Department**

NYPD tracks major crimes as a primary indicator. Overall, major crime statistics in CD7's 20th and 24th precincts, and PSA6 (public housing division) show a continuing downward trend in 2008.

Six officers of the 20th Precinct are dedicated to Amsterdam Houses and Addition. CB7 encourages NYPD to implement this approach at Frederick Douglass Houses.

- Staffing - NYPD has moved to a data-based deployment and response system that utilizes specialized units and task forces. Consequently, the number of uniformed officers in precincts has declined over the past 5 years. In the 20th and 24th Precincts, the number of uniformed officers (126 and 120, respectively) and civilian personnel (12 and 20) have continued to decline. PSA6, whose

officers are responsible for NYCHA developments in eight precincts, has 127 uniformed officers. However, actual staffing levels are lower, due to homeland security assignments, military service, and sick leave. Recruiting, retention and civilianization are essential.

- **Illegal drug dealing.** The 24th Precinct, PSA6 and Manhattan North Narcotics continue their initiatives to reduce illegal drug sales on the streets and in buildings. Drug sales were reduced, but community complaints about drug dealing are increasing as several major dealers are coming out of prison. One special narcotics unit (module) at the 24th is essential; a second is needed to root out dealers and the organizations that support them.
- **Precinct support.** NYPD needs to replace police vehicles, marked and unmarked, more frequently. Internet access and email will increase productivity and communication.

## **Fire Department**

CD7 is located in the 9th and 11th Battalions and has 3 Engine and 2 Ladder Companies. In FY07, the Department responded to 4,463 medical emergencies and 4,751 non-medical emergencies, and 616 structural and 327 non-structural fires. The number and size of fires has decreased because of new construction and renovations of occupied and vacant buildings. It does take more time to get to a fire in the new high rise buildings. Average response time to structural fires was 4:17 minutes; ambulance response time to life-threatening emergencies was 6:54 minutes.

Engine Company 74 on West 83rd Street is slated for a much needed renovation. 145 West 110th Street, built in 1959 and home of Battalion 11, Engine Company 76 and Ladder Company 22, is getting much needed roof repairs and window replacements. Several houses do not have emergency electric generators, which are needed to charge radios among other things. The houses that do have generators find they are often not maintained and may not function in a blackout. FDNY has developed mobile training modules that come to the fire house. Fire fighters can train without taking a house out of service for a day. The Manhattan Borough President has funded one unit. Additional units will be needed to meet training needs.

## **Emergency Preparedness**

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) finds that only 7% of New Yorkers has taken any steps to prepare for an emergency. The agency is developing Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) through the community board in each community district. CB7's CERT completed training in 2007, and with funding from Council Member Inez Dickens is moving to actual service delivery. CB7 continues to see the need for a Manhattan-wide working group that can share best practices and team needs.

# **TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

## **Traffic**

### **Traffic Study**

Increases in residential and commercial development, in population density and in vehicular traffic are resulting in congestion and safety concerns throughout CD7. The NYC Department of Transportation is conducting a comprehensive traffic study from West 57th to West 86th Streets. The study will analyze new residential and commercial buildings, the growth in the number of visitors, and competing needs for parking and curbside access. The community will be included in the planning process. Four areas are of particular concern are:

- **Bow Tie, Broadway/Columbus Avenue/West 63rd-66th Street.** The traffic study is a first step in a redesign to increase pedestrian accessibility and safety, reduce traffic/pedestrian conflicts,

improve traffic capacity, and enhance open space uses.

- Broadway/Amsterdam Avenue/West 70th -74th Street. The traffic study can identify changes in regulations to increase pedestrian accessibility and safety and reduce traffic/pedestrian conflicts.
- West 59th Street Corridor, Columbus Circle to the Hudson River, West 57th-61st Street. We have great concerns about the large number of potential trucks in this section of the district pending completion of the Extell Project, which contains a major hotel and a Costco, itself a major generator of truck traffic. As the Henry Hudson Parkway does not allow commercial vehicles north of 59th Street and West End Avenue doesn't allow them above 70th Street, this truck traffic will be concentrated on residential streets.

The traffic study can lay the ground work for a public transportation system, including ferry and bus service, for this new community, and provide much needed data for the consideration of the Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan and future uses of the West 59th Street Marine Transfer Station.

CB7 is monitoring traffic diversion from the closure of the 72nd Street off-ramp. In conjunction with the closure, CB7 has called for the full construction of Riverside Boulevard to West 59th Street, linking Riverside Drive and Route 9A and reducing traffic on West End Avenue. While DOT has implemented several mitigations, CB7 remains concerned about continuing problems at intersections of West 96th Street and West End Avenue and West 96th Street and Broadway.

## **Subways/Buses**

CD7 is served by two major subway lines with seven different routes. Along Broadway, the #1 serves local stations and the #2/3 serve express stations. Along Central Park West, the B/C lines serve local stations and the A/D lines serve 59th St.-Columbus Circle station - a major junction where the two major lines intersect.

On the IND Central Park West line, more local trains should be added to the "shoulder" periods - immediately after rush hour - as many riders are still traveling at these times. The recent addition of B service later in the evening is a welcome increase for Central Park West local riders.

There have been service/dispatching issues regarding the Broadway #1,2,3 trains. Often there are delays on the #1, yet the #2/3 are not routed to the local tracks to pick up the scores of passengers on the local stations.

Fiber optic communication has been introduced on the IND CPW line, but not on the Broadway IRT. For safety and security reasons, this installation should commence as soon as possible.

## **Subway Stations**

CD7 has 14 subway stations along the IRT and IND subway lines. In addition to recent renovations of the West 66th Street and West 72nd Street IRT and West 81st Street IND stations, four stations on the IRT have been brought back to their 1904 splendor: 103rd, 110th, 116th and 125th Streets and Broadway. In addition, two stations are under construction:

- West 59th Street IND/IRT Station at Columbus Circle. The station is an important transfer point for five lines, as well as a destination for thousands of tourists and workers, is a gateway station to the West Side and an important station for the entire City. The station has taken on added importance with the addition of the Time Warner Center, the Museum of Art & Design at 2 Columbus Circle, and The Hearst Tower on 8th Avenue and West 57th Street. Renovations are underway and



include handicapped access, improved rider circulation, and new arcades and retail.

- West 96th IRT Street Station. Work commenced in September of 2007. CB7 welcomes the station renovation plans and urges DOT to work with us to address surface traffic concerns.

## **Bus Service**

There is much room for improvement in bus service throughout the district as well as several opportunities for new and improved routes.

- M104 service was reduced after the introduction of free intermodal transfers. Service needs to be restored.
- M7 and M11 service levels are also inadequate. It would be useful for there to be additional service when schools get out. In particular, M11 service needs immediate headway reduction.
- The M60 bus, which connects the Upper West Side with LaGuardia Airport, should be extended to the West 96th and Broadway area.
- CB7 requests a decrease in headways on the M79 and M86 that have resulted from the move to articulated buses. There are fewer buses, and loading and unloading of articulated buses take considerably longer than with standard buses, causing bunching and uneven service.

NYC Transit needs to pay additional attention to bus service when construction affects subway service in off-peak periods.

CB7 supports additional “on-street” supervision of bus service to improve NYC Transit’s response to actual operation conditions. More supervisory attention needs to be provided on weekends.

## **Streets, Signals and Signage**

**Streets.** In FY07, the DOT resurfaced approximately 13 of the 193.6 lane miles in CD7. Street cuts for utility work, including fiber optics and cable, have left CD7’s streets in dire shape. We request resurfacing of additional lane miles and enforcement of DOT’s protected streets. There were 620 pothole complaints and numerous reports of holes in the pavement that collect water and restaurant garbage run-off. CB7 recommends a significant increase in resurfacing of streets and is working with DOHMH and DOT on filling in holes as part of the West Nile Task Force.

**Sidewalks.** Sidewalks are maintained by the owners of property abutting them. DOT has resumed issuance of sidewalk violations in front of multiple-dwelling-unit buildings. This will give pedestrians documentation of conditions that lead to injuries. Many sidewalks with violations in CD7 are over sidewalk vaults, especially on Amsterdam Avenue and on Broadway. The replacement of a sidewalk over a vault requires special engineering and can be costly. CB7 recommends that another method be sought to skim-coat existing sidewalk surfaces over vaulted areas, when sidewalk replacement isn’t feasible.

**Additional Signage.** CB7 urges the installation of “Stop Here on Red” signs for the Broadway Malls (similar to the Park Avenue Malls) to alert motorists that they may not turn from Broadway heading east or west without stopping to observe the E/W traffic lights; signage for West End Avenue to stop the speeding traffic; and “Don’t Honk” signs in areas where commercial and residential neighborhoods have conflicts.

**Walk Signals.** CB7 appreciates DOT’s trial of countdown pedestrian timers on walk-don’t walk signals and hopes they appear in CD7 very soon. More and more cities are installing these

devices and we would welcome test installations in CB7. We believe countdown clocks give pedestrians more information than flashing signals (which give no indication of the time remaining to cross).

**Red Light Cameras.** Pedestrians who find they cannot safely cross the street because drivers do not follow traffic signals. To discourage traffic from jumping the red light, CB7 finds red light cameras are needed at Central Park West and West 63rd Street, adjacent to the Ethical Culture School; at West End Avenue and West 72nd, 79th, and 96th Streets; and at West End Avenue and West 66th Street near Lincoln Towers.

## **Competing Demands**

In our popular and congested neighborhood, pedestrians compete for sidewalk space, not only with standard street furniture such as postboxes, bus shelters, and lampposts, but also with newsstands, fruit stands, street vendors, unenclosed and enclosed sidewalk cafes, delivery bikes, and newsboxes. Implementation of the Coordinated Street Furniture Franchise has begun in CD7 with the installation of bus shelters and newsstands. CB7 looks forward to full implementation and the reduction of some sidewalk clutter.

CB7 and the community at large have been frustrated by several cases of abandoned enclosed sidewalk cafés. Such cafes are “temporary” structures erected on the public sidewalk. When abandoned, these structures are difficult and expensive to remove; and over time, landlords view enclosed sidewalk cafes as part of the rentable restaurant floor area. CB7 favors some kind of bonding mechanism to guarantee the removal of such a structure and urges the City to come up with an appropriate regulatory approach. In addition, something needs to be done to prevent the removal of building walls when these structures are erected.

In these security-conscious times, an additional demand on sidewalk space comes from institutions requiring protection from terrorist attack. Planters, bollards, and jersey barriers are sprouting in front of properties. DOT and DCP should develop guidelines for size and configuration to allow for maximum pedestrian flow while protecting sensitive sites. Alternative obstructions, such as closely planted trees and reinforced lampposts, should be explored as well.

## **PARKS AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

### **Parks**

CD7 is fortunate in having immediate access to two of the City’s great parks: Central Park and a substantial portion of Riverside Park, including the new 23-acre Riverside Park South. In addition to the active recreation areas in these parks, the district has 11 playgrounds. The renovation of the Booker T. Washington playing field on West 108th Street is complete and Frederick Douglass Playground at West 100th Street is in design.

In addition, CD7 has 35.5 acres of parkland. The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) maintains this parkland with 10 full-time workers, including a full-time horticulturist, seasonal workers and Job Training Participants. CB7 believes that full-time, skilled personnel, including supervisors, horticulturalists and gardeners, are essential to maintaining the parkland and to building the department’s future management structure.

With fewer workers, adequate equipment is essential. CD7 needs a crew-cab pick-up to transport personnel, materials.

Park Enforcement Personnel (PEP) address many quality of life concerns. Playground Assistants bring much needed organized activities and supervision to neighborhood playgrounds.

CB7 encourages funding for assistants for district playgrounds.

## **Riverside Park**

Areas in need of restoration include the following: The 72nd Street pedestrian ramp, the Carrere Staircase at 99th Street, and the Riverside Drive pedestrian zone from 91st Street to 95th Street, and the Soldiers and Sailors monument at West 90th Street. Design of the multi-million dollar restoration of the Rotunda, a centerpiece of the park at West 79th Street, is underway and will provide a scope and budget for the project. DOT plans to begin the restoration of the seventeen bridges that create the structure in 2012.

## **West 59th Street Recreation Center**

CB7 has identified a dearth of swimming and gym facilities for youth, seniors, schools, and employees in the rapidly growing southwestern corner of the district. Accordingly, CB7 has advocated for significant investment to redevelop the West 59th Street Recreation Center, located between 10th and 11th Avenues. Phase 1 of the recently completed Master Plan calls for demolition of the derelict 59th Street building, construction of a new building to the East of the 60th Street building, and the creation of an outdoor park for active and passive recreation. Funding is in place for this project, and a request for proposals has been issued.

## **Historic Preservation**

More than 1100 buildings in CD7 have been designated, most as part of one of nine historic districts. Fifty individual buildings and monuments, 25 interiors, and four parks have also been designated. CB7 worked with the community and the Landmarks Preservation Commission on the designation of the new Manhattan Avenue District between West 104th and 106th Streets.

Particularly because CB7 is concerned about potential demolition of historically and architecturally notable but undesignated row houses along West End Avenue, it supports the creation of a West End Avenue Corridor Historic District from 70th Street to 107th Street, and is working with the community in advocating for such District at LPC. CB7 is also reviewing landmark-eligible buildings and blocks in CD7, especially north of West 96th Street, and looks forward to further collaboration with LPC and community groups on future designations.

## **BUSINESS AND COMMERCE**

CD7 is home to a wide range of private enterprises, ranging from boutique businesses to national chains to not-for-profits of all types. CB7 carefully reviews the liquor licenses of restaurants and bars every two years. We strive to listen to the concerns of neighbors as well as understand the needs of business owners. We are proud to review and approve over 20 street fairs in our District which support local not-for-profit organizations. These fairs raise on average \$9,000 for each of the not-for-profits helping, among others: tenants, after school programs and day care centers. We also seek to support the three Business Improvement Districts (B.I.D.s) in the community.

Community Board 7 welcomes your comments on this document and your recommendations of additional issues for consideration.

*Mel Whymore*  
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Chairperson

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