



STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS FY 2013

Staten Island Community Board 3 is located in the most southern part of Staten Island and includes a portion of the west shore. Our neighborhoods consist of Annadale, Arden Heights, Bay Terrace, Charleston, Eltingville, Great Kills, Greenridge, Huguenot, New Dorp, Oakwood, Pleasant Plains, Prince's Bay, Richmond Valley, Richmondtown, Rossville, Tottenville and Woodrow.

The Center for an Urban Future in their report "Staten Island: Then and Now" reveals how Staten Island, as a borough, has continually grown over the past twenty years, and that Community Board 3 has experienced the largest growth. This growth has brought wide-ranging changes to nearly every aspect of life on Staten Island.

With the objective to sustain our community, and achieve our full potential, we offer our 2013 District Needs:

TRAFFIC

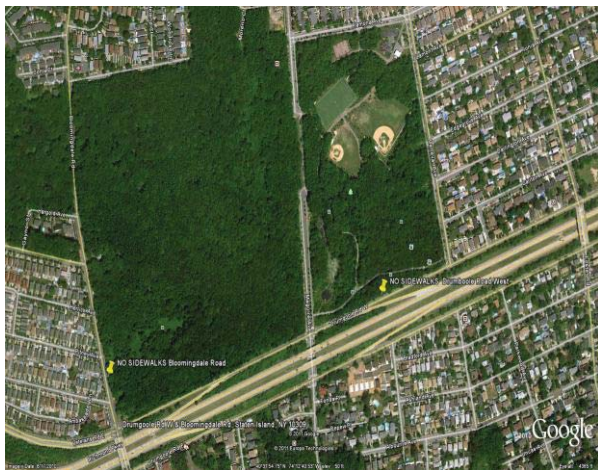
We can blame our growth for the soaring increase in registered vehicles; a major contributor to unmanageable local traffic congestion and persistent highway gridlock. The south shore has been developed on undersized antiquated local and arterial roads, without suitable understructures, and they are inadequately maintained. Waivers granted in the past, poorly planned housing developments and flawed commercial planning have predestined our roads to uncompromising ineffective design. Our needs vary from expediting road reconstruction projects, completing service roads that access the West Shore Expressway, and developing a road network through Fresh Kills Park, to low-cost quick solutions such as reconfiguring intersections with left turn bays, installing traffic controls that allow traffic lights to change according to traffic volume, and maintaining a moratorium on waivers which builders currently use to circumvent their responsibility for making roadway improvements to local streets.

TRANSPORTATION

Being a borough that has long been deprived of public transit investments, we continue to be motor vehicle dependent. Increasing local and express bus service would be a valuable means to reduce vehicles on our roads. A necessary component to reduce vehicle traffic would be a fast ferry from the south shore. Staten Island's south shore may not meet the city's prerequisite for demand for a fast ferry, however our disproportionate share in mass transit alternatives should unquestionably validate our need. Another paramount solution would be a light rail system; it would reduce traffic, lower emission levels, and improve commuter time. In order to achieve our potential for economic development the city must recognize our need to bring Staten Island into the 21st century.

SIDEWALKS

Sidewalks are a fundamental need, yet too many south shore neighborhoods do not possess what most of New York City's residents take for granted. In the past, builders were granted waivers and were not required to install sidewalks. Sidewalks are also not required for undeveloped property, and as a result, we have vacant lots without sidewalks that protrude into the roadbed narrowing the width of our streets. Shamefully, the City of New York is guilty of contributing to our sidewalk crisis. The policy of not installing sidewalks on city owned property during the design phase for city road reconstruction projects, sewer projects or the Department of Parks construction venues (new and old) should be abolished. Staten Islanders should be able to safely walk to a bus stop, walk to a park with their children, or just walk without fear that a sidewalk may terminate and compel them to walk in the street.



Perimeter of Bloomingdale Park



Drumgoole Road West border of Bloomingdale Park

NO SIDEWALKS



NO SIDEWALKS

Bloomingdale Road no sidewalks to walk to bus stop

Little League field Hylan Blvd & Bedell Ave

ROAD MAINTENANCE

Our roads are in a persistent deplorable physical state. More often than not, when pothole and maintenance crews are overwhelmed and public outcry reaches peak levels, the Department of Transportation “DOT” calls for “temporary blitz crews” partially funded by our elected officials. This customary practice has proved to be inefficient and costly. Funding additional crews to routinely repair would be a practical option.

SEWERS - DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Another byproduct of rapid growth is the battle to keep pace with the demand for sanitary and storm sewer systems. In the past the building trade relied on the use of septic systems and drywells, because municipal sewer systems were unattainable. Many homeowners have waited twenty years or more for sewers to be installed, and many continue to wait. The city continues to struggle to fund sewer projects for established neighborhoods by performing “sewer catch-up.” We should learn from our past mistakes and not continue to duplicate our past failure to provide the necessary sewer infrastructure to support future development. Staten Island continues to benefit from the success of the Bluebelt by reducing costs of massive sewer projects needed to prevent flooding. At the same time, it is our obligation to recognize the importance of forecasting our demands for sewers, pumping stations and water treatment plants. Pictures below illustrate customary flooding of our streets, homes built thirty years ago are still waiting for storm sewers.



BUILDING DEPARTMENT

The Department of Buildings “DOB” is an agency that provides complex indispensable services. Our community suffers due to the DOB’s limited staffing levels and effectual enforcement methods. The need for prompt response for inspections, especially in the areas of zoning compliance and code enforcement poses a major concern for our community. The DOB enforcement unit is mainly driven by complaints. It is imperative that DOB restructure and intensify their inspection policies, including a 24-hour Task Force inspector designated specifically for Staten Island. By expanding computerization programs and incorporating the use of on-site computer technology for inspectors, inspections and violations could be addressed immediately.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

“Short Term Events and Long Term Patterns” published by the Department of City Planning in March, 2009 reports that New York City’s population is projected to increase to more than 9.1 million by 2030 with increases in every borough. In the lead for anticipated growth are Staten Island and Queens, projected to be above their historical highs achieved in 2000. Their forecasts include:

- The most substantial number of new resident to increase near public transit corridors.
- A sharp increase in the population 65 years; the percent of population aged 65 and over is expected to rise from 11.1% in 2007 to 17.8% in 2030 with all boroughs experiencing a substantial increase in both the number and percent of persons aged 65 and over.

“Staten Island: Then and Now” describes how Community Board 3 on the island’s south shore experienced both the largest numerical increase of 41,745 and rate growth 33%. It states we are an older borough with 16,000 more residents over the age of 65 in 2010 than in 1990.

The report goes on to tell that our swelling population has delivered new businesses and jobs, with private-sector employment increasing by 32% between 1990 and 2009, compared to a 4%

gain citywide. Twice as many new firms were started in 2010 (2,822) as in 1990 (1,413) with the number of self-employed residents growing by 38%. The fastest growing sector during the past decade was food services and accommodation, with a 35% increase in jobs. Educational services grew by 31% with a large part attributed to expansions at local colleges. The leading job market provider was the health care sector adding approximately 3,000 jobs in the past 10 years with 27,320 jobs. The next largest is the retail trade with 15,953 jobs.

New development has seen a dramatic decrease with the number of building permits in 2009. The borough's office vacancy rate in 2010 was 8.6% and was at its lowest point since 2001. The retail vacancy rate was a slim 2.9%, down from 4.5% in 2007. Only the industrial vacancy rate at 5.3% was higher than the level from the last five years, but it is still about 1/3 of what it was from 2000 to 2003. Vacant parcels shrunk between 2001 and 2010; commercial by 23% and residential by 17%. Our economy should benefit from the fact that Staten Islanders have become more highly skilled.

Staten Island's success depends on whether we properly use our assets and contend with our current challenges. We recognize that vacant land on the south shore together with the west shore waterfront holds immense potential for commercial development, manufacturing and housing to cultivate economic growth. Additionally, an important path to prosperity would be to encourage vocational, technical or fine arts institutions to locate a facility on the south or west shore.

In spite of this knowledge and awareness, we are in a weak position to compete for economic opportunities because our sewer and road infrastructures are deficient, we have scarce mass transit, and businesses, as well as commuters, must bear exorbitant bridge tolls. We have to work consistently to fast track road construction, sewers, and mass transit, which will result in continuous advances in growth. Another weakness that hinders growth is that prospective residents are wary of commute time to jobs, and additional fixed expenses added to their budget. The fact is, the current level of service and infrastructure is not enough, and we can no longer be expected to absorb this burden that is destined to destroy our future stability.

SANITATION

Our appeals to increase resources for additional lot cleaning, street cleaning, and enforcement are straightforward, modest requests that improve quality of life. We need to adequately fund these services to maintain a clean and healthy environment, while concurrently increasing funding to correspond with our growth.

EMERGENCY SERVICES, FDNY and NYPD

We are painfully aware that our emergency services narrowly escape downsizing due to budget cuts. We need to secure funding to preserve our firehouses and police stations. In a borough that expects eminent growth, it is hard to accept that our city officials look to reduce services. We concede that more may not be an answer, but the reality is we need to develop and utilize superior advancements to enhance services that will safeguard our community.

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION

PlaNYC gave us Greenstreets, Million Trees NYC and reforestation of our parklands, which we truly value for their positive attributes. However, these initiatives carry a perpetual commitment to fully fund forestry, beach and general park maintenance.

Community Board 3 has seen a rise in requests for pruning, and dead tree or stump removal. The Department of Parks & Recreation rotation cycle approach for street tree maintenance is slow, and does not satisfy complaints in a timely manner. Greenstreet medians require routine maintenance, as they become overgrown quickly and become magnet for litter. The city must continue to amply fund these initiatives.

Staten Island is New York City's greenest borough, with passive and recreational parkland, including beaches and waterfronts, all of which require upkeep, protection and regularly scheduled maintenance. Some of our older parks need restrooms and others need renovation. It is imperative that we preserve our parks to sustain our environment, to nourish the physical and mental health of our residents, and offer clean spaces where children can enjoy recreation and leisure time.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The south and west shore have vacant parcels of land suitable for new educational facilities, some of which are city owned. We will profit later by investing in education now, and secure a brighter future for Staten Island.

DEPARTMENT OF AGING

Our older population is projected to grow over the next several decades; people are living longer, and Staten Island's population of older adults is growing rapidly. In order to keep pace with this growth we must plan now to provide age-related housing options together with support services for the health and well-being of our senior citizens.

Access-A-Ride, a salvation for senior citizens, has begun cost-cutting measures. Seniors classified as "conditional" are taken only to bus stops, and are then expected to use regular mass transit, if they are physically able to do so. MTA bus service on the south shore either is unreliable, inadequate or nonexistent. It is a grim picture to imagine, a senior being driven to a bus stop, waiting for mass transit while being exposed to severe cold or heat, rain or snow, only to be expected to walk from the bus to their final destination. On their return trip, they are expected to repeat the arduous journey, but run the risk of being abandoned when Access-A-Ride is notoriously late or doesn't show at all. The decisive factor used to determine eligibility for service should be based on the sole fact that mass transit is not a viable option in our borough. The subjective principle used to classify "conditional" is flawed, because it assumes that mass transit is equitable in all 5 boroughs. A senior may not have a pre-qualified permanent physical disability, however their age single-handedly limits their physical endurance and challenges their ability to use public transportation, thereby demonstrating a qualified need.

Senior Centers provide an essential service to our aging community. These centers are safe retreats that encourage seniors to lead independent viable lives in their community, provide social opportunities, entertainment, and offer meals during the week. Connecting with peers reduces loneliness and provides a sense of security. Through communication with members and staff, they are kept well informed regarding health services, available resources, and entitlements such as Social Security, Meals-on-Wheels etc. We will continue to advocate for continued funding for our senior centers.

DOITT

Community Boards share the responsibility of addressing citizen's complaints. We record, track and resolve complaints daily, yet our data is not included in 311 reporting system. We review and use DOITT's data that is broken down into community districts to give us understanding and insight into constituent's needs. We strongly believe that in order to precisely gauge the needs of a district, Community Board Complaint data should be merged into the 311 data. Additionally, expanding interaction to include sharing of information between agencies would serve to improve service delivery.

We submit the above statement of our needs which reflects the direction and course of action required to face the challenges we will meet in 2013.



Charlene Wagner
District Manager



Frank Morano
Chairman of the Board

cc: Borough President James P. Molinaro
Councilman Vincent Ignizio
Councilman James Oddo
Councilwoman Debi Rose