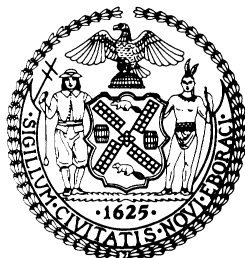


# **The City of New York Borough of Brooklyn**



## **Community Board #18**

### **STATEMENT OF DISTRICT NEEDS AND PRIORITIES**

**SAUL NEEDLE**  
TURANO Chairperson

**Manager**

**DOROTHY**  
District

**Fiscal Year  
2016**



Bill de Blasio  
Mayor

Eric L. Adams  
Borough President

Saul Needle  
Chairperson

Dorothy Turano  
District Manager

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### STATEMENT OF NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

#### FISCAL YEAR 2016

## Section 1:

### **THE COMMUNITIES OF YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW**

Often referred to as “The Gateway District” -- the neighborhoods that comprise Community Board #18 have a rich history from the earliest days of the Canarsie Indians to the polyglot communities that exist within our borders today. These neighborhoods have been characterized as some of the finest places in New York to live in and raise a family.

Covering one of the largest geographical Community Boards in the City, a “snap shot” look would capture the heart and the spirit of Brooklyn ... multi-ethnic, middle class neighborhoods with a solid tax base of single family, multi-family, mid-rise buildings with a scattering of condominiums and cooperative development. Additionally, within our boundaries, are several high-rise buildings including housing for senior citizens and the homeless and three (3) N.Y.C. Housing Authority (NYCHA) Projects, Bayview, Breukelen, and Glenwood, requiring continuous rehabilitation, upgrading and modernization.

The hallmark of Community Board #18 has, and continues to be, its network of volunteer, civic, parent, religious, and service organizations. This harmonious interchange between neighborhoods, groups, and residents has built the very foundation that keeps the fabric of our communities stable while planning for future growth and revitalization, and looking to the new Administration for a comprehensive program of long term infrastructure improvement and planning.

### **THE VISION**

For all too long the City Administration has virtually ignored

the Board's Capital and Expense Budget Requests and Priorities. If we are ever to realize the long range vision of this Board then the City must grant our Capital and Expense Budget Priorities and funding requests. Given the "bare-bones" funding level that we must accept year after year, we can barely maintain the basic and essential facilities and services without the hope of any long range visionary planning objectives.

## Section 2:

### "The Gateway District" – Our Parks, Waterways and Tributaries, and their future in the wake of Super-Storm "Sandy"

**Jamaica Bay** is one of the largest and most productive coastal ecosystems in the northeastern United States, and includes the largest tidal wetland complex in the New York metropolitan area that serves as flood protection and shoreline erosion control for the homes and businesses of the bordering neighborhoods.

On October 29, 2012, in the wake of super-storm "Sandy," the East Coast saw the destruction of whole communities. Our neighborhoods were no exception. Bergen Beach, Canarsie, Gerritsen Beach/Plumb Beach, Marine Park and Mill Island suffering wide-spread damage ... double-digit millions in property damage ... untold personal loss ... businesses destroyed or disrupted ... lives lost and families uprooted.

After the storm promises were made and commitments were assured. Nevertheless, those commitments and promises have had little, if any, tangible effects. Billions of dollars were sent to the State from the Federal Government for the affected communities. Sad to say after twenty-two (22) months, many of our communities including those now sitting in the "A" Zone of the newly drawn Flood Zone Maps, have seen any of these dollars or productive re-build programs.

The "Build It Back" Program has been an absolute failure. As the Bloomberg Administration drew to a close after fourteen (14) months, not one single dollar of program relief was seen or spent in our community to repair or rebuild. The de Blasio Administration was handed a bureaucratic mess. Only now have they been able to start the process of making actual awards to begin the rebuilding and repair process.

Public Forums funded by the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery – New York Rising Community Reconstruction Program – with a vision for a more resilient community, are being held throughout communities impacted by “Sandy” to rebuild and become more resilient through innovative community-driven plans. To do so, the Governor has allocated \$25 million for planning in the most affected communities.

Proposals have been made for further storm protection, but no clear Flood Control Plan has been offered and funded. The “shore” communities need a “boots on the ground,” federally funded system for sand dunes, human-made dikes, dams and/or floodgates to provide a defense against future storm surges from the surrounding rapidly rising bodies of water. We must not “plan in a vacuum” or put plans on the shelf for the next administration. We must plan for a true engineering solution for the next 100 year storm – that is **not** 100 years away!

We urge NYC DEP to upgrade the sewer and water delivery systems within our community. Few streets, if any, are equipped with adequate catch basins or storm sewers to drain precipitation from the roadways, which results in flooding during heavy rain storms. While the roadway is open to upgrade the sewer systems, the City can also replace the water mains and deteriorated roadways. Act Now!

To add insult to injury ... FEMA added practically all of our shorefront properties to their “A” Zone ... lowering property values and making Flood Insurance mandatory, with few exceptions, at astronomical premiums, and without a proposed plan to protect these communities – that is the Injury. The Insult – The New York City Department of City Planning has proposed a Flood Resilience Zoning Text Amendment designed to address FEMA's new “flood” zoning map designations and building requirements, and promote recovery from the storm, rebuilding, and increasing the city's resilience to climate-related events, including coastal flooding and storm. Nowhere in this plan are complex and neighborhood-specific issues addressed for our unique attached housing-stock areas severely affected by Hurricane Sandy and now classified by FEMA as Zone A. Nowhere in this plan is a provision for financial assistance for the homeowner in order to come into compliance with these new zoning requirements.

More than 500,000 people live within the Jamaica Bay watershed. Jamaica Bay bordering on Brooklyn, Queens, and Nassau County includes 26,645 acres consisting of open water, meadowland, marshes, dunes, and forests. Its inlets are under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, Gateway National Recreational Area. Sixty one percent (61%) of Gateway is water. Without remediation, by the year 2017, the

sea level is expected to increase by six feet as a result of global climate changes. That very fact puts our shore communities, not in danger, but in crisis!

Gateway National Recreation Area, one of our nation's 391 national parks, and one of its few "urban" national parks, plays host to more than 80 species of fish and 400 species of birds and butterflies (nearly 20% of North America's bird species) which live in or visit during seasonal migrations. The bay is a critical stopover area along the Atlantic Flyway migration route and is one of the best bird-watching locations in the western hemisphere. The National Audubon Society and the American Bird Conservancy designated Jamaica Bay as an Important Bird Area worthy of special attention and protection.

It is well documented by various scientific investigations that the tidal marshes that occur in Jamaica Bay are disappearing at an unprecedented alarming rate. From 1924 to 2009 more than 50% of the bay's marshes disappeared. The Bay is being overloaded with nitrogen from NYC's DEP waste treatment plants, discharging 30,000-35,000 tons a day of nitrogen into the bay -- destroying aquatic life and the marshes at the rate of 35-40 acres of marshlands a year. At this rate, without remediation, this important community resource will cease to exist in our lifetime. Although marsh plants require nitrogen to thrive, too much can kill them. Major steps have been taken to address this problem by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection with the opening of the Paerdegat Basin Retention Facility -- a state-of-the-art facility at the foot of Jamaica Bay.

The future of this ecosystem, including wildlife, local homes, and infrastructure is of deep interest to conservation groups and environmentalists as well as community organizations and residents. It is our combined goal to bring Jamaica Bay water quality to levels that meet and, hopefully, exceed Federal standards for recreational use and ultimately preserve this lush, natural resource. Since the inception of our Community Board, in 1977, that has been one of our core missions.

**Floyd Bennett Field** opened in 1931. From 1941 to 1971 it operated as a Naval Air Station and became part of the Gateway National Recreation Area in 1972. It is an historic treasure -- the first municipal airfield and an aerial hub for fighter planes during World War II, where the sounds of the departing aircraft of Wiley Post, Amelia Earhart, and Douglas "wrong-way" Corrigan stand as a living testament to times past. Views from the control tower at Floyd Bennett Field gave clear vision to the criss-crossing runways of New York's first municipal airport. Now...the legendary runway is a barren pothole-ridden road.

The field is dotted with abandoned buildings and structures, ruinous hangars, and dilapidated roads. The field's coast is a polluted cemetery for destroyed boats and debris. In short - It is the disgrace of Gateway!

On May 5, 2012 park rangers cut the ribbon on the newly renovated William Fitts Ryan Center, once the main arrival and departure terminal at Floyd Bennett Field. In it hangs a portrait of the field's namesake, pilot Floyd Bennett, the first man to fly over the North Pole – a fitting tribute to a great American hero. The restoration project, contracted and managed by the National Park Service's Denver Service Center, was funded in large part by a \$4.8 million grant from the Department of Defense. Additional funding was provided by the National Park Service. A good “start” – but even under the Federal Sequestration which establishes “caps” on annual appropriations bills for programs such as defense, education, national parks, and many others, the dream of a restored Floyd Bennett Field must not be lost.

The Board continues to urge the restoration of Floyd Bennett Field's water access to its original prominence. The restoration of the boat docks at Floyd Bennett Field and at Canarsie Pier would allow for the use of the on-again, off-again use of water taxis at peak times to facilitate the movement of participants of large outdoor events as well as visitors to the Park, the islands off the coast of Canarsie, and the sports entertainment complex at Floyd Bennett Field. It would enable connection with other parts of the borough and city. Water taxi service is already prepared to provide stops in Red Hook, Fulton Ferry Landing in DUMBO, and Governors Island where the public can enjoy summer programming and concerts or take a car-free bike ride. We urge a full study of the “best use” of this multi-mogul approach.

The Historic Aircraft Restoration Project (HARP) is a National Park Service Volunteer In Park program dedicated to preserving the aviation history of Floyd Bennett Field for future generations. Since 1995, volunteers have dedicated thousands of hours of their spare time to restore and maintain vintage aircraft. Many of the volunteers are retired airline mechanics who have specialized knowledge of the technology used in the vintage aircraft that modern mechanics do not have. They work with a new generation of volunteers whose goals are to pass the knowledge down to the next generation. HARP is located in Hangar B, which was constructed by the U.S. Navy during World War II. After World War II, it was used as a training facility to help keep the nation's naval aviators prepared for national emergencies. Today, Floyd Bennett houses one of the finest aircraft restoration facilities in the United States as well as an NYPD training and aviation facility and a Marine Corps Reserve Battalion.

Occupying four (4) of the eight (8) airport hangars is a "mega" community-based sports and entertainment complex known as "Aviator Sports & Recreation" complete with a football field, ice rinks, and a climbing wall.

The historical integrity of some of the hangars has been compromised by this conversion and is in contradiction to the protection in place by its inclusion on the National Register and under the management and jurisdiction of the National Park Service. Promoting commercialization and excessive delegating of public responsibility to private concessionaires jeopardizes this natural treasure, and detracts from the stated mission of the "Gateway Plan" ... an Act of Congress.

Transco/National Grid has commenced a two-phase gas pipeline project that is being installed parallel to the Marine Parkway Gil Hodges Memorial Bridge and will connect to National Grid's gas system infrastructure on both sides of the Rockaway Inlet. A new meter and regulator station, to measure, condition and control the flow of natural gas before it enters the local natural gas distribution system, is proposed to occupy Hangars A and B in the southern part of Floyd Bennett Field.

In April 2010 a "Blue Ribbon Panel Task Force" was formed for Gateway to establish a shared vision for the future of the country's third most-visited national recreation area. The panel, an esteemed group of federal, state, and local agencies, and experts, released their final report on how best to revitalize Floyd Bennett Field and help make Gateway National Recreation Area an iconic urban national park. The report, "The Next Jewel In New York's Urban Park Crown," is a forty-page report that calls for a significant re-investment in the 1,400 acre Floyd Bennett Field, the largest waterfront property in New York City. It contains specific and achievable recommendations for actions on education, environmental restoration, transportation and infrastructure, public programming, park design, and a new management partnership. We urge the adoption and implementation of their recommendations.

On July 17, 2012 New York City and the National Park Service formalized the management partnership to jointly manage more than 10,000 acres of parkland in and around Jamaica Bay. Under the agreement, city and federal officials will work together to implement the recommendations to improve access, foster research, run education and recreation programs and plan restoration projects for the bay. Jamaica Bay is an unusual patchwork of private, city, state and federal lands.

## OUR PARKS – NOW AND TOMORROW

City parks in the Jamaica Bay area total 3,300 acres and include Canarsie, Marine, Paerdegat Basin and Spring Creek Parks, as well as Rockaway Beach and Idlewild Park, among others. The federal holdings, which span 7,300 acres, include Floyd Bennett Field, Fort Tilden, Jacob Riis Park, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge and a smattering of salt-marsh islands, all making up part of the Gateway National Recreation Area. This partnership will improve our city's great natural treasure. We look forward to continuing to engage our elected leaders in revitalizing Floyd Bennett Field. Nowhere else in the world is there the potential that exists at Gateway, and specific guidance will be provided to the National Park Service as to how this vision can be applied.

**Paerdegat Basin**, on the Northwestern edge of Jamaica Bay, is one of the largest remaining coastal ecosystems in New York City. Portions of the Gateway National Recreation Area are on both banks at its mouth and dot the landscape. The area surrounding the head of Paerdegat Basin supports New York City infrastructure. The Department of Transportation (DOT) operates a maintenance and storage facility at the northwest corner, and DEP also operates a maintenance and storage facility at the northwest corner, and a Pumping Station at the headwater terminus.

The tributary watershed to Paerdegat Basin includes 6,825 acres spanning portions of the Canarsie, Brownsville, Crown Heights, Flatbush, East Flatbush, Marine Park, and Flatlands neighborhoods of Brooklyn. The Bay is the depository of the city's treated wastewater -- approximately 300 million gallons a day.

DEP, as part of the 1997 Paerdegat Basin Water Quality Facility Plan ULURP Application, committed to upgrade the Pumping Station at the base of the shoreline and built a thirty-million gallon underground Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Retention Facility, coupled with a twenty-million gallon "in-line" retention, to hold and treat the overflow until the Knapp Street Sewage Treatment Plant could properly process the sewage. The completed project became operable on May 12, 2011 and, as part of the ULURP Application, includes DEP maintenance and personnel facilities and the "new home" and "Community Meeting Room" for Community Board #18 as a separate "stand alone" building on the DEP site.

More than two (2) decades ago, as part of the Paerdegat Basin Water Quality Facility Plan, the ULURP Application also included the conversion of approximately 177 acres of Paerdegat Basin shoreline



and submerged land to parkland. As a result of that action, DEP designed and presented a proposed Paerdegat Basin Natural Area Park and Ecology Park. The project has been developed and coordinated with the Department of Parks and Recreation as is scheduled for completion in September 2014.

The Natural Area Park is a restoration of a coastal grassland community over much of the project site. Public access is restricted as its goal is to promote habitat restoration and ecological improvement. The Ecology Park, a 5-acre section of the project, will highlight many of the plant community types that exist or once existed in New York City. The Ecology Park will be equipped with a trail and viewing platforms for public access and will be used as an educational resource to promote awareness of the various environments found throughout the city.

**The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation** (NYS DEC) has included Jamaica Bay on its Section 303(d) impaired water list since 1998 because of violations of water quality standards relating to pathogens, nitrogen, and oxygen demand. In November 2009 and continuing today they launched a project costing more than \$11 million began to restore 35 acres of disappearing marsh lands and coastal wetlands in Jamaica Bay by reducing the amount of nitrogen and impacts from contaminated sediment in the water to prevent further loss of wetlands and protect a host of endangered and threatened species.

The future of this ecosystem, including wildlife, local homes, and infrastructure is of deep interest to environmentalists and conservation groups as well as area community organizations and residents. It is our combined goal to bring Jamaica Bay water quality to levels that meet and, hopefully, exceed Federal standards for recreational use and ultimately preserve this lush, natural resource.

This Administration and its successors need to continue to act upon a plan to protect the city's waterfront from the effects of sea level rise and storm surges taking into account the changing needs of the waterfront. The plan, released by former Mayor Bloomberg and his Special Task Force in the wake of "Sandy," was long overdue. Loaded with suggestions ... short of detail ... and void of any funding streams. Although very aggressive, much of it goes without funding and lacks insight into the long range needs and possibilities for development and planning. Additionally, the Bloomberg Administration prepared an award winning plan, "Vision 2020," released by the Department of City Planning in March 2011, providing a sustainable framework for more water transport, increased public access to the waterfront and economic

opportunities that will help make the water part of New Yorker's everyday lives. The 10-year plan lays out a vision for the citywide policies and site-specific recommendations. WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT PLAN?

Our Community Board continues to ask the basic question – When will all the plans be implemented and who will fund them? The silence from the Bloomberg Administration was deafening ... We are now waiting for action from the de Blasio Administration.

The maintenance and upkeep of our parks and playgrounds continues to remain a major area of concern due to insufficient staffing and funding. Some parks and playgrounds in our District are in various stages of design, scope and reconstruction. The Board fully supports the continued funding of these projects. Several of our smaller parks and playgrounds require reconstruction or "in-house" spruce-up. We urge that these projects as well as increased staffing be addressed through the Capital and Expense Budget.

The Greenstreets Program provided us with an opportunity to beautify our barren neighborhood triangles and traffic islands. We wholeheartedly support the continuation of this program. We encourage strategies for additional conservation and beautification programs to include sorely needed maintenance provisions. Programs started and then abandoned deserve funding so that they can continue.

On June 20, 2012, the Community Board voted unanimously to recommend approval for the disposition of city-owned property located at 2875 Flatbush Avenue, a/k/a Mill Basin Project with the following conditions:

- That the proceeds of the sale of these properties be allocated by EDC to map and develop, with the appropriate City and State Agencies, the adjacent property including the Four Sparrow Marsh "Forever Wild" natural habitat, as dedicated Parkland and based upon a development plan approved by the community in partnership with the environmental advocates to preserve the property in perpetuity.

The premise behind the redistribution of these proceeds is well-established by other projects such as the Community Board Office and the mapping and development of the adjacent parkland along both sides of Paerdegat Basin. This development plan, previously discussed, was included and made part of the approval process for the ULURP application for the DEP Sewer Retention Facility.

We continue to urge the Administration and the Department of Parks and Recreation to support our quest to maintain this precious, endangered “open space” for generations to come.

Parks' Department equipment and personnel are always in short supply. We urge that our requests, as well as Departmental requests, be given a high priority in budget negotiations for adequate maintenance and operation of our parks. The park areas within Community Board #18 provide recreational and cultural outlets for all ages, and are truly a valued natural resource that must be protected and maintained. Marine Park comprising 798 acres, and Seaview Park comprising 540 acres, are regional facilities that serve a large population outside our local neighborhoods. We are pleased that the long-awaited, over-budgeted construction of the Marine Park Community/Senior Center, a/k/a The Carmine Carro Community Center,” has finally become a reality. This facility will provide sorely needed recreational activities for our vital seniors and active youth population.

Department budget cuts have historically negatively impacted the Forestry Division of the Department of Parks & Recreation and continue to cause great consternation for the residents of our community. The large geographic area of our Community Board and its residential neighborhoods are the “home” to the largest street tree population in the Borough. Consequently, we must cope with a Parks' Division that falls behind in its protracted pruning and dead tree/stump removal schedules. We are hopeful that additional funds will be allocated to this desperately needed service particularly after the massive destruction caused by super storm Sandy.

### Section 3:

#### Administration Planning, Development, Future Commitment to Maintenance, and Development in the Planning Process

The Boards continually struggle to fulfill their Charter mandated obligations under its paltry budget allotment. The Mayor and the city would be better served if he cut the tens (10's) of millions of taxpayer dollars spent each year on unnecessary and often duplicated studies contracted to outside sources, and provided the Boards with a full time Professional Planner with a clear mandate to work with the Boards and the community to provide land use services.

The Board urges increased funding to allow Community Boards to function and to hire these planners and consultants to provide the essential tools to the community to address pressing and necessary zoning expertise and resources for effective neighborhood planning. The concept of community-based planning was the reason Community Boards were created when Mayor Wagner took his "Community Planning Council" concept city-wide in 1963. The boards were envisioned as town halls for community based planning to be equipped with a full-time professional urban planner. Five (5) decades later, despite the tireless efforts of their members and staff, Community Boards and community-based organizations have few real opportunities to engage in proactive planning and even fewer opportunities to ensure that development suits neighborhood needs. Funding, training and resources must be provided to assure active and meaningful participation by the Community Boards as they continue to partner with city government and developers.

We urge the **Department of City Planning** (DCP) to develop a new text amendment that would strengthen rules and zoning regulations for the placement of communication towers and poles, especially in residential neighborhoods, on city-owned housing projects and commercial properties. The outdated Federal Telecommunications Law of 1996 does not restrict the placement of cellular transmission devices based on health concerns since no hazard has been established. The Board of Standards and Appeals Special Permits for non-accessory towers in residential districts, ZR 73-30, only looks at the effect of the utility on the "privacy, quiet, light, and air of the neighborhood." With the proliferation of cell phone antennas and towers, we must use zoning laws to regulate their location, size, design, and operating characteristics to insure that the proposed use to be compatible with adjacent uses, residences, buildings, or structures. The Federal Appeals Court (Sprint Telephony PCS v. San Diego, 2008) upheld the right of the municipality to regulate towers and poles as long as they do not actually prohibit wireless service or create significant service coverage gaps. New Zoning Regulations would insure the least intrusive placement of communication towers and poles that are sensitive to the nature and character of the community.

On June 30, 2009 the City Council approved the DCP ULURP Application for lower density and contextual zoning map changes for the Canarsie neighborhood. Community Board #18 unanimously supported the ULURP Application. That text amendment has set the standard for future development. We support further review by DCP and urge new efforts be made to address the population growth and the inequities in R-32A and R-4 Zoning Districts which cover large areas of our Board.

It is the sense of this Board that all of the communities within our Board be rezoned to create a rational up-to-date zoning plan that reflects natural residential, commercial, and manufacturing boundaries. The current land use is largely an artifact of historical urbanization. Future land use must be controlled by zoning, public policy, and land use regulations intended to promote activities appropriate to preserve the neighborhood character and infrastructure for those who live and work there.

A partner in the planning process is the **Board of Standard and Appeals (BSA)**. BSA's original mission was to provide a relief valve for property owners in those **rare** circumstances where existing zoning regulations prohibited them from reasonably developing their property. BSA is frequently misused to circumvent and twist the spirit and intent of the Zoning Resolution. BSA repeatedly demonstrate their indifference to the views of the community and its concerns respecting the character of its unique neighborhoods by granting zoning variances in favor of development, construction, and other related matters. They should base their decisions on the responses to the following questions: ...does the unique condition of the property prevent reasonable development? ...would unique property conditions prevent an owner from obtaining a reasonable financial return? ...Does the variance, if granted, alter the essential character of the area? ...Is the situation a self-imposed hardship? (buying or overbuilding on the property knowing the restrictions and then claiming hardship) ...Is the variance requested the minimum necessary to afford relief?

For the protection of generations to come -- we must continue to fight to maintain and preserve our natural resources and the unique character of the diverse neighborhoods of our city. We must continue to examine and revise zoning laws to meet ever-changing community needs and interests.

## Section 4:

### Going Our Way

Transportation needs, particularly total reconstruction, contract resurfacing, and scheduled repair of the roadways within the Board area, presents an ever increasing challenge. Canarsie and surrounding communities were built on landfill that rapidly deteriorated and require aggressive street and sewer reconstructive programs. The Community Board urges the Department of Transportation to advance our Board's meager Capital Project requests. Street resurfacing is a

temporary costly “fix” ... not a solution. It’s “band-aid” therapy for a hemorrhage! Our roadways have recently seen a high increase of “sink holes” as a result of the road bed undermining from “Sandy.” An emergency “hands-on” effort by DOT and DEP must address this major community need and concern. Filling these voids is not the solution ... excavation, backfilling and resurfacing is the correct repair.

As our communities age, it becomes increasingly essential that the Capital Budget needs of the area be met if we are to maintain public structures and facilities at acceptable levels. Emphasis must be placed on long-term infrastructure rebuilding as well as short-range improvements, until full Capital funding becomes available.

The DOT has undertaken the "Reconstruction of the Seven (7) Bridges on the Belt Parkway" which commenced with minimal impact in November 2009 with the first of three contracts in our Board area - Fresh Creek Bridge, Paerdegat Basin Bridge, two (2) separate bridges eastbound and westbound, and the Rockaway Parkway Bridge. The Mill Basin Draw Bridge, a fixed structure with 60-foot clearance over Mean High Water obviating the need for opening and closing the bridge, is now scheduled for approximate duration from 2015 to 2018. All impacts to wetlands shall be mitigated in accordance with Federal and State regulations. Tidal wetland restoration and improvement projects have been performed at Jamaica Bay sites within the Gateway National Recreation Area to mitigate the tidal wetland impacts from this project. A freshwater wetland restoration and improvement project is planned at a site in Marine Park, fronting on Avenue U, approximately between East 34<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> Streets. The landscaping contract will complete the project by 2019.

Transportation issues persist to rank high on the problem list for our Community Board. Pedestrian, cyclist, and motor vehicle occupant safety at many of the intersections and streets within our Board area are the source of major concern.

As a component of PlaNYC, NYC DOT created a Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs. With no enforcement of regulations in place, and without consultation, an unprecedented three-year plan was launched to expand the city's on-street bicycle network by 200 miles. Bicycle lanes clearly offer both an environmental and practical benefit in areas served by adequate mass transit alternatives and a bike-friendly population. Bike lanes, if not properly placed, will only create hazardous conditions in our board area and jeopardize pedestrians, cyclists, and motor vehicle occupants.

The primary mission of government is to protect the public. To

this end, Mayor de Blasio, in February 2014, launched his “Vision Zero,” action plan, a Swedish-inspired agenda to re-engineer streets and increase law enforcement to eliminate traffic fatalities. To bolster public feedback for the plan, the Administration has put together an interactive map for New Yorkers to report traffic and street safety condition. Our Community Board supports this plan and applauds Mayor de Blasio for its implementation. The plan commits to ramped up enforcement of speeding and failure to yield campaigns; develop borough-specific street safety plans; redesign 50 locations each year with improved visibility and safety; reduce the citywide speed limit from 30 to 25 mph; expand the use of speed and red light enforcement cameras; expand neighborhood “slow zones”; and City Hall will continue to convene a Task Force to oversee implementation of the Action Plan and coordinate future efforts

The City Bike system was launched in late May 2013. Just before launching the bicycle-sharing program, private account information of 1,174 of its customers was accidentally leaked via a software glitch which has since been resolved. Other problems do persist – law suits have been filed, docking stations have been relocated after complaints were received, and participants experience problems in picking up or dropping off bicycles at docking stations. The de Blasio Administration is negotiating a deal that would stabilize Citi Bike and create the opportunity to expand the bike share system. It is essential that the Community Board participate in the planning process before possible expansion of this program into our Board area, and when the full funding and sponsorship for the program is realized.

We urge the Mayor and NYCDOT to recognize the highly unusual transportation challenges inherent to our community as well as the unique needs of the population we serve. Unlike most other areas of the City, Community Board #18 is simply not accessible to the New York City subway system. Residents must take at least one bus to reach the nearest subway station. Our neighborhoods are largely residential with a major shopping mall, Kings Plaza, and small shopping areas/strips interspersed throughout, so there are no direct truck routes. This means that we constantly have a large number of buses and commercial truck traffic on our residential streets. The addition of bike lanes would impede traffic even further and pose a hazard to everyone who uses that roadway, pedestrians and bicyclists included.

Additionally, our board's population, historically and currently, includes one of the largest constituencies of senior citizens in the City. With or without designated lanes, it is safe to expect that this population is not going to jump on the bike-riding bandwagon. We,

therefore, join with our local elected officials, community civic associations, and area residents in opposing the proposed expansion of on-street bicycle lanes to include streets within our communities.

Kings Plaza Shopping Center, built on city-owned land, is the cause of constant consternation. Numerous costly and time consuming studies have been performed by outside consultants, the Departments of Transportation and City Planning, as well as the Borough President's Office, in an effort to improve pedestrian, vehicular, and bus circulation problems at the intersections and along Flatbush Avenue and Avenue U. The studies continue to identify the same problems and continue to propose a myriad number of improvements including changes in bus stop locations and operations, directional signage, street configuration with the widening of Avenue U and Flatbush Avenue, and the **installation of pedestrian safety fencing** along the South side of Avenue U, from Flatbush Avenue to East 55<sup>th</sup> Street, and on the center traffic island on Flatbush Avenue, between Avenues U and V. Our Community Board also included in our Capital Budget Priorities and Requests a request for the construction of an elevated pedestrian overpass at this intersection. -- **To date... nothing of consequence has been done**, except for the creation of a major bus layover in front of the Kings Plaza Shopping Center causing buses, leaving the layover, to sharply cross five (5) lanes of traffic on Flatbush Avenue to accomplish a left-hand turn onto Avenue U ... the widening of the traffic islands on Flatbush Avenue has created additional confusion, danger, and further bottleneck this dangerous intersection!

All the studies performed...All the dollars spent...All the changes suggested...All the promises made...All the time and money wasted -- **To date...nothing of consequence has been done.** The problem is self-evident -- the solutions have been proposed -- implement the recommendations. Install speed cameras and red light cameras at this dangerous intersection.

Although the Mall has undergone a major interior renovation, the exterior is old/out-dated and poorly maintained, and has become a community eyesore! The new management should join with the NYC Department of Business Services and the ECD to develop a Business Improvement District along Flatbush Avenue from Avenue V to the Flatbush Avenue Junction.

In this time of rising out-of-control fuel costs we urge the MTA to develop a long-term strategy for meeting the public transportation needs of our area and for all city residents.



We remain frustrated in our efforts to provide adequate public transportation to other parts of the Borough due to the lack of speed, curtailed, changed and/or eliminated service on the surface bus lines. The speed and traffic flow can be easily improved by strict enforcement of regulations prohibiting the use of illegal vans on bus routes.

We continue to ask for attention to, and relief from, the constant illegal parking, double and triple parking of idling buses outside the Flatbush Bus Depot, 4901-23 Avenue O, on Fillmore Avenue, Utica Avenue, and along Flatbush and Utica Avenues. The buses regularly block the street and the Flatbush Avenue entrance/exit to the adjacent Floridian Diner and Burger King. They create hazardous pedestrian, vehicular, and environmental conditions. The TA's lack of vigilance or concern underscores their unwillingness to work with the community, city and state agencies, and our elected officials to address this and numerous other issues.

## Section 5:

### Emergency Services

#### FDNY

We are optimistic that funds will be increased to establish an even greater emergency service presence for the improvement of service deliveries to battle fires, reduce crime, and enhance quality of life conditions within our Community Board area.

Fire protection in a residential community, comprising tens of thousands of frame dwellings, is obviously of paramount concern. The theory used by the Fire Department for "manning" decisions includes statistics that **do not** include literally thousands of homes and tens of thousands of area residents that have become part of the Board area since that statistical information was compiled decades ago. Consequently, analysis of the Department's decision should be the subject of "up-to-date" review not budgetary constraints. With the occupancy of an EMS facility at 10110 Foster Avenue for use as an ambulance station, warehouse facility and offices, we see an improvement in EMS response time.

We urge the **Mayor's Community Affairs Unit (CAU)**, the **Office of Citywide Event Coordination and Management (CECM)**, and the **Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DOITT)** to continue the strong working

relationship between their centralized staff and our Community Board to assist in the coordination and approval of Street Activity Permits and the resolution of community and telecommunication issues and problems. We commend their constant expansion of internet access and support to our Board. Computer support services are crucial since the use of the internet has become the means for government to conduct its business.

Data report listings posted on NYC.gov was an important step toward sharing **311 Citizen Service Center** complaint collection data. However, we continue to stress the need to be informed about specific complaint collection data encompassing location, tracking and resolution. Interaction and sharing of information between city agencies and the Community Board will continue to enhance service delivery and further our efforts to improve the quality of life for our residents and the business community.

The 911 System is experiencing serious problems and must be overhauled. The 30-year old EMS dispatch system was set to be overhauled as part of a replacement of the 911 System but, as yet, the city has not gotten around to completely updating the system. The Administration has to figure out something to do with the system, because it is not working efficiently.

### **NYPD**

We have praiseworthy day-to-day "line" contact with the two area Police Precinct Commanding Officers that service our Community - the 63rd Police Precinct, and the 69th Police Precinct. Special praise must be given to their prudent command decisions in police utilization. Active participation at the Community Council level further improves these community relations. The Auxiliary Police continue to play a vital role in the day-to-day operations of both Precincts. We commend these vital groups of community volunteers. We look forward to our share of the 1200 new officers that have been budgeted by the City Council as well as the addition of Administrative Officers during the summer months to become part of the Patrol force. Forty (40) more police officers have been assigned to the 69<sup>th</sup> Precinct on foot patrol from 9 PM to 5 AM in high crime sections of Canarsie including the two (2) housing developments - Bayview and Breukelen Houses. This presence will help crack down on crime and provide faster response time to reported incidents which could possibly result in an arrest.

Our Community Board is frustrated, however, in our attempts to address the following specific areas of concern that we and other

neighboring Community Boards continue to identify time-and-time-again with little or no positive results. We ask the Police Department to increase their staffing to provide for continual enforcement of the laws to maintain the quality of life for all city residents. Special attention must continue to be given by law enforcement agencies to aggressively address the following violations:

- The rampant illegal street parking of commercial vehicles, delivery trucks, 18 wheelers, car carrier trailers, the well-defined "4-Sale" cars, and the autos/SUV's, with and without license plates, left all day at metered parking and on the sidewalk in front of the various Auto Malls on Utica Avenue, Ralph Avenue, Avenue U and Kings Highway.
- Double parking continues to plague our neighborhoods, in general, and at the "Kings Plaza" shopping area, schools and places of worship, in particular.
- The proliferation of illegal "dollar" vans particularly at and around the Kings Plaza Shopping Center, on Flatbush Avenue, Avenue U, Remsen Avenue, Ralph Avenue, Utica Avenue, and Flatlands Avenue, and all the routes leading to the Kings Plaza Shopping Center and the Gateway Shopping Complex in East New York.

The Administration must establish stronger enforcement with severe penalties for operation of licensed, unlicensed, and "renegade" vans illegally operating and parking in our communities. Rather than develop a strategy to shift the illegal parking and van problems from block-to-block we must adhere to a strong commitment of interminable rigorous enforcement of these "quality of life" violations.

The need for a new 63rd Precinct Stationhouse continues to be an absolute necessity. Although the Department allocates funds for rehabilitation of the antiquated Stationhouse to meet staffing needs and patrol requirements, the poor conditions and problems still exist. Funding must be set aside for relocation. Modern, adequately sized police precincts are essential to good policing. We urge the NYPD to aggressively explore the acquisition of city-owned properties. Where development costs would be minimized ... new Police Precincts Do Not need to be centralized in a community ... with the communications available today location is secondary to space needs!!

## Section 6:

### Department of Sanitation

BK18 supervision and personnel have been exemplary in their willingness and demonstrated ability to work with the Board in developing the maximum potential with their limited manpower and old equipment to deliver quality service to a community experiencing ever-increasing population growth and needs as they implement further source separation and recycling programs.

Increased manpower is also needed to maintain the numerous center malls along our roadways. Neglected and unattended they grow into breeding grounds for vermin and illegal dumping creating a community nuisance and safety hazard. Lot cleaning, attention to the ASP cleaning schedule and the quick removal of the illegally placed clothing bins is a top priority. The Administration must establish stronger enforcement with severe penalties for the placement of illegal "Clothing Donation Bins" placed throughout our communities and on private property parking lots. Rather than develop a strategy to "tag" the bins only to have them shifted to another location, we must also adhere to a strong commitment of interminable rigorous enforcement of this "quality of life" violation.

## Section 7:

### Department of Buildings

Increased staffing for the Department of Buildings is critical. Code enforcement personnel are a crucial component in enforcing the Zoning Resolutions and Building Codes. Unchecked greed and neglect will lead to gross abuse, dangerous code violations and allow illegal conversions to go unchecked.

## Section 8:

### Youth – The Future of Our Community

The Board continues to direct its attention to the needs of our area youth by developing and supporting broad outreach after-school and evening recreational, cultural, and educational programs within the community. We are currently working with our local elected officials, community and youth organizations, to secure funds for special programs designated to address identified youth problems.

The de Blasio Administration recently announced receipt of a

\$52 million grant by the New York State Department of Education which will be managed in partnership with the United Way of New York City to develop forty (40) innovative Community Schools that will provide services to at-risk families. An Advisory Board has been formed, consisting of leaders from community groups, social services, businesses and academia, to hone new models for turning schools into vibrant community hubs for at-risk families. By reaching students with vitally important services, ranging from mental health support to homework help and family counseling, Community Schools will help at-risk children succeed in the classroom and beyond. We urge the Administration to continue to support collaboration between parents, teachers, principals for all students.

## Section 9: Conclusion

With a new Administration come new challenges and new opportunities... Those two (2) key factors point to the clear need for civic activism and a clear vision of what lies ahead as we go forward with the “people’s” work. The partnership that has developed between government and community is best exemplified by our Statement of Needs and Priorities for Fiscal Year 2016 -- a true product of that joint cooperation.

Respectfully submitted,



Saul Needle  
Chairperson



Dorothy Turano  
District Manager