



THE CITY OF NEW YORK

BOROUGH OF THE BRONX

COMMUNITY BOARD 7



PAUL FOSTER, CHAIRMAN

FERNANDO P. TIRADO, DISTRICT MANAGER

COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS STATEMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013

Introduction

Bronx Community Board 7 is located in the northwestern section of the borough and is comprised of all or part of the neighborhoods of Bedford Park, Fordham, Jerome Park, Kingsbridge Heights, Mosholu, Norwood, University Heights, and a portion of the Marble Hill section of Manhattan. We are bordered by Webster Avenue on the east, Woodlawn Cemetery and Van Cortland Park on the north, Goulden Avenue on the northwest, the Harlem River on the southwest, Hall of Fame Terrace on the south, and Fordham Road on the southeast.

There are many attractions in or near the district such as The New York Botanical Garden, Van Cortland Park, Bronx Library Center, Kingsbridge Armory, the Lehman Center for Performing Arts and Art Gallery, the Bronx's Education Mile, Hall of Fame for Great Americans, Bronx Historical Society, Montefiore Medical Center, and Bronx High School of Science. The district is home to many post secondary educational facilities such as Lehman College and Monroe College and adjacent to Fordham University and Bronx Community College. The district also is centrally located and contains many access points to major highways and roads as well as crucial public transportation connections such as both NYCT and Yonkers bus lines, trains, and several Metro North Railroad lines.

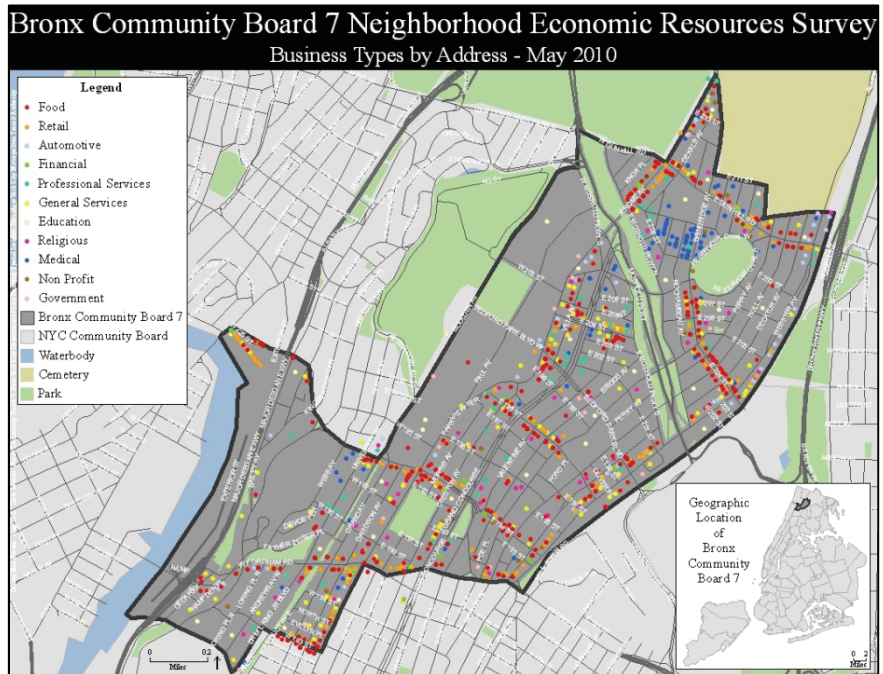
The district has a total land area of 1.9 square miles and as per the 2010 census, a population of approximately 140,000 persons, making the district the second most densely populated district in the borough (more than double the borough's density). This has created a variety of conditions that affect the quality of life of residents in our neighborhoods, ranging from overcrowded schools (the district is within School District 10, the most overcrowded district in the Bronx and the 3rd most overcrowded school district in the city) to lack of affordable housing for low and working class families. Additionally, our district decreased the most according to the census and is also one of only two districts in the borough that saw a population decline, with a net loss of 1.5 percent of our population. While one can speculate about undercounting and other issues, there is a general sense among residents in the community that quality of life issues may play a part in this decline.

The following document represents the various concerns our office has received from community residents, groups, and organizations within the district and the recommendations by the Board to the Mayor's office, the various city agencies, and our elected officials for their consideration in Fiscal Year 2013. These issues are organized by the committee assigned to monitor, evaluate, and respond to them and in most cases is directed to the city agency responsible for delivering those services.

Economic Development

Economic Profile of the District

There are many important commercial areas and institutions that drive the local economy, including the Fordham Road Business Improvement District, the largest BID in the borough and the third largest in the city. Other important economic centers are the Jerome-Gun Hill BID, the Bainbridge-204th Street Merchants Group, the Bedford Park Merchants Group, the Target / River Plaza, and the Kingsbridge Road Merchants Group. In addition, there are several large institutions that draw both tourism and individuals to the district seeking medical services. These institutions include Montefiore Hospital, the New York Botanical Gardens, Lehman College, and Fordham University, each contributing significantly to the economy both in terms of dollars generated and in local residents employed by them.



Small Business Development

Small businesses are the lifeblood of many communities, and our district is no exception. The Board conducted an economic survey throughout the district in May 2010 and, as anticipated, the vast amount of commercial space is dominated by small retail and service related industries (see map above). Additionally, over two-thirds of all businesses in the district fall into one of three categories: retail, general services, or food. While there are a number of large employers in the district (i.e. Montefiore Hospital), it is important that the city work with the district to diversify the types of jobs that exist in the Bronx so that there is an opportunity for upward mobility.

In light of the recent economic downturn, it is important that services that help promote small business development continue to be made available through the Department of Small Business Services to help foster a new generation of entrepreneurs, especially amongst minority and woman-owned businesses. Chief amongst these services is the assistance in identifying lenders to provide credit and in increasing incentives for small businesses to startup in our district.

Equally important are the services provided by the Small Business Services (SBS) Workforce 1 Program, which provides assistance in the form of job training, placement, skill development, and recruitment. According to the 2000 US Census, the average percentage of people in the civilian labor force that are unemployed range from 6.6% to 9.1% in Community Board 7, which is higher than the city and national averages. Additionally, unemployment for those less than 25 years old has hovered at almost 14% in many parts of the district since the 2000 census and has only become worse during the current fiscal crisis. It is imperative that funding for job training programs like Workforce 1 be expanded to help address the chronic levels of unemployment we face in our community.

Webster Avenue Rezoning Initiative

In these times of fiscal uncertainty, it is vital that we spur local economic development as a way to ensure stability and create new opportunities for growth in our communities. The Webster Avenue Rezoning Initiative, which was approved by the City Council in March 2011, proposes to allow new development in an area while protecting areas with one and two family homes from overdevelopment.

This initiative allows for the development of both inclusionary and market rate apartments to be developed along large portions of Webster Avenue between Fordham Road and East Gun Hill Road. In addition, it requires developers to create ground floor commercial space, thereby bringing jobs and business opportunities to the community.



The initiative also includes areas for larger scale commercial development on the intersections of Bedford Park Blvd. and East Gun Hill Road to diversify the types of businesses that can be established, including professional office space or other uses to draw people to Webster Avenue. However, for the project to succeed, we ask that the city continue to fund a number of initiatives, including funding to create affordable inclusionary housing, allocating monies for the construction of more schools to meet the rise in demand, opportunities for small businesses to develop and succeed such as Avenue NYC, and various street enhancements such as planted medians to entice development in the area.

Development of the Kingsbridge Armory

It is imperative that the City move forward and work with the community board and local elected officials to create a viable plan for the Kingsbridge Armory. If allowed to remain unoccupied, it will continue to drain city coffers at approximately \$1 million a year, depleting limited resources that can go to other services like schools, parks, and public safety.

It is in everyone's best interest to come back to the negotiating table and revisit all options and work towards a viable plan for the armory and the community. There are many recommendations by various groups, but the Board requests that the City come back to the negotiation table with a commitment for viable alternatives and allocate funding to create a new Request for Proposals (RFP) for redevelopment.

Development at the former Fordham Library

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) has acquired the former Fordham Library on Bainbridge Avenue near Fordham Road for the purpose of establishing a full service animal shelter that the agency was mandated by law to create in every borough. Now that legislation has been introduced to remove this requirement, the Board once again asks that DOHMH discuss options for use of the building that community members have advocated in the past few years. These uses include a mixed use commercial building that would provide much needed services such as jobs, business opportunities, child care, a computer clubhouse after school program, and community services.



Education and Libraries

School Construction Authority and School Development

The community strongly disagrees with the School Construction Authority's (SCA) assessment that additional schools are not warranted in our neighborhoods, as identified in the 2010 amendment to the existing five-year plan. The number of school seats on all levels has not kept pace with the increase in residential development in our community since 2000-01, pushing all of our schools in our district to operate at over 100% capacity and a handful of schools to operate at nearly 200% capacity. Only one new school is planned for construction, PS 177, which will have 640 seats from grades K-8. Additionally, the practice of truncating grades in schools from K-6 to K-5, as is the case for PS 246, alleviates one problem, but creates other problems by cramming new middle school students into classrooms that are already operating above capacity. Finally, the relocation of PS 51 due to environmental conditions in the building to a location outside of the district contributes to a loss of school seats and exasperates overcrowding in other local schools. We need more local schools now.

Too much space is being wasted on the use of Transportable Classroom Units that have become commonplace in our district. While we are encouraged by SCA's plans to remove these units and put new buildings in some locations (like PS 94), units at others schools (like PS 56) are long overdue to be replaced with a permanent building that also provides much needed recreational space.

This situation is not conducive to a healthy learning environment and we impress upon the SCA and the Department of Education (DOE) to reexamine its current five year construction plan to devise a better solution for our children's educational needs.

Resources Conducive to Learning

It is important that our children are provided with opportunities to grow and have positive experiences that are outside of the realm of standardized testing. We urge DOE to maintain funding and, wherever possible, implement new programs to introduce children to the arts and music.

Additionally, the lack of time or appropriate facilities for physical education can have negative impacts on a child's ability to learn. It is strongly recommended that provisions are made to ensure that children in our schools are meeting the state mandated guidelines for physical education.

Support for Our Libraries

The Bronx Library Center is a beacon for learning located in our district and is one of but a handful of libraries that offers a full 7-day-a-week service in the borough. It offers a wide array of programming, lectures, internet access, and other activities that would be otherwise inaccessible to area residents. Likewise, the Mosholu Branch is the only library available to the Norwood community and is also heavily utilized. Yet, the city has slashed funding from many of its smaller branches, resulting in shorter hours of operation. Despite these difficult financial times, we urge the city to continue full service at both the Bronx Library Center and our Mosholu Branch to provide our communities with opportunities for learning and growth.

Environment & Sanitation

Enforcing Environment and Sanitation Regulations

There are many concerns by community residents over the perceived lack of enforcement in both environmental and sanitation issues in our district. While the Board understands the difficulty in enforcing certain issues (i.e. noise or dog waste), the Board strongly recommends that the departments

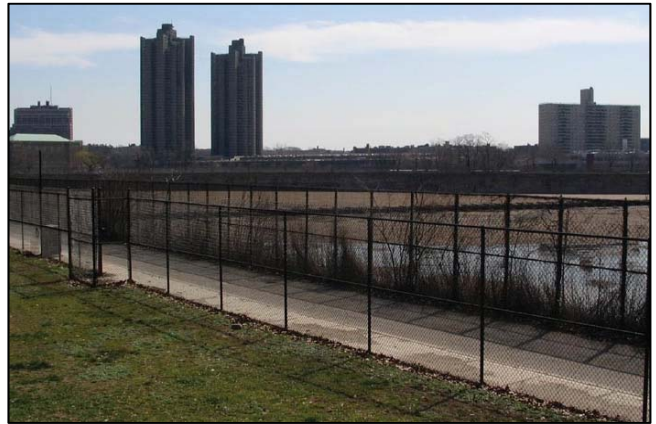
of Environmental Protection and Sanitation increase the number of enforcement officers and redouble its efforts to address our quality of life issues. In particular, the Board recommends full restoration for DSNY's supervisory staff to pre-2010 levels and increase the number of field workers to address cleanliness and quality of life issues. We also request that DSNY not reduce resources that would unduly shift the burden of street and sidewalk cleanliness upon our local business improvement districts in light of the current fiscal crisis as they lend themselves to negative perceptions to both residents and consumers shopping in our neighborhoods.

Finally, in areas where responsibility for maintenance is shared by multiple agencies (i.e. subway entrances on overpasses), we implore DSNY to work closely with those agencies to maintain basic levels of cleanliness for the district.

Access to the Jerome Park Reservoir

Many communities in upstate New York currently have access to the reservoirs for recreational activities without compromising water quality or safety concerns to the drinking water system. The Department of Environmental Protection in 2008 stated that access to our own Jerome Park Reservoir is not possible due to the security concerns.

We ask the city, especially DEP, to devise a balance between security concerns and public access to the park space so that all residents can utilize the area. The Board expressed its frustration with DEP earlier this year when the Parks Department recently proposed to put a jogging track at the western end of the reservoir, but completely disregarded creating any direct access to the reservoir on the eastern side which is adjacent to our district. We ask DEP to provide the community with detailed security concerns at the reservoir and discuss with residents and civic groups scenarios where access to the reservoir could be implemented. We also ask for additional funding from DEP to the Parks Department to construct a complete path around the reservoir accessible to everyone.



Construction and Jobs at the Croton Filtration Plant and Related Projects

The Board has for several years brought to the attention of DEP that the agency has not fulfilled prior agreements to produce jobs for neighborhood residents at the construction site and they have fallen short of original commitments made to the community. Jobs were promised as a prerequisite to construction, beginning at the site, and we implore the DEP commissioner to follow through on these promises.

Health & Hospitals

Addressing Major Health Concerns

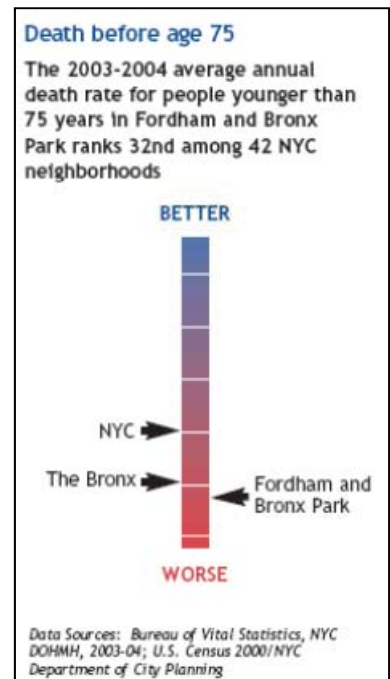
Health concerns in the district are reflective of many of the major health concerns affecting the borough. However, the Board believes that resources to address these issues have not been provided at the same level as in other communities. We request that the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and the Human Resources Administration (HRA) work with the community to focus on several health issues that are of great concern to our residents.

Prevalence of Domestic Violence- The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence reports that fatalities due to domestic violence in the Bronx have fallen 39% in 2009 from 2008, but unfortunately has seen an increase of almost double the number of fatalities in 2010 than in 2009. There are a number of programs currently in place to bring awareness and provide services to residents, but there must be a greater level of collaboration between the various mayoral and municipal agencies involved if we are to further reduce the incidence of domestic violence in our community. The Board continues to support the operations of the Family Justice Center and the city's continued efforts to reduce domestic violence in our community.

Substance Abuse and Depression- Substance abuse and depression are closely linked to one another, and both are treatable health conditions. As per the Community Health Profile for 2006 published by DOHMH, residents in our community are 60% more likely to experience serious psychological distress than adults in NYC overall. Additionally, the death rate due to drug abuse (in 2003-2004) was 70% higher in our neighborhoods than in NYC as a whole.

It is imperative that resources to address both substance abuse and depression continue to be funded to avert a return to the days of rampant substance abuse and its subsequent negative effects on our communities. We implore the city to increase its education resources targeting drug prevention and mental health initiatives, especially for our youth.

Diabetes and Obesity- According to the University of Wisconsin's County Health Rankings 2010, the Bronx is the least healthiest county in all of New York State. The rates for these health conditions will continue to increase, particularly in lower income communities, if we do not improve food selection choices available to this vulnerable population. Many residents commute to areas outside of our community to obtain healthier fresh foods, adding an unnecessary financial burden and forcing them to choose between eating healthier or limiting their food choices to provide for other basic needs.



The Board continues to support to the Department of City Planning's (DCP) F.R.E.S.H. text zoning amendment to encourage developers to take advantage of development incentives in exchange for putting new supermarkets in their commercial spaces. This provides residents with a greater variety of healthier food options and reduces the time and expense related to shopping outside of the district. The Board's support is also based on the research of many health advocates and the report "Eating Well in Harlem: How Available is Healthy Food?" by DOHMH. According to the study, "Research suggests that access to food - including the availability, quality, and price of healthy foods, and the presence of supermarkets and advertising - affect the food choices of residents, many of whom shop close to home."



HIV and AIDS- According to the Fordham Bronx Park Community Health Profile, “the rate of HIV diagnoses is more than 60% higher than the NYC rate, and the people living with HIV/AIDS in the community is 40% higher than the NYC rate”. The report also states that while residents in the community are more likely to get tested for HIV, “nearly one-third of HIV test results are ‘late’ diagnoses, indicating that the disease has progressed to AIDS”.

We support the DOHMH initiative to expand testing to all Bronx residents so that individuals are aware of their status and have access to treatment as early as possible if they are diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. We believe that the agency needs to both expand its outreach efforts on their initiative and provide resources to residents “post-diagnosis” so that they receive the appropriate care and support.

Teen Pregnancy- Teenage mothers and their babies face numerous health risks and socioeconomic pressures than adult mothers. Many teenage mothers tend to have less disposable income and often times do not finish high school, while their babies tend to have lower birth weights and other health issues associated with weight. While the teen birth rate has decreased over the last 10 years, the average birth rate of teen mothers in our community is nearly 50% higher than the NYC rate.

We strongly urge DOHMH to provide the necessary resources to our teens, especially to our middle and high school youth, to reduce the incidence of teen pregnancies in our community. We also believe that the Department of Education needs to expand its sexual health education program and work closely with DOHMH to ensure that all principals are in compliance with educating students in our district.

Housing

Rise in Multi-family Building Foreclosures

Communities throughout the district continue to suffer the repercussions of multi-family building foreclosures, often spurred by speculative capital groups with portfolios of rent stabilized buildings which do not produce high enough returns to cover overleveraged mortgage payments. The district is among those with tenants suffering through loss of basic building services, maintenance and repairs. We ask the city to take the following actions to help mitigate the fallout of private investors operating swaths of buildings in the red.

First, the city should create a centralized list of properties in lien pending. This will facilitate responsible housing providers stepping in and rescuing properties on the brink of foreclosure. We believe the Center for New York City Neighborhoods is a logical entity to track and manage such a list with the support of HPD and other city agencies.

Second, we would like to see HPD work with the University Neighborhood Housing Program (UNHP), a local nonprofit organization, to expand their array of lending programs to owners of buildings in financial distress. UNHP has created a mechanism to identify buildings at high risk of financial and physical distress. Through this tracking system, HPD could help preserve existing housing stock.

Finally, we believe HPD should play a role in training those that take over foreclosed buildings in receivership. Many of the receivers who manage multi-family buildings that return to the hands of mortgage holders have no idea how to operate a building, putting tenants and communities at risk. Another option would be to pair up receivers with entities that have experience managing buildings to ensure that buildings do not fall into disrepair. There is legislation pending in the state assembly that would require the licensing of receivers and the Board would support this measure to ensure that families have safe, livable housing standards.

Creating More Affordable Housing

Housing affordability continues to be the primary housing issue facing residents of the district. Services to maintain housing stability from the Board office to nonprofits providing housing counseling and eviction prevention have seen a rapid rise in the number of people seeking assistance. Existing services are stretched to the limit to meet this demand and the Board recommends several actions that can be taken to prevent evictions and increase the availability of affordable housing.

First, the city needs to target more resources for eviction and foreclosure prevention throughout our district. The recently reduced amount of one-time financial assistance available to households in rent arrears available through HRA has made it increasingly difficult for people to cobble together the money needed to help maintain their current housing.

Second, low-income homeowners struggling under the weight of adjustable interest mortgages are not getting the guidance early on when they begin falling behind in their payments. The most cost effective way to keep people in housing and out of shelters is by providing more information and assistance through widely publicized and available prevention programs.

Finally, while the district has some of the most affordable private market rental housing throughout the city, there is great need for capital to build new rental and home ownership opportunities for working and middle income households. The district is fortunate to have community-based nonprofit affordable housing developers in our district that are using resources available through city, state, and federal resources to increase affordable housing stock. There is a tremendous opportunity for HPD and HDC to concentrate resources on the newly rezoned Webster Avenue to develop affordable rental and ownership units along this corridor while preserving the homeownership within Bedford Park and Norwood.

Residents' Quality of Life and Self-Certification Abuses

The Board strongly advocates HPD and DOB on the behalf of our residents who have endured substandard living conditions to assist in the remediation of hundreds of glaring violations in buildings throughout the district. Tenant advocate groups place the blame on the agencies' heavy reliance on self-certification for compliance of violations.

Self-compliance does not work well unless it is accompanied by a thorough system for verification and enforcement than what currently exist. We urge both agencies to increase its current code enforcement personnel and Emergency Repair Program contractors so that it is not as heavily reliant on the self-certification process and to address the concerns of our residents in a timely fashion.

Concerns Regarding the Location of Cluster Site Housing

We remain concerned with Department of Homeless Services (DHS) sponsored cluster site transitional housing programs in the district, where the agency partners with local property owners to convert individual apartments into temporary homeless residences. Dedicating permanent market-rate affordable housing units to meet rising demand for transitional shelters removes the very affordable units needed to move individuals and families from shelter to permanent housing. The City must work to return these units to the rent-stabilized affordable housing stock as soon as possible.

Furthermore, the Board is concerned that property managers enrolled in this program are not being properly vetted by the agency. Some buildings used in this program have hundreds of DOB and HPD violations, some very critical, yet they are able to participate without first correcting these violations. Because the agency pays the owner of these establishments a significant rate (up to \$95 per day), the

Board is concerned that unscrupulous and irresponsible property owners may be taking advantage of this program to fund repairs mandated by other city agencies.

We ask that the agency develop more stringent criteria to determine which buildings can be used as temporary facilities and that all community boards are notified whenever any cluster-site program is being implemented in their district, regardless of the size or number of units involved.

Parks and Recreation

Fordham Landing / Kingsbridge Heights Waterfront

Currently, the district does not have access to most of the waterfront because it is underdeveloped or used for manufacturing purposes. The Board supports a plan to create waterfront access for multiple purposes, including recreation, for community residents. The Board urges the Parks Department, to expedite the acquisition process of the parcel of land just north of the University Heights Bridge from DOT for the creation of Regatta Park from funding allocated to it from the Croton Filtration Mitigation Fund. Additionally, we ask that the city work with Con Edison to incorporate their parcel into the development of this park.

The district needs public access to the waterfront as is available in the other boroughs to revitalize what has been an undeveloped and underserved area for many years. We believe that the Fordham Landing / Kingsbridge Heights Waterfront will provide many recreational, residential, and commercial activities and bring vibrancy to the Harlem River and surrounding neighborhoods.



Renovation of Mosholu Parkway and Adjacent Parkland

Mosholu Parkway intersects through our district and serves as a greenway between our major parks (Van Cortland and Bronx Park/Botanical Gardens), a connector to our major roadways (Bronx River, Saw Mill, and Henry Hudson Parkways), and a scenic respite from the surrounding urban environment.

There are discussions between community organizations in our district and the Mayor's office to redesign portions of the parkway to increase the amount of available green space and address traffic flow issues. However, there are other issues that need to be considered in the renovation of the parkway to address long standing community complaints.

Chief amongst these complaints is the constant flooding that occurs on the parkway, especially during the winter months. The areas on the parkway most affected are on the intersections of Bainbridge Avenue and Hull/Marion Avenues, which separates Norwood, a major shopping area, from the northern part of Bedford Park, which is primarily residential with a high concentration of senior citizens. Curb lines and sidewalks are broken, making it difficult for some to cross in fair weather. During and after rain or snow storms, the intersections become flooded and impassible for many.



Residents have complained to multiple city agencies over the last few years and have not received the appropriate response to this longstanding issue. Several agencies must collaborate to remediate this situation, starting with the DEP, so that further damage does not occur to the parkway and for the safety of our residents.

Soil erosion from the adjacent park lands is the major cause of the flooding on the parkway. Lack of proper maintenance and enforcement of quality of life issues (i.e. dumping of charcoal and other contaminants) has caused many barren areas, allowing dirt and debris to flow onto the parkway and obstruct the catch basins. These parklands desperately need maintenance and we implore the city and specifically the Parks Department to remediate the issues affecting our parkway.

Enforcement / PEP officers and Security Issues

Security issues remain a major concern in our parks. Based on the NYPD CompStat reports and community complaints, what should be a welcoming setting for our youth is often times the reverse, a hostile environment where disorderly youth, vandalism, and other negative quality of life issues occur on a frequent basis.

Lack of lighting on many paths in the parklands adjacent to Mosholu Parkway is a great concern. These paths are very dark and provide ample opportunity for illegal dumping, loitering at night, and vehicle vandalism for those who park along the parkway. These paths are used by hundreds of school age children and residents going between Bedford Park and Norwood and lighting, particularly during the winter months, would provide an additional level of security to these individuals. The Board asks that the agency submit an official request to DOT to conduct a lighting study along sections of the parkway to determine which areas can benefit from additional lighting.

The community implores the Parks Department to increase the number of Parks Enforcement Personnel (PEP) officers and patrols at our parks to assist in making our parks a safer environment for all of us. Additionally, the Board recommends that more lighting and security cameras be installed where necessary, parks and playgrounds be properly closed at the appropriate times, and that there be more collaboration with the community board and the NYPD to address situations as they arise.

Public Safety & Quality of Life

CompStat Reporting and Trends

The district office has a good working relationship with the 52nd Precinct, which has been responsive to and continues to work with us on many issues raised by the community. We will continue working with the precinct on sharing information on a regular basis that assist us in providing us better responses to community concerns, planning with local stakeholders, and working with other city agencies to improve the quality of life for our residents.

One point that the Board will continue to press for is the release of much more detailed information of crime that occurs in the district. We urge the NYPD to make available detailed CompStat data so that the Board can have better information for budget planning. At a minimum, this data should include the day, timeframe, and location of the major crime stats plus shootings. Other non-confidential information that can be disclosed is the age, ethnicity, and gender of both the assailant and the victim. As has been explained before, it is easier for the Board to ask for targeted resources for a smaller area than to request the city to provide them district wide. Without additional information, the Board cannot make appropriate requests to fund initiatives from other city agencies that could help to drive down a

particular crime. The Board supports the resolution currently being considered by the city council to make these stats available for every community board.

Quality of Life Issues Affecting Residents

Still a concern to community residents is the perception that some quality of life (QOL) issues are not being addressed as aggressively as major crimes. There are several disturbing trends that have been reported to both the community board and the precinct that negatively impacting quality of life issues in the district:

Youth and gang violence- Reports show that shootings, assaults and gang related activity remain high, especially in the neighborhoods of North Fordham, Bedford Park, and Norwood. Residents continue to complain to the district office that they have witnessed or know someone who is a victim of gang violence. The Board has witnessed an increase in the precinct's responsiveness to the community's needs, but is concerned that further budget cuts, especially to personnel, will erase whatever progress has been made to address gang violence.

Prostitution issues- Since instituting "Operation Losing Proposition" in early 2010, the precinct has been able to make significant strides in reducing prostitution in Kingsbridge Heights, especially in and around St. James Park. Furthermore, we have received many complaints that prostitution is taking up root along East 198th Street and on East 208th Streets, areas where this activity was not previously known. The amount of recidivism and spread of this activity warrants a continued presence and resources by the NYPD for the foreseeable future.

Curbing graffiti vandalism- Graffiti vandalism is a chronic blight throughout our district and has many property managers, business owners, and the city agencies spending a considerable amount of financial and personnel resources to remove graffiti. The district office continues to work with the Community Affairs Unit in bringing free graffiti removal programs to the neighborhood. Yet, this and other programs are not sufficient in addressing the problem and residents are expecting more from the NYPD. The Board once again recommends that the precinct expand its anti-graffiti program and implement additional strategies to curb vandalism and prevent the sale of materials used by graffiti vandals.

Robberies - There has been a dramatic spike in the number of robberies that have taken place this past summer, particularly of cell phones and chain necklaces. Youth have been reported as being the primary perpetrators and victims of this crime, mostly taking place in parks and after school. We urge the police to step up measures for both enforcement and prevention so that this issue does not continue to escalate.

NYPD Staffing Concerns

The Board and community residents are very concerned with the number of officers the precinct continues to lose. We have lost the majority of our impact officers as they have been reassigned to other parts of the borough, and have received very few additional officers from the last several graduating classes. Even when the impact officers were assigned to the precinct in late 2008, the total number of officers was not at the same levels as in previous years.

This trend is particularly disturbing to the Board in light of the increase in of major crimes such as shootings and burglaries as well as quality of life issues. The notion that officers are frequently reassigned to address increases in crimes in other precincts is reactionary and counterproductive. The Board recommends to the Mayor's office that the number of classes and officers increase and that the precinct staff levels are raised to appropriate levels.

FDNY Staffing Concerns

The Board strenuously objects to the Mayor's office's decision to reduce the number of firefighters per ladder from 5 to 4 as a way to reduce personnel expenses. Given the number of high rise buildings throughout our district, the Board believes this policy to be detrimental to the health and safety of our residents. We strongly urge the City to consider other means to contain costs in the agency other than reducing personnel in the future as this puts the lives of residents and firefighters at risk.

Senior Services

Funding Formula for Existing Centers

The Board's opines that the Department for the Aging (DFTA) continues to set unrealistic and unattainable benchmarks for determining how well senior centers are being utilized. Many senior residents feel that the city has used these benchmarks as a way to justify the potential closing of centers, as was proposed in 2010 for both Tolentine Zeiser and RAIN Bailey centers, which now operate entirely on discretionary funding from the city council. Senior advocates cite that the criteria for determining center utilization limits itself to how often seniors use the onsite meals program and does not include other programming that might take place throughout the day. Additionally, centers are under new pressures to provide programming as a condition to receiving their current funding.

The Board continues to support the position that the proposed funding formula does not take into account the true utilization of our centers and voices its opposition to the agency's constant revamping of criteria for funding our centers. The Board recommends the allocation of additional funding to match the rise of expenses to our centers to offset previous reductions and to decrease each center's reliance on having to solicit outside funding.

Our centers are often times the only available resource for information, meals, and socialization for many seniors in our community and more must be done to ensure that they are able to weather the current economic downturn. We implore DFTA and elected officials to not turn its back on our seniors and provide the funding to maintain all of the city's senior centers.



Traffic & Transportation

Potential traffic issues for a rezoned Webster Avenue

With the recent construction of an 800+ car garage and rezoning of Webster Avenue, changes to the residential and commercial density along this road will impact the volume of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. This is especially true along the intersections of Bedford Park Blvd and East Gun Hill Road, where there are significant traffic issues. The Board is requesting that DOT work with the Department of City Planning to evaluate this roadway to determine what street enhancements, such as planted center medians, adding curb neckdowns, and new street trees can be implemented to improve pedestrian and vehicular safety.



Converting Oliver Place into a step street

Oliver Place, between Marion Avenue and Decatur Avenue, is a street that was never completely developed and is covered mostly by small trees and other plant growth. An application for de-mapping the street was submitted to the Borough President's Topography office several years ago, but the action was never completed. The street now stands neglected, and is now a frequent site for illegal dumping, loitering, and illicit activities, with a small, poorly lit staircase for residents to travel back and forth.

The Board is seeking the assistance of both the Borough President's office and the DOT to convert this area into a step street with green space. This would allow residents to travel safely on Oliver Place and provide space for use as passive recreation. A well-lit, wider step street would also provide better visibility to residents and city agencies and act as a deterrent to dumping and illicit activities.

Maintenance Issues

The district office continues to work closely with the Department of Transportation (DOT) to address sidewalk and street maintenance issues. The district has many major commercial corridors and roadways, including the northern end of the Grand Concourse, which are heavily utilized. However, appropriate funding to repair our major roadways is insufficient considering the number of vehicles and buses that utilize our roads, especially in light of the population growth we have been experiencing and are projecting in the coming years. In the best interest of maintaining our roadways, it is recommended that DOT reexamine the amount of funds allocated to the district for street milling and repaving to determine if additional monies are warranted.

Youth Services**Employment and Mentoring Programs**

A major concern for the community, especially in these troubled economic times, is the lack of employment opportunities for youth and young adults in our community. The city was fortunate to receive federal stimulus dollars again this year to fund additional jobs for youths and young adults. However, it is apparent that there are still too few opportunities for skill development that would prepare these individuals to enter the workforce.

Therefore, the Board recommends that the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) promote existing programs to a greater extent in economically distressed neighborhoods throughout the district. Furthermore, we implore the city to not reduce funding for existing DYCD initiatives such as the Summer Youth Employment Program and the Neighborhood Advisory Boards, as it is counterproductive for the city to balance its budget at the expense of our youth.

We need the city to provide leadership by encouraging mentoring programs that will prepare our youth by teaching them the skills necessary to thrive in the workplace.

Closing Statements

On October 18, 2011, the Board submitted their "Service Program Priorities for FY 2013" survey, ranking the importance of ninety city services. Services are grouped into one of five priorities from highest (A) to lowest (E) rank. The results of this survey can be found in Appendix A of this document.

Community Boards were developed for the purpose of having residents participate in government locally and to address their needs. Board 7 is committed to working with the respective agencies in order to achieve the goals mentioned in this document.

We ask for the support from the Mayor's office, the city agencies, and our elected officials that the concerns of each neighborhood be considered and discussed in a respectful manner to help everyone through these times of uncertainty. We want to do our best to reassure families and individuals residing in Bronx Community Board 7 that we in government are committed to their well being and that they are able to live and thrive in this neighborhood as in every other neighborhood in the City.

In conclusion, the Chairperson, District Manager, Board Members, and residents want to extend our thanks and appreciation to the Mayor, Borough President, City Council, and the heads of the various city agencies for their continuing assistance in addressing our concerns and in supporting our community.

Respectfully submitted,



Paul Foster
Chairman



Fernando P. Tirado
District Manager