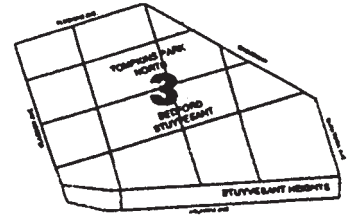




**THE CITY OF NEW YORK**  
**COMMUNITY BOARD No. 3**  
**BEDFORD STUYVESANT RESTORATION PLAZA**  
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## **DISTRICT NEEDS STATEMENT**

### **FISCAL YEAR 2011**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Each neighborhood within this great city has its own unique character. Each is sustained by a wide variety of citizens and action groups that are committed to its ongoing revitalization. The strength and fortitude of Bedford-Stuyvesant rests on the shoulders of hundreds of citizens who have been actively involved in the lifeblood of this community with a tenacity that never wavered. Small businesses, a viable public educational system, a large home ownership basis, and strong civic institutions such as block associations and volunteer groups have been the backbone of ongoing development.

For over thirty years, Community Board 3 has been the linchpin of development within the borders of its district. Our members have given tirelessly of their time and skills to represent our neighbors. We are justly proud of the strong participation of our residents in the community board process, as stipulated in the City Charter. Each month, our public meetings are packed with over one hundred and fifty people in attendance. They come from all sections of the district, and represent a broad cross section of cultures, ethnic groups, businesses, and faith-based institutions. Their voices in such issues as land use, housing, and municipal services is a model of the “town hall meeting” approach to governance.

The committees that function during the year are fully involved in the concerns of the community. There is strong participation from citizen members who join these committees and remain to be part of the decision-making process. Clear objectives set the course for each working group, and outcomes are based on progress in those areas. We have been able to establish a roadmap that links complaints to the level of service delivery, and we are working to strengthen those connections with the establishment of an automated complaint system that takes full advantage of the 311 system. In that way, we are demonstrating to our neighbors that our city’s municipal services are willing and able to respond to their needs. Despite budget constraints, our office staff has been our public face, answering the hundreds of questions and handling the concerns that span so many of the day-to-day quality of life issues.

We would like to thank those representatives from city agencies who have proven to be active partners in the delivery of services to the public. As we move forward with projects such as the Rezoning of the Northern District and the development of affordable housing along the Fulton Street corridor, we are mindful of the importance of genuine collaborative efforts. Yes, there are great concerns in our district:

- we are still the epicenter of disastrous health issues such as HIV/AIDS, asthma, and obesity
- our historically firm homeownership base has been undermined by vicious predatory lending schemes and the looming water and property tax lien system
- the educational system has undergone so many changes that it is difficult for parents and community to understand the processes that are now governing our children's education
- employment opportunities are at a premium, exacerbated by a lack of access to workforce development programs
- opportunities for the growth of small businesses has diminished
- our young people and residents are menaced by the rise in gang culture and the proliferation of guns that are readily available in our public housing complexes
- infrastructure and environmental issues such as the construction of the sanitation garage and large number of streets that require varying levels of attention are put off for years in the name of fiscal accountability

Persistent progress within Community District 3 did not just start. We have had an extraordinary broad base of residents and groups that have made certain that Bedford-Stuyvesant continues to thrive. It is against this long arc of progress that this year's district needs statement is presented.

## **ARTS & CULTURE**

Although the Brooklyn Children's Museum is not within the borders of Community District 3, we applaud the opening of their brand new space. The Museum is a prime example of the need to promote cultural resources across barriers such as community district lines; particularly since long-term funding has been provided by council members that cover more than one district. Funding should be made available to find more creative ways of advertising the wonderful programs offered by such institutions as the Brooklyn Museum, the Jewish Children's Museum, MoCADA, and the Weeksville Heritage Center. Families in our public housing developments, schools, and our large number of faith-based institutions should be part of a sustained campaign to welcome them to these cultural facilities.

Another area which we have highlighted in earlier editions of our needs statement is the critical lack of arts in our public schools. Although parent groups and educators are

working to raise funds for music and other programs, this becomes a difficult undertaking without support from municipal agencies. The Noel Pointer Foundation is operating in several schools, and the enhanced addition of violin classes has been of great benefit to the children and their families. In our last two budget priorities responses we were advised that funds for the arts now rest within the budgetary decisions made by each school. However, with rounds of budget cuts each year, enrichment programs must understandably go to the bottom of the list.

We, again, advocate for more funding for activities and programs that are part of Bedford-Stuyvesant's unique cultural legacy. The Central Brooklyn Jazz Festival and the Fulton Art Fair are two examples of activities that routinely receive support from the City Council, but we look forward to increased funding as demands increase within the community.

Our artistic community attempts to work with the youth to enhance their appreciation for the world of culture and arts. There is such a great need for funding to the different foundations to expand some of the existing programs. Many, if not all of our art and cultural organizations are at the edge of financial risk due to undercapitalization.

The Magnolia Tree Earth Center, the Central Brooklyn Jazz Festival, the Skylight Gallery and the Youth Arts Academy at Restoration, and the Weeksville Heritage Center (although just across our borders) all enhance the lives of our neighbors. Increased funding from municipal sources would help to undergird these institutions. The Fulton Art Fair will be celebrating its 53rd year in 2011, and there is a critical need to redouble support for this venerable fine arts institution. New collaborative efforts such as the Bedford-Stuyvesant Artists' Association must also be supported, the George Washington Carver Gallery, Skylight Gallery, Zion Gallery, AfroArt Designs, the Lewis Gallery just to name a few, that are keeping the richness and beauty of our combined cultures alive should be financially supported and exposed to the rest of the City for the great existing and up and coming institutions they are.

## **DAY CARE**

The concept of a comprehensive early childhood education is the most important start a parent can give to a child, which will not change for various reasons. We are still pitifully deficient in infant/toddler care in this community. With Welfare reform in full operation, parents on public assistance need more qualified infant/toddler services to facilitate their being able to return to work. Parents needing a full-range of services from the Department of Social Services are just not getting it.

The problems of under utilization that have plagued child care centers over the past few years are exacerbated in this present climate of financial instability. Adults are without employment or at best underemployed. The new agreement between ACS and the Department of Education to cut funding for children in the 4 and 5 year old range, will drastically undercut the publicly funded day care centers. The City will no longer fund children in that bracket and they are now to be placed in charter and public schools, however, no provisions have been made to accommodate the increase in children to those facilities, which the Department of Education readily admits; not to mention, there is no after-care component for the working parent. This new policy by the City of New York is detrimental

to both the parent and child. At this time, there are only two licensed infant/toddler child care facilities within Bedford-Stuyvesant and one of them, Tabernacle Day Care already has a two-year wait list.

As an epicenter of an underserved population, Bedford-Stuyvesant needs to have more ACS funded centers. Parents continue to need subsidized child care services. The parents with children in the age range of birth to three years of age are most affected. This group has the greatest demand for child care. Parents are being urged to return to work or school in a socio-economic climate of struggle of financial crisis. The publicly funded day care centers are not licensed for the infant to toddler stage and the City will not pay to retro-fit them to do so. The end result is that the publicly funded day care centers are actually being forced out of business.

There needs to be a bridge to connect the necessary components of demand, poverty and policy. Even the private day care centers are affected. In lieu of ACS regulations to remove the four and five year olds from publically funded programs, children are being left on the ACCIS 1 list after being discharged; this keeps the programs under-enrolled causing financial problems for the centers. Vendor programs are unable to remove children from their ACCIS 1. The names of children are not purged from one to six months and those placements are held vacant because you cannot put in new children while the other names are still on the list, further disenfranchising the parents and the centers.

In instances where programs are in place, the reimbursement rate has not been increased for the last five plus years for private centers, creating a hardship to keep their doors open, not to mention that costs have risen drastically. Several centers have inadequate or non-existent funding and have had to close, causing an even greater gap for child care among the underserved of Bedford-Stuyvesant. Three ACD funded centers in CB3 have already closed and we anticipate many more closing, leaving our district underserved with public funded day care programs.

Strategies to address child care market rates, policies and an effective voucher program must be addressed and not disassembled. Additionally, a definition of early childhood accredited systems and the role they play in the improvement of program quality and accountability.

## **EDUCATION**

Community District 3 covers schools in School Districts 13 and 16, with the majority of the schools being in District 16. As we have described in previous years, we are still committed to the support of excellence in our public schools. The following areas require ongoing vigilance if our children are to receive high-quality education:

- **Resources for Classroom Essentials**

Recent budget cuts have stymied progress gained in other years. We are hopeful that these cuts will be restored as part of the President's commitment to sound education. We applaud all of our educators in the District for "doing more with less"; however, the constant uncertainty surrounding critical funding for our schools begins to take a toll on our children.

- Comprehensive Approach to High Drop-out Rates

While the Mayor's reports indicate lower drop-out rates within our schools, we are still concerned with the high rate of early-leavers in our middle schools and high schools. This is a difficult and complex situation to address; yet, this is the time to call for the development of a comprehensive plan to address these issues within our community. Strategies could include research on best practices; the convening of a commission comprised of a broad base of stakeholders (There are groups already organized in the community that could address this issue, if given support from the Department of Education.)

- School Safety

Within the past two years, there has been a rise in gang recruitment and "turf" battles in and around our schools. As indicated in the section on Safety, there must be a comprehensive approach to this critical change in the landscape. Three years ago, working with the Bedford-Stuyvesant Safety Task Force, this Community Board was successful in establishing safe passage zones around Boys and Girls High School and CS 21. In addition to funding for more safe passage zones, we are requesting that any guidelines that have been developed by DOE's Gang Intervention Unit be carefully reviewed, in conjunction with the NYPD Gang Unit and the District Attorney's resources.

- Parental Involvement

We need "teeth" in the parental involvement initiatives that have been set forth the Department of Education. Our parents still feel adrift in a monumental bureaucracy, where they feel powerless to make change, even in their own schools. It is time for innovative models that draw parents into the decision-making process. It is apparent that the old approaches are ineffective in communities such as ours. There must be more attention paid to diverse cultures, mores, and history in order to develop initiatives that will make a difference. The supervisory design is still a mystery to many, with a superintendent who may, or may not be the evaluator of record for principals within the District. For example, where do parents and community go for assistance when schools do not work?

In each of our district needs statement, we have advocated strongly for more parental involvement. The Community Board, community organizations and the various task forces that have been organized by Councilmember Vann are ready to participate in any pilots that DOE would like to initiate. We are ready!

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

The Nostrand Avenue Reconstruction Project (HWK1129), stretching from Flushing Avenue to Atlantic Avenue has been in the budget of Community District 3 since 1989. Nostrand Avenue is a much used thoroughfare that spans our district from north to south. The roadbed and abutting area are truly in deplorable condition. This project has previously been moved from budget to budget. Most recently, this Community Board has petitioned to the City of New York to keep this project in the current 2011 budget. We need to see this venture begin without additional delays. If your agency has been fortunate enough to have received some of the Federal Stimulus Money, this would be an ideal application. In the event, this endeavor has not been selected for monies at this juncture; but will be



funded at a later date, are there plans to set aside a portion of any additional funding for CD3 projects that will have an impact on Bedford-Stuyvesant community.

The Recovery Act provides vast opportunities for energy conservation initiatives. Many of them are well-suited to applications in urban areas. Funding for such projects that flow from the Federal government through the pipeline that leads to the City should be simply and widely communicated to homeowners, renters and businesses. Most importantly, access to jobs for residents of the District should be a top priority with the influx of any funding resulting from the Stimulus package.

In addition, with the rapidly expanding population in Bedford-Stuyvesant, we have been experiencing flooding much more frequently. Our catch-basins are blocked with debris, litter and trash that washes down during heavy rain and the street corners are impassable. While we are aware that the cleaning of sewers and catch-basins are complaint driven, it would be beneficial to have them placed on a schedule, at least during the rainy season (heavy storm watches, i.e., hurricane season, etc.). Many of the catch-basins have noxious odors emanating from them that pollute the air for at least half a block. When they are cleaned, it is not long before the problem arises once again.

Of paramount concern to the Bedford-Stuyvesant community is the recently passed legislation regarding the sale of liens on properties with outstanding water and sewer charges. With the escalating cost of living in this neighborhood, higher property tax rates, predatory lending practices, and financial failings due to the state of our economy, it is of particular interest to Community Board 3 what impact these issues will have on homeowners and the residents, particularly the seniors and others with either fixed or low incomes.

As advocates for the residents, it would be encouraging to see the implementation of some type of program that would protect the rights of the Central Brooklyn property owners to ensure they can continue to remain an integral portion of a community that most of them have been in for generations, with an intensive program of education and alternatives to this population for saving their homes.

Community Board 3, would like to see noise regulations enforced by DEP and the Police Department. In addition, we would like to see signage regarding the prohibiting of honking horns in certain areas, including the fines for such posted on those signs, i.e., hospitals, residential sections, schools, et al. There really needs to be an increase in staffing for all agencies concerned to enforce the regulations.

We acknowledge DEP's continued installation of the Automatic Meter Reading Technology throughout the community.

## **HEALTH CARE**

No community can tolerate a sustained onslaught of life-threatening health issues. Bedford-Stuyvesant is no exception. Yet, we continue to be the epicenter of an alarming number of health challenges.

In former versions of this document we have requested increased funding in several criti-

cal areas. Unfortunately, we must, again, repeat the call for more funding in these areas:

- HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment
- Expanded emergency room services
- Innovative preventive programs that address the high rates of diabetes, obesity, and asthma
- Increased resources for training EMT personnel
- Expanded emergency mental health programs at Woodhull and Interfaith Hospitals
- More accessible locations for flu vaccinations

While we await universal health care reforms at the Federal level, several provisions of the laws recently signed by Governor Patterson in March and July, 2009 have great promise for many residents of Bedford-Stuyvesant.

“In March, Governor Patterson signed into law his Program Bill to help New Yorkers who lost their jobs at small businesses take advantage of a COBRA subsidy made available under the Federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). In addition, the 2009-10 budget eliminated certain barriers to enrolling in public health insurance coverage such as face-to-face interviews, finger imaging, and asset tests, and authorized the Department of Health to seek Federal support for expanded coverage for low-income adults. Moreover, as of September 1, 2008, all of New York’s uninsured children became eligible for moderate or no-cost health care coverage under Child Health Plus.” [New York State Press Release, July 29, 2009]

The issue then becomes one of informing the public of these new areas of assistance. The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene must make every effort to bring this information to the public. In the past, we have requested that our local Health office become more visible in the community, and that it step up its efforts to get information to the public. Since funding is always an issue, more resources should be allocated for this purpose. In its 2003 report, the Mayor’s Office of Citywide Health Insurance Access lists Community District 3 relatively low with respect to the number of EPHINE (Eligible for Public Health Insurance but Not Enrolled), the result has been a clogging of our emergency rooms because the extent of full access to health services has not been clearly explained. This has created a health crisis based upon relative success....large numbers of the population within Community District 3 are, indeed, enrolled in public health programs. Yet, they fail to use the preventive services that are available to them. We are hopeful that this issue of access to information will be given the serious attention that it deserves.

## **HOUSING AND LAND USE**

The re-zoning of Bedford-Stuyvesant South was completed in 2007. We have patiently or not so patiently waited to begin the process for the northern portion of our community. This is a very lengthy procedure and to preserve the integrity of this area, this needs to be completed as quickly as possible. The developers are fully cognizant that this work is beginning and even though things have slowed down in the northern quadrant, I am sure they will pick up again. We cannot allow a portion of our community to slip through our fingers without regard to the people that live and work there. The area is home to diverse

cultures and each of those ethnicities should be represented equally.

There are several parcels of land in the south eastern quadrant particularly on Fulton Street and we know that there has been discussion regarding those pieces. It is the understanding of Community Board 3 that the parcels on Fulton Street under the purview of HPD. Block 1548, lot #s 26-30 totaling 10,000 square feet, block 1549, lot #s 4-7 totaling 8000 square feet and block 1549, lot #s 19-34 totaling 26,000 square feet. We view this as a marvelous opportunity for economic development. As a community, we would like to see an updated report on all vacant land within CB3, both those that have been designated for programs and those that have not.

With a needs assessment in place that has community input, these parcels can be maximized to their fullest potential. With the Mayor's push for affordable housing, we can utilize these parcels of land as affordable housing with commercial/public space below. It would be in line with the zoning along the rest of Fulton Street and keep the street as a major commercial strip in Bedford Stuyvesant throughout its entirety. A multi-use building with perhaps a mid-size supermarket or bank on the ground level would be perfect. We must not forget that Bedford-Stuyvesant is part of the pilot for economic development.

In addition, Community Board 3 is interested in finding out the relationship between HPD and HUD with regard to funded projects in our area i.e., Risley Dent, Hunterfly Homes, Jackie Robinson, Medgar Evers and Smith Woodward. We are looking to fully understand how that relationship works and its impact on this community.

There needs to be safeguards in place whereby the Department of Buildings can have adequate inspectors to enforce their guidelines. There have been instances when complaints have come in and we involve DOB that the answers are nebulous. A contractor/developer that has applied for permits should be held accountable to what has been applied for. On occasion, that is not happening. This should not be. The issues of such infractions violate the quality of life and can at times be hazardous to public safety. If more inspectors are needed, then we should push to get the funding for them. It makes more sense to be proactive than it does to be reactive. We have had issues such as a school that was operating without a Certificate of Occupancy for three years. Another instance of blatant disregard for the guidelines of DOB is work being done in the backyard to build a deck without any type of work permit. When that was discovered, they got the permit and it was revoked for a time, yet they were allowed to go back yet a third time and complete the work even at the displeasure of the property owner next. Contractors/developers are given violations, they pay an ECB fine or not and then carry on with business as usual. I am sure that compliance with codes was established for a reason. DOB needs to have a vehicle to respond to violators. Rules, laws, guidelines were created for the safety and well being of all concerned. It is time to make people comply.

Our major need continues to be technical assistance from agencies such as City Planning and HPD, and elected officials, to help us make a comprehensive assessment of:

- rezoning of Bedford-Stuyvesant North
- the status of the urban renewal plans
- the coordinated development of the plans (how they fit together)



- how our housing needs have (or have not) been met by these plans
- vacant land under the aegis of several city agencies
- how Community Board 3's Affordable Housing Policy impacts all of the plans

After a 32 year history, Community Board 3 should have had all of these issues addressed already. We feel that looking at where we are is now a tremendous understatement. Such a study will require time, staff, and commitment from agency staff and members of our Community Board, and other stakeholders but it needs to happen none the less. It is a project whose time is long overdue.

Predatory Lending continues to plague Bedford-Stuyvesant. We have one of the highest foreclosure rates in the country. With the efforts of community groups and elected officials partnering to fight this rising tide we are seeing some improvement. Several city agencies have predatory lending programs, and in a small way have begun to partner with other groups to wipe out this scourge. A creative, combined approach on the part of these agencies (mirroring our coordinated efforts in the community), would give our existing initiatives the additional impetus that it needs. This would maximize resources, and make it easier for residents to access services.

The Department of Homeless Services needs to spread out where the support of agencies for supportive/transitional housing is being placed and not have them concentrated in a few areas of this City, like Bedford Stuyvesant and Crown Heights, which has the largest number of such facilities, but throughout. Housing Bridge continues to place these types of homes very close together within our district. How many group/programmatic facilities are being placed in this community? By comparison, what is the ratio of similar facilities being placed within other areas throughout the five boroughs?

There is no domain in life that is not obliged to upgrade its relationship to the needs of CB#3 resident with disabilities and their families. This is particularly relevant to housing development. The need for more "accessible" affordable housing is a given. However, utilization of "universal design" practices which go beyond the concept of "barrier free" living is necessary to make living spaces accessible, safe, and practical for all residents. This will always remain crucial to Community Board 3.

## **LANDMARKS**

The goal of Community Board 3 is first to identify the historic properties throughout this community district and then to contact the residents and inform them of the value of having their properties landmarked. Homeowners are entitled to receive a grant to restore the property to its original architectural aesthetic beauty that has set this community apart from other areas around the City. Preserving the historical properties enhances our community, promotes economic growth and allows the homeowner to have a heightened sense of self-worth.

There are several areas within the community that are deserving of city landmark status. The Community Board does all it can to preserve the historic housing stock for future generations. We continue to educate home owners regarding the benefits of going through landmark process; increasing your property value and elevating the values in your community. As an advocate, Community Board 3 would like to see programs and

additional funding put in place that would allow property/home owners to become aware of the wonderful inheritance they have as the people of Bedford-Stuyvesant.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION**

We commend the Parks Department for the intense schedule of events taking place in our City Parks. The residents can come out of their homes in the evenings and go to the park to relax and enjoy a cultural event or some dancing, a concert and watching our children showcase their talent.

With the renovation of our facilities, like Brevoort Park, made possible with the thoughtfulness of Councilmember Darlene Mealy, the beginning of Pulaski Park renovations and now the completion of the entire area, due to the contribution of Councilmember Al Vann, our parks are becoming something to shout about. Marcy Playground is also under construction and the second phase will renovate the rest of the park area. We are certainly thankful to our elected officials for all that they are doing.

With the increased usage of the parks and playgrounds around the district, there needs to be bathrooms made available. If the comfort stations are not operable at the time, perhaps porta-potties can be made available until the comfort stations can be brought back online.

The Sumner Armory continues to be high on our list of priorities of a facility that will enhance our community once redevelopment as a public facility can begin which can include an indoor track, tennis, basketball, volleyball, racquetball, and paddleball courts, a bowling alley, swimming pool and a roller skating rink. The development of the Sumner Armory for community use would consolidate diverse and needed community facilities into one of Community Board No. 3's most regarded historic buildings.

We still recommend enclosing Marcy Pool and creating other recreational and sports facilities within the new enclosure. The remodeling should lead to a facility that complements the remodeled Bedford Y and rival the well-used St. John's Pool. The new facility could encompass a track, fitness center, racquet ball, tennis courts and/or basketball courts. In addition, the site should be explored for additional building construction to provide multi-purpose community use, such as workshop rooms for youth and senior programs.

To maximize the pleasure of spending leisure time in our parks and playgrounds, it is imperative that animal waste be cleaned up by the individual walking and exercising the dog. Enforcement regarding this issue is crucial for the cleanliness of our city's parks.

Our parks continued to be plagued with dumping. Construction debris and other manner of rubbish is being dumped more often in our green spaces and other public areas. With additional Park Police, undercover to catch the perpetrators, this problem can be combated. In addition, with staff shortages in the parks, there is an increase in the trash level due to more and more people availing themselves of our wonderful parks.

The Tree Pruning Cycle really needs to be looked at again. The weather conditions being so temperate, we can only expect optimum growth of our trees and plants. A seven year cycle is too long.

In addition to this, the older trees that are in place are destroying the sidewalks, curbs and buckling the roadbeds. We would like to see parks begin an intensive program of root slicing so that the damage caused by trees in the community will not be a financial hardship to the property owners. These economic times call for a better effort on the part of our City in relationship to the proud property owners and their tenants.

## **POLICE**

The New York City Police Department works tirelessly to keep our community safe. Each time an area becomes blighted with crime, the precincts flood the areas with officers and equipment when it is available. The problem is that the availability of manpower and equipment can really only concentrate on one and/or a small area at a time. If there is an impact unit in the Fulton/Nostrand corridor, then the crime is committed further in the eastern sections of Bedford Stuyvesant, etc. Whatever the area of police concentration is, the criminal element moves to another area. For the residents of this community, it seems that the criminal element can manipulate the department to suit their particular needs for a particular time.

We continue to strive for a crime free community, yet there are more and more shootings. Guns continue to pour into this community. What is the true extent of the illegal fire arms initiative? The gun problem within NYCHA is quite prevalent. How do we combat that? Shootings take place and the perpetrators run into the NYCHA developments and disappear. Gun suppressions programs are a prime objective of the Police Department and it is certainly not evident on these streets. Gun shots are heard, squad cars are rushing from one incident to another all night. These infractions are no longer committed under the cover of darkness but anytime during the day; in the mornings while residents are on their way to work or school; during the early afternoon when children are being dismissed from school. In parks where people of all ages are there to enjoy recreational time, gun shots can ring out. We must take an even greater stance to remove guns from the streets.

We need additional mobile command posts throughout the district and at least an additional Skywatch for the Bedford-Stuyvesant Community. The sector cars in our two precincts need to be replaced and/or at least overhauled. Each precinct command, regardless of where it is deserves to have decent sector cars and not have to depend on borrowing from other precincts.

School children are being accosted as they leave their schools. We are much in need of safe passage programs for school districts 13 and 16, which cover the Bedford-Stuyvesant community.

Mistrust of our enforcement officers continues to be prevalent here in this community and creates its own range of problems. Even with Commissioner Kelly's mandate for implementing programs to foster better police-community relations, there is no real impact on the reality of our neighborhood. New recruits do not understand the culture of the people of this community and misunderstandings commonly occur between the police and the residents. As a community board, we are ready to work with the local administration in order to make certain that officers gain a clearer, more positive view of who we are.

The Gang Unit appears to operate in a reactive mode, which leaves it to citizens who are

justifiable afraid, to report crimes perpetrated by gangs. The Crips and the Bloods still rule areas of the community, and we are now faced with the horror of gang members as young as 12 and 13 years old. These children are assaulting and harassing residents at subway stops, in our parks (Fulton, in particular), and as they walk home from work. It goes without saying that where there are firearms, we should realize that there are drugs, robberies, and other crimes being committed. We need to find out how gangs have so easily infiltrated our community, schools and recreational spaces and put a deterrent in place to avoid that behavior. Our precincts should be actively recruiting more blocks to participate in the Block Watchers Program. Beef up our police-community relations initiatives so that they are relevant to the officers and residents. We can truly help each other.

## **SAFETY/EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

By all accounts, we will eventually experience a major hurricane hitting the New York Metropolitan area. We need an Emergency Preparedness strategy designed for the uniqueness of the Bedford-Stuyvesant community. While it is true, we are not a coastal community, our sewer system and catch basins are not equipped to handle the deluge and inundation of rising water in our streets.

It is crucial to know and organize health care providers and first responders, as well as, CBOs equipped with the necessary information and skills in case of emergencies. We should be aware of appropriate shelter provisions and strategic locations that people can be directed to in the event there is a need. Educational tools need to be disseminated more readily throughout the neighborhood to allow residents to know that terrorist's attacks are not the only emergencies. We see that as a pressing need, in the event of natural disasters as well as impending terrorist attacks.

We are just beginning to explore all of the ramifications of establishing such a system, and there is a need for assistance in that development. City, state, and federal agencies all have resources and plans that would be of value. There should be a major recruitment drive to train CERT teams throughout all communities, particularly within the confines of the community based organizations.

## **SANITATION**

Once again, Community Board 3 is without the preliminary construction costs for our own sanitation garage. We learned recently that the initial construction will not begin because the plans are no longer funded. It is imperative that the funding be reinstated for construction costs of a sanitation garage within the boundaries of Bedford-Stuyvesant. Our temporary garage was located in Community Board 1, now it has been situated in Community Board 4, a greater distance from the area BK3 services. Community Board 4 asked for their garage in 1984 and it is now built, we began our request in 1980 and still it cannot be seen, even on the horizon. How long will it be before Community Board 4 is complaining about our sanitation facility being in their neighborhood? The weather last winter was not bad, so, it remains to be seen, how well the transplanted garage can respond to the community during periods of inclement weather. The greater distance will create a further hardship on the salt spreaders and the distance they will need to cover, as well as the rapidity in refuse removal time on sidewalks.

Sanitation Enforcement officers and Sanitation police need to be in place to ensure compliance with littering and dumping regulations which have really gotten out of hand in and around vacant lots and in the front yards of vacant buildings, on corners at litter baskets, beside commercial establishments, even on the side of corner properties. We need increased personnel both undercover and uniformed out here onsite at the times (early morning hours and late at night) when the violations are taking place. Our catch basins are being blocked due to the volume of litter that gathers at the corners after being washed off the sidewalks down into the street during heavy rains. The smell is unbearable and it creates flooding at the street corners. If they were swept clean on a regular schedule, this would be prevented.

We need timely printed materials sent out to the community well in advance noting schedule changes prior to the changes taking place. Finally, with so many new pet owning residents in the community, there needs to be more curb and clean-up after your dog signage printed and strategically placed throughout the community. Violators should be appropriately given enforceable summonses. The decision to eliminate the division that manufactured and printed these signs needs to be reevaluated by the Department of Sanitation.

## **SENIORS**

The senior population of Community Board 3 continues to be a major concern. Seniors are being displaced because they can no longer afford to age in place. We need to have guaranteed steps to keep the people that helped build this community right here. They are unable to afford the rents or are unable to get into the senior housing in their very own neighborhood. Some of our golden residents cannot procure housing because they have too much income while others do not have enough. Some of our aged neighbors are ill and/or disabled and need some sort of assisted living facility within the confines of Bedford-Stuyvesant. It is a travesty to have to move the seniors out of the neighborhood they have lived in their entire adult life, raised their children and grandchildren in. Not only are they struggling with placement, but also with being preyed upon by unscrupulous entities trying to take away their property and holdings.

We need funding to create a facility sponsored by HUD and DFTA that will allow our seniors to age in place safely. Perhaps an incentive can be put in place for a developer to create the building and then DFTA can be its sponsoring agent.

However, our elders need our assistance. There is an increasing percentage of senior citizens living in poverty and we need to concretized supportive services targeted specifically for them. These would include Medicaid, SSI, Food Stamps, home delivered meals and the ever crucial housing subsidies.

Information is the key to better informed decisions. Definitive strategic well thought out plans should be instituted to ensure that our older Americans receive pertinent information. This does not have to only fall on the municipalities but with appropriate training the responsibility can be shared with community-based, faith-based, religious institutions, block associations and other community entities to advocate on behalf of the elderly. Keep the advocates abreast of new and beneficial legislation that will impact the quality of life for our seniors.



The Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption Unit must continue to be in place for our older citizens. The price of rent has sky-rocketed and those seniors that do not own their homes are at an impasse as to how to afford to continue living in their rental property. Income eligibility needs to be re-vamped, so more elderly are qualified to age in place without fear of increases that will force them have to seek shelter elsewhere. The seniors deserve the opportunity to remain in the community they have built, love, have friends in and raised their children.

With predatory practices and tax liens that are not only based on property taxes but the ever increasing water bills, our senior population is being displaced. As a basic quality of life issue, older New Yorkers should be allowed to remain living in their homes and communities. To be surrounded by people places and things that are familiar promotes better health.

Protective services need to be provided in order to safeguard seniors against crime and abuse. There should be training for all municipalities to recognize when the elderly have been victimized, sometimes even by their families. Assist with fuel and utility costs with programs such as HEAP and Weatherization.

Another crucial matter when considering the elderly is making sure that our public, private and recreational spaces are senior friendly. They should be able to continue to go out and enjoy this city without worry that they cannot use the stairs, (i.e., subways), getting in public spaces and places like the theatres, restaurants, houses of worship and the like.

## **SOCIAL SERVICES**

Our Community continues to have an influx of transitional housing. The programs that are under the purview of the Department for Homeless Services, are monitored, however, the bulk of what is coming into the community is privately run. The result of this is that there are houses that shelter mentally disturbed people, sexual offenders, substance abusers, victims of domestic violence and the like that require assistance to fit into the community. Complaints about the people populating those entities are becoming standard. Some of the transplanted residents are verbally abusive and/or just plain intimidating. People have complained about some of the people actually doing illegal substances in public. Any such facility should be equipped with the appropriate supportive services. Surely, there is something that can be done to monitor this. Upon inquiry, we are told that they are not part of the City's system, but perhaps they are state or federal. Without appropriate support, there are negative behaviors that affect the quality of life for all of the residents living in the vicinity. There should be personnel onsite to make sure that all such facilities are appropriately monitored for the residents of the facility as well as the community at large. The exploitive practices need to be curtailed.

With the Bedford Shelter becoming an intake center, there will be even more people roaming the streets with nowhere to go. Even though the Bedford Shelter is not in this community board, it is seated right across the street. There is no transportation for the clients to use in CB8, so they must come through CB3. When decisions are being made that will ultimately impact a community, the tax payers of that area should be involved in the decision making process.

There are established entities like Housing Bridge that are part of the DHS system and they keep placing these transitional/supportive houses within a few blocks of each other here in Bedford-Stuyvesant. How much are we suppose to absorb? Outside of the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, we are the most popular for three-quarter/supportive housing. This City has five boroughs, not just one. Why not spread this throughout the City and not centralize a social problem in one small area.

Additionally, it would be beneficial if all sheltering programs in the community be listed and given to organizations like the community board so that we may also have appropriate information that will allow us to allay the fears of the surrounding community. If these facilities are known, the community will also be able to be supportive to the residents and make sure that everyone has a suitable quality of life.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

In this present climate of expansion and increased density, Community Board 3 has had to really project the future needs of the Bedford-Stuyvesant community. It is obvious that the current status of our district, beginning with infrastructure issues, roadways, vehicular, bicycle, pedestrian traffic, parking and public transportation are not going to accommodate our new ever expanding neighborhood.

Community Board 3 has had Nostrand Avenue in our budget for two decades. It was believed that work would have begun since 2006. We have now been included in the 2011 budget. The Nostrand Avenue roadbed is in such a state of disrepair that it is actually hazardous for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists as well. Nostrand Avenue traverses from North to South, Flushing Avenue to Atlantic Avenue the entire width of CD3.

As our community continues to be developed for affordable housing and economic growth, numerous residents, visitors and others will be utilizing Nostrand Avenue for travel. It is imperative that the reconstruction of Nostrand Avenue (HWK1129) move forward immediately.

Throughout the Bedford–Stuyvesant Community there are secondary streets that may not need infrastructure work, but definitely should be resurfaced. Our streets are continuously being dug up by cable and communications companies, utilities and the like. Once the job is done, these agencies do not repair the roadbed back the way it was prior to their working in the area. The patching of the spots where they needed to excavate is just lightly covered and soon sinks, creating potholes and depressions. With the onset of the winter months, that problem is exacerbated even further due to icing conditions, snow removal and salt residue. Each year, these problems continue to grow. Now we have streets that are tenting, water is deeply pooling in areas, the streets are sinking and have been the cause of accidents where vehicles are veering to avoid a depression, pothole or cave-in. Some of the streets that need resurfacing are Quincy Street, MacDonough Street, portions of Decatur Street, Halsey Street, Park Avenue, Gates Avenue and more. Our need is that when work is done on a city street, city inspectors go out when the work is completed to see that the road surface has been put back to its original state.

The Mayor's plans for the Bus Rapid Transit System (BRT) are well on the way. The B-44 bus route has been chosen as this community's express route, since Nostrand Avenue

spans the borough of Brooklyn. The roll-out in Brooklyn is tentatively scheduled for Fall 2011. The Gateway Streetscape, the Reconstruction of Nostrand Avenue, the Gateway Business Improvement District and BRT need to work collaboratively to maximize their efforts rather than become destructive forces for the work that will be accomplished. The municipalities that need to formulate this collaborative effort are MTA, DOT, and EDC

Another critical problem with our roadways is that there is no consistent enforcement for big rigs that do not respect the truck routes but continually use the residential streets. These streets are not constructed to handle such heavy vehicles and they ruin the road-bed, not to mention the vibrations from these heavy vehicles also compromise the foundation of our historical building stock. Over time, this creates an structural damage issues for the property owners.

To accommodate the growing population within the borders of Community District 3, we have taken a look at the traffic signals along Fulton Street. Our study indicates that we need a left turn signal from Fulton Street to Albany Avenue, a turn signal from Fulton Street to Ralph Avenue, and a left turn signal from Fulton Street to Schenectady Avenue. This will help pedestrian crossings and prevent collisions at these intersections. In addition, the synchronization of the traffic signals for pedestrians crossing Atlantic Avenue needs to be extended to afford our seniors and physically challenged time to completely cross the expanse of this street. It is quite intimidating for the elderly, et al to be caught in the middle.

For some years, we have been requesting an elevator at the Utica Avenue Station. It is a major transportation hub with two buses (B-25 and B-46), the "A" and "C" subway lines coming together at Fulton Street and Utica Avenue. The station is extremely deep, and presents a hardship for the physically challenged and the elderly. This is a major priority, and we would funding, planning, and implementation in the very near future. We would also like to revisit the placement of street furniture/bus shelters within the community district.

Lewis Avenue held a Farmer's Market between Decatur and McDonough Streets. Initially, it was a nice addition to the neighborhood but the market has not come back to Lewis Avenue for the past two years. It used to be active during the months of July through October however, that has not happen yet again this year. The Farmer's Market on Malcolm X Boulevard is thriving nicely. If there is not going to be a Farmer's Market, the community would like to have the signs taken down in order to provide parking to the residents in the area.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Every community is measured by its economic development and growth. Community District 3 is no different. There are portions of this community that are severely underserved and we would like to rectify that problem. As Brooklyn becomes more diverse, denser and prosperous, Bedford-Stuyvesant is determined to be counted in the number. It is critical that the impact of any proposed changes address the current conditions and needs of that community.

Our brownstone houses have become a much sought after commodity and as we stretch to accommodate our growth, the entire catchments area of Bedford-Stuyvesant must be included. In the south eastern quadrant of Bedford-Stuyvesant, there are needs that

must be met. The area is without decent commercial amenities such as a supermarket, bank, recreational area for youth, sit-down eateries, card shops and the list goes on.

There is a parcel of land on Atlantic Avenue which is Block 1557, lot #s 3,4,23,26,28 & 31-37 totaling 25,616 square feet. Granted, this parcel is not particularly large, however, it is perfect for a residential community to benefit from. If utilized appropriately, this parcel can provide affordable housing, much needed commercial and/or recreational space, not to mention employment opportunities.

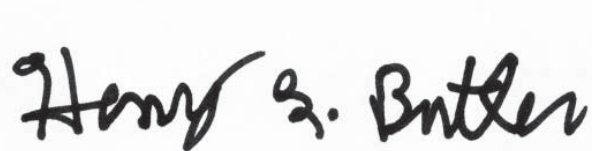
Community Board 3 is a member of CIBS, and fully supports this outstanding opportunity for community growth. One of our roles over the next two years will be to help with the sustainability of these pilot programs after funding has decreased.

## CONCLUSION

The most effective way to foster a healthy, clean, prosperous City is to partner with its citizens. By including Community Board 3 as plans are being decided for this neighborhood, you will have the opportunity of sampling the opinions and needs of a representation of this great neighborhood. This is how we will be able to meet the needs and satisfy the beat that is Bedford-Stuyvesant. The residents of this wonderful historic community are a proud and ingenious people. We continue to lobby the City not to discount us but to defend our quality of life and the very contextual underpinning that has made Community Board No. 3 such a highly sought after place to be.

It is wonderful watching a plan come together. Community Board No. 3 continues to be excited as plaNYC2030 slowly unveils itself. Constructive change that encompasses all of the City's inhabitants is truly beautiful. Our community has gotten onboard and eagerly awaits each opportunity to witness history in the making. The greening of our city with its eco-friendly theme is not only healthy for the earth and her inhabitants but beautiful to look at. Together with the planners of this City, we look forward to orchestrating the most magnificent Bedford-Stuyvesant ever.

Respectfully submitted,



Chairperson



District Manager