



COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 11

*Serving Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston,
Hollis Hills, Little Neck & Oakland Gardens*

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STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS

FY 2011

Community Board 11, located in Northeast Queens is bounded by Nassau County on the east; Little Neck Bay and 26 Avenue on the north; Utopia Parkway and Fresh Meadows Lane and 210 Street on the west and the Grand Central Parkway and Horace Harding Expressway on the south. The District is comprised of the neighborhoods of Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston, Hollis Hills, Little Neck and Oakland Gardens. These neighborhoods are residential in zoning and character with the major portion of the District comprised of 1, 2 and 3 family houses and several cooperative and condominium apartment complexes, developed 50-60 years ago and a scattering of rental apartment buildings. Douglas Manor and Douglaston Hill are landmarked communities within Board 11. The shopping needs of the residents are met by the commercial strips, all of which are C1 and C2 zoning overlays in residential districts. Community Board 11 is an upper middle income community of approximately 118,000 residents. The District remains a culturally and ethnically diverse community. Approximately 39% of the population is now foreign born, the majority (32%) of which is Asian.

The District is known for its approximately 775 acres of parkland. Alley Park, which is a large regional park, has areas under Federal and State tidal and fresh water wetland protection, as does Udall's Cove in Little Neck. The shoreline in Bayside is part of the Greenway system and supports a marina for recreational boating and fishing and a bicycle and jogging path. Adjacent to this shoreline is Crocheron Park and John Golden Park which have large open spaces with ball fields, playgrounds and tennis courts. Part of Cunningham Park is in CB11 including the historic Vanderbilt Motor Parkway. Additionally, there are smaller parks and playgrounds, a golf course and numerous Greenstreets throughout the district. Oakland Lake is a natural spring fed lake and hosts a large population of turtles, geese and ducks. The Alley Pond Environmental Center, located at the base of Little Neck Bay, is an education center focusing on the preservation of the wetlands areas.

All public transportation is provided by bus lines, from the district, terminating at the Flushing and Jamaica subway lines and the Port Washington branch of the Long Island Railroad, both of which are used primarily as commuter transportation to Manhattan. Residents look forward to the planned addition of a LIRR station on the east side of Manhattan at Grand Central Terminal.

BUILDING AND ZONING

The Department of City Planning (DCP) rezoned 350 blocks of Bayside in 2004, 135 blocks of Douglaston and Little Neck in 2006, 50 blocks of North Flushing/Auburndale in 2009 and plans have been drafted for the remaining areas of Auburndale and Hollis Hills and Oakland Gardens. The goal of rezoning is to curtail overdevelopment and maintain the low density nature of the district. New zoning designations were also introduced for single family homes, R2A and R1-2A, to limit the size of the homes.

The Buildings Department has added more inspectors and plan examiners resulting in an increase of prompt responses to complaints. Owners must be held responsible when they circumvent the law and work without obtaining a permit or build beyond the scope of the zoning regulations. DOB has increased the cost of many types of fines; higher fines should help to be a deterrent. The Commissioner must have the authority to refuse new permits to those owners with outstanding violations and fines. The frustration of “no access” reports in illegal conversion and occupancy complaints continue to upset residents. Access warrants are difficult to obtain and the complainants feel that nothing is being done to stop illegal conditions. Unfortunately, in many cases this may be true but balancing private property rights with government enforcement continues to be a dilemma.

Economic Development:

Bell Boulevard, between Northern Boulevard and 35 Avenue, is a Business Improvement District (BID). The BID will help fund improvements along the Bell Boulevard commercial strip. Bell Boulevard increasingly has more restaurants and bars and less and less small retail stores due to high rents and competition with large discount stores. This is a concern here as well as in parts of Douglaston.

Leviton, a large manufacturer and distributor of electrical supplies has vacated their offices on Little Neck Parkway, CB 11's only M1-1 zone, and we are waiting for information on its future use.

More commercial buildings have been developed along Northern Boulevard unfortunately; due to the economic downturn many of the spaces remain empty.

EDUCATION AND YOUTH:

This school year approximately 16,500 students are enrolled in School District 26 in its 19 public elementary and secondary schools located in CB11. There are three high schools in the district; Bayside, Benjamin Cardozo and Francis Lewis High School with a total population of approximately 12,000 students. The population in all three high schools has increased greatly with utilization rates at 151%, 138% and 170% respectively. With students housed in buildings meant for half the number, the already overutilized schools have become dangerously overcrowded. Both Cardozo HS and Bayside HS have transportable classrooms, but permanent building space should be added to the school or space leased to relieve overcrowding. We have brought this concern to the attention of the Chancellor.

Queensborough Community College, located in Bayside, continues to grow and be a premier community college with recently upgraded computer and science classrooms, an art museum and the construction of the Kupferberg Holocaust Center.

The Beacon Programs at Middle School 158 and Middle School 172 operated by the Samuel Field “Y” continue to be successful serving the youth and community groups of our district. Additionally, Out of School Time Programs operate at four schools and City Council funds have helped

provide programming at four other locations. There are several sports groups run by volunteers that are funded privately and, in some cases, with support from our local officials.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The Alley Creek Drainage project, which has been a Board priority since 1972, is in the final stages. The project is now concentrated on the south side of Northern Boulevard with the reconstruction of the pumping station that will bring combined sewer overflows to the Tallman Island water treatment plant. A wetland mitigation, known as Phase III, for the Oakland Ravine Area and Oakland Lake by the Department of Environmental Protection with the Department of Parks and Recreation has been contracted and we are awaiting a start date for the project.

Street cave-ins and depressions account for one of the most frequent service complaints to DEP. We are pleased that several trench restoration projects have been completed. The time frame from identification of necessary projects and design and funding takes an excessive number of years.

Throughout the remainder of the District, there are areas of intersection flooding. Catch basin problems always account for one of the highest number of service complaints to DEP from our district. Repairs are backlogged often over a year from the time of complaint to repair. Broken and sinking catch basins pose a hazardous condition at corners. More funds and personnel are needed for regular catch basin cleaning and for repair. It is important that catch basin and sewer installation projects be ongoing in cases of flooding conditions. The district has many seepage basins which fail over time. The only solution is the funding of combined sewer projects. There are five projects in design for combined sewers and sanitary sewer installation. Funding for these projects cannot be delayed.

A major concern is the poor storm water drainage on 223rd Street between 37th Avenue and 42nd Avenue. Presently, storm water runs along a ditch along the eastern edge of 223rd Street. This project will require joint planning with Department of Transportation since capital reconstruction of the street is necessary. It is now in the planning stages.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

CB 11 has requested in our budget priorities that all fire houses have their own generator for emergency situations and CPR kits. As emergency responders these two items are a necessity.

HEALTH

This past winter for the third time, Board 11 sponsored a flu vaccine clinic with St. Mary's Hospital and the NYC Department of Health. It was very successful and we were able to vaccinate 125 people. We look forward to providing this service in the fall of 2009. With the swine flu epidemic this past spring we are most anxious to do our part to help keep residents vaccinated against flu.

Last summer mosquitoes were a big problem in the District. The DOH sprayed the Alley Pond Marsh areas, again this year, with pesticides to prevent West Nile virus. Catch basins through out the city were treated with larvacides.

LIBRARIES

A new library building or expansion is a necessity for the Little Neck/Douglaston Library. Its space is inadequate to meet the needs of the residents. We are working with the Little Neck Pines

Civic Association, Friends of the Library and the Douglaston Women's Club to garner support and funding from the Queens Public Library System, the Mayor and our local legislators. When asked this past year by our Congressional representatives for possible projects for the Federal Stimulus funds we included the request for the library. The circulation in this library with only 5,700 sq. ft. of space is far greater than other libraries half the size.

PARKS & RECREATION

It is imperative that the Queens Forestry Division be funded at a greater level for street and park tree pruning and maintenance. Forestry complaints account for the greatest number of 3-1-1 calls from our district residents. The new pruning cycle was reduced to seven years but now due to budget reductions the cycle will increase again. However, the City is planting more trees under the Million Trees NYC project and, therefore, a concern about the ability to prune the existing and additional trees exist. Public safety is being compromised by ignoring hazards caused by trees when not pruned regularly. The Parks Department still has an enormous backlog of stumps to be removed; approximately 1000 in CB11 alone.

Tree roots account for the lifting and destruction of many sidewalks. The Tree and Sidewalk program is the answer for many homeowners; however, it needs to be funded at a higher level to meet the need. The Mayor has dedicated some of the Federal Stimulus money to this program.

The Parks Department needs funding in order to improve the walkways around Oakland Lake that are always wet due to the natural spring source that feeds the lake. The Borough President has provided some funds for the repair of a section of the walkway and reconstruction of stairways leading to the lake from Springfield Boulevard.

Several playgrounds adjacent to schools need various improvements: fences, safety surfaces and handball court rehabilitation including Francis Lewis Playground and Seven Gables Playground. The Challenge Playground at PS 177 needs more extensive work, including the removal of an old wading pool and plumbing work. Ball fields in Alley Pond Park, John Golden Park and Underhill Park need new turf. The Douglaston Golf Course is a beautiful public course. Unfortunately, the residents across the street are not happy with the errant golf balls that hit their property. Funding is needed to install tall fence netting. We also continue to support funding for a new Alley Pond Environmental Center building which was damaged during the Alley Creek project. This wonderful center educates numerous school children and adults throughout the year. The building needs to expand to accommodate the programs they sponsor.

This park district has insufficient personnel and vehicles to clean and maintain our parks. With over 775 acres of park and Greenstreets, more park workers are needed to just maintain Alley Pond Park and additional staff is needed for playground and Greenstreet maintenance.

The acquisition of designated lots in Alley Park and Udalls Cove Ravine continue to take place. There are still eight more lots that need to be acquired because of the potential for development. Therefore, the City must continue to dedicate funds for further acquisition

POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

The 111th Precinct, which is located on Northern Boulevard in Bayside, patrols the 9.4 miles of Community Board 11. This precinct has seen a decrease in crime and is a safe, low crime area. However, burglaries of private residential homes and auto thefts remain the predominant and troubling crime statistic in the precinct. Youth on youth crime has had a slight increase, especially the steal-

ing of expensive electronic devices and cell phones. There is a concern with the alarming increase in graffiti, since the Police Department states that this often leads to future criminal activity. The precinct is actively working on enforcement, eradication and education to combat this quality of life crime.

We are pleased that there was a slight increase in the number of officers this year. The interior of the precinct house is showing its age and is in desperate need of renovation and remodeling. Money has been in the budget for renovations of the front desk but the work has not started. We also support funding for the replacement of aged out vehicles.

SANITATION

CB11 continues to be among the top rated Community Boards in the borough for cleanliness. However, in order to maintain the good record, we must have a dedicated litter basket crew six days a week. This year due to budget cuts that number is in jeopardy. CB11 receives three day a week broom crews in our commercial areas. There are no regular broom services in residential areas and we need sweeping in these areas also, particularly in the autumn, with the falling of leaves from street trees. The Board urges DOS to maintain broom service at least three times a week and provide brooms for residential areas also.

Our District contains several miles of street malls and triangles which need to be cleared of weeds and litter during the summer and autumn months. Weeds interfere with visibility and they must be cleared regularly.

SENIORS AND AGING

The 2006 American Community Survey indicated that there are almost 18,000 seniors aged 65 or over representing about 16% of the population living in Community Board 11. The district has the second highest median age in the City, 41.6. Although there has been a decrease in population of 60-75 year range since the 2000 census, there is an increase in seniors over 75 years of age. Senior programs and services must be available to a senior population with possibly greater needs. As the baby boom era population continues to age, the City must be prepared to meet the needs. The Bay-side Senior Center is the only major senior center in our district, funded by the Dept. of the Aging. The Samuel Field YM-YWHA operates the C.A.P.E. program for homebound seniors and Alzheimer patients and their families. The "Y" also has a small senior leisure center and runs the Deepdale NORC (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community) senior program. This year S.N.A.P., Services Now for Adult Persons has the contract with DFTA for case management in CB 11.

TRANSPORTATION

Curb repair and replacement must be funded. Curbs are deteriorating and causing trip hazards. Curbs provide a course for rain water runoff. Without curbs, areas adjacent to the street wash away. The only curbs that have been installed are in conjunction with sidewalk projects. Center island malls on Union Turnpike and on 42 Avenue desperately need curbs. Metal rebar sticks out of the curbs on Union Turnpike causing a serious safety hazard. This is an item we forwarded to our Federal and State representatives for inclusion in Federal Stimulus package money for transportation.

In Douglas Manor, a capital project, in conjunction with the Department of Environmental Protection, is urgently needed to reconstruct a section of Shore Road that is collapsing. It is currently in the ten year plan.

In the southern area of Douglaston, sidewalks are needed on Commonwealth Boulevard just north of the Grand Central Parkway especially for students walking to and from the Glen Oaks Campus schools.

CB11 has asked repeatedly for the reconstruction of the streets between Francis Lewis Boulevard and the Clearview Expressway and between Northern Boulevard and 48th Avenue. While DOT has acknowledged the need, they consistently do not fund the project. We urge DOT to make this a priority in FY 2011.

State Senator Frank Padavan secured funds to create a “Quiet Zone” at the Little Neck LIRR station, a request made by this Board on behalf of the residents who live near the station. MTA/LIRR and NYCDOT are working together on this project. We have asked DOT to commit some of these funds along with other funds from Congressman Gary Ackerman, to reconstruct the parking lot at the station to make it safer for pedestrians and drivers. The project is in design and scheduled to be constructed next year.

Traffic has become a serious problem. There are more cars and trucks on our roads. With increased building development and with an ever increasing population, neighborhoods are starting to experience more local traffic congestion. We receive many requests for various traffic safety measures, stop signs, speed humps, traffic signals etc. NYC DOT should look at creative traffic calming methods. We are pleased to see that the “Strategic Plan for DOT -2008 and Beyond” looks at more of these initiatives. We look forward to the improvements that the Truck Traffic Study has recommended to improve signage, develop new routes and educate truckers on the City regulations.

Our commercial areas are underserved with available parking. The most severe condition exists in the area of Bell Boulevard and the LIRR station. Commuters and shoppers compete for very limited muni-meter parking and greatly impose on the adjacent residential streets for parking. The new Business Improvement District (BID) will be working on this matter with DOT to find solutions. The City must provide assistance to northeast Queens to develop parking areas. The areas of Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston and Little Neck adjacent to the Long Island Railroad stations are also congested during commuting hours and parking is at a premium.

CB11 has advocated for more express bus service, limited stop service, additional buses to the LIRR stations and Park and Ride lots at Shea Stadium and Aqueduct Race Track.

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