



COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 11

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

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STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS **FY 2008**

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 Meadow 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 garden apartment complexes, developed 50-60 years ago. Douglas Manor and Douglaston Hill are land-marked 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.

The District is an upper middle income community of approximately 116,400 residents representing a population increase of 7.7% since the 1990 census. The District remains a culturally and ethnically diverse community. According to the 2000 census, 35.9% of the population is now foreign born, the majority of which are Asian.

This school year approximately 16,500 students are enrolled in School District 26 in its 19 public elementary and secondary schools located in CB 11. There are three high schools in the district with a total population of approximately 12,000 students. Queensborough Community College, located in Bayside, continues to grow and be a premier community college.

2000 Census figures indicate that there are almost 20,000 seniors aged 65 or over representing 17.2% of the population living in Community Board 11. Although there has been a decrease in population of 60-75 year range, there is an increase in seniors over 75 years of age. Senior programs and services in this District must be available to a senior population with possibly greater needs. Affordable senior housing is lacking here as elsewhere in the City. As the baby boom era population continues to age, the City must be prepared to meet the needs. There is only one major senior center in our District and a few small senior clubs within other community centers. With one of the largest senior populations in Queens, there is a concern that our seniors are not adequately served.

The District is known for its approximately 850 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 sup-

ports 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, tennis courts and a concert area. Additionally there are smaller green parks and playgrounds, a golf course and numerous green streets throughout the district. The preservation and maintenance of these natural areas has been a priority of this Board for years.

All public transportation is provided by bus lines 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. The areas of Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston and Little Neck adjacent to the Long Island Railroad stations are congested during commuting hours and parking is at a premium. With increased building development and with an ever increasing population, neighborhoods are starting to experience more local traffic congestion.

BUILDING AND ZONING:

Virtually the whole district has or will be undergoing major zoning changes over the past 18 months in response to complaints by residents that developers were changing the low density character of the area through demolition and new construction. The Department of City Planning (DCP) studied and rezoned 350 blocks of Bayside where a new citywide R-2A zone was created to limit the development of "McMansions", oversized single family homes that are out of character with the surrounding neighborhood. The R-2A zone for single family homes limits floor area and provides new height limits. This zone has now been adopted in other areas throughout the City. 135 blocks of Douglaston and Little Neck are in the process of being rezoned to preserve its low density areas. Additionally, DCP will apply for the rezoning of Hollis Hills and Oakland Gardens later this year. We are waiting for the study for the rezoning of Auburndale to be completed and we urge DCP to move swiftly so that further development will be controlled.

The Self-Certification application process at the Buildings Department continues to be a problem. 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 needs more personnel to audit and monitor plans to ensure that builders are complying with the Zoning Amendment and the Building Code. The Commissioner should not allow permits to be given to contractors who flagrantly defy the law and owe fines and penalties to the City for past violations. We support City Council legislation that would correct these abuses. Queens has finally received additional inspectors and the backlog of complaints is being addressed. 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. Greater cooperation through a multi-agency task force comprised of the Department of Buildings, the Fire Department and Police Department personnel would help with illegal conversion and illegal building enforcement.

EDUCATION AND YOUTH:

There are three high schools in CB 11, Bayside, Cardozo and Francis Lewis High School. The populations in all three schools have increased greatly with the utilization rates at 151%, 138% and 170% respectively. With students housed in buildings meant for half the number, the already over-utilized schools have become dangerously overcrowded. Despite the addition of transportable

classrooms a few years ago to Cardozo, permanent building space should be added to the school. The School Construction Authority is also investigating the placement of temporary classrooms at Bayside High School.

CB 11 passed a resolution this year urging the Department of Education to return P.S.130 to District 26's jurisdiction. Some years ago District 25 acquired the school, however, due to changing enrollment patterns, District 26 now needs space. The Region has agreed to include District 26 students into the lottery system established for admission to PS 130, however, this Board felt that they had not included a fair number of residents in our district. Our Education Committee has also asked the School Construction Authority and DOE to look at adding building space at existing local elementary schools as they have done in other areas throughout the city. Many of our schools are located on full city blocks and can spare some of it for building. Use, capacity and zoning must be revisited by DOE due to changing populations. DOE can also explore the leasing of unused classroom space in under-enrolled local parochial schools as a temporary short term solution to our severe overcrowded conditions.

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. There are several little league groups run by volunteers and are funded privately or with support from our local officials.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Poor drainage and flooding have been longstanding problems in our Community District area due to the natural landscape of the northern end of the district with hills, low lying areas and wetlands. The Alley Creek Drainage project has addressed one problem area in Bayside along Springfield Blvd. from 46 Avenue to 56 Avenue.

The Alley Creek Drainage project, which has been a Board priority since 1972, is in the final stages. The project is now concentrated north of Northern Boulevard with the installation of water retention units in Alley Creek. The wetland mitigation, known as Phase III, planned for the Oakland Ravine Area and Oakland Lake been modified. DEP and the Department of Parks and Recreation have agreed to a restoration plan that will not only improve drainage but enhance the beauty of the ravine and lake.

Throughout the remainder of the District there are areas of intersection flooding. Catch basin flooding complaints always account for the second 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 and the installation of new ones have been stalled as DEP has found that many seepage basins fail after a short time. We urge DEP to design new seepage basins as quickly as possible.

Street cave-ins and depressions account for the most frequent service complaint to DEP. We are pleased that some trench restoration projects are commencing or planned over the next few years. However, again more funds are needed as the wait for the commencement of these projects, once the need is determined, takes years.

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.

HEALTH:

The flu season in 2004-2005 brought our attention to the lack of public health services in the north-east section of Queens. With flu vaccine shortages, only the elderly and those with certain illnesses were able to receive the vaccine. However, if you were not affiliated with a senior center and did not get on a coveted list, your only option in this district was to go to the Corona or Jamaica Health Center, a long trip for an elderly person and a long wait on line. This past winter The Department of Health helped Board 11 sponsor a flu vaccine clinic with St. Mary's Hospital and Congressman Gary Ackerman. It was very successful and we were able to vaccinate 100 people. We look forward to providing this service again this year especially as we face threats of avian flu.

PARKS & RECREATION:

The acquisition of designated lots in the Alley Park and Udalls Cove Ravine continue to take place. Pressure to develop these lands from the owners and potential developers are increasing and therefore the City must continue to dedicate funds for acquisition.

Crocheron Park is in need of a complete rehabilitation. It is the second largest park in the District and is the link to one of only two pedestrian bridges over the Cross Island Parkway to the Bayside Marina and Joe Michael's Mile. The paths, benches, and gazebos need to be thoroughly restored, along with associated drainage work needed to restore the Crocheron Park Pond. The adjoining John Golden Park is in need of a new bathroom facility to accommodate the large number of park patrons. The Borough President has provided a portion of the funds needed this fiscal year.

This park district has insufficient personnel and vehicles to clean our parks. With over 850 acres of park and green streets, the two crews assigned to our district struggle to meet the demands. This year the State hands over the responsibility of maintenance of the new Alley Pond Park to the City. This will be a large additional park to maintain.

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 "311" calls from our district. The City Council this year did recognize this need and added additional funds. With the ten year cycle pruning contract coming to an end we are hopeful that these additional funds will provide for a contract better suited to meet the demands in our district with its great number of street trees. Public safety is being compromised by ignoring hazards caused by trees when not pruned regularly. Additionally, the Parks Department has an enormous backlog of stumps to be removed; in Queens, it numbers in the thousands.

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.

POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

The 111th Precinct, which is located on Northern Boulevard in Bayside, patrols 9.4 miles of Community Board 11. This precinct has seen a decrease in crime and is a safe, low crime area. How-

ever, burglaries of private residential homes remain the predominant and troubling crime statistic in the precinct. There is a concern with the alarming increase in graffiti crimes, since it is established 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. Robberies involving youth on youth theft of cellular phones and I-Pods has spiked here, as other electronic device thefts have increased citywide.

Another concern is the growing number of establishments that have liquor licenses. The Precinct is aggressively cracking down on owners of these establishments that serve to minors and violate other public safety ordinances.

The Commissioner is encouraging that Precinct Community Councils should exist in all precincts. The 111th has had an active council for years but they receive no funds and the fundraising they can do is insufficient. In the past the city has provided funds for councils and they should do so again. The Council has advocated more foot patrols and bicycle patrols. There is no money funded for bike repair and not enough officers are receiving the special training required. The precinct is in need of patrol cars, as they are often short of cars due to repairs that take an inordinate amount of time.

Presently, only the Sergeants and Lieutenants take cell phones out on patrol so that they may stay in contact with the desk. We believe that all patrol officers should be equipped with cellular phones.

This year the 111th Precinct house received some much needed work with the replacement of the roof. However, the interior of the building is in desperate need of renovation and remodeling. All precincts, as well as firehouses, should be equipped with generators in case of emergency power outages.

SANITATION:

CB 11 continues to be among the top three rated Community Boards in the borough for cleanliness. However, in order to maintain the good record we must have a dedicated litter basket crew seven days a week. The adopt-a-basket program is thriving in CB 11 and contributes to the high street cleanliness ratings the Board receives. CB 11 receives three day a week broom crews in our commercial area. In prior years broom cleaning was done periodically. There are no 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 the broom service at least three times a week and provide brooms for residential areas also.

Our District contains several miles of street malls 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. Public safety depends on good visibility at all intersections.

TRANSPORTATION:

Curb repair and replacement has been non existent, 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 Department's lack of interest in dedicating some of its budget to curb work is unacceptable. Funds must be dedicated for this purpose. Thanks to our State Assembly Member we have obtained funds for curb repair on malls only. The Union Turnpike center island is in desperate need of new curbs.

CB 11 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 2008.


In Douglaston a capital project, in conjunction with the Department of Environmental Protection, will be needed to reconstruct a section of Shore Road that is deteriorating and compromising safety.

Street maintenance, which includes repaving, the filling of potholes and small wear and tear emergency repairs, has not received the priority it needs. Usually there are only one or two crews to cover the vast number of streets in this borough. This is inadequate for proper maintenance.

Traffic has become a serious problem. There are more cars and trucks and everyone seems to drive faster and more aggressively. Safety concerns are growing. Many requests for traffic controls are denied and residents are frustrated. NYC DOT should look at creative traffic calming methods as illustrated by the advocacy group, "Transportation Alternatives", and used in other parts of the country. One area of concern now being addressed by DOT is truck traffic and its impact on communities. We look forward to the improvements the Truck Study has recommended. To improve signage, develop new routes and educate truckers on the City regulations.

Residents who live close to the Long Island Railroad at Little Neck approached the board this year for help to establish a "Quiet Zone". The federal government had initiated new rules regarding horn blowing requirements at grade crossings. In order to establish a "Quiet Zone" NYC DOT will have to install different gates in order to comply with the regulations. NYC DOT is working with our Federal and State officials to obtain funding for this project.

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. CB 11 has identified surplus LIRR property adjacent to the existing Municipal parking lot on 42nd Avenue and has obtained LIRR approval to further explore this matter. CB 11 urges DOT to approve the study and move forward with this expansion plan.



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