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## COMMUNITY BOARD No. 2, MANHATTAN

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Greenwich Village • Little Italy • SoHo • NoHo • Hudson Square • Chinatown • Gansevoort Market

# STATEMENT OF DISTRICT NEEDS Fiscal Year 2013

## **PREFACE**

Community Board 2 Manhattan (“CB2”) continues to be greatly concerned that the City has minimized the impact of the district’s rapid changes and has neglected to adequately respond to the need to increase the ancillary services that such changes require. During these years of exponential residential growth in NoHo, SoHo, Chinatown and our Hudson River waterfront, planners have not provided for the necessary amenities that make for a healthy and growing residential community, e.g., public schools, open space and parks, access to health care, affordable retail space, and general services such as sanitation, police and fire.

Each year, CB2 receives many applications for residential conversions and re-zonings. The complaints and requests that come to CB2 reflect the concerns of this new residential population. Our budget priorities for the past few years have continued to focus on servicing these new arrivals to the district, as well as our long-time residents. More specific assessments of services will be set forth throughout this Statement.

## **I. DISTRICT OVERVIEW**

### **A. Geography**

Community Board 2 is a diverse district, bounded on the north by 14th Street, the south by Canal Street, the east by the Bowery/Fourth Avenue, and the west by the Hudson River. It is a unique and rapidly expanding community that includes the vibrant neighborhoods of Little Italy, part of Chinatown, SoHo, NoHo, Greenwich Village, the West Village, Gansevoort Market, the South Village and Hudson Square.

### **B. Population**

The population in Community Board 2 increased in recent years, impacting the District in ways discussed throughout this Report. The Department of City Planning lists CB2 among the eleven highest areas of growth in the entire City through 2010.

We have five major universities - New York University, the New School, the Cooper Union, Hebrew Union College, and Cardozo Law School - that add a substantial non-permanent population to our neighborhoods. Several of these institutions are currently in the midst of expansion, with proposals to add many thousand more undergraduate residents to our district, along with additional full time faculty and classrooms that will increase the number of day visitors. While the students that join us every year are welcome, it is clear that the city needs to consider their numbers when looking to allocate services to District 2.

### **C. Income structure**

Much of the architecture and history of our district has been maintained by residents who are determined to preserve the middle class, live-work, merchant and artisan atmosphere of our neighborhoods, past and future, but socioeconomic patterns are changing drastically.

Median income for Districts 1 and 2 combined for the period 2007-2009 was \$104,305.

### **D. Housing**

In recent years, the median monthly rent in District 2 ascended to the highest in the City to \$1,691. Rental units that are rent-regulated are 54.6%, and more than 1,300 buildings are registered with rent-stabilized units. District 2's rank in severe overcrowding rate in rental unit conditions has been elevated from twenty-eight in the City to nineteen. We think that we are losing affordable housing stock, and fear that this will depress our middle class population, that is essential to a healthy, diverse community.

### **E. Tourism/Visitors**

Within the boundaries of Community District 2 are some of the most popular tourist attractions in New York City, with millions of tourists visiting the restaurants and cafes of Little Italy and Chinatown, the galleries and boutiques of SoHo, the jazz clubs and Off-Broadway theaters of Greenwich Village, as well as burgeoning nightlife, night club and cabaret spots of the entire area. A weekend evening stroll through the Meatpacking and waterfront districts in the west, along West 4th Street and Bleecker St. toward the east, through SoHo, Chinatown and Cleveland Circle in the south and on the western edge of the Bowery from Houston to 14th St reveals the nightlife that is attracting record numbers of tourists.

A walk through our landmark districts is an historic delight with many well-preserved buildings dating back to the early part of the nineteenth century. We see many groups conducting walking tours in our neighborhoods, telling stories about our immigrant, arts, and bohemian history. Tour buses travel through our small streets, obstructing pedestrian and bicycle passage as well as emergency access and deliveries, damaging our vulnerable infrastructure, idling and spewing dangerous emissions.

Our street trash baskets are often overflowing, especially on the weekends, and it is up to our citizens and merchant associations to supplement the Department of Sanitation pick-ups. We require more police presence to manage the crowds. The parks in our district require more maintenance because they are not just the outdoor space for our residents, but also appeal to visitors who are looking for a pleasant stop on their way through our district. The High Line Park alone has attracted millions of visitors since its opening two and a half years ago.

Tourists are extremely welcome in our neighborhoods. They provide a significant clientele for our

small businesses and cultural institutions. However, the influx of thousands of people on a daily basis puts a severe strain on our infrastructure and resources, and these additional needs are not adequately addressed in the budget allocations.

## **II. LAND USE, HOUSING, AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

In assessing local needs it is necessary to recognize the development boom that Community District 2 has experienced over the last ten years. The number of change of use applications is among the highest in the city, and the rapid influx of new development along the eastern, western and southern borders of the district have added to density of both people and built environment disrupting both neighborhood character and density.

Two recent re-zonings in the Far West Village are guaranteed to increase our resident population. We anticipate another re-zoning in Hudson Square that will transform a manufacturing/commercial district to mixed-use, building in excess of 3000 residential units, both fair market and affordable. NYU is seeking a rezoning to add approximately 3 million square feet to its campus, including permanent faculty housing and dormitory space. With the closing and bankruptcy of St. Vincent's Medical Center, and the purchase of the eastern portion of the campus, the Rudin Management Company, Inc. is currently seeking a rezoning in the West Village, with an expectation to build 450 luxury residential units. These massive changes require that current residents and newcomers are provided with levels of service appropriate to the relevant developments.'

In NoHo, SoHo, and parts of Little Italy a continuing growing population is evident as existing residents living in converted buildings see new neighbors moving into newly constructed buildings that were built on former parking lots. Since 2005, seventeen previously vacant lots now house residential buildings, adding hundreds of new residents to this area. Community Board 2 will continue to work with the Department of City Planning to ensure that these buildings fit into the character of the neighborhood. Hundreds of loft dwellers residing in NoHo and SoHo continue to bring their loft space into compliance with legal residential requirements and their numbers are also inflating the population figures. Major new apartment projects along the south side of East Houston Street, in the northern portion of SoHo have added hundreds of new residents there, as well, transforming what was once a commercial traffic corridor to the Holland Tunnel into a highly dense pedestrian traffic area simultaneously. The community board is working with our elected officials to examine what zoning changes are necessary in the adjacent M1-6 District that will help preserve the neighborhood's unique character and address increased pressure on local infrastructure and the need for affordable housing. The Board is now preparing for a major land use application in Greenwich Village by New York University. This represents a major institutional expansion that will shift the demographic of the Village area.

These changes impact many of the day-to-day issues that come before our board. It is frustrating to us that the one venue where we are asked that to participate by mandate of the City Charter, the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure ("ULURP"), is too often driven by the interests of developers. Community boards are supposed to be at the table during the scoping process of ULURP, but we are not included in the pre-process conversations. Consequently, our voice is not heard when the Department of City Planning is asking the hard questions about the impact on the community of a development project, and developers are allowed to assume what is, and is not, important to us. It is especially problematic that ULURPs seldom consider the cumulative impact of individual projects - including traffic concerns, the increased pressure on infrastructure, safety during construction, the need for more park space, school seats, libraries, and social services.

We could go a long way toward ameliorating this problem, if we could become true partners with the Department of City Planning in considering the valuable input of the community at the start of every proposed land-use project. Most of the discussion that follows, and the needs that we are defining, is driven by this unfortunate shortcoming in the current ULURP process.

Another issue of great concern to the members of all our neighborhoods is the alarming rate of loss of the local businesses that are the backbone of our community. For the last few years, there have been too many empty storefronts along our commercial corridors. Some of this can, of course, be explained by the current economic climate. But this is only part of the problem in our district.

As our downtown communities have become more desirable, there is a disturbing trend by landlords to end the leases of long term tenants in favor of newcomers who are willing and able to pay much larger rents – usually trendy restaurants and bars, chain stores and upscale retail.

We added business development to the Land Use Committee, to focus on this issue. We support and work well with our local Business Improvement Districts (BIDs): Village Alliance, Hudson Square, and NoHo. This year we have responded to applications for two new BIDs in SoHo and Chinatown. The City Council approved the Chinatown Bid on September 21, 2011. The services that a BID can provide help to improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods. They are also usually willing and effective partners in helping to advocate for important capital projects and general enforcement of City rules and regulations, although there is concern that some of these quasi-governmental agencies unduly increase property taxes and may be unresponsive to the needs of the residents within their purview.

This year we would like to engage all of our BIDs, and the Department of Small Business Services, in an effort to come up with real solutions to the problem of maintaining a healthy mix of businesses to provide the real services that our neighborhoods need.

### **III. SOCIAL SERVICES**

In recent years, Community Board 2 has consistently expressed an urgent need for more schools given the significant increase in young families in the District. Thus, we were shocked this year when, in addition to not gaining much-needed new schools, the City threatened to cut funding for 4000 teachers, services for LGBT youth and essential services to seniors. While all of those threats did not ultimately come to pass, an even tenser environment was created and important cuts were made.

#### **A. Education**

Not only has the district overall gained population, there is an explosion of children in our public schools, all of which are over capacity and all of which have more kindergartners than 5th graders. In addition, middle school space is non-existent: our only middle school was moved downtown to the Financial District last year.

We implore the city to provide accurate statistics and rational planning for our school children. Official statistics suggest a child increase of thirty-four percent (34%). Unofficial observation (overcrowded playgrounds, new maternity and child stores – including one for children’s haircuts and one for medicines – and traffic jams of strollers) suggests an even greater increase. There are many reasons to believe this baby boom will continue, including that many gay and lesbian couples are now having children, and that families are choosing to stay in the city (especially with both parents

working). Nationwide, the only age group increasing births are women over age of thirty-five, and CB2 has many residents in this demographic.

Another area of significant growth is in our Chinese American population. PS 130 in Chinatown has actually turned away siblings of current pupils due to lack of space. Our two other elementary schools, PS 41 and PS3, both have waiting lists for the 2011-2012 year.

This child population boom has not been met, or even recognized, by the Department of Education. We have had no new schools in our district for 50 years (and lost our only middle school in the past year). CB2 has recognized this need in the past few years, and repeatedly called for more school space. We fear another crisis such as the one a year ago, when parents of kindergartners on a public school waiting list organized protests, publicized in the media, to finally find a place for their children. Those children will need places for years to come, and we ask how they will be served?

Elsewhere in this Report we address the proposed rezoning of Hudson Square by Trinity Real Estate. They have requested zoning changes to increase residential zoning near Canal Street, which will likely cause a demand for additional school seats. While the applicant has plans to build a school, that would likely only address the residents of the rezoning and would not alleviate the preexisting dearth of school seats in the District.

One potential solution to this on-going problem is the purchase (or leasing), and subsequent renovation and conversion, of 75 Morton Street, for use as a public school. We have secured strong support from all our locally elected representatives (city, state, and national). This was our number one budget priority two years ago, and continues to be so. This solution is relatively cheap and ADA compliant. We continue to be incredulous that a mostly empty, state-owned building, has not been leased or bought by the city and converted to a middle school. We believe that if the entire building is taken over, it could hold an elementary school and middle school as well.

Another consideration is that we have several empty parochial school sites, as the Catholic Church re-thinks its ability to financially support education. We are committed to finding space for our elementary and middle school children to attend school in the immediate neighborhood.

Also, three years ago, the City entered into an agreement with the Foundling Hospital on Sixth Avenue to convert the facility into a 540 seat, zoned elementary school. Construction has been delayed and we are still waiting to hear from the Department of Education as to when we can expect its opening.

Finally, New York University has also offered space for a new school. It is disappointing that the Department of Education is not moving forward with the pre-planning process necessary to ensure that this important facility is built now, in preparation for our burgeoning need. To delay means that our children will have to suffer needlessly in overcrowded classrooms that diminish the quality of education they should receive.

All three of our primary schools (P.S. 3, 41, and 130) are overcrowded and in serious need of renovation. Among the specifics is that the P.S. 3 cafeteria and gym are too small to safely accommodate the children, and P.S. 130, in Chinatown/Little Italy, has stated that they need an addition, perhaps in their schoolyard. We would like to explore both possibilities.

One of our frustrations is that the Department of Education continually underestimates the number of school age children in our district, and around the city. Fudging the numbers downward is unworthy of a first class city that will depend on a well-prepared population to see us through



this century. We have pleaded with the Department of Education to conduct an Educational Needs Assessment to delineate our need for public school seats. Because it has not happened, we are moving forward with this analysis on our own.

## **B. Youth**

We need much more outdoor play space for children of various ages, especially those under five and over twelve. Safe walking, bicycle, and mass travel are a priority; we support measures in this direction. We won our fight for continued subsidies for MTA fares for students, but lost our M 8 bus, which served many youth and seniors.

Cutbacks in after-school resources deny many children in our community essential recreational, educational and vocational activities. This is particularly true of the southeastern section of the district, where a full service youth center is overdue. We do support the City's efforts to open school playgrounds during non-school hours. P.S. 41 has a large outdoor area that could be safe space for our children to play. Unfortunately, this project has been delayed and we have not been told when it will commence. We will continue to work with the school and the City to make sure these areas are available as soon as possible.

## **C. Seniors**

Many elders in our district have decided to "age in place", but services for our older residents have been cut drastically. The meal program at one of our centers (First Presbyterian) has been eliminated, and our other centers are overcrowded, with multiple seatings. An important part of the meal program, social contact, seems to be ignored completely. We would like to understand the goals of the Department for the Aging because they do not seem to be in accord with our understanding of the needs.

We note that several cost-effective programs for seniors – Visiting Neighbors is the most obvious – have lost funding. Again, we are joining our elected officials to work to solve this problem, but we need the City to support Visiting Neighbors and other adult day care facilities, in order to allow seniors to live independently in their own homes.

Our elderly are vulnerable to the rampant building boom in our community, when landlords seek to push seniors out. New building permits must accommodate the elderly. Many of our seniors continue to live in rent-regulated walk-up apartments. Renovation, not removal, is needed.

## **D. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Community**

Our district welcomes our Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender-Questioning ("LGBTQ") community. They are integral to our healthy growth and community strength.

We are strong supporters of our three strong social service organizations, the LGBT Center, the Door, and Housing Works, attending to the special needs of this community, including many not from community district 2. All three also support those who are not LGBTQ. The LGBT Center operates 300 citywide programs that draw thousands of participants each year. Housing Works provides services for hundreds of people living with HIV/AIDS. The Door helps adolescents and emerging adults find jobs, education, and health services.

The Hudson River Park pier at Christopher Street has become a safe gathering place for LGBTQ youth, who still experience discrimination in other parts of the city. This large population in our neighborhood raises concerns among local residents, especially when drug-dealing, prostitution,

and petty vandalism occurs. We are especially concerned about the increase in anti-gay hate crimes in our neighborhood, and in other parts of the city. This violence does not come from our residents, but from people coming into the district who have specific agendas against alternate life styles. CB 2 is working with the 6th Precinct, The Door, neighbors, and our elected officials, and asks that the City work address this hateful behavior, and to find safe havens for these youth. CB 2 strongly urges the City to expand, not cut back services for LGBT youth. Our board strives to balance our concern for the youth and the residents.

### **E. Homeless**

Proportionally, there are fewer homeless people in CB2 than elsewhere in the city, but our concerns extend beyond our borders. We deplore the closing of homeless shelters (particularly those friendly to LG-BTQ youth and to seniors) and we question many policies that the city has regarding homeless people in shelters and in streets. The Doe Fund provides workers at our pier and we welcome more such efforts.

## **IV. ENVIRONMENT, PUBLIC HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

### **A. Public Safety**

Counterfeit vending and illegal peddling remain serious problems in parts of our district. We appreciate the specialized task forces within various city agencies, including the Mayor's Office of Special Enforcement, the District Attorney's office and its new special prosecutions unit, the NYPD, and the Lower Manhattan Task Force, for the energy and resources they have directed at these problems in response to our complaints (including the Canal Street Initiative, instituted March 2010). We hope these efforts will continue with additional personnel and resources. We have begun to see progress toward mitigating the sales of counterfeit goods and unlicensed vending which is rampant below Houston Street. We urge the City to provide these agencies with greater resources.

Aside from the counterfeit goods industry/illegal vending problems discussed above, our district faces very high rates of recidivism in prostitution and sales of narcotics. We receive continuous complaints from both the residential and business communities, regarding the need for additional police coverage, which has been reduced in recent years. Law enforcement problems reach not only into our homes and busy streets, but also into the many sites where tourists, residents and theater-goers gather for enjoyment. Drug dealing in our parks and streets hurts our residents and seriously damages our neighborhoods. It is important that the 1st, 5th, 6th, and 9th Precincts are equipped with adequate staff and resources to deal with these problems.

### **B. Environment**

Community District 2 is currently host to several major capital projects throughout the district. All create environmental concerns, particularly with regard to noise, traffic congestion, and pollution. The projects include the Sanitation Department's Salt Shed and Garage on Spring Street, continuing work at various sites where shafts are being connected to the water tunnel, and the ongoing New York City Transit renovation of the Bleecker-Lafayette train station. In addition, work will soon begin at the fan plant facility to be constructed by NYCT at Mulry Square. It is vital that these agencies take every action to minimize problems caused by these projects.

Community Board 2 remains concerned about the possibility of 'hydro-fracking' in the City's watershed areas. We support the City's position on this issue and will continue to work closely with our elected officials to prevent hydraulic fracturing in the Marcellus Shale.

New residents, replacing the manufacturers who previously hired private carters, must now rely on collection by the NYC Sanitation Department. Further, the growth of tourism throughout our district, particularly on weekends, has created an additional burden on the existing uniformed Sanitation workers. Sanitation District 2's limited staff is hard pressed to meet the community's growing needs as the area has increasingly become home to a twenty-four hour population. In particular, the agency's decision to cut the number of supervisors in each district has made it more difficult to clean the streets as thoroughly as they had been cleaned in the past.

### **C. Public Health**

Our number one public health concern is the closing of St. Vincent's Hospital. We address this issue in a special section below.

Our community board has been working diligently with the World Trade Center Environmental Health Center's Community Advisory Council to pass federal legislation that would provide permanent funding for this center along with the other centers dedicated to those affected by 9/11. In the interim, it is important that the City continue its funding and support of these centers.

We are very interested in ensuring that the number of new HIV infections in the City decreases. It is essential that the City fund new methods to help prevent new infections and continue to fund more research into how to effectively reach the populations that are seeing higher infection rates.

We are pleased the City has dedicated significant resources and is now taking a pro-active approach in combating the rat population in our City. In particular, we applaud the Rat Indexing Initiative. We urge the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and other relevant agencies to continue these aggressive efforts.

### **V. TRAFFIC and TRANSPORTATION**

When looking at any issue that comes up regarding traffic in this district, our board considers the importance of balancing all the modes of transportation important in New York City – pedestrian, public transportation, bicycles, cars, taxis and trucking.

One of the District's major traffic and transportation problems is with vehicular congestion around the entrance and exit to the Holland Tunnel. The tunnel brings in great volumes of private vehicles visiting the city from out of state. In addition, trucks make many local commercial deliveries, and use our narrow streets to travel from the Hudson River to the F.D.R. Drive, south to the Financial District and to the outer boroughs. Our fragile network of narrow streets is also clogged with trucks skirting the one-way toll on the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge in order to use the toll-free Manhattan Bridge to access the Holland Tunnel. With the advent of E-Z Pass and other electronic traffic management systems, the one-way Verrazano toll is no longer feasible and should be eliminated.

Every year in our budget requests, we ask that the City work with the Port Authority to consider new approaches to dealing with the traffic back-ups that are caused by the Holland Tunnel. We also ask for enforcement strategies to help keep traffic from "blocking the box" at intersections, as well as to control honking, and driving recklessly to circumvent congestion. The newly formed Hudson Square Business Improvement District is addressing many of these problems. We are working with them, and look forward to further work with them and the relevant agencies, to find and implement, long lasting solutions, with hopes that these agencies will respond to our needs and recommendations.



Community District 2 has several internationally known tourist destinations that encourage heavy nighttime and weekend usage of the district's streets, by both cars and pedestrians. New York City Transit should be initiating a major effort to increase the use of public transportation in this context as well as in general by making it more comfortable, convenient, accessible, frequent, and making transit access points more user friendly for both visitors and residents. Instead, NYCT is making major cuts to the system. These cuts in both subway and bus service are having a severe impact in our District, where every segment of our population relies on these facilities to get from here to there and is hard pressed to find feasible alternatives. For example, the senseless elimination of evening and weekend service on the much-used, much-needed M-8 bus route deprives access for the many seniors, children, business people, parents with babies, local residents, workers and others who have traveled it daily to reach doctors appointments, school, work, night-time meetings, recreation, subway connections and other essential activities. The removal of our subway station agents compromises our safety and takes away our source for vital information and orientation. We vehemently oppose these cuts that are completely counter to the sustainability goals of PlaNYC. Public transportation makes more efficient use of space and energy, significantly reduces air and noise pollution, and minimizes pedestrian/vehicular conflicts. Therefore, instead of imposing these destructive cuts on a population that already depends so strongly on transit and its benefits, opportunities must be explored and followed through in providing new transit access and routes in areas of need.

As part of this endeavor, every effort needs to be made to repair and rehabilitate our deteriorating subway stations for users' comfort and safety. In particular, the West 4th Street station has been severely deteriorating over many years of neglect to the point that current conditions are not only off-putting, but also a threat to people's health and safety. All of the platforms and surrounding areas are plagued with moldy, leaky and peeling walls and ceilings, and a full rehabilitation is long overdue.

In a walking community like Community Board 2, with a populace that spends much of its time out and about on the streets, the City must continue to encourage improvements for pedestrian and alternative transportation modes with emphasis on design and regulation of streets, including traffic calming approaches and more pedestrian-oriented redesign of complex intersections, lighting and directional information for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic, improved safety, enforcement, added bicycle parking both on sidewalks and in selected street spaces, as well as aesthetic improvements. Facilitating pedestrian and bicycle movements and access between the six major subway lines, bus routes, hospitals, commercial districts, open space, schools, universities, historic districts and residential communities, also needs implementation.

Opportunities must be sought and identified to reclaim streets for public space that both support pedestrian activities and build community life. The Department of Transportation ("DOT") is beginning to achieve this through its Plaza program in such areas as Gansevoort Plaza and Astor Place. The anticipated permanent reconstruction of pedestrian friendly improvements on 9th Avenue between Gansevoort Plaza and 14th Streets also will be welcome.

An opportunity to add significant open space is being lost at Mulry Square, where the MTA intends to build an above-ground subway fan plant, whereas an underground facility, although more costly, would allow for substantial public/green space at the site that would benefit the community in perpetuity. Since the above-ground option continues to be pursued, at the least the housing for such a facility should have a more appropriate community- and pedestrian-friendly design that both respects the area's historic importance and recognizes the utilitarian nature of the facility, while providing an appropriate context for displaying the September 11th Tiles for America. In view of the possibility of extensive new construction at the St. Vincent's campus, which is adjacent to the Mulry Square site, every effort should be made to coordinate construction plans, considering the impact of these two projects.

Individuals using wheelchairs have a basic right, pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, to use our city streets. In May 2007, the Community Planning Fellow assigned to our Board by the Borough President, presented a pedestrian ramp study to our Traffic & Transportation Committee. The study found that twenty-three percent (23%) of all street corners in our district do not have pedestrian ramps. In addition, another fifteen percent (15%) of all corners have pedestrian ramps that are uneven with the adjacent roadbed, or degraded, making them unusable or a safety hazard. Although the City has been taking necessary action to remedy this injustice, it still has a long way to go, especially in repairing broken, degraded areas.

The degraded condition of our district's streets, particularly those paved with historic Belgian blocks, is an ongoing concern and, at times, presents a hazardous condition. Some of our many requests for capital repaving projects, street reconstruction, improved traffic conditions and other needed improvements have been heeded, but there is still much to be done. Maintenance will always be an urgent item on the community's agenda.

The proliferation of tour buses on our small, historic streets has produced a host of negative impacts, including hazardous conditions for pedestrians, air and noise pollution, traffic congestion, and broken street beds. CB 2 calls for increased regulation, enforcement, and relocation of tour bus routes to larger, more accommodating thoroughfares. A tour bus route-plan is long overdue, as is legislation putting it into action.

Recently, we have focused on working with DOT to create a safe environment for increasing bicycling as a mode of transportation. We have embraced the need to build protected bicycle lanes along many of our uptown/downtown and cross-town commuting arteries. However, there has been controversy. The majority of people who testify at our hearings are supportive of the bicycle lanes, but there are others who come with legitimate concerns about the impact on pedestrian safety. We have a number of resolutions that ask the DOT to increase general education to the public about the protocols of the new bicycle lanes, and to look for ways to adjust the markings on the lanes to clearly announce how space is allocated to bicycles, pedestrians and cars.

We have also been working closely with the DOT to look at our parking regulations in a new way. We have consistently supported pilot programs with muni-meters to test how variable pricing can work in our neighborhoods. Because we have so many destination areas, and know that many people insist in coming by car, over our bridges and tunnels, instead of using public transportation, we encourage the use of appropriate priced street parking to help reduce unnecessary circulation of cars looking for parking and eventually encourage visitors to consider mass transportation (which hopefully will be restored and enhanced).

## **VI. PARKS, RECREATION and OPEN SPACE**

With only about .40 acres of parkland per 1000 residents, our district has one of the lowest ratios of public open space in the city, and with its fully built up high-value land, the city standard of 2.5 acres is an unobtainable goal.

But important progress has been made:

Hudson River Park provides new opportunities for active recreation, quiet enjoyment, access to the river, and connection to the waterfront greenway.

The High Line and Pier 40 provide unique and special park experiences conjured out of disused industrial facilities.

There has been a steady and ongoing stream of improvements to quality and condition of our parks with recently and soon-to-be completed renovations at Washington Square, Seravalli, Petrosino, and Minnetta parks, and needed repairs at Tony Dapolito Recreation Center. Work on other important projects continues or will begin soon at JJ Walker and Father Fagan parks and Phase 3 of Washington Square reconstruction: the perimeter, the dog run, and the park house. These upgrades make our parks more attractive and safer, and attract more people for a better park experience.

The population of families with young children continues to rise in our district, increasing the overcrowding of our play spaces, and large-scale development projects and major rezoning proposals are under consideration. The focus of our efforts will continue to be on the preservation and improvement of the parks we have and on taking advantage of every opportunity to create new public open space.

We urge our elected officials and city agencies to continue to help us protect, preserve, and improve the public open space we have and to pursue every opportunity for creating new open space in our district.

### **NYU Expansion**

CB2 has devoted substantial time and energy to consideration of preliminary expansion plans presented by NYU. With respect to parks and open space, this project currently represents a threat, not an opportunity. If built as currently proposed, the project will bring a large number of students-- in new classrooms during the day and in dorms on weekends and in the evenings-- into an area that is particularly underserved by parks, and especially parks with space for active use needed by people in the student age range. While NYU proposes to replace existing privately held open space with new plaza type campus space between some of its new buildings, and to relocate some uses in existing public and publicly accessible open spaces, this space will be inward facing, surrounded by university activity, and partially below grade. We believe the net impact will be a reduction of open space actually used by the public. We have also expressed our concern about overcrowding of nearby parks such as Passanante playground and destructive active use of the lawns of Washington Square that were recently renovated at great cost for not-active use. If applications related to expansion are approved, existing public and publicly accessible spaces need to be protected and new space for active use by students needs to be created to prevent overcrowding of nearby parks. The project should not be allowed to alienate existing parks and public open space on the strips owned by the city Department of Transportation, either by direct transfer of the land or by encumbrance of the land with private easements that will diminish their public use and control, transfers that should require state legislation for alienation of parkland. With better planning and less intensive development, the project may provide an opportunity to enhance existing open space and add new shared amenities serving the campus and the neighborhood. Unfortunately, current plans fail in this regard and present the most serious current threat to existing parks in a underserved area in our district.

### **The Water Tunnel Shaft Project**

Community Board 2 was gratified to learn in December, 2010, that the Department of Environmental Protection has reaffirmed its prior commitment to creating new parks at three water tunnel shaft sites when these projects are completed, and has agreed with our assessment that the Parks Department is best equipped to plan and operate these parks. We are very hopeful that work on all these parks will begin prior to the end of the current administration and we urge the city to move ahead with the design of these new parks in the current fiscal year so that construction of the new parks can begin as soon as work of the shafts is complete. The site at Hudson Street between West Houston and Clarkson is the largest at approximately 1/2 acre and is ideally located near Tony Dapolito Recreation Center, JJ Walker Park, and City As School High School. At an "envisioning

session” for this site community groups identified possible uses including youth sports, a school gardening project, and a dog run. A site at the corner of Grand and Lafayette is important for its location in a particularly park-starved area. The third site, on East 4th Street between Bowery and Lafayette is located next to the Merchants House Museum and could provide an outdoor public space associated in some way with the museum.

### **St. Vincent’s Triangle**

This project, as proposed by the developer, will convert the triangle surrounded by Seventh Avenue, Greenwich Avenue, and West 12th Street, into publicly accessible open space. CB2 has strongly stated our preference for public ownership and control of publicly accessible open space. We are hopeful that the Parks Department and the City Planning Commission will support a proposal whereby the developer funds the construction and operation of a true public park on a permanent easement granting use of the land to the Parks Department.

### **Hudson Square Rezoning and Business Improvement District**

Hudson Square is a neighborhood has transitioned from a world leader in the printing industry to a commercial district attracting important creative businesses. The area, while successful in many ways, would thrive as a 24-hour community if zoning changes allow construction of residential units on some sites. But residential use will require creation of more and better public open space. CB2 and the Hudson Square BID have identified opportunities on land belonging to the Port Authority and along streets adjacent to Soho Square, an underutilized park in need of improvement. We urge the city to embrace and encourage the efforts of the BID to create new public open space in conjunction with the rezoning of the district.

### **Trees**

As an area with very few large parks and burdened by high vehicular traffic, our district greatly values the benefits of streets trees. We support the citywide effort to plant one million new trees. In response the complaints as well as several incidents of illegal tree removals, we did an informal and incomplete survey of part of our district and were alarmed to find hundreds of existing tree pits with dead or missing trees. This deprives our residents of the trees they need, creates trip hazards, and fosters a harmful sense of poor management not unlike the impact of graffiti. We passed a resolution urging the Parks Department to make the replacement of trees the highest priority for tree plantings in our district and we have seen some replacements. We also requested a policy change whereby tree and stump removals automatically generate a high priority request for a new tree without the need for a second 311 request. CB2 also identified the need for new trees in Hudson Square, an old manufacturing district that is becoming a vibrant commercial and residential area.

### **Mulry Square**

CB2 has for many years supported conversion to public open space of the MTA parking lot at the southeast corner of Seventh Avenue and Greenwich Avenue. This idea would be even more attractive given the new park that will be built on St. Vincents Triangle site on the northwest corner. MTA plans to construct an emergency fan plant on the site and have not complied with our request to include substantial open space as part of this project or to pursue opportunities for building the fan plant in conjunction with new construction at the St. Vincents site. The failure to fully investigate opportunities to create new open space here is regrettable and the project deserves another look.

## **Continuing Upgrade of Parks and Playgrounds**

While most of our parks are in good condition, there are still some that need renovation. DeSalvio Playground, at the corner of Prince and Mulberry Streets, was last renovated in 1996. The park is now run down, uninteresting, and underused despite its location in an area with no other parks and a growing population of families with young children. An energetic group of parents has launched a drive to get the park rebuilt and the council member has allocated some of the required funds.

The small sitting areas along Sixth Avenue also need attention. Father Demo Square was recently rebuilt, and funds have been allocated for Father Fagan Square. Trinity Real Estate is committed to rebuilding Duarte Square prior to occupying new construction on their adjacent property. Soho Square and Little Red Square require attention.

## **Opportunities for Youth Sports**

Youth sports groups are on the front line of an important citywide battle against childhood obesity, diabetes, and asthma. Most of these groups operate at little or no public expense. Opportunities for outdoor youth sports have increased significantly in our district with the installation of fields at Pier 40 and artificial turf at JJ Walker Park. Funds have been allocated for needed renovations at JJ Walker. But the need for indoor sports remains largely unmet and limits the ability of sports groups to provide rear around opportunities. Because of the high cost of land and development, it may be unrealistic to expect public funding for indoor gyms. Developers of large residential projects should be encouraged to respond to this need and gyms should be included in all school projects. Youth use of current public school gyms should be prioritized over adult use.

## **VII. LANDMARKS and PUBLIC AESTHETICS**

Ours is a historically rich community, graced by well over two thousand century-old dwellings. Indeed, District 2 Manhattan has the oldest housing stock in the entire City with the median age of residential buildings at 94 years. Row houses constructed in the early 1800's, on what was then farmland, still stand in the Greenwich Village and Charlton/King/VanDam Historic Districts. Cast-iron buildings that were bolted together in SoHo during the last half of the nineteenth century still line the streets today.

Within Community District 2 are now nine designated historic districts: Charlton-King-VanDam; Gansevoort Market; Greenwich Village, with two extensions; SoHo Cast Iron, with one extension, MacDougal-Sullivan Gardens; NoHo, with one extension; NoHo East; and numerous individual landmarks.

Our board has joined with other preservation organizations and our neighbors to continue to advocate for the creation of a South Village District that represents an important chapter in the immigrant and bohemian history of New York City.

The strength of the Landmarks Preservation Commission is essential to the unique quality of this district and remains evident in the value of properties here and the vigor of tourism. Our board is unique in the city, in that over 70% of our building stock falls under the jurisdiction of the Commission. Unfortunately, too many illegal renovations and additions slip through each year. Landmarks enforcement must be expanded, and the Commission must have the necessary funds to perform their duties. We will continue to advocate for a stronger LPC, because the integrity of our neighborhoods depend on them.



## **VIII. SIDEWALKS, PUBLIC FACILITIES and PUBLIC ACCESS**

Community Board 2 Manhattan continues to see more pressure on sidewalk access and usage. The list of incursions grows as businesses try ever harder to differentiate themselves, particularly in the current economic conditions. The sidewalks are often home to sidewalk cafes, newsstands, sidewalk vendors, food truck crowds, benches, sandwich board signs and other items taking pedestrian and open space, often illegally.

Community District 2 is an extremely popular area for tourists and tri-state visitors and the relatively small size of many of our sidewalks, especially on side streets leads to intense congestion that often forces people to walk in the streets, which is undesirable and unsafe. The incursions mentioned above, both legal and illegal contributes to the problem.

In addition, many restaurants and bars are locating in small buildings and designing their facades with large expanses of windows or doors that are left open far past a reasonable hour, carrying crowds (and amplified music) out onto already crowded sidewalks and into the neighborhoods.

A primary issue is the lack of consistent and meaningful enforcement of sidewalk café regulations by the Department of Consumer Affairs (“DCA”). Enforcement is inconsistent and has failed to deter restaurants that are the biggest violators of the sidewalk café rules. We continue to see too little enforcement in the evenings or on weekends when sidewalk café activity is at its peak. As a result, we consistently encounter a minority of establishments which:

- operate outside allowed hours, particularly before noon on Sunday;
- operate the café outside the approved footprint and/or with more seats than approved;
- maintain illegal outside service stations;
- do not remove café furniture when allowed café hours have ended.

These situations often create unsanitary conditions, limit or make treacherous pedestrian access in what is public right-of-way, and create an uneven playing field that encourages responsible establishments to break the rules as well, if only to compete with their opportunistic neighbors.

For several years, Community Board 2 has been troubled by DCA’s reluctance to enforce the Zoning Resolution’s ban on sidewalk cafes in certain zoning districts. In one example, the agency continues to allow three restaurants on West 4th Street, where the zoning is R6 and where sidewalk cafés are prohibited, to continue to operate. This situation persists despite repeated requests by the CB 2 and the Borough President’s office for DCA to explain why the restaurants on this strip receive preferential treatment compared to other restaurants in the district that have received violations for similar infractions. Furthermore, it is an ongoing injustice to individuals and families nearby who continue to endure the resulting noise and to responsible restaurant operators who are either paying significant license fees or are losing business to these operators with illegal sidewalk cafes.

The other primary issues with illegal sidewalk use are benches, chairs and sandwich board signs. All three are endemic and we see only sporadic enforcement on these issues from the Department of Sanitation. Sandwich board signs are certainly not new. But benches, chairs and other seating whether against the building, extending out from it, lining the curb, or wrapping around street trees, has grown significantly with little apparent enforcement being done.

## **IX. STREET ACTIVITIES and FILM PERMITS**

Community District 2 hosted more than eighty street fairs in the last fiscal year. Although street fairs are a longstanding tradition in our neighborhoods, there are too many generic, promoter based multi-block events that have no relationship or nexus to our neighborhoods. These long multi-block events take business away from the merchants who pay rent and taxes, and generally detract from the quality of life of our residents. We appreciate that there is a citywide moratorium on new multi-block fairs, but we urge the City to look for ways to more effectively integrate the remaining street fairs into the fabric of the community.

Community Board 2 has become increasingly chagrined by the proliferation of “special events” approved by the Mayor’s Street Activity Permit Office (“SAPO”) in our pedestrian plazas. The problem has become particularly egregious in the Gansevoort Plaza. CB 2 supported the plaza program wholeheartedly because we recognized that our district needed more public open space. Unfortunately, we now find ourselves in the position of having absolutely no say in how the plazas are being used, while we must bear witness to SAPO permitting commercial use with increasing frequency. What was intended to provide an oasis in a sea of traffic has been taken over by the likes of commercial retailers, Vegas hotels, and alcohol promotions. We strongly urge SAPO to review its special event policy and include the community board in the approval process.

In addition to the street fairs, we have an ongoing problem with the issuance of film permits. Our historic streets are some of the most desirable film and photo-shoot locations. Unfortunately, we again have no input regarding the number, location, or date and time of the permits being issued. There is simply no process to allow for community feedback and input regarding the issuance of film permits. Some of our streets are repeatedly closed, which causes a great inconvenience to residents and businesses. There are location vehicles parked throughout their neighborhood (often illegally running their engines), cables and equipment everywhere, catering stations on the sidewalks, large crews standing around hour after hour, lights shining into bedroom windows at night, and even security that denies access to their buildings when the cameras are rolling. It takes many phone calls, angry letters, and the intervention of the board and elected officials to get an area deemed a hot spot, giving that area at least a few months of relief.

The Mayor’s Citywide Events Coordination Management office and the Mayor’s Office of Film, Theater, and Broadcasting need to create a new process that will take into account residents’ concerns, business interests and allow for community and community board input before issuing any permits that restrict access to our streets.

## **X. ARTS AND INSTITUTIONS**

### **A. Universities**

There are five major higher education institutions located in Community Board 2: New York University, Cooper Union, Benjamin Cardozo Law School, Hebrew Union College, and The New School (which includes the Parsons branch). They draw tens of thousands of students, professors and other staff who commute to or live in the Village.

New York University has put forward an aggressive expansion in their Plan 2031, seeking to add 3 million square feet into the core of historic Greenwich Village. Community Board 2 has the role of the main liaison with the community and NYU.

Over the past 20 years, NYU has been buying buildings and either demolishing or renovating them for their own purposes. The historic neighborhoods around Washington Square Park are hardly recognizable with the number of large, modern buildings that have replaced the low scale and intimate streetscapes that Henry James and Edith Wharton wrote about over 100 years ago. The current plan looks to develop on property that they currently own. However the enormity of the project will have significant negative impacts on the quality of life for residents in their buildings and the surrounding streets, including the retention of affordable housing, publicly accessible and community friendly open space, congestion and density, change of use in favor of campus life over neighborhood, and designated historic buildings.

Community Board 2 is in the forefront, with support from the Borough President's office and our local councilmember, in reviewing of all the complex zoning, mapping, transportation, deed restrictions, land use, environmental and other agenda items and issues. We have hosted countless meetings as part of the pre-ULURP and EIS Scoping process. We anticipate a certified application in the next months. We would ask that the appropriate agencies consider the needs of our residents and the history of our neighborhoods before issuing approvals. This is the time for NYU to look to expand into other locations, outside of the core area. Otherwise, we fear that Greenwich Village, known throughout the world and attracting thousands of visitors each year to New York City, will be swallowed up by a well-funded and rapacious institution that perhaps, has outgrown its roots.

Cooper Union and The New School are in the middle of years long expansions that will stretch our District's historical references – economically and socially. We have made every effort to work with both institutions to minimize the construction impacts on our neighborhoods. We are particularly anxious that the New School adhere to Community Board 2's construction protocols that address issues of noise related to construction, scheduling, street closings, etc.

## **B. Libraries**

We are increasingly concerned that budget cuts have resulted in a reduction in staff and in the hours of operation at the libraries in our district. These reductions impact young children and the elderly most of all. We continue to request that additional funds be allocated to keep the large community room at the Hudson Park branch open during all library hours in order to increase the activities for toddler-aged children. We also ask that the New York Public Library provide a dedicated staff to create special youth programming.

## **C. The Arts**

Community Board 2 is very excited that the Whitney Museum of American Art "broke ground" in May for its new museum in the Gansevoort Market district. This important institution, which was originally founded in our district, will be a great asset to the Far West Village and could help to re-focus the neighborhood as an art and design district. The Museum will be an exciting center of art, with exterior exhibition spaces as well the traditional interior spaces, and will be integrated with the High Line park that run along the eastern face of the building. Restaurants, gathering places, and other public areas will be part of the overall design.

We continue to be concerned about the impact on the downtown arts scene of the closure of so many of the district's off-Broadway and small theaters. The main causes are the exponential increase in rents and the drastic cut back of funding to non-profits. Two years ago we supported a proposal to use tax incentives that would encourage landlords to retain live performance space. The plan is still being vetted by legal staff and tax experts in the NYC Council Speaker's office,

but the general consensus is that it will be difficult to get it passed in Albany and the emphasis is now to seek some kind of already existing NYC programs that could provide some incentives to landlords to help the arts theater community. We ask that the City support these efforts.

## **XI. SLA LICENSING**

All neighborhoods within Community Board 2 are now saturated with liquor licenses. Every full on-premise application that comes before the board requires a 500-foot hearing at the State Liquor Authority (“SLA”) because there are more than three existing on-premise liquor licenses nearby. In fact, many have twenty or more licenses within the 500 feet. Even in the current economy, CB 2 has seen an increase in SLA applications. The increase has forced our committee to implement Co-Chairs and now the committee meets twice a month, every month, in order to complete a committee hearing at a reasonable time in the evening. Several areas in our district, in particular the Bowery, West and East Village, Kenmare area, Meatpacking District, SoHo, and University Place are experiencing a dramatic increase in late night (and early morning) visitors who patronize new bars, clubs and restaurants. This trend has severely strained the quality of life for residents who are demanding that we stop approving SLA licenses, including beer and wine licenses. CB 2 has noted that there is quite a difference between retail daytime use and retail nighttime use, and has gone on record to call upon the City to amend Use Group 6 to require special permits for bars, restaurants and clubs.

Community Board 2 reviewed and passed resolutions regarding 164 applications for liquor licenses in 2010, which does not include beer and wine licenses (Beer and wine applications are not heard unless requested by the community). This is an increase of thirteen percent (13%) from 2009. One hundred forty-seven applications for liquor licenses were approved in 2009, an increase of fourteen percent (14%) over the 127 applications reviewed in 2008. In just three years, we have had a twenty-seven percent (27%) increase in this district alone. Most of these establishments are in previous retail or manufacturing/artist live-work areas, driving up the cost of small retail spaces and larger manufacturing/repair spaces. This is increasing the Board of Standard and Appeals variances for other uses, and effectively driving out small businesses that have been the mainstay of economics within the district.

In addition to reviewing license applications, our staff and board members spend extensive time and resources asking the police and city agencies, along with the SLA, to enforce the legal ‘methods of operation’. Far too often, establishments that have been approved as restaurants with background music, transform themselves illegally into late night venues. As a result, the residential community continues to suffer with even greater degree. Our office receives the complaints, but it is very difficult for us to get the appropriate agencies to do an inspection.

It is important that the City commit to working with the SLA to coordinate the timely enforcement of laws that are written in order to protect our residential and mixed-use neighborhoods from being overwhelmed by the negative impact of the concentration of nightlife.

## **XII. WATERFRONT**

The development of the Hudson River Park has been a great benefit to the residents in our park-starved district. The access to the waterfront, the bikeway and walkway, the playgrounds and seating areas are used year round. The ball fields on Pier 40, at Houston Street, have created the opportunity for children and adults to participate in organized sports leagues. Many residents take advantage of the relatively affordable vehicle parking on Pier 40, as well.

We have had two failed attempts to develop Pier 40 according to the parameters outlined in the Hudson River Park Trust Act. This is of increased concern because the pier is in very bad shape structurally. It is in desperate need of work on both its roof and pilings. We think these failures are due to the lack of public input into a planning process before the issuance of the RFP's.

CB 2 will continue to work with the Community Advisory Committee of the Trust to try to re-start the process to develop Pier 40. In order to succeed, it is imperative that the community be involved in the planning stages. Our board is committed to seeing that the athletic fields and parking remain, and that the necessary commercial development is appropriate to the park and additive to the community. While this project is clearly under the jurisdiction of the Trust, we would ask that the city's representatives on the Trust Board join us in advocating for a process and an RFP that responds to the needs of our district.

Last year, as part of the Department of City Planning's review of their Comprehensive Waterfront Plan, CB2 identified two important issues. First, we are concerned about the potential danger posed by rising sea levels. Many parts of our district lie in potential flood plains, and would be devastated in a storm surge. It is imperative that the City begin planning now to institute preventative measures that will protect our community from the impacts of climate change or a natural disaster.

Also, we are advocating to improve safe access to our waterfront. Our highest priority is to institute a new pedestrian crossing, over Route 9A, at Spring Street. The Hudson Square neighborhood is becoming increasingly a residential area, and yet it has the worst open space ratio per person in our district. Currently the only crossing to the park is on the south side of Canal Street, which is actually in Community Board 1. This effectively renders the entire neighborhood cut off from the Hudson River Park. Creating a new crossing will require the cooperation of many city agencies, New York State Department of Transportation, and the Hudson River Park Trust. We ask that the City commit to working with us to advocate for this change, as partial mitigation for the decision to locate a three-district sanitation garage and salt shed at Spring and West Streets, and in light of the upcoming proposal to rezone this area to allow for significant residential development.

In Section III of this report (Social Services), we listed our concerns about the needs of the LGBTQ youth who flock to the Christopher Street pier on weekend evenings.

### **XIII. OTHER ISSUES**

#### **A. Chinatown**

As one of the oldest neighborhoods in New York City and the country, Chinatown has been a traditional gateway for immigrants, particularly from East Asia. While Chinatown's population and boundaries have grown dramatically over the past three decades due to reforms in national immigration quotas, it continues to struggle as a densely populated, low-income neighborhood with limited language access to mainstream services and programs. Chinatown's economy suffered greatly in the period after September 11th due to restricted flow of commerce under the security zone, and more recently gentrification pressures from neighboring areas have contributed to a loss of affordable housing and dislocation of low income residents and small businesses.

In late 2008, a planning body called the Chinatown Working Group was formed to identify major issues of concern in Chinatown and to come up with ways to allow Chinatown to grow while protecting and retaining its historical character. The Chinatown Working Group is made up of more than fifty full voting members comprised of important stakeholders representing residents, small



businesses, workers, social service institutions, arts, and advocacy groups, as well as Manhattan's Community Boards 1, 2, and 3. Other institutions and elected officials also participate in a non-voting capacity during the Working Group's monthly full sessions and Working Team meetings – designed for open, democratic, consensus-building planning in the hopes of creating a comprehensive community-based 197a Plan. In accordance with the City Charter, Community Boards 1, 2 & 3 would be co-sponsors along with the Chinatown Working Group of its proposed 197a Plan.

The preliminary planning needs of Chinatown have focused around a few core issues, namely re-zoning for preservation and creation of housing that is affordable to existing Chinatown residents, combating tenant harassment and illegal eviction, support for small businesses and job creation for locals, developing more parks and usable open spaces, improving traffic flow and pedestrian safety, bolstering immigrant social services, creating spaces for local arts and culture, enhancing educational opportunities for youth and adults, and preservation of Chinatown's unique immigrant culture and history. In articulating its goals for Chinatown's future, the Working Group is carefully considering the impact of its proposals on adjacent New York City communities.

Community Board 2 will continue to work along these broad guidelines of neighborhood planning in Chinatown in coordination with local stakeholders and other community boards, and, if approved, ask the City adopt this 197a as an action agenda.

### **B. St. Vincent's Hospital**

In 2010, our community lost its single most important health care resource with the closing of St. Vincent's Catholic Medical Center. St. Vincent's, which operated in our district for over 150 years, was one of only two Level One Trauma Centers south of 59th Street and provided invaluable services to our residents and to all of lower Manhattan, including in-patient hospitalization, emergency room care, a large variety of out-patient clinics and a commitment to serve anyone who walks through their doors without regard for ability to pay.

Our board worked with St. Vincent's since 2007 to support their bid to build a new 'state of the art' replacement hospital. This loss has been devastating to our district, and we still contend that the west side of lower Manhattan needs a hospital.

However, the property has now been sold to a private developer, who is proposing a luxury residential development in a current ULURP application. In an acknowledgment of the need to address the loss of health care services in the area, the developer donated a building on the site of the former St. Vincent's campus to North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System. NSLIJ is intending to build a Comprehensive Care Center that will include an emergency department, diagnostic labs and community clinics. This is a new model for delivering health care services in New York City, and we have heard countless testimony that people are confused about the capabilities of the facility. We urge the City to work closely with our board, the community and NSLIJ to monitor its effectiveness (especially in coordinating with FDNY ambulance service to ensure safe and appropriate response to all emergencies), and to sponsor a public outreach/education program that will communicate the role of the Center in the larger health care system.

We further urge the City and State Departments of Health to continue seeking opportunities to restore a full service hospital to our district, which we believe is crucial to the health and well-being of the community.

## CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

Within the next few weeks, the Office of Management and Budget will receive our specific Capital and Expense Budget requests and priorities. We cannot stress enough – as we have done so often before - the particular needs we have enumerated that deserve special consideration.

Ours is a community of families and preservationists: our block and community associations plant and care for trees; friends' groups care for our parks; merchants' associations help local park and City groups; civic organizations clean their streets, and residents get involved and help. We also have BIDs, that are committed to supporting our businesses, and provide security, extra sanitation services and street beautification projects to ensure that their areas remain attractive destinations. The fact that the historic beauty and integrity of our many neighborhoods has survived is clearly due to these efforts.

It is time that the City makes the same commitment to our district, as have our residents and businesses. Increasingly, City agencies are asking for input from the community board regarding the issuance of licenses, changes to regulations and feedback for large development projects. However, we notice that building owners, restaurateurs and cafe entrepreneurs have found it too easy to build in complete disregard of local laws. New businesses are opened and profits are reaped while complaints sit on agency desks. Illegal and unlicensed operations continue without inspections and penalties, and residents continue to complain to the Board office. More careful attention must be paid to the zoning regulations regarding building plan examiners and sidewalk cafe application certifiers. Illegal construction continues in Community District 2. And too often, we are asked to retroactively approve illegal renovations in our historic districts. We need City agencies to establish procedures that will help us to protect our neighborhoods in line with existing laws, and then follow up with inspections to ensure that violations are cured in a timely manner.

Finally, we ask that in FY 2013, the City does not again propose cuts to the community board budgets. Any reduction would essentially eliminate the money expended on basic operating expenses. To compensate, our only alternative would be to lay off staff, thereby making it impossible to perform some of our City Charter-mandated responsibilities. Community boards have not received increases to their operating budgets in twenty years. It is difficult to perform our duties under the current funding. Any further cuts would basically undermine our role in helping to deliver the appropriate level of city services in our community and prevent us from participating as a full partner in reviewing land use changes, monitoring city services and reviewing agency applications. We understand that there are fiscal challenges that New York City must address. However, it would be short sighted to not take advantage of the thousands of volunteer hours that community board members devote to ensuring that the City stays connected to its local populations.

*Brad Hoylman*

Brad Hoylman  
Chair

*Bob Gormley*

Bob Gormley  
District Manager