

Bronx Community Board #2

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SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION –HISTORY

Community District #2 is located in the Southeast corner of the Bronx, bounded by the Bronx River on the east, the East River on the south, E. 149th Street and Prospect Avenue on the west and portions of E. 169th Street, E. 167th Street and Westchester Avenue on the north. It is comprised of the neighborhoods of **Hunt's Point, Longwood** and the southeastern portion of **Morrisania**.

The Europeans first settled Hunt's Point in 1663. At this time, Edward Jessup and John Richardson arrived on the peninsula and purchased the land from the Wekkguasegeek tribe indigenous to the area. After Jessup died, his widow, Elizabeth entrusted the land to Thomas Hunt Jr., her son in-law.

Once part of West Farms in lower Westchester County, the area was annexed to New York City in 1874 and began to develop after a subway line from Manhattan was extended in 1904. As more people moved to the area, the city's business owners began to realize the advantages of locating to Hunt's Point. Among them were the convenient access to the Tri-State region, the existing rail lines running through the Hunt's Point area and the abundance of space available for the development of industrial and commercial activity.

The population was predominantly Jewish along with a few German, Irish and Italian immigrants; later it became largely Puerto Rican and African-American. By the 1960's local housing was deteriorating and many white residents left for the suburbs. Hunt's Point was beset by poverty, drugs, and crime in the 1970's and early 1980's. Characterized by frequent arson and mass abandonment, this period was undoubtedly the low point in the area's rich and diverse history. Living conditions became so difficult that almost 60,000 residents, approximately two-thirds of the existing population left, or were forced out, of the neighborhood during the 1970's.

Conditions later vastly improved through the initiatives of SEBCO Development Corp., Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association, South Bronx Development Corp., the Bronx Borough President's Office, and the New York City Department of Housing Preservation & Development which created new housing and rehabilitated existing housing. The success of their efforts are clearly evident. Between 1980 and 1990, the population of the district grew by 14.7 percent, the largest margin of growth of any community in the Bronx. From 1990 to 2000 the Growth rate was 18.7 percent, the second highest in the borough. Since 1992, we have seen the development of over 4,800 new housing units. Of the new units, two-thirds are located in what were once vacated buildings and one-third are newly created low-density housing. So thorough is the development and renovation of the district that no city owned apartment building in the community stands vacant.

SECTION TWO: OUR PEOPLE AND HEALTH

Some Facts about the Population:

The results of the 2010 US Census were not available at the time that this statement was submitted. The facts noted, therefore, reflect the 2000 Census report results.

2000 Population	Black (Non-Hisp.).	Hispanic (Non-Hisp.)	White	Asian & Pacific Is	Other
CD2: 46,824	10,021 21.4%	35,507 75.8%	582 1.2%	207 0.47%	507 1.1%

The population and character of the neighborhoods that comprise CD2 are predominantly Hispanic and Black. Between 1990 and 2000, the number and percent of Asians & Pacific Islanders and Blacks has increased slightly, while the percent of Whites and Hispanics has decreased slightly.

Compared to NYC as a whole, in Hunt's Point /Mott Haven the percentage of the population that is Hispanic is substantially higher (73% vs. 27%), the percentage that is White is substantially lower (1% vs. 34%), the percentage that is African-American is nearly identical (24% vs. 25%), and the percentage that is Asian is substantially lower (.5% vs. 10%).

Our population is growing both young and old at the same time. Overall, however, this community is young in comparison to other parts of New York City. The median age in CD2 is 26.9, the third lowest in the Bronx and significantly younger than the median age for the Borough and New York City as a whole. The increase in population occurred principally among children under 9 years (20.3%) and adults over 60 years of age (10%).

Families in CD2 households are more likely to have children living with them than in New York City as a whole. Single women head a majority of these households. It ranks 2nd, among 59 Community Boards, for households with children under 18 years old (50.8%).

Our residents are among the least likely to have completed high school or equivalency degrees in New York City, both reflecting and exacerbating employment problems.

Compared to NYC as a whole, in Hunt's Point /Mott Haven the percentage of adults 25 years and older without a high school diploma (61% vs. 32%) and the percentage of linguistically isolated household (28% vs. 12%) are substantially higher. Approximately 4.1% of the population has completed a 2-year or 4 -year College curriculum.

Households in CD2 on average earn significantly less than the rest of NYC. In 2007, 55.3% of all residents received some sort of income support, a decrease of 9% from the 1994 high figure of 61.1%, but still one of the highest in NYC. The percent of the population on income support for the entire city in 2000 was 32% and 42.9% for the Bronx.

Community Health Profile:

Key health issues in Hunts Point / Mott Haven include:

- Hunts Point / Mott Haven residents experience more barriers to health care access than those in NYC overall, with more than one third of residents without a regular doctor and a high proportion of residents (16%) visiting the emergency department for routine health care.
- Although death rates due to HIV disease have decreased in Hunts Point / Mott Haven during the past decade, this community, has the third highest HIV-related death rate in the city.
- Hunts Point / Mott Haven have the highest proportion of adults with diabetes in the city (17%), and those who are obese are much more likely to have diabetes than non-obese adults.

Death rates:

In Hunts Point and Mott Haven, death rates are higher than in NYC overall.

Although New York City death rates have dropped over the last decade, the death rate in Hunts Point / Mott Haven has remained consistently higher than both the Bronx and New York City overall rates.

In 2003-2004, the average annual death rate in Hunts Point and Mott Haven was more than 10% higher than in the Bronx and 35% higher than in New York City overall.

Premature death:

People who die before age 75 can be thought of as dying early, or prematurely. If a person dies early, their years of potential Life lost (YPLLs) can be calculated by subtracting their age at death from 75 years to get a measure of premature death.

The causes of premature death differ across communities. The primary cause of premature death in Hunts Point / Mott Haven is cancer, as well as in both the Bronx and New York City overall.

The 2003-2004 average annual death rate for people younger than 75 years in Hunts Point / Mott Haven is one of the highest, ranking 40th among 42 NYC neighborhoods.

Avoidable hospitalization:

The 2004 avoidable hospitalization rate in Hunt's Point / Mott Haven ranks as the second worst (41st) among 42 NYC neighborhoods.

Health Insurance:

More than one in three adults in Hunt's Point and Mott Haven are uninsured or went without health insurance during the past year.

Smoking:

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in New York City and the cause of many illnesses, including heart disease, stroke, emphysema, and lung cancer. One fifth of Hunts Point / Mott Haven residents (20%) currently smoke, but nearly 7 in 10 smokers in Hunts Point and Mott Haven (67%) are trying to stop.

Heart Disease:

The heart disease hospitalization rate in Hunts Point / Mott Haven has remained consistently high during the past decade. The average annual heart disease hospitalization rate in 2003-2004 was 25% higher than the Bronx rate and 50% higher than the rate in NYC overall (2,773/100,000 vs. 2,201/100,000 in the Bronx and 1,856/100,000 in NYC).

Obesity:

One in 4 adults in Hunts Point and Mott Haven is obese. Obesity can lead to a variety of health problems, including heart disease and diabetes. Rates of obesity are increasing rapidly in New York City and across the U.S., making it a major public health concern

Diabetes:

Adults are nearly twice as likely to have diabetes in Hunts Point and Mott Haven as in NYC overall. The increasing prevalence of obesity in the U.S. has contributed to an epidemic of diabetes. About 95% of diabetes cases are type 2 diabetes, which is strongly associated with obesity.

In Hunts Point and Mott Haven, 17% of adults have diabetes, which is nearly twice the percent among adults in New York City overall (9%).

HIV Status:

The death rate due to HIV disease has dropped by more than half during the past decade in this community. However, in 2003-2004, the average annual HIV related death rate in Hunts Point / Mott Haven was still 55% higher than the Bronx rate and more than 3 times the NYC overall rate (61/100,000 vs. 39/100,000 in the Bronx and 18/100,000 in NYC).

HIV/AIDS testing and prevention:

Hunts Point / Mott Haven residents are more likely to be tested for HIV than those in New York City overall (42% vs. 23%). However, one quarter of positive HIV test results (24%) are "late" diagnoses (HIV has already progressed to AIDS) in this community.

The most common way people get HIV is through sexual contact, and having multiple sex partners increases the risk of HIV. Only one third (32%) of Hunts Point / Mott Haven adults who had more than 1 sex partner in the past year reported using a condom at their last sexual encounter.

Psychological distress:

Nearly 1 in 10 adults in Hunts Point and Mott Haven suffers from serious psychological distress. In Hunts Point / Mott Haven, residents are more likely to experience serious psychological distress than those in New York City overall (9% vs. 6%).

Mental illness:

Residents in Hunts Point / Mott Haven had a higher mental illness hospitalization rate in the past 10 years (excluding alcohol- or drug-related illness) than those in New York City overall. In addition, the mental illness hospitalization rate in this community has increased by 11 % during the past decade.

In 2003-2004, the community's average annual rate of mental illness hospitalizations (1,051/100,000) was higher than both the Bronx rate (949/100,000) and the rate in New York City overall (813/100,000).

Alcohol-related hospitalizations:

The alcohol-related hospitalization rate in Hunts Point and Mott Haven has increased by more than 20% in the past decade. In 2003-2004, the average annual alcohol-related hospitalization rate in this community was 55% higher than in the Bronx and double the New York City overall rate (877/100,000 vs. 569/100,000 in the Bronx and 439/100,000 in NYC).

Drug-related hospitalizations:

The drug-related hospitalization rate increased between 1999 and 2004. In 2003-2004, it was higher (2,344/100,000) than in the Bronx (1,258/100,000) and nearly 4 times the rate in New York City overall (595/100,000).

Drug-related deaths:

The death rate due to drugs in 2003-2004 was 3 times as high in Hunts Point and Mott Haven as in NYC overall (30/100,000 vs. 10/100,000).

Cancer deaths:

The death rate due to cancer has remained fairly steady in Hunts Point / Mott Haven during the past decade, while the NYC overall rate has dropped. The 2003-2004 average annual cancer death rate was similar to the Bronx rate but more than 25% higher than the NYC overall rate (209/100,000 vs. 185/100,000 in the Bronx and 161/100,000 in NYC).

Preventing cancer and related deaths. Individuals can reduce their risk of the most common cancers. Never smoking or quitting the habit greatly reduces the risk of lung and other cancers. High colon and breast cancer death rates highlight the importance of getting recommended screenings so treatment can begin early.

The highest cancer-related death rates among men in Hunts Point and Mott Haven are due to lung, prostate, and colon cancers. Among women, lung, colon, and breast cancers are the top 3 causes of cancer-related death.

SECTION THREE: THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Housing:

In CD2, housing is predominantly medium density apartment buildings and row houses. The Hunts Point peninsula, to the east of the Bruckner Expressway, is a 20 block residential community of approximately 14,000 residents surrounded by manufacturing and other mixed uses.

Community Board #2 has historically placed housing redevelopment and new construction among its highest priorities. The housing initiative is one in which both the Community Board and local organizations have been extremely successful. The impetus for this advocacy developed as a result of the need to restore a massive decline in the area's housing stock which occurred during the 1970's and 1980's.

Those few small private homes already in the district were a rock of stability during the seventies when many of the multiple dwellings succumbed to the plague of abandonment. During that same period only 10% of our small home stock was lost and continues to be strong to the present.

Community District #2 is still undergoing a significant increase in housing redevelopment that is welcomed in the area. The new housing removes vacant buildings as a blighting element, encourages rejuvenation of existing properties and provides customers for businesses which further strengthens the economic fabric of the community.

However, Hunt's Point / Longwood has an extremely low rate of ownership. Those that do own their own homes have the most precarious financial situations; Community Board #2 has one of the highest rates of foreclosures in the City. Between 2002 and 2005, the percentage of home purchase loans that were sub prime increased by 33.8 percentage points, one of the largest increases in the city. This community district has the highest poverty rate in the city.

Over 4,500 new units of housing were developed between F.Y. 91 and the present. This new housing has resulted in an increased population of over 7,000, approximately half of which were formerly homeless, one quarter low income and the final quarter private homeowners. This population increase represents a 18.7% rise in the district's population.

The development of housing in the district has been consistent with the Community Board's plan to develop a mixture of housing forms. Two thirds of the newly developed units are made up of formerly vacant structures which have been renovated, one third represent low-density housing. These new homes will guarantee the community a mixed income character far into the future.

Through the past 15 years, Community Board #2 has made great strides toward its goal of developing a mixture of housing types that provide all too scarce opportunities for its long-time residents and newcomers seeking needed housing. At one end of that increasingly broad housing spectrum are private homes in the century-old Longwood Historic District and townhouses just one or two decades old. At the other end are rental units for formerly homeless and low-income individuals and families who have found stable homes in rehabilitated and new structures throughout the district. In all, the district's population has officially grown by 7,381 residents representing an 18.7% increase since FY91.

The current phase of Community Board #2-approved new and rehabilitated housing units continues to advance its mission of developing a truly diverse, mixed-income community by emphasizing two demographics currently under-represented in the district's housing pool: moderate income homeowners and seniors. During FY06 and continuing to the present, the CB2 Housing and Land Use committee has put its support behind new construction projects to create cooperative apartments for moderate-income individuals and families in the Longwood neighborhood. Similarly, the Committee has endorsed new construction projects to create housing for individual seniors and senior-head-of-household families (typically seniors with custody of minor grandchildren) elsewhere in Longwood and the district's Morrisania neighborhood.

The district's steady population increases have fostered business growth, an array of charter schools, additional medical facilities, and greater community involvement throughout CB2. With the crisis of sheer housing volume easing, Community Board #2 is looking to the future and moving previously secondary housing priorities up on the Community Board #2 housing agenda.

As a result, the CB2 Housing and Land Use Committee have identified and the full Board has formally resolved to pursue the following short list of housing priorities:

1. A comprehensive housing and land-use inventory: With dozens of private and public development projects continuing to change the district's streetscape, CB2 would create a comprehensive inventory of existing and developing housing stock throughout its neighborhoods. Benefit: This inventory would serve as a baseline from which to create a new needs assessment and draft guidelines for future development.
2. Statements of long- and short-term housing needs: The district's anticipated needs , assessment would categorize perceived housing issues by Short-Term and Long-Term Goals. Benefit: Solve acute problems and address chronic issues.
3. A standardized application process for subsidized and special-needs housing: The number of buildings in the district providing new low-income and special-needs housing units have introduced a like number of application forms and procedures to the community. Variations in application forms and eligibility rules have proven to be a barrier to many community members despite sincere efforts at outreach to intended beneficiaries. CB2 sees a solution in creating a uniform application form to be distributed by participating building management offices and the CB2 office. In coordinating this effort, CB2 would also explore ways in which applicants can receive counseling regarding their eligibility for specific housing units. Benefit: Guide more current residents out of substandard housing into decent affordable housing for which they are eligible.
4. A template and guidelines for presentations to the CB2 Housing and Land-Use Committee: Anticipating the continuing redevelopment of existing housing units and construction of new units, CB2 perceives a need to codify its presentation guidelines. These guidelines will be published and readily available to developers wishing to gain the Community Board's endorsement of their project. These guidelines would anticipate frequently asked questions and, after pre-presentation review by the CB2 staff , ensure that only fully prepared presenters come before the Housing and Land Use Committee. Benefit: Ensure a streamlined, efficient review process for both the Committee/Board and developers.
5. New initiatives for development of housing to meet needs within CB2 as stated by CB2: The district has historically responded to housing development proposals originated by agencies from outside the community. In large part, those initiatives have served the needs of CB2 to rebuild its badly decimated housing stock. They have successfully changed the district's housing profile while sweeping changes in the city's real estate market over the past decade have brought new residents to the community. As both factors continue to change the district's housing and demographics, CB2 perceives a need for new initiatives that will reflect trends revealed in its proposed needs assessment. Benefits: CB2 would take a more pro-active role in

designing and promoting new housing initiatives to advance its goal of creating an economically diverse and stable community.

6. A policy statement for clear and clean public spaces: With greater population density comes increased use of public spaces. Ironically, such increased use presents a risk to the maintenance and cleanliness of such spaces perhaps equivalent to the consequences of previous abandonment and disuse. CB2 would take a leadership role in establishing and enforcing responsibility and accountability for clear and clean public spaces throughout the district. Benefit: Clean, safe common areas promote community pride and individual dignity for all residents.
7. A means to connect local employees with local housing options: Which comes first, the housing or the local labor pool? CB2 would forge a stronger connection between its increased pool of affordable housing and the sizable existing pool of low wage earners employed by area employers. Benefits: Further stabilize the district's economic base by keeping steadily employed workers in the district after work. Improve the lives of such workers through decent housing and lower commutation expenses. Foster a healthier, more reliable local work force for area employers.
8. Initiatives for job creation: Through its proposed guidelines for housing developers' presentations, CB2 would encourage the hiring of local residents and locally-based companies on construction and renovation sites in the district. CB2 is also in a unique position to build a bridge between area employers and agencies working in the arena of job training. That bridge could connect under-employed residents to appropriate training and ultimately to jobs close to home. Benefits: Local laborers and contractors would take and encourage enduring pride in community improvements. Employers would gain a local labor pool with more reliable attendance and specific training. Resident employees would have steady employment accessible to affordable housing without high commutation expenses. The community would gain residential and industrial stability that generates more retail commerce for existing businesses and attracts new retailers.
9. A means of regular communication with adjacent community board housing and land-use committees: CB2 is in part a peninsula, not an island. What impacts its residents resonates in contiguous Community Board districts and vice versa. While an informal "grapevine" links city neighborhoods across district lines, CB2 and its neighbors would benefit by regular communication. Benefit: Engender greater cooperation when appropriate and broker solutions when interests diverge.

Housing report compiled by Allison Jaffe, Housing Committee facilitator.

Waterfront:

Similar to the Bronx, the Hunt's Point peninsula is surrounded on three sides by water. It is not surprising therefore, that the waterfront is playing an increasingly important part in our planning for the future. The Port Morris and Hunt's Point waterfronts are considered "working waterfronts" in the City's Comprehensive Waterfront Plan and are designated as Significant Maritime Industrial Areas. This status protects existing uses, a source of consternation for community residents desperate for waterfront access and more green space.

As was noted in the 2003 Bronx Waterfront Taskforce Executive Summary, "the Bronx shoreline offers tremendous opportunities for new recreational venues, valuable ecological restoration, quality neighborhood development and a vibrant working waterfront".

Highlights of the Taskforce's recommendations, and we concur, for Hunt's Point and the Bronx River include:

- Remove the prison barge
- Reuse the marine transfer station (maritime or other economic development)
- Develop maritime activities in Hunt's Point including possible freight ferries, water shuttles between the Bronx and Queens, fishing fleets & recreation boats
- Maximize recreational opportunities on the Bronx and East Rivers; complete both the Bronx River and South Bronx Greenway, developing a "green necklace" around Hunt's Point industrial waterfront.

In the South Bronx, the Taskforce supports bolstering the working waterfront in Hunt's Point and Port Morris, where its ownership is private as well as public, for the food market and for other industries, especially those that utilize waterborne transportation. However, the shoreline should not be squandered on garbage transfer stations and other noxious uses that are not water dependent.

The Committee on Hunt's Point believes, and we concur, that it is feasible and indeed essential to establish public access to the waterfront while protecting its natural resources and enhancing its employment resources. Implementation of these recommendations will require further research and planning efforts. Two crucial projects that will determine the character of Hunt's Point Water front should be addressed in the very near future: removal of the prison barge and reuse of the marine transfer station.

Parks:

Unfortunately, Bronx Community Board #2 has the least amount of park acreage in the borough both in number and per capital. We are therefore very supportive of the proposed South Bronx Greenway. The Point CDC, Sustainable South Bronx and other Community groups, including this board, are working with the NYC Economic Development Corporation to secure a portion of the greenway through the Hunt's Point market, other adjacent EDC properties, and through the Fulton Fish market property. DEP, meanwhile, will "open up" the northern part of its Water Pollution Control Plant property so that the greenway can reach the Tiffany Street pier and the newly opened 5 acre Barretto Point Park.

Proposed bike and pedestrian paths can help move area employees to local businesses in an environmentally sound manner, while this "green necklace" around the peninsula will help employers provide a much-needed amenity for the estimated 16,000 employees who work in the area. Green space, a bike-ped path, designated fishing spots, and picnics areas will all help employers attract and retain qualified employees and furnish much needed recreation space to residents and workers alike. We are hopeful that the greenway will hug the coastline as closely as possible.

In 2008 Lafayette/Hunt's Point Riverside Park was completed. This small site (70' x 190') is on the de-mapped street of Lafayette Avenue just north of Edgewater Road and its natural slope into the river can be utilized for water-based sporting activities such as canoeing. The Point CDC, located in Hunt's Point, and "Rocking the Boat" are proposing that a Boathouse be built on the site. This facility could become a new destination for school groups, families and visitors to the area that celebrates the resurgence of the Bronx River, teaches about its history and inculcates respect for the environment.

In 2009, Concrete Plant Park" opened. Site of a concrete plant from the late 1940s through 1987, the land was acquired by Parks in 2000. In close partnership with community organizations and public agencies, the Parks Department and the Bronx River Alliance began the revitalization of this formerly abandoned site through re-establishing salt marshes on the riverbank once strewn with trash and tires, as well as reintroducing the public to the site through organizing community festivals. This waterfront park, completed in September 2009, contains facilities supporting and linking existing and planned multi-use pedestrian greenways with other off-road, on-road bicycle/pedestrian routes. Construction of a new canoe/kayak launch provides an access point to the Bronx River Corridor along the park's shoreline. The park was also enhanced through the creation of a waterfront promenade, and inviting park entrances at both Westchester Avenue and Bruckner Boulevard.

SECTION FOUR: ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Major Concerns:

Fortunately, CD2 is home to many community-based organizations concerned with environmental conditions. They have made links between perceived noxious land use and high rates of disease and discomfort in the community. Among the complaints and concerns are:

A) Brownfield sites in Hunt's Point are both burdens and potential opportunities for the area. The NYC Department of Environmental Protection should play a pro-active role in identifying, remediating, and bringing new life to the many non-contiguous acres of industrial brownfields in Hunt's Point. To date, DEP has done little to facilitate clean-ups in the community or work with the Community Board to identify contaminated sites. We believe that DEP should partner with eligible community development organizations to seek out and remediate brownfield sites rather than simply fulfilling its enforcement duties. Further, we feel that more sites would be acquired and successfully remediated if DEP re-oriented its priorities on brownfields--from watchdog to technical assistance provider. The lack of positive DEP involvement and cooperation on this end of the process has, we feel, resulted in many sites remaining untouched and off the market, festering environmental wounds in our community.

B) City-sponsored capital projects totaling close to \$ 1 billion in Hunts Point. The construction of the Fulton Fishmarket (\$ 83 million), the upgrade and expansion of the Hunts Point Wastewater Treatment Plant (\$ 750 million), improvements to road and rail in the industrial area (\$ 5 million), and enhancements to the Produce Market

taken together, with the construction of the Iroquois Natural Gas Pipeline, have created a climate of unprecedented growth and change in Hunts Point. These projects have been undertaken with very little attention to community planning issues, or their cumulative impact on the local environment.

We believe that a significant role exists for DCAS or DCP to coordinate multiple projects and prepare overall impact statements when these projects occur simultaneously. Further, we believe that the scale and scope of these projects justify the engagement of a skilled urban planner who could assist the community in drafting its own master plan for the area and help integrate these new initiatives into an overall land use plan for Hunt's Point. This planner could be based at the office of the Community Board and accountable to its members.

C) The larger number of heavy manufacturing industries and commercial traffic in close proximity to residential areas. Nearly 40% of the city's sludge and a large amount of Manhattan's commercial waste is processed and transported through Hunt's Point. Wind blown trash, foul and acrid odors, waste spills, illegal dumping and rodent infestation are daily facts of life in this community. These environmental stresses affect a wide range of economic and quality of life indicators including employee job performance, local school attendance, and the overall health of community residents.

D) The high volume of diesel truck traffic and its concomitant air pollution and safety hazards. The childhood asthma rate in Hunts Point is many times the national average, and the presence of noxious odors has been positively correlated with the incidence of asthmatic episodes in children.

E) The numerous solid and putrid waste transfer facilities and the concern that with the closing of the New York City Fresh Kills landfill, a greater reliance upon these transfer stations will ensue. By any objective measure, the Hunt's Point peninsula is over saturated with transfer stations and other waste handling facilities. It is host to a sludge de-watering facility, a DEP Water Pollution Control Plant, a sludge processing plant, and over eighteen waste processing sites. Hunt's Point has borne far more than its fair share of the city's private and public waste management facilities.

As a result of these environmental concerns, Community Board #2 has adopted a policy of zero tolerance for any proposed new waste transfer stations in this district.

Rail Service:

Hopefully, the restoration of rail service to Hunt's Point along the former NY-New Haven rail line of Metro North will become a reality. As part of the Penn Station Corridor Study, Metro North is examining opportunities for resuming commuter rail service along this line for the first time in over 60 years. A proposed commuter line would run from Penn Station through Astoria, over the Hell Gate Bridge and make stops in the Bronx at Hunt's Point, Parkchester, and Co-op City, linking these East Bronx destinations, facilitating reverse commuting, and mitigating congestion on the Bruckner and I-95. This new stop would enable Board #2 residents to commute to jobs in lower Westchester and even Connecticut. It would also encourage new investment in Hunt's Point and create a mass transit rail stop on the peninsula side of the Bruckner Expressway.

SECTION FIVE: YOUTH CONCERNS

Schools

We have schools of all grades serving local children as well as children from other school districts. We have always supported education and are committed to developing and maintaining high standards for teachers as well as students. We must also provide assurances to parents that their children are in safe and healthy environments, both during the school day and during after school programs.

Libraries

With the increase in housing and population, there is a critical need to provide full spectrum library services. The libraries play a vital role to address and complement the educational environment and provide a valuable resource to residents in the community. Libraries serve, as educational and cultural centers that often are the only resources children have to go after school. They are the knowledgeable base of the community and the future.

We are happy that six day funding for libraries has changed for the better: currently, the libraries are not at risk of losing their base funding.

We support increasing branch library funding to bridge the “digital divide” through free computer training and broad access to the Internet. Of all free public access computers in the City, 98% are in public libraries. We strongly urge the City to maintain funding so our libraries remain open on Saturdays for those many residents who are unable to use them during the week.

CB2 also believes library funding for expanded hours and technology training and services should be increased. This Board seeks funding for building and technology infrastructure, which would serve to protect the investment that the City has made in computers and electronic information resources while ensuring well-maintained and secure libraries.

Summer Youth Employment Program

Community Board #2 has suffered from the selection process and general disorganization of the Summer Youth Employment Program.

The number of slots that Community District 2 has received from summer jobs grossly underestimates that number of children in this community who could benefit from this program. Children in our district are in desperate need of the experience, money and skill development that summer employment provides, and this program is a lynchpin to their efforts to obtain that employment. The alternative to the positive experience of employment is far too often a “lost summer” for our youth, spent on the streets engaged in idle behavior that may lead to anti-social behavior.

Young people also need after school programs that will provide them with an outlet for exercise and community involvement. Community Board #2 strongly urges Department of Youth and Community Development to fund more programs that support the arts and athletics.

HIV/AIDS Education

We are planning to establish a peer youth health awareness program, with particular emphasis on HIV/AIDS prevention. Once every hour, two young people in the United States are infected with HIV, and about half of the new infections occur among youth between the ages of 15 and 24. Contrary to common belief, adolescents are a high-risk group. They are not only exploring their sexual identities, but also experimenting with drugs and alcohol, with little regard for risk and long-term consequences. Their judgment is often impaired by drugs, and not to mention peer pressure. Teens do not view HIV as a direct and immediate threat. They do not see outward signs of HIV among their peers, and they usually do not see their friends sick with full-blown AIDS. This is what makes HIV, with its invisibility with its very long incubation period, a silent killer to teens.

Moreover, as statistics show from the U.S. Department and Human Services, approximately one-fifth of the AIDS cases in the United States occur in New York City alone. That is why peer-to-peer education is so important in metropolitan New York. Peer-to-peer education works because peers are much more effective at changing each other's behaviors than teachers and other adults.

SECTION SIX: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In January of 2008, the Department of City Planning approved the plans to rezone 33 blocks in Hunt's Point as part of a larger “Hunt's Point Vision Plan” designed to improved the area's open space, transportation, and economic opportunities. For more information about this project, please visit www.plannyc.org.

Because the economic future of Hunt's Point is tied to food-related industries, it is essential that the area be clean and untainted by noxious uses of land. The concentration of waste transfer stations in the area has created daily nuisances for the food industry, including windblown trash, foul odors, rodent infestations, and some major streets clogged with waste hauling vehicles.

Community Board #2 recognizes the importance of the Hunt's Point Food Distribution Center (HPFDC) to the district and to the City as a whole and has been supportive of the NYC Economic Development Corporation's plans to expand and improve the food industry facilities. The Food Distribution Center has undergone numerous expansion projects including a 150,000-sq./ft. refrigerated warehouse constructed in the Hunt's Point Cooperative Market. This new state-of-the-art facility has created many new jobs.

The biggest expansion for the HPFDC is the opening of the Fulton Fish Market in Hunt's Point. The City, constructed a 451,000 square foot two-story state-of-the-art wholesale seafood distribution facility at the HPFDC. The approximately 30-acre site is located south of Food Center Drive at Halleck Street and bounded by the East River to the south.

The new Market accommodates approximately 55 businesses. Each selling stall has a freezer and refrigerator, a display and/or preparation area, storage capacity, ice making equipment and is located along a central delivery corridor. In the future, the building may also contain a restaurant, and public amenities. Parking for large and medium trucks, vans and cars are incorporated into the site plan, as well as loading docks, appropriate queuing space and track circulation. There are approximately 1,400 loading and queuing spaces for suppliers and customers on site, and approximately 600 parking spaces for employees across Food Center Drive on a portion of another site.

The Market's relocation is included within the New York State Economic Development Zone and New York City Empowerment Zone. The relocation, which is a use consistent with the objectives of these zones, has brought new jobs for local residents and increases the area's business profile. The Fish Market is compatible with adjacent uses at the HPFDC and consistent with the New York City Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. In addition, the Market complies with goals outlined by the City for the South Bronx Significant Maritime Industrial Area and In-Place Industrial Park designations.

Finally, development of the site as a wholesale market follows NYCEDC's goal for site disposition within the HPFDC and allows further consolidation of food wholesaling activities.

We would like NYCEDC to facilitate the introduction of a retail economy to the Hunt's Point industrial area which would help diversify the area's mix of wholesaling and manufacturing businesses, and can serve as a powerful bulwark against further encroachments by the waste industry. Because area businesses now largely serve regional and national markets, they are seldom attentive to the harmful impacts their activities may have on the 14,000 people who live in the peninsula. A retail economy can help make area businesses more cognizant of quality of life issues such as unnecessary truck idling, dirty sidewalks, foul odors, and windblown trash on roadways, since such environmental insults can negatively impact retail sales.

On a much smaller scale, the opening up of the Hunt's Point wholesale markets to retail customers from the South Bronx has been identified as a Community need. At present, Board #2 residents bear all of the burdens of hosting the country's largest food distribution center but enjoy little of the benefits of living so close to some of the world's best produce, meat and fish products. To address this, we are proposing a wholesale to-the-public market operated by local entrepreneurs who will vend tropical, specialty produce, meats, dairy products, and fish from the nearby wholesale markets in an effort to leverage the great bounty of fresh food that passes through Hunt's Point each day. Though the peninsula is home to the freshest produce in NYC, its residents have absolutely no access to any of these markets. There is no fish store in the Hunt's Point peninsula, no butcher shop and only a few small produce operations.

Hunts Point Economic Development Corporation:

The Hunt's Point Economic Development Corporation (HPEDC) works to strengthen and solidify the relationship between businesses and the community. The EDC helps develop and coordinate business programs, assists with area maintenance and industrial park management.

The Hunt's Point Avenue commercial strip continues to suffer from worrisome vacancy rates and deteriorated storefronts. The HPEDC is addressing the redesign of Hunt's Point Avenue. The goal is to make the shopping area more attractive and hopefully to improve the economy of the immediate community.

SECTION SEVEN: A NOTE ON CRIME

Under the excellent leadership of Captain Philip Rivera, the 41st Police Precinct has continued the positive trend of decreasing overall crime in our community. Nonetheless, this community board continues to place increased law enforcement high on our list of community needs. Worry over the level of staffing, both uniformed and administrative, still exists within the community. Areas of concern include drug-related crimes, gang violence, burglary, prostitution and other quality of life issues. We will continue to lobby for increased police personnel. Funding for crime and drug prevention programs will also continue to be sought.

John Robert
DISTRICT MANAGER

Roberto S. Garcia
CHAIRPERSON

Working To Improve The Hunt's Point – Longwood Community