



**The City of New York  
Community Board No. 3  
Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Plaza  
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## **DISTRICT NEEDS STATEMENT FISCAL YEAR 2013**

### **INTRODUCTION**

New York City is one of the most diverse and exuberant places in the world. The city is a manifestation of intercultural congruity and historical events. Consisting of five boroughs and a population of 8.4 million, NYC has been proclaimed to be the “melting pot” of modern day society. Within this architectural behemoth is a place called Bedford-Stuyvesant, a family based community with a traditional way of life. Communities such as Bedford-Stuyvesant are key elements for the preservation of the history of New York City.

Bedford-Stuyvesant is located in the heart of Brooklyn, which is the most populated borough in all of New York City. This district is predominantly a Pan African Diaspora community that is rich in culture, and home to some of the most desirous housing stock in New York City. As a district, we are continuing to stay on the Mayor’s vision working in conjunction with PlaNYC 2030. Our future goals are to build on the solid foundation that we already have in place, by ushering in new businesses to help stimulate the economy and by improving the quality of life in this community, as well as neighboring communities. The enrichment of neighborhoods such as ours will be instrumental in the composition to the future melody of the “Big Apple.”

Community District 3 has worked vigorously throughout its years for the betterment of Bedford-Stuyvesant. With the new coming of age, we are very excited about the various opportunities available for Fiscal Year 2013 that will help elevate our community socially and economically. With projects such as the Nostrand Avenue Reconstruction Project HWK 1129 and Bedford-Stuyvesant Gateway Streetscape Enhancement Project, the future of Bedford-Stuyvesant is truly looking very promising.

With the economy being in such a volatile state, Community District 3 has been working hand in hand with Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corp. on the Bedford-Stuyvesant Gateway Business Improvement District (BID). With strenuous market analysis, community feedback, and a thorough procurement system set in place; we are looking only to bring in businesses with the utmost potential that will be beneficial to Bedford-Stuyvesant.

The Community Board consists of fifty volunteers, all who live within the borders of Bedford-Stuyvesant, and three full-time staff members. The Board is broken down into different committees. Each committee consists of a chairperson, vice or co-chairperson and committee members. The composition of the committees consists of board members and residents from Bedford-Stuyvesant. Every committee has charges set forth each year, which

are taken from the responsibilities outlined in the City Charter and from the input of the community at large. Our office, like the other 58 community boards in this city, works to rectify issues and concerns of the board's constituents to maintain a reasonable quality of life for all.

As we move forth, Community District 3 has attempted to involve as much of the community as possible. We have developed surveys to allow the residents to be heard about important issues within our borders. This year we implemented live streaming so that persons unable to make the meetings can still be a part of our public meetings on-line. Our website, [www.cb3bedstuy.org](http://www.cb3bedstuy.org), posts information and is linked to facebook and twitter. It is interactive, making it possible to respond while you view the meeting. The goal we are striving to meet is to keep the Bedford-Stuyvesant residents informed.

Our community partners are key assets to our success over the years. Maintaining these professional relationships allows us to relay important information to the community; therefore, creating a transparent system and building trust amongst our fellow citizens of Bedford-Stuyvesant.

Even with all of the progress in Bedford-Stuyvesant there are still voids that need to be filled within our community. Various perils such as health issues and predatory practices have plagued the lifeline of Bedford-Stuyvesant for awhile, and we can no longer afford to set them aside.

- We continue to be the epicenter of disastrous health issues such as HIV/AIDS, asthma, and obesity
- There are vicious predatory lending schemes, the looming water and the property tax lien system
- The educational system changes – lack of understanding for parents and community regarding processes that are now governing our children's education
- There are insufficient employment opportunities
- A need for access to workforce development programs
- The opportunities for the growth of small businesses has diminished
- A rise in gang culture and the proliferation of guns that are readily available in our public housing complexes
- Infrastructure and environmental issues such as the construction of the sanitation garage in CD3
- Local streets that require varying levels of attention are put off for years in the name of fiscal accountability

Community District 3 has always held the tradition of ongoing efforts to make this district a model for living, working, enjoyment and proactive efforts for a standard of quality and excellence. The residents in Bedford-Stuyvesant have a reputation of activism and concern that is unmatched.

## **ARTS & CULTURE**

Unfortunately, this portion of our needs statement has not changed. We continue to look towards having an African American Cultural Center within the borders of Bedford-Stuyvesant. The community urgently bands together to hold on to the richness that is our diverse African Diaspora cultural experience. There should be funding made available for

activities and programs that depict and enhance this community's eclectic culture. Our art and cultural institutions are teetering on the edge because of a lack of capital.

There are so many organizations, institutions, foundations and programs that we would like to see survive: The Central Brooklyn Jazz Festival, the Fulton Art Fair that is celebrating its 55<sup>th</sup> year in 2013, are two widely enjoyed activities each year, yet there is hardly enough income generated to keep them afloat. It is the love of the arts that has sustained them thus far. The Bedford Stuyvesant Artists' Association (BeSAA), as well as our galleries, some of which have had to close their doors during the last fiscal year, needs support to continue. It would, indeed, be a travesty to allow these time honored entities to fade into nothingness. Our children must be exposed to their culture that is so rich and beautiful. The youth should be able to learn who they are through the expressions of those who have come before them. To share what we have is a gateway to becoming who we are to be as a people. The diverse and rich culture of Bedford-Stuyvesant must be allowed to survive and be a prominent and integral part of the legacy that is the City of New York.

We are pleased that the City is looking at public spaces as a venue to have works of art. That is an exciting prospect for schools, parks and plazas, one of which will be on Fulton Street, our main commercial corridor. This is an opportunity for the local artists of Bedford-Stuyvesant to showcase their talent. With our streetscape project along Fulton Street in progress, and other venues being considered, albeit tentative, it is yet another way to keep the culture alive and visual for all to enjoy. However, to foster a growth in cultural and economic upward mobility, it is imperative that these projects are allowed to move forward. This cannot come to its full fruition without funding from the City.

## **DAY CARE**

Community Board 3 takes this opportunity to thank our Mayor and his administration for restoring the needed funding to the Division of Child Care and Head Start. As we know, the comprehensive early childhood education is a crucial beginning for any child.

With restoration to the Division, parents are once again able to find gainful employment. It is always imperative that we give our youth a solid foundation and maybe there will not be such a demand for re-entry programs.

Day Care and Head Start are where most of the children become socialized and learn to integrate with others. This much-needed component is a basic foundation to prepare the young children for the public school system. Without this initial advantage, some of the children end up in special education programs or are labeled with attention deficit and other learning disabilities. With the growing trend toward charter schools, the youth, without some formalized early schooling system, will not be eligible for the charter school environment. That would be a pity.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

An agreement has been reached for the site of the Pfizer Complex, with Acumen Capital Partners, LLC. This is a monumental opportunity for economic growth and development. It is one of the last bastions of land that can really impact the future economic development and employment opportunities in the northern section of Bedford-Stuyvesant. Pfizer and Community District 3 are on the same page with the vision for that site. This company has a proven track record of redeveloping former single tenant manufacturing facilities in New

York City into vibrant, much-needed, job-creating light industrial and commercial buildings. When this company was approached, they understood that this community was looking for job creation and economic development. We believe this is a good match. By moving into these types of arenas, we can curb the escalating unemployment rates here in Bedford-Stuyvesant.

As of 2010, the unemployment rate continues to be high in Community District 3. For Central Brooklyn, which includes Bedford-Stuyvesant, the rate was 15.3%, while Brooklyn at large was 10.2%. African Americans fair a bit worse. In our community it is 16.1% and an even more astounding 18.3% in Central Brooklyn. For the Latin American community, the largest ethnic group in Bedford-Stuyvesant, there is only a slightly higher percentage, 16.9%. We need assistance, such as subsidies and aid to small businesses to keep them alive as we go through the current economic crisis.

Just as there are prospects in the northern section of Community District 3 with the Pfizer site, there are also similar scenarios in the southern part of the district. There is a parcel of land on Atlantic Avenue which is Block 1557, Lot #s 3, 4, 23, 26, 28 & 31-37 totaling 25,616 square feet. Granted, this parcel is not particularly large; however, it is perfect for a residential community to benefit from. If utilized appropriately, this parcel can provide much-needed commercial opportunities, leading to additional employment opportunities.

## EDUCATION

Community District 3 is covered by School Districts 13 and 16. Unfortunately, very little has changed. What we are looking for is a 21<sup>st</sup> Century education for our youth that will equip them for success in the new global workplace. Our schools are still teaching to the test. This is not adequate to prepare them to think critically, solve problems, or use the knowledge they have gleaned. In this we are failing our children and our country. Our drop-out statistics have begun to rise. As a nation, we cannot afford to have our children fall behind.

The process of co-locating schools in Community District 3 has left a division between traditional schools and charter school parents. The traditional school community expresses concerns about being left out of the decision making process. School staff and parents should be partners with the Department of Education in this course of action.

Charter Schools are popping up everywhere. While we applaud the charter schools, every child is not going to have access to one. Acceptance is usually done on a lottery basis and they can only accept so many students. What then should happen to the rest of the youth? It is imperative that all schools afford the youth quality education and not just a select few. As stated previously little has changed:

- Resources for Classroom Essentials

The continued budget cuts still stymie any progress gained. We were hopeful that these cuts would be restored, as part of the President's commitment to sound education. We applaud all of our educators in the District for "doing more with less"; however, the constant uncertainty surrounding critical funding for our schools begins to take a toll on our children

- Comprehensive Approach to high Drop-Out Rates

We are still concerned with the high rate of early-leavers in our middle schools and high schools. This is the time to call for the development of a comprehensive plan to address these issues within our community. Strategies should include research on

best practices, and the convening of a commission comprised of a broad base of stakeholders. We must utilize what is already in place. For instance, the CEC must be empowered to catapult changes. (There are groups already organized in the community that could address this issue, if given support from the Department of Education.)

Middle Schools in Community District 3 are in a crises state. High retention rates have students who are 15 and 16 years old still in middle schools. The Department of Education needs to develop a comprehensive plan to address the needs of this population of students so that they may have an opportunity to successfully complete high school.

- School Safety

Gang recruitment and “turf” battles are certainly moving forward in their efforts in and around our schools. There has to be a comprehensive strategy to this negative phenomena growing in our urban settings. This Community Board was successful in establishing safe passage zones around Boys and Girls High School and CS 21. In addition to funding for more safe passage zones, we are requesting that any guidelines that have been developed by DOE’s Gang Intervention Unit be carefully reviewed, in conjunction with the NYPD Gang Unit and the District Attorney’s resources. Our children deserve to be safe.

There needs to be programs established for art, music, and sports in an afterschool setting. This will be beneficial to parents that need to work long hours, while their children (latchkey) are left to their own defenses. This would allow for structured time spent in a safe environment. Not only does this help parents because of the extended day, but it could well be a deterrent to gang recruitment and activities.

- Parental Involvement

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

The Department of Education must provide technical support to Parent Associations and Community Education Councils. Parental empowerment is the backbone of our children’s academic success.

In each of our district needs statements, we have advocated strongly for more parental involvement. The community board, community organizations, the various task forces and our elected officials are ready to participate in any pilots that DOE would like to initiate. We are ready!

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The preservation of our environment is the key essential to our way of life. Delegating money to make sure that we have an efficient infrastructure is a must. With New York City being such a highly populated area, our environment has to sustain more “wear and tear” than most habitats. Bedford-Stuyvesant has a population of 134, 217 people, and with the consumption of natural resources and production of waste per household our infrastructure is due for more than just a routine “tune up.” Air quality control is very important within our community since we have a vast amount of constituents that are diagnosed with asthma. By creating and maintaining a more conducive living environment it will not only elevate the quality of life but will also allow citizens to be more productive in their day to day activities. Also, by rebuilding our infrastructure, it will help introduce jobs in a market that is very lackluster when it comes to opportunities. New “Green” ideas are welcomed for the benefit of the community. Creating a more eco-friendly environment with the implementation of natural energy supplements would be groundbreaking for Bedford-Stuyvesant.

In this current fiscal cycle, Community District 3 is taking a closer look at environmental issues. November of 2010, we were approached by National Grid with an issue in the southern portion of Bedford-Stuyvesant concerning an investigation on Skillman Street, which is bounded by Flushing, Bedford and Park Avenues. The area of concern for National Grid, which was one of 22 others throughout the City, was once a holding site for manufactured gas plants, and the concern was that dangerous chemicals were left underground. This is a major issue as we continue to develop land within the District. Before any development has begun, the areas should have a thorough environmental study done. We cannot afford to put residents in jeopardy of future health issues. Despite the fact that this was the first such incident reported to us, we have begun to hear rumblings of another proposed site of possible contamination. The development of houses situated on Jewel McKoy Lane, between Troy and Schenectady Avenues whose cross streets are Herkimer and Atlantic are now attempting to have an investigation done. While nothing has been confirmed, the possibility can be totally disastrous.

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

## HEALTH CARE

Within the last couple of years great steps have been taken to improve the nation’s healthcare system. President Barack Obama’s healthcare reform was a major push for the positive inception of universal healthcare. The “Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act” (PPACA) was passed by congress and signed into law by the president on March 23, 2010. Even though the healthcare system is still in a transitional phase, we have to do a better job of making the information more accessible and understandable to the general public. Bedford Stuyvesant has some of the highest statistics when it comes to health issues. Diabetes, high blood pressure, and HIV/AIDS are some of the major health issues we have been struggling with for some time now. Utilizing our community partners, schools, and media outlets as tools to spread the word about these new health care developments will be

the focal point in determining whether or not we will see a drastic change for the good within the community.

The reform seems to be surrounded with controversy. Insurance companies are raising their rates, covering less and controlling how our health needs are met. There must be a way to make it possible that our nation's residents are covered, the insurance and pharmaceutical giants are accountable to the health of the client and not only to the money in their pockets. Steps need to be taken to insure the physical safety of the people. Healthier people mean longer life, more revenue productivity, and a better economy.

Possibly, offering incentives to third parties to promote healthier habits would be more impactful in our fight to create a healthier lifestyle. Thus, through substantial exposure and common practices from our fellow citizens not only will we be healthier as a people but also more knowledgeable about the new health care opportunities.

It is crucial that the residents of New York City have access to good medical care; even more so in Bedford-Stuyvesant where the percentages of persons without that access are lower than the rest of Brooklyn and considerably lower than New York City at large. Much of our high death rates are due to there being no personal doctor for the management of treatable illness. In this Community, people are more likely to go to the emergency room for sickness as opposed to going there for the intended emergency treatment. Health issues such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, prenatal care, HIV can be manageable conditions with appropriate medical check-ups with a personal doctor for regular treatment.

It seems that the more things change the more they remain the same. We are still the epicenter of health challenges. The premature death rate in Central Brooklyn is 933 per 100,000 people in Brooklyn versus 754 per 100,000 in Central Brooklyn versus 718 per 100,000 in New York City. The primary cause of premature death is cancer which is still a whopping 17%, heart disease at 16%, HIV at 14% and homicide at 8%.

Obesity continues to be a major health problem in Community District 3. It is a major contributor to diseases such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease. Not to mention raise the risk of asthma. Seven out of eleven Brooklyn neighborhoods have 20% or more obese adults. The numbers are even more astounding when you consider those that are overweight but not yet obese. In Brooklyn 12% of the adults have diabetes as compared to 9% in New York City overall.

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

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

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene must make every effort to bring information to the public. In the past, we have requested that our local Health office become more visible in the community, and that it step up its efforts to get information to

the public. Since funding is always an issue, more resources should be allocated for this purpose.

## HOUSING AND LAND USE

This year 2011, we are continuing to work on the re-zoning of Bedford-Stuyvesant North. Community District #3 is collaboratively working with City Planning to make comprehensive decisions regarding what the northern portion of Bedford-Stuyvesant will look like. The plan is to finish our studies as quickly as possible to preserve the integrity of this area. We are not willing to have a portion of our community slip through our fingers without regard to the people that live and work here. The area is home to diverse cultures and each of those ethnicities should be represented equally.

The Office of Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Rebuilding should direct a study to assess the need and impact of active manufacturing in northern sections of Bedford-Stuyvesant. Clear opportunities for either the attraction of industrial manufacturing and/or the protection of areas for manufacturing should be identified. Additionally the study should include an assessment for the attraction of a green industry cluster appropriate and contextual to the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood.

There are several parcels of land in the south eastern quadrant particularly on Fulton Street and we know that there has been discussion regarding those pieces. It is the understanding of Community District #3 that the parcels on Fulton Street under the purview of HPD are Block 1548, Lot #s 26-30 totaling 10,000 square feet, block 1549, lot #s 407 totaling 8000 square feet and block 1549, Lot #s 19-34 totaling 26,000 square feet. We view this as a marvelous opportunity for economic development, employment, and affordable housing. The unemployment statistics of 15% in Bedford-Stuyvesant certainly warrant this.

With a Needs Assessment in place that has community input, these parcels can be maximized to their fullest potential. With the Mayor's push for affordable housing, we can utilize these parcels of land as affordable housing with commercial/public space below. It would be in line with the zoning along the rest of Fulton Street which is R7D, and keep the street as a major commercial strip in Bedford Stuyvesant throughout its entirety. A multi-use building with perhaps a mid-size supermarket or bank on the ground level would be perfect. We must not forget that Bedford-Stuyvesant is part of the pilot for economic development and greening. Commercial revitalization along Fulton Street will be a tremendous boost to this under-served area of Central Brooklyn. It will also connect the eastern portion of Fulton Street with the Bed-Stuy Gateway BID ... leading to a viable commercial corridor for the entire length of Bedford Stuyvesant.

Just as last year, we must re-emphasize that the Department of Buildings must have adequate inspectors to enforce their guidelines. There have been instances when complaints have come in, and when we involve DOB, their replies are nebulous. A contractor/developer that has applied for permits should be held accountable to what has been applied for. On occasion, that is not happening. This should not be. The issues of such infractions violate the quality of life and can at times be hazardous to public safety. Once permits have been issued, there should be periodic inspections while the work is going on to ensure that the contractors are doing what they applied for. Sometime deviating from the specifications can cause major problems and even worse, possible injury or property damage to adjacent parcels of land. We experienced a problem like that on MacDonough



Street this Spring, where the plans were deviated from and it almost cost the block three brownstone houses. If more inspectors are needed, then we should push to get the funding for them. It makes more sense to be proactive than it does to be reactive. Compliance with codes was established for a reason. DOB needs to have a vehicle to respond to violators. Rules, laws, guidelines were created for the safety and well being of all concerned. It is time to make people comply. Community District #3 is pushing for legislative action to give DOB more enforcement power that will help safeguard the City against unscrupulous developers and contractors from going around the proscribed methods and procedures that have been designed for the safety and well-being of all.

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

- Rezoning of Bedford-Stuyvesant North
- The status of the urban renewal plans
- The coordinated development of the plans (how they fit together)
- How our housing needs have (or have not) been met by these plans
- Vacant land under the aegis of several city agencies
- How Community District #3's Affordable Housing Policy impacts all of the plans

After a 33 year history, Community board 3 should have had all of these issues addressed already. We feel that looking at where we are is now a tremendous understatement. Such a study will require time, staff, and commitment from agency staff and members of our Community board, and other stakeholders but it needs to happen none the less. It is a project whose time is long overdue.

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

## **LANDMARKS**

Community District 3 has been diligently working to assist the residents of Bedford-Stuyvesant in getting their properties land marked. Two years ago, we were successful in having Agate and Alice Courts receive land mark designation. Now we are about to have hearings on expanded Stuyvesant Heights Historic District. In addition, the Landmark Committee of CD3 is simultaneously working on Stuyvesant North, East and West, along with Bedford Corners.

This process is how a community is able to maintain the character and contextual make-up of its neighborhood. We want to have a continuum of the rich housing stock that originally attracted people to Brooklyn in the first place.

We will continue to identify the historic properties throughout this community district and then to contacting the residents and inform them of the value of having their properties land marked. This is our mission and commitment. Homeowners are entitled to receive a grant to restore the property to its original architectural aesthetic beauty that has set this community apart from other areas around the City. Preserving the historical properties

enhances our community, promotes economic growth and allows the homeowner to have a heightened sense of self-worth.

## **MTA**

Community District 3 is excited to have the work on the elevator at the Utica Avenue Subway Station begin. This is on the “A” and “C” line and is a transportation hub for the B25 and B46 buses as well. This is a more than worthy project considering how deep this station is and the number of seniors and disabled persons that live in this area. There have already been a number of scheduling changes on the B25 and B46 bus lines that have longer wait time between buses. This presents a hardship to the riders. Studies have been done, that somehow manage to say that the changes are warranted because ridership dictates that it is cost efficient. However, for those of us that live and work along the route, we never have a seat and hardly any standing room. An elevator allows those that can, to have alternatives to the bus.

The elevator will be beneficial to many Bedford-Stuyvesant residents, as the only other elevator is at the western end of the neighborhood. This will give greater accessibility to the residents that live in the eastern portion of the community.

Metro Transit Authority (MTA) is the premier form of transportation in New York City. With all of the new acquisitions to MTA, we would like to inquire about the 911 intercoms and ETA monitors for our subway terminals. Having a more efficient and secure subway system for our constituents is very important. We also would like to request fully functional security cameras placed in all of our terminals to help reduce criminal activity within our community. Cleanliness is very important within our community. With that said we would like more regulatory cleanings of our bus and subway stations in order to cut down on pathogens and help prevent future bio-hazardous events from occurring.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION**

In our efforts to keep in step with a healthier New York we want to keep moving forth on enhancing Bedford-Stuyvesant’s parks and provide ample opportunity for recreation to combat the neighborhood’s nearly endemic problems of obesity and asthma. We applaud the fine job of renovating parks in Bedford-Stuyvesant. With the help of Council Members Vann and Mealy, in coordination with the Department of Parks and Recreation, Pulaski Park is undergoing renovations. Councilman Vann has put funding in place to finish working on Von King Park’s cultural facility, although additional funding is needed to complete the work. We have looked at the scope of work to begin regarding sprucing up St. Andrews Playground. The Chairperson, Henry L. Butler and the District Manager, Charlene Phillips met with the then Borough Commissioner Spiegel to look at the preliminary plans. Charlie’s Place Playground, needs a complete make- over. There must be funding in place to make that happen. This facility is located on the northern section of Bedford-Stuyvesant. We give much praise and appreciation to Commissioner Jeffries that the parks and playgrounds within our borders continue to be a priority for the parks in this area. The playground at PS 309, received a new ball field last year and is quite nice as well as Marcy Playground’s renovations. Our parks, under the current administration have been getting face-lifts and we are truly grateful on behalf of the residents of this great neighborhood. Additionally, Bedford-Stuyvesant residents have been making active use of the intensive programming

taking place in city parks. This community's parks have come a long way toward meeting residents' needs, but the following needs remain:

Increased Maintenance of existing parks:

- Comfort stations, specifically at Saratoga Park and Taaffe Playground, but in general at all of our parks/playgrounds which include restrooms, are required at heavily used and/or programmed parks. Porta-potties should be put in place in the interim.
- Better enforcement on the cleanup of animal waste. Excessive animal waste in parks impedes their use by neighborhood residents.
- More sites for trash collection and increased frequency of trash collection in heavily utilized or programmed parks.
- Better enforcement against illegal dumping in parks. Construction debris often ends up in city parks.
- Funding for an African American Cultural Center within the confines of Bedford-Stuyvesant
- Re-evaluation of the tree-pruning cycle. Higher temperatures have caused tree overgrowth. Additionally, overgrown trees on city sidewalks are damaging curbs, sidewalks, and roadbeds, and a revamped program of root slicing is required.

Expanded opportunities for recreation:

- Sumner Armory, a highly regarded historic building, should be redeveloped for community use. Bedford-Stuyvesant residents lack adequate indoor recreational facilities, and Sumner Armory could accommodate an indoor track; tennis, basketball, volleyball, racquetball and paddle ball courts; a bowling alley; and a roller-skating rink.

We see that the Bedford Armory will be renovated for some recreational space. While we applaud those efforts, the 245 Coast Artillery (Sumner) Armory is larger and has the capacity for a wonderful recreational, cultural and community facility. We met with Borough President Marty Markowitz and walked through the Sumner Armory initially. He saw the potential immediately and pledged \$1 million towards beginning the process of conversion. Senator Montgomery realized how beneficial renovating the Armory would be and has sponsored a feasibility study to see if conversion is possible. This District is not trying to eliminate the wonderful services provided by the Department of Homeless Services, on the contrary, we would like to be able to work with them. Once we learned that the Bedford Armory, which is not in our District, would be converted, we wondered why not the Sumner Armory. At this point, it appears the only thing that is in the works for Bedford-Stuyvesant is more shelters and facilities for homeless individuals. We are a residential community and pay taxes like every other community in this great City. Surely we deserve more than just to be able to house the homeless.

The Department of Homeless Services has been in the process of circumventing the 1998 local law NYC Administrative Code § 21-312 and §21-315 which states, that an armory should not house more than 200 beds, unless it has been grand fathered in. It is our understanding that in order to increase the shelter's census, extreme circumstances must be proven. At this time, that has not been proven. The DHS is or has already created a 400-bed facility.

We are concerned that there has not been a discussion or study on the negative impact this will have on the residents' health and safety, as well as on the surrounding

community. Community District 3 would love to be in dialogue regarding these issues. In addition, we challenge whether there is some definitive information stating that the Bedford Stuyvesant community will not be afforded the same considerations with regard to our armory as other districts around NYC. This armory is the second largest in the nation.

- Kosciuszko Community Pool (K Pool)/Marcy Pool should be enclosed for year-round use. It is near the upcoming Nostrand SBS line and a public school. A concept plan (contained within the EPA Smart Growth report) already exists for the enclosure and solar heating of the facility

## **POLICE**

As a community, our goal of a crime-free neighborhood continues to be a top priority. Community District works tirelessly with both of our Precincts (79<sup>th</sup> and 81<sup>st</sup>) to help keep our streets safe. We cannot wage this war without an appropriate number of officers to patrol the area. This is also a task that requires the cooperation of each resident within our borders. There is no way to know what is happening without each of us assuming the responsibility of being the eyes and ears for our enforcement agencies.

A crucial issue for both precincts appears to be gun violence. This has reached such an epidemic that it has become larger than a precinct issue. The time has come for the legislators, law enforcement agencies, community and faith-based institutions to work concertedly to try and rectify the problems of guns in the community.

The District Attorney will sponsor gun buy-back programs, however there needs to be more organizations that are willing to host them. A few concerned clergy persons have stepped forward but the number is far too small to actually put a dent in this critical situation. We are calling on everyone to do their part.

Guns cross interstate lines like it is a legal enterprise. They are sold on the open market as well as underground. Children are finding the ease of access to firearms as effortless as we used to find purchasing candy. There is no accountability or conscience in gun distribution. The youth have no real cognizance of the true deadly nature of guns. It seems to be a game of who is going to win. We are not living in a video game. Politicians on the federal, state and local level must now begin to assume responsibility as well.

Gang violence and drug proliferation have created the economic climate of supply and demand. These two entities make it necessary for guns to be on our streets. The goal here is to cut off the demand so there will be no need to supply. Let us get guns off the street.

Gang activity continues to be prevalent in our community. Children are being forced to join or remain in gangs. They may not all be the Bloods or the Crips, but they are gangs none-the-less. How can we protect our youth? Everyone does not want to be a part of that sub-culture. The Community District feels that if we had designated gang units, we could combat this problem. If the gang unit is familiar with the youth in the area, they will get to know who is who. That goes so far when dealing with neighborhood gangs. NYCHA is the biggest place to harbor gang families. We have so many shootings that are gang or drug related. They are sometimes interchangeable. Territories within a network of buildings are quite efficient. Our PSA officers are so short staffed. They cannot concentrate on gangs so they somehow manage to treat everyone as though they were gangs. That is not effective. We need to

design a plan that will work and help keep all the residents within our borders safe. People getting shot anytime or night has to stop.

The community affairs officers make great efforts for police/community relations. We certainly appreciate all that they do; however, it is known that community relations is a top-down issue and must be dealt with that way. How directives are issued from 1 Police Plaza to the commands, affects how the officers carry out their responsibilities. It cannot continue with business as usual. We are not all criminals, in fact the number of criminals in comparison to fine upstanding hard working people in this district is surprising. With an infusion of new blood at headquarters, we are hoping to see Chief Banks work through the problems and create a law enforcement force that is reminiscent of days gone by when police officers were allies. We would like to see the re-institution of the CPR Program, Courtesy, Professionalism and Respect.

Community District #3 would like to have the following needs met:

- Funding for additional section cars for our precincts
- Funding for another Skywatch dedicated to Bedford-Stuyvesant
- Additional officers in place especially in the areas of NYCHA
- Each precinct should have its own gang and gun unit answerable to the precinct commander. With designated units, there is a greater opportunity to proactive rather than just reactive. The job is overwhelming in this present climate.
- The impact unit should be permanently assigned to their home precincts
- School children are being accosted as they leave their schools. We are much in need of safe passage programs for school districts 13 and 16, which cover the Bedford-Stuyvesant community.
- Funding for a Bedford-Stuyvesant Community Justice Center

## **SAFETY/EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

This City is by no means out of the woods when it comes to preparedness. The weather systems are changing by the day, month and year. It is evident by how hot or cold it is, the amount of snowfall, hurricanes that come extremely close, tsunamis and let us not forget tornadoes skipping through our streets. What will we do if a disaster strikes? How will the people of Community District 3 be mobilized? Are our evacuation routes clearly defined? Is there a list of health care providers that can be readily called upon? Let us not forget the ever present danger of terrorism.

These questions and more will need to be answered succinctly. There must be a way to harness the needs in this arena. Is it possible for designated groups to begin to mobilize sections of each quadrant of the district? Can OEM manage without designated district assistance?

Community District 3 implores the City of New York to be proactive and not reactive when it relates to the safety and state of preparedness of the residents of Bedford-Stuyvesant as well as, New York at-large.

## **SANITATION**

Community District 3 is still without our own Sanitation Garage. We have been making this request since 1980. In all fairness, we understand that the current fiscal crisis makes

something on the scale of a Sanitation Garage nearly impossible. This was our thinking until we learned that money was appropriated for a Solid Waste Management Project (SWMP) on East 91<sup>st</sup> Street in Manhattan. The residents fought this idea, because they felt the site was in too close a proximity to where the residents lived and played. The sum of \$127 million was set aside to make this project happen. That was not in the works for 31 years. Since the SWMP will not be placed at East 91<sup>st</sup> Street, why not move the money into a garage for Community District 3?

This garage is important to the future of Bedford-Stuyvesant. With the current projections for the Bedford-Stuyvesant community, the increased density will necessitate having our own garage. With PlaNYC 2030 trying to make New York City a greener, cleaner, and leaner City, the lack of a facility in this district will truly become an intolerable condition. With such great disparities in this district's health statistics, we cannot afford to have garbage and debris strewn around because we are utilizing a garage in Community Board #1 that will be unable to keep up with the population and commercial growth of the community. Not only do we demand that this project be funded, it is also mandated by the City Charter that each district have its own garage.

The Bedford-Stuyvesant Gateway Business Improvement District (BID), encompassing Fulton Street from Classon Avenue to Troy Avenue and Nostrand from Halsey Street to Atlantic Avenue, is a high traffic, densely populated commercial shopping corridor. The majority of the District is made up of long city blocks; therefore, there is a glaring need for garbage receptacles to be placed mid-block to capture the overflow of litter. Given the functions of the BID, the Gateway is equipped to collect and move all garbage from mid-block receptacles to corner receptacles for pick-up by the Department of Sanitation.

We are aware that the signage division is no longer in existence however the need is even greater than before for signage. Is it possible to create a signage division that serves multiple municipal agencies making it more cost efficient? We need to have printed signs about canine waste, littering, and no posting. At this point, residents are putting up their own signs and residents are at risk of running afoul of sanitation codes themselves trying to compensate for the lack of official signage.

We are still requesting timely printed materials sent out to the community well in advance noting schedule changes prior to the changes taking place.

## **SENIORS**

The senior population of Community Board 3 continues to be a major concern. This is another area where nothing has changed. Our newest issue is the fact that several of the senior centers have been closed, which is the **only** life-line some of our elderly have with the world outside of their homes. Seniors are being displaced because they can no longer afford to age in place. We need to have guaranteed steps to keep the people that helped build this community right here. They are unable to afford the rents or are unable to get into the senior housing in their very own neighborhood. Some of our golden residents cannot procure housing because they have too much income while others do not have enough. Some of our aged neighbors are ill and/or disabled and need some sort of assisted living facility within the confines of Bedford Stuyvesant. It is a travesty to have to move the seniors out of the neighborhood they have lived in their entire adult life, raised their children

and grandchildren in. Not only are they struggling with placement, but also with being preyed upon by unscrupulous entities trying to take away their property and holdings.

- We need funding to create a facility sponsored by HUD and DFTA that will allow our seniors to age in place safely. Perhaps an incentive can be put in place for a developer to create the building and then DFTA can be its sponsoring agent.
- There are an increasing percentage of senior citizens living in poverty and we need to concretize supportive services targeted specifically for them. These would include Medicaid, SSI, Food Stamps, home delivered meals and the ever crucial housing subsidies.
- Information is the key to better informed decisions. Definitive, strategic, well- thought - out plans should be instituted to ensure that our older Americans receive pertinent information. This does not have to only fall on the municipalities but with appropriate training the responsibility can be shared with community-based, faith-based, religious institutions, block associations and other community entities to advocate on behalf of the elderly. Keep the advocates abreast of new and beneficial legislation that will impact the quality of life for our seniors.
- The Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption Unit must continue to be in place for our older citizens. The price of rent has sky-rocketed and those seniors that do not own their homes are at an impasse as to how to afford to continue living in their rental property. Income eligibility needs to be re-vamped, so more elderly are qualified to age in place without fear of increases that will force them to have to seek shelter elsewhere.
- Protective services need to be provided in order to safeguard seniors against crime and abuse. There should be training for all municipalities to recognize when the elderly have been victimized, sometimes even by their families.
- Assist with fuel and utility costs with programs such as HEAP and Weatherization.
- Another crucial matter when considering the elderly is making sure that our public, private and recreational spaces are senior friendly. They should be able to continue to go out and enjoy this city without worry that they cannot use the stairs, (i.e., subways), getting in public spaces and places like the theatres, restaurants, houses of worship and the like.

## **SOCIAL SERVICES**

Community District 3 has worked diligently over the past year to make sure that the homeless people that are placed in this community are treated fairly in their housing quest. There are many transitional facilities cropping up all over Bedford Stuyvesant in our residential community. Some of the homeless are being placed in unsafe conditions. We have been working with the Commission on Human Rights, the Department of Homeless Services and our elected officials to see that these dangerous practices are curtailed.

The Department of Homeless Services and the City Council, at the urging of the community districts of Brooklyn, have taken a closer look at the present practices and deemed that there needed to be change. A pilot program is now in effect that instructs providers to refrain from making referrals to buildings that have registered complaints regarding occupancy violations, but have not been inspected by a City agency because the inspector was unable to access the premises. Perhaps the new practice of multi-agency representatives doing the inspections will help. We continuously ask that more inspectors are hired. At this time, it is obvious that we need some guidelines that have teeth in order to closely watch over what is happening with our buildings and the residents.

We continue to ask that strict attention be paid to the concentration of facilities that are placed in one geographic area. Bedford-Stuyvesant is largely a residential community and if we continue to make every vacant house a facility, we will only be known as a blighted ghetto of sheltering systems. Community District 3 is working toward building up this area, not allowing it to fall into a total state of disrepair. Residential facilities for homeless individuals and families must be spread throughout the five boroughs.

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

## **TRANSPORTATION**

As with DEP, the Nostrand Avenue HWK1129 project, (the reconstruction of Nostrand Avenue from Flushing to Atlantic Avenues) has been in the budget of Community District 3 since 1989. Nostrand Avenue is a major thoroughfare that runs from the northern most end of our district straight through in a southerly direction. At last, the construction work has begun. Thank you for hearing us.

Plans for NYC Select Bus Service along the Nostrand-Bedford corridors should include an impact study measuring effects on the local commercial strips and the identification of areas for dedicated parking along commercial nodes/intersections.

We have a number of roadbeds that are in hazardous/deplorable conditions. Broadway, which borders Community District 4, Bushwick, is so bad that cars have to actually travel in the opposite lane to avoid vehicular damage or an accident. Atlantic Avenue, which borders Community District 8, Crown Heights, also has a hazardous roadbed. There must be some type of infrastructure/reconstruction done on both of these roadbeds before there is some type of major catastrophe.

In addition, Halsey Street from Tompkins to Broadway was initially supposed to be completed and it was not. The request was in for the 2004 budget requests. We would like to see that work done.

Additionally, we are cognizant of the growing number of bikers within the district. The existing bike lanes do not seem to connect. The lanes should connect allowing safe passage for bikers throughout Brooklyn. That being said, we do not want bike lanes along our major transverses. It slows traffic too much. Everyone is not riding a bike. There are people that still must use their vehicles and between parking, bike lanes, buses and deliveries, the major thoroughfares are being tremendously disadvantaged for motorists. There is a safety issue for bikers on busy streets. The secondary roadways would truly be much safer.

We would like to see bus shelters at all of our bus stops for the elderly and disabled especially. The bus stop areas need to be kept clean and snow-free. Some bus stops have debris lying around and weeds growing up out of the pits that the bus stop sign is in. There must be better maintenance at our bus stops and transportation hubs.



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

## **CONCLUSION**

Community District 3 is very excited about the new projects the City of New York will embark on for fiscal year 2013. With our innovative budgetary propositions we are looking to eventually eradicate ailments that have been impeding progress in our community for far too long. We are a proud, resilient, and prosperous people who have a lot to offer the City of New York. The journey has been long, but the results will be worth the wait. Bedford-Stuyvesant is on the forefront of the new economical wave for New York City, and we are fully prepared with the help of Mayoral support to take our place in history.

Respectfully submitted,

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Board Chairperson

Charlene Phillips  
District Manager