



# CB9M

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## COMMUNITY BOARD #9, MANHATTAN STATEMENT OF NEEDS FISCAL YEAR 2008

August 7, 2006

Community Board No.9, Manhattan (CB9M) is located on the upper west side of Manhattan, including West Harlem, the neighborhoods of Morningside Heights, Manhattanville, and Hamilton Heights. Our boundaries are Cathedral Parkway (110th Street) on the South; 155th Street on the North; Manhattan/Morningside, St. Nicholas, Bradhurst and Edgecombe Avenues on the East; and the Hudson River on the West.

Each neighborhood is a distinct community, Morningside Heights on the southern portion of the District, north from 110th Street, contains many of the area's many institutions: Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, Bank Street College of Education, Columbia University, Barnard College, Teacher's College, Manhattan School of Music, Union Theological Seminary, Jewish Theological Seminary, The National Council of Churches, Riverside Church, Grotto of Notre Dame: and the St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center. With beautiful historic parks framing the neighborhood; Morningside Park to the east and Riverside Park to the west.

Lawrence T. McClean  
District Manager

West Harlem - Manhattanville begins at roughly 122nd Street and extends northward to 135th Street. The area includes the southern portion of City College of New York City campus (CUNY), four large housing complexes: the General Grant Public Housing Development; the housing cooperative Morningside Gardens; the Manhattanville Housing Development, 3333 Broadway and a number of tenement and apartment buildings, a handful of HDFC cooperatives plus a number of small commercial establishments, and a partially occupied industrial section that is targeted by Columbia University for an expanded campus site.

The northern most section of CB9M is comprised of Hamilton Heights (parts of this area are designated the "Hamilton Heights Historic District" and "The Sugar Hill Historic District"). It's home of The City College of New York and to a substantial number of owner-occupied brownstones and over 130 Housing Development Fund Cooperatives (HDFCs); it also includes the city-owned Audubon Houses, a small and dwindling number of City owned (in rem) occupied and vacant structures. Hispanic/Latin, White, Middle Eastern, African-American, Caribbean and Asian merchants operate the majority of the small businesses in the area.

These three neighborhoods form CB9M District area, each reflecting the potential and promise of the community, as well as problems.

**SERVING HAMILTON HEIGHTS/MANHATTANVILLE & MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS**

## **HOUSING:LANDUSE**

Throughout the late 1990's and in to this decade the need for affordable housing became more pressing: today, it continues to be a major problem to be resolved.

Affordable housing for the middle and lower income residents of Community Board 9 is in extreme demand. We must respond to this need.

There are approximately very few city-controlled buildings and vacant lots in the Board area. The vast majority of the properties are located in the Manhattanville and Hamilton Heights sections. Many are in various stages of disrepair. A significant number of privately owned residential buildings are in a similar state. We are deeply concerned about the need for timely rehabilitation of our deteriorating and often over-occupied housing stock. Toward this end, the Board supports the continuation of the initiatives to coordinate the necessary repairs, Rehabilitation and contract monitoring. The Tenant Interim Lease (TIL), the Neighborhood Entrepreneur Program (NEP), Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP), and Anti-Abandonment Program have some potential; Community Board NO.9 however has reservations about them as well as the Third Party Transfer Program. Those reservations relate more to the presentation than the actual implementation. The track record of the entity chosen to oversee a site is of greatest importance, as many current residents fear displacement in the name of renovation or show dissatisfaction with selected contractors and in the case where conversion to HDFC cooperatives is the intended goal the residents and future shareholders have shown great concerns in regards to their lack of participation in the development process from planning to construction, relocation and the actual conversion to HDFC cooperatives.

## **Crime and Quality of Life Issues**

Eradication of drug dealers and adequate maintenance of all city-owned and privately owned properties in the area, including NYCHA Developments is necessary if the area is to be a vital part of this city. We hope that funds will become available to support NYPD, NYDS and HPD within CB9M to facilitate the implementation of our Comprehensive Plan for this district. Please note that this is a long-standing request. Such an investment will prevent further deprivation of the residents of the community.

We strongly urge HPD's (and the City's) full cooperation in the implementation of our 197 A Plan. CB9M will also work with the TIL, NEP and NRP offices as they focus on meeting the needs of the upcoming fiscal years.

It is imperative that the city's fair share policy be strictly enforced so that over-saturation of social service institutional and other health support facilities are not forced into the Community District 9 area. Instead, we strongly urge the rehabilitation of city owned vacant and occupied properties for much needed affordable housing to ensure the stabilization of the low, moderate and middle-income neighborhoods of our district with a particular emphasis in home ownership programs affordable to the District's income levels.

In addition, we support the completion of the Tenant Interim Lease (TIL) Program, as well as expansion of HDFCs with more stringent guidelines to guarantee major repairs for tenants associations before sale of such designated buildings: with built-in requirements for tenant education purchasing and maintaining TIL buildings. Additionally guidelines must be set up in order to prevent the displacement of the small commercial business in the TIL buildings. These facilities help preserve the character and usually respond to the needs of the community.

The City Planners accept the fact that in the establishment of the Mayor's Ten Year Housing Plan, this community should not and can not be left out of the rehabilitation and development of "affordable" housing. The Mayor must consider that the median income for Board 9 was \$27,392 (2000 census). We do not want displacement of our current population at the expense of decent housing in our community. Thus, CB9M has developed a Comprehensive Housing Plan through its 197A Plan which calls for the creation of apartment units at rents which reflect the income of residents in our District. We plan to continue discussions with all pertinent city agencies seeking support for and implementation of our plan. Finally, we believe the City must continue to accept responsibility for eradicating the increasing drug trafficking in our community, which occurs in city owned buildings. We are especially upset that funds that had previously been targeted for anti-drug programs are being reduced. HPD and NYCHA must continue to work in concert with the local police precincts to control the spread of the drug epidemic and its eventual eradication. We commend NYPD and the HPD Narcotics Unit and urge their continued cooperation in the battle to control crime and narcotics in our city.

Additionally the excessive noise created by bands of youths and car alarms during the late and wee hours of the night must be addressed with the vigorous enforcement by NYPD as is done in other more affluent Districts.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Economic Development in CB9M combines issues of education, training and employment for our residents, together with a complex set of issues affecting local business, merchants and other entrepreneurs.

The overall picture is that of an economically isolated community in transition. This is illustrated by the high unemployment rates, the large numbers of dislocated and discouraged workers outside the labor force, the large percentage working poor and the numbers within community who are dependent upon public assistance for economic survival.

CB9M area often receives resources to address aberrant behavior. Unfortunately; the same is not true in terms of resources to be directed towards economic improvement and development. High crime, rates, importation of homeless, drug addicts and AIDS victims are some of the more apparent aberrations that are frequently addressed as manifestations of this community's economic isolation. While CB9M does not fault these efforts, it does however decry the absence of economic development programs, offered by NYC Small Business Services, that would address the cause of these patterns. A community of the poor that is economically isolated is a community that will remain distressed particularly with the importation of additional victims of these social ills. Current programs and policies that do not offer the economic means whereby individuals may eventually escape poverty and live in and contribute to the community's future and social well being must be viewed as bankrupt.

CB9M has only in the last few years been touched by any of the City's Economic Development Corporation in the planning for the West Harlem Piers. What will happen in light of Columbia University's Expansion has not been fully brought to the table. Only a few companies have utilized the economic incentives north of 96th Street. We had hoped that the Empowerment Zone would respond to part of the problem. Unfortunately, CB9M has not seen much in the way of results from this promise nor does it expect any meaningful progress from this source.

After many years, CB9M has finally been touched by the City's Economic Development

Corporation in the planning and construction of the West Harlem Piers. Though a long awaited addition to the Hudson River waterfront at the foot of 125th Street, the West Harlem Piers will only add a minimum of employment for our residents. There is a need for an educational component that would offer our young people an opportunity to learn more of Aquaculture. The former Marine Transfer Station should be looked at as an ecology center that could partner with the Board of Education. This would offer opportunities to monitor our air quality, the sewer treatment plant, and investigate improving the fish habitat in our area while training our future environmental scientists. Other communities would come to us to learn how to observe and preserve their local ecosystem. The Center could generate resources or finances that would support the park.

It seems that "Development "in our community occurs only when our requests are related to correcting the aberrant behaviors that result from our economic isolation. The growth industry in this community is centered on social service and environmental curative programs. The following represents a brief description of the social indicators and the existing local business environment in CB9M:

#### **A. LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS, MERCHANTS AND THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT:**

1. The influence of money laundering businesses has taken a toll on the northern portion of the district and has prevented newer businesses and services from coming into the district. Drug fronts can pay exorbitant rents and have pushed area commercial rents well above 100% during this past five years.
2. Business face particularly high increases in rents in mixed-use apartment buildings throughout the District, and especially on NYCHA owned properties where CB9M has seen three businesses on West 125th Street close (including SUBWAYS) because of excessive rent increases.
3. Legitimate businesses face difficulty in growing because of the lack of a diversified consumer base and an inability to meet the needs of newcomers. Our economic workshops have helped many, but more in depth coaching is needed. There is currently no structured mechanism to assist merchants in these situations i.e. like how to negotiate with landlords and city agencies, marketing studies, product development and customer service.
4. The size of the loans of financial support sought by local entrepreneurs and business are usually under \$50,000. Banks and the City financial agencies often find these loans too small and not cost effective to process. City agencies such as the Department of Small Business Services do have programs that are intended to serve these groups however, a more aggressive and customized approach is needed.
5. The growing centralization of the banking-industry' has made it more difficult for some small businesses to deal with the increased complexities require to obtain funding and within the District there are no federal credit unions with the wherewithal to handle these needs.

#### **B. BACKGROUND FACTORS**

1. 40% of our working population can be considered part of working poor since they earn less than \$10.00 per hour.

2. 26% of the adults in the community are either semi-literate or illiterate and for 35% of the adult population, English is a second language. The waiting time for entry into an adult literacy or English as a second language course now exceeds one year.
3. Light industrial manufacturing has declined from some 59 firms hiring in approximately 6,500 to less than 19 firms in West Harlem employing approximately 1,200. Much light manufacturing space in the area is now being utilized as storage space. Storage supply firms averages one job per 20,000 square feet compared to one job 200 to 300 square feet. The existing industrial space in the communities approximately 2.43 million square feet. All but 88,000 square feet of this is privately owned. With support from the city, the space remaining can be used for a large technology district.
4. Broader West Harlem still lacks the vital linkages that would lead CB9 residents towards meaningful employment. Economic development initiatives continue to occur without any economic benefits accruing to the residents because of the lack of any affirmative actions or a mechanism to screen, recruit, train and include residents in these construction activities. CB9M makes the following recommendations in an effort to address the aforementioned problems. CB9M is asking that model programs be established so that in the future, as resources become more available, they can be earmarked for our community.

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1. Creation and implementation of a public-private community development' program for CB9M, whereby residents of the District would be served. This would assure that the residents share the economic benefits that accrue from these publicly funded programs
2. Establishment of a Business Improvement District (BID) .for the, businesses from 135th Street to 155th Street along Broadway and also Amsterdam Avenue to better manage the physical and business environment in the area. These BIDs should tailor their initiatives to conform with additional available funding packages (State, Federal, Private).
3. Elected official to provide CB9M on an annual basis a report on the performance of the banks on fulfilling their obligation under the community Reinvestment Act and hold the banks accountable regarding loans to business.
4. Establishment of policies governing the use of commercial spaces in City-owned properties as to affordable rents and uses to be made of these commercial spaces and the development of commercial space particularly in City-owned abandoned buildings. This will provide incentives for start-up businesses and the development commercial space.
5. A program or private banking consortium that will duplicate existing

revolving funds for small business loans in order to increase referral of small businesses to sources of financial loans. Thus actually employing the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) initiatives, which they have failed to do in any major sense to this point. Failing that, promoting the establishment of a Merchants & Professionals Federal Credit Union to provide those services banks fail to provide,

6. Extension of the 125th Street BID to include the area in CB9M from Morningside Avenue to Marginal Street and to provide the street amenities consistent with the development of this corridor.

## **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

CB9M is greatly concerned by the City's attitude about Health Services in our area. For six years, despite the availability of funds, Manhattanville Health Station has not been rehabilitated. Programs originally on site have dispersed with no guarantee of their return.

Threatened cut backs in space and services at the Sydenham Clinic and local in school sites we maintained only through the efforts of Community and local council members.

The previous administration's refusal to match State funds was in part the reason that in FY 2001 and FY 2002 Health and Hospital Corporation received only 11 million dollars out of 115 million dollars designated in the Governors Budget. This loss of potential funds for Harlem Hospital in particular combined with a 30 million dollar loss in 1999 - 2001 at St. Luke's/Roosevelt Hospital creates a stark picture of not only a lack of new programs but the continued existence of services now available.

CB9M believes that the high incidents of rats in this community is directly related to the staffing of 3 inspectors and 2 exterminators until the latter part of 2001, as well as massive private construction of late without monitoring by the Dept. of Buildings as to mandated baiting. Even with the added Personnel the Department of Health cannot keep up. We urge that staffing for upper Manhattan be tripled. In addition, at agencies with their own Pest Control units such as HPD and Parks, staffing should be increased so they can be more responsive to complaints.

CB9M will strive to insure that the City adheres to the Fair Share guidelines in the Charter as to the placement of Social Service Facilities. More importantly the Board needs the assistance of our State elected officials as well as local elected officials due to the fact that the majority of programs sited are funded north of 125th Street by New York State authority without a mandate for local oversight or comments.

The City must continue to lobby for and demand from the federal and state governments money that will sponsor permanent low and moderate-income housing.

In the meanwhile, day/child care, job training and placement, and permanent housing rent subsidies must be a top priority while poor families remain in this economically unacceptable condition. The majority of the day/child care facilities are too expensive for CB9M residents to afford. There are currently over 400 children on waiting lists for full time slots (per H.R.A. in 2004). Funding for free/affordable day/child care programs for pre-school age children must be increased to address the need.

The increased importation of homeless families is a critical issue for CB9M. In order to help these families break the vicious cycle of poverty, it is imperative that the appropriate agen-

cies coordinate their services to meet the multitude of problems confronting their clients and spread their relocation throughout more affluent neighborhoods rather than concentrating them in already economically depressed areas where opportunities are already strained or lacking.

The increases in ambulatory care services for prenatal care for addicted mothers and teenagers continue to be a pressing need in the CB9M area created by some of the social programs in place. The ongoing demonstration program at Reality House/Harlem Hospital is a step in the right direction and we hope reflective of a commitment to expand affordable and accessible health care to our residents.

Another shelter for battered women is urgently needed in the CB9M area. Such an institution would provide the resources for a woman and her children to start over without having to go into a welfare hotel or move with family or friends. Currently, we have no such facility.

West Harlem has been ranked among the highest in the incident of lead poisoning cases in the City. Health officials are not examining Forty percent of our children. Mandatory screening for lead poisoning should be done at all day care centers and elementary schools in order to correct situations.

## **SENIORS**

The elderly population in CB9M is large and increasing. During this time of budget constraints we must not lose sight of the special needs of our seniors. It is imperative that long range comprehensive planning includes housing, health and mental care, home care and senior centers. Only in this way can we ensure continued quality of life and prevent the isolation, which places many of our elderly at risk of poor health, unacceptable living conditions, poor nutrition and inaccessible services.

The astronomical cost of health care today takes an especially heavy toll on seniors, many of whom, while above the Medicaid eligibility level, cannot afford large out-of-pocket medical expenses. The Seniors Issues Committee of Community Board 9 strongly urges support of a National Health Bill, that unlike the current prescription bill actually works, which would guarantee access to community based, affordable, quality, health care.

A priority need of the seniors of CB9M was an additional van for the Hamilton Grange Senior Center, which was delivered. So that it can be effectively utilized, funding to cover the salary of a driver must be included in the package, which DFTA is unable to fund. Board 9 needs the assistance of City and State Legislators to secure the funding for these vital personnel. In order to encourage the independence of our seniors and facilitate their ability to maintain their social networks it is imperative that we make available safe, reliable means of transportation.

The escalator at the 125th Street and Broadway IRT line and the 145TH Street 8th Avenue line subway station is all too often not operating, making it impossible for the frail, elderly, mothers with young children, and physically handicapped adults to use these stations. While both escalators were allegedly reconstructed they continue to break down on an almost daily basis. Reliable access to the subway is an imperative. It is completely unacceptable that CB9M residents should have to go nine blocks down to Broadway and 116th Street to access the subway. The job must be done right this time and then the experience must be replicated at 145th Street.

In response to the increased numbers of seniors and disabled persons in our community it is imperative that immediate attention be given to facilitating access to public places.

# YOUTH

The youth of our community is primarily of African-American and Latino origins. Many of their families require public assistance and have limited access to basic services such as hospitals, education, libraries, etc. As the population has grown, services have remained at the same level or in some strategically impacted areas, it has been drastically reduced.

In 1994 - 1998, funds for youth programs were cut by approximately 38%.

In 1999, some of these funds were restored, but service needs have increased and the allocated funding levels were inadequate to meet the newly identified needs and number of youths who need services. As recently as this Fiscal year's negotiations we were to have undergone drastic cuts in these areas.

There are almost no programs that will accommodate school-age youth when schools are closed during the school year, except the Beacon School, which we need more of; during the summer months, they are closed half days for administrative purposes.

Working parents risk losing their employment when they struggle to find child care programs and UPTOWN summer activity programs. These must be provided WITHIN our community. In addition these opportunities must be made available for disabled children.

The lack of a full Summer Youth Employment Program which as recently as 2001 employed 42,000 youngsters was reduced in the summer of 2005 to 11,500 citywide, which is devastating. The City should work with State and Federal Law makers to restore all cuts on an annual basis, and not subject to last minute negotiations.

We support the efforts of Region 10 in providing students opportunities to learn Work Force skills: typing, computer skills and being able to think critically, calculate, spell accurately and have good reading comprehension. School District 6 students have an additional education barrier to overcome, language. We support their efforts to foster the options of education strategies that will provide effective acquisition of English (WITHOUT restricting usage of their own languages), basic to being able to compete in the general Workforce.

While we are concerned about the lack of employment opportunity for our youth, we are more intensely concerned about their lack of employable skills. In the "selected" five Manhattan High Schools, the graduation rate barely out pointed the drop-out rate and the stay-in-school percentage. We must improve the quality of available effective education strategies so that the dropout rate is reduced and the graduation rate increased.

To improve the quality-of -life for our community youth, we require:

1. Programs that provided counseling, academic tutoring for remediation enhancement: access to college scholarships;
  2. Job training, career planning, and computer classes;
  3. Safe Corridors' while traveling to and from school;
  4. Family supports services that encourage the continuity of the family unit.
- Despite these needs, many of our young people continue to reach out, stay in



school, join available youth programs and hope for a better future. They must be supported. We encourage and actively support youth participation in the decision making process at CB9M. We WELCOME youth as equal partners on the Board and especially on the Youth Services Planning Committee.

## **POLICE**

We had until recently been pleased to a point with efforts of the Department with the Upper Manhattan Initiative which includes the 30th Precinct. However recently that coverage had dropped and while crime numbers are down, by comparison to ten years ago Drugs remains a major problem. Many of the dealers have moved inside and taken over multiple apartments making under cover arrests more difficult.

Increasingly Gang activity has flourished. In a briefing by the Harlem Drug Task Force in 2001 Board 9 learned that 60% of the identified Gang members lived in the projects. With Summer Youth Employment, the majority of whom the applications are from these Developments we see a prescription for disaster as the only local employers are these criminals.

CB9M urges full utilization of the Trespass Affidavit Program on every block to combat this situation.

The Board urges an increase in both Precinct Uniformed personnel with concerns that the Initiative in the adjoining 28th Precinct will drive Drug Dealing into the 26th Precinct at our Eastern Border.

More manpower is needed for the Housing Police to facilitate sweeps so that Officers from the 26th and 30th Precincts can remain on the street as a visible presence. Civilian Personnel have returned due to CB 9's efforts to bring staffing to pre 1994 levels, we urge the Department to maintain these levels.

Additionally the excessive noise created by bands of unruly youths, young men and women and car alarms during the late and wee hours of the night must be addressed with the same vigorous enforcement by NYPD as done in other more affluent Districts. Loitering should not be permitted, even if NYC has no anti-loitering laws. CB9M constantly receives complaints of this nature and about the dissatisfaction of the community residents particularly from co-operative and home owners who are responsible and liable for the sidewalks but cannot get the NYPD to rid them of the uninvited and unwanted conglomeration of people in front of their properties to the wee hours of the night talking loud, playing music and eating and leaving their debris for the co-op and home owners to clean or be fined by Sanitation Enforcement.

## **SANITATION**

While the Sanitation cutbacks of the mid 1990's have been somewhat restored problems with trash collection can negatively impact the quality of life in our community. This is especially true north of West 125th Street.

This is in part due to the population being 20% higher (including undocumented) than reflected in the 2000 census. The staffing does not reflect the actual tonnage of garbage handled by CB9M's Sanitation Crews. Pick-ups along the Commercial Strips of Broadway, Amsterdam Avenue (W 135th - W 155th), and 125th Street cannot keep up with utilization. We urge the City to increase staffing to facilitate three pick-ups in these locations a day. For lots and trouble locations we need the Clean Team restored. Recycling figures have greatly improved since 1997, however

the Public Schools and City owned buildings or agencies are the greatest violators. The Office of the Mayor must reach out to local agencies to follow the rules.

We need if not increased then consistent Sanitation Enforcement in our Area. Board 9 has recommended Flex Shifts to reflect our findings that the majority of violations occur in the afternoon when Enforcement Officers are finished their Tour. Super block structures require special attention for health reasons; the health and integrity of our community MUST be a top priority.

## **FIRE**

CB9M strongly requests that fire Marshals be located in upper Manhattan to respond effectively and quickly to arson inspections. CB9M requests that all the ambulances covering our area be upgraded or replaced.

CB9M requests the restoration of the five-man team to the engine companies. The deficiencies in our area are not limited to manpower alone. There is also a need for the Red Cap Program in upper Manhattan. A long-term goal is to have resident sprinklers for all multiple dwellings.

Although our request for a Juvenile Fire Setters Intervention Unit has not been funded, we strongly recommend the creation of such a Unit in Manhattan. Because of the constantly growing population in the

area there will be many children that need and would benefit from the resource that this unit can provide.

## **PARKS**

The need for safe, well maintained parks and open spaces is a high priority for this Board. It is imperative that the members of this community be provided with recreational havens for our youngsters (26.1% of our residents) and pleasant refuge for our senior (9.9% and ever increasing). Maximizing the proper use of our park areas would also provide recreational outlets and gardening opportunities to everyone for good health and would be a positive intergenerational and intercultural community activity.

CB9M is blessed with potentially extraordinary park resources. Over 75 acres of our district is parkland. The only recreation center at Morningside Park needs additional staffing. Except for Riverbank, the rest of the parks and playgrounds remain without recreational activities or sponsors. There are no botanical gardens or environmental centers in all of Manhattan. Monies must be found to restore PEP Officers and the Parks Ranger. There are no running tracks or soccer fields. Providing the youth in CB9M with the facilities and the staff to engage in these team sports would afford them an opportunity to develop skills in team cooperation and problem solving; thus raising their future potential.

The reconstruction of Riverside Park stopped at 110th Street until 1996 and awaits completion as budget restraints are lifted. The urgent need for stone restoration this year and tree care is painfully evident as well as increased tree pruning in Community Board No. 9. The budget monies for maintenance and improvement are still not enough.

In addition to the above mentioned improvements, we are in dire need of maintenance staff and professional horticulturists (both full time and part-time gardeners) in Morningside, St. Nicholas, Jackie Robinson and Riverside Parks. Recreation supervisors and more park rangers are needed to engage children in urban laboratories and teach environmental values, urban

gardening and" training in horticulture. Since there are so few day care centers and many of our schools are poorly equipped, our parks must be programmed to provide alternatives, which can stimulate career opportunities for our older youth. Our parks have some of the oldest tree specimens in the city and some of the largest stands of elms in the nation. All require ongoing care. Our priority is to build a clean, healthy, and safe community. Specifically, the following must be done; completion of the restoration of Riverside Park's landscape and in the northern portion of the district. Rehabilitation work in Morningside Park, completion of the facilities promised in Riverside Park and full time gardeners in St. Nicholas and Jackie Robinson Parks. These changes plus the corresponding maintenance crews and recreation workers and Safety Officers (PEP) will afford the members of our community a truly viable alternative for recreational and educational experience.

## **HARLEM PIERS**

The last remaining major opportunity for community development is the Harlem Piers Waterfront. This is the area from St. Clair's Place in the South to 135th Street in the North, Broadway in the East and the Hudson River in the West. For years both the private and public sector has been recommending various plans for revitalization and development. Our Board with the community's consistent support, has identified certain elements, which have continued throughout all the plans. Construction of the Piers is currently under way with an expected completion date of Spring, 2007.

The area along Twelfth Avenue from 125th Street to 136th Street is fast developing into a "restaurant" row

with little or no input from the surrounding community. Support businesses have not been planned for the area and opportunities to invest in this kind of endeavor have not been identified. The completion of the bike path will bring another type of consumer and offer additional opportunities for successful small business collaboration.

The proposed Columbia University Manhattanville Expansion Plan in the area from 125th Street to 133rd Street between Broadway and Twelfth Avenue is scheduled to span at least 25 years. This will have a direct impact on the surrounding community as well as the entire West Harlem community. The planned expansion has already had a direct influence on commercial and apartment rents in the surrounding area. There must be a mechanism in place to protect the businesses and people who have stayed throughout the hard times. Subsidies and support must be made available for small minority owned businesses to survive and thrive.

A professional, environmental assessment of what facilities are feasible is currently being conducted. The industrial land at the western end of 125th Street is critical to the area's economic stability. Our top priority is the proper development of this critical area. Second is availability of jobs paying wages that support family obligations, preferably with "career -future for our local residents. Third, and most important, that the waterfront area be reserved for recreational use and water related activities that support the environment and promote learning for the entire community. We wish to retain the current businesses in the area foster facilitates that will provide our community with quality of life options. The establishment of a Special Zoning District for the area would also permit manufacturing and other commercial uses but they must be evaluated as to their overall effect on the community.

Open space and recreation through extension of the esplanade to connect with Riverside Park and the reestablishment of the recreation pier that once served Harlem is a paramount consid-

eration in any plans for the area. Our forthcoming pier will not only permit the establishment of waterfront accessibility and transport but would also provide a safe location that would cater to youngsters as well as adults. Other recreational and cultural opportunities should be evaluated to complement what is provided in Riverside Park and Riverbank State Park.

By reestablishing rail service for Metro North at 125th and 145th Street on the Amtrak line, accessibility to the Harlem Piers and Riverbank would be enhanced. This would aid the economic development of the area, and provide educational opportunities for both Columbia University and City College as well as offer additional access to health and religious institutions. Funding is critical to follow up on the cumulative impacts assessment, establish the vehicle for immediate development of the area and provide information to the community that would facilitate cooperative progress on its revitalization.

## **EDUCATION/LIBRARIES**

Some elementary schools in CB9M rank among the bottom ten percent in reading and mathematics. A contributing factor to this condition is the lack of adequate facilities; I.S. 172 is a prime example.

CB9M wants to emphasize the request for a public high school in our area is not new. We strongly believe that by having our children attend a school in our area, a sense of community involvement and pride will grow. The staggering dropout rate among African American and Latino children is not acceptable and must no longer be tolerated. We recommend that a needs assessment be conducted and followed by a plan which will address the needs of a high school population in CB9M. The Board strongly supports the funding of capital priorities determined and proposed by the local school district in consultations with the CB9M.

The poor education of our youth and the deplorable rate of illiteracy for many of our adults keep the cycle of poverty and deprivation pain intact. The cuts to the literacy programs are most unfortunate and must be restored. The basic educational infrastructure for youth continues to exist and at a level that undermines the future economic well being of the community.

The City's libraries are also a vital tool for education, advancement and cultural enrichment. At Board 9's George Bruce and Hamilton Grange and Columbia Branch libraries there has been a decrease in book circulation and services. The means must be found to increase or maintain hours of operation and fill vacant personnel positions. Programs such as English as a Second Language, CLASP Adults Literacy and citizenship prep should be increased in our libraries. We also want to assure that each branch has a Children's Librarian.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

The need for an increase of inspector personnel to assure good quality drinking water is a vital need in our community. We are pleased that the Department of Environmental Protection has shared our concern and hope that it will continue its demonstrated support when additional funds become available.

The staffing has to be maintained at the mandated levels at the Sewage Treatment Plant. CB9M strongly requests the assistance of our Elected Officials to monitor Plant activities. The failure of the back up generators during the August 2003 Northeast Blackout almost led to disaster. Board 9 calls for an expedited delivery of the new equipment as well as coordinated training of the staff during emergencies.

Complaints about air pollution and noise are handled by DEP with a staff of nine Inspectors citywide in the evenings and weekends that is entirely too small. This is especially true since they are expected to respond also to calls from 311 about late night or illegal construction. It often takes months to arrange an inspection for noise or fume complaints that can entirely disrupt a neighborhood. DEP must have its inspection forces increased significantly, especially in light of our North River Pollution Control Plant.

Flooding of catch basins in CB9M is a constant Problem along, St. Nicholas and Morning-side Drive; it is commonplace to see "mini lakes". This has become an intolerable situation that must be addressed immediately in light of West Nile Virus concerns; it creates a health hazard and makes it especially difficult for our senior citizens to "navigate" the cross walk.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

The city has recognized the fact that deferred maintenance often results in higher costs than yearly upkeep. With so much roadway improvement scheduled and deferred, it is necessary for the Mayor's Traffic Construction Coordinating Council (MTCCC) to monitor this activity closely to ensure a minimum amount of traffic congestion negative impact on the small businesses and residents in our area. For our community, the availability of convenient and reliable mass transportation is a requirement. Most of our workers have low paying jobs and cannot afford alternative forms of commutation; they need subways and buses that deliver them to their place of employment on time. The failure of the MTA to increase services that correspond with the 15% growth in mass transit utilization causes delays that make our resident's travel more difficult.

CB9M has been able to maintain (M18, M4, M5 & M104 or extend (M60) service, however the lack of additional buses and subway cars (especially in the #1 Line) causes on a regular basis by-passing of stations and bus stops southbound to expedite schedule adjustments for lower Manhattan leaving our community stranded. Reconstruction efforts both within and without our Board District have placed undo

strain on our other arteries. For instance, the work on Columbus Avenue for the Frederick Douglass Circle to our south has resulted in increased heavy truck traffic on Broadway; and the rebuilding of the 155th Street entrance/exits to the Miller Highway [Westside Highway] has significantly increased usage of Amsterdam Avenue and the 125th Street Corridor. Additionally, the junction of Broadway and 125th Street, has become heavily congested; given the many differing objects of the drivers entering the intersection, it has become increasingly hazardous. During peak periods, traffic enforcement is required for this area.

There is a desperate need for adequate parking facilities. CB9M successfully coordinated with Sanitation to change street sweeping signage reducing lost parking time. One branch of the Department of Transportation removed over 90 spaces for HPD of which to this date only 50 are used without the knowledge or input of either CB9 or the Manhattan Borough Commissioner.

CB9M recommends that a method of coordination be "created so that all changes are routed through the Manhattan Borough Commissioners Office, with subsequent input from the Board before implementation.

The conditions of our road surfaces north of West 135th street require reconstruction, NOT RESURFACING, on Amsterdam Avenue, St. Nicholas Avenue, as well as Broadway.

## 197A PLAN

To accomplish the afore stated needs, the Board recognized early on, that an appropriate 197 A is essential to accomplish our goals. Therefore, as early as the 1980's, this Board recognized the need to identify comprehensive and integrative approaches to improve the quality of life in CB9M. Thus, we held numerous community meetings throughout the CB9M district, received and documented suggestions and ideas presented in our 197 A Plan. During a ten-year period, the Board utilized the services of several universities (City College; Pratt Institute and Columbia Univ.) This was done individually and at different periods of time. We received and reviewed a number of profit and non-profit organization's proposals but none could be executed due to NYC Budget constraints. This handicap also prevented the assignment of a long-term promised consultant to assist the Board in accomplishing the development a 197 A document, which would meet the criteria, required by City Planning.

In spite of difficulties encountered, in Feb. of 2001 after many consultation sessions with City Planning, the Borough President's office and the service of Columbia Univ. the Board was enabled to submit an official 1998 197 A Plan Document to City Planning.

We are awaiting a decision from City Planning on this document. City funds have been provided to assist in the finalization of the 197-A. The Board's goals are:

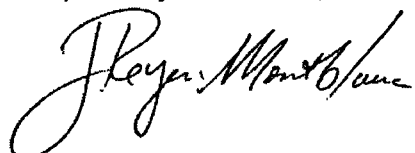
- 1 - To receive approval of our submitted 197 -A Plan by City Planning "and other appropriate gov't agencies.
- 2 - To accomplish the long-term rehabilitation of our current housing stock, especially for those in need of affordable housing.
- 3 - To implement our approved 197 A Plan.
- 4 - To monitor the implementation of the recommendations as stated in our 97 A Plan document. .
- 5 - To monitor the implementation of maintenance of the recommendations as outlined in our 197 - A Plan.

During these times of the City Budget prosperity it is the City's responsibility to provide adequate funds to implement the proposed 197 A Plan and to finance a continuous up-date of our Plan. Such financial support is essential for this Board to accomplish our primary goal to improve the quality of life in the CB9M area. .

We are aware of the budgetary restrictions affecting all• phases of government funding. We want to do our part in conserving these resources and utilizing them in a way that will be beneficial to all in the community.

Working together does make a difference!

Respectfully Submitted,



Jordi Reyes-Montblanc  
Chair