



COMMUNITY BOARD No. 18

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STATEMENT OF NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

FISCAL YEAR 2015

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Within the boundaries of Community Board #18 are many communities that comprise the "southern tier" of Brooklyn which can be classified as multi-ethnic, middle income neighborhoods with a solid tax base of single-family, multi-family and mid-rise buildings.

Throughout our communities there exists a network of volunteer civic, parent, religious, and service organizations working in a harmonious atmosphere of partnership with our elected officials to enhance the quality of life for all of our residents. It is that spirit that makes the neighborhoods of Community Board #18, perhaps, some of the finest places in New York City in which to live and raise a family.

The communities that comprise Community Board #18 are truly representative of the city as a whole and must be maintained in order to attract and keep families, business, and industry in the city. Only through a comprehensive program of infrastructure improvement and long-range planning can we attempt to fulfill our planning objectives. Every effort must be made by the city to grant our Capital and Expense Budget requests and recognize the priorities that we have attached to these funding recommendations. Unfortunately, at the present "bare-bones" funding level, we can barely maintain the basic and essential facilities and services without the hope of long-range planning.

We urge the **Mayor's Community Affairs Unit (CAU)**, the **Office of Citywide Event Coordination and Management (CECM)**, and the **Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT)** to continue the strong working relationship between their centralized staff and our Community Board to assist in the resolution of issues and problems. We commend their constant expansion of internet access and support to our Board. Computer support services are crucial since the use of the internet has become the means for government to conduct its business.

Data report listings posted on NYC.gov was an important step toward sharing **311 Citizen Service Center** complaint collection data. However, we continue to stress the need to be informed about specific complaint collection data encompassing location, tracking and resolution. Interaction and sharing of information between city agencies and the Community Board will continue to enhance service delivery and further our efforts to improve the quality of life for our residents and the business community.

The 911 System is experiencing serious problems and must be overhauled. Recently, emergency rescuers were forced to take up pencil and paper as the citywide 911 computer-aided dispatch system crashed several times, resulting in up to 90 minutes of down time. The 30-year old EMS dispatch system was set to be overhauled as part of a replacement of the 911 System but, as yet, the city has not gotten around to updating the system. The Administration has to figure out something to do with the system, because it is not working.

GATEWAY NATIONAL PARK/JAMAICA BAY AND ITS TRIBUTARIES

Jamaica Bay is one of the largest and most productive coastal ecosystems in the northeastern United States, and includes the largest tidal wetland complex in the New York metropolitan area that serves as flood protection and shoreline erosion control for the homes and businesses of the bordering neighborhoods.

On October 29, 2012, in the wake of super-storm “Sandy,” the East Coast saw the destruction of whole communities. Our Community Board neighborhoods were no exception. Bergen Beach, Canarsie, Gerritsen Beach/Plumb Beach, Marine Park and Mill Island suffered wide-spread damage ... double-digit millions in property damage ... untold personal loss ... businesses destroyed or disrupted ... lives lost and families uprooted. After the “calm” – the clean-up and rebuilding began and continues to this day. All levels of government have weighed-in to help in the process.

Proposals have been made for further storm protection, but no clear Flood Control Plan has been offered and funded. The “shore” communities need a “boots on the ground,” federally funded system for sand dunes, human-made dikes, dams and/or floodgates to provide a defense against future storm surges from the surrounding rapidly rising bodies of water. We must not “plan in a vacuum” or put plans on the shelf for the next administration. We must plan for a true engineering solution for the next 100 year storm – that is **not** 100 years away!

To add insult to injury ... FEMA added practically all of our shorefront properties to their “A” Zone ... lowering property values and making Flood Insurance mandatory, with few exceptions, at astronomical premiums, and without a proposed plan to protect these communities – that is the Injury. The Insult – The New York City Department of City Planning has proposed a Flood Resilience Zoning Text Amendment designed to address FEMA’s new “flood” zoning map designations and building requirements, and promote recovery from the storm, rebuilding, and increasing the city’s resilience to climate-related events, including coastal flooding and storm. Nowhere in this plan are complex and neighborhood-specific issues addressed for our unique attached housing-stock areas severely affected by Hurricane Sandy and now classified by FEMA as Zone A. Nowhere in this plan is a provision for financial assistance for the homeowner in order to come into compliance with these new zoning requirements.

To quote one of Mayor Bloomberg’s favorite retort when faced with a tough question; “**Get Real!**” That is what we are asking the city administration to do. So far, we have gotten no “real” response!

More than 500,000 people live within the Jamaica Bay watershed. Jamaica Bay bordering on Brooklyn, Queens, and Nassau County includes 26,645 acres consisting of open water, meadowland, marshes, dunes, and forests. Its inlets are under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, Gateway National Recreational Area. Sixty one percent (61%) of Gateway is water. Without remediation, by the year 2017, the sea level is expected to increase by six feet as a result of global climate changes. That very fact puts our shore communities in crisis!

Gateway National Recreation Area, one of our nation's 391 national parks, and one of its few “urban” national parks, plays host to more than 80 species of fish and 400 species of birds and butterflies (nearly 20% of North America's bird species) which live in or visit during seasonal migrations. The bay is a critical stopover area along the Atlantic Flyway migration route and is one of the best bird-watching locations in the western hemisphere. The National Audubon Society and the American Bird Conservancy designated Jamaica Bay as an Important Bird Area worthy of special attention and protection.

It is well documented by various scientific investigations that the tidal marshes that occur in Jamaica Bay are disappearing at an unprecedented alarming rate. From 1924 to 2009 more than 50% of the bay's marshes disappeared. The Bay is being overloaded with nitrogen from NYC's DEP waste treatment plants, discharging 30,000-

35,000 tons a day of nitrogen into the bay -- destroying aquatic life and the marshes at the rate of 35-40 acres of marshlands a year. At this rate, without remediation, this important community resource will cease to exist in our lifetime. Although marsh plants require nitrogen to thrive, too much can kill them. Major steps have been taken to address this problem by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection with its opening of the Paerdegat Basin Retention Facility -- a state-of-the-art facility at the foot of Jamaica Bay which includes construction of the adjacent Paerdegat Basin Natural Park Area.

The future of this ecosystem, including wildlife, local homes, and infrastructure is of deep interest to conservation groups and environmentalists as well as community organizations and residents. It is our combined goal to bring Jamaica Bay water quality to levels that meet and, hopefully, exceed Federal standards for recreational use and ultimately preserve this lush, natural resource. Since the inception of our Community Board, in 1977, that has been one of our most important missions. That battle continues to this day!

Currently, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in partnership with the N.Y.C. Department of Parks and Recreation and the N.Y.S. Department of Environmental Conservation, began work in December 2009 on an \$8 million Gerritsen Creek/Marine Park Ecosystem Restoration Project. The project plan is to rebuild approximately 32 acres of marshlands; approximately 20 acres of coastal grassland; more than 240,000 cubic yards of beach; removal of invasive species of plants and transplanting more than 750,000 native marsh plants. This vegetation acts as filters for the area's water, improving water quality and lessening the negative impact caused by run-off and other contaminants. The marshlands restoration will provide the public a place for recreation and access to wildlife. The creation of observation points along the restored nature trails, with signage posted along the paths, will provide education for the visitors about the area's variety of species and plant life and the tension that occurs when ecological and human environments intersect. That project continues to this day!

Floyd Bennett Field opened in 1931. From 1941 to 1971 it operated as a Naval Air Station and became part of the Gateway National Recreation Area in 1972. It is an historic treasure -- the first municipal airfield and an aerial hub for fighter planes during World War II, where the sounds of the departing aircraft of Wiley Post, Amelia Earhart, and Douglas "wrong-way" Corrigan stand as a living testament to times past. Views from the control tower at Floyd Bennett Field gave clear vision to the criss-crossing runways of New York's first municipal airport. Now...the legendary runway is a barren pothole-ridden road.

The field is dotted with abandoned buildings and structures, ruinous hangars, and dilapidated roads. The field's coast is a polluted cemetery for destroyed boats and debris. In short - It is the disgrace of Gateway!

On May 5, 2012 park rangers cut the ribbon on the newly renovated William Fitts Ryan Center, once the main arrival and departure terminal at Floyd Bennett Field. In it hangs a portrait of the field's namesake, pilot Floyd Bennett, the first man to fly over the North Pole – a fitting tribute to a great American hero. The restoration project, contracted and managed by the National Park Service's Denver Service Center, was funded in large part by a \$4.8 million grant from the Department of Defense. Additional funding was provided by the National Park Service. A good “start” – but even under the Federal Sequestration which establishes “caps” on annual appropriations bills for programs such as defense, education, national parks, and many others, the dream of a restored Floyd Bennett Field must not be lost.

The Board continues to urge the restoration of Floyd Bennett Field's water access to its original prominence. The restoration of the boat docks at Floyd Bennett Field and at Canarsie Pier would allow for the use of the on-again, off-again use of water taxis at peak times to facilitate the movement of participants of large outdoor events as well as visitors to the Park, the islands off the coast of Canarsie, and the sports entertainment complex at Floyd Bennett Field. It would enable connection with other parts of the borough and city. Water taxi service is already prepared to provide stops in Red Hook, Fulton Ferry Landing in DUMBO, and Governors Island where the public can enjoy summer programming and concerts or take a car-free bike ride.

The Historic Aircraft Restoration Project (HARP) is a National Park Service Volunteer In Park program dedicated to preserving the aviation history of Floyd Bennett Field for future generations. Since 1995, volunteers have dedicated thousands of hours of their spare time to restore vintage aircraft. Many of the volunteers are retired airline mechanics who have specialized knowledge of the technology used in the vintage aircraft that modern mechanics do not have. They work with a new generation of volunteers whose goals are to pass the knowledge down to the next generation. HARP is located in Hangar B, which was constructed by the U.S. Navy during World War II. After World War II, it was used as a training facility to help keep the nation's naval aviators prepared for national emergencies. Today, Floyd Bennett houses one of the finest aircraft restoration facilities in the United States as well as an NYPD training facility and a Marine Corps Reserve Battalion.

Occupying four (4) of the eight (8) airport hangars is a "mega" community-based sports and entertainment complex known as "Aviator Sports & Recreation" complete with a football field, ice rinks, and a climbing wall.

The historical integrity of some of the hangars has been compromised by this conversion and is in contradiction to the protection in place by its inclusion on the National Register and under the management and jurisdiction of the National Park Service. Promoting commercialization and excessive delegating of public responsibility to private concessionaires jeopardizes this natural treasure.

Transco/National Grid is planning to commence a two-phase gas pipeline project that will be installed parallel to the Marine Parkway Gil Hodges Memorial Bridge and will connect to National Grid's gas system infrastructure on both sides of the Rockaway Inlet. A new meter and regulator station, to measure, condition and control the flow of natural gas before it enters the local natural gas distribution system, is proposed to occupy Hangars A and B in the southern part of Floyd Bennett Field.

Partisan Legislation in Washington seeks to allow Floyd Bennett Field to house this station, labeled by the NYPD as a "potential terrorist target" and, consequently, a high risk factor for the facility and surrounding communities. Have they forgotten that Floyd Bennett Field is a designated Historic District on the New York State and National Register of Historic Places (S/NR) and is visited yearly by tens of thousands of adults and children?

At a regularly scheduled meeting of Community Board #18 held on January 18, 2012, a Motion was made and passed, unanimously, to oppose the building, maintenance, and operation of this high-pressure National Gas Line at Floyd Bennett Field in Gateway National Park and its prolongation along Flatbush Avenue. A coalition of gardeners and environmentalists have joined the opposition of the project claiming it would definitely harm local wildlife and possibly cause a catastrophic explosion.

In April 2010 a "Blue Ribbon Panel Task Force" was formed for Gateway to establish a shared vision for the future of the country's third most-visited national recreation area. The panel, an esteemed group of federal, state, and local agencies, and experts, recently released their final report on how best to revitalize Floyd Bennett Field and help make Gateway National Recreation Area an iconic urban national park. The

report, “The Next Jewel In New York’s Urban Park Crown,” is a forty-page report that calls for a significant re-investment in the 1,400 acre Floyd Bennett Field, the largest waterfront property in New York City. It contains specific and achievable recommendations for actions on education, environmental restoration, transportation and infrastructure, public programming, park design, and a new management partnership.

On July 17, 2012 New York City and the National Park Service formalized the management partnership to jointly manage more than 10,000 acres of parkland in and around Jamaica Bay. Under the agreement, city and federal officials will work together to implement the recommendations to improve access, foster research, run education and recreation programs and plan restoration projects for the bay. Jamaica Bay is an unusual patchwork of private, city, state and federal lands.

City parks in the bay area total 3,300 acres and include Canarsie, Marine, Paerdegat Basin and Spring Creek Parks, as well as Rockaway Beach and Idlewild. The federal holdings, which span 7,300 acres, include Floyd Bennett Field, Fort Tilden, Jacob Riis Park, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge and a smattering of salt-marsh islands, all making up part of the Gateway National Recreation Area. This partnership will improve our city’s great natural treasure. We look forward to continuing to engage our elected leaders in revitalizing Floyd Bennett Field. Nowhere else in the world is there the potential that exists at Gateway, and specific guidance will be provided to the National Park Service as to how this vision can be applied.

Paerdegat Basin, on the Northwestern edge of Jamaica Bay, is one of the largest remaining coastal ecosystems in the New York City area. Portions of the Gateway National Recreation Area are on both banks at its mouth and dot the landscape. The area surrounding the head of Paerdegat Basin supports New York City infrastructure. The Department of Transportation (DOT) operates a maintenance and storage facility at the northwest corner, and DEP also operates a maintenance and storage facility at the northwest corner, and a Pumping Station at the headwater terminus.

The tributary watershed to Paerdegat Basin includes 6,825 acres spanning portions of the Canarsie, Brownsville, Crown Heights, Flatbush, East Flatbush, Marine Park, and Flatlands neighborhoods of Brooklyn. The Bay is the depository of the city’s treated wastewater -- approximately 300 million gallons a day.

DEP, as part of the 1997 Paerdegat Basin Water Quality Facility Plan ULURP Application, committed to upgrade the Pumping Station at

the base of the shoreline and built a thirty-million gallon underground Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Retention Facility, coupled with a twenty-million gallon "in-line" retention, to hold and treat the overflow until the Knapp Street Sewage Treatment Plant could properly process the sewage. The completed project became operable on May 12, 2011 and, as part of the ULURP Application, includes DEP maintenance and personnel facilities and a "new home" for Community Board #18.

More than a decade ago, as part of the Paerdegat Basin Water Quality Facility Plan, the ULURP Application also included the conversion of approximately 177 acres of Paerdegat Basin shoreline and submerged land to parkland. As a result of that action, DEP designed and presented a proposed Paerdegat Basin Natural Area Park and Ecology Park. The project has been developed and coordinated with the Department of Parks and Recreation and is now under construction with anticipated completion in 2014.

The Natural Area Park is a restoration of a coastal grassland community over much of the project site. Public access is restricted as its goal is to promote habitat restoration and ecological improvement. The Ecology Park, a 5-acre section of the project, will highlight many of the plant community types that exist or once existed in New York City. The Ecology Park will be equipped with a trail and viewing platforms for public access and will be used as an educational resource to promote awareness of the various environments found throughout the city.

The **New York State Department of Environmental Conservation** (NYS DEC) has included Jamaica Bay on its Section 303(d) impaired water list since 1998 because of violations of water quality standards relating to pathogens, nitrogen, and oxygen demand. In November 2009 a project costing more than \$11 million began to restore 35 acres of disappearing marsh lands and coastal wetlands in Jamaica Bay by reducing the amount of nitrogen and reducing the impacts from contaminated sediment in the water to prevent further loss of wetlands and protect a host of endangered and threatened species.

The future of this ecosystem, including wildlife, local homes, and infrastructure is of deep interest to environmentalists and conservation groups as well as area community organizations and residents. It is our combined goal to bring Jamaica Bay water quality to levels that meet and, hopefully, exceed Federal standards for recreational use and ultimately preserve this lush, natural resource.

This Administration and its successors need to continue to act

upon a plan to protect the city's waterfront from the effects of sea level rise and storm surges taking into account the changing needs of the waterfront. The recently released plan by Mayor Bloomberg and his Special Task Force, in the wake of "Sandy," was long overdue. Although very aggressive, much of it goes without funding and lacks insight into the long-range needs and possibilities for development and planning. Additionally, the Mayor also proposed a plan, "Vision 2020," released in March 2011, providing a sustainable framework for more water transport, increased public access to the waterfront and economic opportunities that will help make the water part of New Yorker's everyday lives.

Our Community Board continues to ask the basic question – When will the plans be implemented and who will fund them? The silence from the Administration is deafening!

ADMINISTRATION PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Each year, the Mayor proposes further "attacks" on the Community Boards by reducing our meager budgets...only to be restored by the City Council during Budget negotiations. The Boards continually struggle to fulfill their Charter mandated obligations under its paltry budget allotment. The Mayor would be better served if he left the operating budgets intact and cut the tens (10's) of millions of taxpayer dollars spent each year on unnecessary and often duplicated studies contracted to outside sources.

The Board urges increased funding to allow Community Boards to function -- to hire planners and consultants to provide the essential tools to the community to address pressing and necessary zoning expertise and resources for effective neighborhood planning. The concept of community-based planning was the reason Community Boards were created when Mayor Wagner took his "Community Planning Council" concept city-wide in 1963. The boards were envisioned as town halls for community based planning to be equipped with a full-time professional urban planner. Almost four (4) decades later, despite the tireless efforts of their members and staff, Community Boards and community-based organizations have few real opportunities to engage in proactive planning and even fewer opportunities to ensure that development suits neighborhood needs. Funding, training and resources must be provided to assure active and meaningful participation by the Community Boards as they continue to partner with city government and developers.

We urge the **Department of City Planning** (DCP) to develop a

new text amendment that would strengthen rules and zoning regulations for the placement of communication towers and poles, especially in residential neighborhoods, on city-owned housing projects and commercial properties. The outdated Federal Telecommunications Law of 1996 does not restrict the placement of cellular transmission devices based on health concerns since no hazard has been established. The Board of Standards and Appeals Special Permits for non-accessory towers in residential districts, ZR 73-30, only looks at the effect of the utility on the "privacy, quiet, light, and air of the neighborhood." With the proliferation of cell phone antennas and towers, we must use zoning laws to regulate their location, size, design, and operating characteristics to insure that the proposed use to be compatible with adjacent uses, residences, buildings, or structures. The Federal Appeals Court (Sprint Telephony PCS v. San Diego, 2008) upheld the right of the municipality to regulate towers and poles as long as they do not actually prohibit wireless service or create significant service coverage gaps. New Zoning Regulations would insure the least intrusive placement of communication towers and poles that are sensitive to the nature and character of the community.

On June 30, 2009 the City Council approved the DCP ULURP Application for lower density and contextual zoning map changes for the Canarsie neighborhood. Community Board #18 unanimously supported the ULURP Application. That text amendment has set the standard for future development.

It is the sense of this Board that all of the communities within our Board be rezoned to create a rational up-to-date zoning plan that reflects natural residential, commercial, and manufacturing boundaries. The current land use is largely an artifact of historical urbanization. Future land use must be controlled by zoning, public policy, and land use regulations intended to promote activities appropriate to preserve the neighborhood character and infrastructure for those who live and work there.

A partner in the planning process is the **Board of Standard and Appeals (BSA)**. BSA's original mission was to provide a relief valve for property owners in those **rare** circumstances where existing zoning regulations prohibited them from reasonably developing their property. BSA is frequently misused to circumvent the existing zoning text. They repeatedly demonstrate their indifference to the views of the community and its concerns respecting the character of its unique neighborhoods by granting zoning variances in favor of development, construction, and other related matters. BSA should base their decisions on the responses to the following: ...does the unique condition of the property

prevent reasonable development? ...would unique property conditions prevent an owner from obtaining a reasonable financial return? ...Does the variance, if granted, alter the essential character of the area? ...Is the situation a self-imposed hardship? (buying or overbuilding on the property knowing the restrictions and then claiming hardship) ...Is the variance requested the minimum necessary to afford relief?

For the protection of generations to come -- we must continue to fight to maintain and preserve our natural resources and the unique character of the diverse neighborhoods of our city. We must continue to examine and revise zoning laws to meet ever-changing community needs and interests.

Community Board 18's housing stock basically consists of well-maintained owner-occupied one and two family homes with scattered co-op and condominium development. Additionally, there are several high-rise buildings and three (3) **N.Y.C. Housing Authority (NYCHA) Projects**, Bayview, Breukelen, and Glenwood, within our boundaries. These Housing Projects are desperate for federal funding. They require continuous rehabilitation, upgrading and modernization. We are opposed to the sale of any of the open space area within the projects developments for private development.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Transportation needs, particularly total reconstruction, contract resurfacing, and scheduled repair of the roadways within the Board area, presents an ever increasing need. Canarsie and surrounding communities were built on landfill that rapidly deteriorate and require an aggressive street and sewer reconstructive program. The Community Board urges the Department of Transportation to advance our Board's meager Capital Project requests. Street resurfacing is a temporary costly "fix"...not a solution. Our roadways have recently seen a high increase of "sink holes" as a result of the road bed undermining from "Sandy." An emergency "hands-on" effort by DOT and DEP must address this major community need and concern.

As our communities age, it becomes increasingly essential that the Capital Budget needs of the area be met if we are to maintain public structures and facilities at acceptable levels. Emphasis must be placed on long-term infrastructure rebuilding as well as short-range improvements.

The desperately needed "Reconstruction of the Seven (7) Bridges on the Belt Parkway" commenced with minimal impact in

November 2009 with the first of three contracts - Fresh Creek Bridge, Paerdegat Basin Bridge, two (2) separate bridges eastbound and westbound, and the Rockaway Parkway Bridge. The second contract - Mill Basin Draw Bridge, a fixed structure with 60-foot clearance over Mean High Water obviating the need for opening and closing the bridge, is now scheduled for duration from 2014 to 2017. The landscaping contract will follow and complete the project in 2019.

Transportation issues persist to rank high on the problem list for our Community Board. Pedestrian, cyclist, and motor vehicle occupant safety at many of the intersections and streets within our Board area are the source of major concern.

As a component of the Mayor's PlaNYC, NYCDOT recently created a Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs. With no enforcement of regulations in place, and without consultation, an unprecedented three-year plan was launched to expand the city's on-street bicycle network by 200 miles. Bicycle lanes clearly offer both an environmental and practical benefit in areas served by adequate mass transit alternatives and a more bike-friendly population. Bike lanes will only create hazardous conditions in our board area and jeopardize pedestrians, cyclists, and motor vehicle occupants.

The City Bike system, operated by NYC Bike Share, was launched in late May 2013. Just before launching the bicycle-sharing program, private account information of 1,174 of its customers was accidentally leaked via a software glitch which has since been resolved. Other problems do persist – law suits have been filed, docking stations have been relocated after complaints were received, and participants experience problems in picking up or dropping off bicycles at docking stations when, in fact, the Citi Bike “app” does not indicate a problem at the station. On the bright side, however, some resourceful New Yorkers don't have any problems at all with the City Bike System. They use the docked bikes as “free” exercise bicycles. It is essential that the Community Board participate in the planning before possible expansion of this program into our Board area.

We urge the Mayor and NYCDOT to recognize the highly unusual transportation challenges inherent to our community as well as the unique needs of the population we serve. Unlike most other areas of the City, Community Board #18 is simply not accessible to the New York City subway system. Residents must take at least one bus to reach the nearest subway station. Our neighborhoods are largely residential with a major shopping mall, Kings Plaza, and small shopping areas/strips interspersed throughout, so there are no direct truck routes. This means that we constantly have a large number of

buses and commercial truck traffic on our residential streets. The addition of bike lanes would impede traffic even further and pose a hazard to everyone who uses that roadway, pedestrians and bicyclists included.

Additionally, our board's population, historically and currently, includes one of the largest constituencies of senior citizens in the City. With or without designated lanes, it is safe to expect that this population is not going to jump on the bike-riding bandwagon. We, therefore, join with our local elected officials, community civic associations, and area residents in opposing the proposed expansion of on-street bicycle lanes to include streets within our communities.

Kings Plaza Shopping Center, built on city-owned land, is the cause of constant consternation. Numerous costly and time consuming studies have been performed by outside consultants, the Departments of Transportation and City Planning, as well as the Borough President's Office, in an effort to improve pedestrian, vehicular, and bus circulation problems at the intersections and along Flatbush Avenue and Avenue U. The studies continue to identify the same problems and continue to propose a myriad number of improvements including changes in bus stop locations and operations, directional signage, street configuration with the widening of Avenue U and Flatbush Avenue, and the **installation of pedestrian safety fencing** along the South side of Avenue U, from Flatbush Avenue to East 55th Street, and on the center traffic island on Flatbush Avenue, between Avenues U and V. Our Community Board also included in our Capital Budget Priorities and Requests a request for the construction of an elevated pedestrian overpass at this intersection. -- **To date... nothing of consequence has been done**, except for the creation of a major bus layover in front of the Kings Plaza Shopping Center causing buses, leaving the layover, to sharply propel across five (5) lanes of traffic on Flatbush Avenue to accomplish a left-hand turn onto Avenue U...and the widening of the traffic islands on Flatbush Avenue which have created additional confusion, danger, and further bottleneck this dangerous intersection!

All the studies performed...All the dollars spent...All the changes suggested...All the promises made...All the time and money wasted -- **To date...nothing of consequence has been done**. The problem is self-evident -- the solutions have been proposed -- implement the recommendations.

Although the Mall has undergone a major interior renovation, the exterior is old/out-dated and poorly maintained, and has become a community eyesore!

EMERGENCY SERVICES - FIRE

We are optimistic that funds will be increased to establish an even greater emergency service presence for the improvement of service deliveries to battle fires, reduce crime, and enhance quality of life conditions within our Community Board area.

Fire protection in a residential community, comprising tens of thousands of frame dwellings, is obviously of paramount concern. The theory used by the Fire Department for "manning" decisions includes statistics that **do not** include literally thousands of homes and tens of thousands of area residents that have become part of the Board area since that statistical information was compiled decades ago. Consequently, analysis of the Department's decision should be the subject of "up-to-date" review not budgetary constraints. With the impending occupancy of a new EMS facility at 10110 Foster Avenue for use as an ambulance station, warehouse facility and offices, we expect to see a significant improvement in EMS response time.

POLICE

We have praiseworthy day-to-day "line" contact with the two area Police Precinct Commanding Officers from the 63rd Police Precinct, Commanding Officer, Captain John Rowell, and from the 69th Police Precinct, Commanding Officer, Deputy Inspector George Fitzgibbon. Special praise must be given to their prudent command decisions in police utilization. Active participation at the Community Council level further improves community relations. The Auxiliary Police continue to play a vital role in the day-to-day operations of both Precincts. We commend these vital groups of community volunteers.

Our Community Board is frustrated, however, in our attempts to address the following specific areas of concern that we and other neighboring Community Boards continue to identify time-and-time-again with little or no positive results. We ask the Police Department to increase their staffing to provide for continual enforcement of the laws to maintain the quality of life for all city residents. Special attention must continue to be given by law enforcement agencies to aggressively address the following violations:

- The rampant illegal street parking of commercial vehicles, delivery trucks, 18 wheelers, car carrier trailers, the well-defined "4-Sale" cars, and the autos/SUV's, with and without license plates, left all day at metered parking and on the sidewalk in front of the various Auto Malls on Utica Avenue, Ralph Avenue,

Avenue U and Kings Highway.

- Double parking continues to plague our neighborhoods, in general, and at the "Kings Plaza" shopping area, schools and places of worship, in particular.
- The proliferation of illegal "dollar" vans particularly at and around the Kings Plaza Shopping Center, on Flatbush Avenue, Avenue U, Remsen Avenue, Ralph Avenue, Utica Avenue, and Flatlands Avenue, and all the routes leading to the Kings Plaza Shopping Center and the Gateway Shopping Complex in East New York.

The Administration must establish stronger enforcement with severe penalties for operation of licensed, unlicensed, and "renegade" vans illegally operating and parking in our communities. Rather than develop a strategy to shift the illegal parking and van problems from block-to-block we must adhere to a strong commitment of interminable rigorous enforcement of these "quality of life" violations.

The need for a new 63rd Precinct Stationhouse continues to be an absolute necessity. Although the Department allocates funds for rehabilitation of the antiquated Stationhouse to meet staffing needs and patrol requirements, the poor conditions and problems still exist. Funding must be set aside for relocation. Modern, adequately sized police precincts are essential to good policing. We urge the NYPD to aggressively explore the acquisition of city-owned properties. Where development costs would be minimized ... new Police Precincts Do Not need to be centralized in a community ... not with the communications available today!

TRANSPORTATION & THE METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY

In this time of rising out-of-control fuel costs we urge the MTA to develop a long-term strategy for meeting the public transportation needs of our area and for all city residents.

We remain frustrated in our efforts to provide adequate public transportation to other parts of the Borough due to the lack of speed, curtailed, changed and/or eliminated service on the surface bus lines. The speed and traffic flow can be easily improved by strict enforcement of regulations prohibiting the use of illegal vans on bus routes.

We continue to ask for attention to, and relief from, the constant parking, double and triple parking of idling buses outside the Flatbush Bus Depot, 4901-23 Avenue O, on Fillmore Avenue, Utica Avenue, and

along Flatbush Avenue. The buses regularly block the street and the Flatbush Avenue entrance/exit to the adjacent Floridian Diner and Burger King. They create hazardous pedestrian, vehicular, and environmental conditions. The TA's lack of vigilance and action underscores their unwillingness to work with the community, city and state agencies, and our elected officials.

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

The maintenance and upkeep of our parks and playgrounds continues to remain a major area of concern due to insufficient staffing and funding. Some parks and playgrounds in our District are in various stages of design, scope and reconstruction. The Board fully supports the continued funding of these projects. Several of our smaller parks and playgrounds require reconstruction or "in-house" spruce-up. We urge that these projects as well as increased staffing be addressed through the Capital and Expense Budget.

The Greenstreets Program provided us with an opportunity to beautify our barren neighborhood triangles and traffic islands. We wholeheartedly support the continuation of this program. We encourage strategies for additional conservation and beautification programs to include sorely needed maintenance provisions

On June 20, 2012, our Community Board voted unanimously to recommend approval for the disposition of city-owned property located at 2875 Flatbush Avenue, a/k/a Mill Basin Project with the following conditions:

- That the proceeds of the sale of these properties be allocated by EDC to map and develop, with the appropriate City and State Agencies, the adjacent property including the Four Sparrow Marsh "Forever Wild" natural habitat as dedicated Parkland and based upon a development plan approved by the community in partnership with the environmental advocates to preserve the property in perpetuity.

The premise behind the redistribution of these proceeds is well-established by other projects such as the Community Board Office and the mapping and development of the adjacent parkland along both sides of Paerdegat Basin. This development plan, discussed on page 6, was included and made part of the approval process for the ULURP application for the DEP Sewer Retention Facility.

We continue to urge the Administration and the Department of

Parks and Recreation to support our quest to maintain this precious, endangered “open space” for generations to come.

Parks' Department equipment and personnel are always in short supply. We urge that our requests, as well as Departmental requests, be given a high priority in budget negotiations for adequate maintenance and operation of our parks. The park areas within Community Board #18 provide recreational and cultural outlets for all ages, and are truly a valued natural resource that must be protected and maintained. Marine Park comprising 798 acres, and Seaview Park comprising 540 acres, are regional facilities that serve a large population outside our local neighborhoods. We are pleased that the long-awaited, over-budgeted construction of the Marine Park Community/Senior Center, a/k/a The Carmine Carro Community Center,” has finally become a reality. This facility will provide sorely needed recreational activities for our vital seniors and active youth population.

Department budget cuts have historically negatively impacted the Forestry Division of the Department of Parks & Recreation and continue to cause great consternation for the residents of our community. The large geographic area of our Community Board and its residential neighborhoods are the “home” to the largest street tree population in the Borough. Consequently, we must cope with a Parks' Division that falls behind in its protracted pruning and dead tree/stump removal schedules. We are hopeful that additional funds will be allocated to this desperately needed service particularly after the massive destruction caused by super storm Sandy.

DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION

Sanitation Commissioner, John Doherty, brought a life-time of experience to the job. We urge the Administration to give him the manpower necessary to do the job.

BK18 Superintendent, Michael Lorenzo, and Supervisor Luis Otarola, have been exemplary in their willingness and demonstrated ability to work with the Board in developing the maximum potential of their limited manpower and equipment to deliver quality service to a community experiencing ever-increasing population growth.

Increased manpower is also needed to maintain the numerous center malls along our roadways. Neglected and unattended they grow into breeding grounds for vermin and illegal dumping creating a community nuisance and safety hazard.

DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS

Increased staffing for the Department of Buildings is critical. Code enforcement personnel are a crucial component in enforcing the Zoning Resolutions and Building Codes. Unchecked greed and neglect will lead to gross abuse and dangerous code violations.

YOUTH

The Board continues to direct its attention to the needs of our area youth by developing and supporting broad outreach after-school and evening recreational, cultural, and educational programs within the community. We are currently working with our local elected officials, community and youth organizations, to secure funds for special programs designated to address identified youth problems.

The State Legislature gave the Mayor broad authority in running the retooled Board of Education as the Department of Education. Reading and math scores reflect a distorted picture of the crisis in our local schools. Fancy slogans such as "no child left behind" and "children first" become the advertising campaign of a failed system. Closing schools to reopen new schools and "Charter Schools" is costly and ineffective. We urge the State Legislature and the Mayor to continue to examine the direction that public education is going and recognize the role of the teacher and the need for parental involvement as the first line of defense in providing a sound basic education... That formula puts "children" first rather than "control" first.

IN CONCLUSION.....

Notwithstanding the drastic budget cuts suffered by the Community Board, we continue to make a major impact in implementing our Charter mandated obligations. We look toward the continued support of our elected officials as key ingredients in restoring these funds so that we may be even more responsive in addressing the needs of our community. The partnership that has developed between government and community is best exemplified by our Statement of Needs and Priorities for Fiscal Year 2015 -- a true product of that joint cooperation.

Respectfully submitted,



Saul Needle
Chairperson



Dorothy Turano
District Manager