

COMMUNITY PLANNING BOARD #11, THE BRONX

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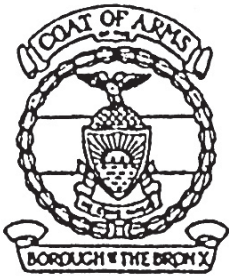
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COMMITTEES

*Community Development &
Budget Priorities*

Economic Development

Education & Culture

Health & Social Services

*Highways, Traffic &
Transportation*

Housing

Information & Technology

Land Use

Parks & Playgrounds

Public Safety

*Sanitation & Environmental
Protection*

Youth Services

Statement of District Needs FY13

Community Board #11 is located in the north central section of the Bronx, it lies between the Bronx River and the Hutchinson River Parkway, and is bounded on the south by Tremont Avenue and on the north by East Gunhill Road and Boston Roads and Adele Avenue. It is comprised of such traditional neighborhoods as Morris Park, Van Nest, Pelham Parkway, Allerton, Pelham Gardens and Bronx Park East. The major thoroughfares passing through the Community District, in addition to its boundaries are White Plains Road, Allerton Avenue, Pelham Parkway, Morris Park Avenue and Bronxdale Avenue.

Community District #11 is serviced by schools lying completely within Region 2, a number of schools operated by religious groups, Christopher Columbus High School and Bronx High School for the Visual Arts. In addition, Mercy College's Bronx Campus is located in the district. The Police Precinct of record is the 49th Police Precinct. Sanitation #11 is entirely coterminous with the Community District, as is Parks District #11. Although, in this instance a number of playgrounds and park areas which are located in Bronx Park (a joint interest area), traditionally identified with Community District 11 are also serviced by Parks District #11 because of the reorganization due to budget reductions by the Parks Department. Community Board 11 is one of those districts, which is serviced by H.R.A.'s Office of Family Services at the Fordham, Crotona and Bergin Centers. The Department of Housing Preservation and Development has designated Community District #11 a Neighborhood Preservation area although our Neighborhood Preservation Office on Allerton Avenue has been closed for some time. Community District #11 is also the home of Jacobi Medical Center, Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Hospital, Bronx State Hospital, Beth Abraham Hospital, Calvary Hospital, New York Eye Surgery Center, the Bronx Occupational Training Center and the New York Center for Special Education.

DISTRICT NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

Police – Community Board #11 continues to advocate for an increase in Police Department personnel for the 49th Police Precinct. We believe that the cop on the beat is a visible deterrent to crime in our district.

Community Board #11 urges that additional police be hired and the equipment they require to perform their duties be procured in a timely manner.

The 49th Precinct is in need of scooters and three-wheeled vehicles to allow Beat Officers to adequately patrol their beat areas and allow them quicker access to playgrounds and schoolyards. Presently, the 49th Precinct staffing is below the Safe City-Safe Streets anticipated patrol level. The current level assigned to the 49th Precinct is 169 officers, which is under the required level. We urge you to continue to look at the 49th Precinct and have additional officers assigned to the precinct to meet the mandated patrol level.

The 49th Precinct also patrols our 3 New York City Housing Developments, Pelham Parkway Houses, Eastchester Gardens and Parkside Houses. They have taken over the responsibility from PSA 8 in 2004. Even though their numbers were increased to 4 additional officers, which is hardly enough to do an adequate job of patrolling these developments.

Community Board 11 is in serious need of Traffic Control Agents to be assigned to Pelham Parkway and Boston Road, Pelham Parkway, White Plains Road and Bronxdale Avenue and Pelham Parkway, Eastchester Road and Pelham Parkway and Allerton Avenue and Bronx Park East. These intersections during the rush hours are gridlocked and dangerous.

Sanitation – For the last seven years Community Board #11 has been requesting five-day pick-up at all the schools in our district. Currently, only public schools receive five-day pick-ups. This makes little sense. Private and religious schools all have feeding programs and generate the same amount of garbage each day as public schools. The garbage at the private and religious schools has to linger there until the scheduled pick-up date. Garbage being stored at a school, waiting to be picked up poses potential health and safety concerns to those children.

We are also requesting additional sanitation pick-ups at our NYCHA developments and other high-rise buildings in our district. It makes no sense that a one and two family house receives the same amount of pick-ups as a 1500 unit development. Storing of garbage does nothing but breed rodents and vermin.

Community Board #11 continues to request the restoration of the Clean Team and N.I.C.S. (Neighborhood Intensive Cleaning Squad) which were eliminated in prior years. These two programs are vital to maintaining the quality of life in our district.

Community Board #11 strongly believes that the City of New York is going to have to deal with Amtrak and the MTA. These two agencies believe and for all intensive purposes are “above the law” when it comes to being responsible for maintaining their property and 18 inches into the curb. For years we have been demanding that both the MTA and Amtrak maintain their property, all in vain. Community Board #11 has the ability to call enforcement and get a tax paying citizen a summons for not maintaining their property but these two entities cannot be summons. These same citizens that have the displeasure of living opposite one of these properties all have beautiful manicured lawns and when they look out their window or leave their house they have to look at a slum. This is not only unfair but it is also unethical. Community Board #11 is now looking to our Federal Elected Officials for a change in the law to hold them accountable.

Finally, Community Board #11 is requesting additional personnel for our Sanitation District. These personnel will allow us to maintain a high score card and leave our streets clean.

Department of Environmental Protection – Community Board #11 recommends that additional personnel be provided to Department of Environmental Protection. Additional field workers are needed to eliminate the existing backlog in sewer repairs and clasped streets.

Community Board #11 is also requesting that we become a lock-down district. During the summer months many of our hydrants are open by kids to cool off from the summer heat. This causes low water pressure throughout our district and brown water flowing from our taps.

We continue to support the construction and reconstruction of various sanitary and combined sewers in our district. In addition, funds for additional catch basins are needed to solve drainage problems in the district.

Parks and Recreation – The Parks Department has never rebound from the budget problems of the 80's when they saw their budgets slashed. Community Board #11 is still feeling the pain from the loss of maintenance, forestry and recreation workers.

Personnel for fixed-post in playgrounds are vital to maintaining safe, clean and healthy playgrounds for our children and seniors. By staffing our playgrounds, the incidents of vandalism and misuse of park property drastically declines, saving maintenance needs.

This is especially necessary in parks such as Matthews and Muliner Playground. Without park personnel assigned to this park vandalism will occur and the money spent on renovations would be wasted.

Additional personnel in PEP are needed to combat the destruction of parks and playgrounds both in the day and in the evening. With such a low number of PEP officers assigned to the Bronx our parks are not patrolled and secured during the day or the evening. These PEP Officers would also help us combat the illegal barbecuing that takes place in Bronx Park and Pelham Parkway on the weekends in the summer months.

The Forestry unit needs to be increased in order to assure that the many trees in our district are safe and being maintained.

Currently, it takes years to have a tree pruned in our district. During storms, these trees, when not properly maintained create a dangerous situation for our community.

Proper fencing and lighting is a major concern for our parks and playgrounds. Proper fencing will reduce the vandalism that usually occurs when a park is not secured. Proper lighting also reduces vandalism in our parks and playgrounds in addition to reducing criminal activity.

Community Board #11 supports the Following Parks projects:

P-1034 - Pelham Parkway

OP-963 - Bronx River Parklands

In addition, we urge that proper equipment and materials be purchased for the Parks Department's use, including a pick-up truck with a snowplow.

Community Board 11 is requesting that Van Nest Playground (Five Corners Park) be expanded and reconstructed to accommodate that large number of young people in the Van Nest Community. We also support the renovations of the south end of Loreto Playground and the existing bocce courts. Community Board 11 would like to see a canopy placed over the courts to prevent damage in inclement weather.

The Community Board urges the reintroduction of the summer recreational programs sponsored by the agency. Including, the preschool and summer program at Zimmermann Playground and the Mobile Recreation Unit program.

Fire – Community Board #11 is opposed to any cuts in Fire Department Personnel or units. Only after September 11th did everyone realize how much we all depend on them and how they put their life on the line to save others. Any cut in personnel increases the danger that these brave individuals face each day.

Community Board 11 supports an increase in Fire Marshals in the Borough of the Bronx. We need this investigative body to cut down on arson in the Borough. Their numbers are too few for the vital services they offer.

We also urge the Fire Department to remove all deactivated emergency call boxes in our district. They have become full of garbage and bring down the look of the community.

Libraries – Community Board #11 supports the New York Public Library Branches in our district. Community Board 11 understands the need and supports funding to make it possible to have libraries remain open 6 days a week. Our residents depend on our branches being open and available to them. We also urge that funds be made available to fully renovate the Van Nest and Allerton Branches. These structures are in need are serious renovation and also need to be up-graded.

Security at libraries has become a serious problem in our district. Unruly children in our libraries have created a difficult situation for our residents to be able to sit and enjoy a good book. Additional security guards are necessary to keep libraries safe and enjoyable.

Housing – Community Board #11 urges that the funding for the various programs which provide loans to residents and landlords in our district be increased. Specifically, the Home Improvement Program, Article 8A loans, Community Consultant Contracts and Senior HELP Program are all extremely valuable programs to the residents of our community.

In addition, we urge that HPD and the Buildings Department be provided with inspectors and enforcement personnel needed to do all inspections in a timely manner. We are also urging that Section 8 housing is inspected yearly to assure that residents are living in a safe and healthy environment. Community Board 11 is requesting that a better line of communication be available between the Community Board and that inspecting agency. All too often, the Community Board gets a call from a resident in section 8 housing regarding vermin and other major housing violations. Our attempt to contact either the HPD or the NYCHA section 8 unit is futile.

Youth – The continuing need for a Beacon Program is urged for the Community Board #11 area. This need arises with the increased number of at-risk youth in our area. It seems totally unfair that some community boards have two and three Beacons and our board continues to have none. Currently, there are no evening/weekend programs for youth in our district. The only program that we have operating in Community Board 11 for our youth is one operated by NIDC and it is for youth up to the 5th grade. That program operates until 6:00 PM daily. .

There continues to be a need in Morris Park, Pelham Gardens and Van Nest communities to have a center open until 10:00 PM. This has been a need for the last 10 years.

Without programs for young people, families will flee to the suburbs to raise their children. We need to keep families in our community and make them want to stay here and raised their children.

As stated in the past, community organizations used to receive their funding through Department of Youth Services (DYS) now they receive their funding from Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD). However, our allocations are miniscule and very limited to meet the needs of our ever-increasing youth population. The allocation of “Out of School Time” funds is now decided by DOE with no input from Community Board 11.

NYCHA just totally renovated the Community Center at Eastchester Gardens. This facility has a full size gym and many rooms for activities. However, there is no money to fund a program at this site.

Transportation – Community Board #11 is in support of the following capital projects:

HW-710 – Pelham Parkway
HW-116 – Esplanade
HW-691- Astor Avenue
HW-870- Williamsbridge Road

Our Board also supports an increase in funding for the in-house resurfacing program and the contract resurfacing and milling programs, as well as additional Traffic Device Maintainers (TDMs).

We urge the Department of Transportation to increase its use of the Engineered Resurfacing Program, which can eliminate the need for major reconstruction of streets that need more than an in-house resurfacing job.

The Bureau of Traffic Operations is in need of additional inspectors to conduct traffic surveys in a timelier manner. Presently, it takes 12-18 months for a traffic study to be completed once it has been requested.

Community Board 11 is requesting that the muni-meters placed on Morris Park Avenue as a pilot program be removed. They have not increased the availability of parking spaces on the business strip as the pilot program was intended. We urge DOT to immediately remove these muni-meters and replace the regular meters on this strip.

Community Board 11 is totally frustrated with the constant delays of the Pelham Parkway Reconstruction (HW711). It has now been 14 years since the Board has made this project a priority and still there is no light at the end of this tunnel. This project was originally scheduled to begin in 1999. Year after year we hear from DOT and/or DDC that construction will begin next year. The cost of this job has risen significantly due to the bureaucracy maze that exists in New York City. We demand that this job begin immediately.

We are also asking that DOT conduct a study of the cost involved with the creation of angle parking on Morris Park Avenue from Newport Avenue to Bronxdale Avenue.

We are also requesting that Kingsland Avenue and Tiemann Avenue between Allerton Avenue and Pelham Parkway North be reconstructed. Before this is done we are requesting that “core borings” be done to determine if there are streams or any other problems below these two streets.

Commercial Revitalization – Community Board #11 continues to support various programs sponsored by DBS and EDC to enhance the merchant and business communities of our district.

Lack of parking continues to be a major problem for our business strips. Every year our stores lose more and more customers to Bay Plaza and other malls because of the lack of parking. Because of this problem, Community Board #11 is requesting that we allow angle parking on Morris Park Avenue. This will create 50% more parking spaces for this business strip. We also have to continue to look for ways to alleviate the parking problems in all our business strips. This has been a request for many years now and we believe that the City should begin to think seriously about it.

We are also requesting that the City construct an in-door municipal parking facility at the current out-door facility at White Plains Road and Marin Place.

Community Board #11 will continue to work with our local merchants and neighborhood organizations to enhance the viability of the commercial strips in our district.

We are also pleased with the work of the White Plains Road BID and we support continued funding to keep them in operation. Although Allerton Avenue does not have a BID we will continue to work with the Allerton Business Improvement District as well as the Boston Road Merchant Association, the Morris Park Alliance and the Eastchester Road Merchants Association to make them viable business areas in our district.

Health and Hospitals – Additional Health Inspectors are needed for this agency, especially in pest control section of the agency. Inspections need to be made in a timelier manner. The Health Department has been extremely helpful to us this year in clean-ups of properties that have been neglected and I want to thank them.

Department of Education – We continue to support the building of a mini-school at PS 76. We also support the various requests from schools within our district for improvements and additions to meet the increasing student population.

Community Board #11 is looking forward to the new school being built on Bronxdale Avenue and Van Nest Avenue. This will alleviate some of the over-crowdedness that our schools experience at this time. We want to thank Councilman James Vacca for all his help in the negotiations with both the SCA and DOE.

Community Board 11 is beginning to examine the zoning for the communities south of Pelham Parkway. We formed an ad-hoc committee to look into these zoning issues in order to recommend changes. Currently, elementary school children living south of Pelham Parkway are required to go to an intermediate school north of Pelham Parkway. They will also begin a dialogue with DOE regarding the citing of a new intermediate school south of Pelham Parkway which is seriously needed.

We support the request of schools in our district for resurfacing, fencing and security lighting and cameras in its schoolyards. This is desperately needed in PS 108 which has been broken into and vandalized many times this year.

City Planning – Community Board #11 is urging a change in the uses allowed in an R district. We would like to prevent medical facilities from being as-of right in these districts. Our residential communities are inundated with medical facilities opening up next to private homes. These facilities are destroying the character of our community.

We are also requesting a change to the uses of a C district on Boston Road to prevent motels, (which often become hot sheet motels) from being as-of right.

Conclusion – Community Board #11 stands ready and willing to cooperate with all the above agencies to achieve our desired goals. Community Board #11 is committed to maintaining and enhancing the quality of life for the residents of our community.

Respectfully submitted,

Dominic Castore
Dominic Castore.
Chairman

John A. Fratta
John A. Fratta,
District Manager