



COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 9

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STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS – FY 2015

INTRODUCTION

Community District 9 encompasses one of New York's first humanly inhabited areas. The area was once the home of the Mareckkawicks, a branch of the Canarsie tribal community, which occupied Kings County and parts of Jamaica. The area was colonized by Dutch farmers from the Netherlands (Holland) in the early 17th century. Lefferts Homestead, relocated to Prospect Park from its original location on Midwood Street and Flatbush Avenue, is a living reminder of this agricultural community which flourished in our district until the early 20th century.

Also of historic significance is Clove Road, snugly located in the middle of Montgomery Street/Empire Blvd/Nostrand Avenue/New York Avenue, within Community District 9. A Phase 1A Archaeological Documentary Study of Clove Road, conducted by The RBA Group in 2002, found that Clove Road "... is eligible for National Register (of Historic Places) under Criterion A based upon its association with the establishment of Kings County's 19th Century public institutions, the Alms House, Hospital, Asylum, and Penitentiary, an event that significantly contributed to the broad pattern of New York's urban history." The Board will continue to work with the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, the New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation for this site to be listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

Present day Community District 9 includes a portion of the neighborhood known as Crown Heights, northern parts of Flatbush, Prospect Lefferts Gardens, and the northern portion of Midwood (Wingate). Bordered by Prospect Park, Eastern Parkway and Lincoln Terrace Park, the district includes such prestigious cultural institutions as the Brooklyn Museum, the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, the Brooklyn Public Library and the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences.

Other notable institutions include: Kings County Hospital Center, one of the largest hospital complexes in the world; SUNY Health Science Center at Brooklyn; Kingsboro Psychiatric Center; Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center; as well as, the SUNY Downstate Advanced Biotechnology Incubator and the SUNY Parkside Dialysis Center. Collectively, these institutions form the southern-most boundary of the district.

Medgar Evers College of the City University of New York, seven high schools, four intermediate schools, ten elementary schools, including new small schools and charter schools, make up the District's public educational system. A significant number of private and parochial schools complete the education picture.

Only minutes by car or public transportation from downtown Brooklyn, Community District 9 is home to numerous small and medium-sized businesses and the 98,429 residents (2010 census), who live along our tree lined streets. Our many religious institutions include a number of the large Catholic churches, a number of the oldest Protestant churches in the borough, and the world headquarters of the Chabad Lubavitch Jewish Movement.

Families and institutions have thrived in Community District 9 for generations. Over the past five decades this largely middle class community has undergone extensive demographic changes. The ethnic make-up of the community has become a unique blend of people of American, Caribbean, European, Asian and Hispanic descent.

This continued growth has brought with it a concomitant escalation in the need for vital municipal services. Community Board 9 has taken a critical look at our community district's needs and has embarked upon a the formulation of a 197-a plan which sets out our vision for a better future for our community, the objectives of which are as follows:

Objectives:

To improve the quality of life for residents through:

- The promotion of community safety and the reduction of crime;
- Social and cultural development;
- Improved health and social services;
- Support for the preservation, expansion and physical integration of the public parks system and educational institutions;
- Promotion of employment and business opportunities through
 - the strengthening and expansion of existing retail commercial areas;
 - the improvement of local businesses and economic development;
 - a local hospital jobs program.
- The promotion of new low-density/contextual residential development to provide both a humanly sealed built form and increased opportunity for neighborly social interaction;
- The guiding of future physical and human development programs to enhance the lives of the residents;
- Improved environment - neighborhood beautification and development of new open space resources.

We submit this "Statement of Community District Needs" to document the Board's advocacy for the provision of acceptable levels of City services for the continued improvement in the quality of life for the people of this district. The restoration of services; the renovation and upgrading of school buildings and other public facilities; expanded economic/business opportunities, the acquisition of land for the creation and expansion of open space; and the implementation of a Traffic Calming plan; are all vital to our overall goal for the restoration and preservation of our district.

DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION

Relocation of Community District 9's Sanitation Garage

It is widely known that the current location of District 9's Sanitation Garage at 356 Winthrop Street is not a suitable, situated as it is within close proximity to Kings County Hospital Center, SUNY Downstate University Medical Center and SUNY Downstate Advanced Biotechnology Incubator. This unsuitability is further exacerbated by the fact that the space is too small and cannot house all of the Dept of Sanitation's equipment. Therefore garbage filled trucks usually line the street giving off the putrid smell of garbage. In addition, there is no adequate on-site facility for cleaning the equipment, as well as substandard on-site conditions for employees of the Department who service our district.

The SUNY Downstate Advanced Biotechnology Incubator is a multimillion dollar facility with significant benefits for the borough of Brooklyn. This facility places Brooklyn in a position to compete with other cities and states in the Biotechnology market. This medical research facility is being expanded to provide additional laboratories and offices to companies conducting research into finding cures for diseases; and for new state of the art medical equipment. This expanded Biotechnology Park will bring with it additional jobs to Brooklyn, helping to revitalize both the economy and Brooklyn neighborhoods. Addressing the problems caused by the sanitation garage on this and the other health care institutions will go a long way towards improving the location.

Community Board 9 has identified two possible sites for District 9's Sanitation Garage. These properties are currently under the jurisdiction of SUNY Downstate Medical Center. The Board thinks that the development of either of these sites will not only accommodate a state of the art sanitation garage but a parking facility for SUNY Downstate as well. This would solve the problem affecting SUNY's Biotech Incubator, as well as the Dialysis Clinic and will be a win-win for both Community District 9 and SUNY Downstate. Not only that, but there is also the possibility of utilizing the current sanitation garage site for the further expansion of a medical campus in the district.

Dirty Sidewalks/Litter Baskets/Illegal Postings

Dirty sidewalks on commercial strips, littering, improper use of DSNY litter baskets, are all issues that continue to require enforcement. An increase in the number of Enforcement Agents coupled with strict enforcement is needed to curb this blatant disregard for the community, the environment; and sanitation codes.

There appears to be an increase in the proliferation of illegal postings on light poles, street trees and traffic signals in the district. Community Board 9 would like to see more enforcing against these abuses that creates blight in our community. There appears to be a need for an additional basket truck to effectively service the litter baskets in the district, especially on busy commercial strips. Additional baskets are also needed in several locations to decrease the instances of littering.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Garaging Police Vehicles

Community Board 9 again emphasizes the dire need for a facility to garage police vehicles and vouched cars. The current practice by agency personnel to overtake the streets around the local precinct with police cars, trucks and other equipment, including vehicles vouched by the precinct is unacceptable.

Double parked cars and sidewalk parking around the precinct increases danger for pedestrians: senior citizens, school children, parents with baby carriages, the disabled. The Board has done a search of the area around the 71 Precinct and has identified property suitable for garage facilities for the precinct's vehicles. Acquisition of these premises, whether by lease or purchase, will effectively eliminate the current congestion being experienced at Empire Boulevard and New York Avenue.

Facilities/Equipment/Technology

The Board believes that the Police Department has an obligation to bring all of its precincts into the twenty-first century by upgrading facilities, equipment and technology. The 71 Precinct's physical plant continues to deteriorate. There is a definite need for an upgrade of the structure as well as the interior facilities. Visibility of police officers in reassuring numbers is lacking throughout the district. The Board feels that a combination of improved facilities, technology and increased civilian clerical support would allow for more police presence on neighborhood streets.

Patrol/Traffic Enforcement

Shootings, murders, drugs, criminal street gang activity, are all on the rise in Community District 9. The community is terrified and feels besieged by these unlawful acts. Community Board 9 continues to receive numerous complaints from residents regarding the sale of drugs on street corners, bodegas, and in apartments in their buildings. The Board feels that there should be constant police presence at problem locations, especially on Flatbush Avenue, as well as aggressive drug enforcement to close down known locations that are dealing drugs.

Speeding; double parking; passenger vans; illegal parking; driving/parking in bike lanes all contribute to dangerous traffic conditions in the community. More vigilant traffic enforcement is needed throughout the community.

**DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
DEPARTMENT OF CITYWIDE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

Land Acquisition for Open Space

There is a genuine need for more dedicated open space in the district. Community Board 9, through its 197-a Planning Committee, has identified several possible locations for the addition of open space in the district. These include the grounds of **Kingsboro Psychiatric Center; property adjacent to Wingate Park; a Plaza project for Clove Road; Flatbush Avenue and Empire Boulevard; and Parkside and Ocean Avenues.** These locations all present viable opportunities for the development of passive open space for the enjoyment and use of our residents.

Recreation Center

This community, with its large youth population, is in dire need of a Recreation Center, to address community youth needs, including health and physical fitness, youth development and delinquency prevention. The availability of the armory on President Street presents numerous possibilities for the eventual development of resources to fulfill much needed youth, recreational and entrepreneurial needs of community/Brooklyn residents. We look forward to working with the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Department of Youth and Community Development, along with our elected officials, to make this a reality.

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Park Reconstruction Projects

Hamilton Metz Park

The Board is pleased that our City Council representative has allocated the funds necessary to complete the redesign and reconstruction of the unfinished portion of Hamilton Metz Park. The community is looking forward with anticipation to the completion of the exercise area ents. The inclusion of this feature will be welcomed by all and will complete the renovation of this park for the continued use by all those who use this park on a regular basis.

Wingate Park

Wingate Park is one of the most heavily utilized parks in the district; used by people from all over Central Brooklyn. As a consequence the park has deteriorated tremendously. We are pleased that the reconstruction of the Playground is slated for next spring; and that the contract for Phase II is being addressed.

Mount Prospect Park

Community Board 9 has been requesting funding for a preliminary design investigation for the upgrade and reconstruction of Mount Prospect Park. We have not been successful with

this request. After ten years the time for action is NOW. We cannot continue to allow this promising park to continue to be used only for dog-walking, when families are in dire need of open space in our community. A reconstruction project for this space is long overdue.

Prospect Park Projects

Community Board 9 supports the ongoing efforts to restore the structures and facilities in Prospect Park. Among the many important projects within the park that are in need of restoration are the Picnic House and Litchfield Villa. We urge that these, and other projects in the park, be funded to completion

Park Maintenance

Community Board 9 has long been an advocate for provision of adequate funding to provide much needed upkeep of our parks and playgrounds. We continue to advocate for this funding as we strive for the improvement of park facilities within our district. The maintenance of our neighborhood parks, playgrounds and malls has been severely hampered by budget cutbacks. A more sustained, consistent effort at weekly maintenance is needed, especially during the spring, summer and early fall, when more people are outdoors utilizing these facilities.

Tree Planting/Pruning Stump Removal

The greening of our district is an important aspect of our community beautification plan. Beautifying our neighborhood streets with the planting of street trees is a top priority. So is tree pruning and the removal of dead trees and tree stumps. These are important quality of life issues which must be addressed to avoid possible loss of life and property damage.

DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING

The senior population in Community District 9 continues to be under-served. In the face of this glaring reality, more outreach must be conducted in the community to reach seniors in order to provide them with the services that they need: Health Care; health insurance; transportation; senior housing; immigration; employment; nutrition and wellness; are all unmet needs of our growing senior population.

DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

There are not enough programs to serve the large youth population in the district. Community Board 9 envisions the establishment of a community youth center, a place where our neighborhood youth can go to participate in healthy, clean and safe activities

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

In the year 2013, it is absolutely outrageous that the schools in this district are still not meeting the needs of our children. Not only is there major overcrowding in all the district's

schools, the buildings are in poor shape and do not provide the type of environment for learning that our children so desperately need. Is there any wonder that children drop out of school?

There is a litany of critical needs for all the schools; below we mention a few of the needs for a few of the schools:

Medgar Evers Prep (High) School – this is a relatively new building. This building does not have a Gymnasium nor does it have an Auditorium! Who would design a high school and not include these basic amenities. This is a high school!! Students need PE to graduate. The children currently receive physical education instruction in the hallway of the basement of the school. This is outrageous!

In addition, the school is over capacity. The school's capacity is 900 students, the current enrollment is 1,200 children. How are they expected to learn in this overcrowded environment? Computers in the computer lab are obsolete, constantly malfunction, and are insufficient to meet the needs of the large student body. There is an absolute need for upgraded, state of the art computer labs.

W.E.B. DuBois High School - another high school without a gymnasium; hampering the fulfillment of physical education requirements.

Public School 161 – this is another school without a gymnasium; auditorium that is in need of renovation; installation of additional bathroom stalls to meet the needs of the large student body. The entire school needs rewiring to not only be up to code, but to also enable the use of state of the art computer technology; as well as heating and air conditioning.

We have only listed these three schools in this statement. The situation is the same in all our district schools. These are the stumbling blocks that year after year our children endure to receive less than a first class education.

Everyone should be held accountable for this sorry state of affairs that is being allowed to continue at the expense of our vulnerable children.

AGENCY FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

With our significantly new and large immigrant population and a probable Census 2010 undercount, the Board strongly believes that the actual need for day care and head start services in Community District 9 is far greater than is currently estimated. There continues to be long waiting lists for placement of children at all of our existing day care centers. The demand continues to rise. An increase in the number of day care slots and vouchers and the establishment of at least one head start center will begin to address this need.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

There is an enormous need for affordable housing in this district. We recommend HPD look into the feasibility of constructing affordable housing on the grounds of Kingsboro

Psychiatric Center, this is city-owned property. The housing needs are great; there is available city-owned property in this district; let's move to provide affordable housing to benefit hard working tax payers.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Addressing the health care needs of the community is vital. Education and outreach is so needed, especially for the growing immigrant population. Education on immunization for children; health and wellness information; prenatal care to reduce the infant death rate, and education for the prevention of teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases among young people; healthy eating to combat obesity in children and adults; all this and more are vitally needed for our community.

Rat Infestation

Our community is infested with rats. Dirty alleyways, backyards, sewers and subway tracks, all contribute to this scourge. These conditions are extremely prevalent in the warmer months and create serious health problems for the community.

HEALTH AND HOSPITALS CORPORATION

Reconstruction of Kings County Hospital Center

Community Board 9 continues to support the reconstruction of Kings County Hospital Center. This institution is the primary health care facility not only for District 9 but for Central Brooklyn as well. We are pleased that low cost, quality health care will continue to be available to the hard working families who rely on this hospital for their health care needs.

Affordable Housing

Community Board 9 also supports and applauds the Health and Hospitals Corporation for its re-use of Buildings J and N to create affordable housing for special needs and moderate and low income families.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Traffic Calming

It has been over ten years since the Department of Transportation conducted a traffic calming study of our district, at our request. There have been changes in the demographics within our community since this study was undertaken, therefore this study would perhaps not be truly reflective of today's conditions. The Board is once again requesting a study of the district by DOT to determine what traffic calming principles could be implemented in this largely residential community.

Street Resurfacing

There are always numerous potholes in our streets from the aftermath of winter, as well as other depressions from street openings by various parties. Streets all over the district are being excavated by cable and utility companies. The streets are not always restored properly and deteriorate after a harsh winter or some other circumstance. The allocation of adequate funding for a consistent street repair/resurfacing program will serve to effectively address the pothole repair/street resurfacing needs of the City.

Pedestrian Ramps/Curb Restoration

There are a number of locations within the district where the curb is damaged and/or missing which creates a dangerous condition – one such location is in front of 888 Nostrand Avenue, Brooklyn, between President and Carroll Streets. In addition, there are a number of locations within the district where pedestrian ramps are missing. These locations need to be addressed to allow safe travel by all pedestrians, but especially those in wheelchairs, those with baby carriages, senior citizens and others.

Reconstruction of Empire Boulevard

We look forward to working with the agency on the scope of work for the reconstruction of Empire Boulevard from Utica Avenue to Washington Avenue, which includes traffic and pedestrian safety enhancements at the western and Eastern ends of Empire Boulevard and the resurfacing of the roadway – Project ID HWK779W. Empire Boulevard is a major thoroughfare in our district leading to key cultural institutions including the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, The Brooklyn Museum of Art, and Prospect Park.

Reconstruction of Clove Road (the Bedford Pass of the American Revolution) and Malbone Street – HWK166

The reconstruction of Clove Road and Malbone Street – HWK166 – is one of the most important roadway reconstruction projects in Community District 9

Given the historic significance of this roadway, which has been found to be eligible for inclusion on the National Register based on its association with the establishment of Kings Country's 19th century public institutions, the Alms House, Hospital, Asylum, and Penitentiary, Community Board 9 is hard pressed to understand why the city is refusing to fully fund the cost for the reconstruction of this road with the appropriate amenities in keeping with its historic stature.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

The importance of an adequately trained and properly equipped Fire Department cannot be over-emphasized. Appropriate training and proper equipment help to provide that safety net that our fire fighters need in their life-saving efforts on our behalf. One lesson learned from the

2003 Blackout that crippled the city, is that firehouses should be equipped with power generators.

The Board sees a strong need for the provision of fire prevention and educational programs to be implemented for Community District 9, including the Child Fire Starter Program. This program, which provides early intervention services and has worked well in other areas, will help to reach those children who are at risk, thus saving valuable life and property. In addition, an increase in fire prevention programs will also help in the education of our citizens, thus reducing the risk of fire. We continue to support a Carbon Monoxide Detector and Fire Detector distribution programs, so critical as an early warning system.

Fire Marshals

The swift investigation of fires should be a priority. The lack of adequate numbers of Fire Marshals hampers the agency's ability to immediately begin the investigation as to the cause of a fire. Appropriate funding must be made available for the hiring of additional Fire Marshals to address this void. Not only will this lead to the apprehension of suspected arsonist(s), but will also help to curb the number of suspicious fires.

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS SERVICES

The revitalization of our local commercial strips is one of our main priorities. We urge the agency to continue to work with us for the revitalization of the following commercial strips in Community District 9:

- Nostrand Avenue from Eastern Parkway to Clarkson Avenue;
- Kingston Avenue from Eastern Parkway to Empire Boulevard;
- Utica Avenue from Empire Boulevard to Eastern Parkway;
- Bedford/Franklin/Rogers Avenues from Eastern Parkway to Parkside Avenue;
- Flatbush Avenue from Empire Boulevard to Clarkson Avenue;
- Empire Boulevard from Utica to Flatbush Avenues

The reconstruction of Kings County Hospital Center, the establishment of the Biotechnology Incubator Project, the expansion of Medgar Evers College of the City University of New York, all open up opportunities to attract viable businesses to the district that can provide an array of consumer products and services, leading to the revitalizing not only the district's economy, but its quality of life as well.

NEW YORK CITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Subway Station Rehab

With the exception of the Utica Avenue and Eastern Parkway Subway Stations, all the other subway stations in the District are in need of rehabilitation including the Parkside Avenue Station, President Street Station, Franklin Avenue Station, Nostrand Avenue Station, Kingston Avenue, Sterling Street and Winthrop Street subway stations. We are heartened to see an

acknowledgement in PlaNYC that these stations are in need of repair. We look forward to discussing with the New York City Transit Authority the plans and time-frame for planned improvements to these stations.

The Board is pleased that the MTA/NYCTA has finally recognized that the Eastern Parkway-Brooklyn Museum Station meets their criteria for stations to be ADA compliant. This subway station serves Community Districts 8 and 9 and the major cultural institutions in our district – the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and the Brooklyn Public Library.

Thousands of local residents, visitors from the five boroughs and tourists from across the country and the world use this station to visit our neighborhoods and cultural institutions. These are the lucky ones. The disabled and our senior citizens cannot visit these institutions if they do not have access to a personal vehicle. Although, this station is not slated for immediate ADA compliance, we are pleased that the station has been approved for the designation and will work hard with the agency and our elected officials to make it a reality.

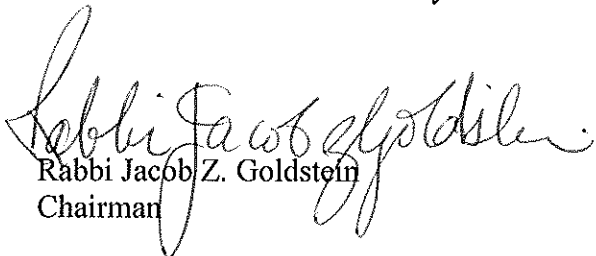
DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS

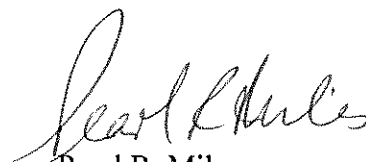
Response to complaints of building and zoning violations in the district by the Department of Buildings is inadequate. Follow-up to ensure compliance is even worse. To compound matters we have seen a rise in the numbers of unsafe buildings – bulging bricks, cracked exteriors, façade collapses, and other unsafe conditions. In addition, non-conformance with a building's Certificate of Occupancy provisions and commercial uses in residential zones are all on the rise in the district. A more effective and efficient code enforcement operation is needed to address the building and zoning violations that seriously hamper the safety and quality of life of our residents.

CONCLUSION

It is Community Board 9's belief that quality of life begins with good health and the nurturing of a built environment, set in aesthetically pleasing neighborhoods and reinforced with educational and economic development.

We believe that there is much to be done to enhance the quality of life for current and future residents. Our goal is to revitalize our neighborhoods to provide a safe and healthful setting, a place of tranquility and respite from the tasks of assimilation and striving to succeed. In order to accomplish these goals, the Board will continue to work with the City's agencies, elected officials and community to address the needs identified here.


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