



## BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

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**Honorable Ruben Diaz, Jr.**  
**Bronx Borough President**

### OFFICERS:

#### **Chairperson Manager**

Daniel Padernacht

#### **District**

Nicole M. Stent

#### **Vice Chairperson**

Rosemary Ginty

August 4, 2014

#### **Secretary**

Joyce M. Pilsner

### **Statement of Community District Needs for Fiscal Year 2016**

#### **Treasurer**

Philip Friedman

### **Introduction**

### **COMMITTEE CHAIRS:**

#### **Aging**

Karen Pesce

#### **Budget**

Brendan Contant

#### **Economic Development**

Sergio Villaverde

#### **Education**

Sylvia Alexander

#### **Environment & Sanitation**

Robert Fanuzzi

#### **Health, Hospitals & Social Services**

Steven Froot

#### **Housing**

Paul Ellis

#### **Land Use**

Charles G. Moerdler

#### **Law, Rules & Ethics**

Martin Wolpoff

#### **Libraries & Cultural Affairs**

Marvin Goodman

#### **Parks & Recreation**

Bob Bender

#### **Public Safety**

Arlene Garbett Feldmeier

#### **Traffic & Transportation**

Michael Heller

#### **Youth**

Lamont Parker

Community Boards provide a vital service as the frontline of the Government of New York City. They connect the needs of our neighborhoods and residents to New York City Agencies. The annual Statement of Community District Needs for Bronx Community Board 8 ("BXCB8") provides an overview of our community board's needs and budget requests. BXCB8's budgetary requests reflect the most essential services our growing community requires to remain a desirable place for our residents, families and elderly citizens. The intention of the City Charter is a partnership between agencies and communities in both planning and budgeting, and also in the delivery and monitoring of services. It is in this spirit that we have done our utmost to work closely with City Agencies in formulating our budget requests.

### **District Profile:**

BXCB8 covers an area of 3.4 square miles. The neighborhoods included within the board boundaries are: Fieldston, Kingsbridge, Kingsbridge Heights, Marble Hill, Riverdale, Spuyten Duyvil, and Van Cortlandt Village. In the case of the Marble Hill area, .1 square mile, these statistics are not included in the Bronx city planning profile but in Manhattan. However, the marble Hill community is considered a part of the community board's jurisdiction, receives municipal services from the Bronx and includes 8463 residents (Manhattan census track 309).

BXCB8 includes within its boundaries, three New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) locations: Marble Hill, Ft. Independence Houses and Bailey Houses. Marble Hill Houses accounts for a population of approximately 3,500. The Ft. Independence Houses account for a population of approximately 775 and the Bailey Houses account for approximately 476 residents according to the NYCHA website data. NYCHA information, as of January 2010, indicates that the average family income in conventional public housing is \$23,187; 49.5% of NYCHA's households are below the poverty line; 11.9% of NYCHA families receive public assistance; working families account for 47.4% of NYCHA families; social security, SSI, a pension, Veteran's benefits, etc., support 41.9% of NYCHA families; 35.4% of the households are headed by persons over 62 years-of-age; and 36.8% of the NYCHA population are minors under 21 and 29.7% are minors under 18.

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To better understand the needs of the board area, the following statistics provide a profile of Bronx Community Board No. 8, according to the Department of City Planning, based upon the demographic statistics from 2010 - 2012 American Community Survey 3-Year estimates show the population of Bronx Community Board 8 as 105,862. In addition:

- 44.9% Hispanic origin
- 15.5% Black/African American
- 5.4% Asian
- 23% Under 19 years old
- 22% Over 60 years old

Where most Bronx neighborhoods have decreased in population, the NYC Department of City Planning BXCB8 Profile shows an increase in total population. In 2000 the census stated there were 101,332, the current 2010 census indicates 101,731 total population living within our boundaries and 2010 - 2012 American Community Survey 3-Year estimates (excluding Marble Hill community) show the population of Bronx Community Board 8 as 105,862, a steady increase.

### **FY 2016 Budget Requests**

The FY 2016 budget priorities were produced by the standing committees within BXCB8. These committees hold public meetings where residents and community board members work together with city agency representatives to discuss local priorities and concerns. The goal of these gatherings is the formulation of budget requests that will equitably allocate City resources in an effort to improve the community and city as a whole.

### **Community Board 8 Funding**

Our first priority is an increase in the funding for the Community Board Office of BXCB8. Our budget has not been changed in over 20 years; therefore we are requesting an expense increase from \$206,895 to \$275,000 in FY2016. The additional funds will help us to better serve our growing community allowing us to hire additional staff, interns or full-time employees, to improve our electronic media outreach and visibility throughout our district.

Several of the high value added services that BXCB8 has undertaken over the last several years have involved the electronic distribution of information (community board meetings, public hearings, weather related/emergency alerts). We would like our communications through online/social media to become more robust, proactive and integrated with our community members. The benefits of allocating additional resources toward these projects include: less wasted paper (and associated costs), more timely information, greater visibility of government services, support of local economic development efforts, improved marketing of city agency initiatives, better emergency coordination and a host of others. Having an additional staff member or intern (s) coordinate all of this information would reduce waste and greatly improve stewardship of the social programming and other resources entrusted to our community via the City of New York.

### **Education**

The age of approximately 23% of our population is 19 years or younger, making this the largest age-based demographic in our district. Our school children deserve a safe and

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supportive learning environment. Our schools are in urgent need of repair and we need to speed up the process of improving these learning environments in order to keep working families in our community rather than see them leave for the suburbs.

We request that capital funds be allocated to make repairs to the infrastructure of our schools and to conduct further, thorough inspections of our schools.

There are specific capital requests for necessary repairs and upgrades to the following school facilities:

1. MS 244 - Electrical upgrade for computers.
2. The Marie Curie High School for Medicine –
  - o Electrical upgrade to power air-conditioners needed in classrooms.
  - o Student lockers installed on 5<sup>th</sup> floor. (Junior High School building-High school on 5<sup>th</sup> floor of a 57 year old building).
3. PS 81 –
  - New air-conditioners for several classes and rewiring to accommodate 220 volt units.
  - New cafeteria tables.
  - Alarms for all exit doors.
4. Repair all exit doors in elementary and District 75 schools in Bronx Community Board 8 in anticipation of alarms being installed for the safety of students.
5. Continued funding for small high schools to join the Small School Athletic League in Bronx Community Board 8 to enable students to participate in team sports.

We also request allocation for several expense projects in FY2016 that include:

1. Funding for after-school educational/recreational programs in particular remediation and enrichment programs for all of the schools in Bronx Community Board 8 including Title No. 1 Schools.
2. Allocation of funds to provide for a meaningful reduction of class size for all grades.
3. Upgrade of all gymnasium equipment in all schools in Bronx Community Board 8 to help reduce the epidemic of obesity among students.

### **Aging**

Services and programs to maintain and improve the quality of life of our seniors are extremely important to BXCB8. Our population of seniors (over 60 years) in 2010-2012 was 22%<sup>1</sup>, so that to better care for this population demographic, we seek FY2016 expense funding for the following items:

1. Increase access and mental health programs for older adults
2. Improve/upgrade support programs and training for unpaid family caregivers
3. Provide nutritional program and instructional staffing for computer lab at Ft. Independence Senior Center
4. Improve/increase transportation with accessible vehicles for seniors and provide for maintenance, fuel and drivers' wages for agency programs; develop DFTA transportation contract for BXCB8 area.
5. Provide DFTA representative for BXCB8
6. Facilitate telehealth equipment and services to monitor shut-in older adults

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<sup>1</sup> 2010 - 2012 American Community Survey 3-Year (excluding Marble Hill community)

## **Health, Hospitals & Social Services**

Mental health and family services make a positive difference in the lives of BXCB8 residents especially for seniors. The board district has limited resources for mental health services. There is one mental health facility, Riverdale Mental Health Association that offers behavioral healthcare to individuals living in the Northwest Bronx. However, BXCB8 does not have a hospital or an in-patient facility within its boundaries. With 22% of the BXCB8's population over 60 years of age and growing<sup>2</sup>, we request expense funding from:

1. The Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) for the Riverdale Mental Health Association (RMHA) Geriatric Program. This RMHA program addresses the unique mental health issues in Bronx Community Board 8's growing geriatric community.

## **Land Use**

Bronx Community Board No. 8 after extensive consultation with the Department of City Planning and the Office of the Bronx Borough President, prepared and submitted, a 197A Plan for rezoning of relevant portions of Board 8, which was enacted in 2004 and is currently in effect.

The Board is reviewing and considering a proposed rezoning of the Central Riverdale area to add an "A" grade to restrict height to a certain limit as illustrated by the two maps attached. The goals of this rezoning are to keep the area low density and to preserve a central business district on Johnson Avenue and Riverdale Avenue.

## **Parks and Recreation**

It is welcome news that the new Mayoral administration plans to expand access, sustainability and public health initiatives throughout the city's acres of parkland.

Our community has 1,346 acres of parkland—fully 63% of the land in our area. There are 68 park sites, including many smaller Greenstreets as well as gems such as Wave Hill and the 1,146 acre Van Cortlandt Park (VCP). To put this in perspective, we have 20% of the parkland in the Bronx. For that reason, historically, many of our capital requests have been for improvements to parks, a natural resource for all the residents of New York City.

The board is greatly interested in providing access to its many parks and playgrounds in the board area. Our parks engage all ages and families in healthy, outdoor activities. There are multiple programs designed to educate our community about the environment, preservation, healthy eating and lifestyles as well as information on local historical sites in the city. There are also recreational activities such as summer camps, after school and fitness programs where seniors, teens and families can participate as well as exercise opportunities, including running, walking, swimming, tennis and bike lessons. There are youth sports programs and many more great outdoor activities that improve the health of our residents and expose them to the great outdoors.

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<sup>2</sup> 2010 - 2012 American Community Survey 3-Year (excluding Marble Hill community)  
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VCP is one of the most heavily used public parks in the city. It serves the public throughout the City through soccer, football, baseball, softball, and cricket leagues, as well as concerts. Local schools and colleges train their athletes or hold citywide sporting competitions in this historic park and in the stadium. The cross-country course is well known up and down the East Coast. In addition, city residents use the swimming pool, two golf courses, lake, and walking, biking and running trails, which are a mecca for thousands of people of all ages in the sweltering days of summer and throughout the year.

BXCB8 is grateful for the support from the Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. for providing funding for the construction of a comfort station in Fort Four Park. While some progress is being made thanks to responses to our past budget requests, funding from our local elected officials and Croton filtration plant mitigation funding -- which is ending in 2015 -- CB8's parks continue to be in great need of maintenance, enforcement, reconstruction, rehabilitation and repair. Van Cortlandt Stadium is in deplorable condition. Renovation is long overdue and critically needed. For example the bathrooms and locker rooms are severely deteriorated and barely usable.

Capital funding is needed for many projects to improve our parks including:

1. With the construction of a new restroom and related plumbing repairs in Fort Four Park, maintenance will also be required.
2. Redesign and reconstruction of Bailey Avenue playground.
3. Repair of Henry Hudson Park basketball and handball courts
4. Construction of a restroom at Broadway and W. 251<sup>st</sup> St adjacent to the Van Cortlandt Park Parade Grounds.
5. Installation of a pedestrian bridge over the Major Deegan Expressway in Van Cortlandt Park
6. Reconstruction of the pond wall at Spuyten Duyvil Park to prevent water runoff on the roadway of the parking lot at the adjacent Metro-North station.
7. Resurfacing of the Seton Park tennis courts and basketball courts plus related repairs
8. Renovation of Van Cortlandt Park Stadium
9. Erosion control measures in Ewen Park to prevent runoff downhill toward Riverdale Avenue
10. A tot lot playground to serve North Riverdale near the Broadway perimeter of Van Cortlandt Park
11. Renovation of the Strong St. playground

While most of our past expense requests have been for the maintenance and security of our parks, we have had mixed results in having them acted upon. Proper maintenance of our community parks preserves them and keeps them safe, useable and accessible. In addition, regular maintenance prevents deterioration of parks and park facilities to the point where they require capital improvements. In other words, maintenance is highly cost effective. We are highlighting our concerns and hope that more of these requests will be fulfilled in FY2016.

Funding for expense items are needed for:

1. Personnel sufficient for maintenance and enforcement in CB8 parks, especially on weekends and times of high use.
2. Personnel sufficient to maintain and preserve the integrity and health of Forever Wild and natural areas in Van Cortlandt Park and neighborhood parks to replace maintenance personnel who will be lost in 2015 because of the expiration of Croton mitigation funding.

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3. One stump grinder and one replacement tractor for Van Cortlandt Park.
4. Purchase of an additional wood chipper to aid in removing tree debris from CB8 parks

We greatly appreciate the attention given to our Parks, which will benefit all residents of our community and throughout the Bronx. Our parks are a vital asset that has a direct effect on the health of our community.

### **New York City Housing Authority**

BXCB8 has three New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) development locations: Marble Hill, Ft. Independence Houses and Bailey Houses. Marble Hill Houses accounts for a population of approximately 3,500. The Ft. Independence Houses account for a population of approximately 775 and the Bailey Houses account for 476 residents. According to NYCHA information, as of January 2010, the average family income in conventional public housing is \$23,187; 49.5% of NYCHA's households are below the poverty line; 11.9% of NYCHA families receive public assistance; working families account for 47.4% of NYCHA families; social security, SSI, a pension, Veteran's benefits, etc., support 41.9% of NYCHA families; 35.4% of the households are headed by persons over 62 years-of-age; and 36.8% of the NYCHA population are minors under 21 and 29.7% are minors under 18.

The new administrations interest in a more equitable New York and improving the quality of life for NYCHA residents is in keeping with the interests of Bronx Community Board No. 8. Mayor de Blasio has announced a NYCHA schedule to complete the installation of cameras at 49 developments by the end of 2014.

NYCHA has had a history of challenges in providing appropriate care and maintenance to its residents. BXCB8 has been addressing various issues concerning the NYCHA developments in the district and their livability. In meeting with the community and specifically the residents of the NYCHA developments, several concerns emerged including the status of the security camera installation, a continued need for better lighting, the backlog of work orders, issues with management and concerns regarding cleanliness of the buildings. The NYCHA tenants identified what they believed to be the three most important concerns for the residents as: (1) maintenance, (2) janitorial services, and (3) security.

In keeping with the Boards interest in providing advocacy for community residents, the following are the FY2016 budget requests for NYCHA developments:

Funding for capital items are needed for:

1. Installation of sufficient security cameras at Marble Hill Houses, Bailey Avenue Houses and Fort Independence Houses to provide full surveillance coverage of all interior and exterior public spaces.

Funding for expense items are needed for:

1. Hiring of sufficient personnel to staff all open caretaker positions at Marble Hill Houses, Bailey Avenue Houses and Fort Independence Houses.
2. Hiring of additional skilled trade workers to service Marble Hill Houses, Bailey Avenue Houses and Fort Independence Houses.

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### **Department of Environmental Protection**

In 1999, the New York City Council determined that NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) should build a Pedestrian Bridge. A feasibility study was conducted and determined that it was feasible. The construction of a Pedestrian Bridge over the Major Deegan would connect its eastern and western halves and connect the broken Old Croton Aqueduct Trail. It would be extremely valuable for the community, and is already a part of the Van Cortlandt Park Master Plan. The board supports this Pedestrian Bridge.

Funding for a capital expense is needed for:

- Construction of a Pedestrian Bridge over the Major Deegan to connect its eastern and western halves and connect the broken Old Aqueduct Trail.

The Hansen Reports issued monthly by the Department of Environmental Protection (“DEP”) show a consistently high number of community complaints concerning clogged catch basins and flooding. We request expense funding for:

- DEP to hire more workers to routinely clear clogged catch basins. This will possibly avert high volume of complaints concerning clogged catch basins.

### **Department of Sanitation**

The community is concerned about the waste and collection of refuse to promote a healthy environment and maintain the health, safety and welfare of the district. We request expense funding for:

1. NYC Organics Collection Program - expand this program in Community Board No. 8 by distributing more waste bins throughout the district and add more collection trucks.
2. Increase in Enforcement Agents - more agents can prevent our streets from being overrun with waste.
3. Placement of additional garbage cans and scheduling of additional pickups throughout the board district with special attention in the Marble Hill area.

### **Libraries and Cultural Affairs**

BXCB8's libraries are an invaluable cultural, educational, and informational resource to all of the members of our community. The physical conditions of some of our libraries are in dire need of repair or replacement. Some libraries continue to operate in old, overcrowded and poorly maintained buildings. We request capital funding for:

1. Full interior renovation and a new roof for Spuyten Duyvil Library.
2. Partial interior renovation of the Riverdale Library, including upgrading life safety systems, HVAC replacement and changes for ADA compliance, new furniture and equipment, rehabilitation of the retaining wall, sidewalk entrance area and upgrade to the drainage system.
3. Major renovation of the Van Cortlandt Library, including the façade and affected interior spaces, a new roof, new windows, new furniture, new equipment and replacement of the rooftop HVAC unit for ADA compliance.

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4. Funding to acquire an additional or new site for the Van Cortlandt Library to meet the needs of a growing population.

Regardless of the conditions of our libraries, our residents cannot use or benefit from them if they are not open. We affirm the decision to keep these vital resources open six days per week and implore that funding continues.

Thank you in advance for all of your consideration.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the members of Bronx Community Board No. 8 by:

Daniel Padernacht  
Chair,  
Bronx Community Board No. 8

Brendan J. Contant  
Chair, Budget Committee  
Bronx Community Board No. 8

Nicole M. Stent  
District Manager,  
Bronx Community Board No. 8

BC/nms  
Attachments: 2 Land Use maps