



Community Board 12M

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COMMUNITY DISTRICT 12, MANHATTAN STATEMENT OF DISTRICT NEEDS AND PRIORITIES FY 2013

Community District 12-Manhattan (CD12M) encompasses the neighborhoods of Washington Heights and Inwood; is bounded by the Harlem River Drive on the east side and by the Hudson River on the west side; and runs from West 155th Street to West 220th Street. We are a diverse community of 208,181 residents (based on the American Community Survey 3-year estimates for 2007 through 2009 unless otherwise stated), including a majority of residents (69 percent) of varied Latino or Hispanic heritage. Among the more populous ethnic groups, Dominicans make up the largest single (95,107 or 46 percent of the district population), followed by Puerto Ricans (15,580 or 7 percent); Mexicans (11,068 or 5 percent); Ecuadorians (5,234 or 3 percent); and many other ethnic groups. Ours is also an immigrant community: 21 percent of our residents attained citizenship through naturalization and another 27 percent do not possess citizenship. Our median age 34 and 12 percent of our residents are over age 65. We are also a high poverty community—23 percent of our residents live on incomes below the federal poverty threshold. According to New York University's Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy, our 2009 median household income (\$37,092) was 46 percent below the Manhattan median (\$68,706), and 25 percent below the median for New York City (\$50,033). In addition, American Community Survey 3-year estimates for 2007 through 2009 indicate that 15 percent of our residents aged 16 to 65 reported having no income, 10 percent were unemployed and 25 percent were not in the labor force. Notably, 31 percent of our adults over age 21 do not have a high school completion credential. We urgently need reforms to boost our incomes, family-oriented services that support our working parents, vocational and educational programs to raise our skill levels and educational attainment, and an array of services that are tailored to our immigrant and primarily Spanish-speaking community.

NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

Daycare and Early Childhood Education

Community District 12 is home to nearly 16,000 preschool-age children. The care and education of our youngest children remains among our highest priorities. In the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) *2008 Community Needs Survey* (the most current municipal government analysis available to the public), our district was identified as one of the most underserved in Manhattan. Over half of the children eligible for daycare are not served; ACS-funded services were "overutilized" at 105 percent and private daycare providers serve only 7 percent of children, according to the ACS report. Community District 12 has a severe shortage of childcare and many eligible children; our district has a poverty rate of 34 percent for preschool age children (based on the American Community Survey 3-year estimates for 2007 through 2009). Community Board 12 has repeatedly requested in its expense and capital priorities that daycare and early childhood education centers be constructed in our district and we have requested funding to increase the number of daycare providers. In response to our FY 2012 budget request, the ACS did not support funding more daycare providers in our district and rejected a proposal to construct an early childhood education center on Broadway between Academy and West 204th Streets. In response to our request to develop daycare centers to alleviate the shortage of daycare, the ACS responded that it needed more information from Community Board 12, and that it would contact the Board and we continue to ask New York City to recognize and act on our need for more subsidized daycare in age-appropriate, use-conforming, and environmentally safe facilities.

Parks

Community District 12 features over 600 acres of parkland, which is in need of additional maintenance and repairs. Our park benches, pathways, paving, planting stairs and sidewalks require reconstruction (Inwood Hill, Highbridge, Fort Tryon, Gorman Park, Highbridge Water Tower); lighting needs to be restored or installed (Fort Washington); new playgrounds are needed, and existing playgrounds need renovation (Bennett, Fort Washington, Javits, Orville and Wilbur) water fountains and new comfort stations are also needed (Fort Tryon, Inwood Hill), and renovations to the HVAC system at the J. Hood Wright Park's recreation center. In addition, our parks require Parks Enforcement Patrol officers, maintenance workers and after-school program providers.

Community Board 12 also supports the following:

- Develop the Sherman Creek waterfront for multipurpose recreational use.
- Fund for the design and implementation of bikeway improvements.
- Ensure that Columbia University work closely with the Board and community groups and honor its community benefits agreement regarding the development of a new sports facility at 218 Street, including the recommendations in our November 5, 2010 resolution to New York City Department of City Planning Commissioner Amanda Burden.
- Ensure that Riverbank State Park staffing, hours and services are not cut and that the emission of waste into the Hudson is controlled, communicated adequately and reduced.
- Construct a temporary, exterior locker room and changing facility at High Bridge Recreation Center as outlined in our resolution dated April 27, 2011 to Landmarks Preservation Commission Chair Robert Tierney and New York City Department of Parks and Recreation Commissioner Adrian Benepe.
- Fully fund and immediately begin work on necessary repairs to the Highbridge Tower, which has been closed to the public.
- Assign additional parks enforcement personnel and maintenance workers to clean our parks and to enforce regulations.

Housing

According to the Furman Center's 2010 report on housing in New York City, 89.5 percent of our rental housing units are rent regulated—the highest percentage of rent regulated housing units of all community districts in New York City. Rent regulation helps to avoid unjust evictions and rent increases, and provides affordable housing and a pathway to the middle class for our community. Expanding our supply of rent regulated housing and improving its condition will ensure the future of our diverse community.

The physical condition of our rent regulated housing units is often inadequate, which puts unnecessary stress on tenants. The Furman Center observed that serious housing code violations (class C, deemed immediately hazardous) are on the rise in our district—from 120.7 per 1,000 units of rental housing in 2008 to 147.9 violations per 1,000 units of rental housing in 2010. Our rental vacancy rate is 1.5 percent (Furman Center, 2010), which severely restricts choices for renters who are seeking to move to more habitable units. We request that the New York City Department of Housing, Preservation and Development work closely with us to achieve more effective enforcement of the housing, building and safety codes and greater protection of tenants' rights.

Community Board 12 supports the following policies to increase the number of affordable rental housing units and to preserve the architectural character of our district.

- Increase funding (recurring annually) for housing organizers, legal services attorneys and paralegals to work at non-profit organizations serving the community, such as the Mirabal Sisters Cultural and Community Center, Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation, Project Remain/Nos Quedamos and the Washington Heights Inwood Coalition.
- Work to implement the recommendations of the Manhattan Borough President's C8 rezoning study regarding Community District 12 to allow for the construction of new affordable housing of contextual heights—relative to existing structures, as contained in our October 1, 2010 resolution to New York City Department of City Planning

Commissioner Amanda Burden. Specifically, Community Board 12 request that the C8 districts 2 (Broadway between 173 and 177 Streets), 3 (Amsterdam Avenue between 179 and 181 Streets) and 4 (Broadway between 181 and 187 Streets) be rezoned to permit residential, retail and commercial uses; that building height restrictions be imposed on the C8 district 5, which covers Dyckman Street between Staff Street and Broadway and is surrounded on three sides by parkland to preserve and protect views; and, that zoning in C8 districts 1 (158 Street east of the Henry Hudson Parkway) and 6 (Tenth Avenue between Post Avenue and 218 Street) remain unchanged.

- Construct housing that is affordable to persons with incomes at or below poverty, with contextual height limits of 6 or 7 floors, as with surrounding buildings.

Health and Environment

Our 2010-2011 resolutions advocated support by the New York City Department of Education of Planned Parenthood's "We're Going to the Principal's Office" campaign to reduce teen pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and to implement sex education in schools as a means to improve public health (resolution dated October 18, 2010) and a March 25, 2011 resolution urging our elected officials to maintain funding for school-based health centers sponsored by New York Presbyterian Hospital.

Community Board 12 also supports the following policies to improve the health and environment of our community:

- Construct an Emergency Medical Service base station in our community district.
- Expedite construction of a sanitation garage in Manhattan Sanitation District 8.
- Increase funding for the Bureau of Pest Control.
- Restore funding for Manhattan's only lead-safe house.
- Create a special noise abatement unit for Community District 12.
- Increase funds for public education and outreach on disposal of household garbage and recyclables.
- Hire additional Sanitation workers, including street cleaners, and Sanitation officers for Community District 12.
- Hire additional staff for child and family health clinics in Community District 12.
- Increase funds for mental health programs and school-based health clinics in Community School District 6 schools.
- Develop comprehensive regulations and policy for the placement of cellphone towers on residential buildings that protect public health and safety and uphold tenants' rights.

Youth, Education, Job Training and Skills Development

According to the 2009 American Community Survey 3-year estimates for 2007 through 2009, Community District 12 is home to 32,138 children from 5 through 18 years of age. Poverty rates for our district's children range from 34 percent to 22 percent at different age groups. In high-poverty communities, parent involvement is a critical factor in educational achievement. That is why our November 30, 2010 resolution to Chancellor Joel Klein and Deputy Mayor Dennis Walcott expressing support for "Parent Advocates Coming Together," a model parent advocacy group developed by the Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers College that provides training and other support to parents seeking involvement in their children's education.

Community District 12 is also home to 47,986 adults over age 21 (31 percent of all adults over age 21) who have not attained a high school diploma or other high school completion credential. In addition, 10 percent of working-age individuals (ages 16 to 65) are unemployed, while 25 percent of working-age individuals are not in the labor force. These statistics underscore the importance of creating meaningful, effective and skills-appropriate employment training programs to serve residents in our district. We have repeatedly asked the Department of Small Business Services to open a one-stop employment and training center in our district. The very high percentage of adults in our community who have not completed high school continue to suffer depressed incomes and skill levels because of the lack of relevant employment and training services.

Seniors

Senior citizens are a growing proportion of our population; we need better planning for their future needs and more support for their current needs. People over age 64 comprise 12 percent of our population and of them, 28 percent are at or below the federal poverty level. Many rely heavily on the services offered in our senior centers, which are in-need of renovation and additional funding for more programming and basic operational expenses, including cost-of-living increases for staff employed by senior centers. Community Board 12 supports interventions and increased funding to ensure that seniors remain housed in their apartments and have access to legal services when necessary for repairs or defense against eviction and harassment.

Our resolution dated April 27, 2011 addressed to the President and CEO of New York Presbyterian Hospital, Dr. Herbert Pardes, urged the hospital to reconsider closing the Geriatric Practice at 99 Fort Washington Avenue and to notify our elected officials and the Community Board before implementing plans to close or consolidate services in Community District 12 and before submitting those plans to relevant State, City or federal agencies.

Police

Community District 12 lacks a sufficient number of officers to address rising rape and sexual assault, gang activities, and violence on the street, as well as growing resident complaints regarding quality-of-life crimes, especially noise, loitering, car vandalizing, disturbances in our parks or during parades and community celebrations, and illegal parking. Community District 12 simply does not have enough officers on-hand working in our district as opposed to other police precincts to meet the needs of our residents, in either the 33rd and 34th precincts. Community Board 12 urges the City of New York to recruit more applicants to its police academy and to increase its hiring of officers.

Fire

With our aged buildings and high density population, Community Board 12 advocates that our firehouses remain open and fully staffed. In addition, Community Board 12 supports the construction of a new Emergency Medical Services base station that will improve response times in our community. In addition, we are requesting the full renovation of the Engine 67 firehouse on West 170th Street. Community Board 12 also supports hiring of additional staff for enforcement issues, including ensuring that landlords who place cell phone towers on their buildings are not violating the fire code.

Traffic and Transportation

In a resolution dated October 1, 2010, Community Board 12 called on the New York City Department of Transportation to protect the safety of disabled New Yorkers and uphold the requirements of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act by installing Accessible Pedestrian Signals in conjunction with Countdown Signals and ultimately at all signalized traffic intersections.

According to our May 25, 2011 resolution to Department of Transportation Commissioner Janet Sadhik-Kahn, Borough Commissioner Margaret Forgione, and to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Chairman Jay Walder, Community Board 12 recommends that the MTA support and enforce the Rider's Rebellion Transit Rider's Bill of Rights. These include equally reliable, affordable and efficient transit for all New Yorkers, fare increases as a last resort, increased subsidies from the State and City governments, and a more accessible transit system with level boarding for all buses and working elevators and escalators in subway stations.

Community Board 12 advocates hiring additional pothole repaving crews to work in our district and to repair our streets. We also urge that West 207th Street from 10th Avenue to Seaman Avenue; Nagel Avenue from Broadway to West 205th Street; Seaman Avenue from Riverside Drive to West 218th Street be reconstructed.

Community District 12 also supports the immediate rehabilitation of the following stations: West 181st Street IND; West 157th Street IRT; Dyckman Street IRT; West 163rd Street IND; and, West 207th Street IRT.