



# Community Board 12M

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Manny Velazquez, Chairman  
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## STATEMENT OF DISTRICT NEEDS AND PRIORITIES FISCAL YEAR 2010

Community Board 12-Manhattan, covers the neighborhoods of Washington Heights and Inwood, from West 155<sup>th</sup> Street to West 220<sup>th</sup> Street, with the Harlem River Drive and the Harlem River forming the eastern and northern boundaries and the Hudson River the western boundary. The 2006 American Community Survey and PUMA Report lists the district's official population as 208,867 (although the true population is most likely much higher when the undocumented who did not respond to the Survey are taken into account), with 74.3% of Hispanic origin, 14.1% White Non-Hispanic and 8.6% Black Non-Hispanic. The CB12M District is the second most populated community district in Manhattan. CB8M has 5,592 more residents than CB12M, this is partially due to Roosevelt Island being part of CB8M and has a large municipal residential hospital and a very large cooperative housing complex with thousands of residents on the Island. The 2006 ACS Report indicates that CB12M district has 34,871 between the ages of 5 and 19. This is the largest concentration of children and youth living in a district in Manhattan, according to the report. The 25-54 year age group comprises 47.4% of the district ( 92,682 people), and the 55 and older age group accounts for 22.6% ( 27,159 residents).

The 2006 ACS Report Census reports the Median household Income + Benefits ( inflation adjusted dollars) in the district is \$32,487 and the Mean household income is \$44,198. Meanwhile more than 25% of all persons are living below the poverty level.

An Interagency Task Force was formed in April 2003 to study Sherman Creek, whose initial boundaries were Dyckman to West 207<sup>th</sup> Street from 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue east to the Harlem River. The City owns very few properties in the initial study area while Con Edison owns 30%. Therefore, the Sherman Creek study was expanded to its present scope to include much of Inwood: Dyckman and West 207<sup>th</sup> Streets from the Harlem River to Broadway and the east side of Broadway from Dyckman north to West 207<sup>th</sup> Street. This area is being studied for rezoning and mixed-use development opportunities with housing as the keystone. The Departments of City Planning (DCP) and Housing Preservation & Development (HPD) presented an initial rezoning proposal to the community on June 28, 2006, which was not well received. DCP and HPD continue its work on the rezoning proposal; meanwhile, the NYC Department of Transportation started the Inwood-Sherman Creek traffic study in spring 2007.

### HOUSING & HUMAN SERVICES

According an analysis of 2006 data by the New York University Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy, Community District 12 features a high percentage of rent regulated apartments (89 percent of all rental units versus 52 percent citywide), and a relatively low median rent (38 percent lower than that of Manhattan and 17 percent lower than the citywide median). Despite the low rents and the protections of rent regulation, Community District 12 renters face a housing affordability crisis that is a result of the district's 28 percent household poverty rate, an 11.4 unemployment rate and relatively low incomes, with over 50 percent of households earning under \$36,000 annually.

The Furman Center also reported that the rate of homeownership in Community District 12 is below that of most other community districts, at 8.3 percent. Yet, Community District 12 also faces the highest citywide rate of property tax delinquency for delinquencies over \$500, and our homeowners face among the highest rate of mortgage foreclosure.

Community Board 12 supports the following actions to address the affordability crisis:

- Enhanced subsidies for renters, including more Section 8 vouchers, higher Family Assistance, Safety Net Assistance rent allowances and higher income thresholds for these programs in order to cover more of our low-income households; and, an equalization of rent increase exemptions for disabled renters with those of senior citizen renters.

- Mayoral intervention to stop the supplemental rent increases targeted to long-term renters approved in July 2008 by the New York City Rent Guidelines Board.
- Property tax relief targeted to low- and middle-income renters and homeowners that limits increases in property taxes to a percentage of household income.
- Forgivable loans and education programs to assist homeowners in foreclosure who was victimized by sub prime lenders.
- Prohibition on the sale of subsidized affordable homeownership units, HDFC units, TIL units and other such publicly subsidized affordable housing at market rates or to purchases with incomes above the initial sale thresholds.
- Tenant and nonprofit affordable housing developer representation on the New York City Rent Guidelines Board, with voting rights.
- Increased financing programs for the development of permanently affordable housing targeted to households making between 30 and 80 percent of the area median income.

Community District 12 continues to face challenges of inadequately maintained housing stock, illegal conversions and insufficient code enforcement, which is now compounded by a new form of ownership referred to as “predatory equity” or “private equity.” Over 5,000 rent-regulated apartments in CD 12 are owned by private equity firms, which have been purchasing rent regulated multifamily properties citywide with the goal of evicting a large proportion of current tenants and raising rents substantially.

Community District 12 proposes the following actions:

- A ban on investment of public funds in or public contracting with private equity firms engaged in predatory practices, including the funds of the New York City retirement systems.
- A massive expansion of funding for legal services to provide representation to low and moderate income tenants in housing court and to reduce delays in assisting tenants.
- More accessible annual reporting of housing code violations, notices of evictions, complaints of tenant harassment by the New York City Housing Court and the New York City Department of Housing and Preservation, including identification of the landlord or property owner and community district.
- Increased cyclical apartment inspections and increased inspections of illegal conversions.
- The issuance of New York City general obligation debt and/or New York City Housing Development Corporation bonds backed by building rents to finance improvements and modernizations in rental housing, including energy efficiency and green building projects, in rent regulated, publicly subsidized housing and public housing.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION (HRA)**

In Inwood and Washington Heights, the percentage of residents living below the poverty level is higher than in Manhattan and NYC overall (WAHI 31%, Manhattan 20%, NYC 21%). The Human Resources Administration (HRA) must negotiate with the Federal government to increase the allotments for rent and food stamps for public assistance recipients residing in CB12M. The HRA facility located at 4055 10th Avenue should provide immigrant and domestic violence services in that 25,000 of 34,000 reported cases in the borough in 2005 occurred in Community Districts 9, 10, 11 and 12.

HRA should hold a series of Job Fairs for those who are chronically unemployed who have received their services. The staggering number of minority males and young adults who are unemployed in CB12M must be addressed by HRA and other city agencies. Charged with the responsibility of job training and placement of their clients.

## **DEPARTMENT OF HOMELESS SERVICES**

The Fort Washington Armory shelter at 216 Fort Washington Avenue houses 200 mentally ill homeless men. Capital funds have been allocated for much-needed air conditioning. Additional funds are needed to enhance the services at the shelter and for increased security to patrol the area and minimize the impact on the community.

The Department of Homeless Services must also provide funds for additional anti-eviction and SRO legal services in Washington Heights-Inwood to prevent displacement of tenants who need help in Housing Court, where landlords almost always have legal representation.

## **YOUTH SERVICES & EDUCATION**

Washington Heights-Inwood is the one of the most over-populated community districts in New York City, and its school district (Region 10, District 6) has been severely overcrowded for years. The School Construction Authority (SCA) acquired 200 Sherman Avenue (former St. Matthew's Lutheran School & Church) to build a new 600-seat school for pre-k to 8<sup>th</sup> grade; the SCA is also building new schools for Gregorio Luperon High School at 2120 Amsterdam Avenue that opens in September 2008 and for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Academy at West 152<sup>nd</sup> Street and Amsterdam Avenue, which will open in September 2007. Community Board 12 has also passed resolutions urging the Department of Education (DOE) and SCA also to build new schools on the two adjacent vacant lots on Broadway between West 204<sup>th</sup> and Academy Streets, at the Verizon building at 5030 Broadway, and on the site of the I.S. 143 annex at Audubon Avenue and West 182<sup>nd</sup> Street.

We recommend that DOE reinstate funding for all after-school programs in District 6 and stop the practice of charging facility fees to after-school programs so that more children may benefit from them. The DOE must also provide additional training for special education teachers and furnish elementary and intermediate school students with additional counseling and health services.

CB12 requests the Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD) provide full funding for a Beacon School after-school program at I.S. 52 in Inwood. In addition, DYCD must increase funding for after-school programs, the summer youth employment program (SYEP), youth delinquency and violence prevention programs, domestic violence, immigrant services and ESL classes to meet pressing needs in our community.

There is a severe shortage of quality daycare in Washington Heights-Inwood. We ask the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) to increase funding for additional daycare programs, including early childhood centers, nursery and pre-school programs, in this underserved community. ACS also must increase funds for immigrant and domestic violence programs in Washington Heights-Inwood.

## **LIBRARIES**

We support the continuation of full funding for six-day service at the Inwood, Ft. Washington and Washington Heights branch libraries. New computers are needed at the Ft. Washington and Washington Heights branches.

All three branches must receive additional funds for books and materials including software, subscriptions and recorded matter. It is important that the Ft. Washington and Washington Heights branch libraries are fully renovated so that both are ADA-compliant.

The Washington Heights branch library, 1000 St Nicholas Avenue, had their community room renovated for use by the public over a decade ago. This space has been unavailable to the community for other than classroom space for bi-lingual classes for almost five years. The NYC Library should negotiate with the DOE to utilize the local schools to offer this training and allow the community to use the space it successfully lobbied government to provide years ago.

## **SENIOR CITIZENS SERVICES**

More than 20,000 Washington Heights-Inwood residents are age 65 and over, and almost one-fourth of the district's total households (16,556) have one or more senior citizens. The Washington Heights and Inwood Council on Aging (WHICOA) states that the quality-of-life issues for the elderly include improving access to health services, decreasing health disparities, increasing and maintaining affordable housing. The Department for the Aging, together with other City agencies, must also address the following issues:

1. Preservation and development of affordable and safe senior housing. Seniors need rents tied to their income levels in order for the neighborhood's elderly on fixed incomes to be able to stay in their homes.
2. Seniors need increased legal services to fight landlords in order to maintain the quality of their apartments and to stop landlords that attempt to buy out or force them out of their rent-regulated apartments.
3. The Meals-On-Wheels program delivers hot, nutritious food to homebound seniors and provides them with a sense of safety. Keeping its vehicles on the road in light of increased insurance and gas prices is critical.
4. Senior centers are the home away from home for many and offer access to information on benefits and services that would not otherwise be available, especially to poor immigrant seniors served throughout our community. In order to ensure continuation of services provided by experienced, competent staff, we need a permanent mechanism to provide cost-of-living salary increases for staff of these programs. Some centers also need more staff to expand their services.
5. Increased funding for renovation and improvement of senior centers (i.e. lighting and noise reduction, painting and maintenance, and increased activities and services).
6. Enhanced outreach to the community's veterans and non-English-speaking residents.
7. More resources for neighborhood police and community-based services for elderly crime victims.

## POLICE DEPARTMENT

The 33rd Precinct has 138 officers on duty and would like to have another 25 officers to have a total of 163 officers. Need funding allocation to the repair of the air conditioning/heat system which is broken for almost 2-years; the precinct actually has a temporary unit from outside the precinct which is not sufficient for the building's need. 34th Precinct has 157 officers in its roster, 149 actual officers and would like to have another 25 officers to have a total of 174. Both precincts want more cars.

The number of active NYPD Officers assigned to provide law enforcement services to Washington Heights-Inwood is inadequate. Presently, the 33rd Precinct has 138 officers on active duty. The 33rd Precinct needs an additional 25 officers to reach a total of 163 active police officers assigned to the area from 155 Street to 178 Street river-to-river, and the 34th Precinct has 157 officers on its roster, 149 of the 157 are on active duty and also needs an additional 25 officers to police the areas from W. 179 Street to W. 220th Street river-to-river.

In addition, these services and police personnel are needed to provide safety and security in Washington Heights-Inwood:

- Increase the number of officers on duty from Friday thru Sunday
- Increase the number of officers assigned to gun control
- Increase the number of officers assigned to the Youth Gang Unit
- Increase the number of CPOP and bicycle patrol unit
- Continued strong support for the Auxiliary and Community Affairs Unit

## FIRE DEPARTMENT

Community Board 12 acknowledges the FDNY's continued efforts in fire safety, prevention and investigation. We suggest that the highest priority be given to the identification of potential fire-hazard buildings. Community District 12 was in the highest category for structural and suspicious fires in 2002, 2003, and 2005. Therefore, we strongly recommend the following actions:

- Increase the number of Fire Marshals so that suspicious fires can be investigated and arsonists apprehended.
- Ensure that all Community District 12 fireboxes and 1,200 fire hydrants are operational.
- Multilingual fire safety and open hydrant educational materials.

- Greater outreach to our schools, parents and block associations, about fire safety and prevention.
- Distribution of emergency preparedness manuals throughout the community.
- Inform every community about the FDNY school program that recruits new firefighters and expand outreach efforts utilizing community-based organizations, religious institutions, etc.

Finally, we have serious concerns about firehouse coverage when engine companies are relocated for medical, training, and special operations. When any of the district's four firehouses are out of service, the community's public safety is in jeopardy, which happened when a serious store fire occurred on St. Nicholas Avenue and West 171 Street in July 2004. Engine 95/Ladder 36 on Vermilyea Avenue is the only firehouse north of West 181<sup>st</sup> Street and when these companies are redeployed, tens of thousands of people living in northern Washington Heights and all of Inwood are without adequate fire protection. Also, Engine 95/Ladder 36 are the community's only firehouse with a four-man crew; the rest are five-man houses. CB12 strongly urges the FDNY to make Engine 95/Ladder 36 a five-man house.

### COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT)

Community Board 12 CERT (CB12M CERT) is a nationally recognized team of volunteers that has a waiting list of community residents, business owners and agency personnel seeking training and certification since January 2005. CB12M CERT needs funds to train and certify additional volunteers in emergency preparedness to meet the needs of a community with more than 200,000 residents who are spread across a district with a diverse topography in a variety of dwellings and structures. The team also needs funds for supplies and equipment for volunteers to protect themselves from harm during an emergency and to communicate across the district which has a challenging topography. OEM has scheduled training and certification for new volunteers in the fall of 2008 and has offered CB12M twelve spaces in the new -member training. Although CB12M greatly appreciates both OEM personnel and their support of CB12M CERT, we recommend that OEM receive additional funds so that they can provide additional training slots to CB12M CERT and that the training be offered in the CB12M district. OEM requires volunteers to travel to locations outside of the district and does not supply transportation or supplies which are expenses that most CB12M CERT members can not afford. We recommend that OEM be awarded adequate resources so that CERT volunteers can be reimbursed for travel to OEM training locations and be given funds to disburse to CERT for critical supplies and equipment and mailings. Presently, CB12M CERT members have to rent or use a member's car to pick-up large orders of materials that OEM would like for volunteers to distribute across the Washington Heights-Inwood Community and at all public events and team activities. Since 2002 the CB12M CERT Team Leader has written grants to Citizens for NYC, SEMO the MBP for supplies such as a team banner, training materials and refreshments for Town Hall Meetings and special training sessions such as "Subway Evacuation" session for the Battery Park CERT and the CB12M CERT several years ago.

### TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION

Community Board 12 has discussed its traffic congestion problems with several administrations yet no significant improvements had been made to date. We ask the NYC Department of Transportation (NYC DOT) to further assist the board in this matter. Again, this year we request and support an overall study of Community District 12's traffic patterns that would recommend short-term and long-range solutions to our traffic problems. NYC DOT studied the Sherman Creek area's traffic conditions, especially on Dyckman Street, West 207<sup>th</sup> Street, Nagle Avenue, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenues. Other locations which we recommend DOT study and take immediate action on and alleviate congestion are:

- The " W .162 Street and Amsterdam Avenue five-way traffic Hub".
- Ft. Washington Avenue between West 165<sup>th</sup> & 168<sup>th</sup> Streets.
- The entire Dyckman Street-Riverside -Broadway intersection including the proposal to remove the third lane, the right-hand lane signal, at the northwest corner of Dyckman Street and Broadway since 19 traffic accidents ( YTD 12-18-07) have occurred there, including the August 31, 2007 death of an eight-month old.
- Edgecombe Avenue: Install a crosswalk at W. 158th Street with a traffic signal to insure the safety of children crossing to enter or leave the playground.

The roadway in front of the Morris-Jumel Mansion is in need a complete resurfacing with cobblestones. At present, the roadway is prohibitive to vehicles due to a three-foot rise in the middle of the road that has caused extensive damage to cars traveling to the historic site. It is dangerous for those with special needs crossing the highway.

The planned redevelopment of the George Washington Bridge bus terminal will impact the already heavy traffic congestion in the corridor of West 178<sup>th</sup> Street & Broadway. A thorough Environmental Impact Study and community consultation are necessary to minimize any negative impacts on traffic and pedestrian safety, among other issues.

West 181<sup>st</sup> Street traffic already moves at a glacial pace. Former Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields commissioned a 2003 report by Konheim & Ketcham, which the NYC DOT has yet to act upon to the chagrin of Community Board 12. In the interim, CB12 continues to submit mitigation recommendations to NYC DOT regarding West 181<sup>st</sup> Street.

### **PARKING**

Washington Heights and Inwood has lost more than 400 parking spaces in 2006. This has added to the extremely difficult parking situation in this community. We strongly support construction of municipal parking facilities in Community District 12. Particular attention and plans need to be developed to mitigate the double-parking and tour bus congestion that occurs in the historic and landmark areas in CB12M. Specifically, the " Homeowners Association of the Historic Jumel Area" have complained of being trapped by double-parked cars five days and nights a week. These cars are associated with a church located at the corner of E 162 Street off of St Nicholas Avenue. This condition is compounded by the presence of as many as 25 ( twenty-five) , 47 ( forty-seven) passenger tour buses which come through and are on W. 162 Street between St. Nicholas and Edgecombe Avenue , every Sunday and Wednesday as they discharge and pick-up passengers visiting the Morris-Jumel Mansion. One solution to this oppressive situation for residents is to place a finite number of restricted parking slots for residents on W. 162 Street between St. Nicholas and Edgecombe Avenue. Parking stickers issued by NYC DOT and/or NYPD would be given to eligible residents. These parking and traffic issues which are both hazardous to the environment, resident's health and public safety can be found in the Ft Tryon area, as well.

### **HIGHWAY OPERATIONS**

As per last years " Statement of Needs" CB12M supports the restoration of arterial highway cleaning and maintenance crews, and the creation of a three-person crew dedicated to Community District 12's operational needs. High priority areas include the Henry Hudson Parkway and the Harlem River Drive. Repairs are required to the ramp connecting the Harlem River Drive and the Trans-Manhattan Expressway leading to the George Washington Bridge, and the Alexander Hamilton Bridge. We oppose the presence of trucks and/or commercial vehicles on the Henry Hudson Parkway.

### **BUSES**

Again this year CB12M reminds the Administration about the problem of five bus routes coming across from the Bronx along West 181<sup>st</sup> Street, the area's major commercial thoroughfare, this must be addressed to relieve congestion, air pollution and decrease travel time. These buses block intersections and hamstring traffic. We urge the MTA New York City Transit to remedy this problem.

In 2005, the MTA ignored the recommendation of hundreds of Washington Heights residents and CB12's resolution opposed to rerouting the southbound M101 bus; meanwhile, in 2006 the MTA created a city-block long bus stop on Broadway from 207<sup>th</sup> to Isham Street and placed three buses in front of 4966 Broadway without any community consultation, which has resulted in numerous quality-of-life complaints.

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### **RECONSTRUCTION PROJECTS, STREET MAINTENANCE**

Tenth Avenue is being reconstructed from West 206 to 218 Streets; however, there are several areas where similar projects should be considered, including West 207<sup>th</sup> Street from 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Seaman Avenue; Nagle Avenue from Broadway to West 205<sup>th</sup> Street; and Seaman Avenue from Riverside Drive to West 218<sup>th</sup> Street.

We continue to support the Manhattan Street Maintenance Division's program for resurfacing and pothole repair. Funding should be secured for the expansion of in-house maintenance forces for asphalt and concrete repair. Broadway from Dyckman to West 220<sup>th</sup> Streets must be milled and resurfaced. The roadway on Jumel Terrace between W 162 and W 160 Street (see above) is in a critical condition and needs immediate and complete resurfacing with cobblestones. There is a three-foot "rise" in the middle of the street and this is damaging to vehicles and those crossing the street to visit the Jumel Mansion.

## **SUBWAYS**

The MTA has seriously neglected the Washington Heights-Inwood community for many years. Service on the "A" train, once the pride of the system, has deteriorated to the point where it ranks 19<sup>th</sup> out of 22 subway lines, according to the Straphangers Campaign's ninth annual State of the Subways Report Card. The "1" line ranked 18<sup>th</sup> for seat availability, which proves that more trains are needed on this line. The "1" also ranked 20<sup>th</sup> when it comes to clarity of announcements. The "C" train ranked 20<sup>th</sup> in frequency of service and 18<sup>th</sup> in breakdown rate. The conditions on the "C" line at West 155<sup>th</sup> and 163<sup>rd</sup> Street; the "A" stations at 181<sup>st</sup>, 190<sup>th</sup> and Dyckman Streets, and the #1 stations at West 157<sup>th</sup>, Dyckman, West 207<sup>th</sup> and 215<sup>th</sup> Streets are deplorable. Capital reconstruction projects are required for these stations. The 163<sup>rd</sup> Street "C" station was rated in the worst condition of all Washington Heights-Inwood stations in Community Board 12's 2006 subway survey. A comprehensive plan is necessary to outline renovations and reconstruction projects for all our neighborhood's subway stations.

Community Board 12 urges the MTA to continue the operation of three elevators at the West 168<sup>th</sup> Street station, especially during the morning and evening rush hours. According to Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer's August 2006 report on elevator and escalator maintenance and repairs in the New York City subway system, one of the West 181<sup>st</sup> Street "A" station escalators was out of service for 149 days in 2005, far and away the worst figure in Manhattan! One of the 181<sup>st</sup> Street "1" station elevators was out of service for 34 days in 2005, the fourth worst figure in the borough. Equally disturbing is that only four of Manhattan's 22 fully accessible stations are at or above 125<sup>th</sup> Street. The MTA must increase the number of fully accessible stations in Washington Heights-Inwood to meet its goal of increasing subway access for people with disabilities, which requires making 67 stations fully accessible by 2010 and 100 fully accessible by 2020.

On the positive side, long-standing problems with filthy conditions, flooding, graffiti and bad lighting at the Broadway pedestrian tunnel at the West 191<sup>st</sup> Street station on the "1" line may finally be close to resolution with assistance from the Mayor's office and various City agencies.

We strongly urge the MTA to prioritize subway stations in Washington Heights-Inwood in its plan to re-paint 350 stations system-wide over the next decade. Many of this neighborhood's subway stations have been forgotten in past system-wide decisions by the MTA.

## **HEALTH**

CB12M strongly supports the NYS and NYC initiative on addressing diabetes, childhood nutrition, well-being and healthcare. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's (DOHMH) last Community Health Profile in 2004 states that more than half of Inwood and Washington Heights residents were born outside of the U.S. ( 51%). Adults in Washington Heights-Inwood do not consider themselves to be in good health. Thirty-two percent (32%) said they were in poor or fair health, compared to 18 % in the City and 21 % in the USA. Heart disease and cancer caused most deaths in 2004 among the community's residents; meanwhile, the death rate due to accidents and injuries was particularly high compared to New York City overall. Heart disease is the neighborhood's leading cause of adult hospitalization. The data also indicates significant hospitalization rate for alcohol abuse, as well as asthma and injuries. Again diabetes and asthma admissions increased since the last Statement of District Need, which is very concerning. More than 200 people are diagnosed with HIV each year in Washington Heights-Inwood and more than 2,000 people are living with HIV/AIDS in the WAHI Community.

Washington Heights-Inwood is near or better than the citywide averages for early prenatal care, low birth weight, and infant mortality.

One in five adults smoke while more than 75% of the neighborhood's smokers are trying to quit. Nearly one in three adults in Washington Heights-Inwood gets no physical activity, and one in six is obese, which leads to 12% of community adults having diabetes.

Many Washington Heights-Inwood residents have poor access to medical care: In 2005 about 32 % of CB12M residents did not have a personal doctor. People's ability to increase healthy behaviors and improve their health is influenced by the conditions in which they live. A healthy environment that includes adequate housing, neighborhood resources and community services is essential in preventing disease and promoting health. Twenty-one did not have a HS diploma, compared to 11 % for the borough, 31% are living in poverty, and 53% feel the neighborhood is unsafe.

Community Board 12 strongly advocates for the following community services:

- Increased access to medical, dental care and mental health services through DOHMH, the NYC Health & Hospitals Corporation and the New York-Presbyterian Hospital.
- Increased lead poisoning prevention, asthma and diabetes programs.
- Additional nurses and health educators in our public schools.
- Increased enrollment in Family Health Plus and Child Health Plus.
- Expansion of domestic violence and youth gang violence prevention and treatment programs.

### **BUREAU OF VETERINARY & PEST CONTROL SERVICES**

CB12M again strongly urges the Administration to conduct an intensive rodent abatement program in the District. This is a dire health and safety issue that needs immediate attention but seems to be ignored. It is necessary to address the neighborhood's serious vermin problem, immediately. Rat-resistant garbage cans need to be distributed to buildings across the district and especially between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue; however, more areas must be baited and receive the containers. Multilingual educational materials should be distributed to our schools, parents associations, community-based organizations and elsewhere throughout the district to help foster a cleaner and safer environment.

### **ENVIRONMENT**

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) must improve its services to the Washington Heights-Inwood community. Air and noise enforcement is non-existent, catch basins are sporadically cleaned and the department has failed to provide the 33<sup>rd</sup> & 34<sup>th</sup> Precincts with additional wrenches to close open fire hydrants despite continuous requests from public officials, the commanding officers and CB12 to do so. It is absurd that the 33<sup>rd</sup> precinct has only one wrench and the 34<sup>th</sup> precinct has none! In 2007 the New York Presbyterian Hospital committed to purchase wrenches for the 33<sup>rd</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> precincts and CB12 strongly urges the DEP to act upon this generous offer.

Noise is also a very significant problem in Washington Heights-Inwood. According to a recent report, Community District 12 generated the greatest number of noise complaints to the 311 hotline in FY 2006-07, far surpassing any other neighborhood in the City. Community Board 12 supports increased inspections and enforcement of noise and air pollution regulations. Additional funding is needed to assign inspectors for nighttime and weekend duty; only nine inspectors currently work 6:00pm to 2:00am throughout the City. A multi-agency task force must be created to deal with the noise problem here, similar to what was done in Community District 6 in Brooklyn.

DEP must reach out to Washington Heights-Inwood business and restaurant owners about the proper disposal of waste, grease and biohazards.

### **SANITATION**

The streets in southern Washington Heights were among the City's dirtiest, according to the July 2006 Scorecard Report. Overflowing litter baskets add to the problem. We strongly support the following actions by the Department of Sanitation:

- Additional litter baskets and increased pick-up schedules, especially on Broadway and other commercial streets.
- Additional litter baskets and trash pick-up and street cleaning in the Jumel Historic District which has over 40,000 visitors a year and yet only as Sanitation services provided to non-historic areas in the district.
- Increased number of Sanitation Police Officers *(CB12 and CB9 split a weekend-only officer. That is unacceptable. CB12 requests its own dedicated fulltime Sanitation Police Officers.)*
- Additional street cleaners. *(We need at least four more street cleaners per day in District 12.)*
- Another mini-salt spreader.



Multilingual educational materials on proper garbage disposal and recycling requirements.

The Department of Sanitation must reduce its six to eight-year timeframe for construction of a new garage for District 8M garbage trucks, which currently operate from the West 215<sup>th</sup> Street garage and contribute to the traffic problem in our community despite the City Charter's requirement for co-terminality in City services.

### **ZONING AND LAND USE**

Much of the actual property uses in Washington Heights and Inwood are contrary to the official New York City zoning regulations, which were last updated in 1961 in the CB12 area and most of the City. In many cases, zoning laws and regulations are not adhered to and this significantly impacts the neighborhoods' quality of life. The enforcement of existing regulations would prevent non-conforming uses in residentially zoned areas. Moreover, the City must provide new zoning guidelines where necessary.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Washington Heights-Inwood contributes to the City's economy and tax base with the following large employers: Columbia University Medical Center, the New York-Presbyterian Hospital, Yeshiva University, Isabella Geriatric Center and more than 3,500 local businesses.

Community Board 12 proposes that the City and the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone (UMEZ) focus their resources in the following areas: commercial revitalization and growth, development of office and retail space, and tourism. UMEZ has several small business and cultural institutions in 2006-07. UMEZ should continue its aggressive outreach to small businesses in Southern Washington Heights who ( between W155 and W165 Street) given that they do not have a Business Improvement District in this area and there are a significant number of residents with small businesses that are neglected by city agencies and other institutions. The City and UMEZ must also assist merchants with incentives and loan programs to encourage sidewalk and storefront improvements, which would enhance shopping conditions and improve the quality of life.

The critical shortage of office and modern retail space in Washington Heights-Inwood limits the expansion of local businesses and hinders job creation. Developing underutilized areas, most notably Sherman Creek, would help alleviate this problem, as will the redevelopment of the GWB bus terminal that will create 800-plus permanent jobs.

We urge the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYC EDC), Department of Small Business Services (SBS) and UMEZ to foster economic growth in Washington Heights-Inwood by strengthening the neighborhood's competitive position and facilitating investments that catalyze the economic vibrancy of the community as a whole. The following steps will enhance the Washington Heights-Inwood business community:

- There is an estimated 3,513 businesses in Washington Heights-Inwood, according to the Audubon Partnership for Economic Development. The NYC EDC, SBS and UMEZ must provide entrepreneurs, especially minority-owned and women-owned businesses, with services and programs to benefit new business and help existing businesses expand.

- Collaborate with commercial banks, lending institutions and local groups to expand alternative lending programs for small businesses.

- Create a business development clearinghouse involving New York City and State agencies and the U. S. Small Business Administration to provide assistance and information to local businesses.

- Organize year-round bilingual seminars focusing on commercial development, and the New York City and State requirements for starting and expanding a business.

- Create a one-stop Business License Service Center.

- Movie and film producers routinely shoot in Washington Heights-Inwood. The Mayor's Office of Film, Theatre and Broadcasting should fulfill its commitment to create a digital catalog of our community's stores, restaurants, and nightlife.

The City also should assist in the development of Business Improvements Districts (BIDs), in Washington Heights and Inwood, particularly in the following areas: West 207<sup>th</sup> Street, Dyckman Street, and the southern Washington Heights commercial area pursuant to the Community League of the Heights Neighborhood Planning Initiative.

The City should also work with the Audubon Partnership for Economic Development, Washington Heights BID, Northern Manhattan Coalition for Economic Development, Washington Heights-Inwood Development Corporation, Chamber of Commerce and the Harlem Community Development Corporation to support business development and expansion in the neighborhood.

## **TOURISM**

The City and UMEZ must more effectively promote tourism in the area and work with the community to develop activities that capture more tourist dollars. Washington Heights-Inwood is well on its way to becoming a significant sightseeing destination. The Chamber of Commerce of Washington Heights-Inwood recently published a 50-page book titled "Discovering Northern Manhattan," which highlighted the community's museums, historic houses and apartment complexes, parks and other notable destinations, including the National Track & Field Hall of Fame. The publication is available at the NYC & Co. tourist information office, kiosks and hotels throughout the City and to riders on the Gray Line tour bus that makes its final stop at the Cloisters. In addition, all official City maps must show the entire Washington Heights-Inwood community and reflect its major points of interest.

Each year more than 300,000 people attend the Children's Festival sponsored by the Washington Heights Business Improvement District, an average of 40,000 attend the Medieval Festival in Fort Tryon Park, Over 35,000 people visit the Morris Jumel Mansion a year. The five-year old NOMA Uptown Arts Stroll has grown into a three-week long celebration of the visual and performing arts community in Washington Heights-Inwood. We also have magnificent parkland, with Fort Tryon Park considered one of the most beautiful parks in the United States. Each of these cultural institutions and events needs to be supported by the Administration and other funding organizations such as the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone.

## **PARKS**

Thirty-three percent of Community District 12's terrain is parkland. We regard our parks as one of the most valuable resources in the community and urge the continued reconstruction of the pathways in Inwood Hill, Fort Tryon and Highbridge Parks. Improved access to Fort Washington Park is also needed. We are pleased that the restoration of the J. Hood Wright Park retaining walls and the installation of artificial turf at the Michael Buczek ball field in Highbridge Park and the restoration of the retaining wall and entrance path at the Morris-Jumel Mansion in 2009-10.

Our FY 2010 proposed capital projects for the Department of Parks & Recreation are as follows:

- 8) Reconstruction of sidewalks and paths in Roger Morris Park, including a wheelchair ramp, drainage work and landscape restoration.
- 9) In Ft. Tryon Park landscaping at the Alpine Garden and Broadway perimeter, including installation of water service and reconstruction of stonework, pathways and staircase.
- 10) Continued reconstruction of Inwood Hill and Fort Tryon parks' paths, including paving, drainage, bench replacement and adjacent landscape.
- 11) Reconstruction and enlargement of the Indian Road Playground in Inwood Hill Park
- 12) For the Riverside Oval (Riverside Drive & West 156<sup>th</sup> Street), replacement of the curb and fence, restoration of the fountain, water service, sewer connection, landscaping and accessibility for the disabled.
- 13) Equipment for park maintenance including the expanded Greenway.

Community Board 12 urges the City to fund a maintenance program and/or endowment as part of all Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR) capital projects. Horticulturists, stonemasons, general maintenance workers, increased seasonal personnel and skilled trades-people are sorely needed in our parks. Maintenance is the key to keeping our parks in good condition and preventing deterioration. Routine maintenance would save the City money in the long run and avoid costly capital projects.

Washington Heights-Inwood must receive its fair share of PEP officers to enhance the safety of our parks. Funds also are needed for enhanced pest control and tree pruning in all CB12 parks. Additional resources are required for recreational programs for children at Highbridge, J. Hood Wright and Inwood Hill parks.

## **CULTURAL AFFAIRS**

We request that the Department of Cultural Affairs help maintain all our historic and cultural institutions, including the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Hispanic Society of America, Dyckman Farmhouse Museum, the Morris-Jumel Mansion and the

Cloisters. We are especially concerned about the future of the Audubon Terrace complex; the American Numismatic Society recently moved and the Hispanic Society, which occupies about half the complex, announced that it also plans to move. CB12 asks the Mayor's Office in December 2005 to create a task force to develop a plan to preserve and revitalize the Audubon Terrace complex.

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### **CONCLUSION**

Washington Heights-Inwood historically has been a neighborhood of many different nationalities. The City must reevaluate how it views this neighborhood in comparison to the rest of Manhattan. We have experienced an unparalleled housing price boom over the past decade and stand on the threshold of the City's next waterfront rezoning in the Sherman Creek/Inwood area. The preservation and development of affordable housing is critical to the neighborhood, and the City must step up its efforts in this area.

It is now time for the City to increase the investing in Northern Manhattan by committing the resources, municipal services, housing, economic and education programs required to improve not only the Sherman Creek/Inwood area but the rest of this thriving, buoyant community of Washington Heights-Inwood.

Pamela Palanque North

Vice Chair, Community Board 12 M