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Community Board 12M

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COMMUNITY DISTRICT 12, MANHATTAN STATEMENT OF DISTRICT NEEDS AND PRIORITIES FY 2015

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 190,020 residents (U.S. Census Bureau 2010 PL File and 1990 Census ST 1 Population Division NYC Department of City Planning July 2011), including a majority of residents 134,976 (70.1 percent) of Latino or of Hispanic heritage; 33,442 (17.6 percent) of White Non-Hispanic; 13,954 (7.3 percent) of Blacks/African American Non-Hispanic; 4,814 (2.5 percent) of Asian or Pacific Islander Non-Hispanic; 228 (0.1 percent) of American Indian and Alaska Native Non-Hispanic; 672 (0.4 percent) some other race Non-Hispanic; 1,934 (1.0) Non-Hispanic of two or more races. The largest group in the district is of Dominican descent. Community District 12 is also an immigrant community: 21 percent of our residents attained their citizenship through naturalization and another 27 percent do are not citizens. The median age in the district is 34 and 12 percent of our residents are over the age of 65. We also have a high poverty rate; 23 percent of our residents live on incomes below the federal poverty threshold. According to the New York University's Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy (2012) our median household income (\$38,320) and the Manhattan median household income is (\$68,702) In addition, American Community Survey 3-year estimates for 2007 through 2009 indicates that 15 percent of our residents are between the ages of 16 to 65 and report having no income, 10 percent were unemployed and 25 percent were not in the labor force. Notably, 31 percent of our adults over are over the age of 21 and do not have a high school diploma. Community District 12 urgently need employment services to increase the median household income, social/human services that support our working families, vocational training schools to raise resident skill levels to obtain competitive employment, provide more services for immigrant families, and more free ELS courses for non-English speaking residents.

NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

Parks & Cultural Affairs

Community District 12 features over 600 acres of parkland. Despite the fact that some repairs and reconstruction had been done our parkland is in need of additional maintenance and repairs. Our park benches, pathways, paving, planting stairs and sidewalks require reconstruction (Inwood Hill Park, Highbridge Park, Fort Tryon Park, 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, we need more Parks Enforcement Patrol officers and maintenance workers. Furthermore, we need better access our parkland adjacent to the Henry Hudson River and the East River.

Community Board 12, M also supports the following:

- The development of the Sherman Creek waterfront for multipurpose recreational use and calls upon federal, state, and local officials to fund the project.

- Fund the design and implementation of bikeway improvements.
- Ensure that Columbia University honors its community benefits agreement regarding the development of the 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 the emission of waste into the Hudson is controlled, communicated adequately and reduced.
- 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.
- Request that Parks Department takes affirmative steps in cleaning up and rodent prevention of all parkland in CB #12, Manhattan.
- The NYC Department of Parks & Recreation's renovation plan for the Grotto in Fort Tryon Park's Alpine Garden, and urges the Public Design and Landmarks Preservation Commissions to approve said plan
- The NYC Department of Parks & Recreation to suspend its current project for the renovation of Inwood Hill Park's tennis & basketball courts and instead to implement the plan proposed by the Washington Heights Tennis Association.
- The design for the reconstruction of the path and stairs and miscellaneous site work behind the Cottage and leading to the Henry Hudson Parkway within the southwest portion of Fort Tryon Park (Contract No. M029-210M), as proposed by the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation.
- The proposed design for the construction of the enclosure of the lobby at the Highbridge Play Center.
- The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation Commissioner designate the southeastern section of Isham Park as a designated off-leash area from the time the park opens until 7:30 a.m. and from 9 p.m. until the park closes.

Traffic and Transportation

Due to the presence of many aging subway station in our district and the fact that we are the final stop for a number of bus routes, Community Board 12 has worked closely with the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) to improve the physical conditions of our subway stations and the issues of busses running off schedule which at times creates bus bunching. We call upon the MTA to continue its hard work in taking measures to improve these conditions and to partner with CB12 in reaching out to community members and surveying which bus routes are off schedule and which bus lines are more prone to bus bunching.

Our committee is committed to improving the safety of our pedestrians and vehicular drivers and has passed resolutions in favor of New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) initiatives related to create traffic calming measures in the following areas:

- Safe Streets for Seniors
- Adjacent to schools
- Installing speed humps in areas where cars travel above the speed limits
- Approved the first slow zone in Manhattan in Inwood
- 215th Street Step reconstruction
- Studied traffic flow and patterns at 157th Street, 181st Street corridor, and Dyckman, Riverside Dr. between Henry Hudson Parkway and Broadway, synchronize the traffic signal on Seaman Ave and Riverside Dr. and Riverside Dr. and Broadway. Street lights and traffic signal in CD#12 shall be free from sneakers and debris; we ask for DOT to develop a system to address this issue.

We have also taken steps to memorialize certain individuals from our neighborhood through our street co-naming process. We have recently implemented specific guidelines and instructions for those interested in learning the process of street co-naming.

This past year as in the previous year has seen our committee's desire to work with those interested in implementing bike lanes in northern Manhattan. We have asked DOT to study specific streets and avenues for the feasibility of installing bike lanes where safe and appropriate and to think of options of traversing our community both east-west and north-south. In addition, we ask for better signage and access to all bordering bridges and greenways. We also ask DOT to consider our community as they look to integrate additional citi bike share locations within CD #12.

We have been involved in ongoing conversation with the Port Authority NY & NJ with regards to the planned construction at the 175th Street Bus Terminal. We ask that the PA work with the NYPD to ensure that all traffic patterns disrupted by the construction have appropriate signage and traffic control personnel on location to maintain the flow of traffic.

Community Board #12 supports funding for the following DOT programs: school safety program, the senior safety program, street reconstruction program, resurfacing, milling and bus pads reconstruction.

Furthermore, Community Board #12 request that DOT conduct a comprehensive study on the Broadway, Riverside Drive and Dyckman St. intersection and to implement safety measures for pedestrian and drivers as soon as possible. In addition, we recognized that the Dyckman Street corridor has become a destination for dining and entertainment resulting in a more pedestrian and vehicle traffic creating many severe gridlocks on a daily basis in the Dyckman corridor. Therefore, the District Manager of Community Board #12, Manhattan has requested to NYC DOT Borough Commissioner Margaret Forgione to synchronize the traffic signal on Riverside Drive & Broadway with the traffic signal on Riverside Drive and Seaman Ave. to improve the street capacity and turning movement on the left turn from Seaman Avenue onto Riverside Drive.

In addition, Community Board #12, Manhattan urges NYC DOT to remove debris and/or personal items of residents from the street light poles, and traffic signals poles in order to maintain DOT property and the appearance of Community District #12.

Community Board #12, M continues to request as stated in a resolution dated October 1, 2010, that NYC DOT comply with 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.

Community Board 12, M advocates for the hiring of additional pothole repaving crews to work in our district and to repair our streets.

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

Housing and Human Services

Community District 12 Manhattan is well known for its pre and post world war buildings which are in need of much maintenance and repair. Many of which are not accessible for individuals with disabilities. As well it holds the most rent regulated apartments in all of Manhattan at 56, 173 rent regulated units. Within Community District 12 Manhattan there exist many housing issues where tenants who live in these apartments are faced with deplorable living conditions and serious housing code violations. This is such a problem that in 2010 and 2011 The New York City Public Advocate Bill Deblasio Worst Landlords Watch List, reports Manhattan's worst-run buildings are mostly Harlem, Washington Heights, and Inwood. Forty five of the 56 Manhattan buildings on the list are in those areas

The impact of high rent is felt nationwide, the call for affordability is imperative. A report created by Shaun Donovan / Secretary of the U.S Department of housing and Urban Development "Out of Reach 2012" defined affordability as it is consistent with the federal standard that no more than 30% of a household's gross income should be spent on gross housing cost and households paying over 30% of their income are considered cost burdened.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg's has acknowledged the need when he called for 165,000 affordable housing units to be either built or preserved in New York City. However the mayor's affordable housing distribution has been grossly uneven, as seen in statistics provided by the Department of Housing, Preservation and Development regarding the borough of Manhattan. From 2004 to 2010, 36,271 affordable housing units were built or preserved in Manhattan, but more than two-thirds of this construction was concentrated in just three of Manhattan's twelve community districts.

Residents in this district are faced with rising rents; overcrowding and physical conditions of existing rent-regulated housing units are often in deplorable, conditions with serious housing code violations. This clearly highlights the needs for more funding our existing housing stock in regard to preservation and new construction of affordable housing. Another major concern for our community is the need for affordable and accessible housing, since the median house hold income of our residents is 38, 320 and 42.3% of our residents, received some form of income support in the form of cash assistance, SSI or Medicaid in 2009.

Many tenants who are faced with these conditions cannot afford to pay for a lawyer and are fearful of taking their landlord to housing court to advocate for repairs. Tenants are fearful of retaliation tactics by landlords and of frivolous evictions from their apartment. This is why it is so vital to have legal services for tenants and to continue funding for our local CBOS who provide legal services for tenants.

Furthermore, households in rent stabilized units as a whole paid 32.0 percent of their income contract rent. The median rent income ration for pre-1947 units was 32.1 percent, while it was 31.4 percent for post-1947 units in 2011 and Households in rent stabilized units as a whole in the city paid 35.2 percent of their income for gross rent in 2011. The median gross rent income ratio for pre-1947 units was 35.8 percent, while it was 34.0 percent for post 1947 units.

As reported by, the Furman Center for real-estate & Urban policy (2012) the median house hold income for Washington Heights and Inwood in 2012 is 38, 320 and rent regulated units were at a 86.7 %, As a result of the divergent trends in income and rent since the beginning of the recession, New Yorkers' median rent burden increased from 29.9 percent in 2007 to 32.5 percent in 2011.

The unemployment rate for all of Manhattan is 8.5 % 2012 and in CD12M it is 14.5%. In every year from 2005 to 2011, the city issued between 52 and 58 new serious housing code violations per 1,000 rental units. The overall percent for New York City Housing code violations are 53.7, CD12M is at an overwhelming amount of 130 the rent burden for all of Manhattan was at 56.8% and for Washington heights its was 30.1 %.

Community Board 12 Manhattan supports the following actions to address the lack of affordable housing, high poverty and unemployment rate, and housing code violations:

- Provide funding for the development of Daycare Centers with in CD#12
- The creation of affordable and accessible housing with in community district 12m that takes into account residents annual median income
- Fund additional subsidies to local food pantries and soup kitchens
- Higher more HPD inspectors
- Provide funding for the creation of a work force one center
- Continue funding for DHS,ACS and HRA services
- Continue funding for our local community based organizations who provide vital services in; housing, benefits advisement, addictions, mental health, domestic violence, behavior modification, harm reduction, immigrant services and legal services for tenants,
- Provide continued funding for Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation, Washington Heights Inwood Coalition; which provide legal services for tenants in CB12M
- Continued funding for lead safe program

Health and Environment

Our residents are less likely to have a regular health care provider than those in NYC overall and foreign-born adults and men are least likely to have a regular doctor. Nearly one in ten residents use the emergency room, most likely at New York-Presbyterian Hospital, when they are sick or need medical advice. One in five local adults is obese, and almost one half do not exercise. The birth rate to teenage mothers is higher in this community than in Manhattan and NYC overall. On the plus side, the average annual death rates in our district were reported to be lower than in Manhattan and NYC overall.

The initial findings of the New York City Community Air Survey showed that Washington Heights is one of the most polluted areas in the City, apparently because of the huge amount of traffic coming through the community on the Trans Manhattan Expressway and the concentration of apartment buildings burning dirty fuel oil.

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

- The continuation of the Ambulatory Care Network off-site practices operated by New York-Presbyterian Hospital (NYPH), which serve people who otherwise would not have regular doctors.
- Increased funding for mental health programs and school-based health clinics in Community School District 6 schools.
- Full staffing and extended hours for the Dyckman Clinica de las Americas / Dyckman Health Center and the Washington Heights Child Health Center, the two facilities in our district operated by the NYC Health & Hospitals Corporation.
- Aggressive outreach efforts by the Bureau of Pest Control to reduce rat infestation in our community, which was cited as having the highest rate of rat infestation in Manhattan in 2011.
- Restoration of funding for Manhattan's only lead-safe house, operated by the Northern Manhattan Improvement Corp. at 2183 Amsterdam Ave. This facility is a vital resource for families with lead-poisoned children whose apartments are undergoing lead abatement.
- Increased funding for public education and outreach on disposal of household garbage and recyclables.
- Due to Northern Manhattan becoming a destination for dining and entertainment the number of pedestrian traffic has increased dramatically we need more litter baskets on our streets to mitigate the overflow of litter baskets on our streets.
- The hiring of additional Sanitation workers, including street cleaners and Sanitation police officers, for Community District 12.
- The construction of a Sanitation garage for Manhattan Community District 8 so that its collection trucks will no longer make thousands of unnecessary trips through our community every year in violation of the City Charter co-terminality mandate.
- The use of cleaner, less polluting fuel oil in apartment buildings, local businesses and large institutions to reduce a major source of pollution in the community.
- Stronger and consistent enforcement of the Noise Control Code throughout the community, especially late at night in connection with bars and restaurants.
- Comprehensive regulations and policy for the placement of cell phone towers on residential buildings that protect public health and safety and uphold tenants' rights.

Youth and Education Committee

. According to a Census Data taken in 2010, the CD12M's population of young adults under the age of 18 consist of 37,307 (19.6 percent) and 10,678 (5.6 percent) under the age of 5. The community of Washington Heights and Inwood has approximately 24,000 students and 31 public schools, 19 out-of- school time (OST) programs, 8 daycares and head start programs, and 3 public libraries. However, local concerns regarding the improvement and increase of resources in this community continue to be a challenge. The increase and improvement of these and other related-education resources are vastly needed in the community. There is a high demand for a variety of programs in the community and among them are child care to assist working parents and after school programs, job training and skill development, college readiness programs to help students succeed in higher education, healthy eating in schools to reduce obesity, and youth anti-violence programs that promote safer communities. The committee has been actively advocating for these and other important resources with the hope of improving the youth's education and their well-being. In that, the committee has successfully passed several resolutions and accomplished other important tasks. Some of the most recent accomplished tasks include:

Seniors

SENIOR CITIZEN SERVICES

More than 28,000 Washington Heights-Inwood residents are age 60+ and almost one-fourth of the district's total households have one or more senior citizens living within. The Washington Heights and Inwood Council on Aging (WHICOA) states that quality-of-life issues for the elderly include increasing affordable housing, providing appropriate geriatric medical services,

preserving the legal rights of seniors, providing accessible transportation 24/7, securing and maintaining access to healthy food, and educating and employing future professionals in the field of aging. There is a need for City Agencies, including the New York City Department for the Aging and others, to address the following issues:

1. Preservation and development of affordable, accessible and safe senior housing. Seniors need rents tied to their income levels so that the neighborhood's elderly population living on fixed incomes can remain in the community.
2. Increasing the provision of accessible medical services dedicated to meeting the specific needs of the geriatric population.
3. Increased legal services to educate and advocate for seniors with respect to the following:
 - a. Countering landlords who unlawfully attempt to evict seniors from rent-regulated housing or who fail to adequately maintain safe housing.
 - b. Identifying and preventing scam artists who prey on the elderly to divest them of financial resources.
 - c. Identifying and preventing physical, emotional or psychological abuse that may be inflicted by others
 - d. Educating seniors about Advance Directives and other rights that may apply.
4. Access to healthy food in the community and access to appropriate food programs that are designed to assist those with medical needs.
5. Access to safe public transportation 24 hours per day, seven days a week. (The logistics and terrain of the district pose challenges for anyone who has difficulty walking or who uses an assistive device to travel)
6. Increase in training opportunities for the community to work in the field of geriatrics. The percentage of seniors in the community is expected to grow over the next several decades. To address a need to increase the number of qualified professionals who work in the field, we need to create and support training programs for community residents.
7. Compensate those who work in the field of geriatrics with a competitive wage commensurate with the level of professionalism and skill that the position warrants.

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.