



COMMUNITY BOARD # 4Q

Serving: Corona, Corona Heights, Elmhurst, and Newtown

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STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS

FISCAL YEAR 2018

Queens Community Board 4Q (CB4Q) is a culturally diverse community that encompasses the areas of Corona (south of Roosevelt Avenue) and Elmhurst. The total land area of Community Board 4Q is 2.4 square miles, bounded by Roosevelt Avenue to the North, Flushing Meadow Corona Park (FMCP) to the east, the Horace Harding Expressway to the south, and New York Connecting Railroad (CSX) to the West. According to the 2010 Census, at the time the population of CB4Q was 172,598 a 3.3% increase from the 2000 Census.

The ongoing problem of overdevelopment continues to grow within CB#4Q. The current levels of service and infrastructure can no longer absorb the additional housing units. In order to secure the future stability of CB4Q, careful consideration must be given to the rezoning of our community.

The over-usage of already limited City services will only continue to have a detrimental effect on our youth population. Overcrowded schools are common ground, after school programs are overcrowded, and the few libraries within our vicinity are used far beyond capacity.

The following is a statement of needs and priorities focused on improving the quality of life for all of the residents in the Community Board #4Q district:

ULURP/Zoning

General Infrastructure / Overcrowding

For far too long, we have operated under the careless mentality of “when it is needed, we’ll deal with it.” The intricacies behind infrastructural projects combined with lack of funding and staffing has led our agencies to operate with little to no time to actually handle issues on a proactive basis. Community services and utility companies are increasing their services as the need arises, and not before.

The fact is that large sections of Elmhurst and Corona were designed as a tightly woven network of 1-2 family houses whose streets are far too narrow, and simply not prepared to handle such an influx of tourism in such a short amount of time. With 75% of the district’s make up being residential, it is evident that people want to live here. What is a constant problem for us however, is the misconception that in order to solve the problem, more housing should be created. Throughout the year, variances are constantly being brought to Community Boards for review thus converting 2 and 3 family homes into multi dwellings of 15 or more families. The growth is blatantly evident, yet very little emphasis is being put on into actual upgrades to our streets or sewer systems.

Furthermore, we must accept the fact that the undocumented population of CB4 is not being entirely accounted for. It is imperative that a more aggressive campaign be set into place right away to educate, and to reassure our undocumented population that migratory status has no legal bearing to the US Census. An accurate count will more effectively allow our city to provide the services to all our families. It is our hope that the recently well-received IDNYC program serve as a bridge to allow those who had a fear of previously being identified, to come forward and be counted.

With the average median household income at \$45,661, and 27% of the district’s households living below the poverty line, there should be more conversation and initiatives geared towards not only providing affordable housing, but in also taking into consideration that housing initiatives require substantial infrastructural changes especially in neighborhoods such as Corona and Elmhurst that have seen a tremendous surge in population within the last 5-10 years.

Department of Buildings (DOB)

An ongoing issue with DOB not actively following through on inspections and violations continues to be at the forefront of our concerns. With 77% of Community Board 4’s population consisting of renters, the associated dangers with Single Room Occupancies (SRO’s) and illegal conversions are only exacerbated due to the overcrowding condition that continues to be detrimental to our district. Inspection requests for SRO’s and illegal conversions submitted by the Community Board office have extended well past 6 months. Due to the inherent dangers associated with illegal conversions i.e.: fires, carbon monoxide poisoning, an increase in staffing should be looked into. In order to perform inspections and enforcement in a professional and timely manner, the hiring of additional qualified personnel is of utmost importance.

New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYCDPR)

Million Trees NYC

After the successful inception of the Million Trees NYC initiative, there was an obvious influx in the amount of trees being planted throughout the borough. However, the concern that the pruning cycle for trees is simply too short should be taken into light. In order to produce healthier trees, funding should be allocated to increase the number of staff and vehicles accordingly, and furthermore, we are requesting that the pruning cycle be shortened from 7 years to a more reasonable time frame. Additionally, the Trees and Sidewalk program while positive, is flawed. Homeowners whose sidewalks are damaged due to tree roots are given a severity level from 1-100, with the highest numbers (80-100) receiving all the priority. Several constituents who have lower numbers have had to endure damaged sidewalks for several years, and many have already received summonses. As we enter another hurricane season, priority should be given to the reevaluation of staffing and funding of the program so that the backlog of complaints can be moderated to a more reasonable number.

Parks Enforcement Police (PEP) / Flushing Meadows Corona Park (FMCP)

An issue of contention within the district is the borough wide lack of Park Enforcement Police (PEP). Within the last nine months, New York City has seen a 23% increase in crime within our parks, with Queens coming in 4th place across boroughs accounting for 181 of the 974 crimes across the city. While Flushing Meadows Corona Park (FMCP) does not fall within the jurisdiction of any community board in specific, Community Board 4 sees the brunt of the park's popularity more than any other district. Countless events throughout the year continue to thrive within the park, and while the potential support to local business is appreciated, such large scale events can be detrimental to the quaint neighborhoods surrounding FMCP. Funding to increase enforcement across the borough would help with crowd mitigation, overall safety and more late night patrols. For several years, the Community Board has been in full support of an NYPD satellite station within the park; at the very least, we would be in favor of security cameras throughout some of the more prominent trouble parks within the district.

Additional Lighting / Signage

In the coming year, the NYCDOT will be initiating a city wide replacement of light bulbs from incandescent to light emitting diodes (LED's) both along our streets and our parks. Central Park Manhattan recently underwent a campaign in which 1600 of its low sodium vapor lamps were replaced with LED's. The estimated savings on energy costs in addition to the decreased carbon footprint and increased lifetime on the newer bulbs are still not entirely accepted by many communities due to the feeling that they emit more of a projected spotlight. While security within our 24 parks is of utmost importance, discretion should be taken with the installation of these bulbs in quaint residential neighborhoods where these new lights will affect the quality of life of our constituency. In addition to additional lighting, many of our parks are in need of signage. Flushing Meadows Corona Park currently holds more square footage than Central Park, but the lack of signage both directional and informational is sparse. The lack of PEP throughout the district can be at least somewhat mitigated if we provide our parks with better

lighting, security cameras, and signage dictating to visitors where they are allowed to conduct activities. Furthermore with the amount of venues around FMCP (Tennis Center, Hall of Science, Queens Museum of Art etc.) directional signage should be clear, concise and plentiful.

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Bioswales

When the bioswale program was unveiled in the district in 2013, it was received with trepidation as concerns were immediately brought up with regards to the accountability of bioswale maintenance. While the Community Board was in favor of the overall concept behind them, we feared that due to the lack of garbage bins throughout the district, these bioswales would quickly become garbage pits. We soon came to learn that an apparent miscommunication between the Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Dept. of Sanitation Enforcement (DSNY) created a situation in which homeowners are being improperly summonsed time and time again for bioswales in front of their properties despite earlier promises of this initiative being maintained by the City. Before more installations are set in place, we must emphasize that our communities are being unfairly ticketed for an initiative geared towards making lives easier. The responsible agencies must plan more effectively, and essentially be held accountable for their programs before they are dropped on our communities, and not after the fact.

Damaged Hydrants

An ongoing issue in which hydrants are being damaged and are unable to be fixed due to lack of a proper maintenance partner has recently become an issue throughout the district. Hydrants are damaged, and in some cases sunken far below street level, but remain that way despite the inherent dangers associated with this problem. Funding should be immediately allocated, and a contract negotiated to help to fix this problem before it escalates beyond control.

New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT)

Traffic Safety / Bike Lanes

Over the last 3-4 years NYCDOT has worked closely with Queens Community Board 4Q in understanding its needs with regards to traffic safety.

Due to the recent uptick of public events within the district, specifically around Flushing Meadows Corona Park, the department has put substantial resources into traffic mitigation and constituent safety. Implementation of the long awaited Queens Boulevard Traffic Safety plan has begun, and Broadway from Queens Boulevard into Jackson Heights will soon see traffic and safety improvements along the corridor. In conjunction with these improvements and Vision Zero, fatalities and injuries for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists alike will likely continue to dwindle. Community Board 4 however has expressed concern over the proliferation of bike lanes throughout the district, specifically in corridors where vehicles and cyclists have never shared roads. While it is universally understood that all streets should be safe for all, the specifics on how bike lanes are supposed to be properly used is still unclear to many of our constituents. Many cyclists actively ignore rules of the road, i.e.: helmets are rarely worn, cell phones are actively

used, and motorized vehicles (i.e. motorcycles, scooters) feel that they can freely use bike lanes as a means of travel. While NYC's Vision Zero campaign has proactively initiated substantial educational community outreach, lawmakers should now work on a campaign geared towards holding cyclists accountable for the laws governing bicycles within the district through education. While good for revenue on a small scale, an increase in cyclist summonses since Vision Zero's inception simply just states that cyclists themselves may not even know the laws, or worse, feel like they are above them. The solution is not simply about more summonses, but about more education for cyclists and motorists alike. The Vision Zero initiative at its most basic level should be more aggressively phased into our Elementary, Junior and High School curriculum.

Public Safety

Renovation of 110 Precinct / FMCP Satellite

Since 1988, the Community Board has put the renovation of the 110th Precinct at the very top of its yearly capital requests. For approximately 7 decades, this facility has seen little to no improvements to its overall infrastructure. Both within and outside the facility, structural crumbling, loose bricks, and flooding are common. As one of the busiest precincts in Queens North, with close to 250 uniformed and civilian personnel (and growing), this structure is a potential danger that is unfair to those tasked with keeping our communities safe.

Additionally, the community has been requesting a proper parking facility for the 15+ marked and unmarked vehicles being stored along the residential block surrounding the precinct. In a district where parking is at a premium, we should be looking to provide parking for our officers all the while returning parking spaces to the residents of the surrounding community.

Earlier this year, in conjunction with Community Board 4, Congressman Crowley (CD14), State Senator Jose Peralta (SD13), and Assemblyman Francisco Moya (AD39) brought these concerns to light, and forwarded them to the attention of the Governor's and Mayor's offices. Additionally, it was requested that an NYPD satellite station be installed within the confines of Flushing Meadows Corona Park, a request that the Community Board has supported for many years. We look forward to the continued dialogue, and will be at the forefront with our Elected Officials in full support of the above stated requests.

Roosevelt Avenue

Roosevelt Avenue continues to be a point of contention, and much needed attention. The onslaught of street vendors, rampant crime, and quality of life issues along the commercial corridor are simply getting out of hand. The Community Board receives incessant calls with regards to the conditions of Roosevelt Avenue. We are seeking assistance from our lawmakers to help us find a solution to a growing problem with no clear end in sight. The potential implementation of a task force exclusive to this commercial corridor would be a welcome addition, and one that has been discussed over several conversations, but has made little headway thus far. We look forward to this continued dialogue.

Illegal Car Sales

Throughout the district of Community Board 4 we have seen a massive increase in the amount of illegally parked cars displaying “for sale” signs on them. While we continue to be at the forefront in bringing these vehicles to the attention of the agencies responsible, there simply isn’t enough manpower, and laws are far too lax. Vehicles are being blatantly parked along streets; some with plates, others without, and in many cases those who do have plates only display them in the rear of the vehicle enabling them to use the vehicle’s second plate on another one. The majority of these vehicles are being sold by local repair shops who have accepted the low summonses as the norm while they continue to sell the vehicles. The Dept. of Sanitation can ‘tag’ a vehicle with no plates, but due to the multiple day turnaround time, the vehicle is moved far before enforcement is able to impound it. The low cost of the summonses is simply not enough to deter the sales of these vehicles. For these reasons, the Community Board is thankful, and in support of legislation from Assemblyman Francisco Moya against “curb stoning” (a practice in which a dealer poses as a private seller to avoid regulations and taxes). We are in full support of legislation such as this that will help to stop these unfair practices from continuing to manifest themselves within our neighborhoods.

Youth Services

Early Childhood Services

With the expansive growth of immigrant families with young children in our district, there is a great need for Early Childhood Services for children Birth to Three. The services that we are in need of are quality infant-toddler care and early childhood education provided by trained professionals with a culturally sensitive and linguistically sensitive focus. Currently, there are an insufficient number of Early Childhood centers in our district that service Infants and Toddlers and their parents and we are in desperate need of facilities to provide the space to render such services.

According to a recent Unicef report on early childhood development, an economically disadvantaged child has the opportunity to thrive socially and academically when provided with early intervention and early childhood services. In addition, the report states the following:

- Brain development is most rapid in the early years of life. When the quality of stimulation, support and nurturance is deficient, child development is seriously affected.
- The effects of early disadvantage on children can be reduced. Early interventions for disadvantaged children lead to improvements in children’s survival, health, growth, and cognitive and social development.
- Children who receive assistance in their early years achieve more success at school. As adults they have higher employment and earnings, better health, and lower levels of welfare dependence and crime rates than those who don’t have these early opportunities.
- Efforts to improve early child development are an investment, not a cost. Available cost-benefit ratios of early intervention indicate that for every dollar spent on improving early child development, returns can be on average 4 to 5 times the amount invested, and in some cases, much higher.

In addition, because the majority of the immigrant families in our district are economically disadvantaged, there is a great need for Parent Services to help families obtain WIC benefits, secure affordable housing, learn about ESL classes, legal services and more.

Given the multiple benefits of providing Early Childhood Services and Parent Services to an economically disadvantaged immigrant community and the lack of such services in our district for these children and families, it is imperative that we consider the early childhood needs of these families to prepare children to become successful learners and productive members of society.

After School/Mentoring Programs

The lack of after school programs throughout the board continues to be an area of difficulty for many of our residents. The need for mentoring, homework help, counseling, and overall social networking is unfortunately missing from our community. In addition to the allocation of funds for after school programming, the need for a multi-purpose community/recreational center is a request that our board has held onto for some time. Such a center would provide the youth of CB4 with the social skills required for their growth. Communal activities such as sports, arts and crafts, and after school workshops are just a few of the different programs that could be offered at such a facility, especially in a day where social media, smart phones and video games reign above all else. Our youth lacks basic social skills than can only be obtained through communal activities and physical, social contact with each other.

For this reason, CB4 is asking that acquisition of land and furthermore, the construction of an intergenerational and/or after school center within our district be considered. It is imperative that we give our youth, our future a place in their own community where mentorship and afterschool programs will be provided.

Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) / Health Hospitals Corp. (HHC)

Food Vendors

The eclectic nature of Elmhurst and Corona combined with the astronomical prices on rent for 'brick and mortar' establishments has led Community Board 4 to be a mecca for street vendors. The sheer amount of nationalities, cultures and craftsmen within the district have encouraged those seeking employment to establish themselves as successful street vendors. The concern however, is over the high amount of vendors that flood areas where commercial traffic is extremely high, and the negative impact this can have on brick and mortar businesses. Laws are in effect that help to govern the distance between street vendors and physical establishments selling similar wares, but complaints to agencies, and fights between vendors are far too numerous to log. While it is universally understood that street vendors are in fact a legitimate tax paying business, there should be an understanding that inspections of these carts must be far more stringent. Furthermore, enforcement should be conducted more often in heavily utilized commercial corridors that have been overrun by street vendors such as Corona Plaza, and the area within the purview of the 82nd Street Business Improvement District (82nd Street Partnership) which spans 82nd Street from 37th Avenue to Baxter Avenue.

Health Care / Urgent Care Facilities

Community Board 4Q is home to Elmhurst Hospital Center, a trauma center within the heart of Queens that sees a tremendous amount of patients spanning the entire borough. While the hospital has been recipient of several upgrades and expansions over the last few years with more to come, the truth is that it is still the only trauma center within immediate reach of our communities.

Urgent care facilities throughout the district are indeed a welcome addition as many constituents see these facilities as a cheaper, quicker alternative to the negative stigmas associated with an actual hospital. Although these facilities have gained popularity, the fact remains that the residents of the surrounding neighborhoods of Elmhurst, Corona, Maspeth, and Glendale are still in need of an actual hospital. Urgent care facilities are not made to replace hospitals, but to work in conjunction with them.

Health Insurance

The percentage of adults (18+) medically insured within the district is possibly the lowest in Queens with close to a mere 60%. More emphasis should be put into public campaigns emphasizing the importance and the need for quality health insurance and preventive measures. It is important to note that depending on the neighborhood, the percentage of those able to speak English "less than very well" ranges anywhere from 37% to a staggering 79%. Emphasis must be put into providing this information in multiple languages.

Chairperson Louis Walker, District Manager Christian Cassagnol, the Members and Staff of Community Board 4Q would like to thank our agencies in helping to bring these concerns to light, and we welcome continued discussions as we enter the coming year.

We look forward to another year of working with you.

Christian Cassagnol



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Queens Community Board 4*

Louis Walker



*Chairperson
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