



# Neighborhood Support Teams

September 2017



Office of the Mayor

Mayor's Community  
Affairs Unit

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# Executive Summary

On August 31, 2016, Mayor de Blasio signed Local Law 102 of 2016 requiring a designated agency to review requests and to develop a list of at minimum three neighborhoods where interagency collaboration, or a “neighborhood support team,” would address quality of life issues within confined geographical areas.



The genesis for this legislation grew out of a task force convened by City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito to address quality of life concerns on 125th Street. These concerns included the sale and use of the drug K2 along with associated crime and sanitation issues. Input from members of the task force which included community-based organizations, local businesses, elected officials, and city agency officials informed a coordinated interagency approach to addressing the multitude of issues.

The Mayor’s Office: Community Affairs Unit (CAU) was designated as the coordinating agency under the law to identify priority neighborhoods because of CAU’s unique work on the ground in communities and its day-to-day communication with Council Members, Community Boards, and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and geographic areas. Based on the level of interest shown and specific feedback CAU received, the Mayor’s Office of Operations, which uses data-driven methods to solve problems and improve City services, was tasked with developing empirical criteria for evaluating applications for a neighborhood support team. These criteria would serve as a guide for applicants to strengthen their submission and would provide CAU with a framework to help determine which neighborhoods would best be served by the creation of a support team.

Working within the parameters of the Local Law 102 and listening to community feedback, we plan to work within the existing governmental structures to further empower the community boards as we advance inter-agency coordination and address quality of life issues in key areas throughout the City.

Due to the immediate implementation timeline of LL102, it took considerable effort, outreach and program development to structure the program to have a high level of engagement with local community boards and elected officials and local impact. Therefore, this report, while delayed by 6 months, will serve as the first report which was initially due on March 1, 2017. CAU has developed an implementation plan and expects to meet all subsequent deadlines.

# The Plan

Each neighborhood support team, comprised of representatives from City agencies and community stakeholders, would use existing City resources and input from local communities to identify at least three priority geographic areas to address quality of life issues in a geographic area no bigger than a Community District. It would develop a targeted strategy and implement this plan over the course of one year.

Following the passing of Local Law 102, an implementation team made up of staff from CAU and OPS reached out to the law's co-sponsors to discuss the development and implementation of the activities needed to support the law. These conversations allowed the implementation team to identify a process that would provide a fair and equitable way to not only identify areas of concern but also choose geographic areas that meet the criteria to be set forth prior to the formal application process. Together, with the support and information provided by the Speaker's Office, CAU and OPS developed a proposed program timeline that would include a Request for Expressions of Interest, development of a vetting process, and a formal application process that would begin June 2017.

On February 15th, 2017, the City released a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) to the public via website (<http://www.nyc.gov/nst>) in order to further explore how neighborhood support teams might work to address the specific quality of life issues affecting New York City's neighborhoods, as determined by the people closest to those issues. Feedback throughout the process was mixed. Many Community Board leaders requested assistance in furthering their existing work or their charter mandated responsibilities rather than re-creating an existing process. This feedback was instrumental in further shaping the proposed program guidelines.



Through March 31, 2017, CAU conducted additional outreach to Borough Presidents, NYC Council offices, Community Boards, and BIDs. Outreach efforts specifically targeted these groups due to the complexity of agency jurisdictions, familiarity of the issues presented, and existing community relationships. Outreach consisted of informal presentations regarding the program to these specific stakeholders and requested feedback regarding the proposed action plan. These direct community engagements continued to be instrumental to the City's understanding of the best way to solve the individual quality of life problems identified through the RFEI process. During this timeframe, CAU continued to receive and review RFEI submissions from community partners that were interested in engaging further with the program.

After review of the quality of life issues identified in the RFEI process, CAU again engaged directly with Community Boards, local elected officials, BIDS and Borough Presidents to better understand the issues they flagged in the RFEIs. Overwhelmingly the administration was again asked to bolster the work of the communities rather than supersede. The interpretation of the local law and the program by Community Boards and Borough President's offices was negative and was seemingly viewed as "replacing local Community Boards" or "doing the job they were elected to do". Based

## The Plan, continued

on that feedback, CAU will continue to meet with the teams that submitted RFEI's to better gauge the potential response opportunities and better gauge the viability of a task force to address the issues as a whole or offer an increased liaison relationship between city agencies and Community Boards. Additional feedback from local elected officials and stakeholders included asking the administration to delay the implementation of the current program timeline to allow for a formal application process to begin in September. This would accommodate for the summer recesses of local Community Boards.

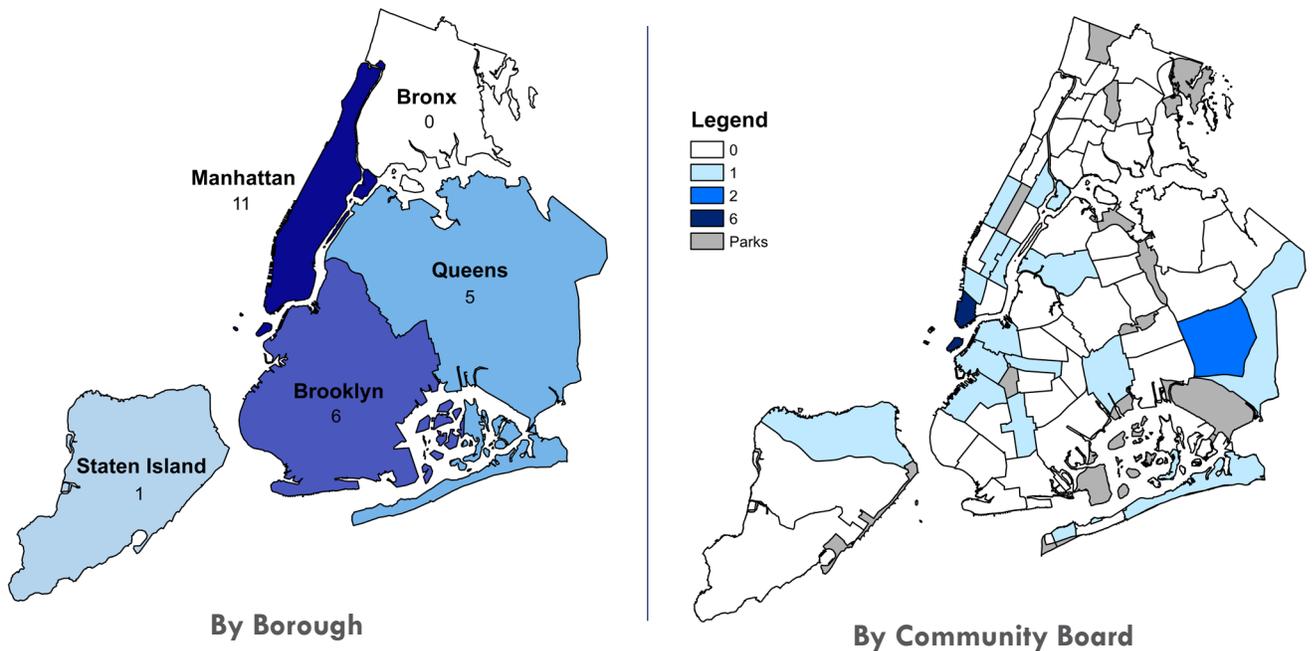
During the review process of submitted RFEIs, the implementation team was able to identify priority areas, but determined that a task force for these items wasn't necessarily needed. Many of the issues raised could be addressed through a single agency with the implementation team acting in an advisory role. Instead, the team thought that they could help a majority of the groups who submitted RFEIs tackle the problems they identified over the course of the updated program timeline by following this modified program model. We will therefore begin working on the 17 defined RFEI submissions and will notify the community leaders who submitted requests by September 1, 2017 in accordance with Local Law 102.

# Findings from the Request for Expressions of Interest

## Geographical Submissions

The City received 23 expressions of interest from 17 community boards. One submission from a Queens Community Board was received in June after this period concluded. All other submissions came in during March, with the exception of 2 blank records which were not counted in this report. The maps indicate the Boroughs that had submissions and a map of the individual community boards that submitted RFEIs.

It is interesting to note that the total number of submissions reflect the response from stakeholders throughout the initial outreach process. As you can see in the graphics, there were 11 total submissions in Manhattan, 5 in Queens, 6 in Brooklyn, and 1 in Staten Island. There were two community boards that submitted a total of 6 duplicate RFEIs. This may have been a result of the online submission process and submitting parties being unsure if the RFEI was submitted successfully or submitting a RFEI for each of the three issues that were requested in the RFEIs.



# Findings from the Request for Expressions of Interest, continued

## Specific Issues

The top issues mentioned relate to public safety, transportation, and sanitation. Some of the specific issues include using public garbage cans for residential trash, inadequate lighting, and construction on narrow streets, drug activity in restrooms, loitering outside local businesses, homelessness, lack of enforcement of Designated Activity Zones, and the underreporting of crime against immigrants due to language and legal barriers. It is important to note that applicants would often select several issue categories to describe a particular concern. Homelessness fell into the categories for Public Safety, Public Health, and Sanitation. Drug use would also fall into those same categories, and Construction/Congestion issues would typically be associated with Public Safety, Transportation, and Sanitation categories. Regardless of how applicants categorized the issues facing their neighborhoods, Public Safety, Sanitation, and Transportation were the top three categories reported throughout all RFEI submissions.



### Public Safety

- Drug use in public bathrooms
- Inadequate lighting
- Underreporting of crime against immigrants



### Sanitation

- Residential trash in public garbage cans
- Illegal dump outs



### Transportation

- Construction on narrow streets
- Lack of traffic enforcement
- Increased traffic due to construction

## Next Steps

After receiving the expressions of interest and review of the responses by the Office of Operations and the Community Affairs Unit, it was determined that some of the issues mentioned in the expressions of interest will require collaboration among city agencies, while others would be best addressed by additional, focused engagement with a single city agency and/or targeted guidance to the community board. As appropriate, CAU will serve as liaison between the community board and the relevant city agencies.

CAU will then setup an initial meeting between the Community Boards and identified agency partners, discuss the issues, serve as a liaison between them, and monitor the progress of each issue.

Based on the feedback from Community Boards, initial coordination meetings will likely begin being scheduled in September based on the calendar of CBs during the summer months. The projects will then work on a rolling basis, likely to take the remainder of the year to impact the issues raised by the applicants. The updated 2017-2018 timeline of this project is reflected below. Please note that this timeline is subject to change.

### Updated Timeline

DATE	TASK
Week of Jan. 9, 2017	Internal Meeting (CAU, OPS, CLA, IGA, Press, Law) to review materials and determine process
Week of Jan 16, 2017	Meet with the Council to review revised timeline/process
	Brief DCP (as rep of Community Boards) and SBS (as rep of BIDs) on timeline/process
Week of Jan 23, 2017	Brief relevant agencies prior to release of RFEI
Feb 15, 2017	RFEI Released
Feb 15 - Mar 31, 2017	CAU receives/responds to questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Info call for potential applicants</li> <li>• Targeted outreach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Board (via borough directors)</li> <li>• BIDs (via SBS)</li> <li>• Council (with CLA support)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
March 2017	Outline RFEI report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine process for reviewing submissions</li> <li>• Consider options based on number of submissions</li> <li>• Information pulled from event registration form</li> </ul>
March 2017	Outline process for determining application details/criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider post-NST evaluation so that info/evaluation for both application and follow survey is consistent</li> <li>• Incorporate agencies/determine who will sit on the selection committee</li> </ul>
Mar 31, 2017	Expressions of Interest Due

## Updated Timeline, continued

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TASK</b>
May – June 2017	RFEI Submission reviews and additional outreach based on findings.
July 2017	Report Submission
August 2017	Notify City Agencies of community areas for NSTs.
September 1, 2017	Notify RFEI submitters
October 2017	Schedule Initial meetings with Agencies and Community Boards
November 2017	Finalize and Begin implementation of strategy drafted by CBs and Agencies
December 2017 - May 2018	Strategy implementation with monthly check ins.
March 1, 2018	Report
June 2018	Strategy and Implementation Review and wrap up meetings
July – September 1, 2018	Data Collection and notification of selected applicants