

## 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 (NST),” would address quality of life issues within confined geographical areas.

The genesis for this legislation grew out of a task force convened by former 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 brought forth.

The Mayor’s Community Affairs Unit (CAU) was designated as the coordinating agency under the law to identify priority neighborhoods because of CAU’s entrenched relationships with communities Citywide and its day-to-day communication with Council Members, Community Boards and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). Based on the level of interest shown and specific feedback CAU received, the Mayor’s Office of Operations (MOO), 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 submissions 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 Local Law 102, CAU listened to community feedback and decided to work within the existing governmental structures and resources. 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. These geographic areas would be confined to the size of a Community District. It would develop a targeted strategy and implement this plan over the course of one year.

The goal was to empower community boards as we advance interagency coordination and address quality of life issues in key areas throughout the City. For the second cohort of the NST program, there were 4 NSTs created across the city. The Manhattan NST worked with CB4 to address noise concerns for the residents living in areas adjacent to the Hudson Yards development and the proliferation of After-Hours Variances for noise intensive construction late into the evening. The Brooklyn NST worked with Assembly Member Simcha Eichenstein to address heavy traffic conditions and lack of parking in the area. The Bronx NST worked in the Westchester Square area to assist the community in cross-cultural engagement and youth engagement in public spaces. Finally, the Queens NST worked directly with

Councilmember Koo to address stoop line stands along the Main St. corridor that creates dangerous conditions for pedestrians.

## The Plan

On February 15th, 2019, the City released a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) to the public via the administration's website (<http://www.nyc.gov/nst>). Its goal was to 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. The 2019 applications included a range of issues including neighborhood impacts from large development projects, crowded streets and lack of parking, youth engagement in city parks, and overcrowding conditions due to stoop line stand encroachment.

Through March 2019, CAU conducted additional outreach to Borough Presidents, Council Member 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. Local stakeholders received informal presentations of this program and were asked for feedback regarding the proposed action plan. Direct community engagement 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 time, CAU continued to receive and review RFEI submissions from community partners that were interested in engaging further with the program. During the review of RFEIs, the implementation team was able to identify priority areas that were specific to each location. From this, the team developed customized plans for each NST location.

## Application and Program Guidelines

A program management and implementation team was dedicated to developing guidance on specific grading criteria, make-up and geographical dispersion of NST programs, and improved program implementation steps. The goal was to create an open and transparent guide for application expectations, to eliminate perceived bias in the acceptance process by outlining the scoring criteria, and to take action steps for an active Neighborhood Support Team.

The application and program processes are outlined below.

1. The Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) was designed to draw on the insights of community stakeholders to better understand the specific quality of life issues affecting New York City's neighborhoods and residents. RFEIs included a written form and accepted additional documentation including news articles, stakeholder interviews, community meetings and/or objective observations of the conditions in the relevant communities. RFEI submissions were evaluated based on merits and scored based on objective criteria, **which had previously been determined by the managing agency**. Sample criteria accepted included the comprehensiveness

and complexity of the issue, whether addressing this issue would promote equal access to public resources and services, whether there had been prior attempts to address these concerns, and the level of community buy-in. Criteria for RFEI evaluation is included in appendix 1.

- a. Submissions from Community Boards, Council Members, Business Improvement Districts, and other community-based organizations were accepted. One application per entity is considered.
- b. All submissions were required to name a relevant contact person to serve as the community liaison for communication with NST implementation team and city agencies.
- c. Applicants accepted into a prior cohort of the NST program are not considered until one NST cycle after their cohort cycle finished.

In accordance with Local Law 102, the City **then choses no less than 3 RFEIs per year, with a limit of three applications selected per Borough.** Each Team selected consisted of relevant City agencies and community members that developed and executed plans to address quality of life conditions identified by the support team.

2. Neighborhood support teams work to create and execute a one-year action plan **for each NST in the cohort.** At the end of one year, the support team will determine any relevant next steps that aim to establish sustainable, community-driven framework for continued city agency responses. Support team recommendations are advisory. City services offered are subject to agency review, budgets, and the need to allocate limited resources.
  - a. Following the review and acceptance of applications into the NST program, the managing team then identifies key issues and engages relevant city agencies for awareness. The team then works with the applicant to schedule an in-person initial meeting to detail the issues presented in the application. These initial meetings included the applicants, relevant city agencies, and relevant community partners.
  - b. After the initial meeting, the managing team meets to discuss strategy items that were brought up in the initial meeting, and identify further follow-ups with city agencies for clarification, and then draft a strategy document.
  - c. The strategy document is submitted to agencies for additional feedback or clarification. The updated document is then submitted to the applicant and relevant stakeholders for further review and input process. Following the approval by the applicant, the implementation process will begin. In some cases, due to a variety of factors, agencies have begun implementing specific strategies prior to the strategy document.
  - d. Regularly scheduled check-in calls with the community stakeholders, agencies and program implementation team continue until cohort ends. Teams are purposely flexible so that strategies and solution delivery can be modified based on community and agency feedback.
  - e. Neighborhood Support Teams work to create and execute action plans for each cohort with the goal of creating frameworks that are sustainable and community-driven.

Support team recommendations are advisory and City Services offered through the NST are subject to agency review, budgets and the need to allocate limited resources.

## Current Status of Active NSTs

The second cohort of the NST program was determined after receiving 18 Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI), of which only 4 were accepted. The score sheets determined that the 4 accepted would benefit from a collaboration amongst city agencies. Of the 14 RFEI submissions declined, 7 submissions were duplicates, 3 submissions were able to have their issues resolved by using a more focused engagement with a single agency or community organization (in which CAU was able to be the connector), and the final submission was rejected because the same community was selected in a prior cohort.

CAU has convened 10 NST meetings since the second NST cohort. In those meetings the NST management team along with each specific cohort developed strategies outlining the various steps needed for the implementation process for each applicant.

### Program Highlights:

#### **Flushing, Queens NST- Still in Progress**

- Community concerned with overcrowding and unsafe street conditions due to overextended stoop lines and unlicensed vendors in the Flushing Main Street corridor
  - Collaborated with
    - Councilmember Koo
    - Dept. of Sanitation, Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene, Dept. of Consumer Affairs, Dept. of Buildings, and Dept. of Environmental Protection.
  - Developed a highly targeted educational campaign for small businesses to teach about significant violations of city law that this issue presented
    - Walk through with Agency Representatives
    - Provided Translated materials outlining rules and regulations
    - Hosted an information session for small businesses
  - Provided resources to help the correct current violations
  - Conducted targeted enforcement of issues presented to business owners

#### **Borough Park, Brooklyn NST- Still in Progress**

- Community concerned with the significant increase in street traffic
  - Collaborated with
    - Assembly Member Eichenstein
    - Department of Transportation
  - Currently looking into suggestions from community members to
    - Change some two-way streets to one-way streets
    - Adjust delivery vehicle times and locations
    - Installation of bike lanes to calm traffic
    - Adjust no-parking locations in neighborhood

#### **Hudson Yards, Manhattan NST-Still in Progress**

- Community concerned with excessive construction noise around the Hudson Yards Project

- Collaborated with
  - Community Board 4 District Manager Jesse Bodine
  - Dept. of Buildings, Dept. of Environmental Protection, Con-Edison, Dept. of Design and Construction.
- Developed escalation procedures for direct noise monitoring, adjusting After Hours Variance (AHVs) times
- Improving the AHV review process
- Developing a potential pilot program for long-term noise pollution studies to inform noise mitigation procedures and practices for future development projects

#### **Westchester Square, Bronx NST- Still in Progress**

- Community concerned with youth engagement and activity in local parks after school hours
  - Collaborated with
    - Pelham Lab High School, Dept. of Parks and Recreation, Dept. of Youth and Community Development.
  - Working with local school principals to engage students park programming and activities
  - Activation of regional parks with Resource Fairs for community
  - Development of cross-cultural education for residents and students to create understanding amongst new and existing communities

### **Next Steps**

CAU is currently engaged in extended NST operations to finalize programmatic outcomes for the NST applications accepted into this current cohort. Work will continue to create resolutions for each of the issues outstanding in the current cohort while the application process for the third cohort will begin. CAU is currently developing relevant materials to help prepare Community Boards, Elected Officials and other community leaders for the next cohort being developed.

**Appendix 1: Criteria for Evaluation**

**Neighborhood Support Team- Criteria for Evaluation: Highest Total Points (Rate on a scale of 1 to 5)**

**Community Buy in**

1.....2. ....3.....4.....5

- 1. Level that the community Board, Elected Officials or BIDs are supportive?
- 2. Would taking on the RFEI disrupt actions being taken or that will be taken by other local parties?
- 3. Is the feedback from Borough Directors about issue supportive?
- 4. Does the level of community buy in meet the standards designated by the coordinating agency?
- 5. Has this group applied previously for a NST?

**The comprehensiveness and complexity of the issue**

1.....2. ....3.....4.....5

- 1. Would Interagency cooperation assist in resolving
- 2. Are there any State, Federal or criminal law components to the issue?
- 3. Does the issue align with a citywide strategy of the Administration?
- 4. Can a plan be implemented within the NST Framework?
- 5. Who are the key parties involved in the issue?

**Whether addressing this issue would promote equal access to public resources and services**

1.....2. ....3.....4.....5

- 1. Is this a group that has easy access to citywide services?
- 2. Has this issue been addressed in other RFEI's?

**Whether there have been prior attempts to address these concerns**

1.....2. ....3.....4.....5

- 1. Has the RFEI exhausted other avenues for solutions (Borough Directors, Task Force, Community Board, etc.?)
- 2. How long has this been an issue within that community?
- 3. Has the issue made any significant steps?
- 4. Are there any other issues to take into consideration?

## Appendix 2: Neighborhood Support Team: Cohort 2 Status

Borough	Affected Geographical Location	Organization	Issues	Status
Manhattan	CB 1	Community Board 4	Construction Noise	In Progress
Brooklyn	CB 12	AM Eichenstein	Heavy Traffic conditions and lack of parking	In Progress
Queens	CB 3	Council Member Koo	Stoop Lines creating dangerous pedestrian issues	In Progress
The Bronx	CB 10	Community Board 10	Illegal Parking, Excessive Noise, Environmental runoff	In Progress