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## COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

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Greenwich Village ✦ Little Italy ✦ SoHo ✦ NoHo ✦ Hudson Square ✦ Chinatown ✦ Gansevoort Market

### STATEMENT OF DISTRICT NEEDS

#### Fiscal Year 2020

#### **PREFACE**

Community Board 2 Manhattan (“CB2”) continues to be greatly concerned that the City has minimized the impact of the district’s rapid changes and has neglected to adequately respond to the need to increase the ancillary services that such changes require. During these years of exponential residential growth in NoHo, SoHo, Chinatown and our Hudson River waterfront, planners have not provided for the necessary amenities that make for a healthy and growing residential community, e.g., public schools, open space and parks, access to health care, adequate public transit opportunities and public transit access, affordable retail space, and general services such as sanitation, police and fire.

Each year, CB2 receives many applications for residential conversions and re-zonings. The complaints and requests that come to CB2 reflect the concerns of this new residential population. Our budget priorities for the past few years have continued to focus on servicing these new arrivals to the district, as well as our long-time residents. More specific assessments of services will be set forth throughout this Statement.

#### **I. DISTRICT OVERVIEW**

##### **A. Geography**

Community Board 2 is a diverse district, bounded on the north by 14<sup>th</sup> Street, the south by Canal Street, the east by the Bowery/Fourth Avenue, and the west by the Hudson River. It is a unique and rapidly expanding community that includes the vibrant neighborhoods of Little Italy, part of Chinatown, SoHo, NoHo, Greenwich Village, the West Village, Gansevoort Market, the South Village and Hudson Square.

##### **B. Population**

Although the population in Community Board 2 has decreased slightly since the 2000 census, the recent rezoning of Hudson Square and other new residential construction will increase our population by several thousand residents in the coming years. In addition, we have five major universities - New York University, the New School, the Cooper Union, Hebrew Union College, and Cardozo Law School - that add a substantial non-permanent population to our

neighborhoods. Several of these institutions are currently in the midst of expansion, with proposals to add many thousand more undergraduate residents to our district, along with additional full time faculty and classrooms that will increase the number of day visitors. While the students that join us every year are welcome, it is clear that the city needs to consider their numbers when looking to allocate services to District 2.

### **C. Income structure**

Much of the architecture and history of our district has been maintained by residents who are determined to preserve the middle class, live-work, merchant and artisan atmosphere of our neighborhoods, past and future, but socioeconomic patterns are changing drastically.

Median income for Districts 1 and 2 combined for the period 2007-2009 was \$104,305.

### **D. Housing**

In recent years, the median monthly rent in District 2 ascended to the highest in the City. Rental units that are rent-regulated are 54.6%, and more than 1,300 buildings are registered with rent-stabilized units. District 2's rank in severe overcrowding rate in rental unit conditions has been elevated from twenty-eight in the City to nineteen. We think that we are losing affordable housing stock, and fear that this will depress our middle class population, that is essential to a healthy, diverse community.

### **E. Tourism/Visitors**

Within the boundaries of Community District 2 are some of the most popular tourist attractions in New York City, with millions of tourists visiting the restaurants and cafes of Little Italy and Chinatown, the galleries and boutiques of SoHo, the jazz clubs and Off-Broadway theaters of Greenwich Village, as well as burgeoning nightlife, night club and cabaret spots of the entire area. A weekend evening stroll through the Meatpacking and waterfront districts in the west, along West 4th Street and Bleecker St. toward the east, through SoHo and Chinatown in the south and on the western edge of the Bowery from Houston to 14th St reveals the nightlife that is attracting record numbers of tourists.

A walk through our landmark districts is an historic delight with many well-preserved buildings dating back to the early part of the nineteenth century. We see many groups conducting walking tours in our neighborhoods, telling stories about our immigrant, arts, and bohemian history. Tour buses travel through our small streets, obstructing pedestrian and bicycle passage as well as emergency access and deliveries, damaging our vulnerable infrastructure, idling and spewing dangerous emissions.

Our street trash baskets are often overflowing, especially on the weekends, and it is up to our citizens and merchant associations to supplement the Department of Sanitation pick-ups. We require more police presence to manage the crowds. The parks in our district require more maintenance because they are not just the outdoor space for our residents, but also appeal to visitors who are looking for a pleasant stop on their way through our district. The High Line Park alone has attracted millions of visitors since its opening.

Tourists are extremely welcome in our neighborhoods. They provide a significant clientele for

our small businesses and cultural institutions. However, the influx of thousands of people on a daily basis puts a severe strain on our infrastructure and resources, and these additional needs are not adequately addressed in the budget allocations.

## **II. LAND USE, HOUSING, AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

In assessing land use and housing, it is necessary to recognize the development boom that Community District 2 has experienced over the last ten to fifteen years. The number of change-of-use applications our Land Use committee regularly handles is high, and the rapid influx of new development throughout the district has challenged both neighborhood character and density patterns.

### **Affordable Housing**

CB2 has few undeveloped sites left that are appropriate for large-scale development. Exceptions include St. John's Terminal and the Special Hudson Square District.

In 2013, the City approved the Special Hudson Square District in the southwestern portion of our district. This rezoning created a mixed-use district by incentivizing residential development in combination with affordable/inclusionary housing, expanded community facility uses, ground-floor retail, and limiting as-of-right hotel development, while at the same time ensuring that commercial and manufacturing uses are retained. The proposal also included height limits and set-back regulations that will help to preserve the unique identity of the district. We are starting to see applications for conversions to residential from this neighborhood, many of which include affordable units under the auspices of the Inclusionary Housing program.

Our goal is to not only encourage projects that provide affordable housing, but also encourage a sense of community and social interactions. Developer amenity packages pose a significant challenge in this regard.

Another challenge is the loss of affordable units due to luxury and vacancy decontrols as well as tenant harassment, illegal landlord behavior especially with respect to construction and false DOB filings.

In light of the mayor's mandate to add affordable units, the community has been encouraging consideration of a large site that provides access and repair of the underground water infrastructure at 388 Hudson Street (next to a park) as a possible and appropriate affordable housing development site. We had strongly urged the City to consider this site in lieu of the tiny site in Little Italy known as the Elizabeth Street Garden. Our preference has gone unheeded and we continue to pursue the protection of a vital and much-loved garden in a neighborhood starved for open space.

### **Neighborhood Character and Quality of Life**

CB2 is primarily made up of historic, small-scale buildings with residential above and commercial at the street level. An ongoing "Quality of Life" conflict in these mixed-use neighborhoods is the noise and light pollution generated by the commercial tenants and disturbing the residents above.

In those neighborhoods not protected by Landmark status, the “neighborhood character” finding affords us critical leverage to maintain the type, scale and appearance of the surrounding area.

In NoHo, SoHo, and parts of Little Italy, a growing residential population is evident as long-time residents who live in converted buildings watch new neighbors move into newly-constructed, luxury buildings that are being built on former parking lots. CB2 will continue to work with DCP and LPC to ensure that these buildings fit into the character of the neighborhood. Major new residential projects in the northern portion of SoHo and along the Bowery, Lafayette and Bond Streets have added scores of new residents there, as well, transforming what was once an industrial corridor into an area notable for its super high-end housing stock.

In SoHo and NoHo, we continue to see 74-711 conversions of formerly Joint Live Work Quarters for Artists loft buildings to luxury residential and retail. Given SoHo's popularity and the strong demand for residential housing, we believe the special permit processes that drive these conversions are outdated in CB2 and the economic breaks afforded to developers are no longer warranted. Similarly, the qualifications for the JLWQA and Artist Certification programs that artists and the arts depend on for protection need to be updated. We support their presence in the district and want them to survive.

We also struggle with applicants who come before us for special permits pursuant to ZR Section 74-781 to allow retail below the second floor in M1-5A and M1-5B zoning districts. Too often, the applicant's good faith marketing campaign is marked by a perfunctory effort to lease the space at rates deemed suitable for conforming uses, but are actually too high to support such uses. After that effort predictably fails, the applicant returns to City Planning, stating that they have fulfilled the 74-781 requirement and now deserve the special permit and the accompanying full market-rate rent. This process is obsolete in many ways and needs to be brought into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and be better supervised.

Increasingly, residents must co-exist with oversized retail stores that operate late into the night, attracting 18-wheeler deliveries and trash pickup trucks on a virtually 24/7 basis. Without regulation, the situation can be unlivable. Likewise, advertising LED screens in the display windows and the general light spill from closed stores need to be addressed.

For these reasons and others, we need to develop and enforce regulations and policies that encourage “good neighbor” regulations.

### **Contextual Zoning**

Community Board 2 has passed two resolutions calling for zoning changes to protect the corridor between Fourth Avenue and University Place. This is a successful area with strong neighborhood character and many buildings occupied by small businesses, including ground floor stores and smaller offices on upper floors. A strong residential component thrives in the current mix of uses. The area is served by excellent mass transportation, Washington Square and Union Square parks, important universities, and proximity to many highly-popular areas on all sides.

This unique location is highly attractive to new commercial office uses, but the current built environment offers limited opportunities. For this reason, the area is under extraordinary pressure that threatens many of the very qualities that make it so attractive. New office buildings are particularly problematic. For example, when 799 Broadway was recently vacated to prepare for demolition, dozens of small stores and offices were dislocated with very few options for relocation. The replacement offices will probably serve a single company and the new retail will be beyond the reach of neighborhood businesses that bring life to the mixed-use streets.

In response to community concerns, the Department of City Planning issued a report suggesting that there were few, if any, threatened sites. Because the study did not analyze the high values of Class A offices in the area, it was almost immediately proved incorrect--largely because it was based on the assumption that buildings already built to the maximum allowed floor area, or even over-built, would not be likely targets for demolition.

Immediate action is required to protect the area, preferably with contextual rezoning that supports affordable housing requirements for all new buildings. City Planning should update its earlier report based on a study to include a CB2 public hearing.

### **Oversized Retail and the Department of Buildings**

CB2 strongly supports retailers and especially small businesses in our service area. Non-conforming oversized retail operations, however, often bring numerous harms to our mixed-use neighborhoods and undermine the small and local-serving retailers that employ many and serve as the backbone of a thriving economy. Balance is needed here, along with solid and consistent enforcement of local zoning.

Non-permitted oversized retail, which has been allowed to operate in violation of public policy, has become a significant problem within CB2's M1-5B zoning districts. Continuing conflicts caused by these big retail operations raise concerns among our elected officials and the residents and small business operators of CB2.

We know that these oversized non-permitted operations are also a concern for the Department of Buildings, which in the spring of 2017 issued six ECB violations for illegal retail operations along the M1-5B Broadway corridor. However, during the adjudication of those ECB violations at the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH), numerous deficiencies were observed, both in regard to zoning inspections and zoning enforcement.

Our goal at CB2 is to find meaningful paths for correction of these unsatisfactory conditions, so that our local laws are upheld and the quality of life for our community is not unnecessarily diminished. Proposals towards that end were included in a letter sent to DOB on June 22, 2018. They were:

- Significant and meaningful financial penalties for violations of zoning
- Significant and meaningful penalties for improper self-certifications
- Better training and management for DOB inspectors
- Increased resources for DOB attorneys and OATH hearing officers

### **CB2'S Place in the ULURP Process**

It is frustrating to us that while community boards are included during the scoping process of ULURP, we are not present at pre-process conversations with developers. Consequently, our voice is not heard when the Department of City Planning is asking the hard questions about the impact of a project on the community, and only the developers are there so what is, or is not, important to us is not represented. Also problematic is that ULURPs seldom consider the cumulative impact of individual projects, such as traffic concerns, increased pressure on infrastructure, safety during construction, the need for more park space, school seats, libraries, and social services.

We would really be true partners with the Department of City Planning if the valuable input of the community could be heard at the start of every proposed land-use project.

### **Bleecker Street and "Retail Blight"**

Another current issue of great concern is the alarming storefront vacancy rate in some parts of our district, in particular in the Meatpacking District and along Bleecker St. In 2018, CB2 added a new committee, called Economic Development and Small Business, specifically to focus on this issue. The committee has been meeting since July and will be issuing its first report with recommendations in the coming months.

## **III. SOCIAL SERVICES**

### **A. Education**

#### **Bleecker School**

**\$65 Million Option to Build Public School.** The NYC School Construction Authority (SCA) has the option to build a 100,000 square foot school at [509 LaGuardia Place](#) in Greenwich Village on New York University-owned land (the Bleecker School Option), under a July 24, 2012 Restrictive Declaration by New York University (NYU) and amended by a letter from NYU to Councilmember Chin on October 21, 2014.

Without action by our elected officials and NYU, the Bleecker School Option will expire on December 31, 2018 and will result in the transfer of \$65+ million of value from NYC taxpayers to NYU, based on a real estate market where the price per buildable square foot in Manhattan averages more than \$650, and arguably higher due to the lack of vacant land in Greenwich Village, either city-owned or city-optioned.

Please also note, if the option expires, NYU would allocate no less than 25,000 square feet of above grade space for a community facility, when and if it decides to build the Bleecker Building. However, if for any one-year period NYU is unable to rent this space, 100% of the site reverts to NYU permanently.

**Bleecker School Key Community Benefit in 2012 NYU Rezoning:** As part its 2012 rezoning, NYU made a good faith promise to our community for the Bleecker School, committing to a 100,000 square foot public school and a 2025 option date. As part ULURP, CB 2, the Manhattan Borough President and the NYC Department of City Planning all reviewed a rezoning package that included NYU's commitment for a 100,000 square foot public school and a 2025 option

date. However, the final rezoning approved by the NYC City Council included an option, that expired *11 years earlier* on December 31, 2014.

**Need for Bleecker School:** CB 2 recognizes the need for 600 public school seats at the Bleecker School, based on our June 2017 demographic analysis and the following drivers of demand:

1. Current elementary schools remain over capacity and overcrowded;
2. Continued development, rezoning and future zoning changes;
3. Unmet programmatic needs, such as dual-language programs, language based learning programs and inadequate space for physical education, arts, science and other non-math/ELA academic subjects;
4. Need to modernize 19<sup>th</sup> century school facilities throughout District 2 to meet 21st century education needs and comply with ADA standards for accessible design;
5. Expansion of Pre-K and 3K programs;
6. Inclusion of District 75 seats;
7. CEQR flawed methodology in estimating demand for public school seats, and growth of family-sized apartments; and,
8. Reduction in class size to comply with Contract for Excellence laws;

**Reinstate 2025 Option Date.** To ensure that the SCA exercises its option to build the Bleecker School, NYU must reinstate the School Election Notice to 2025. Not only is 2025 the date NYU originally promised, it also will a) give the DOE enough time to fund the school, which is currently unfunded in the DOE's Capital Plan for FY 2020-2024; b) new school planning takes time -- 75 Morton took 12 years from advocacy to opening and NYU's own 181 Mercer Building remains under construction; c) downtown schools at Trinity Place and Duarte Square are delayed; and, d) allows more time to consider educational needs in a dynamically changing residential environment.

### **Duarte Square School in Hudson Square**

**Public School & Gym.** As part of the 2013 Hudson Square rezoning, Trinity Church will build the core and shell of a 444-seat elementary school, the Duarte Square School, under a March 20, 2013 Restrictive Declaration by The Rector, Church-Wardens and Vestrymen of Trinity Church in the City of New York.

The DOE would fund the remaining cost, the majority of which is funded in the DOE's Capital Plan for FY 2020-2024, released in November 2018.

In addition, in a March 12, 2013 letter from the Department of Education to the Speaker of the New York City Council, the DOE has the option to build expanded recreation facilities in the Duarte Square site, including a) a double-height, 6,300 square foot gym, b) a 3,500 square foot multipurpose assembly space and c) 2,100 square foot multipurpose space.

Trinity Church is exploring leasing or selling the Duarte Square School site and CB 2 wants to ensure that the public school and gym commitments are not further delayed by a potential sale or lease.

CB 2's priorities for Duarte Square are to ensure that:

1. Trinity Church, or the new owner, and the SCA establish a timeframe for developing the school,
2. The SCA funds the additional recreation facilities and that these are designed with a separate entrance to allow for community use during non-school hours,
3. No charter school claims the site, and,
4. The school is designed and built with a separate gym and auditorium, not a “gymnasium,” as well as an outdoor playground.

### **Funding Needs at Existing CB 2 Schools**

**Underfunding = Overcrowding.** Public schools in CB 2 are overcrowded and underfunded, resulting in large class sizes as principals attempt to stretch funding allocated on a per-student basis. To reduce class size, New York State needs to allocate additional funding and the DOE would need to increase capacity – one more reason to fund and build the Bleecker School.

**Technology.** CB 2 supports additional funding for technology for MS 297, P751, PS 3, PS 41, PS 130, City-As-School High School and Broome Street Academy to ensure that all children have access to technology, a critical equity issue in education.

**Other Capital Projects.** CB 2 also supports funding new water fountains at PS 3, air conditioning at PS 130, flexible classroom seating to build the literacy program at City-As-School High School and funding a green wall to augment the hydroponics program at City-As-School High School.

**After School Programming.** 75 Morton will be expanding enrollment through the 2020-21 school year, requiring additional funding for on-site after school programming, through the Department of Youth and Community Development’s *School’s Out New York City*.

**Arts Education.** CB 2 wants to ensure that the DOE allocates funds for increased arts education, faculty and classrooms in our service area's public schools.

### **Funding, Siting and Building New Public Schools**

The City Environment Quality Review (CEQR) process is flawed for analyzing how new development impacts public schools and overcrowding. Most development projects do not trigger an analysis of their impact on school seats and even when a new development triggers an Environmental Impact Analysis, the CEQR Technical Manual and EIS guidelines to do not accurately estimate the need for new public school seats. CB 2 recommends that:

1. The Department of City Planning develop new and better formulas, based upon current demographics, that more accurately represent the percentage of families with school age children that comprise our local population, and considers the number of families who can be expected to move into new residential development;
2. The Department of City Planning to institute a policy that would require a school impact study, using local data as required under the 2014 law, on all new residential construction and conversion, regardless of size; and,
3. The City develop a mechanism that would require developers of all new residential buildings to contribute to a capital fund for public schools, and/or include new school

seats within their projects.

## **B. Youth**

We need much more outdoor play space for children of various ages, especially those under five and over twelve. Safe walking, bicycle, and mass travel are a priority. We support measures in this direction.

Cutbacks in after-school resources deny many children in our community essential recreational, educational and vocational activities. This is particularly true of the southeastern section of the district, where a full service youth center is overdue. We support efforts to open school playgrounds during non-school hours. P.S. 41 has a large outdoor area that could be safe space for our children to play. We will continue to work with the school and the City to make sure these areas are available as soon as possible.

## **C. Seniors**

Many elders in our district have decided to “age in place”, but services for our older residents have been cut drastically. The meal program at one of our centers (First Presbyterian) was eliminated a few years ago, and our other centers are overcrowded, with multiple seatings. An important part of the meal program, social contact, seems to be ignored completely. We would like to understand the goals of the Department for the Aging because they do not seem to be in accord with our understanding of the needs.

We note that several cost-effective programs for seniors – Visiting Neighbors is the most obvious – have lost funding. Again, we are joining our elected officials to work to solve this problem, but we need the City to support Visiting Neighbors, as well as adult day care facilities, in order to allow seniors to live independently in their own homes.

Our elderly are vulnerable to the rampant building boom in our community, when landlords seek to push seniors out. New building permits must accommodate the elderly. Many of our seniors continue to live in rent-regulated walk-up apartments. Renovation, not removal, is needed.

## **D. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Community**

Our district welcomes our Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender-Questioning (“LGBTQ”) community. They are integral to our healthy growth and community strength.

We are strong supporters of our three strong social service organizations, the LGBT Center, the Door, and Housing Works, attending to the special needs of this community, including many not from Community District 2. All three also support those who are not LGBTQ. The LGBT Center operates its own programs and provides space for over 400 individuals and organizations to run programs of their own, all of which draw 6,000 people a week from around the metropolitan area. Housing Works provides services for hundreds of people living with HIV/AIDS. The Door helps adolescents and emerging adults find jobs, education, and health services.

The Hudson River Park pier at Christopher Street has become a safe gathering place for LGBTQ

youth, who still experience discrimination in other parts of the city. This large population in our neighborhood raises concerns among local residents, especially when drug-dealing, prostitution, and petty vandalism occur. We are especially concerned about the increase in anti-gay hate crimes in our neighborhood, and in other parts of the city. This violence does not come from our residents, but from people coming into the district who have specific agendas against people whose lifestyles differ from their own. CB 2 is working with the 6th Precinct, The Door, neighbors, and our elected officials, and asks that the City work to address this hateful behavior and to find safe havens for these youth. CB 2 strongly urges the City to expand, not cut back services for LGBT youth. Our board strives to balance our concern for the youth and the residents.

#### **IV. ENVIRONMENT, PUBLIC HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

##### **A. Public Safety**

We remain concerned about quality of life issues throughout our district. The large number of bars, clubs, and restaurants at times compete with residences within close proximity. We receive a significant number of noise complaints from residents, often about bars or clubs that crank up the amplified sound and, at times, exacerbate the situation by leaving their doors and windows open. The proliferation of street vendors, selling merchandise and food, has become a bane to many residents and businesses, particularly on Broadway and throughout SoHo. We welcome vendors who obey the laws and rules of New York City. However, too many ignore clearance requirements and create problems in those areas. In particular, regulation of food trucks is piecemeal and enforcement is ineffective because different agencies are involved and there is no coordination among them. The City needs to update regulations and enforcement strategies to keep pace with the proliferation of food trucks throughout the district.

##### **B. Environment**

New residents, replacing the manufacturers who previously hired private carters, must now rely on collection by the NYC Sanitation Department. Further, the growth of tourism throughout our district, particularly on weekends, has created an additional burden on the existing uniformed Sanitation workers. Sanitation District 2's limited staff is hard pressed to meet the community's growing needs as the area has increasingly become home to a twenty-four hour population. In particular, the agency's decision a few year's ago to cut the number of supervisors in each district has made it more difficult to clean the streets as thoroughly as they had been cleaned in the past.

##### **C. Public Health**

Our community board has been working diligently with the World Trade Center Environmental Health Center's Community Advisory Council to pass federal legislation that would provide permanent funding for this center along with the other centers dedicated to those affected by 9/11. In the interim, it is important that the City continue its funding and support of these centers.

We are very interested in ensuring that the number of new HIV infections in the City decreases and that those living with HIV and AIDS receive the services they need to remain healthy and to

have stable living environments. It is essential that the City fund – and advocate forcefully with the State and Federal governments to fund – new methods to help prevent new infections, research into how to effectively reach the populations that are seeing higher infection rates, and support for the non-profit service providers who are the best responders to the epidemic and yet are losing government funding.

We are pleased the City has dedicated significant resources and is now taking a pro-active approach in combating the rat population in our City. In particular, we applaud the Rat Indexing Initiative. We urge the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and particularly the Parks Department to continue these aggressive efforts.

## **V. TRAFFIC and TRANSPORTATION**

When looking at any issue that comes up regarding traffic in this district, our board considers the importance of balancing all the modes of transportation important in New York City – pedestrian, public transportation, bicycles, cars, taxis and trucking.

One of the District's major traffic and transportation problems is with vehicular congestion around the entrance and exit to the Holland Tunnel. The tunnel brings in great volumes of private vehicles visiting the city from out of state. In addition, trucks make many local commercial deliveries, and use our narrow streets to travel from the Hudson River to the F.D.R. Drive, south to the Financial District and to the outer boroughs. Our fragile network of narrow streets is also clogged with trucks skirting the one-way toll on the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge in order to use the toll-free Manhattan Bridge to access the Holland Tunnel. With the elimination now of toll booths on the Staten Island side of the bridge, and toll collection being done by way of E-Z Pass scanners and license plate readers, the one-way Verrazano toll is no longer feasible and should be eliminated.

Every year in our budget requests, we ask that the City work with the Port Authority to consider new approaches to dealing with the traffic back-ups that are caused by the Holland Tunnel. We are pleased to note that some of these problems are now being examined by DOT's Hudson Square/West Village Transportation Study to identify and address longstanding transportation challenges as well as challenges and opportunities anticipated in the near future, and we look forward to the findings and proposals that result from this study. We also ask for enforcement strategies to help keep traffic from "blocking the box" at intersections, as well as to control honking, especially now that "No Honking" signs are no longer used, and to curtail reckless driving done to circumvent congestion. We continue to work with the Hudson Square Business Improvement District to address many of these Holland Tunnel problems, and look to continue to work with them and the relevant agencies, to find and implement long lasting solutions, with hopes that these agencies will respond to our needs and recommendations.

Community District 2 has several internationally known tourist destinations that encourage heavy nighttime and weekend usage of the district's streets, by both cars and pedestrians. New York City Transit should be initiating a major effort to increase the use of public transportation in this context as well as in general by making it more comfortable, convenient, accessible and frequent, and making transit access points more user friendly for both visitors and residents. The removal of many of our subway station agents compromises our safety and takes away our source for vital information and orientation. We vehemently oppose these cuts that are

completely counter to the sustainability goals of PlaNYC and Vision Zero. Public transportation makes more efficient use of space and energy, significantly reduces air and noise pollution, and minimizes pedestrian/vehicular conflicts. Therefore, instead of imposing these destructive cuts on a population that already depends so strongly on transit and its benefits, opportunities must be explored and followed through in providing new transit access and routes in areas of need, and sources of funding for our suffering transit system must be pinpointed and secured. CB2 has passed at different times at least three resolutions in support of congestion pricing, both to raise funds for transit improvements and to curtail the ever-growing congestion that disrupts our streets.

One major transit deprivation impact has resulted from the removal of the M6 bus route and the diversion of the M1, M3, and M5 buses from the routes they followed for many years in District 2. The new route locations are difficult, if not impossible, to reach for CB2's sizable and growing senior and disabled populations who have depended on convenient bus service to access important destinations, such as medical facilities and food shopping. They have resulted in distances, timing, stop locations, and reduced frequencies that severely penalize the entire District's residents, workers, parents and children because of the long waits, crowded buses, far apart stops and lack of needed accessibility. These routes need to be restored to their former locations that provide the service the community needs although with every passing year, the likelihood of this happening becomes more doubtful, but we're hopeful that the remaining existing routes can be modified for the comfort and convenience of our seniors and all our citizens who depend on these buses for transportation.

In addition, every effort needs to be made to repair and rehabilitate our deteriorating subway stations for users' comfort and safety. In particular, the West 4th Street station has been severely deteriorating over many years of neglect to the point that current conditions are not only off-putting, but also a threat to people's health and safety. All of the platforms and surrounding areas are plagued with moldy, leaky and peeling walls and ceilings, and a full rehabilitation is long overdue. L-train stations along 14th Street are also in need of upgrades, and their 15-month closing during the Canarsie Tunnel Project presents a perfect opportunity for carrying out needed improvements, including ADA accessibility, at all three CB2 L-train stations. At this point, agreement has been reached for renovations to be done that make our 6th Avenue 14th Street station ADA accessible. We are hoping that not only CB2's other two stations on 14th Street along the L line can be made accessible in the very near future, but that all the subway stations in our district can be converted into ADA-accessible ones very quickly, something that is very needed and long overdue.

In a walking community like Community Board 2, with a populace that spends much of its time out and about on the streets, the City must continue to encourage improvements for pedestrian and alternative transportation modes with emphasis on design and regulation of streets, including traffic calming approaches and more pedestrian-oriented redesign of complex intersections, lighting and directional information for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic, improved safety, enforcement, added bicycle parking both on sidewalks and in selected street spaces, as well as aesthetic improvements. Facilitation of pedestrian and bicycle movements and access between the six major subway lines, bus routes, hospitals, commercial districts, open space, schools, universities, historic districts and residential communities, also needs to be pursued. With increased and increasing development on the Far West Side, attention needs to be given to

providing public transportation opportunities, accessibility and connections in that area for residents, businesses, working people and those who visit.

Opportunities must be sought and identified to reclaim streets for public space that both support pedestrian activities and build community life. The Department of Transportation (“DOT”) is beginning to achieve this through its Plaza program in such areas as Gansevoort Plaza and Astor Place, which we welcome.

Individuals using wheelchairs have a basic right, pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, to use our city streets. In May 2007, the Community Planning Fellow assigned to our Board by the Borough President, presented a pedestrian ramp study to our Traffic & Transportation Committee. The study found that twenty-three percent (23%) of all street corners in our district do not have pedestrian ramps. In addition, another fifteen percent (15%) of all corners have pedestrian ramps that are uneven with the adjacent roadbed, or degraded, making them unusable or a safety hazard. It is our understanding that all regular corners now have pedestrian ramps. The City has begun the reconstruction of complex corners to install pedestrian ramps at those locations. We look forward to the day when this project is complete.

The degraded condition of our district’s streets, particularly those paved with historic Belgian blocks, is an ongoing concern and, at times, presents a hazardous condition. Some of our many requests for capital repaving projects, street reconstruction, improved traffic conditions and other needed improvements have been heeded, but there is still much to be done. Maintenance will always be an urgent item on the community’s agenda.

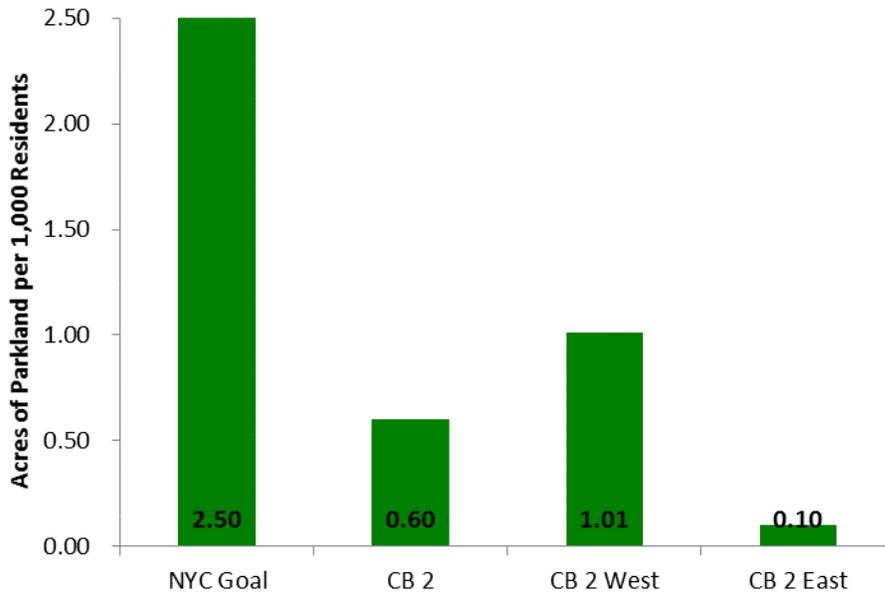
The proliferation of tour buses on our small, historic streets has produced a host of negative impacts, including hazardous conditions for pedestrians, air and noise pollution, traffic congestion, and broken street beds. CB 2 calls for increased regulation, enforcement, and relocation of tour bus routes to larger, more accommodating thoroughfares. A tour bus route-plan is long overdue, as is legislation putting it into action.

Recently, we have focused on working with DOT to create a safe environment for increasing bicycling as a mode of transportation. We have embraced the need to build protected bicycle lanes along many of our uptown/downtown and cross-town commuting arteries. However, there has been controversy. The majority of people who testify at our hearings are supportive of the bicycle lanes, but there are others who come with legitimate concerns about the impact of bicycles on pedestrian safety. We have a number of resolutions that ask the DOT to increase general education to the public about the protocols of the new bicycle lanes, and to look for ways to adjust the markings on the lanes to clearly announce how space is allocated to bicycles, pedestrians and cars.

We have also been working closely with the DOT to look at our parking regulations in a new way. We have consistently supported pilot programs with muni-meters to test how variable pricing can work in our neighborhoods. Because we have so many destination areas, and know that many people insist in coming by car, over our bridges and tunnels, instead of using public transportation, we encourage the use of appropriate priced street parking to help reduce unnecessary circulation of cars looking for parking and to encourage visitors eventually to consider mass transportation (which hopefully will be restored and enhanced).

## VI. PARKS, RECREATION and OPEN SPACE

With only about 0.60 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, our district has one of the lowest ratios of public open space in the city, well below the City standard of 2.5 acres. As shown in the chart below, the west side of CB 2 is substantially better served by open space than the east side, which includes the neighborhoods of Chinatown, Little Italy, NoHo and SoHo.



But important progress has been made in recent years. Along with the development of the Hudson River Park and the Highline, there has been a steady and ongoing stream of improvements to the quality and condition of our parks with renovations at Washington Square and JJ Walker and the Jane Street Triangle.

The new park at St. Vincent's Triangle, which includes the AIDS Memorial at the northwest corner of the site, is a popular oasis for community members and tourists to our area. The long-awaited renovations at Father Fagan Park, SoHo Square have been completed and the renovation of DeSalvio Playground continues. Funding has been obtained from a variety of sources for improvements at Pier 40, Little Red Square and Jackson Square and we look forward to the commencement of the improvements. These initiatives will make our parks more attractive and safer, thereby providing more people a better park experience.

These additions and improvements are critical, but they have not been sufficient because the population of families with young children continues to rise in our district, increasing the overcrowding of our active play spaces. In addition, several large-scale development projects and major rezoning proposals have been approved during the past few years, which will add to the pressure on our parks and the need for more open space, particularly those in which active recreation will be possible.

Whereas the focus of our efforts over the last few years has been on the preservation and improvement of the existing parks, we now see a need to strive to take advantage of every opportunity to create new open space. We thank our elected officials and City agencies for their

support and we urge them to continue to help us protect, preserve and improve the public open space while we ask that they work with us to pursue every opportunity for creating new open space in our district.

### **Elizabeth Street Garden**

#### **Preserve Elizabeth Street Garden and Build More Affordable Housing at Alternative Site.**

Since 2013, CB 2 has held four public hearings and passed four resolutions in support of the permanent preservation of Elizabeth Street Garden in its entirety as public open, green space and urges the City to transfer jurisdiction over this lot to the Parks Department. CB 2 also supports the development of affordable housing at an alternative city-owned site at Hudson and Clarkson Streets, but only if the Elizabeth Street Garden is preserved.

**Neighborhood Underserved by Open Space.** The neighborhood around Elizabeth Street Garden lacks open space. Little Italy and SoHo account for 23% of CB 2's population but have only 3% of its open space, virtually 100% paved, for an open space ratio of only 0.07 acres per 1,000 residents, as compared with the City planning goal of 2.5 acres per 1,000 residents. Furthermore, the majority of CB 2's open space is in Washington Square and Hudson River Parks, nearly a mile and 1.2 miles from the Garden, respectively. Residents in Little Italy and SoHo are less likely to use these spaces with frequency. Furthermore, Elizabeth Street Garden is located in the only downtown Manhattan neighborhood that the NYC Parks Department defines as “underserved” by open space.

**About the Garden.** Elizabeth Street Garden is a unique community park and green space with open lawn, majestic trees, flowering garden beds, and sculptural artworks located in the Little Italy neighborhood of Manhattan, between Prince and Spring streets. City-owned and privately leased, the Garden attracts more than 100,000 visitors each year, including local elementary students, families and seniors, as well as residents from around the city and tourists from around the world, who learn about the Garden from several travel websites and guidebooks.

The Garden is open to the public seven days a week, weather permitting and volunteers provide free public and educational programming. The Garden's design, size and configuration make it ideally suited for movies, music, yoga, community festivals, arts performances, educational programs, gardening and quiet meditation that are not offered in any other nearby public community space.

### **DEP Water Tunnel Shaft Sites**

For nearly 20 years, New York City has promised new public parks at three DEP Water Tunnel Shaft sites, upon completion of water tunnel construction. Recently, the City has begun to move forward with the 9,835 square foot site on East 4<sup>th</sup> Street in NoHo and the 12,560 square foot site in SoHo. However, CB 2 feels that the City needs to invest more time and funding to adequately design these parks, better understand any constraints at each site and further solicit feedback from community residents who have patiently waited nearly 20 years for these parks.

### **Trees**

As an area with very few large parks and burdened by high vehicular traffic, our district greatly values the benefits of streets trees. We support the citywide effort to plant one million new trees. We passed a resolution urging the Parks Department to make the replacement of trees the highest priority for tree plantings in our district and we have seen some replacements. We also requested a policy change whereby tree and stump removals automatically generate a high priority request for a new tree without the need for a second 311 request.

## **VII. LANDMARKS and PUBLIC AESTHETICS**

Ours is a historically rich community, graced by well over 2,000 century-old dwellings. Indeed, District 2 Manhattan has the oldest housing stock in the entire City with the median age of residential buildings at 94 years. Row houses constructed in the early 1800's, on what was then farmland, still stand in the Greenwich Village and Charlton/King/Van Dam Historic Districts. Cast-iron buildings that were bolted together in SoHo during the last half of the nineteenth century still line the streets today.

Within Community District 2 are now nine designated historic districts: Charlton-King-VanDam; Gansevoort Market; Greenwich Village, with two extensions; SoHo Cast Iron, with one extension, MacDougal-Sullivan Gardens; NoHo, with one extension; NoHo East; and numerous individual landmarks.

The board has joined with other preservation organizations and our neighbors to advocating for the successful designation of the South Village District and the Stonewall Inn. The board continues to identify districts and individual buildings worthy of designation.

The strength of the Landmarks Preservation Commission is essential to preserving the unique quality of this district and remains evident in the value of properties here and tourists, guide books in hand, enjoying the well-preserved district. There is a very considerable increase in visitors to Sheridan Square following the designation of the Stonewall Inn and the creation of the Stonewall National Monument. CB2 is unique in the city, in that well approximately 75% of the building stock falls under the jurisdiction of the Commission.

There is an urgent need for increased funding for monitoring and enforcement at several stages:

Changes without certificates of appropriateness are frequent. The board, the landmarks committee, and the residents of the neighborhood are vigilant in documenting work in progress without permission. The Commission does not have staff who survey the districts for violations of this type. They only respond to complaints. Complaints, however appear to take some time to be investigated rarely result in the work's being stopped right away and months or years may pass before violations are corrected. Having staff to survey the districts in this regard would be desirable to replace the present haphazard reporting from the public.

When applicants before the Landmarks Committee to have work that has not been approved, the most frequent and least plausible excuse for not having obtained a Certificate of Appropriateness prior to the work is an ignorance of the regulations. Increased monitoring would also address this concern.

Less frequently, work is undertaken that is not in compliance with the Certificate of

Appropriateness indicating need for increased monitoring during the carrying out of work that has been approved.

## **VIII. SIDEWALKS & STREET ACTIVITIES**

### **Sidewalks**

Community Board 2 Manhattan continues to see more pressure on sidewalk access and usage. The list of incursions grows as businesses try ever harder to differentiate themselves, particularly in the current economic conditions. The sidewalks are often home to sidewalk cafes, newsstands, sidewalk vendors, food truck crowds, benches, A-frame signs and other items taking pedestrian and open space, often illegally.

Community District 2 is an extremely popular area for tourists and tri-state visitors and the relatively narrow width of many of our sidewalks, especially on side streets, can lead to intense congestion that often forces people to walk in the streets, which is undesirable and unsafe. The incursions mentioned above, both legal and illegal contribute to the problem.

A primary issue is the lack of consistent enforcement of sidewalk café regulations by the Department of Consumer Affairs (“DCA”). We continue to see too little enforcement in the evenings and on weekends when sidewalk café activity is at its peak. As a result, we consistently encounter a minority of establishments which:

- do not remove café furniture when the café is not in operation;
- operate the café in a manner that is not consistent with their approved plan;
- maintain illegal outside service stations and host stands.

These situations often create unsanitary conditions, limit or make pedestrian access treacherous in what is public right-of-way, and create an uneven playing field that encourages responsible establishments to break the rules as well, if only to compete with their opportunistic neighbors. For several years, Community Board 2 has been troubled by DCA’s reluctance to enforce the Zoning Resolution’s ban on sidewalk cafes in certain zoning districts. In one example, the agency continues to allow three restaurants on West 4<sup>th</sup> Street, where the zoning is R6 and where sidewalk cafés are prohibited, to continue to operate. After numerous requests over a period of several years by CB 2 and the Borough President for DCA to either address this situation or at least explain why it refused to act, DCA steadfastly stonewalled all attempts at a resolution. Finally, in April 2013, just prior to a City Council oversight hearing on DCA’s management of sidewalk cafes, DCA sent letters to these three operators notifying them of the illegal status of their cafes. Unfortunately, well over a year later, DCA is still allowing the cafes to operate, supposedly because the operators have filed with the Department of City Planning for unspecified zoning or zoning text changes that would legalize the cafes. While the prospects of a rezoning are dubious, sidewalks cafes would still be prohibited because the sidewalks are too narrow. By allowing restaurants to operate unlicensed sidewalk cafes in areas where the zoning prohibits it, DCA has created an unfair and un-level playing field among area restaurants. It is unfair to individuals and families nearby who continue to endure the resulting noise, and to responsible restaurant operators who are either paying significant license fees or are losing business to these operators with illegal sidewalk cafes.

The other primary issue with sidewalk cafes is the inability to get rid of defunct enclosed cafes. CB2 has several café enclosures that have been sitting empty for multiple years. Many of these have been used by landlords or various operators in the past to justify dismantling virtually entire first-floor facades, in violation of rules established in the Zoning Resolution and, often, apparent landmarks violations. The City Council may want to look more closely at the many issues relating to enclosed sidewalk cafes.

### **Street Activities**

Community District 2 probably hosts more street fairs, block parties, etc. than any other district in the city. Although street fairs are a longstanding tradition in our neighborhoods, there are too many generic, promoter-based multi-block events that have no indigenous relationship to our neighborhoods. These long multi-block events take business away from the merchants who pay rent and taxes, and generally detract from the quality of life of our residents. We appreciate that there is a citywide moratorium on new multi-block fairs, but we urge the City to look for ways to better ensure sponsors are indeed functional organizations and are viable members of the immediate community.

Community Board 2 remains disturbed by the endless proliferation of promotional and commercial events, some permitted and some not, which are occurring regularly in SoHo and, to a lesser extent, in NoHo. These events clog sidewalks and streets and often result in chaotic street scenes costing the City money and resources as it struggles to bring order to the mayhem. Residents are inconvenienced and neighboring businesses are hurt as temporary “pop-up” shops commandeer the sidewalks, close streets and often blast music that illegally impacts the quality of life of the neighbors. The City needs to focus on this growing problem and come up with ways to successfully address and contain it.

## **IX. ARTS AND INSTITUTIONS**

### **A. The Arts**

Community Board 2 is delighted by the arts and culture that the Whitney Museum of American Art in the Gansevoort Market district has infused into our district since opening its doors in May 2015, and also appreciates the institution’s regular communications with and support of our board. This important institution, which was originally founded in our district, is a great asset to the Far West Village and has begun to help re-focus the neighborhood as an art and design district. The Museum is an exciting center of art, with exterior exhibition spaces as well the traditional interior spaces. Integrated with the High Line Park that runs along the eastern face of the building, the museum offers restaurants, gathering places, and other public areas as part of its overall design.

In addition, our district has several other fine museums, including the NYC Fire Museum, the Children’s Museum of the Arts, the Museum of Chinese in America, the Leslie Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, the Merchant’s House Museum, and The Drawing Center, among others. CB2 is also excited about the Jackie Robinson Museum, which is scheduled to open in our district within the next couple of years.

Community District 2 is also home to a unique array of performance spaces, Off-Broadway and independent theaters, film centers, and dance organizations. We take tremendous pride in the vibrant cultural scene that these organizations provide our community. These cultural organizations include:

HB Playwrights; Cherry Lane Theatre; HERE; Rattlestick Playwrights Theater; Greenwich House & Greenwich House Pottery; The Gym at Judson; IRT Theater; IFC Center; Film Forum; Angelika; Cinema Village; Quad Theater; Actors Playhouse ; 13th Street Rep; Minetta Lane Theater; Westbeth Center; New Ohio; The Public Theater; Joe's Pub; Ars Nova; Axis Theater; The Duplex; Cornelia Street Café; Peridance; Martha Graham Dance Studio; Soho Playhouse; The Greene Space (WNYC Radio); Tenri Cultural Institute; New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture; Lucille Lortel Theater; Village Vanguard; Institutional theaters of NYU and The New School, among others.

While we have a vibrant arts and culture scene in our area, we continue to be concerned about the impact on the downtown arts scene due to the closure of so many of the district's Off-Broadway and small theaters and other cultural spaces. The main causes are the exponential increase in rents and ongoing funding challenges faced by non-profits. Some years ago, we supported a proposal to use tax incentives that would encourage landlords to retain live performance space. In addition, CB2 strongly supports funding for the arts both in our area and citywide, and increased arts education in public schools, as a growing body of studies presents compelling evidence connecting student learning in the arts to a wide array of academic and social benefits. Namely, these various studies continue to indicate that the arts help to improve visual analysis skills and critical judgments, inspire creativity and improve motivation, collaboration, attitudes and attendance.

## **B. Arts Advocacy**

Advocating for arts organizations and artists located within CB2 and for those that produce, program or present arts and culture within CB2 has been, and remains, a top priority for our board. For one, our committee has a history of writing resolutions and letters of support for non-profit arts organizations located within our district that are seeking funding or restoration of funding from grant organizations and city agencies. We were also the first community board City-wide to write a letter of support for New York City's first comprehensive cultural plan. In addition, we speak out against entities and agencies that seek to utilize our local parks and public spaces for arts-related projects that do not have wide community support, while strongly supporting public arts projects that are in alignment with the spirit of our community and neighborhoods. We also strive to foster connections amongst arts organizations located within our district to forge stronger cultural alliances. Finally, as is widely known, CB2 has historically been the home of a wide array of talented artists and, as such, our committee remains dedicated to advocating that the work of these local artists is a part of planned arts programming within our district whenever possible.

## **C. Libraries**

We are happy that long-awaited renovations and upgrades to the Jefferson Market Library will be commencing in the coming year. However, we do have concerns about the closure of the

library for two to three months to do asbestos removal. We encourage the NYPL to make every effort to have the work done as quickly as possible and to facilitate the use of CB2's other libraries (Mulberry Street and Hudson park) by the regular visitors to the Jefferson Market branch.

On that note, we also think it is time for a master plan to renovate the Hudson Park branch to make its amenities more available. It is an amazing, albeit, somewhat inaccessible facility that has great potential if it was more readily used by the community-at-large.

We are increasingly concerned that budget cuts have resulted in a reduction in staff and in the hours of operation at the libraries in our district. These reductions impact young children and the elderly most of all. We continue to request that additional funds be allocated to keep the libraries and their community rooms open for as many hours as possible. We also ask that the New York Public Library provide a dedicated staff to create special youth programming.

#### **D. Religious Institutions with Arts Programming**

The lack of affordable space continues to be a reality in our community. It especially poses challenges for the smaller non-profit arts groups, and so we see this affordability issue as a significant threat to the cultural ecosystem in our area. As such, CB2 continues to investigate and support new and creative ideas surrounding affordable space for the arts in our community. We are particularly interested in the model of sacred/secular partnerships, such as Judson Memorial Church and Saint John's In The Village. These religious institutions each has its own arts programming, as well as affordable performance spaces that they allocate for outside arts groups. We will continue to support this model and its expansion to other religious institutions in our area.

#### **E. Universities**

There are five major higher education institutions located in Community Board 2: New York University, Cooper Union, Benjamin Cardozo Law School, Hebrew Union College, and The New School (which includes the Parsons branch). They draw tens of thousands of students, professors and other staff who commute to or live in the Village.

Over the past decades, New York University (NYU) has been buying buildings and either demolishing or renovating them for its own purposes. With its current campus master plan now in progress (Plan 2031), NYU will add 3 million square feet into the core of historic Greenwich Village. The plan will develop partly on property that NYU currently owns, and partly on city-owned land. The enormity of the project will have significant negative impacts on the quality of life for residents in their buildings and the surrounding streets, including the loss of affordable housing, publicly accessible and community friendly open space, congestion and density, change of use in favor of campus life over neighborhood, and designated historic buildings. Community Board 2 has the role of being the main liaison between the community and NYU. Plan 2031 was challenged in an Article 78 lawsuit brought by several community members and groups with a decision stating that Mercer Playground, LaGuardia Park and LaGuardia Community Garden are implicitly designated "parkland" and cannot be removed from public use. Appeals to that decision, and to the omission of the land in front of the Coles Sports Center on Mercer Street, were unsuccessful. In June 2015 the state's highest court upheld a lower court ruling allowing

NYU to move forward with its expansion plan. Our board is in regular communication with NYU and will continue requesting that the institution present occasional construction updates to our Arts & Institutions Committee.

The New School does not have a formal expansion program. It is described as having a history of "adaptive re-use", meaning the school often leases space in the area and fits it to their needs. The institution recently purchased a building on 14th Street between 5th and 6th Avenues (behind 55 West 13th Street). We will continue to make every effort to work with The New School and keep the community apprised of any updates related to this purchase.

## **X. SLA LICENSING**

All neighborhoods within Community Board 2 are now saturated with liquor licenses. Every full on-premise application that comes before the board requires a 500-foot hearing at the State Liquor Authority ("SLA") because there are more than three existing on-premise liquor licenses nearby. In fact, many have twenty or more licenses within the 500 feet. Even in the current economy, CB 2 has seen an increase in SLA applications. To address this increase, CB 2's SLA Licensing Committee now meets twice a month, every month, in order to complete a committee hearing at a reasonable time in the evening. Several areas in our district, in particular the Bowery, West and East Village, Kenmare area, Meatpacking District, SoHo, and University Place are experiencing a dramatic increase in late night (and early morning) visitors who patronize new bars, clubs and restaurants. This trend has severely strained the quality of life for residents who are demanding that we stop approving SLA licenses, including beer and wine licenses. CB 2 has noted that there is quite a difference between retail daytime use and retail nighttime use, and has gone on record to call upon the City to amend Use Group 6 to require special permits for bars, restaurants and clubs.

In addition to reviewing license applications, our staff and board members spend extensive time and resources asking the police and city agencies, along with the SLA, to enforce the legal 'methods of operation'. Far too often, establishments that have been approved as restaurants with background music, transform themselves illegally into late night venues. As a result, the residential community continues to suffer with even greater degree. Our office receives the complaints, but it is very difficult for us to get the appropriate agencies to do an inspection. It is important that the City commit to working with the SLA to coordinate the timely enforcement of laws that are written in order to protect our residential and mixed-use neighborhoods from being overwhelmed by the negative impact of the concentration of nightlife.

## **XI. WATERFRONT**

The development of the Hudson River Park has been a great benefit to the residents in our park-starved district. The access to the waterfront, the bikeway and walkway, the playgrounds and seating areas are used year round. The ball fields on Pier 40, at Houston Street, have created the opportunity for children and adults to participate in organized sports leagues. Many residents take advantage of the relatively affordable vehicle parking on Pier 40, as well.

We have had two failed attempts to develop Pier 40 according to the parameters outlined in the Hudson River Park Trust Act. This is of increased concern because the pier is in very bad shape structurally. It is in desperate need of work on both its roof and pilings. We think these failures

are due to the lack of public input into a planning process before the issuance of the RFPs.

CB 2 will continue to work with the Community Advisory Committee of the Trust to try to re-start the process to develop Pier 40. In order to succeed, it is imperative that the community be involved in the planning stages. Our board is committed to seeing that the athletic fields and parking remain, and that the necessary commercial development is appropriate to the park and additive to the community. While this project is clearly under the jurisdiction of the Trust, we would ask that the city's representatives on the Trust Board join us in advocating for a process and an RFP that responds to the needs of our district.

Two years ago, as part of the Department of City Planning's review of its Comprehensive Waterfront Plan, CB2 identified two important issues. First, we are concerned about the potential danger posed by rising sea levels. Many parts of our district lie in potential flood plains, and would be devastated in a storm surge. Unfortunately, this concern was borne out during and after the recent devastation caused by superstorm Sandy. In the aftermath of the storm, we applaud the report prepared by the NYC Special Initiative for Rebuilding and Resiliency (SIRR) and anticipate the City will continue its preparation and preventative measures through the Office for Long term Planning and Sustainability.

Also, we are advocating to improve safe access to our waterfront. Four years ago, our highest priority was to institute a new pedestrian crossing, over Route 9A, at Spring Street. Unfortunately, New York State does not seem to be receptive to this request. The Hudson Square neighborhood is becoming increasingly a residential area, and yet it has the worst open space ratio per person in our district. Currently, the only crossing to the park is on the south side of Canal Street, which is actually in Community Board 1. This effectively renders the entire neighborhood cut off from the Hudson River Park. Creating a new crossing will require the cooperation of many city agencies, New York State Department of Transportation, and the Hudson River Park Trust. We ask that the City commit to working with us to advocate for this change, as partial mitigation for the decision to locate a three-district sanitation garage and salt shed at Spring and West Streets, and in light of the upcoming proposal to rezone this area to allow for significant residential development.

In Section III of this report (Social Services), we listed our concerns about the needs of the LGBTQ youth who flock to the Christopher Street pier on weekend evenings.

## **CONCLUSION/SUMMARY**

Community Board 2 is a community of families and preservationists: our block and community associations plant and care for trees; friends' groups care for our parks; merchants' associations help local park and City groups; civic organizations clean their streets, and residents get involved and help. We also have BIDs, that are committed to supporting our businesses, and provide security, extra sanitation services and street beautification projects to ensure that their areas remain attractive destinations. The fact that the historic beauty and integrity of our many neighborhoods has survived is clearly due to these efforts.

It is time that the City makes the same commitment to our district, as have our residents and businesses. Increasingly, City agencies are asking for input from the community board regarding the issuance of licenses, changes to regulations and feedback for large development projects.

However, we notice that building owners, restaurateurs and cafe entrepreneurs have found it too easy to build in complete disregard of local laws. New businesses are opened and profits are reaped while complaints sit on agency desks. Illegal and unlicensed operations continue without inspections and penalties, and residents continue to complain to the Board office. More careful attention must be paid to the zoning regulations regarding building plan examiners and sidewalk cafe application certifiers. Illegal construction continues in Community District 2. And too often, we are asked to retroactively approve illegal renovations in our historic districts. We need City agencies to establish procedures that will help us to protect our neighborhoods in line with existing laws, and then follow up with inspections to ensure that violations are cured in a timely manner.



Terri Cude  
Chair



Bob Gormley  
District Manager