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

STATEMENT OF DISTRICT NEEDS

Fiscal Year 2022

PREFACE

Community Board 2 Manhattan (“CB2”) has been dramatically impacted by the onset of COVID-19 in early 2020 and since the shutdown that began in March 2020, has been struggling across many fronts. Amid protests, economic instability, and a permanently changed physical landscape (permanent roadbed outdoor dining), the District is bracing for more changes ahead.

In addition to our standing Committees, two working groups were created by CB2 in 2020. In May, the Reopening Working Group was created to respond quickly to the fast moving events of reopening non-essential businesses, the advent of new outdoor dining programs that crossed multiple licensing agencies, and to address issues as they relate to impacts caused by COVID-19 and reopening of our community from the almost total shutdown implemented in March. In June, the Equity Working Group was created to foster conversation and cultivate solutions to social justice issues in our neighborhoods in light of the movement that swept our City and nation following the murder of George Floyd, with the commitment to making racial equity a primary focus and to encourage an organizational culture that is viable and sustainable within a world of changing demographics and unremitting racial disparities.

Throughout this Statement and in our work over this year, CB2 highlights and reflects on some of the changes necessary to bridge the gap in the process of stabilizing our community in an equitable manner. COVID-19 has brought forth a confluence of issues surrounding racial inequities, public health, housing insecurity, job insecurity, and income inequality. As these challenges are also ongoing and evolving rapidly, sometimes monthly and even weekly, we also point those interested to CB2’s monthly resolutions on these topics which can be found on our website. The impacts of COVID-19 have not yet been fully realized and we are still in the midst of profound impact on our education system, local economy, businesses, housing, social services, residents, workplaces, arts and cultural institutions, and transportation. We are experiencing an upheaval in our community with no predictable end, yet our community heavily relies on an opening and functioning local economy that depends heavily on office workers, visitors and tourists both local, regional, national and international. Under such unprecedented circumstances, our budget priorities signal the areas of highest concern amid an anticipated deficit that could lead to a decline in services for our

residents and businesses.

I. DISTRICT OVERVIEW

A. Geography

Community Board 2 is a diverse district, bounded on the north by 14th 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

According to statistics reported in the NYU Furman Center's *State of New York City's Housing and Neighborhoods in 2017*, the population in Community Board 2 has been steadily rising and was at 152,813 in 2016, an increase of 21.7% since 2000. While we would ordinarily expect that trend to continue, the impact of the covid-19 virus on the residential vacancy rate remains to be determined, but may very well show a decrease in the district's population, at least in the short term. In addition, during normal times, the five major universities in the district - New York University, the New School, the Cooper Union, Hebrew Union College, and Cardozo Law School - would add a substantial non-permanent population to our neighborhoods. However, with the virus dictating a significant portion of that population studying virtually at home, we have not experienced the usual flood of students throughout our district at this time. However, as NYU and The New School continuing to expand, we expect the student populations to expand further in the years ahead. 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. According to the NYU study, the median income for District 2 for 2016 was \$139,900, while the poverty rate was 8.0% and the unemployment rate was 3.9%. It is yet to be determined how dramatically the covid-19 pandemic will affect these numbers, but it is clear the current impact is significant and continuing to move in the wrong direction.

D. Housing

In recent years, the median monthly rent in District 2 increased to the highest in the City at \$2,580 in 2016. 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 crowding rate in rental unit conditions had stood at 3.2% which was 32nd among New York City's community districts. Other studies have shown that we are hemorrhaging affordable housing stock in the last fifteen years, and we fear that this will depress our middle class population, that is essential to a healthy, diverse community. Covid-19 has dramatically shifted the housing situation in District 2. Reports seem

to indicate a rapid shift in occupancy rates and it is unclear if this trend will reverse in the short term.

E. Tourism/Visitors

The covid-19 pandemic has had a brutal impact on the district's tourism industry. With the United States off limits to most countries, the usual influx of tourists from abroad had come to a halt. The shuttering of Broadway and off-Broadway theaters, movie theaters and, until recently, many of our museums has resulted in a dramatic reduction in visitors from other American cities and states as well as the tri-state area. This decrease in the number of tourists visiting New York City has not only hurt the above-mentioned venues, but has dealt a crushing blow to many of the restaurants and bars in District 2 despite the efforts of the city to expand opportunities through a number of temporary outdoor dining initiatives. The lack of office workers in and around our District has also severely impacted our local economy. The winter of 2020-2021 may mark an historic low point for visitors. CB2's reliance on tourists and office workers cannot be overstated and the projected slow return of tourists, particularly international tourists may have a significant long-term impact on the local economy.

II. LAND USE AND HOUSING

Until everything ground to a halt in March 2020, the number of change-of-use applications our Land Use committee regularly handled was high. Development throughout the district is a challenge to both neighborhood character and density patterns.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

CB2 is home to thousands of affordable housing units of various types. Among them are traditional rent stabilized units, Joint Live Work Quarters for Artists (JLWQA) units in rent stabilization, Interim Multiple Dwelling (IMD) units currently under the supervision of the Loft Board, previous IMD loft units that are now rent stabilized, Mitchell Lama housing units and project based Section-8 buildings. Rent stabilized units can be found in great numbers throughout CB2 in almost all of our neighborhoods including in Greenwich Village, the West Village, South Village, SoHo, NoHo, Little Italy, Nolita and Chinatown, and to a lesser extent in the Meatpacking District, Union Square South, and Hudson Square.

The passage of the Housing Stability And Tenant Protections Act of 2019 strengthened existing rent stabilization laws and included provisions to end high-rent vacancy deregulation, narrowed the preferential rent loophole, put in place more protections against unnecessary major capital improvements (MCIs) and individual apartment improvements (IAI).

A recent report derived from tax bills indicates that between 2007 and 2020 there was an increase of 1,975 rent stabilized units in CB2. During that same time period, 6,407 units were removed from rent stabilization yielding a net loss of 4,432 affordable units. The passage of the Housing Stability And Tenant Protections Act of 2019 will significantly protect the remaining rent stabilized units within CB2.

CB2 remains committed to protecting and preserving the affordable housing that we have and supporting additional opportunities for the creation of additional affordable housing where practicable and appropriate.

Recent History

In March 2014, Borough President Brewer asked each community board to compile a list of sites within its jurisdiction that could serve as opportunities for affordable housing. For discussion within CB2, CB2's Affordable Housing Working Group reviewed a list of potential affordable housing opportunities that included the following analysis:

- identification of every block and lot of land owned or leased by the city, state and federal government within the boundaries of CB2;
- review of the lot area, gross floor area, current use and zoning for each potential site;
- submission of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests for information not publicly available; and
- identification of opportunities for Mandatory Inclusionary Housing related to the potential rezoning of privately held land.

CB2 submitted a list of 20+ potential affordable housing sites within CB2 to the Borough President, which she released in May 2014.

Within the M1-5A and M1-5B zoning districts in SoHo and NoHo, the 2014 list included:

- 2 Howard Street, a parking structure owned by the U.S. government and one of many locations that Friends of Elizabeth Street Garden suggested as an alternative to developing Elizabeth Street Garden;
- Block 208 (bounded by Lafayette Street, Centre Street, Howard and Canal Streets); and
- Block 207 (bounded by Centre Street, Baxter Street, Hester and Canal Streets), which includes 180 Centre Street, a privately owned parking lot.)

Nearby, between Elizabeth and Mott Streets, CB2 is on record supporting the creation and continuing preservation of 252 units of affordable housing at 21 Spring Street.

The Special Hudson Square District

The Special Hudson Square District was established in 2013, in part to facilitate and encourage new residential development. Right after the rezoning, we were starting to see some applications for conversions to residential in this neighborhood, some of which included affordable units under the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing program, but these residential opportunities were ultimately converted to as-of-right commercial office developments.

In December 2016, the City approved zoning changes for the mammoth 550 Washington Street site, one of two undeveloped sites left that are appropriate for large-scale development.

At 550, CB2 supported the development of 476 permanently affordable housing units, consisting of 178 units of permanently affordable senior housing on the north site and 298 units of affordable housing on the center site. Though the north side is still on track to be senior housing,

the rest of the site is currently now under construction for an office campus for Alphabet Inc., without the large number of affordable housing units that were promised to the community.

The other site is 388 Hudson Street, a 25,000 square foot, gravel-filled, city-owned lot that resulted from the creation of one of New York City's water tunnels as an access site. As a part of the creation of this water tunnel access site and the city's acquisition of the property in 1999, this site was promised to CB2 as a future park in consideration of the significant lack of public open space within CB2. In December 2015, CB2 passed a resolution in support of building affordable housing at this location instead of the Elizabeth Street Garden Site. 388 Hudson Street offers the opportunity for four to five times as much affordable housing as the Elizabeth Street Garden site, which is slated for a much smaller affordable housing development project for seniors. Preservation of the Elizabeth Street Garden site as open space would be a better allocation of public space in CB2 (In November 2015, the City announced a similar swap in Chelsea, where it built Chelsea Green, a new \$3.5 million, 0.23-acre public park on West 20th Street, a former city-owned parking lot, and is building 234 units of affordable housing on a larger city-owned site two miles north.)

To date, our preference has gone unheeded.

In 2015, CB2 heard three applications for luxury residential in the Special Hudson Square District:

- At 39 Clarkson Street, CB2 supported the inclusion of affordable housing, but the project was ultimately built as office and commercial.
- At 112 Charlton Street, CB2 recommended denial of the application unless the applicant supported CPC's goals for the Special Hudson Square District by including affordable housing in the project. That project did not go forward.
- At 111 Leroy Street, the application was for a 12-story building with 30 condo units or a seven-story building with 21 units. If the applicant were to be allowed to build the bigger building, 20% portion of the building was proposed as a stand-alone residence for seniors with 13 units. If the applicant could only build the smaller building, the 20% would have consisted of four affordable units. The community was overwhelmingly in favor of the affordable portion of the building, but against lifting the Restrictive Declaration because of the increase in size, which was out of character. Ultimately, the developer built a luxury 10-story building with nine full-floor condominiums and five adjacent single-family townhomes.

SoHo and NoHo (M1-5A & M1-5B Zoning Districts)

Since April 2014, the Land Use committee has heard fifteen 74-711 applications (for ground use retail) and recommended approving nine of them. Six recommendations were denials either because the projects were formerly JLWQA units and were not being replaced by any form of affordable housing or because they resulted in the loss of arts-related uses. In most cases, these 74-711s result in the creation of luxury residential with no affordable component whatsoever.

As of September 2020, New York City's Loft Board records 475 Loft Board units (Interim Multiple Dwelling Units – IMD) in 87 buildings in CB2 that have not yet been fully legalized by the building owners and moved into rent-stabilization.

The Loft Board also records 401 units in 231 buildings in CB2 that have been legalized since the 1980s, which includes those units entering the rent stabilization system as new housing units with affordable rents. This number does not include the units in 100+ buildings where the landlord “bought out” the legal rent stabilized tenant, the tenant was disqualified, etc., which resulted in removal of those units from rent stabilization.

ENVISION SOHO/NOHO

At the beginning of 2019, an initiative was formed to examine the key land use and zoning issues in SoHo and NoHo and seek community input on such topics as housing, jobs, arts and culture, preservation, retail, quality of life, and creative industries.

Sponsored by Department of City Planning, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and Council Member Margaret Chin, this initiative to study the “Future of SoHo/NoHo” consisted of a series of public workshops and meetings of an Advisory Group (eighteen members that included government representatives, arts and culture organizations, neighborhood groups, businesses and property owners, historic preservation advocates, CB2's Chair Carter Booth.) Note that no certified SoHo NoHo artists or groups representing their direct interests were represented.

In a series of Land Use committee meetings and full board meetings, the public expressed concern over the planning process, the potential harm to the character of these neighborhoods, and the negative impact on its long-term residents and artists. The plan sponsors released a final report in November 2019. The Land Use committee held several meetings to gather input in preparation for CB2's response, but progress on that effort has been hampered by the pandemic.

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Sponsored by Department of City Planning, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and Council Member Margaret Chin, this initiative to study the “Future of SoHo/NoHo” consisted of a series of public workshops and meetings of an 18-member Advisory Group (including government representatives, arts and culture organizations, resident groups, business and property owners, the SoHo Broadway Initiative, historic preservation advocates, and the chair of CB2). No certified SoHo NoHo artists or groups representing their direct interests were represented, even though they are the legal residents of JLWQA units within the study area.

In April 2019, CB2 passed a resolution in response to a presentation by the Envision SoHo NoHo sponsors. At that time, CB2 went on the record as opposed to making any changes that would further drive up the value of property so as to displace artists and change the fundamental character of the two neighborhoods.

In a series of subsequent Land Use committee meetings and full board meetings, the public expressed concern over the planning process, the potential harm to the character of these neighborhoods, and the negative impact on its long-term residents and artists.

A final report, entitled “Envision SoHo/NoHo: A Summary of Findings and Recommendations” was released by the plan sponsors in November 2019, which was reviewed by CB2’s Land Use committee. Among the report’s recommendations are the following, which were viewed positively by committee members:

- Improve reporting, transparency and tracking for rent-regulated units (former IMD units)
- Improve tenant harassment protections for rent-regulated units (Loft Law and IMD units)
- Explore ways to provide rental assistance for low-income artists and other renters
- Maintain JLWQA as a permitted use and allow for the creation of new types of units and buildings so that art-making/maker uses can continue to coexist with other uses and residents
- Explore ways to modernize the artist certification process
- Identify additional resources to support and promote the artist community, including property tax abatements and other incentives, and by leveraging the business community to support local arts
- Allow residential use, live/work units, shared studio/maker space and other services in new buildings

CB2 members agree with the Envision sponsors that the following recommendations require more study:

- Develop pathways to legalize non-artist residents in SoHo/NoHo
- Connect artists to affordable housing and studio opportunities and explore affordable live-work and housing typologies conducive to and supportive of arts-making and creating

CB2 held a number of public hearings on the Envision report and gathered public input. The pandemic has slowed CB2’s response to the Envision Report, in particular the significant change in many of the underlying issues examined and covered in the Envision Report, and further study is clearly warranted given the monumental impacts due to COVID-19.

In October 2020, following the Envision SoHo NoHo Report, the City announced the SoHo/NoHo Neighborhood Plan. CB2 anticipates spending a significant amount of time responding in the coming year to the changes presented.

Going Forward

On September 9, 2020 the Land Use committee held an informational meeting regarding New York City’s Loft Board’s intention to make changes to the rules of its administrative code. The presentation included the history of the NY State Loft Law and a discussion of the mission and processes of the Loft Board. The committee intends to hold additional meetings once the

changes are finalized. It is clear that discussions are hampered by the lack of knowledge of the total number of units processed by the Loft Board since its creation in the 1980s.

At its September 17, 2020 meeting, the Loft Board indicated that it is looking at including the designation of Loft Law buildings in the DOB's Building Information Search. The inclusion would further enable easy Identification of Interim Multiple Dwellings throughout the City. The Loft Board is also addressing the self-certification process with DOB, and considering standardizing the Article 7C legalization annotation on Certificates of Occupancy so that there is a clearer record of which buildings were processed as IMDs, and which units in those buildings have historically been JLWQA.

DISTRICT NEED: CB2 asks DCP to coordinate with City and State agencies to commission a comprehensive inventory—by both quantity and type—of **all** the existing current affordable housing throughout Community Board 2 including all rent regulated units.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF LIFE

CB2 is made up of a number of neighborhoods most of which comprise 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 that disturbs the residents.

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 and tenements watch new neighbors move into newly-constructed, luxury buildings that are being built on former parking lots. The number of remaining vacant lots has been significantly reduced in the last 10-15 years as a result of this development. In the M1-5A and M1-5B areas of CB2, only four vacant lots remain.

Major new residential projects in the northern portion of SoHo and along the Bowery, Lafayette, Bleecker and Bond Streets have added scores of new residents, as well, transforming what was once an industrial corridor into an area notable for its super high-end housing stock. CB2 will continue to work with DCP and LPC to ensure that new buildings fit into the historic character of the neighborhood.

Also 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 through 74-711 are outdated and the economic breaks afforded to developers in exchange 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 artists' presence in the district and want them to thrive and survive.

There are also issues with 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 an outdated marketing approach to finding conforming tenants and a perfunctory effort to lease the space at arbitrary rates deemed suitable for conforming uses that 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 requirements through the antiquated method and now deserve the special permit and the accompanying full market-rate rent. The current process is outdated in many ways; it does not require a thorough marketing effort including explanations of the many conforming uses in plain language advertisements and placement of those advertisements in contemporary commercial listing services and locations which comparable spaces are marketed. The process needs to be brought into the 21st century and be better supervised by DCP. At a minimum, this process should be thoroughly reviewed by CB2 prior to the inception of the marketing effort for each application and not at the conclusion.

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. Conversion and creation of the oversized retail stores and chain stores have also been accompanied by a lack of the traditional requirement to have appropriate facilities for loading docks. Without regulation, the situation can be unlivable. Likewise, bright advertising LED screens in the display windows and the general light spillage from closed stores need to be addressed.

The advent of overnight, on-demand restocking and deliberate elimination of onsite storage increases delivery traffic and quality of life impacts. For these and other reasons, we need to develop and enforce regulations and policies that encourage good neighbors and explore new ways to mitigate these impacts.

OVERSIZED RETAIL AND THE DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS

CB2 strongly supports retailers and especially small businesses in our service area. Nonconforming oversized retail operations, however, often bring numerous harms to our mixed-use neighborhoods and undermine the small, local-serving retailers that 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 on an ongoing basis in violation of public policy, has become a significant problem within CB2's M1-5B zoning districts. In 2015, CB2 identified 10 retail stores facing Broadway between Bleecker and Canal as illegal oversized retail establishments. Between 1996 and 2019, only four had completed the 74-922 Special Permit public review process. 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.

As of August 2020, only one of these offenders—Zara at 503 Broadway—has come before CB2's Land Use committee. Its application for a Special Permit for oversized retail took up much of the Land Use committee's energy in 2019. What could have been the first step in the overhaul of a flawed process resulted in nothing more than a barely-token reduction in the

number of deliveries permitted and their hours, despite vociferous and unified opposition from the community board and local residents.

Many changes of use and waivers of zoning requirements are issued during internal DOB deliberations without public review or input. While the impacts of each individual change of use and waivers may seem expedient for the applicants under the guise of supporting economic development, the cumulative effect of these changes creates an overwhelming impact on the community and surrounding businesses comprised of the total impacts of each of the small, individual projects.

CB2 questions whether: 1. The absence of backup documentation for Certificates of Occupancy at DOB is adequate justification for accepting changes of use involving Use Group 10 and oversized retail; and 2. It is advisable for DOB to continue to rely on self-certification to establish that requirements have been met for a change of use to large retail during the Special Permit process.

In both cases, the underlying impacts on our community are significant. Our goal at CB2 is to find meaningful paths for correction of these unsatisfactory conditions and increased enforcement, so that our local laws are upheld as intended and the quality of life for our residential community is not unnecessarily diminished.

CONTEXTUAL ZONING BETWEEN UNIVERSITY PLACE AND FOURTH AVENUE

Community Board 2 continues to be concerned about the need for zoning changes to protect this corridor. 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.

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 to include a CB2 public hearing.

CB2'S PLACE IN THE ULURP PROCESS

We are gratified that the Charter Revision committee's proposals for two changes to the ULURP process passed successfully in November 2019. They were: 1. Providing a ULURP pre-certification notice period by requiring the Department of City Planning to transmit a detailed project summary of ULURP applications to the affected community board at least 30 days before the application is certified for public review, and to post that summary on its website; and 2.

Providing community boards with additional time during the summer to review ULURP applications certified for public review by the Department of City Planning.

ULURP's continued lack of consideration for the cumulative impact of individual projects continues to be problematic, especially in the areas of traffic; increased pressure on infrastructure; safety during construction; the need for more park space, school seats, and libraries; plus the need for increased social services.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT SPACES

For much of 2019 into the first quarter of 2020, the Land Use committee considered Aurora Capital's application for a minor modification to ULURP No. C 840260 ZMM, originally approved in 1984 at 60-74 Gansevoort Street LLC, 52-58 Gansevoort Street LLC, and 46-50 Gansevoort Street (between Washington and Greenwich Sts.). The application sought to allow Use Groups 3, 4, and 6B (offices), which were not allowed pursuant to a restrictive declaration on the property, in addition to those use groups previously permitted at the property.

The Land Use committee worked with the residents and Aurora to secure their mutual agreement regarding noise control for outdoor spaces and development restrictions, and with CB2's Arts & Institutions committee to address the needs of local performing arts organizations for space.

After years of controversy and litigation over this development and the neighbors' almost complete opposition to the developers' request for a change of use, ultimately a compromise was brokered by CB2 and unanimity prevailed.

The final result was an example of the public process at its best: As part of the negotiations to modify the restrictive declarations that accompany the property, and to address the quality of life concerns of the residents, Aurora Capital agreed to restrictions on the use of the outdoor roofs and terraces and offered community spaces reserved for performing and other arts institutions in perpetuity both at 68 Gansevoort (free space) and at Aurora's development site further west in CB2 (reduced rent).

The terms of the agreement include carefully-crafted quality of life protections for the neighbors and a significant public benefit for the community at large.

This protracted effort and its satisfying result raised CB2's awareness of the needs of the arts community, and the Land Use committee was encouraged by its success to consider making a community benefit an essential aspect of future applications for changes of use.

III. SOCIAL SERVICES

A. Education

Key Priorities:

- *Fund the Bleecker School, a \$65 million option for NYC.*
- *Build the Hudson Square School and Public Gym Space.*

- *Fund Technology, Capital Improvements to Century Old Public Schools and Programs that Increase Diversity and Support our Most Vulnerable Students.*
- *Revise the CEQR Process for Building and Siting New Public Schools.*

Bleecker School: NYC’s \$65 million Option to Build New Public School

New York City has the option to build a new Department of Education public school in Greenwich Village – the Bleecker School. For this to happen, the NYC Department of Education (DOE) must fund the school before the option expires on December 31, 2021 or extend the option date.

- **What is the Bleecker School:** As part of the New York University 2012 up-zoning, NYU’s key community giveback was the option to build a 100,000 sq. ft. public school on NYU-owned land, “the Bleecker School.” If the Bleecker School is not built, 100,000 square feet of school space reverts to NYU for university use and option expires on December 31, 2021, \$65+ million in value transfers from NYC taxpayers to NYU, based on the average price per buildable square foot in Manhattan and arguably higher, due to the lack of vacant land in Greenwich Village. Please 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.
- **What Needs to Happen:** The DOE must fund the Bleecker School in its FY 2020 – FY 2024 Capital Plan before December 31, 2021. Alternatively, the city and NYU can extend the option expiration date to 2025 – the date originally proposed by NYU. While this allow the city more time to fund the Bleecker School, NYU has publicly stated that it will not agree to further extensions.
- **What Kind of School Can Built at the Bleecker School Site.** The Bleecker School can serve public school students from pre-kindergarten to 8th grade, i.e. PK-5, 6-8 or PK 8, but a high school would require NYU consent. The Bleecker School can serve general education students, Students with Disabilities, such as students with dyslexia, or other learning disabilities and/or District 75 students.
- **CB 2’s Position.** CB 2’s September 2019 Resolution – Dyslexia Education: A Critical Equity Issue for NYC Students – supports 1) the implementation of early screening, curriculum development, teacher training, programs and schools to support and teach children with dyslexia in NYC public schools and 2) the creation of a DOE public school program for dyslexic students at the Bleecker School Site. Currently, there are no DOE public schools or programs for students with dyslexia and language-based learning disabilities, even though there are several private special education schools and a newly opened charter school specifically designed to address the learning needs of these students.
- **For Updates:** Visit bit.ly/BleeckerFAQ.

Hudson Square School

As part of the 2013 Hudson Square rezoning, Trinity Church committed to build the core and shell of a new public school and the DOE has the option to build expanded recreation facilities at this site. Trinity Church has yet to move forward with its development plans and CB 2 wants to ensure that the public school and gym commitments are not further delayed.

- **Public School.** As part of the 2013 Hudson Square rezoning, Trinity Church committed to build the core and shell of a 444-seat elementary 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 February 2019.
- **Public Gym.** 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.
- **CB 2’s priorities for Duarte Square are to ensure that:**
 1. Trinity Church, or any 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 to provide sufficient outdoor recreation space.

Funding Needs at Existing CB 2 Schools: PS 3, PS 41, PS 130, MS 297, P721, P751 and our six high schools: Broome Street Academy, Chelsea Career and Technical Education, City-As-School, Harvest Collegiate, Harvey Milk and NYC iSchool.

Technology: During the pandemic, 100% of students require technology to access education both in school and remotely and consequently all CB 2 schools need additional investment in technology, for smart boards, laptops, tablets and high speed broadband.

Other Capital Upgrades to Century-Old Schools. CB 2 supports significant capital improvements for school-wide facilities and programs, including:

- **PS 3.** Gymateria dividers to use the space for multiple groups increase flexibility using socially distanced guidelines and weatherproofing of the rooftop playground;
- **City-As-School.** STEAM and Literacy programs including a Wet Lab, Maker Space, Literacy Lab and Library / Media Center and adding water bottle refilling stations; and,
- **Broome Street.** Cafeteria upgrade and library, which also would be available to The Door members.

Expense Priorities include funding:

- [NYC Men Teach](#) to recruit, train and retain talented non-traditional public school educators in order to close the representation gap between our students and those that teach them;

- **Washing machines and dryers** at schools serving students who live in temporary housing, because students who lack access to laundry facilities tend to have higher absentee rates;
- **CRSE** – Curriculum development and teacher training for Culturally Responsive – Sustaining Education;
- **Arts education** to maintain most recent baseline funding; and,
- **Structured Literacy**, both teacher training and reading and writing curricula.

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 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

In light of the pandemic and the need for socially distanced, outdoor recreation, CB 2 needs much *more outdoor play space* for children of various ages, especially those under five and over twelve – in particular, the addition of more *public park spaces with artificial and natural turf*. We also support efforts to open school playgrounds during non-school hours and increasing bike safety for youth with the addition of more protected bike lanes.

C. Seniors

While our district ranks high in nearly every indicator, including income, we feel that measures of the median fail to tell an accurate narrative, especially where seniors are concerned. Greenwich Village has gone through a dramatic economic shift over the last twenty years or so. However, our senior residents arrived long before, when this community was less affluent, when the cost of living was less expensive, and when rents were lower and more units were rent-stabilized.

We worry that misleading data threatens the funding allocated by DFTA to Greenwich House, which is the primary provider of senior services in our district. Greenwich House is expanding its program to meet increased need at West Village Houses and at Westbeth, where Greenwich

House calculates approximately 50% of its 640 units now have residents growing increasingly frail and at-risk.

Greenwich House works mostly under the constraint of government contracts, which can be inflexible, byzantine in their stipulations, and out-of-step with current costs. The result is that Greenwich House's programs are unable to provide all that our curious, artistic, intellectually vibrant seniors desire. Contract reimbursements have also failed to compensate for inflation, placing increased strain on Greenwich House's budget.

Greenwich House relies on others to provide complementary services. One of these is Visiting Neighbors – a volunteer-based organization that operates what appears to be a cost-effective program aimed at improving quality of life, enhancing health indicators, and reducing hospital stays for older residents. Visiting Neighbors has been receiving discretionary City Council funds since DFTA cancelled its contract, forcing it to significantly reduce its scope. We urge DFTA to contract with Visiting Neighbors again.

D. Retroactive contracts

An additional threat to social service agencies is the pace of the City's fulfillment of city contracts. Social services providers are compelled to advance funding to provide services, while the City takes as long as a year to reimburse these expenses. This provides cash flow problems for our providers, increasing the cost of debt service produced by credit lines, and threatening the very existence of providers working at small-scale. We urge the City to improve procurement systems to shorten the time required to register contracts.

E. Healthcare

Four years after the closing of St. Vincent's Hospital in 2010, one structure of the former St. Vincent's campus reopened as a stand-alone emergency room operated by Northwell Health. While not the first such facility in New York State or New York City, it is the first of its kind in Manhattan, and a new model for a community that had lived near a full-service hospital since 1849.

Lenox Health Greenwich Village has now been in operation for five years. Many residents are pleased by its performance, but we need a deeper understanding of its ability to fulfill health needs. We urge the City and State to fund the commission of Community Health Assessment as a follow-up to the study conducted in 2011 by CUNY School of Public Health at Hunter College.

Furthermore, we have identified several concerns with this model that must be addressed:

-The lack of expedited-admission agreements between Lenox Hill and neighboring hospitals creates undue burdens on patients requiring inter-facility transfer for continuing treatment. The only current expedited-admission agreement is with Beth Israel, which is about to undergo radical changes to its facilities. No agreements exist with NYU or other hospitals.

-The Joint Commission and other monitoring agencies classify the stand-alone emergency department as an integral part of the entire Lenox Hill system rather than as a separate facility.

This makes it impossible to monitor the performance of this facility that is so crucial to our district's health outcomes.

F. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Community

The Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender-Questioning (“LGBTQ”) community is an important part of our history and is integral to our strength as a community.

We are grateful for the work of our strong social service organizations, the LGBT Center and The Door, which service residents from within our district and largely from without. 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. The Door helps adolescents and emerging adults find jobs, education, and health services.

We support increased funding for The Door's important outreach program. This initiative is designed to connect homeless and runaway youth to social services. Funding for this program relies on a yearly application for discretionary City Council funds, which generally fall shy of The Door's budget. This program generally makes over 2000 contacts a year, and has succeeded in providing additional services to thousands of young people. In 2018, 35% of those served identified as LGBTQ.

G. Tenant Displacement

It is unclear at this time, but it is anticipated that there will be ongoing issues related to tenant displacement as the impact of Covid-19 and the resulting economic conditions continue to reverberate through our community in the coming years.

Resident displacement is a concern in our community, where the sharp increase in property values over the last generation has encouraged landlords to seek ways to convert rent-stabilized units into market-rate apartments. Tenant harassment is a frequent complaint often made to our local City Councilmembers. New laws passed in New York State improve security for incumbent tenants, but we fear that gaps still exist.

Our district would benefit from data to shed more light on the issue of housing instability among our residents. It is our sense that statistics on median income, health, and rents fail to provide a full profile of our community's makeup. It would also be beneficial to have data on rent-controlled and rent-stabilized units in our district.

We support increased funding for agencies and non-profit organizations providing free- and low-cost legal services to tenants facing eviction. Mobilization for Justice is currently operating in our district under a ten-year contract it received from a private developer – The Rudin Organization – as mitigation for impact produced by the construction of a new luxury housing development. Three years remain on this contract, and we are concerned about the loss of services at its termination.

H. Homelessness

Homelessness presents itself differently throughout the City. Community Board 2 is in the process of gaining a deeper understanding of the causes of street homelessness in our district. It is our sense that many of those living on our street, in our parks, and in our subway stations suffer from mental illness and substance abuse and lack a safety network that can help them make a transition to stable housing.

We support the opening of a Safe Haven drop-in center, with supportive services and temporary housing, that is scheduled to open later in 2020. We are also concerned that meeting this important need not come at the cost of quality of life. Although CB2's profile is one of a high-income area, West 14th Street is a vulnerable pocket of the neighborhood that has struggled with property values and incidents of crime and mayhem. It houses many commercial establishments but also residents and small children, and is adjacent to other fully residential streets. It is important that the Safe Haven have sufficient funds to prevent any negative impacts due to its operations.

We also urge the City to expand outreach to the homeless in our district. While we recognize the difficulty in encouraging street homeless to accept shelter and services, we also know that the more engagement there is with providers, the more successful their efforts are likely to be. Strong funding is necessary to maintain a robust presence of outreach workers in our district.

I. Substance Abuse

We support the work of Greenwich House as our local provider of needed substance abuse treatment to New Yorkers within our district and without. Here, too, this important work should not come at the cost of quality of life. Greenwich House will soon co-locate its substance abuse services to its location on Mercer Street, where it currently operates a methadone center. This site lies in the midst of a residential neighborhood and close to playgrounds. Greenwich House should be provided with robust funding to ensure that it is able to prevent any negative impacts due to its operations.

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 though the efforts of the local Business Improvement District have improved enforcement efforts. 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 recently updated regulations for street vendors and food trucks and restructured the enforcement strategies, but Covid-19 has slowed the pace of those changes and it is unclear how effective the new enforcement strategies will be..

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.

Covid-19 has also significantly impacted local sanitation services with budget cuts that have resulted in reduced corner garbage bin pickups to once daily from three times and with the elimination of Sunday service entirely. This has not adequately matched the use of the corner garbage bins that see increased usage in many areas from weekend use especially from to go food and drink containers.

The advent of roadside dining has also created impacts on local residential trash pickups and missed collections and roadside dining structures are anticipated to have significant impacts on snow removal operations throughout CB2, in particular on narrow streets and areas where there are multiple eating and drinking establishments on the same block.

C. Public Health

Covid-19 has an ongoing dramatic impact on New York City and District 2 at this time, which is currently difficult to evaluate except that it is clear that the impacts have been disproportionate across communities of color and income levels.

Our community board continues to work 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 has also been 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 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 we welcome Congress's and the MTA's recent approval and implementation of a return of the two-way toll expected by the end of 2020.

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 final report of 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. With the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on transit use and the MTA budget, we understand that improvements we sorely need for a faster, more accessible, reliable system are on hold for the time being, but we look forward to such improvements once operations are back to normal.

Disabled access in our subway stations is greatly lacking, with not even a handful of stations in the CB2 District providing either elevators and/or escalators to enable the many physically challenged in our area to use the subways. Although installation of one more ADA accessible entrance has been added in CB2, much more accessibility is needed. Our goal is to have every one of the subway stations in CB2 be furnished with the elevators and escalators that will give all of our citizens the rightful access they need to get around. 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.

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. Now that congestion pricing has been approved, we look forward to the improvements it will bring, not only in making our streets safer, less crowded and easier to walk through while helping to provide necessary support for transit, but also in creating more livable space in our community. The reduction in vehicular traffic that has occurred during the pandemic has resulted in quieter, more navigable streets and less air and noise pollution, and with the Open Streets and Open Streets-Restaurant programs, all demonstrate how the less trafficked streets that congestion pricing will bring can enhance people's quality of life. We hope for its speedy implementation.

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, reduced stop locations, and 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. With every passing year, the likelihood of these routes being restored becomes more doubtful, but we're hopeful that the remaining existing routes can be modified for the comfort and convenience of our seniors and physically challenged and all our citizens who depend on these buses for transportation.

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 and an infrastructure fashioned to accommodate a balance between modes, including new micro-mobility ones. 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") has begun to achieve this through its Plaza program in such areas as Gansevoort Plaza and Astor Place, which we welcome, and the Open Streets program is pointing the way to more shared streets and pedestrianized areas, 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.

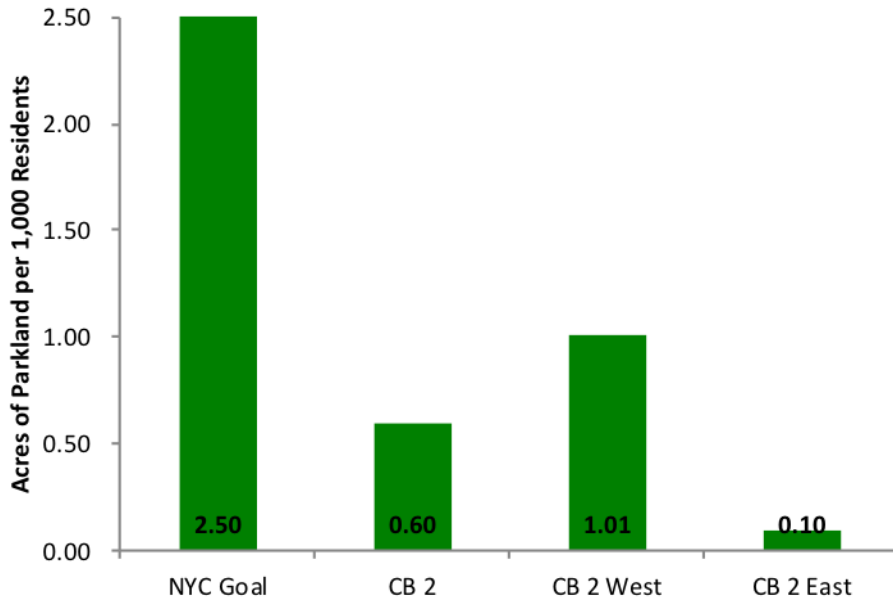
The proliferation of tour buses on our small, historic streets has produced a host of negative impacts, including hazardous conditions for pedestrians, air and noise pollution, traffic congestion, and broken street beds. CB 2 calls for increased regulation, enforcement, and relocation of tour bus routes 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 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 also want to give proper attention to balancing the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians, with education and enforcement that prevents bicycling on sidewalks or going the wrong way on one-way streets, while protecting bicyclists from vehicular harm.

We also have 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 on 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). We also support extending curbside access to accommodate increased e-commerce deliveries and FHV activity. We are heartened by the new streets master plan legislation which promises more safety for pedestrians and bicyclists and a better balance of street space for all modes of transportation on New York City's streets.

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 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.

Although we are appreciative that the renovation of Little Red Square has commenced, it is very disappointing that the work has been slowed to a crawl due to ongoing issues with the contractor. We urge the Department of Parks and Recreation to resolve these issues, so the enhanced park can once again be enjoyed and so that the Little Red School House and the adjacent businesses will no longer be burdened by the unsightly construction site on their doorsteps.

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 Senior Housing at Alternative Site. Since 2013, CB 2 has held seven public hearings and passed five 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 where up to five times as much senior housing can be built, but only if Elizabeth Street Garden is preserved in its entirety.

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, 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 4th 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 appear before the Landmarks Committee to present 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

The City's lack of enforcement in making outdoor dining a success brings concern as the program transitions into a permanent one at the end of September 2021, with the potential to severely impact the quality of life for residents in the community amid permanent decisions being made during a pandemic with unknown long term consequences.

Covid-19 has dramatically increased the pressure on sidewalk access and usage. The existing sidewalk café regime that existed prior to Covid-19 that was administered by the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection was suspended during the onset of the pandemic. In June, CB2 provided a comprehensive set of recommendations to both the Mayor and City Council with an extensive set of suggestions related to exploring new outdoor dining options. In the summer of 2019 with the advent of several outdoor dining initiatives under the auspices of the Department of Transportation, new semi-permanent build outs were created in roadbeds and to some extent on the sidewalk. As we enter the first winter with Covid-19 in resurgence, the dramatic proliferation in a short period of time of full structures on both the sidewalk and in roadbeds where none had previously existed has significantly changed and impacted the use of sidewalks in our community with rampant illegal uses allowed to proliferate as a result of a lack of any enforcement or clear guidance. CB2 is in the process of reviewing these programs on an ongoing basis as they change monthly and even weekly and current up to date guidance and recommendations from CB2 are expected on an ongoing basis throughout the next year with the hope that at some point that guidance and recommendations will be heeded by the City of New York.

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 and Worker Protection ("DCWP"). 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:

- 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 DCWP's reluctance to enforce the Zoning Resolution's ban on sidewalk cafes in certain zoning districts. By allowing restaurants to

operate unlicensed sidewalk cafes in areas where the zoning prohibits it, DCWP 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

After March 2020 and the onset of Covid-19 cases in New York City, for the most part all permitted Street Activities and associated events were suspended with several minor exceptions. We anticipate a resumption of those activities as the City and State determine which activities are safe to proceed as the impacts of Covid-19 are addressed over time.

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

It is unclear to what extent Covid-19 will impact District 2’s arts and cultural institutions over the near and long term. Continuing advocacy will be a critical element of reviving District 2’s arts and cultural institutions as the impacts of Covid-19 are addressed over time.

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 this winter.

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; 13th Street Rep; Minetta Lane Theater; Westbeth Center; New Ohio; The Public Theater; Joe's Pub; Ars Nova; Axis Theater; The Duplex; 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, including the recent demise of Cornelia Street Café and Actors Playhouse, two Greenwich Village fixtures. 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

Ongoing advocacy as the impacts of Covid-19 are addressed over time for arts organizations and artists located within CB2 and for those that produce, program or present arts and culture within CB2 will be critically important.

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 citywide 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 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 and to be made fully accessible. 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 St. John's In The Village. These religious institutions each have their 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

Covid-19 and emergency executive orders issued by the Governor of New York have superseded any sense of normal operations of establishments licensed by the New York State Liquor Authority and they have experienced severe economic hardship as a result. Those executive orders are the direct result of public health concerns. A significant focus of the Liquor Authority transitioned to enforcement and adjudication of those issues in the short term and as such, the licensing process and other normal administrative functions have slowed significantly. With the transition to almost exclusive outdoor dining during warmer months, new issues arose with respect to quality of life impacts and the impacts of expanding licensed premises outdoor areas. It is unclear how long the executive orders will remain in effect. It is also unclear how the expanded outdoor dining will continue and how ongoing quality of life issues will be mitigated. CB2 has been conducting bi monthly meetings to quickly provide recommendations on licensing and other matters that come before the Board.

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 and public interest must be demonstrated. In fact, many have twenty or more licenses within the 500 feet. Prior to Covid-19, CB 2 continued to see an increase in SLA applications despite the heavy saturation of liquor licenses throughout the district. To address this increase, CB 2’s SLA Licensing Committee has been meeting 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 Village, Greenwich Village, Kenmare corridor/Little Italy 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 in some cases or requiring curtailed operations in order to mitigate those quality of life impacts as afforded under the 500 ft. rule. There exists a heavy reliance on visitors

and tourists to District 2 in order to support all these establishments which contributes to the quality of life impacts. .

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. These types of operations represent a small percentage of operators overall, but represent a significant number of the complaints in our district.

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. Work on the pilings has recently been undertaken. 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.

We eagerly look forward to the addition of Little Island (Pier 55) to the Hudson River Park. This nature and arts amenity is scheduled to open to the public in Spring 2021. In addition, just to the south, we anticipate the development of the Gansevoort Peninsula into a public space with sports fields, areas for lounging and river views, a salt marsh on the northern side, a resilient “beach” and kayak launch and “Day’s End” on the southern side, and a new pavilion with large openings in the canopy that will evoke the geometric forms and light effects of Gordon Matta Clark’s cuts into the warehouse on the site that is the inspiration for the art installation. Design is progressing without issue or delay and construction will begin in 2021.

A number of 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 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.

XII. EQUITY

The Equity Working Group (EWG) was created to foster conversation and cultivate solutions to social justice issues in our neighborhoods. The EWG commits to making racial equity a primary focus and to encourage an organizational culture that is viable and sustainable within a world of changing demographics and unremitting racial disparities.

Teacher Workforce Diversity

America's rapidly diversifying student population demands an equally diverse teaching force. New York City's District 2 has nearly 75% students of color, but employs a mere 40% teachers of color. Multiple studies of U.S. public school students have determined that assignment to a racially similar teacher is associated with substantive gains in achievement for both Black and white students; and that students matched to a same-race teacher perform better on standardized tests and are significantly less likely to drop out of school and more likely to attend a four-year college.

NYC Men Teach engages and recruits men of color to become teachers in New York City by providing early career support, professional development, mentoring, and networking services to diversify the teaching pipeline by recruiting and retaining 1,000 additional men of color to teach in NYC schools, where currently less than 8% of the teachers are men of color. The professional development, program fellowships and school partnerships this program provides positively impacts the practice and policy around diversity in our schools and classrooms.

Commemoration of the African Diaspora

Our neighborhoods are defined by a history of political activism, unique architectural landscapes, an active creative community and the cultural mosaic of its inhabitants. It is equally defined by the erasure of its early inhabitants, landowners, and Black communities, like Little Africa, that once thrived within our boundaries. This buried, forgotten and ignored history has played an

important role in shaping the neighborhoods that we know today. The creation of signage, markers, or public art acknowledging and celebrating the rich history and contributions of the African diaspora within CB2 would begin to correct that injustice.

Anti-bias training

Years of exposure to structural and cultural racialization and privilege have embedded stereotypes and biases in our individual psyches and the broader culture. And because of the link among cultural stereotypes and narratives, and systemic policies, practices and behaviors, implicit bias is one part of the system of inequity that serves to justify inequitable practices and behaviors. Anti-bias training can advance meaningful change to these patterns and uproot deep-seated beliefs to foster a positive and supportive environment for all. In a year of national protests against racial injustice, the education and information such training provides is critical.

Development of Black and Latinx owned small businesses

In last year's District Needs Statement (FY 2021), we described the significant storefront vacancy rate and "retail blight" as an issue of great concern to our district. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the future of our small businesses has never been more precarious. The economic revitalization of our neighborhoods has never been more critical. Even when this pandemic subsides, roughly one-third of the City's 240,000 small businesses may never reopen, leaving empty storefronts, countless New Yorkers without jobs and all of us without the vital services they provided.

The disproportionately devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Black-owned businesses is irrefutable. In New York State Black business ownership fell by 70% From February to April 2020. Within New York City, a mere 2% of businesses are Black-owned. Within CB2 that number is even smaller. Black and Latinx emerging entrepreneurs disproportionately lack the basic building blocks for success. Access to peer/mentor networks, social capital, external financing, generational wealth, venture capital funding, education, business background, legal resources and affordable workspace are just some of the barriers faced by these prospective business owners.

Programs like [BE NYC](#) and JP Morgan's [Advancing Black Pathways](#) and [Master Card](#) 500 million dollar pledge aim to close the racial wealth gap by investing in initiatives that make the economy work for those traditionally disenfranchised from business ownership. Such a program would offer tremendous opportunity for more Black-owned businesses to start, grow and contribute to the revitalization of CB2.

A targeted initiative that brings an organization or initiative such as BE NYC to CB2 to create an incubator that supports these fledgling businesses would be of benefit to the entire community. Historically, small businesses produce a higher economic impact on the local neighborhood and are the leading source of job creation in New York and nationwide. The income and revenue from small businesses traditionally circulates within the neighborhood in which they are located.

CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

Community Board 2 is a community of families, individuals 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. Each of these groups has been under tremendous pressure as a result of Covid-19 and a slowing delivery of certain City Services.

In the wake of the impacts of Covid-19 on service delivery, it is imperative that the City properly evaluates the services it delivers and makes the same commitment to our district, as have our residents and businesses. Since the advent of the various open dining programs this June, there has been no enforcement on the part of any city agencies despite ongoing complaints and obvious public safety issues. The city has abdicated its responsibility as an enforcement partner of the state in enforcing executive orders and liquor licensing regulations. 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 and operate 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.



Carter Booth
Chair



Bob Gormley
District Manager