

CB6

BROOKLYN
COMMUNITY BOARD 6

Eric McClure

Chairperson

Mike Racioppo

District Manager

FY2026 STATEMENT OF DISTRICT NEEDS

CB6 Budget Committee

Dillon Shen-Cruz

Laura Osorio

Scott Middleton

Rebecca Kobert- CB6 Land Use



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COMMUNITY BOARD 6**

Eric McClure - Chair Mike Racioppo - District Manager

FY 2026 STATEMENT OF NEEDS

November 2024

Daniel Garodnick, Chair
Department of City Planning
120 Broadway, 31st Floor
New York, New York 10271

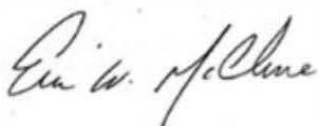
Dear Chairperson Garodnick:

Budgets are moral documents. Politics is who gets what, when, and how. These two statements combine to illustrate what governments care about most. New York City's budget for Fiscal Year 2026 and our (Brooklyn Community Board 6) recommendations, priorities, and role in the process through our Statement of Needs is no exception.

In the most simplified sense, **our priorities are additional housing, climate resilience, transportation, and increased access to social services.** In the following pages, you'll find more detailed information about these, **thanks to the great work of our budget committee led by Dillon Shen-Cruz, Laura Osorio, Scott Middleton, and Rebecca Kobert.**

We, **Brooklyn Community Board 6, unanimously voted to approve our FY2026 Statement of District Needs** at our November 2024 Full Board Meeting.

Sincerely,



Eric McClure
Chairperson



Mike Racioppo
District Manager

Brooklyn Community Board 6: FY2026 Statement of District Needs

November 2024 • Co-authored by Dillon Shen-Cruz, Laura Osorio, and Scott Middleton, on behalf of Brooklyn Community Board 6

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Overarching Priorities

Theme 1: Additional Housing

Brooklyn Community District 6 faces a critical housing shortage that spans affordable, market-rate, temporary, and shelter housing. Addressing these needs is essential to ensuring stability, security and economic opportunity for all residents.

- **Affordable Housing:** The district has a significant gap in affordable housing options, particularly for low- and moderate-income residents. Rising rents and limited availability of affordable units have displaced long-term residents and left many households rent-burdened (27.7% of the district's population spend 35% or more of their income in rent).¹ Expanding affordable housing options, both in terms of rental and ownership opportunities, is critical to sustaining the diverse, mixed-income population that defines this community.
- **Market-Rate Housing:** There is demand for responsibly developed market-rate housing that complements the district's infrastructure and affordability needs. Balancing the growth of market-rate units with affordable housing options is necessary to prevent exacerbating displacement and to support neighborhood diversity. Targeted zoning and incentives such as those included in the City of Yes Housing Opportunities package, which Community Board 6 supported for approval, can help create a balance, ensuring new developments contribute to housing diversity and stability.
- **Temporary Housing:** Access to temporary housing solutions, including supportive housing, is essential for residents facing short-term displacement or those transitioning from shelters. The district needs increased housing options that offer stability and supportive services to help

¹ American Community Survey 2014–2018 5-Year Estimates for PUMA 4005, which is an approximation of BK CD6.

individuals regain permanent housing. Investment in these resources can prevent homelessness and support residents in crisis.

- **Shelter Housing & Other Housing:** The district requires expanded shelter facilities that provide not only safe space but also access to essential services such as healthcare, employment assistance, and mental health resources. Existing shelters are often at capacity, leading to unmet needs for vulnerable populations, including families, seniors and individuals with disabilities. Ensuring shelters are adequately funded and well-equipped is essential to meeting the immediate needs of these populations. Furthermore, we continue to urge the Department of Housing Preservation and Development to allocate for the FY's 2026 budget sufficient funds for the planning, site selection/acquisition, development, and construction of affordable senior housing and special needs households in the most needed sections of our district.

A coordinated response that prioritizes each of these housing categories is essential to meeting the diverse needs of Community District 6. By addressing the critical gaps in affordable, market-rate, temporary and shelter housing, the city can create a more inclusive, stable, economically resilient community. We recommend prioritizing these housing needs in the City's budget process to ensure the district can effectively serve its residents and reduce housing insecurity. We urge that City agencies create a comprehensive strategy to alleviate and address critical housing needs to improve the quality of life for all residents in the district.

Theme 2: Climate Resilience

With over 6,000 dwelling units in the 100-year floodplain in Brooklyn Community District 6, thousands of district residents live with a 1% chance of experiencing a major disaster every year.² In 2012, Hurricane Sandy laid bare the reality that the most vulnerable New Yorkers are disproportionately hurt in major coastal flooding events. For instance, the storm caused significant damage to NYCHA's Red Hook Houses and even 12 years later, plans to recover and flood-proof the complex are yet to be completed. More recently, Hurricane Ida and Tropical Storm Ophelia revealed the extent to which climate change vulnerabilities impact coastal and upland neighborhoods alike; low-lying areas such as Fourth Avenue experience more and more severe flooding during sudden, heavy downpours known as cloudburst events. NYC Stormwater Flood Maps published by the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice show that rainfall of 1.77 inches per hour is likely to result in flooding of over one foot in several areas of the district, including 4th Avenue from 1st Street to President Street.³ Additionally, New Yorkers observed historically low levels of rainfall and a higher incidence of wildfires in 2024, suggesting a need for greater drought resilience in the City's watershed and water infrastructure.

Preparing for the impacts of climate change is of the utmost importance to the district. Investing in green infrastructure is critical to making our communities less vulnerable to climate risk and environmental hazards. To address these rising concerns, the neighborhoods within the district need proactive investment in climate resilience measures, especially in the climate vulnerable communities of Red Hook and Gowanus. Top priorities include:

² According to FEMA's 2015 Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Maps (PFIRM) and the FEMA 2007 Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM).

³ NYC Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice. Extreme Rainfall/NYC Stormwater Flood Maps. <https://climate.cityofnewyork.us/challenges/extreme-rainfall/>

- **Implementing coastal mitigation measures** to protect against flooding and storm surge, including building retrofits, seawalls, breakwaters, and soft shoreline stabilization techniques.
- **Expanding and designing urban greenery** and permeable surfaces to absorb stormwater, reduce the urban heat island effect, and resist the effects of drought
- **Installing gray infrastructure** such as sewer pipes and underground storage tanks to minimize damage to property and infrastructure during cloudburst events and increase local drought resilience, and modernizing sewer infrastructure to accommodate heavy rain and flooding
- **Protecting electric infrastructure** and expanding local power generation with solar and energy storage systems to protect residents from power outages
- **Strengthening social services and emergency preparedness** to help residents prepare for and cope with flooding, heat waves, droughts, wildfires, and cold snaps.

Several of these interventions are included in the Red Hook Coastal Resiliency project – a local coastal protection project that seeks to reduce flood risks due to coastal storm surge and sea level rise along Red Hook's waterfront. Similarly, the Department of Environmental Protection is currently working on sewer system upgrades associated with the Gowanus rezoning in 2021. These and other city-backed funding and initiatives will help the district adapt to climate challenges; foster a greener urban environment; and safeguard both infrastructure and residents.

Theme 3: Comprehensive Transportation Assessment

We urge the City to examine a range of transportation issues which limit access to services and even exacerbate social and health issues in some neighborhoods. Red Hook's residents, for example, live in a transit desert, yet vehicle ownership is uncommon among those with lower incomes, and residents cannot easily rely on other modes of transportation. Walking and cycling, in particular, are not as safe or comfortable as they could be for all residents in our district, with rising traffic congestion, high vehicle speeds, a lack of pedestrian safety measures (e.g., daylighting at intersections), and a lack of protected bike lanes. Further, in the primarily industrial neighborhoods of Red Hook and Gowanus, heightened freight activity from local truck routes and last-mile warehouses also reduce air quality, increase noise levels, and exacerbate poor health outcomes.

We suggest a comprehensive transportation assessment of our district to holistically address these long-running issues. A comprehensive assessment should address road safety, walkability, and bike infrastructure needs. Any transportation recommendations that arise from this assessment should address the need for protected bike lanes, enhanced bike network connections, curb extensions, and high-visibility crosswalks to enhance safety for non-vehicular transportation options, while also addressing traffic congestion in both commercial and residential areas of the district. The assessment should also address barriers to access in both public transportation and active modes, including considerations for both physical access and affordability. Additionally, the assessment should address the concentrated impact of freight activity in neighborhoods like Red Hook and Gowanus.

Theme 4: Greater Access to Social Services

Community profiles managed by several City agencies⁴ show that Brooklyn Community District 6 performs well on a range of economic, social, and health indicators relative to other districts. But district-level data and statistics do not convey the breadth of experiences across our neighborhoods. On one hand, Park Slope's residents are among the most educated, wealthy, and employed in the City; similar observations could be made for Cobble Hill and Carroll Gardens. On the other hand, over 60% of Red Hook's residents live in the Red Hook Houses, the City's second-largest NYCHA complex, where 48% of those under the age of 18 live below the federal poverty line and 19% of those over the age of 16 are unemployed, according to the American Community Survey. Similar disparities exist in NYCHA's Gowanus properties.

We strongly recommend the City to increase funding for social services in our district, with specific regard for our low-income and underserved residents in Red Hook and Gowanus. Greater budget allocation with targeted neighborhood investment is needed to fill gaps in healthcare, workforce development, childcare, senior assistance, housing livability, food access, and more. Top priorities include expansion of the following services:

- **Access to childcare** both in Red Hook and Gowanus and also throughout the district overall, which has 7,500 children under the age of 5, according to the 2020 US Census, yet only 5 childcare facilities that accept vouchers or cash assistance to support low-income families⁵
- **Workforce development programs** throughout Gowanus and Red Hook—neighborhoods that are slated to undergo significant economic development but do not provide adequate job training support for local residents, with 1 in 5 Red Hook residents reporting having trouble accessing job training or employment programs in 2018.⁶
- **Targeted health assessments and interventions** for Gowanus and Red Hook, neighborhoods which do not contain their own hospitals, are disproportionately affected by poor air and soil quality, and are in need of greater support for chronic conditions, mental health, substance abuse, and other health issues

Over time, our goal is to have the Community District 6 become a place of opportunity not only for the wealthy, but also for those in most need of services, and to empower all of our district's residents to live healthy, stable, and successful lives.

Recommendations by Committee

Committee 1: Land Use, Landmarks, & Housing

- **Affordable Housing Development:** Increase budget allocations for affordable housing construction and subsidies in areas experiencing the most need and displacement pressure, like Red Hook and Gowanus. Housing affordability and a sufficient housing supply are crucial to the

⁴ These include the NYC Department of City Planning's Community District Profile (<https://communityprofiles.planning.nyc.gov/brooklyn/6#resources>) and the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Community Health Profile (<https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/data/2015chp-bk6.pdf>).

⁵ NYC Child Care Connect. <https://a816-healthpsi.nyc.gov/ChildCare/>.

⁶ Red Hook Initiative. *Red Hook Community Health Report*, October 2018.

https://rhicenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/redhook_chnaa_oct2018_report_english.pdf

health of the City and its residents. The City's Housing Plan has not kept pace with housing demand. Brooklyn Community Board 6 recognizes the current need for affordable housing within New York City and that this City can and must do much more to expand affordable housing options that allow more residents to share the positive attributes of the district and help to create a more equitable city. Per the City's Department of Housing Preservation & Development, the 2024 New York City Area Median Income (AMI) for very low-income to moderate income is 31 to 120% family income.⁷

- **Community Center Spaces, Facilities, and Open Spaces:** Allocate sufficient funds for community center spaces within large residential developments, including NYCHA complexes such as the Red Hook Houses, to compensate for the 457 trees, 14 water sprinkler systems and many community spaces eliminated as part of FEMA construction work. NYCHA should direct additional resources for the programming and maintenance of these and other community facilities so that they may provide robust and comprehensive programming for community members of all ages.
- **NYCHA Housing Maintenance:** Update and maintain NYCHA properties to serve a critical segment of the City's residents by allocating funds to improve NYCHA housing conditions, targeting mold remediation, plumbing repairs, and HVAC systems. The preservation and enhancement of NYCHA properties is imperative, and the City needs to do all it can to achieve these goals. As of our last Summary of Needs and Budget Request, NYCHA has responded that it will accommodate these issues within existing resources, therefore while understanding NYCHA is operating without the full funding it deserves, we want to reinforce that the declining quality of NYCHA housing in our district is threatening the health of district residents living in NYCHA complexes. The city must make sure that NYCHA's Comprehensive Modernization Program at the Gowanus and Wyckoff Houses provide critical maintenance for these housing complexes.
- **NYCHA Vision Setting:** While physical physical capital investment into NYCHA facilities is critical, inclusive, community-led visioning processes are necessary to generate fresh ideas for NYCHA campuses. Community visioning sessions have been held at Gowanus Houses and Wyckoff Gardens. Input from these and similar sessions should be incorporated into the development of all future RFPs from architectural, engineering, and construction work on NYCHA campuses in our district.⁸
- **Zoning Adjustments:** Budget for rezoning initiatives to increase affordable units in mixed-income developments, especially near transit corridors. Brooklyn Community Board 6 has urged the City to take strong measures to generate more affordable housing through new construction and regulatory changes in the district and city-wide. We would like to see the City maximize the number and affordability levels of new housing development, particularly in any new rezoned areas. Targeted zoning and incentives such as those under City of Yes Housing Opportunities, which Community Board 6 supported for approval, can help create a balance, ensuring new developments contribute to housing diversity and stability. District residents should have protections from displacement and cost of living burdens, due to increased property values in new development areas, and district wide.

⁷ Department of Housing Preservation and Development, *Area Median Income*.

www.nyc.gov/site/hpd/services-and-information/area-median-income.page

⁸ NYCHA Gowanus Neighborhood Rezoning.

<https://www.nyc.gov/site/nycha/about/comp-mod/gowanus-neighborhood-rezoning.page>

Committee 2: Transportation, Parks, and Public Infrastructure

- **Adequate Funding for NYC Parks:** Fully fund parks so that they may continue to function as key public spaces and resources for our district. Despite some recent victories, including the introduction of new second shift funding and one shot council funding for Urban Park Rangers, NYC Parks' budget has not been fully restored after the mayor's recent cuts. As a result, the agency has seen a \$20M reduction, and has 800 fewer staff than FY24, plus a hiring freeze and the lowest number of Parks Enforcement Officers in years (300 citywide). Restoring the agency's budget to appropriate levels is a top priority for this Community Board.
- **Comprehensive Transportation Planning:** Budget for a comprehensive transportation plan to address road safety, walkability, and bike infrastructure needs. The plan should address the need for protected bike lanes, enhanced bike network connections, curb extensions, and high-visibility crosswalks to enhance safety for non-vehicular transportation options. Additionally, the plan should address traffic congestion on district streets, which has been exacerbated by enormous growth in home delivery of goods and which could be improved with implementation of commercial and residential loading zones and better freight management.
- **Improved Affordability for Citibike:** Budget to expand the Reduced Fare Bike Share program to include public high school and CUNY students aged 16 and above, in order to help make biking an affordable transportation option for young people.
- **Flood Protection Infrastructure:** Allocate funds for fixed and deployable flood barriers in vulnerable areas to prevent damage during heavy storms, including as part of the Red Hook Coastal Resiliency initiative and the tentatively selected plan in the NY & NJ Harbor & Tributaries Focus Area Feasibility Study (HATS), which proposed a series of shoreline based measures for the Red Hook waterfront.⁹
- **Public Safety Traffic Enforcement:** Budget for critical enforcement action throughout the district. Trucks find their ways onto the more residential streets in the district more and more frequently, coming off of busy thoroughfares like Atlantic Avenue and 4th Avenue. Signage and enforcement are desperately needed throughout the district to protect pedestrians and bicyclists, especially in Red Hook, where a number of last-mile warehouses are currently operating and drawing significant truck traffic. Additionally, the lack of traffic enforcement, signage, and modern traffic design leaves our district's streets overcrowded with large vehicles, making emergency response extremely slow in residential neighborhoods.
- **Subway Enhancements:** Fund accessibility upgrades, such as elevators and ramps, at key subway stations serving the district, especially at the Smith-9th Street subway station, which lacks elevators despite being the highest elevation transit station in the entire world. Accessibility improvements are broadly needed; other than the 7th Avenue F/G station, no stations within the district are currently served by elevators. The district also lacks east-west bus service, and there is widespread support to reactivate the B71 route, which was discontinued in 2010. The district also suffers from slow bus speeds, and would benefit from implementation of transit-signal priority and other enhancements such as the bus lanes NYCDOT recently proposed for Flatbush Avenue, on the northeastern boundary of the district.¹⁰

⁹ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. NY & NJ Harbor & Tributaries Focus Area Feasibility Study Alternative 3B Summary Map. https://www.nan.usace.army.mil/Portals/37/HATS_100yrIntSLR_Risk_wAlt3B_500dpi.pdf

¹⁰ Khalifeh, Ramsey. "Dramatic redesign of Flatbush Ave would add bus lanes to gridlocked Brooklyn street." gothamist.com/news/dramatic-redesign-of-flatbush-avenue-would-add-bus-lanes-to-gridlocked-brooklyn-street

Committee 3: Business Licenses & Affairs

- **Business Improvement Districts:** Increase program outreach, funding, and support for community-based development organizations to conduct a Commercial District Needs Assessment, define new Business Improvement Districts throughout the district, apply for Small Business Services funding, and make targeted improvements to the commercial districts throughout the district.
- **Cannabis Licenses:** Increase outreach and program support to accelerate the licensing of unlicensed marijuana retail stores throughout the district, especially for census tracts classified by New York State as “Communities Disproportionately Impacted” by cannabis enforcement, which historically have been located in Red Hook and Gowanus.¹¹
- **Outdoor Spaces:** Maintain outreach, funding, and support for permitting and physical maintenance of outdoor sheds and spaces for local restaurants and bars, which provide a third space to those who are immunocompromised or disabled and support a thriving business community.
- **Workforce Development Programs:** Fund programs and centers for workforce development within Red Hook, Gowanus, and the NYCHA facilities that are located in those neighborhoods. This includes NYCHA direct-entry union training programs and workforce development programs related to local employment within Red Hook and Gowanus Industrial Business Zones, particularly as green manufacturing expands in the area.

Committee 4: Human Services & Environmental Sustainability

- **Emergency Preparedness for Extreme Weather:** Fund emergency response resources, including heating and cooling centers, to assist residents during severe weather, particularly in low-lying or otherwise vulnerable areas of the district.
- **Expansion of Childcare Programs:** Increase the number of childcare programs for children under the age of 5 which are either fully funded by the city or subsidized using city vouchers and cash assistance. Expand the distribution of childcare subsidies.
- **Health Facility Funding:** Budget for permanent healthcare facilities in areas like Red Hook, Gowanus, and Columbia Waterfront, focusing on accessible, low-cost services. The district lacks any NYC Health + Hospitals facilities, and the only hospital within the district boundaries is not easily accessible to parts of the district, and private urgent care clinics are unevenly distributed.
- **Healthy Food Access Initiatives:** Provide budget for community gardens, urban farms, and affordable food programs to reduce food insecurity in underserved neighborhoods. Expand DOHMH’s Shop Healthy! food access programs to improve access to healthy affordable foods, especially in Red Hook, which is not currently eligible for these programs.
- **Homelessness Services:** Increase funding for shelters, mental health services, and job training programs to support homeless populations within the district. Community District 6 must house its fair share of the unhoused population, and to do so, more permanent facilities are needed. Beyond housing, additional job training and placement programs can help address the root issues for the unhoused population, including through support of relevant nonprofit groups.
- **Green Infrastructure and Stormwater System Upgrades:** Sufficient funds are requested for the areawide installation of green infrastructure including, but not limited to, bioswales, rain gardens, offline retention facilities, rain barrels, pervious surface treatments, and other best

¹¹ <https://cannabis.ny.gov/communities-disproportionately-impacted>

management practices to aggressively prevent storm water from entering into the sewer system. Reduction of storm water entry into the system is necessary to reduce the amount of combined sewer overflow events that occur, particularly within the Gowanus watershed area. Many green infrastructure investments will also reduce the urban heat island effect and reduce the risk of heat-related injuries during more frequent and severe heat waves. Investments in improved stormwater infrastructure, including sewer capacity increases and street drainage, is also necessary to mitigate flood risks.