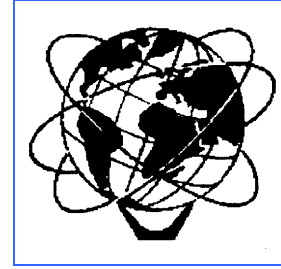


Queens Civic Congress



2007-2008 Platform

CIVIC 2030

Queens Civic Congress Membership as of June 2007

◆ Association of Old Forest Hills ◆ Auburndale Improvement Association ◆ Bayside Civic Database ◆ Bayside Clear-Spring Council ◆ Bayside Hills Civic Association ◆ Bayswater Civic Association ◆ Bay Terrace Community Alliance, Inc. ◆ Bellaire-BellVill Civic Association ◆ Belle Harbor Property Owners ◆ Bellerose Commonwealth Civic Association ◆ Bellerose-Hillside Civic Association ◆ Bell Park Manor Terrace Community Council ◆ Bowne Park Civic Association ◆ Briarwood Community Association ◆ Cambria Heights Civic Association ◆ Cherry Robinson Homeowners ◆ COMET (Communities of Maspeth-Elmhurst Together) ◆ Concerned Citizens of Laurelton ◆ Cornucopia Society ◆ Creedmoor Civic Association ◆ Deerfield Area Association ◆ Doug-Bay Manor Civic Association ◆ Douglas Manor Association ◆ Douglaston Civic Association ◆ Dutch Kills Civic Association of Long Island City ◆ East Flushing Civic Association ◆ Federated Block Associations of Laurelton ◆ Federation of Civic Associations of Southeast Queens ◆ Floral Park Community Council ◆ Flushing on the Hill Civic Association ◆ Flushing Heights Civic Association ◆ Forest Hills Chamber of Commerce ◆ Forest Hills Crescents Association ◆ Forest Hills-Van Court Association ◆ Fresh Meadows Homeowners Association ◆ Georgetown Mews ◆ Glendale Civic Association of Queens ◆ Glen Oaks Village Owners, Inc. ◆ Greater Astoria Historical Society ◆ Greater Whitestone Taxpayers Civic Association ◆ Harding Heights Civic Association ◆ Hillcrest Estates Civic Association ◆ Hilltop Village Co-op #1 ◆ Hilltop Village Co-op #2 ◆ Hilltop Village Co-op #3 ◆ Hilltop Village Co-op #4 ◆ Hollis Hills Civic Association ◆ Holliswood Civic Association ◆ Hollis Park Gardens Association ◆ Holly Civic Association ◆ Hunters Point Community Coalition ◆ Hyde Park Gardens Cooperative ◆ Jackson Heights Beautification Group ◆ Jamaica Estates Association ◆ Jamaica Hill Community Association ◆ Juniper Park Civic Association ◆ Kew Forest Neighborhood Association ◆ Kew Gardens Civic Association ◆ Kew Gardens Hills Civic Association ◆ Kissena Park Civic Association ◆ Little Neck Bay Civic Association ◆ Little Neck Pines Association ◆ Malba Civic Association ◆ Meadowlark Gardens Owners ◆ Middle Village Maspeth Civic Association ◆ Middle Village Property Owners ◆ Mitchell-Linden Civic Association ◆ Neponsit Property Owners ◆ Newtown Civic Association ◆ North Bellerose Civic Association ◆ North Flushing Civic Association ◆ North Hills Estates Civic Association ◆ Northeast Clearview Homeowners Association ◆ Norwood Civic Association ◆ Oakland Gardens/Terrace Community Council ◆ Off Broadway Homeowners Association ◆ Our Neighborhood Improvement Association ◆ Parkway Village Historical Society ◆ Queensboro Hill Neighborhood Association ◆ Queens Colony Civic Association ◆ Queens Community Civic Corp. ◆ Queens Village Civic Association ◆ Ramblersville-Hawtree Civic Association ◆ Richmond Hill Historical Association ◆ Ridgewood Property Owners and Civic Association ◆ Rockaway Action Committee ◆ Rockaway Park Homeowners/Residents ◆ Rocky Hill Civic Association ◆ Rosedale Civic Association ◆ Royal Ranch Association ◆ Southeast Queens Concerned Neighbors ◆ South Ozone Park Civic Association West ◆ Springfield/Rosedale Community Action Association ◆ Station Road Civic Association of Auburndale ◆ Sunnyside Gardens/Harrison Place Homeowners ◆ Surrey Estates Civic Association ◆ Union Turnpike Merchants Association ◆ United Forties Civic Association ◆ United Neighbors Civic Association ◆ Utopia Estates Civic Association ◆ Waldheim Neighborhood Association ◆ Wayanda Civic Association ◆ West Cunningham Park Civic Association ◆ Westmoreland Association ◆ Woodside Community Council ◆

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CIVIC 2030

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President's Introductory Remarks

June 2007

Greetings:

The Queens Civic Congress is an umbrella organization of over one hundred civic and community associations from across the entire borough of the two million plus residents of Queens county. We have published this platform for the past ten years as a common and united statement of our collective views, concerns, and positions of the various communities in our diverse borough. Many of our civic colleagues throughout the rest of the city share many of these concerns and support similar positions. In fact, we are grateful for their suggestions and support. After a year of review and circulation among our membership for comments as part of our approval process, this document was approved by our membership unanimously at our June meeting.

This year we are issuing our platform **Civic 2030** in direct response to the mayor's 2030 Plan for New York City. City government has for far to long created grandiose plans with fanfare but with little regard to the affect they will have on the people living or working in this great city. Today, we ask where are the plans for the waterfront, cross harbor freight tunnel, a classroom seat for every child, east side rail access, the one seat ride to the airport to name a few. The city government always seems to choose the future without a path from the present. The reason is that every administration wants to take our eye off of the current state of the city's problems, because they do not have the will or imagination to remedy current issues.

Planning for the future is important, but it must be grounded in reality and on resolving current problems as the bedrock for future endeavors. As you will see throughout **Civic 2030**, we speak to the need to first correct the city's historic failures to resolve housing and zoning enforcement matters as a prelude to fostering localized planning methodology to increase housing opportunities.

Very truly yours,



SEAN M. WALSH
President

Officers of the Queens Civic Congress

Officers	Committees Chairs
<p>Founders: <i>Albert Greenblatt</i> <i>Robert I. Harris</i></p> <p>President: <i>Sean M. Walsh</i></p> <p>Executive Vice Presidents: <i>Corey B. Bearak</i> <i>Patricia Dolan</i></p> <p>Vice Presidents: <i>Tyler Cassell</i> <i>Richard Hellenbrecht</i> <i>Paul Kerzner</i> <i>David Kulick</i> <i>Audrey Lucas</i> <i>Nagassar Ramgarib</i> <i>Edwin Westley</i> <i>Dorothy Woo</i></p> <p>Secretary: <i>Seymour Schwartz</i> Treasurer: <i>James A. Trent</i></p>	<p>Audit & By Laws.....<i>Phil Ragusa, CPA</i> By Laws.....<i>Albert Greenblatt</i> Aviation & Noise.....<i>Seymour Schwartz</i> Building Access Legislation.....<i>Paul Kerzner</i> Building Code Enforcement.....<i>Nagassar Ramgarib</i> City Charter & City Governance.....<i>James Walsh</i> City Infrastructure & Capital Program.....<i>Dorothy Woo</i> Community Facilities.....<i>Tyler Cassell</i> Congress Platform <i>Richard Hellenbrecht</i> Co-ops & Condos.....<i>Marc Haken</i> Creedmoor Task Force <i>Bernard Aquilino</i> Deed & Covenant Restrictions.....<i>Tina Chan</i> Economic Development.....<i>Chris Collett</i> Health/Hospitals & Social Services.....<i>Kevin Forrestal</i> Higher Education.....<i>Kim Francis</i> Housing Development.....<i>Tom Paino</i> Newsletter & PR.....<i>David Kulick</i> Nominations.....<i>Helene Zaro</i> Parks & Cultural Affairs.....<i>Audrey Lucas</i> Planning.....<i>Pat Dolan</i> Public and Legislative Affairs.....<i>Corey Bearak</i> Public Education.....<i>Kenneth Cohen</i> Public Safety.....<i>Mary Anderson</i> Preservation and Landmarking.....<i>Paul Graziano</i> Tenants.....<i>Florence Fisher</i> Transportation<i>James Trent</i> Workshops.....<i>Robert Harris</i> Zoning Enforcement....<i>Joseph Amoroso</i></p>

LAND USE AND ZONING

Queens and New York City require a land use policy based on community input and review with consideration of current availability of the requisite city services and infrastructure. Such a policy is essential to preserve and enhance the fundamental character and viability of our city's neighborhoods. Planning must be sufficiently flexible to respond to demographic and environmental dynamics of our city by creating new opportunities for the orderly development of housing, business, and community facilities. An example is the recently enacted R2A zone which maintains traditional affordable housing stock. Zoning maps and text must keep pace with new building, construction, and signage technologies. The ideal plan will engage early in their formulation process all the stakeholders. Top-down initiatives not only attract skepticism but essentially fail to garner support (e.g. NYC2012, Far West Side Stadium).

The Mayor has recently embarked on a planning exercise, called PlaNYC, to be prepared for significant population growth in the next 23 years, projected at 900,000 additional people. Planning is necessary to ensure infrastructure and social resources to handle the growth, but QCC and civics must ensure the protection of quality neighborhoods in our borough. In addition, the City must provide funding to community boards to enable independent, professional planning assistance to review rezoning or other land use changes intended to accommodate the expected population growth. By preserving existing good housing in stable neighborhoods, we are saving affordable housing.

Queens, with only five historic districts and few designated landmark buildings, faces the rapid loss of its architectural legacy. The Landmarks Commission must increase its focus and attention to preserve our unique and important architectural heritage.

Strong neighborhoods strengthen the City and ensure its future.

Therefore, the Queens Civic Congress adopts the following:

1. Provide for community input and review and legislative oversight of major residential, commercial, industrial and public developments, and amend ULURP to specifically require to mandate this.
2. Create additional contextual districts to protect existing residential configurations, density and uses not reflected in existing zoning districts. For example, there is no zone which adequately describes and protects single-family row houses or narrow lots with single-family homes.
3. Support long-term planning as a means of preserving and enhancing the physical character and stability of neighborhoods.
4. Establish urban design elements as part of the land use decision-making process.
5. Provide funding for technical, independent, professional assistance to community based organizations for neighborhood-based planning and zoning changes proposals.
6. Map large-scale retail uses only in districts appropriately zoned, and subject any siting of "big box" retail establishments to community input and review and legislative oversight.

7. Mandate community review of publicly funded major proposals, including all development and construction projects of federal, state and city agencies and authorities or entities, not already subjected to ULURP.
8. Fund borough-based offices of each borough president to perform planning functions and zoning for their respective borough.
9. Establish regulations to prevent the inappropriate use of eminent domain that could directly or indirectly benefit private or commercial developers at the expense of homeowners or renters especially as available land is rapidly disappearing..
10. Include in all land use decisions a non-renewable effective date for the implementation of the permitted action.
11. Require any amended plan or proposal by public agencies to include an updated environmental impact statement of the amended plan.
12. Retain the existing limits on the transfer of development rights as provided for in the Zoning Resolution, i.e. limiting the transfer of unused air right allowances from one site only to an adjacent or shared lot.
13. Require Landmarks Commission to work with civics in identifying and designating individual buildings, historic districts and scenic landmark districts.
14. Require the Landmarks Commission to provide a written response for declining an application for landmark designation by a neighborhood and establish an appeal process to decisions of the Landmarks Commission to City Council.
15. Enhance staffing, technical and legal support for the Landmarks Commission.
16. Establish a borough commission to identify likely individual sites and districts for landmarking.
17. Subject zoning lot mergers and lot subdivisions to Special Permit or ULURP review and limit each zoning lot to one sewer line.
18. Increase planning staff of agencies that make land use policy determinations.
19. Provide community boards with at least ninety days' notice for all land use applications.
20. Remove In-Fill in all R Zones
21. Restrict front yard fences to 3.5 feet with open view of yard to provide a clear sight line and corner view, and restrict side and rear yard fences to 6 feet high.
22. Eliminate all exemptions from FAR space calculation throughout a building in R1 to R5 zones.
23. Revise Major Concessions Rules to include all significant private uses on public property (including parks) to community/borough review (see Parks section).
24. Urge continued cooperation among public officials and agencies to implement the Queens Civic Congress Master Plan for the Creedmoor campus, in addition to the three public schools (The Glen Oaks Campus). See the Queens Civic Congress Website for the plan.
25. Create new zoning text amendments to meet unanticipated needs resulting from new building technologies and new products offered by the housing and construction industry.
26. Regulate commercial signage in a consistent and practical manner in all C zones (Amend the Zoning Resolution).
27. Create new zoning text amendments to regulate signage, building masks and other new signage technologies that increasingly degrade the urban landscape. Foreign language signs should contain an English translation at least as large as the foreign language lettering.
28. Establish an enforceable awning and canopy law that will provide reasonable identification while reducing visual congestion. All signage should include address in English for emergency services.
29. Establish restrictions on all Billboards within city limits to prevent vehicle accidents and visual congestion.
30. Clarify and improve zoning text with regard to use groups.
31. Subject all City Planning Commission (ULURP) decisions to mandatory legislative review.

32. Require a rear yard of no less than 20 feet on all R1 through R3 corner lots and all lots currently exempt from the usual rear yard regulations.
33. Ban overpaving in residential areas. Restrict paving over of front, side and rear yards and restrict decks or patios to no more than 10% of the open space. Any added construction should provide adequate drainage into the natural water table, and prohibit paving over the patch of green between the sidewalk and the street. Existing open space and green space must be preserved.
34. Require the Department of City Planning to provide accurate zoning maps, and when necessary, Misland maps, to community boards. Require Department of City Planning to assist community boards to redesignate R1 through R5 districts to more appropriate contextual districts.
35. Ban front yard parking except in approved parking ribbon in all R1 through R5 zoning districts.
36. Require front yard alignment with houses on the block in all R1 through R4 districts and prohibit upper floor porches or any extension that extends beyond the first floor building line
37. Eliminate McMansions through the combination of reinforced FAR restrictions, new rules to preserve the as-built fabric of communities, mandate alignment with pre-existing buildings, eliminate overhangs and cantilever over driveways.
38. Call upon the U.S. Congress to repeal the provision on zoning of religious facilities (RILUPA – Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act) that usurps the authority of local government in zoning matters.
39. Address overdevelopment in low density-zoned neighborhoods by a combination of restrictions to self-certification, full enforcement of existing building and zoning codes and establishment of a borough task force to study the possible long-term effects of major development projects.
40. Establish height limits for all R1 districts to 35 feet and R2 districts of 32 feet.
41. Reduce exempt space in R-1 districts to 35 square feet for all utilities and reduce to 400 square feet for any attached garage by means of text amendment.
42. Reduce the attic or third floor maximum ceiling height in R-1 zones to five feet.
43. Apply R2A restrictions to R1 and R3 districts.
44. Establish a new zone for single family detached homes on narrow lots of less than 40 feet wide. The current R3A zone encourages conversion of single family homes to two-family, increasing congestion and affecting the quality of life.
45. Eliminate exemptions and percentage reductions for required parking in all residential zones.
46. Rewrite zoning resolution on a zone basis rather than topical basis.
47. Demand closer coordination between, and oversight of the Buildings Department by the Department of City Planning with regard to DOB interpretation of zoning provisions.
48. Support City Council legislation regarding elimination of self-certification on Alt. 1 permits and eliminate partial demolition on Alt. 1 permits.
49. Limit the corner rear yard lot exemption in any zone to one building per corner, regardless of corner lot size.
50. Require at least a 20 foot deep rear yard on all corner houses.
51. Require live vegetation in all front yards in R1, 2 and 3 zones except for the walkway, which is to be limited to five feet wide and driveway, to be limited to fifteen feet. All refuse containers must not be present in any yard with street frontage.
52. Support City Council efforts to increase fines and fees for contractors violating stop work orders with maximum fines of up to \$15,000 and six months in jail for continuing violations. Seek to increase the penalty to include stripping any builder guilty of illegal demolitions of his right to seek permits for demolition or construction.

53. Seek legislation to permanently assign street address numbers to zoning lots as these lots are increasingly split or merged to create development opportunities and original designations can not be tracked.
54. Convert ECB fines to tax liens if not paid.
56. Reform of BSA:
 - a. Instead of increasing at great expense the number of commissioners, who will still be controlled by the political system, we suggest that the Council mandate the hiring of financial analysts by BSA to examine the basis of each variance and special permit application financial figures used to establish economic hardship. Currently the BSA can not get down into sufficient detail to determine the economics of an application. Most civic groups can not afford to hire accountants and real estate experts to do this work. This analysis is where cases are won and lost or the size of the variance is reduced or facts from which appeals may be successfully argued. Require a detailed financial report be made available to each side before the hearing is closed.
 - b. Legislatively outlaw the common argument made by developers “obsolete zoning.” This argument is a common argument made by developers who have a weak financial case to establish a hardship but instead say the block or neighborhood needs to change. This is a question for DCP not BSA.
 - c. We do not have any precedents for the site under consideration leaving us to completely reargue the same site over and over again at great expense. If you note there are very few negative votes at BSA. The reason is that the lawyer for the developer goes to the Monday executive session which is open to the public and hears the preliminary decision of the BSA which is announced the following day, Tuesday. The lawyer calls his client and tells him if he is going to loss, and then he withdraws the application to avoid any negative decision on the record. This has tremendous repercussions for the civic community when they defeat the applicant’s variance request but can never cite this as a precedent for the same site or neighboring sites because the record is gone! We ask for legislation to stop this by denying the applicant the right to withdraw the applicant once the evidentiary hearing is closed. This will enable a body of negative decisions to exist on the record for future use.
 - d. Require legislative review and oversight by the City Council of Board of Standards and Appeals decisions to grant variances. This appeals process may be legally flawed, because the BSA exists as a panel of experts in the field to make limited exceptions. If the Council can override BSA, then it engages a political legislative arm of the government (unlike the old Board of Estimate which was an Executive function) over a land use function, something the courts have not supported in the past. Aside from this and more important for civics is the statute of limitations to bring an appeal. It is currently 30 days from the filing of the BSA decision. Any legislative fix must still allow an appeal to the courts. It must also extend the time to appeal (currently 30 days) pursuant to Article 78 to the standard time frame of 120 days and/or toll it until the Council renders a written decision to override, sustain, or decline to hear the matter.

HOUSING & BUILDINGS

New York City needs affordable and safe housing preserved as well as the development of new housing to ensure a variety of residential opportunities in diverse neighborhoods. The practice of encouraging the destruction of sound housing, including private homes in the name of luxury development must cease. The fundamental key to providing affordable housing is through the preservation of neighborhoods and their unique characteristics through the maintenance of existing housing stocks and development of new affordable housing on appropriate sites where existing infrastructure will support it. The building of illegal units or their conversion by adding of apartment units through subdivisions or additions to existing housing in excess of the established zoning and use group regulations poses major public safety and quality of life problems. More importantly, the deaths and injuries that result from fires and building collapses make clear the need to assure the public safety of those who reside in or visit homes. The exploitation of immigrants and recent arrivals to our city must end. Illegal conversions continue unabated as the City reduced staffing levels at the Department of Buildings (DOB) and Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) in response to financial difficulties in the late '70's and again in the early '90's. In the past year there has been an explosion of building collapses and scaffolding incidents resulting in injury, death and massive property damage, which must be addressed. While the DOB has made efforts to improve its enforcement options in the past year, the city must continue to increase enforcement.

Therefore, the Queens Civic Congress adopts the following:

1. Seek prompt and decisive action by the City against illegal apartments, single room occupancies and inappropriate commercial uses in residential buildings.
2. Improve compliance by increasing inspection and rigid enforcement of zoning and Building Codes by the city DOB and HPD.
3. Re-inspect all violations within 30 days and repeat until there is compliance [see Int.No.203 and A7800 (Brennan)/ S5223 (Padavan)]
4. Start a Comstat tracking of complaints for DOB and HPD and maintain in an “open” status all Building and Housing complaints until physical site inspection is conducted and the violation is cleared (see Int.No.232).
5. Mandate the DOB to require applicants to cure all outstanding violations before approval of any new-building permit, alteration permit or C. of O. (see Int.No.232) or the sale of premises.
6. Enforce enacted state legislation to increase inspectors’ access to buildings with suspected violations (S.6084) and to allow the filing of tax liens (S.3597A) on unpaid Environmental Control Board (ECB) fines -- i.e. to allow ECB to assess fines and other liens that can be converted to tax liens and potentially result in seizure of property [A7755 (Hevesi)/ S5407 (Padavan)].
7. Enact legislation to authorize building inspector access to investigate illegal building violations in a dwelling (see Intro.No.230) and legislate the Queens Civic Congress proposal to improve inspector access.
8. Mandate DOB and HPD to allow community participation in inspections.

9. Require that DOB dedicate at least one full-time inspector to each community board as a regular point of contact on buildings issues, inspections and follow-ups, with no less than two full days per month in the assigned district or as necessary to meet residents' complaints.
10. Establish a multi-agency task force to coordinate services among the fire, buildings department and other agencies, to report directly to the office of the mayor.
11. Establish a program to educate and inform new and established homeowners of relevant building codes and zoning laws and fines for noncompliance. Use the Offices of Council Members and the Borough Presidents as resources for outreach.
12. Require the Police Department to assist and cooperate with the DOB to enforce stop work orders (Int. No.245) and increase fines for violation of stop work orders.
13. Prohibit self-certification for new building or major building alteration permits and for the correction of violations.
14. Pending elimination of self certification, mandate the random audit of 20 percent of self certified applications within 20 days of filing. Immediately report all proven violations to the State Board of Education and remove privileges for self-certification and Directive 14 inspections.
15. Reestablish quarterly building inspections of all multiple dwellings by DOB and HPD.
16. Require registration of restrictive deed covenants with the DOB. Require title searches to identify and report restrictive covenants to the purchaser and financial institution (see Int. No.67).
17. Empower the DOB to enforce deed restrictions limiting use, density, yards and architectural elements (see Intro. #16).
18. Restrict the size of "For Sale" signs in R1 through R6 from a maximum of 12 square feet to 4 square feet.
19. Ban "Sold" signs or "For Sale" signs on residential property after contract of sale is signed.
20. Dedicate all DOB and HPD revenue from fees for inspections, applications and permits, and fines to a special fund for code and safety enforcement. Require the Commissioner of Buildings to provide an accounting of revenue the agency collects and its expenditures every six months. If the amount of the expenditures is less than 90% of agency revenues, the commissioner shall either reduce fees or raise expenditures to match expenditures.
21. Continue to require utility companies to obtain verification of DOB approved permits prior to installation of additional gas or electric meters or increased amperage service.
22. Support legislative initiatives (S.6102) to require real estate brokers to verify local zoning compliance on property listed for sale or lease and encourage recent mortgage broker/banker initiatives requiring buyer/seller certification of zoning compliance prior to loan approvals.
23. Support the efforts of the State Attorney General to restore the non-solicitation law, which was found to be invalid by a lower court in the state.
24. Improve the DOB Building Information System (BIS) by giving a full, plain English explanation of why a complaint was "Resolved" when no violation is issued.
25. Improve the DOB BIS by showing zoning mandated calculations, such as net square footage and Floor Area Ratio, building height and yard requirements.
26. Require NYPD to enforce DOB and HPD stop work orders and assist with the service of violations and inspections. Expand the recent Sheriff initiative to address stop work order violations.
27. Employ existing fire code and create regulations with stiff penalties to fight illegal dividing walls, blocking of exits and failure to provide smoke detectors and adequate electrical service in order to prevent hazards due to illegal conversions and basement/attic apartments.
28. Require the Department of Buildings Community Accountability Act, directs DOB to notify community boards and borough presidents of all construction permits and DOB actions in the district and to issue public reports on all construction accidents, property damage and dangerous conditions [A7745 (Brennan)/ S5422 (Padavan)].

29. Prohibits DOB from issuing certificates of occupancy until all adjudicated fines are paid [A7745 (Brennan)/ S5422 (Padavan)].
30. Give community boards the right to 30 DOB audits a year and to copies of any plans on file at the DOB [A7745 (Brennan)/ S5422 (Padavan)].
31. Empower the DOB to refuse to accept the filing of any documents by a person found to have knowingly or negligently submitted false documents to the DOB [A7746 (Brennan)/S4603 (Padavan)].
32. Require City licensure of general contractors by a Contractors Licensing Board to allow the City to revoke the licenses of developer-contractors who willfully violate laws involving safety, workers' compensation, etc. [A7744 (Brennan)/ S5410 (Padavan)]
33. Abolish the exemption from the duty of contractors to shore up adjacent properties for excavation of less than 10 feet and compel developers to carry insurance for damage for construction, demolition and excavation [A7748 (Brennan)/ S5246 (Padavan)].
34. Fund technical assistance grants of \$500,000 to a not-for-profit organization in each borough to provide legal, technical and professional assistance in the public interest regarding zoning, planning, and building and construction issues [A7747 (Brennan)/ S5441 (Padavan)]
35. Develop an affordable housing plan to create a mix of 150,000 units over ten years, including low (working poor), moderate and middle income and senior housing and preserve (existing) Mitchell-Lama and FHA 236 buildings by leveraging private and non-profit resources through a re-allocation of existing housing development funds.
36. Encourage new residential construction in appropriate areas which have adequate infrastructure, e.g. the Dutch Kills up zoning initiative
37. Strongly enforce existing zoning regulations for use and bulk on all developments.
38. Review New York State law concerning eminent domain to ensure that private developments can not be helped by the inappropriate taking of private property.
39. Establish co-op board regulations to allow reasonable scrutiny of applicants to protect the quality of life and value of investment.
40. Implement tax regulations regarding tax abatements and credits for co-ops to reduce accounting difficulties and to maximize the value of the abatement or credit.
41. Oppose 2006 Int. No.119 which would require co-op boards provided reasons for rejection of co-op applicants. [14 protected classes of individuals already exist and numerous city and state agencies protect against discrimination in co-op housing.]
42. Treat co-ops as not-for-profit corporations for corporate tax purposes
43. Distribute NYC tax abatements and credits directly to the co-op corporation that made the payments. Allow such co-ops to use such credits or return them to the shareholders in a manner that a co-op decides works in the best interest of the co-op at large.
44. Restore cyclical enforcement on multiple dwellings.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

“As-of-right” may not be right for the community. The New York City Zoning Resolution defines many religious, medical and professional operations as "community facilities" and permits them in any zoning district as-of-right and bulk bonuses. Substantial changes in uses of community facility since 1961 adversely affect many neighborhoods. Religious facilities, for example, increasingly hold events and turn to commercial uses to try to cover increasing operating costs, bringing extra traffic, noise, parking and congestion into otherwise quiet neighborhoods. Houses of worship occupy private homes in residential areas, often violating required rear yards, failing to provide adequate parking, or necessary handicapped access and emergency egress. "Professional offices" included under this category were included to provide communities with medical doctors, dentists or lawyers who lived in the community and dedicated a small walk-in office to provide services to local clients. Now, residential neighborhoods are experiencing the conversion of private houses to use by multiple professionals with substantial out patient clinics. Publicly and privately supported community facilities pose potential disruptions to our neighborhoods. Communities must be able to comment, evaluate and review the siting and operations of these entities. In addition, some city, state and publicly funded agencies and non-profit institutions may currently move or substantially modify existing community facilities and other operations without public review.

The City’s recent modification of the laws governing the construction of community facilities did not address the continued abuse by community facilities of the existing zoning rules. Community facilities as of right receive bulk bonuses without community or city review to build structures far greater than the Zoning Resolution would normally permit. Many community facilities are not required to use 100% of their increased bulk for the “community facility function,” currently they may use portions of their structure for normal commercial profit. While community facilities provide a valuable resource to our city, they should not be allowed to receive greater benefits than their neighbors, i.e., increased bulk, without a review process.

Therefore, the Queens Civic Congress adopts the following:

1. Subject the siting, scoping and sponsoring of publicly funded facilities to ULURP regulations as a non-conforming use.
2. Eliminate “as of right” bulk bonus or any other exempt space without a special permit subject to community board review as was accomplished in R2 zones under recent community facility rules.
3. Base the siting of facilities on the need for the proposed service within the community based on the number of like facilities within the area.
4. Require the sponsoring federal, state or city agency to notify all elected officials, community boards and community-based civic organizations and neighborhood groups with the promulgation of the Request for Proposal. Mandate that public notice must appear at the same time in community newspapers that circulate in the affected neighborhood(s).
5. Require, coinciding with the issuance of the initial Request for Proposal, full disclosure by the sponsoring federal, state or city agency and by any provider responding to the RFP:

- a. verification of need in a sited neighborhood.
 - b. alternative sites.
 - c. choice of providers.
 - d. terms of the contract (including length).
 - e. establishment of a Community Compliance Review Board.
 - f. full financial disclosure by the provider.
 - g. environmental impact statement.
6. Rate objectively the effectiveness and impact on the community of any proposed program.
 7. Create repository for public comment on facilities at NYC Department of Consumer Affairs offices.
 8. Eliminate the community facilities bulk bonus in residential districts. Count recreation rooms, basement, cellar and attics in the FAR.
 9. Prohibit rear or side yard parking at community facilities in residential areas
 10. Require community facilities to obtain special permits when they seek to site in residential districts -- subject to public review with legislative oversight. BSA decisions should have an appeals process to City Council for disputed cases.
 11. Impose parking requirements for all community facilities regardless of the zone, predicated on occupancy of the entire building rather than the number of fixed seats.
 12. Prohibit use of valet parking services to count toward meeting community facilities parking requirements.
 13. Require parking space for one in every six persons in total occupancy for any increase in bulk bonus if there is not a concurrent increase in side yard buffer without parking.
 14. Apply the Internal Revenue Code with respect to accessory uses on community facilities.
 15. Require Department of Buildings' review of any change in use of a community facility to determine continued eligibility for community facility bonuses or exemptions.
 16. Require on-site or appropriate commercial parking for all community facility accessory vehicles.
 17. Required number of parking spots for any community facility must at least meet minimum standard City parking requirements for other uses in that zone.
 18. Require a special use permit granting process when the community facilities changes or alter use under which they are built "as of right" or sought a variance. A new use requires a new permit and use vote.
 19. Only permit "as of right" construction with no provision of parking for houses of worship when there are no ancillary uses and no bulk bonuses that occupy or build consistent with the residential zoning in R1, R2, R3 and R4 zones.
 20. Eliminate any bulk bonus for community facilities in R1, 2 and 3 zones except by special permit.
 21. Require community review of any State agency plan to open, move or substantially modify the mission of State funded community facilities.
 22. Improve the opportunity for community input and review and provide accountability in the siting of state-licensed group homes, also known as community residences, by amending state law to require the state agency which licenses the proposed facility in a community to:
 - a) notify affected community members;
 - b) hold a public hearing in the community near the proposed facility;
 - c) provide a 60 day comment period following the public hearing;
 - d) provide residents the opportunity, presently afforded community boards under existing law, to propose alternate sites; and
 - e) mandate that the community be able to present arguments of over-saturation but, unlike existing law, consider the existence of all types of community facilities which may impact a neighborhood.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police precinct staffing is currently lower than during the Dinkins administration. New York City continues to suffer from the lack of community policing, inadequate response times to 911 emergency calls, and deteriorating public confidence in the NYPD, particularly among our diverse ethnic communities as demonstrated most clearly in the recent Kahlua Club incident. Police must increase their credibility in the community and practice "Courtesy, Professionalism and Respect." We note the enactment - called for in our previous two platforms - of the law that bans racial profiling.

ID Theft has become a problem of critical dimension as the global economy becomes more reliant on credit, debit card and Electronic Funds Transactions.

Graffiti has made a striking and disappointing comeback in the past few years. The recent passage of a law supported by the QCC to require property owners to allow the city or city-authorized groups to cleanup defaced private property will hopefully start to address the issue of graffiti.

The response time of the Fire Department's Emergency Medical Service has not improved as was promised by the consolidation of the EMS into the FDNY.

Therefore, the Queens Civic Congress adopts the following:

1. Bring and maintain precinct staffing to Safe Street/Safe Cities.
2. Deploy uniformed police in accord with the citywide percentage of crimes. Queens, for example, 19% of the manpower, but 25% of the crime in the city.
3. Restore and increase police staff assigned to precinct-based Community Patrol.
4. Bring all precincts to less than seven minute has response time.
5. Increase NYPD Budget allocation to purchase more RMPs (radio motor patrol vehicles), Unmarked and Nondescript Vehicles. Keep the present practice of keeping cars for three years, i.e. 90,000 miles.
6. Increase allocation of RMPs to outlying precincts.
7. Increase emphasis on auto theft, identity theft, robberies and burglaries, apprehension and prevention.
8. Work with community groups for a graffiti-free environment, increase penalties for defacing property.
9. Continue the police bicycle surveillance program with tax payer supported equipment and maintenance.
10. Strengthen the Civilian Complaint Review Board and re-engineer it as an independent NYPD monitor with its budget set as a percent of the NYPD budget.
11. Maintain existing Emergency Medical Service ambulance tours and encourage as many additional voluntary ambulance tours to enhance emergency response.
12. Enforce training and performance standards for voluntary ambulance groups used by the Fire Department.
13. Require contracted ambulance service to utilize the nearest medical facilities.

14. Develop and implement a true community policing program to engage the resources of concerned communities in a partnership with the NYPD to address crime and disorder, including quality of life problems, in each precinct.
15. Implement a plan to reduce gun violence, also supported by the Mother Against Guns and Million Mom March Queens Chapter: Deploy cops appropriately to take guns off the street and prevent illegal guns from finding their way here, without violating one's rights or worse; Advocate the strengthened "Christopher's Law" requirement for handgun safety locks on all firearms at the federal level; Require reporting -- in the Mayor's Management Report -- on gun safety and enforcement measures; National photo licensing and safety testing for handgun buyers; National registration of all handguns; More gun case prosecutions by the U.S. Attorneys under tougher Federal statutes; Prosecute gun cases under federal law by empowering Assistant District Attorneys, by special designation as federal prosecutors by U.S. Attorneys; and initiate and pursue lawsuits against gun makers.
16. Restrict use of semi-automatic weapons (M-16s) in crowded subways by Law Enforcement Personnel and negotiate use by military personnel.
17. Return the Fire Marshal station to each borough and the Queens Marshals to Fort Totten during each shift.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Parks and recreational facilities are among the most important quality of life programs of any community. Parks are irreplaceable assets. The long-term viability of parks has become increasingly under attack due to significant reductions in professional maintenance and upkeep at Parks facilities and trees along our thoroughfares throughout the borough. Deferred maintenance and use of non-professional maintenance workers will eventually lead to a complete breakdown of Parks services. The City fails to adequately fund the Department to deliver horticulture and Forestry Services and to staff sufficient plumbers, masons, carpenters, etc. The City needs to allocate all parks-based revenues to the Department of Parks and Recreation operation budget. According to NY4P, Parks have seen a budget reduction since 1990 of 32% and a 70% reduction in staff, seriously affecting Parks maintenance.

The Parks Department has conducted major capital programs to improve parks and has not followed-through with maintenance and support services to protect the investment. In addition, as the borough with the largest amount of natural area, Queens has the most to lose from a policy of only maintaining the ball fields and playgrounds at its parks. Given extensive residential and commercial development, it is crucial that we protect in every way possible existing and potential parklands.

Our many lovely parks and greenways must be protected from natural deterioration, vandalism and changes in use of open areas due to a variety of factors. Our Parks are particularly vulnerable properties, which repeatedly attract proposals that may harm these precious resources. Recognizing the inherently commercial nature of concessions, large-scale concessions in parks and other public spaces and the use of private entities to privatize parks must be strictly limited by rules for Major Concessions as mandated by the City Charter. Strict scrutiny must be applied where private conservancies are used to maintain and operate any park to ensure public access and use of our parks remain pre-eminent.

Therefore, the Queens Civic Congress adopts the following:

1. Authorize the Department of Parks and Recreation to retain funding generated by Park properties.
2. Establish a secure funding source for Greenways for the Queens area.
3. Upgrade bike paths and include in Greenways.
4. Create a ComStat for parks that will provide the public with regular, accessible measurements of maintenance and operation of all 1,700 Parks Department properties.
5. Enforce vendors' permit requirements in parks to control illegal vendors.
6. Maintain graffiti-free parks and playgrounds.
7. Remove and replace dead trees and stumps within 6 months on a single service request call.
8. Prune trees on a five-year cycle and plant at least 25,000 trees citywide per year.
9. Fund the Forestry Division so that it can oversee the city's urban forest.

10. Improve parks' physical plant
 - a) Increase maintenance, security and repair services at Parks;
 - b) Improve plant life and nature trails;
 - c) Add recreational and educational programs and services; and
 - d) Reconnect bodies of water to native water supply to revitalize local species and reduce algae.
11. Enforce requirements of public review and legislative oversight of proposals to alienate or to require transfer of parkland, including private management arrangements to ULURP and State law.
12. Strictly limit Major Concessions in Parks – Repeal the 1998 Rules for Major Concessions and create new ones that establish realistic triggers for public review and legislative oversight, such as:
 - a) Marinas;
 - b) Parking lots of any size;
 - c) New buildings of more than 10,000 square feet -- not in parks;
 - d) New buildings of more than 5,000 square feet -- in parks;
 - e) Open use in park -- 5,000 square feet;
 - f) Restaurant -- 150 seats or more;
 - g) One or more concession totaling 25% of one park.
13. Hire sufficient professional employees to maintain the NYC Parks infrastructure.
14. Establish a Parks budget line item for the maintenance for natural open spaces.
15. Support the Flushing Meadows-Corona Park Conservancy.
16. Protect Flushing Meadows-Corona Park from any further commercial and corporate exploitation.
17. Impose a moratorium on all new construction/development of non-public-benefit projects in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park pending completion of a Master Plan by a Commission that has public members.
18. Establish “Flagship” designation for the Alley Pond Regional Watershed Park and seek community input.
19. Designate additional major parks in Queens as flagship parks, joining the only Queens flagship parks: Forest Park and Flushing Meadows-Corona Park.
20. Preserve Fort Totten - This beautiful and historic area has become available due to reduced need as a military installation by the federal government. We must protect this property for use of future Queens residents by:
 - a) Mandating restrictive covenant for the reversion of any Fort Totten space exclusively to Parks Department for public use if the space is no longer required by Fire Department for educational purposes.
 - b) Expanding space available for use by community not-for-profit organizations to 14 buildings.
21. Require specificity in the Fire Department’s agreement concerning maintenance of Fort Totten open areas by Parks. Fire and Parks Departments must have nontransferable line item budgets for this maintenance and upkeep.
22. Complete the acquisition of all private parcels within the boundaries of Udalls Cove Ravine.
23. Acquire remaining waterfront and wetland parcels in Northeast Queens and Jamaica Bay.
24. Acquire Klein Farm and additional parcels suitable for parkland.
25. Expedite acquisition of land for Idlewild Park.

TRANSPORTATION - MASS TRANSIT

Queens is a borough of over 2 million residents, encompassing scores of communities. Queens' transportation infrastructure is the life-line that binds the neighborhoods of the communities of our borough together. It links Queens residents with jobs, services and activities both inside and outside the borough. Providing fast, accessible transportation for residents of the borough is critical to our economic, educational, cultural and social success. Our economy is highly dependent on efficient transportation. Should commuting become difficult, individuals and companies will seek housing and economic opportunities elsewhere.

Transportation in our borough includes both mass transit, primarily subways and buses and to a lesser extent, the Long Island Rail Road, and vehicular transportation. Long Island Rail Road and Metro North commuter railroads receive significantly larger subsidies than the subway system at the expense of subway and bus maintenance and expansion.

Ridership growth dramatically increased fare revenues but the resulting continued increase in overcrowding imposes discomfort and inconvenience to riders. Closing subway token booths has increased security risks to all riders and imposed a particular hardship on elderly, the disabled and parents with young children.

Planning and funding for capital projects to expand capacity is at best tenuous. Each of these transportation modes has separate needs. New York's elected and transportation officials need to seek and secure a fair share of funding for mass transit when New York City's economy - which drives our nation's economy - remains dependent on a vibrant transportation system.

While Manhattan is now getting the Second Avenue Subway, it is at the expense of Queens residents. Queens has only two significant subway systems and one smaller line for over two million residents, but the Number 7 extension is stalled, the east side access is nowhere in sight, and mass transit access to Queens' two major airports is put on the back burner.

Therefore, the Queens Civic Congress adopts the following:

1. Provide Queens commuters a more clean, comfortable, dependable and speedy trip to and from work. Apply Metropolitan Transportation Authority budget to increase mass transit service.
2. Establish a citywide Surface Transit Authority to coordinate interborough operations, improve surface transportation, ensure a meaningful community role in project and operations planning and improve scheduling.

3. Call on MTA New York City Transit to revise its 63rd Street Tunnel Service Plan which generates numerous rider complaints from both the Brooklyn and Queens communities, to the Service Options jointly proposed by QCC, Noble Street Block Association & Friends and Regional Plan Association to restore the pre-existing E, F (operating through the 53rd Street tunnel), G (to Forest Hills) & R service routes and run the V trains instead through the 63rd Street Tunnel as a Broadway express until the opening of the Second Avenue line, when the V trains will eventually enter the Second Avenue Subway upon its completion.
4. Call on The Long Island Rail Road to increase marketing of its service to Queens residents, review prospects for re-use of abandoned and underused service lines in Queens and must complete a marketing study before recommending or implementing any further station closings in Queens.
5. Call on the MTA New York City Transit to abandon its program to eliminate all token booths and clerks and replace them with MetroCard machines and turnstiles from the New York City subway system.
6. Call on MTA New York City Transit to honor judge Lebedeff's decision, which stated that these alterations constitute a significant change in access to subway service, for which the NYCTA is required" (i) to give public notice, including notice to affected community boards, (ii) to conduct a public hearing, and (iii) to obtain the approval of its board, all as specified in Section 1205(5) of the Public Authorities Law."
7. Call on MTA New York City Transit to provide convenient, street level MetroCard outlets for seniors and people with disabilities since MetroCard service is currently provided only at subway station booths reached by staircases or at off-street retail locations, barring access by the physically disabled and seniors.
8. Enforce the three-minute rule for idling buses.
9. Require transportation agencies to give at least 90 days notice to community boards, community organizations and affected institutions before implementing changes, modifications or removal of bus routes, bus stops and service delivery.
10. Call on MTA New York City Transit and the N.Y.C. Department of Transportation to reconfigure Queens bus routes, many of which were laid out more than a half century ago, to reflect changing residential, commercial, business, cultural and industrial needs. Require public review of proposed route changes.
11. Establish Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems, especially serving areas without adequate mass transit service, particularly western and south Queens. Require thorough public review and input on BRT routing, stations and stops and the impact on commercial and residential districts.
12. Establish fiscal equity for subway riders relative to suburban commuter lines to correct the billion dollar inequity in fare subsidies applied to out-of-towners.
13. Require the MTA New York City Transit and all public and private surface operators to purchase exclusively buses that use non-polluting fuels, commensurate with standards applicable to Nassau and Suffolk counties and to replace non-compliant buses on an expedited basis.
14. Create new and revise, where applicable, existing bus routes to provide one-seat cross-borough surface transit.
15. Authorize Access A Ride to cross county lines up to five miles (Weprin bill A-9515).
16. Return express F train service from 179th Street.
17. Make construction of the 7 line extension to the far West Side of Manhattan a priority. Oppose the 2nd Avenue line unless it is a full 4 track line with connections to the Bronx and Brooklyn and Queens subway lines.

18. Seek community input through community board review of the design of new and refurbished subway stations. These stations affect the appearance of streets in the community.
19. Demand immediate investigation and complete response by transportation agencies to problems such as the recent Long Island Rail Road gap issue.
20. Introduce point-to-point bus service to improve north/south bus service in Queens and between any other locations where it would improve bus service.
21. Explore rapid trains for city-to-city mass transportation to avoid trips between city and airport and lengthy security delays at airports for relatively short trips. Rapid trains are used in Europe, Japan and China
22. Seek fair share of mass transit funding from Albany and Washington with the goal to establish a system of free fares for subways and local buses [London already allows youth and seniors to ride free and is exploring an extension to those who receive public benefits].

TRANSPORTATION - VEHICULAR

It was pointed out in the last section that transportation in our borough includes both mass transit and vehicular transportation. Our local streets and roads and arterial highways, expressways, bridges and tunnels serve both passenger vehicles and trucks and, to a large extent, share these important roadways with bus loads of people headed to school and work, not to mention pedestrians and bicycles. The value of truck transportation to the borough's and the region's economy can not be underestimated. We must be cognizant also, of the need for peace, quiet and safety in residential areas. All of these needs must be balanced with a limited budget, lack of room for roadway expansion and an ever aging infrastructure.

Therefore, the Queens Civic Congress adopts the following:

1. Require New York State and New York City to control and reduce ever-expanding trucking and commercial vehicular traffic that is clogging our streets and highways producing insufferable pollution. Freight transportation alternatives must be developed, such as the proposed rail freight tunnel from Brooklyn under New York Harbor. We support the building of the rail freight tunnel under New York harbor provided that the transfer of rail freight to truck is distributed evenly throughout the Bronx and Long Island and that Western Queens not be the sole transfer point.
2. Control and reduce illegal and perilous truck and commercial vehicular traffic on Queens' local streets through meaningful policing and environmental enforcement.
3. Expand use of EZ-Pass for paying municipal parking lot fees and install EZ-Pass scanners in all lanes, including manned lanes at MTA Bridges and Tunnels facilities.
4. Enact legislation to protect the privacy of EZ-Pass users and bar the use of EZ-Pass for monitoring or enforcing speeding and other traffic infractions or for tracking vehicular use. Enact legislation to set standards for law enforcement agencies or others seeking EZ-Pass data that would require a judicial subpoena.
5. Implement off-hour discounts for travelers and truckers in order to relieve prime travel time delay on existing tolled Port Authority and MTA tunnel and bridge crossings based on time of a day use.
6. Maintain free use of all non-TBTA East River and Harlem River bridges for all city residents, and oppose any plan or scheme to impose a tax, fee or toll on vehicles to enter Manhattan such as the "fee" proposed by the Mayor as part of "PlaNYC".
7. Create safe cycling routes to encourage less reliance on fossil-fueled vehicles and to enhance the quality of life of Queens citizens. Implement routes only with advance review and notification to communities.
8. Oppose the expansion of HOV lanes in Queens, which have proven to be ineffective in national surveys, as an imposition on the quality of life of residents and communities in its path, with no benefit to the people of Queens.
9. Require community board and civic association consultation and input on the City's determination of truck routes
10. Regulate and closely supervise city and utility work crews and private contractors who cut open streets and roads so that remedial work is proper, durable and long-lasting. Coordinate roadway improvements with utilities to prevent re-opening newly restored streets.

11. Increase handicapped accessible taxicabs on City streets. Oppose any increase in commuter van (dollar vans) services as a substitute for adequate public transportation. Establish uniform visual identification of legal vans (color, signage).
12. Oppose any increase in commuter van (dollar vans) services as a substitute for adequate public transportation. Establish uniform visual identification of legal vans (color, signage).

TRANSPORTATION - AVIATION

We recognize the importance of Kennedy International and LaGuardia Airports to the convenience and economic vitality of the borough and city. However, we must control and curtail the negative impact of both noise and pollution stemming from the aircraft activity at the two Queens airports, and mitigate the harsh, often unbearable sufferings of residents nearby to these facilities.

Therefore, the Queens Civic Congress adopts the following:

1. Oppose the weakening or termination of the High Density Rule, as well as additional exemptions as permitted in the Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century (AIR 21) enacted in April 2000.
2. Call for a rollback of any additional flights (slots) at LaGuardia Airport to below the levels preceding the enactment of AIR 21.
3. Call for the re-allocation of existing slots, not new slots, for greater efficiencies and to meet current needs, and to set statutory limitations on the number of operations at New York metropolitan airports.
4. Call for the restriction of all flights, scheduled and unscheduled (except emergency operations) to the hours of 7 am to 11 pm.
5. Improve noise abatement procedures, including an immediate ban on flights by any Stage 2 commercial jetliners equipped with “hush kits,” which have no effect on noise or pollution reduction. All commercial aircraft must be Stage 3 since 2000, but charter and private aircraft under 75,000 pounds are still be exempt. All Stage 2 aircraft should be banned from New York City airports.
6. Call for a change in take-off frequency below 58 seconds to a much wider time interval to attenuate the unremitting jet-noise created by the “high density rule.
7. Establish and enforce formal accountability by the Port Authority and the Federal Aviation Administration to the Environmental Protection Administration and independent citizen representation. Reinstate and strengthen enforcement of the Quiet Communities Act of 1978 and the Noise Control Act of 1972.
8. Reduce immediately the effects on human mental and physical health and to the environment of aircraft noise and pollution from jet exhaust and the dumping of jet fuel.
9. Support legislation which would call for an airport measure-cap-trade program as is currently in effect at Boston’s Logan Airport, where if the airport exceeds its pollution levels, it has to pay or trade with low-pollution areas.
10. Call for the installation of air-sensing devices on the Queens side of runway 13/31 at LaGuardia Airport to supplement those being installed in a controlled test by the State of New York’s Health Department in the South Bronx.
11. Adjust flight schedules to more evenly spread aircraft noise among the communities. Adjust the distribution of flights off LaGuardia's runway 13, since northeast Queens endures 95 percent of the take-offs at LaGuardia.
12. Require aircraft landing and taking off at Kennedy or LaGuardia Airports to use flight paths over water, parks or highways when practical.
13. Subject any disposition of an airport by sale, lease, transfer or license agreement to approval by the City Council.
14. Subject any management contract covering an airport to approval by the City Council.

15. Call for the Queens Borough President's Advisory Board to become more proactive in terms of sustainable aviation policies, programs and projects in behalf of the affected communities.
16. The Flushing Airport exemption must not be removed.
17. Support the plan by the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey to relieve the congestion at LaGuardia Airport (the world's busiest airport, where only 65% of flights have been on time in the past two years) by the introduction of a rule that would require airlines to utilize their assigned gates (slots) at no less than 80% of capacity, or allow other airlines to use them as well; and to impose a minimum number of occupied seats on flights.

TRANSPORTATION - JFK AND LaGUARDIA ACCESS

We agree for the need for an alternative efficient mode of access to and from Kennedy International and LaGuardia Airports and Manhattan. “AirTrain JFK” has now been in operation for over two years and has achieved some ridership gains, but we believe it has not achieved a level of use consistent with the huge financial investment and costly impacts on the communities through which it operates. Frequent fliers with luggage, particularly those on expense accounts, are not likely to use a system where multiple modes and inconvenient changes via steps and escalators are necessary. We look forward to a more convenient, one-seat ride to the airport for businesspeople from the central business district.

No apparent progress has been made toward a mass transit solution to get to LaGuardia Airport. LaGuardia, one of the busiest airports in the country, must be served by convenient one-seat service as quickly as possible to reduce traffic congestion, waste of fuel and environmental damage of private cars and taxis bringing passengers to the airport.

Therefore, the Queens Civic Congress adopts the following:

1. Provide direct one-seat rail access to both Kennedy International and LaGuardia Airports that will be seamless, accessible, comfortable and affordable with greater efficiencies. Our responsible borough, city and state officials must see to it that the projects go forward in a careful, responsible manner that minimizes harm to communities. Cut and cover, sound barriers and all available technologies should be employed to preserve and enhance the neighborhoods that are home to tens of thousands of Queens residents.
2. Subject such projects to community input and review.
3. Call for a direct route to LaGuardia Airport via the Port Washington line of the Long Island Rail Road, with a connection at Willets Point, which will have a minimal impact on communities.
4. Support JFK access from lower Manhattan through Brooklyn provided the project has the support of Brooklyn civics and causes no environmental harm.

EDUCATION

Just four years after the Mayor announced Children First school reforms. The landscape has changed again with the Department of Education moving from a centralized to a decentralized system. The objective is to have the principals of each school responsibility for their school's performance.

Performance over the last four years depends on what set of figures you want to believe. On the one hand the NYC Department of Education points to grade level percentages and graduation rates increasing; while the NYS figures seem to indicate little gain. They do seem to agree that we are on the right course in the primary grades but from middle school on progress in being reversed.

Many changes are afoot affecting every facet of educating our children. The points addressed in the most recent power point presentation from Chancellor Klein include: accountability, empowerment, student funding and teacher excellence. As always the devil is in the details that need to be developed. It will take another three to five years for us to judge the impact of these changes, but we must be flexible to make adjustments during the journey.

School funding continues as the primary concern of the Queens Civic Congress. New York City schools serve 40% of the New York State school population and receive 38.7% back from the State. The Governor and our Legislative leaders must develop a financing plan that provides a sound basic education for each student from early childhood through high school. Implement a fair New York State financing plan. The Governor and our Legislative leaders have been ordered by the State's highest court to increase funding to NYC schools which provide a sound basic education through high school. Various stakeholders have provided estimates from \$5 to \$7 billion of additional funding to answer the court order.

The teachers' union and the Department of Education are not fully aligned as a team to work for the benefit of our students; this must change.

All analyses of educational outcomes show better results with smaller classes and when programs in music, sports, the arts and other extra curricular programs are added.

The QCC finds after school programs vitally important element of education because 26% of our students come from single-parent households and 40 % from households where both parents work outside the home. The most recent statistics demonstrate our students get into trouble between the hours of 3:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Therefore, the Queens Civic Congress adopts the following:

1. Implement a robust pre-Kindergarten program. All the studies indicate our children are better students and better citizens the earlier they begin the education process. Any parent of a three year old will tell you how their children absorbed all of their experiences. Early Childhood Centers are a no-brainer and we must carry out the State mandate to implement.
2. Fund classroom and school-based services before administrative costs.
3. Reduce class sizes to levels appropriate in each grade and student grouping.
4. Restore all arts, music, sports and extracurricular programs.
5. Reform School Governance eliminate the Panel for Educational Policy
6. Implement the building-by-building maintenance plan
7. Expand the Beacon Program to include all schools, thereby encouraging youth programs in each neighborhood; provide oversight to ensure the program delivers services identified and needed by the community. The city must ultimately plan to open more neighborhood schools at night and on weekends for youth programs. Queens needs this because Beacons tend to be separated by great distances
8. Expand Computer usage and training, provide well-trained computer instructors.
9. Encourage the development of vocational apprenticeship, based on a model that will teach those students with an aptitude and preference for skilled crafts
10. Enforce immunization requirements
11. Have janitorial services in City schools done by City employees not contractors.
12. Reduce school overcrowding by building new schools. The following information was provided by the New York City School Construction Authority: Since our previous platform, progress was made in building new schools and making additions to existing schools for Queens from CY 2004 through CY 2006, including: completed construction two primary and one intermediate schools, plus additions to five primary and one intermediate schools. This provided 2,800 seats. In addition, 2,887 high school seats were provided through the lease construction program, addition and reclamation. (See appendix 1 for the specific schools.) Schools in construction will add 3,906 seats between CYs 2007 – 2008. (See appendix for details).
13. Establish Borough School Superintendents - Each shall be responsible for all pre-K, elementary, middle/junior high and high schools (including specialized and alternative schools), citywide special education programs, and adult and continuing education. This will facilitate programs that meet the basic needs of boroughs and their neighborhoods. The Chancellor shall establish the criteria for borough financial officers. Each borough superintendent, subject to the Chancellor's approval, shall appoint borough financial officers. Each borough Superintendent shall select all supervisors from district managers to principals, educational administrators, supervisors of special education and assistant principals. This model also saves monies by eliminating the ten regional superintendents and their staffs. The new de-centralized organization placing the responsibility with school principals and the potential guidance options makes a move in this direction.
14. School Funding - The allocation of funds to the boroughs and schools shall be per capita, according to the program and the number of eligible students. The Mayor and the City Council shall allocate funds to the programs based on units of appropriation set by the Chancellor. An attempt is being made to address the funding inequities with the "Fair Student Funding" plan.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Queens has the second largest and best-educated labor force of all the boroughs. Queens also has a significant pool of available warehouse, industrial and commercial space - much of which has been modernized and upgraded. But the competition for office, retail and professional space and jobs from Nassau County and other regional counties is fierce.

The lifeblood of any county is the ability to attract new businesses and to retain existing businesses in order to create economic growth and provide job opportunities for the local residents. Queens has major aviation industry jobs, service sector, wholesale and retail trade industries in its economic base. Large tracts of vacant land or buildings in previously industrial areas and in the Rockaways create huge opportunities for significant economic development in our borough. Because of the impact of large scale retail development subject to any review, Economic Impact Review should be part of the review process. In addition, often major economic development projects include Community Benefit Agreements which give something back to the host community, but no standards exist for compensation or implementation reviews.

Entrepreneurs and businesses need certain incentives, in addition to access to capital and labor, in order to start a new venture or continue an existing business.

Therefore, the Queens Civic Congress adopts the following:

1. Institute the "Downtown Manhattan Tax Credit Model" to help neighborhood commercial shopping strips - The shopping areas in the other boroughs should be able to use this concept of tax credit incentives. The tax credit model was successfully used in the revitalization of downtown Manhattan to improve commercial and residential neighborhood occupancy, and to increase utilization and enhance competitiveness with respect to neighboring megastores and suburban malls.
2. Expand the sales tax exemption on apparel/footwear purchases to \$500, and include in the exemption most essential household items.
3. Eliminate the Unincorporated Business Tax - Entrepreneurs and professionals continue to leave the city, particularly Queens County, for the lure of a less taxing business tax climate of nearby suburban counties.
4. Complete the across-the-board rollback of all the Dec. 2002 real estate tax increases for private homes, rental, condominium and cooperative residential property as well as commercial, retail and residential property.
5. Establish standards for provisions in Community Benefit Agreement and community input and review of implementation of any CBA

6. Stabilize Water/Sewer Rates – Roll back water/sewer rates, which have been going up at percentage increase two and three times the rate of inflation. This “hidden tax” is a source of revenue for the city that receives little attention and no retribution from those who have to pay it. The independent New York City Water Board has to learn to live within its means.
 - a. Dedicate all funds generated by the Water Board to running the agency and for operating and maintaining the City's vital water supply and sewer systems.
 - b. Enact legislation to Delay Water Board Rate Setting until after City adopts its budget. The Assembly unanimously passed legislation A.03791; the State Senate must introduce and pass this bill.
 - c. Cap the water/sewer rate increase yearly at the rate of inflation.
 - d. Remove capital costs from the calculation of the rate structure.
 - e. Cease “rental payments” from the NYC Water Board to the City for the “right to operate” the water supply infrastructure for the benefit of the city.
 - f. Fund capital water and sewer projects directly from the general New York City capital budget.
 - g. Aggressively Advocate the federal and state governments fund the mandates each imposes on the City’s water supply and disposal systems.
 - h. Reduce water and sewer rates to reflect improvements in billing and collections.
 - i. Provide incentives to reduce consumption (and disposal) rather than charge for basic use which imposes a de facto penalty on those who conserve.
 - j. Set up a senior citizen water rate relief program similar to the Seniors Homeowner Exemption on real estate taxes. Pending legislation A.07961 (2007) must get passed.
7. Eliminate the New York State gross receipts tax on our utility bills - The gross receipts tax is a hidden tax imposed by New York State, and very few other states, on its residents' utility bills - gas, electric and telephone. The gross receipts tax contributes to New York State's being one of the highest energy cost states in the country, raising about \$1 billion for the state coffers. While the state has begun to phase this tax out, under the present scenario it will be years before it is eliminated. Furthermore, the deregulation of utilities will draw out-of-state competitors, which are exempt from this tax. These utilities will be able to offer lower rates than our native utilities. It is time to eliminate the residential and commercial gross receipts tax in this legislative session.
8. Eliminate the New York City personal income tax surcharge - New York City is one of the only municipalities in the country that has a personal income tax, much less a surcharge on top of that. This onerous tax add-on was imposed temporarily during financial crisis in order to meet City obligations. We must immediately remove the personal income tax surcharge and lower the City's personal income tax to retain the middle-class tax base in the City.
9. Index to COLA the income eligibility limits for the Senior Citizen Homeowners Exemption (SCHE) and the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE). Pass the legislation, A. 06538 (2004) introduced in the Assembly and needed to be re-introduced in the Senate.
10. Implement the Queens Civic Congress Real Property Tax Reform Initiative:
 - a. That would help more New Yorkers who need the help – Middle, moderate and lower income homeowners and tenants, and imposes equity based on a property’s use and occupancy.
 - b. Implement Co-op and Condo Property Tax reform without shifting any burden to owners of one, two or three family homes.
 - c. Capture billions of dollars in lost real estate tax revenue based on illegal uses and improper property classifications through a combination of fines and improvements in the classification of real property.

11. Reform the City's personal income tax through a surcharge on (New York State Adjusted Gross) incomes over \$200,000 (nearly 90% of this gets raised from those who earn over \$1,000,000) and apply the revenue to reduce the real estate tax rates hikes.
12. Remove the \$15 auto registration surcharge.
13. Repeal State and City surcharges on cellular and landline telephone bills for 911 and enhanced 911. Oppose any institution of the 911 surcharge for future enhancements.
14. Establish an Arts District in Long Island City in close proximity to public transportation, parking and regional highways
15. Qualify more Queens-based cultural programs for CIG status.
16. Adopt a fair and consistent formula for the distribution of funds to cultural institutions throughout the City, such as use of size of physical plant, payroll, attendance, quality of programs, etc.
17. Establish legislation to incorporate a cultural component in large projects of a residential nature.

ENVIRONMENT

With the closure of the Fresh Kills Landfill (Staten Island), all New Yorkers must share equally and fairly in the challenges of disposing of the city's waste. A major step happened with implementation of weekly collection of recyclables in Queens. New York City requires more waste reduction and recycling to avoid more costly garbage exporting.

New York City also requires stronger actions to protect the City's supply of clean drinking water and to expedite the completion of the water tunnel and planning for adequate drainage and water treatment in underserved areas, especially in south Queens.

Jamaica Bay is a critical ecological resource serving much of Queens and providing recreational activities for residents. Yet, Jamaica Bay is in jeopardy due to years of neglect, run-off and untreated waste. Residential development is encroaching on viable tidal wetlands and marsh areas and there is very little public access to these valuable natural resources.

Global Warming and the adverse health impacts of pollution require local initiatives to improve our air quality. New York made great strides since the “dark sky” era of incinerators in almost every neighborhood. Asthma and lung disease disproportionately afflicts youth and residents in lower-income communities, often near major vehicle transportation routes.

Therefore, Queens Civic Congress adopts the following:

1. Support the continuation of the City Council's waste recycling law mandates. Implement the original 1989 New York Recycling Plan (Local Law 19) to full mandates.
2. Adopt a plan to dispose of the city's waste not subject to recycling.
3. Mandate community review and notification with legislative oversight for the siting or change in use of waste transfer stations.
4. Restore street trash collection and cleaning of street trash receptacles.
5. Increase frequency of collections, particularly to schools and commercial litter baskets.
6. Strictly enforce Department of Sanitation codes in both residential and commercial districts.
7. Create Community District Sanitation Councils similar to precinct community councils, which would provide an opportunity for problem resolution and coordination of operations.
8. Continue to collect yard waste.
9. Restore periodic collection of paints, batteries, tires and other toxic materials in each borough.
10. Accomplished legislation to prevent additional solid waster transfer stations in or near residential areas or the routing of trucks carrying putrescible solid waste through residential areas. Monitor and track implementation.
11. Create an “E-waste Center” to collect used personal computers, printers and related devices and recover gold, copper and other materials.
12. Reduce recycling fines for homeowners and tenants to \$25.00.

13. Introduce bottle and can buybacks centers. Use surplus bottle and can deposit money to fund recycling and waste reduction programs and expand the bottle bill to cover additional non-carbonated beverage containers.
14. Establish City and state programs to require the purchase and use of "Clean Air" school buses, taxis, all MTA and private buses, emergency and heavy duty (i.e. Sanitation) vehicles and look at similar programs to apply to fleet vehicles and freight haulers that travel local NYC streets, and establish clean fuel stations accessible to the public and private fleet vehicles and taxis.
15. Support proposed legislation to protect the New York City Watershed with the following elements: A Comprehensive Watershed and Delivery System Management Plan covering the Catskill, Delaware, Croton and Brooklyn/Queens aquifer watersheds; An Annual Watershed Survey and Review of Rules and Regulations and Agreements on Watershed Protection; Reform of Personnel to Protect the Watershed and Water Supply and A Water Conservation Plan. Support the acquisition of property surrounding our watersheds to prevent any further deterioration of our water supply.
16. Oppose any increase of former Jamaica Water Supply water into the New York City water system.
17. Support the proposed Croton Aqueduct to increase water supply to Queens.
18. Take immediate steps to reduce the effects of aircraft.
19. Take immediate steps to reduce the effects of pollution from jet exhaust and the dumping of jet fuel.
20. Establish new wetlands legislation to protect waterfront and all remaining riparian wetlands from development and enforce existing waterfront zoning laws.
21. Oppose any legislation (currently HR 2995 and S 517 in the Congress) that would encourage weather manipulation of the ionosphere through atmospheric experimentation or chemtrails designed to lessen or increase the intensity of storms, and which require the use of particulate compounds. The perceived benefits are too vague, and the legal and liability issues pertaining to weather modification, and the potential adverse consequence to health, climate, water and air quality resulting from weather modification activities should be considered before such legislation is passed by Congress. Such attempts to geo-engineer the planet also imply ownership over weather in selective areas, a slippery slope in a global ecosystem
22. Ban the distribution of circulars thrown on front lawns, porches and vestibules; support pending city and state legislation to implement the ban.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

We have a very strong healthcare system in New York City and in Queens County. New York State and City have a long tradition of commitment to provide care to our most frail individuals. But, even though the population of Queens is growing at a faster rate than most of the boroughs, and significantly faster than many other regions in the state, a recent study has demanded the closure of six hospitals in the City, including two in Queens. Mergers and acquisitions have also resulted in streamlining of some private hospitals in the borough causing the loss of some additional patient beds.

New York healthcare providers--especially hospitals and nursing homes--have been operating with a deficit for many years. At the same time, the cost of the Medicaid Program is growing to a point of not being sustainable. Commercial insurance rates continue to rise and so does the number of uninsured persons which is now almost 20% in New York State and about 33% in Queens. The uninsured rarely obtain healthcare outside of Queens which places a disproportional burden on Queens' healthcare providers. There are disparities in healthcare outcomes among communities in Queens which are unacceptable. We suffer from significant long-standing shortages in healthcare occupations which threaten our ability to provide healthcare.

Therefore, the Queens Civic Congress adopts the following:

1. Queens should have sufficient inpatient beds to meet the need for hospital and nursing home care within the county. A plan to allow for a phased-in increase in beds in Queens needs to be developed. Western Queens and the Rockaways need new high-quality hospitals that have the capacity to provide interventional care to heart and stroke patients.
2. A non-partisan commission should be established to review and recommend steps to reduce the high cost of various industries that have seen a high rate of return, e.g. HMOs, drug manufacturers, imaging suppliers, implantable device manufacturers, etc.
3. A non-partisan commission should be established to review and recommend overhaul of the reimbursement system to allow for reasonable margins for hospital & nursing homes as well as to promote accessible primary care.
4. The Commission on Healthcare in the 21st Century's efforts concerning long-term care need to be completed.
5. Encourage programs to assist individuals to enter and stay in health professions that that have demonstrated long-term shortages.
6. Develop programs to increase primary and diagnostic care in underserved communities. Emphasis should be placed on providing good health practices by individuals.
7. New York State should take steps to reduce the number of uninsured residents.
8. New York State should develop new regulations and technology to protect private health information in an electronic environment.
9. New York State should provide incentives to promote healthcare information and management systems that reduce medical error, promote communication, and simplify and standardize administrative tasks.

10. Medicare D should be amended to allow for price negotiations with drug manufacturers. Also, the number of drug plans should be reduced and drug plans should maintain their formularies for the enrollment year with limited unavoidable exceptions.
11. Queens should be the site of a first rate medical school.
12. EMS ambulance response time should be measured from the time of the 911 call to the time the person in need is reached.
13. New York State should require environmental testing and abatement of any contamination before any school or healthcare facility is built.
14. We endorse call the designation of Queens as a Health Region, as proposed by Queens Borough President Helen Marshall. We also call for revision of the “Take Care” program of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Specifically, the grouping should reflect the social/economic conditions that produce common challenges to high-quality health care delivery.
15. We also endorse establishing a health care task force comprised of health care leaders in Queens as called for by Queens Borough President Helen Marshall. Health care leaders must include, but not limited to, community leaders who serve on Hospital Community Advisory Boards.
16. There should be expansion of educational efforts to all ages to promote healthy living with special emphasis on good nutrition.
17. Resist any loss of inpatient hospital beds in Queens.
18. Review all sales, mergers and/or sale of Diocesan hospitals in the borough to avoid the loss of beds.
19. Expand Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) both vertical (apartment building and apartment developments) and “without walls” (WOW – for low density communities) to provide services to seniors to continue to live in their homes and communities.
20. Provide adequate funding for necessary language services, youth, after-school and child care programs.
21. Provide appropriate, supervised residences and services for physically handicapped and mentally challenged individuals.
22. The QCC urges government officials to encourage immigrants to become citizens; however, the QCC opposes the extension to non citizens the right to vote in federal, state or local elections for elected officials, referendums, propositions or any other issue on an election ballot.

CITY GOVERNMENT REFORM

Citywide Governance

We welcome the administration's plans to put more information about agency operations on the internet.

We must also ensure that government allows the public basic access to the seat of government to access public meetings with ease, to access their elected and appointed officials in the halls of government and to criticize (or praise) government at the seat of government. Concerns about security offer no basis for these rules that effectively limit speech and opportunities for the average citizen to influence government.

Voting represents one of the ways that citizens participate in civic life and government. Access to voter registration expands public access and participation in government. In our own city, City Hall must encourage this important form of civic and political involvement through easing participation in the political process. This includes encouraging voter registration at our public schools, colleges, and other educational institutions and community and faith-based organizations.

The City's 311 Citizen's Complaint and Service Request System has been in place for several years and provides the Mayor and, more recently civic organizations and citizens, 'big picture' access to important information on the delivery and demand for city services. However, two major problems restrict its usefulness to civic groups: several city agencies have not been integrated into the 311 system, so responsiveness can not be tracked and the data available is only aggregate data available to the zip code level.

Therefore, the Queens Civic Congress adopts the following:

1. Require city government to report routinely basic information about agency operations to community boards, borough boards and council members and borough presidents.
2. Call on the government of our City to ensure access to City Hall and its Plaza to the people.
3. Call on the city to encourage voter registration through the appropriate use of our public schools, colleges, and other educational institutions and community and faith-based organizations.
4. Integrate agencies with legacy systems into 311 as quickly as possible.
5. Provide easy on-line access to 311 data with "drill down" capability.

Borough Presidents

We have consistently advocated a strong role for borough presidents in the governance of our city. City Charter Chapter 4, particularly section 82, clearly requires borough presidents to monitor service delivery, review all capital projects in the borough, advise the mayor on the formulation of the Preliminary and Executive Budgets, provide technical assistance to community boards, and identify the borough's strategic needs.

Therefore, the Queens Civic Congress adopts the following:

1. Provide the Borough President with the resources to empower each to carry out their charter functions and help New York City weather the current fiscal crisis, rather than cut the borough presidents' budget.
2. Provide the Borough Presidents oversight of borough offices of the Department of City Planning and Department of Buildings.

Community Boards

The City Charter established Community Boards to bring government closer to the people and provide local input in such areas as the budget, land use and service delivery. The City Charter Chapter 70, Section 2800, d. clearly requires each community board to carry out 21 enumerated functions, yet the budget provides only minimal funds to carry out these mandates.

In addition, the Queens Civic Congress has observed a reduction in the appointments of civic and neighborhood representatives to community boards. A lack of civic expertise significantly reduces the effectiveness of local community boards.

We are also aware of proposals to change the method of appointing community board members. We support continuing the current method of community board appointments by the Borough Presidents and City Council members.

Therefore, the Queens Civic Congress adopts the following:

1. Call on the City to provide adequate funds for the Community Boards to carry out the Charter mandated functions and to ensure the timely delivery of city services to their districts.
2. Call for Borough Presidents and Council Members to give greater emphasis to qualifications and active community participation of prospective community board members in making their appointments.
3. Maintain a cooperative process between the Borough Presidents and respective Council members to appoint community board members.

City Council

The City Council allows outside employment and the current salary structure is akin to the US. Congress on a local scale and requires no additional payments to assume leadership positions that essentially gets used by the leadership to impose its will and punish independence.

Therefore, the Queens Civic Congress adopts the following:

1. Since City Council member's salaries have been substantially increased and are competitive with a job in the private sector, the Council must eliminate City Council members' lulus and supplemental payment for Council positions such as a chairmanship. The Council permits council members to have full-time outside employment.
2. Mandate future Council member salary increase will only be effective following an intervening election.

CITY BUDGET/FISCAL POLICY

We recognize the need to reform once and for all many city fiscal policies that contribute to annual budget crises, capital budget construction delays and cost increases. While New York City has enjoyed a few years of strong economy and tourism resulting in budget surpluses, the forecast in the next few years is for large deficits. We need a strategic budget plan to prepare for and address the enormous projected deficits and borrowing that could limit the ability of current and future Mayors to provide essential services to New Yorkers. A priority must be to maintain the level of essential city services.

New York City needs to introduce real discipline into its budgeting process. New York City must require its agencies to justify service delivery options and program. On the other hand, local municipal governments should be responsible for local operations, not for Medicare and other mandates imposed on them.

Budgeting for the delivery of city services where appropriate by borough and community district, rather than the centralized approach to decision-making, introduces flexibility and efficiencies. It directs services based on need and an understanding that all communities will receive a fair share of services and programs, just not necessarily the same mix of services and programs. Basic services must be base lined to avoid the annual "budget dance."

A review of long and short-term capital budget financing issues indicates a need exists to develop a longer-term city capital plan that makes sense. The current four and five year plans (four years for the city capital budget; five for the Department of Education) fail to address actual spending capabilities and might not adequately reflect neighborhood needs and priorities. A longer-term debt-financing plan would supplement the strategy to provide needed additional capital financing. This would serve to identify the City's real debt needs based on its real ability to advance projects, once initiated for funding (inclusion in the "capital commitment plan"). It would also be a basis around which to develop a coalition to seek federal and state funding commitments that recognize the regional benefits of much of the City's proposed capital program.

Therefore, the Queens Civic Congress adopts the following:

1. Implement a new fiscal strategic approach that uses budget surpluses to reduce existing debt and fund some capital projects on a pay-as-you-go basis and not create so-called rainy day funds which are not fiscally sound.
2. Rather than mere across-the-board spending caps, a strategic review of each year's annual spending needs to be justified.
3. Reshape New York City's Annual Executive Expense Budget to reflect the need to deliver services based on the varying needs of each of the five boroughs and the diverse needs of communities.
4. Set capital priorities by community needs and that support neighborhood development, including a borough-by-borough grid of capital spending by agency. (This also includes schools, housing, court facilities, highways, sewers, water supply, etc.).

5. Develop longer-term city capital plan that makes sense by outlining a *Strategic Capital Program* that identifies the City's real debt needs based on its real ability to advance projects.
6. Shift responsibility for the preparation of the Mayor's Management Report from the Mayor's Office of Operations to the Independent Budget Office and rename the report the City Management Report
7. Develop a coalition to seek federal and state funding commitments based on the regional benefits of much of the City's proposed capital program.
8. Improve virtually non-existent legislative and executive oversight of the management of the City's capital plan and capital projects.
9. Pass a "Federal Brooks law" style Qualified Based Selection (QBS) professional contracting law barring bid fee cuts [Int. No. 301].
10. Ensure the City receives its fair share of funds based on the census. Require accuracy of the upcoming decennial census through outreach and input from civic leaders and the recruitment of civic activists as census takers. The QCC encourages civic leaders and community-interested members to apply for such positions.

Queens Civic Congress

2007 - 2008 Platform

CIVIC 2030

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