

COOPER SQUARE COMMITTEE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2009 – 2012

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2. Mission Statement:

The Cooper Square Committee's mission is to work with area residents to contribute to the preservation and development of affordable, environmentally healthy housing and community/cultural spaces so that the Cooper Square area remains racially, economically and culturally diverse.

Our organization's goals are to prevent displacement of low income tenants and non-profit community/cultural organizations. We also work to promote preservation and development of affordable housing and community/cultural spaces. We do this through tenant rights education, one-on-one counseling, tenant organizing, and sponsoring/developing affordable housing and community/cultural projects. We also work to ensure that low income and special needs residents gain access to housing and income support entitlements, and give referrals to other service providers.

3. Statement of Strategic Goals:

Based on the findings from the Cooper Square Committee's Needs Assessment, our Board of Directors has articulated the following strategic goals:

a. Maintaining the racial, ethnic, economic and cultural diversity of the Lower East Side.

The Lower East Side has played a special role in our nation's history, serving as a gateway to America for waves of immigrants, including primarily Germans and Irish in the mid-1800s, Jews, Italians, Eastern Europeans and Chinese in the late 1800s and early 1900s, to Puerto Ricans in the mid-1900s. From the 1950s on, the community increasingly attracted bohemians seeking less expensive housing. The political, economic and artistic life of the community has benefited from the contributions of all of these groups. Today, the community still attracts newcomers from Europe, Asia, and America's suburbs, but they are more likely to be middle class or upwardly mobile students.

The identity of the Lower East Side as home to working class and poor immigrants is being threatened by gentrification and displacement. Last year, the National Historic Preservation Society ranked the Lower East Side as one of America's most endangered historic places. The economic and social forces shaping these changes are greater than the resources of the community's non-profit organizations to prevent, but the Cooper Square Committee can play a role in contributing to the preservation of the unique nature of this community through effective eviction prevention work, tenant education, community organizing, coalition building and our housing preservation and development activities.

b. Minimizing and preventing displacement of long-term, low and moderate income residents.

As our Needs Assessment documents, thousands of low income tenants, particularly Latinos, have been displaced from the Lower East Side since 1990. We have found, from our research, that any tenant paying a below market rent is at higher risk of harassment and displacement. Our Tenant Counseling and Organizing work is committed to educating tenants about their rights and responsibilities so that they don't make careless mistakes that put them at risk of a holdover action (ie., illegally subletting or making illegal alterations to their unit). We also want to ensure that tenants are not intimidated into vacating their apartment simply because the owner has asked them to move or has offered them a buy-out, with the implied threat of eviction if they don't accept it.

CSC's Tenant Counseling and Organizing Program aims to educate hundreds of tenants about their rights each year through one-on-one counseling, tenants rights workshops and organizing campaigns. Together, these activities have prevented countless evictions, and made tenants aware that they have strength in numbers, and that they can fight back against harassment. We plan to continue and expand upon these efforts in our workplan over the next 3 years.

c. Slowing and reversing the deregulation of rent stabilized housing, and preventing government assisted or public housing units from being privatized or reverting to market rate when contracts expire.

The loss of some 9,000 rent stabilized units in the Lower East Side/Chinatown since 1997 has put many rent stabilized tenants on edge. When multifamily buildings are sold, long-term tenants often fear that

the new building owner will target them for harassment and eviction in order to deregulate their apartment. The Cooper Square Committee's Housing Specialists devote a lot of their time and energy to working with tenants who allege that they are being harassed (sent legal notices to cure an alleged violation of their lease, offered repeated buy outs, asked to sign a new lease rider that waives some of their rights, and a variety of other tactics) in order to get them to vacate their apartment. Given the scope of the problem, the Cooper Square Committee has tried to pool resources by getting tenants in multiple buildings with the same landlord to work together, share information and address the issues systematically. We will recommit ourselves to these efforts over the next few years, and work to access more funding to hire an additional Housing Specialist to work on this issue in a comprehensive way, and in coordination with city-wide tenants rights organizations.

Similarly, we are working to monitor government assisted buildings in our community to ensure that they remain as affordable housing for years to come. For example, we are working with 10 Stanton Street, a 146 unit project-based Section 8 building whose contract expires in June, 2010. We will continue to work with the tenants and elected officials to negotiate with the owner to keep this building in the Section 8 program for a minimum of 5 more years. We will also encourage the tenants to participate in the legislative advocacy process to ensure that these types of buildings are placed under rent stabilization.

d. Educating all types of tenants (rent stabilized or other) about their rights to safe, decent housing without unwarranted threats of eviction.

The only way to ensure that rent stabilized tenants are not intimidated into moving out of their apartments due to landlord harassment, thereby fostering deregulation, is to educate them about their rights. CSC needs to implement this tenant education goal through a combination of one-on-one tenant counseling, continuing to co-host weekly tenants rights clinics with Met Council every Tuesday night, and by sponsoring or co-sponsoring periodic tenants rights workshops that are well publicized in our community.

In particular, many newcomers into our community are from outside NYC or from other countries. Often times, they are students sharing an apartment. Our work with them needs to emphasize that as rent stabilized tenants, they have a set of rights that were fought for by housing advocates, and that they need to help preserve these rights for future residents of our community. We need to encourage them to challenge suspected rent overcharges, and to stand firm in dealing with their landlord when they are facing a lack of services or bullying tactics such as unannounced visits to their apartment seeking access, or letters demanding personal information that the tenant is not legally required to provide. Our tenant counseling program will work to ensure that tenants are briefed on common landlord tactics, as well as what the law requires and does and does not require tenants to do as part of their lease agreement.

e. Promoting, advocating and, whenever possible, developing low, moderate and middle income housing on city-owned land and in the inclusionary zones.

There are very few city-owned vacant lots or vacant buildings on the Lower East Side, with much of it developed since the late 1980s, or in the pipeline for development. However, one major exception is the Seward Park Urban Renewal Area, (SPURA), comprising 10 city-owned sites with about 7 acres of land.

These sites can accommodate over 1,000 units of housing as well as hundreds of thousands of square feet of commercial space.

The Cooper Square Committee plans to work in coordination with other affordable housing organizations on the Lower East Side to advocate for development of these sites over the coming 3 years. CSC serves on CB3's Zoning and Economic Development Committee, and plans to keep articulating a set of planning principles and a road map for developing these sites. The planning principles are already taking shape, with stakeholders from the Seward Park area participating.

Once the principles are agreed upon, we will begin to move towards fleshing out the housing and commercial program, including the affordability requirements, and specify the design guidelines. We aim to get HPD and EDC to create and issue an RFP over the next year or two.

CB3 has been an effective body in terms of partnering with community organizations and the City of New York in promoting progressive land use policies. The rezoning of the Lower East Side was a major accomplishment, and bodes well for reaching a consensus on Seward Park. The creation of inclusionary zones for the first time on the Lower East Side provides opportunities for mixed income housing to be developed at scores of sites in our community. The residential FAR of much of the Lower East Side was no more than 3.44. Now, it is 5.4 in the inclusionary zones with a bonus up to 7.2 FAR (more than double) if the developer includes a minimum of 20% low income housing on the site. Although the recession has brought new construction to a halt, the soft sites are likely to be redeveloped over the coming decade, with a gain of hundreds of additional low income units on privately owned sites. The Cooper Square Committee plans to work to identify opportunities to partner with private developers to preserve or develop low income housing off-site or on-site in the inclusionary zones.

f. Preserving affordable housing by acquiring privately owned multifamily buildings if such opportunities arise.

With real estate prices dropping 25% or more in the past year, it has created an opportunity for CSC to enter the real estate market as a prospective buyer. We are looking into utilizing HPD's building acquisition fund (a grant of up to \$125,000 per unit) to acquire one or more multifamily buildings below Houston Street to preserve affordable housing units permanently.

We plan to work with a development team of architects, consultants, and attorneys to make an offer on a viable property, and form a non-profit HDPC to take title to the building(s). We will reach out to financial intermediaries such as LISC and CPC to obtain financing. If necessary, we will invite them to be co-owners in exchange for providing the necessary equity to make the transactions work. CSC will use the developer's fee to hire a project manager to ensure that the renovation process goes smoothly, and we will market any vacant units to low/moderate income people in accordance with the program guidelines.

g. Advocating for contextual zoning on the Bowery, which has no such protections.

The rezoning of 111 blocks on the Lower East Side east of the Bowery was a great victory for our community that will ultimately pay dividends in future years as more mixed income housing, in context with the existing scale of the community, is developed in years to come. However, for residents on and near the Bowery, the rezoning was only a partial victory. Many fear that even greater development

pressure will be pushed onto the Bowery since it is not included in the rezoned area. Developers still have great incentives to build commercial buildings at an FAR of 6.0 on the Bowery compared to a 4.0 commercial FAR east of the Bowery. More low rise buildings on the Bowery are at risk of demolition, to be replaced with over-sized hotels and dorms.

The Cooper Square Committee plans to continue to work to advocate for a 197-C plan (a rezoning action) takes place for the area along the Bowery from East 4th Street down to Delancey Street or even down to Canal Street if residents of Chinatown want this to happen. Another option is to push for designation of the east side of the Bowery as a historic district, as is currently the case on the west side of the Bowery from East 4th Street to Delancey Street. The height of new buildings on the west side of the Bowery is limited to 85 feet, whereas there is no height limit for new buildings on the east side of the Bowery.

h. Promoting the greening of the Lower East Side housing stock, particularly government assisted and income-restricted housing.

Many affordable housing advocates are concerned about the long-term sustainability of NYC's low and moderate income housing stock. Rising fuel costs, water and sewer charges and insurance have forced some HDFC's to raise rents or cut back on basic building services. Even privately owned non-HDFCs are feeling the pinch. Deferring maintenance is not a viable option over the long-term. A lot of property owners and managers, from self managed TIL buildings to mutual housing buildings, are looking for ways to reduce costs. One way to do this is to reduce consumption and waste of water, fuel and electricity.

CSC plans to provide technical assistance to property owners regarding how to make their buildings more energy efficient. Our housing staff has, and will continue to get training, regarding green technologies and programs. We will inform property owners about NYSERDA's Multifamily Performance Program (MPP) and DHCR's weatherization program, and help them determine whether the buildings are income eligible. We will do direct mailings to hundreds of area property owners and inform them about these programs, and encourage them to apply for an energy audit after briefing them about these programs.

CSC also plans to apply for capital funds to regrant to an eligible building so that they can install solar panels on their roof. By taking on and publicizing a pilot solar project, we want to promote the viability of solar energy on the Lower East Side.

i. Working to remedy housing code deficiencies of the old law tenement housing stock, thereby improving overall housing conditions.

CSC plans to monitor HPD's database of housing code violations for multifamily buildings in our service area, and direct some of our outreach and organizing efforts at buildings that have an average of more than 2 code violations per unit. In general, buildings in our service area have an average of 1 code violation per unit, so it's reasonable to assume that those with significantly higher than average number of code violations, particularly B & C violations, are in need of outreach and an inspection by our Housing Specialist. As our Needs Assessment found, buildings below Houston St. have twice the number of code violations per unit than buildings north of Houston St.

Although HPD has defunded CSC's Neighborhood Preservation Contract, like 80% of the other Manhattan based organizations, CSC will continue to outreach within our staffing capacity to physically distressed buildings in an attempt to help the tenants organize a tenants association and begin a productive dialogue with the property owners. The aim will be to get the owners to invest in capital improvements to replace obsolete building systems and remove code violations. We will advise the owners about low interest loans, if they qualify, and j-51 tax abatements that they are eligible for if they replace major systems. If necessary, CSC will assist the tenants associations in bringing an HP action in Housing Court to compel the building owners to make building wide repairs and improvements.

j. Promoting home ownership opportunities for low and moderate income residents of our community, whenever feasible.

Given that market prices for co-op and condominium prices on the Lower East Side start at over \$300,000 for a studio apartment, even in the current economic downturn, there are virtually no home ownership opportunities for low and moderate income tenants. However, CSC's affiliate, the Cooper Square Mutual Housing Association, owns 314 units of housing that they plan to convert to cooperative ownership in the 2nd half of 2009. They will be filing the offering plan with the NYS Attorney General's office and expect to obtain a "No Action" letter approving the plan by early 2010. CSC plans to facilitate this important home ownership opportunity for hundreds of households by hosting educational forums for MHA tenants, and educating them about the legal status of cooperatives, the rights and responsibilities of shareholders, and the benefits of being a co-op owner. By adding over 300 owner occupied units in our community, we expect to increase the home ownership rate by as much as 1% over the next year.

CSC will also be advocating that a plan for the Seward Park Urban Renewal Area (SPURA) include a home ownership component. If even 25% of the units are set aside for home ownership (in keeping with the citywide average), it's possible that upwards of a few hundred new housing units on the sites will be for owner occupants, including first time homebuyers.

k. Addressing the issue of predatory equity, whereby firms purchase buildings relying mainly on equity from investors rather than financing from banks, and then aggressively work to displace below market rent tenants in order to maximize returns for their investors.

The Lower East Side is primarily a rental community, with 85% of households living in rental housing. During the past decade, particularly after the dot.com bubble burst in 2000, and after the capital gains tax was reduced, CSC observed the rapid escalation of real estate prices on the Lower East Side. Another trend was that, increasingly properties were being purchased for cash, without any bank financing or with bank financing accounting for less than half the purchase price. Equity was becoming increasingly available for real estate acquisitions, and the modus operandi of buyers was to quickly move to vacate apartments occupied by below-market rent tenants.

Among the buyers of hundreds of housing units of rent regulated housing were Steve Croman, the Shalom family, Benjamin Schaoul, and more recently Westbrook Partners (who purchased a package of 17 buildings (260 units) in the East Village from the Extell Development Corp. for \$96 million in 2006. These speculators share a similar style in that they move to vacate a large percentage of units within the first year of taking title to their buildings.

l. Helping small businesses access resources to maintain their economic viability, thereby preserving jobs.

CSC does not currently provide significant technical assistance to small business owners. Our affiliate, the Cooper Square MHA, manages 23 buildings with some 25 commercial tenants, many of which are start up women owned or minority owned businesses. By partnering with FAB, we have helped link these businesses with a non-profit that is actively marketing local businesses in the East 4th Street Cultural District. FAB has created a brochure that features many of these local businesses, and they have promoted joint marketing efforts by the theaters and local businesses whereby the theaters promote local businesses and vice versa.

One of the main challenges local businesses face is rising rents. As the area has become saturated with bars and restaurants, property owners see these establishments as the highest and best use of their commercial spaces. Dry businesses have difficulty surviving as rents climb above \$50 per square foot.

CSC may be able to help local businesses survive and thrive by doing two things: 1) Market themselves more effectively by collaborating with FAB in joint advertising efforts; and 2) Refer them to non-profits and government agencies that offer services that can help them reduce their operating costs. One such entity is a non-profit called Envirolution that does free energy audits for businesses, and advises them on energy savings measures they can take. They may also be able to access low interest loans to invest in energy star appliances and renovations to weatherize their storefronts.

m. Assisting the east 4th Street Cultural District's marketing efforts, and improving the physical appearance of the block.

The Cooper Square Committee has worked in partnership with Fourth Arts Block (FAB) to leverage over \$16 million in NYC and NYS capital funds for the renovation of 6 cultural buildings on East 4th Street. Renovation is now underway in most of the buildings on the block. Our own mixed use cultural building at 59-61 E. 4th Street has had a new storefront (with a ticket window for theaters on the block) installed using NYS Main Street program funds. We also have had a new sprinkler system installed in our office to bring it up to code. Much work still needs to be done to bring all the cultural buildings on the block up to code, and expand cultural programming capacity on the block. A master plan that we commissioned with FAB proposes a variety of actions to improve the physical appearance of the block, including sidewalk bump outs to improve pedestrian safety and traffic flow, custom street lights, better pedestrian lighting, more tree plantings, banners and signage promoting the cultural district, a marquee along a barren wall behind JASA's building near the Bowery, decorative paving of the crosswalk near the Bowery, and more.

CSC has awarded Main Street façade improvement funds to two buildings so far, and 3 more are in progress, to be completed by August, 2009. When this work is completed, the street level visibility of the cultural groups will be greatly improved, enabling passersby to see directly into the buildings. The buildings themselves will have become greener, with more energy efficient storefronts and more natural light. These physical improvements will also serve to complement the marketing efforts of the cultural district.

n. Helping low income people improve their economic opportunities by referring them to providers of ESL, GED classes, job training and placement.

The 9% unemployment rate on the Lower East Side (as of the 2000 Census) is likely in double digits in the current downturn. CSC does not provide job training or placement services, but we refer people to local organizations that do, such as Henry Street Settlement, University Settlement, Catholic Big Sisters, La Bodega de la Familia, and others. We plan to continue to maintain our relationships with these organizations, and identify other groups that we can refer job seekers to in order to help local residents access economic opportunities and upward mobility.

Given that CSC wishes to remain a tenants rights counseling and housing preservation work rather branch out into becoming a multi-service organization, we have opted not to expand our mission statement. We recognize the importance of education and access to good paying job opportunities for Lower East Side residents, given that these advantages will enable long-term residents to increase their income and remain in our community. However, many constraints (limited funding for new programs, limited programming space) make it unlikely that CSC could expand into this area even if we wanted to in the near future.

As our office building at 59-61 E. 4th Street undergoes renovation, one of the other non-profits in our building called Works in Progress (one floor above us) plans to double their programming space. Since they will be providing job training and apprenticeship opportunities to disadvantaged young people, we plan to foster a working relationship with them, and we are leaving open the possibility that we could at some point launch a pilot Green Jobs training program in their new space after they move into it in the next 2 years. To the extent that such a job training program complements our housing mission, we will pursue funding for it.

o. Developing a new generation of community leadership through our organizing activities to advance our housing preservation and community development goals.

Given that much of the Cooper Square Committee's organizing work over the years has been with tenants in the Mutual Housing Association buildings and 10 Stanton Street, we have succeeded in developing and preserving affordable housing and preventing any serious threat of displacement for these tenants, thereby enabling residents to age in place. Tenant turnover is very low, and the typical tenant in these buildings is over 50 years of age. Consequently, these buildings are becoming naturally occurring retirement communities (NARCs).

Tenants in rent regulated and free market units in the community, on the other hand, tend to move in and out more frequently, making it more difficult to develop and retain community leaders. CSC plans to redouble our efforts to identify younger residents (ages 18 – 40) who identify as community stakeholders, get them engaged in one or more of the issues we are working on, and cultivate them as leaders in our organization by inviting them to co-chair one of our ad hoc or standing committees, and ultimately bring them onto our Steering Committee. It is essential for the long term viability of our organization to foster a new generation of leadership, given that the median age of our Board members is now over 60 years old.

4. PROGRAMS SERVICES, DELIVERABLES, ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

a) TENANT COUNSELING & ORGANIZING PROGRAM:

CSC's two full time Housing Specialists and one part-time Housing Specialist counsel hundreds of tenants in our geographic service area each year to prevent evictions, resolve landlord-tenant and tenant-tenant disputes, bring about apartment repairs and improved building services. Our Housing Specialists also organize tenants in buildings where there are systemic problems ranging from lack of repairs, illegal renovation work, harassment and displacement. Our Executive Director also engages in housing organizing.

The key tenant counseling and organizing deliverables CSC aims to achieve over the next three years are the following:

- 1) Counseling/Educating Tenants about their rights to Prevent Evictions, Obtain Repairs and Obtain Entitlements.
- 2) Preservation of Affordable Housing at 10 Stanton Street Tenants.
- 3) Organizing residents re: development of Seward Park Urban Renewal Area (SPURA).
- 4) Organizing Multi-Building Tenant Coalitions and tenants in Distressed Buildings.
- 5) Assist the MHA with educating MHA tenants about the co-op offering plan when it comes out in 2009.
- 6) Organize/Educate tenants about how to advocate for stronger tenant protections in the NYS laws and regulations.

Tenant Counseling: CSC counsels about 1,000 tenants per year who call or walk into our office every day. Many of the inquiries are basic questions about lease renewals, or language included in lease riders of an initial lease. However, a lot of tenants come into our office after receiving 30 day notices that a legal action will commence if the tenant does not correct a violation of the terms of the lease or bring the rent up to date. Tenants facing legal action are assessed in terms of their income and their eligibility for free legal services. Those that can afford attorneys are informed about the availability of tenant attorneys, and our staff also advises them about how to respond to a legal notice in the absence of an attorney since most tenants go to Housing Court without one. Our staff educates these tenants about the types of defense they can present, and how to document their counter claims.

Many of the low income tenants we assist are living in a variety of government assisted or income-restricted housing, such as NYCHA housing, Section 8 or MHA housing. Many of these tenants are in need of entitlement assistance such as Section 8 recertification, SCRIE or assistance with reopening an entitlement case that has been closed due to failure on their part to provide adequate documentation.

CSC needs to continue to sustain its staffing capacity to provide this basic and essential tenants rights counseling service for the many people who come into our office every day. CSC will register at least 200 tenants per year, a fraction of those that come in, advise them and monitor the outcomes of their cases. CSC will also organize periodic tenants rights workshops for tenants, or refer them to our joint workshops with Met Council every Tuesday night, so that they are adequately equipped to navigate the administrative and legal issues that may impact on their ability to remain in their homes. Among the outcomes we will achieve each year are the following: 1) At least a dozen evictions will be prevented; 2) Scores of tenants obtain housing entitlements; 3) Dozens of tenants will obtain apartment repairs.

Preservation of 10 Stanton Street: The Section 8 contract for this 146 unit project based Section 8 building is expiring on June 23rd, 2010, and CSC has begun reviving the Tenants Association again to assist them with negotiating with the owners, the 10 Stanton Street Owners, LLC. Several planning meetings have been held this year, a meeting was held in May with the tenant leaders, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, Senator Daniel Squadron, and reps of other elected officials, and a follow up meeting is scheduled for June. It is likely that several meetings will be held with the owner to nail down the terms of the Section 8 contract renewal. The tenants are aiming to win a commitment of a 5 – 10 year renewal. They also want to get a commitment from the owners that they will apply for NYS weatherization funds since the building is income-eligible.

The owner does not need to sign off on the contract renewal until March, 2010, 3 months before the contract expires, so CSC will continue to actively work with the tenants through that date, door knocking regularly to inform tenants, holding bi-monthly or quarterly tenant meetings with tenants and elected officials, and with the owners. We expect that we will recruit floor captains from each of the 9 floors in the building to disseminate information, and turn tenants out for meetings. The outcomes we aim to achieve are the following: 1) A 5 – 10 year Section 8 contract renewal; and 2) the owner will apply for weatherization funding, and invest hundreds of thousands of dollars into replacing the boiler, installing new windows, and making the building more energy efficient.

Organizing Residents re: the Seward Park Urban Renewal Area (SPURA): CSC is actively participating in Community Board 3's Economic Development and Zoning Committee, and giving input into its efforts to arrive at the core planning principles for this large urban renewal area which contains 10 sites, and some 7 acres of land. Although SPURA has sat vacant for 40 years due to a political impasse, adversaries are finally sitting down together to try to move towards a consensus. CSC has supported GOLES' lead role in convening SPURA Visioning sessions, mobilizing stakeholders to attend, and many different viewpoints have been expressed about the preferred development scenario for these sites. CSC will work in coalition with other Lower East Side groups to move the discussion forward, and engage stakeholders by door knocking near the SPURA site to make people aware of the potential for mixed income housing and commercial development on the sites, attending CB3 and other SPURA related meetings, sending out email blasts to the larger coming, and meeting with elected officials and stakeholders to build support for a plan during 2009 and 2010.

We are confident that CB3, in partnership with HPD, EDC and other city agencies, can reach a consensus statement about planning principles, and then get HPD and EDC to draft one or more RFPs to be released to the developer community. The outcomes we aim to achieve are the following: 1) Development of local leadership able to speak out on this issue; 2) The City will develop and issue an RFP to build on most of the 10 Seward Park sites in 2010 or 2011. 3) The disposition of the SPURA land will successfully go through the ULURP process, allowing development to proceed.

Organizing Multi-Building Tenant Associations: The increasing number of speculators who have targeted the Lower East Side/East Village for real estate investment opportunities has wreaked havoc on the lives of rent stabilized tenants during the past decade. During that time, CSC has helped tenants form several multi-building coalitions such as the Croman Coalition, the Shalom Tenants Alliance, and the Westbrook Coalition, to name a few. These coalitions have succeeded in getting media coverage about their situations, gained the support of local elected officials, and mitigated some of the worst abuses.

Given these successes, CSC will continue to bring together tenants from multiple buildings facing a common systemic pattern of displacement, harassment, illegal renovation work, and other issues.

Over the next 3 years, CSC will identify new potential speculators by doing research on properties in the community (ie., title transfers, code violations) and monitor trends with problematic landlords, relying on client intake and tenant meetings and surveys; we will reach out to and organize tenants in multiple buildings with the same landlord who are experiencing systemic housing problems. We will hold tenant meetings, develop leadership, teaching tenants to use effective tactics, such as letters to the landlord, calling 311, holding a press conference, going to housing court, etc. The outcomes we aim to achieve are the following: 1) Tenants in multiple buildings will experience qualitative improvements in living conditions (ie., harassment will stop, code violations will be corrected); 2) At least a dozen new tenant leaders will emerge, and we will encourage them to become active in our organization, and when possible to join our board.

Assisting the MHA with the Co-op Offering Plan: The Cooper Square MHA offering plan will be released before the end of 2009, according to their Executive Director. Once the AG's office receives it, they are expected to issue a "No Action Letter" within 6 months. CSC plans to work with the MHA to educate tenants about the offering plan, and the rights and responsibilities of co-op ownership so that they can make an informed decision about whether or not to purchase shares in the co-op.

CSC will need to mobilize staffing and board resources to meet with the MHA Board and develop a plan to do outreach and tenant education through a series of workshops about co-op ownership. CSC will also have to help low income tenants access financial assistance in the form of one shot deals from HRA or another source, if necessary, so that they can purchase shares for \$250. CSC will assign at least one staff person work with at least one volunteer to meet with MHA tenants, and organize workshops. We will work with the MHA to create a bilingual fact sheet about the offering plan. The expected outcomes are as follows: 1) At least 200 tenants will purchase shares in the co-op; 2) The home ownership rate in the Lower East Side will increase 1%.

Educating tenants about how to advocate for stronger rent protections: In the course of CSC's work of educating tenants about their rights and responsibilities, it is inevitable that they want to know more about the regulatory framework and the legislative process that has shaped tenant-landlord relations in New York City. CSC has an obligation to inform tenants about the relevant rent laws, how they originated, and how they have been amended, repealed, re-enacted, strengthened and weakened over time. CSC will continue to educate tenants about how they can be effective advocates for their self interests.

In order to carry out this work, CSC will create and revise fact sheets about the rent laws, hold/co-sponsor workshop about rent laws, work in coalition with other tenants rights organizations, and educate our local NYS and NYC legislators about the displacement impacts of some existing laws and regulations. The outcome we aim to help bring about is that NYS legislators will close some loopholes in the NYS rent laws (ie., personal use evictions, phony demolition) that put tenants at greater risk of displacement. In doing so, the rate of displacement and gentrification in our community will slow down to some degree.

TENANT COUNSELING/ORGANIZING PROGRAM (June 1, 2009 – June 30, 2012)

Program Deliverables	Resources Required	Activities & Outcomes expected	Funding Required
1) Preservation of Affordable Housing at 10 Stanton Street.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 full time organizer spending 4 – 7 hours per week. - Tenant leaders - An intern - Pro bono legal assistance 	<p>Activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Door knocking/emailing/phone calling at least ½ of the tenants 2) Bi-monthly or Quarterly tenants meetings during 2009 3) Meetings with tenants, elected officials and HUD officials 4) Meetings/negotiations with the landlord to reach an agreement to extend the Section 8 contract in 2010. <p>Outcome(s):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) 5-15 Year Extension of Section 8 contract or purchase of building by a non-profit. 2) Owner applies for weatherization funds. 	\$7,500 - \$9,000 annually
2) Organizing residents re: development of Seward Park Urban Renewal Area (SPURA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 full time organizer spending 4 – 7 hours per week - Board involvement - Community leaders - An intern 	<p>Activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Door knocking near the SPURA site 3) Attendance by several CSC members at CB3 meetings and SPARC meetings 4) Email blasts to alert residents about updates with Seward Park planning process 5) Meetings with elected officials and stakeholders to build support for a plan during 2009 <p>Outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Development of local leadership able to speak out on this issue. 2) The City will develop an RFP to build on most of the 10 Seward Park sites. 	\$7,500 - \$9,000 annually

Program Deliverables	Resources Required	Activities & Outcomes expected	Funding Required
3) Organizing Multi-Building Tenant Coalitions and tenants in Distressed Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 full time organizer spending 4 – 7 hours per week. - Tenant leaders - An intern - Pro bono legal assistance 	<p>Activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Research properties in the community (ie., title transfers, code violations) and monitor trends relying on client intake. 2) Reach out to and organize tenants in multiple buildings with the same landlord who are experiencing systemic housing problems. 3) Hold tenant meetings, develop leadership, teaching tenants to use effective tactics, such as letters to the landlord, calling 311, holding a press conference, going to housing court, etc. <p>Outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Tenants in multiple buildings will experience qualitative improvements in living conditions (ie., harassment will stop, code violations will be corrected). 2) At least a dozen new tenant leaders will become active in Cooper Square Committee, a few will join our Board of Directors. 	\$8,000 - \$12,000 annually
4) Counseling/Educating Tenants about their rights to Prevent Evictions, Obtain Repairs and Obtain Entitlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 full time organizers spending 20 – 25 hours per week - Board involvement - Community leaders - An intern 	<p>Activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Housing staff will register over 200 walk in clients per year. 2) Staff will counsel each client about their rights, and appropriate actions to take to remedy their housing situation. 3) Staff will organize periodic workshops on various housing topics. <p>Outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) At least a dozen evictions will be prevented. 2) Scores of tenants obtain housing entitlements. 3) Dozens of tenants obtain apartment repairs. 	\$110,000 – \$120,000 annually

b) COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM:

CSC's Executive Director is currently the only staff person administering CSC's Community Development Program. Having partnered with Community Access to complete development of a 54 unit building with supportive services at 29 East 2nd Street, CSC has no new construction projects in the pipeline, and is only peripherally involved in renovation work at a mixed residential/cultural and commercial building at 59-61 East 4th Street. CSC has two community development deliverables planned over the next 3 years:

- 1) Acquisition of 1 or more privately owned buildings, and preservation as low income housing.
- 2) Administering the Main Street Program in the East 4th Street Cultural District.

Building Acquisition: CSC has been monitoring multi-family real estate listings since the Fall of 2009, when the financial crisis hit, and real estate transactions grinded to a halt. Prices have begun to drop, and it is now possible that CSC can utilize HPD's Lower East Side/Chinatown Building Acquisition Fund to acquire a building below Houston Street to preserve as affordable housing. The fund provides a grant of up to \$120,000 per unit, and HPD also provides PLP financing for renovation work. CSC has inspected several buildings with our project architect to assess the feasibility of acquiring one or more of them, and has sent pro formas to the Community Preservation Corporation to obtain a letter of interest before making an offer. We hope to make an offer and close on one property this year. If so, CSC will be bringing on a project manager to deal with the closing, the many labor intensive demands of the renovation process and marketing of any vacant units. The anticipated outcome is preservation of at least 20 units of housing, and an increase in the supply of affordable housing in our community.

Administering Main Street funds: CSC has been administering \$250,000 in NYS Main Street funds for the East 4th Street Cultural District, awarded in two separate rounds. To date, we have awarded a \$50,000 building renovation grant at 59-61 E. 4th Street for a new automatic elevator, two façade improvement grants of \$20,000 each for 64 E. 4th St. and 59-61 E. 4th St., and a \$25,000 streetscape improvement grant. Three other façade improvement grants are in progress, as the building owners are bidding out the work at 62 E. 4th St., 79-83 E. 4th St. and 67 E. 4th St. Over the next year, CSC expects to expend \$25,000 in streetscape improvement funds for the installation of a marquee along an 80 foot blank wall behind a JASA owned building just east of the Bowery, greatly improving the visibility of this cultural block. CSC also plans to award \$50,000 for a sprinkler system being installed in 59-61 E. 4th Street. Work is underway and is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

CSC's Executive Director is administering the funds and working in partnership with FAB to improve the streetscape and facades. CSC will submit relevant historic review forms, photographs to SHPO, send Set Up and Completion forms to the NYS Housing Trust Fund, maintain a checklist of items that property owners must provide (copies of proposals, bids, invoices) in order to access funds for façade improvements, and implement the workscope for Phase 2 of the Streetscape Project (planting trees, installing a marquee and a kiosk on E. 4th St). The outcomes we expect to achieve by next year are the following: 1) Improvement of facades of 5 cultural buildings, leveraging over \$150,000 in private funds; 2) Completion of Phase 2 of Streetscape Project; 3) Improving the appearance of the Cultural District, helping to market the block as a cultural destination.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (June 1, 2009 – June 30, 2012)

Program Deliverables	Resources Required	Activities & Outcomes expected	Funding Required
1) Acquisition of 1 or more privately owned buildings, and preservation as low income housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 full time staff person spending time as needed to implement this project. - Project development team – architect, lawyer, consultant 	<p>Activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Monitoring real estate listings by the major real estate brokers. 2) Setting up appointments to inspect properties with our project architect. 3) Development of a pro forma, negotiating to secure an option on the building, obtaining equity from HPD, and financing from various sources. 4) Shepherding the project to closing, creating a non-profit ownership entity, developing a work scope, securing bids, selecting a GC, attending weekly site meetings, etc... <p>Outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Purchase of a privately owned building. 2) Completion of renovation 3) Marketing of units to low income tenants 	\$45,000 - \$60,000 annually
1) Administering the Main Street Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 full time staff person spending several hours per week to implement this project. 	<p>Activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Administer funds in the current Main Street Program for the East 4th Street Cultural District. 2) Submit relevant historic review forms, photographs to SHPO, send Set Up and Completion forms to the NYS Housing Trust Fund. 3) Maintain checklist of items that property owners must provide (copies of proposals, bids, invoices) in order to access funds for façade improvements. 4) Work in partnership with FAB to prepare 	\$10,000 annually

		<p>and implement the workscope for Phase 2 of the Streetscape Project (planting trees, installing a marquee and a kiosk on E. 4th St).</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Improvement of facades of 5 cultural buildings, leveraging over \$150,000 in private funds. 2) Completion of Phase 2 of Streetscape Project. 3) The appearance of the Cultural District will be greatly improved, helping to market the block as a cultural destination. 	<p>Total = \$55,000 - \$70,000</p>
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c) GO GREEN HOUSING PROGRAM:

CSC has decided to launch a Go Green Housing Program as a result of our community needs assessment and our strategic planning workshops.

- 1) Educate our community about “Going Green”.
- 2) Market Green products to tenants, property owners, (particularly non-profit HDFCs) and business owners.
- 3) Get local residents, especially teens, involved in teaching tenants in their buildings to recycle.
- 4) Develop a “green” building capital project idea such as a solar roof or a green roof, and raise money to get it done to demonstrate that it is viable.

Educate our community about “Going Green”: Mayor Bloomberg’s 2030 plan envisions NYC growing by 1 million people by the year 2030. To do this, many communities including the Lower East Side have been rezoned to allow for more housing. In order to allow for environmentally sustainable growth, new and existing housing and commercial buildings and businesses need to become more energy efficient given that NYC’s energy grid is aging, and under stress.

CSC plans to align its activities to recognize the growing importance of greening our community and our local housing stock. The first step involves educating our staff, board and community about the importance of “going green”, and the many ways that green practices can be realistically adopted. CSC will undertake a multi-faceted educational campaign to build momentum for greening our community. We will be holding periodic workshops for our board, members and local stakeholders, including tenants, businesses and key decision makers such as property owners, managers and superintendents.

CSC will make fact sheets available in our office, at community events, and via mailings and e-mail blasts. We will take key decision makers and tenants on tours of local green buildings to illustrate the types of green technologies that can be implemented. The outcomes we anticipate include the following: 1) Dozens of multifamily building owners will obtain training on green technologies and products; and 2) 1 – 2 building owners per year will apply for NYSERDA or NYS weatherization program funds to improve the energy efficiency of their buildings.

Market green products and technologies: CSC will work to make property owners, managers and tenants aware of vendors and providers of green products and services so that they can move from understanding basic principles of going green to actually adopting green standards. We will put property owners in touch with partners in NYSERDA’s Multifamily Performance Program. We expect the following outcomes: 1) At least 100 households per year will obtain green products; 2) Non-profit HDFCs will adopt use of cost effective green products and technologies.

Get local residents, especially teens, involved in teaching tenants in their buildings to recycle: CSC will partner with organizations such as the Lower East Side Ecology Center that do community environmental education work, and schools that have Green Teens Programs to get teens involved in environmental education. CSC will outreach to low income buildings where recycling rates are typically low to get young people to educate residents about how to recycle properly. We will follow up after these trainings, and survey superintendents to find out if recycling has increased. CSC expects the following outcomes: 1) At least 10 teens get trained to do recycling trainings in their own buildings; 2) At least 15 buildings, containing over 500 units, increase their recycling rate by at least 20%.

Carry out a “Green” building capital project: CSC will outreach to low income housing managers and community facility managers to determine the feasibility of doing a green building project. After identifying a willing partner, CSC will explore capital funding availability from the City or from DHCR’s Urban Initiatives Program to carry out a solar roof project. We anticipate that 3 community facilities or HDfC’s will get a solar roof or green roof over the next 3 years.

GO GREEN HOUSING PROGRAM (June 1, 2009 – June 30, 2012)

Program Goals	Resources Required	Activities/Outcomes Expected	Funding Required
1) Educate our community about "Going Green"	<p>- 2 full time Housing Staff spending 5 – 7 hours per week each.</p> <p>- Tenant and community leaders</p>	<p>Activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Train our staff and board about green resources and technologies. 2) Distribute monthly online news alerts or newsletters to communicate going green awareness. 3) Send out mailings to property owners about green resources, and counsel interested property owners. 4) Take residents and property owners on tours of local green buildings and other greening projects. <p>Outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Dozens of multifamily building owners obtain training on green products. 2) 1 – 2 building owners per year apply for NYSEERDA or NYS weatherization program funds to improve energy efficiency. 	\$14,000 annually for payroll expense plus fringe benefits
2) Market Green products to tenants and property owners, (particularly non-profit HDFCs) and business owners.	<p>- 2 full time Housing Staff as described above.</p> <p>- Tenant and community leaders</p>	<p>Activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Send out periodic mailings and emails to property owners, HDFCs, etc... 2) Maintain an updated list of NYSEERDA multifamily building partners, Green vendors and Environmental non-profits. 3) Hold a workshop on Going Green where vendors can market their products. <p>Outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) At least 60 households per year obtain green products per year. 2) Non-profit HDFCs adopt use of cost effective green products and technologies. 	\$14,000 in additional funding plus fringe benefits

GO GREEN HOUSING PROGRAM

Program Goals	Resources Required	Activities/Outcomes Expected	Funding Required
3) Get local residents, especially teens, involved in teaching tenants in their buildings to recycle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 full time organizers as described above. - Tenant and community leaders 	<p>Activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Set up a recycling demonstration in a project based Section 8 building or NYCHA building. 2) Partner with a local Trade School's Green Teen Program to do trainings of young people about recycling, so that they can go out and train others in their building. 3) Evaluate change in recycling rates in the buildings where training occurred. <p>Outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) At least 10 teens get trained to do recycling trainings in their own buildings. 2) At least 15 buildings, containing over 500 units, increase their recycling rate by at least 20%. 	\$12,000 annually in payroll expense
4) Develop a "green" building capital project idea such as a solar roof or a green roof, and raise money to get it done to demonstrate that it is viable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 full time Housing Staff as described above - Tenant and community leaders 	<p>Activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Outreach to low income housing managers and community facility managers to determine the feasibility of doing a green building project with a willing partner. 2) Select a partner, help package an application, identify and pursue financing, etc... <p>Outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) 3 community facilities or HDPC will get a solar roof or green roof over the next 3 years. 	<p>\$15,000 annually in payroll expense</p> <p>Total = \$55,000</p>

d) LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:

CSC's Board of Directors has identified leadership development as a critical strategic goal to be carried out over the next 3 years. While this is not a program area per se, it is the most important priority in terms of the development of our organizational infrastructure. Thus, it is highlighted in this strategic plan.

Identifying new leaders, and bringing new younger members onto our board, will help to strengthen our organization's capacity to organize, fundraising and carry out basic governance in the coming years. In particular, we will be looking to recruit younger board members who reflect the diversity of our community, and who have a range of skills, regardless of income levels. At least 1/3rd of our board will continue to consist of low-income persons, but we recognize the need to balance this policy objective with an equally important objective of professionalizing the board by attracting people with the following skills: knowledge of non-profit governance, fundraising, bookkeeping, marketing, finance, education, and graphic design.

- 1) Attract and develop more younger organizational leadership.
- 2) Work to identify and prioritize issues of concern to young Lower East Side residents (ages 18 – 39), and develop an organizing campaign to address them.

1) Attract and develop more younger leadership in the Cooper Square Committee: CSC has been successful in preventing displacement of many of our members. As a result many residents in the Cooper Square Urban Renewal Area between E. 4th St. and Stanton Street have been able to age in place. Our core leadership reflects this fact. Most of our members are at least 55 years of age, including 8 of our 10 board members. The children of many of our members are not able to afford to live in our community unless they remain in their parents' apartment. Most of the younger people moving into our community are college students or young, upwardly mobile professionals. This has created a challenge for our organization in terms of recruiting younger leaders for the organization. Nonetheless, there are younger residents who have benefited from CSC's organizing and community development work, but who have not actively participated in our organization's affordable housing preservation work. These are the people we need to actively engage and advance our organization's mission into the future.

In order to do this, CSC must bridge a generational divide by engaging in the following activities: We need to research young people's concerns through online surveys and outreach at various venues where younger people gather; we have to partner with FAB on events to bring together artists and younger people, hold pot-luck events, and use social networking sites like Facebook and My Space to attract young people. The outcomes we aim to achieve are as follows: 1) Bring in at least 100 members under the age of 40.

- 2) Add at least 4 board members in their 20s and 30s.

2) Work to identify and prioritize issues of concern to young Lower East Side residents (ages 18 – 39), and develop an organizing campaign to address them: CSC's intake and counseling work, and our community surveys, have given us a good understanding of the needs of older residents in our community. We have less information about the needs of younger residents. CSC will work to address this by doing a needs assessment of younger Lower East Side residents. We will utilize SurveyMonkey.com to do an online survey of people 45 and under to assess their priorities and identify

the issues of concern to them. While their concerns will undoubtedly overlap with those of older residents, we expect that we will learn more about concerns regarding the quality of local schools and issues affecting newer residents such as housing affordability, as well as concerns of working adults and families with young children who have little time to participate in community organizations. We will try to form a youth oriented committee that can organize community forums or focus groups about the concerns of younger residents. If we are successful in organizing a youth committee, we will prepare a brief report of findings re: youth oriented issues, and identify one or more issues from the Youth Report to organize around.

The outcomes we anticipate are as follows: 1) We will release a report about youth issues. 2) We will obtain additional community resources for at least 1 youth oriented project (ie., summer jobs, job training, more resources for an existing local program).

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (June 1, 2010 – June 30, 2012)

Program Goals	Resources Required	Activities & Outcomes expected	Funding Required
1) Attract and develop more younger leadership in the Cooper Square Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two staff organizers spending 7 hours per week each. - Tenant leaders - Youth leaders - An intern each semester - New outreach material 	<p>Activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Research young people's concerns through online surveys and outreach at various venues 2) Partner with FAB on events to bring together artists and younger people 3) Hold pot-luck events 4) Use social networking sites like Facebook to attract young people <p>Outcome(s):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Bring in at least 100 (under 40) members 2) Add at least 4 board members in their 20s and 30s 	\$15,000 - \$20,000 annually in payroll expenses plus fringe benefits
2) Work to identify and prioritize issues of concern to young Lower East Side residents (ages 18 – 39), and develop an organizing campaign to address them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two staff organizers spending 7 hours per week each - Board involvement on a Youth Committee - Youth Community leaders - An intern each semester 	<p>Activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Conduct online surveys about youth-specific issues 2) Conduct community forums or focus groups about 3) Prepare a brief report of findings re: youth oriented issues 4) Identify 2 issues from the Youth Report to organize around. <p>Outcome(s):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Release a report about youth issues. 2) Obtain additional community resources for at least 1 youth oriented project (ie., summer jobs, job training, more resources for an existing local program). 	<p>Included in the above Program Funding.</p> <p>Total = \$15,000 - \$20,000</p>