

Coram Civic Association

PO Box 21
Coram, NY 11727

Middle Country Road Task Force

PO Box 658
Middle Island, NY 11953

Shoppers are leaving the Coram Plaza Shopping Center and shopping in Mt. Sinai, Farmingville and Selden! Why?

- Panhandlers •Homeless/Vagrants •Charity Food Distribution •Lack of Cleanliness
- Overnight Parking of Tractor Trailers •Drug Transactions/Prostitution

November 30, 2015

(Business Name_

Address 1

Address 2

Dear_____

I am writing to you because I know you are even more concerned than I with the long-term success of your business...and the Coram Plaza Shopping Center.

I'll get right to the point: our organizations—the **Coram Civic Association** and the **Middle Country Road Task Force**—have been receiving an increasing number of impassioned pleas to 'clean up' the Coram Plaza Shopping Center. Our organization members as well as an alarmingly large number of the Longwood community members (Coram, Middle Island, Gordon Heights, Yaphank, Ridge, Lake Panamoka, as well as Medford, Selden, Port Jeff, Mt. Sinai and Farmingville) have been stating emphatically that they are **reducing or eliminating their visits to your shopping center...**and now there are a growing number of people who are posting their concerns on social media as well as voicing their concerns at our monthly meetings. I'm sure I don't have to remind you how quickly social media drove people to attack Simon Properties about their "Glacier Christmas" display at Roosevelt Field with threats of boycotting all of Simon's shopping centers. In mere days, Simon was forced to dismantle their displays and revert to the traditional Christmas displays *all across the country*. Such is the power of social media. None of us can afford for the **Coram Plaza Shopping Center** to suffer a similar attack from social media. Here are their major complaints in order of frequency:

- **Panhandlers** – shoppers are becoming increasingly fearful for their personal safety as well as for the safety of their family members
- **Homeless/Vagrants** – shoppers are seeing an ever-increasing number of homeless congregating in the center; primarily around the bus stop at the Home Depot end as well as living in the wooded areas by the Capital Bank and behind the BP Station. This cause serious discomfort for your shoppers and they are choosing instead to shop in Farmingville, Mt. Sinai, and Selden.
- **Church Charities Food Distribution** – Lighthouse Ministries uses the Coram Plaza Shopping Center as a food and clothing distribution location on a weekly basis. This causes a very large number of the "needy" to congregate in the center causing discomfort for the shoppers who would like to frequent your business.
- **Overall cleanliness of the parking area and green areas** – many people have commented that they have stopped shopping at the Coram Plaza or frequent it much less because of the lack of suitable maintenance.

- **Overnight parking of tractor trailers** – this was most notable down by the Home Depot end and has been alleviated to a large degree; however, it still does occur intermittently.
- **Drug transactions/Prostitution** – many have complained about witnessing drug and prostitution transactions taking place and some have said that they have been accosted for those purposes.

Back when that center first opened, I worked there as the operations manager for Grant City. The center was beautiful and a major draw for business. The center tanked in the 90's and has struggled mightily to make its way back to prominence. Unfortunately, it is again teetering on the edge. You--and we the community members--cannot afford to let that happen. We are working diligently with local, county and state officials as well as the SCPD to address many of these concerns, *but we need your involvement.*

What can you do?

1. When a representative from our organization calls upon your store, please take a moment to chat with us and share with us your thinking on these customer complaints. Let us know your ideas to counter the problems that are reducing traffic to the **Coram Plaza Shopping Center**.
2. Contact your landlord and ask for their help in resolving these issues before the shopping public resolves them for us. Part of your rent goes to parking lot security and upkeep; make sure you're getting what you are paying for. It is no longer illegal to panhandle, and the No Loitering laws were stripped from the books. The police cannot intervene in matters *without a complainant* — a property owner or tenant acting as an agent— willing to file a complaint against trespassers. This is a two-step process requiring owners to ask the trespassers to leave, and then filing a complaint if they refuse or return. Take the time to do this. An ounce of prevention now may prevent a pound of lost revenue *or bankruptcy filings* later. We are also in the processing of contacting the three different property owners for the center, as are our local Suffolk County Legislator and NYS Assemblyman.
3. This is the busy time for retailers so what better time than now to make a special effort to keep your store clean and attractive...and keep an eye outside to make sure the area in front of your store is *attracting* customers.

We all have a stake in the ongoing success of the **Coram Plaza Shopping Center**. Storeowners have invested a sizeable amount of their life savings in their businesses. Store managers have invested part of their lives in their careers. The homeowners of Coram have their quality of life and the value of their homes invested in the appearance and financial vitality of this center.

All it takes is for one of the anchor stores to leave or a couple more of the independents to fold, and the **Coram Plaza Shopping Center** will collapse. You cannot afford for the public to continue taking their dollars elsewhere. We, the residents of Coram and the Longwood Community, cannot afford for your business to fail.

Help us to help you and together we can help our hamlet of Coram maintain a vibrant shopping area.

Much more to follow. Comments? Questions? Observations? Please contact me at cdreilly@CoramCivic.org.

Sincerely,

Christopher D. Reilly

Coram Civic Association-Board Member

Middle Country Road Task Force-Board Member (Info on MCRTF: www.coramcivic.org/MCRTaskForce.html)

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