



Each working group produced draft recommendations, which ranged in specificity from broad goals to objectives and priorities to specific mechanisms and tools members’ wanted to see used in Gowanus and in shaping a draft planning and land use framework. The recommendations were discussed and prioritized, including those that needed more information and those that, while the underlying goals may be supported broadly, the mechanisms or tools discussed were **beyond the scope or ability of this neighborhood study for feasibility, legal or other policy reasons**. Those are listed below with a supporting rationale that was discussed with the Working Groups and at the Working Group Summit in July.

Recommendation	Rationale
Arts & Culture	
<p>Explore land use strategies to encourage or require artist live/work space on an area-wide basis.</p>	<p>Across the city, zoning supports live/work space through accessory uses if certain requirements are met. Accessory uses are uses that are related and incidental to a primary use and include home occupations (a non-residential use that can be carried on within a dwelling unit) as well as living or sleeping accommodations in connection with a non-residential use in a building. These home occupations and non-residential uses can support a wide range of professions and uses, including fine art studios. Aside from accessory uses, area-wide efforts to implement live/work space for artists have faced challenges that make implementation difficult, such as artist certification, individuals’ career and life changes, and ongoing enforcement. Despite supporting the underlying goal, because of these challenges, the City is not seeking to implement an area-wide policy, in Gowanus for artist live/work space to supplement existing regulations for accessory uses. However, the Department of City Planning is committed to working with property owners and potential sponsoring arts organizations in Gowanus who: 1) would like to understand how accessory uses might apply to their developments to support live/work space, or 2) have a vision for artist live/work space and want to ensure that their program is supported by any potential land use changes.</p>
<p>Explore the possibility for DCLA capital funding to accommodate shorter lease periods.</p>	<p>All City capital funding, which includes DCLA’s capital funding for cultural non-profits, must follow established City guidelines and rules. Per the City’s Guidelines for Capital Funding Requests for Not-For-Profit Organizations, the City may fund Projects on real property that the applicant leases from a non-government entity if the lease is at least as long as the useful life of the improvements. Typically for improvements on real property the minimum required lease term is 15 years and for moveable equipment is 5 years. Please note that a prerequisite for DCLA capital funding is the organization must be a recipient of DCLA Programs (CDF) funding in one of the last three fiscal years.</p>
<p>Make Gowanus a focal point of the AREA program by committing to creating a specific number of affordable artist workspaces.</p>	<p>DCLA’s Affordable Real Estate for Artists (AREA) initiative is a citywide commitment announced by Mayor de Blasio in the 2015 State of the City Address to create 1,500 units of affordable housing and 500 units of artist workspaces over a period of 10 years. The goal is to ensure the creation of long-term affordable workspaces across the city that are accessible to artists of all backgrounds and are beneficial for neighborhood needs and development. To ensure fairness for artists across all neighborhoods and boroughs, DCLA cannot make any neighborhood a focal point of the program nor commit to a specific number for Gowanus. However, if there are suitable publicly or privately owned sites in Gowanus that have potential to develop affordable artist workspaces, DCLA is happy to consider specific proposals.</p>
<p>Explore mechanisms to implement commercial rent control to help artists and arts and cultural organizations stay in Gowanus.</p>	<p>Artists and arts and cultural organizations are an important part of the “Gowanus Mix” and the Department of City Planning and the Department of Cultural Affairs have worked with local stakeholders to develop potential strategies to support these groups and the “Gowanus Mix.” Commercial rent control is a broad and controversial topic that has many challenges, implications, and legal boundaries, and is out of scope for a neighborhood study. The study is, however, contemplating mechanisms to incentivize space for uses including those that support the arts and cultural ecosystem in Gowanus.</p>



Recommendation	Rationale
Housing	
<p>Consider mechanisms, such as leveraging new market rate residential development or through the PLACES study to fund state of good repair in NYCHA developments of Gowanus Houses, Wyckoff Gardens, and Warren St Houses.</p>	<p>There is currently over \$18 billion of unfunded state-of-good-repair needs across NYCHA developments city-wide. These needs far surpass the \$1 billion Neighborhood Development Fund, which was created to address capital needs across 15 neighborhoods that will be studied as part of the Housing New York Plan, including Gowanus.</p> <p>NYCHA is responsible for the state-of-good-repair in their developments and is looking to address some of this unfunded need through the NYCHA NextGen process. NextGeneration NYCHA is a comprehensive plan released by the Mayor and the Authority to ensure that public housing in NYC continues to be a resource for current public housing residents and the next generation of New Yorkers. A significant portion of that plan is dedicated to addressing the physical needs across the portfolio leveraging increased city and state investment, tools like HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration Program (also known as RAD) and revenue generated through new development like the NextGen Neighborhoods program, which aims to add affordable housing and raise revenue to fund capital improvements by building new housing that is 50% affordable and 50% market rate – Wyckoff Gardens is part of this program.</p> <p>NYCHA and the City continue to work closely to increase the availability of capital funding to address the physical needs of all of its buildings. Mayor De Blasio has committed \$1 billion to replace 700 deteriorating roofs over the next 10 years and \$355 million to fix 150 building facades over the next 3 years. Gowanus Houses is also receiving Federally funded Sandy recovery and resilience capital investments. Work includes repairs to mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, roof replacement on 12 buildings, façade repairs, and new site lighting, as well as flood proofing and stormwater retention areas. In addition, an Energy Performance Contract will provide funds for new energy efficient lighting in building common areas and inside apartments, as well as heating controls and replacement of showerheads and aerators at Wyckoff Gardens (\$408K) and Gowanus Houses (\$3.7M).</p>
<p>The PLACES study must include strategies for preserving and improving public housing.</p>	<p>While the Gowanus PLACES Study cannot address state-of-good repair in NYCHA's residential units, the study is exploring how improvements to shared spaces at NYCHA developments (including community centers) that residents have advocated for can be achieved.</p>

Support the creation of a "Displacement-Free Zone" for unregulated units, including establishing a Good Neighbor Tax Credit Program wherein homeowners can receive tax credits or other incentives to keep rents affordable in their buildings.

The Administration is working on multiple fronts to keep New Yorkers in their homes and make sure our housing stock is in good financial and physical shape. HPD preserves affordable housing by rigorously enforcing the Housing Maintenance Code; financing improvements in the quality, physical condition, and efficiency of residential buildings in exchange for restrictions on the rents an owner can charge; and monitoring the condition and long-term financial stability of affordable buildings. Under *Housing New York*, the City has also worked to protect tenants from deregulation and harassment, expanded and refined its preservation tools to reach a wider range of properties, and created new incentives to preserve long-term affordability in changing neighborhoods.

Since 2014, the City has financed the preservation of 53,300 affordable homes across the city, including assistance for owners of 520 small homes.

The Center for New York City Neighborhoods, an HPD partner, connects homeowners at risk of foreclosure with free housing counseling and legal services. The Center can also provide information about important tax programs and other resources, including HPD's home repair loans, which help low-income homeowners make critical repairs to their buildings so they can resist pressures to raise rents or sell. Homeowners in need of assistance can reach the Center by calling 855-HOME-456.

HPD has explored the benefit of a Good Neighbor Tax Credit Program, but there are concerns about how it would work in practice. In addition, the City is legally prohibited from regulating rents in unregulated units and establishment of a tax credit or incentive would require cooperation and approval from New York State; HPD is willing to explore other ideas that do not require state tax authority.

Consider a right-to-return preference for residents who were displaced on a project or site-specific basis.

The City's approach is to prevent displacement wherever possible, and there are a number of resources available to ensure tenants are aware of their rights and protected from deregulation and harassment. For example:

- To support tenants who are facing eviction or harassment, the City has expanded funding for free civil legal services for low-income New Yorkers. The Administration also helped to create an interagency, multi-jurisdictional Tenant Harassment Prevention Task Force to investigate and bring enforcement actions – including criminal charges – against landlords who are found to be harassing tenants.
- In Gowanus, outreach specialists with the City's new Tenant Support Unit will be going door-to-door, informing tenants of their rights, documenting complaints related to harassment and eviction, and making referrals to free legal support whenever necessary.
- The City also continues to work with tenants, advocates, and the State Assembly to achieve reforms in the rent regulation laws.
- Finally, families who are falling behind on rent and at risk of becoming homeless can contact a local HomeBase Center to be connected with emergency rental assistance programs.

Establishment of a Right-to-Return preference presents many challenges, including requiring State legislation, which is beyond the scope of a neighborhood study. In new affordable housing built as a result of Mandatory Inclusionary Housing, as well as other projects financed by HPD, community district residents will receive priority for a portion of lottery units, per HPD's Community Preference policy.



<p>Mandate preservation of existing affordable commercial retail and local services, and require that future commercial retail businesses, and services are affordable to residents.</p>	<p>The City lacks both the legal authority and the capacity to monitor and regulate the day-to-day operation of retail stores. In addition, the retail industry is in a state of flux and rigid regulations could adversely affect the health of neighborhood corridors and availability of services for residents and workers.</p>
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Recommendation	Rationale
Industry & Economic Development	
<p>Study the IBZ for land use changes, including, specifically, to allow increased industrial and commercial FAR along with use restrictions.</p>	<p>While the Gowanus portion of the Southwest Brooklyn IBZ is part of the overall PLACES context area and being considered for infrastructure and service-related needs, studying the area for land use changes would significantly expand the study's scope. DCP remains committed to reinforcing the area as an industrial and commercial jobs center and to working with business and property stakeholders on specific projects or issues that they may have. Currently, citywide zoning text amendments are proposed to limit self-storage and hotel uses in this IBZ (among others) and M1 districts, respectively, as part of a plan to strengthen core industrial areas laid out in the Mayor's Jobs Plan.</p>
<p>Develop as-of-right zoning requirements for deeding mission-driven, nonprofit stewardship of industrial and art space in new developments.</p>	<p>While working group members did not reach a consensus in support of this recommendation, requiring space to be deeded or used by a non-profit entity for a specific purpose or use raises legal, technical, enforcement, financial, and policy issues that would make such a program challenging to implement. Some working group members, including business and property owners, also discussed that this would add undesirable constraints to the management of property and expressed a need for more flexibility.</p>

Recommendation	Rationale
Sustainability & Resiliency	
<p>Consider establishing "managed retreat," which would prohibit any use of public financing for construction or redevelopment work in the Gowanus flood zone.</p>	<p>This interest was not mutually shared among working group members. It conflicts with core objectives established within the Gowanus Study process, including promoting investment in the creation of commercial and arts uses, housing and continued industrial use on canal-side properties.</p> <p>The City's resiliency land use policy is to restrict density in areas that face exceptional flood risk, such as areas where projections of sea level rise would result in daily tidal flooding by the 2050s, and where shoreline enhancements are not feasible to address these risks. In and around Gowanus's narrow floodplain, as in most of the city's coastal areas, coastal flood risk can be managed through emergency preparedness and investments in flood risk mitigation including infrastructure hardening, floodproofing of buildings, shoreline raising, and/or long-term coastal protection infrastructure.</p>