

Jerome Avenue Study

Workshop & Visioning Session Summary



5.30.15

6.27.15

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Overview

In continuation of the Visioning Process, the Department of City Planning (DCP), in partnership with Community Boards Four and Five, held a Community Workshop and Visioning Session in May and June 2015, respectively. These sessions built upon the previous planning activities which included small group meetings, focus groups, and the Open House series (summary at NYC.gov/Jerome). These events demonstrated the City's comprehensive approach to the Jerome Avenue Study, collaborating with several key City agencies including: the Department of Housing and Preservation (HPD), Small Business Services (SBS), the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and the Department of Transportation (CDOT) as well as various community stakeholders. Overall, more than 100 participants attended both the Community Workshop and the Visioning Session.

The Community Workshop engaged stakeholders in further developing their goals for the Jerome Avenue corridor. Participants were divided into groups at the onset. During the first activity representatives from the HPD, CDOT, SBS, and DPR rotated to each group asking

a series of key questions aimed at greater clarity and definition around the goals and priorities established by community stakeholders related to housing, jobs and businesses, community resources and access, mobility and circulation. DCP staff members facilitated the group discussions around community assets and opportunities, discussing where the goals might be achieved within the study area. The event culminated with representatives from each group, providing an overview of what had been discussed in their group throughout the course of the day, highlighting key issues and points of discussion and agreement. Following the report out, each participant was given a number of dots which they could use to vote on the goal or goals which they felt were most important.

DCP followed the Community Workshop with a Visioning Session, intended to confirm the community-driven goals statements, as well as begin to identify geographic areas within the study area where those goals could be met. Participants divided into five groups, based on specific sections of the study area (sub-areas) and participated in four distinct exercises. The exercises

were designed to systematically build upon each other from the broadest geographies and topics, to the most specific at the sub-area level. First each group evaluated and confirmed the goal statements from the Community Workshop. Next each group identified existing land use patterns and then discussed potential scenarios for the rezoning area. Each group established a general framework for the study area and shared these with the larger group. Each group then addressed their specific sub-area to begin assigning densities, building heights public realm and streetscape improvements. Finally, large-scale photographs of specific sites (representing typical conditions throughout the sub-area, and study area) were used as a base to sketch each group's future vision. The final exercise allowed participants to explore their recommendations and ideas for the broader study area and apply them to specific sites within their selected sub-area. This also was an opportunity for community stakeholders to discuss a variety of tradeoffs related to their goals and vision for a particular area.

The Community Workshop and Visioning Session successfully built upon all of the outreach and information shared and gathered by DCP during the course of the last several months. The input gathered from these sessions will help the Department to better understand the various perspectives of community stakeholders, their goals and vision for the Jerome Avenue corridor. DCP will collaborate with its sister agencies to establish a draft framework for land use changes as well as strategies related to the goals statements developed by the community. DCP will continue the public discussion and input by sharing the draft land use framework and strategies with the public in fall 2015.

Community Workshop

The Community Workshop built upon the Department's community outreach efforts established during the Open House Series. The event's objective was to continue the dialogue among the community, DCP & sister agencies related to goals for the Jerome Avenue corridor.

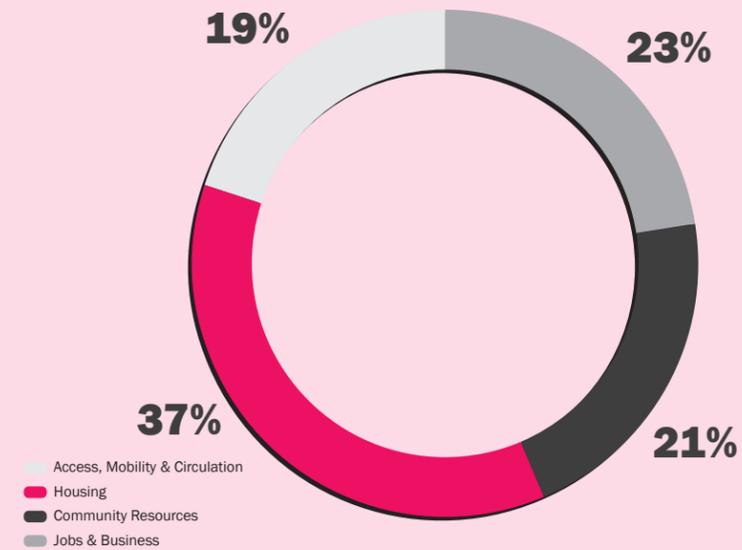
Participants organized into small groups and engaged in substantive discussions around broad goals pertaining to: Housing, Community Resources, Jobs & Businesses, as well as Access, Mobility & Circulation. These discussions were facilitated by representatives from HPD, SBS, DOT and DPR and DCP. Each group remained stationary while the representatives from each agency rotated at regular intervals to each group. The groups first discussed and edited the goals statements related to each category. Each agency would discuss the goals with the group framed around a series of key questions, allowing each group to refine or edit the goals as they deemed appropriate. Utilizing a large-scale map of the study area each group discussed the various assets within the study area and opportunities within the neighborhood where the goals statements could be achieved. The end results were a set of goal statements and a map which identified assets, opportunities and challenges as identified by each group.

Participants were also invited to create a map of their neighborhood where they identified on individual maps, specific points of interests, commonly used routes, and streets that they specifically avoided. DCP collected all of the individual maps, and compiled them gain a better understanding of the perceptions and realities of how community members experienced the study area. The

maps are a key tool in assessing how the study area is actually used and experienced on a day-to-day basis.

The event culminated with representatives from each group reporting back on their group's discussion including their agreed-upon goal statements. All participants were given the opportunity to vote on all goals developed by the groups throughout the course of the day as a means of establishing priorities among community members. Housing received the most votes, followed by jobs and businesses, community resources, and access, mobility and circulation. The most widely agreed-upon goals related to the creation and preservation of affordable housing, business training, open space quality (specifically playgrounds), and the physical conditions around/under the elevated rail.

TOTAL VOTING BY TOPIC



Participants discuss goals relating to Community Resources



Participants vote on goals discussed throughout the session



Participants discuss goals relating to Access, Mobility & Circulation

Community Workshop

My Neighborhood Exercise

MY NEIGHBORHOOD

Follow the steps below to help create a map of **YOUR** neighborhood. If any of the places below are not on the map provided, just make a note on the reverse side, and we will be sure to include it!

1. Home Where do you live? Draw a **STAR** around your home!

2. Work/Learn Where is your job or school? Draw a **CIRCLE**. Use as many circles as you need.

* If you are not currently working or in school, no worries! Draw a circle around the last place you worked or school you attended.

3. Recreation/Entertainment Where do you go on your free time? Draw a **SQUARE** around the places you visit most frequently.

* Some common places might include: restaurants, libraries, bodegas, grocery stores, coffee shops, bus stops, gyms, bars, streets, etc. Where are we most likely to find you in the neighborhood?

4. Annotate Put a small number next to each shape you have made & use the back of the sheet to **LIST THE NAMES** of the places.

5. Pedestrian Routes How do you get to where you are going? Draw a **SOLID** line along the streets you use the most.

* You might choose to take certain routes because they are more convenient or direct, are more convenient for shopping or take you directly to your favorite park.

6. Streets you avoid Where are the streets you never take? Draw a **DASHED** line along the streets you actively avoid.

* You might avoid a street because it is too hilly. Maybe it feels unsafe at night or has cars double parked

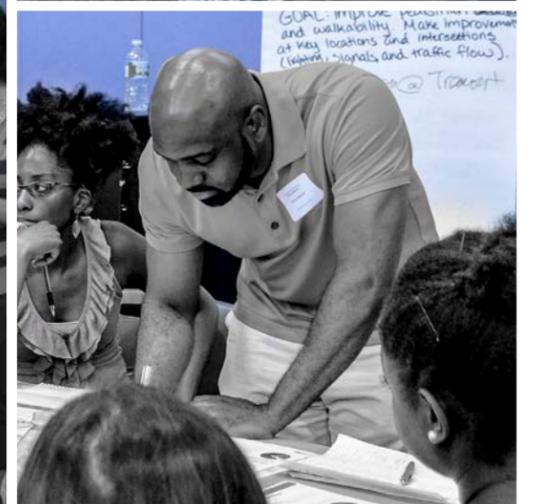
7. Discuss! What does your map look like? Why? **SHARE** with the group.



Participants' annotated 'My Neighborhood' maps
Compiled results from the My Neighborhood exercise (right)

Community Workshop

Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club, 1835 University Ave. | 5.30.15



Visioning Session

The Visioning Session engaged more than 60 community participants in a multi-part event aimed at developing a future-oriented vision for the Jerome Avenue Corridor. As a pre-cursor to the actual event community members were invited to engage in an open-house style introduction which included informational boards, draft goal statements and detailed information about the project and the study area. This gave anyone who may have not attended an event or who had questions to familiarize themselves with materials and talk to DCP staff members. Participants were asked to self-organize themselves into one of five sub-area groups. Each sub-area represented a discrete portion of the overall study area (with some overlapping geographies) and would be the focus of that group throughout the event.

Each group first with reviewed and discussed the goal statements. The goal statements were developed by community stakeholders over the course of several months through a series of outreach activities conducted by DCP. The Visioning Session allowed DCP to confirm and refine those statements based on community input.

Participants arranged colored poker chips, corresponding to land uses on a large-scale map of the study area. First, the chips were arranged to represent existing conditions. Once completed, each group used the goals statements as a guide to rearrange, swap, preserve or identify new uses with the poker chips to reflect a desired vision for the area. As the poker chips were being rearranged, DCP facilitators simultaneously mapped and diagrammed the discussions. At the end of the exercise, each group presented their land use vision to the larger group.

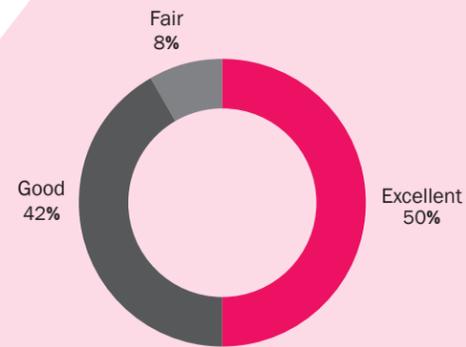
Once each group established an overall land use vision and the rationales behind other groups' visions, they turned their attention to their selected sub-area. Participants reviewed and discussed a series of cards which represented a variety of options related to open space improvements, commercial and community spaces, retail, and residential development. The cards allowed participants to select images that related to directly to their vision of the selected sub-area.

Participants then had the opportunity to combine the goal statements with their selected images and apply them to existing sites within the sub-area. Each group had large-format photographs of sites within their sub-area. DCP urban designers used these photographs

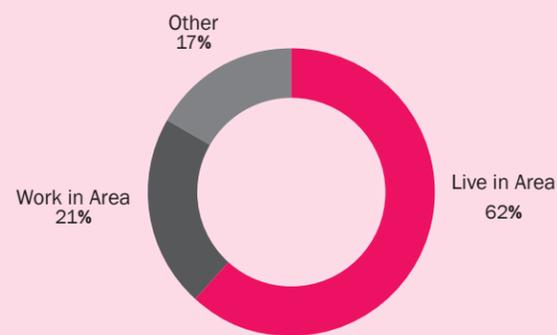
as a base to sketch future vision scenarios as outlined by the group. The facilitators led a discussion of the broader land use visions and various interventions discussed at the study area level and how they might be applied to the sub-area level. DCP staff members also engaged the groups in a discussion of trade-offs associated with the different scenarios identified by the group. The end product was a series of drawings and scenarios that truly reflects the community's vision for the future of the Jerome Avenue Corridor.

Exit surveys indicated that participants rated the event highly and overall felt they were able to fully engage and participate in the event. Results from the survey are found below.

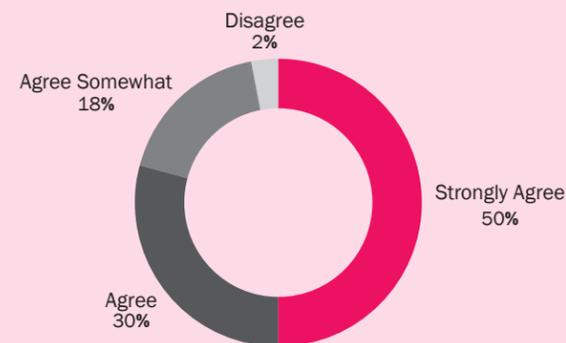
1. Overall, How would you rate the Visioning Session?



2. Why did you attend the session?



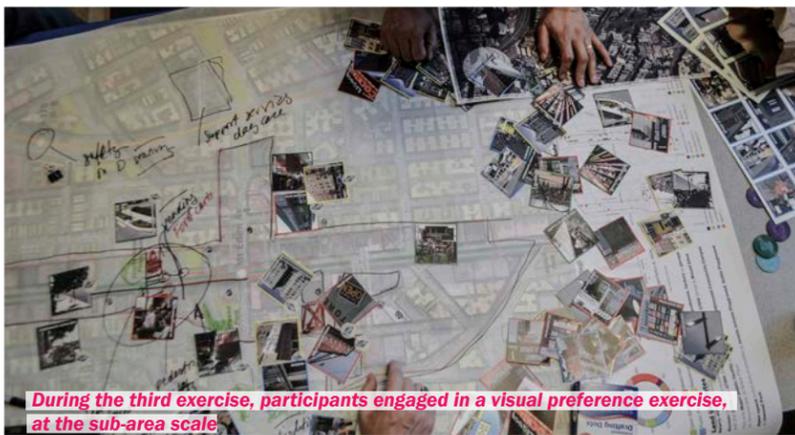
3. I was able to participate in the discussion & activities



Participants reach consensus on the goals for the study, as voted on at May's Community Workshop



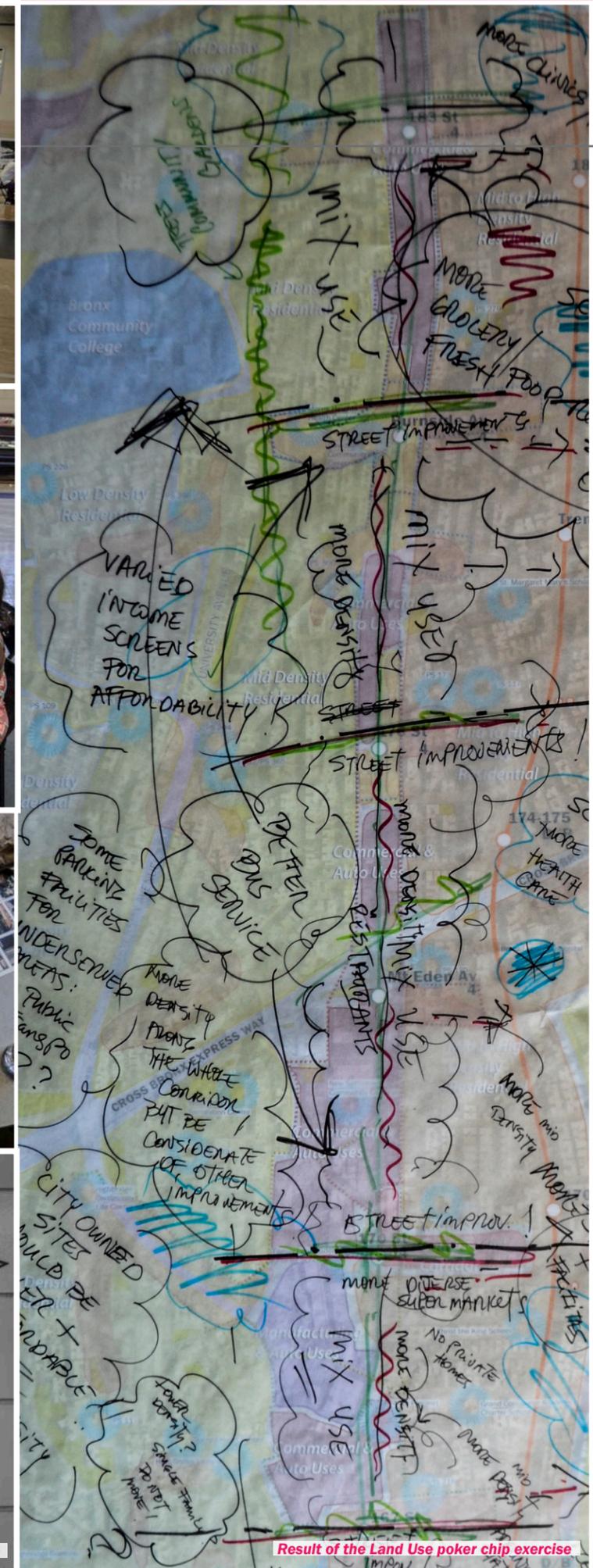
Using poker chips, participants indicated desirable land use patterns for the Study Area



During the third exercise, participants engaged in a visual preference exercise, at the sub-area scale



An urban designer sketches a future scenario under the direction of event participants



Result of the Land Use poker chip exercise

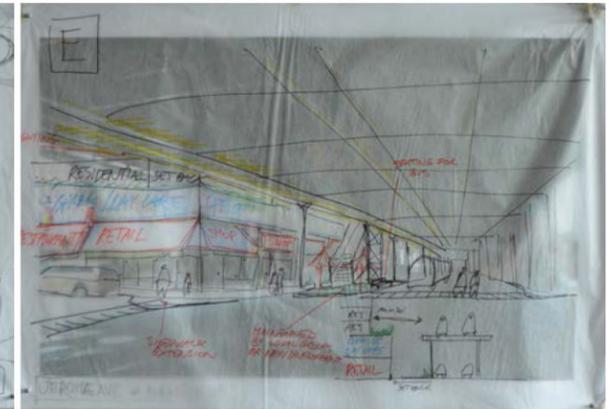
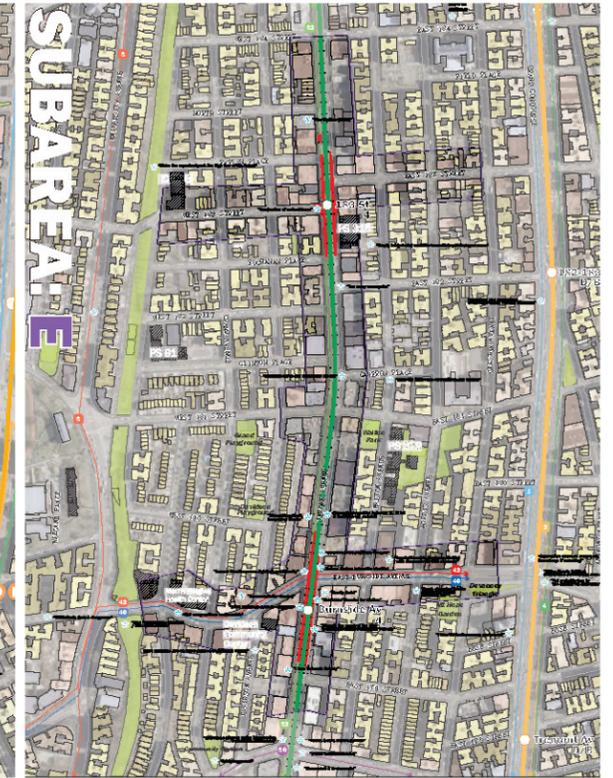
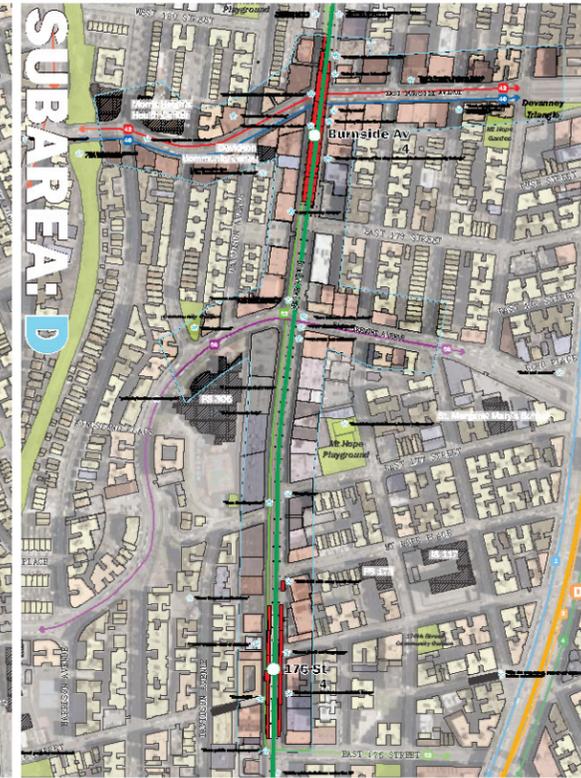
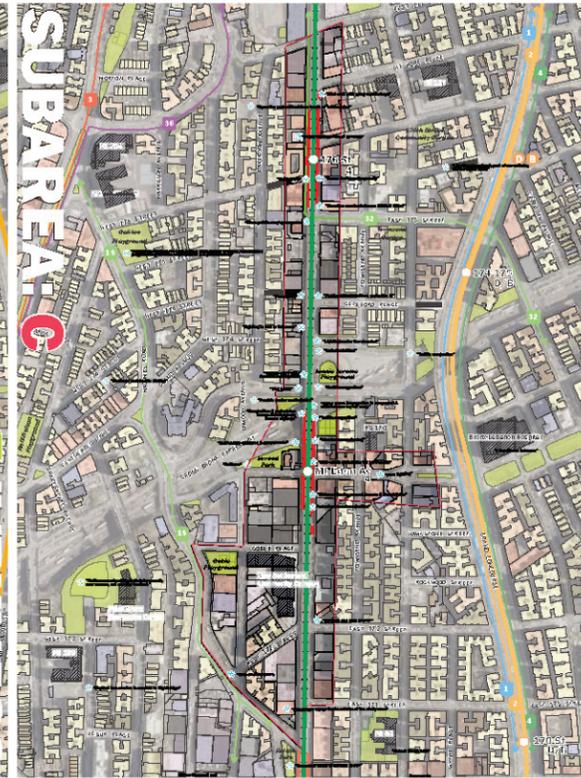
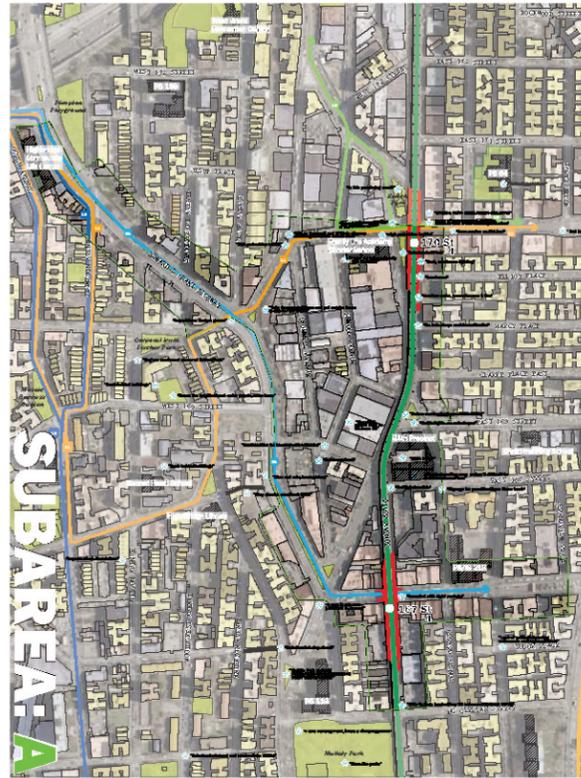
A

B

C

D

E



- Participants expressed the importance of access to fresh and high quality foods
- Participants like the convenience of the area in terms of public transportation, but want to see improvements made to improve accessibility for elderly and disabled.
- Preserve lower density residential on side streets and see the development of higher density residential along Jerome.

- Participants would like to see a city-wide community day where all agencies come together to advertise and educate community on different programs/services.
- Participants also expressed desire to preserve auto shops in a designated area and maintain them separately from housing.

- Group C agreed that auto-related business should remain near the Cross Bronx Expressway
- Participants want to improve pedestrian safety around the Cross Bronx Expressway area
- The group wants to see more lighting and parking regulations under/around the elevated to make it safer and more pedestrian friendly.
- The group also shared their desire to promote mixed-use and maker spaces

- Group D agreed that housing was appropriate all along Jerome Avenue corridor
- Participants agreed that auto-uses that were compatible with residential should remain throughout
- Participants agreed that noise mitigation should be required for any development along the elevated rail
- The group expressed interest in improving and expanding the Davidson Community Center

- Group E would like to see second story commercial/office space near the elevated with residential on higher floors to avoid noise/pollution from the train.
- Participants would also like to see improved lighting and landscaping along Jerome Avenue.

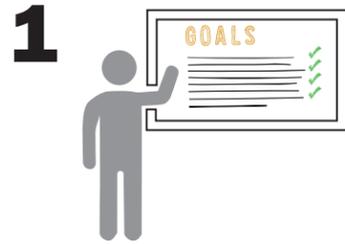
A

B

C

D

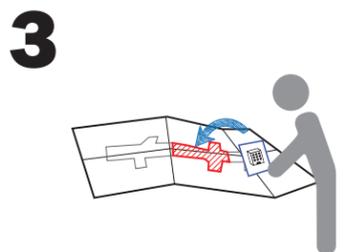
E



Participants affirm and amend study area goals, as discussed at May's Community Workshop



Participants discuss desired land uses for the study area (results on following pages)



Participants place images representing various types of development, retail and public realm improvements



DCP urban designers use existing conditions photographs to sketch groups' visions

Visioning Session



Group A



Group B



Group C



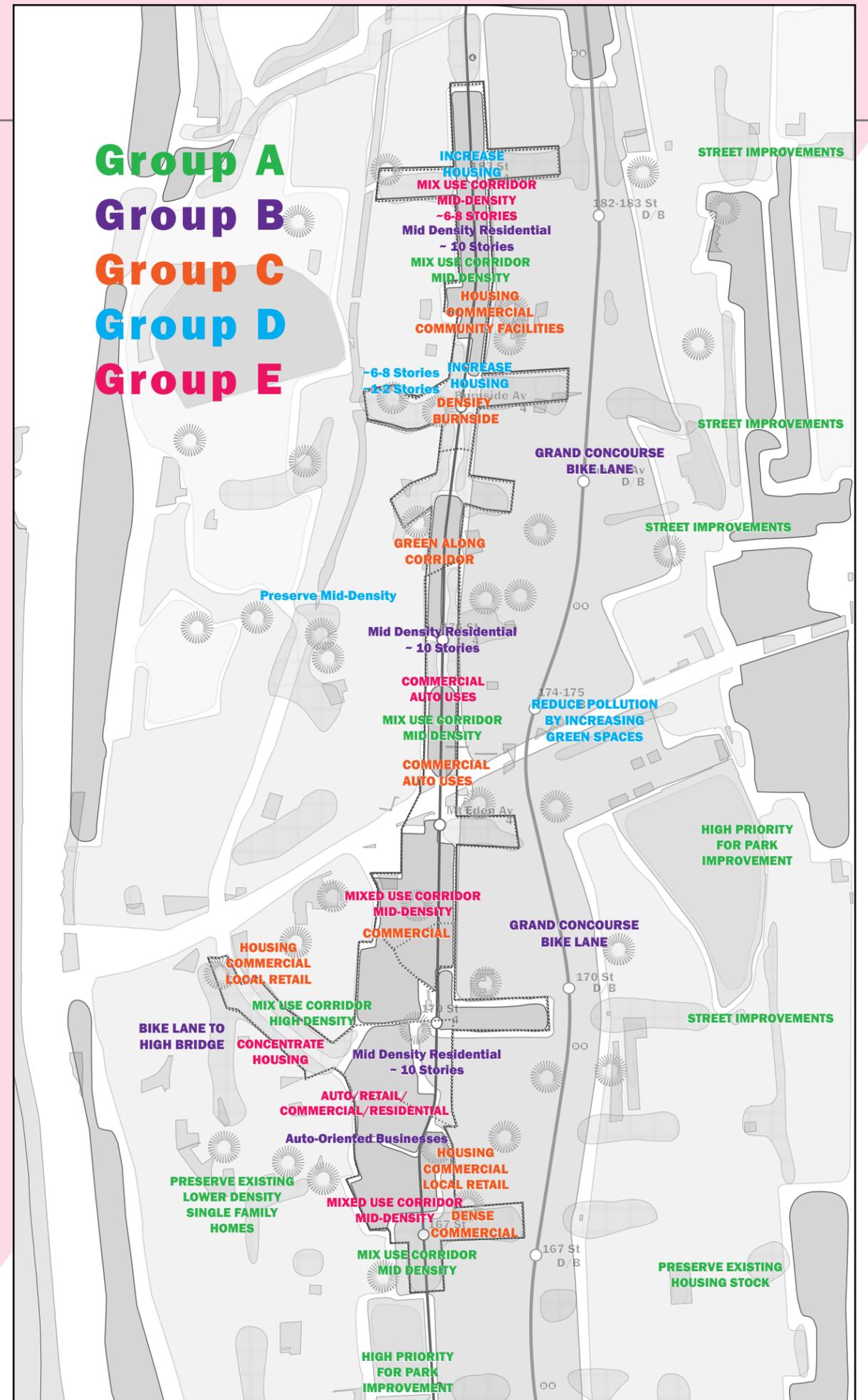
Group D

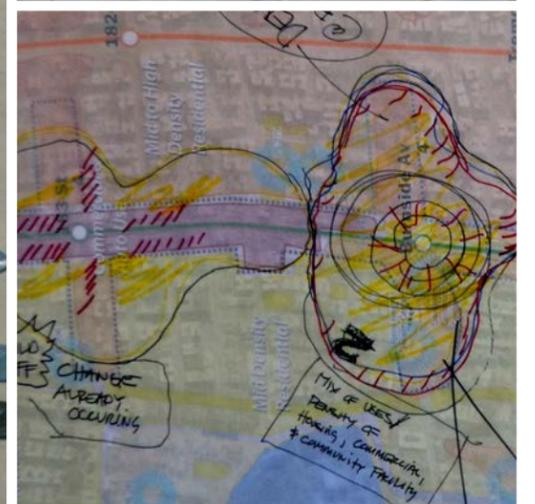


Group E

During the first exercise, participants arranged poker chips to display their vision for the future of the study area. The poker chips were color-coded to represent: residential, commercial, institutional, industrial and open space land uses. The facilitators then sketched diagrams based on the placement of the poker chips, revealing their overall vision for the study area.

A compilation of each groups' land use diagram helps to identify agreement across groups, but also identifies unique ideas & patterns (right)





Jerome Avenue Study Goals

HOUSING

GOAL#1: Provide sustainable, high-quality, affordable housing with a range of options for residents at all income levels.

- Housing opportunities must provide significant options for low and extremely low-income households
- New housing should create home ownership opportunities to empower the community
- New housing should maintain neighborhood character – building quality, a range of unit sizes and a range of incomes
- Assist local residents in qualifying for new housing opportunities – provide regular information sessions and household credit counseling
- New housing and services should support the needs of the homeless and promote housing options for Seniors, Youth/Foster Care Youth and Disabled
- Housing should support safe, attractive neighborhood streets, especially along Jerome Ave
- Help new and old buildings shape a healthier Bronx – support use of green technology, energy efficiency, and retrofitting of old buildings

GOAL#2: Protect tenants by improving housing quality and penalizing bad landlords.

- Be vigilant in protecting current residents - Partner with local organizations to promote outreach and education to ensure residents and owners have access to the City's housing resources, including anti-harassment assistance, household credit counseling and marketing of affordable housing
- Collaborate with local organizations and non-profits to identify distressed buildings and those that would benefit from rehabilitation and building improvements/upgrades
- Guarantee every tenant who faces harassment or eviction has access to legal services

Jobs and Businesses

GOAL#1: Create greater retail diversity to meet current and growing retail and service needs

- Help local retail merchants organize and increase the attractiveness of local retail corridors
- Work with landlords and vacant property owners to attract diverse businesses to address local needs
- Attract healthy food and quality retail to ensure residents have affordable retail options
 - Diversify beyond self storage, pharmacies, 99 cent stores, fast food, tire shops
 - Develop anchor stores, healthy/better food options, supermarkets, sit-down restaurants, banks
- Help locally-owned small businesses develop in the neighborhood
 - Evaluate their business needs on an on-going basis
 - Monitor area rents and identify trends

GOAL#2: Help Jerome Avenue residents prepare for jobs and career growth with appropriate job training and skills development

- Tailor employment services to meet the needs of the local community
 - Auto workers
 - Youth
 - ESOL
- Connect residents to job opportunities in diverse industries with livable wages
 - Green Buildings
 - Technology
 - Building Trades
 - Transit
 - Municipal
- Increase opportunities for workers and youth to develop skills through internships and apprenticeship programs
- Leverage local non-profits and educational institutions (BMCC, Monroe)
- Ensure immigration and basic education needs are addressed via training programs

GOAL#3: Promote small businesses and support entrepreneurship throughout the corridor.

- Maintain and support the entrepreneurial spirit along the Jerome Avenue corridor
- Expand access in the community to existing business services and training – provide regular scheduled workshops and forums to promote/market SBS services and resources, create a satellite Business Solutions Center, create a business incubator
- Market and provide services for M/WBEs to increase local minority contractors and developers' involvement in development process
- Increase access to capital, lines of credit, and banking services
- Work with HPD/housing developers to assist locally-owned businesses secure commercial space in new mixed-use developments
- Provide access to legal advice to business start-ups and growing businesses
- Provide financing and loans for façade improvements
- Create incubator spaces to provide opportunities for entrepreneurs/maker spaces
 - Explore new uses based on community feedback
 - Support retail corridors by identifying complimentary uses to existing businesses

GOAL#4: Support auto-related businesses and workers.

- Help owners bring their businesses into compliance with regulations to become better neighbors for current residents and ensure worker safety
- Provide education and training programs for auto-related business owners to help them strengthen their businesses
 - Capital
 - Compliance
 - Technology
 - Performance Standards
- Target training programs for auto-related workers' needs
 - Auto-repair certifications
 - Auto-repair licenses
 - Technology
 - New fields
 - Immigration
 - ESOL
- Create a balance of auto-related business and other commercial uses in the area

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Goal#1: Ensure every neighborhood has green streetscapes, quality parks, and diverse recreation spaces.

- Plant more street trees and overall provide more green across the neighborhood.
- Increase opportunities for active recreation to fight asthma and obesity
 - Improve quality of playgrounds throughout the area
 - Create “fitness park”
 - Increase the number of schoolyards to playgrounds in the area
- Create new “green spaces” in the community including community gardens, green streets, passive recreation
- Leverage existing open spaces – High Bridge, Aqueduct Walkway, Mullaly, Claremont, schools
- Make better use of existing underutilized parks by increasing programming
- Increase safety and cleanliness of all parks especially Mullaly and Claremont
- Improve connections to waterfront, between parks, across bike lane corridors
- Connect bike lanes with major parks and the waterfront
- Increase the diversity of local amenities including: dog runs, skate parks

Goal#2: Meet the educational, health and service needs of the community, especially youth and seniors – today and in the future as the neighborhood develops.

- Promote health and well-being through greening, walkability, programming and partnerships.
- Create programs to promote intergenerational recreation
- Make sure adequate school seats are available to meet the educational needs to local youth including high school
- Increase local services such as health clinics, daycare centers, and senior centers by providing additional capacity for existing providers

- Support local cultural and religious institutions
 - Existing cultural events
 - New events based on community preference
 - Create new programs/events based on community needs and existing organizational capacity
- Fill the void left by loss of Highbridge Community Life Center
- Help meet space and programming needs of Yankasa Islamic Center and Davidson Community Center

Access, Mobility, Circulation

Goal#1: Promote a safe, walk-able Jerome Avenue under the elevated train

- Make the area “under the elevated” more welcoming and a better place for shopping, walking, and working
 - Improve lighting - street and pedestrian
 - Create opportunities for pop-up uses, food trucks, moveable furniture, retail, art, greenery
- Enforce parking and traffic regulations to keep sidewalks clear and safe
 - Signage at appropriate locations
- Improve pedestrian visibility at crossings along Jerome Avenue
- Create more bike lanes and identify additional locations for bike racks
- Provide adequate sanitation services including more garbage cans and ensure regularly scheduled pickups
- Promote redevelopment of vacant parcels
- Ensure new development provides adequate light and air under the elevated structure

Goal#2: Make sure the streets are safe and attractive for handicapped, seniors, and others with mobility issues.

- Provide elevator to subway between 167th Street and East 183rd Street
- Provide adequate bus shelters, widen sidewalks, seating on retail corridors, other amenities to improve mobility
- Improve bus connections (Bx3, Bx36, e.g.)
- Provide speaking traffic lights for visually impaired
- Line up curb cuts with pedestrian travel path in crosswalks

- Enforce regulations to provide safe, even sidewalks
- Improve pedestrian crossings by adding signals and striping at key intersections

Goal#3: Make streets throughout the Jerome Avenue area safe, green, inviting, and walkable.

- Widen sidewalks along major streets and provide seating and lighting at key intersections and along retail corridors
 - Tremont, Burnside, Grand Concourse, 167th, 170th
- Plant more street trees and overall provide more green across the neighborhood
 - Sedgwick, ELG, Grand Concourse
- Restripe bicycle lanes and travel lanes as needed
- Improve the pedestrian and bike experience along Edward L. Grant Highway
 - Protected bike lanes
 - Improved bus stops
 - Increase circulation/space for pedestrians
- Shorten crossings, provide pedestrian islands, and improve pedestrian visibility especially around the Cross-Bronx Expressway on/off ramps
- Create protected bike lanes at busy intersections and key locations
- Repair underpasses along Grand Concourse
- Improve step streets to make sure they are safe and inviting
 - 176th Street
 - Clifford Place
- Help local merchants improve existing façades and overall streetscape improvements – seating, street trees,
- Promote and incentivize active ground floor uses along the corridor
- Establish partnerships with local organization, create new plazas for community recreation and entertainment to support/promote existing retail businesses
- Improve bus connections (Bx3, Bx36, e.g.)
- Work with service providers to incorporate/include their facilities and residents in strategies to improve overall neighborhood quality of life
- Educate auto merchants on sidewalk regulations and neighborhood benefits of improved streetscapes