

Block by Block

Walking for a Healthier East Harlem

An Equity in Action Report by the Center for Health Equity



EAST HAILEN
COMMUNITY
WALKING
TRAIL

Table of Contents

I.	SUMMARY	4
	FINDINGS	5
	STEPS WE CAN TAKE	7
II.	INTRODUCTION	10
	WALKING	10
	EAST HARLEM	12
	A WALK THROUGH HISTORY	13
III.	OUR METHODS	17
IV.	WHAT WE LEARNED	20
V.	RECOMMENDATIONS	31
VI.	RESOURCES	37

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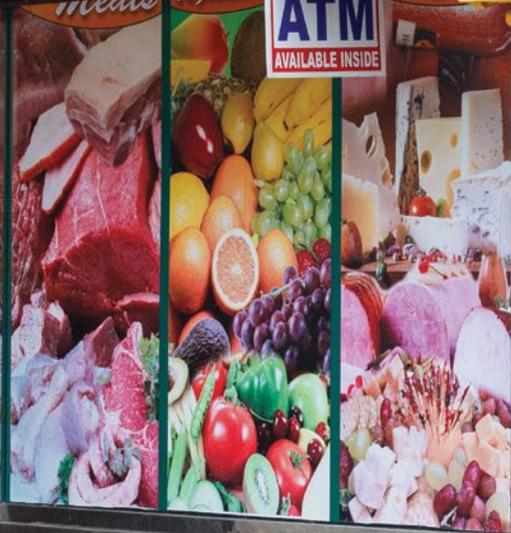
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Summary

The New York City Health Department believes all New Yorkers — regardless of the neighborhood they live in — deserve an equal opportunity to lead a healthy life.

Walking is a free way to gain health benefits and be physically active. Neighborhoods designed to support safe, clean and well-maintained streets and sidewalks help residents be physically active and get to know one another. The East Harlem Neighborhood Health Action Center, part of the Health Department's Center for Health Equity, worked with community organizations, residents and other City agencies to create the East Harlem Community Walking Trail. The trail provides residents with opportunities for physical activity and to connect with their neighbors.

As part of creating the East Harlem Community Walking Trail, we wanted to better understand how residents felt about walking in their neighborhood, what residents perceived as barriers to walking in East Harlem and how we could work together to improve walking conditions. To do this, we interviewed people in the neighborhood and assessed the sidewalk and street conditions. This report shares our findings. It includes a summary of what we learned, why it's important and what we can do together to make East Harlem a neighborhood where all residents enjoy walking.

To learn more about the East Harlem Community Walking Trail and to download a map of the trail, visit nyc.gov/health and search for **East Harlem Walking Trail**.



Findings

We surveyed more than 200 residents at locations along the East Harlem Community Walking Trail and assessed the physical conditions of the streets and sidewalks that make up the route. These are our most important findings.

WHAT WE LEARNED

1

Most residents we surveyed walk in East Harlem for at least 10 minutes a day and want to continue doing so.

2

The neighborhood has many existing resources that promote walking, like public art, trees and parks, but more can be done to improve the appeal of walking in East Harlem.

3

Residents are concerned about safety and want better lighting on East Harlem's streets.

4

Improving the cleanliness and condition of the sidewalks in East Harlem is a high priority for residents.

5

Many residents avoid walking under the Park Avenue Viaduct, the main way to cross Park Avenue in East Harlem, due to concerns about safety, traffic, lighting and the condition of the viaduct.

6

Residents respond positively to the idea of the East Harlem Community Walking Trail and view it as a way to get exercise and connect to the neighborhood and to one another.



"You+Park" New York Restoration Project, 2018. Learn more about You+Park at nyrp.org/youpluspark

Steps We Can Take

All of us — community members, community organizations, policymakers and schools — can take steps to improve our health and the health of East Harlem. For more information, see Page 31 for recommendations.



COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Be an advocate for your community by walking together. Join a walking group to get out regularly and connect with your neighbors. Call 311 to report issues or concerns, like broken street lights and unsafe pedestrian crossings. Volunteer to plant trees or clean up litter in the neighborhood.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND HEALTH ADVOCATES

Promote walking and involve residents in taking care of the neighborhood. Organize group walks along the East Harlem Community Walking Trail to explore the cultural history of the neighborhood. Work with community members to organize neighborhood improvement or cleanup projects.

POLICYMAKERS AND CITY AGENCIES

Support policies and prioritize resources to improve East Harlem's built environment, or the physical parts of where people live, work, learn and play. Champion public art and mural projects in East Harlem to improve the sidewalk experience.



SCHOOLS

Promote wellness by walking the East Harlem Community Walking Trail with students, staff and parents. Make the East Harlem Walking Trail part of your school wellness policy so that students can be physically active while learning about the neighborhood's rich history and culture.



Introduction

Walking

Walking is good for our health. It reduces the risk of diabetes, heart disease and obesity, and helps people manage stress and anxiety. Walking connects people to their neighbors and improves their sense of community.¹ In the words of T. Morgan Dixon, cofounder of the walking organization GirlTrek, “Walking is for healing, for joy, for fresh air, quiet time, to connect and disconnect, to worship. But it’s also ... so we can be healthy enough to stand on the front lines for change in our communities.”²

Streets and sidewalks should be spaces where residents can walk, interact with one another and feel connected to their neighborhood. We know that neighborhoods with safe streets, well-maintained sidewalks and designated walking routes encourage people to walk.³ We also know that neighborhoods that provide opportunities for residents to interact are healthier.^{4,5,6}

In New York City (NYC), and across the country, decades of discriminatory policies have affected neighborhood conditions that promote walking. For example, early Federal Housing Administration policies encouraged the denial of services to and financial investments in communities of color—communities like East Harlem.



In East Harlem, resident concerns about physical safety and street and sidewalk conditions can make walking unappealing. At the New York City Health Department’s East Harlem Neighborhood Health Action Center (East Harlem Action Center), we work with community organizations, residents and other City agencies to address health inequities by improving neighborhood conditions for health, including safe, walkable streets. Through these partnerships, we created the East Harlem Community Walking Trail as a response to safety concerns and other barriers to walking in East Harlem.

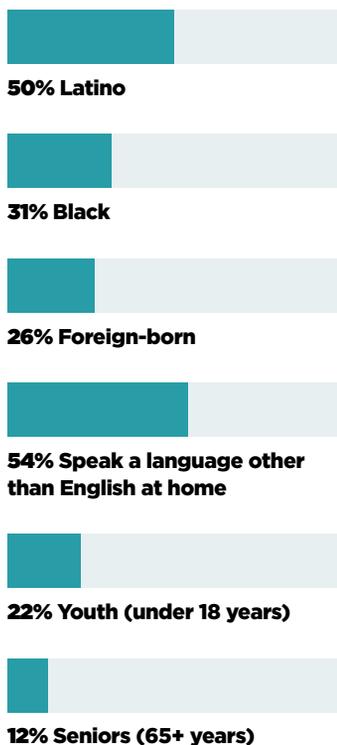
Before launching the East Harlem Community Walking Trail, we wanted to better understand the conditions of East Harlem’s streets, how residents felt about walking in their neighborhood and how we could work together to make improvements to the streets. We surveyed people in the neighborhood and conducted a physical assessment of the sidewalk and street conditions along the route that would become the East Harlem Community Walking Trail. This report shares our findings and offers recommendations for making East Harlem a healthier neighborhood with clean, safe and enjoyable streets for everyone.

The East Harlem Neighborhood Health Action Center launched the trail in fall 2016 as a designated route along 106th and 115th streets. It connects to Central Park and Randall’s Island Park, an island in the East River accessible to pedestrians via a foot bridge. The trail provides an opportunity for residents to be active in their neighborhood, to learn about East Harlem’s rich history and culture, and to connect with other residents.

East Harlem

East Harlem is a culturally vibrant neighborhood with a strong history of community organizing and activism. Also known as El Barrio and Spanish Harlem, half of East Harlem’s residents are Latino, with Puerto Ricans making up most of the Latino population.

FIGURE 1: Who lives in East Harlem



One-third of East Harlem residents are Black, and one out of four residents was born outside of the U.S., emigrating from Mexico, the Dominican Republic, China and other countries.^{7,8} More than half of all residents speak a language other than English at home (see Figure 1).

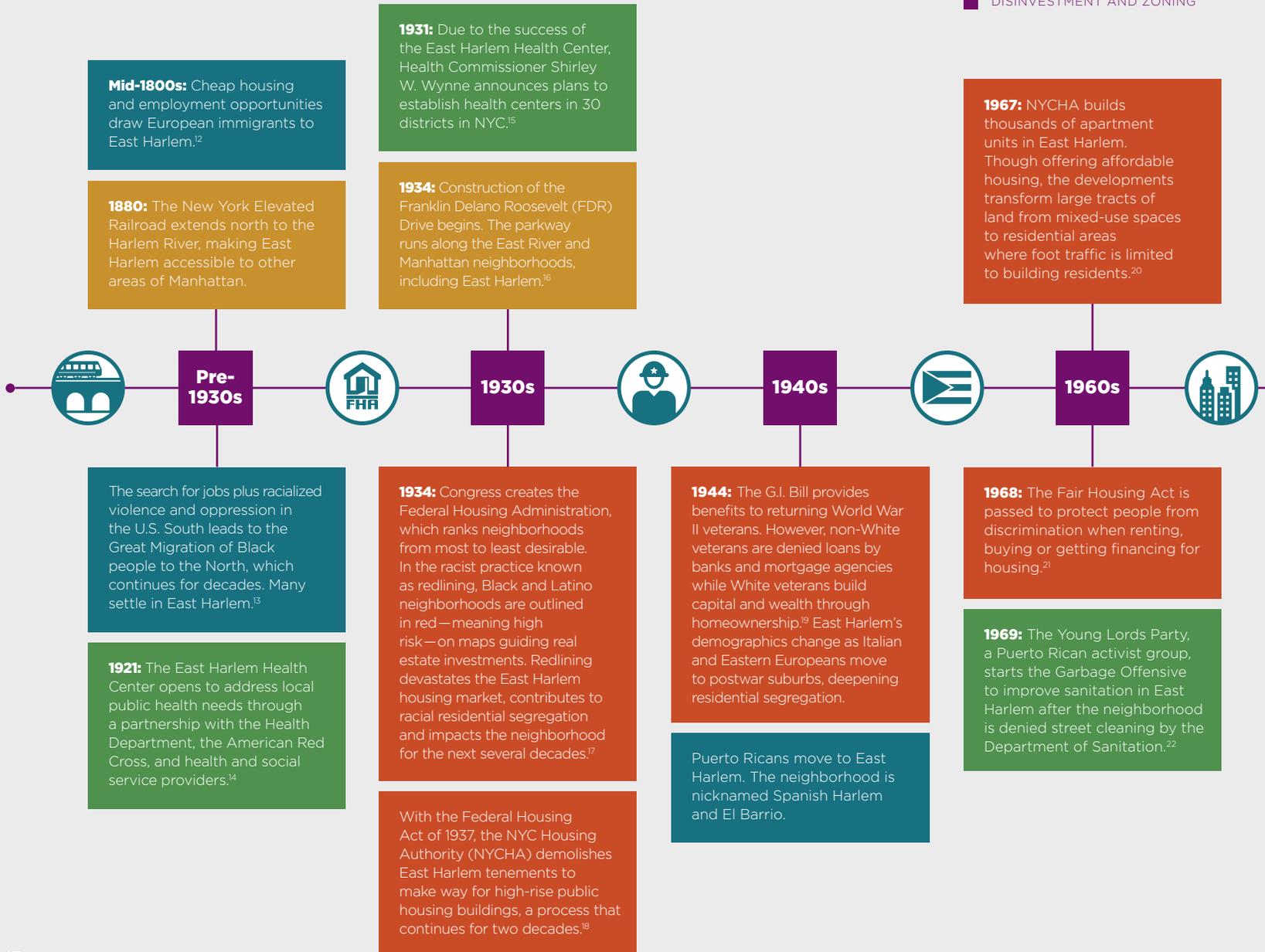
Like many neighborhoods in New York City that are home to Black and Latino communities, discriminatory practices and policies have contributed to high levels of poverty in East Harlem. It is the 12th poorest neighborhood in New York City, with a median household income of \$31,000, compared to \$53,000 citywide.^{9,10} Practices and policies such as benign neglect (see timeline on Pages 13 to 14) removed funding and services from East Harlem and other communities of color, and worsened neighborhood features such as streets and sidewalks as well as living conditions. This history has contributed to high rates of chronic disease and poor health outcomes. East Harlem residents tend to be less physically active than other New Yorkers,¹¹ and are more likely to have been diagnosed with diabetes, obesity and heart disease. Their average life expectancy is five years less than New Yorkers as a whole and almost 10 years less than their neighbors on the Upper East Side.

A Walk Through History

A neighborhood is not only shaped by its residents, but also by governmental practices and policies. Some of these have discriminated against residents because of the color of their skin and have segregated neighborhoods across the nation—including in New York City. This timeline is a selection of key processes and policies that shaped the physical environment and population of East Harlem, and some of the efforts to respond to local issues.

LEGEND

- POPULATION
- HOUSING
- HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND LOCAL ACTIVISM
- TRANSPORTATION
- DISINVESTMENT AND ZONING



1970: Daniel Patrick Moynihan, President Richard Nixon's urban affairs advisor, proposes benign neglect, which encourages the government to move public money from inner cities to suburbs.²³

1976: NYC Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Roger Starr proposes planned shrinkage, and the City withdraws services like garbage removal, fire service and street repairs from low-income neighborhoods, including East Harlem.²⁴

The New York Elevated Railway tracks are demolished as the NYC train system moves underground.



1970s

The Young Lords Party conducts door-to-door tuberculosis (TB) testing in East Harlem to compensate for poor health services in the neighborhood.²⁵

A coalition of residents, hospitals, organizations, the Health Department and other City agencies establishes the East Harlem Environmental Extension Service to address environmental health and safety in tenement housing.²⁶



1980s

A wave of immigrants from Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, West Africa and Asia come to NYC—many settle in East Harlem.²⁷



2000s

2002: The NYC Department of City Planning rezones areas in East Harlem, leading to the development of large residential buildings and retail spaces.²⁸

2003: The Health Department launches three District Public Health Offices, including one in Harlem, to focus public health resources in NYC neighborhoods with the highest rates of illness and premature death.²⁹

Protected bike lanes are extended to East Harlem along First and Second Avenues.



2010s

Citi Bike, the NYC bike share program, expands to East Harlem.³²

2016: Building upon the District Public Health Offices, the Health Department launches Neighborhood Health Action Centers, including one in Harlem, to offer coordinated health and social services to residents.

2017: The Second Avenue Subway is completed with plans to extend the line to East Harlem in the coming years.

2016: The NYC Department of City Planning presents a rezoning plan for East Harlem, which would create new housing. Residents worry that the plan will make the area unaffordable and lead to displacement.^{30,31}

The East Harlem Community Walking Trail is created to promote physical activity and build a sense of community.





Jacob Azeke, walking group participant and East Harlem resident

Investing in East Harlem's Streets and People

Jacob Azeke has lived in Harlem for more than four decades. Since joining a walking group based out of King Towers Development where he lives, he has become an advocate for walking in his neighborhood.

When Azeke joined the group, he just wanted a little exercise. But he found it also gave him a sense of community and broadened his social connections.

“Walking is good for your body, your heart, your lungs, for your general wellness,” Azeke said. “Some people don’t have anything to do, so I say, why not join a walking group? Then you will be healthy, will meet new people and get to know the neighborhood.”

However, he feels more can be done to improve East Harlem’s streets. “Dirt and trash litter the sidewalks and graffiti distracts from the beauty of the neighborhood,” Azeke said. “In East and Central Harlem, within a year or two, the sidewalks start to crack and they start to look very messy and very ugly. The sidewalks have a lot of garbage. They need to be cleaned more often,” he said.

Now, he sometimes leads the walking group. Last year, he participated in a week-long walking challenge to promote the East Harlem Community Walking Trail.



Azeke says he feels healthier since starting to walk regularly — usually three times a week for about 45 minutes.

According to Azeke, to get more people living a healthier life, “We need more funding for after-school programs, senior center programs and neighborhood improvements. The more money that comes to Harlem, the more improvements that can be done to the infrastructure of the community and the community will feel part of New York City.”

Our Methods

TABLE 1: Survey Respondents (N=217)

GENDER

Woman	62%
Man	38%
Another gender	0%

AGE

18-24	6%
25-44	34%
45-64	44%
65+	17%

RACE OR ETHNICITY

Black	50%
Latino	44%
White	12%
Other	8%

TIME IN EAST HARLEM

< 1 Year	7%
1-9 Years	21%
10+ Years	72%

METHODS. To better understand the conditions of East Harlem’s streets and how residents felt about walking, we surveyed residents and conducted physical assessments of the sidewalks and streets of the East Harlem Community Walking Trail.

SURVEYS. The East Harlem Action Center surveyed 217 East Harlem residents, ages 18 and older, from ZIP codes 10029 and 10035. The surveys were conducted in English and Spanish at five locations along the East Harlem Community Walking Trail. Respondents received a \$5 gift card for answering questions about their experiences walking in East Harlem and their perceptions of neighborhood safety and maintenance.

The majority of respondents were women (62%) and Black (50%) or Latino (44%), with a median age of 49. Most respondents were longtime residents of East Harlem, with nearly 72% having lived in East Harlem for 10 years or more (see Table 1). Ninety percent of the surveys were conducted in English. When comparing the survey respondents with census data for the East Harlem population, there were more women, older adults and Black respondents and fewer Latino respondents who completed the survey compared to the overall East Harlem population.



STREET ASSESSMENT. The East Harlem Action Center evaluated the 22 blocks* that make up the East Harlem Community Walking Trail to identify areas for improvement and points of interest for walking tours. As part of the assessment, East Harlem Action Center staff, Walking Trail Steering Committee members and other City agency representatives examined the safety of the sidewalks and intersections, the condition and maintenance of sidewalks and the presence of amenities such as benches, trees and trash cans.



*For the purposes of this study, blocks are defined as the area from one street intersection to the next, including the sidewalks and pedestrian crossings.



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What We Learned



1. Most residents we surveyed walk in East Harlem for at least 10 minutes a day and want to continue doing so.

- Most survey respondents (77%) reported that they walk for at least 10 minutes at a time in East Harlem, one or more times a day.
- Walking in East Harlem was described as very pleasant (31%) or somewhat pleasant (59%) by the majority of respondents.

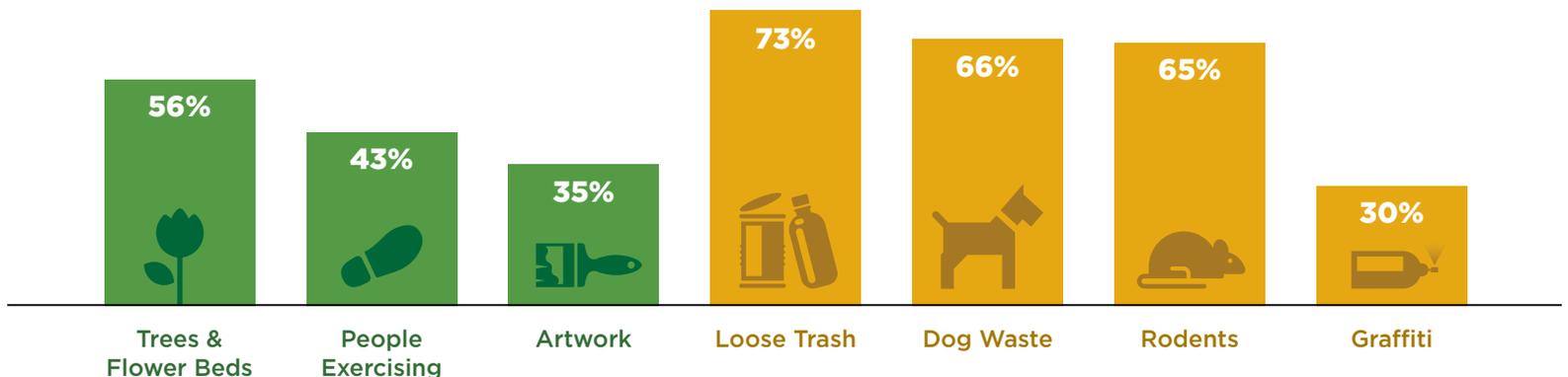
2. The neighborhood has many existing resources that promote walking, including public art, trees and parks, but more can be done to improve the appeal of walking in East Harlem.

- More than one-third of survey respondents reported that they often see murals or artwork while walking in East Harlem (35%).
- The street assessment identified eight works of public art along the East Harlem Community Walking Trail, including murals, sculptures and mosaics.
- A little over half (56%) of survey respondents reported seeing trees and/or flower beds often while walking (see Figure 2). Healthy trees

benefit neighborhoods by removing air pollutants, keeping streets cool during the summer and beautifying the neighborhood.

- We counted a total of 406 trees along the East Harlem Community Walking Trail, with an average of 22 trees per block. However, 12 of the trees were dead, and of the 222 trees that were on the sidewalk (rather than on property near the sidewalk), more than half (51%) had vacant or overgrown tree pits. Only 12% of trees on the sidewalk had tree guards or fences, which extend the life of trees.
- Only 27% of the 22 blocks assessed had benches. Benches are an important feature for pedestrians, particularly in East Harlem. The neighborhood is an Age-Friendly District (nyam.org/age-friendly-nyc) where seniors (aged 65+) make up 12% of the population. Benches also create spaces for people to come together in the neighborhood.

FIGURE 2: While walking in East Harlem respondents reported they often saw ...



Source: East Harlem resident street intercept survey, 2016

3. Residents are concerned about safety and want better lighting on East Harlem's streets.

- Survey respondents were mixed on how safe they felt from crime in their neighborhood. Eighteen percent felt very safe, 57% felt somewhat safe and 26% reported feeling not very safe or not at all safe (see Figure 3). Perceptions of safety can influence physical activity.
- Forty percent of respondents avoid certain streets while walking in East Harlem, citing concerns about safety, crime, poor sidewalk conditions, rodents, time of day and poor street lighting at night (see Figure 4).
- Most respondents rated the street lighting as fair, poor or very poor (57%) (see Figure 5).

FIGURE 3: Perceptions of safety while walking in East Harlem



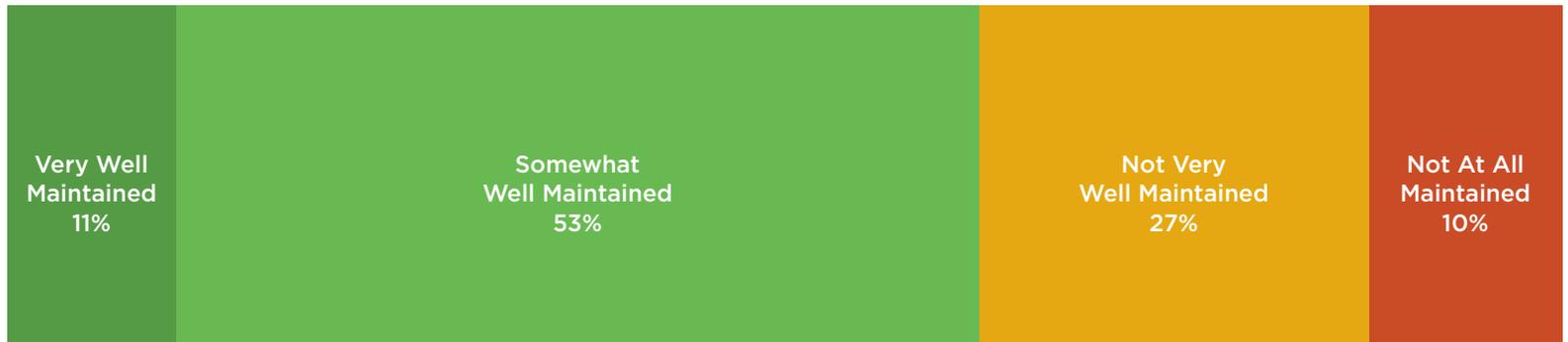
Source: East Harlem resident street intercept survey, 2016



4. Improving the cleanliness and condition of the sidewalks in East Harlem is a high priority for residents.

- Only 11% of survey respondents believed the sidewalks in East Harlem were very well maintained (see Figure 6).
- The street assessment revealed that most sidewalks* had at least one trip hazard (77%). Furthermore, 67% of all sidewalks assessed had at least one major crack, 40% had at least one hole, 35% were uneven and 7% had protruding hardware (see Figure 7). Of the crosswalks assessed, 35% had a major trip hazard, including cracks, holes and protruding hardware.
- Although respondents described East Harlem as a pleasant place to walk, they reported seeing loose trash, rodents, dog waste and graffiti (that would not be considered art) more frequently than trees, flower beds and public artwork (see Figure 2).

FIGURE 6: Perceptions of sidewalk maintenance in East Harlem



Source: East Harlem resident street intercept survey, 2016

*Most blocks assessed had two sidewalks, one on each side of the street.

- The street assessment found that 42% of streets assessed had at least some trash and more than a quarter of blocks did not have any trash bins (27%). Dog waste was found on nearly half of all blocks (45%) and graffiti (that would not be considered art) was found on 27% of blocks.

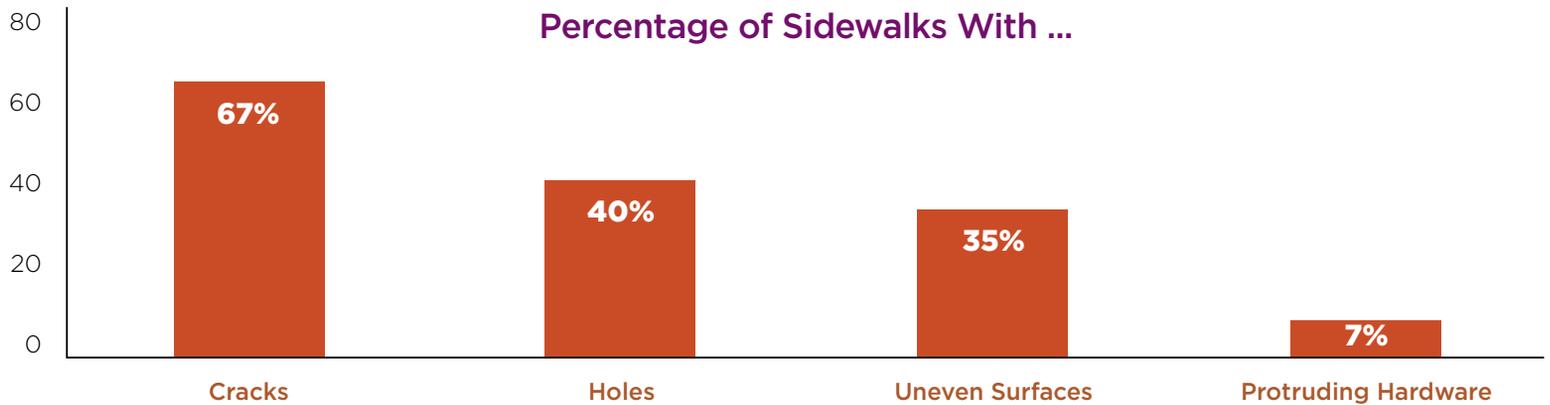
5. Many residents avoid walking under the Park Avenue Viaduct, the main way to cross Park Avenue in East Harlem, due to concerns about safety, traffic, lighting and the condition of the viaduct.

The Park Avenue Viaduct is a historic elevated railway in East Harlem that carries Metro-North trains. It is a prominent feature in East Harlem and residents have to walk under it to cross Park Avenue. Passage under the viaduct requires walking through pedestrian tunnels.

- Nearly one out of four respondents (24%) never walks under the viaduct.
- Among the 166 respondents who said they do walk under the viaduct, one-third avoid it at certain times because of water dripping from the ceiling, poor lighting and concerns about safety and crime.
- Respondents who walk under the viaduct rated traffic safety, lighting and cleanliness on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being the worst and 5 being the best. Viaduct traffic safety received a mean rating of 3.15, lighting received a mean rating of 2.46 and cleanliness received a mean rating of 2.43 (see Figure 8).

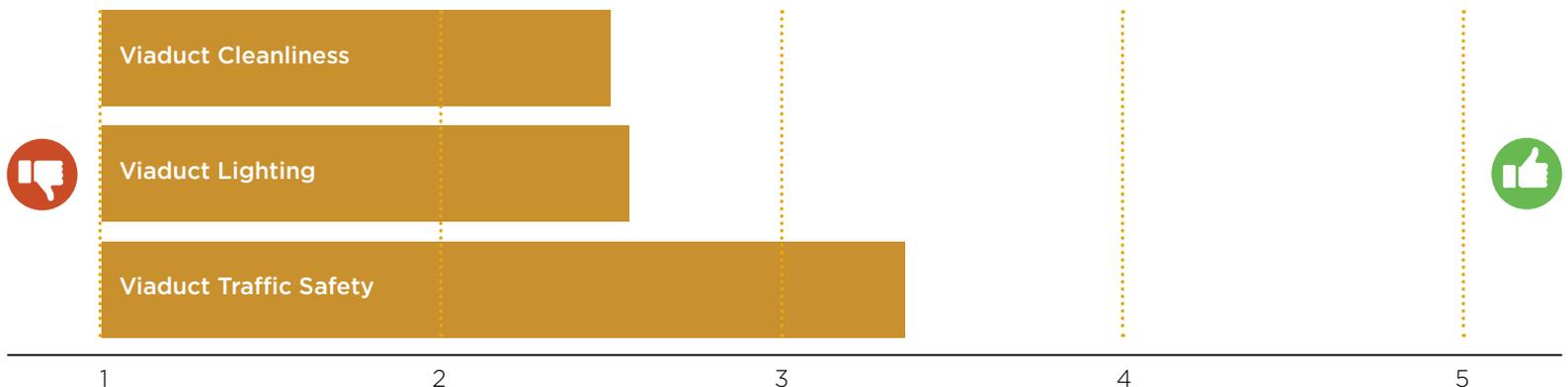


FIGURE 7: Trip hazards on the 43 sidewalks assessed along the East Harlem Community Walking Trail



Source: East Harlem Community Walking Trail street assessment, 2016

FIGURE 8: Park Avenue Viaduct ratings among 166 respondents who reported walking under the viaduct



Source: East Harlem resident street intercept survey, 2016



6. Residents respond positively to the idea of the East Harlem Community Walking Trail and view it as a way to get exercise and connect to the neighborhood and one another.

- Most survey respondents were very likely (50%) or somewhat likely (40%) to use the East Harlem Community Walking Trail.
- Respondents said they would use the trail for exercise (65%), social activity and feeling connected to the community (22%), walking to and from places (21%) and getting outdoors (15%).

Built in 1897, the Park Avenue Viaduct is a distinctive feature of the East Harlem built environment. Much of the area under the viaduct is vacant and industrial, and there have been many plans to improve pedestrian safety, lighting and maintenance around it. In 2012, the Harlem Community Development Corporation proposed a plan to turn vacant space beneath the viaduct into a mile-long, open-air market called “La Marqueta Mile.” This plan, however, did not receive sufficient financing and did not move forward.³³

In 2015, the NYC Department of Transportation added safety measures in and around the viaduct in response to pedestrian injuries and fatalities. These measures included curb extensions, pedestrian walking signs and improved tunnel lighting. However, additional action is needed to address residents’ concerns of safety, lighting and maintenance.³⁴



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Sindia Avila, East Harlem resident and former Community Health Worker, East Harlem Neighborhood Health Action Center

Walking Toward a Healthier and Cleaner East Harlem

Originally from Honduras, Sindia Avila has lived in East Harlem for more than a decade. It's a neighborhood she loves. "It's the Spanish Harlem — you see a diversity of culture," she said.

According to Avila, there are many benefits to living in the neighborhood — from its hundreds of murals and thriving art culture to its vibrant melting pot identity — but there are also serious changes needed to make it a safer, cleaner neighborhood.

Avila helped conduct the street assessment in East Harlem. She sees broken street lamps, cracked concrete, littered streets and a lack of trash and recycling bins as barriers to walking in the neighborhood.

"I would prefer to walk in a nice clean area," Avila said. "You want to be able to walk freely and safely. If you walk in an environment that is always dirty, that creates stress and becomes a health issue."

Community health is Avila's number one concern. As a community health worker with Harlem Health Advocacy Partners, she developed a walking group for senior residents. Three times a week, 20 to 30 residents from a local public housing development walk around the neighborhood and



through the parks in East Harlem to exercise and spend time with one another.

Avila has seen an impact on the residents' health since the walking group started. The walking group helps people get out of their apartments and socialize with others in their neighborhood. She has even seen residents with hypertension and diabetes improve their health just by walking a few times a week.

“What does a healthy community look like? Clean streets, nice sidewalks, trees, nice scenery, community gardens, places where people can have lunch in nice weather,” Avila said.

Recommendations



As our findings show, we can do more to encourage walking and promote health for all. It takes improving the built environment — the physical parts of where we live, learn, work and play. It also takes investment — by **residents, community groups and policymakers** — to make East Harlem a healthier neighborhood.

RESIDENTS

Be an advocate for your community by walking.

- Explore the East Harlem Community Walking Trail and learn about the neighborhood’s history and culture as you move.
- Join the East Harlem Community Walking Trail Steering Committee to maintain the Community Walking Trail and support collaborative projects. Email harlemoutreach@health.nyc.gov or call 646-682-2100 for more information.
- Join an East Harlem walking group to get out regularly and connect with neighbors. Email harlemoutreach@health.nyc.gov or call 646-682-2100 for more information.

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- Conduct walking tours to identify sidewalk and traffic issues or other needed improvements, and call 311 to report concerns.
 - Volunteer to plant flowers or help maintain tree and planter areas. For more information, see Page 39.
 - Join your local community board and participate in committees that promote public and environmental safety. To find your community board, visit nyc.gov and search for “community boards.”
 - Get involved in the city’s participatory budgeting process. You can submit ideas for projects or vote on suggestions made by other community members. Visit council.nyc.gov/pb to learn more.
 - Meet your local elected official to share ways to make walking in East Harlem safer and more appealing. For more information, visit cb11m.org/elected-officials.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND HEALTH ADVOCATES

Promote walking and involve residents in taking care of the neighborhood.

- Organize group walks along the East Harlem Community Walking Trail to explore the neighborhood’s cultural history.
- Coordinate neighborhood walks to identify locations where public art, trash bins, bike racks, benches or flowers might be needed.
 - Trash bins or litter baskets can be requested through the NYC Department of Sanitation. Visit nyc.gov/dsny.

- Bike racks and benches can be requested through the NYC Department of Transportation. Visit nyc.gov/dot.
- Street concerns, such as potholes, can be reported by calling 311 or visiting 311 online at nyc.gov/311.
- For information on getting free flower bulbs or public art, see Page 39 under Resources.
- Apply for grants aimed at improving the built environment and encouraging physical activity among residents. See Page 41 for grant opportunities.



POLICYMAKERS AND CITY AGENCIES

Support policies and prioritize resources to improve the East Harlem built environment.

- Champion public art and mural projects in East Harlem to improve the sidewalk experience.
- Promote programs that help property owners repair their sidewalks.
- Support policies to make streets safe and accessible for people of all ages and all abilities, known as complete streets policies. Visit nyc.gov/dot and search for “complete streets” for more information.
- Review the East Harlem Neighborhood Plan for recommendations on how to make East Harlem’s streets and sidewalks more inviting.



Visit eastharlemplan.nyc for more information.

- Support the Vision Zero Plan, which aims to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries in New York City through engineering, education and enforcement efforts. Visit nyc.gov/VisionZero for more information.

SCHOOLS

Promote wellness by walking the East Harlem Community Walking Trail with students, staff and parents.

- Organize a field trip along the East Harlem Community Walking Trail so students can be physically active while learning about the neighborhood's rich history and culture.
- Make using the East Harlem Community Walking Trail part of your school wellness policy. Children who are physically active are more likely to do better in school and to have lower rates of absenteeism and behavioral issues.
- Encourage staff wellness by organizing walking tours and friendly walking challenges.



*Dr. Cappy Collins,
executive director
for Nullary Care and
project lead for Cada
Paso Walking Program*

Connecting One Another to Resources, One Step at a Time

Twice a month, a small parade strolls down the streets in East Harlem. Sixty to 70 people walk down avenues and boulevards, pushing strollers and chatting with their neighbors in a mix of Spanish, Nahuatl and other languages. These residents are part of the Cada Paso Walking Program, which promotes healthy living.

Cada Paso works with the Little Sisters of the Assumption Family Health Service and Nullary Care, a nonprofit focused on bridging the gap between primary care and public health. Cappy Collins, executive director at Nullary Care, is a pediatrician and public health advocate. His goal with Cada Paso isn't just to get residents outside and moving, it's to make sure they have access to the health resources they need.

"We try to connect information with action," Collins said. "Walking becomes the mechanism by which we get residents in touch with the resources they might need."

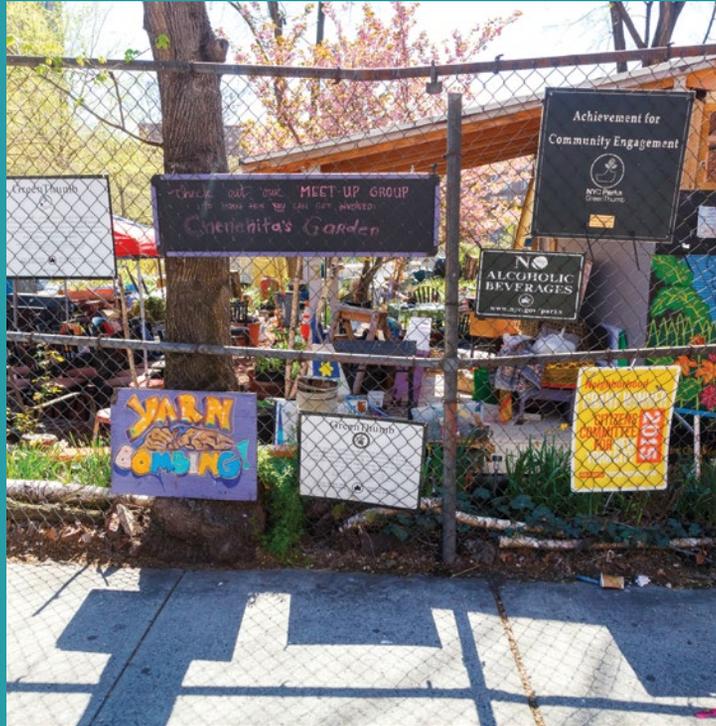
Cada Paso's solution is simple: Walk with residents while providing health information and connecting them to available resources in the community. The program gets people socially and civically engaged and provides an opportunity to get exercise.



“Get 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week and you’ll be in a better position in terms of your heart health and life span,” Collins said.

Collins has also brought Cada Paso participants to the Walking Trail committee meetings to be part of programming and outreach. “Our participants were at the table, contributing to the planning sessions, hearing from other stakeholders and participating in a street assessment to identify sidewalk dangers, excessive trash and inaccessible curbs,” Collins said.

Resources



NYC 311

311 is New York City's one-stop shop for all government information and non-emergency services. Notify the City of sidewalk or street issues and place neighborhood improvement requests through the NYC 311 app or by visiting nyc.gov/311. This chart includes examples of issues you can get help with by calling 311.

ISSUE	EXAMPLES	WHAT YOU CAN DO	NEXT STEPS
Street safety and maintenance	Potholes Street light is not working Crossing signal is not working	Call 311 to report street safety and maintenance issues to the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT).	DOT will follow up and conduct an inspection.
Trash	Street litter Not enough public trash bins	Call 311 to request public trash pickup or litter baskets from the NYC Department of Sanitation (DSNY).	DSNY will schedule trash pickup. DSNY will evaluate the request and if approved, trash bins will be placed on a street corner of a major commercial street or near a major transportation hub.
Sidewalk safety and maintenance	Sidewalk cracks	Call 311 to report sidewalk maintenance problems. Although sidewalks are City property, property owners are responsible for sidewalk maintenance, including trip hazard repairs. Repairs are done at the expense of the property owner.	DOT will follow up to inspect the hazard. Property owners may receive a violation.
Dog waste	Dog waste on sidewalk	Call 311 to report dog waste. Property owners are responsible for maintaining sidewalks on their property, including removing dog waste.	Property owners could receive a violation. Dog walkers who do not pick up after their dog can be issued a fine if caught in the act.
Benches and bike racks	Not enough sidewalk benches Not enough bike parking	Call 311 to request a sidewalk bench or bike rack from DOT.	DOT will evaluate the request, and if it meets their criteria, they will install new benches or bike racks.



NEW YORK CITY

- **Cada Paso Walking Group** is a weekend walking program for families in East Harlem. The year-round program combines the physical activity of walking with educational talks on different health topics. Email nullarycare@gmail.com to learn more.
- **Harlem Health Advocacy Partners' (HHAP)** community health workers help residents set health goals, address barriers to health and manage chronic diseases. HHAP walking groups meet regularly at the following NYCHA developments: Clinton Houses, Johnson Houses, King Towers, Lehman Village and Taft Houses. Email harlemoutreach@health.nyc.gov or call 646-682-3400 to learn more.
- **New York City Council** invites community members, through a participatory budgeting process, to decide how to assign part of the public budget on projects to improve schools, parks, libraries, public housing and other public spaces. Visit council.nyc.gov.
- **New York City Department of City Planning (DCP)** oversees land use and zoning planning. DCP works with neighborhoods to plan for growth and promote economic development. Visit nyc.gov/planning.
- **New York City Department of Parks and Recreation** maintains a clean and safe parks system and offers a variety of recreational opportunities for the public to enjoy. Visit nycgovparks.org.
- **New York City Department of Sanitation** promotes a healthy environment through efficient handling and management of the city's solid waste and recycling. Visit nyc.gov/dsny.
- **New York City Department of Transportation (DOT)** is responsible for the safe, efficient and environmentally responsible movement of people and goods in New York City. You can request bike racks and sidewalk benches from DOT. DOT also partners with community-based organizations and artists to present public art on DOT property. Visit nyc.gov/dot.
- **New Yorkers for Parks (NY4P)** builds, protects and promotes parks and open spaces in New York City. NY4P's Daffodil Project has planted more than 6 million daffodil bulbs in open spaces across New York City. To learn more or request free bulbs to beautify your local park, tree pit or community garden, visit ny4p.org. Requests can be made during the summer and bulbs are typically available in the fall.



TOOLKITS AND GUIDES

- Download the **Guide to Healthy Eating and Active Living in NYC** for tips and resources to improve your health. Visit nyc.gov/health and search for “eating healthy.”
- **Step It Up! A Partners Guide to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities** by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention describes the benefits of and barriers to walking and offers ideas for working together to make walking more accessible. Visit cdc.gov and search for “step it up.”
- **Every Body Walk! Collaborative Social Justice Toolkit** is designed for organizations and individuals to help foster fairness, equity and inclusion in walking and walkable community programs. Visit americawalks.org and search for “every body walk toolkit.”
- **GirlTrek** encourages women to use walking as a practical first step to inspire healthy living, and support families and communities. Visit girltrek.org for information on how to organize a walk or join a walk near you. You can also download **Harriet’s Handbook**, a guide from GirlTrek with a list of 1,000 walks, to learn about walking for self care and to track your walks.

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

- A small amount of money can make a big difference. Building Healthy Communities is a New York City Mayoral Initiative that gave small grants to three East Harlem organizations to create regular group walks. These groups walked, identified areas in need of improvement and learned about East Harlem history and art. The following organizations have funding opportunities that promote walking and improvements to the built environment:
 - Citizens Committee for New York City: citizensnyc.org/grants/neighborhood-grants
 - City Parks Foundation: cityparksfoundation.org/grants-resources/
 - American Trails: americantrails.org/rtp/index.html
 - New York City Small Business Services: Visit nyc.gov/sbs and search for “neighborhood challenge.”
 - ioby (In Our Backyards): ioby.org



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This study was conducted by the **East Harlem Neighborhood Health Action Center**, which is part of the New York City Health Department’s Center for Health Equity and one of three Action Centers. The Action Centers work to address the root causes of health inequities, or unjust differences in health outcomes, for residents in neighborhoods impacted by racism and long-term disinvestment by organizations and institutions. The Action Centers offer coordinated health and social services, as well as community programs under one roof. They also provide hubs for people to become involved in efforts to improve the health of their neighborhoods.

The Center for Health Equity works toward a fair and healthy New York where all residents — regardless of their neighborhood — have the opportunity to lead their healthiest lives. As a division of the New York City Health Department, we strengthen our agency’s goal to eliminate health inequities and confront long-standing forms of oppression, like racism. We do this by using data and storytelling to highlight injustices, by elevating the voices of historically excluded residents, influencing policy and implementing neighborhood-based strategies to foster health. Visit nyc.gov/health/che to learn more.

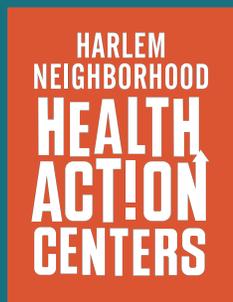
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