

Brownsville Planning Process: What we heard at Workshop 1

The first public workshop for the Brownsville Neighborhood Planning Process was held at the Oasis Beacon Center on Tuesday, July 19, 2016. About 75 Brownsville community members attended the event to speak to representatives from 10 different City agencies and to learn about ongoing City programs. To see all of the agency posters from the event, visit courbanize.com/brownsville and click on the info tab.



Housing and Development (HPD/DCP)

The most popular ideas regarding what should be built on vacant lots were:

- Community recreation centers, with a priority on spaces for youth
- Healthy food options including supermarkets with more fresh foods
- Restaurants offering a wider variety of cuisines and space for families to sit down together
- Community event space available for public use
- Space for small, local businesses, and other entities that will prioritize local hiring

Infrastructure and Transportation (DOT)

- More/better lighting is needed at the Junius transit stop and pedestrian bridge, as well as at the Saratoga Avenue and Rockaway Avenue transit stops
- Transit stops need elevators, and there should be free transfers between the 3 and the L
- Plazas, seating, tables, planters, and trash cans should be added on sidewalks at Rockaway and Livonia, in the slip lane on Livonia, and at E 98th Street and Livonia
- The top priority route connections for bicycles among community members are Eastern Parkway/Prospect Park and Canarsie Pier/Jamaica Bay Greenway
- 67% rated current bike connections in the neighborhood as “Needs Improvement” or “Poor;” 76% of respondents said that they would be interested in biking to regional destinations beyond Brownsville if there was a dedicated space for bikes connecting to that location

Economic/Workforce Development (SBS/EDC)

- There are too many Chinese restaurants, 99¢ stores, and liquor stores in the neighborhood, and not enough supermarkets with affordable and healthy food options, sit-down dining options, or entertainment amenities (e.g., movie theaters, bowling alleys, art galleries, etc.)
- The community needs more afterschool programs, summer youth employment opportunities, and better marketing of the workforce services that are currently available
- More garbage cans and better lighting are needed, especially along Livonia, and the frequency of street cleaning should be greatly increased
- There is a need for more job training programs, small business/entrepreneurship assistance, and local hiring initiatives
- Workshops on topics including healthy eating, exercise, managing finances, running a business, and computer skills should be offered

Open Space (Parks)

- The top priorities for people in terms of parks and open space, in order, were:
 1. Enforcement and safety
 2. Greening and horticulture
 3. Comfort stations
 4. Adult recreation
 5. Playgrounds
- The things that people like most about Brownsville's parks are: gardens; the sense that the spaces are accessible; and events and programs
- The things that most need improvement in Brownsville's open spaces are: more comfort stations, especially at Betsy Head Park; better maintenance, including for play equipment and lawns; increased safety measures and more amenities such as seating and lighting
- In future parks in Brownsville, people most want to see: more activities and events for all ages; exercise equipment and trails/tracks that encourage health and wellness; and additional amenities including light, seating, comfort stations, and picnic/BBQ areas
- People's favorite things to do outside in Brownsville are: walk and bike; talk with family, neighbors, and other community members; and play sports including handball, basketball, and tennis

Neighborhood Health and Safety (BHC, DOH, MOCJ)

- Brownsville's greatest need currently is for engaging activities and programming that incentivizes positive community participation, especially for young adults
- Brownsville Recreation Center and Betsy Head Park are both great assets/resources for the community, but they are in need of renovation
- The neighborhood needs more active spaces to improve safety, especially along Livonia; this could be achieved through increased retail, better programming, more lighting, etc.
- The 3 and L train stations need elevators and vehicular traffic/congestion needs to be reduced to make the neighborhood safer/more appealing to pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users
- More fresh food options are needed in the neighborhood; residents feel that they have to travel long distances to access high-quality fresh foods (education around the importance of these types of foods is also needed)