

Edgemere Community Engagement Key Takeaways

This document is intended to summarize feedback from the public during the Edgemere Town Hall on August 25, the Edgemere CLT Info Session on October 27, and stakeholder conversations with local Edgemere groups and CLT organizations across the city.

Key Takeaways

- Participants and community stakeholders were generally interested in establishing a CLT in Edgemere. Aside from general interest, participants and stakeholders expressed the sincere need for support from HPD and external funding to ensure the success of a CLT in Edgemere.
- Participants identified key priorities that the CLT could focus on outside of affordable housing development: opportunities for young people, support for local entrepreneurs and health and wellness.
- Many participants expressed desire in expanding commercial amenities and other opportunities on the CLT, including opportunities for local entrepreneurship and job creation
- Public school capacity and health infrastructure were topics that were mentioned multiple times. Participants and stakeholders were interested in more access to quality public health facilities, especially during the COVID pandemic.
- Participants were very interested in incorporating waterfront recreation as an open space amenity and potential economic development tool.
- Community stakeholders expressed concern in the wealth building model of a CLT. Since homes won't be sold at market value, stakeholders mentioned that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) households won't have the same access of traditional wealth building opportunities as other neighborhoods.
- Participants and community stakeholders expressed a need for more awareness and education regarding CLTs and other shared equity models to understand their benefits. Many called specifically for technical assistance and capacity building training as well.

Community Priorities

Economic development and opportunities for young people — Participants identified a strong need for expansion of youth-centering services and opportunities available in Edgemere, specifically as they relate to employment and education.

- Participants mentioned that the resiliency component of the CLT and neighboring Army Corps project can create an opportunity to educate youth on the surrounding ecosystem and its contribution to flood resiliency.
- Participants cited upcoming residential development in the East Rockaways (Edgemere Commons and Arverne East) and stressed the importance of public school capacity and education with new families coming to the neighborhood.
- Participants were very interested in entrepreneurship and job training opportunities that can be managed in partnership with the future CLT organization in order to create more jobs for the neighborhood.

Creative use of open space resources – Parks, community gardens, and the waterfront were identified as untapped community resource that could host community events, allow for local entrepreneurship. Participants wanted to see the waterfront nature of the Edgemere community and leverages it to meet neighborhood goals.

- Residents proposed creating an environmental education center with focus on coastal ecology.
- Some mentioned local arts groups in the Rockaways that would benefit from having an indoor/outdoor creative space to rent

Health Infrastructure and Wellness — Participants raised concerns about accessibility of healthcare and medical services, as well as local availability of healthy food options. They identified a potential role for the CLT in supporting expansion of the already existing network of community agricultural groups, whether that be through formal partnerships, provision of gathering spaces, or resource sharing.

- Participants suggested urban farming and gardens as a way to increase the availability of fresh and affordable produce. These spaces could also be activated to bring educational programs to the community.
- Some participants envisioned programming such as outdoor performance space and outdoor fitness classes.
- Others introduced the idea of having a “holistic health” theme that capitalizes on the natural features in the area.

Multigenerational wealth building through homeownership, especially for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) families — Participants identified unique challenges faced by BIPOC communities in terms of building equity and intergenerational wealth, and emphasized the importance of holding these considerations paramount as the CLT is developed.

- Participants are aware of low rates of homeownership among BIPOC households and communities. Although a CLT presents an opportunity for affordable homeownership, many questioned the shared equity wealth building model and whether it can adequately function like traditional homeownership wealth building. While there is some skepticism, some view the CLT as a mechanism by which these disparities can begin to be addressed.
- Participants emphasized the need to ensure that the CLT build up and prioritize these communities in the long term by integrating these aims across all stages of CLT development (policy, organizational structure, leasing and financing structures, etc.).

Amenities and services to support existing homeowners — While Edgemere’s proximity to the coast is a community asset in many aspects, it also presents a set of unique residential challenges, especially in the context of homeownership and property maintenance. Participants highlighted a need for more comprehensive assistance with home repairs and weatherization.

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- Participants expressed interest in creating an educational/training component that would assist existing homeowners in financial management and making repairs.
- They also called for institution of a small grants program that would provide financial assistance to homeowners in need of funds for repairs.
- Some participants called for the CLT to offer unbuildable land for yard extensions on existing residences.