

NEXT GENERATION NYCHA: A COMMUNITY VISION FOR INGERSOLL HOUSES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This Executive Summary presents a condensed version the results of the Ingersoll Houses' community vision. It identifies critical needs and desirable solutions for the community. As a community-driven process, it is entirely built upon the ideas, desires, and expectations presented by participants.

Ingersoll Houses in Fort Greene, Brooklyn, is one of NYCHA's 334 communities. It was completed in 1944 and includes 1,826 apartments, which are home to 1,569 families.

Ingersoll Houses was selected to be part of NextGeneration NYCHA, an initiative aimed at organizing and convening residents to create a long-term vision for their communities.

NextGeneration NYCHA is a multi-faceted, long-term strategic investment and planning process that will explore creative ways to sustain public housing for the next generation of New Yorkers. It is an inclusive process that will gather input from NYCHA residents, administrators and managers, and community partners and residents to address how NYCHA looks, operates, and is financed.

The initiative started with an organizing effort that included door-to-door canvassing and building- and community-wide meetings. More than 540 residents were canvassed. The organizing effort identified six topics of importance to the community:

- Safety and Security
- Affordable Housing
- Repairs and Maintenance
- Job Training and Apprenticeship
- Community Services
- Playground Improvements

The six topics became the focus of three facilitated workshops held at the Ingersoll Community Center on September 23, 27, and 29, 2014. 211 residents attended multiple workshops along with 28 Fort Greene residents and numerous elected officials, as well as other key city stakeholders invited as observers.

At the workshops, participants were asked to envision how to improve Ingersoll, identify places in the neighborhood that worked and that did not, express ideas and concerns in open mike sessions, and vote on community priorities. Those ideas were gathered and used to establish vision statements, goals and next steps.

When asked to prioritize the six topics, participants gave Safety and Security the largest share of the votes, 43%. Affordable Housing followed with 25%, while Repairs and Maintenance received 17% of

the votes. Job Training and Apprenticeship received 7% of the votes, Community Services 6%, and Playground Improvements 3%. A brief summary of the top three topics follows. The full report includes results for all six topics, independently of their ranking.

Safety and Security: Comments focused on individual building security, poor lighting, and lack of enforcement of existing safety regulations. They also focused on drug related criminal activities in the neighborhood and the relationship between Ingersoll and nearby Tillary Street Homeless Shelter.

Affordable Housing: Residents recognized the magnitude of change occurring in their neighborhood. They also pointed out to the limited availability of truly affordable apartments and senior housing amid the area's gentrification. They were open to building additional affordable housing within Ingersoll Houses and in Fort Greene and saw affordable housing as a tool to incorporating places for shopping, services, and programs in the neighborhood.

Repairs and Maintenance: Focused on the timeliness and quality of how apartments, buildings, and the Ingersoll's grounds are serviced and kept in good repair. It also discussed ways that residents could help maintain buildings and keep grounds clean.

There are 29 recommended next steps to bring Ingersoll's vision to fruition. Implementing them will be a complex undertaking that will require an unprecedented collaborative effort involving NYCHA, others in the public sector, community partners, and residents. It will also require extending organizing efforts and a continuation of the dialogue the vision started.

All the goals identified by the community and the proposed next steps are listed in the back.

Topic 1: Safety and Security

GOALS IDENTIFIED BY PARTICIPANTS

- Secure Ingersoll buildings
- Improve lighting conditions
- Increase police presence in and around the community
- Enforce and enhance existing rules and regulations

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- Quantify cost of installing layered access in every building and pursue available funding sources
- Identify areas where crime most occurs
- Upgrade lighting conditions where necessary
- Work with NYPD to identify steps to increase safety in Ingersoll
- Adopt and implement existing anti-violence programs provided through community partners and suitable to Ingersoll conditions
- Work with neighboring Homeless Shelter to minimize crime and quality of life concerns
- Organize buildings to address safety and quality of life issues

Topic 2: Affordable Housing

GOALS IDENTIFIED BY PARTICIPANTS

- Build new and preserve existing affordable and senior housing at Ingersoll and within the Fort Greene neighborhood
- Incorporate neighborhood services and commercial spaces into new affordable housing

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- Identify appropriate location, type of development, and mix of uses best suited to Ingersoll's needs
- Identify funding sources and partners to build affordable and senior housing within Ingersoll
- Identify incentives and opportunities to encourage the development of affordable housing in the Fort Greene neighborhood
- Work with city agencies and community partners to attract affordable services and shops to the Fort Greene area

Topic 3: Repairs and Maintenance

GOALS IDENTIFIED BY PARTICIPANTS

- Improve the quality and timely delivery of repairs
- Engage residents in keeping buildings and grounds clean

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- Provide information on how repairs are currently scheduled and conducted and recommend improvements
- Provide recommendations for improving quality control standards for repairs
- Organize residents to assist in keeping the community clean
- Identify specific problem areas to keep clean and well maintained
- Review and improve maintenance and cleaning procedures

- Explore developing a program that provides resident training for basic repair and maintenance

Topic 4: Job Training and Apprenticeship

GOALS IDENTIFIED BY PARTICIPANTS

- Expand residents' access to available existing training and apprenticeship programs
- Work with area's businesses and shop owners to increase resident access to jobs

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- Identify and prioritize Ingersoll's residents job training needs
- Match those needs with available job training programs provided by community partners
- Expand job training and placement opportunities for residents with past criminal records
- Initiate a mentoring program to support young residents to succeed

Topic 5: Community Services

GOALS IDENTIFIED BY PARTICIPANTS

- Attract affordable shops and services to Ingersoll and the surrounding community.
- Help seniors and people with limited mobility to access shops and services

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- Explore the location of neighborhood affordable retail services serving the vicinity of Ingersoll
- Work with community partners and city agencies to address the lack of affordable stores within an easy reach of Ingersoll
- Identify incentives and programs to attract affordable retail small businesses and services
- Work with transportation agencies and community partners to address mobility needs of elderly residents

Topic 6: Playground Improvements

GOALS IDENTIFIED BY PARTICIPANTS

- Develop a plan to improve the availability and quality of open space and playgrounds in Fort Greene

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- Conduct an inventory for park conditions, recreational facilities and playgrounds within a walking distance of Ingersoll
- Coordinate physical improvements to existing facilities based on the plan's recommendations and funding availability
- Publicize and enforce rules that regulate the use of playgrounds

The full version of the Ingersoll Houses' community vision report is available at nyc.gov/nycha