

Flushing West Public Event: Presentation + Roundtable Discussions
Thursday, August 20, 2015
Flushing YMCA, 6:00 – 8:00 PM

NOTES FROM FLIP CHARTS:

HOUSING

Table 1

- Housing- improving
- Condition of housing outdated (amenities, materials)
- Affordable housing (stop increasing rents)
- Issues with basement and cellar apartments
- Stop converting apartments (supposedly 2 or 3 bedrooms smaller than they should be); illegal layout; dining rooms rented as bedrooms)
- Water concern- Terrible flood
- Senior Housing: waiting list. Lack of management for repair, not clean
- Old buildings, many from 1960's, old sinks and walls, leaking ceilings
- Affordability: many basement apartments because they are cheaper but there are continual evictions
- Illegal conversions, people charging extra for dining rooms (calling it a bedroom)
- Coastal protection – how do we protect Flushing from a Rockaways-like impact post-Sandy?
- Long waiting list for senior housing
- Decreasing rental assistance (SCRIE)
- Poor management of homes –people being asked to move out to make “improvements” (address of this building is 41st Ave?) ← unsure if this was because the landlord actually needed them to temporarily move or if it is a tactic
- Harassment tactics in rent-stabilized buildings – not enough time to talk about what kind!
- Cleanliness of buildings and housing

Table 2

- Atmosphere – area near Sky View has smells of the canal, poor air, full of dust
- High housing costs
- Lack of housing for young people (0-1 BR)
- Family housing also needed (2+ BR)
- Recreational space for activities and meetings needed
- Daycare needed
- Fitness center needed
- More homeownership opportunities, Chinese like homeownership
- Quality of education in Flushing an issue driving families away

Table 3

- A lot of people sharing housing, crowding
- Lack of housing; preventing people from moving in
- Need for senior housing; no places for seniors during the day
- Too much space being developed for housing; need open spaces; community centers
- Lack of housing options for young people: very few studios/1 bedrooms
- No housing for homeless; special need populations
- Day laborers can't live in Flushing
- If connected to Willets Point could relieve lack of space for housing in Flushing
- Parking issue in all of Flushing
- Lots of immigrants, including undocumented people, sharing housing
- Need for low-income housing
- Lack of housing in general, people want to be in Flushing
- Hard to find housing for singles who want to move to Flushing, most of whom have a connection to the area
- Need elevator buildings for seniors
- Lack of supportive housing
- Need a space for seniors to hang out – getting kicked out of McDonald's
- Need open space
- Community center, right now it's only the library
- Need supportive housing, including mental health support
- Work center or hiring site for the many Latino day laborers
- Need for parking – how to add so many more people?
- Need for open space

Table 4

- Too many construction projects happening at once; no concern for people living nearby
- Not taking community consideration into account on building projects
- What is happening with infrastructure and those who can't afford rent?
- Why does HPD advocate for more housing in this congested area?
- Parking problems around Flushing Commons
- No sanitary sewers
- Too much construction going on at once, no concern for people living nearby
- Community is not involved regarding all the construction going on; living next to these sites
- Need for parking
- Concern about adding so many more people to the area on sewer and other infrastructure
- Anger about Willet's Point eviction (last living resident from that neighborhood)
- Need for clarification for why we were asking these questions about housing and explanation for how MIH would take effect
- Helpful to explain the leverage that HPD can have to capture something for the community (affordability and amenities) when developers ask for financial assistance, as well as the City in this neighborhood planning process to leverage capital funds
- Live music venue and open space needed for community

Table 5

- Biggest Issue: low and moderate affordability
- Families are more concerned with affordability than size → overcrowding
- Affordable studios for seniors: fixed income
- Mixed Housing: seniors(families with supportive services)
- Support intergenerational communities
- NIMBY-ism about supportive, low income housing
- Medical Facilities, especially for those without insurance
- Need a closer hospital
- Another library needed
- Affordability concern for low and moderate income, especially seniors
- Housing needed for seniors, young people, families, and workers
- Housing for seniors so they don't have to share rooms – instances of sexual assault by roommates
- Need to ask seniors if they prefer intergenerational buildings (mix) or isolation in a senior complex; also want to provide space for their families to visit which sometimes senior complexes don't have, including shared community space
- If KAFSC were here they'd say need for housing for domestic violence but would that be too nearby? Should consult with them
- Always a need for supportive housing for those with mental illness but there is always NIMBY when it is proposed
- Housing discrimination happens but no one had specific instances
- Need for multi-use spaces that enable diversity and integration
- Need a hospital. If someone needs an ambulance during rush hour –trouble.
- At least some kind of medical clinic, one that accepts folks without insurance. There is a vacant hospital building on Northern Blvd that can be renovated for medical uses.
- Could use another library
- Spaces for seniors
- Youth recreation – free things to do (not constantly shopping)
- Non-profits to share a space to do something like a Beacon program
- Need to address congestion

Environmental – Water Quality + Brownfields

Table 1

- Moving out factories and replacing them with parks and residential, could improve creek quality
- Give life to the creek, avoiding pouring dirty water there
- Contaminated waters from industrial and residential uses, are they filtered in the same facility?

Table 2

- Can area along water be rezoned for residential use?
- Does river need to be dredged?

- Is there a subway station planned to the west of Flushing?
- Air quality is poor, dusty and smells bad

Table 3

- Will creek ever be used for recreation?
- What exact contaminants are in the study area?
- Clean-up the creek!!

Table 4

- Who places “e” designations on properties? City planning
- What is Phase I?
- What is relationship between state brownfield study and DCP environmental study?
- Water contamination- status?
- How to increase density without more substantial treatment capacity?
- Flushing river full of garbage

Waterfront and Open Space

Table 1

- Self-sufficient community gardens
- Parks are not maintained very well- Bowne Park is where everyone goes
- Smoking cigarettes is not allowed
- Closed bathroom - why?
- Closing hours too early, would be better to extend it to 10 pm
- Teenagers doing drugs in hidden places
- Management of park opening (NYPD have the key and do not open it before 7:30am)
- Parsons Street: used path is very bumpy, should be smoothed.
- What about paying seniors of the neighborhood to clean the park
- Planting trees along the waterfront to invite more birds and people
- More fitness equipment
- More sitting in in the park and shade and café

Table 2

- Don't know of many open spaces/parks
- Would be nice to have public plaza with seating in the center
- As many plants and trees as possible
- There are fewer parks in West Flushing
- Can industrial sites be converted to parks?
- Would like boardwalk along water with green space
- Places to exercise walk/run/dance
- Need places to sit and talk

- Need public restrooms
- Parks that have elements of traditional Chinese gardens or parks (e.g. Confucius plaza)
- Need outdoor spaces for seniors

Table 3

- Where will new parks be?
- Smell and lack of activities keep residents away from waterfront
- Too much fencing around parks
Waterfront access, good idea, pathway from Flushing Meadows park to waterfront
- Sky View waterfront still not accessible!
- Want walking/biking/boating on the waterfront

Table 4

- Bland Playground is used by many adults – at times, the conditions (trash, drinking in the park, the crowd) can make the park feel uninviting
- Improve events in open space (more programming, activities)
- Open space difficult to provide because of other congestion
- How to create more cohesive open space network?
- Clock tower should not be demolished
- Why not condemn entire area under URA?
- Improve street and park cleaning too much trash
- Priority: theater/park production on regular basis
- Need enforcement on smoking in parks
- Need path improvements in parks
- Want longer hours, especially in the evening
- More fitness equipment
- More tables and chairs for gathering
- Interest in community gardens
- Need bathrooms in existing parks

Table 5

- A lot of open space to the south, none downtown
- Flushing Meadows Park is not accessible
- Outdoor experiences are during commutes
- Promenade: no views like East River
- Opportunity to access Flushing Meadows Park through Flushing Creek
- People might come from Northern Boulevard if there are pedestrian and bike lane improvements
- Flushing Creek is a unique experience
- Want actual green space along the waterfront
- Concern about stormwater management issues
- More parks needed in the zoning study area
- Improve view across Flushing Creek

Transportation

Table 1

- Need more public parking
- Access to daycare
- Access to Bayside difficult; extend 7 train
- Walkability on main street has to be improved due to the high number of pedestrians and traffic congestion
- Stop traffic during rush hours?
- Bus should stop past Main Street
- Another access to subway on Parsons Boulevard
- Other bus routes on College Point Boulevard and Union Street, not only on Main Street
- 2 stations @ College Point to reduce congestion
- Changing the bus depot away from Main Street to somewhere else (next to 34th Ave.)
- Expand 7 train platform
- Disperse bus stops
- Reduce turning for buses

Table 2

- Walk along College Point Boulevard to bus
- Bus timing - keep them spaced out
- Extend Q66 bus
- Long wait for buses on Roosevelt and Main Street, lines contribute to congestion
- Add transit connection: College Point and Roosevelt, ideally subway
- Pedestrian safety-bridge under Long Island expressway, theft
- Dark on Roosevelt between College Point Boulevard, Main Street and Prince Street - more lighting, police, CCTV
- Parking is scarce
- Street improvements
- Pedestrian Plaza

Table 3

- Can't reach College Point by transit
- Sidewalks need to be repaired and widened
- Roosevelt Avenue bridge needs to be improved
- Can't see median on College Point Boulevard at night; no trees
- Main Street too busy; congested; close down street to cars like Fulton street in Brooklyn
- Difficult to walk on College Point Boulevard; fix sidewalk and bike lanes
- Roosevelt Avenue and College Point Boulevard intersection - terrible congestion
- Everyone goes to Sky View to park
- Parking ticket enforcement too strict

- Create a bus only zone
- Main Street roadbed in poor condition
- Roosevelt Avenue/College Point Boulevard intersection not pedestrian-friendly
- College Point Boulevard medians are not visible on rainy days
- Want pedestrian crossing over Northern Boulevard bridge
- Want more subway service to College Point
- Want waterfront bike lane connection to Flushing Meadows Corona Park
- Add bike lanes on Northern Boulevard
- Lippman Plaza needs upgrade

Table 4

- 7 train already at capacity
- How can subway be expanded to increase capacity?
- Bus congestion on street, improve traffic flow
- Bus terminal needed was supposed to go where flushing commons is now.
- College Point Boulevard – difficult to drive during rush hour
- Housing need, investment in infrastructure will be required
- Traffic lights change too fast, signal improvements required
- Vehicular, transit, pedestrian congestion reduction is top priority

Table 5

- Main Street LIRR intersection very crowded
- Sky View only place to park
- Main Street, Roosevelt Avenue very crowded
- Main Street between Northern Boulevard, Kissena Boulevard bus lines going around the block, especially in bad weather
- 39th Avenue: can't tell which line is for which bus route
- 7 train exits: more needed at Main Street
- Buses can terminate at Mets/ Willets Point
- Main Street: people of different capacities crowding; sidewalk capacity must be increased
- Pedestrian Safety not an issue because everyone has to move so slowly
- Simplify intersection at Kissena Boulevard and Main Street
- Crosswalks must be painted more regularly

Land Use and the Public Realm

Table 1

- Pedestrian median to channelize movements
- Bigger pedestrian spaces
- Comfortable Sidewalks; have recycled tires (like in South Korea) it makes it soft

- Chairs on sidewalk
- Bike paths -> lack of bike paths makes it dangerous to navigate

Table 2

- Prefer sidewalk at Prince Street and Roosevelt Avenue
- No reason to walk on sidewalk without retail
- People park at Sky View and walk from there to restaurants along Prince Street and Roosevelt Avenue
- Prefer convenience of shopping mall with department stores (i.e. Queens Center Mall)
- Public spaces, restaurants with tables and chairs outside, safer crosswalks and more people walking

Table 3

- Trees: great in the summer
- Retail; nice to see activity
- More sidewalk space needed
- During rush hour bus lines crowd sidewalks and cause congestion
- Without streetscape sidewalk looks empty, intimidating, scary, especially at night
- Flushing Library not big enough for all students that want to study there
- Benches for senior population
- Public Bathrooms
- Public Wi-Fi

Table 4

- Potholes and cracks in the sidewalks
- More trees
- Too much pedestrian congestion
- Widen sidewalks
- Lighting on sidewalk crucial
- Food courts in Sky View Parc are closing down
- No one asks residents what they want
- More variety in stores; stores should correspond to demand
- DCP should restrict possibility of casino

Table 5

- Street vendors sometimes create too much sidewalk congestion
- Main Street's sidewalk between Northern Blvd. and 37th Ave. is very appealing with adequate shade, retain frontage and plenty of foot traffic to make you feel safe
- Open, clean sidewalks
- Only parking is in Sky View
- 3 hours is the typical stay downtown
- Congestion hasn't stopped people from coming here
- College Point Boulevard - a dead zone 10 years ago

- New housing looks outside our income range
- Buses should terminate at Mets/ Willets Point
- Walking across Roosevelt Avenue bridge could be better
- Want community facility space – a common meeting area for all ages – similar to library