



Block by Block

How **community organizations, health advocates and schools** can promote health and improve walking conditions in East Harlem.



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 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. 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.

WHAT WE LEARNED

As part of creating the East Harlem Community Walking Trail, we interviewed people in the neighborhood about their experiences walking in East Harlem and assessed the sidewalk and street conditions along the blocks that make up the East Harlem Community Walking Trail.

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 each other.



“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.”



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






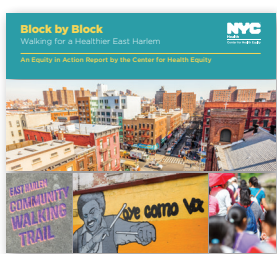
“You+Park” New York Restoration Project, 2018. Learn more about You+Park at nyrp.org/youpluspark.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

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

-  Organize group walks and field trips along the East Harlem Community Walking Trail to explore the neighborhood’s cultural history and be physically active.
-  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 New York City (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 of the full report.
-  Apply for grants aimed at improving the built environment and encouraging physical activity among residents. For information, see Page 41 of the full report.
-  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 at your organization by offering walking tours and friendly walking challenges.



WANT TO LEARN MORE?

To read the full report or get involved, visit nyc.gov/health and search for **East Harlem Community Walking Trail**.

