



August 9, 2016 *(revised December 21, 2016)*

# Dinsmore-Chestnut Community Visioning Workshops Report

# 01 Introduction

## Why: Development, Informed by the Community

In June 2016, the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), with the help of the Office of City Councilmember Rafael Espinal, the Office of State Assembly Member Erik M. Dilan, the Office of State Senator Martin M. Dilan, the Office of Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, Brooklyn Community Board 5, and various City agencies, facilitated two community visioning workshops to gather public input for the future development of new affordable housing, a public school, neighborhood amenities, and public art in and around the Dinsmore-Chestnut development site in East New York, Brooklyn. The purpose of the workshops was to facilitate meaningful community engagement, identify community priorities, and gather ideas for future development from those who live and work in East New York and have an intimate understanding of neighborhood conditions and needs.

This report summarizes the results of the workshops and shares additional feedback received through email and surveys. This report is also available on HPD's website at [www.nyc.gov/dinsmore-chestnut](http://www.nyc.gov/dinsmore-chestnut) and will be attached as an addendum to the Request for Proposals (RFP) issued for this site. RFP respondents are encouraged to consult this report in developing their proposals.

## How: Community Visioning Workshops

Two workshops were held at the Blessed Sacrament School gymnasium at 108 Pine Street, a few blocks from the development site. The workshops were scheduled on a weekend (Saturday, June 18th at 1:00-3:00pm), and a weeknight (Thursday, June 23rd at 6:30-8:30pm) so that community members would have two opportunities to attend. Small group activities were held in English, Spanish, and Bengali.

In all, over 100 community members participated, including families, seniors, Community Board 5 representatives, local groups, and elected officials. In addition, over 40 New York City staff members attended the workshop to facilitate activities and discuss the site with the community.

HPD designed interactive activities to gather community input on needed and desired:

- Housing types
- Community facilities
- Retail uses
- Site layout and urban design
- Public art in the neighborhood

With the help of Councilmember Espinal and his staff, Brooklyn Community Board 5, and local community organizations, HPD conducted extensive outreach to encourage participation in the workshop. Outreach for the workshop included door-to-door canvassing, distributing street flyers to residents and business owners near the site, and sending email blasts to local organizations. HPD also created a paper and online feedback form with questions similar to those that were asked through activities at the workshop, for community members that were not able to attend.



Workshop attendees share ideas for the future development of the Dinsmore-Chestnut site.

**Workshop outreach and participation in numbers:**

**500**  
Flyers distributed in English, Spanish, and Bengali

**100+**  
Community participants attended

**40**  
City staff facilitated 11 tables

**131**  
Online and paper surveys collected<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 44 of which were additional questionnaires collected through online and paper submissions from community members who were unable to attend the workshops.

Join Council Member Espinal, NYC Dept of Housing Preservation & Development, and partners for a:

**Community Visioning Workshop**

Share your ideas for the development of new affordable housing & neighborhood amenities on the Dinsmore-Chestnut Site



1-3 p.m.  
Saturday, June 18, 2016

6:30-8:30 p.m.  
Thursday, June 23, 2016  
(choose one)

Blessed Sacrament School  
108 Pine Street, Brooklyn, NY 11208  
Crescent St Stop on **J** **Z** trains  
or B13 Bus to Crescent St / Fulton St

Opening remarks by Elected Officials  
Interactive Activities & Resource Tables  
Kids' Table  
Local Arts Activity  
Snacks & Refreshments  
Spanish and Bengali\* Interpretation  
*Part of the East New York Community Plan*



\*Activities in Bengali available only on Saturday in collaboration with the Bangladesh American Community Development & Youth Services (BACDYS)

For Access-A-Ride transportation, please reserve 2 days in advance at (877) 337-2017

Unable to attend the workshops? Submit your feedback through: <http://nyc.gov/dinsmore-chestnut>, call your local elected official (718-642-8664) or Community Board (718-498-5711), or email us at [dinsmore@hpd.nyc.gov](mailto:dinsmore@hpd.nyc.gov).

Hosted by Office of Council Member Rafael Espinal, State Assembly Member Erik M. Dilan, State Senator Martin M. Dilan, Brooklyn Community Board 5, Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams, and NYC Dept. of Housing Preservation & Development (HPD), Dept. of Transportation (DOT), Dept. of Parks & Recreation, Dept. of City Planning (DCP), Economic Development Corporation (EDC), Dept. of Small Business Services (SBS), and Dept. of Cultural Affairs Building Cultural Capacity Initiative (DCLA-BCCI). Part of the East New York Community Plan - visit <http://nyc.gov/eastnewyork> for more information.



Unirse al Concejal Rafael Espinal, el Departamento de Conservación y Desarrollo de la Vivienda de NYC, y colaboradores para un:

**Taller de Visualización Comunitaria**

Comparta sus ideas para el desarrollo de nuevas viviendas asequibles y comodidades en el sitio "Dinsmore-Chestnut"



1-3 p.m.  
Sábado, 18 de Junio de 2016

6:30-8:30 p.m.  
Jueves, 23 de Junio de 2016  
(elegir un taller)

Blessed Sacrament School  
108 Pine Street, Brooklyn, NY 11208

Crescent St Stop en los trenes **J** **Z**  
o el Bus B13 a Crescent St / Fulton St

Declaraciones de apertura por parte de los Representantes Electos  
Actividades Interactivas & Mesas de Recursos  
Mesa para los niños  
Actividades de Arte Local  
Meriendas y Refrescos  
Interpretación en Español y Bengali\*



\*Las actividades en Bengali sólo estarán disponibles el Sábado en colaboración con Bangladesh American Community Development & Youth Services (BACDYS)

Para el transporte Access-A-Ride, por favor reserve 2 días por adelantado (877) 337-2017

¿No puede asistir a los talleres? Envíe sus comentarios a <http://nyc.gov/dinsmore-chestnut>, llame a su concejal (718-642-8664) o junta de la comunidad (718-498-5711), o escribanos a [dinsmore@hpd.nyc.gov](mailto:dinsmore@hpd.nyc.gov).

Organizada por la oficina del concejal Rafael Espinal, Miembro de la Asamblea del Estado Erik M. Dilan, Senador Estatal Martin M. Dilan, Brooklyn Community Board 5, el Presidente del condado de Brooklyn Eric L. Adams, y el Departamento de Conservación y Desarrollo de la Vivienda de NYC (HPD), el Departamento de Transportación (DOT), el Departamento de Parques y Recreación, el Departamento de Planificación de la Ciudad (DCP), la Corporación para el Desarrollo Económico (EDC), el Departamento de Servicios para Pequeños Negocios (SBS), y el Departamento de Asuntos Culturales (DCLA).



কর্তৃপক্ষের নেতৃত্ব প্রদর্শন, একত্রেই সিটিপ্ল্যানিং অফিসের সাথে ডেভেলপমেন্ট, এবং নিউইয়র্ক সিটির অন্য অংশদারগণের:

**কমিউনিটি ভিশনিং ওয়ার্কশপ**

ডিনসমোর-চেস্টনাট সাইটে নতুন সম্ভার বাড়ি ও পাড়ার সুযোগ-সুবিধা উন্নত করতে আপনার ভাবনাগুলি শেয়ার করুন



দুপুর ১টা - ৩টে  
১৪ জুন, ২০১৬ শনিবার

ব্রেসড স্যাক্রামেন্ট স্কুল  
১০৮ পাইন স্ট্রিট, ব্রুকলিন, NY 11208

নির্বাচিত কর্মকর্তাদের দ্বারা মতব্য চাণ্ড  
ইন্টারেক্টিভ কার্যক্রম ও রিসোর্স টেবিল  
শিশুদের টেবিল  
স্থানীয় শিল্পকলা কার্যক্রম  
স্ন্যাক্স ও রিফ্রেশমেন্টস  
স্প্যানিশ ও বাংলা\* অনুবাদ



\*মালায় কার্যক্রমগুলি মালয়েয় জাতির কমিউনিটি ডেভেলপমেন্ট আন্ড ইয়ুথ সার্ভিসেস (BACDYS)র মাঝে মধ্যস্থিত

অধিষ্টিত এবং কর্তৃপক্ষের নেতৃত্ব প্রদর্শন, একত্রেই সিটিপ্ল্যানিং অফিসের সাথে ডেভেলপমেন্ট (HPD), সিটিপ্ল্যানিং অফিসের সাথে ট্রান্সপোর্টেশন (DOT), সিটিপ্ল্যানিং অফিসের সাথে প্যার্কস অ্যান্ড রিক্রিয়েশন (DCP), ইকোনমিক ডেভেলপমেন্ট কর্পোরেশন (EDC), সিটিপ্ল্যানিং অফিসের সাথে স্মল বসিনেস সার্ভিসেস (SBS), এবং সিটিপ্ল্যানিং অফিসের সাথে কালচারেল অ্যাফেয়ার্স বিভাগ (DCLA-BCCI)। এই সিটিপ্ল্যানিং অফিসের সাথে - আরও জানতে সাক্ষাৎ <http://nyc.gov/eastnewyork> দেখুন।



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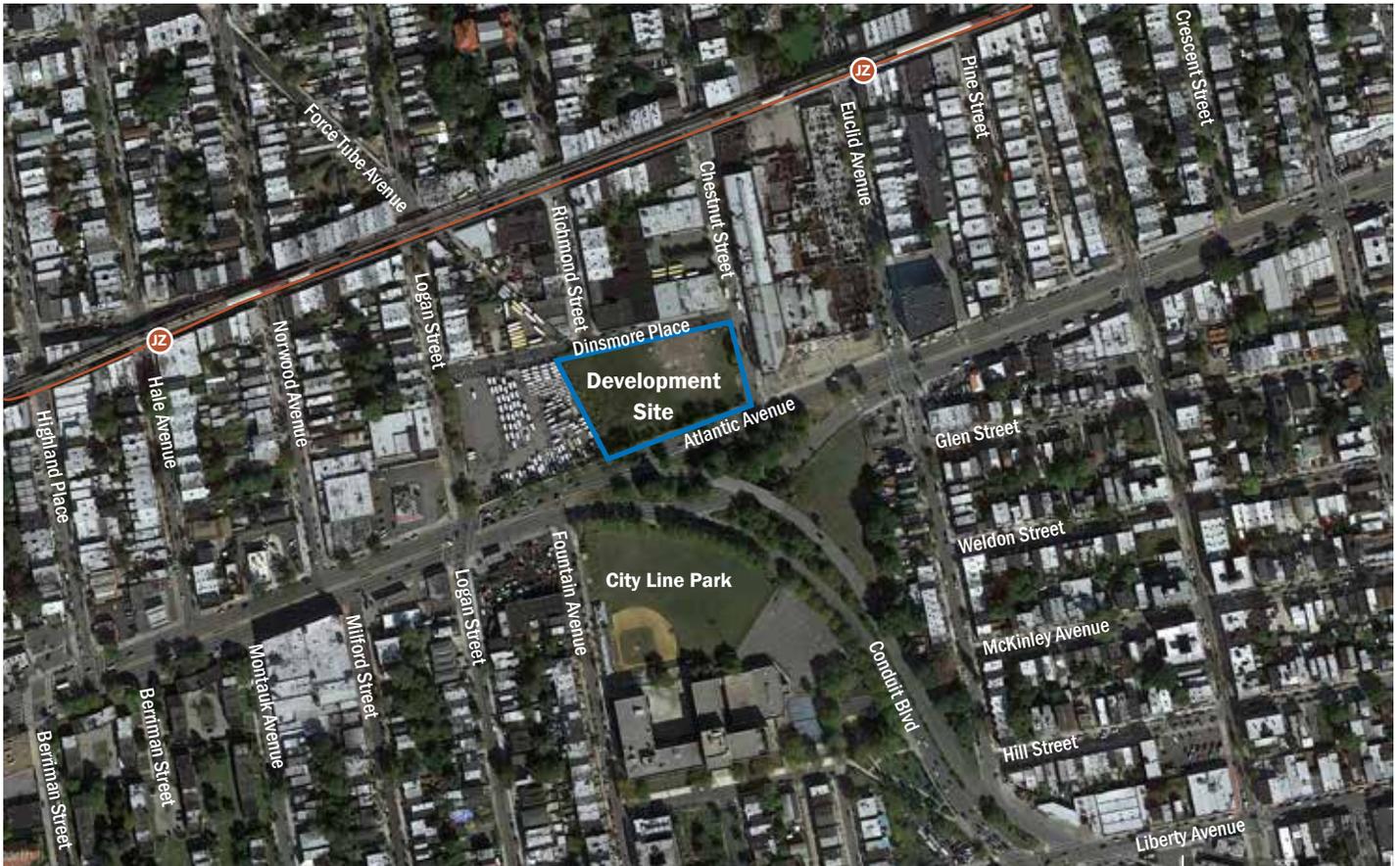
**What: Dinsmore-Chestnut Site**

The Dinsmore-Chestnut site, bounded by Atlantic Avenue, Chestnut Street, and Dinsmore Place, is vacant land owned by the City of New York. The site is approximately 80,000 square feet, making it one of the largest vacant public sites in East New York. The Department of Housing Preservation and Development is leading a development project that will produce a significant number of affordable housing units on the site with ground-floor commercial and/or community facility uses. In addition, the New York City School Construction Authority (SCA) will build a 1,000-seat public school on the site, as well as a play yard jointly operated with the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) that will serve the school's students during school hours and be open to the public at other times.

The development of Dinsmore-Chestnut site is part of the East New York Community Plan (visit [www.nyc.gov/eastnewyork](http://www.nyc.gov/eastnewyork) for more information). Consistent with the Plan, future housing at Dinsmore Chestnut must be affordable for households earning a range of incomes.



View of the site from Dinsmore Place.



Aerial view of the Dinsmore-Chestnut development site

## 02 Summary of Findings

While we heard different goals for the site, some common threads amongst the many tables stood out as community priorities:

### Building Program

- **Housing Types:** A need for different affordable housing types, including family-sized units, units for singles/couples, supportive housing for those with special needs, and senior apartments
- **Community Facilities:** Arts and cultural center, active recreation facilities, senior center and youth center, and workforce/economic development center
- **Commercial Spaces:** Affordable supermarket or food co-op with healthy food options, sit-down restaurant or cafe, gym, and pharmacy

### Site Layout and Urban Design

- Maximize the number of affordable housing units.
- Incorporate setbacks into the building design to contextualize it with existing neighborhood character
- Create retail on Chestnut Street connecting Atlantic Avenue and Fulton Street
- Incorporate a green roof or rooftop terrace into the building design, and support urban agriculture
- Orient the entrances to the school and residential spaces away from Atlantic Avenue for safety
- Implement traffic calming measures and pedestrian safety measures, especially on Atlantic Avenue
- Create a more welcoming streetscape through design elements like street trees, street benches, and public art
- Integrate local arts and artists into the building design and public spaces

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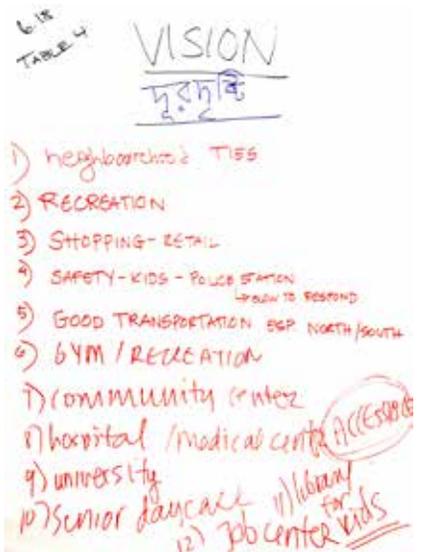
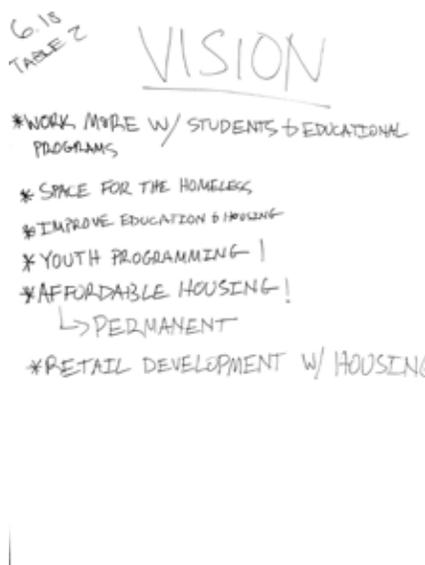
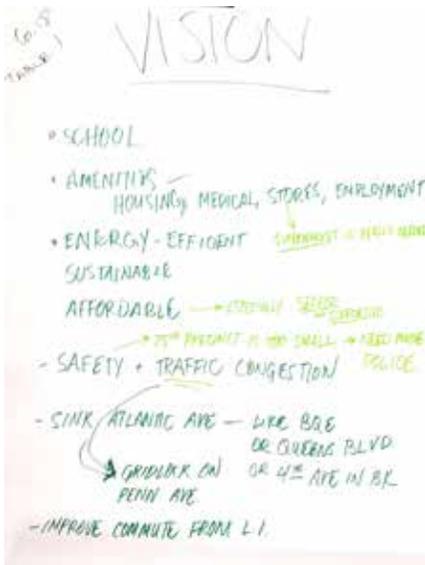


Workshop attendees listen to group presentations of ideas for the site.

“We want permanent affordable housing for the community”

“Necesitamos un patio para que los jovenes jueguen deportes”

“We would like more retail and recreation spaces in this area”



**“We propose a multi-generational building, from community space to apartments”**

**“We would like more healthy food options and a garden to grow food on-site”**

**“We need to improve pedestrian safety around the site”**

GZS  
TABLE 2  
VISION

- ① CONTEXTUAL BUILDING + AFFORDABLE RETAIL
- ② FLEX SPACE + HEALTHY FOOD
- ③ BUILDINGS THAT CONNECT TO NEIGHBORHOOD JOBS + DRIVE STORE
- ④ GREEN BUILDING + COURTYARD  
Healthy Food options + Grow food on site  
Community ORGANIZATOR SPACE
- ⑤ MULTIGENERATIONAL BUILDING!  
FROM Community space to apartments
- ⑥ PROMOTE public/open SPACE

GZS  
MESA 3

VISION

- SEGURIDAD / <sup>PUNTO</sup> POLICIA
- LIMPIEZA
- ESCUELAS
- LIBRERIA
- VIVIENDA ASEQUIBLE
- PARQUES (PARA NIÑOS) BASKETBALL
- CLINICA / DISPENSARIO MEDICO
- LUMINARIO PUBLICO
- SUPERMERCADOS, TIENDAS, MAU?
- GROC STORE

GZS  
MESA 4

VISION

- Accesible
- Family housing, juvenes
- Parking
- More affordable housing

GZS  
TABLE 5  
ART 5

VISION

- Local Opportunities During Contracting
- Local Retail opportunities / Strategic Placement of small retail
- Community Needs / Financial Assistance
- Community Driven Arts
- Food Loop / URBAN Agriculture / Community Garden
- Arts to Bridge Cultures
- "Village" programming / programming / (for school) programs
- Deeply Affordable Housing
- Pedestrian Safety

GZS  
MESA 6

VISION

- o Prioritize the school!
- o Affordable housing + retail
- o Recreation Facility
- o Parking for new residents
- o Commercial w/ Housing on top



Participants discuss their preferences for housing, community facility and commercial space types in a hypothetical building exercise.

## 03 Desired Uses

The first activity was geared toward discussing the types of housing and amenities that should be provided in the development at Dinsmore-Chestnut. As a warm-up exercise, each participant completed a questionnaire specifying their top three choices for housing types, community facilities, and commercial spaces needed in the neighborhood.

Workshop attendees at each table then worked together as a group to design their ideal program for the site. Using a blank board that represented a “hypothetical building,” participants placed tiles with images of different types of housing, community facilities, and retail spaces to indicate the uses they would like to see at the site.

The results are summarized on pages 9-10.



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Participants create their ideal building in the hypothetical building exercise.





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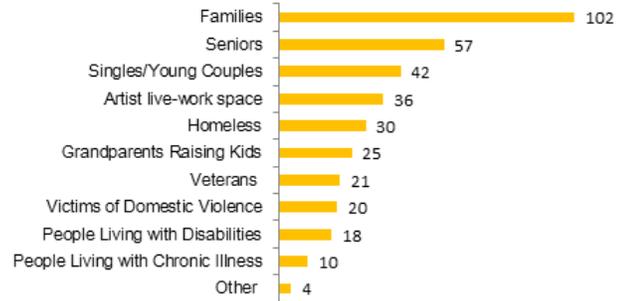
“There is a need for retail in the area to activate the street, especially along Chestnut Street.”

**Questionnaire Results**

**Types of Housing**

Participants identified family-sized units (2-and 4-bedrooms), senior housing, and units for singles and young couples as priorities in the community. Supportive housing was also identified as a need. Participants identified a need for a variety of housing that will serve vulnerable populations, including the formerly homeless, grandparents raising kids, victims of domestic violence, and veterans. Participants also wanted to provide artist live-work space on this site.

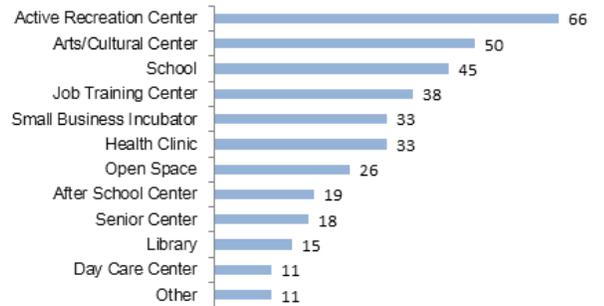
**Desired Housing Types**



**Types of Community Facility**

Participants conveyed the importance of having community facilities that serve local youth such as an arts and cultural center, a recreation center, a daycare center, or an after-school help center. In addition, many tables highlighted a workforce development facility, such as a job training center or small business incubator, as a priority.

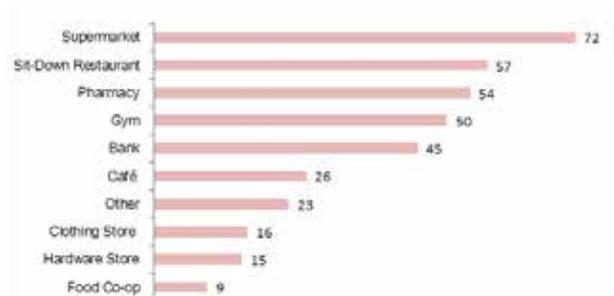
**Desired Community Facilities**



**Types of Commercial / Retail**

Participants consistently expressed the need for retail in the area that would activate the ground floor and promote walkability, especially along Chestnut Street. Almost every table mentioned the need for a grocery store that offers healthy food. Participants suggested a wide range of food store types, from bodegas to small food co-ops and supermarkets. They also noted that the neighborhood could use a pharmacy, gym, or sit-down restaurant or cafe.

**Desired Commercial Spaces**





**Idea:**

Many participants noted that the neighborhood currently houses a lot of families, but that more artists are moving into the area. A program that incorporates a mix of housing types and sizes would serve both newer residents and families who have lived in the area for a long time.

**Desired Housing Types:  
Hypothetical Building Exercise by Table**

Table	Senior Housing	Family Units	Singles/ Couples	Supportive Housing	Other
Average	19%	41%	23%	9%	7%
Range	15-32%	20-47%	12-37%	0-25%	0-25%

\* The chart above compiles the results from the hypothetical building board activity, summarizing the aggregate proportions of each type of housing desired on the site.



**Idea:**

Many participants expressed an interest in mixing different types of community spaces to serve people from across all age ranges. Additionally, open spaces with urban farming could further serve food retail uses by providing fresh produce. A food co-op could serve both community and economic development needs.

**Table Votes for  
Community Facility/Commercial Use**

Community Facility/ Commercial Use	Table Count
Pharmacy	6
Arts/Cultural Center	5
Childcare Center	5
Youth Recreation Center	5
Food Coop	5
Healing/ Fitness Center	4
Parking Lot/Garage	4
Senior Center	4
Workforce Development Center	3
Small Business Retail	3
STEAM Center	3
Small Restaurant/Café/Fast Food	3
Grocery Store/Supermarket	3
Afterschool Center	2
Offices	2
Small Business Incubator	2
Bank	1
Prayer Hall	1
Hardware Store	1
Library	1
Community Room	1
Hall Room	1
Recreation Room	1
Flex Space/Museum	1
Small Grocery/ Bodega	1

\* The chart above shows how many tables prioritized these uses.



**Idea:**

Workshop participants voiced a general preference for small businesses. Although many indicated the need for a supermarket, they also acknowledged that large retailers would take up space that could otherwise be used by multiple smaller businesses. Some participants suggested that flexible, low-rent space could serve local start-ups, and could be supported by a business incubator and/or workforce development center on site.

# 04 Site Layout & Urban Design

The next activity asked participants to envision the design and layout of the Dinsmore-Chestnut development site, as well as public realm improvements in the surrounding area. This activity was led by urban designers from the Department of City Planning and HPD, who asked participants questions such as: “Where should we locate certain uses? How should the buildings be designed? Where should we build ground-floor retail? How can we make the streets feel safer and more walkable?”

- 13 Using an aerial map of the site and surrounding area, as well as photographs of existing conditions, each table produced various sketches illustrating their vision for the neighborhood.

## Building Design

Participants generally welcomed a mixed-use building that would maximize the number of housing units. Participants were comfortable with the building reaching as high as 14 stories (the maximum allowed pursuant to zoning), though many suggested that setbacks and design elements should be used to make the building fit into the context of the neighborhood. If provided in conjunction with open spaces and other community-serving uses, participants felt that a dense development with affordable housing would be an asset to the neighborhood.

Due to safety and accessibility concerns, many noted that building entrances should not be located along Atlantic Avenue, while some explained that streetscape

improvements with retail uses could help make Atlantic Avenue a safer, more pedestrian-friendly environment. Many tables identified Chestnut Street as ideal for retail and community facility uses, while Dinsmore Place could act as a quieter street where parents could drop their kids off at school or head to the park.

## School and Play Yard

The site design activity was influenced by the need to accommodate a new school on the site in a separate building. Facilitators showed participants an aerial photo of the area with the anticipated siting of the school towards the western portion of the site.

Participants emphasized the importance of placing the school entrance and drop-off zone on Dinsmore Place, as opposed to Atlantic Avenue where traffic is heavy. Several designs incorporated a pedestrian walkway through the block that would connect Dinsmore Place to Atlantic Avenue.

## Streets and Connectivity

Participants noted a need for streetscape improvements around the site. In particular, traffic calming measures were consistently cited as a high priority. Many commented that crossing Atlantic Avenue was particularly unsafe, and that installing speed bumps and widening sidewalks would also improve pedestrian safety on other streets surrounding the site. Some tables discussed that adding bike lanes



Each table completed a site diagram and street-view sketches (see pages 15-16).

in the area would improve safety, but participants also noted that Atlantic Avenue might be too heavily trafficked to include a bike lane, unless a physical barrier is also installed.

Additionally, many participants felt that more and better street lighting along with more trees would make the area feel safer. Some tables suggested reactivating Force Tube Avenue as a pedestrian/bike throughway and highlight its connection to the site.

### Arts and Culture: Neighborhood Placemaking

HPD and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs Building Cultural Capacity Initiative (DCLA-BCC) partnered at the workshops to facilitate discussions about arts and cultural assets in East New York. Participants talked about where in the neighborhood they experience or participate together in arts and culture, how art can add to the beauty and safety of the neighborhood. Participants proposed ideas about ways that art can be integrated into the architecture and urban design of the Dinsmore-Chestnut site. General ideas fell into three categories: (1) Infrastructure and Public Space, (2) Architecture and Building Design; and, (3) Development Program and Community Programming.

*Infrastructure and Public Space.* Participants envisioned the possibility of street art or sculpture in public spaces and sidewalks, way-finding signage, tree grates, bike racks, benches and outdoor furniture, outdoor light fixtures, railings and fences, or planters



Participants noted a need for streetscape improvements around the site.

that might be designed by artists. Some participants suggested measures for improving walkability. One idea was a pedestrian overpass over Atlantic Avenue that was painted with a mural, and using lighting features to improve safety.

*Architecture and Building Design.* Participants and local artists said the project could be an opportunity to have artists work with architects in the design of the building. Participants thought it would be a way to incorporate the cultural history, people, or other assets that represent the positive qualities of the community into the building and architectural design. For example, people envisioned entrance doors, lobby floors, window guards, or other architectural elements that could be designed by an artist and incorporated into the design and construction of the building. Artists could also work with the landscape architect on the gardens and landscape design for residents.

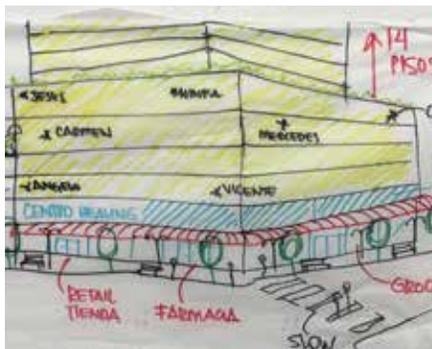
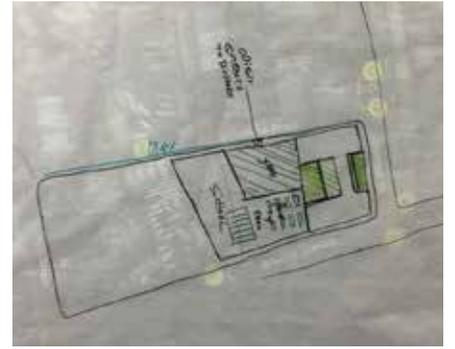
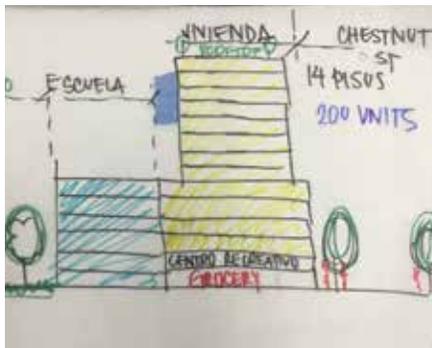
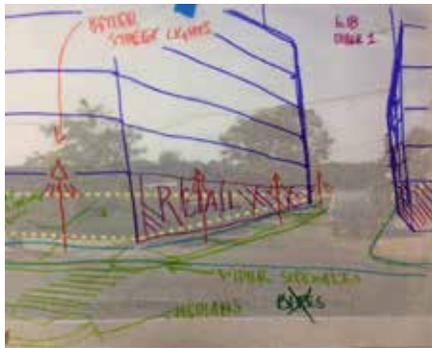
*Development Program and Community Programming.* Participants voiced interest in incorporating cultural/ arts facility space, such as workspace, performance space, exhibit space, and/or a cultural center, into the development program. Some expressed an interest in affordable housing with a preference for artists who would provide arts classes at the school, arts therapy classes to seniors or special needs populations, or other inter-generational arts and cultural programming. Other ideas included programming to support local culinary arts, urban farming (such as productive rooftop gardens), and food trucks on certain days.



#### Idea:

Developers could include local artists in the architecture, urban design, or landscape design teams as part of the design process to achieve the community development objective.

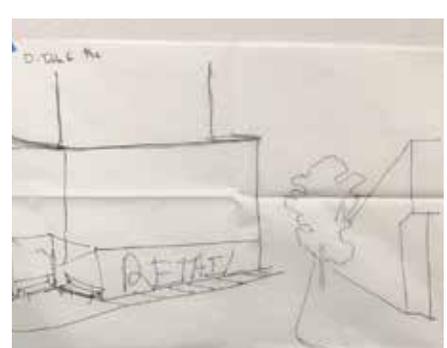
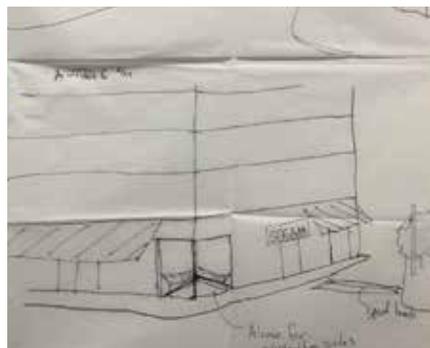
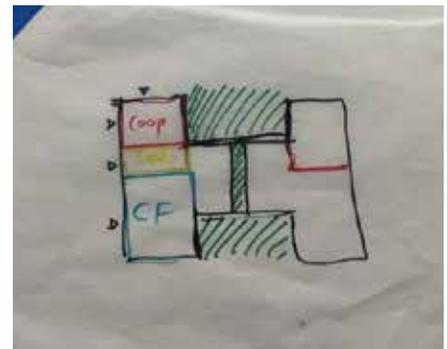
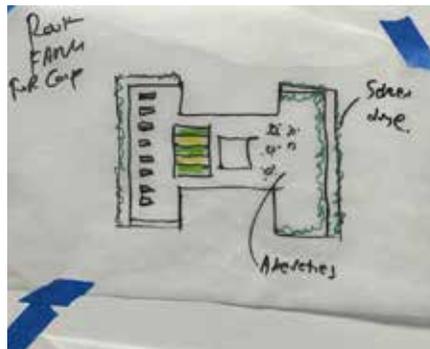
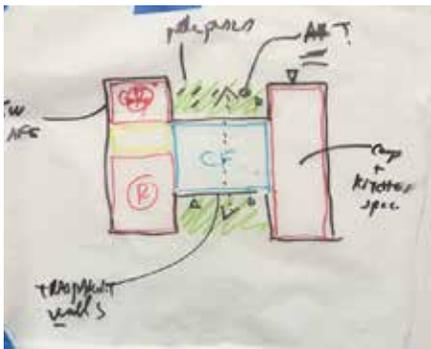
The design process could emphasize community involvement to meaningfully incorporate community assets and cultural identity into the project design.





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A table of participants, including Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez, discusses their design vision for the Dinsmore-Chestnut site.



# Acknowledgments

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We would like to thank all community groups and participants for taking the time to raise their concerns and share ideas with us regarding the future development of the Dinsmore-Chestnut site. We would also like to thank City Council Member Rafael Espinal for his remarks, and for the assistance of his team with outreach and workshop planning. We would like to thank U.S. Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez for her attendance and remarks at one of the workshops. Additionally, we want to thank the Office of State Assembly Member Erik M. Dilan, the Office of State Senator Martin M. Dilan, the Office of Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams, and Brooklyn Community Board 5 for co-sponsoring the event.

We also thank the DCLA Building Community Capacity's East Brooklyn arts organizations and local artists who helped to facilitate the arts and cultural assets mapping activity.

Finally, the workshops would not be possible without the volunteer staff from the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development, Department of City Planning, Department of Transportation, Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Small Business Services, Economic Development Corporation, and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

We are greatly appreciative for the participation of the Bangladeshi American Community Development and Youth Services for their help with outreach, interpretation, and facilitation at the workshop for Bengali-speaking participants.

