

What We Heard At Workshop #1

The Jewel Streets Neighborhood Plan

The kickoff workshop for the Jewel Streets Neighborhood Plan was held on June 24, 2023 at Spring Creek Gardens Youth Community Center. Around 60 participants attended, including residents, property owners, and members of East New York Community Land Trust (ENY CLT). NYC Councilmembers Barron and Ariola made remarks alongside Debra Ack, Special Projects Coordinator at ENYCLT, and HPD Commissioner Adolfo Carrión.

Participants discussed a range of neighborhood issues, including transportation, economic development, health resources, open space, land use and more. Below is a summary of the feedback received during breakout group conversations and collected from feedback boards:



Housing Quality and Infrastructure

- Homeowners have experienced flood damage and unsanitary living conditions due to sewage backups.
- Street raising has been discussed as a potential solution, but some homeowners expressed concerns about the impact to their houses' foundations.
- Jewel Streets residents want the city to connect existing homes to sewers along Linden Boulevard and to reimburse residents who are reliant on septic systems.
- Residents reported a number of vacant, small homes that appear abandoned.
- Some residents blamed new construction for increased flooding in older parts of the neighborhood that aren't hooked up to the sewer system.

Transportation

- While residents agreed that the northern part of the neighborhood benefits from better subway access, they described how inconsistent bus service can be.
- There's a need for more north-south bus routes to better connect the entire neighborhood.
- While it's relatively easy for residents to get to JFK by bus and train, residents want to see better bus connections to places like nearby Shirley Chisholm Park, Cityline, and Howard Beach.
- Buses are often late and unreliable, and some bus stops feel unsafe.
- Some residents walk 15 minutes to Howard Beach to catch a bus to the Rockaway Boulevard A-train station rather than crossing busy Linden Boulevard and walking through the Jewel Streets to the Grant Avenue station because the area north of Linden Boulevard feels dangerous.
- The lack of sidewalks and streetlights on side streets along with high-speed traffic on Linden Boulevard and the Conduit make residents feel unsafe.
- Residents recounted their experiences with the unsafe conditions on avenues. One workshop participant was struck by a car and broke her shoulder while trying to cross Linden Boulevard.
- Residents were split on their opinions about bike lanes, with some concerned that they take away parking spots and others seeing bike lanes as a traffic calming measure.
- Participants expressed a strong desire to see more sidewalks in the neighborhood to make it safer to walk around and access commercial areas and transit.

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Economic Development & Community Services

- While small strip malls and big box retail exist along Linden Boulevard, essential retail amenities and community facilities are severely lacking in the neighborhood.
- Residents often leave the neighborhood for everyday errands like buying groceries, dining at restaurants, mailing packages, visiting libraries, going to the bank, and doing laundry.
- Residents want to see continuing education centers, schools, community colleges, youth programming, and immigrant services in the neighborhood.
- Gathering spaces and cultural centers, including performance and theater spaces for local arts groups, are also missing from the community.

Open/Green Space

- Residents want to see more green space in the neighborhood, including more trees, because there are very few parks, greenery, and areas for recreation.
- In addition to more trees and park spaces, space for urban agriculture and gardening was a big priority for the participants.
- Residents described how prevalent wildlife and trees like weeping willows used to be in the Jewel Streets and would like to see more of them again.
- Families enjoy going to Robert Venable Park on Sutter Avenue and want to see more spaces like it but noted that consistent maintenance is needed for the space to feel clean and safe.
- Residents also like going to Gemini Fields and to the cricket grounds at Tudor Park but want to see better lighting at the fields and have a hard time accessing the cricket grounds because they have to cross Conduit Avenue.

Land Use

- For residents in the Jewel Streets, resolving illegal industrial uses is the number one priority to address a slew of quality-of-life concerns, including sanitation, illegal dumping, and nuisance uses next to residences, which all contribute to a sense of danger
- Residents expressed that the current zoning doesn't align with the industrial uses in the area, and that there should be a larger residential and green space focus.
- Some participants had concerns around the scale of recent development, like the 12-story Linden Terrace.
- However, other community members want to see vacant lots in the Jewel Streets and large parking lots along Linden Boulevard, like the one behind the former Linden Boulevard Multiplex Cinemas, brought to productive use, such as affordable housing.
- Residents reported that the area only has a small commercial hub.

Flooding and Resiliency

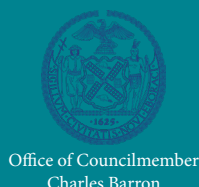
- Flooding is a major issue in the neighborhood, and the Jewel Streets are especially impacted due to the lack of a comprehensive sewer system and low-lying streets.
- Residents reported that recent efforts to pump water out of the Jewel Streets on Amber and 78th Street have resulted in flooding elsewhere in the neighborhood.
- A participant reported that the pump station along Amber Street and Linden Boulevard doesn't work properly, and that flooding is bad along Loring Avenue. Residents want to see short and long-term solutions, including investments in additional stormwater and sewer infrastructure, but have concerns about how that would affect existing buildings.

Health

- Residents reported a lack of access to fresh foods due to few grocery stores.
- While there are urgent care facilities, more high-quality medical offices, along with reliable emergency medical services, are needed.
- Mosquitoes exposed to chronic standing and contaminated water in the Jewel Streets pose health risks to residents.

Essential Services and Infrastructure

- Multiple residents have experienced unreliable services for garbage collection and mail delivery.
- There was a general sentiment that Jewel Streets residents were being left out of improvements happening in other parts of the city, like new street paving and other infrastructure improvements.



Visit the website
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nyc.gov/jewelstreets