

351 Powers Avenue Community Visioning Report

NYC Department of Housing Preservation & Development
Office of Neighborhood Strategies



July 2022



Department of
Housing Preservation
& Development

What?

Development Informed by Community

The NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) conducted community outreach from the fall of 2021 through the spring of 2022 to gather input on the potential development of new affordable housing and neighborhood amenities at 351 Powers Avenue, a City-owned property.

The goal of the outreach activities was to identify priorities for housing from those who live and work near the site and have an intimate understanding of neighborhood conditions and needs. Because this site will also be required to be built with climate resilient design, outreach activities also aimed to identify preferred design interventions that address extreme heat and flooding.

This report summarizes the results of the 6-month engagement process and is available on HPD's website at nyc.gov/351-powers. It will be attached to the Request for Proposals (RFP) issued for 351 Powers Avenue. Development teams responding to the RFP are strongly encouraged to consult this report and thoughtfully respond in their proposal. HPD will evaluate how well development teams incorporate the community vision from this report in their submission.

www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/services-and-information/351-powers-site-overview.page

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351 Powers Avenue RFP



Get Involved Site Overview RFP Process & FAQs Housing Resources

Interactive web page

Where?

Site and Context

351 Powers Avenue is located in Mott Haven in Bronx Community District 1, just south of St. Mary's Park. The site is an undeveloped, mid-block lot of approximately 17,400 SF on Powers Avenue — a street that runs between East 141st Street and East 143rd Street. It sits adjacent to the P.S. 65 and Leadership Academy Charter School building and playground, and is currently used for parking by school faculty and staff. It also abuts two-story homes to the north and five-story multifamily buildings to the west.

The site is surrounded by a mix of uses, including low and medium density residential buildings, community facilities and the 34-acres St. Mary's Park. The site is within a 10-minute walk of several public transportation options, including the Cypress Avenue 6 subway stop, and the Bx 17 bus line which runs north/south on St. Ann's Avenue and connects to the 2,5, and 6 subway lines. The closest major commercial corridor is a few blocks southwest at East 138th street and St. Ann's Avenue. The corridor includes a mix of restaurants, grocery stores and other retail.



Site Aerial View

Public facilities and institutional uses in the surrounding area include P.S. 65 (K-8), and Academic Leadership Charter School (K-5) adjacent to the Site, Neighborhood Charter School (K-3), J. M. Rapport School Career Development (9-12), University Prep Charter Middle School (5-8). The nearest public library is Mott Haven Library located less than a mile from the site. There are several places of worship nearby, including Templo Emmanuel on Cypress Avenue. The nearest post office is located half a mile from the site on East 139th Street and St. Ann's Avenue.

How?

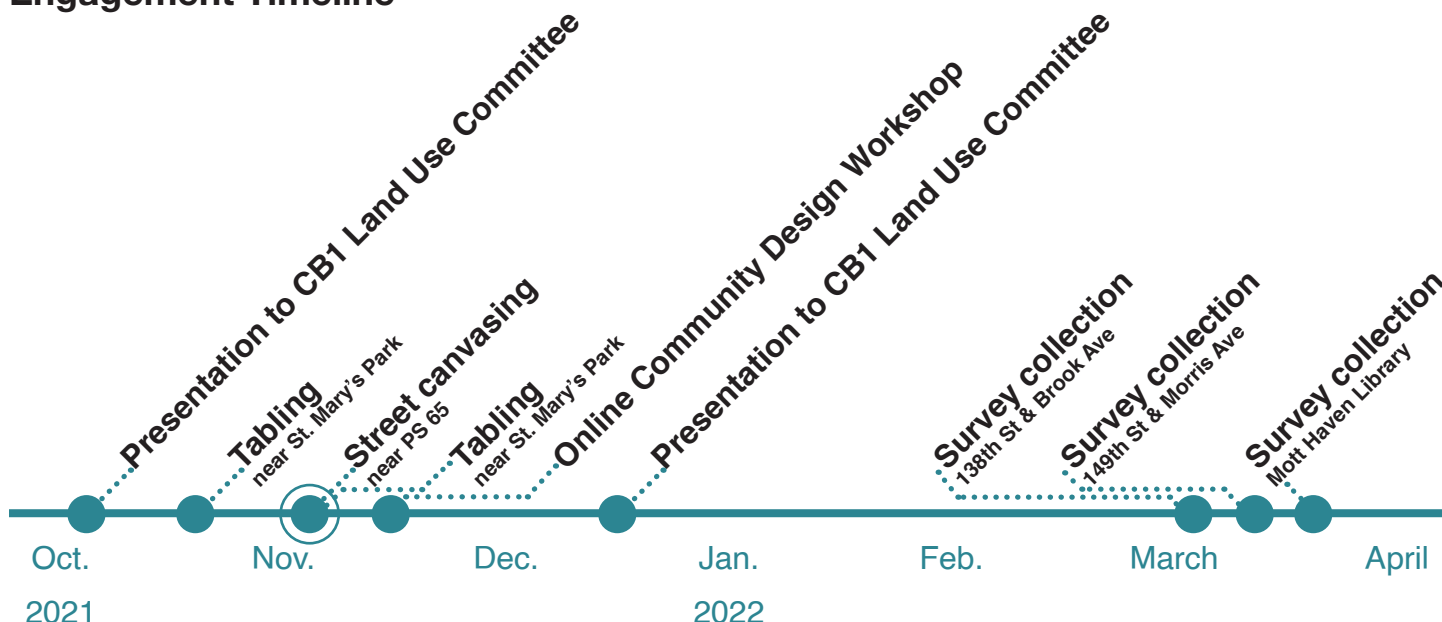
Engagement Strategies

The community engagement for this project took place during the COVID pandemic resulting in the need for digital tools and limiting in-person events. These engagement strategies included an interactive website, a virtual workshop, and a survey.

In October and early November 2021, project staff tabled in St. Mary's Park and at the P.S. 65 election day polling site to inform the public about the project. These on-the-ground efforts also served as outreach for the project survey and an online community workshop. Additionally, staff were able to share information about accessing affordable housing and other housing services offered by HPD.

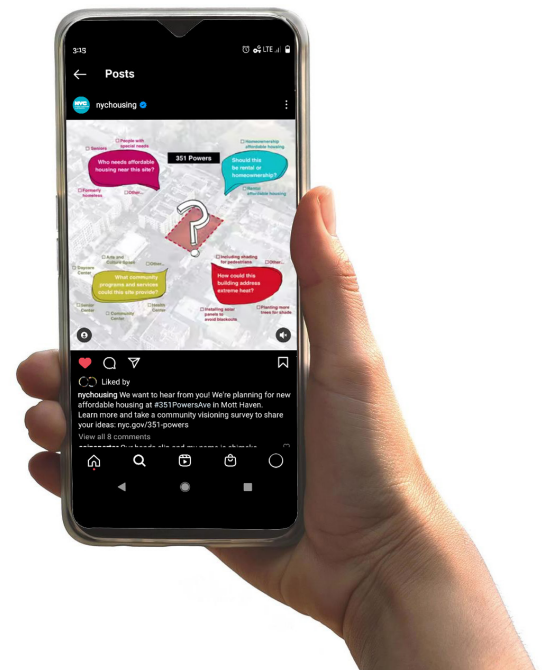
The virtual workshop was held on November 8, 2021. Community members were asked to share their feedback on the future residential program at the site—including affordability levels and populations served—as well as non-residential and public amenities and services. A total of 10 stakeholders and community members attended this workshop.

Engagement Timeline



9 Public events
1 Design workshop
177 Surveys collected

The survey was the primary method of collecting community input. It was updated after the workshop to better capture community preferences. Similar to the workshop, it asked for input on affordability levels, priority populations, and design preferences. Surveys were available in English and Spanish and were collected throughout the engagement period both virtually and through paper collection and distributed through tabling events, social media, and partnerships with local organization. 177 surveys were collected.



Survey shared through social media

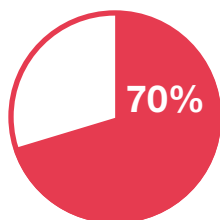


HPD van survey collection day (March 2022)

01 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

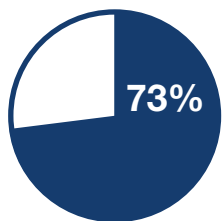
RFP submissions will be evaluated based on the quality and feasibility of the proposals, as well as how well they respond to the priorities articulated by the community. Though participants communicated many different visions for the site, certain themes emerged as priorities:

BUILD LOW-INCOME RENTAL HOUSING



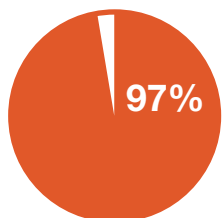
of respondents preferred the site to be developed for **rental housing** rather than ownership and **over 50 percent** prioritized targeting households with **extremely low-incomes**.

INCREASE SAFETY ON AND NEAR THE SITE



of respondents prefer **additional lighting** and several comments mentioned **safety** as a primary concerns for the neighborhood.

INCLUDE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS



of respondents recommended that the new development **include programs or services** for community members.

02 DETAILED FINDINGS

PUBLIC WORKSHOP

Ten participants attended the virtual Community Visioning Workshop in 2021. Themes from the conversation included:







- Extremely low-income individuals and individuals who have experienced homelessness have the hardest time accessing affordable, safe housing;
- New housing should be inclusive but prioritize lower income New Yorkers;
- New housing should be designed for universal accessibility; and
- Any new building should be designed for sustainability.

Participants also discussed the lack of community spaces for adults and youth to meet or learn. Participants shared that local groups meet in private spaces, like cafes or restaurants, and would like to have access to public, community-focused meetings spaces.

Workshop boards with attendees' ideas and comments on sticky notes:

What type of community programs or services would you like to see here?

Think about what you often need to leave the neighborhood to find.
What do you find yourself wishing you had nearby
Think about what might be complementary to the services and spaces nearby.

Ideas Corner			Existing - medical, adult English classes, skills training	Community center - place to socialize, for kids	Very little in the area deals with science	Skills training
Seniors Center 	Health/ Wellness 	Youth Space 	Closest library is 25-30 blocks away (Woodstock on 165th)	Youth community center	Not too much in the area that speaks to youth interests	Existing - park
Theater & Arts Space 	Skills Training 	Non-profit Cafe 	Bronxworks will have workforce development center	Something for the youth to do	Cram schools - extra-curricular study help	
			Theater and arts	Existing - community center (small)	Not too many places for adults to meet	

New York City is experience more and more extreme heat events.

Are you concerned about the impact of increasing heat or extreme heat events on your community?

What do you normally do on a hot day or during an extreme heat event?

White roof and reflective colors on building façade

Window shading

Trees, shrubbery and greenery

Shading and tree canopies



Increasing heat is a concern

Risk of heat strokes - chronic health conditions

Cooling centers in NYC

Less reliance on gas, fossil fuels - Electrification

What design features would you want to prioritize?

What do you like, what don't you like?

If you can give a preference of up to two design features, what would they be?

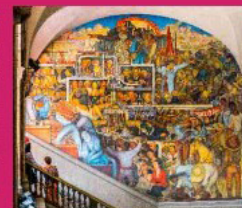
Accessible and inclusive design



Green building, sustainable and resilient design



Art incorporated into the building



Passive recreation opportunities



Passive recreation facilities

Citibikes in The Bronx

Green, sustainable design

Aging in place - accessibility

Mix of features

Art can help community buy-in

Bike rooms not used

Communal/outdoor space over art

Design workshop boards held on November 8, 2021

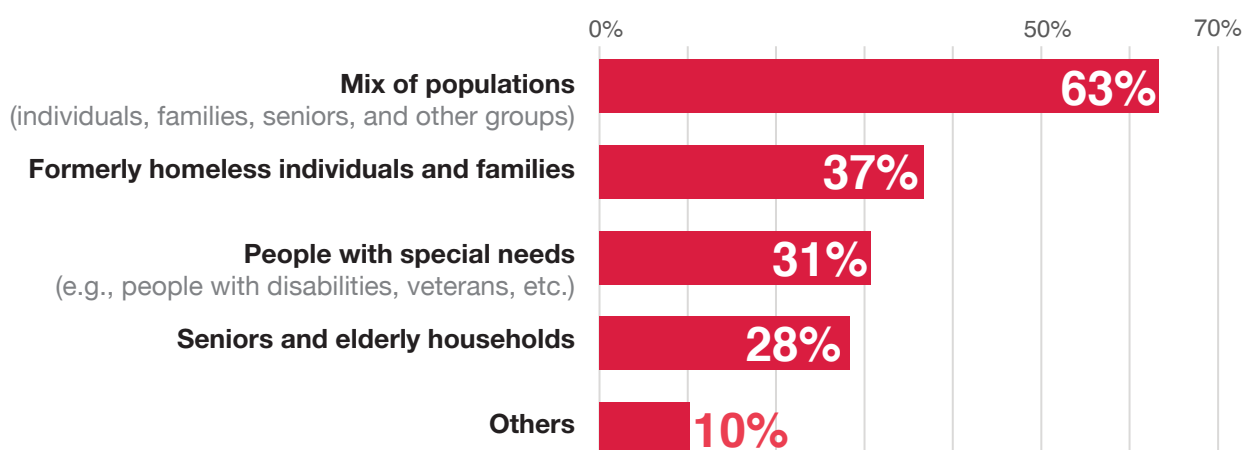
SURVEY

The project team created a 10-question survey to elicit feedback on the affordable housing programming as well as public and community amenities that could accompany future development at 351 Powers Avenue. Following the survey, participants were given an optional demographic questionnaire. Over 170 participants filled out the survey and the results are summarized below.

RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

1. WHO NEEDS AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEAR THIS SITE?

Participants were asked to select up to two population priorities from the options below. Respondents were also given a write-in option. The percentage of participants that selected each population priority was:



94% of respondents answered this question

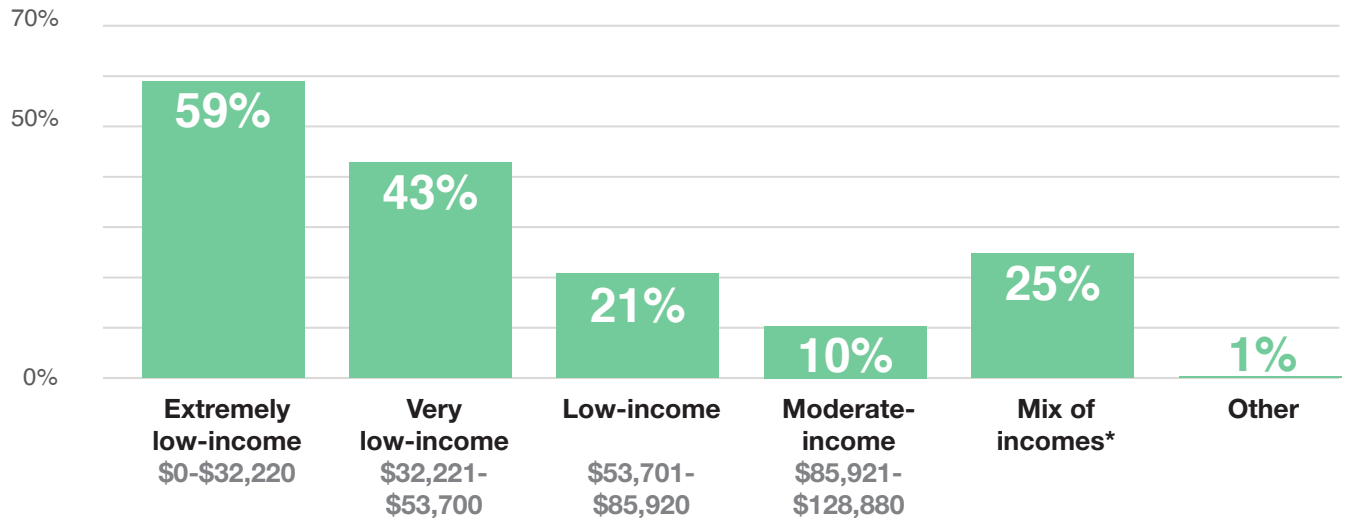
While all answers received responses, there was a clear preference among respondents for the housing to serve a mix of individuals and families. Almost 2/3 of respondents selected this choice. The next most popular selection, formerly homeless individuals and families, was selected by 37 percent of respondents.

“Young adults need places to live”

“All low- and moderate- income families”

2. WHAT INCOME LEVELS SHOULD WE TARGET FOR THIS APARTMENT BUILDING?

HPD builds income-restricted affordable housing where units are reserved for households in specified income ranges. Participants were asked to select up to two income levels HPD should be targeting for this new housing. Respondents were also given a write-in option.



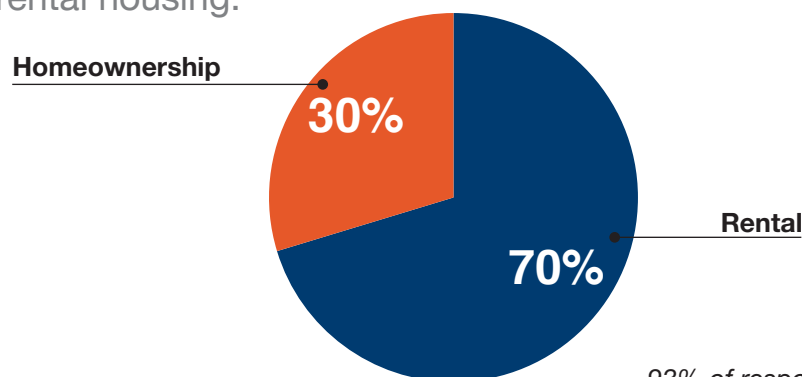
*from extremely low- to moderate-income

95% of respondents answered this question

About 60 percent of participants preferred targeting extremely low-income households. The second most popular selection was very low-income households. Interestingly, the third most popular option was for a mix of incomes—from extremely low through moderate income households. 25 percent of respondents selected this option. The least popular option was for only moderate income households. The 2019 median household income in the surrounding neighborhoods was approximately \$25,000.

3. SHOULD THIS BE A RENTAL OR HOMEOWNERSHIP SITE?

HPD has affordable housing financing options for both homeownership and rental housing.



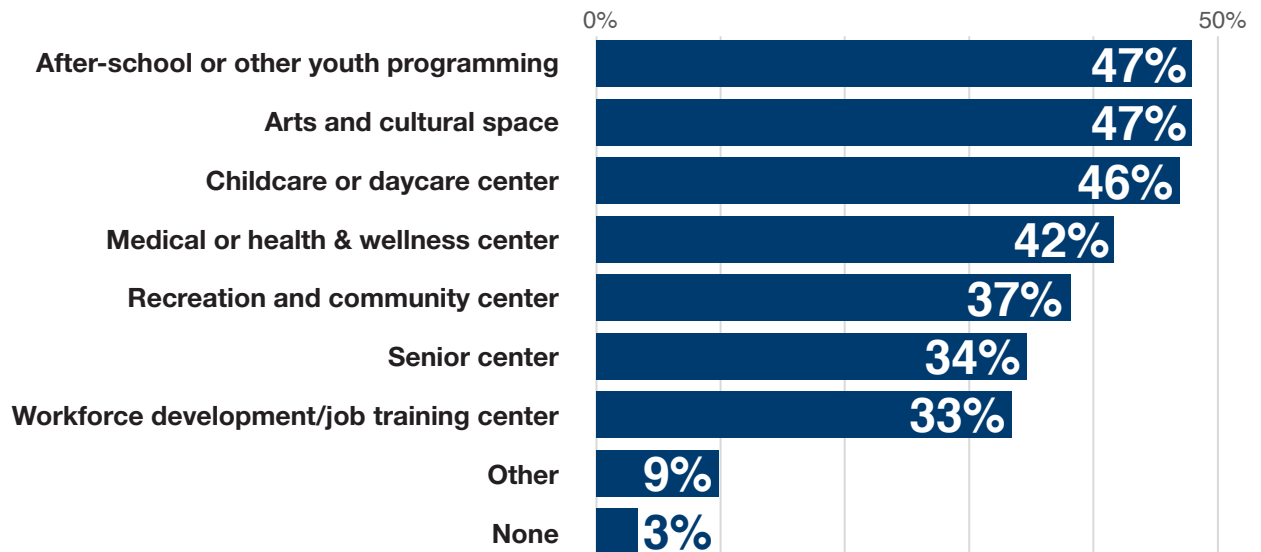
93% of respondents answered this question

Survey respondents overwhelmingly supported using 351 Powers Avenue for rental housing.

NON-RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM AND DESIGN

4. WHAT TYPE OF COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES COULD THIS SITE PROVIDE?

Respondents were asked to select up to three types of community programs or services. The percentage of participants that selected each program was:



97% of respondents answered this question

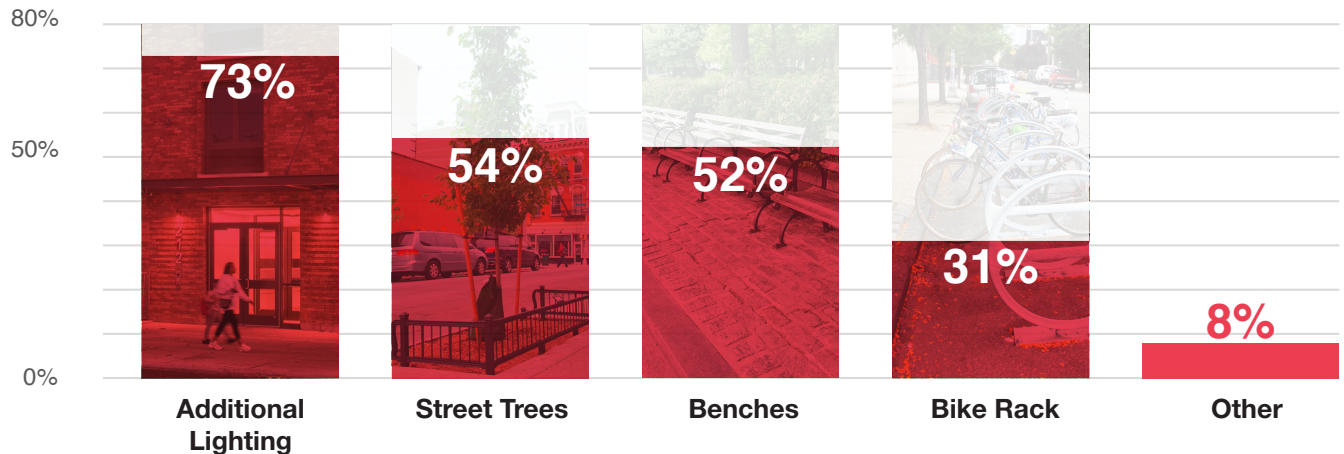
All specific suggestions were selected by more than 50 respondents, indicating a strong interest in increased programs or services in the neighborhood. But top three most popular responses were related to children or youth (childcare or daycare; after-school or other youth programming) or creation and community space. 42 percent of respondents expressed interest in workforce development/job training opportunities. Only 3 percent of respondents selected “none.”

“Daycare center so future moms don’t have to go elsewhere to have their infants taken care of”

“Arts and cultural space with daycare facility so infants can learn from culture and arts”

5. WHAT PUBLIC AMENITIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE INCORPORATED INTO THE SITE DESIGN?

Respondents were asked to provide select a preferred public amenity. Many respondents selected more than one option and 11 respondents selected all four options. The percentage of participants that selected each program was:



96% of respondents answered this question

With over 100 selections, “additional lighting” was a strong preference among respondents. This finding is reflected in a variety of written comments calling for increased security on the street. Street trees and benches were also popular, with over 50 percent of respondents selecting these choices.

12 respondents wrote in additional comments, including:

“Parking”

“More security to make sure people clean up after their dogs!”

“Better garbage maintenance”

“Shuttle to commercial areas, Randall’s island, or connect to new Metro North future stops or Soundview Ferry”

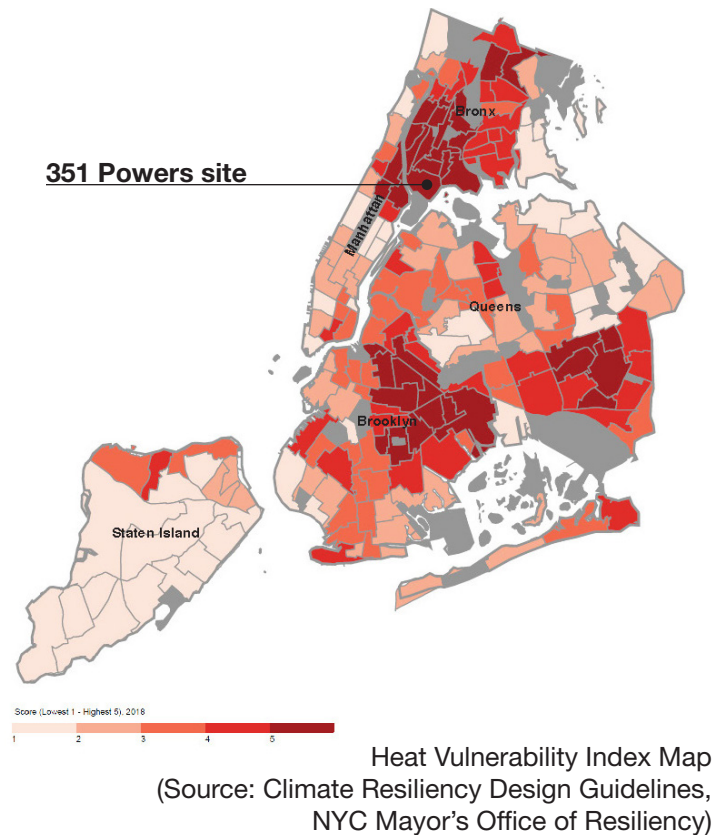
“Playground”

“Murals and artwork that uplifts the community”

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

This RFP has been selected to be part of a pilot project led by the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice (MOCEJ) to test the Climate Resiliency Design Guidelines.

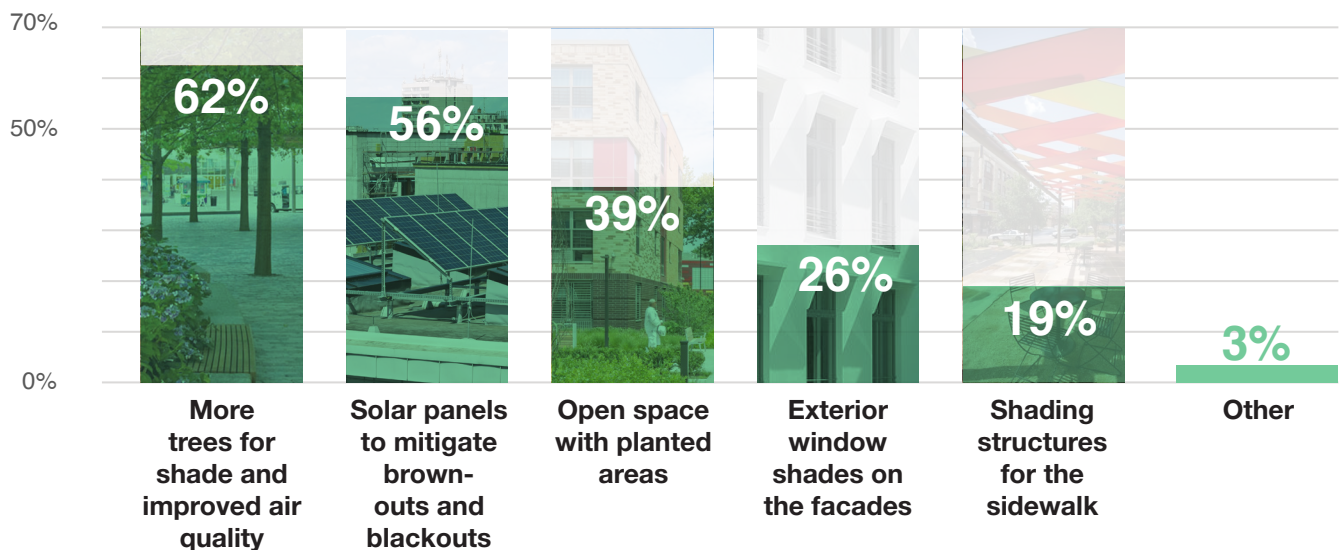
This site is located in an area with the highest Heat Vulnerability Index (HVI). Respondents were asked to provide feedback on possible mitigation measures and on community resilience.



6. EXTREME HEAT MITIGATION:

WHICH OF THESE MEASURES THAT REDUCE EXTREME HEAT WOULD YOU PREFER TO SEE IN THIS FUTURE DEVELOPMENT?

Respondents were asked to select up to 2 measures. The percentage of participants that selected each option was:

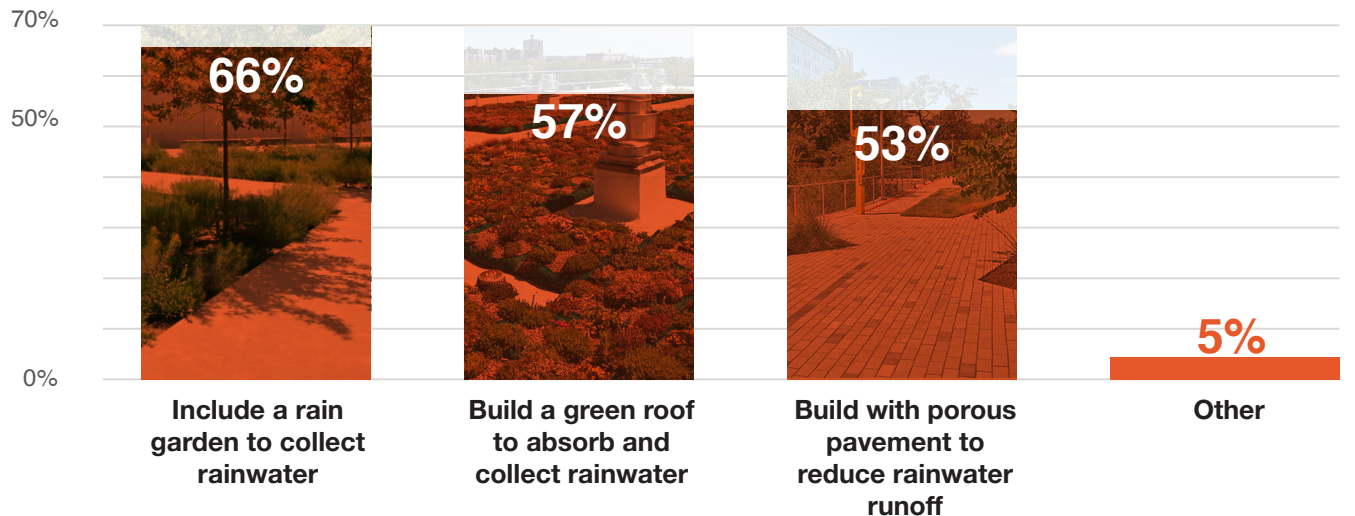


94% of respondents answered this question

7. FLOOD MITIGATION:

WHICH OF THESE MEASURES THAT REDUCE THE IMPACT OF FLOODING WOULD YOU PREFER TO SEE IN THIS FUTURE DEVELOPMENT?

Respondents were asked to select up to 2 rainwater management strategies. The percentage of participants that selected each option was:



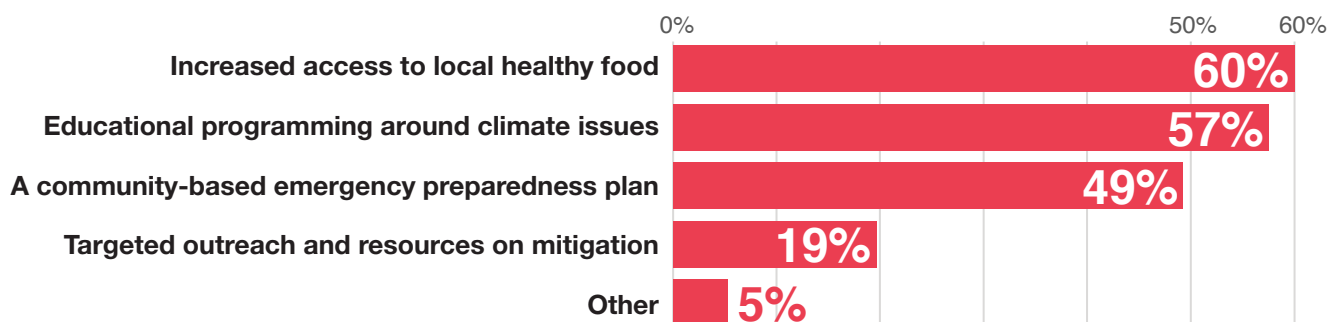
92% of respondents answered this question

While rain garden was the most popular option, each option was selected by over 50 percent of respondents.

8. COMMUNITY RESILIENCE:

WHAT ARE WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR COMMUNITY'S ABILITY TO ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE THREATS?

Along with changes to the built environment, the health and preparation of a social community can help mitigate and respond to climate related emergencies. The percentage of participants that selected each option was:



91% of respondents answered this question

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Respondents were given the option to include additional comments or feedback related to the site. About 1/3 of survey respondents shared additional comments. The project team reviewed all the comments and a few themes were repeated by multiple participants:

- 7 people mentioned sustainability:

Ensure the building includes sustainability features that reduce energy costs for residents.

- 7 people mentioned:

Focus programming on youth.

- 6 people mentioned:

Add Parking.

- 6 people mentioned:

Increase safety on the street.

PROFILE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Participants in the engagement activities do not reflect a random sample of people who live in the neighborhood. To understand who participated, survey respondents were given an optional demographic questionnaire. Below is a summary of responses to the demographic questionnaire.

Participation Rate:

The questions in the demographic questionnaire generally had a lower participation rate than the site survey. Participation rates for questions about the site ranged from 91 to 97 percent. Participation rates for the demographic questions ranged from 77 to 89 percent.

Age:

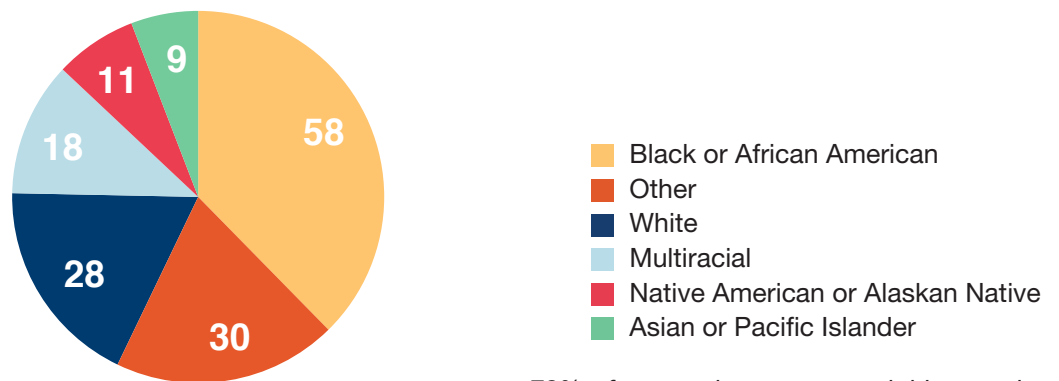
Respondents ranged in age from 14 to 87 years old. While this is a significant range, the vast majority were middle aged adults. About 3/4 of respondents were between 30 and 60 years old.

Race:

The questionnaire provided race and ethnicity options as they are framed in the US Census, with one question about racial group and the other about identification as Latinx or Hispanic.

For the question “with what racial group do you identify?” respondents were provided six options including a write-in option. Respondents could select more than one option, and often did.

- **With what racial group do you identify?**

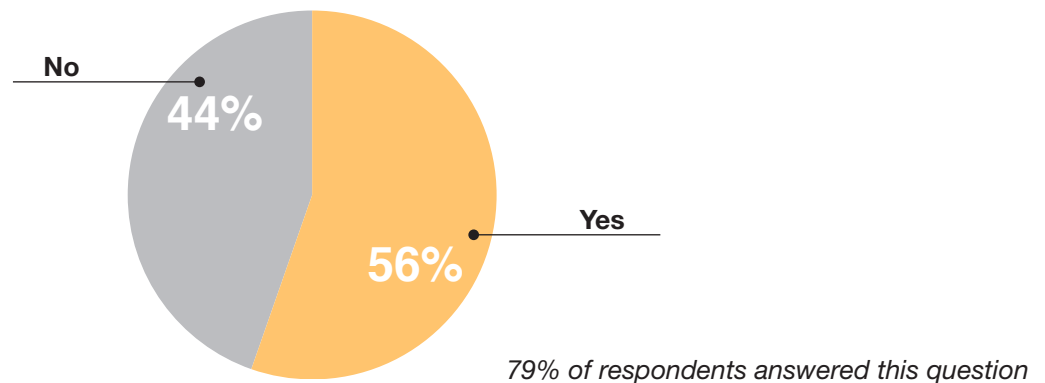


Out of 138 responses, 58 identified as Black or African American. About 25 percent of these respondents also identify as Latinx, Hispanic or Spanish origin.

The second most common racial group selection was “other,” where respondents wrote in answers like “Hispanic,” “Puerto Rican,” “Mexican American,” and “Lemko, Eastern European.” 80 percent of respondents selected an option other than “White.”

Respondents are then asked “do you consider yourself of Latinx, Hispanic, or Spanish origin?” and can only select either yes or no. 56 percent of respondents responded yes to this question.

- **Do you consider yourself of Latinx, Hispanic, or Spanish origin?**

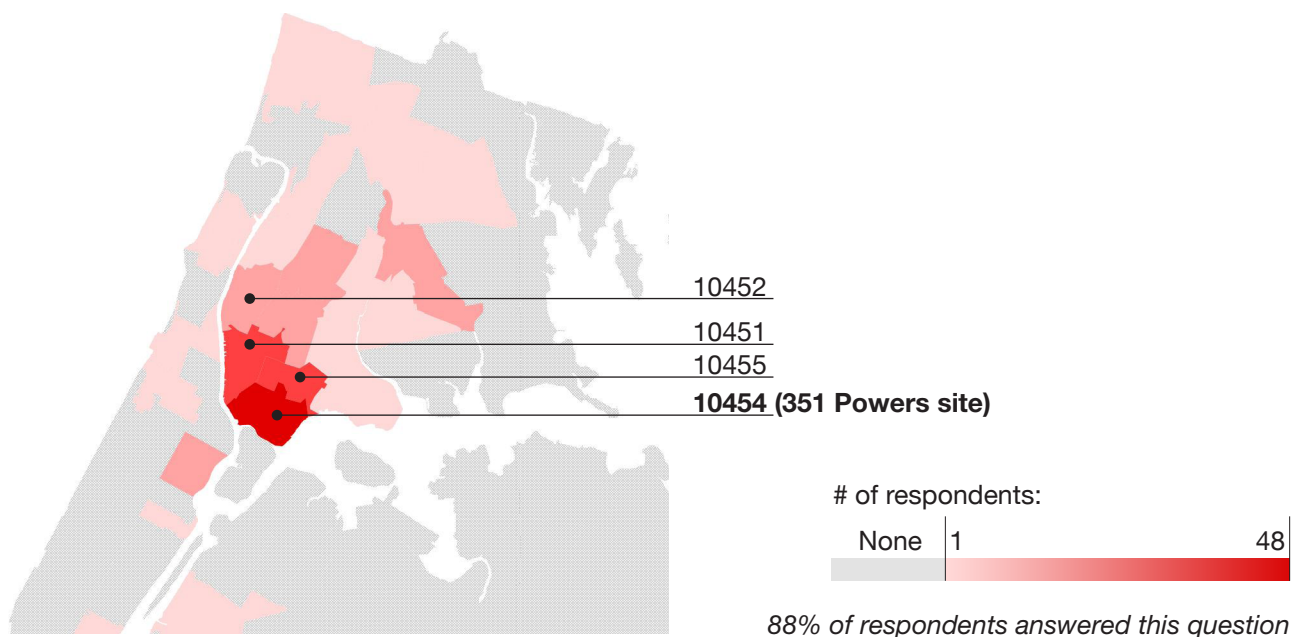


It is worth noting that the response rate to the question about racial group identification was the lowest of any in the questionnaire, with only 77 percent responding. While we cannot know exactly why this is the case, the racial and ethnic categories used by the US Census do not fully capture the complexity or lived realities of peoples racial and ethnic identifications.

Neighborhood and Housing situation:

As shown the map below, most respondents reside in the southwest Bronx, within a few miles of 351 Powers Avenue. 351 Powers is in zip code 10454, which had the highest number of responses. 60 percent indicated zip codes 10451, 10454, 10455 or 10452. While most respondents live in the Bronx, respondents also from reported zip codes Brooklyn, Queens, and Manhattan.

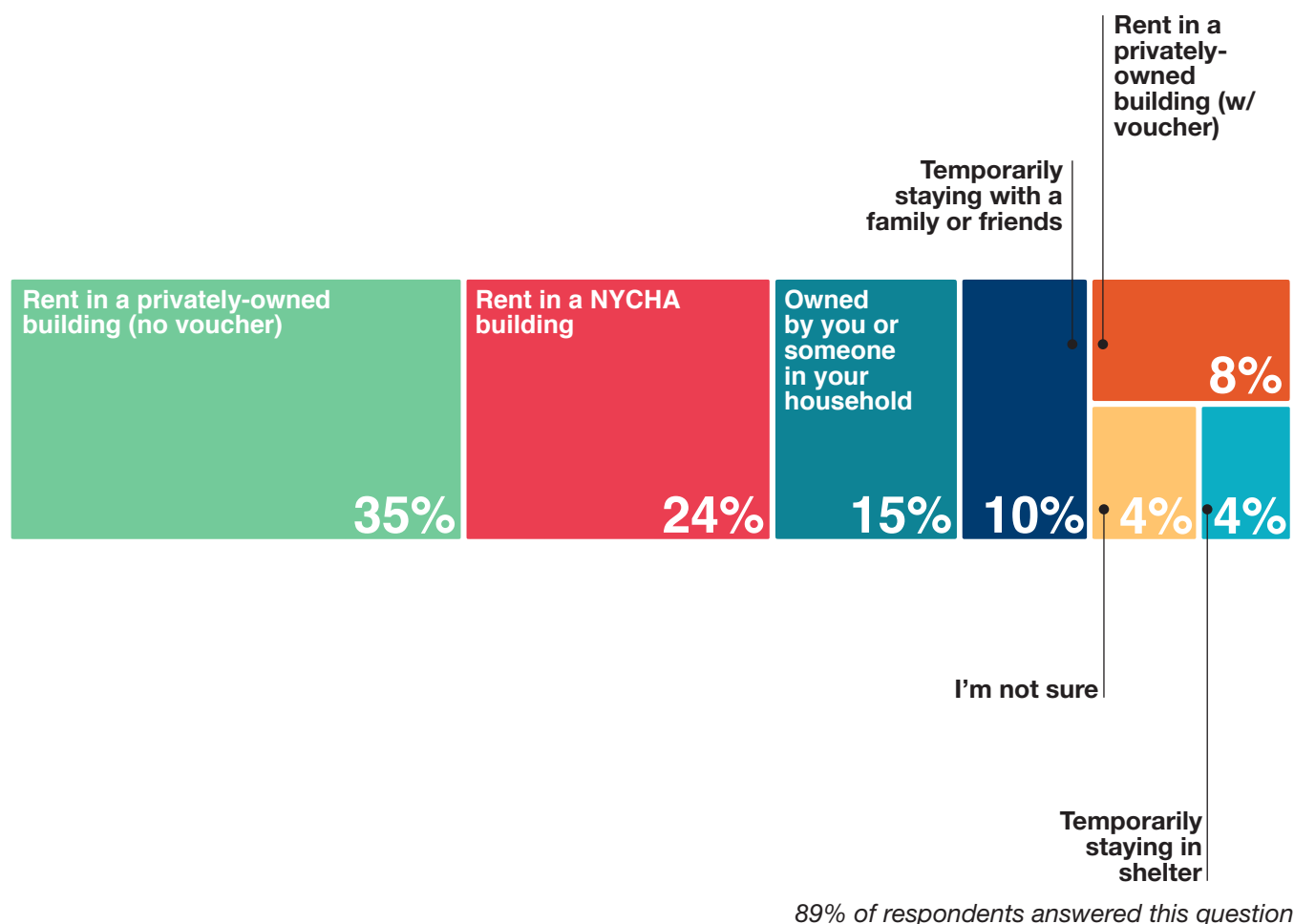
- **What is your zip code?**



This outcome reflects the design of the survey campaign: to elicit feedback from people who live or work near 351 Powers Avenue. In-person tabling and flyer postings took place primarily in zip code 10454 and online distribution was done primarily through local community organizations.

Respondents were also asked about their current housing situation and were given options reflecting a wide range of experiences

- Which of the following best describes your house, apartment, or place of dwelling?



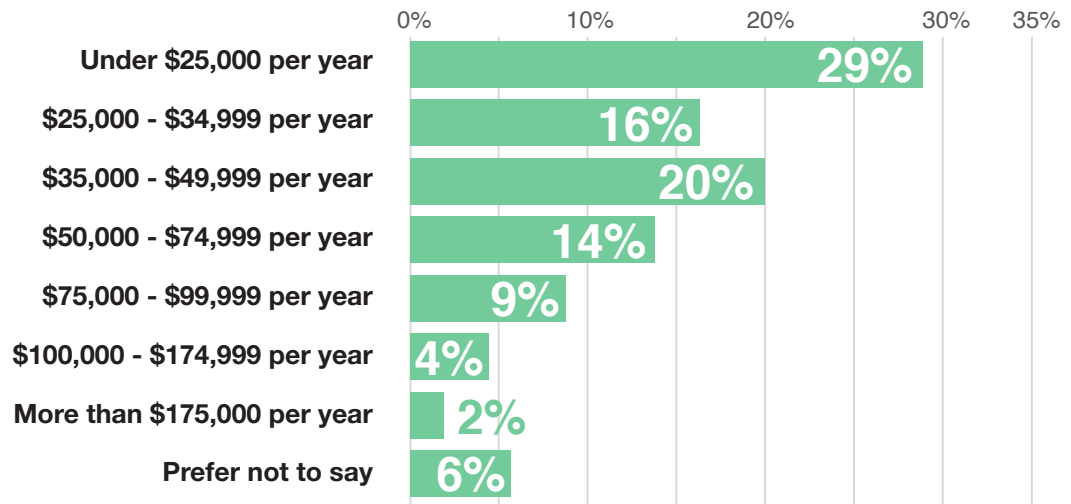
About 35 percent of respondents rent on the private market. About 24 percent live in public housing and another 8 percent use a housing voucher. 15 percent of respondents live in a home owned by someone in the household.

15 percent of respondents indicated residing in temporary living situations, either staying with family or friends or in shelter housing.

Income:

About 1/3 of respondents reported their household income as less than \$25,000/year. The median reported income range was \$25,000 - \$34,999 per year.

- **What is your approximate total annual household income?**



90% of respondents answered this question

Respondents were also asked to share the number of people living in their home. The median household size for all respondents was 4. For a family of 4, \$25,000 - \$34,999 is under 30 percent Area Median income.



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Have more questions about this project?

- **Email us:** 351PowersRFP@hpd.nyc.gov
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