

August, 2024

Inwood 9th Avenue

Community Visioning Report

NYCTM
Housing Preservation
& Development

Table of Contents

01. What?	p. 3
• Development Informed by Community	
02. Where?	p. 4
• The Site	
• The Context	
03. How?	p. 6
• Community Engagement Strategy	
• Engagement Events Timeline	
04. Findings	p. 9
• Summary of Findings	
• Neighborhood of Residence	
• Residential Programming	
• Ground Floor Uses	
• Waterfront Access and Public Space	
• Additional Comments	
05. Profile of Respondents	p. 17

What?

Development Informed by Community

The NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) conducted community outreach from December 2023 through April of 2024 to gather input on the development of new affordable housing and neighborhood amenities at 4095 9th Avenue, a City-owned property.

The goal of the outreach was to identify priorities for the new development from those who live and work near the site and have an intimate understanding of neighborhood conditions and needs. This report summarizes the results of the engagement process and is available on HPD's website at nyc.gov/inwood9th-rfp. It will be attached to the Request for Proposals (RFP) issued for 4095 9th Avenue. Development teams responding to the RFP are strongly encouraged to consult this report and thoughtfully respond in their proposals. HPD will evaluate how well development teams incorporate the community vision from this report in their submissions.

The screenshot shows the NYC Housing Preservation & Development website. The header includes the NYC logo and navigation links: Home, About, Services and Information, Media, Events, and Contact. A search bar is also present. The main heading is "Inwood 9th Avenue RFP". Below this, there are social media sharing options (Facebook, X, Twitter, Email) and a print button. The central graphic features an aerial view of a city block with a white map overlay highlighting the project site at 4095 9th Avenue. Text on the graphic reads "Affordable Housing Coming to Inwood!" and "Share Your Opinion Now!". At the bottom of the graphic are four buttons: "Site Overview", "How to Get Involved", "RFP Process and FAQ", and "Submit an RFP Response".

Project Website

Where?

The Site

The Inwood 9th Avenue site is an approximately 93,737 square foot lot located at 4095 9th Avenue between 220th Street and 218th Street in Manhattan Community District 12. Formerly used as a parking lot, the site now sits vacant along the Harlem River waterfront. The site is at the northeastern tip of Inwood, close to Isham and Inwood Hill parks.

As a part of the **Inwood NYC Action Plan**, the City proposed a set of neighborhood investments including a rezoning led by the NYCEDC in partnership with various city agencies which was approved by City Council in **2018**. The plan set overarching goals for housing, culture, education, economic development, transportation, and open space. As part of prior commitments, the site will feature a publicly accessible **waterfront open space**, as well as a **STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) focused community facility. The specifics of these amenities were discussed throughout the community engagement phase.



Site Aerial View

Where?

The Context

The surrounding neighborhood is characterized by medium-density residential neighborhoods west of Broadway and 10th Avenue. Broadway serves as the main commercial corridor and is lined with a series of commercial, institutional, and automotive uses.

Educational institutions and healthcare centers in the area include Zeta Inwood Elementary School and Zeta Manhattan Middle School, CUNY in the Heights, and New York-Presbyterian Allen Hospital. Muscota Marsh is a green space on the western side of Manhattan, offering close proximity to the salt marsh and freshwater wetlands.

The site is approximately one-quarter mile from the 215th Street subway station, with service to the 1 line. Bus lines Bx7, Bx20, BxM1, and M100 are also within a short walking distance of the site offering access to Harlem, East Midtown, and Riverdale.



Site Aerial View

Community Engagement Strategy

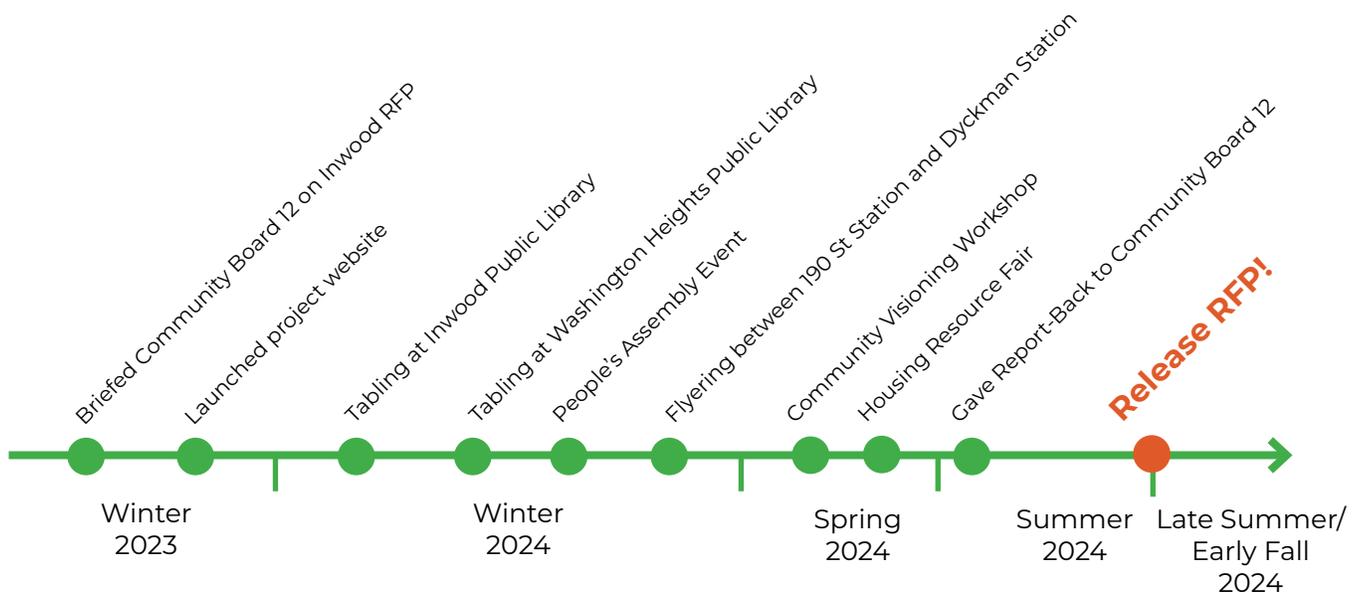
HPD hosted tabling events, did flyering in the neighborhood, attended local events and meetings, and organized a workshop over the course of four months to provide various ways for community members to provide their input.

All project advertisements and engagement materials including email blasts, flyers, social media posts, and project questionnaire were translated to Spanish to accommodate the large community of Spanish speakers in the neighborhood. Live Spanish interpretation, as well as American Sign Language was provided at the workshop. Additionally, the project website is available in multiple languages.

The questionnaire was the primary method of collecting community input. Over 450 members of the public responded to questions about:

- What kind of housing should be included at 4095 9th Avenue
- What preferred STEM programming would most benefit the neighborhood
- What commercial ground floor use could go on the site
- What open space amenities could go on the waterfront

Engagement Events Timeline



In addition to the individual events listed in the Engagement Events Timeline, HPD promoted the project in the following ways:

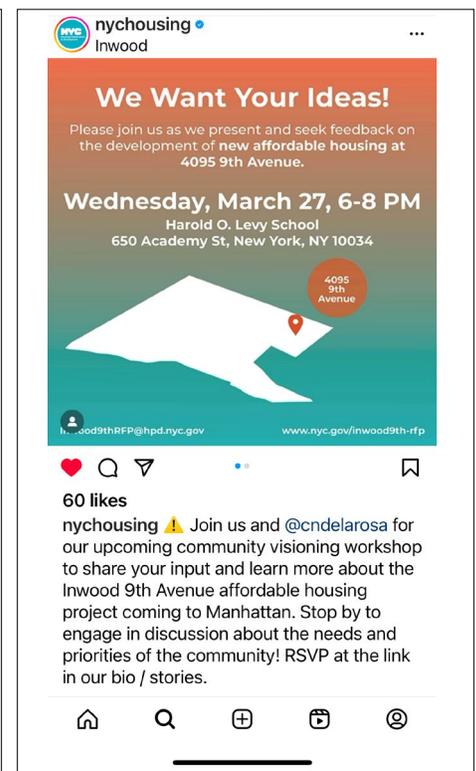
- Conducted targeted outreach to individual community-based organizations and stakeholders throughout the engagement period.
- Distributed print materials at the Dyckman Houses, Inwood, and Washington Heights public libraries to get the word out.
- Posted on social media (Instagram, X, Facebook) to promote ways to provide input throughout the engagement period.
- Posted flyers with link to the workshop RSVP and questionnaire across the neighborhood.



Email Blast



X Advertising



Instagram Advertising

The workshop was held on March 27. Community members were walked through two activities, mapping neighborhood assets and needs and discussing who needs affordable housing and what kind of affordable housing should be included. Participants were asked to share their visions for housing and ground floor preference for the site. Over 100 stakeholders and community members attended the workshop.



HPD engagement throughout the neighborhood and with community residents at the public workshop

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. In total HPD received **452 questionnaire responses**. These priorities are reflective of the questionnaire responses and conversations had at the workshop.

Summary of Findings

RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

- **Housing costs are too high and unattainable for many long-time residents. These residents are at risk of being priced out of the neighborhood.**
- **Community members want to see rental housing for lower-income households.**
- **Households with children and seniors were identified as priority groups in need of housing as local residents would like to remain in Inwood.**

GROUND FLOOR USE

- **Community members expressed interest in STEM programming that caters to neighborhood youth, but also teaches adults and seniors new skills.**
- **Interest in commercial ground use for a grocery store, pharmacy, affordable veterinary services, fitness center, and childcare.**

WATERFRONT OPEN SPACE

- **Community members chose soft planted shoreline along the waterfront and a small playground as preferred open space amenities.**
- **Other ideas include water-related amenities along the Harlem River, areas for active recreation, natural space and and park land, bike trails, urban gardening, and outdoor furniture for seating and board games.**

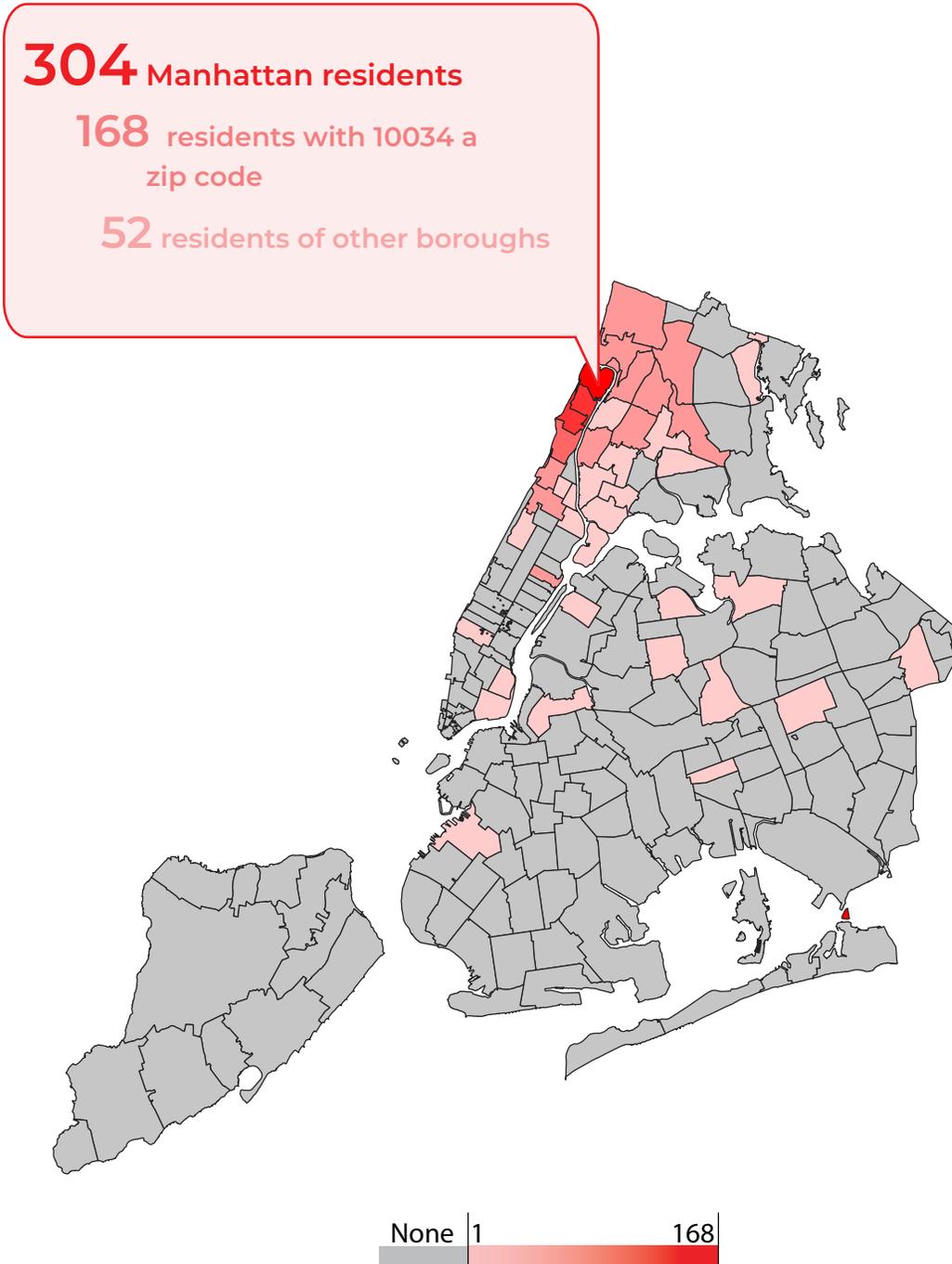
GENERAL FEEDBACK

- **Given the site's location, there should be sufficient lighting at night to ensure safety.**
- **Amenities should consider all of Inwood. STEM programming should be flexible to include all ages, open space amenities should compliment nearby trails and greenspace, and commercial uses should promote community welfare.**

A. NEIGHBORHOOD OF RESIDENCE

The site is located in the 10034 zip code. Almost half of all respondents who answered this question* live in this zip code. Additionally, 85% of respondents gave a home zip code located in Manhattan.

1. ZIP CODE

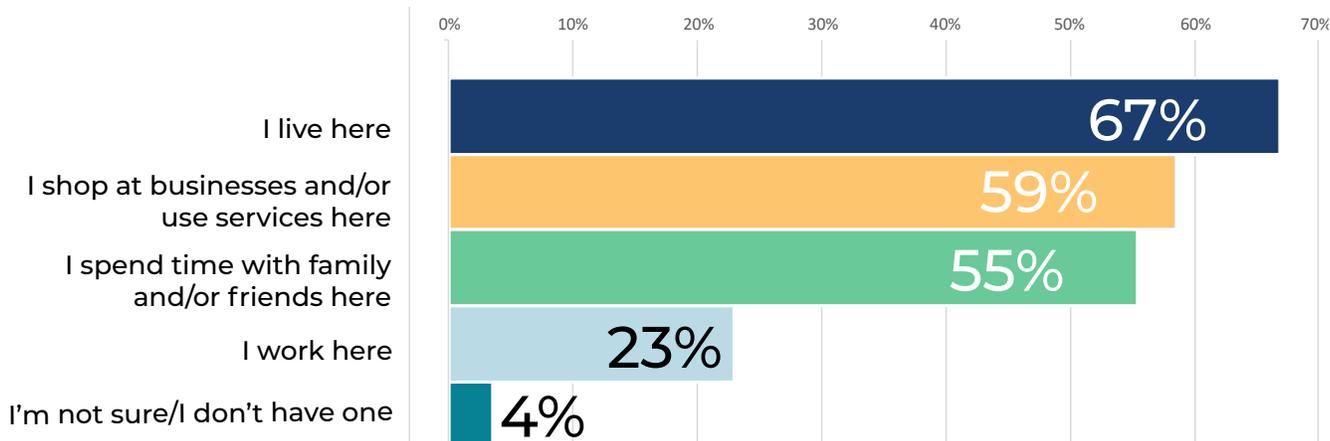


*79% of respondents answered this question.

When asked about their relationship to the area, a majority of respondents said they lived nearby. Many also selected “I shop at businesses and/or use services here” and “I spend time with family and/or friends,” signaling that respondents have a close tie to the neighborhood.

2. WHAT IS YOUR CONNECTION TO THE INWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD?

Select all that apply:



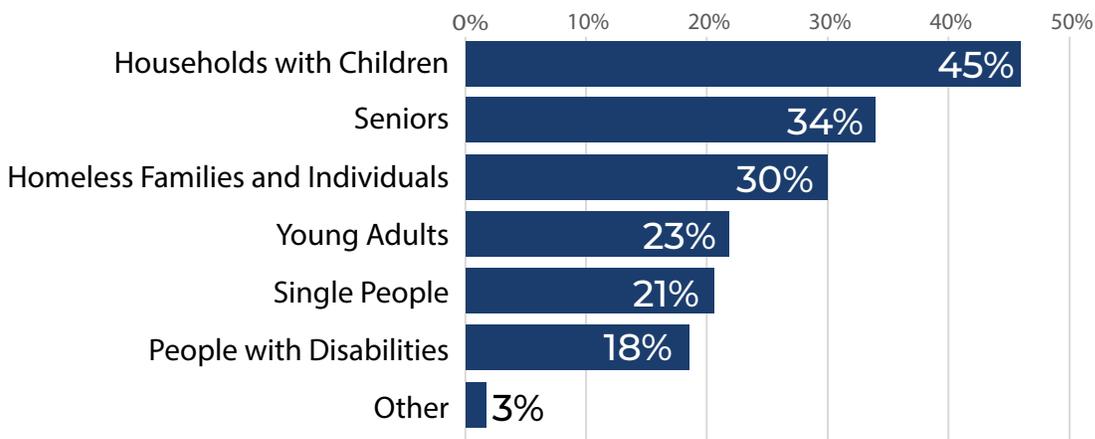
99% of respondents answered this question.

B. RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMMING

HPD asked respondents about housing issues and priorities for the neighborhood to better understand how the 4095 9th Avenue development could improve quality of life for neighborhood residents.

3. WHO NEEDS AFFORDABLE HOUSING THE MOST AT 4095 9TH AVENUE?

Select up to 2:

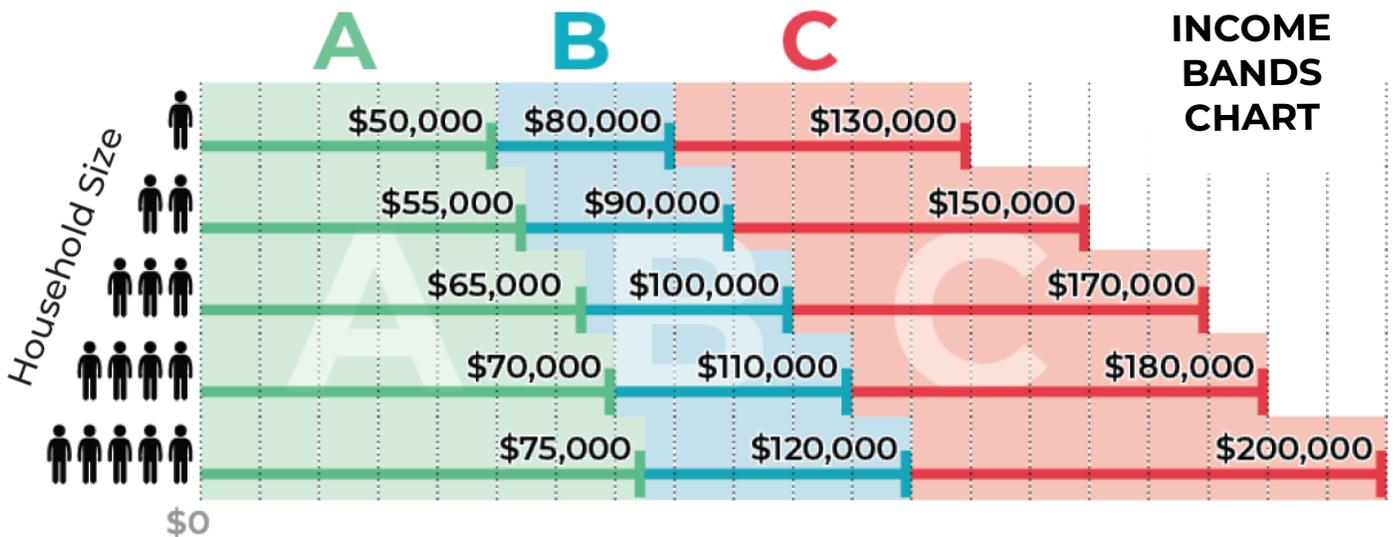


98% of respondents answered this question.

Almost half of respondents identified households with children as the leading group that struggles the most in finding or keeping housing. Seniors and homeless families/individuals were also selected by many respondents.

Echoing this sentiment, one respondent wrote, **“Please continue to invest in infrastructure that supports families and children.”** Another respondent highlighted the urgent need for senior housing, stating that **“Seniors are in serious need of housing as many landlords are trying to kick us out. I myself am in an emergency situation.”** A Spanish speaking community member underscored the priority for deeply affordable housing for their fellow neighbors by saying **“I would like for our neighbors who are low-income like myself to have access to this development”**

Respondents were shown a chart which approximated income ranges by household size in groupings of “lower-incomes” (A) and (B), and “moderate-income” (C). These terms approximate 50%, 80% and 130% of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Income Limits, or Area Median Income (AMI), for 2023.

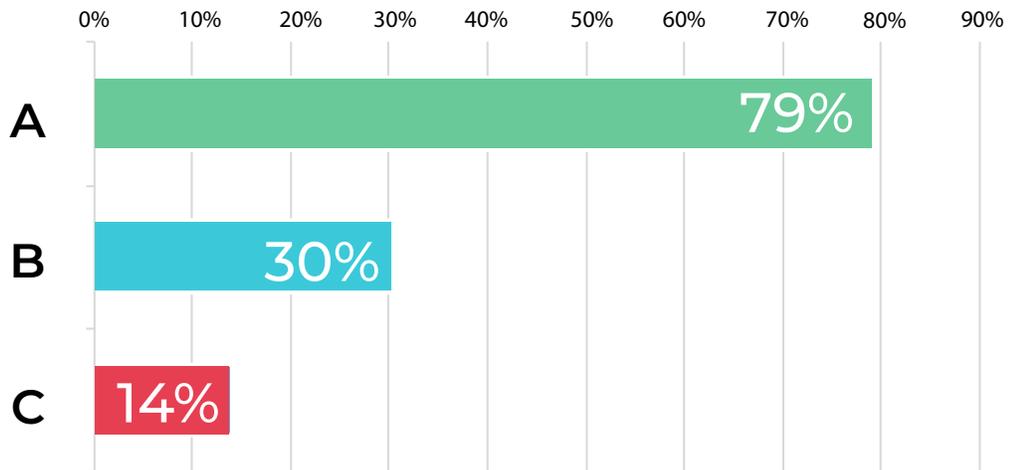


The AMI (Area Median Income) for all cities across the country is defined each year by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

HPD builds income-restricted affordable housing where units are reserved for households in specified income ranges or with specific needs like senior and supportive housing.

Using the Income Bands Chart as a guide, respondents were asked to consider the needs of their community and select all options that apply for housing programming they would like to see at the site.

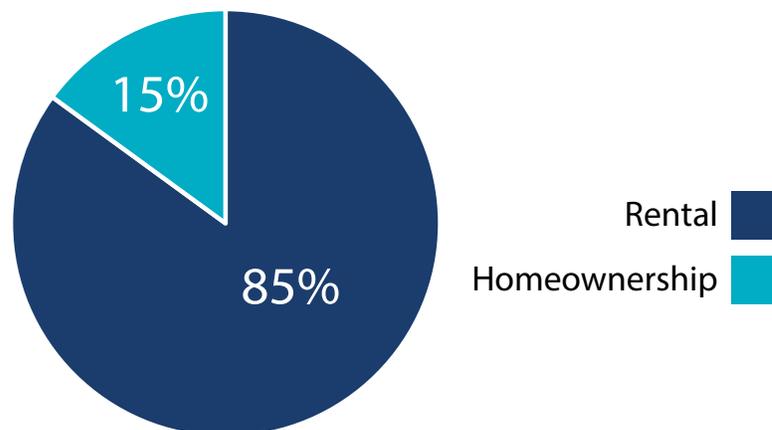
4. WHAT INCOMES SHOULD THE NEW HOUSING BE AFFORDABLE FOR?
Select all that apply:



98% of respondents answered this question.

Respondents had a strong preference for affordable rental housing for the lowest income households. Respondents commented on the need for housing for those making low incomes, asking for **“housing for those earning less than \$50,000 annually.”** Another described the situation, stating **“people in our neighborhood are continually deciding between rent and food. We need to make sure that affordable housing is truly affordable and that it will remain affordable.”**

5. WHAT KIND OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING DO YOU THINK IS MOST NEEDED IN INWOOD? HOMEOWNERSHIP AVAILABLE ONLY TO “C” INCOMES.



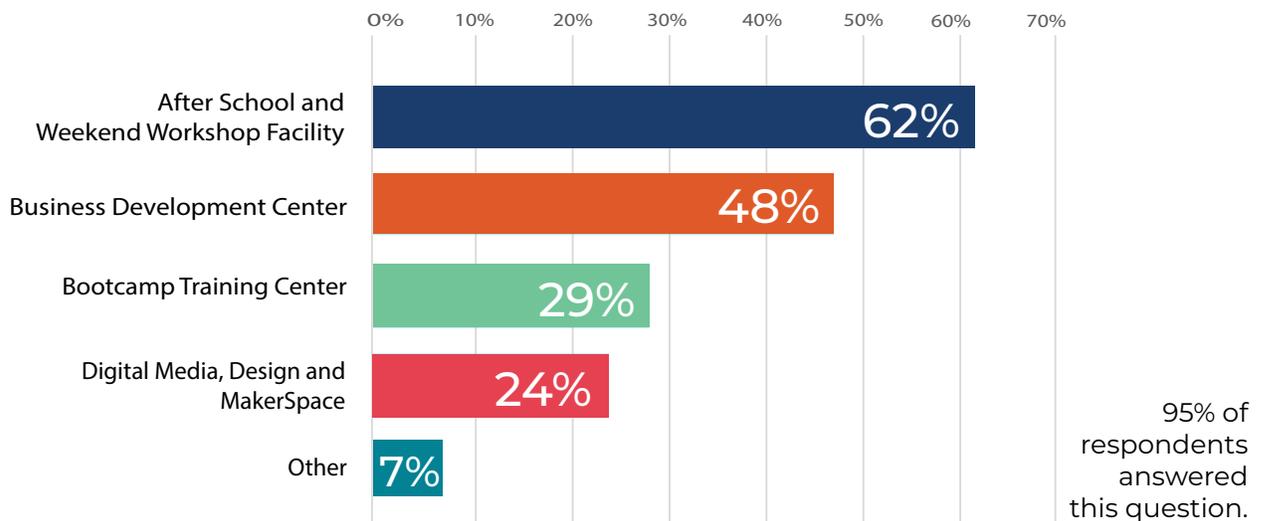
89% of respondents answered this question.

C. GROUND FLOOR USES

HPD-financed buildings provide more than homes through their ground floors, which can serve the whole neighborhood. Respondents were asked to select categories of STEM programming and potential commercial retail that would benefit the neighborhood.

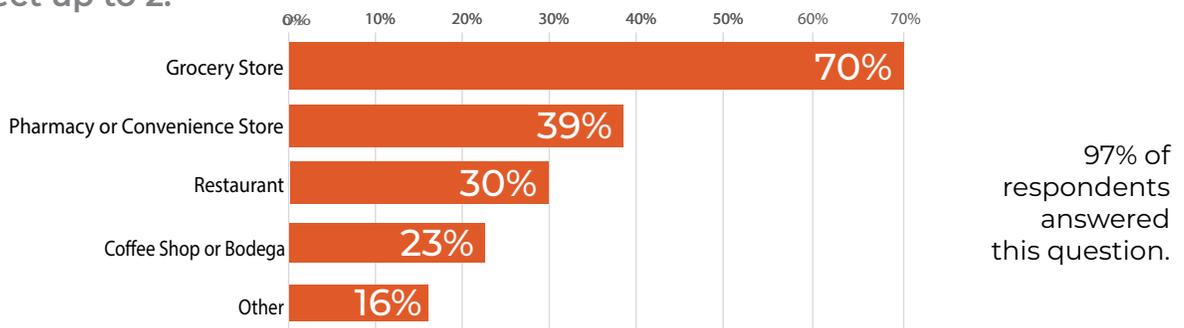
6. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics): WHAT TYPE OF STEM FOCUSED COMMUNITY FACILITY WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE ON THE SITE?

Select up to 2:



7. RETAIL: WHAT TYPE OF COMMERCIAL USE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE ON THE SITE?

Select up to 2:



After school and weekend workshop facility was the most selected STEM use; community members want to see a community facility that provides education and opportunities to youth in the neighborhood. However, comments left by community members also tell of a need for adult vocational training and opportunities. Additionally, the facility should be flexible to include arts and sciences. One comment stated that it should be **“STEAM. Arts too!”** and inclusive to all ages, **“Tech workforce development center for both seniors and youth.”** The facility should be inclusive of technology arts like sound engineering, video game development, or natural sciences like botany and environmental sciences related to the river.

Grocery store was the most selected commercial retail space. At the workshop, community members expressed the need for a onestop shopping experience and for a grocer that can offer a large variety of goods. Although the neighborhood has many pharmacies in the area, because of the site’s location, pharmacy was the second most favored option.

There was also a strong interest in affordable veterinary services for low-income residents. There are none in the Inwood and Washington Heights neighborhoods. The need for a gym is another use many residents left comments on as there are very few options in the area.

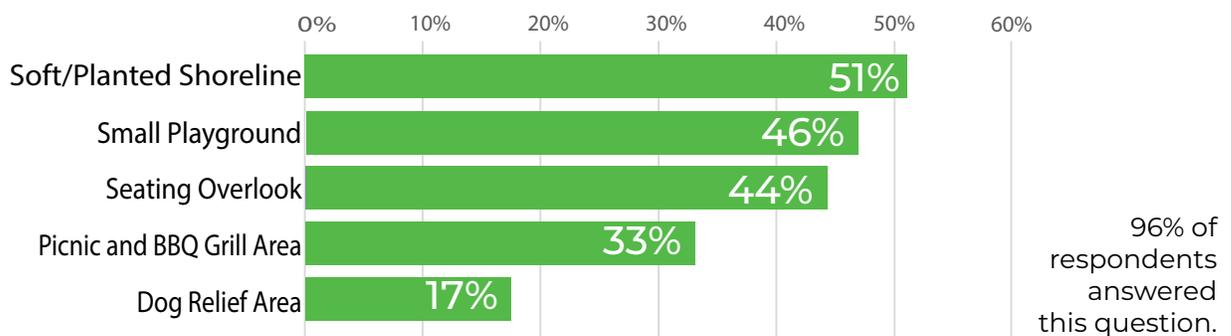
Ground floor amenities at the site should be carefully considered given the site’s location and projected increase in new residents coming to the neighborhood.

D. WATERFRONT ACCESS AND PUBLIC SPACE

Waterfront zoning has special rules that require public access to the waterfront and building design that encourages connection to the waterfront. The Inwood Special District calls for the creation and maintenance of physical and visual public access to and along the waterfront.

8. WHAT TYPE OF OPEN SPACE AMENITIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?

Select up to 2:



A soft/planted shoreline and small playground were the top two choices for open space amenities among community members. Seating overlook was a close third choice. Community members expressed that this space should be a **“place to sit and relax after a hard day’s work.”** Many residents also left comments for amenities related to the river, a sports field or court, and stressed the importance of taking into consideration future planned greenspace. The open space should be **“nature based for relaxation and contemplation”** with the usage of native plant life. Community members also want to see bike trails that are merged with planned trails, linking the site to the rest of the neighborhood.

E. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Respondents were given the option to include additional comments or feedback related to the site. The comments highlighted below were representative of several themes that were repeated in questionnaires and conversations had through HPD's various methods of community engagement.

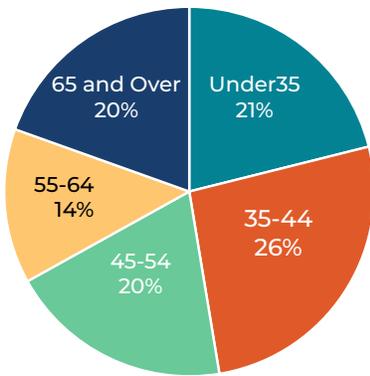
9. PLEASE SHARE ANY OTHER COMMENTS OR IDEAS YOU MIGHT HAVE FOR CONSIDERATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS SITE:

- "Building could have rooftop terrace area."
- "Glass should be bird-safe, as this building will be next to the water. Light pollution and light trespass minimized. Native plants and natives used throughout green spaces."
- "Boat house for our local rowing club and also for public boat launch access."
- "There are no affordable options for people in the neighborhood to have their pets spayed or neutered and most of Inwood's residents are lower income. Please please please help the people and animals in need."
- "Public bathrooms, drinking fountains, and a drinking area for pets."
- "Things we don't have: movie theaters, bagel shops, affordable veterinarians, board game cafes. Would love to see natural space restored outdoors with native plants."
- "The demographics of Inwood are something like 80% rent stabilized units and Hispanic/Latino immigrants. I like the neighborhood as it is for the most part. Please consider putting in amenities here that would augment the existing residents of the neighborhood and will not do anything to push them out."
- "STEM center programming needs to provide Green education that is related to the river and surrounding wetlands, marshes."
- "STEM needs to be flexible as traditional STEM ignores art tech like sound engineering, video game programming and design."
- "STEM programming should be inclusive of seniors for computer basics."

Profile of Respondents

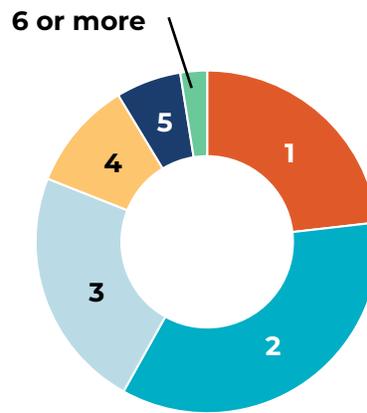
Questionnaire respondents had a wide variety of ages. The youngest respondent was 15 years old, and the oldest was 92. Around 26% of respondents were between the ages of 35-44, while 21% were under the age of 35, and 20% were 65 and older. The median age of questionnaire respondents was 45 years old, skewing slightly older than Manhattan Community District 12's median age of 38.

A.1 AGE



85% of respondents answered this question.

A.2 HOUSEHOLD SIZE

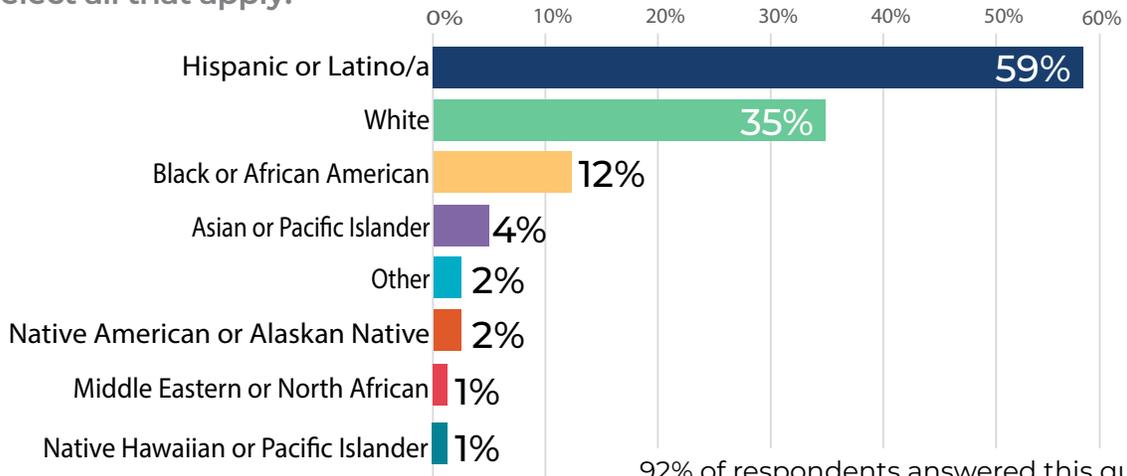


Around 58% of respondents live in a 2 or 3 person household.

79% of respondents answered this question.

B. WHAT RACIAL AND/OR ETHNIC GROUPS DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH?

Select all that apply:



92% of respondents answered this question.

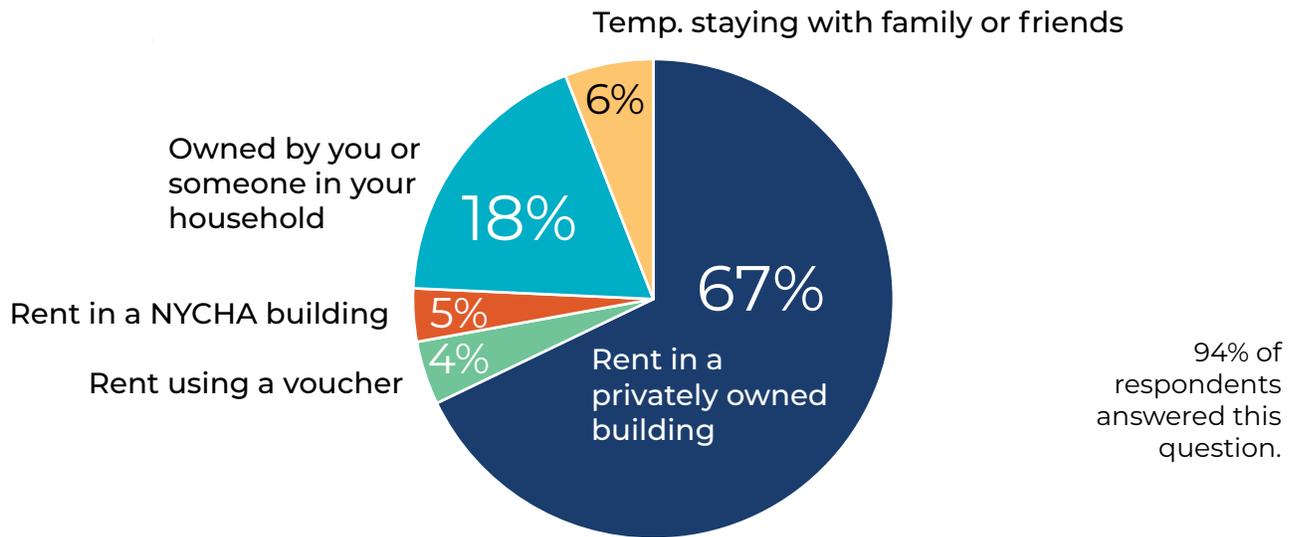
Respondents were asked to select as many racial and/or ethnic identities as applied to them. Latino and/or Hispanic, and White were the two most frequently selected groups. The demographics of questionnaire respondents mirror those of Manhattan Community District 12 where people identifying as Latino and/or Hispanic (68.5%) and White (19.5%) make up 88% of the population.

C. HOUSING SITUATION:

Respondents were asked about their current housing situation and were given options reflecting a wide range of experiences. Most respondents are renters in privately owned buildings, but around 18% of respondents own their own home. A combined 9% of respondents rent with a voucher (e.g. Section 8, CityFHEPS), or are renting at a NYCHA building.

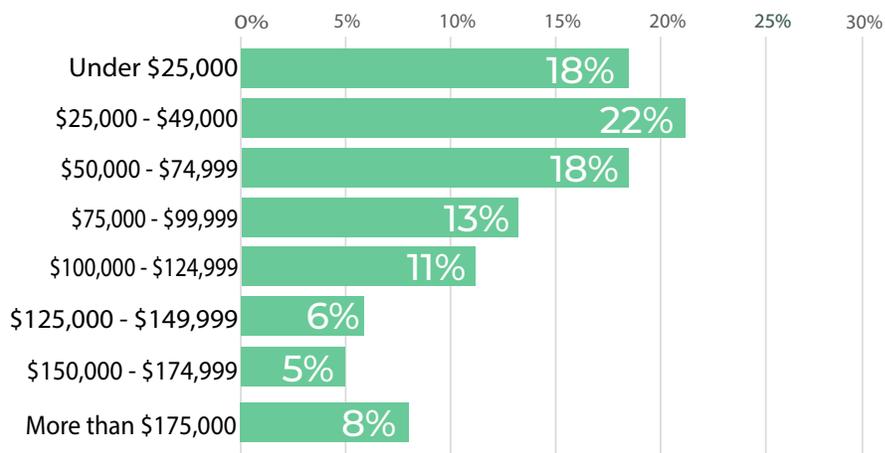
People in homeowner-occupied households were overrepresented in questionnaire respondents when compared to only 10.8% in Manhattan Community District 12.

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



D. INCOME:

Nearly 40% of respondents who gave their income make less than \$50,000 per year, and of that group, around half make less than \$25,000 per year. The trend in questionnaire respondents' household income skews lower than the median household income for Manhattan Community District 12, which is approximately \$60,000 per year.



87% of respondents answered this question.



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- Project website:
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