



# BROWNSVILLE: OPPORTUNITY AND STRENGTH IN THE HEART OF BROOKLYN

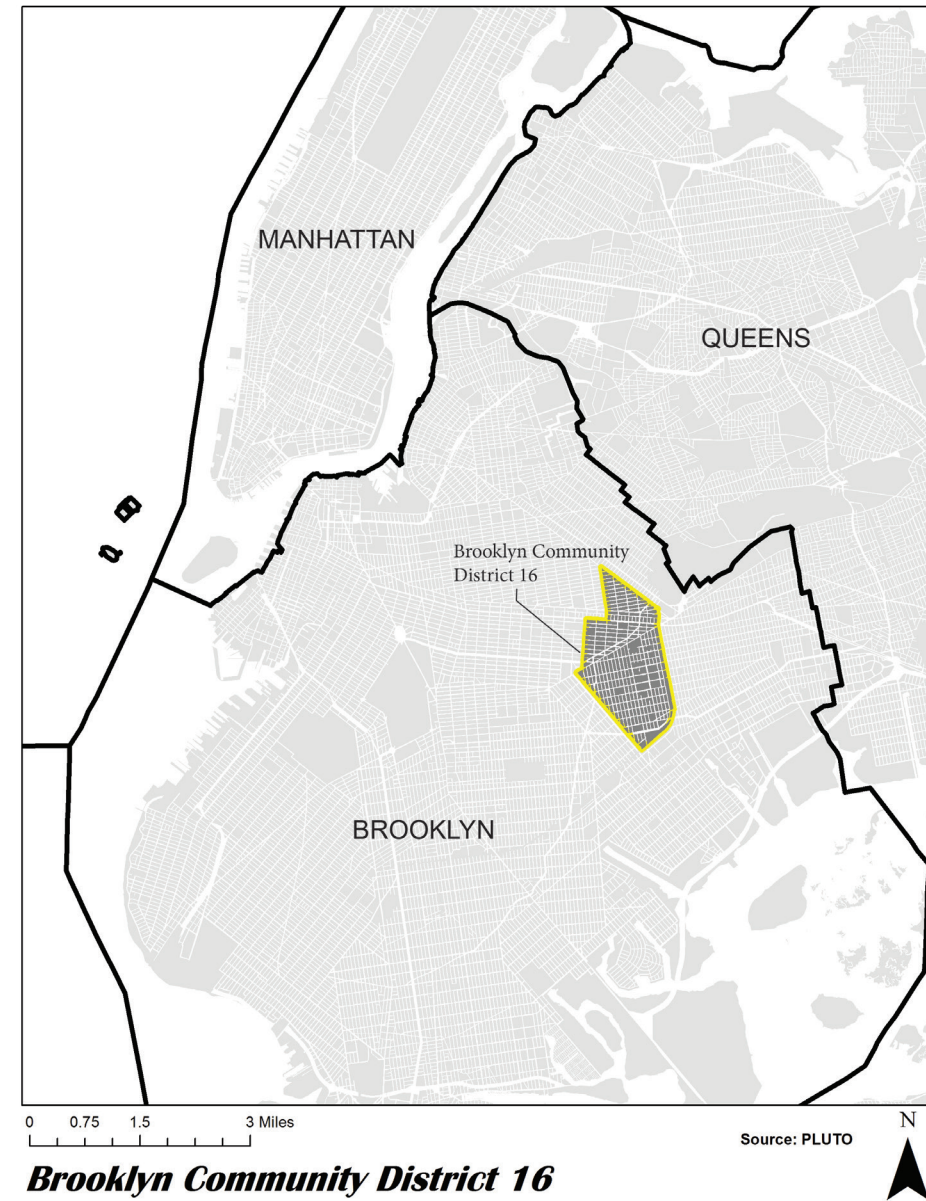
PRATT PSPD FUNDAMENTALS OF PLANNING STUDIO  
SPRING 2015



Pratt Institute's  
Programs for Sustainable  
Planning & Development

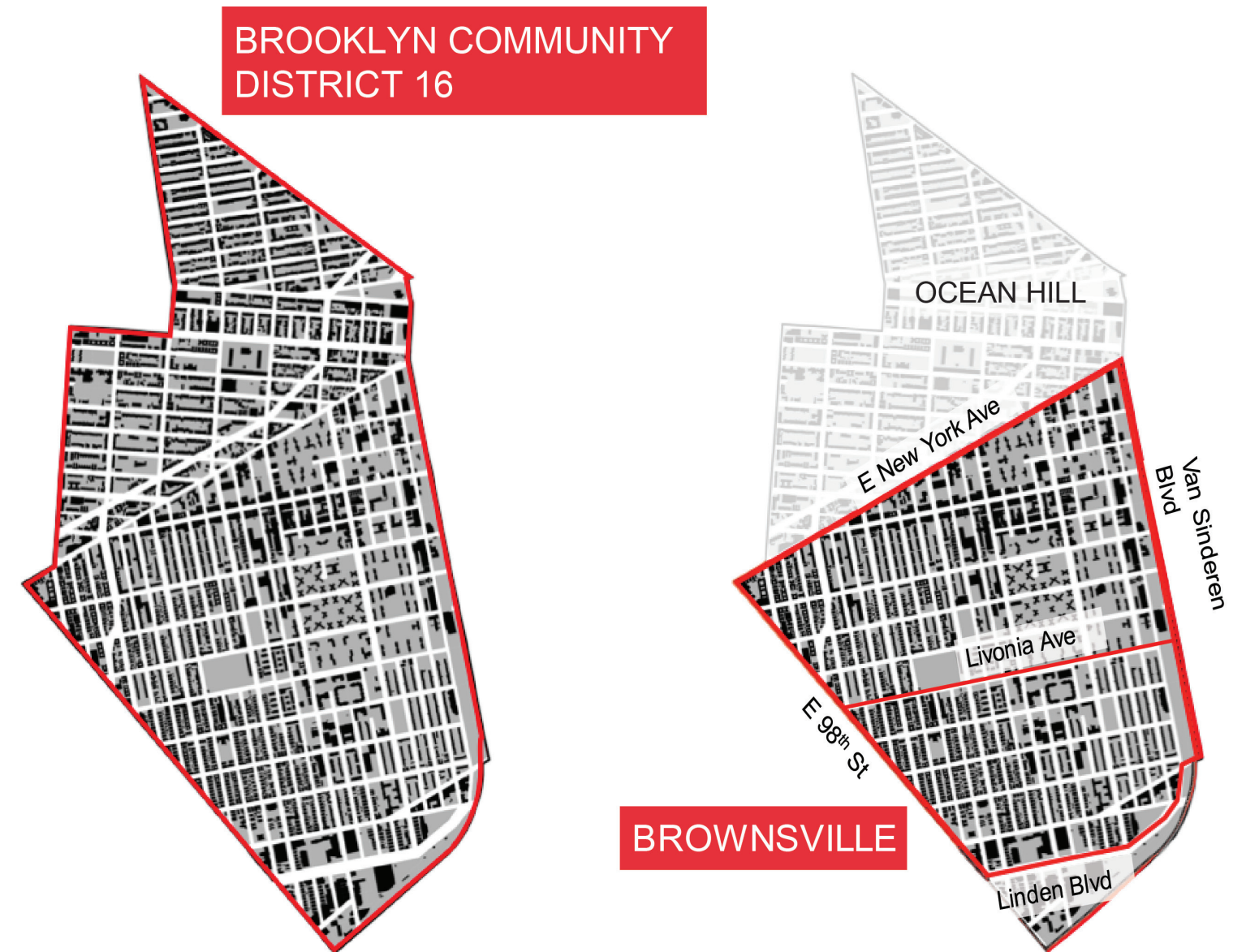
# STUDY AREA

The study area for this report is the neighborhood of Brownsville, Brooklyn. Brownsville and the neighborhood of Ocean Hill make up Brooklyn Community Board 16. Brownsville is located in the northeast section of Brooklyn and is bordered by the Bedford-Stuyvesant and Bushwick to the north. To Brownsville's west are Flatbush, Weeksville, and Crown Heights, and to the east, Brownsville is bordered by East New York. The southern edge of the study area borders the neighborhood of Canarsie.



Brooklyn Community District 16 location within the New York City – source: PLUTO

# STUDY AREA



Brownsville's location within the Brooklyn Community District 16 – source: PLUTO

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	05
Existing Conditions: SWOT.....	08
Assessment of Developable Space.....	09
Market Analysis.....	14
Objective 1: Create Opportunities for Local Economic Development.....	18
1.1 Establish a Food Enterprise Co-op.....	20
1.2 Establish Coalition of Businesses (MUSE) to Strengthen Existing Hair & Beauty Sector and Develop New Business.....	23
1.3 Set up or Partner with an Existing Organization to Increase Supplemental Education and Job Training Programs.....	27
1.4 Partner to Restore Pitkin Avenue’s Historic Resources.....	29
1.5 Establish Brownsville Arts, Research, and Design Coalition [BARDC].....	33
1.6 Apply for use Variance/Rezoning: M-1 Light Manufacturing.....	35
Objective 2: Preserve Affordability and Financial Stability.....	38
2.1 Promote Access to Financial Services.....	41
2.2 Create Workshop to Increase Awareness of & Assistance in Applying for Rent Exemptions: NYC Rent Freeze Program.....	43
2.3 Encourage the Formation of a Coalition to Create a Community Land Trust.....	45
2.4 Initiate Land Tax Reform by means of a Land Value Tax (LVT) and Tax Abatements.....	47
Objective 3: Improve Mobility, Safety, and Accessibility.....	48
3.1 Implement Urban Art Initiative.....	50
3.2 Create an Inter-generational Community Walking Group.....	54
3.3 Advocate for the Establishment of a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC) within a NYCHA Development or Building.....	57
Objective 4: Alleviate Environmental and Health Burdens.....	58
4.1 Support Cleanup and Redevelopment Efforts of Brownfield Sites.....	60
4.2 Increase the Use of Open Spaces and Vacant Lots for Community Gathering Use.....	62
4.3 Increase Access to Health Care Services.....	65
4.4 Improve Public Health through Healthier Eating.....	67
4.5 Encourage Green Infrastructure and Mitigate Impacts of Climate Change.....	69
4.6 Reduce Costs by Increasing Energy Efficiency in Buildings.....	71
4.7 Create a Committee to Link and Expand all the Existing Community Gardens and Farmers Markets.....	73
Conclusion.....	76
References.....	77

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was prepared for the Brownsville Partnership (“BP”) to assist BP in identifying a comprehensive planning strategy to support housing, economic development, and other types of development on vacant and underutilized land that conforms with the community’s vision and input. BP has also asked for technical assistance to identify strategies to diversify the retail stock in Brownsville, spur the local economy by providing more opportunities for local entrepreneurs and to activate the many vacant lots in Brownsville.

BP is an initiative of Community Solutions. Community Solutions coordinates BP, which is a network of organizations and residents working together, to build on existing assets to create solutions to challenges that are facing the community. BP’s major goal for 2017 is to connect 5,000 residents to jobs by convening a network of partners to address economic instability.

Situated in the eastern portion of Brooklyn, Brownsville, along with Ocean Hill, make up Community District 16. Brownsville is bordered by East New York to the east; Canarsie to the south; East Flatbush and Crown Heights to the west; and Bedford-Stuyvesant and Ocean Hill to the north. Brownsville is a predominantly low-income population of color community. Many estimate that Brownsville is home to the largest concentration of public housing in the nation. The public housing in Brownsville is situated on superblocks, which lack commercial activity and are surrounded by open space, most which consist of under-utilized parking lots or underdeveloped lots.

The recommendations that are presented in this report aim to build off the existing strengths and assets of Brownsville and respond to the weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the built, social, and natural environments identified in the Fundamentals of Planning Studio Existing Conditions Report (Spring 2015). Research for the Existing Conditions Report began with a neighborhood survey where the studio class began to identify key assets, such as the types of housing in the neighborhood, existing commercial strips, existing vibrant public spaces and urban design and architectural elements of the study

area. The class then undertook a comprehensive study of the community’s existing conditions in order to identify the key assets and vulnerabilities. The Existing Conditions Report examined the built, natural, and social environment of Brownsville and detailed the location and amount of vacant and underutilized land while reflecting on community needs, such as access to open space, jobs, transportation facilities, and the community’s vulnerability to climate change. The report contains many key findings. Among other things, the studio class found that the study area has one of the highest concentrations of poverty in all of New York City and there are a number of issues that are a cause of concern when addressing economic development in the study area. The isolation of residents from the main commercial corridors, underutilized commercial space, and an unskilled workforce put Brownsville at a disadvantage for development. In addition, threats of coastal storms, and high rates of health conditions, such as asthma, along with a large senior population, create vulnerabilities that should not be ignored when planning for development. Brownsville also has, compared to New York City, a large number of City-owned vacant lots as well as a high number of properties that are under built.

This report details a series of planning and programmatic recommendations. In addition to building off of the Existing Conditions Report, the studio class reached out to individuals identified by BP in order to gather first-hand information to supplement the existing conditions research.

The recommendations are categorized under four overarching objectives: (1) Create Opportunities for Local Economic Development; (2) Preserve Affordability and Financial Stability; (3) Enhance Public Safety, Accessibility, and Mobility and (4) Alleviate Environmental and Health Burdens. The recommendations are designed to provide Brownsville Partnership with approaches to accomplish these objectives. The means of accomplishment vary depending on the recommendation with implementation strategies ranging from raising awareness of an issue to taking direct action. Additionally, each implementation strategy varies in terms of time frame and implementation cost.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## **(1) Create Opportunities for Local Economic Development:**

High unemployment and a lack of job availability are major concerns in Brownsville and as such more initiatives and efforts are needed to help boost economic activity. By looking at untapped potential in the neighborhood from Main Street-boosting programs to leveraging existing and proposed zoning in Brownsville can open doors to a new set of local entrepreneurs. The recommendations are:

- o Establish a Food Enterprise Co-op;
- o Establish Coalition of Businesses (MUSE) to Strengthen Existing Hair & Beauty Sector and Develop New Business;
- o Set up or Partner with an Existing Organization to Increase Supplemental Education and Job Training Programs;
- o Partner to Restore Pitkin Avenue’s Historic Resources;
- o Establish Brownsville Arts, Research, and Design Coalition [BARDC]; and
- o Apply for use Variance/Rezoning: M-1 Light Manufacturing.

## **(2) Preserve Affordability and Financial Stability:**

Despite rent levels that are below average in Brooklyn, Brownsville residents pay a disproportionate amount of their household income on rent, even with a high rate of rent subsidies and public housing. Increases in making the land more productive, with more outside investment will likely lead to an increase in rent. Our recommendations in this section aim to support the need to retain and expand affordable housing in Brownsville so as to ensure that residents are able to benefit from positive changes occurring within their community. With the primary aim being the avoidance of displacement (i.e. gentrification), this section contains recommendations that range from utilizing existing city programs to preserve affordability for vulnerable populations to the creation of a community land trust, which could be used to develop new affordable housing. The recommendations are:

- o Promote Access to Financial Services;
- o Provide Training to Increase Awareness of & Assistance in Applying for Rent Exemptions: NYC Rent Freeze Program;
- o Encourage the Formation of a Coalition to Create a Community Land Trust; and
- o Initiate Land Tax Reform by means of a Land Value Tax (LVT) and Tax Abatements.

## **(3) Enhance Public Safety, Accessibility, and Mobility:**

Brownsville has a number of issues with its aging transportation infrastructure, large superblocks of public housing, and subway stations that are not handicap-accessible, which all amount to a very difficult built environment to move about in as a resident. This is particularly true for populations such as senior citizens and those with ambulatory difficulty, of which Brownsville has a large number. Adding to the equation is an elevated crime rate relative to the rest of Brooklyn and a large number of vacant lots, which heightens the perception of danger in the neighborhood. These recommendations aim to support the vulnerable populations, bring to life the neglected spaces in the study area, and engage the residents in the outdoors of the community. The recommendations are:

- o Transform Livonia Avenue Using Urban Art Initiatives;
- o Create an Inter-generational Community Walking Group; and
- o Advocate for the Establishment of a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC), within a NYCHA Development or Building.

## **(4) Alleviate Environmental and Health Burdens:**

Climate change has quickly become an issue that infiltrates all aspects of planning and its urgency and relevance to Brownsville are strong. Though the study area is not a coastal neighborhood, it is still threatened by climate change because it is located in the hurricane storm surge and is susceptible to extreme weather conditions, including heat waves. Recommendations in this objective look to mitigate these effects by creating carbon sinks, decreasing the urban heat island effect, and strengthening the natural storm-water intake through green infrastructure. Also hazardous to the community are threats to public health by way of food access and exposure to brownfield contamination, which are addressed in these recommendations through the coordination of existing community gardens, the utilization of brownfield remediation programs and improved access to healthcare and healthy food options. The recommendations are:

- o Support Cleanup and Redevelopment Efforts of Brownfield Sites;
- o Increase the Use of Open Spaces and Vacant Lots for Community Gathering Use;
- o Increase Access to Health Care Services;
- o Improve Public Health through Healthier Eating;

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- o Encourage Green Infrastructure and Mitigate Impacts of Climate Change;
- o Reduce Costs by Increasing Energy Efficiency in Buildings; and
- o Create a Committee to Link and Expand all the Existing Community Gardens and Farmers Markets.

# EXISTING CONDITIONS: S.W.O.T.

Below, we define the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT), which we derived from our research in our Fundamentals of Planning Studio Existing Conditions Report (Spring 2015). These findings, together with our overall observations from our community survey, stakeholder interviews, and client feedback, serve as the basis of expanded analyses, including our final recommendations detailed in this report.

## STRENGTHS

- There is a large number of subway and bus lines
- Ongoing improvements are being made to the transportation infrastructure, including bike and safety improvements
- There is a large amount of available affordable housing
- The study area has a number of ongoing green infrastructure projects
- Pitkin BID acts a strong economic asset for the study area;
- The healthcare sector is growing
- There is a high percentage of community organizations dedicated to improving Brownsville
- Pop-Up and seasonal markets are on the rise
- Commercial overlays exist in residential areas
- There are a number of community gardens in Brownsville

## OPPORTUNITIES

- The study area contains a large amount of under built FAR
- Improvements could be made to parks and recreational facilities including ongoing maintenance
- There are a number of vacant lots, both privately and publicly owned
- Space exists for increasing the amount of green infrastructure
- Land designated as IBZ and BOA could be cleaned and improved for economic development
- FRESH programs are available to improve healthy food options for the community
- Tactical urbanism could be used to improve and beautify neglected spaces in Brownsville

## WEAKNESSES

- There is a low educational attainment rate particularly among ages 15-17, who are entering the workforce
- Brownsville has a high crime rate when compared to the rest of the city
- There exists a high concentration of poverty in northeastern Brownsville with its highest concentration among children and people of color
- The community has a low median household income when compared to Brooklyn and the whole city
- Superblocks of public housing restrict walkability and create personal safety hazards within the developments
- The housing infrastructure of Brownsville is aging and threatens public health
- Car-oriented highways and intersections isolate pedestrians from neighboring areas
- Most of Brownsville’s residents lack of Preventative Care and Education
- There is a high concentration of shelters

## THREATS

- Brownsville is located in a storm surge zone, which could have a negative impact on businesses and residences
- Emissions from the burning of fossil fuels are a threat to public health
- Brownsville has many structures with lead-based paint, which can lead to lead poisoning particularly among children
- Gentrification in surrounding neighborhoods (rezoning in East N.Y.) could increase the potential for higher rent, a burden on infrastructure, and social tension

# ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPABLE LAND

## I. Potential and Priority Sites for Development and Commercial Activities

As part of our research we examined potential development sites and determined that Brownsville is under built, which presents numerous opportunities for development, including residential, commercial, light manufacturing and community facility spaces. This section includes our assessment of five priority sites identified by the Brownsville Partnership and the vacant lots that are under the jurisdiction of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (“HPD”). Several of these sites will be further addressed in the recommendations section of this report. Looking at those five sites and the 91 HPD vacant lots in the study area, there is approximately 850,000 un-built square feet, which, if built, could produce more than 1,000 dwelling units, at a cost of approximately \$275 million. If used for community facilities, the un-built space would yield an estimated 1.9 million square feet.

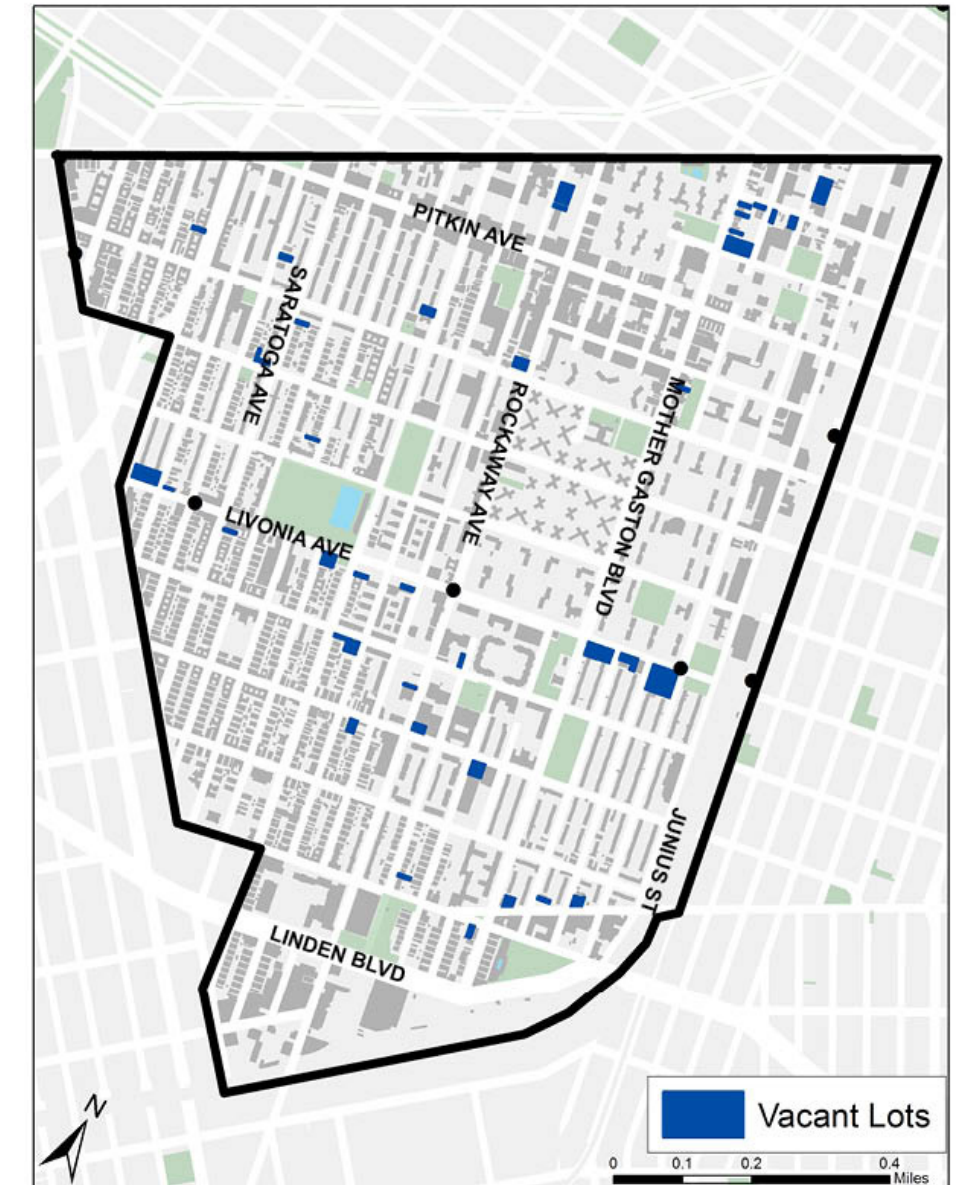


Fig. 1 Map of City-Owned Vacant Lots, Pratt Institute 2015.

# ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPABLE LAND

## 1. Current Issues Regarding City-Owned Vacant Lots

The development and activation of City-owned vacant property offer opportunities for new residential, commercial, and community uses, including community gardens and open public space. As this section discusses, current initiatives to develop city-owned properties offer these opportunities but pose challenges as well for the residents of Brownsville. It is vital that residents be involved in the negotiation and decision-making processes.

### A. Infill Development

Brownsville has 91 vacant parcels under the jurisdiction of HPD. Mayor de Blasio’s housing plan calls for building or preserving 200,000 affordable units citywide. As part of that mission statement HPD issued a request for qualifications for developers, due on February 19, 2015, for the design and construction of high-quality, new construction, affordable housing development projects on public sites.<sup>1</sup>

This request for qualifications is a part of the New Infill Homeownership Program (“NIHOP”) and the Neighborhood Construction Program (“NCP”). These two affordable housing programs, announced in December 2014, are designed to capitalize on small under-used sites to create affordable rental and homeownership opportunities.<sup>2</sup>

Many of the smaller sites that NIHOP and NCP are designed to focus on would have been considered difficult to develop under existing traditional programs.<sup>3</sup> NIHOP and NCP encourage development by aggregating these smaller publicly owned sites and targeting qualified developers, local non-profits, and local community development corporations to participate in the program. NIHOP is designed to expand opportunities for homeownership of one to four family homes and affordable condominiums and cooperatives of 15 units or less. Generally, one-third of the units in each project will be required to be affordable to low-income households. Additional tiers of affordability will be encouraged for moderate and middle-income households. NCP is designed to aggregate sites to develop affordable rental housing

of up to 30 units so as to achieve economies of scale in the remediation, development, financing, and operation of scattered infill lots for rental housing.

The Request for Qualifications included twenty-three vacant lots in the study area at 14 locations (nine single lots and 14 lots forming five contiguous properties ranging in size from 2 lots to 5 lots). We estimate that approximately 344 housing units could be built on these 23 vacant lots targeted for development. These 23 vacant lots, as well as the other 91 vacant parcels under the jurisdiction of HPD and the priority properties identified by BP, appear in a table we have created that can be found in the appendix that details, amongst other things, development costs and the number of units, if residential, that could be built.

# ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPABLE LAND

## B. Community Gardens and Infill Development

Among the 23 lots in Brownsville targeted by infill development are three community gardens. These three gardens are comprised of nine lots. The addresses of the community gardens are:

- The garden on New Lots Avenue at the corner of Sackman (93 - 103 New Lots Avenue)
- The Brownsville Student Farm across the street from the new Greg Jackson Center (514 - 522 Rockaway)
- The community garden at 615 Saratoga Avenue (Isabaliah Ladies of Elegance)

These HPD lots appeared vacant on city planning maps; however organizers of these gardens had signed interim-use agreements, brokered by Green Thumb, which is the city’s community-garden support program.<sup>4</sup> HPD is now asserting that the gardeners may have to adhere to the “interim” part of the agreements, which would mean vacating their gardens to make room for infill development. Mayor de Blasio has stated that HPD will take a “hard look at whether communities are best served by these gardens staying as they are” and has stated that any apartments built on temporary garden plots would be “100% affordable.”<sup>5</sup> The challenge for BP, community organizations, and residents is to determine the appropriate balance between the construction of additional affordable housing and the need to preserve these community gardens and the vacant lots to meet other community needs. BP has responded to the RFQ, and community gardeners are involved in the negotiation/decision-making process.

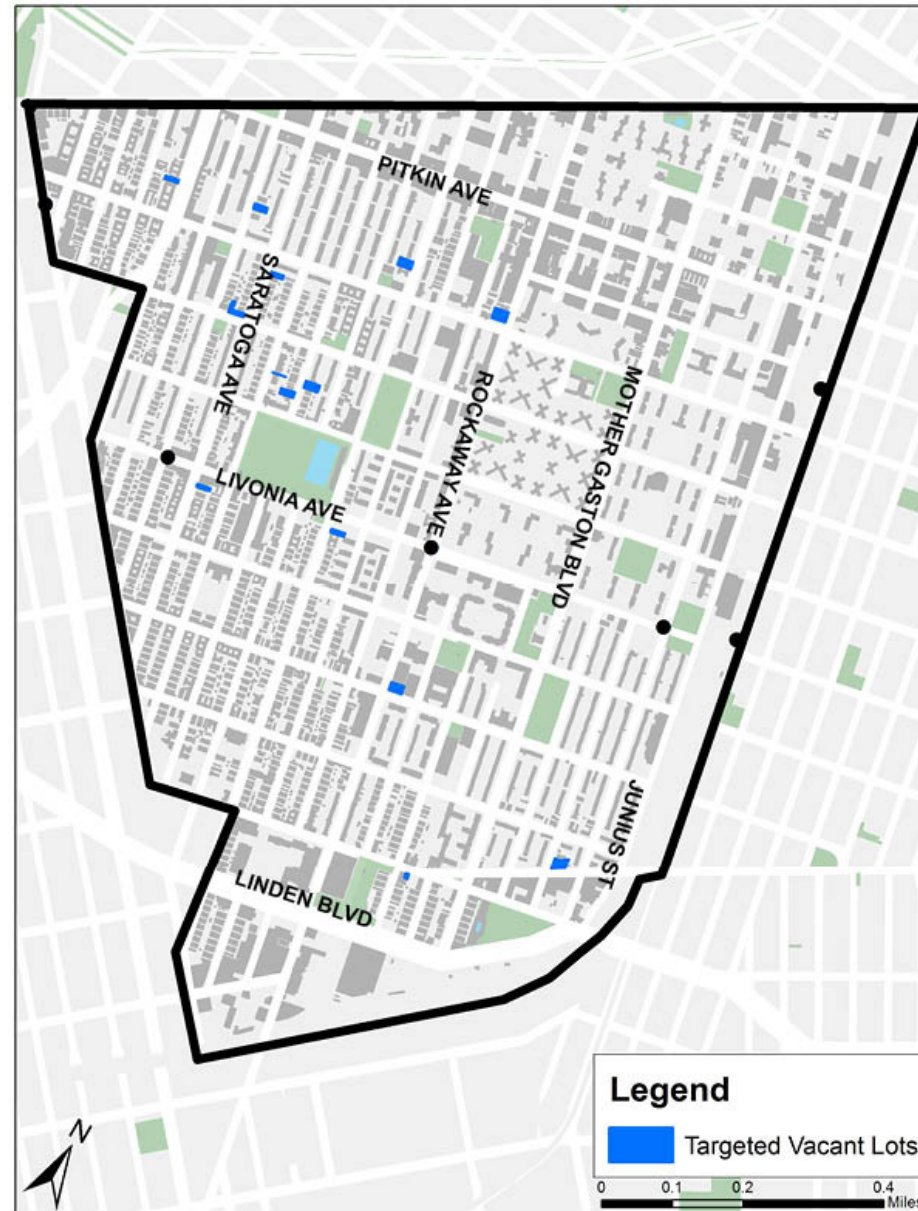


Fig. 2 Map of City-Owned Vacant Lots Targeted for Development, Pratt Institute 2015.

# ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPABLE LAND

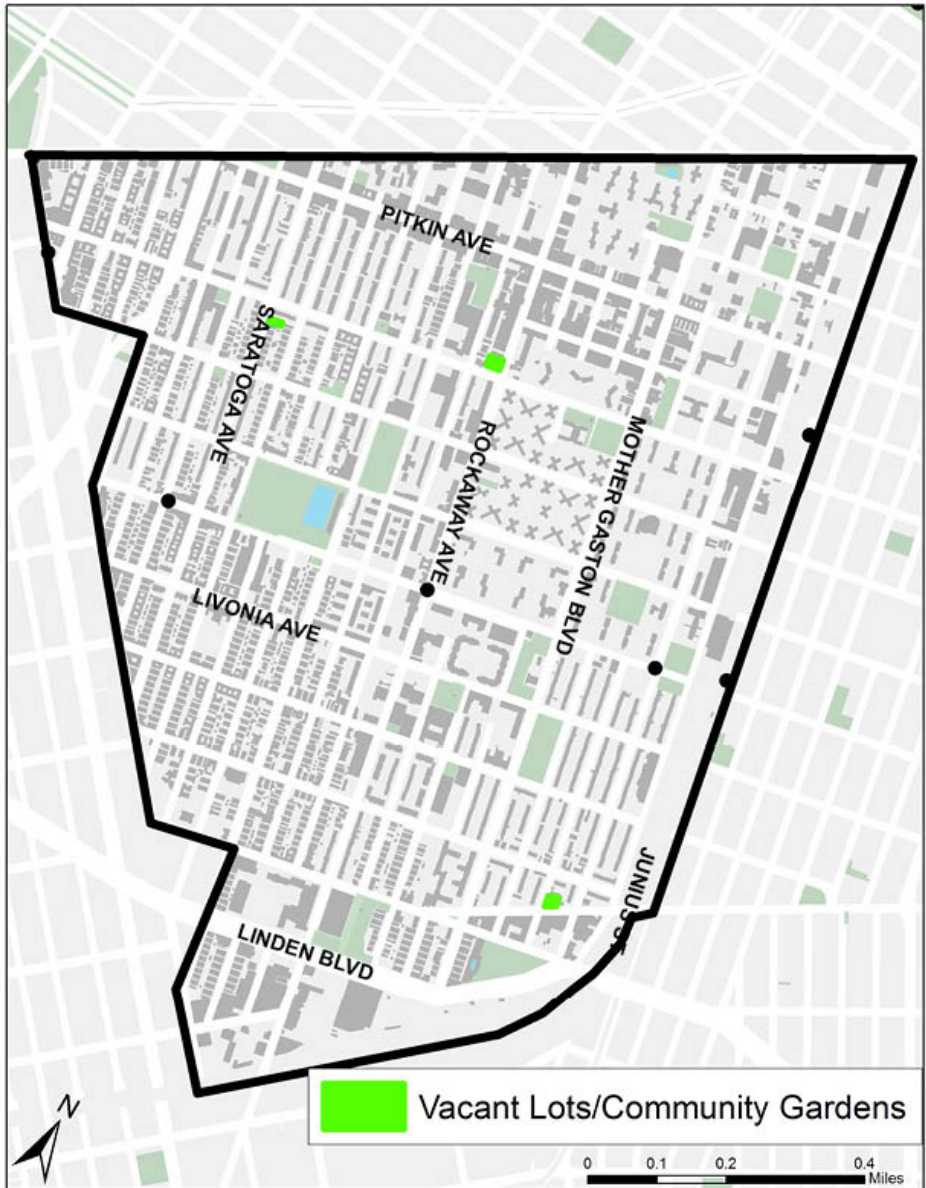


Fig. 3 Map of City-Owned Vacant Lots targeted that have gardens, Pratt Institute 2015

## C. NYCHA Infill Plan

In recent years NYCHA has been selling off parking lots, green space and playgrounds to developers, in the hopes to address their budget deficits as well as create more affordable housing.<sup>6</sup> Since 2013 NYCHA has sold 54 plots that were comprised of 441,000 square feet of public land to private developers.<sup>7</sup> More details of this plan to sell off this publicly owned land will be released in 2015, as part of the “Next Generation NYCHA” plan. NYCHA has promised to sell the land exclusively for affordable housing. In Brownsville in 2014 NYCHA sold off one parking at the Van Dyke houses to a developer for apartments for homeless families. NYCHA plans to continue to sell off space in Van Dyke houses development “to create affordable housing, retail stores, and services,” as well as to “encourage outside investors and developers to consider Brownsville.”<sup>8</sup> NYCHA is now discussing selling another huge lot that is currently being used for football, basketball, and family gatherings.<sup>9</sup> A small lot at the Howard Houses in Brownsville is also among the properties that are currently for sale.



Fig. 4 Van Dyke Houses, Photo courtesy of Brownsville 100 Days.

# ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPABLE LAND

## 2. Sites Identified by Brownfield Partnership

The client, Brownsville Partnership, has identified the following properties as “priority sites.” BP identified these privately owned, underutilized sites as potential locations for new uses including: community and cultural facilities, housing, mixed-used retail and office space, and training facilities. The objective is to stimulate economic development in the community. BP called these catalytic properties that can create jobs while improving public spaces, adding affordable housing, and generating new commercial and cultural uses.

1. 1542 East New York Avenue;
  - Former 65th Precinct Stationhouse;
  - 11,250 sq. feet – could be used for a community facility or converted into 13 housing units;
  - Owned by a non-profit that wanted to restore it and open a new community center but the organization has not been able to afford the \$3.8 million renovation cost.
2. 1797 Pitkin Avenue, the “Bank Building”;
  - 22,500 sq. ft. building;
  - Sold last September for \$3.2 million.
3. 519 Rockaway Avenue; the new Greg Jackson Center for Brownsville
4. 635 Rockaway Avenue, “PS 125”;
  - 27,000 sq. ft. building on a 30,000 sq. ft. lot;
  - Potential for 144,000 sq. ft. community facility or 85 housing units.
5. 739 Rockaway Avenue;
  - Large building with more than 133,000 sq. ft.
6. 283 Sutter Avenue.
  - Next to the recently opened Greg Jackson Center for Brownsville;
  - 2,540 sq. ft. lot;
  - Potential for a 12,000 sq. ft. community facility.



Fig. 5 Map of Priority Properties identified by client, including Greg Jackson Center. Pratt Institute, 2015.

# MARKET ANALYSIS

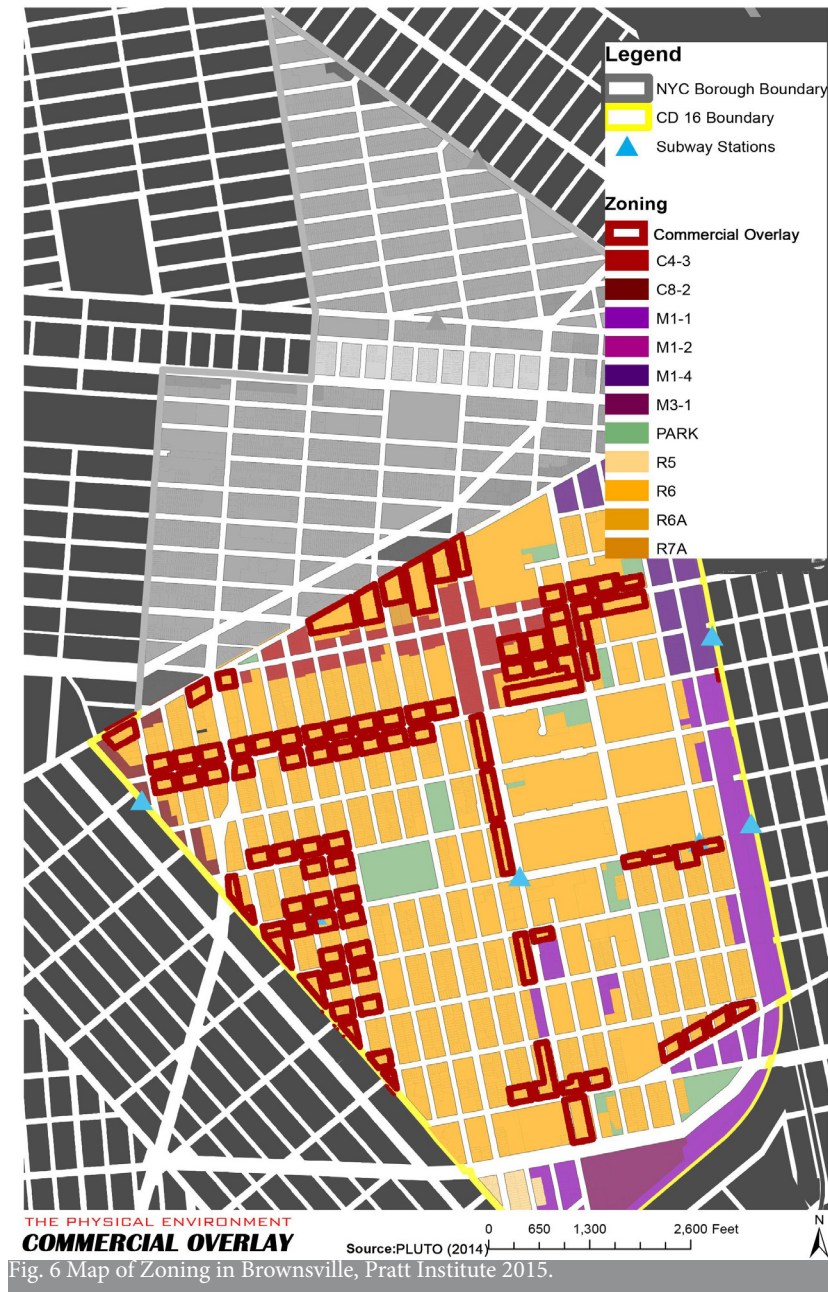


Fig. 6 Map of Zoning in Brownsville, Pratt Institute 2015.

## 1. Commercial and Industrial Uses Allowed by Zoning along the Commercial Corridors

### a. Pitkin Avenue

Pitkin Avenue in Brownsville runs through Howard Avenue to the west to Van Sinderen Avenue to the east. Beginning on Howard Avenue and moving east through Grafton Street the zoning along Pitkin Avenue is comprised of R6 districts with a C1-3 commercial overlay. R6 is a medium density residential zone. C1 commercial overlays permit “local shopping and services” and the bulk is controlled by the underlying R6 residential district. Continuing east from Grafton Street through Watkins Street, for a total of 12 blocks, is a C4-3 district, which permits larger retail establishment uses. See Appendix [insert appendix #] for a list of the use groups allowed for the main commercial corridors, including Pitkin Avenue. From Watkins Street through Powell Street, Pitkin Avenue returns to containing R6 districts with a commercial overlay (C2-3). However, from Powell Street through Van Sinderen Avenue, Pitkin Avenue is zoned M1-4, which is a light manufacturing district.

### b. Rockaway Avenue

To the north Rockaway Avenue contains R6 districts with a C2-3 commercial overlay. As Rockaway Avenue intersects with Pitkin Avenue, Rockaway Avenue is zoned C4-3, which allows for regional commercial uses, i.e. larger retail establishments, large entertainment facilities, services to business establishments, etc. Moving south Rockaway Avenue returns to contain R6 districts with some blocks containing a C2-3 commercial overlay. Towards the south of Brownsville, Rockaway Avenue contains an M1-1 district, which is located between Newport St. and Lott Avenue, on the West side of Rockaway Avenue. As Rockaway Avenue nears Linden Blvd, Rockaway Avenue returns to containing R6 districts with commercial overlays on certain blocks.

### c. Belmont Avenue

Belmont Avenue, running west to east, begins at Rockaway Avenue, a block south of Pitkin Avenue, and contains C4-3 districts through Thatford Avenue. From Thatford Avenue through Powell Street, Belmont Avenue primarily consists of R6 zoning districts, with some blocks containing a C1-3 commercial overlay. Moving eastward Belmont Avenue contains M1-4 districts, which permits light manufacturing.

# MARKET ANALYSIS

### d. Livonia Avenue

Livonia Avenue, running west to east through Brownsville, primarily consists of R6 districts with C2-3 commercial overlays appearing on certain blocks between East 98th Street through Junius Street. Towards the east, from Junius Street through Van Sinderen Avenue, Livonia Avenue is comprised of M1-1 districts, which permits light manufacturing.

### e. Mother Gaston Boulevard

Mother Gaston Boulevard runs north to south through the study area. Beginning at the northern end of the Boulevard R6 zoning districts exist from East New York Avenue through Liberty Avenue on the west side. However, on the east side M1-4 districts exist. From Liberty Avenue south to Linden Boulevard Mother Gaston Boulevard consists of R6 zoning with a variety of commercial overlays, C1-3, C2-3 and C2-4, scattered over various blocks with only a small portion not containing a commercial overlay.

## 2. Categories of Existing Businesses that Exist Along Commercial Corridors

As of 2012, there were more than 700 businesses in Brownsville in the zip code 11212. The majority of them employ less than 5 people; a few employ more than 10, making it a predominately micro-business economy. The majority of the businesses in Brownsville cater to healthcare, including child-care facilities, health care practitioner offices, senior care agencies, and other health-related industries.<sup>10</sup> The largest healthcare related employer is Brookdale University Hospital and Medical Center. There are also many retail businesses, primarily grocery and clothing shops. It is very likely that more retail shops have opened since retail was surveyed in 2012; we observed several small to medium size grocery stores that were relatively new. Other Services include personal service shops, such as barbershops, beauty salons and nail salons. There are also funeral home services, laundry facilities, additional advocacy groups and numerous religious organizations, auto repair shops and car washes.<sup>11</sup>

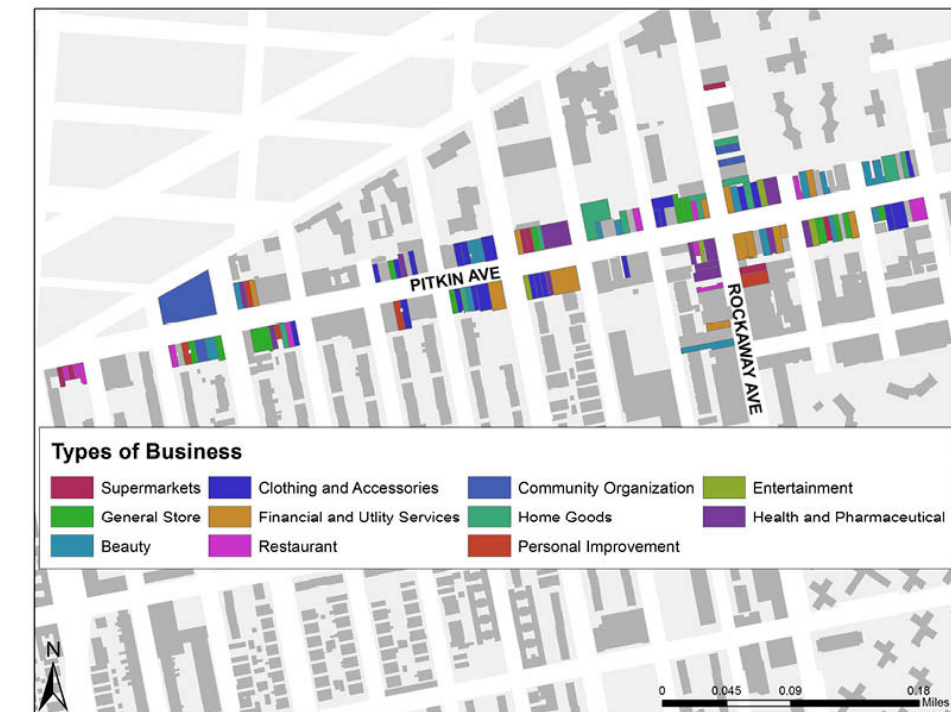


Fig. 7 Pitkin Avenue Map of Existing Businesses

Although there are more retail businesses than any other type of business, Health Care related industries account for more than half of the available jobs in Brownsville, followed by retail trade making up one-fifth; and the remaining businesses make up a slightly more than one quarter of the total jobs available.

When considered in relation to the occupations of employed people living in the study area, this information shows a mismatch. Noteworthy is the lack of sales, office, and administrative businesses in Brownsville, even though the majority of Brownsville residents are employed in those types of businesses. There are also many employed in healthcare related fields, with local employment opportunities at the nearby hospital. There are also numerous day care facilities in the area.



# MARKET ANALYSIS

The majority of retail shows are along the commercial corridors of Pitkin Avenue, Rockaway, Mother Gaston and Belmont. In our survey conducted on April 1, 2015 a total of 36 stores sold goods and groceries, but only 11 sold a variety of fresh produce. There were 25 restaurants, none of which with sit-down service, 3 liquor stores, 17 home furnishing stores, and 40 apparel stores. Our market analysis concluded that there was enough estimated disposable household income in the study area to support the number of apparel, grocery, liquor and home furnishing stores on the commercial corridors.

We conducted a short market analysis to determine the potential spending power to support retail stores in the commercial corridors by households in the study area. There is enough disposable income in the primary market area of the commercial corridors to support additional grocery stores, as well as home furnishing and liquor stores. There is more purchasing power in Brownsville than is met with supply. Please see the Appendix for the Methodology and Results of the Market Analysis.

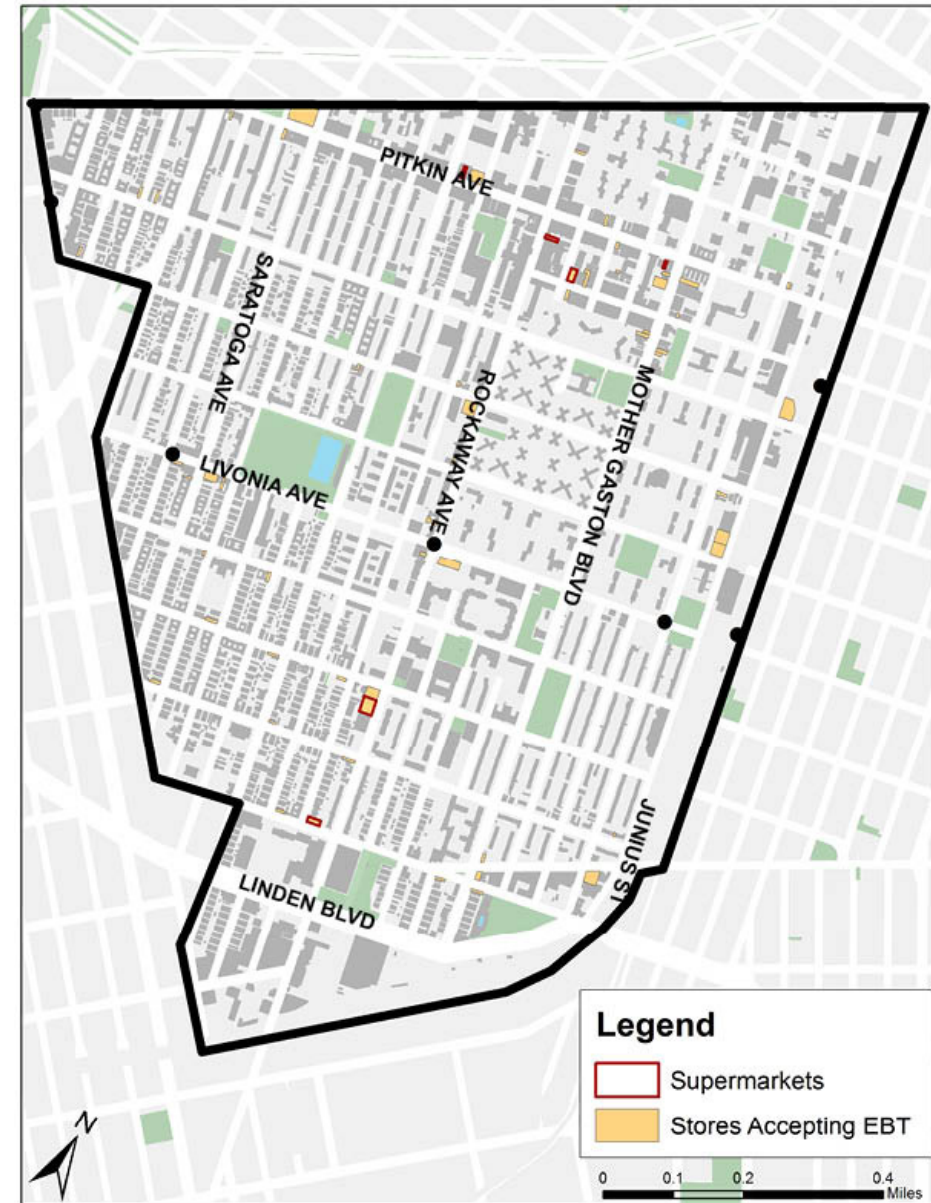


Fig. 8 Map of Market Analysis Grocery Store Map



Pitkin Avenue BID leading a parade down Pitkin Ave. Image courtesy of Pitkin Avenue Business Improvement District

## CREATE OPPORTUNITY FOR LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The existing conditions reflect ongoing efforts to improve economic conditions for residents and businesses. Brownsville's zoning, human capital, and current market reflect a diversity of uses, needs, and ways to expand. This section focuses on transforming isolated existing conditions into economic opportunities through partnerships and coalitions because people are Brownsville's greatest strength. The goal is to form collaborations to take advantage of historic buildings, an existing economic sector, a community need, high unemployment, and underutilized buildings to improve business conditions, develop economic opportunity, and empower local stakeholders.

The recommendations for Objective 1 include:

- Establish a Food Enterprise Co-Op;
- Establish a Coalition of Businesses (MUSE) to Strengthen Existing Hair and Beauty Sector and Develop New Businesses;
- Partner to Restore Pitkin Avenue's Historic Resources;
- Establish Brownsville Arts, Research, and Design Coalition [BARDC];
- Apply for Use Variance: Light Manufacturing; and
- Partner with an organization to increase supplemental education and job training programs.

# Objective 1: Create Opportunity for Local Economic Development

## 1.1 ESTABLISH A FOOD ENTERPRISE CO-OP

There is an abundance of underutilized property along Brownsville's main streets and commercial corridors. Brownsville is in need of an economic revival and this vacant land presents a unique opportunity to build upon. In conjunction with this opportunity is a potential threat that must be addressed before moving forward. According to a survey of Brownsville residents taken in 2010 by members of the Juvenile Justice Corps, unemployment was identified as the biggest problem facing the youth population with an overwhelming 81% of the respondents 25 years + and 73% of the 16-24 year old respondents deeming it a "major problem." Activating this land with a multi-faceted food enterprise will promote economic development through local proprietorship and job creation.

Facilitating a cooperative business where a group of community food entrepreneurs can come together will allow residents to pool their resources together, both financial and intellectual, to promote economic development. Establishing a co-op business is a commonly used tool in low-income neighborhoods to combat threats such as limited financial resources and gentrification associated with redevelopment, while promoting local business ownership and economic stability. It also allows for a shared vision to help cultivate and maximize local, community values. Brownsville Partnership can help coordinate these meetings to jumpstart the process and introduce food entrepreneurs to each other.

Once a food co-op has been established, instituting a kitchen incubator could be the next step to further the advancement of a food enterprise. A kitchen incubator can act as a shared location to service Brownsville residents' food-related endeavors. Instituting a kitchen incubator first, will allow food entrepreneurs to take advantage of available professional kitchen space at affordable costs while they receive training, meet peers, and learn to grow their business. At Hana Kitchen in Sunset Park, it costs food entrepreneurs less than \$200 to rent kitchen space for one eight-hour shift with 20-30 tenants renting on a regular basis. Workflow will depend on the size of the kitchen and resources available.<sup>12</sup>

A kitchen incubator will provide local food-entrepreneurs with a foundation to build upon while they hone their skills and look to expand. In addition, incubators can offer industry workshops on topics like accounting, tastings, networking, branding, and social media.<sup>13</sup> A kitchen incubator can also be a job-training hub to provide workers with professional skills and prepare them for a career in the food industry. Working in conjunction with the supplemental education program that you will learn about in a later recommendation, would be beneficial. The Liberty Kitchen in New Orleans is a successful example to model after.<sup>14</sup> According to the National Business Incubation Association, "[b]usinesses launched through a period of nurturing in business incubators fare much better, with an 80% rate of success," while "businesses launched by entrepreneurs acting on their own have only a 20% chance of surviving five or more years."<sup>15</sup> In order to keep cost low, the kitchen incubator would ideally operate out of an already functioning kitchen. The Brownsville Partnership organization was considering instituting a café within the Greg Jackson Center for Brownsville; combining this with a kitchen incubator would help create a shared benefit on multiple levels. Where and how a kitchen incubator starts, plays a huge role in how much the endeavor will cost and the timeframe for implementation. The primary need is a professional kitchen to rent out to entrepreneurs. The New York City Economic Development Corporation is a fantastic resource with ample experience setting up similar establishments.<sup>16</sup>



Source: Kitchen Incubator at Entrepreneur Space. Image courtesy of NYC-EDC



## 1.1 ESTABLISH A FOOD ENTERPRISE CO-OP

In the short term, this kitchen incubator can provide the necessary resources to support a food stand launched by local food entrepreneurs. With limited healthy dining options currently in Brownsville, we believe that this co-op could provide the neighborhood with an outlet for nutritious meals. Working with some of the other health-related recommendations that will be proposed would be advantageous. Starting off with a food stand will help the business owner to build a clientele and develop an understanding for basic business practices on a smaller scale. Additionally, a food stand can be funded by a minimal investment and would be an ideal start-up for a food entrepreneur without much financial backing.

Pending future success, this stand can hopefully evolve into a food truck that can cater to a larger market and serve as a location for social gathering. A food truck operating at the intersection of Belmont Avenue and Rockaway Avenue would help to stimulate a commercial corridor with optimal access to public transportation. This is an ideal location due to the high level of foot traffic within this commercial corridor, which could then be funneled down Mother Gaston Boulevard to increase awareness of that commercial sector. This location would serve as a convenient spot for shoppers to grab a quick and healthy bite to eat. Zion Park would be another ideal location to target because of the proximity to the plaza and availability of outdoor seating. Food trucks can also be located on Newport Street near Livonia and on Mother Gaston Boulevard. Acquiring street permits for the truck will allow for the flexibility to operate in various locations without the restrictions that a fixed storefront would face. This also allows for flexibility in the use of the truck, which can also act as a portable health truck and to cater for special events, among other diverse uses. While this would require a larger investment that would primarily consist of monthly rental fees for the truck itself, it would likewise offer the potential for a larger profit as it operates on a larger scale.



Source: Fig. 1.1.2 The Cravings Truck. Image courtesy of Mobile-Cuisine.com

The final step would be to develop an expansion, sit-down restaurant along Pitkin Avenue. With the help of the Pitkin BID to acquire a suitable space for development and the New York City Department of Small Business Services to achieve a sustainable business model, this is a feasible goal and one that the community and stakeholders alike, greatly desire. Based on community stakeholder interviews and in observing the existing businesses along Brownsville's primary commercial avenues, establishing a local sit-down restaurant is one of the most pressing retail ventures that does not currently exist within Brownsville. Not only would it provide a much needed service and asset to the community, but it would also help to serve as a marketing tool for the products off the food entrepreneurs utilizing the kitchen incubator. This would be an expensive and long-term project, but it would serve to boost a central economic sector of the neighborhood. There are several financial outlets and government breaks that can be explored to assist with this investment such as tax incentives, government funded business assistance programs, and micro-lending.



## 1.1 ESTABLISH A FOOD ENTERPRISE CO-OP

In addition to the aforementioned economic benefits, this project will also provide job opportunities. Partnering with organizations that can connect those seeking employment to businesses with opportunities would help to reinvest this proposal into the community that it will serve. Examples of organizations to reach out to include the New York State Youth Work Program and NYCHA, in addition to the aforementioned, proposed supplemental education program.

As part of our campaign to create opportunities for economic development, the proposed food enterprise can help to maximize community values and provide Brownsville a better tomorrow.

For models of co-operative programs that have successfully been instituted in New York City, please see:

Johnson, Michael, (2010) "A Network of Cooperatives Gets Organized in New York City: Low-income and immigrant workers well-represented." Grassroots Economic Organizing. Retrieved from <http://www.geo.coop/node/435> (April 2015).

Bransberg, Vanessa, (2011), "The Center for Family Life: Tackling Poverty and Social Isolation in Brooklyn with Worker Cooperatives." Grassroots Economic Organizing. Retrieved from <http://www.geo.coop/node/636> (April 2015).

Lawrence, John, (2014), "A Call to Develop a Worker Cooperative Sector in New York City: How the City Can Create Jobs and Address Inequality at Its Roots." Truthout. Retrieved from <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/22000-a-call-to-develop-a-worker-cooperative-sector-in-new-york-city-how-the-city-can-create-jobs-and-address-inequality-at-its-roots> (April 2015).

High cost

Long term



For further reference on prior examples and insight on how to get this started, please see:

Jenifer Buckley, Christopher Peterson, & Jim Bingen, (2014), "The Starting Block: A Case Study of an Incubator Kitchen." International Food and Agribusiness Management Review. Retrieved from <http://www.ifama.org/files/IFAMR/Vol%2017/Issue%201/%289%29%2020130001.pdf> (April 2015).

Sarah Clark, Harvell Howard, & Viviane S. V. Rossi, (2009), "Exploratory Study for a Kitchen Incubator in West Memphis, Arkansas." University of Arkansas: Clinton School of Public Service. Retrieved from <http://www.broadwaywestmemphis.com/pdfs/KitchenIncubatorStudybyClintonSchool.pdf> (April 2015).

College of Tropical Agriculture & Human Resources, (2000), "Some Costs and Considerations for Establishing an Entrepreneurial Community Shared-Use Kitchen or 'Test-Kitchen Incubator.'" Food Manufacturing and Technology FMT-2. Retrieved from <http://www2.ctahr.hawaii.edu/oc/freepubs/pdf/fmt-2.pdf> (April 2015).

Pratt Center for Community Development, (2011), "A Review of Selected Incubator Kitchens & Training Restaurants." Retrieved from [http://prattcenter.net/sites/default/files/serving\\_up\\_innovation.pdf](http://prattcenter.net/sites/default/files/serving_up_innovation.pdf) (April 2015).

For alternative sources to help fund a kitchen incubator and food enterprise, please see:

UW- Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems, (2001), "Community Kitchens: key elements of success." Retrieved from <http://www.cias.wisc.edu/community-kitchens-key-elements-of-success/> (April 2015).

Haley Rose, Lynne, "Grants to Start Business Incubators." Retrieved from <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/grants-start-business-incubators-15888.html> (April 2015).

## 1.2 ESTABLISH COALITION OF BUSINESSES, MAKE, USE, SHOP, AND EXPERIENCE (MUSE), TO STRENGTHEN EXISTING HAIR & BEAUTY SECTOR AND DEVELOP NEW BUSINESS

There are currently more than twenty-two locations on Pitkin Avenue alone focused on hair and beauty in Brownsville. Brownsville's focus on hair and beauty, the diverse population and hair types, available zoning for retail and manufacturing of goods, and high unemployed and employable population lends itself towards becoming an "urban magnet" for hair care and styling. Make, Use, Shop, and Experience (MUSE) Brownsville would bring together the current owners, workers, and stakeholders of beautician services in Brownsville and enable the hair and beauty services to expand. MUSE would capitalize on the existing enterprises and utilize available industry and manufacturing space for development in Brownsville around the theme of hair and beauty guiding new and old developments.

Brownsville Partnership will seek out local owners, operators, local beauty and hair product developers, and relevant community leaders to form this niche coalition. It will identify local opportunities among shops. Priority opportunities may include: changing shop hours to be more flexible, encouraging small-scale product creators, common postings at open booths, training new stylists and workers, working with the BID to prioritize this sector throughout its already existing marketing channels, ensure minority and women owned businesses are receiving incentives and financial support. The coalition of hair and cosmetology stakeholders will be able to identify who could be eligible for manufacturing and administrative positions. MUSE will encourage a beauty school to relocate, and therefore should also seek someone involved in beauty schools or community colleges. Once this vision is realized, customers will be able to get their hair done, shop for locally made goods, and have a positive experience all in Brownsville for every budget.

There is a small existing hair braiding training school in Brownsville, but that is only one of the requirements for this impressive professional process. Barbers can apprentice for a portion of their required hours, so the collaborative MUSE would help identify available masterful barbers or shops that could use an extra hand and promote multi-generational involvement and learning.

The establishment of MUSE will help residents see their assets as a main draw that can leverage future growth. An urban magnet takes a single enterprise and establishes a precinct through elements that support that enterprise.<sup>17</sup> A magnet can be for arts or whatever enterprises already exist and are relevant to the area's demands. Rooted in the 78% Black population and growing Hispanic or Latino population, culture, existing retail, braiding education, and connectivity to other hair services mean that for this magnet to be complete, Brownsville lacks only administrative or office-setting jobs for support and manufacturing of hair products.

With the growing Black and Latino population in Brownsville and the United States alongside new trends, the hair industry is expected to expand. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics projects 13% growth in employment of hairdressers, hairstylists, cosmetologists, and barbers.<sup>18</sup> 80% of the hair care goods sold is for 12% of the population.<sup>19</sup> In Brownsville 78% of the population is Black, so there are increased opportunities to sell products and services because of this large market.<sup>20</sup> While this grows, so does the median income of these hair technicians and barbers. The average wage is \$16.71, which at 30 hours a week would produce \$26,067 a year, enough to live in Brownsville. Salaries are higher for barbers and cosmetologists, so encouraging licensure, training, and an organization for job openings will further increase local economic development. Profits in this field have risen 5.7%. Brick and mortar stores, opposed to growth of online sales, are still lucrative in this market.<sup>21</sup> Salons are unique because although there are corporate ones, like Sport Clips, Fantastic Sams, Supercuts, there is a high fragmentation. Large companies take 15% of all revenue, opening the field for local competition and simultaneously, the possibility to appeal to the major companies to locate their training in Brownsville.<sup>22</sup>



## 1.2 ESTABLISH COALITION OF BUSINESSES, MAKE, USE, SHOP, AND EXPERIENCE (MUSE), TO STRENGTHEN EXISTING HAIR & BEAUTY SECTOR AND DEVELOP NEW BUSINESS

Despite national growth projections in the hair and beauty sector and Brooklyn's sizable population, there is not a comprehensive beauty school within six miles of Brownsville. Similarly, there is not a community college, technical institute, or higher education facility. Another possibility, expanding the net of training, education, and empowerment could be to attract a community college with programs and training in hair and beauty. There are community colleges in the State University of New York network that offer cosmetology programs and skills. The former police precinct at 1542 East New York Avenue could be an excellent place to locate this school because of its location, size, and impressive building style. Introducing a trade school to Brownsville will diversify opportunities to residents and local business owners. By locating it North of Pitkin, on a major edge between Ocean Hill and Brownsville, it will be accessible to many, enlarge MUSE's reach, and potentially decrease stigma as it prepares new sector leaders. With the growth of MUSE, supporting the hair and beauty sector in Brownsville, it is likely others would begin to identify the area as a beacon for growth and opportunity, drawing in large franchise hair and beauty educational centers to train and evaluate people from different backgrounds.

Currently, hair care trends, especially Black and Latino styles and services, are shifting toward more natural and chemical free products, many of which can be made on a small or large scale sustainably in Brownsville.<sup>23</sup> The concentration of existing shops along Pitkin Avenue with ability to expand along Belmont, the adjacent commercial strip, creates a perimeter perpendicular to the cluster of shops to the available manufacturing zoning district within Brownfield Opportunity Area and East New York Industrial Business Zone at Junius Street.

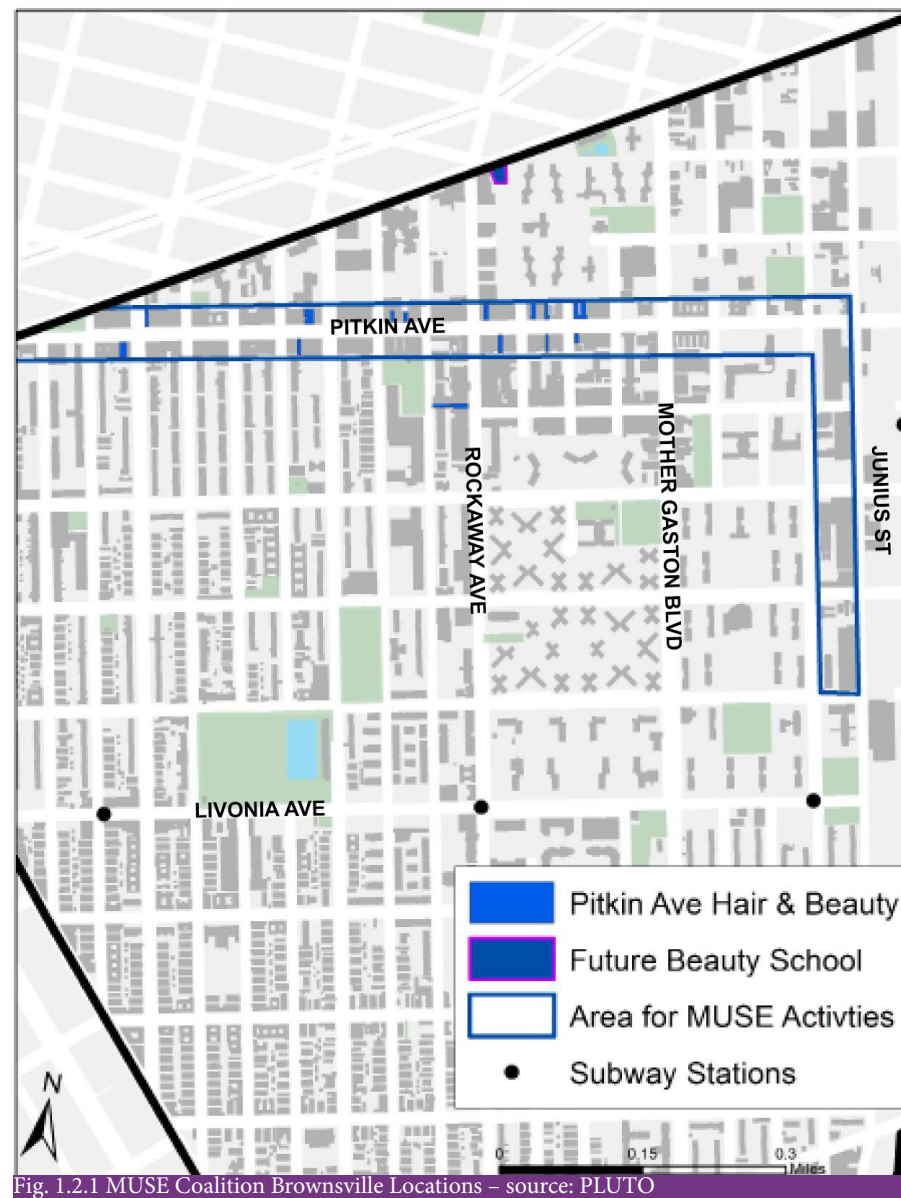


Fig. 1.2.1 MUSE Coalition Brownsville Locations – source: PLUTO



## 1.2 ESTABLISH COALITION OF BUSINESSES, MAKE, USE, SHOP, AND EXPERIENCE (MUSE), TO STRENGTHEN EXISTING HAIR & BEAUTY SECTOR AND DEVELOP NEW BUSINESS

The first step is to form the coalition. It can be formed as soon as possible. There is not a merchant organization, so it may take time to find relevant stakeholders at the beginning. Because this focuses on strengthening the existing market, it is important not to neglect those that exist before shifting to new programs. Maryland's microenterprise loan program<sup>24</sup> helped a barbershop stay in business and revitalize its Downtown Baltimore neighborhood. Citywide, there are entrepreneurial grants and opportunities from New York City Economic Development Corporation [NYCEDC] that specialize in innovation, industrial, and business enterprise that all apply to the hair and beauty business. MGB POPS is one of NYCEDC's opportunities, and the Brownsville based pop-up market does feature a line of beauty products. The coalition could host and promote neighborhood wide events, attracting new talent, host hair shows and conventions in some of the open spaces, and seek meetings to lure large beauty schools and franchises to create even more opportunities.

MUSE does not just intend to promote service sector employment. It will create positions in administration and management, product development, marketing, manufacturing, education, and health all under the hair industry's strong and growing umbrella. Once MUSE is supported locally as a magnet, luring the outside, supporting the inside, and creating new opportunities for jobs and education, Brownsville and MUSE can take advantage of another recommendation, Brownsville Arts Research and Design Coalition's rezoning, especially as it lends itself to clean manufacturing and shared space. This recommendation integrates local economic development as it exists and will exist. A muse inspires and lures the admirer like a siren. Brownsville's Hair MUSE will inform and inspire culture, enterprise, and future local development.



### 1.2.1 Case Studies

The Pitkin Avenue BID discovered that the BID's presence, likely due to people traffic, increased patrolling, and a sense of community pride, has decreased crime along the corridor.<sup>25</sup> In Atlanta, there has been success in opening a late night barbershop.<sup>26</sup> Having late hours at a barbershop or two could promote a safe place, nighttime activity, and influence other nightlife opportunities.

As Main Street programs begin to work, businesses reap the benefits. Headquarters Barber Beauty & Natural Hair Salon on Broad Street in New Orleans has seen a remarkable improvement since it relocated to a corridor with a Main Street project. Together, the people traffic of the street and the people traffic of the shop bring in people, place, and profits.<sup>27</sup>

The Urban Magnet theory has been most successful in practice in Vancouver, British Columbia. Although it is a different geography, demographic group, and enterprise, Granville Island's art urban magnet has promoted job growth, existing artists, making art, art education, performance, and events. Through bolstering art, Vancouver identified their main lure, built upon it more, and was able to develop new and existing sectors around it.<sup>28</sup> The Urban Land Institute has identified hair salons and barbershops within case studies about improving local economic development through mixed-use corridors, much like Pitkin Avenue and corners throughout Brownsville.<sup>29</sup>

## 1.2 ESTABLISH COALITION OF BUSINESSES, MAKE, USE, SHOP, AND EXPERIENCE (MUSE), TO STRENGTHEN EXISTING HAIR & BEAUTY SECTOR AND DEVELOP NEW BUSINESS

A mobile salon would allow for fewer overhead costs and more mobility in start up costs as well as being able to take advantage of temporary spaces and pop-up markets. In San Diego, a mobile barbershop and salon has been successful because of flexible hours, location, and clientele.<sup>30</sup> Black business ownership is difficult, even in a field like hair care where the services caters specifically to the client, however, once the barriers are broken it instills community pride, inspires other entrepreneurs, and promotes economic development.<sup>31</sup> A Latino teenager in the Bronx received funding for her idea of a mobile salon, so there are opportunities to engage young people and get them thinking about business and community needs.<sup>32</sup>

These cases show successes of individual shops in a larger structure, and MUSE will provide inspiration, individualism, and pride across Brownsville and Brooklyn through successfully engaging in its hair care and beauty sector.



## 1.3 SET UP OR PARTNER WITH AN EXISTING ORGANIZATION TO INCREASE SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATION AND JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS



One of Brownsville's major issues is unemployment, which fosters a number of other social problems. Looking a step further, low levels of post high school education are a major weakness in the community. From our existing conditions report, high levels of poverty and unemployment were found to major issues. Half of the census tracts within Brownsville had over 13% unemployment. There are not many job training or placement facilities in Brownsville -- some are closed and can only serve a few members of the community. Jobs Plus is a great example of a job placement facility that only serves Van Dyke houses.<sup>33</sup> (See Figure 1.3.1)

Partnering with other organizations for supplemental education and job placement would be essential for the community.

### 1.3.1 Implementation

There are a few organizations that can be explored for partnerships: The Doe Fund and Green Work Force NYC. These organizations assist with both training and job placement. Beyond these organizations NYCHA has partnered with Green City Force. This program gives job training and placement. By partnering with Brownsville Partnership, this program would be able to reach more of the residents in Brownsville.

The Doe Fund would be a key organization with regards to partnership. The Doe Fund initially targeted the homeless population; however their services have expanded to serve other targeted populations, one of which can serve this community: The Youth Initiative.

The Youth Program is currently aimed at 18-26 year olds focusing on education, personal growth and job readiness. The program is tailored for youth at different levels of education those with GED's or high school education attempting to go to college as well as those without. They offer instruction to youth trainees in the areas of literacy, mathematics and computer skills. Beyond just education they offer guidance enabling them to become more

job-ready. Along with these services a life skills curriculum is offered that covers financial management, parenting skills and independent living. It is a full service program for young adults.

If partnering with the Doe Fund is not an option, they can work with another community based organization to help replicate the program, which can be a viable option for the Brownsville Partnership.<sup>34</sup>

Another option for partnering would be the Green Jobs Training Program which offers a number of workshops in a variety of green fields; along with this service they also offer job placement assistance on completion of the program. Training programs are usually two and a half weeks long. Their workforce team will help graduates with job placement, interview, and resume skills.<sup>35</sup>

### 1.3 SET UP OR PARTNER WITH AN EXISTING ORGANIZATION TO INCREASE SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATION AND JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS



#### 1.3.2 Green City Force and NYCHA

Another program that is in the process of expanding but specifically to NYCHA residents is the Green City force. This program has information sessions over the next few months with a kick off of the program in November. So far Van Dyke is the only housing development in which this program will be launched in the near future.<sup>36</sup> (See Figure 1.3.1)

Looking toward the future the implementation of the Career Pathways Program a product of the Jobs for New Yorkers Task Force will open a number of doors for training opportunities for middle skill and middle-income jobs for New Yorkers. This program goes beyond job training using sector-focused bridge programs, skills training, job relevant training as well as work-based learning opportunities. Career Pathways aims to improve the quality of jobs available by targeting industries such as: technology, health care, manufacturing and construction. The city aims to maximize local job opportunities through contract and economic investment. Overall the program aims to create opportunities for higher skilled jobs and orient their services around career progression instead of merely job placement.<sup>37</sup>

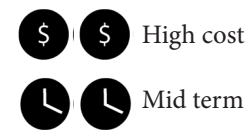
#### 1.3.3 Case Study

##### Green Jobs training – Castle Hill Bronx

Castle Hill is the first of many NYCHA green jobs projects. This is a 14-building development with 2,025 apartments. The program created green jobs for the residents within the NYCHA complex, and the residents earned a salary/stipend while learning skills for green construction. This project won “Energy Project of the Year”; it consisted of making repairs installing energy efficient appliances and many other greening efforts. The project was two pronged, focusing on decreasing the carbon footprint and giving some NYCHA residents a new skill set and potentially a job.<sup>38</sup>



Fig. 1.3.1 Jobs Plus service area and potential sites of training facilities - source: DCP



### 1.4 PARTNER TO RESTORE PITKIN AVENUE’S HISTORIC RESOURCES



Pitkin Avenue, Brownsville’s main commercial corridor, is the historic “Fifth Avenue of Brooklyn.”<sup>39</sup> Once part of the largest commercial area in Brooklyn, Pitkin Avenue has been a witness to and a core element of the unique history of Brownsville -- a working-class community, an immigrant Mecca and a community that despite tremendous economic and social struggles has a long history of community activism and participation. Today, many of the storefronts along Pitkin Avenue are in poor condition, many of the historic buildings lining the corridor are poorly maintained and the corridor’s commercial spaces are underused. We recommend partnering with the Pitkin Avenue Business Improvement District (BID) and other local organizations to secure financial support for restoring Pitkin Avenue’s historic resources with the goal of encouraging investment in the rehabilitation of historic buildings and the re-use of vacant space.



Fig. 1.4.1 Map of Pitkin Avenue showing location of Loew’s Theater on western end and the bank building on the northeast corner of Mother Gaston Boulevard and Pitkin Avenue – source: PLUTO

Two extraordinary buildings flank historic Pitkin Avenue. On the eastern edge is the Bank Building. (See Figures 1.4.2 and 1.4.3). On the corner of Pitkin Avenue and Mother Gaston Boulevard, it started life as the State Bank more than 100 years ago. It has remained in remarkably good condition with most of its original architectural features intact.

On the western edge is the Loew’s Pitkin Theater (see Figure 1.4.4). Built in 1929, the theater operated as a premier movie and performance venue. After closing in the late 1960s, it fell into disrepair. POKO Partners recently restored the original facade and adapted the interior to house the Brownsville Ascend Lower School and 65,000 square feet of retail shops and restaurants.<sup>40</sup>



Fig. 1.4.2 Brownsville State Bank 1905. Image courtesy of Brooklyn Public Library



Fig. 1.4.3 The “Bank Building”. Image courtesy of Eileen Huggard



Fig. 1.4.4 Pitkin Avenue in 1949. Image courtesy of Brooklyn Public Library Brooklyn Collection

## 1.4 PARTNER TO RESTORE PITKIN AVENUE'S HISTORIC RESOURCES



The Pitkin Avenue Business BID is working to revitalize the commercial corridor along Pitkin Avenue and create a strong and growing business community. The Pitkin Avenue BID implements streetscape improvements, activates the new Public Plaza at Zion Triangle with community events, and promotes business development.<sup>41</sup> (See Figures 1.4.5 and 1.4.6)



Fig. 1.4.5 Harvest Festival at the Public Plaza. Image courtesy of Neighborhood Plaza Partnership



Fig. 1.4.6 Free Yoga Classes at the Public Plaza. Image courtesy of Neighborhood Plaza Partnership

To build on these efforts, we recommend leveraging the historic resources of Pitkin Avenue to facilitate rehabilitation of the storefronts and commercial space along the corridor. Specifically, we recommend two actions:

- (1) Seeking National Register of Historic Places designation for the “Pitkin Avenue Historic District”; and
- (2) Applying for funds from the New York State Main Street Program. Under the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program, National Register designation would provide owners of certified historic buildings with access to tax credits for substantial rehabilitation (up to a combined 40 percent federal and state income tax credit).<sup>42</sup> Rehabilitation is defined by the program’s regulations to mean “the process of returning a building or buildings to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient use while preserving those portions and features of the building and its site and environment which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values as determined by the Secretary [of the Interior].”<sup>43</sup>

The rehabilitation must be completed following the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. The Standards are ten principles applied to the project “in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility” to ensure that the historic character of the property is preserved.<sup>44</sup>

New York Main Street Program funds provide participating property owners with matching grants for exterior facade and storefront renovations or interior renovations for commercial or residential units. The funds are available in eligible areas in New York State including Brownsville. Eligible areas are areas that (1) have experienced sustained physical deterioration, decay, neglect or disinvestment; (2) have a number of substandard buildings or vacant residential or commercial units; and (3) in which more than fifty percent of the residents are persons of low income, or which are designated by a state or federal agency to be eligible for a community or economic development program). The New York Main Street Program also provides technical assistance for revitalization efforts.<sup>45</sup>

The recommendation builds upon several strengths and opportunities in Brownsville, including Brownsville’s strong cultural identity and presence of community organizations and its historically significant buildings. It also responds to the threat of deteriorating commercial infrastructure in Brownsville. As part of the Hundred Days to Progress Initiative, the New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS) recently completed a retail needs study. SBS concluded that the:

Retail mix is not that bad given the demand for services within the community. There are some service gaps that can be addressed, but initial efforts should focus elsewhere, including: improving access to Pitkin, so it can pull from a broader area beyond the immediate vicinity, and improving the physical condition/appearance of the avenue, in regard to public streetscape and infrastructure (curbs, catch basins, sidewalks, tree pits), and private buildings and storefronts.<sup>46</sup>

## 1.4 PARTNER TO RESTORE PITKIN AVENUE'S HISTORIC RESOURCES



As part of the same initiative, SBS also recently conducted a facade and storefront assessment of properties within the Pitkin Avenue BID. It found that 65% of storefronts are in poor condition.

The Brownsville Partnership and the Pitkin Avenue BID could partner with other organizations, including the Brownsville Heritage House and Brooklyn Community Board 16, to form a coalition of community members, who would work to strategize, organize and generate support for these actions. Early discussions with property and business owners are important to explain the advantages of the programs. The coalition could engage students in a Historic Preservation program to conduct a Brownsville Historic Resources Survey.

The coalition also might expand its role to preserve and celebrate all of the remaining historic fabric of Brownsville and its cultural heritage. In addition to contributing to the economic development of Brownsville, the coalition’s actions would strengthen Brownsville’s sense of community and place.

### Implementation Steps:

<b>National Register of Historic Places Nomination for Pitkin Avenue</b>	
1	<b>Identify an organizer/sponsor for the nomination</b>
2	<b>Conduct a Historic Resources Survey (funding from the Preservation League of New York State Grant Program may be available to pay for the survey expense)</b>
3	<b>Educate business and property owners and the community to generate interest and support</b>
4	<b>Working with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), prepare a nomination, which documents and identifies the key historic characteristics of every building</b>

<b>Main Street Program Grants</b>	
1	<b>Identify a Local Program Administrator (the Pitkin Avenue BID would be an eligible organization)</b>
2	<b>Educate business and property owners and the community to generate interest and support</b>
3	<b>Apply for New York Main Street grants from the New York State Department of Homes and Community Renewal</b>

### 1.4.1 Case Studies

Many communities are using preservation tools in their efforts to revitalize their main streets and downtowns. In Brooklyn, the Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership is working to revitalize the Myrtle Avenue commercial corridor in Brooklyn’s Fort Greene, Clinton Hill and Wallabout neighborhoods. The partnership successfully nominated the Wallabout Historic District and the Wallabout Industrial Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places. Property owners now have access to preservation tax credits and other incentives.

The partnership also applied for New York Main Street grants from the New York State Department of Homes and Community Renewal and received four rounds of funding. To date, the program has assisted thirty-five properties with a total of \$730,000 in grant awards. The awards spurred \$2 million in property investments by property and business owners. Main Street funding also has been spent on streetscape improvements. (See Figures 1.4.7 and 1.4.8).



## 1.4 PARTNER TO RESTORE PITKIN AVENUE'S HISTORIC RESOURCES



Fig. 1.4.7 Myrtle Avenue Banner. Image courtesy of Eileen Huggard.



Fig. 1.4.8 Myrtle Avenue Sidewalk. Image courtesy of Eileen Huggard.

Preservation is a key component in Riverhead, New York's downtown revitalization program. As part of the program, the town successfully nominated the Riverhead Main Street Historic District for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The goal is to incentivize property owners to rehabilitate their buildings with the tax credits that become available with a National Register listing.

More than thirty businesses in Riverhead have benefited from Main Street Program grants since 2004. The grants have been used to renovate the historic 1933 Suffolk Theater, which reopened in 2013, and the 1929 Commercial Building at One East Main Street, which now contains the Dark Horse Restaurant on the ground floor and offices and apartments on the upper floors.

### Resources:

Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership. <http://www.myrtleavenue.org/about/myrtle-avenue-brooklyn-partnership>.

Town of Riverhead Community Development Agency. <http://www.townofriverheadny.gov>.

Town of Riverhead Landmarks Preservation Commission. <http://www.townofriverheadny.gov>.



Fig. 1.4.9 Main Street in Riverhead, NY. Image courtesy of Eileen Huggard



Fig. 1.4.10 Suffolk Theater in Riverhead, NY. Image courtesy of Eileen Huggard



## 1.5 ESTABLISH BROWNSVILLE ARTS, RESEARCH, AND DESIGN COALITION [BARDC]



The Brownsville Arts, Research and Design Coalition [BARDC] is a cooperative networking and resource tool for all local arts, research and design organizations and individuals in the neighborhood. This support group for local visual and performance artists, graphic and product designers, and environmental researchers will create an environment of sustainable employment and enable creative entrepreneurs to realize, or manufacture, ideas and goods.

### 1.5.1 Rationale for Recommendation

BARDC is a recommendation motivated by the burgeoning arts and design scene in not just Brownsville, but also New Lots and East New York.<sup>47</sup> Despite a collective move toward engaging youth and adults in the arts and design fields, the various neighborhoods lack strong collaboration in their various efforts and will stand to benefit from a shared platform of communication, ideas and resources.

A large coalition of organizations and individuals passionate about the arts, research and design will also promote a broader awareness amongst Brownsville residents of the importance of these fields in the social and economic life of the neighborhood. This visibility can also drive local leaders and elected officials to protect the innovative freedom of the arts and research communities in the neighborhood through funding and advocacy.

### 1.5.2 Governance Structure

As Brownsville Partnership has already established ties with a number of local arts organizations and individuals, it is well-placed to initiate the formation of this Coalition. Although Brownsville Partnership need not chair this Coalition, all of its activities are to be eventually governed by a steering committee of representatives from member organizations and/ or member individuals.

At this stage, we would like to recommend Brownsville Partnership approach the following organizations to become founding members of BARDC:

- East New York IBZ;
- East Brooklyn BID;
- Justice Center for Youth;
- Arts East New York;
- Made in Brownsville;
- Groundswell.



Figures 1.5.1, 1.5.2, 1.5.3, and 1.5.4 Logos of possible founding members of BARDC. Images courtesy of East Brooklyn BID, Arts East New York, Made in Brownsville, and Groundswell

Funding for all the Coalition's activities may be procured through grants and incentives provided by NY State Energy Research and Development Authority, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, NYC Department of Design and Construction, or via external foundations such as Rockefeller Foundation and Knight Foundation

## 1.5 ESTABLISH BROWNSVILLE ARTS, RESEARCH, AND DESIGN COALITION [BARDC]



### 1.5.3 Types of Activities/ Resources

Following the obtainment of the certificate of incorporation and non-for-profit corporation status, BARDC will create an online marketplace for the free sharing of services, products and skills in the arts, design and clean research. This collaborative, crowd-sourcing platform will enable knowledge exchange to occur quickly and easily amongst Coalition members. BARDC will also facilitate meetings and networking sessions amongst members to foster partnerships and joint-work collaborations. Over time, with greater membership and support, BARDC will be able to spearhead the application for a use variance/ rezoning on lots along Livonia Avenue to house the first light manufacturing corridor in Brownsville solely dedicated to the production of art, designer goods and clean energy innovations.

Overall, given the existing networks and relationships that Brownsville Partnership already has in the region, the recommendation can easily be achieved in a short time span and at very low cost. Local arts, research and design organizations such as Made in Brownsville and Groundswell can only be better served by a platform of collaboration and a shared information and resource base.

Low cost

Short term

## 1.6 APPLY FOR USE VARIANCE / REZONING: M-1 LIGHT MANUFACTURING



The recommendation seeks to introduce M-1 light manufacturing uses along Livonia Avenue, on Sites A, B, C, and D as shown in Fig 1.6.1. However, in order to do this, we urge Brownsville Partnership to consider both the options of seeking a variance on stated lots, or completely rezoning the corridor. It must be noted that the land use change, whether through variance or rezoning, must be led by the Brownsville Arts, Research and Design Coalition [BARDC] in order to be a robust, community-supported action.

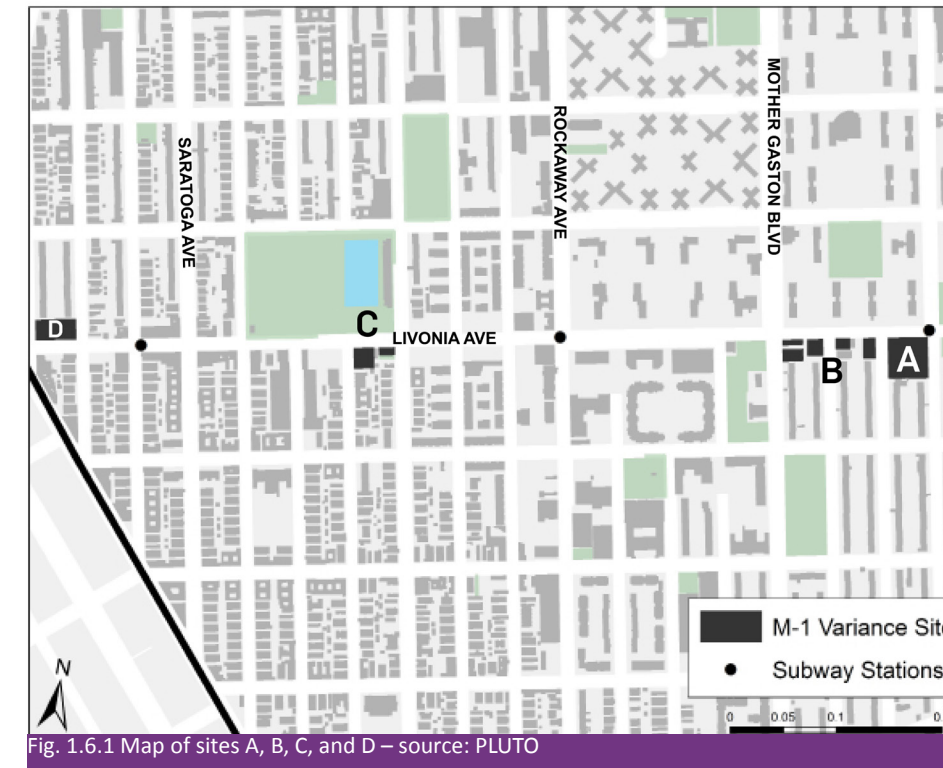


Fig. 1.6.1 Map of sites A, B, C, and D – source: PLUTO

### 1.6.1 Rationale for Recommendation

This recommendation is strongly linked and dependent on the success of the Brownsville Arts, Research and Design Coalition (Recommendation 1.3). The newly-zoned light manufacturing sites are meant to create a physical professional environment, or facility, for the artists, researchers and designers of the Coalition, for them to conduct joint manufacturing and workshop activities, gain visibility in the neighborhood and most importantly to “put their content out there” (Quardean Lewis Allen, 2015)<sup>48</sup> through brick-and-mortar stores, studios, workshops, and exhibition space. By seeking a use variance, or rezoning, for light manufacturing use (M1-1), these lots will also be permitted to include retail, offices, hotels and community facilities, providing added socio-economic benefits for members of BARDC and other residents of Brownsville.

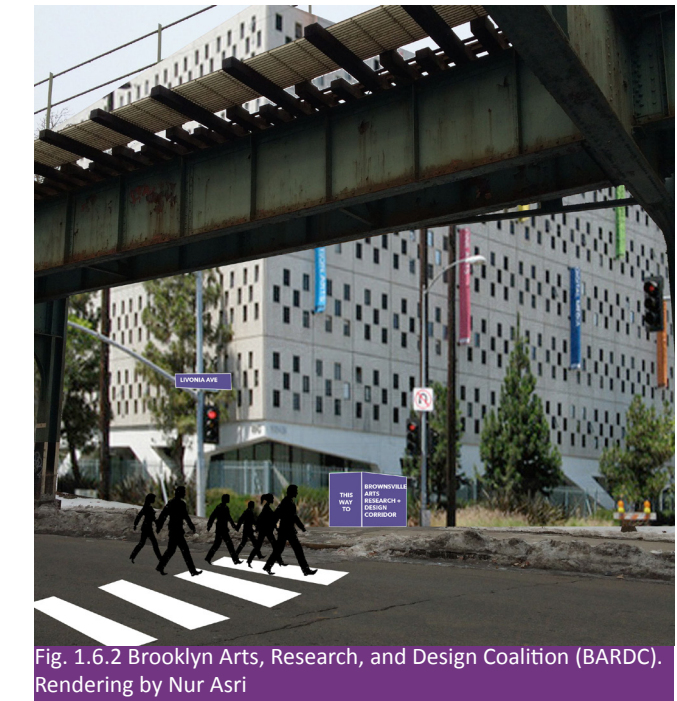


Fig. 1.6.2 Brooklyn Arts, Research, and Design Coalition (BARDC). Rendering by Nur Asri

## 1.6 APPLY FOR USE VARIANCE / REZONING: M-1 LIGHT MANUFACTURING



By mobilizing BARDC members to put their skills and knowledge in the arts and research fields to the production line, the newly-zoned light manufacturing lots will be able to spur economic development in a niche market of arts, research and design. Potential light manufacturing jobs in the design industry include material fabrication, furniture design and construction, and product design.

In addition, the use variance/ rezoning of Sites A, B, C, and D will support a new type of industry in the neighborhood—the clean industry. Clean industries refer to businesses that are involved in digitally-enabled cleantech innovation, or that use data and information technology to address environmental and energy concerns, including pollution prevention. Unfortunately, the clean industry has not had a strong presence in East Brooklyn. The closest incubator for such activities is located in downtown Brooklyn at the Clean Technology Entrepreneur Center.<sup>49</sup> Again, the change in land use on Sites A, B, C, and D will provide a multi-use space that supports early-stage companies showcasing cleantech innovation. This cleantech research and design activity will serve to complement other recommendations (Recommendation 4.1) put forth in this report.

### 1.6.2 Location

The advantage of siting the new light manufacturing sites (intended for BARDC activities) along Livonia Avenue was its accessibility to the existing Industrial Business Zone. As part of BARDC, East New York IBZ and East Brooklyn BID will be positioned to expand its ombudsman services and tax incentives to Sites A, B, C, and D in order to support its fellow Coalition members. More specifically, the sites were chosen due to their vacancy, ownership status and size. The vacant lots, totaling about 97,690 sq ft, are owned largely by Housing Preservation & Development and may be more easily leased by BARDC to construct facilities for members of the Coalition.

	Address	Zoning + Overlay	LandUse	OwnerType	OwnerName	LotArea
	580 SACKMAN STREET	C2-4/R6	Public Facilities/ Institution	Mixed Owner (Tax Exempt)	TABERNACLE BAPTIST CHURCH	6000
	LIVONIA AVENUE	C2-4/R6	Vacant Land	Public	HPD	979
SITE A	368 LIVONIA AVENUE	C2-4/R6	Vacant Land	Public	HPD	1391
	352 LIVONIA AVENUE	C2-4/R6	Vacant Land	Public	HPD	1600
	354 LIVONIA AVENUE	C2-4/R6	Vacant Land	Public	HPD	1600
	643 MOTHER GASTON BLVD	C2-4/R6	Vacant Land	Public	HPD	2500
	647 MOTHER GASTON BLVD	C2-4/R6	Vacant Land	Public	HPD	2000
	649 MOTHER GASTON BLVD	C2-4/R6	Vacant Land	Public	HPD	2000
SITE B	651 MOTHER GASTON BLVD	C2-4/R6	Vacant Land	Public	HPD	2000
	LIVONIA AVENUE	C2-4/R6	Vacant Land	Public	HPD	1600
	LIVONIA AVENUE	C2-4/R6	Vacant Land	Public	HPD	40000
	756 THOMAS S BOYLAND ST	R6	Vacant Land	Public	PARKS AND REC	1524
SITE C	754 THOMAS S BOYLAND ST	R6	Vacant Land	Public	PARKS AND REC	1488
	LIVONIA AVENUE	R6	Vacant Land	Public	HPD	10017
	LIVONIA AVENUE	C2-4/R6	Vacant Land	Private	AWAN ABDUL J	1600
	LIVONIA AVENUE	C2-4/R6	Vacant Land	Public	HPD	1391
SITE D	LIVONIA AVENUE	R6	Vacant Land	Public	HPD	20000
				Total:		97690

Fig. 1.6.3 Ownership status for new light manufacturing sites: A, B, C, and D – source: PLUTO

Finally, with BARDC manufacturing facilities located along the corridor, and the other arts-heavy initiative recommended in the report (Recommendation 3.1) can be easily supported through BARDC’s expertise and production. The current, unsafe condition of the thoroughfare will then be enhanced through this increased activity of work and play on Livonia Avenue.

## 1.6 APPLY FOR USE VARIANCE / REZONING: M-1 LIGHT MANUFACTURING



### 1.6.3 The Case for Light Manufacturing in R-6 Zones

Although light manufacturing activity within residential areas is not a strikingly new concept to Brownsville as shown below in Figure 1.6.4, BARDC must take the necessary steps to curb noxious uses and ensure protection of adjacent residents from contaminants and hazardous waste. As property managers, BARDC will be responsible for enforcing stringent performance standards and conducting annual checks on art and research tenants to ensure that only clean and sustainable machinery are operated on-site. Neighboring residents must also be consistently engaged with by BARDC and the land use committee of CB16 in order to ensure new light manufacturing lots are not causing hardship or being a nuisance to adjacent users.

#### Precedent rezoning case: Bathgate Industrial Park, Bronx

- 45 acres of residentially-zoned blocks re-zoned as M1-4 zones (Maantay, J. Industrial Zoning Changes in New York City);
- Unlike Recommendation 1.6, the case of Bathgate was not a community-based development scheme;
- It was strictly motivated by a top-down urban renewal scheme that aimed to replace deteriorating housing and exodus of population with industrial activity.
- Recommendation 1.6 will overcome the problems at Bathgate by supporting already growing local skills base in arts, research and design;
- Through the leadership and management of BARDC, the light manufacturing activities of the newly-rezoned lots will only prioritize arts-based/ design-based industries.

Overall, the use variance/ rezoning led by BARDC will introduce productive uses to vacant lots along Livonia Avenue that will expand and take advantage of the East New York IBZ resources, ombudsman services and tax incentives.



High cost

Long term

It will also create a niche employment sector for the region as the “Arts, Research and Design Corridor of East New York” and bring a steady stream of human activity to Livonia Ave, promoting “eyes on the street” safety under the elevated tracks. Finally, the rezoned lots will allow for higher retail activity in the southern residential half of Brownsville.

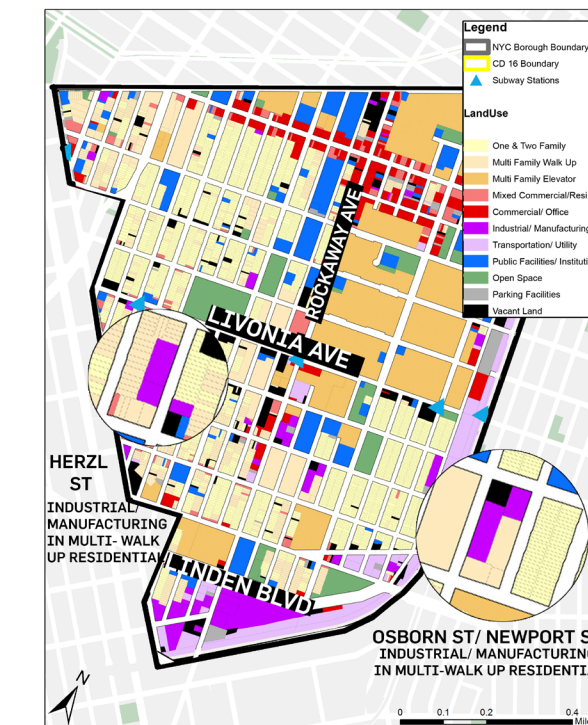


Fig. 1.6.4 Manufacturing on Rockaway Ave/Newport Ave, Osborn St/Newport Ave – source: PLUTO



Fig. 1.6.5 Bathgate Industrial Park. Image courtesy of The Port Authority of NY & NJ.



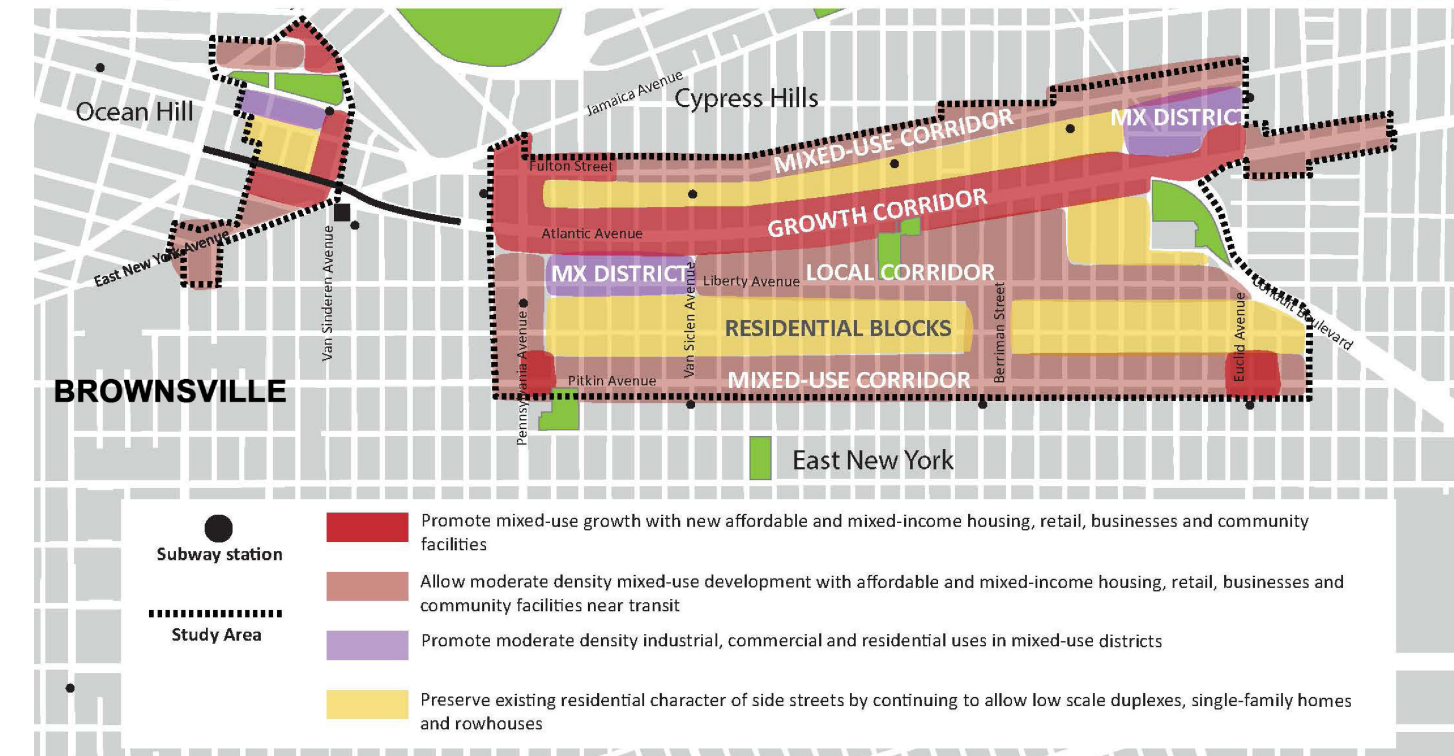
Mural on Belmont Avenue and Thatford Avenue in Brownsville. Image courtesy of NYRP.

## PRESERVE AFFORDABILITY AND FINANCIAL STABILITY

Affordability, in both the residential and commercial spheres, continues to be a major concern for the Brownsville community. In the residential sphere, the poverty rate is high and many residents pay a disproportionate amount of their household income on rent, even with a high rate of rent subsidy and affordable housing. In the commercial sphere, economic development initiatives may negatively impact affordability because small business owners and local entrepreneurs may be faced with an increase in rent.

For example, the de Blasio Administration has targeted parts of nearby East New York and Ocean Hill for growth (see map DCP, Sustainable Communities). The Department of City Planning is working with neighborhood residents, elected officials, and stakeholders to develop a coordinated, multi-agency plan to undertake rezoning.<sup>50</sup> The Mayor's housing plan aims to utilize mandatory inclusionary zoning, which provides for added development potential when an area is "upzoned". Under the plan, a developer will provide a proportionate number of 'affordable' housing units out of the total number built, in exchange for additional development rights, increasing the permitted size of any new building.<sup>51</sup> Critics of this approach argue that attracting higher-income residents into the neighborhood to rent or purchase market rate housing may fuel gentrification.<sup>52</sup> And Brownsville, which is served by both the L and the 3 transit lines, is ripe for transit-oriented development.<sup>53</sup>

### East New York Community Plan Planning Framework



Sustainable Communities Rezoning – source: NYC Department of City Planning, 2015.

# Objective : Preserve Affordability and Financial Stability

## PRESERVE AFFORDABILITY AND FINANCIAL STABILITY

Any increase in development will make the land more productive, likely resulting in an increase in land rent. Therefore, improvements to the neighborhood that make it more desirable may lead to higher prices for residential and commercial real estate. The difficulty will be to attract retail, service and other businesses without displacing current residents and business owners. In order to mitigate some of these negative effects we make the following recommendations:

- Promote Access to Financial Services for both small businesses and residents;
- Create Workshop to Increase Awareness of & Assistance in Applying for Rent Exemptions: NYC Rent Freeze Program;
- Encourage the Formation of a Coalition to Create a Community Land Trust; and
- Initiate Land Tax Reform by means of a Land Value Tax (LVT) and Tax Abatements.

### 2.1 PROMOTE ACCESS TO FINANCIAL SERVICES

To promote the growth of assets, affordability, and financial education in Brownsville a non-profit federal credit union could offer services in Brownsville. It would be to the benefit of residents and small businesses of Brownsville to have a trustworthy banking institution available that promotes transparent banking practices, fair lending, and financial advising, all while supporting the development of the surrounding community.

Due to high interest rates offered for personal loans (also known as payday loans), over-draft costs, excessive account fees, ATM surcharges, and other unnecessary costs, many low income individuals are unable to maintain bank accounts, or are ill advised on how to maintain an account, save for their futures, and learn money-saving techniques and debt reduction skills. A community credit union coop could allow for community members to both gain access to financial services and learn the tools they need to build their financial futures.

Brooklyn is one of the most unbanked and underbanked counties in the country. An unbanked individual does not have a checking or savings account while an underbanked individual has an account, but continues to rely on alternative financial services, like check-cashing services, payday loans, rent-to-own agreements or pawn shops.<sup>54</sup> Brooklyn is one of the top 10 Most Unbanked Counties with a population of over 100,000 households, 13.9% are unbanked and 22.5% are underbanked.<sup>55</sup>

The threat of online predatory pay day loans is also becoming more of a problem, as New York City has become more aggressive towards ending pay day loans with excessive interest rates. The city now faces additional hurdles to help protect residents from online scams.



Fig. 2.1.1 A sign at a furniture stores on Mother Gaston Boulevard informing customers that financing is available, whether or not you have good credit before 90 days. Image courtesy of Katherine Savarese



Fig. 2.1.2 Picture of the Chase Bank located at 1697 Pitkin Avenue, overflowing with customers trying to use the ATM on a Wednesday morning. Image courtesy of Katherine Savarese



## 2.1 PROMOTE ACCESS TO FINANCIAL SERVICES

### 2.1.1 Implementation

This recommendation is to encourage a banking institution to open a branch in Brownsville. The Brooklyn Cooperative Federal Credit Union is based in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood in Brooklyn, NY and would be an ideal candidate for a credit union cooperative that could open a branch in Brownsville.<sup>56</sup> The Brooklyn Cooperative Federal Credit Union also has a branch in the neighborhood of Bushwick.

Brooklyn Coop offers many services:

- Checking and Savings Accounts
- Personal Loans
- Small Business Loans
- Home Loans
- Bill Pay Assistance
- Financial Counseling
- Free Tax Service for Individuals and Low-Cost for Small Businesses
- Cash Checking
- Online Banking

Brownsville residents could have a financial institution that is accessible and as near to their homes as possible. In the commercial corridor alone, based on our field research, there are three major banking institutions currently operating, although it leaves many residents in the south of Brownsville without easy access to a bank.

Along the commercial corridors of Rockaway and Pitkin Avenues, according to our field study; 5 accounting agencies, 2 check cashing locations and 14 discount stores/pawn shops

All of the current banks in Brownsville are located on Pitkin Avenue. It would be most beneficial for a credit union to open on Rockaway Avenue closer to Livonia Avenue. The location of a bank branch in that junction would be more accessible to residents that live in the southern half of Brownsville, and it

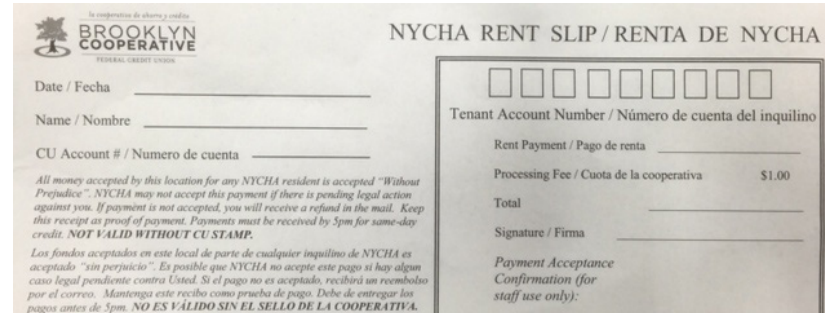


Fig. 2.1.4 A Bilingual NYCHA rent slip at the Brooklyn Cooperative that allows residents to pay rent to NYCHA directly through the Co-op. Image courtesy of Katherine Savarese



Fig. 2.1.5 M & S Bargain Hunters Store on 500 Rockaway Avenue that offers special financing for layaway offers with undetermined interest rates. Image courtesy of Katherine Savarese

would also help to stimulate the business near and underneath the train on Livonia Avenue. It would also be convenient for daily commuters to stop by a bank when traveling to or from work. According to our existing conditions report on the occupations of Brownsville residents, there are many people qualified to work at a bank that have to commute outside of the study area to find a similar job. A small financial institution in Brownsville can offer a living wage and benefits to about a dozen people.

Mid cost

Mid term



## 2.2 PROVIDE TRAINING TO INCREASE AWARENESS OF & ASSISTANCE IN APPLYING FOR RENT EXEMPTIONS: NYC RENT FREEZE PROGRAM

The NYC Rent Freeze Program is comprised of the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (“SCRIE”) and the Disability Rent Increase Exemption (“DRIE”). These programs assist eligible senior citizens and tenants with qualifying disabilities in staying in affordable housing by freezing their rent.<sup>57</sup> A property tax credit then covers the difference between the market rent increase and what the tenant is responsible for paying at the frozen rent amount.



Fig. 2.2.1 NYC Freeze Your Rent. Source: NYC Department of Finance.

To be eligible for SCRIE the tenant must:

- Be at least 62 years old;
- Be the Head of Household;
- Have a combined household income for all members of the household that is \$50,000 or less; and
- Spend more than one-third of monthly household income on rent.<sup>58</sup>

To be eligible for DRIE the tenant must:

- Be at least 18 years old;
- Be named on the lease or the rent order or have been granted succession rights in an eligible property;
- Have a combined household income that is \$50,000 or less;
- Spend more than one-third of monthly income on rent; and
- Must have been awarded one of the eligible government disability benefits.

These programs provide exemptions from all or part of certain rent increases if households meet certain criteria and live in privately owned government subsidized housing. To be covered by the program the household must be living in one of the following:

- Rent stabilized apartments;
- Rent controlled apartments;
- Rent regulated hotel units
- Mitchell-Lama, Limited Dividend, Redevelopment, Section 213 Cooperative or HDFC Cooperative Apartments.<sup>59</sup>

In order to utilize these programs applicants must affirmatively apply to the Department of Finance. Supporters of these programs state that they have been unused because many have not heard of them.<sup>60</sup> Brownsville has both a high percentage of senior citizens as well as a large amount of discouraged workers that are disabled.<sup>61</sup> Additionally, of the rental stock located in Community District 16, 32.7% is rent regulated and 20.2% is subsidized.<sup>62</sup> The number of individuals living in Brownsville that are rent burdened is higher than both New York City and Brooklyn and has risen in the years between 2005 and 2008.<sup>63</sup> Many Brownsville residents would serve to be protected from rent increases through these programs and as such it is recommended that Brownsville Partnership promote the use of these programs and assist residents in applying for these exemptions.

Organizing a workshop to increase awareness of and assistance in applying for rent exemptions would not be time consuming or expensive. Brownsville Partnership, in a one to three month time frame, would be able to identify community groups working with seniors and individuals with disabilities, to participate in planning and executing a workshop. Such groups include: the Brownsville Senior Center and the East New York/Brownsville Family Support Center. An initial meeting would then occur to discuss the process of applying for both rent exemptions. In addition to identification of individuals who would be willing to facilitate and assist in helping residents apply, the organizations could think of how to recruit other volunteers who would be willing to assist. A “train the trainers” event would occur next to ensure that the volunteers are familiar with the programs and the application process.



## 2.2 PROVIDE TRAINING TO INCREASE AWARENESS OF & ASSISTANCE IN APPLYING FOR RENT EXEMPTIONS: NYC RENT FREEZE PROGRAM

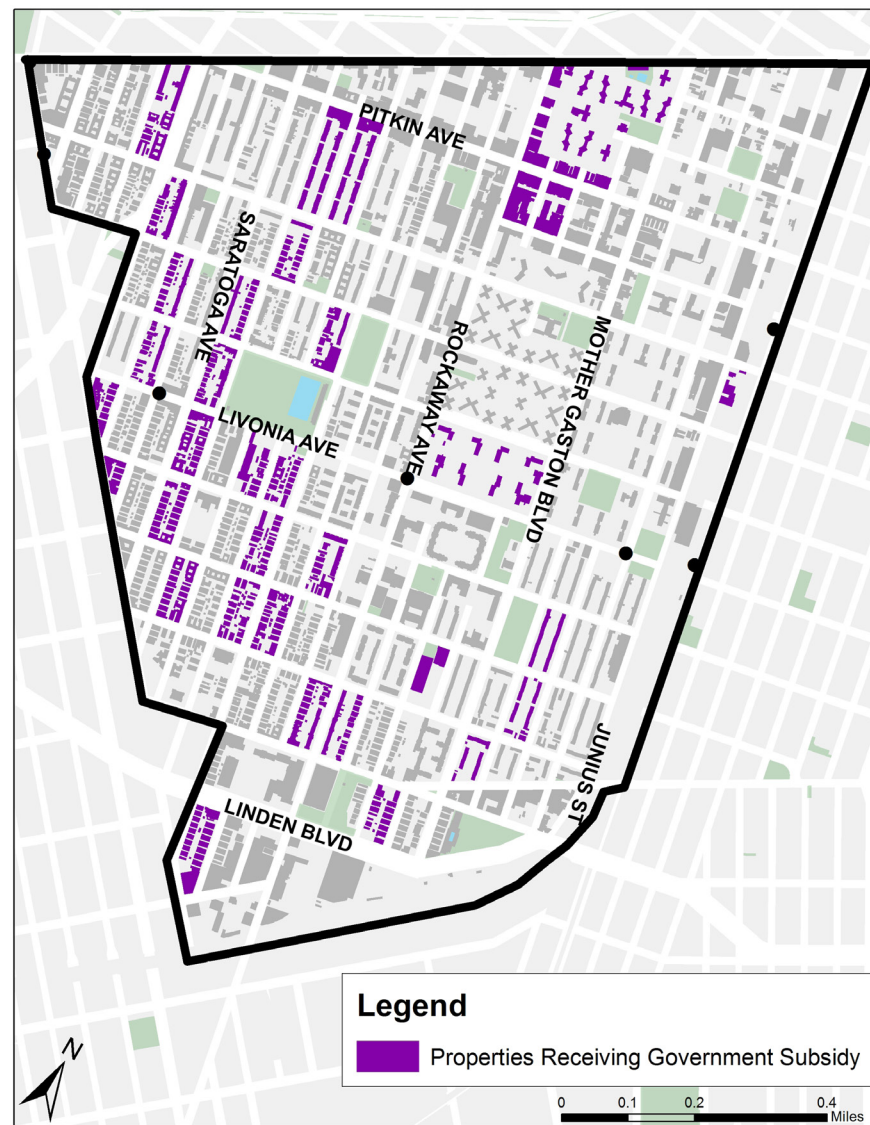


Fig. 2.2.2 Map of Properties Receiving Government Subsidies in Brownsville. Source: Data – Furman Center, Map – Pratt Institute.

Between months three and six the first workshop could be held. A location and time of convenience to those who would be eligible to apply are important. Brownsville Partnership could offer to make their facilities available for hosting and allow the group to decide the details regarding scheduling. The promotion of this workshop is important and should be extensive for even if individuals are not able to attend the workshop, the promotion of the event also serves to raise awareness of the existence of the programs so that even if residents are not able to attend they may apply individually. These workshops could be held one or two times a year in different locations.



Fig. 2.2.3 Senator Serrano hosted a free SCRIE workshop at the Hope of Israel Senior Center in the South Bronx. Source: Nysenate.gov



## 2.3 ENCOURAGE THE FORMATION OF A COALITION TO CREATE A COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

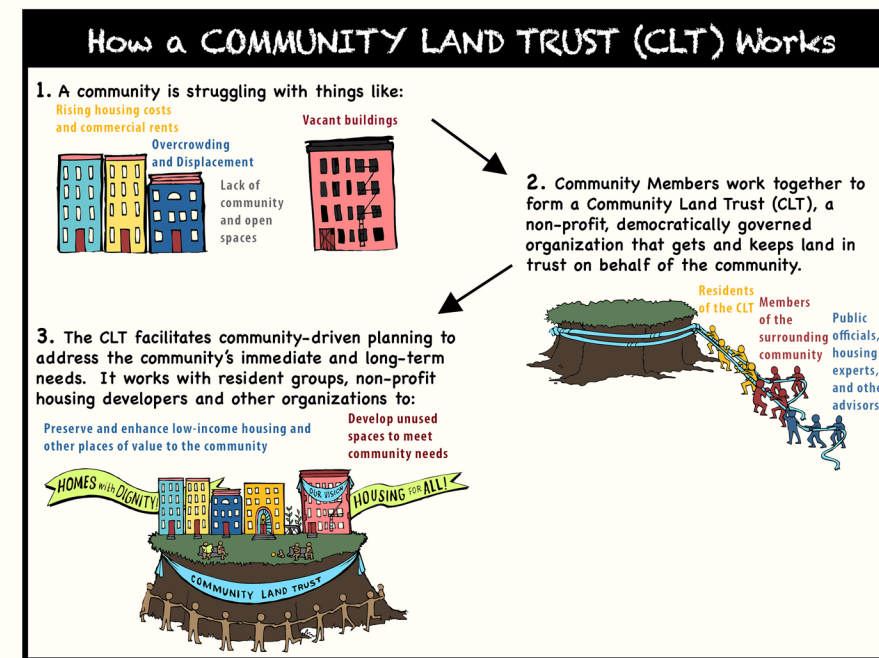


Fig. 2.3.1 How a CLT Works - source: NYC Community Land Initiative

A Community Land Trust (“CLT”) is a means of removing land from the speculative market and places it under the control of a community-based entity, typically a not-for-profit corporation. The entity keeps the land in a trust and the land is either (a) severed from any improvement on the land, meaning that any improvement on the land is sold as private property or (b) the CLT will provide a ground lease to the owner of the improvement on a parcel, which permits the improvement owner to have exclusive use of the parcel, in exchange for rent.<sup>64</sup> This tool allows the property to remain affordable even in the conditions of an appreciating market and for the community to enjoy any increase in rental income in order to fund community initiatives.

Typically, the not-for-profit corporate governance structure places an emphasis on resident and community control via mandating community representation on the Board of Directors.<sup>65</sup> The CLT is able to purchase or lease land, build or rehabilitate houses or apartment buildings and select homeowners who may generally not qualify for traditional home mortgages.<sup>66</sup> Additionally, studies have found that CLT home ownership lessens the chance of foreclosure and increases the chances of success among the population most at-risk of losing their homes.<sup>67</sup>

Brownsville is situated in close proximity to transit as well as being bordered by Crown Heights, where rent is quickly increasing<sup>68</sup> and East New York and Ocean Hill, both of which have been targeted by the Department Of City Planning for rezoning. Despite currently having a median rent that is lower than the median rent in Brooklyn and New York City, Brownsville contains a large number of household that are rent burdened or severely rent burdened.<sup>69</sup> Additionally, Brownsville contains more than 90 City-owned vacant lots. In light of these facts it is recommended that the Brownsville Partnership identify community organizations to partner with and establish a joint task force to coordinate to build awareness for the creation of a CLT. Such community partners may include: the Ocean Hill/Brownsville Neighborhood Improvement Association, N.Y. Communities for Change, the Mutual Housing Association N.Y. and the NYC Community Land Initiative. Upon building awareness the aim is to build a broad coalition that includes local community based organizations and interested local residents.



## 2.4 INITIATE LAND TAX REFORM BY MEANS OF A LAND VALUE TAX (LVT) AND TAX ABATEMENTS

New York City serves as a perfect example of where owners of highly productive land enjoy the rent derived from it.<sup>76</sup> This rent is caused by numerous advantages, some of which are provided for by the community where the land exists.<sup>77</sup> A look at tall office buildings in Manhattan will show such advantages in the form of subways, buses, streets, highways, sidewalks and even sewer and water services. These services make it possible for a dense population to converge on the area where those buildings are located. The community supplies the benefits; the landowner enjoys the high land rent from highly productive land as a result.

Moreover, building improvements and land are taxed at the same rate per \$1,000 of value (mill rate), yet we know that buildings wear out and depreciate, while land continues to increase in value with the passage of time. This is but one indication that the property tax system is out of sync with how things work. As stated by H. William Blatt, "Frequent, regular and accurate assessment of real estate is important to making taxes just."<sup>78</sup>

In New York City, the 421-A tax abatement program is set to expire amid ongoing controversy as to who benefits from it. What we do know is that it contributes to increases in both land productivity, hence land rent, by means of bonuses awarded to developers. According to The Real Deal, Governor Cuomo has promised to extend the abatement program if disputing parties do not reach a compromise.<sup>79</sup>

### Case Study:

Pittsburgh had been taxing land assessments at a rate higher than building assessments ever since 1915. In 2001, it lowered the land assessment rate to equal the building assessment rate. Over the next three-year, Pittsburgh suffered a 19.57% decrease\* in private new construction, compared to the previous three years, even though the value of nationwide construction increased 7.7%\* during the same period (\*inflation adjusted).<sup>80</sup>

If buildings are taxed more, less will be built because they effectively become more expensive. Taxing land more will encourage its fuller use and decrease land prices, because the net rent derived from it will be less, resulting in less land speculation and a more equitable share of rent going to the community that provided some of the advantages.

Therefore we make the following recommendations:

Advocate for the study between the relationships of tax abatements and LVTs with job creation in the building trades and the reduction of land speculation. This study should include the size and scope of the land, in order to see if small landowners should be awarded some exemption or relief.

Decide on an appropriate tax abatement program and lobby for it.

Lobby elected officials for an appropriate and effective LVT.

These objectives will work in conjunction with threats of gentrification, unemployment, and opportunities of revitalization of existing commercial corridors, such as Pitkin Avenue, by slowing the rise in land rent, reducing land speculation, increasing employment in the building trades, and helping the community recoup some of the advantages that it provides, in particular, in conjunction with a Community Land Trust (see CLT).

Assumptions: (1) Any land use analysis shall consider community benefit as part of highest and best use analysis. (2) The 421-A tax abatement program is not part of this recommendation.



## 2.3 ENCOURAGE THE FORMATION OF A COALITION TO CREATE A COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

The next step is to conduct feasibility and visioning workshops. The purpose of these workshops will be to gauge the long-term feasibility of the venture and utilize community expertise to best ensure that the CLT is structured in such a way that is context-sensitive. Many different goals have been addressed by CLTs and, should one be created in Brownsville, the goal will be identified in the community workshops. Different goals which then lead to different CLT models include: protecting tenants, keeping homeowners in their present home, and finding new homeownership opportunities in previously vacant land for low-income families (both for renting and homeownership).<sup>70</sup>

Acquisition and financing strategies will vary depending on the goal of the CLT and while financing and capital resources exist the costs will likely be high. Particularly in NYC acquisition costs can be a serious impediment to the creation of a CLT. The transfer of City- or State-owned land is generally the cheapest option, and as such advocating for a city policy to give long abandoned/unused property to CLTs for management is advised.<sup>71</sup> Additionally, all non-market forms of housing tenure must fight for funding, lender cooperation, and a politically sustainable position. In addition to high costs the length of time to create an operating CLT is likely to take many years.

### Case Study:

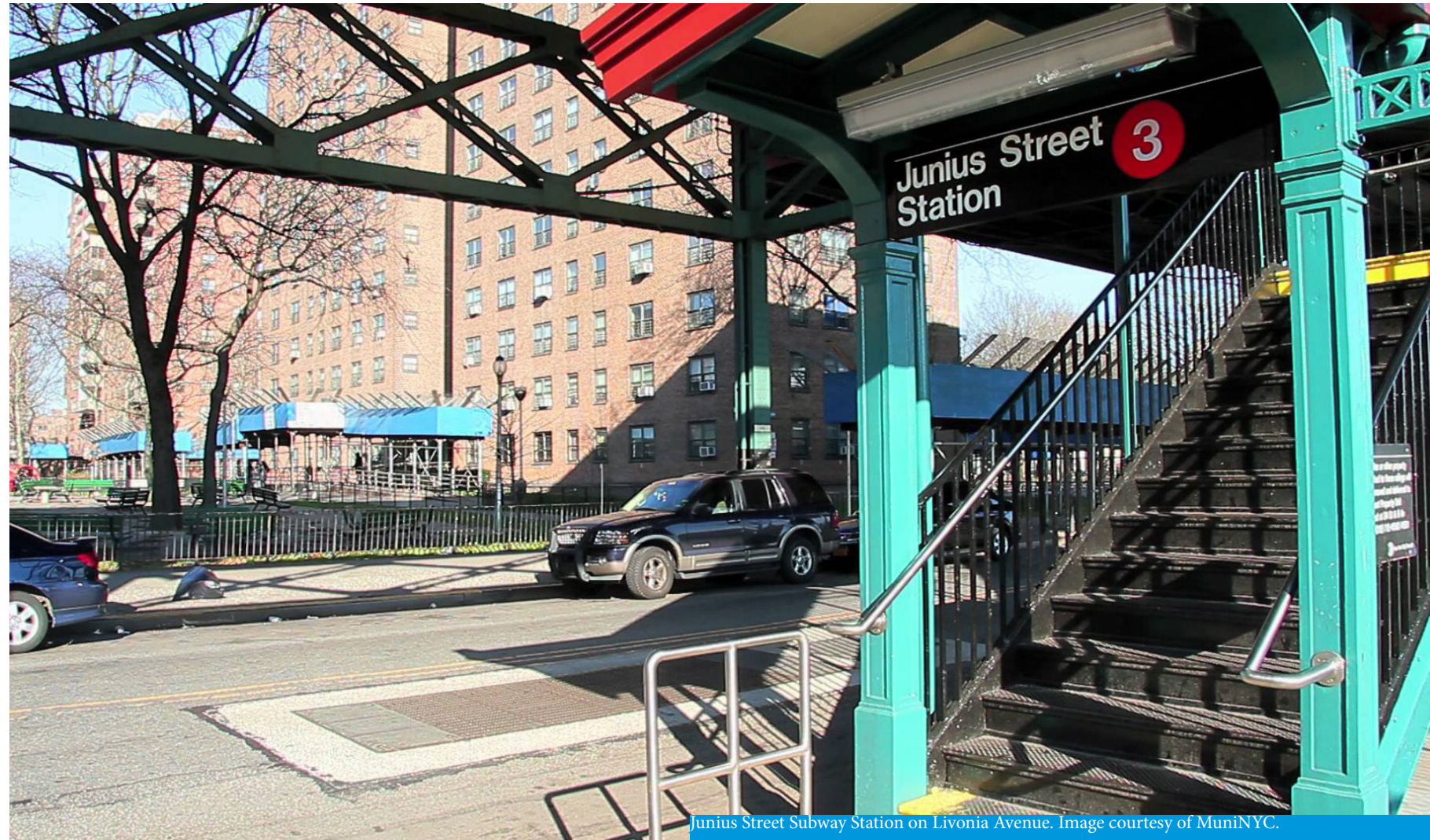
In 1984, the Boston Redevelopment Authority announced plans to redevelop Dudley Street. The community feared displacement and the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative ("DSNI") was subsequently formed.<sup>72</sup> DSNI worked closely with the community, the government and developers to formulate a comprehensive master plan and the formation of a CLT was one of the tools used.<sup>73</sup> The DSNI plan required that all land acquired by DSNI was put into a separate legal entity to make land available for the construction of affordable housing, community facilities, and open space.<sup>74</sup> Acquisition of land had City government support with the Boston Redevelopment Authority giving DSNI the power of eminent domain to acquire vacant land. The land was owned by the CLT; however the residents owned the buildings either as individuals or as cooperative units. Financing was secured of more than \$50 million from a variety of sources, including the Ford Foundation, the City of Boston, HUD, and the Community Investment Coalition. Among the accomplishments of the CLT are the more than 1,300 abandoned parcels that have been transformed into over 400 high quality affordable houses, community centers, new schools, Dudley Town Common, community greenhouses, parks, playgrounds, gardens and other public space.<sup>75</sup>



Fig. 2.3.2 Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative. Photo Courtesy of Boston Globe, 2012







Junius Street Subway Station on Livonia Avenue. Image courtesy of MuniNYC.

## IMPROVE MOBILITY, SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Stress caused by worrying about safety when walking through one's own neighborhood is an issue bigger than just safety, mobility, and accessibility; it is an issue concerning one's quality of life. This objective concentrates on how the built environment of Brownsville makes it difficult for many of its residents to get what they need and even just engage as a part of the community around them because of the need for greater public security, pedestrian-oriented infrastructure, and revitalized vacant areas.

The stigma of an unsafe area often relates to the perceived level of neglect of vacant properties, sidewalks, and public spaces. As part of our research, stakeholder interviews, and feedback from our client, we noted that there are issues of territorial conflict around NYCHA developments in particular, and NYPD crime statistics showed a higher rate of crime around these superblocks than around the regular city blocks.<sup>81</sup> These concerns were echoed by residents of the Van Dyke Houses, a NYCHA development, in the report, Next Generation NYCHA: A Community Vision for Van Dyke Houses. Residents identify the vacant lots and lack of lighting along Livonia Avenue in particular as an area of concern for public safety.<sup>82</sup>

The recommendations detailed in the following pages start off by capturing the momentum of the urban art movement in Brownsville and directing it at the Livonia corridor under the elevated train tracks, to not only illuminate the area but make it a destination that has been brought to life. Additionally, organizing community walks through this corridor will put eyes on the street while also activating unused spaces with potential for economic development. At the same time these walks will bring together community members of all ages, promote physical fitness, and shed light on how important having safe pedestrian infrastructure is to a neighborhood's quality of life. When these recommendations are complemented with the application for Brownsville to become a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC), it is our hope that the issues of mobility will also be addressed for Brownsville's larger than average senior population, who are most vulnerable to the physical accessibility challenges of the area. This includes the fact that none of the seven subway stations in the study area are handicap accessible. Overall, the objective is meant to improve each of the identified issues of access, mobility, and safety, and thereby empower residents to take back the streets of their neighborhood and facilitate community engagement and cultural preservation. Below are the recommendations for Objective 3:

- Transform Livonia Avenue Using Urban Art Initiatives;
- Create an Inter-generational Community Walking Group; and
- Advocate for the Establishment of a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC), within a NYCHA Development or Building.

# Objective 3: Improve Mobility, Safety and Accessibility

### 3.1 TRANSFORM LIVONIA AVENUE USING URBAN ART INITIATIVES



Livonia Avenue is a major corridor that runs through the center of Brownsville. This avenue serves the residents of the community as a mini-commercial corridor, and as a transportation HUB with access to the 3 line. The elevated rail hovers above the entire length of Livonia Avenue in Brownsville. Unfortunately, the streetscape is highly impacted by this infrastructure and suffers effects such as lack of natural light, poor air quality, noise pollution, and an unsafe environment for pedestrians. See the figures below:



Fig. 3.1.1 Livonia Avenue and Saratoga Avenue. Image courtesy of PSPD.

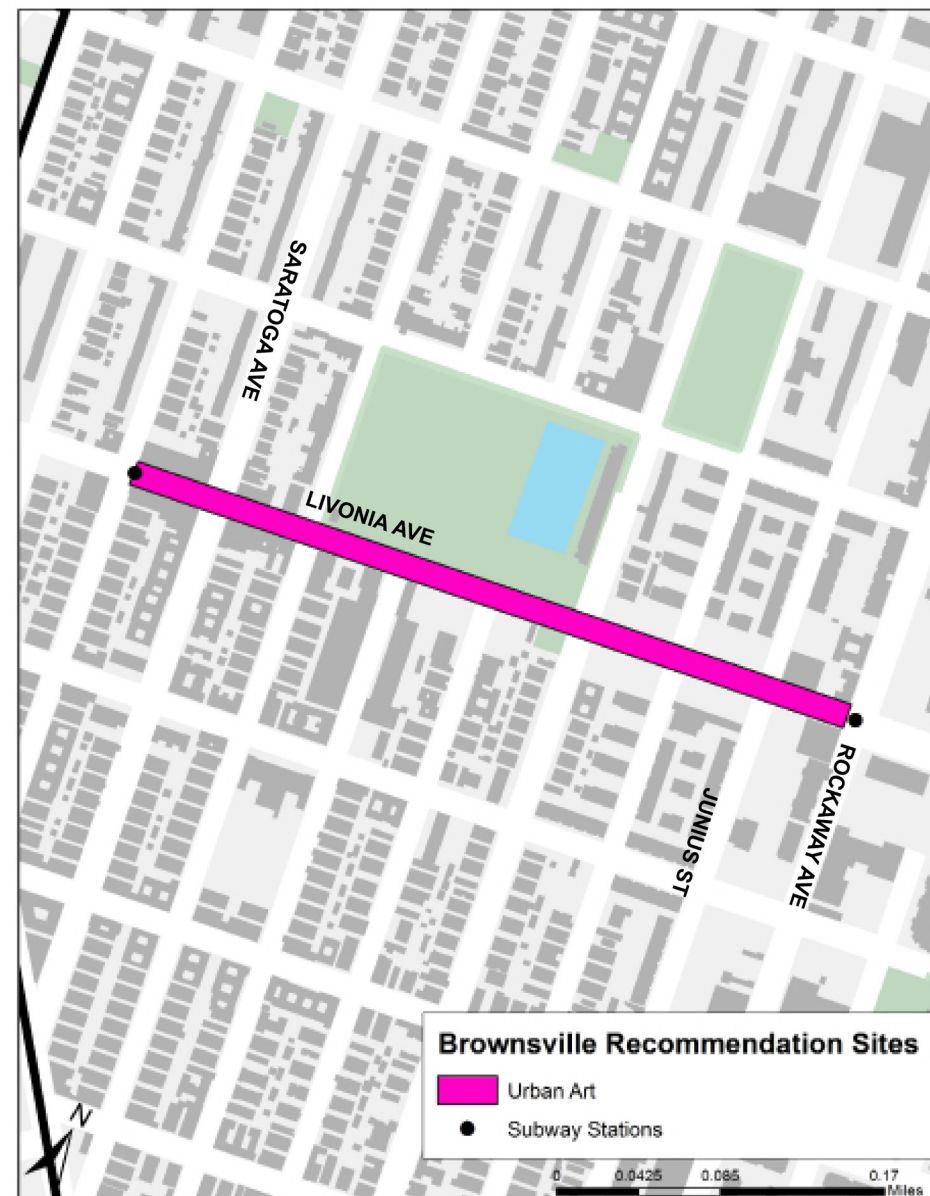


Fig. 3.1.2 Location of Urban Art initiatives along Livonia Avenue – source: PLUTO

### 3.1 TRANSFORM LIVONIA AVENUE USING URBAN ART INITIATIVES



Urban art installation is an affordable and time efficient strategy to not only beautify the space, but also build a strong cultural identity and presence of community organizations, as well as improve walkability, safety, and connection to commercial corridors in Brownsville. Brownsville Partnership may initiate an art coalition district-wide with existing organizations, such as, Groundswell, Municipal Art Society, and Young New Yorkers; and facilitate the involvement of the youth community to transform this corridor into an attractive pedestrian friendly area by implementing urban art initiatives along Livonia Avenue between Rockaway Avenue and Legion Street.

#### Tentative Organization Participants

Today the Municipal Art Society of New York partners with Brownsville Partnership to use “Culture as a Catalyst in Brownsville”. The Culture as Catalyst program aims to stimulate Brownsville’s local economy and create a sense of place by expanding the arts community in Brownsville.<sup>83</sup> The findings and progress of this program can be applied to the continuation of this partnership as well as expanding into a larger art coalition in order to further unite the community with its deep cultural history.

Groundswell practices “Using art as a tool for Social Change”. This initiative works with the youth community to strengthen economic activity, reduce crime, stimulate civic engagement, and reach equity using mural art.<sup>84</sup> Groundswell shares the focus on art as a tool in community planning and may serve as an important resource for its connections and expertise.

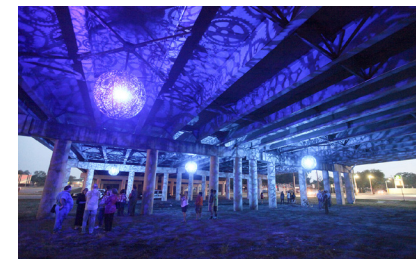
Young New Yorkers provides art programming to the Brownsville NeOn community, specifically residents on probation. Their “Transforming Futures” program seeks to transform the future of Brownsville with the focus on gun violence within the community. For example, their art initiative includes photography, film, illustration, and design to tell local stories followed by a final public exhibition of artwork.<sup>85</sup> Their notable relationship with residents of the Brownsville community in their art work may serve as a resource for participating residents to drive urban art initiatives in these projects.

A potential source of financial funding for these initiatives can be the NYC Department of Transportation Art. This agency program currently partners

with community-based organizations within the five boroughs to execute transformation of public space through related strategies such as installing projected lighting, mural art and sculptures on public infrastructure.

#### Urban Art Initiative Programming

Participating organizations in the coalition are encouraged to conduct outreach to youth community members from previous personal projects. Additional youth members may be contacted through educational facilities throughout the community. Youth community driven design provides an opportunity for the community to express a specific message such as an issue and/or goal, celebrate culture and unite residents, and have full control over the transformation process of their neighborhood. It is encouraged for the facilitating organizations to focus on light and sculptural installations for this specific corridor. Artistic lighting provides needed additional lighting under the elevated rail for pedestrians; these fixtures may be switched out bi-annually or added to as desired. Sculpture has the ability for more permanent change to the streetscape and physically transforms the space into an attractive area. A change in physical streetscape such as this serves as an incentive to keep the area clean and healthy. The increased lighting and pedestrian traffic increases safety in that it improves visibility and provides community engagement. (See Figures 3.1.3 and 3.1.4)



Figures 3.1.3 and 3.1.4 Envisioning urban art installations. Images courtesy of Fred Gonzales (left) and Akron Children’s Hospital (right).

### 3.1 TRANSFORM LIVONIA AVENUE USING URBAN ART INITIATIVES



The large elevated infrastructure provides this program with an exciting amount of blank canvas for installations of all sizes. Urban art installations are encouraged to be practiced year-long through a series of mini-projects. At the completion of each installation, the coalition could organize a community gathering event open to the public to share their work and celebrate Brownsville. At grand opening events the art coalition is encouraged to scout more residents and share with the public the opportunity they have to participate in future installations. On request this section beneath the elevated rail may be used for any other events carried out by organizations and residents.

In addition, with the cooperation of the Department of Transportation the art coalition can apply for the subject section of Livonia Avenue to be closed to vehicular traffic for allocated time frames. This will further provide incentives for the community to utilize and enjoy the area, as well as build community engagement.

#### Initiative Phases

We propose that Brownsville Partnership takes initiative in the formation of an art coalition with these organizations, and we encourage the Brownsville Partnership to work closely with the Brownsville youth community in order to reach the common goal of transforming the neighborhood. The formation of a Brownsville art coalition will provide the community with necessary resources and funding to alleviate the existing conditions of Livonia Ave in affordable and short-term implementation processes such as:

#### Phase 1:

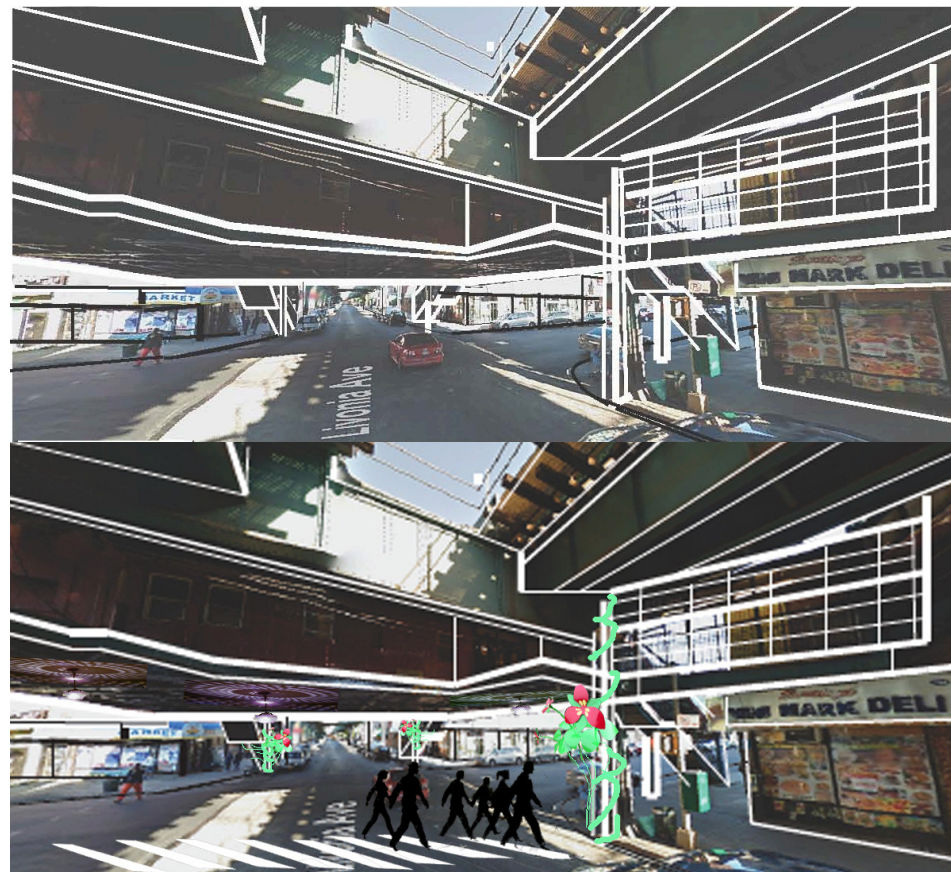
- Formation of Art Coalition;
  - o Brownsville Partnership + Municipal Art Society;
  - o Groundswell;
  - o Young New Yorkers;
  - o DOT Art;
- Youth community outreach;
- Facilitation for youth driven design installations.

#### Phase 2:

- Install finalized urban art projects to the subject streetscape on Livonia Avenue;
- At completion send press releases to residents inviting them to a grand opening event;
- Aim to change artistic light installations at least 2x a year;
- Add new installations to site as desired (encouraged year round);
  - o Host public showing upon each new set of installations;
  - o Conduct community outreach at each event for future projects.

#### Phase 3:

- Contact Department of Transportation for allocated pedestrian time zones.



Figures 3.1.5 and 3.1.6 Before and after renderings of Livonia Avenue's art installation. Images courtesy of Google Maps and renderings by Gabrielle Sallows

### 3.1 TRANSFORM LIVONIA AVENUE USING URBAN ART INITIATIVES



#### Case Studies

Pratt Institute in December 2013 completed an art installation in Fort Greene Brooklyn under the BQE to address similar existing conditions. The "Silent Lights" project is a combination of both lighting and sculpture that creates an engaging pedestrian pathway underneath the overpass and showcases the presence of pedestrians.<sup>86</sup> (Fig. 3.2.4 Silent Lights Fort Greene).



Fig 3.1.7 Silent lights installation in Fort Greene – source: myrtleavenue.org.

Low cost

Short term

### 3.2 CREATE AN INTER-GENERATIONAL COMMUNITY WALKING GROUP



This recommendation addresses the stigmatization of danger and the area's high crime rate by organizing an event that brings together citizens, old and young, to walk together from schools and community facilities through the large public housing blocks to the commercial corridor of Pitkin. See Figure 3.2.1 for a proposed route for the Walking Group.

The walks encourage physical activity to increase public health, establish walkable routes, connect neighbors to open spaces and commercial corridors, and reinforce strong cultural identity and the presence of community organizations, while fostering mentorship and relationships between the elderly and the youth of Brownsville (see Census Tracts 910 and 912 in Figure 3.2.2 below). Located in an area with a high concentration of senior residents, the walking route activates the Livonia corridor where public art is proposed as well as new commercial activity created by the Brownsville Arts, Research, and Design Coalition (BARDC) under our previous recommendations.

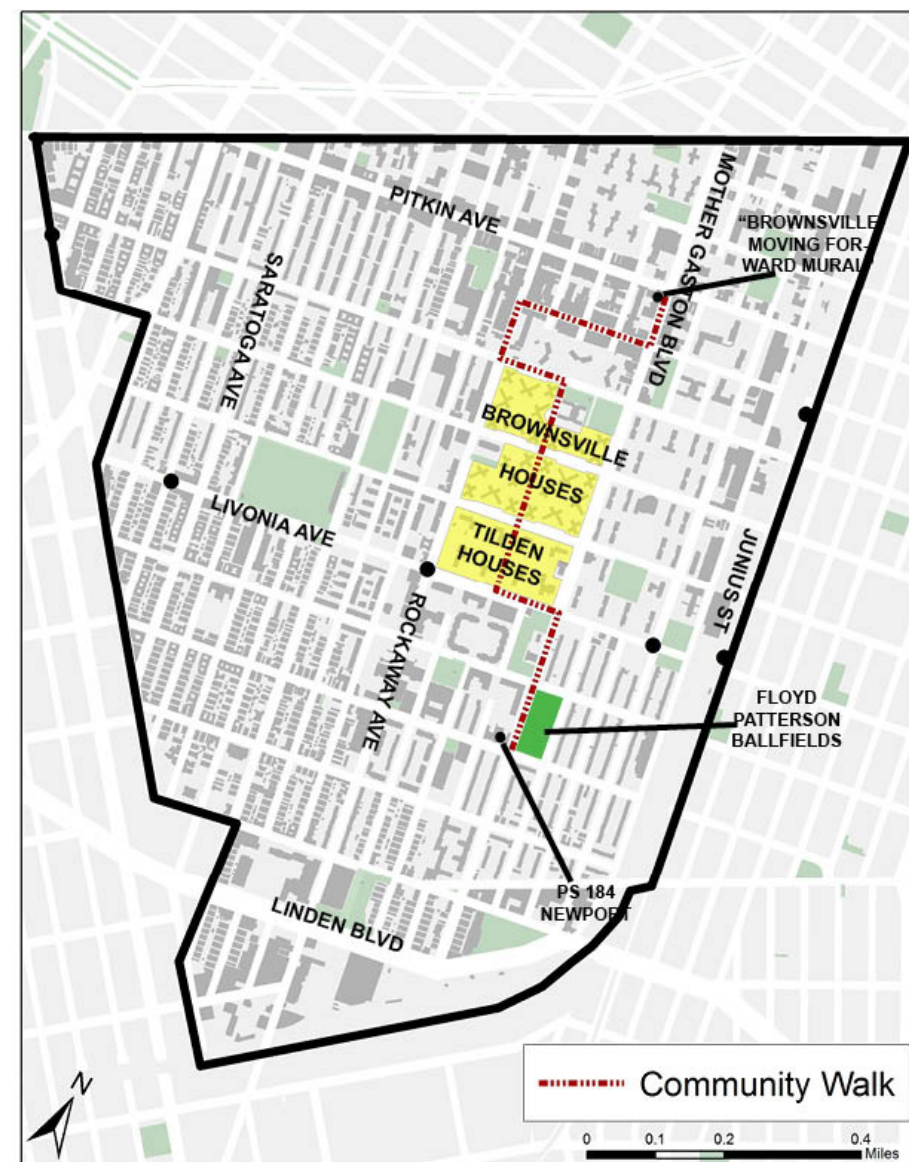


Fig. 3.2.1 Proposed community walking route in Brownsville – source: NYC Department of City Planning, 2015.

### 3.2 CREATE AN INTER-GENERATIONAL COMMUNITY WALKING GROUP

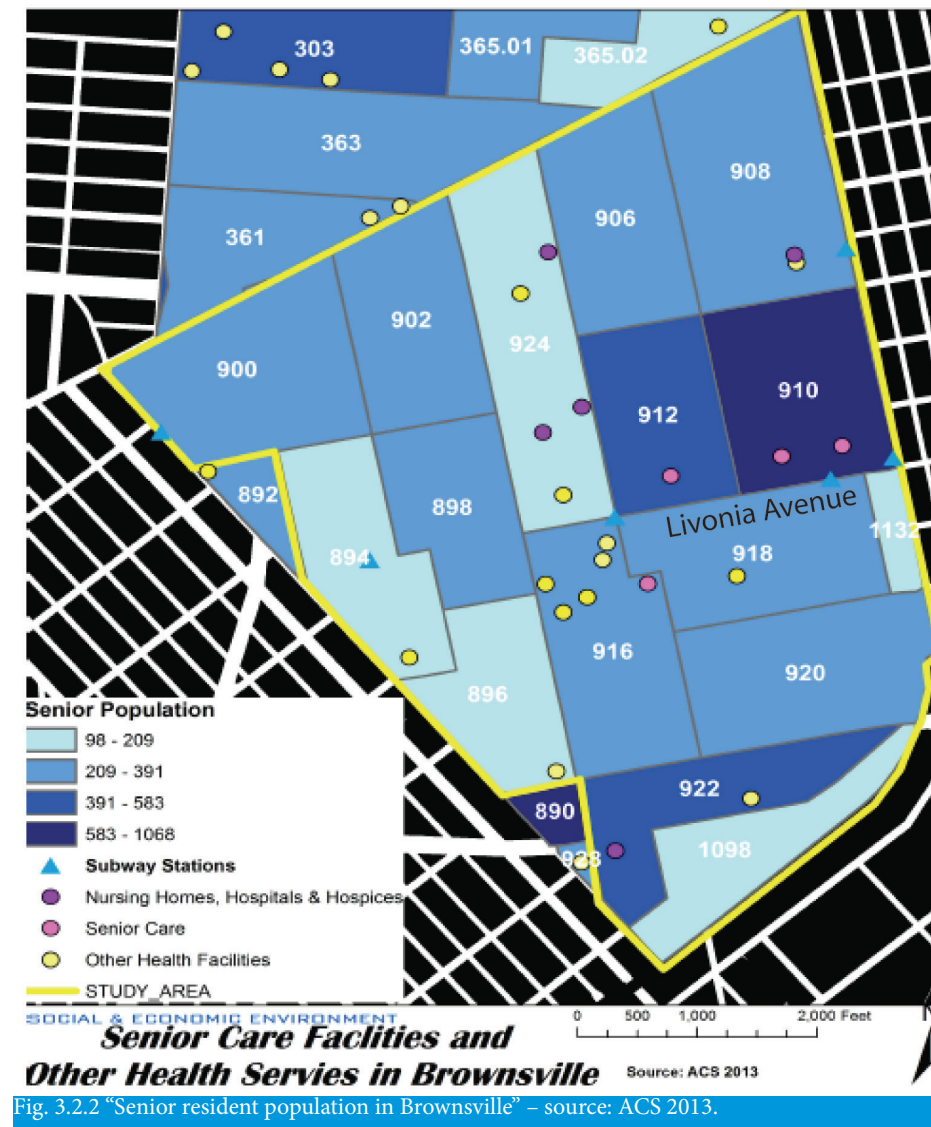


Fig. 3.2.2 "Senior resident population in Brownsville" – source: ACS 2013.

The creation of a walking group could be facilitated by the Brownsville Partnership's senior walking group "Walk the Ville" (see Figure 3.2.3 below), community groups focused on physical activity, and a local community youth group. The route will trace the already existing community trail through the NYCHA developments of the Tilden and Brownsville Houses, bring activity to Belmont Avenue, and connect the school PS 184 to the Brownsville Moving Forward mural on Pitkin Avenue and Mother Gaston Blvd.



Fig. 3.2.3 "Walk the Ville" senior walking group. Image courtesy of DNAinfo New York.

We recommend that the Brownsville Partnership reach out to "Walk the Ville", running groups, recreation centers, senior facilities, and youth facilities potentially willing to participate in planning and executing the walks in hopes of establishing a self-sustaining, community-led and intergenerational walking group. The proposed route could be altered to connect other essential resources in Brownsville, including open space, commercial corridors, community facilities, and landmarks of historical significance, such as the Betsy Head Memorial Playground and the Brownsville Heritage House. Once established, the group can take over in planning and hosting walks and even lend itself to clean-up events along the pathways to encourage environmental stewardship, community



### 3.3 ADVOCATE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATURALLY OCCURRING RETIREMENT COMMUNITY (NORC), WITHIN A NYCHA DEVELOPMENT OR BUILDING

A NORC is a building, development or neighborhood that was not originally built for senior citizens, but is currently home to a significant number of seniors, yet still remains multigenerational. NORCs continue to morph over time and typically have numerous senior residents of various ages, ranging from 60 to 85 years plus, indicating the need for a variety of services.

In the Existing Conditions Report, we cited numerous factors, including the fact that approximately 10% of the Brownsville population is 65 years of age or older, and 35% are between 35 and 64 years of age according to the American Community Survey (ACS) of the US Census. As this latter population segment ages, the number of seniors will significantly increase. Moreover, if we link other factors cited in the report, such as rates of poverty, rent and severe rent burden, unemployment, lack of skilled labor, we can see a number of opportunities, in conjunction with serving the aging segment of the population.

Therefore we recommend the goal of gaining NORC status/certification, by the certifying agencies within the New York State and New York City, Offices for the Aging, in order to provide benefits including:

- Access to health and social services within a building, development and the neighborhood;
- Have meals delivered to elderly at low or no cost;
- Determine what type of care is appropriate and provide such care, through a NORC program, including: self-care, community care, medical care, improve quality of life by providing empowering activities for seniors, and address chronic conditions suffered by 80% of seniors, including loneliness and depression;<sup>87</sup>
- Education for continued employment in the work force;
- Investigate affordable housing alternatives for the single household senior, such as micro housing, single room occupancy, (SRO) and ¾ housing;
- Establish a Brownsville Senior Center;
- Establish an urban farm on a NYCHA property;

- Promote SCRIE, which exempts seniors from rent increases;
- Social engagements and field trips and other activities.

The establishment of a NORC in Brownsville presents opportunities to help mitigate threats and weaknesses such as unemployment, by providing employment in the elder care field; gentrification, by providing alternative housing and exemption of rent increases, increased fresh food, through urban farms, possibly on NYCHA land and a more socially integrated population within the Brownsville community. Noteworthy is that many Brownsville senior citizens are immigrants from agrarian countries with a wealth of agricultural experience.

Case Study:

The Stanley Isaacs Senior Center, 415 East 93rd St, NYC. This center serves more than 2,000 low-income seniors within the Yorkville and Spanish Harlem neighborhood (approximately 700 are within the NYCHA development located at the above address). This is a good model and is similar to NYCHA developments within Brownsville. Visit <https://www.isaaccenter.org/programs/seniors.htm>

Other resources:

Prof. Gita Nandan, Pratt Institute: [gndan@pratt.edu](mailto:gndan@pratt.edu)  
 The Thread Collective: <http://threadcollective.com/>  
 “Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities Farms.” Retrieved from <http://www.oneprize.org/semifinalistspdf/1048a.pdf> (April 2015).

Medium cost  
 Long term

### 3.2 CREATE AN INTER-GENERATIONAL COMMUNITY WALKING GROUP



responsibility, and a way for residents to take ownership of their shared spaces.

This recommendation requires only short-term implementation; 1-3 months for planning, hosting the event, and following up (dependent on weather and season). It also can be implemented at a very low cost for: meeting space; materials for mapping (ex: Google maps online, paper printouts of event notes, markers to highlight routes); if staff members or participants already have smartphones with cameras they can use them for photographing walks; materials for clean-up and beautification including trash bags, gloves, gardening tools, etc.

Impacts (how could it benefit the community):

- Unites two vulnerable and prominent groups of the area, the elderly and the youth, which can engage each other in a dialogue of each group’s diverse Brownsville experiences and knowledge, old and new;
- Breaks down the barriers of territorial borders and perceptions of danger by putting eyes on the street and walkways;
- Connects residents across Brownsville’s superblocks of public housing to open spaces, commercial corridors, and vital community facilities
- Physically engages adults and children, setting a precedent valuing the importance of exercise in an area where obesity is a major concern as cited by our client and existing conditions research.
- Foster an appreciation of Brownsville’s history, including how the past can bring an understanding of the present and a vision for what the community wants to create for the future.

Case study:

- New Rochelle, “Walk-Abouts” – New Rochelle Communities for All Ages (NRCCS): this community organization puts on these walking events that incorporate historical sites and historians as guides. They involve photographing the sites along the walk, conducting informal interviews with long-time residents, and filling out an inventory form identifying places of social, historical, commercial, or religious significance. The walks are open to all ages, and one in particular started

from an elementary school similar to the proposed route in Brownsville with it starting from PS 184 Newport. For more information, see: <http://communitiesforallages.org/new-rochelle/our-initiative>; and <http://www.newrochellecommunityservices.org/about/about-new-rochelle-all-ages.htm>

Other Resources and References:

- Penn State Extension – Intergenerational Program, “Intergenerational Activities Sourcebook.” Retrieved from <http://extension.psu.edu/youth/intergenerational> (April 2015).
- Peter Blaze Corcoran, Brandon Hollingshead, & Joseph Weakland, “To Walk Together: Intergenerational Learning and Transformative Leadership” Florida Gulf Coast University – Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education.” Retrieved from <http://www.fgcu.edu/CESE/images/Corcoran-Intergenerational-Learning-Introduction.pdf> (April 2015).
- ACLA, “Wise Walk” in Allegheny County.” Retrieved from [http://aclalibraries.org/libraries\\_in\\_the\\_news/press-release-wise-walk-program-invites-older-adults-in-allegheny-county-to-get-moving-and-stay-healthy/](http://aclalibraries.org/libraries_in_the_news/press-release-wise-walk-program-invites-older-adults-in-allegheny-county-to-get-moving-and-stay-healthy/) (April 2015).

Low cost  
 Short term



Maggie Joyner in Phoenix Community Garden in Brownsville. Image courtesy of New York Bounty Blog.

## Objective 4: Alleviate Environmental Health Burdens

## ALLEVIATE ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH BURDENS

The existing conditions in Brownsville show that there are many challenges and risks stemming from environmental burdens in the study area. The lack of green recreational space, inadequate affordable fresh produce, and the location in a storm surge zone create threats to Brownsville's residents. Recommendations in this section aim to mitigate these conditions by increasing green and permeable surfaces to absorb stormwater, reduce the urban heat island effect, and beautify the neighborhood. In addition, the goal is to improve public health by creating access to stronger healthcare, health education, and healthy foods. Finally, supporting and strengthening community gardens will address many of the above issues while connecting residents to the earth and to each other. The recommendations for Objective 4 include:

- Support Cleanup and Redevelopment Efforts of Brownfield Sites;
- Increase the Use of Open Spaces and Vacant Lots for Community Gathering Use;
- Increase Access to Health Care Services;
- Improve Public Health through Healthier Eating;
- Encourage Green Infrastructure and Mitigate Impacts of Climate Change;
- Reduce Costs by Increasing Energy Efficiency in Buildings; and
- Create a Committee to Link and Expand all the Existing Community Gardens and Farmers Markets.



## 4.1 SUPPORT CLEANUP AND REDEVELOPMENT EFFORTS OF BROWNFIELD SITES

Once these sites have been remediated, Brownsville Partnership can work to increase investment into the area to redevelop this underutilized land for commercial, public space, or light manufacturing.

- In our own recommendations, we propose preserving some of these sites for public space (see 4.2: Expand the use of open spaces and vacant lots for community gathering)
- A majority of these sites also fall within the East New York Industrial Business Zone; the zone is protected as an industrial/manufacturing district.<sup>91</sup> While this area cannot be zoned for residential, there are many opportunities for commercial activities, an expansion of light manufacturing, and certain community facilities, as well as open space.

There are a number of resources that would help Brownsville Partnership accomplish all of these steps along the way:

- NYC Office of Environmental Remediation: NYC Brownfield Incentive Grant (BIG) Program  
This grant provides opportunities specifically for property owners and developers “for brownfield investigation and cleanup activities throughout the development process, from the earliest stages of information gathering and liability assessment, through environmental investigation and cleanup.”<sup>92</sup> This grant will aide BP in developing a feasibility study to further research potentially contaminated brownfields.
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation: The Brownfield Cleanup Program  
Once it has been determined that there is environmental contamination this grant can be used to clean up those vacant lots.

⌚ ⌚ ⌚ High cost  
⌚ ⌚ ⌚ Long term

## 4.1 SUPPORT CLEANUP AND REDEVELOPMENT EFFORTS OF BROWNFIELD SITES



The Department of State defines brownfields as “dormant properties where contamination or perceived contamination has impeded investment and redevelopment, making them an economic an environmental drain on localities.”<sup>88</sup>

There are several vacant properties within Brownsville that are located in industrial zoned areas along the eastern border and southern tip of the neighborhood (see Fig 1).

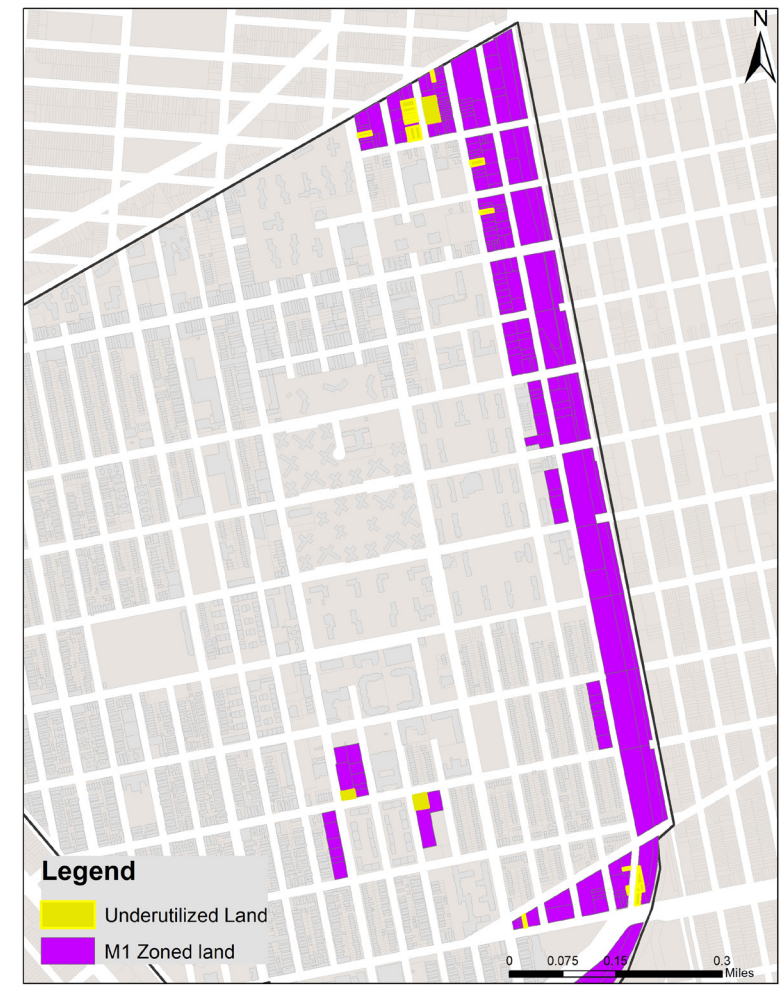


Fig. 4.1.1 Potential Brownfield locations in Brownsville - source: PLUTO

Due to their proximity in a historically industrial area, these lots have the potential to be contaminated with toxins harmful to human health and the environment. If these lots were to be redeveloped, lingering toxins could affect the people who use that space and the surrounding area, endangering the community and adding to existing public health problems. These underutilized lots are currently an eyesore to the existing community and have become an economic and environmental burden. However, through brownfield redevelopment, they have the potential to be remediated and turned into community assets. Once remediated, there is the possible option for further developing the land, either for open space or for economic development. Brownfield Redevelopment programs offer an important tool to revitalize areas that have been hit by disinvestment, such as Brownsville.<sup>89</sup>

### 4.1.1 Implementation

Timeline: Long term  
Cost: High, but fully fundable

#### Phase 1: Research

We propose that Brownsville Partnership complete additional research into the history and usage of the vacant lots in this area to determine if the land is in fact contaminated, and remediation is required.

- o 32 of these lots, encompassing 1.59 acres of land along the eastern section of Brownsville, fall under the East New York Brownfield Opportunity Area, which was applied for by the Local Development Corporation of East New York (LDCENY) back in 2004. Brownsville could partner with LDCENY to improve upon research that may have already been completed.

#### Phase 2: Cleanup

If through Phase 1 it has been determined that there is contamination, Brownsville Partnership can work to remediate these sites. The NYC Office of Environmental Remediation and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation have programs available to facilitate the cleanup of brownfield sites (listed below).<sup>90</sup>

#### Phase 3: Increase Investment

## 4.2 INCREASE THE USE OF OPEN SPACES AND VACANT LOTS FOR COMMUNITY GATHERING USE



With an abundance of city-owned vacant lots in Brownsville, it is important to rethink about their usage given the lack of necessary activity cores in this neighborhood to engage the community in different activities. Vacant lots and active uses in the parks can strengthen social ties in the neighborhood through community involvement and interaction. It can help to redefine the conditions with positive changes in the existing realm of the neighborhood.



Fig. 4.2.1 Map showing vacant lots on Newport St. and highlighting park area on Mother Gaston - source: PLUTO

### Location:

#### Vacant Lots

Address	Size	Existing Use
191-213 Newport St.	6,000 sq. ft.	Newport Gardens
495 Osborn St.	10,858 sq. ft.	ABIB Newborn Garden
152 Newport St.	2,000 sq. ft.	City-owned vacant Lot

### Parks

1. Floyd Patterson Ballfields, Christopher Avenue
2. 668 Mother Gaston Boulevard
3. Dr. Greene Playground, Sutter Avenue

The three vacant lots on Newport Street are located near school, industrial uses and commercial uses, which makes them ideal to be developed into spaces where people from the neighborhood can gather. One of the lots can have food trucks stationed and seating arrangements for sitting so that people and school children can visit this lot during lunch and after hours. The lot opposite the school can be used as an educational garden with urban agriculture where various plants can be grown for children to observe as well as to be sold in one of the farmer's market or food enterprises. A variety of the shown combinations can be put together to make an empty lot active and attractive for the community to visit and interact.

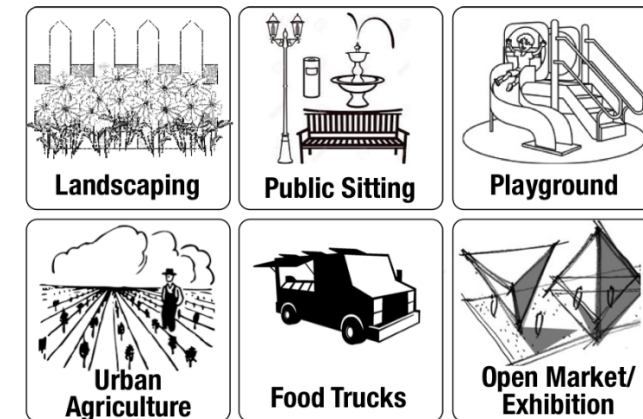


Fig. 4.2.2 Suggestion of various activities in the vacant lots - source: Zil Mistry

## 4.2 INCREASE THE USE OF OPEN SPACES AND VACANT LOTS FOR COMMUNITY GATHERING USE



With three major parks located on the Mother Gaston Boulevard, and the presence of bike lane along the whole street, there is an opportunity to develop the space in these existing parks and make it an attractive green promenade from north to south where the community members can be involved in various activities, take part in the intergenerational historical walks along the tree-lined boulevard and connect with each other, giving the local members an opportunity to take part in the activities and providing amenities like food trucks along these parks, outdoor seating, places to display art and engage in temporary exhibition (e.g. MGB POPS, a pop-up market place on a vacant lot in Brownsville).

The lots and spaces to be developed can provide opportunity for the unemployed residents to work for the development of these lots and at the same time contributes to the revitalization of the neighborhood. Brownsville Partnership can take initiative in coalition with 596 Acres to engage this involvement from community members and unemployed residents. The construction material can be provided by BIGNYC with the construction elements designed using materials with permeable surfaces.

### 4.2.1 Implementation:

In order to make the most expeditious transition from blighted property to a utilizable neighborhood asset, the first phase for properties seeking further enhancements should be a simple cleaning of the site. Brownsville Partnership can work in coalition with 596 Acres to start up this project. This first step ascertains stabilization of the site and surrounding area. Abstracting all structures and debris is first and foremost in order to prepare the site for an incipient use and future maintenance needs.

Extract all excess plants and weeds to engender a defined open area. A replanting of grass or laying out a permeable surface over the entire site and the installation of a tree and fence consummates the initial clean and green phase of the project, engendering a blank slate for future development.

Engaging the residents and community members to participate in all the activities related to developing these spaces can not only help them find work, but also imbibe and revive the communal spirit of Brownsville.

### Park fronts on Mother Gaston Boulevard - Before & After

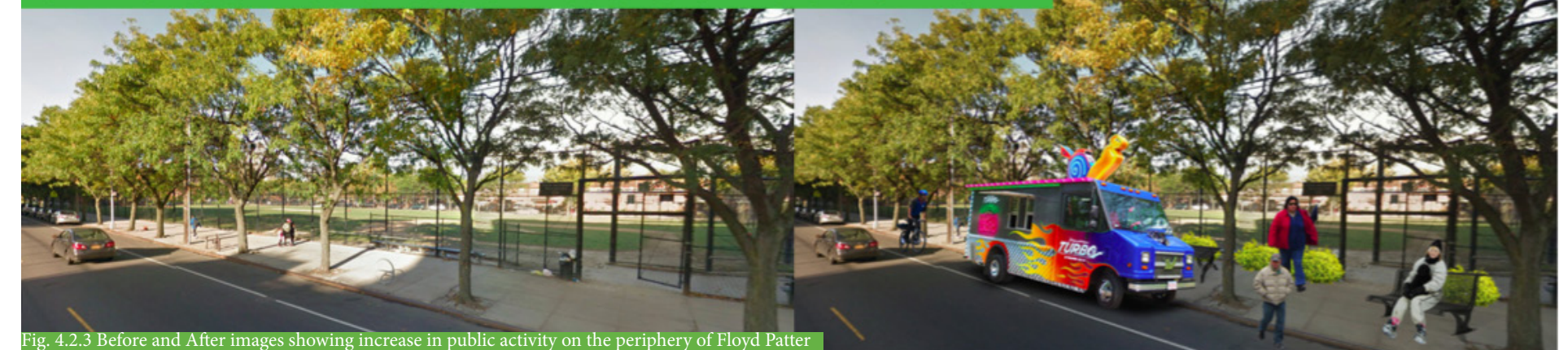


Fig. 4.2.3 Before and After images showing increase in public activity on the periphery of Floyd Patterson Ballfields Park - courtesy of Zil Mistry



## 4.2 INCREASE THE USE OF OPEN SPACES AND VACANT LOTS FOR COMMUNITY GATHERING USE



Finding the most congruous organization or agency to partner with is consequential to prosperously turning these vacant lots into something more for the neighborhood. Brownsville Partnership and 596 acres can further get funding and additional help from Partners accede to take on supplemental revitalization costs and future maintenance needs. Some of the organizations like BIGNYC also offer construction materials and tools needed for the development. Whereas, introducing exhibition spaces in these vacant areas and an opportunity to create something new for youth of this community, can be further be assisted with the help of Groundswell, an organization that helps community members to develop urban art in their neighborhood.

Through analysis of the surrounding neighborhood and amenities, pull what would be the most productive and the most favorable for these key sites and partners. Once a site plan is decided, work alongside partners and community members to engage other members of the community or organizations to implement the orchestration.

In the case of the parks along Mother Gaston Boulevard, the Floyd Patterson Ballfields park has baseball fields and the Dr. Greene Playground has the facilities for kids including a playground, basketball courts, handball courts, bathroom and spray showers but the amount of public activity in these spaces can be incremented by introducing street furniture, exhibition spaces, food trucks, etc. Food Trucks especially can be a part of the Food Enterprise recommended as a part of the solutions with this report. In the green area on 668 Mother Gaston Boulevard, which is a component of the premises of a church, a serene and calm sitting area can be provided for the elderly members who often come and visit this space.

For more information, please see:

Vacant Lots: Occupied, "Neighborhood Strategies for Reuse of Vacant Land." Retrieved from <http://vacantlotsoccupied.com> (April 2015). Keep Cincinnati Beautiful. Retrieved from <http://keepcincinnatibeautiful.org/> (April 2015).

McHugh, Colleen, (Fall 2012), "Cutting Through the Red Tape: How Baltimore's Vacant Lot Programs Have Made It Easier For Communities To Revitalize The Underutilized And Blighted Spaces In Their Neighborhoods." Retrieved from [http://architecture.mit.edu/class/nature/projects\\_12/pdfs/McHughBaltimoreVacancy1SMALL.pdf](http://architecture.mit.edu/class/nature/projects_12/pdfs/McHughBaltimoreVacancy1SMALL.pdf) (April 2015).

NYC Parks, "Dr. Green Playground." Retrieved from <http://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/dr-green-playground/> (April 2015).

NYC Parks, "Floyd Patterson Ballfields." Retrieved from <http://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/floyd-patterson-ballfields/history> (April 2015).

Carnegie Mellon, Heinz School, (Fall 2006), "Vacant to Vibrant: A guide for revitalizing vacant lots in your neighborhood." Retrieved from <https://gtechstrategies.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/VacanttoVibrant.pdf> (April 2015).

💰 Low-High cost

🕒 Short term

## 4.3 INCREASE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE SERVICES



Brownsville has a high rate of emergency department visits for conditions such as asthma and mental health. In Ocean Hill-Brownsville, nearly 3 in 10 residents do not have a regular doctor.<sup>93</sup> This suggests that residents either do not have access to regular preventative health care, or do not utilize existing resources. In addition there is a high percentage of uninsured, with a high concentration falling in the Northeast portion of the neighborhood.

There are 10 medical service facilities already in Brownsville, including the Brownsville MultiService Family Health Center (BMS), located right in the center of Brownsville (see map above).<sup>94</sup> They provide a range of services, regardless of their insurance status, which is an important community resource. However, given the high numbers of emergency department visits, we think that their capacity is insufficient, or residents are not aware of the importance of preventative care. As a result, our recommendation focuses on expanding capacity and educating residents about preventative health care.

### Implementation:

In order to provide Brownsville residents with access to regular, affordable health care services we suggest:

- Working with existing facilities (BMS) to increase their capacity and services.
- Host a health fair with local resources to educate the community about the importance of sexual and preventative health care.
- Partner with Community Healthcare Network to expand their Medical Mobile Van services to Brooklyn and Brownsville. This van provides sexual and mental health services at low cost <http://www.chnny.org/find-us/mobile-van>
- Establishing programs as part of Brownsville's Health Communities program to raise awareness of the importance of creating a lasting relationship with a doctor.

Expanding health services in Brownsville would not only provide health care and education, but also employment opportunities for Brownsville residents. The health care sector is one of the highest currently in Brownsville. In addition, the health care sector is creating a new middle class by providing

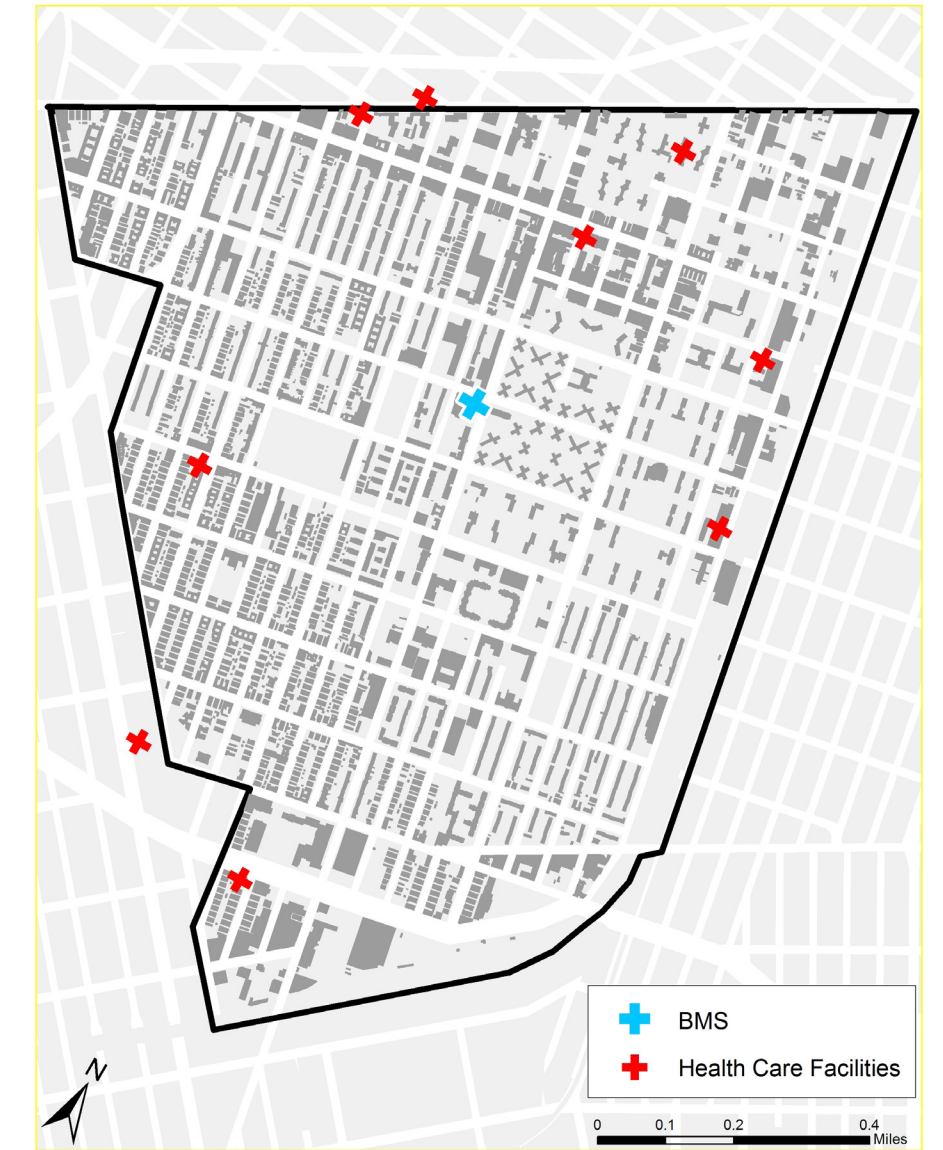


Fig. 4.3.1 Existing Health Care Facilities – source: Brownsville Partnership's Healthy Communities Campaign

### 4.3 INCREASE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE SERVICES

people, especially women, with lucrative jobs and economic security.<sup>95</sup>

#### Case Studies

One example of a successful mobile health van venture is the Summit Health Care Mobile Health Services Van in Columbus, OH.<sup>96</sup>

This is particularly relevant to Brownsville because of the van’s focus on health education as well as healthcare. Brownsville already supplies its residents with low-cost healthcare through institutions like BMS, but the number of emergency room hospitalizations suggests that preventative healthcare in the area is insufficient. To combat this, mobile health vans could follow the example of Summit Health Care and help refer patients to other health services in the area that they may not be aware of. In addition, mobile health vans could provide health education materials to supplement their services and empower Brownsville residents.

Additionally, a study conducted by researchers at the Harvard University Medical School supports mobile vans, showing that providing health education and preventative care can save money as well as prevent unnecessary hospitalizations.<sup>97</sup>



### 4.4 IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH THROUGH HEALTHIER EATING

One of the findings from the Existing Conditions Report was that there is a lack of affordable fresh produce in the study area, which contributes to the high rates of obesity and diabetes.

Although there are existing programs in Brownsville designed to make produce more accessible, there is still a gap between the kinds of food residents know are healthy and the kind they are buying. This is in part because of accessibility, in part due to affordability, and in part due to a lack of information in the neighborhood about healthy eating and how to prepare the fresh produce available.<sup>98</sup> We recommend addressing this issue on all three levels, through increasing the amount of healthy and affordable produce available while also educating residents about healthy habits. The three stages are as follows:

1. The multi-level approach to fostering healthier eating habits begins with the Brownsville Partnership expanding on their “Steps to a Healthier Brownsville” campaign to include readable information on healthy eating and healthy recipe ideas for fresh produce. Information could be made available online as well as in the locations where produce is sold. The Brownsville Youth Market would be a great place to begin engaging residents about healthy habits and offering resources, such as cooking demonstrations and handouts like the Brownsville Partnership’s “Health in the Ville” map.
2. The second step towards healthier eating habits is to increase the amount of fresh produce available across the neighborhood, not only on Rockaway Avenue where most of the supermarkets and farmers markets are already located. This can be done by adding Green Carts in the area. As of now, there is only one Green Cart within the study area boundaries. The green carts provide more affordable produce and can be located wherever there is a gap in accessible food. In addition, they provide income and livelihood for their owners.<sup>99</sup> We propose coaching Brownsville residents in how to apply for and manage green carts. The links below describe the process and qualifications.

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/cdp/license-flowchart.pdf>  
[http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/permit/mfv\\_application\\_forms\\_package.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/permit/mfv_application_forms_package.pdf)

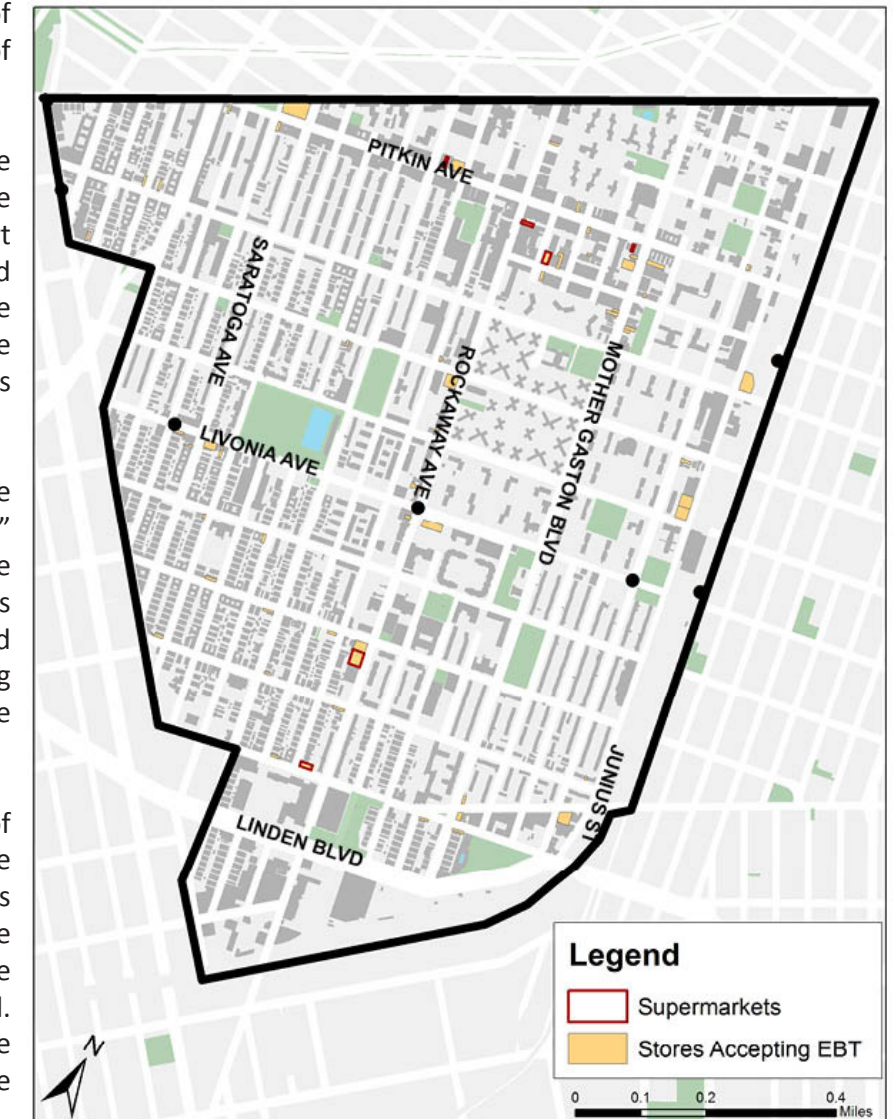


Fig. 4.4.1. Supermarkets in Brownsville - Source: SAVI

## 4.4 IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH THROUGH HEALTHIER EATING

3. Finally, one of the most impactful ways that healthy and affordable food can be increased in the area is through a citywide initiative called FRESH, Food Retail Expansion to Support Health. FRESH offers zoning and tax incentives to supermarket owners and developers that commit to selling a certain amount of fresh produce.<sup>100</sup> Brownsville falls in an area that is eligible for both kinds of incentives (Insert Image 1). Food Bazaar at 417 Junius street is a FRESH program grocery store in the study area that used incentives to expand their produce section in 2011.<sup>101</sup> We propose relying on FRESH benefits to add a new supermarket on a vacant lot (potentially one of the vacant lots on either 402 Rockaway Avenue or 1542 East New York Avenue) in the study area, which is currently lacking in a place to buy fresh produce. This will fill a need for healthy food in the area as well as create many kinds of short-term and long-term jobs.

For more information, please see:

The Center for Active Design, "FRESH program." Retrieved from <http://centerforactivedesign.org/case-studies/case-studies/freshprogram> (April 2015).

Free Active Living Community Resources, (2014), "Brownsville and East New York Health Eating." Retrieved from <http://www.bpnetwork.org/docs/Healthy-Eating-Active-Living-Resources.pdf> (April 2015).

Fuchs, Ester et al., (2014), "Innovative Partnership for Public Health: An Evaluation of the New York City Cart Initiative to Expand Access to Healthy Produce in Low-Income Neighborhoods." Columbia School of International and Public Affairs. Retrieved from <http://www.foodpolitics.com/wp-content/uploads/Green-Carts-Report-Final-June-11.pdf> (April 2015).

Sanger-Katz, Margo, (2015), "Giving the Poor Access to Healthy Food Doesn't Mean They'll buy It." New York Times. Retrieved From: [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/09/upshot/giving-the-poor-easy-access-to-healthy-food-doesnt-mean-theyll-buy-it.html?\\_r=0&abt=0002&abg=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/09/upshot/giving-the-poor-easy-access-to-healthy-food-doesnt-mean-theyll-buy-it.html?_r=0&abt=0002&abg=1) (April 2015).

Medium cost  
Medium term



## 4.5 ENCOURAGE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND MITIGATE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE



Background: As discussed in the Existing Conditions Report climate change is the accelerated result of human consumption and release of fossil fuels (greenhouse gases) in the atmosphere, which have burdened the carbon cycle by trapping heat.

Impacts: Also discussed in the Existing Conditions Report, climate change directly impacts projected sea level rise, super storm occurrence, temperature rise and heat waves, intense pollution sources as well as indirectly impacting human health, livelihood, and economic flexibility. Already, 60% of Brownsville is within the hurricane storm surge area

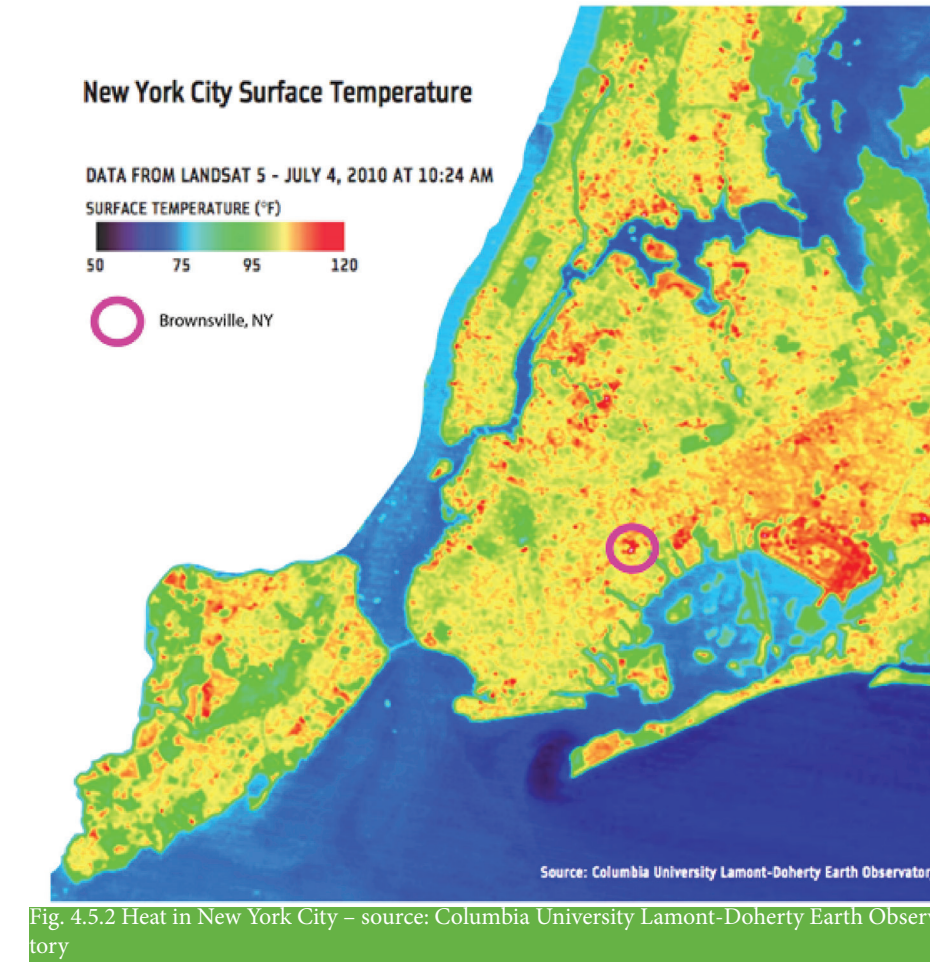


Fig. 4.5.2 Heat in New York City – source: Columbia University Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory

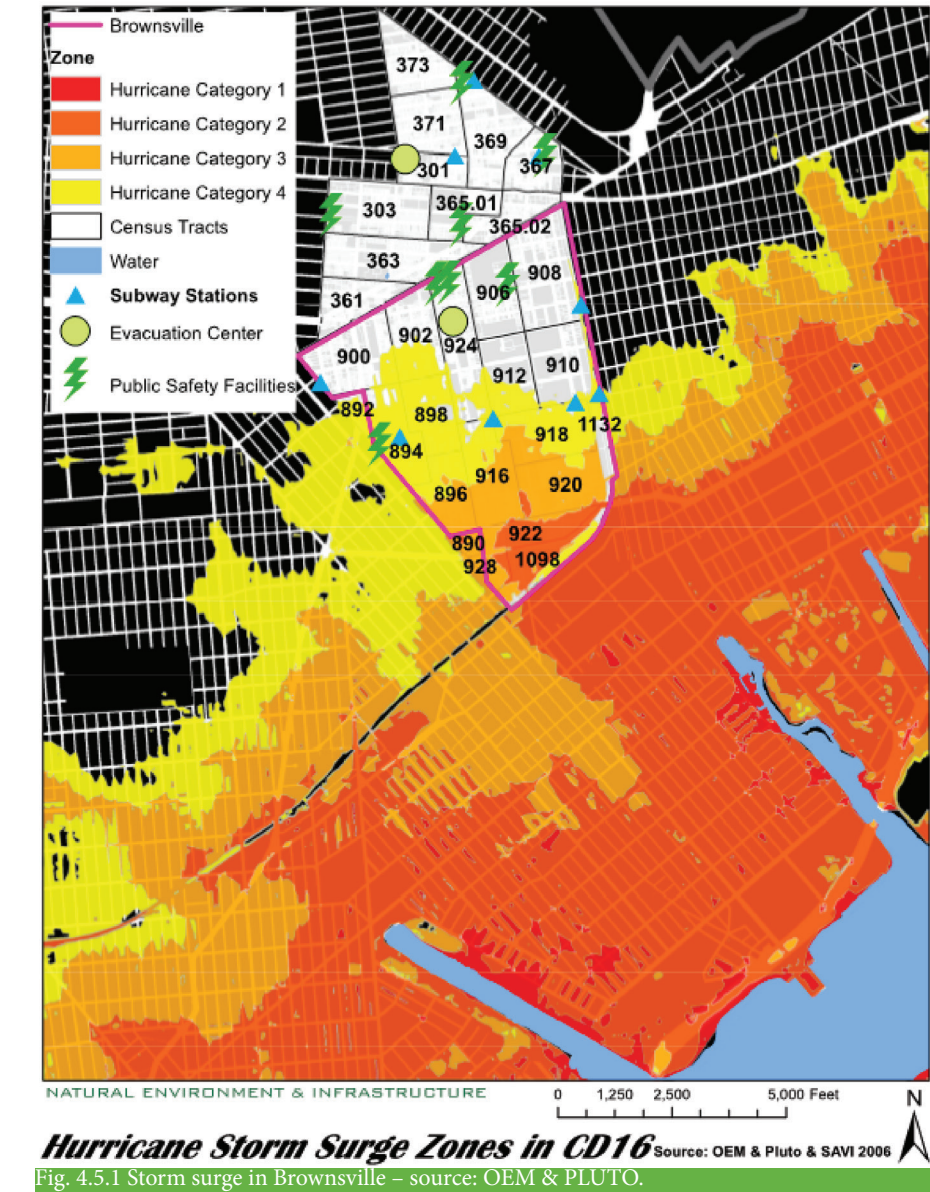


Fig. 4.5.1 Storm surge in Brownsville – source: OEM & PLUTO.

## 4.5 ENCOURAGE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND MITIGATE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE



**Solutions:** The range of climate change's effects can be lessened through mitigation strategies. Mitigation mainly involves decreasing greenhouse gases or increasing carbon sinks to absorb these emissions.

Regarding Brownsville, our recommendation is to increase carbon sinks in Brownsville and thusly mitigate the effects of climate change through tree and green infrastructure initiatives.

This addresses susceptibility to climate related events, lack of preventative health care and education, ongoing investments in green infrastructure, initiatives to activate and/or develop underutilized land, and insufficient access to open space leading to health risks. This could subsequently address stigmatization of danger as it pertains to crime, and efforts to improve the economic conditions for residents and businesses.

### Initiative 1: Million Trees NYC

Million Trees NYC is one of 132 PlaNYC initiatives. "By planting one million trees, New York City can increase its urban forest—our most valuable environmental asset made up of street trees, park trees, and trees on public, private and commercial land—by an astounding 20%, while achieving the many quality-of-life benefits that come with planting trees" (Million Trees NYC, 2015).

**Timeline:** Short-term, especially due to the warm season.

**Cost:** No cost – the City of New York pays for this.

**Possible Ownership:** Brownsville Partnership, NYC Public Schools, Made in Brownsville, any business, group, or individual. This can be implemented by distributing information about the following options, gathering in forums and/or street fairs to discuss ownership and incentivize the community.

- Option A: "Plant a Tree on Your Own: MillionTreesNYC offers free trees and assistance to community groups, neighborhood organizations and businesses that host a community tree giveaway! Trees can be planted on private properties such as front and backyards, commercial properties, community gardens and faith-based centers."
  - o More information: <http://www.milliontreesnyc.org/html/plant/self.shtml>
- Option B: "Request a tree – for a street" by calling 3-1-1

- o More information: <http://www.milliontreesnyc.org/html/plant/plant.shtml>
  - Option C: "Take home a free tree"
- o More information: <https://www.nyrp.org/green-spaces/tree-giveaway>

### Initiative 2: Implementation of Green Infrastructure Projects

Under the City of New York's Green Infrastructure Program, the Department of Environmental Protection and its partners "design, construct and maintain a variety of sustainable green infrastructure practices such as green roofs, rain gardens, and Right-of-way Bioswales on City owned property such as streets, sidewalks, schools, and public housing."<sup>102</sup> This infrastructure encourages the below benefits to the community. This also directly mitigates storm surge flooding by absorbing excess water.

**Timeline:** Application process is quick, implementation requires review.

**Cost:** No cost – the City of New York pays for this.

**Possible Ownership:** NYC Public Schools, NYCHA or private property owners.

- Option A: Grant program for Private Property Owners
  - o [http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/stormwater/nyc\\_green\\_infrastructure\\_grant\\_program.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/stormwater/nyc_green_infrastructure_grant_program.shtml)

### Initiatives 1 & 2

**Benefits to the Community:** This recommendation could benefit Brownsville by promoting green space, providing opportunities for partnerships and network expansion, increasing childhood education, improving air quality, preventing crime, improving mental health and wellbeing, increasing economic activity, and mitigating climate change threats such as flooding, heat waves/heat island effect, and improve air quality.<sup>103</sup>

Low cost

Short term

## 4.6 REDUCE COSTS BY INCREASING ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN BUILDINGS



**Background:** As discussed in the Existing Conditions Report and in the previous recommendation 4.5, climate change is the accelerated result of human consumption and release of fossil fuels (greenhouse gases) in the atmosphere, which have burdened the carbon cycle by trapping heat.

**Impacts:** Also discussed in the Existing Conditions Report, climate change directly impacts projected sea level rise, super storm occurrence, temperature rise and heat waves, intense pollution sources as well as indirectly impacting human health, livelihood, and economic flexibility.

**Solutions:** The range of climate change's effects can be lessened through mitigation strategies. Mitigation mainly involves decreasing greenhouse gases or increasing carbon sinks to absorb these emissions. Mayor Bill de Blasio's 80 by 50 Plan, discussed in the Existing Conditions Report, paired with his plan to retrofit affordable housing units, aims to facilitate this.

Regarding Brownsville, our recommendation is to increase vegetation to absorb carbon emissions in Brownsville as well as mitigate the effects of climate change through energy efficient initiatives in affordable housing units.

This addresses susceptibility to climate related events, existing fresh food programs that have potential to expand, lack of walkability, lack of preventative health care and education, ongoing investments in green infrastructure, initiatives to activate and/or develop underutilized land, insufficient access to open space leading to health risks, and efforts to expand economic conditions for residents and businesses.

### Initiative 1 Active Design Strategy Implementation in Affordable Housing Units

Active design is incorporating fitness into daily urban activities. In affordable housing units, active design has been utilized to increase walkability, transparency, and improve public health, while cutting electricity usage and costs. One strategy has included increasing signage promoting stair usage – relating it to physical health as well as electricity conservation.

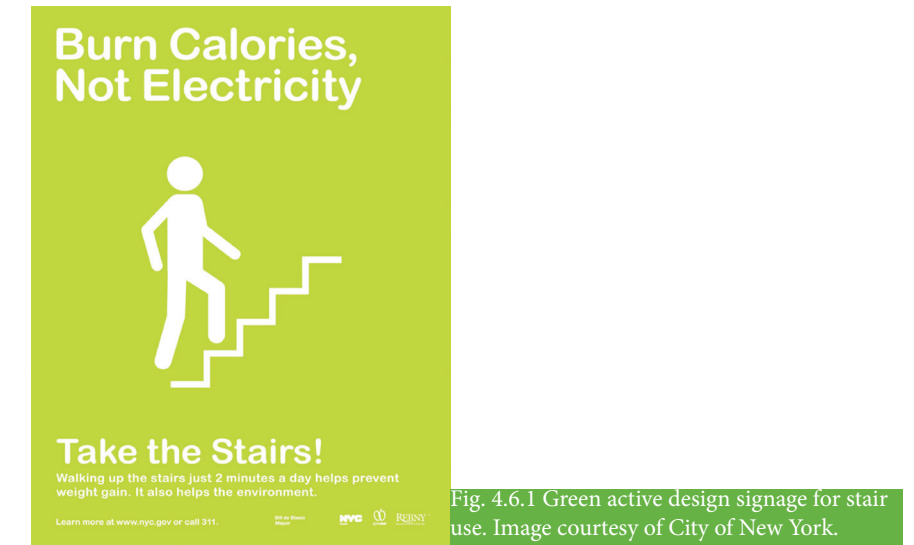


Fig. 4.6.1 Green active design signage for stair use. Image courtesy of City of New York.

Another strategy implemented has included transforming an unmaintained, underutilized, sometimes dangerous stairway into an inviting, safe, and interesting place with paint, art, and lighting.<sup>104</sup>

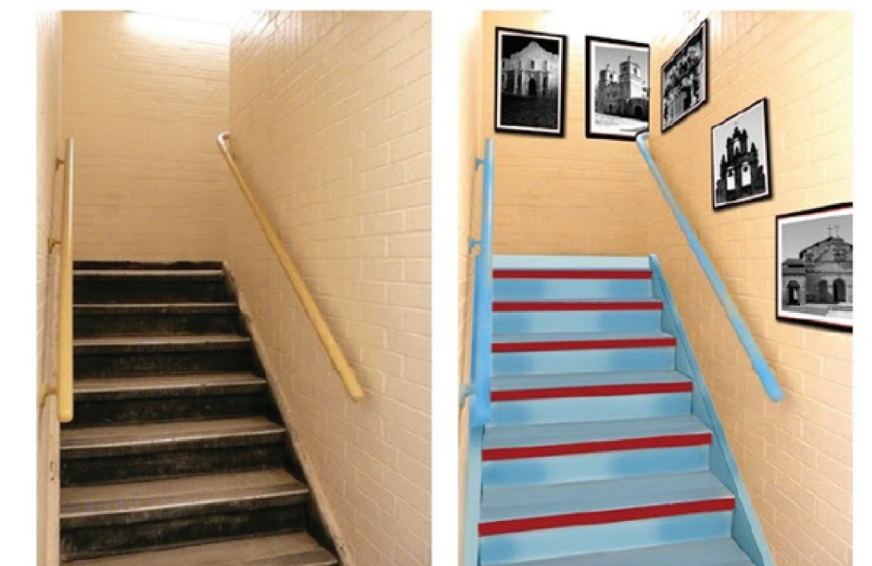


Fig. 4.6.2 Before and after of a housing staircase to make the stairs a more attractive option to encourage physical fitness. Images courtesy of Center for Active Design



## 4.7 INDICATE COALITION TO LINK AND EXPAND COMMUNITY GARDENS

1. Establish a coalition facilitated by Brownsville Partnership
2. Advocate for additional gardens on publicly owned land
3. Organize a market for the exchange of fresh produce from all different gardens in Brownsville
4. Organize gardening workshops and distributions of seeds and tools

One of the findings from our existing conditions report is that there are 20 community gardens and farmers markets in Brownsville. They emerge as people organize them in vacant lots. Community gardens focus on community-based agriculture, and they provide access to fresh produce, different programs, and a space for gathering and intergenerational recreation. Community gardens not only foster a sense of community but also enable members of the community or neighborhood to be able to grow their own produce and support local sustainability by maintaining a permeable, green space that beautifies the neighborhood while taking on stormwater runoff from the area.

The NYC Housing Preservation and Development targeted three of the community gardens in Brownsville as possible lots for development to build housing. These include the Isabahlia Ladies of Elegance on 615 Saratoga Avenue, the Brownsville Student farm on 522 Rockaway Avenue, and the garden on 93-103 New Lots Avenue. The committee could also be an opportunity

We suggest establishing a coalition to represent all community gardens and farmers markets in the area to give the community a stronger voice to advocate for the preservation of these gardens, and creation of additional gardens in publicly owned land as well as NYCHA property. Once the coalition is established, they can organize a market every weekend (Saturday and Sunday) during spring and summer (May to August) to exchange seeds and sell their fresh produce. The coalition would also coordinate the current activities of individual gardens, such as gardening workshops and provision of gardening tools to interested gardeners.

Some of the publicly owned vacant lots that exist in Brownsville could serve as a good area to create new gardens. One potential site is the large lot lo-

cated on 643,647, and 649 Mother Gaston Boulevard, on the corner of Livonia Avenue. The lot is very close to the elevated railway but not shaded due to its size. The lot is not located on but is close to the Rockaway and Livonia commercial corridors. It is also located in a dense residential area, close the NYCHA developments. Therefore it would provide a service to NYCHA residents, and opportunities for those interested in gardening as well as youth programs.

We further recommend that once the coalition is established and there is a link between all the gardens and farmers market, the committee should organize a market, as mentioned before, that would be open during the months of May, June, July and August on the weekends. This would help the cooperation between gardens and would provide the residents of Brownsville with a place to purchase fresh produce as well as a gathering space. One of the lots that we looked into for the market to take place was 352 Livonia Avenue, which is a huge lot, it is not targeted by HPD for development. The lot is located under the elevated railway, next to the lot we suggested for a new garden (643 Mother Gaston Boulevard). This lot could be good for the market since it might be located next to a garden and, as mentioned before, it is located in a primarily residential area, which would bring the residents together and it would be successful as a gathering space. The market could start out as a smaller market located on 425 Rockaway Avenue where Brownsville Partnership already organizes the MGB Pops.

Furthermore, we suggest that once the committee is established, it should organize different events such as gardening workshops and distribution of seeds and tools (these may be provided by different organizations that will be mentioned further in the report). This would help the development and establishment of new gardens as well as getting people interested in gardening and community-based agriculture. These workshops could also help create jobs and further create youth programs, they would also serve the community in the sense that they would provide the residents with gatherings and activities.

## 4.6 REDUCE COSTS BY INCREASING ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN BUILDINGS



Timeline: Short-term  
 Cost: Ranges small to medium  
 Possible Ownership: Brownsville Partnership, NYCHA, Made in Brownsville, interested landlords of affordable housing units.  
 Option A: Can pursue materials for implementation strategies by contacting the Center for Active Design.

Initiative 2 Affordable Housing Roof Garden  
 Roof gardens allow for partnerships, discounts, fresh food, carbon sink implementation, and increased overall health and wellness.

Timeline: Short-term to long-term.  
 Cost: Small to large  
 Possible Ownership: Brownsville Partnership, NYCHA, Made in Brownsville, interested landlords of affordable housing units.  
 Option A: Partner with Sky Vegetables through their website - <http://skyvegetables.com/partners.html>

Initiatives 1 & 2  
 Benefits to the Community: This recommendation could benefit the community by promoting daily physical fitness options, opportunities for open space, creating jobs and partnerships, and providing economic opportunities as well as fresh localized food, while promoting safety and health. All the while increased green space and visibility to alternative building mobility (stair usage) mitigate climate change by decreasing energy usage and increasing carbon sinks

### 4.6.1 Case Study: Arbor House, Bronx, NY. Completed February 2013

Arbor House included strategies from the Center for Active Design's guidelines on "Affordable Designs for Affordable Housing" by increasing visibility to stairs and creating active vegetation on the roof.<sup>105</sup>

On the roof, NYCHA partnered with Sky Vegetables, which oversees a "Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) arrangement in which residents can purchase shares in what gets produced. Sky Vegetables will make 40% of the

produce available to the community through local outreach to schools, hospitals and markets."<sup>106</sup>  
 "This building is a spectacular example of what can be built on an underused NYCHA property with city subsidy and the backing of the private sector... from the sky farm on the roof to the active design elements and the partnership with Mt. Sinai Medical Center, Arbor House provides a safe, secure and healthy environment for the families who live here." – Housing Development Corporation President Marc Jahr (City of New York).<sup>107</sup>

Low-High cost  
 Short-Long term

## 4.7 INDICATE COALITION TO LINK AND EXPAND COMMUNITY GARDENS

### Case Study: East New York Farms

In East New York in the 1990's there was a lot of crime in the area, over 60 community gardens, a lot of vacant lots and the population was mostly under 18 years old. The gardens had started out on these vacant lots that were created as a result of NYC HPD redevelopment in the 1970's.

East New York Planning group formed by Pratt's Center of Community and Environmental Development, Local Development Corporation of East New York, United Community Centers, Cornell University Cooperative Extension, Genesis Home/Help USA, East New York Urban Youth Corps, and Green Guerrillas (left soon after) came together to increase production in gardens, create, youth employment as well as intergenerational activities, and establish a market for exchange of produce. They applied and got a grant for \$250,000 over two years from the Hitachi Foundation for "Resource Use in Community Development". They reached out to a large network of community based organizations in the neighborhoods for input about the needs of people in the community.

The first market opened up on New Lots Avenue and Bradford Street in 1998. After the first grant, they received support from the New York Foundation, the Merck Family Fund, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, and a three-year grant from the US Department of Agriculture Community Food Projects.

East NY farms hired interns and was able to give more structured training to gardeners. By 2000 the market grew significantly and it is still a successful market, open every summer, that provides intergenerational programs and several other opportunities.

### Potential partner organizations

#### New Economy Coalition

The New Economy coalition is a network of organizations that work together to create a new collective economy and politics in favor of community governance and environmental sustainability. The coalition connects leaders from the different organizations to tackle common ground; they also lift up the work of communities with economic and ecological crises and offer direct support. <http://neweconomy.net/>



#### SolidarityNYC

SolidarityNYC is a collective of organizations that promote, connect and support New York City's solidarity economy, which utilizes values of justice, democracy, cooperation and mutualism to meet community needs. SolidarityNYC offers solidarity economy workshops for all kinds of groups and they are also able to convene technical assistance gatherings.

#### Green NYCHA

Resident Green Committees are groups of NYCHA residents that are committed to fighting climate change and preserving public housing. Together with NYCHA they plan projects, organize events and educate residents on environmental issues and are part of the Green Agenda to promote environmental sustainability and reduce energy costs.

The Garden and Greening Program (G&G) is also part of Green NYCHA and it supports resident garden cultivation and sound land management through garden materials resource provision and environmental education-based programming. G&G provides gardeners with year-round technical assistance, as well as free seeds, bulbs, compost and other gardening materials. In addition, G&G has three annual events: the Garden and Greening Program Competition, the Citywide Garden Competition Awards Ceremony, and the NYCHA Grows with its Gardeners Conference

For each garden entry approved by the Property Manager, the Garden and Greening Program offers technical support and free gardening materials: vegetable, flower and herb seeds in the spring; spring-flowering bulbs in the fall; and other materials such as compost, woody shrubs and summer flowering bulbs. The G&G coordinates with resident gardeners and the City University of New York Soil Lab for soil analysis to grow vegetables and fruits.

To become a NYCHA Gardener, NYCHA residents have to submit an application available in the following link: <http://greennycha.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/2013-Garden-Registry-Application.pdf>

## 4.7 INDICATE COALITION TO LINK AND EXPAND COMMUNITY GARDENS



To create a Resident Green Committee, NYCHA residents should contact the Gardening and Sustainability Unit Assistant Director:  
Lee Trotman at 212-306-2921 or [lee.trotman@nychanyc.gov](mailto:lee.trotman@nychanyc.gov)

For NYCHA residents interested in the Garden and Greening Program, for gardening applications, they must contact the G&G Queens, Staten Island and Brooklyn Representatives:

Nicole Johnson  
646-740-1244  
[nicole.johnson@nychanyc.gov](mailto:nicole.johnson@nychanyc.gov)  
Akela Tucker  
646-565-7723  
[akela.tucker@nychanyc.gov](mailto:akela.tucker@nychanyc.gov)  
Denisse Dolin  
646-565-7364  
[denisse.reyna-dolin@nychanyc.gov](mailto:denisse.reyna-dolin@nychanyc.gov)

#### Grow NYC

GrowNYC is a non-profit that helps improve New York City's environmental quality through environmental programs such as green markets, recycling, gardens, and education. GrowNYC's garden program builds and sustains community gardens, urban farms, school gardens, and rainwater harvesting systems. They support three of the existing gardens in Brownsville, the Amboy Neighborhood Garden, Our Lady of the Presentation Garden, and the Phoenix Community Garden. <http://www.grownyc.org/about>



Medium cost



Short-Long term

# CONCLUSION

The purpose of this report is to present to the Brownsville Partnership a framework to achieve their goal of identifying strategies to spur the local economy. Pursuant to the client's request, the formula to achieve this goal is through revitalizing and diversifying the existing retail strips, developing opportunities for local entrepreneurs, creating employment opportunities for residents, and activating the many vacant lots in the neighborhood, all while promoting green building and overall healthy living.

The report consists of a community profile of the Brownsville neighborhood, which is explored further in the preceding existing conditions report, and recommendation proposals for Brownsville Partnership's consideration moving forward. The recommendations involved have been divided into four main objectives:

Objective 1: Create Opportunities for Local Economic Development

Objective 2: Preserve Affordability and Financial Stability

Objective 3: Improve Mobility, Safety, and Accessibility

Objective 4: Alleviate Environmental and Health Burdens

Each objective has been cross-referenced with our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis in order to verify that the objective is addressing the most pressing issues for Brownsville, in accordance with our existing conditions research. The SWOT, in conjunction with our overall observations, has served as the basis of expanded analyses and our final recommendations. We hope that these recommendations provide Brownsville Partnership with a foundation to help facilitate self-sustainable progress within the Brownsville community. We look forward to continued dialogue with Brownsville Partnership and the community.

# REFERENCES

## Assessment of Developable Land

1. NYC Housing Preservation & Development, "New Infill Homeownership Opportunities Program (NIHOP) and Neighborhood Construction Program (NCP." Retrieved from <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/developers/request-for-qualifications/nihop-ncp-rfq.page> (May 2015).

2. NYC Housing Preservation & Development, (December 2014), "HPD Commissioner Been Announces New Development Programs To Spur Affordable Rental And Homeownership Opportunities On Small Under-Used Sites." Retrieved from <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/about/press-releases/2014/12/12.page> (May 2015).

3. NYC Housing Preservation & Development, (December 2014), "HPD Commissioner Been Announces New Development Programs To Spur Affordable Rental And Homeownership Opportunities On Small Under-Used Sites." Retrieved from <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/about/press-releases/2014/12/12.page> (May 2015).

4. Tortorello, Michael, (February 2015), "In Community Gardens, A New Weed?" NY Times. Retrieved from [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/12/garden/in-community-gardens-a-new-weed.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/12/garden/in-community-gardens-a-new-weed.html?_r=0) (April 2015).

5. Moynihan, Colin, (February 2015), "Wary of a New Threat, Community Garden Activists in New York Look Back." NY Times. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/16/nyregion/wary-of-a-new-threat-community-garden-activists-in-new-york-look-back.html> (April 2015).

6. Smith, Greg, (March 2015), "Exclusive: NYCHA quietly selling off parking lots, green space, playgrounds to help ease budget woes." New York Daily News. Retrieved from <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/exclusive-nycha-selling-green-space-developers-article-1.2165863> (April 2015).

7. Smith, Greg, (March 2015), "Exclusive: NYCHA quietly selling off parking lots, green space, playgrounds to help ease budget woes." New York Daily News. Retrieved from <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/exclusive-nycha-selling-green-space-developers-article-1.2165863> (April 2015).

8. NYCHA, "Next Generation NYCHA: A Community Vision for Van Dyke Houses." Retrieved from [www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/.../pdf/van-dyke-report-en.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/.../pdf/van-dyke-report-en.pdf) (April 2015).

9. Smith, Greg, (March 2015), "Exclusive: NYCHA quietly selling off parking

lots, green space, playgrounds to help ease budget woes." New York Daily News. Retrieved from <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/exclusive-nycha-selling-green-space-developers-article-1.2165863> (April 2015).

## Market Analysis

10. United States Census Bureau, "2012 ZIP Code Business Pattern." NAICS. Retrieved from [www.Census.gov](http://www.census.gov) (April 2015).

11. United States Census Bureau, "2012 ZIP Code Business Pattern." NAICS. Retrieved from [www.Census.gov](http://www.census.gov) (April 2015).

## Create Opportunities for Local Economic Development

12. Jeager, Max, (2014), "So many cooks in the kitchen! Food incubators come to Industry City." The Brooklyn Paper. Retrieved from [http://www.brooklynpaper.com/stories/37/13/bn-industry-city-food-incubator-2014-03-21-bk\\_37\\_13.html](http://www.brooklynpaper.com/stories/37/13/bn-industry-city-food-incubator-2014-03-21-bk_37_13.html) (April 2015).

13. Bautista, Camille, (2015), "City To Open Central Brooklyn's First Culinary Incubator This Summer." DNAinfo. Retrieved from <https://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20150312/bed-stuy/city-open-central-brooklyns-first-culinary-incubator-this-summer> (April 2015).

14. McNulty, Ian, (2011), "Learning Through Lunch at Liberty's Kitchen." WWNO. Retrieved from <http://wwno.org/post/learning-through-lunch-libertys-kitchen> (April 2015).

15. Mi Kitchen es su Kitchen, "What is a Kitchen Incubator." Retrieved from <http://www.mikitchenessukitchen.com/incubator.htm> (April 2015).

16. NYCEDC, (2014), "Find community-oriented and affordable incubators, wet lab spaces, and shared workspaces." Retrieved from <http://www.nycdc.com/service/incubators-workspaces> (April 2015).

17. Urban Magnets, "How an Urban Magnet Functions." Retrieved from <http://www.urbanmagnets.com/how-an-urban-magnet-functions/> (April 2015).

18. Bureau of Labor Statistics, (January 2014), "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Barbers, Hairdressers, and Cosmetologists." United States Department of Labor. Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/personal-care->

# REFERENCES

- and-service/barbers-hairdressers-and-cosmetologists.htm#tab-6 (April 2015).
19. Stilson, J. (2010). Good Hair. Lionsgate Home Entertainment.
20. U.S. Census Bureau. 2010 Census Summary File 1.
21. Yee, Vivian, (September 2014), "Black Women Find a Growing Business Opportunity: Care for Their Hair." NY Times. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/09/nyregion/black-women-find-a-growing-business-opportunity-care-for-their-hair.html> (April 2015).
22. SBDC National Information Clearinghouse, (2014), "Beauty Salon 2014." Small Business Development Center Network. Retrieved from <http://www.sbdnet.org/small-business-research-reports/beauty-salon-2014> (April 2015).
23. Salinas, Brenda, (May 2014), "Afro-Latinas and 'Good' Hair." Latino USA. Retrieved from <http://latinousa.org/2014/05/16/afro-latinas-hair/> (April 2015); Muther, Christopher, (May 2014), "Chemical-free black hair is not simply a trend." Boston Globe. Retrieved from <https://www.bostonglobe.com/lifestyle/2014/05/28/chemical-free-black-hair-not-simply-trend/kLVdugv5MChUejSkDXoO3J/story.html> (April 2015); Antonia, "The changing business of black hair." Un'ruly. Retrieved from <http://un-ruly.com/the-changing-business-of-black-hair/> (April 2015).
24. Community Review, "Royal Razor Barbershop is Contributing to Revitalization of Downtown Baltimore Thanks to Microenterprise Loan Program." Retrieved from <http://blog.mdhousing.org/2013/01/04/royal-razor-barbershop-is-contributing-to-revitalization-of-downtown-baltimore-thanks-to-microenterprise-loan-program/> (April 2015).
25. Pitkin Avenue Business Improvement District, "Bring Your Business to Pitkin Avenue." Retrieved from <http://pitkinbid.org/bring-your-business-to-pitkin-avenue/> (April 2015).
26. Brown, Robbie, (April 2012), "At This Atlanta Barbershop, the Conversation Goes on 24/7." NY Times. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/29/us/at-this-atlanta-barbershop-the-conversation-goes-on-24-7.html> (April 2015).
27. Broad Community Connections, "Headquarters Barber Beauty & Natural Hair Salon." Retrieved from <http://broadcommunityconnections.org/featured-businesses/headquarters-barber-beauty-natural-hair-salon> (April 2015).
28. Urban Magnets, "How an Urban Magnet Functions." Retrieved from <http://www.urbanmagnets.com/how-an-urban-magnet-functions/> (April 2015).

29. ULI Development Case Studies, (2000), "The Belmont Dairy. Urban Land Institute. Retrieved from <http://casestudiesarchive.uli.org/CSFrameset.aspx?i=C030007> (April 2015).
30. Kossman, Sienna, (August 2013), "The Costs and Benefits of Running a Mobile Business." U.S. News. Retried from <http://money.usnews.com/money/personal-finance/articles/2013/08/07/the-costs-and-benefits-of-running-a-mobile-business> (April 2015).
31. Yee, Vivian, (September 2014), "Black Women Find a Growing Business Opportunity: Care for Their Hair." NY Times. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/09/nyregion/black-women-find-a-growing-business-opportunity-care-for-their-hair.html> (April 2015).
32. Samuels, Tanyanika, (September 2008), "With mobile salon, Bronx teen has beautiful business plan." NY Daily News. Retrieved from <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/bronx/mobile-salon-bronx-teen-beautiful-business-plan-article-1.321325> (April 2015).
33. NYCHA, "Jobs-Plus." Opportunity NYCHA. Retrieved from <http://opportunitynycha.org/workforce-development/jobs-plus/> (April 2015).
34. The Doe Fund, "Ready Willing and Able." The Doe Fund. Retrieved from <http://www.doe.org/services.cfm> (April 2015).
35. Green work Force NYC, "Job Placement ASsistance." Retrieved from <http://greenworkforcenyc.org/about/job-placement-2> (April 2015).
36. Green City Force, "Join the Corps." Retrieved from <http://www.greencityforce.org/clean-energy-corps/join-us/> (April 2015).
37. NYC Career Pathways, "Preparing New Yorkers for Tomorrow's Jobs." Retrieved from <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/careerpathways/index.page> (April 2015).
38. Beekman, Daniel, (April, 2011), "News report says hiring NYCHA tenants for green jobs, repairs would lower unemployment, save money." Retrieved from <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/bronx/new-report-hiring-nycha-tenants-green-jobs-repairs-unemployment-save-money-article-1.113636> (April 2015).
39. Pritchett, W. (2002). *Brownsville, Brooklyn: Blacks, Jews, and the changing face of the ghetto*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
40. POKO Partners LLC, "Pitkin Theater." Retrieved from [http://www.pokopartners.com/dev\\_completed.php](http://www.pokopartners.com/dev_completed.php) (April 2015).

# REFERENCES

41. Interview with Daniel Murphy, Executive Director, Pitkin Avenue Business Improvement District, April 3, 2015. See also Pitkin Avenue Business Improvement District: <http://pitkinbid.org>; Neighborhood Plaza Partnership: <http://neighborhoodplazapartnership.org>.
42. National Park Service, "Tax incentives for Preserving Historic Properties." Retrieved from [www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm](http://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm) (April 2015). There is also a 10 percent rehabilitation tax credit for the rehabilitation of "non-historic" buildings placed in service before 1936.
43. 36 C.F.R. § 67.2.
44. 36 CFR § 67.7.
45. Office of Community Renewal, (October 2014), "New York Main Street Program Guide." New York State Homes & Community Renewal. Retrieved from <http://www.nyshcr.org/Programs/NYMainStreet/NYMSPProgramGuide.pdf> (May 2015). See also: Division of Historic Preservation, "New York State Historic Preservation Plan 2015-2020." New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Retrieved from <http://nysparks.com/shpo/preservation-plan/documents/NewYorkStateHistoricPreservationPlan20152020.pdf> (April 2015).
46. Brownsville Hundred Days to Progress Initiative, "A Coordinated Effort to Address Community-Identified Opportunities." Retrieved from <http://www.brownsville100days.org> (April 2015).
47. ReNEW LOTS, (2015), "April 23, 20515 RENEW Lots Grand Opening." Retrieved from <http://renewlots.org/events/april-23-2015-renew-lots-grand-opening/> (May 2015).
48. Interview with Quardean Lewis-Allen, Founder and Director of Made in Brownsville, April 2, 2015.
49. Downtown Brooklyn, (2013) "New Clean Tech Incubator to Open at NYU-POLY." Retrieved from <http://downtownbrooklyn.com/POSTS/WORK/NEW-CLEAN-TECH-INCUBATOR-TO-OPEN-AT-NYU-POLY> (April 2015).
- Preserve Affordability and Financial Stability
50. New York City Department of City Planning, "East New York Community Plan: Overview." Retrieved from [http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/east\\_](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/east_)

- [new\\_york/index.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/east_new_york/index.shtml) (March 2015).
51. Anuta, Joe, (September 2014), "De Blasio's Housing Surprise." Crain's New York. Retrieved from <http://www.craigslist.com/article/20140929/REAL-ESTATE/309289982/de-blasios-housing-surprise> (April 2015).
52. Flynn, Gerald, (June, 2014), "Is East New York the Next Bushwick?" Gothamist. Retrieved from [http://gothamist.com/2014/07/22/east\\_new\\_york\\_gentrification\\_afford.php](http://gothamist.com/2014/07/22/east_new_york_gentrification_afford.php) (April 2015).
53. Vitullio-Martin, Julia, (Jan. 2013). "Is Brownsville Brooklyn Ready for Its Jane Jacobsian Comeback?" Untapped Cities Retrieved from <http://untappedcities.com/2013/01/17/brownsville-brooklyn-ready-for-comeback/#.UPhWUJXS9Rk.email> (April 2015).
54. Corporation for Enterprise Development: Expanding Economic Opportunity, (2010), "The Most Unbanked Places in America." Retrieved from [http://cfed.org/assets/pdfs/Most\\_Unbanked\\_Places\\_in\\_America.pdf](http://cfed.org/assets/pdfs/Most_Unbanked_Places_in_America.pdf) (April 2015).
55. Corporation for Enterprise Development. Retrieved from <http://cfed.org/> (April 2015).
56. Brooklyn Cooperative. Retrieved from <http://www.brooklyn.coop/> (April 2015).
57. NYC Department of Finance, (2015), "NYC Rent Freeze Program: A Guide for Tenants." Retrieved from <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/finance/benefits/tenants-drie.page> (April 2015).
58. NYC Department of Finance, (2015), "NYC Rent Freeze Program: A Guide for Tenants." Retrieved from <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/finance/benefits/tenants-drie.page> (April 2015).
59. Sadin Institute on Law & Public Policy, (2010), "New York Elder Law Handbook." Practicing Law Institute. Retrieved from [http://www.pli.edu/Content/Treatise/New\\_York\\_Elder\\_Law/\\_/N-4I21z13i6p?ID=587](http://www.pli.edu/Content/Treatise/New_York_Elder_Law/_/N-4I21z13i6p?ID=587) (April 2015).
60. Navarro, Mireya, (2014), "Albany Expands Effort to Cap Regulated Rents for Older Tenants." Retrieved from [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/21/nyregion/albany-expands-effort-to-cap-regulated-rents-for-older-tenants.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/21/nyregion/albany-expands-effort-to-cap-regulated-rents-for-older-tenants.html?_r=1) (April 2015).
61. Pratt Institute, "Fundamentals Existing Conditions Report." Spring 2015.
62. Pratt Institute, "Fundamentals Existing Conditions Report." Spring 2015.
63. Pratt Institute, "Fundamentals Existing Conditions Report." Spring 2015.
64. Miller, Stephen, (September 2003), "Community Land Trusts: Why Now



# REFERENCES

Is the Time to Integrate This Housing Activists' Tool Into Local Government Affordable Housing Policies." 36 No. 9 Zoning and Planning Law Report 1.

65. Miller, Stephen, (September 2003), "Community Land Trusts: Why Now Is the Time to Integrate This Housing Activists' Tool Into Local Government Affordable Housing Policies." 36 No. 9 Zoning and Planning Law Report 1.

66. Lawrence, Deliah, (Summer, 2002), "Can Communities Fight Displacement Caused by Gentrification?" 11-SUM J. Affordable Housing & Community Dev. L. 357.

67. Thaden, Emily and Greg Rosenberg, (Oct. 2010), "Outperforming the Market: Delinquency and Foreclosure Rates in Community Land Trusts." Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

68. Clarke, Katherine, (Oct. 2014), "King Ransom: Prices Soar in Bed-Stuy, Crown Heights and Bushwick." NY Daily News. Retrieved from <http://www.nydailynews.com/life-style/real-estate/prices-soar-bed-stuy-crown-heights-bushwick-article-1.1968841> (April 2015).

69. Pratt Institute, "Fundamentals Existing Conditions Report." Spring 2015.

70. Neighborhood Economic Development Advocacy Project & Columbia University, (May 2012), "Community Land Trusts in New York City." Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/search?q=Community+Land+Trusts+in+New+York+City&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8#> (April 2015).

71. Mironova, Oksana (April 2014), "The Value of Land: How Community Land Trusts Maintain Housing Affordability." Urban Omnibus. Retrieved from <http://urbanomnibus.net/2014/04/the-value-of-land-how-community-land-trusts-maintain-housing-affordability/> (April 2015).

72. Lawrence, Deliah, (Summer, 2002), Can Communities Effectively Fight Displacement Caused by Gentrification?, 11-SUM J. Affordable Housing & Community Dev. L. 357.

73. Lawrence, Deliah, (Summer, 2002), Can Communities Effectively Fight Displacement Caused by Gentrification?, 11-SUM J. Affordable Housing & Community Dev. L. 357.

74. Lawrence, Deliah, (Summer, 2002), Can Communities Effectively Fight Displacement Caused by Gentrification?, 11-SUM J. Affordable Housing & Community Dev. L. 357.

75. Benfield, Kaid, (2012), A remarkable grassroots revitalization matures and thrives in Boston, Retrieved from <http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/>

kbenfield/a\_remarkable\_grassroots\_revita.html April 2015.

76. George, Henry. (1938). Progress and poverty, an inquiry into the cause of industrial depressions and of increase of want with increase of wealth; the remedy, (p. 48). New York: The Modern Library.

77. Gaffney, M., & Harrison, F. (1994). The corruption of economics (p. 24). London: Shephard-Walwyn in association with Centre for Incentive Taxation.

78. Wealth and Want, "Assessment." Retrieved from <http://www.wealthandwant.com/themes/Assessment.html> (April 2015).

79. Cameron, Christopher, (April 2015), "Corruption probes slowing 421a, rent control talks: Cuomo." The Real Deal. Retrieved from <http://therealdeal.com/blog/2015/04/26/corruption-probes-slowng-421-a-rent-control-talks-cuomo/> (April 2015).

80. Cord, Steven, "The 238 Report: 238 Studies on the Impact of Land Value Taxation." Saving Communities. Retrieved from <http://savingcommunities.org/docs/cord.steven/238.html> (April 2015).

## Enhance Public Safety, Accessibility, and Mobility

81. NYPD, (2015) "NYC Crime Map." Retrieved from <http://maps.nyc.gov/crime/> (April 2015).

82. New York City Housing Authority, (2014), "Next Generation NYCHA: A Community Vision for Van Dyke Houses." Retrieved from [www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/.../pdf/van-dyke-report-en.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/.../pdf/van-dyke-report-en.pdf) (April 2015).

83. Municipal Art Society of New York, "Culture as a Catalyst in Brownsville." Retrieved from <http://www.mas.org/arts/culture-as-catalyst-in-brownsville/> (April 2015).

84. Groundswell, "Transform/Restore Brownsville." Retrieved from <http://www.groundswellmural.org/program/transformrestore-brownsville> (April 2015).

85. Young New Yorkers, (March 2014), "Brownsville Neon Arts Win." Retrieved from <http://www.youngnewyorkers.org/#!BROWNSVILLE-NeON-ARTS-WIN/c1kod/5E6C8DDC-BD16-4321-BBA1-9F4DA42AF7C2> (April 2015).

86. Urban Matter Inc., (December 2013), "Silent Lights." Retrieved from <http://urbanmatterinc.com/silent-lights/> (April 2015).

87. American Psychological Association. "Mental and Behavioral Health and

# REFERENCES

Older Americans." Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/about/gr/issues/aging/mental-health.aspx> (April 2015).

## Alleviate Environmental and Health Burdens

88. Department of State Office of Planning & Development, "BOA Program Summary." New York Department of State. Retrieved from <http://www.dos.ny.gov/opd/programs/brownFieldOpp/boasummary.html> (April 2015).

89. New Partners for Community Revitalization. "The Brownfield Opportunity Areas (BOA) Program Is Critical to Revitalization Efforts." Retrieved from [http://npcr.net/pages/legislation\\_and\\_policy/facts\\_figures.html](http://npcr.net/pages/legislation_and_policy/facts_figures.html) (April 2015).

90. NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, "Brownfield Cleanup Program Summary - NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation." Retrieved from <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8648.html> (April 2015).

91. New York Economic Development Corporation, "NYC Industrial Business Zones." Retrieved from <https://www.nycedc.com/industry/industrial/nyc-industrial-business-zones> (May 2015).

92. NYC Office of Environmental Remediation, "OER- NYC Brownfield Incentive Grant Program - Grant Types." Retrieved from <http://www.nyc.gov/html/oer/html/brownfield-incentive-grants/grant-types.shtml> (April 2015).

93. New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Retrieved from <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/> (April 2015).

94. Brownsville MultiService Family Health Center, "Bms-Family-Health | ABOUT US." Retrieved from [http://bmsfhc.wix.com/bms-family-health#!about\\_us/csgz](http://bmsfhc.wix.com/bms-family-health#!about_us/csgz) (April 2015).

95. Porter, Dionne Searcey, Eduardo, & Robert Gebeloff, (Feb. 2015), "Health Care Opens Stable Career Path, Taken Mainly by Women." Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/23/business/economy/health-care-opens-middle-class-path-taken-mainly-by-women.html> (April 2015).

96. Community Health Network, "Medical Mobile Van." Retrieved from <http://www.chnyc.org/find-us/mobile-van> (April 2015); Summit Health Care, "Mobile Health Services Van." Retrieved from <http://www.summithealthcare.net/index.php/medical-services/mobile-health-services-van/> (April 2015).

97. Cameron, David, (June 2009), "Mobile Health van Returns \$36 for Every

Dollar Invested." Harvard Gazette. Retrieved from <http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2009/06/mobile-health-van-returns-36-for-every-dollar-invested/> (May 2015).

98. Community Solutions, (2015), "Collective Impact for Healthy Living In Brownsville." Retrieved from <http://cmtysolutions.org/update/collective-impact-healthy-living-brownsville> (May 2015).

99. NYC DOH, (2015), "NYC Green Carts: How to Apply to be a Green Cart Vendor." Retrieved from <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/living/greencarts-apply.shtml> (April 2015).

100. Office of the Mayor, "Food Retail Expansion to Support Health." Retrieved from <http://www.nyc.gov/html/misc/html/2009/fresh.shtml> (April 2015).

101. Fears, Danika, (October 2011), "Brownsville Fresh Food Vendors Struggle for Buyers." The Brooklyn Ink. Retrieved from <http://thebrooklynink.com/2011/10/26/33113-in-brownsville-fresh-food-vendors-struggle-for-buyers/> (April 2015).

102. NYC Department of Environmental Protection, "NYC Green Infrastructure Program." Retrieved from [http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/stormwater/using\\_green\\_infra\\_to\\_manage\\_stormwater.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/stormwater/using_green_infra_to_manage_stormwater.shtml) (April 2015).

103. Urban Forestry/Urban Greening Research, (2010), "Crime and Public Safety." University of Washington. Retrieved from [https://depts.washington.edu/hhwb/Thm\\_Crime.html](https://depts.washington.edu/hhwb/Thm_Crime.html) (April 2015); Coniff, Richard, "Trees Shed Bad Rap As Accessories to Crime." Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies. Retrieved from <http://environment.yale.edu/envy/stories/trees-shed-bad-wrap-as-accessories-to-crime> (April 2015); City of New York, (April 2011), "PlaNYC." Retrieved from [http://s-media.nyc.gov/agencies/planyc2030/pdf/planyc\\_2011\\_planyc\\_full\\_report.pdf](http://s-media.nyc.gov/agencies/planyc2030/pdf/planyc_2011_planyc_full_report.pdf) (April 2015).

104. Center for Active Design, "Active Design Supplement: Affordable Designs for Affordable Housing." Retrieved from <http://centerforactivedesign.org/affordablehousingcosts> (April 2015).

105. Center for Active Design, "Active Design Supplement: Affordable Designs for Affordable Housing." Retrieved from <http://centerforactivedesign.org/affordablehousingcosts> (April 2015).

106. NYCHA, (Feb. 2013), "New York City and State Officials Join Blue Sea Development to Celebrate the Opening of a New Health and Energy-Efficient Affordable Housing Development in the Bronx." Retrieved from [80](http://www.</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

# REFERENCES

[nyc.gov/html/nycha/html/news/new-york-city-and-state-officials-join-blue-sea-development-to-celebrate-the-opening-of-a-new-healthy-and-energy-efficient-affordable-housing-development-in-the-bronx.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/html/news/new-york-city-and-state-officials-join-blue-sea-development-to-celebrate-the-opening-of-a-new-healthy-and-energy-efficient-affordable-housing-development-in-the-bronx.shtml) (April 2015).

107. NYCHA, (Feb. 2013), "NYCHA NEWS." Retrieved from <http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycha/html/news/new-york-city-and-state-officials-join-blue-sea-development-to-celebrate-the-opening-of-a-new-healthy-and-energy-efficient-affordable-housing-development-in-the-bronx.shtml> (April 2015).