

ARTS & CULTURE

Takeaways:

- There is broad interest in strengthening the connections between NYCHA and the broader Gowanus neighborhood.
- Specific recommendations with the strongest support were #1, 2, 4, 6, and 8.
- Support is limited for Recommendation #13, which raised concerns and oppositions from some summit participants.

Working Group Member Comments:

Housing

- Consider Chelsea artist loft co-op model
- Arts integrated into new residential/ industrial development (not separate)
- Calling out affordability for artists vs. everybody else is unjust
- Allow live/work to preserve opportunities for artists to remain in Gowanus as cost of residential escalates
- Why is there no mention of increased neighborhood access to arts & culture?
- Arts & culture as a mandatory, inclusionary use (can co-exist with housing and industry) in new construction

Industry & Economic Development

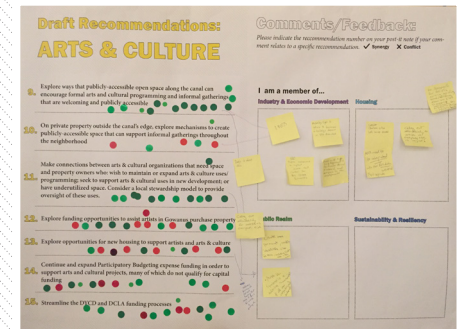
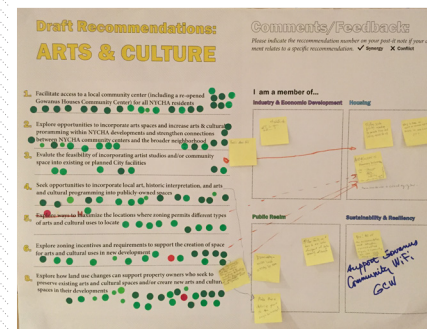
- Ensure a right-to-return to businesses in buildings that are rezoned (i.e. 540 President Street)
- Mechanisms to ensure commercial rent control for all commercial businesses
- Develop as-of-right zoning for mission-driven industrial and arts spaces in new development
- Recommendation #4 relates to Recommendation #8

Public Realm

- Rec. #4: Enlist local artists
- Rec. #6: Make this a defining characteristic of the neighborhood
- Rec. #8: Create more permanently, readily identifiable sites for this including floating sites in the basin
- Rec. #10: Make this symbiosis a defining characteristic of all new development
- Make Gowanus a focal point of the AREA program by committing to creating a specific number of affordable artists work spaces

Sustainability & Resiliency

- Support Gowanus Community Wi-Fi
- All recommendations must strengthen connections between NYCHA and the community - we are one neighborhood



Recommendations:

1. Facilitate access to a local community center (including a re-opened Gowanus Houses Community Center) for all NYCHA residents.
2. Explore opportunities to incorporate arts spaces and increase arts & cultural programming within NYCHA developments and strengthen connections between NYCHA community centers and the broader neighborhood.
3. Evaluate the feasibility of incorporating artist studios and/or community space into existing or planned City facilities.
4. Seek opportunities to incorporate local art, historic interpretation, and arts and cultural programming into publicly-owned spaces.
5. Explore ways to maximize the locations where zoning permits different types of arts and cultural uses to locate.
6. Explore zoning incentives and requirements to support the creation of space for arts and cultural uses in new development.
8. Explore how land use changes can support property owners who seek to preserve existing arts & cultural spaces and/or create new arts & cultural spaces in their developments.
9. Explore ways that publicly-accessible open space along the canal encourage formal arts and cultural programming and informal gatherings that are welcoming and publicly accessible.
10. On private property outside of the canal's edge, explore mechanisms to create publicly-accessible space that can support informal gatherings throughout the neighborhood.
11. Make connections between arts & cultural organizations that need space and property owners who wish to maintain or expand arts & culture uses/programming; seek to support arts & cultural uses in new development; or have underutilized space. Consider a local stewardship model to provide oversight of these uses.
12. Explore funding opportunities to assist artists in Gowanus purchase property.
13. Explore opportunities for new housing to support artists and arts & culture.
14. Continue and expand Participatory Budgeting expense funding in order to support arts and cultural projects, many of which do not qualify for capital funding.
15. Streamline the DYCD and DCLA funding processes.

HOUSING

Takeaways:

- Summit participants expressed support for the Housing group's draft recommendations regarding the inclusion of NYCHA throughout the planning process, protecting existing residents through various city programs, addressing existing residents' needs for community facilities and open space, and promoting development of new affordable housing by applying MIH. Participants voiced a desire to see deeper affordability than the current MIH requirements.
- There was interest in protecting existing residents before moving forward with a rezoning through the creation of a Certificate of No Harassment and considering a right-to-return preference for residents who would be displaced on a site-specific basis.

Working Group Member Comments:

Arts & Culture

- Focus on youth and artists of all ages
- Understand the need for unknown artists to be included in the process of positive changes
- Prioritize industrial over residential
- Focus on spaces and buildings structure for artists
- Rec. #1: Synergy between Arts & Culture and NYCHA
- Arts & culture are for everyone in the community, not just established artists

Industry & Economic Development

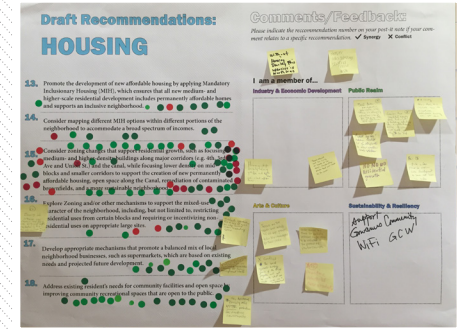
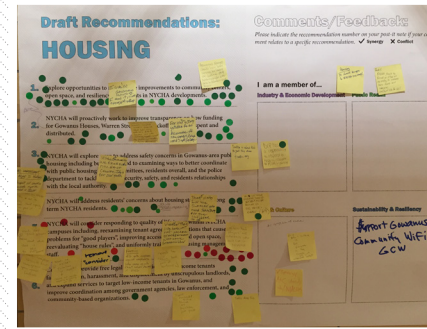
- High-density housing along 3rd and 4th Avenues
- Include multiple types of housing: transitional, live/work, deeply affordable
- People should not be living on banks of the canal; consider other blocks for housing
- DCP has a responsibility to respond to housing concerns for NYCHA

Public Realm

- Prohibit "big box" retailers; restrict square footage of storefronts to allow small scale retailers
- Pick a few places for medium-scale development and leave the rest lower-scale
- Consider a right-to-return instead of buy-outs only
- Deeper affordability beyond MIH
- How does this address affordable housing along 4th Avenue?

Sustainability & Resiliency

- Support Gowanus Community Wi-Fi
- No housing along the canal or on blocks along the water



Recommendations:

1. Explore opportunities to incorporate improvements to community centers, open space, and resiliency investments in NYCHA developments.
2. NYCHA will proactively work to improve transparency on how funding for Gowanus Houses, Warren Street, and Wyckoff Houses is spent and distributed.
3. NYCHA will explore ways to address safety concerns in Gowanus-area public housing including but not limited to examining ways to better coordinate with public housing watch committees, residents overall, and the police department to tackle physical security, safety, and residents relationships with the local authority.
4. NYCHA will address residents' concerns about housing stability for long term NYCHA residents.
5. NYCHA will consider responding to quality of life issues within NYCHA campuses including, reexamining tenant agreement violations that cause problems for residents, improving access to grass and open space, reevaluating "house rules," and uniformly training all housing management staff.
6. Continue to provide free legal representation to low-income tenants facing eviction, harassment, and displacement by unscrupulous landlords, and expand services to target low-income tenants in Gowanus, and improve coordination among government agencies, law enforcement, and community-based organizations.
7. Investigate and take action against landlords who harass tenants to vacate rent-regulated apartments.
8. Continue to promote safe and healthy housing by responding to 311 calls and referrals from community organizations, proactively identify and inspect buildings that are in poor physical condition and improve the code enforcement inspections notification system and language access to create a better experience for tenants.
9. Help homeowners at risk of foreclosure with housing counseling and legal services, and assist in critical repairs to their buildings when possible.
10. Coordinate with local tenant organizing groups and expand programs that educate tenants, particularly the elderly and non-English speakers, about their rights and resources that are available to prevent displacement and provide dedicated Tenant Support Unit (TSU) staff to conduct door-to-door outreach in private residential buildings, informing tenants of their rights and connecting them to a range of resources, including regular TSU community outreach events and/or office hours for drop-in assistance available to tenants in Gowanus.
11. Explore the creation of a Certificate of No Harassment program for Gowanus.
12. Implement a targeted outreach strategy to promote loans and tax incentives that can help building owners make repairs and preserve affordability for existing tenants.
13. Promote the development of new affordable housing by applying Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH), which ensures that all new medium- and higher-scale residential development includes permanently affordable homes and supports an inclusive neighborhood.
14. Consider mapping different MIH options within different portions of the neighborhood to accommodate a broad spectrum of incomes.
15. Consider zoning changes that support residential growth, such as focusing medium- and higher-density buildings along major corridors (e.g. 4th, 3rd Ave and Union St.) and the canal, while focusing lower density on mid-blocks and smaller corridors to support the creation of new permanently affordable housing, open space along the Canal, remediation of contaminated brownfields, and a more sustainable neighborhood.
16. Explore Zoning and/or other mechanisms to support the mixed-use character of the neighborhood, including, but not limited to, restricting residential uses from certain blocks and requiring or incentivizing non-residential uses on appropriate large sites.
17. Develop appropriate mechanisms that promote a balanced mix of local neighborhood businesses, such as supermarkets, which are based on existing needs and projected future development.
18. Address existing residents' needs for community facilities and open space by improving community recreational spaces that are open to the public.
19. On publicly owned sites, promote the creation of affordable housing that exceeds the minimum MIH requirements, with a focus on low and extremely low incomes to support an inclusive neighborhood.
20. Better advertise open housing lotteries, and improve residents' ability to understand, prepare for, and complete affordable housing applications by holding information sessions with trained advocates on hand to assist.

PUBLIC REALM

Takeaways:

- Recommendations #1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 11 received the strongest support.
- There was limited support for variety in building heights (Recommendation #2).
- Responses were mixed to Recommendations #9 and 10, regarding historic resources
- Overall, there was agreement in support for canal public access components, streetscape and open space strategies, and exploring cultural and historic interpretation.

Working Group Member Comments:

Arts & Culture

- Arts & culture should be included in public realm planning as art beautifies, excites and attracts public
- For all projects, consider adding artistic component; fund it so artists are not working for free

Industry & Economic Development

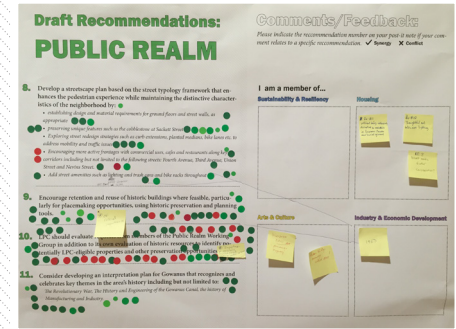
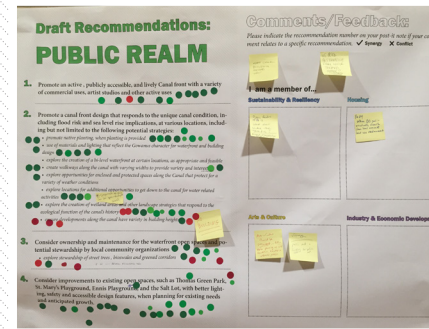
- Support: street amenities, lighting, and trash cans
- Conflict: retention and reuse of historic buildings

Housing

- Rec. #4: When Douglas & Degraw Pool is eventually closed to clean land, consider land use replacement
- Restore B71 bus
- Rec. #11: Should not be extensively disruptive to residents, i.e. Gowanus Houses and burial ground
- Rec. #10: Thoughtful, not intrusive lighting
- Rec. #8: Needs further consideration

Sustainability & Resiliency

- Rec. #4: What about Under the Tracks playground and Prospect Expressway (10th Street and 3rd Avenue)?
- Rec. #6: Must be clear about the meaning of “green space” vs. “open space”; Gowanus is underserved by CEQR definitions



Recommendations:

1. Promote an active, publicly accessible, and lively canal-front with a variety of commercial uses, artist studios, and other active uses.
2. Promote a canal-front design that responds to unique canal conditions, including flood risk and sea level rise implications, at various locations, including but not limited to:
 - promoting native planting, when planting is provided;
 - using materials and lighting that reflect the Gowanus character for waterfront and building design;
 - exploring the creation of a bi-level waterfront at certain locations, as appropriate and feasible;
 - creating walkways along the canal with varying widths to provide variety and interest;
 - exploring opportunities for enclosed and protected spaces along the canal that protect for a variety of weather conditions;
 - exploring locations for opportunities to access the canal for water-related activities;
 - exploring the creation of wetland areas and other landscape strategies that respond to the ecological function of the canal's history; and
 - ensuring developments along the canal have variety in building heights.
3. Explore the creation of additional connections to and across the canal, including but not limited to:
 - Pedestrian canal crossings north of Union Street Bridge (Degraw or Douglass);
 - Nevins Street to 1st Street Turning Basin;
 - through Public Place;
 - from 6th Street to canal turning basin;
 - President Street to canal;
 - Sackett Street to canal;
 - 2nd Street from 3rd Avenue to canal; and
 - additional connections through developments.
4. Consider ownership and maintenance for the waterfront open spaces and potential stewardship by local community organizations; explore stewardship of street trees, bioswales, and greened corridors.
5. Explore opportunities for new active and/or passive recreation space outside of the waterfront open spaces to accommodate existing needs of NYCHA and the surrounding community and future anticipated growth; encourage the creation of a variety of open spaces, plazas (public and privately-owned public spaces) and parklets as part of the overall public realm vision/plan for the neighborhood.
6. Explore opportunities for greening streets and corridors and incorporate green infrastructure in street design, particularly at or along: canal street-ends, Bond Street, 3rd Avenue corridor, Nevins Street, 9th Street, and 3rd Street.
7. Consider improvements to existing open spaces (including such Thomas Greene Playground, St. Mary's Playground, Under the Tracks Playground, Ennis Playground, and the Salt Lot) with better lighting, safety and accessible design features, when planning for existing needs and anticipated growth.
8. Develop a streetscape plan based on the street typology framework that enhances the pedestrian experience while maintaining the distinctive characteristics of the neighborhood by:
 - establishing design and material requirements for ground floors and street walls, as appropriate;
 - preserving unique features such as the cobblestone at Sackett Street;
 - exploring street redesign strategies such as curb extensions, planted medians, bike lanes, etc., to address mobility and traffic issues;
 - encouraging more active frontages with commercial uses, cafes and restaurants along key corridors including but not limited to: Fourth Avenue, Third Avenue, Union Street and Nevins Street; and
 - adding street amenities such as lighting and trash cans and bike racks throughout.
9. Encourage retention and reuse of historic buildings where feasible, particularly for placemaking opportunities, using historic preservation and planning tools.
10. LPC should evaluate requests from members of the Public Realm Working Group in addition to its own evaluation of historic resources to identify potentially LPC-eligible properties and other preservation opportunities.
11. Consider developing an interpretation plan for Gowanus that recognizes and celebrates key themes in the area's history including but not limited to: the Revolutionary War, the history and engineering of the Gowanus Canal, and the history of manufacturing and industry.

INDUSTRY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Takeaways:

- There was a consensus around maintaining the neighborhood's current mixed use character by supporting industrial and commercial uses in specific areas. Similarly, there were many comments requesting to look at how existing zoning tools, such as MIH requirements or MX districts, could be customized for Gowanus.
- Many from the Arts & Culture group identified synergy between arts uses and commercial/light industrial uses.
- From the Housing group, many identified workforce development as a priority, including a need for targeted job training and making Gowanus-based jobs more accessible to local residents, particularly at the NYCHA campuses.

Working Group Member Comments:

Arts & Culture

- Synergy: Support existing light industrial/arts/commercial
- Synergy: Recommendations 1, 2 and 3
- Synergy: Where in the city are we expanding industrial/manufacturing space instead of shrinking it?
- Make Gowanus a focal point of the AREA program by committing to a specific number of affordable artist workspaces

Public Realm

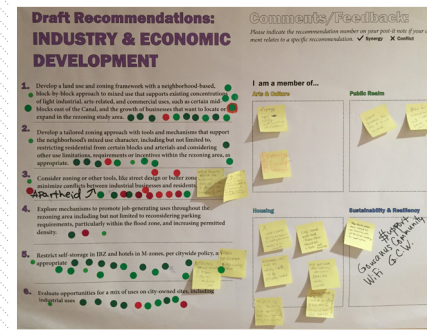
- Leave Gowanus the way it is – mixed use
- Allow for anomalous and “messy” patches so that the natural mix of the neighborhood doesn't disappear
- Rec. #7: Interactions cheek-by-jowl are inherent in the neighborhood and part of what makes it unique

Sustainability & Resiliency

- Those blocks abutting canal water should not have housing
- Job training
- Support Gowanus Community Wi-Fi
- Support Environmental Justice benefits through recently passed NY legislation

Housing

- Invest in workforce training and adult education for members of the community
- City-owned parkland – Public Place – should be a park, not housing
- Inclusionary uses, such as industry and arts, can be vertically located
- MIH must include other “inclusionary” uses such as arts & culture, industry, and live/work
- Zoning needs to be creative to allow higher-value residential to mix with lower value arts and manufacturing in one development
- Rec. #8: NYCHA REES should be used as a resource to connect NYCHA residents to employment opportunities from businesses
- IBZ must be strengthened with further use restrictions as part of this rezoning
- If IBZ is excluded from the study, this perpetuates benign neglect of industrial and manufacturing sectors
- The neighborhood needs more attention in the re-opening of community centers
- Rezoning is an opportunity to create true mixed use zoning tools, not MX and not only on City sites



Recommendations:

1. Develop a land use and zoning framework with a neighborhood-based, block-by-block approach to mixed use that supports existing concentrations of light industrial, arts-related, and commercial uses, such as certain mid-blocks east of the canal, and the growth of businesses that want to locate or expand in the rezoning study area.
2. Develop a tailored zoning approach with tools and mechanisms that support the neighborhood's mixed use character, including but not limited to restricting residential from certain blocks and arterials and considering other use limitations, requirements or incentives within the rezoning area, as appropriate.
3. Consider zoning or other tools, like street design or buffer zones, to support use compatibility between industrial businesses and residents.
4. Explore mechanisms to promote job-generating uses throughout the rezoning area including but not limited to reconsidering parking requirements, particularly within the flood zone, and increasing permitted density.
5. Restrict self-storage in IBZ and hotels in M-zones, per citywide policy, as appropriate.
6. Evaluate opportunities for a mix of uses on City-owned sites, including industrial uses.
7. Study potential short and long-term transportation improvements including but not limited to parking and loading on side streets, transit, and truck routes to reduce conflicts between pedestrians, bicyclists, trucks and other modes of transportation and to support existing and future businesses.
8. Provide resources to existing and new businesses in the form of financial assistance and training based on their needs, while ensuring connections to city's Workforce 1 system and Hire NYC programs, so jobs are accessible to local residents and their skills.
9. Evaluate and explore other potential infrastructure improvements, like broadband, sewer, sanitation and resiliency-related improvements that support and reinforce industrial, manufacturing, and commercial businesses.

SUSTAINABILITY & RESILIENCY

Takeaways:

- Summit participants expressed support for the Sustainability & Resiliency group's draft recommendations regarding a Gowanus community emergency response plan, future flood risk and drainage issues, flood-resistant and active uses on building ground floors, sustainable energy and other green neighborhood initiatives, and green jobs and workforce development.
- There were some questions and disagreement on the working group's draft outcomes related to contaminated site remediation and flood-resistant design; feedback provided at the summit helped clarify these recommendations.

Working Group Member Comments:

Housing

- New employment opportunities should go to local residents
- Consider leveraging new market rate residential development to support NYCHA campuses
- Rec. #6: Define and address Environmental Justice through engagement and acknowledging inequalities

Public Realm

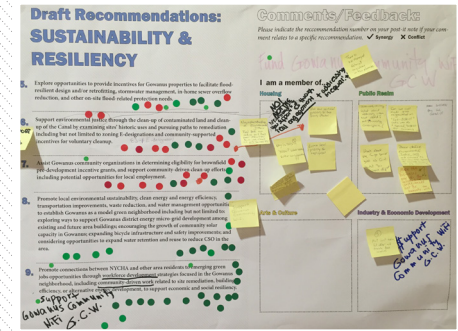
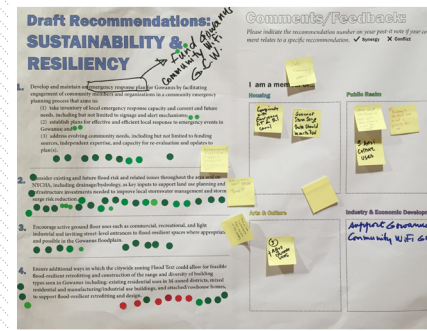
- Promote structures with raised design as New Orleans did post-Katrina
- Address urban heat island effect and need for green space
- Include the surge barrier proposed at the mouth of the canal
- Rec. #4: Building in the flood zone is not a priority for all
- Rec. #6: Define Environmental Justice consistently with NY State legislation
- Rec #6: Fund remediation through responsible businesses, not public

Arts & Culture

- Rec. #3: Include arts & culture uses when considering active ground floors

Industry & Economic Development

- Support Gowanus Community Wi-Fi initiative



Recommendations:

1. Develop and maintain an emergency response plan for Gowanus by facilitating engagement of community members and organizations in a community emergency planning process that aims to: (1) take inventory of local emergency response capacity and current and future needs, including but not limited to signage and alert mechanisms; (2) establish plans for effective and efficient local response to emergency events in Gowanus; and (3) address evolving community needs, including but not limited to funding sources, independent expertise, and capacity for re-evaluation and updates to plan(s).
2. Consider existing and future flood risk and related issues throughout the area and on NYCHA, including drainage/hydrology, as key inputs to support land use planning and infrastructure investments needed to improve local stormwater management and storm surge risk reduction.
3. Encourage active ground floor uses such as commercial, recreational, and light industrial and inviting street-level entrances to flood-resilient spaces where appropriate and possible in the Gowanus floodplain.
4. Support flood-resilient retrofitting and design in Gowanus by allowing in the citywide zoning Flood Text for building types including: existing residential uses in M-zoned districts, mixed residential and manufacturing/industrial use buildings, and attached/rowhouse homes.
5. Explore opportunities to provide incentives for Gowanus properties to facilitate flood-resilient design and/or retrofitting, stormwater management, in-home sewer overflow reduction, and other on-site flood-related protection needs.
6. Support environmental justice through clean-up of contaminated land and the canal by examining sites' historic uses and pursuing paths to remediation including but not limited to community-supported incentives for voluntary cleanup and zoning E-designations.
7. Assist Gowanus community organizations in determining eligibility for OER pre-development grants to address underutilized brownfield sites, and support community-driven clean-up and redevelopment efforts including opportunities for local employment.
8. Promote local environmental sustainability, clean energy and energy efficiency, transportation improvements, waste reduction, and water management opportunities to establish Gowanus as a model green neighborhood including but not limited to: exploring ways to support Gowanus district energy micro-grid development among existing and future area buildings; encouraging the growth of community solar capacity in Gowanus; expanding bicycle infrastructure and safety improvements; and considering opportunities to expand water retention and reuse to reduce CSO in the area.
9. Promote connections between NYCHA and other area residents to emerging green jobs opportunities through workforce development strategies focused in the Gowanus neighborhood, including community-driven work related to site remediation, building efficiency, or alternative energy development, to support economic and social resiliency.