Sunnyside Yard Master Planning Process
Public Meeting 01 Overview
Sunnyside Yard Public Meeting #1

When:
October 24, 2018, 6:00-8:00p

Where:
LaGuardia Community College

What:
6 Information/Activity Stations, with representatives from 5+ City agencies, Amtrak, MTA, and the technical consultant team to facilitate and answer questions at each station.

15 minute presentation
Carl Rodrigues, Senior Advisor, Office of the Deputy Mayor for Housing & Economic Development
Cali Williams, Director of Sunnyside Yard, NYCEDC
Vishaan Chakrabarti, FAIA, Lead of Sunnyside Yard Master Plan Consultant Team, Founder of PAU
375+ People Attended the First Public Meeting!

**Age***

- 19 - 24: 10%  
- 25 - 34: 25%  
- 35 - 44: 26%  
- 45 - 54: 14%  
- 55 - 64: 12%  
- 65+: 6%

**Residence***

- Sunnyside, 28.1%  
- Astoria, 12.2%  
- Woodside, 9.8%  
- Long Island City, 8.5%  
- Sunnyside Gardens, 4.9%  
- Blissville, 1.2%

**Other***, 35.4%

*Data from survey conducted during Public Meeting #1.  
**Of those who selected “Other” 30 reside in Brooklyn, including Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn Heights, Greenpoint, Bushwick, and Williamsburg; 9 reside in Manhattan, including Murray Hill, East Village, Harlem, and Washington Heights; and 7 reside in other neighborhoods in Queens, such as Jamaica, Flushing, Ozone Park, Ridgewood, and Maspeth. One participant was a resident of Duchess County.
Summary of Findings

The public meeting offered a number of activities designed to collect feedback from attendees on a range of topics. Participants highlighted the extent to which the Sunnyside Yard Master Plan is an opportunity to:

- Ensure that quality of life is invested in today and improved for future generations
- Increase access to green space, neighborhood parks, and open spaces in the community
- Meet the needs for truly affordable housing in Western Queens
- Create good, quality jobs through the site’s programs and uses
- Reshape the current transit system connecting Western Queens to the rest of the borough, Manhattan, and beyond
Station 1: Introduction to Sunnyside Yard

The first station provided an overview of the history of Sunnyside Yard and highlighted recent and active projects in the neighborhood. Two activities solicited input about opportunities and challenges in the area and information about destinations around the Yard.
Station 1: Introduction to Sunnyside Yard

Opportunities and Concerns Activity Input

This activity asked participants to identify opportunities and concerns facing Western Queens as it continues to evolve.

**Top Opportunities:**
1. More parks and green space for the community
2. Diversity of the community and the variety of services these attract, like housing that accommodates people of all ages and abilities
3. Job and educational opportunities

**Top Concerns:**
1. The lack of affordability of housing, services, and amenities
2. Aging infrastructure of public transit, sewer, and water lines
3. Mass transit’s capacity to withstand population increases
4. Overcrowding of existing schools
This activity asked participants to identify **why they visited other neighborhoods** around Sunnyside Yard. Pins were color-coded to identify the participant’s home neighborhood.
The second station provided an overview of the functions of the Yard and a high-level description of how you build a platform over a railyard.
The third station explained the process of master planning and the different types of public space typologies that could be part of the plan for Sunnyside Yard. This station invited people to participate in three activities:

1. Identifying and prioritizing Guiding Principles for the Plan
2. Describing visions for Yard
3. Prioritizing types of public space
Station 3: Master Planning and the Future of Sunnyside Yard

Guiding Principles Activity Findings

The top 5 guiding principles identified were:

1. Design **infrastructure and transportation** systems to meet current and anticipate future trends (32 votes)

2. Create **public spaces** that support health, creative expression, community-building, and quality of life (19 votes)

3. Explore new ways to create a mix of **affordable housing** (16 votes)

4. Encourage more **good jobs** that lead to careers and workforce development strategies like union jobs, MWBE, local hiring, etc. (16 votes)

5. Promote sustained **economic diversity** in the community (14 votes)
Station 3: Master Planning and the Future of Sunnyside Yard

Vision for Sunnyside Yard Activity Findings

Key Themes:
- **Affordable Housing**
- **Open Space**
- **Sustainable buildings**
- **Alleviate transit issues**
- **Support and bolster Queens’ multi-cultural profile**
Station 3: Master Planning and the Future of Sunnyside Yard

Public Space Activity Findings

Votes for Public and Open Space Typologies

- Passive Parks
- Ecological Parks
- Program + Arts
- Gathering Places
- Active Recreation
- Play and Adventure
- Promenades
- Courtyards
- Plazas

1st Choice  2nd Choice  3rd Choice

Sunnyside Yard Master Plan
Station 4 provided an overview of transportation in Western Queens and included a collaborative mapping exercise.
Station 4: Connecting Sunnyside Yard

The Collaborative Mapping tool used Google Places to allow participants to identify infrastructure concerns and opportunities facing Western Queens. Themes included:

- Opportunity to transform the Yard into a major transit hub serving the region at large through LIRR, New Jersey Transit, Amtrak, & regional airports.
- **Subway capacity and improvements** remain a major concern for Western Queens. Close to 1/3 of tags expressed concerns about accommodating growing population.
- Neighborhoods surrounding the Yard face limited parking with Sunnyside Gardens particularly troubled by the shortage of available space in their neighborhood.
- **Increased and improved bus service** could alleviate congestion across other modes of transit.
- More protected bike lanes could provide valuable alternative means of transit for residents of Western Queens.
- **Infrastructure**, such as pedestrian-friendly areas, green space, and sewage lines, will become increasingly important as more people move to the area.
Station 5 outlined the Community Engagement process for the Sunnyside Yard Master Plan and solicited input on preferred types of communication and engagement in the future.
Participants were asked to vote for topics that most interest them for workshops and other community engagement events. The topics that most interest participants are:

1. Parks and open space
2. Transportation
3. Arts and Culture
4. Sustainability and Resiliency
5. Housing
6. Jobs and Workforce Training

- Parks and Open Space: 25%
- Transportation: 23%
- Arts and Culture: 14%
- Sustainability and Resiliency: 13%
- Housing: 11%
- Jobs, Career, & Workforce Development: 9%
- Health: 5%
Station 6: What Makes Western Queens Unique? (Youth Station)

Key Themes

1. Neighbors and the people that make up their communities make their neighborhoods unique.

2. Small and local businesses are what make Western Queens special.

3. The multicultural fabric of the community is another positive element of the surrounding neighborhoods.

4. The good quality of life in Western Queens is made possible by the mixed-use neighborhoods and walkable neighborhoods.
How is this information being incorporated in the Sunnyside Yard Master Plan?

The detailed insights generated from the first public meeting:

1. Will be reviewed by the consultant teams to inform their analysis – from mobility planning to open space design.
2. Will be presented to the Steering Committee at their next meeting.
3. Will inform future engagement events, including workshops, public meetings, and interviews to continue building an inclusive and sustainable vision for Sunnyside Yard.