

Sunnyside Yard Master Planning Process

Public Meeting 02 Public Summary Report

NYCEDC



Overall Summary

Public meeting participants highlighted the Sunnyside Yard Master Plan as an opportunity to:

- Design a community where buildings, streets, and public spaces fit seamlessly with surrounding neighborhoods.
- Pilot innovative green infrastructure for the sustainability of Sunnyside Yard and the surrounding communities.
- Create and preserve affordable housing for new and existing residents of Western Queens.
- Create open space that is readily accessible to residents on all sides of Sunnyside Yard.
- Provide facilities in parks and open space that address the diverse needs of surrounding communities.

Additional engagements around the Sunnyside Yard Master Planning Process:

- Thematic workshops
 - Urban Design: Monday, April 8th from 6-8pm
 - Open Space: Tuesday, April 9th from 6-8pm
 - Sustainability and Green Infrastructure: Tuesday, April 30th from 6-8pm
 - Transportation: Wednesday, May 1st from 6-8pm
- Community tabling events from May through August
- Roundtable discussions

For further information about the project and information about upcoming events, please visit www.sunnysideyard.nyc

Sunnyside Yard Public Meeting #2

When:

March 26, 2019, 6:00-9:00pm

Where:

PS 166 Q Henry Gradstein
Elementary School

What:

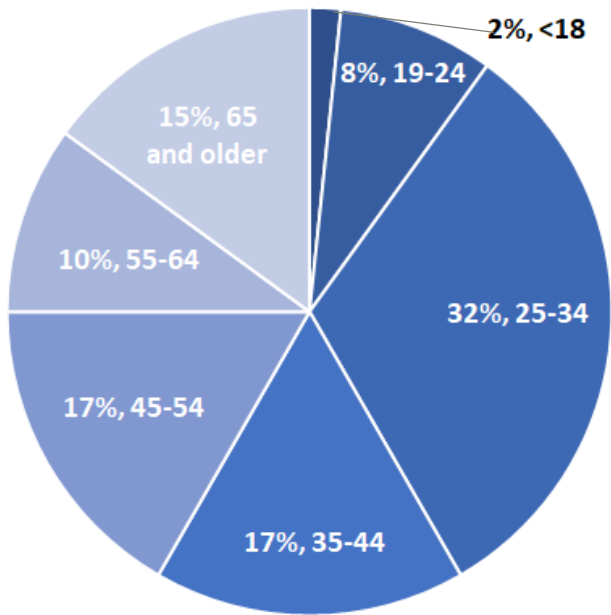
Introductory Presentation
followed by three workshops on:

- Urban Design
- Transportation
- Open Space

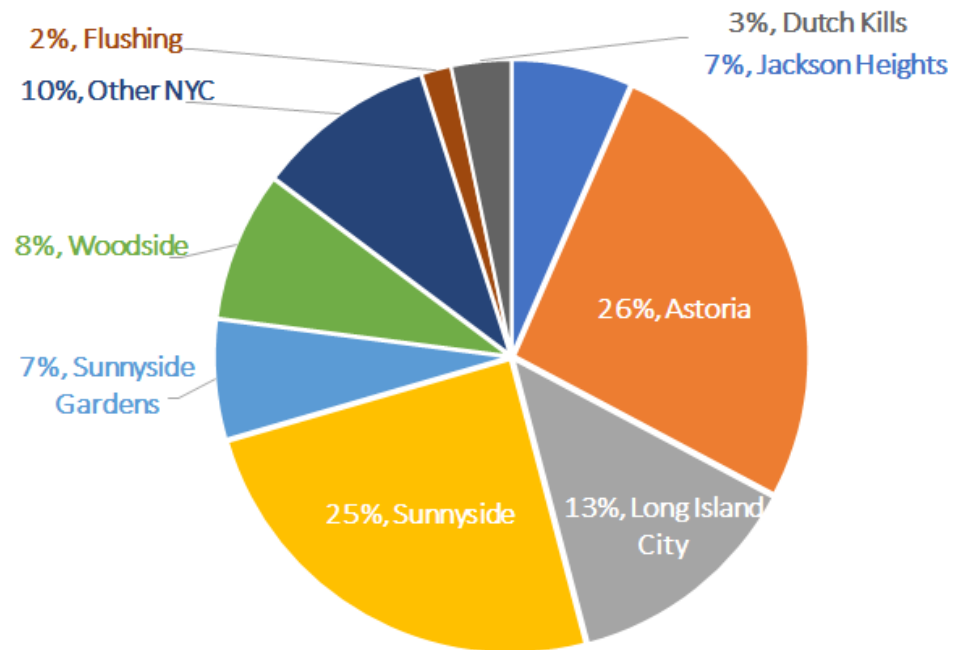


200+ People Attended the Second Public Meeting

Age



Residence*



Data from survey conducted during Public Meeting #2

*"Other NYC" includes residents from South Bronx, Bed-Stuy, Crown Heights, and elsewhere in Brooklyn

Overview



Opening Presentation

The evening was kicked off by representatives from City Hall, Amtrak and Steering Committee Co-chairs Elizabeth Lusskin and Sharon Greenberger. Local Steering Committee member Marie Torniali, President of the Steinway Business Improvement District and Chair of Community Board 1, spoke about her involvement as a local resident and leader in the planning process to date.



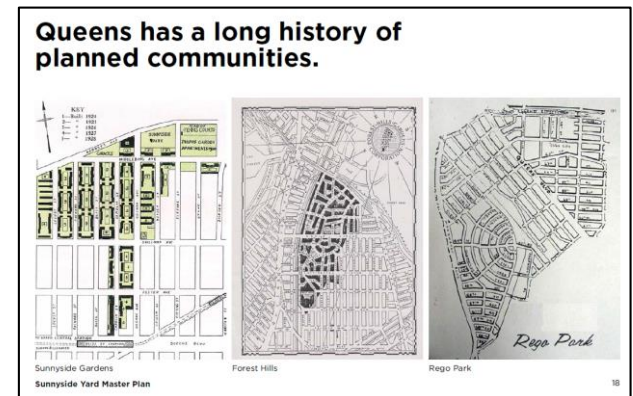
Opening Presentation

Vishaan Chakrabarti, the lead of the consultant team developing the master plan, presented to all attendees an overview of the Sunnyside Yard Master Planning Process, highlighting why long-term planning on this site is a unique opportunity for the City and surrounding neighborhoods. He walked through the community engagement completed to date and how it has informed the work, the 10 guiding principles for the planning process developed by the Steering Committee and last public meeting, and walked through the findings of the planning analysis to date.

You can find the full presentation on our website at [this link](#).

A few key highlights of the presentation include:

- Opportunities that Sunnyside Yard can bring to Western Queens, New York City, and the region --
 - Accommodating public space and affordable housing
 - Becoming regional hub for new jobs
 - Serving as a test site for innovations in green infrastructure, smart urban technology, and better urban design
- Potential uses for the Yard that reflect community priorities and public needs, including transportation, open space, affordable housing, and jobs
- How the planning team is thinking about the urban design of Sunnyside Yard, including
 - Ways to connect existing streets to potential deck
 - The role of green space, building types and density
 - The size of streets and blocks



Breakout Sessions: Learning & Dialogue

Three topic-specific breakout areas allowed for a deeper look at priority topics and direct engagement from participants on how the future plan should reflect community input.

Session Name	Goal
Open Space	Understand the community's preferred park and open space sizes and location on Sunnyside Yard, and the kinds of facilities that should be featured in each location.
Urban Design	Understand how different density levels, building types, and spaces between buildings influence the look and feel of a neighborhood. Learn community preferences for density and locations for specific building types/heights at Sunnyside Yard.
Transportation	Share data on how people currently move around Western Queens and the kinds of updates/changes currently being studied to improve transit in Western Queens. Gather feedback on transit improvements proposed for the area.

Open Space Workshop



Open Space Workshop Overview

Lanie McKinnon, landscape architect at Nelson Byrd Woltz (NBW), gave a presentation highlighting:

- There are many different typologies of open space, including plazas & promenades, passive parks, ecological parks, etc.
- The first public meeting of the Sunnyside Yard Master Plan (October 2018) asked attendees which typologies they preferred and found that passive parks and ecological parks ranked highest
- Parks and green space of different scales can accommodate different kinds of activities and facilities
 - **Large** parks attract users from far away, can have passive or active recreation, and can accommodate large events and vendors
 - **Medium** parks support diverse programs and tend to draw users from up to ½ mile away. They are typically neighborhood parks, linear parks, or greenways
 - **Small** parks support daily users, public art, play, and can serve as circulators
- Constraints and challenges when building green space on a deck include
 - Types of plants and their soil depth requirements
 - Complexities of rail operations and their impact on constructability



You can find the full presentation on our website at [this link](#).

Open Space Workshop Overview



Activity – Designing Open Space at Sunnyside Yard

- 80 participants in groups of 5-7 people
- Community participants identified ideal locations for parks/open spaces of various sizes and uses, using stickers representing hypothetical 10, 5 and 2 acre open spaces for a total of 50 acres of open space
- Participants wrote in desired amenities, facilities, and programming in specific proposed parks and generally across open at space at Sunnyside Yard
- Small group discussion and report back to the full group

Open Space Workshop Findings



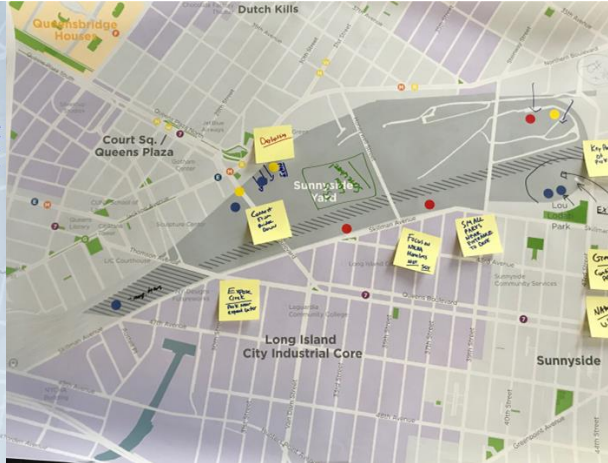
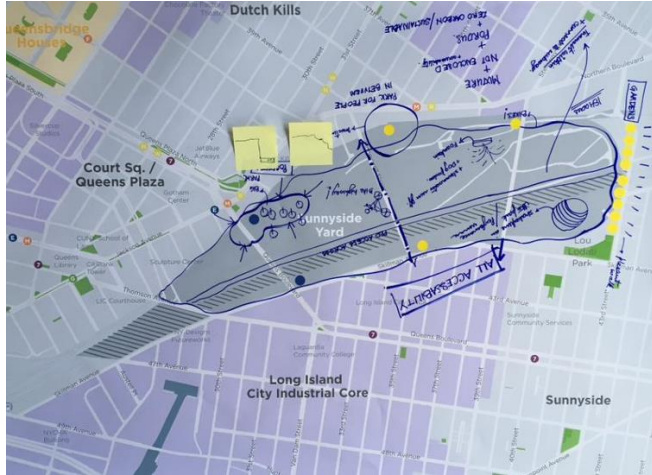
1. Preferred Location of Open Space | Summary

The **top 5 locations** where people want open space are:

1. Central Greenway (linear)
2. Large Park near Sunnyside/Southeast
3. Expansion of Lou Lodati
4. Central Park
5. Neighborhood Parks near Perimeter of Sunnyside Yard

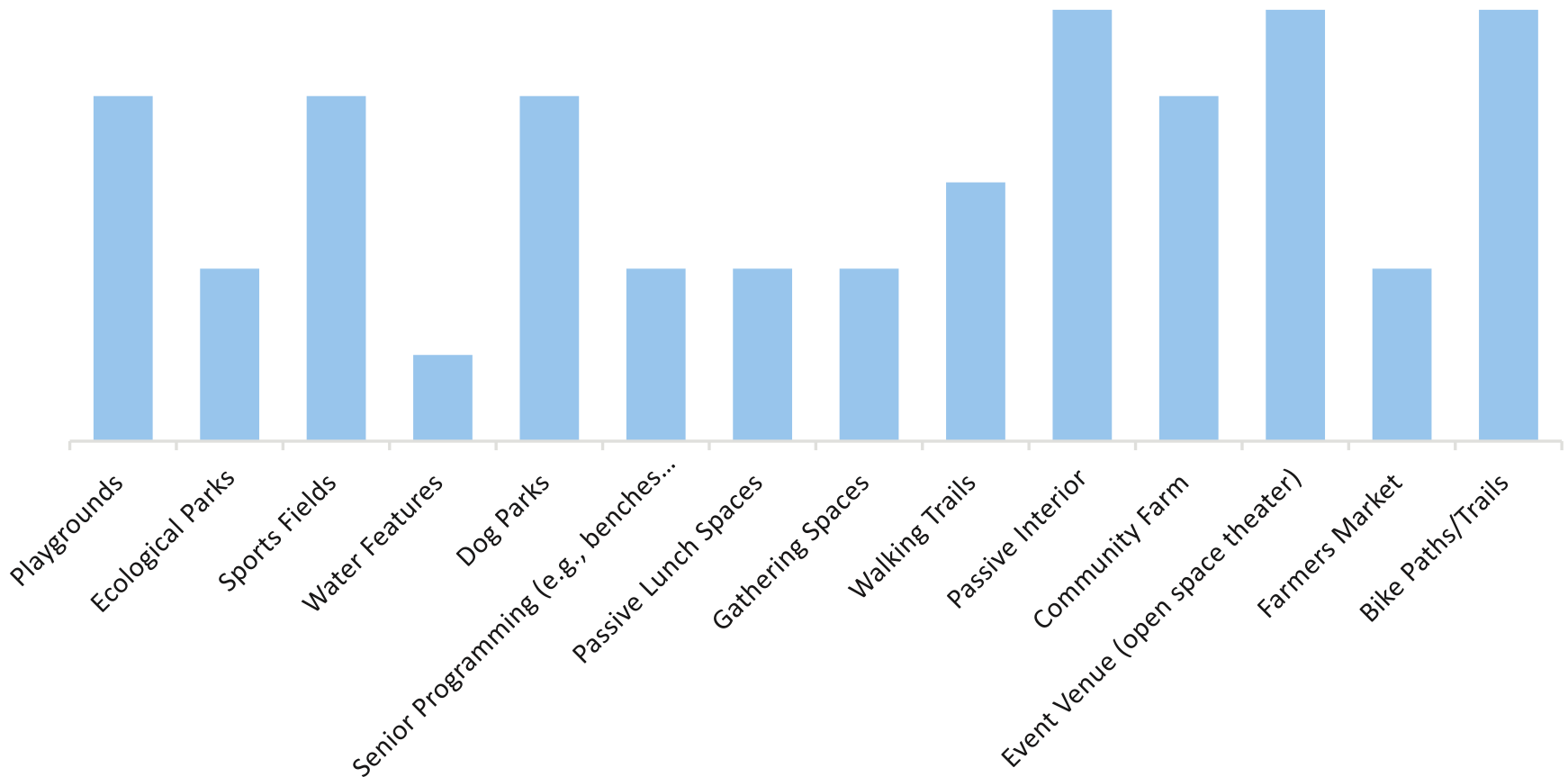


Samples of Participant Maps from Open Space Workshop



Preferred Programming of Open Space

Passive Interior, Event Venues, and Bike Paths and Trails were the three types of programming that participants most wanted to see.



Characteristics of Open Space

We asked what **characteristics** people wanted from the new open space. Here are the results:



Other Open Space Comments

Other Open Space feedback fell into two categories. The team is taking this feedback and questions into consideration into their analysis to be responsive in future meetings.

1. Ownership & Use

- Who owns the park? Sunnyside Yard residents, the City, or developers?
- Desire for locally-serving open space that does not dramatically change surrounding land value
- Programming needs to reflect the diversity of the communities that surround the Yard
- The plan should provide open spaces around LaGuardia Community College for students
- Desire for open space that's accessible to surrounding communities
- Desire to create interim usable greenspace during Phase 1 development

2. Relationship to Surrounding Area/Architecture

- Can we use green space as a barrier for wind tunnels?
- Concern about building shadows
- Interest in connecting Sunnyside Yard greenspace to Newtown Creek
- Desire for locally serving retail, if any, surrounding or near open space
- Participants do not want big box stores near the parks
- Must consider topography of the land around the Yard to make it seamless

Urban Design Workshop



Urban Design Workshop Overview

Skylar Bisom-Rapp, designer at Practice for Architecture and Urbanism (PAU), gave a presentation highlighting:

- Conditions in the Yard – such as active railroads, overhead power lines, and construction timing -- are factors that complicate decking over a railyard
- The planning and design team is exploring various ways of addressing elevation change from street level to a future deck, drawing from innovative examples around the world such as:
 - Park Güell in Barcelona
 - Seattle Art Museum's Olympic Sculpture Park
- Explanation of key planning concepts such as FAR (Floor Area Ratio) and the relationship between building height and density. Skylar talked through urban design principles that influence how buildings feel as you walk by them. He showed a wide range of examples of different building types in Queens to illustrate these concepts.

You can find the full presentation on our website at [this link](#).



Urban Design Workshop Overview

Activities – Designing the look and feel of Sunnyside Yard

- 120 participants in groups of 8-10 people
- Participants use stickers to show preferred density scenarios/FARs based on examples in existing Queens neighborhoods
- Using stickers, community participants indicated where they would like to see high, mid, and low-rise buildings at Sunnyside Yard
- Community participants wrote in ideas for different uses, locations of amenities, and comments about density and building heights
- Small group discussions and report back to the full group



Urban Design Workshop Findings

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1. Density Preferences

We asked which of these images represented participants' preferred **density scenarios**. Everyone was given 4 stickers to allocate.



● Scenario 1: 2 FAR/100% LIC



●●●●●●●● Scenario 2: 4 FAR/100% LIC



●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●● Scenario 3: 2 FAR/50% Sunnyside



●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●● Scenario 4: 4 FAR/50% Jackson Heights



●●●●●●●●●● Scenario 5: 6 FAR/50% LIC



●●●●●●●●●● Scenario 6: 2 FAR/25% Astoria



●●●●● Scenario 7: 4 FAR/25% Corona

Samples of Participant Maps from Urban Design Workshop

We asked where participants preferred **high**, **medium**, and **low** rise development.

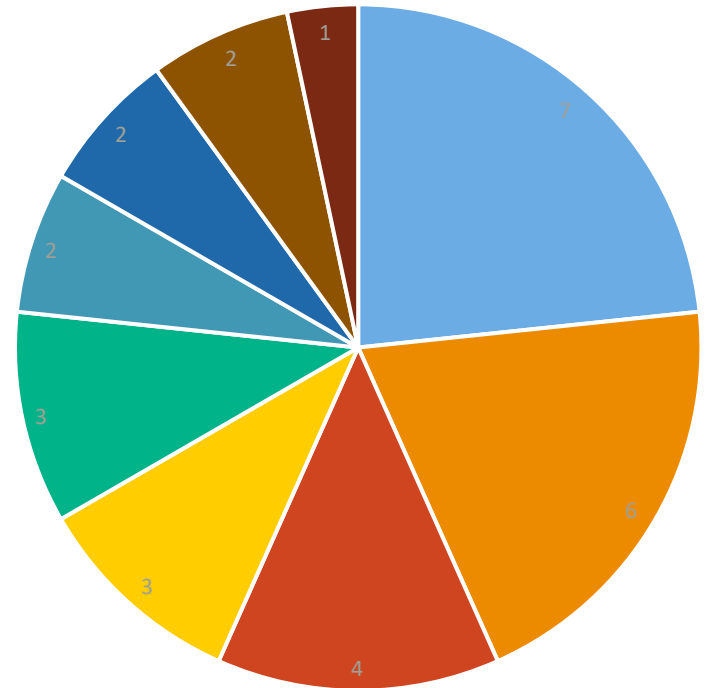
Red stickers = high-rise | **Green** = medium | **Yellow** = low



2. Building Height Preferences

We asked where participants' preferred **high, medium, and low rise** development. Here are key themes that emerged within each group.

- Low-rise should hug perimeter of Yard to avoid casting shadows on existing buildings
- High-rise nearest LIC and low-rise nearest Astoria/Woodside/Sunnyside border
- High-rise buildings in the center of the Yard to avoid casting shadows on surrounding neighborhoods and smaller properties
- Cluster buildings around existing roadways and bridges to encourage Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)
- High-rise closest to major transportation nodes
- Mid-rise or low/high-rise which should be scattered throughout the site
- More lot coverage with low-rise buildings so that added height of deck doesn't overshadow neighboring communities
- Clusters of housing to maximize open space
- Mid-rise mixed-use buildings with commercial/community/retail space on ground floor



Urban Design: General Comments

Other comments and concerns generally fell into 4 categories. The team is taking this feedback and questions into consideration into their analysis to be responsive in future meetings.

1. Surrounding area and architecture:

- Buildings that might be built at Sunnyside Yard should feel well-integrated and seamless from the surrounding neighborhoods
- Desire for frequent well-designed access points to Yard from surrounding context
- Desire to preserve existing public spaces and scenic views

2. Affordability and Ownership:

- Consistent emphasis on the importance of affordability
- Interest in a Community Land Trust (CLT) as a mechanism to allow for community ownership
- Interest in having nonprofit developers involved in future projects
- Desire to have some units/homes set aside for those who already live in the surrounding community and/or artists
- Desire to reimagine co-ops at Sunnyside Yard - what would they look like?
- Desire for new construction that serves needs of local communities
- Emphasis on preserving NYCHA

Urban Design: General Comments (continued)

3. Programming and Transit Design:

- Interest in transit-oriented development, with higher density located closer to transit – development should be transit-oriented and public space should be preserved
- Interest in reevaluating zoning for industrial business zone to the south
- Importance of allowing space between buildings to preserve open space
- Potential to increase housing around LIRR stops to divert flow from subway
- Opportunity for Sunnyside Yard to be a commercial/business hub for Queens
- Preference for roads that go both ways (not one-way) as it's easier for circulation and better for business
- Participants expressed need to understand potential uses first in order discuss density and look/feel

4. Sustainability:

- Building materials must be sustainable and diverse (not all glass)
- Interest in activating rooftops for gardens and green infrastructure (e.g. reuse of storm water)
- Invest in solar/wind energy to power buildings/facilities

Transportation Workshop

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Transportation Workshop Overview

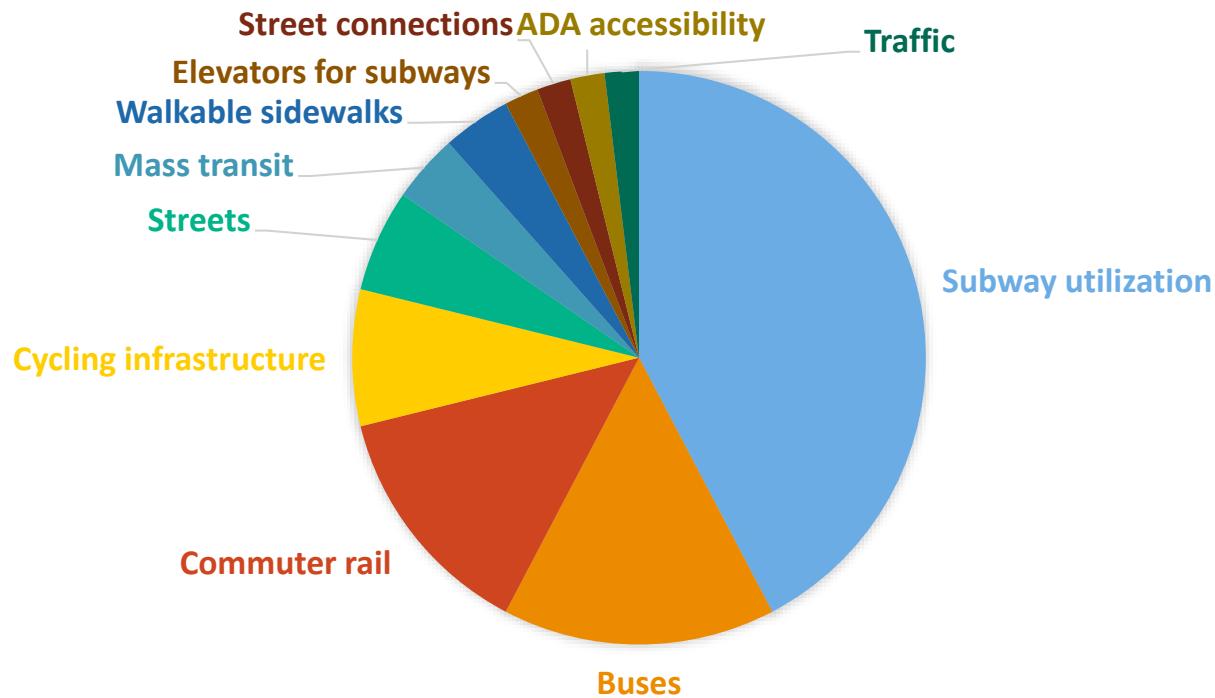
- The Transportation Workshop provided an overview of how people currently get around Western Queens and the kinds of interventions under analysis as part of the Sunnyside Yard Master Plan to improve transit in Western Queens.
- The session consisted of a 45 minute presentation, Q+A and survey to solicit input on the planned transit improvements and interventions in Western Queens.
- You can find the full presentation [here](#).

Transportation Workshop Findings



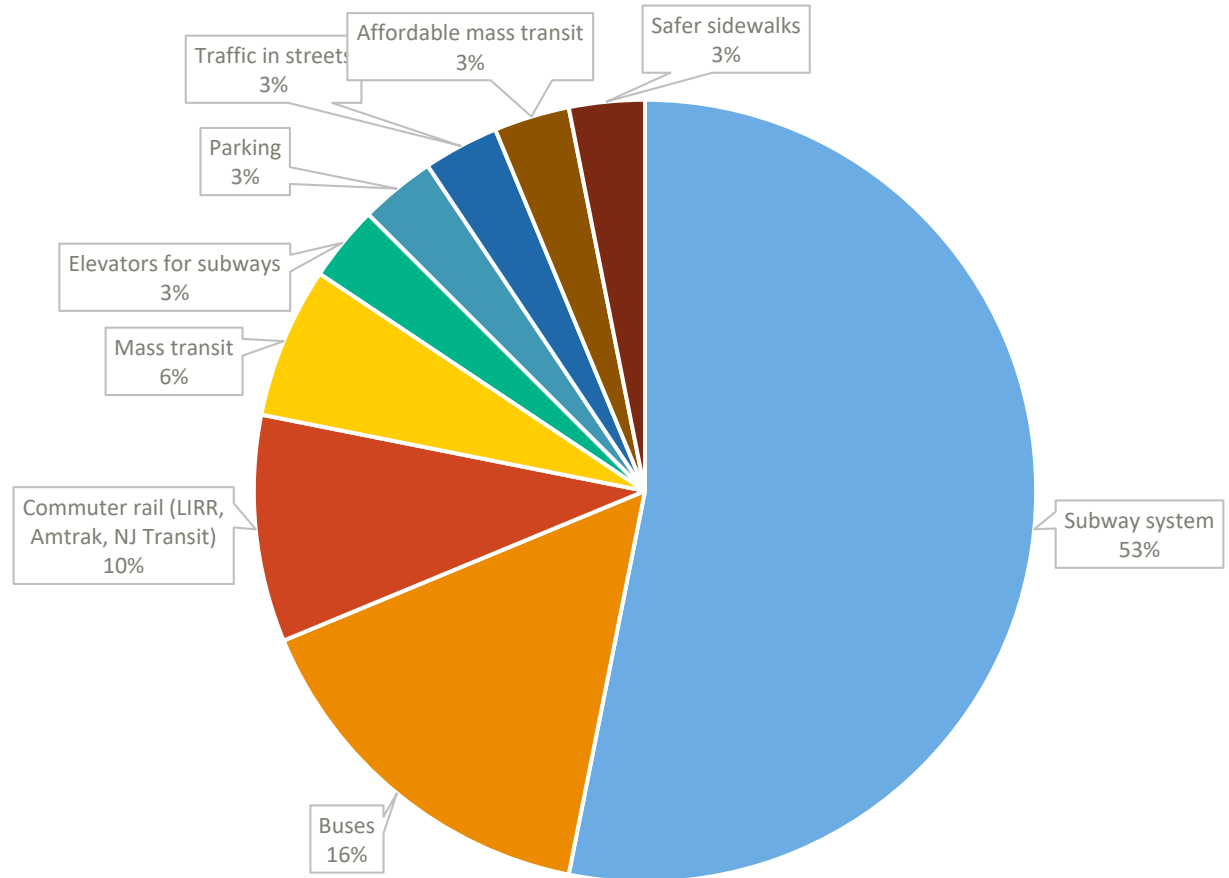
Question 1: What part of the transportation system are you most concerned about?

Subway Utilization was by far the largest transportation concern, followed by Buses, and the Commuter Rail.



Question 2: What part of the transportation system needs the most work?

- Again the **Subway System** was the top answer for this question, followed by **Buses**, and the **Commuter Rail**.
- When asked how to prioritize this work, the top response was **Expansion of Subway Lines**.
- Other notable responses include:
 - Build LIRR stop at Sunnyside Yard
 - Subway maintenance
 - Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) for outer boroughs where subways are less frequent/extensive.



Question 3: What are the top 3 transportation interventions to prioritize?

Participants were given a list of 23 possible interventions and were asked to rank their first, second, and third priorities. These three emerged as the top choices:

1. **Upgrade subway signals** so trains can run more frequently
2. Focus new **development around transit**
3. **Redesign** and improve the **bus network** to provide **better service**



Question 4: What changes to our transit system would you most like to see happen over the next 40 years?

Out of 28 options, these were the top five responses among participants:

1. **Expansion of the subway** with new lines and stations
2. Rail network **connectivity**
3. **Elevators** to trains
4. **Electrification** of entire bus fleet and **expansion** of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
5. Overhauled **signaling system**



Transportation: Additional Comments

- It was clear that **planning near transit** was a priority, with a number of different modes being considered.
- Regarding the **subway**, suggestions included an expansion of the G train down to Brooklyn and up to LaGuardia, a complete overhaul of the 7 train, and even a new train line.
- With **buses**, participants wanted better service in the new neighborhood, dedicated bus lanes/bus rapid transit (BRT), and electric buses.
- A desire to embed **bike lanes** and **pedestrian accessibility** early on in the planning process
- Regarding cars, a desire to **reduce double parking** (e.g. delivery vehicles blocking streets) and **parking minimums** was expressed
- Interest in **adaptable car spaces** that evolve as vehicle usage changes over time

Transportation: Additional Comments (continued)

- **Accessibility** was a key concern, with ADA access to subway stations and continuing Access-a-Ride mentioned as priorities, along with considering the cost of transport and living in NYC.
- There was also a desire to **reach areas that currently have inadequate transit options**, with connections to LaGuardia and Brooklyn being mentioned specifically.
- **Population studies** and **commuting patterns** should be considered when creating the plan. There were suggestions to look at **Chinese and Japanese transit systems**, as well as tap into **current transportation workers** for their ideas and expertise.
- It was concluded, that any plan must provide **multi-modal transit improvements**.

Conclusions & Next Steps



Overall Summary

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- Create and preserve affordable housing for new and existing residents of Western Queens.
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Stay engaged in the Sunnyside Yard Master Planning Process:

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