

Local Issues & Insights From Our 2024 Neighborhood Listening Tour

JANUARY 22, 2025

BROOKLYN ORG



Agenda

1. About Brooklyn Org & Our Annual Listening Tours
2. 2024 Neighborhood Collective Impact Grants
3. Neighborhoods Visited & Participants
4. Top & Emerging Themes Across Neighborhoods
5. Issues & Insights
6. Next Steps
7. Q&A

About Brooklyn Org

WHO WE ARE

- Brooklyn Org is a champion for Brooklyn—a partner and platform for local philanthropy that gives everyone a seat at the table.
- Over our 15-year history, we have moved over \$130 million to nonprofits, while working with innovative leaders at the forefront of community-led change.
- We are bringing together Brooklynites, Brooklyn backers, businesses, & broader believers in equity and justice to make Brooklyn a beacon for the world.

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Our Annual Listening Tours



Dr. Jocelynne Rainey

President & CEO
Brooklyn Org



Lori Luis

CEO & President
LoriLu Consulting

- Started in 2022, our annual Listening Tours help us build relationships with neighborhood leaders & grassroots organizations & stay informed on challenges & opportunities for investment across our borough.
- Led by our President & CEO Dr. Jocelynne Rainey & facilitated by BKO partner Lori Luis, we met with community leaders across Brooklyn: businesses owners, educators, parents, faith leaders, nonprofits, & more.

Neighborhood Collective Impact Grants

- Launched in 2024 to address concerns raised during our annual Listening Tours
- To promote neighborhood-level collaborations that advance racial justice and provide resources to BIPOC and historically disempowered communities
- Three projects received \$25,000 each, in Kensington, East New York/Brownsville, and Flatbush/East Flatbush



Neighborhood Collective Impact Grants

Joining us to talk about the 2024 projects are:

- Immanuel Oni (he/him), space doula, co-founder and co-director of Liminal
- Allyson Martinez (she/her), Executive Director/Co-Founder, Brooklyn Level Up (BKLVLUP)
- Caron Atlas (she/her), Director, Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts NY (NOCD-NY)





NEIGHBORHOOD COLLECTIVE IMPACT GRANT

Project: Beyond Memorial

NEIGHBORHOODS

Brownsville, East New York

NONPROFIT PARTNERS

Liminal SP + Brownsville Community Justice Center

PURPOSE

Aims to reclaim public spaces associated with gun violence and community trauma by:

- Incorporating thoughtful solutions such as intentional lighting in place of NYPD light towers that cause sound and light pollution
- Hosting nighttime activations in under-utilized spaces to deter crime
- Incorporating creative-environmental strategies to improve safety conditions at the Rockaway Ave. 3 train station.

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Project Updates: Beyond Memorial

NEIGHBORHOOD COLLECTIVE IMPACT GRANT

- Series of walking tours and art installations highlighting local history and reclaiming spaces associated with violence
- Improving Dr. Green playground, adding in solar lighting to improve visibility and welcome youth in the space
- Teaching local youth commonly played games and interviewing residents familiar with history of space and neighborhood
- A spring event planned for the installation of the lighting and to engage community with the playground's revitalization

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NEIGHBORHOOD COLLECTIVE IMPACT GRANT

Project: Cultivate Green

NEIGHBORHOODS

East Flatbush, Flatbush, Flatlands

NONPROFIT PARTNERS

Brooklyn Level Up + Wyckoff House & Association

PURPOSE

Studies found that soil in East Flatbush has the 3rd highest level of lead contamination in NYC, potentially jeopardizing the health of homeowners and community gardeners growing and sharing produce.

Asthma-related hospitalization rates in East Flatbush are higher compared to Brooklyn and NYC overall.

The Cultivate Green project aims to conduct soil testing, air monitoring, and remediation, and host community workshops to raise awareness of health risks, sustainability, and preliminary remediation tactics.

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Project Updates: Cultivate Green

NEIGHBORHOOD COLLECTIVE IMPACT GRANT

- In partnership with Brooklyn College's Urban Soils Lab, youth collected and tested over 200 soil samples from local homes, revealing high levels of lead contamination
- Next, they will teach youth how to build planters and replace contaminated soil
- Community impact map project will visualize soil quality data through a digital map
- Videos that feature homeowners discussing their gardening practices and cultural connections to food growing, capturing the cultural significance of gardening in the neighborhood

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NEIGHBORHOOD COLLECTIVE IMPACT GRANT

Project: Kensington Cultural Council

NEIGHBORHOOD

Kensington

NONPROFIT PARTNERS

Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts NY, The Singing Winds, Casa Cultural, Bangladesh Institute of Performing Arts, Arts & Democracy, and ArtBuilt

PURPOSE

Aims to coordinate a series of multilingual public cultural events including family arts workshops, sewing circles, dance and ESL classes, storytelling, concerts, and forums reflecting the traditional cultures of immigrant families.

To address a lack of community space, they will conduct a planning process for a local cultural hub that includes office and studio space for local artists and cultural orgs; a large conference room for public workshops, meetings and forums; and storage for shared equipment.

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Project Updates: Kensington Cultural Council

NEIGHBORHOOD COLLECTIVE IMPACT GRANT

- Cultural programming initiatives, often at the Avenue C Plaza as well as local libraries and schools, with local youth as producers
- Events highlight local cultures, including an Iftar event and a Day of the Dead event
- Working on securing a partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts' program focused on community design and revitalizing vacant storefronts
- Plan to activate a window space for community gatherings and programming

2024 Listening Tour Report

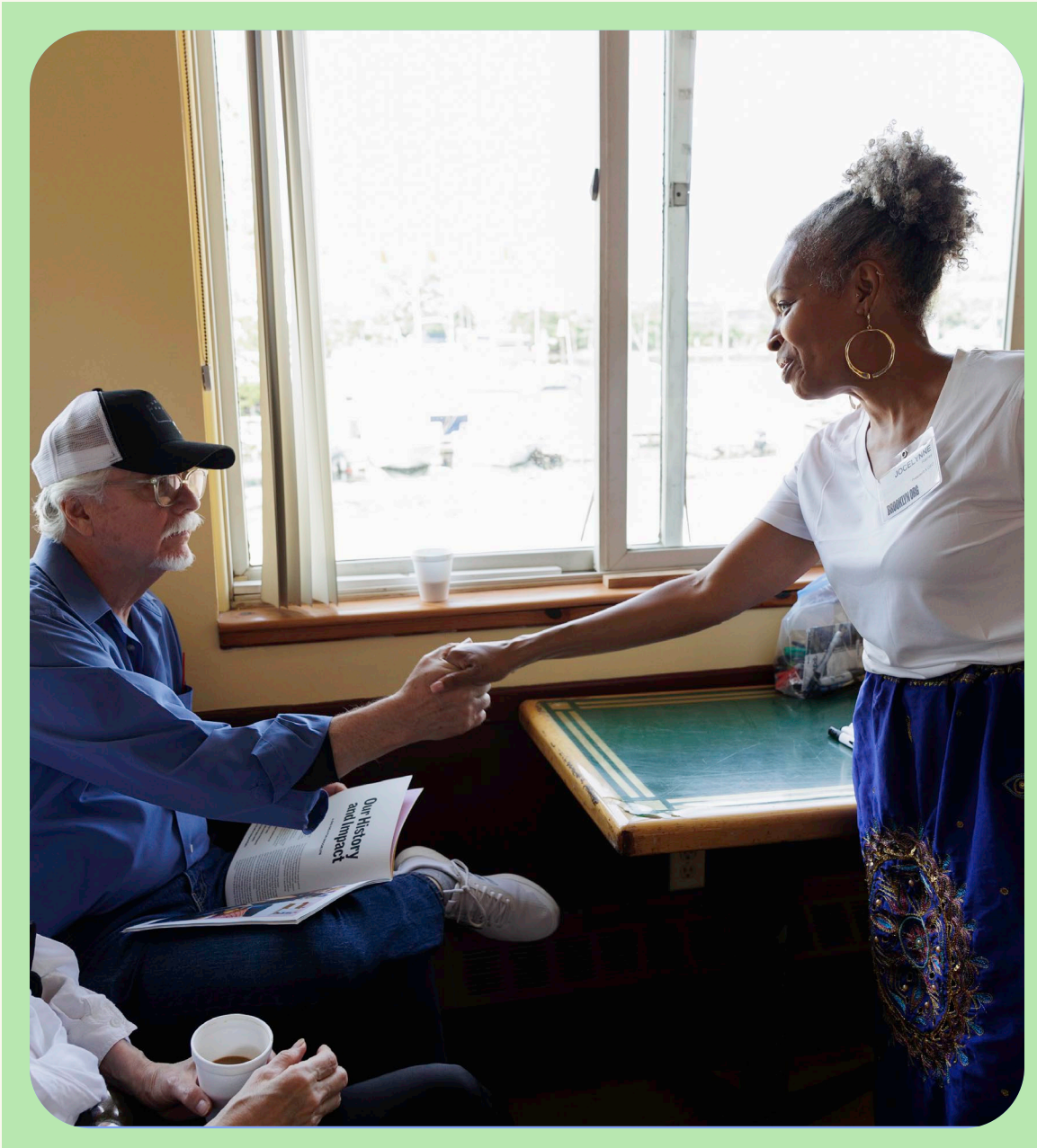


WHAT WE HEARD

About This Report

PLEASE NOTE:

- The issues and insights described in this report reflect observations made by the participants who took part in our community listening tour sessions.
- Insights present a snapshot of the neighborhoods we visited and are not exhaustive of the diverse experiences of Brooklynites across our communities.
- Our support and grantmaking for Brooklyn nonprofits is informed by our commitment to listening to and engaging with communities at every level of our work — and our annual listening tours are one of many ways we engage with community voices.



Neighborhoods

IN 2024, BROOKLYN ORG MET WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS ACROSS 9 CONVENINGS:

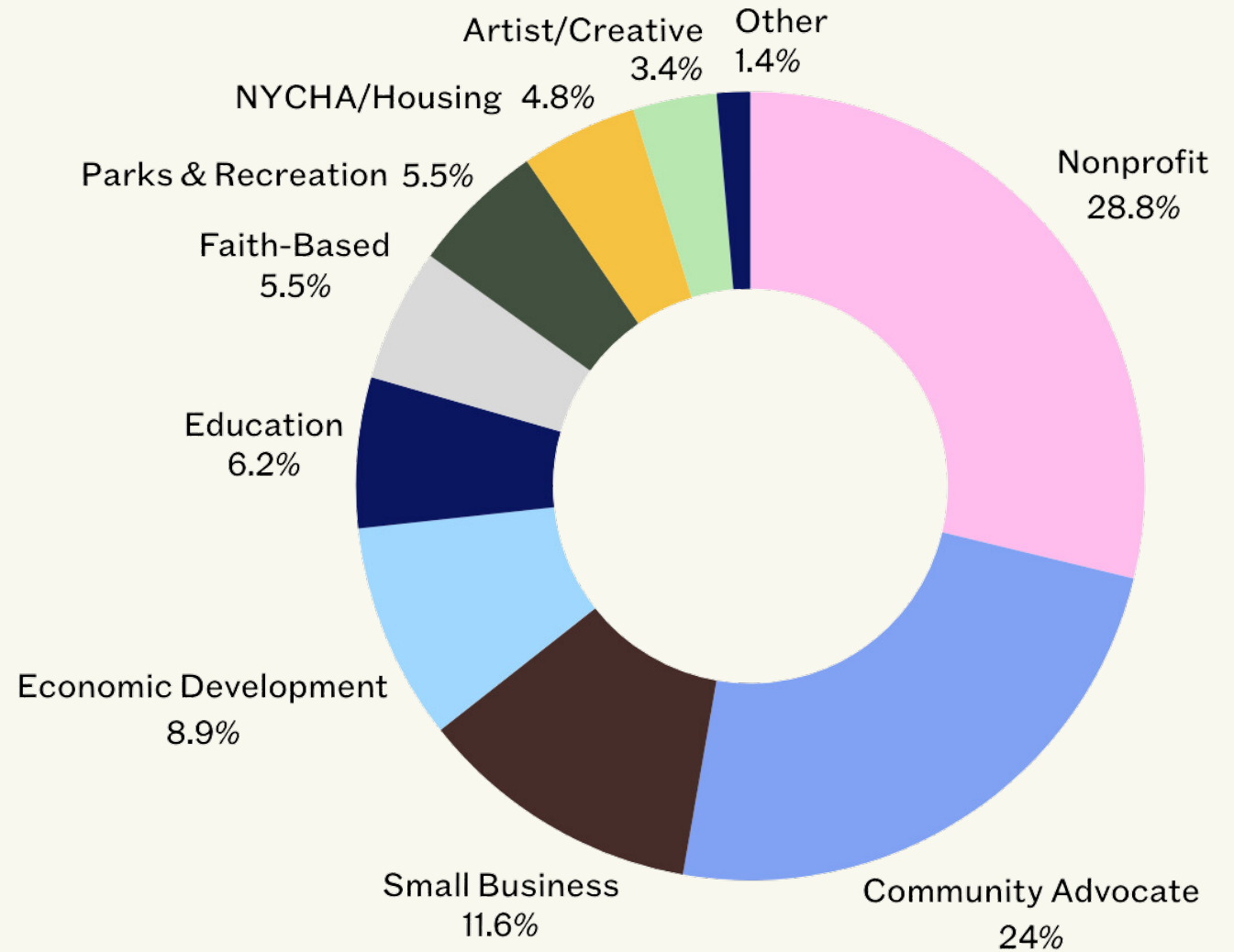
March 8th	New Lots
April 19th	Industrial Zones
May 10th	South Williamsburg / Broadway Triangle
May 30th	Park Slope
June 14th	Sheepshead Bay / Gerritsen Beach
July 10th	Dyker Heights / Ft. Hamilton
July 12th	Downtown Brooklyn
September 24th	Flatlands
November 14th	Columbia Street Waterfront / Cobble Hill / Red Hook

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Participants

WHO WE HEARD FROM

- 146 total participants at 9 meetings
- Top 5 sectors represented: nonprofit, community, small business, economic development, and education
- Small meetings to maximize participation
- Meetings hosted at neighborhood businesses
- 5-30 participants per meeting



WHAT WE HEARD

Issues & Insights

TOP 3 TRENDS ACROSS SESSIONS

1. Food Insecurity
2. Available Space
3. Youth Development

EMERGING TRENDS, NEW SINCE 2023

1. Immigration
2. Development
3. Public Spaces

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Listening Tour Top Themes: 2022 - 2024

TOP AREAS OF DISCUSSION FROM EACH OF THE BROOKLYN ORG LISTENING TOURS

ISSUES	2022	2023	2024
Food Justice	X	X	X
Available Space	X	X	X
Youth Development	X	X	X
Capacity Building	X	X	X
Aging/ Elders	X	X	
Workforce Development	X	X	
Mental Health	X		
Funding	X		
Communication	X		
Community Programming	X		
Education		X	X
Small Business		X	X
Housing		X	X
Arts & Culture		X	
Immigration			X
Community Development			X



ISSUES & INSIGHTS

New Lots

Tour Host: Bklyn Blend

New Lots

TURNED A CORNER BUT HOW WILL LONG-TIMERS SHARE GAINS

- Community is safer, cleaner and more welcoming
- Community deserves the credit for improvements
- Largest youth-run farmer's market in Brooklyn
- Opportunities for local businesses with Broadway Junction and Flatlands/Pennsylvania projects
- Food recycling, pantries and "Food is Medicine" programs work - need investment

A word cloud on a light blue background featuring various terms in shades of purple and blue. The most prominent word is 'Potential' in a large, bold, black font. Other words include 'Persistence', 'Striving', 'Different', 'Neglected', 'Progress', 'Hopeful', 'Curious', 'Poverty', 'Transitioning', 'Growing', 'Resourceful', 'Divided', 'Resilient', 'Colorful', 'Achievement', 'Gentrification', and 'Connected'.

New Lots

TOP ISSUES:

- Local Businesses
- Development
- Education
- Food Access And Insecurity
- Youth
- Nonprofits & Community Leadership





ISSUES & INSIGHTS

Industrial Business Zones

Tour Host: Brooklyn Navy Yard and Russ & Daughters

Industrial Business Zones (IBZs)

INVISIBLE POWERHOUSE FOR BROOKLYN, STRIVING TO BE MORE CONNECTED

- IBZs are for everyone – community to access spaces
- Multi-generational businesses are an IBZ strength for longevity and employment
- Owners want to bring in young people - need help connecting to appropriate sources
- Seasonal work and short-lived initiatives - want to bring NYCHA residents into unions

Ecosystem
Innovative
Cooperative
Ever-Evolving Happy
Diverse Semi-Invisible
Dynamic Strong Scrappy
Creative
Generational
Changing

Industrial Business Zones (IBZs)

TOP ISSUES:

- IBZ policy
- Green Development
- Multi-generational Businesses
- Workforce Challenges
- IBZ and Community connections
- Transit
- Vision for the Future





ISSUES & INSIGHTS

S. Williamsburg/Broadway Triangle

Tour Host: Café 28

S. Williamsburg/Broadway Triangle

RAPID CHANGES BRING NEW COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AND COST-OF-LIVING CHALLENGES

- Opportunities in S. Williamsburg are growing
- Becoming a helpful neighborhood with a little of everything
- Development has been good for job opportunities
- Always something new happening in the neighborhood - new construction, new restaurants and cafes
- The community is coming out and getting to know each other – promoting diversity
- More people are trying to make this neighborhood a better place to live for all

Understanding
Family Community
Healing Black Rising
Vibrant Diversity Growth
Colorful Trans Enduring
Inclusive
Crossroads

S. Williamsburg/ Broadway Triangle

TOP ISSUES:

- Youth Opportunities
- Religious Community Connection
- Mixed feelings on Gentrification
- Housing
- Schools are a resource
- Cost of Living





ISSUES & INSIGHTS

Park Slope

Tour Host: Da Nonna Rosa

Park Slope

PERCEIVED WEALTH OBSCURES SERIOUS INEQUITIES IN HOUSING, FOOD, AND FUNDING

- Prospect Park partnership with Heights and Hills – free programming for older adults
- Medgar Evers College – new Bachelors of Fine Arts program for arts students
- Nonprofits working together in Park Slope
- Kingsboro Temple of SDA collaborated with other churches to collect and distribute canned goods
- Connective public spaces are being reimagined – Grand Army Plaza and school blocks

Multi-faceted
Transition
Learners Growing
Supportive
Engaged
Active
Pride
Changing
Generous
Vibrant
Community
Artsy
Family-Oriented
Neighborly

Park Slope

TOP ISSUES:

- Nonprofit Struggle and Success
- Food insecurity
- Rents
- Immigration and Neighborhood changes
- Public Space
- Youth
- Crime





ISSUES & INSIGHTS

Sheepshead Bay / Gerritsen Beach / Marine Park

Tour Host: Tamaqua Bar & Marina

Sheepshead Bay / Gerritsen Beach / Marine Park

TIGHTLY KNIT, BUT CONCERNED ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THEIR PARKS AND NEIGHBORHOODS

- Residents value the parks - even more so post-pandemic
- Marine Park is a vibrant community space - bigger than Prospect Park
- NY Philharmonic and Met Opera came to Marine Park
- Neighborhood is walkable and safe - there is a sense of connection
- Programming is great, including casual music gatherings, free yoga and senior activities
- Great both Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts troops

Over-Crowded
Attacked Outspoken
Resilient Quaint Congested
Friendly Peaceful
Beach Family Park Vibrant
Diversity Beautiful Secret
Nature Environment
Preservation
Possibility

Sheepshead Bay / Gerritsen Beach / Marine Park

TOP ISSUES:

- Marine Park: Crucial Neighborhood Resource
- Natural Spaces Need Protection
- Community Feeling
- NYPD & Safety
- Development

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ISSUES & INSIGHTS

Dyker Heights/Ft. Hamilton

Tour Host: Twist Coffee

Dyker Heights/Ft. Hamilton

A SHIFT, AS RESOURCE SQUEEZE IMPACTS SENIORS, STUDENTS AND MIGRANTS

- Ft. Hamilton HS partnered to offer adult education for migrant parents to learn English
- Ft. Hamilton HS food pantry provides food, hygiene products, clothing, shoes and coats
- At pantries, seniors are showing up regularly, and they can also get pet food for their pets
- Dyker is beautiful at Christmas with "Dyker Lights"
- Lot of after school programs with , the DOE, Dept. of Youth and Community Development(DYCD), Neighborhood Improvement Association (NIA) and the Community Services Network

Multi-Cultural
Unstable
Beautiful
Seniors Filthy
Solidarity
Amazing

Dyker Heights/ Ft. Hamilton

TOP ISSUES:

- Funding
- Food insecurity
- Older Adults
- Education – Ft. Hamilton HS
- Extracurricular Activities
- Migrants





ISSUES & INSIGHTS

Downtown Brooklyn

Tour Host: Grand Canyon Restaurant

Downtown Brooklyn

VIBRANT ARTS AND CULTURAL PROGRAMS, BUT STRUGGLES TO ENSURE EVERYONE FEELS TRULY INCLUDED

- The arts are vibrant
- "City of Yes" benefits the arts - More studio spaces will become available
- Restrictions on public murals removed and home-based businesses allowed - promoting entrepreneurship
- The small, independent, mom-and-pop businesses are still here
- New businesses are starting to appear - experiential businesses, nightlife, maker spaces
- Brooklyn Heights waterfront - new construction and luxury high rises are activating park spaces

Playful
Expanding
Diverse Tight-knit
Supportive

Downtown Brooklyn

TOP ISSUES:

- Arts
- Development & Small Businesses
- Parks
- Public Programming
- Nonprofits





ISSUES & INSIGHTS

Flatlands

Tour Host: TriniJam Bk Roti Bar & Grill

Flatlands

STRONG COMMUNITY NETWORKS, BUT OVERLOOKED FOR PROGRAM FUNDING

- Homeownership is more affordable here as interest rates pushed down home prices
- The community is becoming more culturally diverse as it gentrifies – it's positive!
- Flatlands has a vibrant aging community – the "recycled teenagers" - robust, well-attended programs, including international travel
- Successful parks beautification project has already improved neighbors' wellbeing
- Healthcare accessibility is improving as more urgent care centers open

Gentrification
Change
Caring Unity Seniors
Culture Family Home
Changing
Dynamic

Flatlands

TOP ISSUES:

- Housing And Development
- Older Adult Services
- Small Businesses
- Health & Well-Being
- Youth
- Community Programming And Funding





ISSUES & INSIGHTS

Columbia St. Waterfront/Red Hook

Tour Host: Mazzat

Columbia St. Waterfront/Red Hook

FACING UPHEAVAL, BUT COMMUNITY ACTION TAKING PLACE

- Community gardens are important gathering spaces - residents have lots, seating, space to socialize
- Hoping for new opportunities as Amazon and Tesla operations grow in the neighborhood
- Walcott Garden – each resident has a lot to tend

Partnership
Progressing
Organizing Fighters Disparate
Stronger Chaotic Love
Resilient New Best Massive
Overwhelmed
Fierce Warriors
Evolving
Opportunity

Columbia St. Waterfront/Red Hook

TOP ISSUES:

- Transit
- Outdoor Space
- Youth
- Workforce
- Housing
- Nonprofits
- Schools

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Next Steps

NEIGHBORHOOD COLLECTIVE IMPACT PROJECT

- Applications for our second round of \$25K grants for 2022-24 Listening Tour participants open soon!

2025 – AMPLIFYING THE PEOPLE’S VOICE

- Partnering with fellow NYC foundations and 5BORO to produce a public poll, surveying NYers on the issues raised in our Listening Tours, aligned to the citywide election
- Producing a series of community engagement events, including Candidate Forums and Town Halls, to amplify the issues and solutions identified by our communities

2026 – LISTENING TOURS RETURN!

- Neighborhood conversations resume; will host 5 regional meetings per year, from 2026-2028



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