

Your LIC: Community Resources: Schools, Recreation & Culture Executive Summary

(see full transcript of workshop notes [HERE](#))

This is a summary of key takeaways and recommendations by participants in community engagement activities focused on Community Resources: Schools, Recreation and Culture. This outreach was conducted by the Your LIC team, and includes online submissions on this topic by the public at [YourLIC.nyc](#) and a public workshop with more than 100 community residents on January 7, 2020, at The Plaxall Gallery. You can read the full transcript of workshop notes, including concerns voiced by community members, [here](#). Additional Q&A has been uploaded onto the YourLIC Community Resources community engagement [webpage](#).

Next Steps: The Your LIC team will use the aspirations and suggestions to inform the inclusion of community resources for the waterfront development project.

Takeaway 1: Education needs to be a priority for planning the district. Plans for the site area should prioritize education and provide an abundance of linked educational services.

“Schools should support existing and new students, as well as former students who never quite made it. For example, high schools and other schools should offer GED classes and opportunities for students who never graduated to return and get their diplomas.” - Workshop 3 Participant

“As P.S. 384Q only goes through grades K - 5, the children there will be needing a middle school! In addition, we would love to see a community center with camps and after-school activities for children, a swimming pool, adult education classes, etc.” – [Online Participant](#)

Summary of Residents’ Suggested Strategies (see full text [HERE](#))

- **Make education a centerpiece of the district:** Establish schools that are socially, economically, and racially integrated as the inspiration for a new neighborhood that makes inclusivity a lynchpin. There was concern that the development might increase separation between low income and higher income students across the district. Newly built space should connect educational activities with an emphasis on creating links between different parks of the neighborhood. There were also concerns about perceived lack of transparency of the City’s planning process as it determines siting and types of new schools, and the resulting impact on parents and children in the community.
- **Create abundant and linked educational services:** Establish elementary, middle, and high schools that are positioned so that students from across the neighborhood can benefit. In doing so, integrate out-of-school activities (such as sports, life enhancing skills, and practical skills), the broader physical environmental and waterfront, and other support services to create a one-of-a-kind, supportive educational environment.

Takeaway 2: Create recreational and community facilities for the entire neighborhood to enjoy. Plans for the site should include recreational and community facilities that link the entire community together and provide space for all neighbors, including students and seniors.

“I teach at LaGuardia Community College. In that community with high-rise buildings, they have gyms, pools. There is no place to work out or swim in this community. We need a gymnasium, with first-class swimming pools where kids can learn to swim. Indoor pools so it's good to be used all year long.” - Workshop 3 Participant

“Would love to see a new multi-service community center that has everything from senior citizen to youth development and education programming.” – [Online Participant](#)

Summary of Residents’ Suggested Strategies (see full text [HERE](#))

- **Focus on youth:** Create recreational and community resources to advance inclusion and prevent disadvantaged youth from becoming involved in crime. Create recreation activities that are free or low-cost and ample; affordable access to pools, gymnasiums, and team sports that provide physical engagement, camaraderie and recognition for youth beyond home and school; a teen center that provides a safe space for teens questioning their identity and sexuality; and more local team sports, perhaps through a Queens Sports Academy. Emphasize the arts, especially music. Concerns about transportation safety, particularly for youth, traveling to the site for activities without adequate public transportation (such as shuttle buses linked to the subway) or crossing guards.
- **Create recreational services that help knit a community together:** Develop recreational programming for adults, seniors, and youth, with particular emphasis on the creation of a flexible, multi-use community center. Additional opportunities include: indoor and outdoor recreation spaces that are accessible, ADA-compliant, and easily reserved; water-based activities such as canoeing, rowing, kayaking; outdoor theaters and other spaces where the community can gather without spending money; and a basketball league that includes teams consisting of players from different neighborhoods. Conduct programming that links events in Queensbridge and other NYCHA sites to the site through jointly coordinated programming, communication, and deep community involvement. Bring existing scattered programs into one cluster and enhance communication so that community resources are aware of each other and plan collaboratively. Connect local recreational resources to potential sponsors and donors to continue to grow the community and community resources.
- **Create community resources that serve the neighborhood:** Utilize urban design to experiment and create spaces that delight the entire community and draw individuals to walk through the site with continuity and flow. Attract retail that can provide needed services and affordability, including full-service banks, supermarkets and big-box stores with affordable offerings. Provide access to healthy food as part of an integrated plan improve health at a community level, with special emphasis on a full-service grocery store.

Takeaway 3: Creates spaces and programming to support arts and culture in LIC. Plans for the site should create the spaces, programming and advocacy required to support LIC artists, anchored with spaces for the community to gather.

“We need to have professional development for artists so that they can learn how to turn their passion for their art into a career. We need to have financial literacy classes, workshops and lessons on how to build resumes, interview prep, build portfolios, pitches, how to create dance reels, demo tapes, and more.” - Workshop 3 Participant

“There should be an information clearance house at different galleries, community centers and events so that people know what kinds of grants, funding and other opportunities are available to them so that they can make money from their passion and work.” - Workshop 3 Participants

Summary of Residents’ Suggested Strategies (see full text [HERE](#))

- **Create spaces, programming and advocacy for the arts and practicing artists in LIC:** Use affordable access to the arts to engage youth, nurture their creativity, and provide skills that enhance their ability to grow and thrive. For all the arts, provide space for lessons and performance. Create a space for artists to gather, work collectively, and establish organizational strategies that showcase events, gallery openings, performances and classes to spur cooperation among different artists and arts organizations. Create a studio arts district that connects artists to each other and to affordable working studios and provide affordable space for practicing artists, with rent and lease stability. Provide affordable spaces for practicing artists. Support self-sufficiency among arts and cultural organizations by linking them with potential corporate sponsors and promoting LIC artists. Use local artists to create murals, public art, and other enhancements that give the LIC neighborhood a distinctive flavor and create a sense of community among the diverse people living in the neighborhood. There was some concern that inadequate attention has been given to the possibility of creating a community land trust in the area.
- **Create a flexible community center:** Participants imagined the power of a community center with affordable classes and materials for youth, seniors and artists, stating that such a center would anchor and stabilize the community and create natural synergy among the arts and growth of a diverse community. Such a space might provide lessons in the arts, painting, dance, and spoken word as well as a performance space.