



# LOWLINE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Karp Strategies  
with rePlace Urban Studio



## GREEN & NATURAL SCENARIO 1

Here are some key ideas we've heard from you about what you want to see in the future. We're looking for your input on how to make it a green, natural, and calm setting. Which of these best describes your future vision of the site? Place one or many stickers next to your choices!

### VOTES

Sticker voting area with colorful stars.

How could the Lowline be used for community programming?

## LOCAL INCLUSION & COMMUNITY BUILDING SCENARIO 2

How could the Lowline be used for community programming?

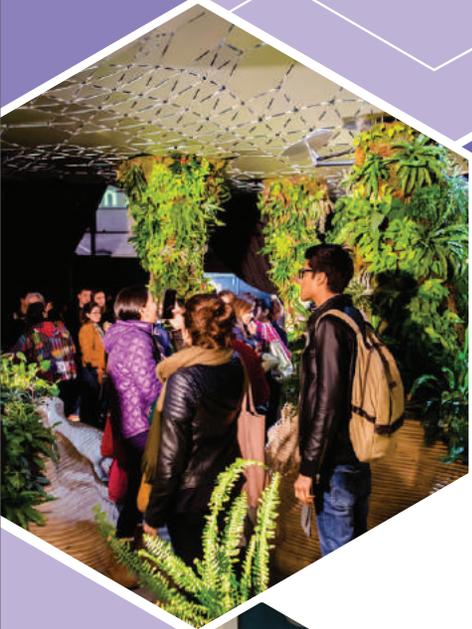
# Executive Summary

The Lowline is a plan to build a green public space in an abandoned underground trolley terminal in the Lower East Side. Innovative solar technology will bring sunlight below ground into this one acre site.

The Lowline collaborated with a consultant team to conduct focused community engagement of Lower East Side residents, businesses, and organizations from October 2016 through June 2017. This team held over 15 outreach events, including large public workshops, small focus groups, and youth training sessions, and deployed a digital platform to collect feedback from those who could not attend in person. At the conclusion of this phase of outreach, over 108,860 people directly engaged with the Lowline via these outreach activities and the Lowline lab.

The primary findings that emerged from this work reveal that participants envision the future site as: a community-driven, inclusive, and free space; a space with many green and natural elements that can offer an oasis from the streets above; and a place for technological and environmental education, with a focus on youth empowerment. Participants also want to continue to have a say in the Lowline's future development, programming, and operations.

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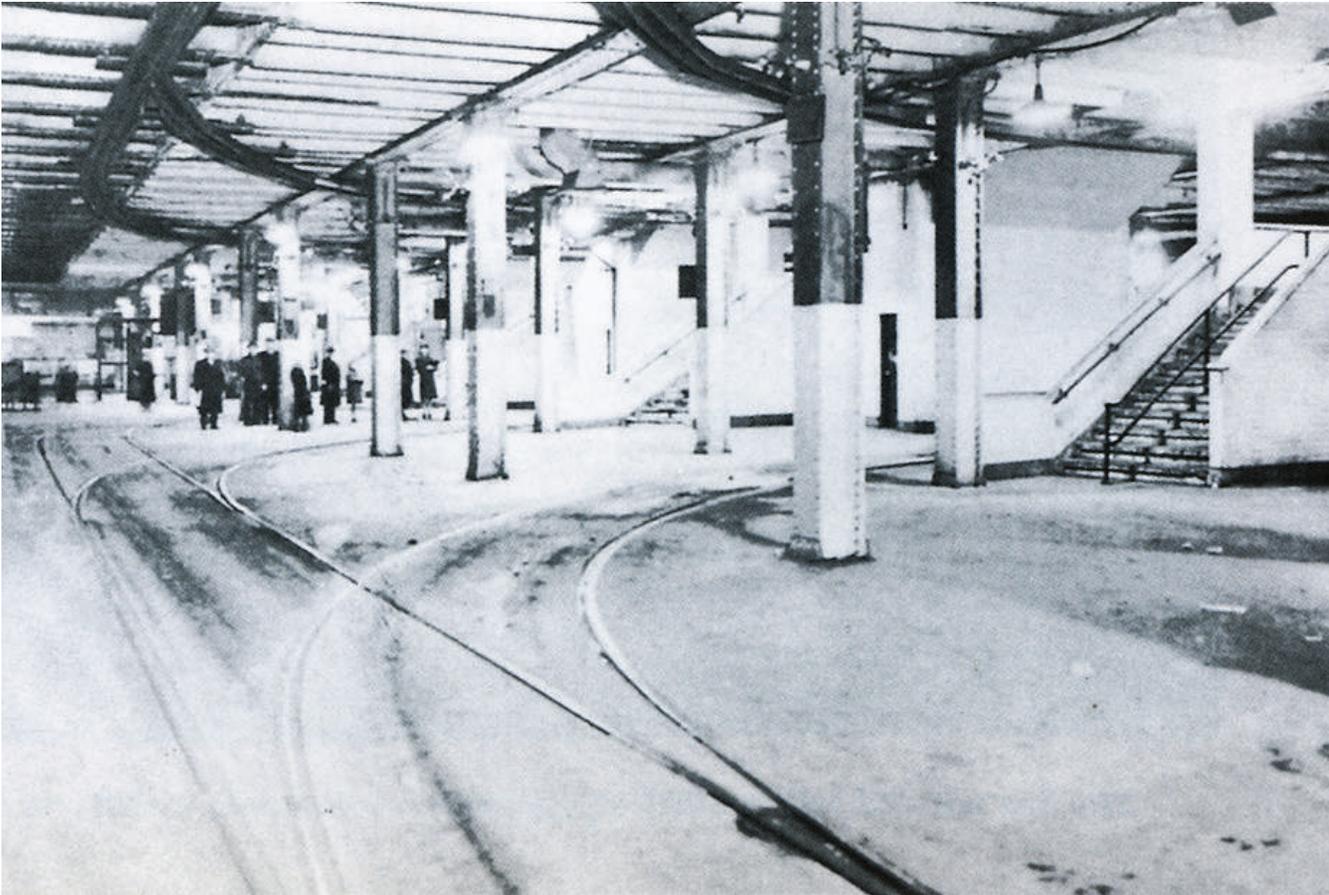


# BACKGROUND

- Project Background
- Project Location
- Community Snapshot
- Engagement History
- Community Input On Operations and Governance

# Project Background

The Lowline is an effort to build a lush, green public community space in an historic trolley terminal on the Lower East Side of New York City. The underground site has been unused for almost 70 years. The Lowline organization now seeks to transform this historic place into a public space, building on all that makes the Lower East Side community special.



Trolley Terminal in the 1930s



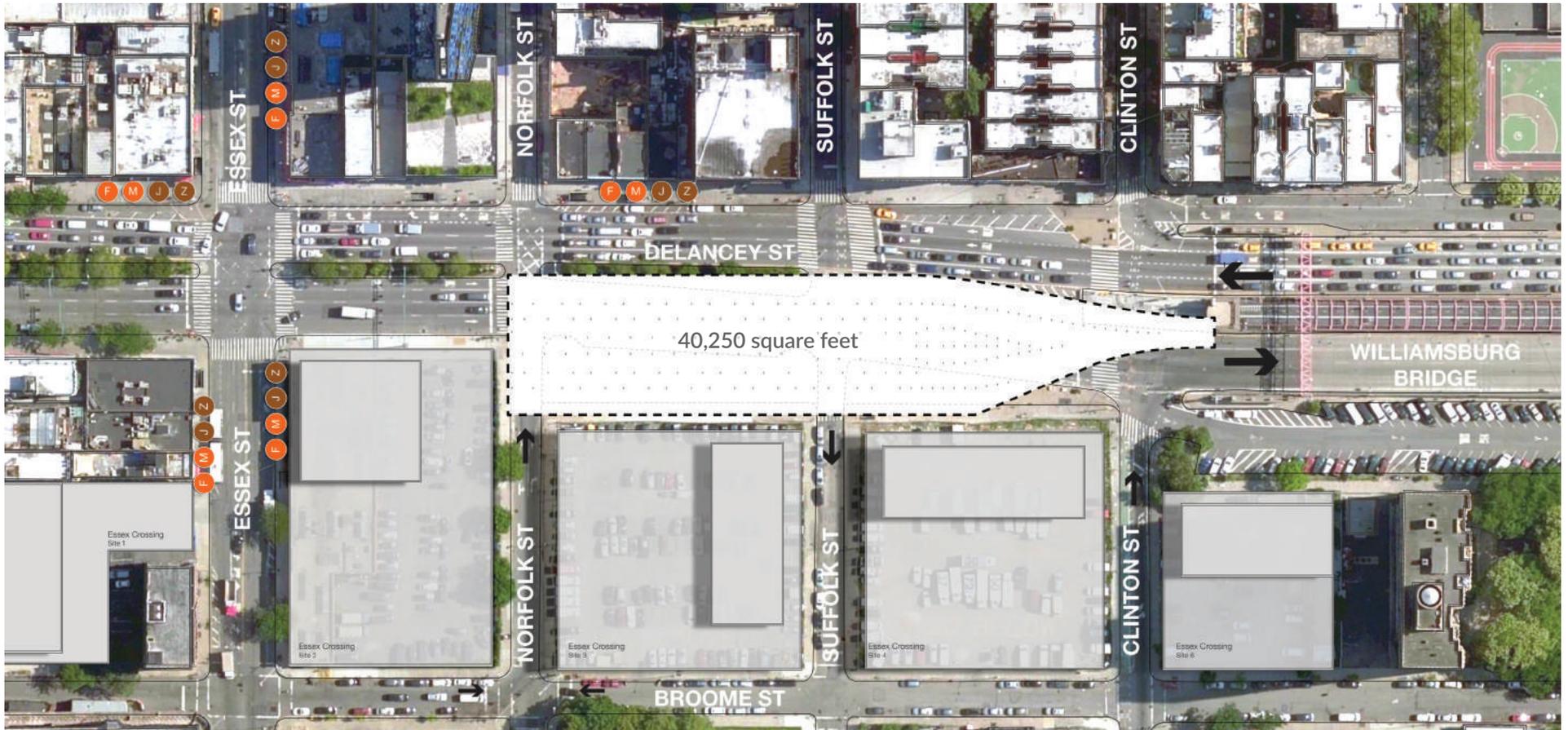
Renderings of the Lowline by RAAD Studio

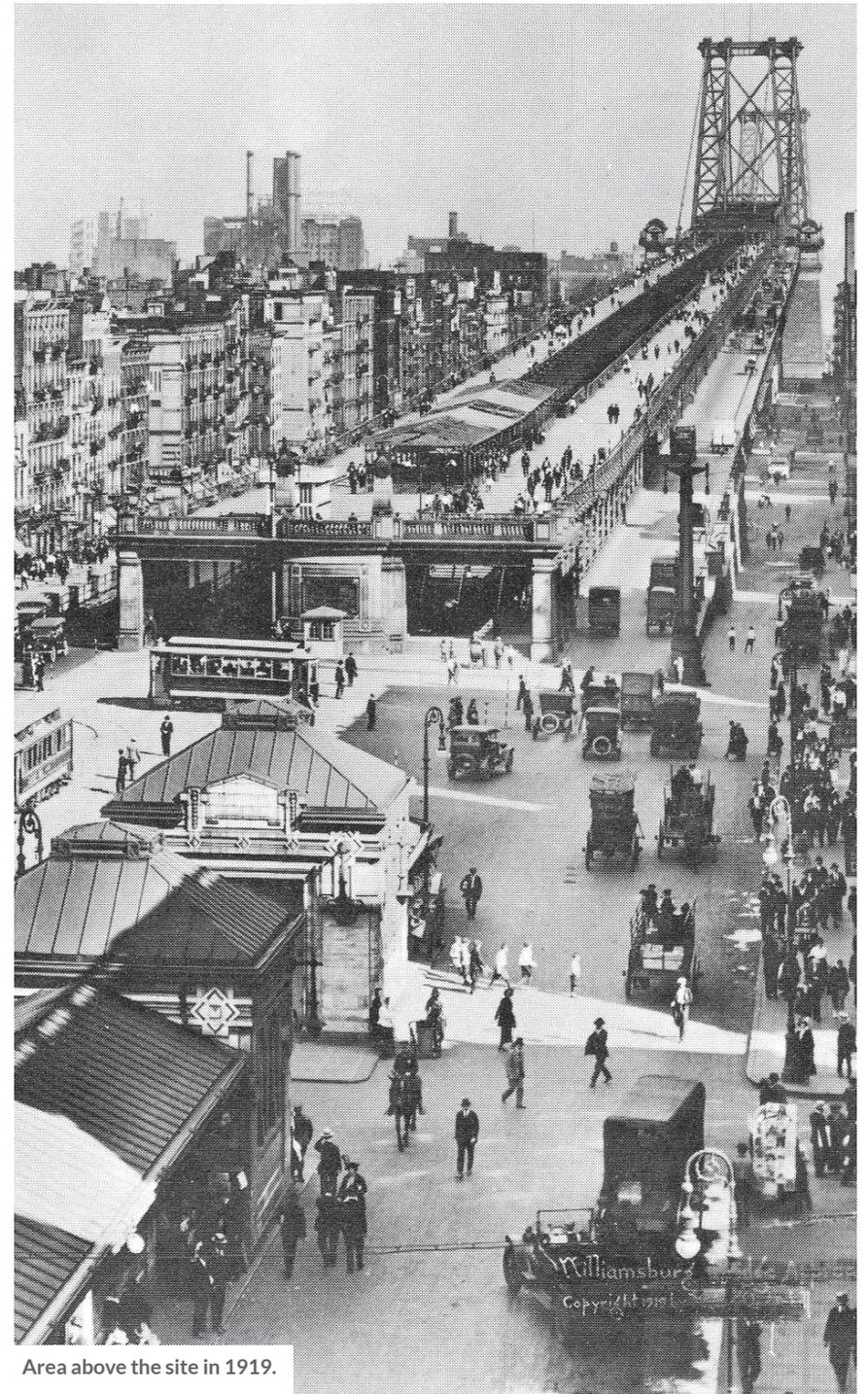


Abandoned Williamsburg Bridge Trolley Terminal

# Lowline Location

The future Lowline site is the one-acre former Williamsburg Bridge Trolley Terminal, just below Delancey Street on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Nearly three blocks in length, it is directly adjacent to the existing J/M/Z subway track at the Essex Street subway stop.





Area above the site in 1919.

# Community Snapshot

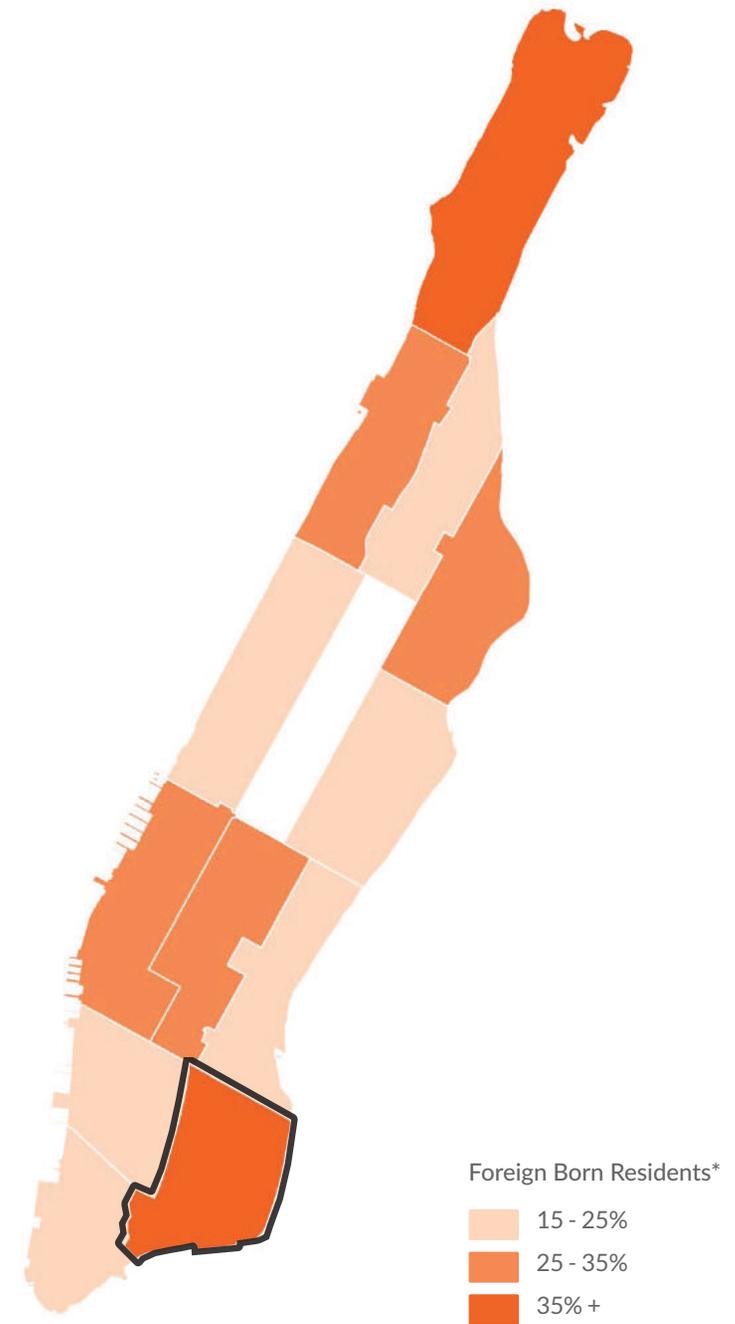
Community District 3 includes the East Village, Alphabet City, Chinatown, the Lower East Side, and Two Bridges neighborhoods.

## Community District 3 Profile

- 168,298 total population within Community District 3
- 34% are Asian; 31% are White; and 25% are Hispanic
- 59% of residents are between the ages of 25 and 64
- 36% of people are foreign born
- 30% have limited English proficiency
- 28% of the population lives in poverty

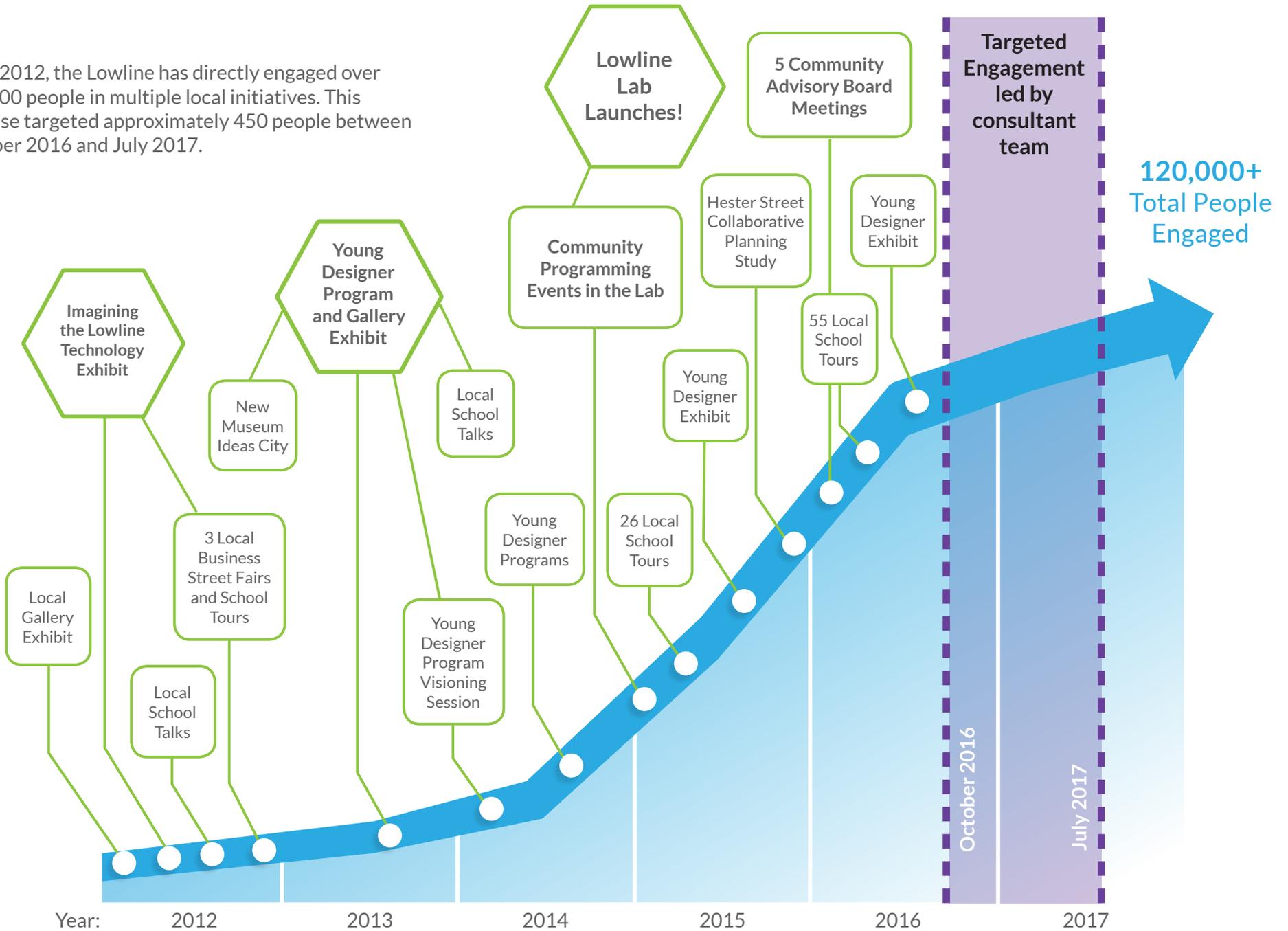
Source: Community Health Profile 2015: Lower East Side and Chinatown

The Lowline is sited in the Lower East Side - a true melting pot within New York City for its swirl of myriad cultures and organizations - and sits physically and symbolically at the crossroads of a diverse community and rapidly changing neighborhood.



Source: U.S Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2011 - 2013

Since 2012, the Lowline has directly engaged over 120,000 people in multiple local initiatives. This exercise targeted approximately 450 people between October 2016 and July 2017.



# Engagement 2016-2017: Deep Dive

In July 2016, the Lowline received conditional designation from the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) to proceed with planning for the future site. Specific community engagement requirements were part of the conditional designation. Though the Lowline has been conducting engagement since 2012, the Lowline sought to hire a consultant team for this targeted outreach effort. The organization ran a competitive bid process and awarded the contract to a team led by Karp Strategies, an urban planning and community development firm supported by rePLACE Urban Studio.



# Targeted Engagement 2016-2017

In 2016, the Lowline hired Karp Strategies to facilitate a more formal public engagement process. Through this outreach, the consultant team sought to accomplish five objectives:

- **Filter** community ideas into an actionable set of recommendations
- **Listen** to community's aspirations, concerns and perspectives on the Lowline
- **Build** new relationships with community residents and organizations
- **Provide** accessible information to community members without English proficiency
- **Foster** long term dialogue between the community and the Lowline team



The consultant team managed over 15 outreach events, including large public workshops, small focus groups, and youth training sessions, and deployed an online digital platform.

The team understood that this community engagement should inform and empower locals to participate in the design and programming process.

Throughout this targeted outreach, the Lowline sought to build even deeper connections to local stakeholders.

# Community Input On Operations and Governance

Before moving forward with any new public engagement, the Lowline worked with its consultants, Community Advisory Board, and Task Force to review key existing community input. Lowline staff heard local concerns and questions during their earlier engagement efforts, and both believed it critical to build on the community's wisdom and wanted to go deeper in the new phase of work. With this guidance in mind, questions that both led to and arose from 2016 - 2017 engagement activities included:

- **Funding:** How will the Lowline balance public and private funding? Does private funding make the Lowline beholden to interests outside of the community?
- **Gentrification:** Will the Lowline increase gentrification? Specifically, will it affect either residential rents or the rents of small businesses?
- **Governance:** Can the Lowline maintain a voice for the community - and especially the move vulnerable in the neighborhood - as it moves forward? Will the community continue to have a say in how the Lowline is run and programmed?



Here are some of those questions and concerns heard during the 2016 - 2017 engagement:

**“More affordable housing on the LES.”**

**“With regard to the question of accessibility, how will the Lowline account for residents of a historically low-income, multi-ethnic community? How does the Lowline plan to engage those residents in the future so the space feels welcoming to these people? I ask because I think it is important to consider the rapid gentrification running rampant across the city and assuring residents do not feel they are being displaced from a community they have called home for decades.”**

**“Have more sessions like this one!”**



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# ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

- Overview
- Timeline
- Outreach Types and Sessions
- Engagement and Outreach Maps



# Engagement Framework: Overview

In order to conduct this critical phase of community engagement, the team developed a variety of engagement strategies:

1. **Public Workshops** - Large community events hosted across Community District 3 that were actively promoted via flyers, online platform, and neighborhood media outlets.
2. **Focus Groups** - Smaller sessions that allowed for engagement with specific groups, including NYCHA residents, youth, small business owners, and Chinese-language speakers.
3. **Place It! Activities** - Smaller sessions designed to be kinesthetic, tactile, and visual that allowed for engagement methods that cross age, language, or professional focus.
4. **Young Ambassadors** - Multiple training sessions and hands-on outreach opportunities allowed this group of teenagers an active role throughout the engagement process.
5. **coUrbanize** - A digital platform, coUrbanize, was utilized to allow mobile and digital access to the process.

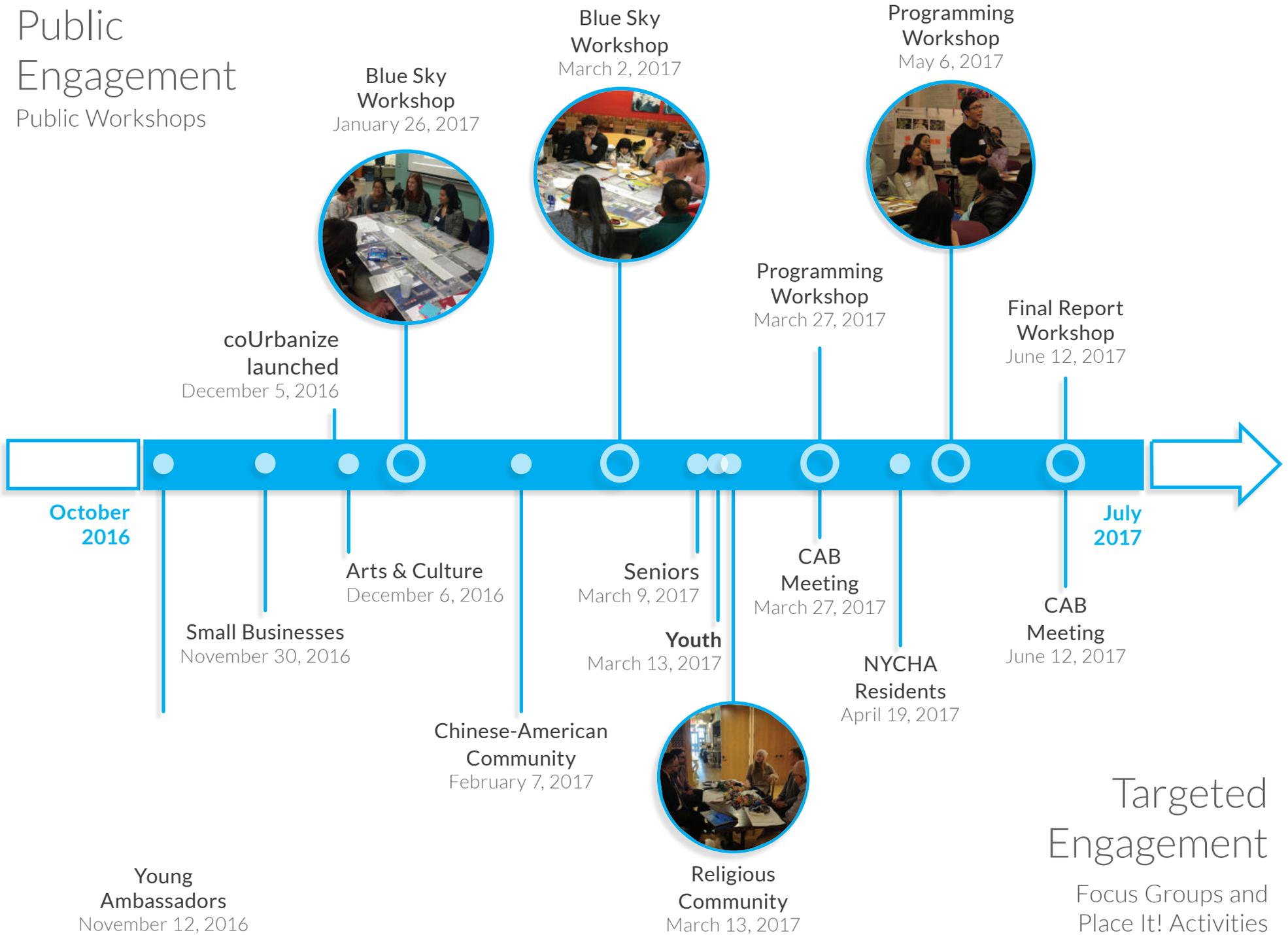


Many community stakeholders were reached during targeted engagement. Here are just a few:

- ALBOR
- Artists Alliance
- CAAAV
- Chinese-American Planning Council
- Community Board 3
- Educational Alliance
- GOLES
- Henry St. Settlement
- Loisaida Center
- New Museum
- NYCHA
- State Senator Niou's Office
- Two Bridges Neighborhood Council
- University Settlement
- Wolfnights

# Public Engagement

Public Workshops



# Public Workshops

These five large, interactive community workshops provided a forum for sharing ideas in a hands-on way; participants learned about the project and gave deep feedback in breakout groups.

## 1. Blue Sky Ideas

- January 25, 2017
- 82 Rutgers Slip
- 70 attendees

## 2. Blue Sky Ideas

- March 2, 2017
- Grand St. Settlement
- 38 attendees

## 3. Programming: 5 Topic Tables

- March 27, 2017
- New Design High School
- 37 attendees

## 4. Programming: 5 Topic Tables

- May 6, 2017
- Hamilton Fish Park Library
- 15 attendees

## 5. Report Out/Feedback Reveal

- June 12, 2017
- Manny Cantor Center
- 50 attendees



# Focus Groups

Smaller, targeted sessions capped at ten participants provided Community District 3 stakeholders who may not readily attend a large workshop an opportunity to engage and to ensure the Lowline heard from some of the largest demographics groups in the Lower East Side.

## 1. Youth (Young Ambassadors -Two Groups)

- November 12, 2016
- Henry Street Settlement

## 2. Small Businesses

- November 30, 2016
- Donnybrook

## 3. Planning and Design Professional

- February 15, 2017
- Sidewalk Labs/ Intersection

## 4. Seniors

- March 9, 2017
- Good Companions Senior Center

## 5. Religious Community

- March 13, 2017
- Sanctuary NYC

## 6. Engagement Strategies with Task Force

- June 6, 2017
- Donnybrook



# Place It! Activities

These four smaller sessions asked participants to share their ideas, values, and feedback by building scenarios using playful objects, and like focus groups, helped ensure the Lowline heard from some of the largest groups of stakeholders on the Lower East Side.

## 1. Arts & Culture Organizations

- December 6, 2016
- Clemente Center
- 10 attendees

## 2. Chinese-American Community

- February 7, 2017
- Lowline Lab
- 6 attendees

## 3. Youth

- March 13, 2017
- High School for Dual Language & Asian Studies
- 10 attendees

## 4. NYCHA Residents

- April 19, 2017
- Seward Park Extension
- 11 attendees



# Young Ambassadors

Training and active inclusions of the Lowline's Young Ambassadors throughout the engagement process both builds their capacity as leaders, and ensures the inclusion of youth voice throughout the process.

## 1. Young Ambassador Training Session One

- Defining Community Engagement
- Public Speaking
- Active Listening
- Outreach Strategies: Hands-on practice

## 2. Two Young Ambassador Focus Groups

- To determine what they wanted to see at the future site
- To demonstrate the value of their feedback

## 3. Young Ambassador Training Session Two

- Understanding online and digital engagement
- Driving integration of online and in-person sessions

## 4. Getting the word out

- Flyering around the Lower East Side
- Using coUrbanize
- Recruiting participants to events

## 5. Outreach and Capacity Building at Public Workshops

- Public speaking/presenting at large meetings
- Note taking at breakout tables
- Translating and facilitating at breakout tables



# Community Advisory Board & Task Force Meetings

The Community Advisory Board provides a consistent forum for open community feedback and to develop a community-centered vision with a diverse group of community residents and stakeholders. Meetings are open to the public. The Task Force comprises nominated members who take a more active role in continuing to foster the Lowline's connection with the community.

1. Kick Off CAB Meeting
  - April 30, 2016
  - Lowline Lab
  - 30 attendees
2. Summer CAB Meeting
  - June 13, 2016
  - Grand Street Guild
  - 36 attendees
3. Summer CAB Meeting
  - July 25, 2016
  - Lowline Lab
  - 33 attendees
4. Fall CAB Meeting
  - September 22, 2016
  - Lowline Lab
  - 23 attendees
5. Winter CAB & Task Force Meeting
  - December 5, 2016
  - Lowline Lab
  - 31 attendees at CAB
  - 8 attendees at Task Force
6. Spring CAB Meeting
  - March 27, 2017
  - New Design HS
  - 37 attendees
7. Task Force Review of Draft Findings
  - June 6, 2017
  - Donnybrook
  - 6 attendees
8. Summer CAB Meeting
  - June 12, 2017
  - Manny Cantor Center
  - 71 attendees

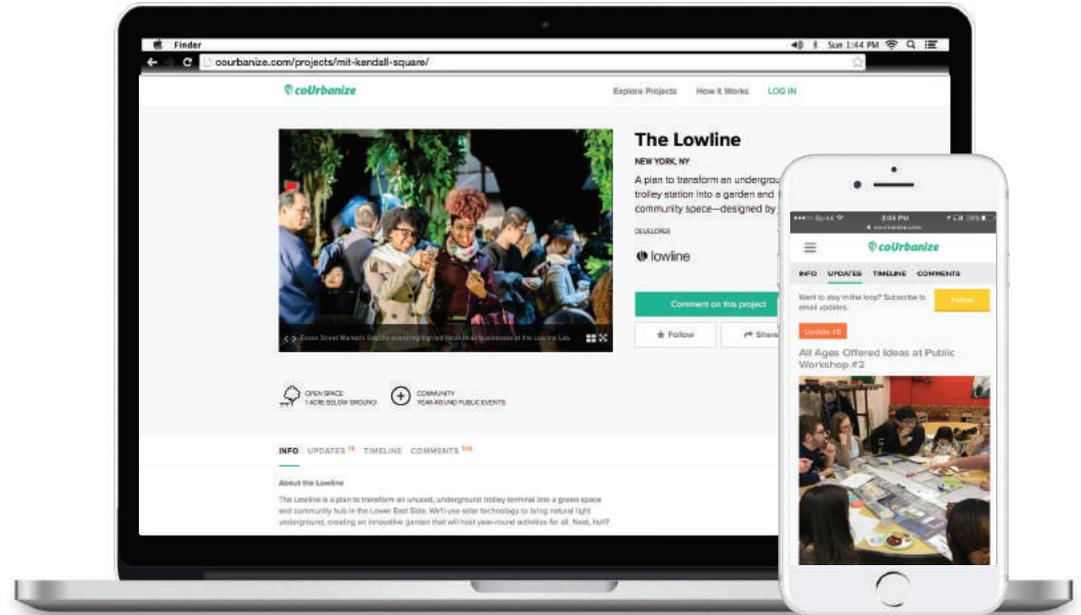
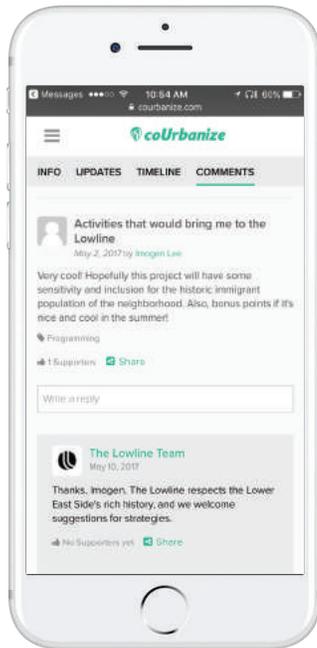




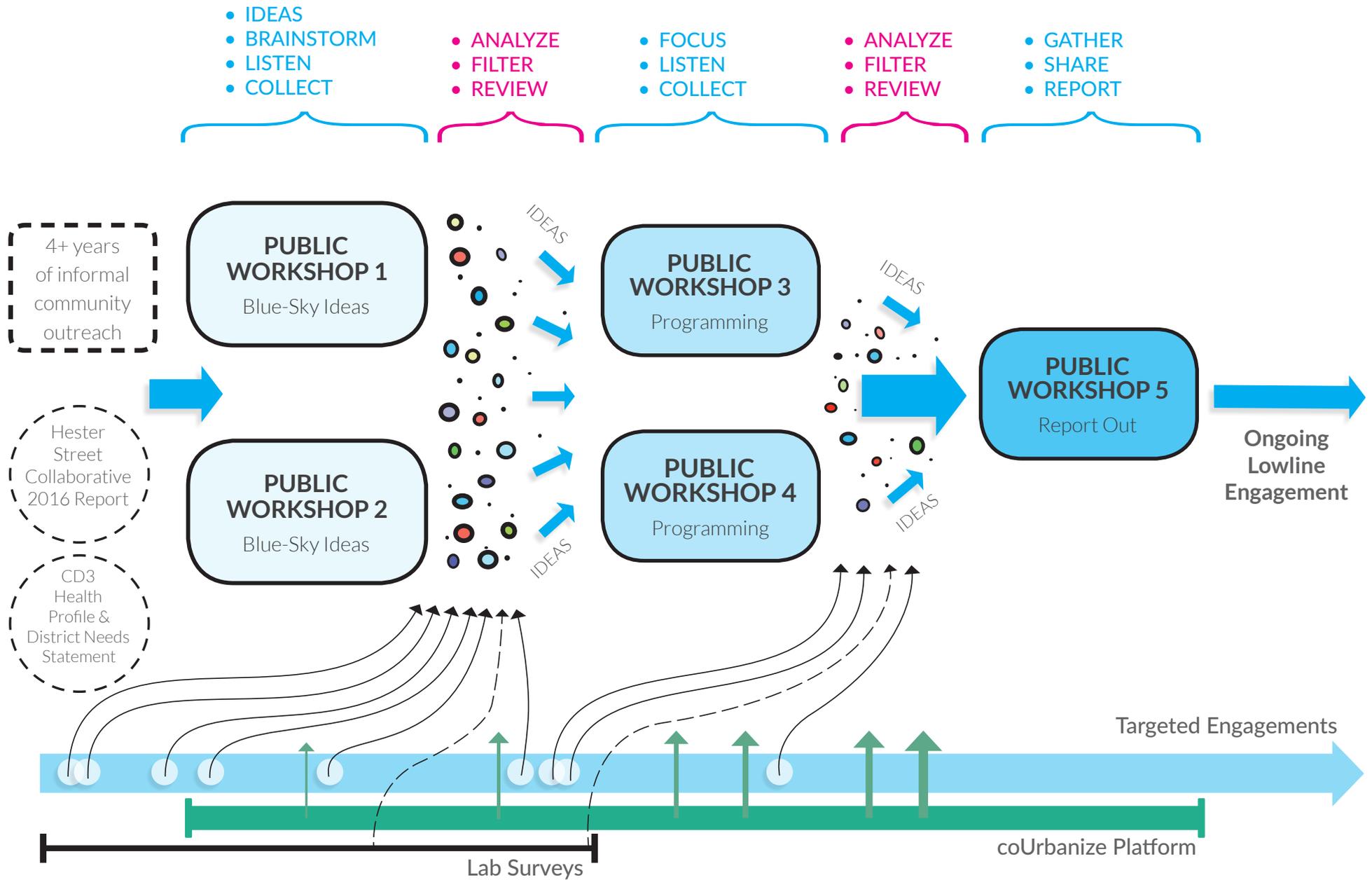
# coUrbanize

Use of a digital platform tailored for the Lowline allowed for an extended reach - taking engagement into people's homes/offices to allow them to engage whenever and wherever is most convenient for them.

Over 140 comments were left on the platform for the Lowline.



Feedback was recorded, analyzed, and brought back to the community in several iterations - allowing for a synthesis of major thematic findings.



# Engagement Map

Engagement activities were spread out across the district to increase reach and likelihood of community feedback.

-  Public Workshops
-  Focus Groups
-  Place It! Activities
-  coUrbanize Signs



# Outreach Map

Multiple outreach methods were undertaken to encourage participation at public workshops:

- Flyering throughout CD3.
- Targeted email newsletter to 1,000+ individuals and community organizations.
- Notices on Facebook and all other social media outlets.
- Outreach via Community Advisory Board, Task Force, and Young Ambassadors.
- Focus Groups and Place It! activities were purposely aimed at smaller, targeted groups.

\*Attendance was invited through research and direct outreach to relevant organizations.



Flyer Locations



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# FINDINGS

- Summary
- Details on Nine Findings

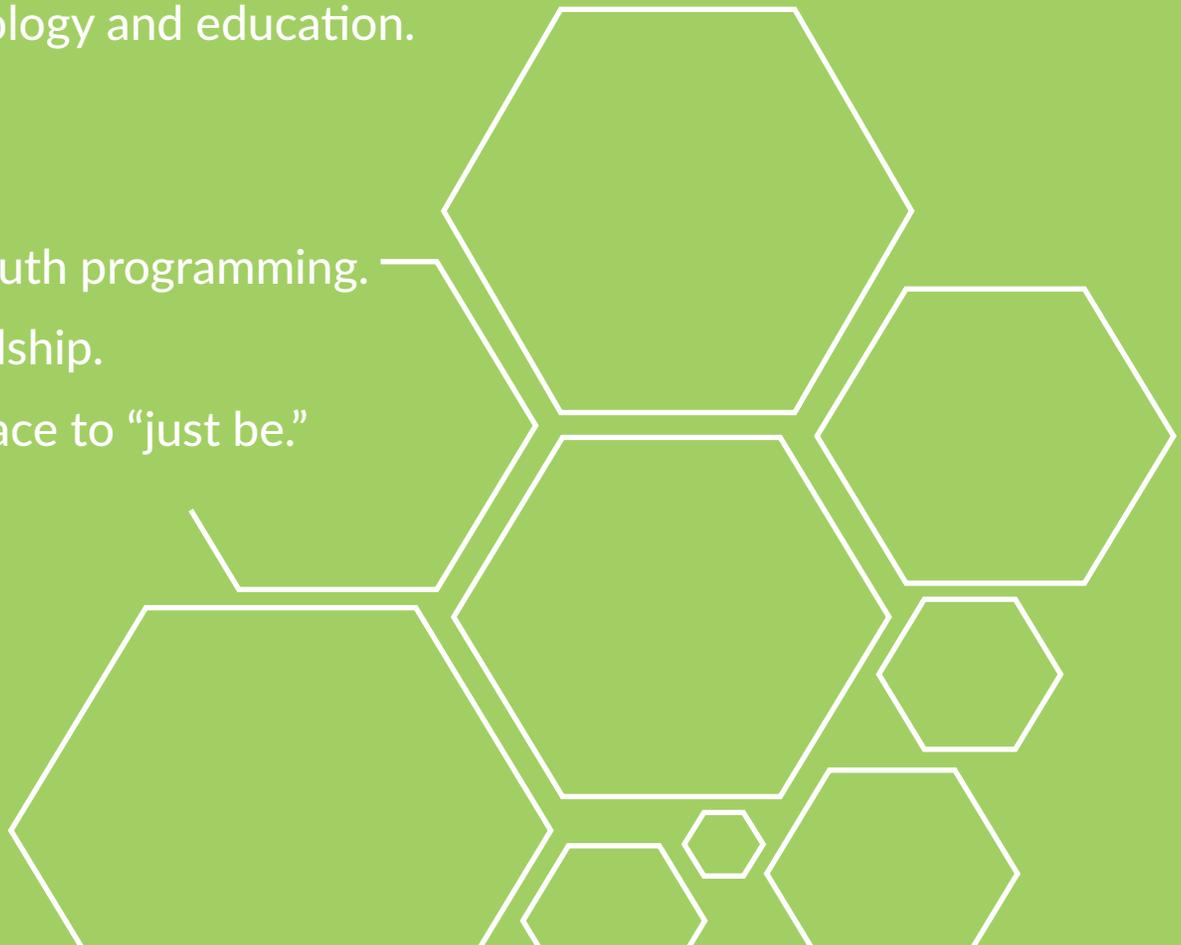




# Key Findings

Through community engagement:

- Focus on local neighborhood.
- Be free and accessible for all.
- Ensure everyone is welcome.
- Emphasize science, technology and education.
- Provide green and nature.
- Offer a flexible space.
- Engage youth and offer youth programming.
- Foster community stewardship.
- Provide a calm oasis - a place to “just be.”



# Focus on local neighborhood.

## WHAT WE HEARD:

- Important parts of the 'local neighborhood' include people, art, culture, and businesses.
- The Lowline can be a place to celebrate and/or maintain the area's unique character.
- The neighborhood's cultural richness is getting lost during a period of transformation.

## POTENTIAL STRATEGIES:

- Provide free access for local residents throughout the year.
- Provide spaces for local artists to create, display, and sell their work.
- Allow local community groups to rent space for events.
- Establish a procurement process to give preference to local vendors and startups.
- Showcase the history of neighborhood through museum-like history panels or small digital exhibits.
- Host capacity building and social service events for the community, including counseling, job training, and programs for new mothers.



**“The Lowline can be a showcase for the history and culture of the Lower East Side because it is a snapshot of a different time.”**

**“Local vendors would help to reinforce the Lowline’s commitment to community.”**

**“The Lowline should be of and for the community above all else.”**



WEINBERG & POLLAK  
SKIRTS  
READY MADE & TO ORDER

WEINBERG & POLLAK & FRIEDMAN SKIRTS

146 \* S. POLAN \* 146

EXTRA NEWS ON SALE OF \$15000.00  
OF GREAT BANKRUPT  
MENS FURNISHING GOODS  
MUST BE SOLD WITHIN 15 DAYS  
COME TO GET BIG BARGAINS WHILE SALE IS GOING ON  
GOODS SOLD AT 1/2 PRICES. COME AND CONVINCE YOUR SELF

עקסטרא נייעס אינ דא איסט סייד!  
איין גרויסער באנקראט סייד פון \$15000.00 ווארע  
פון מענ'ס פארנישונג  
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SHARP GRINDING  
SHARPENING  
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# Be free and accessible for all.

## WHAT WE HEARD:

- The Lowline should be inclusive and accessible to all types of people.
- The vast majority of programming should be free to promote access.

## POTENTIAL STRATEGIES:

- Charge for certain events (like private weddings or galas) to raise money to maintain the space.
- Limited food & beverage programming (sponsorships or residencies) can be leveraged for profit.
- Install a bookstore about horticulture or a flower shop that would sell plants grown at the Lowline.
- Leverage donations and/or ticket sales from tourists.



**“A healthy neighborhood is an inclusive neighborhood.”**

**“Certain events could charge a fee or admission in order to provide free access to other areas or programs.”**



# Emphasize science, technology, and education.

## WHAT WE HEARD:

- The Lowline is about technology and science at its core - and offers endless opportunities for education of all types.
- Opportunities and resources are needed to engage youth and adult learners - and to form connections among residents, schools, and community based organizations.

## POTENTIAL STRATEGIES:

- Offer multi-generational STEAM programming and include culture and local history classes.
- Showcase solar technology with clear information to engage visitors around solar receptor technology.
- Provide funded vocational training programs with exposure to career options for adults and youth.



**“There is a conviction within the community that science, technology, and the environment are fundamentally what the Lowline is about.”**

**“The Lowline should have classes to teach all ages about a solar innovation throughout the entirety of the Lowline space.”**



# Provide green and nature.

## WHAT WE HEARD:

- The fundamental uniqueness of the Lowline is that it can provide green space underground.
- Plants will maintain a sense of freshness underground and help provide a needed quiet space.

## POTENTIAL STRATEGIES:

- Utilize the solar harvesting technology inherent to the Lowline to grow lush greenery.
- Provide area to lounge quietly or have picnics in nature.
- Provide seasonal gardens whose flowers change depending upon the time of year.
- Ensure that plant life is properly maintained.



**“We think that greenery is an integral part of the Lowline’s identity.”**

**“Build a jungle in the concrete jungle.”**



# Ensure everyone is welcome.

## WHAT WE HEARD:

- Young to old; rich to poor; abled and differently abled; English and non-English speaking; local and tourist; all races and cultures: everyone should be and feel welcome.
- A healthy neighborhood is an inclusive neighborhood - and the Lowline can exemplify a healthy space.

## POTENTIAL STRATEGIES:

- Consciously provide or allow for programming for different groups of people.
- Educational programming that include adults as well as children and teenagers.
- Create feeling of security and inclusive by providing multi-lingual signage and programming, and ADA- accessible entrances.



**“Since the Lowline is underground, I’m concerned about ease of access for the elderly. Where will entrances and exits be, and will there be enough elevators or escalators?”**

**“Ensure that all posters advertising events are printed in multiple languages.”**



EXIT

SPACE MICELI / GALLERY

# Offer a flexible space.

## WHAT WE HEARD:

- Explicit requests that the Lowline remain flexible, in order to host different types of programming and users.
- Desire for a variety of spaces, ranging from a quiet space to relax to active spaces for sports or dance parties, to the ability to host or take a botany class.

## POTENTIAL STRATEGIES:

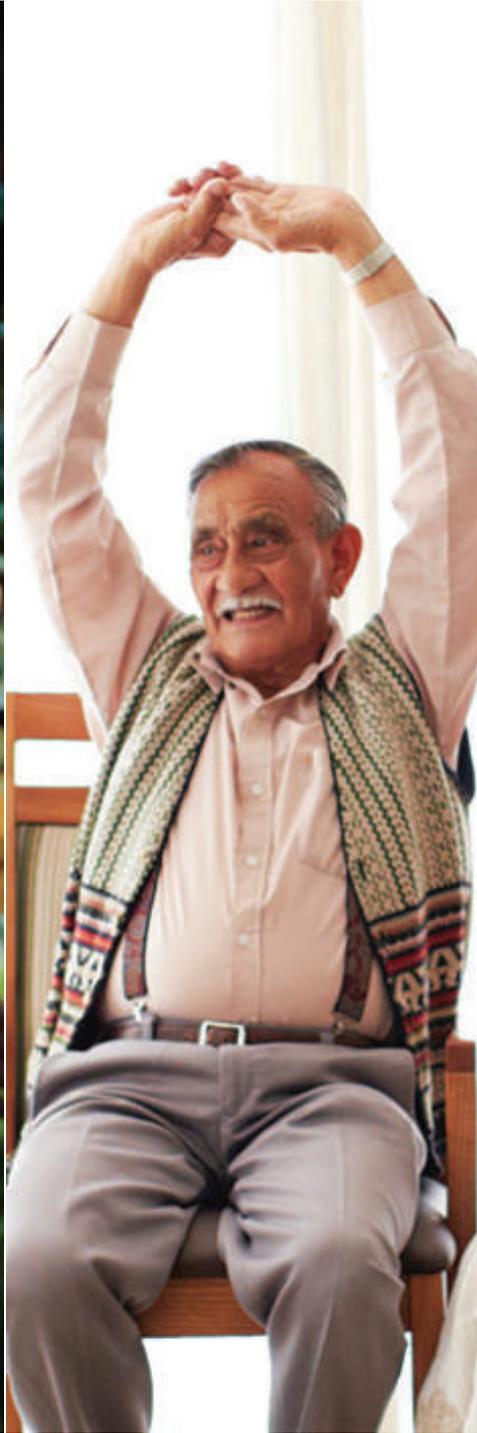
- Many respondents understood that passive and active recreation, especially as they each relate to noise and crowding (or lack thereof), might both be accommodated but occur at different times of day.
- Ensure both design and programming decisions that accommodate diverse programming.
- Maintain balance between passive and active recreation, to allow for both respite and intense action.
- Consider noise and crowding to support these flexible spaces.



“It would be great if the Lowline had community rooms that different non-profit groups could rent for their meetings or events.”

“I’d be more likely to come to the Lowline if there were a lot of *different* things to do.”

“I need a space where i can *‘just be’*.”



# Engage youth and offer youth programming.

## WHAT WE HEARD:

- Desire for the Lowline to be a vehicle for youth programming and engagement, especially as it relates to after-school activities.

## POTENTIAL STRATEGIES:

- Education programming like tutoring or homework after school.
- Activities that engage youth and help prevent teenagers from getting involved with crime.
- Learn gardening and playground for youth that use the existing features of the Lowline.
- A variety of activity ideas connected to play, learning, and the space itself.



**“Partner with local schools to ensure children and teenagers are engaged and safe after they leave the classroom.”**

**“I want a place where I can be with my friends. A place that my parents will trust to let me go to.”**



# Foster community stewardship.

## WHAT WE HEARD:

- Members of the local community want to ensure the Lowline feels like a place for them, in perpetuity.
- A willingness to help the Lowline with programming after it is built to ensure a locally-focused facility and broad inclusiveness.
- Desire to be included at multiple levels: volunteer, programming, and leadership.

## POTENTIAL STRATEGIES:

- Continuation of the Community Advisory Board and Task Force.
- Partnerships and ongoing engagement with active community organizations.
- Community representation on the Lowline's Executive Board.
- Additional outreach and multilingual access.



**“Participants want to understand how the space will be managed when it comes to tourists, safety, entrances/exits, and more.”**

**“Host more events like this one!”**

**“How will the Lowline ensure that the community’s voice is heard after the space opens?”**



# Provide a calm oasis - a place to “just be.”

## WHAT WE HEARD:

- The Lowline should provide a respite away from the hubbub of the city - a “quiet oasis” or a space to “just be.”
- It should not be overly programmed, and instead, be a place you can go without a purpose.
- Parks give people a sense of calm and wellness, and the Lowline should too.

## POTENTIAL STRATEGIES:

- Provide spaces for everyone to simply sit and relax, engaging in unstructured, passive activity - reading, looking at plants, or watching other people go by.
- Pay attention to seniors needing a quiet space to go, without having to do anything.
- Make sure it’s not too noisy, but also ensure it isn’t silent - extreme quiet is disquieting.
- Host yoga or meditation classes, and charge a small fee so that they are limited in size.
- Ensure active and regular use of the space while ensuring it does not become overcrowded - too many patrons could prevent a calm atmosphere.



“I’d like a quiet, contemplative space where I can unwind after a busy day.”



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# LOOKING FORWARD

- Next Steps for Capacity Building
- Next Steps for Partnerships



# Next Steps: Capacity Building

To continue this engagement work in the future, it is suggested that the Lowline should:

- **Invest** resources in ongoing engagement.
- **Partner with local organizations** to expand reach and programming.
- **Continue to work** with Community Advisory Board, Task Force, Young Ambassadors, and Executive Board.



# Next Steps: Partnerships

The Lowline should expand upon existing relationships and seek to build new partnerships with the following organizations, which together provide services and engage the diverse communities within the Lower East Side.

47 ASL and English Secondary School  
AAFE  
Abrons Art Center  
ALBOR  
Alfred E. Smith Recreation Center  
Angel Orensanz Foundation  
Bard High School Early College  
Baruch Community Center  
Baruch Houses  
Battery Park City School  
BECA  
Berkli Parc  
BioBus  
Bowery Alliance of Neighbors  
Bowery Block Association  
Brooklyn Tech  
CAA AV  
Cafe Grumpy  
CASTLE  
CB3  
Center for Architecture  
Chatham Square Library  
Chinatown BID/Chinatown Partnership  
Chinese-American Planning Council  
Chinese Progressive Association  
City Lore  
City Science  
Classic Coffee Shop  
ConBody  
Doughnut Plant  
East River Housing  
East Village Community Coalition  
E. Village Independent Merchants Assoc.  
Educational Alliance  
Manny Cantor Center  
School of the Future  
Emmanuel Presbyterian Church

Essex Street Academy  
Essex Street Market  
Fine Fare  
First Chinese Presbyterian Church  
Formaggio  
Fourth Arts Block  
George Jackson Academy  
GOLES  
Gouverneur Gardens  
Gouverneur Health Center  
Grand Street Guild  
Grand Street Settlement  
AmeriCorps Program  
Seward Park Community Center  
Grassroots Girls  
Green Map  
Gulick Park  
Henry Street Settlement (HSS)  
After School at Manhattan Charter  
After School at P.S. 20  
Expanded Horizons College Prep  
Program  
Good Companions Senior Center  
Hernandez Houses  
Hester Street Collaborative  
Ice and Vice  
iMakr  
Immigrant Social Services  
Insomnia Cookies  
Kossars  
La Plaza Cultural de Armando Perez  
LaGuardia Houses  
Lands End I  
Lands End II  
LES Ecology Center  
LES Girls Club  
LES History Project

LES Jewish Conservancy  
LES Oral History Project (NYPL)  
LES Partnership  
LES People's Mutual Housing Ass.  
LES Preparatory High School  
LES Ready  
Little Chair Cafe  
LOISAIDA  
LOMAA  
Lower East Side Preparatory H.S.  
Lower East Side Preservation Initiative  
LUNGS  
Manhattan Charter School  
Mazeish  
Mesivta Tifereth Jerusalem  
MiLES  
MK Garden  
Moscot  
Museum at Eldridge Street  
NEST+m  
New Design High School  
New Museum  
Ni Deli  
Nord Anglia International School NY  
Osaka Grub  
Ost Cafe  
P.S. 20 Anna Silver School  
P.S. 63 STAR Academy  
P.S. 110 Florence Nightingale School  
P.S. 130M Hernando De Soto School  
P.S. 134 Henrietta Szold  
P.S. 142 New York DOE  
P.S. 184 Shuang Wen School  
Pain d'Avignon  
Patacon Pisao  
Pathways to Graduation  
Peasant Stock

Porto Rico  
Puebla  
Rainbo's  
Rosie Mendez  
Rutgers Houses  
Saxelby Cheese  
Seward Park Conservancy  
Seward Park Cooperative  
Seward Park High School  
Seward Park Housing  
Seward Park Library  
Sixth Street Community Center  
Sons of Essex  
Teak Foundation  
Tenement Museum  
The Neighborhood School  
The Pickle Guys  
The Sill  
The Yard  
Two Bridges Community Center  
Two Bridges Neighborhood Council  
Two Bridges NYCHA  
Two Bridges Townhomes  
University Settlement  
Cornerstone @ Campos Plaza  
Institute for Collaborative  
Education  
Victoria Children's Group  
Vladeck Houses  
Workforce Development Center  
W.O.W Project  
YMCA  
14th Street  
Chinatown  
Cornerstone @ Two Bridges  
Hester Street Center

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## APPENDIX

- Engagement by the Numbers
- Lowline Lab
- Heard on coUrbanize
- Detailed Community Feedback
- Programming Ideas
- Final Scenario Voting



# Engagement “By the Numbers”

5

## Public Workshops

160 attendees  
\*108 live or work in LES

5

## Focus Groups

36 attendees  
\*35 live or work in LES

4

## Place It! Activities

37 attendees  
\*All live or work in LES

2

## Expert Sessions

1 design and  
1 engagement strategy

2

## Young Ambassador Trainings

7

## Community Advisory Board Meetings

1

## Digital Platform

148 coUrbanize comments

26

## Total Engagement Activities

April 2016 - June 2017

Lowline Lab

**110,575**

Lab Visitors

October 2015 - February 2017

**1,773**

Lab Survey Respondents

October 2015 - February 2017

**18,240**

Lab Attendees to Free  
Lowline Community  
Events

October 2015 - February 2017



# Heard on coUrbanize

# 140+

Comments on coUrbanize

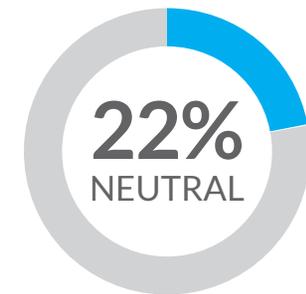
## TOP SUBJECTS OF COURBANIZE COMMENTS:

- Arts & Culture – Commenters expressed interest in opportunities to engage with arts and culture in multiple ways, such as through live performances, exhibitions, and education.
- Green Space, Plants, & Water Features – Commenters were interested in programming and design features related to green space, plants, and water features, with programming desires centered around gardening-related classes.
- Local – Commenters emphasized a desire for programming that features local artists, highlights neighborhood history, or is directed at area residents.
- Education – Commenters were primarily interested in education related to ecology, plant care, gardening, and other plant-related activities, with suggestions including terrarium-building workshops and foraging lessons.

## OTHER SUBJECTS OF COURBNIZE COMMENTS:

- Active Recreation
- Diversity, Accessibility, & Inclusion
- Passive Recreation
- Food & Dining
- Youth

## Sentiment of Comments on coUrbanize



## Arts & Culture

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“I think this could be a part of Lower East Side Tours. Showing LES’s history and also a glimpse of how an unused space has been transformed into a new treasure!”

“...I would love it if the Lowline could be a place where local musicians could showcase their work through small scale acoustic ‘unplugged’ concerts...”

“There should be space to talk about the history of the Lowline and the neighborhood.”

“...I think the Lowline might be a great space to hold book events (readings, release parties, etc.)!”

“I would like to see music and art performances that feel magical and one of a kind.”

## Green Space, Plants, & Water Features

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“Great concept! Would love to see as much greenery as possible—fill it with plants.”

“It would be great to build activities around urban farming and related cooking activities.”

“A garden with tropical flowers in winter—like an underground greenhouse.”

“Plant care class—please help me keep my own plants alive!”

“...Wouldn’t it be cool if there was a pond above ground that you could peek up into from the park below?”

## Local

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“I think this could be a part of Lower East Side Tours. Showing LES’s history and also a glimpse of how an unused space has been transformed into a new treasure!”

“I’d love to be able to enjoy different local artists and speakers in the Lowline.”

“I love the idea of using the old trolley space for a community gathering place.”

“There should be space to talk about the history of the Lowline and the neighborhood.”

## Education

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“A foraging lesson! I want to learn about all the plants and seeds we can eat that grow in New York!”

“I would love to go on garden tours to learn about the plants growing in the Lowline!”

“Green space and teaching about plants and ecology and what bugs can survive underground.”

“I would like to bring my students here to study the design and technology of bringing the sunlight underground. Educational tours designed for school groups would be great.”

# Spotlight: Detailed Community Feedback

Specific community feedback was captured across four public workshops and nine small engagement sessions, and was analyzed in depth. From this analysis, 11 categories of community interest arose; across those, there were 55 specific inquiries, topics, and comments that surfaced more than once. All of these topics were taken into account when formulating the nine Key Findings articulated in this report. All 55 specific topics are presented below; comments that were mentioned more than 50% of the time are highlighted.

## GREEN and NATURAL

**Include green space, features, and/or programming.**

Include a water feature.

Include a community garden.

Include urban agriculture.

## EDUCATION

**Provide spaces and programs for education.**

Emphasize science, tech, and eco-education.

Teach more about solar technology used in the space.

## COMMERCE

**Explain how funding will work, and what methods will be used.**

Allow only minimal vending.

Include food as a primary feature.

Capitalize on the reality that tourists will come.

## OPERATIONS

Focus on safety and security.

Keep it clean.

Think about crowd control, community access, and timing entries.

## LOCAL

**Use Lowline as tool to display LES history.**

Prioritize community access and programming.

Prefer local businesses for any vending included.

Focus on local artists for installations and programming.

Build off of existing LES assets and energy.

Provide social services and build local capacity.

Prioritize local food vendors .

Emphasize local partnerships.

Create community room or meeting areas.

## DESIGN

Explain more about the location and logistics of entrances and exits.

Sitting space is very important.

Create a feeling of openness.

Use the columns.

Ensure lots of light.

Maintain the 'grit' and other original trolley terminal features.

Include a dog park.

## SPACE USAGE

Put on arts and culture events and installations.

Make space for recreation.

Provide a quiet, passive space and be a respite.

Ensure flexibility for different uses and groups.

Put on diverse activities.

Use rotating features (i.e. seasonal gardens).

## USERS

Provide activities for children.

Ensure all ages - including adults and seniors - have something to do.

Reflect the importance of youth engagement and programming.

Be family friendly.

## ACCESS and GOVERNANCE

Welcome all types of people.

Be free or affordable.

Foster inclusive decision making body.

Hold more engagement sessions.

## CONCERNS ABOUT...

...noise and air cleanliness.

...capacity and crowds.

...gentrification.

...the tourist effect.

...exclusivity.

...the existing community not having a say.

...over programming.

...weather events.

...being underground.

## MISCELLANEOUS

Use social media marketing extensively.

Provide free wifi.

# Spotlight: Programming Ideas

Programming ideas were captured across four public workshops and nine small engagement sessions.

To the best of the consultant team's ability, those programming suggestions are presented here in their entirety, and are loosely organized by category of activity, given the multidisciplinary nature of many suggestions.

## ARTS & CULTURE

Art  
Gallery  
Interactive  
School  
Studio to see it being made  
Arts and crafts  
Be a stop on a tour of the LES  
Book  
Fair  
Readings  
Store  
Concerts  
Dance  
Lessons  
Parties  
Studio  
Drum circle  
Experimental theatre  
Fashion shows  
With eco-focus  
Festivals  
Flea market  
Flower  
Arranging class  
Shop  
Graffiti & tagging wall  
Hidden books

## Holiday celebrations

Knitting & sewing  
Mosaics  
Movie Theatre  
For Indie Films  
Murals  
On the ceiling, projecting the sky  
Music lessons  
Oral history  
Performance  
By Kids  
Of K-Pop  
Of Music  
Space  
Spoken Word  
Photobooth  
Poetry  
Readings  
Installations  
Radio station booth  
Sculpture  
Soapbox opportunities  
Talent show  
TED Talks  
Teen night with DJs  
Theatre  
Writing space

## ACTIVE RECREATION

Adults playground  
Amusement park  
Arcade games  
Baseball field  
Basketball court  
Batting cage  
Bike path  
Billiards or pool  
Bocce court  
Bowling alley  
Camping  
Containers with pop up activities  
Fitness classes  
Foosball  
Football field  
Game room  
Giant slide  
Gymnasium  
Handball  
Ice rink  
Indoor sports  
Karate  
Labyrinth  
Life size board games  
Mini golf  
Mixed martial arts (MMA)  
Outdoor exercise equipment

## Ping pong

Playground for small children  
Pool  
Rock climbing wall  
Roller rink  
Running  
Scavenger hunt  
Skate park/ramps  
Soccer field  
Spin class  
Sprinklers  
Squash courts  
Stationary bikes  
Tricycle loop  
Walking tours  
Waterpark  
Zipline

## GREEN & NATURAL

Animal park  
Aquarium  
Beach  
Butterfly exhibit  
Community garden  
Creative gardening  
Fountain for feng shui  
Garden  
Botanic  
Club or classes  
Kids

## Of cultural significance

Of medicinal value  
Seasonal  
Secret  
Zen  
Green everywhere  
Hills, like on Governor's Island  
Japanese garden  
Jungle  
Long green ramp  
Petting zoo  
Pond with fish  
Rainforest  
Vegetable patch  
Waterfall

## SCIENCE & TECH

Classes & General Programming  
Aquaponics  
Climate  
Coding  
Engineering  
Environmental  
Permaculture  
Science  
Solar tech  
STEM  
Sustainability  
Urban planning

Waste enzymes  
Charging stations  
Compost program  
Greenhouse  
Infrastructure exposure  
Installations by large  
tech co.  
Laboratory  
Pokemon Go  
Recycling facility  
Solar collectors at  
street level  
Tech incubator

#### EDUCATION

Adult education  
After school programs  
Classroom  
Classes & Lessons  
    Computer  
    Cultural traditions  
    ESL  
    Technical  
Continuing Education  
Experimental activities  
related to art, food, and  
education  
Interactive educational  
booth  
Job seeking assistance  
Label and teach about

different plants  
Lectures  
Library  
Museum programming  
focused on the Lower  
East Side  
Peer-based education  
Presentations  
Reading room  
School field trips  
Study area  
Tutoring  
Workshops

#### HEALTH & WELLNESS

Acro-yoga  
Air quality workshops  
Cell phone free zone  
Classes  
    Affordable  
    For New Mothers  
    Green cooking  
    Healthy eating  
    Teen health  
    Wellness  
Fitboard  
"Just be"  
Meditation  
Nutrition programming  
Peer counselling  
Pilates

Provide good & healthy  
food  
Quiet time  
Relaxing  
Senior exercise  
Support groups/rehab  
Tai chi  
Therapy  
Yoga

#### COMMUNITY

Chalkboard to write down  
programming suggestions  
Childcare  
Community  
    Building workshops  
    Bulletin board  
    Room/center  
Job training  
Kids birthday parties  
Meals for homeless  
Mom and pop shops  
Multilingual signage  
Neighborhood  
mentorship program  
Push carts  
Religious processions  
Senior center  
Shelter and sanctuary  
Speed dating for seniors  
Speed networking

Take a book, leave a book  
spiritual library  
Volunteer opportunities  
for the unemployed

#### FOOD

24/7 supermarket with  
international food  
Bubble tea store  
Cafeteria  
Chuck E. Cheese  
Coffee shop or vendor  
Cooking classes  
Farmers market  
Food  
    Court with diverse  
    cuisines  
    Exchange  
    Pantry  
Fruit carts with affordable  
produce  
Grocery store  
Industrial kitchen  
Vegetable stand with  
produce grown at  
the Lowline  
Wendy's  
Wine tastings

#### PASSIVE RECREATION

Bean bags for teenagers  
Bingo  
Bleachers to watch dogs  
play  
Board games  
Cat park  
Chess  
Dog park  
Hammocks  
Mahjong  
Picnic area  
Playing cards  
Pods for quiet time  
Slow zones  
Quiet reflective spaces

#### VENDING

Gift shop  
Life-cycle events like  
engagement parties, bar  
mitzvahs, and weddings  
Rotating vendors  
Store that sells flowers,  
bulbs that grow in Lowline

#### OTHER

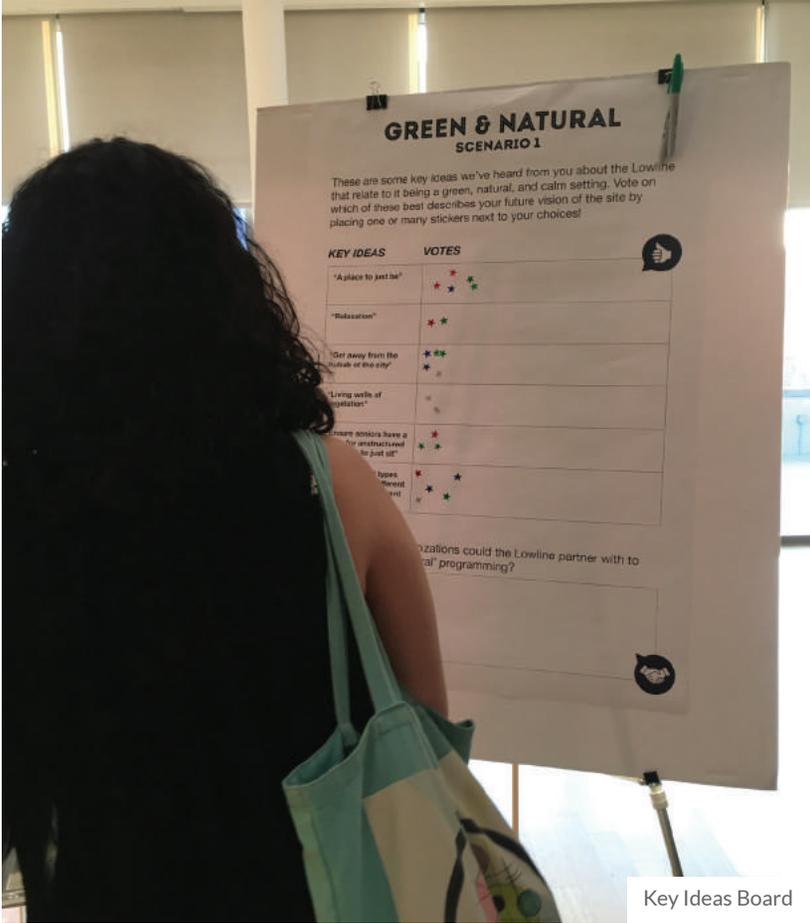
Nothing - leave as is

# Spotlight: Final Scenario Voting

As part of the report out and final feedback collection at Public Workshop 5, three possible programming scenarios for the future Lowline site were presented. These were **Learning & Discovery**, **Local Inclusion & Community Building**, and **Green & Natural**. Each of these scenarios was chosen because of previous and overwhelming feedback heard from the community throughout targeted engagement. Scenarios were presented as a series of images relating to the themes heard. Beside each scenario was a board with key ideas listed on it that related to the scenario in question. Participants were each given 12 stickers and asked to vote on which key ideas best described their future vision of the site programming.



Programming Scenario



Key Ideas Board

#	KEY IDEAS	VOTES
1	Utilize solar collection tech as a learning tool.	31
2	Have different types of gardens for different seasons and cultures.	30
3	Living walls of vegetation.	29
4	Workshops about everything from botany to engineering.	22
5	Plants and tech are fundamental to the Lowline.	21
-	Provide services to help local residents, like job training.	21

Top Five Key Ideas

	KEY IDEAS	VOTES
	<b>Have different types of gardens for different seasons and cultures.</b>	<b>30</b>
	Living walls of vegetation.	29
	Ensure seniors have places for unstructured activities - to just sit.	19
	Get away from the hubbub of the city.	12
	Relaxation.	11
	A place to just be.	10
	<b>Utilize solar collection tech as a learning tool.</b>	<b>31</b>
	Workshops about everything from botany to engineering.	22
	Plants and tech are fundamental to the Lowline.	21
	All-ages approach to education.	19
	The Lowline as a classroom in and of itself.	8
	Digital sketchpads to integrate technology and art.	4
	<b>Provide services to help local residents, like job training.</b>	<b>21</b>
	Make the Lowline a place where everyone feels welcome.	20
	Community is changing; celebrate its history.	12
	Make sure artists have a space to stay on the LES.	8
	Have local, affordable food.	7
	What if people could see how artists make their work?	7

Votes by Key Idea

SCENARIO	TOTAL VOTES
Green & Natural	111
Learning & Discovery	105
Local Inclusion & Community Building	75

Total Votes by Scenario

“Use the columns to build up greenery; instead of trees, this ‘jungle’ should have lush pillars of vegetation.”

“The neighborhood already has lots of artist space, and artists lead to gentrification.”

“Partner with VertiCulture, an aquaponic production facility company.”

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- Main Themes**
- Green Space building into park etc.
  - New Ideas/Innovation
  - Education classroom space
  - Art + Performance
  - Amusement common
  - Arts
  - Culture
  - Priority