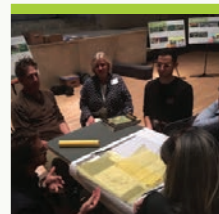


FALL  
2018

# HAVEN GREEN

PUBLIC PARTICIPATORY DESIGN PROCESS REPORT



# PROJECT TEAM

The Haven Green team is a group of community development professionals charged with integrating the dual needs of affordable housing and a publicly accessible outdoor space on the Haven Green site.

Development partners include Pennrose Properties, LLC, RiseBoro Community Partnership and Habitat for Humanity New York City.

The design team includes Curtis+Ginsberg Architects, LLP (lead project architect), Melillo + Bauer Associates (landscape architect), Paul A. Castrucci, Architects (leader of the participatory design process), and the Little Italy community.

*"Pennrose is excited to work with the community towards delivering much needed affordable LGBTQ friendly senior housing, critical community services, and beautiful publicly accessible open space in a smart, eco-friendly design. The feedback we received from these participatory design forums will help guide the vision of the site."*

Timothy I. Henkel, Principal & Senior Vice President, Pennrose.

*"RiseBoro Community Partnership is committed to engaging the array of voices vested in the Site to co-design a successful project and a sustaining neighborhood. Haven Green is an inclusive opportunity to preserve access to cherished open space while providing affordable homes for one of our most vulnerable populations. We couldn't be more excited to steward open engagement towards enriching the quality of life and public assets of the neighborhood."*

Scott Short, CEO, Riseboro Community Partnership

*"Habitat NYC has historically brought people of all walks of life together to bridge our differences in pursuit of the common good. We have reached out with an open hand, and continue to do so, to the community to seek partnership and collaboration on this compromise project on Elizabeth St. that provides both housing and open green space. We invite all interested individuals and community groups to participate in the design and stewardship of the project's open and public space by submitting input through our open survey on [www.havengreencommunity.org](http://www.havengreencommunity.org)"*

Karen Haycox, CEO, Habitat for Humanity New York City

**PENNROSE**  
Bricks & Mortar | Heart & Soul

**RiseBoro**  
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

 **Habitat**  
for Humanity®  
New York City

**CURTIS + GINSBERG** ARCHITECTS LLP

  
**MELILLO + BAUER**  
ASSOCIATES  
Landscape Architecture

**PAUL A. CASTRUCCI ARCHITECT**  
A PASSIVE HOUSE CERTIFIED DESIGN FIRM

  
**HAVEN**  
**GREEN**

# HAVEN GREEN

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATORY DESIGN PROCESS REPORT

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# I. INTRODUCTION

In the summer and fall of 2018, the project team led a participatory design process to collectively imagine the future of the open space on the Haven Green site. The process engaged community members, gardeners, and housing advocates. We obtained input on the activities, design elements and character of the space, with the goal of envisioning an open space that meets neighborhood needs and is grounded in community input. The process was designed to be open, inclusive, and engaging, allowing a wide range of stakeholders and participants to provide input.

## CONTEXT

The Haven Green project is located on city owned land in the Little Italy neighborhood of Manhattan. The site is approximately 20,000 sf of highly valued space that spans from Elizabeth Street to Mott Street. The lot is currently privately leased on a month to month basis by Elizabeth Street, Inc. The current sculpture garden's characteristic statuary is privately owned in connection to its relationship with the adjacent Elizabeth Street Gallery. In 2005, the garden became accessible through the gallery as an exterior showroom. After the site was slated to be developed for affordable housing, the site was opened to the public, and is now commonly referred to as the 'Elizabeth Street Garden.'

In the 5 years since the site was designated for affordable housing, a public debate has arisen around the planned development of the site. Many garden advocates have called for saving the existing space in its entirety, highlighting its importance within the community and arguing that there is an alternative site within Community Board 2 (approximately 1 mile away). Housing advocates have pointed out that, to meet even a fraction of the community district's need for affordable housing, all available sites would need to be developed. Further, fair and equitable housing requires all neighborhoods contribute to meeting this great need. The alternative is seen as both delaying senior housing that is badly needed now, and transferring yet more of the burden for addressing the affordable housing crisis to less affluent communities.



## AFFORDABLE HOUSING + PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE GREEN SPACE

It is in this context that the Haven Green project seeks to combine two vital community resources on one site: Affordable housing and publicly accessible green space. This project is a response to a competitive RFP issued by New York City Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) in 2017. The building provides 123 LGBTQ-friendly affordable housing dwelling units for seniors. The building is slated to be built to the Passive House standard, which will result in a drastic reduction of energy use and carbon emissions for the project. With Habitat for Humanity NYC as the anchor tenant for the ground floor community facility space, the project will provide expanded services for its residents, as well as ongoing community outreach and programming with local non-profits.



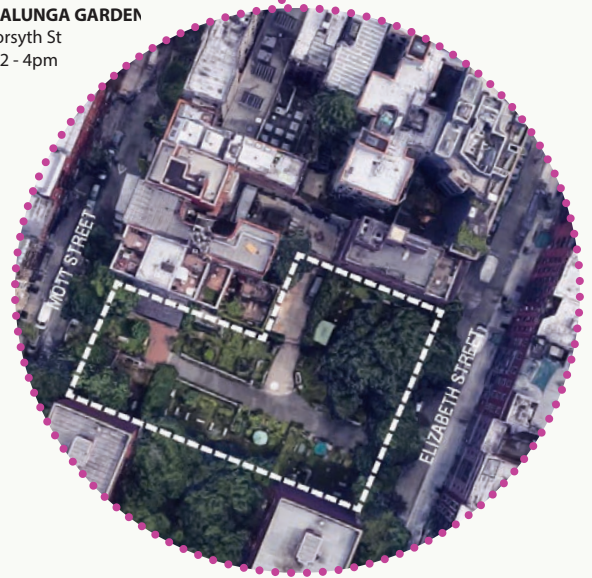
## II. AREA MAP



Above: Publicly accessible gardens within walking distance from the Haven Green site

### MAP LEGEND:

 <b>LIZ CHRISTY GARDEN</b> E. Houston St. btwn 2nd Ave + Bowery SATURDAY 12- 4pm (All Year) SUNDAY 12 - 4pm (May - Sept) TU & TH 6pm - dusk (May - Sept)	 <b>KENKELEBA HOUSE GARDEN</b> 212 E 3th St TH - FR 10:30am - 6:30pm SAT 10am - 4pm & when gate is op	 <b>M'FINDA KALUNGA GARDEN</b> 133 - 165 Forsyth St SAT - SUN 12 - 4pm TH 5 - 7pm
 <b>CHILDRENS' MAGICAL GARDEN</b> 129 Stanton Street MON-SUN 3 - 6pm	 <b>6TH ST &amp; AVE B COMM. GARDEN</b> E 6th St & Avenue B SAT - SUN 1pm - 6pm (Apr 1 - Oct 3 & when gate is open	
 <b>MIRACLE GARDEN</b> 194 E 3th St SAT - SUN 12 - 7pm	 <b>CREATIVE LITTLE GARDEN</b> 530 E 6th St DAILY 11am - 6pm	
 <b>6BC BOTANICAL GARDEN</b> 622 E 6th St (btwn Ave B & C) SAT - SUN 12pm - 6pm (April - Oct) MON - FRI 6pm - dusk	 <b>LA PLAZA CULTURAL DE ARMANDO PEREZ COMMUNITY GARDEN</b> E 9th St & Avenue C SAT - SUN 10am - 7pm (Apr 1 - Oct 31) & when gate is open + members	
 <b>LES ECOLOGY CENTER COMMUNITY GARDEN</b> 210 E 7th St SUNDAY 8am - 5pm	 <b>9TH ST COMMUNITY GARDEN</b> E 9th St & Avenue C SAT - SUN 12 - 5pm (Apr - Oct)	
 <b>FIREMEN'S MEMORIAL GARDEN</b> 358 E 8th St MON - FRI 1 - 5pm	 <b>GREEN OASIS GARDEN</b> Ave D & E 7th St DAILY 8am - 5pm	



# III. THE PARTICIPATORY DESIGN PROCESS

## WHAT IS PARTICIPATORY DESIGN?

Participatory design seeks to engage all stakeholders in the design process. This approach encourages input from voices beyond the client and the designer, inviting end users, neighbors, and other stakeholders to imagine and shape the future of the site.

## WHY PARTICIPATORY DESIGN?

The end users of any space – especially public spaces – are very much the experts of how the place is used, how it feels and how it should be designed. The public participatory design process allows us to harness that expertise, resulting in the best possible design – both in process and result.

## COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY INPUT

The magic of the gardens of lower Manhattan is seen in how each of these community spaces manifests the unique energy and vision of its users and gardeners. A public participatory design process allows the final design of the space to reflect the ideas and vision of its community.

## PARTICIPATORY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

### INCLUSIVE

All people with an interest in the project are invited to participate. To ensure the greatest possible participation, we conduct multi-faceted and broad-based outreach, provide multiple modes of participation, and hold design meetings during the week and the weekend.

### ACCESSIBLE

The design meetings are physically accessible to all people. Translation services are provided to ensure that non-English speakers can participate.

### ENGAGING

The design process should be fun, engaging and allow for participants to provide input in a variety of mediums: through surveys, storytelling, drawing, preference boards, and group discussions.

## THE PARTICIPATORY DESIGN OUTREACH PROCESS

### INITIAL OUTREACH

Beginning in the winter of 2018, the team initiated a broad outreach process to identify the many local and citywide stakeholders. Early meetings with elected officials and key community groups provided an opportunity to introduce the project, team and our proposed design process, as well as to gain understanding of their concerns and suggestions to best target further outreach.

### STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Through the spring and summer of 2018, the team continued to meet with key stakeholders including the Friends of the Elizabeth Street Garden, Elizabeth Street Garden Inc, and other local community gardening, preservation, business, and service organizations as well as Councilmember Margaret Chin, Borough President Gale Brewer, Community Board 2, Assemblymembers Yuh-Line Niou and Deborah Glick, State Senators Brad Hoylman and Brian Kavanagh, Representatives Jerry Nadler and Nydia Velazquez and other community representatives. A series of local meetings provided opportunities for discussion of the project.

### PARTICIPATORY DESIGN OUTREACH

Through these engagement efforts, the team identified a wide range of stakeholders to invite to the participatory design process. A press release announced the effort and invitations to participate were distributed through mailers, flyer, in-person meetings, bulletins and through email invitations to community members who signed up through the website and other outreach, civic and community leaders. The team requested that Community Board 2 leaders notify their constituents – particularly for the third session they requested - but citing past opposition resolutions they opted not to inform the community for any of the sessions.

Altogether, nearly 900 organizations and individuals received information and invitations to the community design workshops including:

- Elected officials and political organizations @40+
- Citywide organizations @65+
- LGBTQ support organizations @9+
- Grassroots local organizations @100+
- Landmarks & Preservation organizations @5+
- Local business groups @10+
- Housing CDC/CBO's & HDFC's @32+
- Senior Citizen support & service providers @11+
- Park and garden groups @16+
- Schools and children's service providers @13+
- Faith communities @58+

**850+ EMAILS** to community contacts through several waves of outreach by email, direct mail, and via organizations in advance of the 4 participatory design workshops.

**1500 FLYERS** distributed to local businesses, community service providers, and by street canvassing at key neighborhood locations including the Spring & Lafayette #6 subway stops, Whole Food and the Chinatown YMCA at Housing and Bowery, and the M103 bus stop at Bowery and Prince.



4  
MEETINGS

596 PREFERENCE  
BOARD RESPONSES

229 NEW IDEAS  
GENERATED



Participants collaborate on design charrettes

## IV. THE PARTICIPATORY DESIGN MEETINGS

In September 2018, the team held four participatory meetings. All meetings were open to public, with the fourth meeting focused on local senior citizens. The public meetings were held on weeknights and a Saturday afternoon at local community spaces (University Settlement and Judson Memorial Church), with the senior citizen focused meeting occurring in the middle of a weekday at the Chinatown YMCA. The participatory design meetings elicited input through three primary methods:

### 1. PREFERENCE BOARDS

Preference boards were prepared for four major categories: Activities, Design Elements, Planting and Seating. For each category, imagery evocative of a wide range of options was shown to participants. Participants were invited to place stickers next to the images they liked. The results of the preference board data were used along with survey data to provide quantitative analysis. Using these 'counting stats' alongside the qualitative results of the design charrettes, the team was able to 'rank' the many great ideas we received by magnitude of community support. Please see the appendix for the results.

### 2. DESIGN CHARRETTES

At each design meeting, participants worked in small groups (2 to 8 people) in a design charrette for the open public space. Each group was given a site plan and toolkit consisting of markers, colored pencils, and collage materials. The groups engaged in a discussion about what design concepts they'd like to see implemented and how they should be arranged on the site. Results from these site plans ranged from a short list of reasons why participants love the existing garden to colorful site plans brimming with ideas about the future of the space.

### 3. SURVEYS:

A 15 question survey was developed for the project. The questions were designed to gather both quantitative and qualitative input. The survey included questions on how participants used the existing garden, what activities people would like to see in the space, what design elements they would like to implement, and what stories people could share about the current or another garden. The survey was available both online (through the project website) and during participatory design meetings.

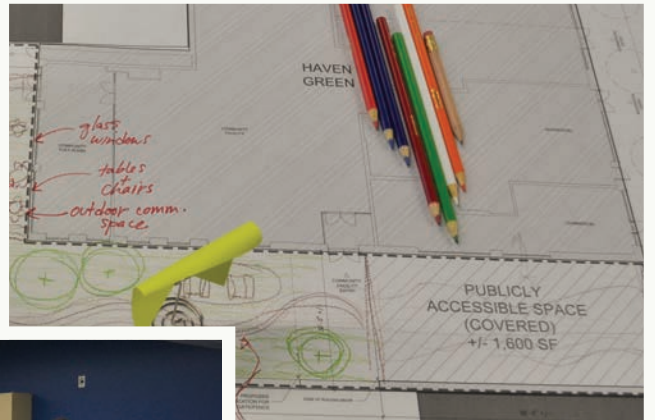
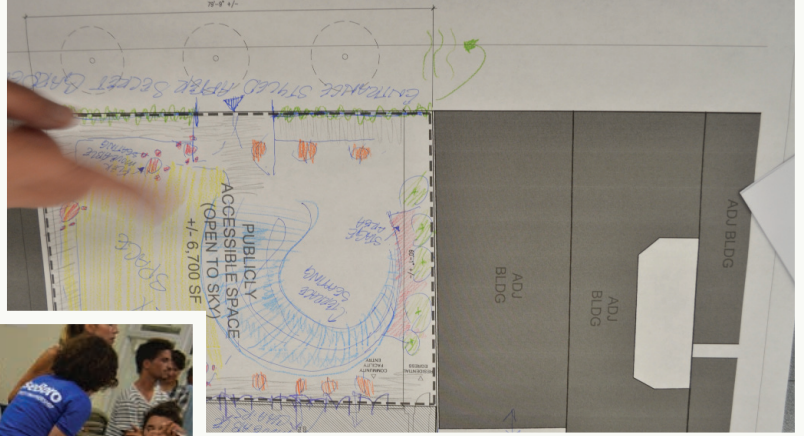
Outside of the participatory design meetings, the team also pulled a wealth of information from articles published by those opposed to the development. These articles highlighted ways that the existing space is appreciated and utilized.



Preference boards from the senior focused meeting



# DESIGN SESSION PHOTOS



## V. WHAT WE LEARNED

The public engagement process generated numerous and diverse design ideas. We received input on the types of uses of the space, the character of the space, how the space feels from the street, types of plants and seating, and ways to engage the community. From this input, the team highlighted recurring themes and ideas that were prevalent across the surveys, preference boards, public comment, and design charrettes.

Where possible, the design should implement the following ideas and comments, while also understanding that the space is not intended to be developed as a 'paint by

numbers' exercise. The team will prioritize the strongest and most recurrent ideas to build up an exceptional design around those concepts.

As such, we have identified 'Essential Ideas' and 'Great Ideas.' The 'Essential Ideas' are ideas that recurred throughout the public input, to the extent that we recommend that they should be included in the design. The 'Great Ideas' concepts include a range of exciting design ideas – many of them also recurrent across much of the input – that should be strongly considered for inclusion in the design.

### 'ESSENTIAL IDEAS'

These 'Essential Ideas' are concepts and suggestions that recurred throughout the public input process.

- no.1 The space should provide a sense of sanctuary from the street. One approach could be to use dense plantings to create a sense of privacy and separation from the street (the 'secret garden' approach).
- no.2 The space should include a water element. The water element should engage the senses and be used in support of creating an ambient environment that is a sanctuary from the street.
- no.3 The space should provide a grass lawn area.
- no.4 Where possible, save existing mature trees. Where not possible, re-plant at least as many trees (as mature as feasible) as being taken away.
- no.5 The space should use native, drought resistant plants that attract birds, butterflies, bees and other wildlife.





## 'GREAT IDEAS'

These 'Great Ideas' include a range of exciting design ideas. Though these ideas weren't as recurrent as the 'Essential Ideas', there was enough support for these concepts to warrant strong consideration.

**no.1** Consider bringing aspects of the existing garden – specifically the sculptures – into the new garden.

**no.2** Consider providing new sculptures throughout the garden. Arrange the sculptures on the perimeter so that garden space is still maximized.

**no.3** Where existing trees must be removed, consider utilizing them to make furniture for the new garden. For example, craft a large communal dining table from the wood of the existing site trees.

**no.4** Consider extending the garden area onto the sidewalk with planters, benches, canopies and art/signage.

**no.5** Consider minimizing pathways. Where possible, consider grass or permeable paver ADA paths wherever appropriate to maximize green space.

**no.6** Consider using movable seats and chairs.

**no.7** Consider implementing terraced seating to create opportunities for meeting and small outdoor performance.

**no.8** Consider locating some of the permanent seating on the north side of the Central garden to capture winter sun.

**no.9** Consider implementing a therapeutic herb garden or herb spiral on the site.

**no.10** Consider implementing vertical gardening to extend the garden up the building walls (both the Haven Green building and neighboring buildings).

**no.11** Consider providing a 'demonstration' garden that highlights a gardening/sustainability feature such as vegetable growing, composting, rainwater collection and re-use, etc.

**no.12** Consider extending the garden into the 'overpass' area with plantings, green wall, and similar path material.

**no.13** Consider implementing a 'rain garden' or other rainwater collection strategy in the garden.

**no.14** Consider strategies for controlling 'cut-through' foot traffic of the garden space by pedestrians. Consider implementing a winding path with intermediate planting area 'barriers' that encourage a meandering route through the site rather than a direct 'cut-through.'



## 'BIG PICTURE IDEAS'

Many participants had great 'big picture' ideas that, while infeasible to implement within the footprint of the Haven Green garden space, are worth mention for future planning and development in the neighborhood and the city as a whole.

**no.1** Create an 'Elizabeth Street Garden' network on multiple affordable housing sites in the community. Advocate for the integration of publicly accessible garden space on future affordable housing developments.

**no.2** Provide a public garden on the building's roof.

**no.3** Work with the southern neighbor (21 Spring Street) to combine the garden and the neighbor's open courtyard.

**no.4** For future projects, engage in a participatory design exercise prior to designing the building massing to allow the process to inform site layout and garden/building balance.



## ACTIVITIES AND USES

Input on activities was wide ranging – from a full slate of programmed activities to a desire to leave the space completely unprogrammed. Given the wide range of potential activities, and the desire to meet other design requirements, we recommend providing an adaptable outdoor space that can flexibly accommodate a variety of uses and activities. Some of the desired activities include:

**no.1** Active use programs (such as yoga and tai chi)

**no.4** Community movie nights.

**no.7** Fall activities such as harvest festival and pumpkin carving.

**no.2** Checkers and chess games.

**no.5** Art installations/shows.

**no.3** Community dinner nights, possibly highlighting ingredients grown on the site.

**no.6** Solstice and equinox celebrations.

**no.8** Winter activities such as 'igloo' or snow fort building, snowman building, hot cocoa and caroling.



## VI. NEXT STEPS

The participatory design process resulted in a wealth of input, including exciting design ideas, preferences for how the space should look and feel, and stories on how the existing space has affected the community. But how will community input be included in the design process for the space?

At the conclusion of this participatory design process, our results and recommendations are being provided to the project design team. Recommendations shown on the previous pages are provided to the landscape architect and the development team, along with the data shown in the appendix following this report. The design team will use this report as both inspiration and a guiding framework, seeking to capture the spirit of the design input while addressing specific needs expressed by participants. The team will strive to incorporate as many community ideas as possible, while also recognizing that the design of the space is not a 'paint by numbers' exercise. The best design for this space will thoughtfully respond to the community input, resulting in a rich and vibrant space that the site deserves.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The participatory design process relied on the hard work of numerous community development professionals, local community groups, political leaders, garden advocates, housing advocates, and the Little Italy community. We extend our sincere gratitude to all of those who participated in this process, including our Haven Green team, University Settlement, Judson Memorial Church, Chinatown YMCA, New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development, New York City Department of City Planning, Community Board 2, Councilperson Chin, Borough President Brewer, Assemblymembers Niou and Glick, State Senators Hoylman and Kavanagh, Representatives Nadler and Velazquez, and most importantly, all those who participated in this process as co-designers.

## VII. APPENDIX - PARTICIPATORY DESIGN DATA

The participatory design process provided our team with invaluable community input, providing numerous insights and design ideas to build from. The following pages show in more detail what we learned from the community engagement in the design surveys, storytelling, preference boards and the design charrettes.

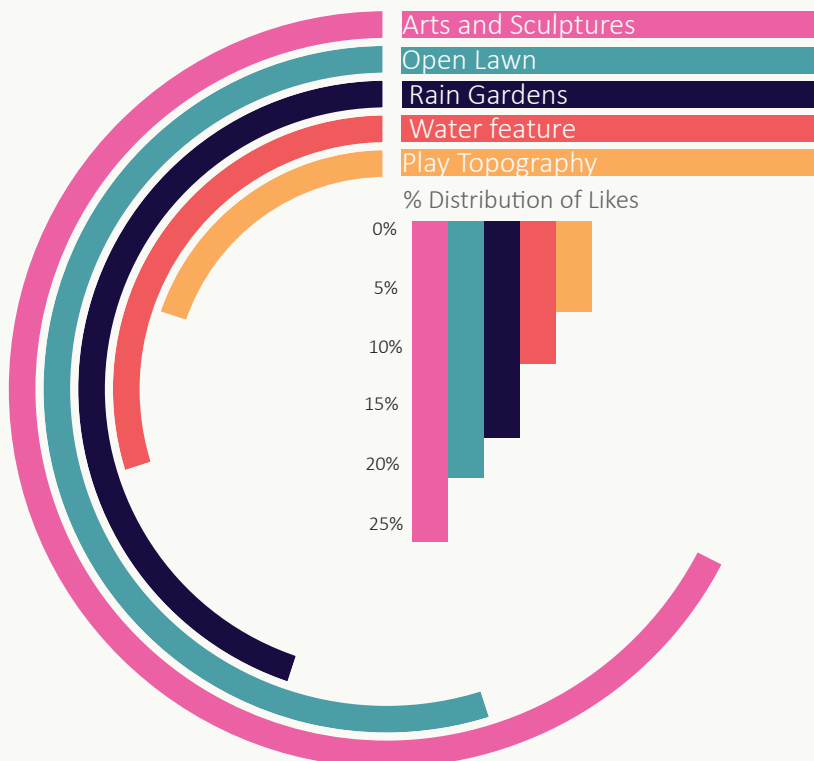
# PREFERENCE BOARDS

## DESIGN ELEMENTS

Preference boards were made for four major categories: Activities, Design Elements, Planting and Seating. For each category, imagery evocative of a wide range of options was shown to participants. Participants were invited to place stickers next to the images they liked. The results of the preference board data were used along with survey data to provide quantitative analysis. When viewed alongside the qualitative results of the design charrettes, the team was able to rank the great ideas we received based on the magnitude of community support.

### Preference Board Question:

What kind of design elements do you want to see here? Design elements - or features - help give a space its distinct character. Can you imagine a space that features art and sculpture from local artists? Or a series of rolling hills for children to run and jump on? How about a rain garden that sustainably manages rainwater?



Arts and Sculptures



Rain Gardens



Open Lawn



Play Topography



Water feature



## ACTIVITIES AND USES

Preference Board Question:

What kind of activities do you envision for this space? How do you think it should be used? Do you imagine a quiet, restful space to read a book? Or a lively space for meeting with your neighbors? Will this be a space for gardening? What do you want to see happen here?



Exercise



Quiet Space



Events



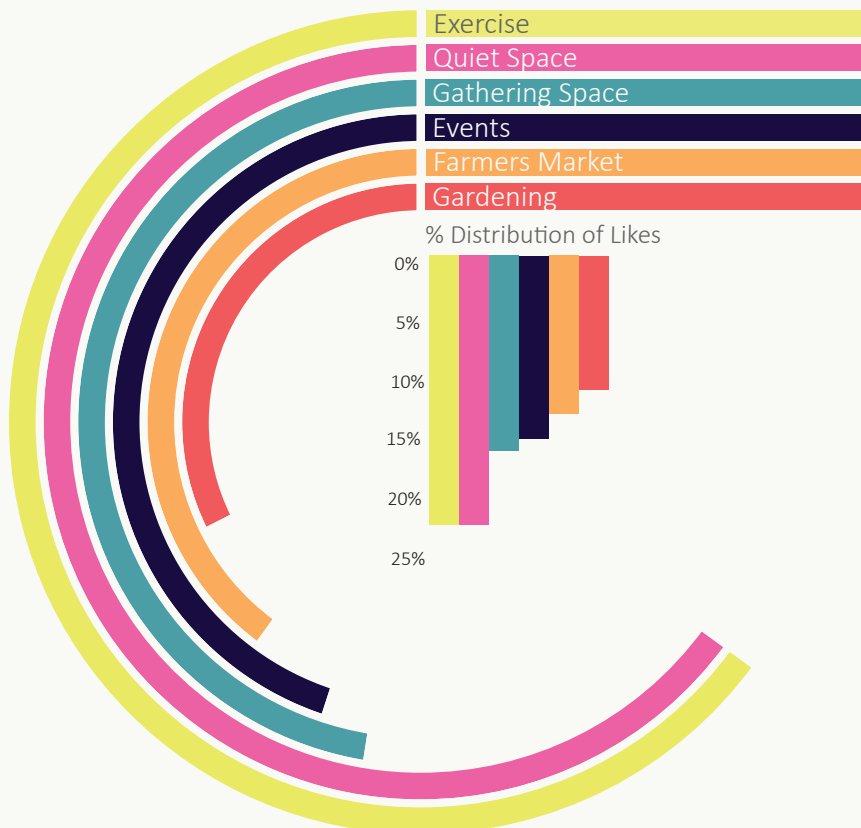
Gathering Space



Farmers Market



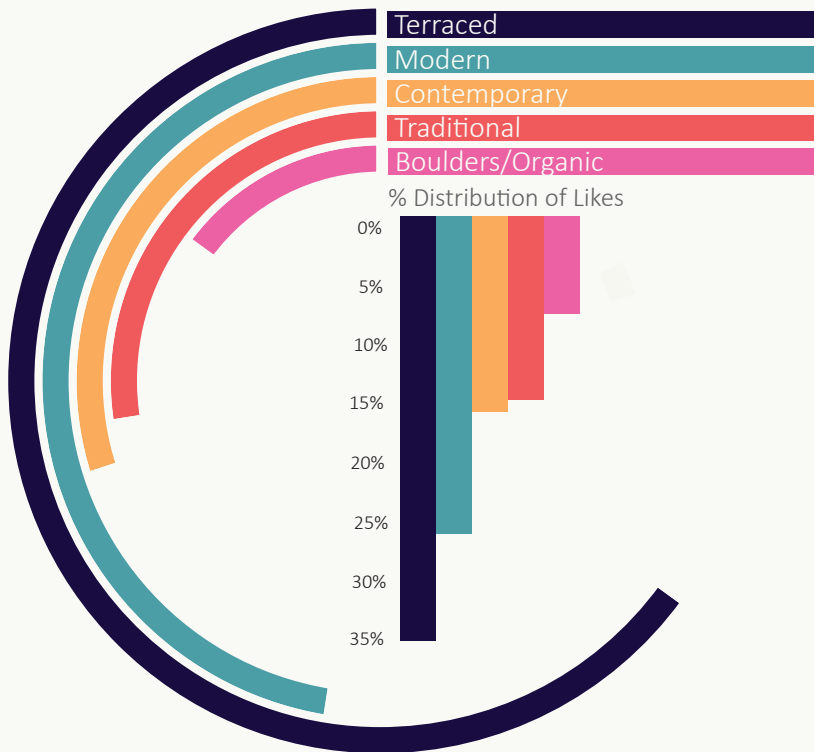
Gardening



## SEATING

### Preference Board Question:

Providing a comfortable respite from the busy streets is an essential aspect of publicly accessible outdoor spaces. The type of seating installed will help define the character of the space, as well as determine what kind of interactions people will have in the space. Do you envision traditional park benches for this space? Modern benches? Or something wild and natural like boulders? Do you envision seating that encourages interactions and gathering, or seating for quiet solitude?



Boulders/Organic



Terraced



Modern



Contemporary



Traditional

## PLANTING

### Preference Board Question:

Plants define the character of an outdoor space. Should this be a wild, lush space with dense greenery? Do you want to see wildflowers blowing in the breeze? Should there be a formal garden here? Or should this space include fruit and vegetable gardens?



Therapeutic Herb Garden



Sensory Plants



Wildflowers



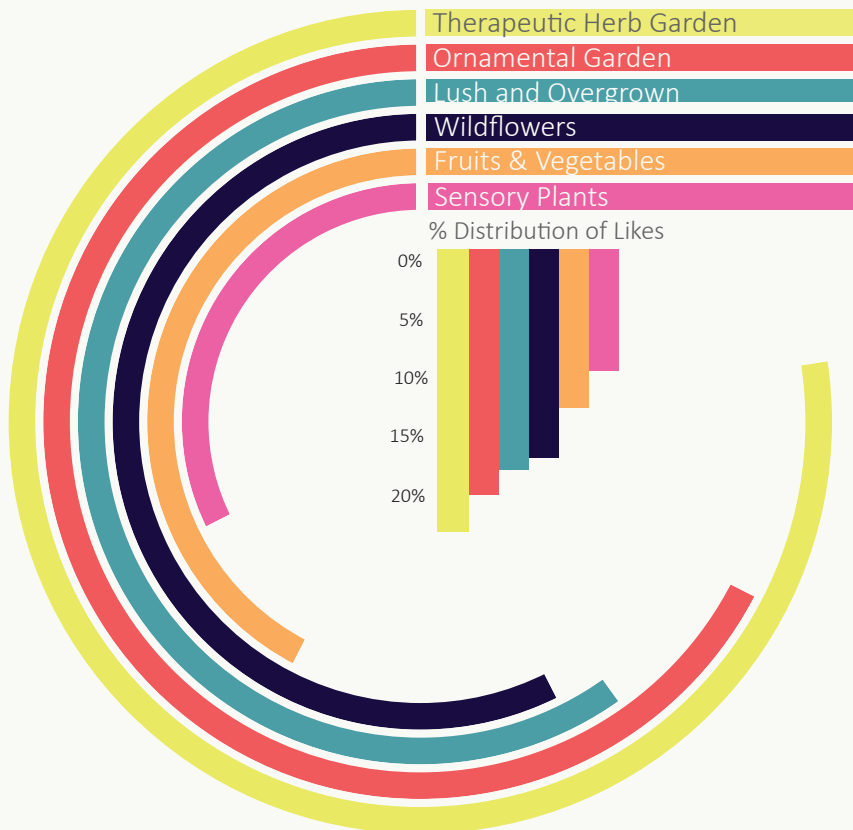
Lush and Overgrown



Fruits and Vegetables



Ornamental Garden



81% of those surveyed walk to the garden.

59% would use the garden in mornings, midday and afternoons

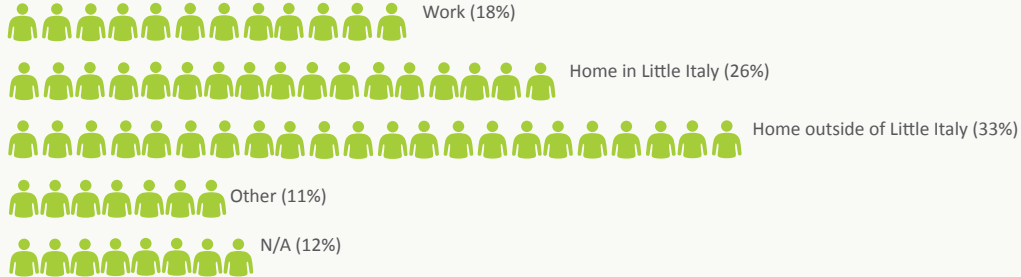
66% would use garden on weekdays and weekends

48% would like to use the garden all year long!

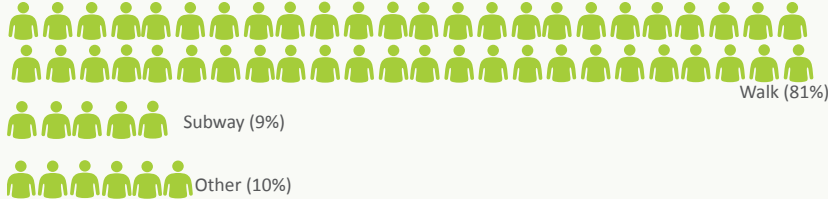
# DESIGN SURVEY

## SURVEY RESULTS: VISITING THE GARDEN

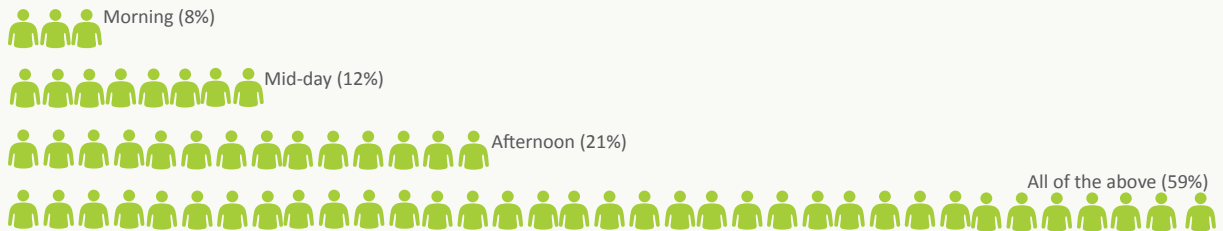
When you visit the garden, where are you traveling from?



How do you typically travel to the garden?



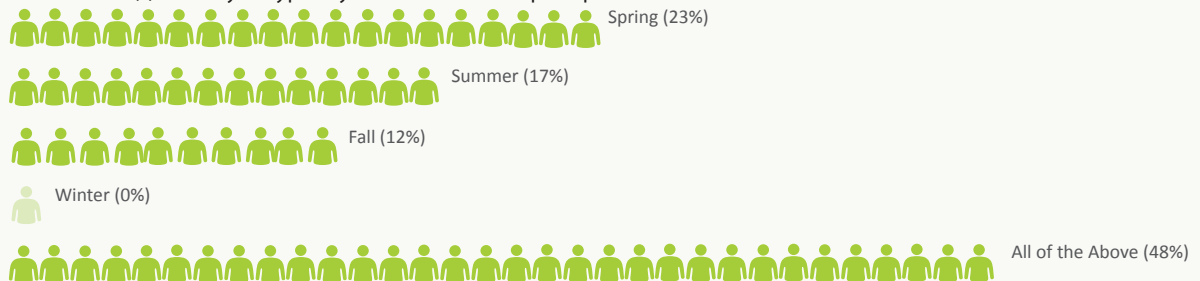
What time of day would you typically want to visit the garden?



What part of the week would you typically want to visit the open space?



What season(s) would you typically want to visit the open space?



# SURVEY RESULTS: ACTIVITIES AND USES

What open space activities/uses matter most to you?



# SURVEY RESULTS: WHO PARTICIPATED?

Have you visited Elizabeth Street Garden? (82% Yes, 18% No)



Participant who are members of community based non-profit in the area:

51% are not members of local non-profit community groups.



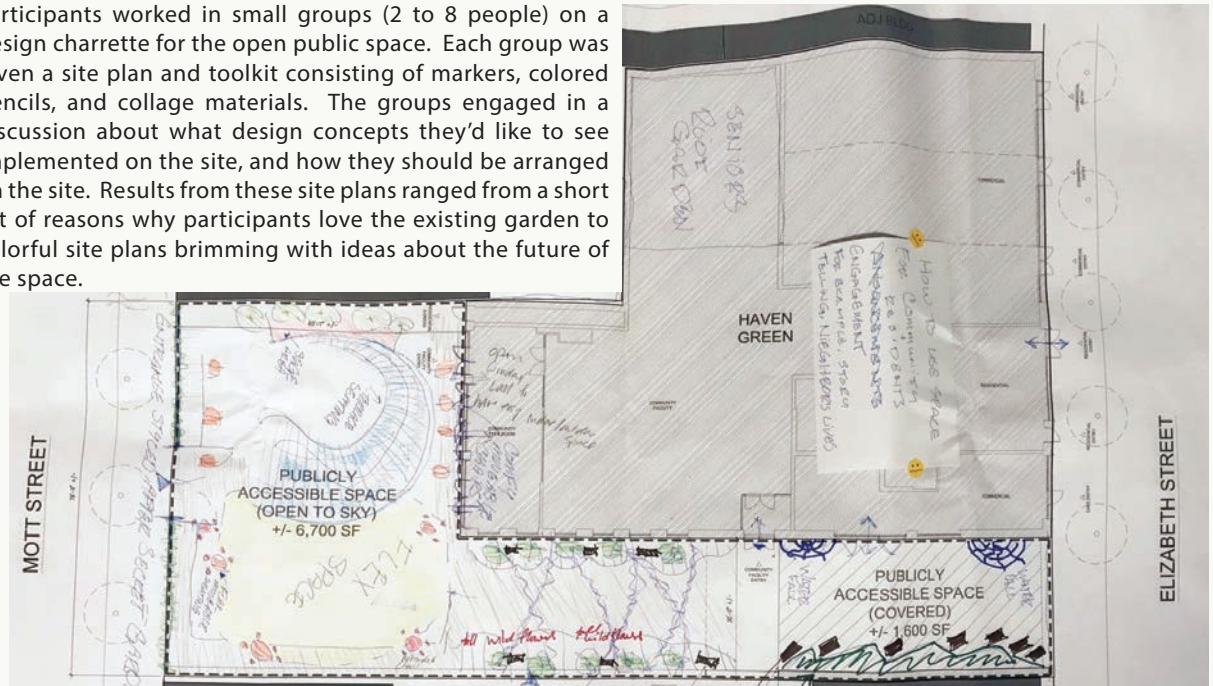
49% are members of non-profit community groups.





# DESIGN CHARETTES

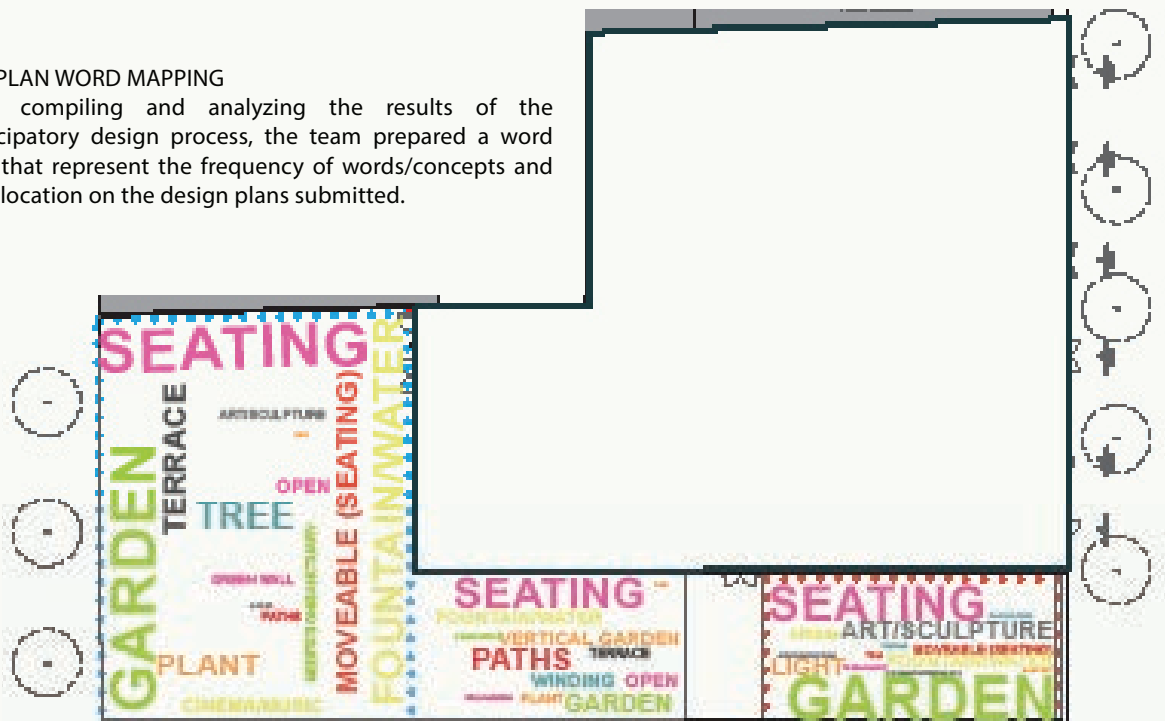
Participants worked in small groups (2 to 8 people) on a design charrette for the open public space. Each group was given a site plan and toolkit consisting of markers, colored pencils, and collage materials. The groups engaged in a discussion about what design concepts they'd like to see implemented on the site, and how they should be arranged on the site. Results from these site plans ranged from a short list of reasons why participants love the existing garden to colorful site plans brimming with ideas about the future of the space.



Above: Raw data of design session 1, Table 7: Ideas include terraced seating, flexible open space, wall planting, and an entrance on Mott Street styled after 'secret garden'.

## SITE PLAN WORD MAPPING

After compiling and analyzing the results of the participatory design process, the team prepared a word map that represent the frequency of words/concepts and their location on the design plans submitted.



Above: Word map shows frequency and location on the site of words/concepts obtained from community input.



# PARTICIPANT STORIES

Storytelling is a powerful tool for conveying essential ideas and feelings that can't be captured in statistics or design exercises. Participants were asked: "Do you have a personal memory or story about the garden that talks about what the space means to you? If you haven't used the garden, do you have a memory of another open space you can share?" Following are a sampling of the stories we heard:

*"I like coming to this garden when taking a break from work. It's a nice place to collect my thoughts."*

*"I use the garden to get away from the noise and chaos of NYC. I send tourists there."*

*"Yes - fell in love there."*

*"Yesterday I found a sitting place to read"*

*"I noticed the space since I first moved to NYC 20 years ago and lived nearby. I longingly looked through the fence. It was such a treasure to behold when it opened to the public and has become even more so. The plantings are very inspiring. It's a magical space. Kudos to those who have created such community around the garden as well. Your (ESG) events are impressive and an inspiration to those of us who belong to other gardens."*

*"I had left my job as a teacher and I was back looking for a job as an informal Environmental Educator. A former colleague said that Elizabeth Street Garden was looking for help to do environmental education with a neighborhood school, so I volunteered and got my hands back in the soil at the garden. It was good for me to get back into the work, and great for the students to experience the sights, sounds, smells and feel of the garden away from their overly urbanized environment."*



# PARTICIPANT STORIES

*"Each and every neighborhood in NYC should be open to caring for our elderly, because, as a city, we collectively should be responsible for our most vulnerable."*

*"Discovery, chance encounters, and opportunities for genuine engagement create memorable public spaces."*

*"I found a seat secluded from the rest - I put my feet up and read a book and had a snack - I could hear only wind chimes in the trees and a soft murmur of other visitors"*

*"No personal memory but I want to reiterate my support for this project. The neighborhood (and the city) need affordable housing for seniors. Thank you for your commitment to housing and open space."*

*"I came to New York 3.5 years ago alone and have found a family in the people who strive to protect the garden. I can meet people of different ages, backgrounds, ambitions and religions and work with them to build a sustainable community project."*

*"Just pleasant sitting there."*