

Community Voices  
and the Future of the

Seward  
Park  
Urban  
Renewal  
Area



Photograph: Yori Yanover

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The active participation of more than 500 local residents, members of community organizations, and business owners made the *SPURA Matters* initiative possible. While the list is too long to print here, GOLES would like to warmly thank all the people who took the survey questionnaire, participated in a public workshop, and who were interviewed as part of the oral history project.

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# Community Voices and the Future of the

## Seward Park Urban Renewal Area

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SPURA Matters is a yearlong initiative facilitated by several non-profit community organizations that wished to renew a community conversation about the redevelopment of the long-vacant Seward Park Urban Renewal Area (SPURA) site on the Lower East Side. Over several months in late 2008 and early 2009 and through different outreach methods, the initiative consulted with local stakeholders to engage them in a dialogue about community needs and potential uses for the site. After decades of controversial development proposals that never went anywhere, SPURA Matters strove to get local stakeholders talking about how the site could be developed in a way that benefits the surrounding community. The ultimate goal of the initiative is to help start a community-driven process to put the site back into a broadly productive use.

This report, prepared by the Pratt Center for Community Development, documents the findings from the SPURA Matters community engagement process and is intended to be used as a tool for local stakeholders to use in advocacy efforts to redevelop the SPURA site. Manhattan Community Board 3 is currently in the process of elaborating a set of principles for redevelopment, and the organizations that are part of SPURA Matters hope that this report can help guide that process.

Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES) spearheaded this initiative, but over the course of the community engagement process, the organizations listed below were active participants:

*Ana Luisa Garcia Community Center  
Center for Urban Pedagogy  
CHARAS-Tu Casa Sound Studio  
City Lore  
Cooper Square Committee  
Cooper Square Mutual Housing Association  
CAAHV  
East Village Community Coalition  
Grand Street Settlement  
Hester Street Settlement  
Immigrant Social Services*

*Indochina Sino-American Community Center  
Jews for Racial and Economic Justice  
Lower East Side Business Improvement District  
Lower East Side People's Mutual Housing Association  
Lower East Side Tenement Museum  
St. Mary's Church  
Two Bridges Neighborhood Council  
University Settlement  
Urban Justice Center*

Through public visioning workshops, a survey questionnaire, and an oral history project, the organizations that were part of SPURA Matters garnered the participation of local residents, business owners, and members of community organizations to talk about the future of the SPURA. From October 2008 to April 2009, over 250 people attended six public workshops, and over 300 people responded to a survey questionnaire.

Several major themes emerged from the public process facilitated by SPURA Matters:

## Housing for Low and Moderate-Income Households

Across the board, housing for low and moderate-income households was the most popularly cited type of development that survey respondents and workshop participants would like to see on the SPURA site. Many reasons were given for the need to create this type of housing: to counter-balance the extreme gentrification that has been occurring in the area; so that immigrants and other low and moderate-income households could remain in the neighborhood; and so that their children and grandchildren could continue to live where they grew up.

While some workshop participants specifically mentioned that they do not favor any level of market-rate housing, a very significant amount of people (74% of survey respondents) who favor affordable housing indicated that they can support the creation of market-rate housing on the site as well if it can help offset its costs. Some participants preferred mixed-income housing on its own perceived merits (e.g., that is not ideal to concentrate people of similar economic backgrounds and that having households with a range of incomes is a good way to create a healthy community).

## Mixed-Use Development

While housing (and affordable housing in particular) was a top goal for many stakeholders, there was no shortage of non-housing ideas for developing the SPURA site. The people who participated in the SPURA Matters outreach activities

(the survey and the workshops) seem to appreciate that a mix of uses helps create a thriving, healthy neighborhood, so they suggested a broad range of things—from movie theaters to retail stores to open space—that could complement housing on the site.

## Community Facilities

Participants discussed the need to create community services and facilities of all types as part of new development. Many of them spoke of essential services such as day care that have been closing down in the Lower East Side. Others spoke of a strong need for seniors and young people to have access to recreational, cultural and educational activities.

## Jobs for Local Residents

Stakeholders expressed that the creation of jobs for local residents is of major importance. Even before the current economic downturn, the number of jobs that were available to people of limited educational backgrounds was declining significantly. But now, jobs of all types are harder to find. As such, people want local residents to be able to benefit from the new jobs—both construction and post-construction—that the development of SPURA would generate.

The SPURA Matters initiative has shown that there is a strong local appetite for putting the SPURA site back into a use that includes housing as a large component. Many participants have expressed a strong desire for creating affordable housing, even if it requires the development of some level of market-rate housing to make it happen. In addition to housing, participants would also like to see community facilities and stores, as well as jobs, created from redeveloping the SPURA site.

# INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

## The Seward Park Urban Renewal Site

It has been over 40 years since the City of New York took ownership of a large piece of land in the Lower East Side known as the Seward Park Urban Renewal Area, or SPURA. Over the decades, there has been a series of proposals for how to redevelop the area, but a vast majority of the site remains vacant today (apart from its use as a parking lot). In addition to problems related to the federal urban renewal program, local controversy over what to develop there has prevented any development from actually taking place.

The actions of private property owners have been largely responsible for the dramatic changes in the built and social character of the Lower East Side, but the SPURA site is still in public hands as one of the largest tracks of vacant city-owned land in Manhattan. This presents a real opportunity to do something on the site that would be of benefit to a broad range of stakeholders, including residents, property owners, business owners, and public and private institutions.



## SPURA Matters Initiative

In 2008, three organizations teamed up to kick off the *SPURA Matters* initiative to get New Yorkers talking about SPURA's past, present, and future: Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES), City Lore, and the Pratt Center for Community Development. They created an interactive tour of the Seward Park neighborhood, facilitated several public discussion sessions, and conducted an extensive oral history project. All of these efforts were made possible by the fact that a diverse, long list of community-based organizations not only endorsed the spirit of *SPURA Matters* but made important contributions to its activities. These organizations are:



- o *Ana Luisa Garcia Community Center*
- o *Center for Urban Pedagogy*
- o *CHARAS-Tu Casa Sound Studio*
- o *Cooper Square Committee*
- o *Cooper Square Mutual Housing Association*
- o *CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities*
- o *East Village Community Coalition*
- o *Grand Street Settlement*
- o *Hester Street Collaborative*
- o *Immigrant Social Services*
- o *Indochina Sino-American Community Center*
- o *Jews for Racial and Economic Justice*
- o *Lower East Side Business Improvement District*
- o *Lower East Side People's Mutual Housing Association*
- o *Lower East Side Tenement Museum*
- o *St. Mary's Church*
- o *Two Bridges Neighborhood Council*
- o *University Settlement*
- o *Urban Justice Center*

## Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to document a series of activities and outreach efforts that several community organizations undertook to better understand the community's interest in seeing development take place on the SPURA site. It will also describe common ideas that were aired among stakeholders regarding the types of development they desire for the future. This document in no way represents a "community plan" for the site. It does, however, represent a strong consensus to do something with the site that could be beneficial to broad segments of the Lower East Side community.

# PUBLIC OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

## Principles

Even by New York City standards, the Lower East Side is an ethnically, racially, and socio-economically eclectic neighborhood. We therefore strove to reflect this diversity when we did outreach for the various activities that are part of the *SPURA Matters* initiative. That being said, we also wanted to make a special effort to ensure that segments of the community whose voices are often marginalized – the elderly, working class people, recent immigrants, etc. – were given the opportunity to express their opinions on the future of the SPURA site. As such, we targeted low-income stakeholders and people who have lived on the LES for a long time, many of whom make up the constituencies of the sponsoring organizations for *SPURA Matters*. A large number of these people have been negatively affected by the recent changes occurring on the Lower East Side, particularly those fueled by the recent real estate boom. Finally, through residential door-knocking and working with the Lower East Side Business Improvement District, we made concerted efforts to reach out to people who live and work near the SPURA site, since they would likely be affected by future development there.

## Feedback Tools

In order to reach a broad range of community stakeholders, we engaged in several different methods of collecting feedback about what people desire for the future of the SPURA site. In acknowledgement of the community's diversity, we thought it was appropriate to supplement public workshops with other approaches

for gathering community feedback since we recognized that not all interested parties would be able to attend a public workshop in the evening. The results of the various forms of feedback are presented later in this report.

### >Public workshops

The participating organizations hosted a series of public workshops that were open to all interested stakeholders. The workshops opened with two historians (Marci Reaven of City Lore and Hilary Botein of CUNY) making a presentation on the history of housing developments in the Lower East Side. The second portion was devoted to participatory exercises designed to let people voice their opinions about how the neighborhood is today and how it could be in the future if the SPURA site is developed. After using large maps to encourage people to think about places in the community that are important to them (as well as places and things that could use improvement), workshop participants played a simple voting game to register their priorities for future development. It is important to note that the participatory exercises were designed so that they could be relevant to a broad diversity of people with different levels of education and different levels of familiarity with real estate development. As such, we tried to stay away from complex, insider language and attempted to orient the discussion about community development more towards the general than the specific.

In order to encourage a broad range of participants, these workshops were held at various locations throughout the neighborhoods sur-

rounding the SPURA site. Translators and translation equipment was available for speakers of Cantonese/Mandarin and Spanish at four of the sessions. Over 250 people attended the public workshops.

*October 22, 2008  
University Settlement*

*November 1, 2008  
St. Mary's Church*

*November 12, 2008  
Grand Street Settlement*

*November 22, 2008  
Peoples Mutual Housing Association of New York*

*March 25, 2009  
Immigrant Social Services*

*March 31, 2009  
St. Teresa's Church*

Because of the importance of hearing from the Grand Street Co-op residential community – major stakeholders in the future of SPURA – the *SPURA Matters* initiative made concerted efforts to reach out to them. Volunteers from Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ) engaged in a year-long door-knocking process in many of those buildings. Through one-on-one discussions about how recent development is affecting the local neighborhood, these volunteers engaged householders in the question of what should be developed at the SPURA site. 175 of them expressed some degree of interest in seeing low and mixed-income housing on the site, and they signed up to learn more

about advocating for such a possibility.

JFREJ volunteers also held a small workshop (which was similar in format to the larger ones) on a Sunday last April for people who were interested in further discussions around what should be developed at the site.

### **>Survey questionnaire**

We designed a short survey and disseminated it at various locations throughout the Lower East Side (and also created an online version of it). Survey questionnaires were distributed throughout the community by several methods, including door-knocking in large residential buildings near the site (e.g., the Grand Street Co-ops and NYCHA's Seward Park Extension development) and canvassing public places such as parks, from as far north as Tompkins Square Park and as far south as the Brooklyn Bridge.

Like the exercise that was done at the public workshops, the survey's straightforward questions were written to gauge what land uses people want to be developed on the site (i.e., commercial, residential, community facilities). Some of the questions were written to see if people were willing to make trade-offs in order to ensure that some of their highest priorities were met (i.e., "cross-subsidizing" affordable units with market-rate units, accepting bigger buildings in exchange for more affordable units). Ultimately, 308 valid surveys were collected; Pratt analyzed the responses, and the results are presented in the next section of this report.

### >Oral history project

GOLES also engaged community members in an oral history project whereby interested individuals were interviewed at length about the past, current state, and future of the Lower East Side. We subsequently reviewed many of the interview transcripts and extracted the parts that were relevant to SPURA. Recurring themes from these interviews are described in the next section of this report.

### Outreach Methods

Because of the high importance that *SPURA Matters* placed on hearing from a wide array of community members, the participating organizations undertook various outreach methods and made a good faith effort to include all types of stakeholders in the public workshops and as survey respondents. Despite limited resources, many hours

and serious efforts were put into getting as many people as possible to participate in the public workshops or fill out a survey.

GOLES spearheaded the outreach activities and enlisted help from other well-established local community-based organizations who could engage their own bases of interest. For example, University Settlement's history of working with the area's Chinese families helped ensure that several members of this community turned out to the public workshop held there. Cabrini Immigrant Services and Two Bridges Neighborhood Council also encouraged their largely Chinese constituents to participate by filling out the survey. Jews for Racial and Economic Justice made repeated concerted efforts, particularly through door-knocking, to encourage residents of the co-op buildings south of the SPURA site to attend public workshops or fill out surveys.



Photo Credit: GOLES

# WHAT WE HEARD

## Public Workshops

The public workshops gave participants a chance to sit together in tables of eight to ten people and have informal discussions about what they like and dislike about the neighborhood today and how the SPURA site could be developed to benefit various stakeholders from the surrounding area. We assigned one volunteer facilitator to each table to guide the discussion and ensure that all voices were heard. The workshops yielded useful information about what a cross-section of stakeholders want for the future of SPURA and the Lower East Side in general, but the process itself was also valuable. Getting people together to talk about development can be a contentious undertaking regardless of the neighborhood, but these public workshops demonstrated that people in the Lower East Side are eager to come together and respectfully voice a multitude of opinions about what the area's future should look like.

### *>What people value about the neighborhood*

While it is easy to get people to talk about how the neighborhood is changing in a way that they don't like, a lot of people articulate how much the neighborhood still means to them. People like many aspects of the neighborhood, but some of the elements that people value the most are community institutions like schools and places of worship. Other characteristics that people like about the Lower East Side are its diversity, vitality, and liveliness.

### *>What people would want to see changed*

A few themes emerged during the discussion about what people do not like about the neighborhood. The recently erected "ugly" residential buildings were often maligned, and an over saturation of bars was frequently mentioned. People also spoke of the ill effects of gentrification and the recent overheated real estate market: decreasing affordability that forces residents and their institutions out. Several people spoke of the disappearance of small, independent retail stores (as well as a movie theater close to the SPURA site), too.

### >What people want for the SPURA site

After the informal discussion of likes and dislikes, individuals at each table were asked to imagine how they would distribute a finite set of financial resources towards the development of the SPURA site. In order to facilitate this exercise, a list of potential development “types” was presented, but people were given the chance to add to the list if they felt something was missing.

In total, participants of the first four public workshops—where attendance was the greatest— distributed their hypothetical budget accordingly:

578	Housing that's affordable to low and moderate-income households
324	Community facilities such as schools, day care, and community centers
289	Open space for recreation and relaxation
281	“Green” buildings are on the site
239	A mixture of housing that's affordable to a variety of income levels
215	Jobs that are created from development go to local residents
159	Larger businesses such as supermarkets and movie theaters
154	Smaller, neighborhood-serving businesses like small grocery and hardware stores
62	New space for retail and other commercial activities is available for local entrepreneurs
23	Market-rate housing (without subsidy)

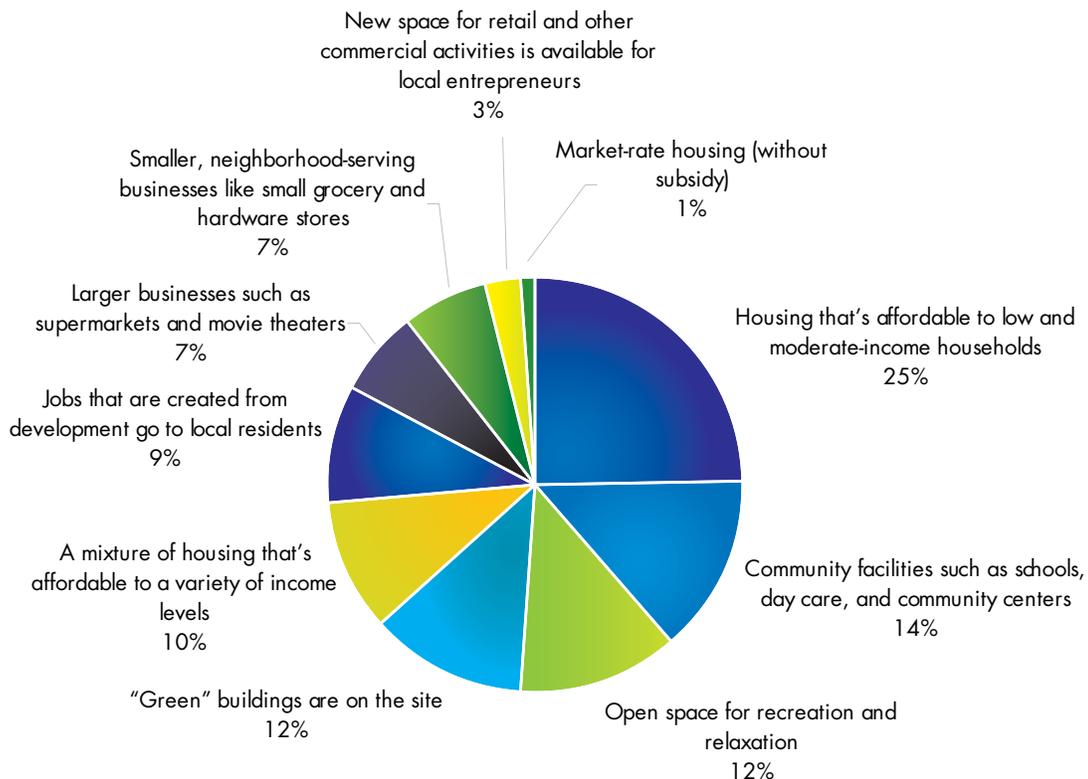




Photo Credit: GOLES

Housing for low and moderate-income households was the clear priority of workshop participants, but many other types of development are also desired. People want to see mixed-use development on the SPURA site that includes opportunities for things like community facilities and open space but they also want to see small and large businesses there.

In their small group discussions, workshop participants were encouraged to elaborate on and

give more specificity to these broad development types. For example, an array of community facilities was suggested: day care centers, performance spaces, after-school activities, senior centers, and health centers. Some people cited the need for a good supermarket to serve people living on the blocks surrounding the SPURA site. Other business types that were mentioned were a department store and a movie theater. Finally, others mentioned the need to preserve the existing street network and streetscape to ensure that there is an active street life with small shops, etc.

## Survey

We used a short survey questionnaire as an outreach tool so we could engage people who would not be interested in attending a public workshop in a manner that consumed relatively little time. The surveys were available in English, Spanish, and Chinese (the online version was only available in English, and 22 respondents completed it).

In total, we collected 308 valid surveys. A few of the questions on the survey did not register this many responses, however, because some respondents did not answer all of the questions. In other words, the sample size for these questions is considerably smaller. Questions with less than 250 respondents are marked with an asterisk. (Two of the survey's questions, Q1 and Q5, could not be processed because the rate of response was too low to merit any analysis. In these questions, people were asked to rank different types of development that they wanted to see on the site, but the question was frequently misunderstood, with respondents picking one option instead.)

The survey questions are presented below, exactly as they were written on the questionnaire. A narrative is interspersed throughout the questions to provide brief interpretations of the survey results.

### >Housing

*If housing gets built on the site, what kind should it be? (Q2)*

60%	Low to moderate-income housing
8%	Market-rate housing
32%	A mixture of both

*If affordable housing is a concern of yours, would you be willing to accept a certain portion of market-rate units as well as affordable units? (This could help subsidize affordable, or below market-rate, units.) Check one: (Q3)*

74%	Yes
18%	No
8%	Affordable housing is not a concern of mine

There is a strong preference for housing that is affordable to households in the “low” to “moderate” income range. However, this preference is not absolute: an overwhelming amount of people – almost 75% – said that including market-rate units would be a suitable way to pay for the “affordable” units. The survey questions were not designed to ask people what proportion of market-rate and affordable units there should be, but the responses demonstrate the community’s acknowledgement of the importance of trade-offs.

Should housing on the site be rental, ownership, or both? Check one: (Q4)

- 26% Rentals
- 13% Ownership (like co-ops or condos)
- 61% A mixture of both

While a quarter of respondents would like to see rental units built on the site, well over half of them would prefer a mix of rental and ownership units. This is possibly a reflection of the neighborhood’s diversity (and thus, a range of housing needs) and of its long history as a rental community.

### >Building Size

Which of the following best describes how big new buildings on the site should be? (Q6)

- 35% The size doesn’t matter
- 26% Similar to the size of the Seward Park Co-ops (about 20 stories)
- 39% Similar to the scale of most tenement buildings (about four to six stories)

A significant portion of people, one-third, said that the size of new buildings doesn’t matter to them. Of the people who cared about building size, about 40% said they should be on the scale of the Seward Park Co-ops at about 20 stories, and 60% said they should be closer to the size of a typical tenement building at about four to six stories.

How willing would you be to increase the size of development on the site if it were accompanied by any of the following: (Q7)

Yes	No	It depends	
82%	9%	9%	Additional community services *
76%	14%	10%	Low-income housing
76%	12%	12%	Moderate-income housing *
85%	6%	9%	Well-paying jobs for local residents *
76%	11%	14%	More space for small business growth *
55%	28%	17%	An attractive design for new buildings *
75%	13%	12%	Preservation of rent-regulated housing units *

The responses to the conceptual question about the trade-off between building size and various community benefits again point to people’s willingness to accept some level of compromise to ensure that stakeholder needs are met. Things like job creation, community services, and space for small businesses were all deemed valuable enough to accept in exchange for larger building size. The importance of jobs being created from development on the SPURA site was echoed in a subsequent question in which the creation of construction jobs was considered “very important” by almost 80% of survey respondents.

\* Questions with less than 250 respondents

New jobs that are created from development (construction) go to local residents

79%	Very important
15%	Somewhat important
6%	Not important

New space for retail and other commercial activities is made available for local entrepreneurs \*

53%	Very important
33%	Somewhat important
14%	Not important

New buildings are built "green" \*

70%	Very important
19%	Somewhat important
11%	Not important

Just over half of respondents reported that it would be very important to create new space for retail and other commercial activities in future development at SPURA. About a third said it would be "somewhat" important. Only 13.6% said it wouldn't be important.

Finally, the growing popularization of the concept of "sustainability" and green development is reflected in these survey results: about 70% of people said that it was very important that the new buildings that are designed for the SPURA site are "green."

Please feel free to add anything else here that is important to you (Q9) (an open question)

Only about 50 people responded to it, but the answers to this open-ended question were fairly diverse. Many of the comments repeated or elaborated on the themes covered in the survey: there were several comments that favored housing for low-income families, the need for community facilities for youth and seniors, and the desire to create green spaces. Other responses introduced new ideas, some of them making specific suggestions about what should be on the SPURA site (e.g., a dog park, a health clinic, community gardens, parking for shoppers of local businesses). People shared broader suggestions and ideas about how the SPURA site should be redeveloped, too:

*"The SPURA area should result in a neighborhood."*

*"This property should act as an Arc De Triomphe that celebrates the historic Lower East Side and the passage to Brooklyn. Growth, prosperity and a celebration of the 21st Century would be fitting and proper."*

*"It's important that whatever is done with the space benefits the entire community and not just a small portion of it."*

\* Questions with less than 250 respondents

>Demographics of survey respondents:

<i>How old are you? (Q10)</i>	
Under 18	2%
18 to 24	5%
25 to 34	19%
34 to 64	60%
64 or older	14%
<i>What best describes your race and/or ethnic background? (Q11)</i>	
Latino/Hispanic	27%
African-American	7%
Asian-American	30%
White	30%
Other	6%

<i>Please indicate your household's annual income: (Q12)</i>	
Less than \$25,000	44%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	34%
\$50,000 to \$100,000	14%
More than \$100,000	8%
<i>How long have you lived in the LES? (Q13)</i>	
Less than five years	17%
5 to 10 years	18%
11 to 20 years	25%
21 years or more	40%

- The people who completed the survey largely represent the working age population: almost 80% of the respondents are between the age of 25 and 64.
- The vast majority of survey respondents are split three ways between Latinos, Whites, and Asians. Only 6.5% of respondents identified as African American.
- Survey respondents tend to be part of working class households: almost 80% of respondents live in households that make up to \$50,000.
- A majority of the respondents are long-time Lower East Siders: almost 65% have lived there for over a decade, and 40% have lived there for two decades or more.

Where do you live? (You don't have to give your exact address, just the cross streets.) (Q14)



*This map shows where the survey respondents live, by indicating the intersection that is closest to their home.*

## Oral Histories

GOLES created the Seward Park Oral History Project as part of *SPURA Matters* as one method for getting people's voices about the Lower East Side and the SPURA site heard. The lead interviewer, ethno-linguist Kara Becker, conducted over 100 hour-long interviews with community residents and asked them a series of questions about growing up and living in the ever-changing neighborhood.

Overall, the interviewees expressed deep enthusiasm for the Lower East Side and its former and current residents and institutions. They spoke passionately about how important a place it has been in their personal development and how they became active in various community issues, and they addressed their hopes and desires for its future.

For the purpose of this report, we reviewed almost one-quarter of the lengthy interview transcripts, paying particular attention to the sections that focused on the Seward Park site. The lead interviewer asked people specific questions about what they knew about the urban renewal site and its history as well as what their personal vision for developing the site would be. Several themes about the future of SPURA emerged from these interviews, and they are described in more detail below.

### >Affordable and mixed-income housing

Of the 25 oral histories that we reviewed for SPURA-related commentary, the desire to develop affordable housing was the most dominant theme. Several interviewees specifically mentioned that at least some portion of new housing units should be reserved for long-standing residents of the area and their children; they saw this as a way to help alleviate the effects that gentrification is having on the Lower East Side. A few people were concerned about the potential ghettoization of very poor people and mentioned that new housing should not solely be for very low-income households, but more reported that preference should be given to low-income households who have a strong need for housing. The majority of those interviewed said that a mix of low, moderate and middle-income housing would be highly desirable.

### >Scale of new buildings

Several people indicated that the size and density of new development was important to them. While some said that they wanted to see low-rise affordable housing and expressed concern that tall buildings would obstruct views, others mentioned that they would be more willing to accept at least some taller and/or bulkier buildings if it meant that low and moderate-income units could be developed. A couple of people even mentioned that building height and size were not an issue for them.

### >Mixed-use development

While it was clearly the development type that was discussed most often, housing was not the only thing that the interviewees want for the future of the SPURA site. Most of the people

whose interviews we studied see the large site as an opportunity to create what would essentially be a micro-neighborhood within the context of the surrounding existing neighborhood. As such, they said that open/green space, community centers, and businesses would be appropriate and desirable complements to housing on the site. There was no clear consensus on what types of businesses would be ideal: some want small, local businesses to stimulate the local economy; one person mentioned that “more upscale” retail would be needed; and a couple of people mentioned the need for food-related retail such as a supermarket. While one person supports the idea of a Home Depot or a Costco on the site, another specifically mentioned opposing big box stores. At least one person cited that job generation would be a positive outcome of putting businesses on the site.

### >Diversity and inclusiveness

When talking about the character of the Lower East Side, many of the interviewees cited its long history as a culturally and ethnically diverse area. Not only was this mentioned several times, but it was clearly something that is highly valued and that people want to continue into the future. This is reflected in the fact that many people said that development on the SPURA site should be done in a way so as to attract a diverse population and that it should benefit the entire community, not just certain groups. The desire for diversity and inclusiveness was not limited to housing. It was particularly discussed in terms of building community spaces and multi-cultural community centers. In fact, one woman said that there should be no religious institutions on the site because it would by definition exclude some groups of people.

# CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

## Summary of Feedback

The local stakeholders that participated in the *SPURA Matters* initiative have many ideas for how the SPURA site could be redeveloped in a way that is beneficial to the community. While the most popular one seems to be creating housing for working-class and moderate-income households, many people favor mixed-income housing on the site. In addition to residential development, space for community activities and businesses is also desired. Finally, people want to see development generate jobs for local residents.

Obviously, not every participant agreed with this summary. There were dissenting opinions voiced in the surveys and public workshops, i.e., that there should be no affordable housing built because “there’s too much already” on the Lower East Side. However, there was broad agreement that some type of mixed-use development that includes a component of housing for low and moderate-income households should guide planning for the site.

## Next Steps

The community engagement process that is documented in this report is the first step in a renewed public conversation about redeveloping the SPURA site. Partially because of the *SPURA Matters* initiative, Community Board 3 is now engaged in an active planning process for the site that has included discussions with the relevant city agencies (e.g., the Economic Development Corporation and the Department of Housing Preservation and Development). The Board is working to finalize a set of planning principles for the site by the end of 2009, in order to ensure that a future city-issued RFP is in line with community goals for its redevelopment. Concurrently, the community groups who collaborated on the *SPURA Matters* initiative are organizing a campaign to ensure that the planning process for the site is open, transparent, fair, and ultimately results in something that can benefit the community.

