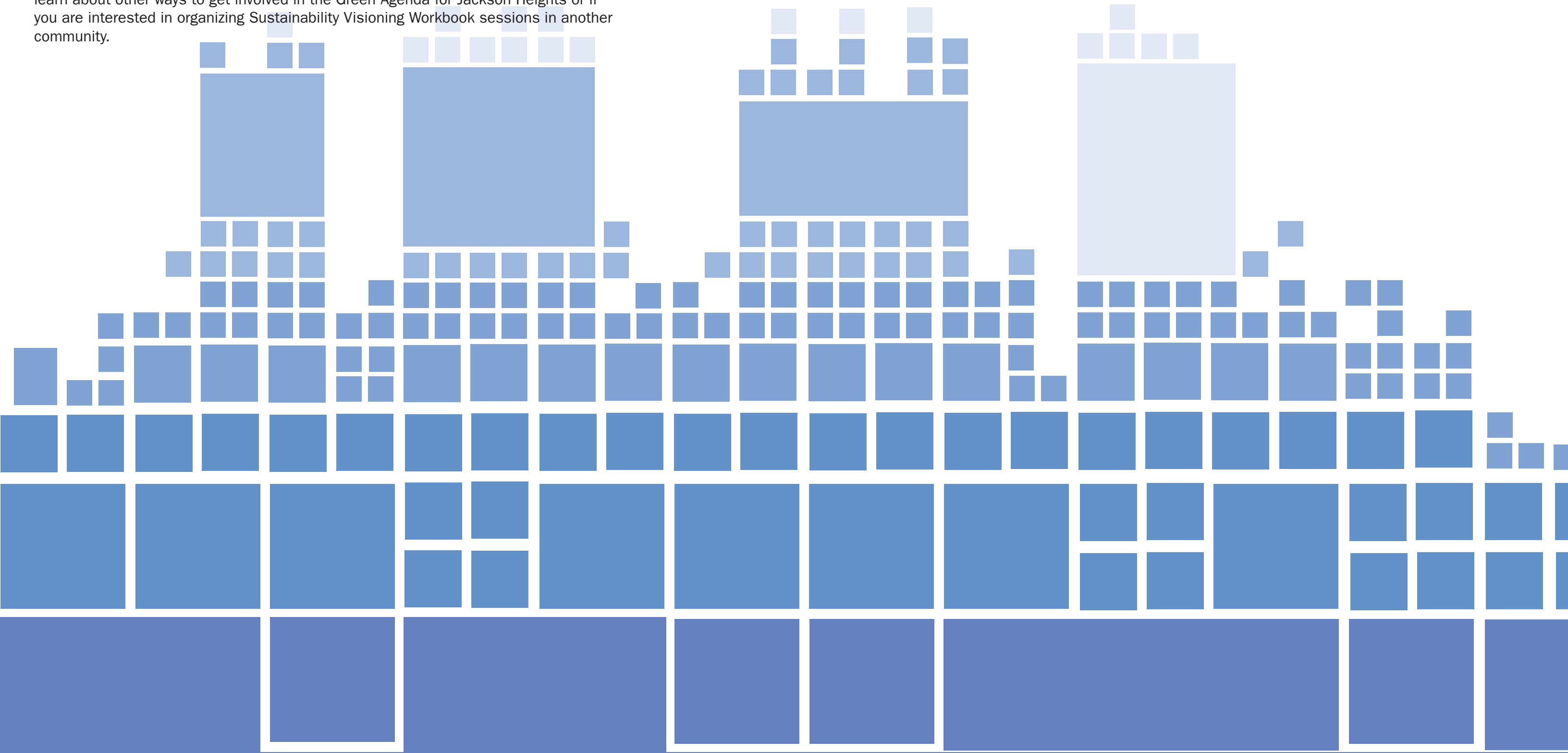
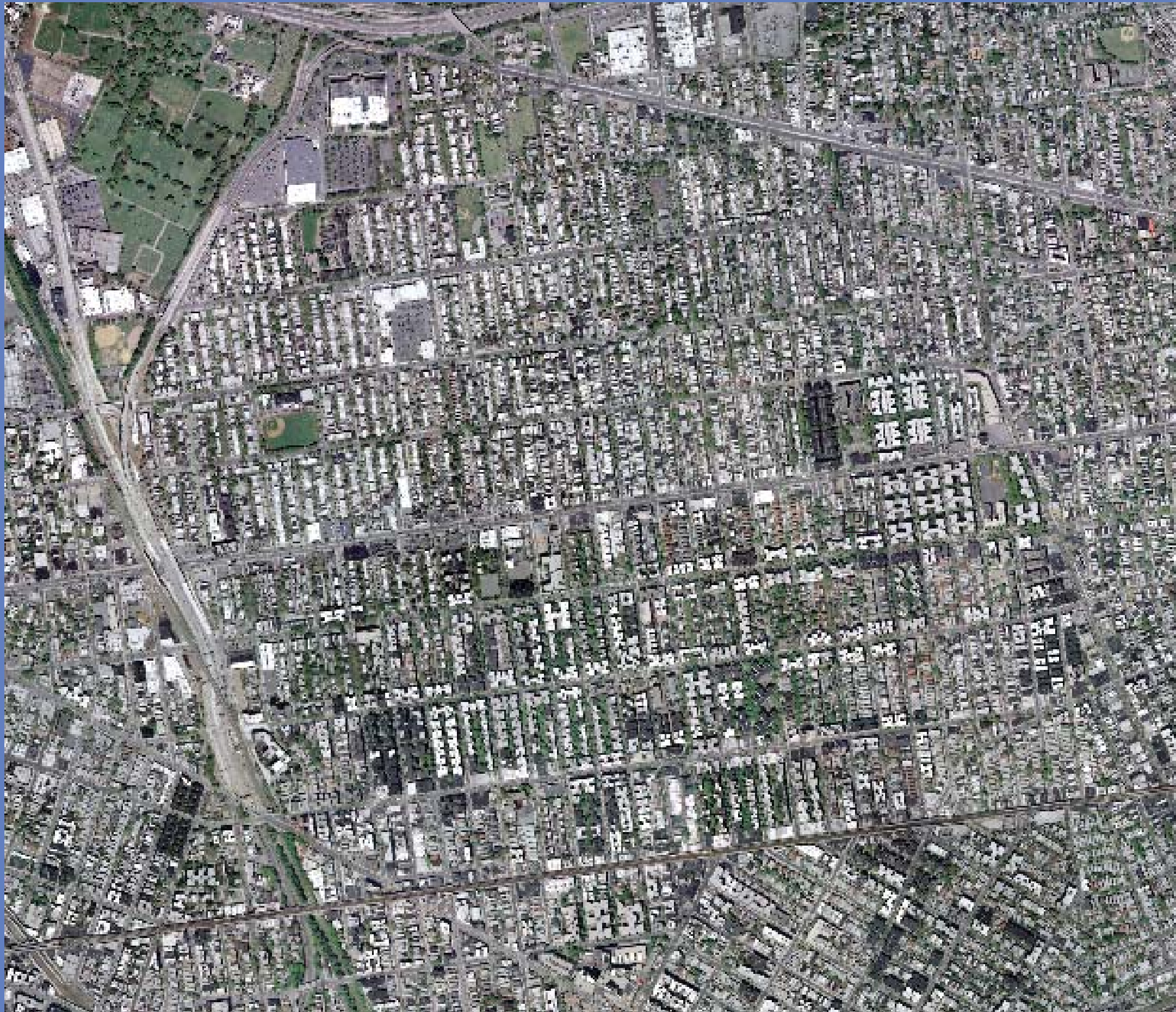


Visioning Workbooks were distributed and hosted in Jackson Heights from November 2009 to March 2010. Please contact Michael Epp at mepp@pratt.edu if you'd like to learn about other ways to get involved in the Green Agenda for Jackson Heights or if you are interested in organizing Sustainability Visioning Workbook sessions in another community.



GREEN AGENDA for JACKSON HEIGHTS

Sustainability Visioning Workbook



A partnership of:

Queens Community House
Contact: Anna Dioguardi
Phone: 718-898-7461 ext. 25
Email: adioguardi@queenscommunityhouse.org

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Contact: Michael Epp*
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Jackson Heights Beautification /
Friends of Travers Park
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*If you have any questions about the contents of this workbook or the activities presented, please contact Michael Epp.



Friends of
Travers Park

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ACTIVITY TYPE TIME REQUIREMENT



5-10min



30-40min



25-30min



35- 40min



25- 35min

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WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

WHAT CAN I DO?



What is the Green Agenda?

November 2009

Not only is Jackson Heights New York City's most diverse neighborhood, it is also one of the most burdened by noise pollution, traffic and poor access to park space. The Jackson Heights Green Agenda is a new collaboration between Queens Community House, Friends of Travers Park and the Pratt Center for Community Development, bringing together residents of Jackson Heights to plan an "environmental blueprint" for the neighborhood to address these issues and others.

The Jackson Heights Green Agenda will engage the community in arriving at a shared understanding of the community's environmental, social, and economic priorities. Completing this workbook is one way community organizations, neighbors, school groups, church groups, other groups and individuals can come to agreement on ways the neighborhood's environment can be improved, guiding future decisions about development in Jackson Heights.

We hope that hosting a group discussion using this workbook will get your group thinking both about issues in Jackson Heights and the larger global environmental challenges our generation faces. All of the input you provide will be used in preparing the final Green Agenda in the months to come, and will be featured in upcoming community-wide visioning sessions that will create a blueprint for improving the Jackson Heights environment.

Thank you for your interest in the Jackson Heights Green Agenda and for hosting a workshop. We hope you'll join us in the coming months to see your hard work displayed and to see the ideas other people in the community have come up with.

Sincerely,

The Green Agenda Team

Using this Workbook

Before Beginning

The workbook is designed to be flexible. How you use it will vary depending on the time you have available, and the skills and interests of your group. Completing all the activities in this workbook as a group takes around two and a half hours, but your group doesn't have to complete all the activities - just make sure your group finishes the activities marked 'REQUIRED'.

As a facilitator, or as a group, take a moment to look over all of the activities and decide which ones you will complete with your group. There are three icons that show whether an activity is discussion based, visual, or involves writing.



What size group?

If your group has more than ten people, you may want to consider completing multiple workbooks.

Does the workbook have to be completed in English?

The workbook can be conducted in English, Spanish or Bengali and the written activities can be submitted in English, Spanish or Bengali. If your primary language is not one of these three, please have someone in your group who is multi-lingual translate the text as you are working.

Questions?

Contact Michael Epp at the Pratt Center for Community Development. 718-636-3486 ext 6466. mepp@pratt.edu.

After you finish the Workbook:

When you are finished with your workbook, make sure you fill out the sign-in sheet on page 3 and let us know what your group thought of the workbook on page 19.

You can drop your completed workbook off at:

Queens Community House
74-09 37th Avenue, Suite 400

or mail them to the address below:

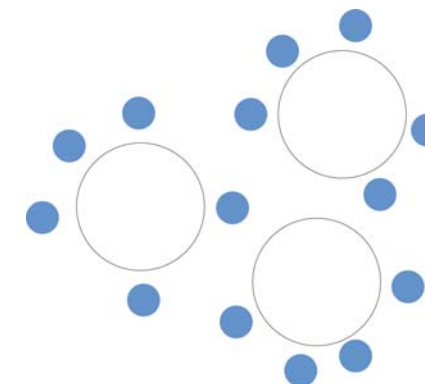
Anna Dioguardi
Director of Community Organizing and Development
Queens Community House
74-09 37th Avenue, Suite 400
Jackson Heights, NY 11372
Tel. 718-898-7461 Ext. 25
Fax. 718-898-2571



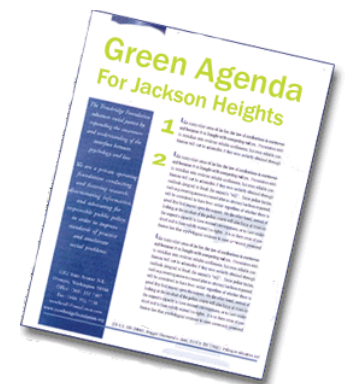
LAUNCH
NOVEMBER 7, 2009



WORKBOOK
NOVEMBER - JANUARY 2010



VISION SESSIONS
FEBRUARY - MARCH 2010



GREEN AGENDA
MAY 2010

What is Sustainability?

The drastic loss of biodiversity and degradation of our soils, air, and water have emphasized protection of the natural environment as a key to sustainability, but sustainability is not only about the natural environment. A sustainable community is also both a place that we want to live in and that we want our children and grandchildren to live in. The most commonly used definition of sustainability was proposed at the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). According to the WCED, sustainability is:

“...the process of meeting the needs of the current generation while preserving the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”¹

To do this, we have to make our communities and homes healthy, just, prosperous, and happy, without overstepping our ecological boundaries. Every community will define sustainability differently, but a community cannot be sustainable if its residents’ basic needs are not met. Ensuring that everyone has access to safe homes and workplaces, a stable livelihood, healthy food, and an environment free of toxins and pollutants lays the groundwork for a more sustainable future.

Note to the Facilitator:

To get your group thinking about environmental issues and sustainability, you may want to start by asking participants:

“In your own home, what kinds of challenges are you dealing with?”

Many of your group’s responses may directly relate to sustainability. Help participants make the connections that link their personal issues with global environmental problems.



Sometimes ‘big picture’ environmental issues can seem distant, but people do feel the impacts in their own lives. For example, asthma, household toxics and unsafe cleaning products are all sustainability issues, and are related to larger issues like lack of open space, vehicle traffic, and use of fossil fuels.

Sustainability Principles

(Adapted from Earth Charter²)

1. Protect and restore biodiversity and natural processes that sustain life.
2. Eliminate poverty
3. Foster economies that promote equitable human development
4. Strengthen democracy and justice; especially for indigenous peoples and minorities
5. Promote a culture of tolerance, non-violence, and peace.
6. Foster a social environment that upholds human dignity, bodily health and spiritual well-being

Sustainability in NYC

Many neighborhoods in New York City are now racing for the title of 'greenest neighborhood'. The communities featured below are just a few of those that have mobilized to imagine and create the changes they'd like to see to make their neighborhood healthier, more just and more sustainable. With the Jackson Heights Green Agenda, we have the opportunity to claim the title of 'greenest neighborhood' for ourselves. A compelling vision can go a long way!



Retrofit Bedford Stuyvesant

Over one third of homeowners in Bedford Stuyvesant pay over 60% of their incomes for housing, and asthma affects one of every ten children. The Bed-Stuy Restoration Corporation and the Pratt Center for Community Development have been working together to address these issues by retrofitting over 5,000 homes in Bedford Stuyvesant over the next 10 years, growing green businesses and jobs, and saving money and energy in the process.

For more Information, visit: <http://prattcenter.net>



Go Green East Harlem!

Go Green East Harlem is a collaborative initiative that aims to address six different environmental issues in East Harlem: public health and asthma, parks and open space, sustainable business, farmers' markets and healthy eating, green building, and transportation. Begun in 2007, Go Green has already had some substantial successes. They've helped start a walk-in asthma clinic, a green market and expanded tree planting efforts in the community.

For more information, visit: <http://weact.org>



South Bronx Greenway

Much of the South Bronx was designed for the movement of cars, not people. Community members developed a plan to reclaim some of this space by turning a median into a greenway where children and adults can play, relax and talk. Their plan looked beyond greening to explore opportunities for job creation, crime reduction, education and training.

For more information, visit: <http://ssbx.org>

INTRO

Our Community



High Density Residential
Mixed Use Commercial
Overlay



Jackson Heights, Queens 6

Jackson Heights, located in Community District 3 in Queens, already has many of the qualities of a healthy, sustainable community: it is walkable, dense, and is one of New York City's most diverse neighborhoods. This tremendous vibrancy means Jackson Heights' residents already use less energy, make fewer trips by car, and buy more items in local shops than the average North American.

How can we be NYC's most sustainable neighborhood?

Previous studies done in Jackson Heights have shown that residents feel that a lack of park space, lack of affordable housing, poor air quality and traffic are all issues that are impacting the community and people's lives⁴. Some of these issues are 'environmental' issues in the literal sense, but others, like affordable housing, are social and economic issues as well.

Jackson Heights is also located in one of the fastest growing areas of the city. From 1990 to 2000 the population grew 32%⁵. The 'Green Agenda' will be a long term-vision of the neighborhood that will look at all of the issues the community faces (whether social, environmental or economic) and imagine the community's ideal future and how we can work towards improving our community as it grows- for both our generation and the next.

The next two pages provide a brief introduction to some of the issues that others have identified in the community- your group may have a different set of concerns. When you are discussing with your group, remember that sustainability is not just about 'greening' the neighborhood. Social and economic concerns matter too.



Jackson Heights in Context

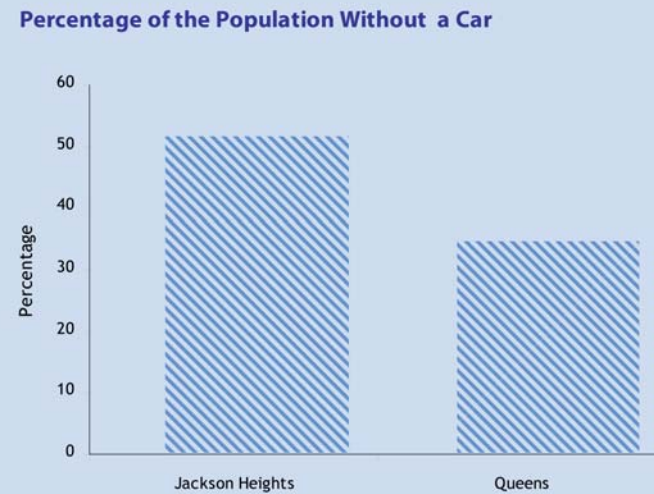


Photo Credit: Emilio Guerra

Streets and Traffic

More than half of all Jackson Heights households are completely car free. This compares to only 34% being car free across all of Queens⁷. That makes Jackson Heights one of the least car dependent communities in the whole country. Despite this low rate of automobile ownership, poor street design puts people in conflict with cars and has created safety concerns and air quality issues in Jackson Heights. Jackson Heights and surrounding communities must also contend with 23 million passengers per year coming through the neighborhood on route to the airport⁸.

One look at this picture of Northern Boulevard is enough to see that we need streets that can better accommodate all users: cars, pedestrians and cyclists. And we need to make trips by bus and subway faster and easier.



Source: Census 2000



Photo Credit: Janice Moynihan

Park Space

Inadequate space for children to play is one of Jackson Heights's most pressing issues. Our children are our future and providing the necessary environment for them to grow and develop is crucial. Sustainability is not just about reducing environmental impact; it is also about improving quality of life and providing the right social and environmental conditions for future generations to flourish.

Jackson Heights is second to last in NYC in park space per person: there are 3,200 children per park or playground!⁹

Affordable Housing

Over 30% of Jackson Heights residents are considered to be in 'house poverty' they pay such high rent that they have trouble paying for other essentials like food, clothing, health care, and transportation¹⁰. 19.2% have 'severe' housing affordability or quality issues – they may be living in apartments that are too small and crowded for their families, or that have health and safety problems like rats or roach infestation, unsafe wiring, holes in walls and ceilings, etc.¹¹

Over 30% of Jackson Heights residents are considered to be in 'house poverty'



Photo Credit: Janice Moynihan

ACTIVITY ONE

Preparing a Community Shield

Description:

Historically, shields and coats of arms have been used by families to differentiate the family and convey the family's uniqueness. A shield can also be used to tell a story about your community's history, current conditions, shared values and its members' hopes and fears for the future. Drawing a shield that represents your community is a way to express what you think and feel are the important facets of your community. Shields are typically colorful and are filled with symbols, but there are no firm rules—your shield can take whatever form you think best balances the values of your group members.

Activity:

- 1) Before beginning the drawing on the next page, have each group member introduce him or herself and describe what they'd most like to see included as part of a shield that represents Jackson Heights.
- 2) Remember that this is a collaborative activity and everyone should have a chance to be involved—drawing the shield will help warm your group up for the other activities in this workbook.
- 3) You may also wish to include a motto – a short statement – that best describes Jackson Heights. Your group can write this motto in the ribbon below the shield. Don't worry if your shield or motto doesn't perfectly represent your group's vision— you'll have a chance to explore the issues in more detail and come up with a vision statement later in the workbook.

Materials:

1. Use the blank shield provided on the opposite page
2. Crayons, pencil crayons, pens, or other drawing supplies (not provided)

Time: 10 - 20 minutes



Nepal's Coat of Arms

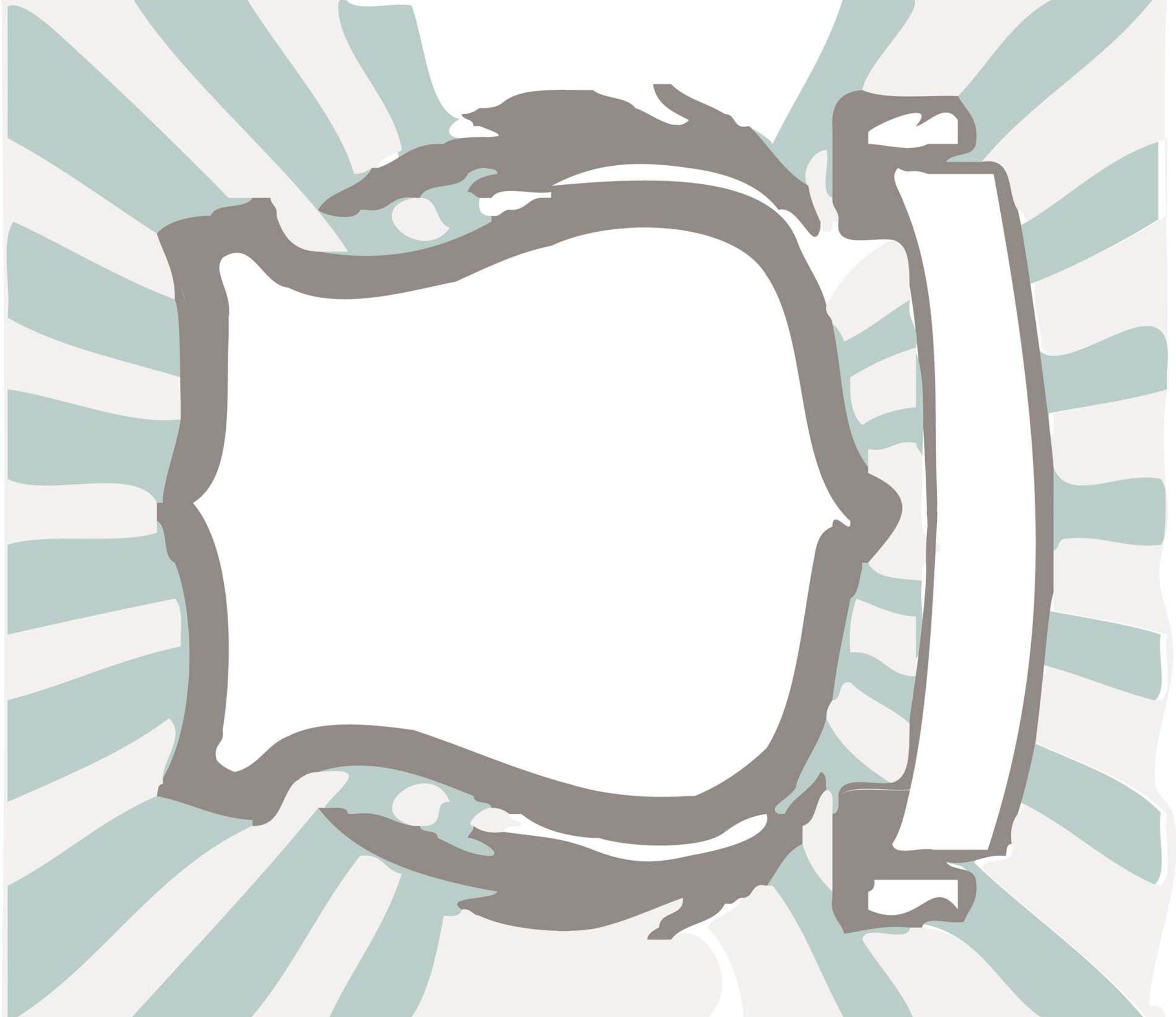


Belize's Coat of Arms



The Dominican Republic's Coat of Arms

Jackson Heights' Shield



ACTIVITY TWO

Identifying our Community Strengths and Weaknesses

In this activity, your group will identify strengths and weaknesses that affect Jackson Heights' sustainability. Community strengths can be thought of as facets of the community that are valuable to community well-being and should be preserved and strengthened. Weaknesses are elements of the community that could be improved upon or which pose challenges. Some of the strengths and weaknesses your group identifies will be related to objects and places in the real world— your group will map these types of weaknesses. However, you will find that many types of strengths and weaknesses are less tangible and can't be so easily mapped— your group will discuss and group these.

Activity

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

WHAT CAN I DO?

- 1) Read out loud the inset to the right that lists some of the types of weaknesses and strengths your group might want to think about.
- 2) Have group members list strengths and weaknesses in the community and assign a recorder to write them on the page to the right.
- 3) Discuss each weakness and strength briefly and **try to group similar ones into themes in the space provided on the page to the right**. Themes should not be overly vague or too specific. For example, 'Parks and Recreation' is a good theme; 'Social' is too general. Try to create **six themes** that your group would most like to address. As a facilitator, guide the discussion to focus on the strengths and weaknesses that are most related to sustainability. You will use these themes in future activities.
- 4) Next, your group members will map the strengths and weaknesses discussed in the previous steps. Make sure everyone at the table is within reaching distance from the large map of Jackson Heights.
- 5) Find the colored flags in the attached envelope and make sure everyone gets a few flags of each color.
- 6) **Have each participant stick flags on the locations of the strengths and weaknesses they identified earlier. Use two different colors of flags— one to represent strengths and one for weaknesses.** Using the felt markers, label each strength and weakness. Draw anything else on the map that your group feels is important.
- 7) After everyone in the group has gone up to the map, facilitate a discussion about what community members see on the map. Potential discussion questions include:

- Are resources or problem areas concentrated in particular places? Why? What can your group do about them?
- Are some problems more visible than others?
- Are there less visible problems that may be equally in need of attention?

Here are a few types community strengths and weaknesses your group may want to think about:



Ecological Strengths and Weaknesses

Examples include: energy efficiency projects, street trees, parks, natural areas, air-quality, noise, co-op gardens, water quality, waste, etc.



Built Strengths and Weaknesses

Examples include: community centers, school buildings, religious buildings, access to public transportation, bicycle facilities, attractive and historic architecture, crowded sidewalks, hospitals, shopping streets, housing, etc.



Economic Strengths and Weaknesses

Examples include: local residents' skills, green businesses (such as green markets), local entrepreneurs and products, diversity of businesses, land and locations for development, green jobs, etc.



Social Strengths and Weaknesses

Examples include: cultural values, sports teams, choirs, community diversity, crime and safety, religious organizations, intercultural communication, volunteer groups, relationships and social networks, social clubs, etc.

Green Map Icons © Green Map System, Inc. 2008

Materials:

- 1) Pens and markers (not provided)
- 2) Large map of Jackson Heights (provided in attached envelope)
- 3) 20 to 30 'flags' of two different colors (provided in attached envelope)

Time: 30 - 40 minutes



Colored Flags



ACTIVITY THREE

Ranking Top Issues

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

WHAT CAN I DO?

Description:

Please complete Activity Two before moving ahead to this activity. In Activity Two, your group has been talking about the sustainability issues the community faces. This activity is focused on identifying the most important issues for your group.

Activity

1. Thinking about the 'themes' (groups of similar issues) your group identified in Activity Two, ask each member of the group what they consider to be the most important **sustainability** issues in Jackson Heights. Try to come up with a list of the **six most pressing issues or themes** in the community. These six 'themes' should be broad enough that no one feels that their issues have been left out.
2. Record the six issues on the opposite page.
3. Talk briefly about each of the issues selected, exploring the issue in more detail. Have group members each present the case for why the issue they chose is the most important (in two minutes or less each). You may also want to discuss:
 - a. How does this issue affect your life in the neighborhood?
 - b. What might be causing this issue? What might be perpetuating it?
 - c. What do you imagine as the nature and extent of the issue in 5, 10, and 20 years?
 - d. What can you do individually to resolve the issue? What can be done as a community?
4. After each issue has been briefly discussed, give each person ten dots. Each person will have ten votes, which can be distributed to any of the six issues. Stick the dots on the following page.

Materials

1. Voting Ballot (on next page)
2. Voting Dots (provided in attached envelope)



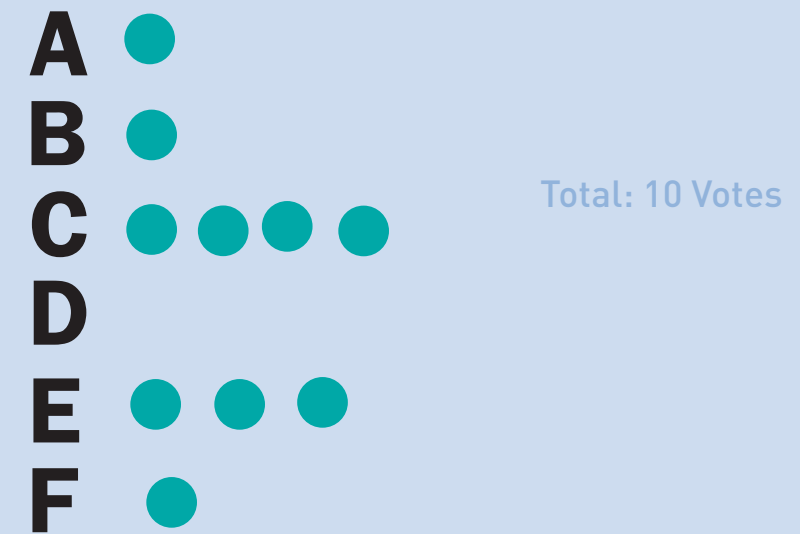
Time:

25 - 30 minutes



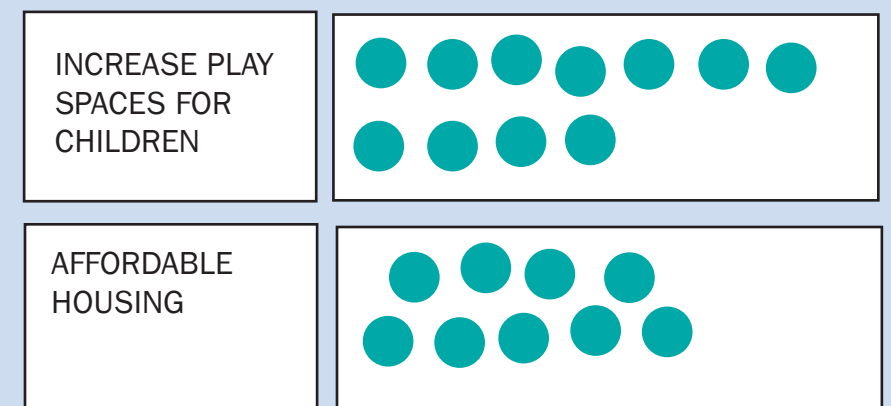
Your Votes May Look Like This:

Each person has ten 'votes' that can be distributed however they see fit. One person's votes might look like this:



Group Example

When completed, your group's grid on the next page might look something like this:



Total: number of votes will be equal to 10 times the number of people completing the activity.

Six Important Themes or Issues

Transcribe the six themes your group identified in Activity Two.

A

B

C

D

E

F

Votes

Remember, only 10 votes per participant. You don't have to put all your votes in one place!

ACTIVITY FOUR

Imagining Jackson Heights in 2030

WHAT ARE
THE ISSUES

WHERE ARE
WE GOING?

HOW WILL WE
GET THERE?

WHAT CAN
I DO?

Description:

Story telling is universal. Across all cultures, people use stories to reflect their values and communicate deeper meaning. Stories can also be a platform for thinking about the future: in fact, many professional ‘futurists’ use this method to gain insight into future scenarios. The previous activities in this workbook looked at ‘what is’—the current resources and issues in Jackson Heights. This activity will help your group explore ‘what can be’. Your group’s stories will help you arrive at a vision statement for the community.

Activity

1. Have the group divide into partners.
2. Each participant will take five minutes to **tell a short story** to their partner about what their children or grandchildren’s lives would look like in 2030 if Jackson Heights were a sustainable community. As a facilitator, suggest to participants that they think about the following questions before coming up with their story:
 - a. What will the community look like in 20 years?
 - b. How will my descendants live?
 - c. Where will they play?
 - d. Where will my descendants work and what kinds of jobs will they have?
 - e. What kind of environmental problems and issues might my descendants be dealing with?
3. After partners have told their stories to one another, have each group discuss the values that underlined their visions of the future. Did they depict a future Jackson Heights where people with a range of incomes could afford to live? Where children can safely play in the street? Participants should briefly discuss whether there were **values that each of the stories had in common**, or whether their values were different.
4. Give each group of two a large sticky note and have them write a few of the values that they found in their stories on the post-its. Have participants keep these to as few words as possible. For example, values might include “Living in Balance with the Environment,” “Celebrating Difference,” etc.
5. Ask a volunteer from each team to read the team’s values aloud twice — so that it will really sink in for the listeners. After reading the goals, stick them on the opposite page.
6. After all teams have read their cards, lead a quick discussion on the similarities people heard.
7. As a group look at all the values listed on the opposite page and try to **combine them into a vision statement**. A vision statement is a one- to two-sentence statement that broadly defines the goals of a group. It identifies the condition that a group wants to be in or the impact it aims to make in the near or far future.
8. At the end of the conversation, write out the vision statement on the opposite page. This should be at most two sentences. (10 minutes or until consensus is reached).

Materials

Post-it Notes (provided in attached envelope)



Time:

40 - 50 minutes

What Makes a Good Vision Statement?

“Compelling visions are felt in the heart and understood in the mind.”

Bob Doppelt, Author of Leading Change Toward Sustainability

There is no right way to write a vision statement. Good vision statements do have several things in common though:

They are inspiring and creative

They are vivid (and sometimes emotional)

They sum up shared values

They can be idealistic and can dream big, but the best vision statements also say how and when they will be accomplished. For example:

Make Jackson Heights _____ within _____ years by doing _____.



Team Values

The common values you found in your stories of Jackson Height's future.

--	--	--	--



Group Vision Statement

--

ACTIVITY FIVE

Taking Steps Towards Sustainability

THREE MOST IMPORTANT SUSTAINABILITY THEMES

Based on Voting in Activity 3

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

WHAT CAN I DO?

Description:

In this activity your group will discuss steps that could be taken that would contribute to your group's vision of a more sustainable Jackson Heights. These steps can be both big and small; they could be actions taken by individuals, actions your group could do, or actions that would require the whole community.

Activity:

1. Review the six top sustainability themes that your group identified in Activity Three and **record the top three themes** in the space to the right.
2. For each of the three themes, discuss as a group:
 - a. Do individuals and the community already have an ability to influence and act on this?
 - b. Would we be able to address this issue with more funding? With collaboration? With planning and other resources?
 - c. Which actions could be taken now, and which actions can be taken over the long term?
3. For each of the three themes discuss the actions that could be taken now by individuals and by the community to improve conditions. For example, if 'local food' is one of your themes, your group may discuss converting vacant lots into temporary vegetated areas or growing food in apartment courtyards. Assign a recorder to **write your groups' action ideas on the opposite page.**
4. Next discuss actions that might not be realistic for individuals and the community to begin right away, but could be accomplished with more resources. For example, if your group identified local food production as a top theme, 'purchasing land for a community farm' might fall under this long term category. Assign a recorder to **write your groups' long term action ideas on the right hand side of the opposite page.**

Materials:

None.

Time:

25 - 35 minutes

1

2

3



ACTIONS THAT CAN BE DONE NOW

ACTIONS THAT REQUIRE FURTHER
RESOURCES, ASSISTANCE, OR PLANNING

Individual Actions

Community Actions

Individual Actions

Community Actions

Individual Actions

Community Actions

TAKE HOME

Leading A Sustainable Life

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

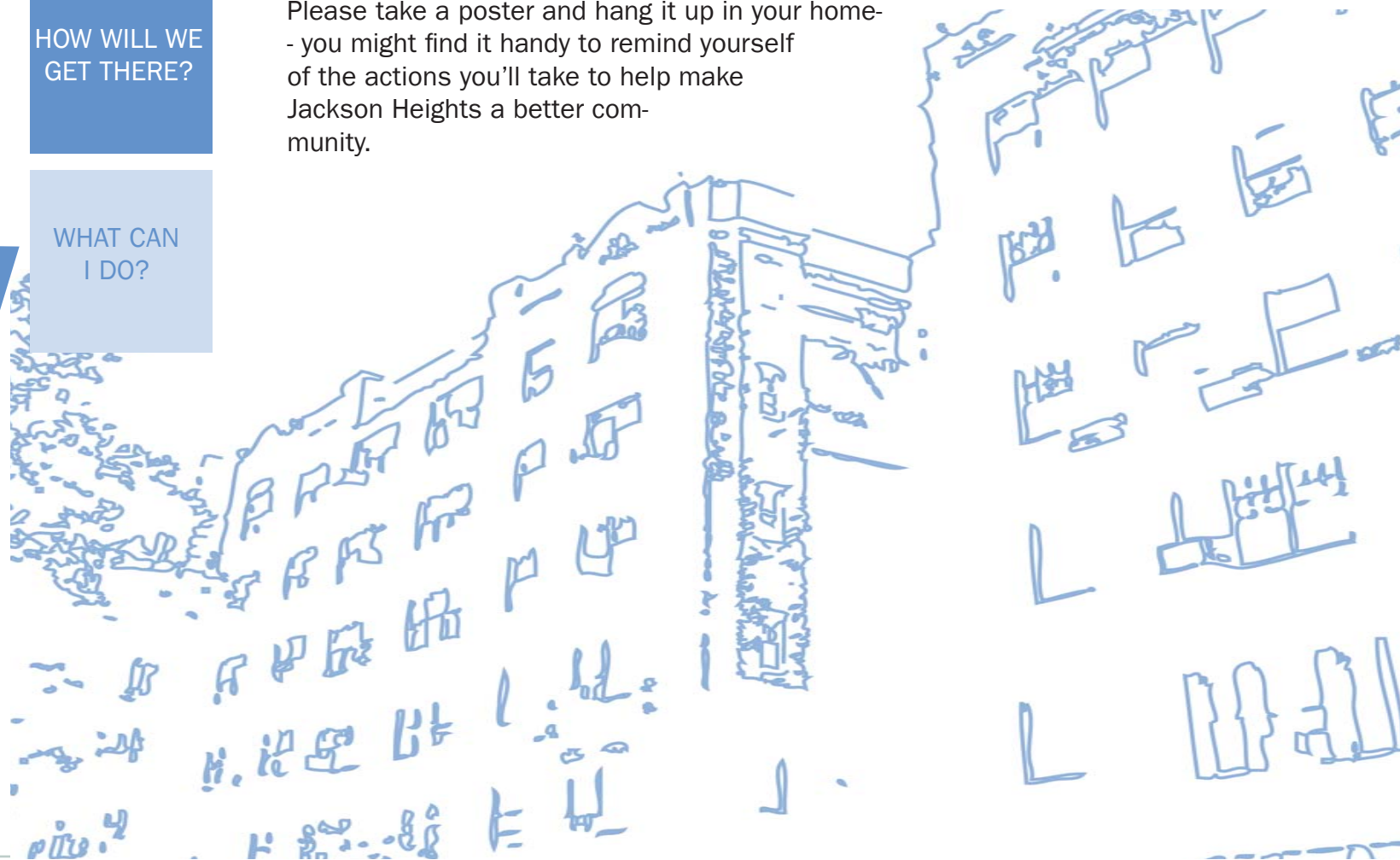
HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

WHAT CAN I DO?

Your group just helped create a community-wide vision for a more sustainable Jackson Heights. A vision is long term and will take time, energy and resources to implement. This doesn't mean we can't act now. The steps taken now by community members in their personal lives will be what make the vision a reality.

The **enclosed poster** has some suggestions for steps that you and your group members can take in your own homes. These eleven measures are simple and have the potential to save you money and increase the health of your household and children. Although the vision you created in this workbook will involve businesses, government, and community groups, it starts with everyone in Jackson Heights making small changes in the way they live, travel, shop, and consume.

Please take a poster and hang it up in your home - you might find it handy to remind yourself of the actions you'll take to help make Jackson Heights a better community.



See the enclosed poster for more information on eleven easy steps you can take in your household and learn how you can save money, reduce your environmental impact and increase your family's health.



REDUCE WATER USE



CLEAN SAFELY



BUY FOODS IN BULK



REDUCE HEATING COSTS



GROW PLANTS IN YOUR ROOM



REDUCE ELECTRICITY USE



WALK OR RIDE A BIKE



STOP JUNK MAIL

Thank You!

Please return this copy of the workbook when you are finished to Queens Community House. See page 5 for more instructions.

What did you think?

Did the activities in this workbook increase your group's understanding of sustainability issues in the community?	VERY MUCH	A LITTLE	SOMEWHAT	NOT AT ALL
How likely will your group members be to participate future sessions discussing Jackson Heights?	VERY LIKELY	SOMEWHAT LIKELY	NOT LIKELY	
Do your group members feel they now have a clearer sense of what an ideal Jackson Heights would look like?	YES	SOMEWHAT	NO	
Which of the activities you completed do you feel was the most valuable? [circle one]	Drawing a Community Shield Identifying Community Strengths and Weaknesses Ranking Top Issues Imagining Jackson Heights in 2030 Taking Steps Towards Sustainability			
How do you think this workbook could be improved:	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>			

References

1. United Nations. 1987. "Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development". <http://www.un-documents.net/wced-ocf.htm>.
2. Earth Charter Initiative. 2000. "The Earth Charter". <http://www.earthcharterinaction.org>.
3. Planning for Sustainability. The Natural Step. 2009.
4. North West Queens Community Study. Pratt Center for Community Development, 2006.
5. Census, 2000.
6. DOT Street Design Manual, 2009.
7. Census, 2000.
8. CB3 District Needs Statement.
9. New Yorkers For Parks, 2008.
10. State of the Neighborhoods. Furman Center, 2009.
11. State of the Neighborhoods. Furman Center, 2009.

Want to Learn or Do More?

We have gathered for you some useful resources for learning about the issues that you worked on in this workbook.

Placemaking: Tools for Community Action

http://www.sustainable.org/Placemaking_v1.pdf

An overview of computer and social tools used to aid community action

NYC Greenstreets Program

http://www.nycgovparks.org/sub_your_park/trees_greenstreets.html

A Parks Department initiative to beautify and cool streets by planting trees

GreenThumb NYC

<http://www.greenthumbnyc.org/>

A Parks Department initiative to create and support community gardens and urban farming

GreenMap NYC

<http://GreenAppleMap.org>

<http://www.greenmap.org/>

Green Map works to identify environmental and social resources, promoting awareness of all the work communities are doing on the environment. See their online map of New York City and participate in GreenMapping by adding local resources to their Open Green Map.

