



Reimagine
the **Cross Bronx**



Engagement Summary Report

Issue Identification Round

June 2024



Table of Contents



1. Study Overview	4
1.1. Study Area Map	5
1.2. Study Goals	5
2. Maximizing Public Engagement	6
2.1. A Plan to Encourage Participation	6
2.2. Issue Identification Round Purpose and Context within the Study	7
2.3. Collaborative Outreach Groups Guide the Process	8
2.3.1 Community Working Group	8
2.3.2 Targeted Outreach	9
2.3.3 Community Partners	10
2.4. Comprehensive Engagement Methodologies and Strategies	12
2.4.1 Issue Identification Workshops	12
2.4.2 Walkshops	13
2.4.3 Community Events	13
2.4.4 Issue Identification Online Survey and Portal	14
3. Expanding Outreach through Community Partners	17
3.1. Community Partners Organization and Outreach Summaries	17
4. Corridor-Wide Issue Identification Findings by Topic	26
4.1. Connected Communities	28
4.1.1 Park Access	28
4.1.2 East-West/North-South Connectivity	30
4.2. Healthy Communities	33
4.2.1 Air Quality	33
4.2.2 Noise	34
4.2.3 Trash Management	34
4.3. Safe Communities	35
4.3.1 Pedestrian Concerns	35
4.3.2 Bicycling Concerns	35
4.3.3 Intersection Safety Concerns	36
4.3.4 Local Street Management and Parking Concerns	36
4.3.5 Poor Lighting	36

Table of Contents



4.4. Strong Communities	37
4.4.1 Housing, Social, and Economic Development	37
4.4.2 Environmental Justice	37
4.4.3 Governance, Communication, and Community Input	37
5. Location-Specific Findings by Corridor Sector	38
5.1. West (Morris Heights, Highbridge, Mount Hope, Mount Eden, Tremont, Claremont Village, Grand Concourse)	40
5.1.1 General Description	40
5.1.2 Harlem River Connection/Major Deegan Expressway (Location 1)	42
5.1.3 University Avenue/Edward L Grant Highway (Location 2)	43
5.1.4 Jerome Avenue (Location 4)	43
5.1.5 Grand Concourse (Location 6)	45
5.1.6 Community Story	46
5.2. Central (Tremont, Claremont, Crotona, Crotona Park East, West Farms)	47
5.2.1 General Description	47
5.2.2 Third Avenue (Location 10)	49
5.2.3 Crotona Park/Walter Gladwin Park (Location 11)	50
5.2.4 Admiral Farragut Playground/Fairmount Playground/ Prospect Playground (Location 12)	51
5.2.5 Southern Boulevard (Location 13)	52
5.2.6 Community Story	53
5.3. East (Parkchester, Soundview, Unionport, Castle Hill, Westchester Square)	54
5.3.1 General Description	54
5.3.2 Bronx River Corridor (Location 15)	56
5.3.3 Rosedale Avenue/Noble Playground (Location 18)	57
5.3.4 Hugh Grant Circle/Virginia Park (Location 21)	58
5.3.5 Community Story	60
6. Next Steps and Upcoming Engagement	61
7. Appendix	62
7.1. Community Events and activities	62
7.2. Survey Results	64

1. Study Overview



The Cross Bronx Expressway (Cross Bronx or CBE), part of Interstate 95 (I-95), travels east-west across the borough of the Bronx, New York. Constructed between 1948 and 1972, the Cross Bronx divided the borough in a way that displaced residents and separated communities. It is currently one of the most congested American interstates with some of the highest rates of collisions. Residents of the area face some of the highest rates of environmental health issues such as asthma.

In December 2022, New York kicked off *Reimagine the Cross Bronx* study, a community-driven effort to re-envision the Cross Bronx Expressway from the Harlem River to Westchester Creek. The study seeks to help reconnect the communities divided by the Cross Bronx Expressway and lessen the negative effects it has had on surrounding neighborhoods.

Reimagine the Cross Bronx is funded by a \$2 million grant from the US DOT Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program. It is being advanced through a partnership between New York City Department of Transportation (NYC DOT), NYC Department of City Planning (NYC DCP), NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), and New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT). Collectively the four partner agencies are referred to as the Study Team.

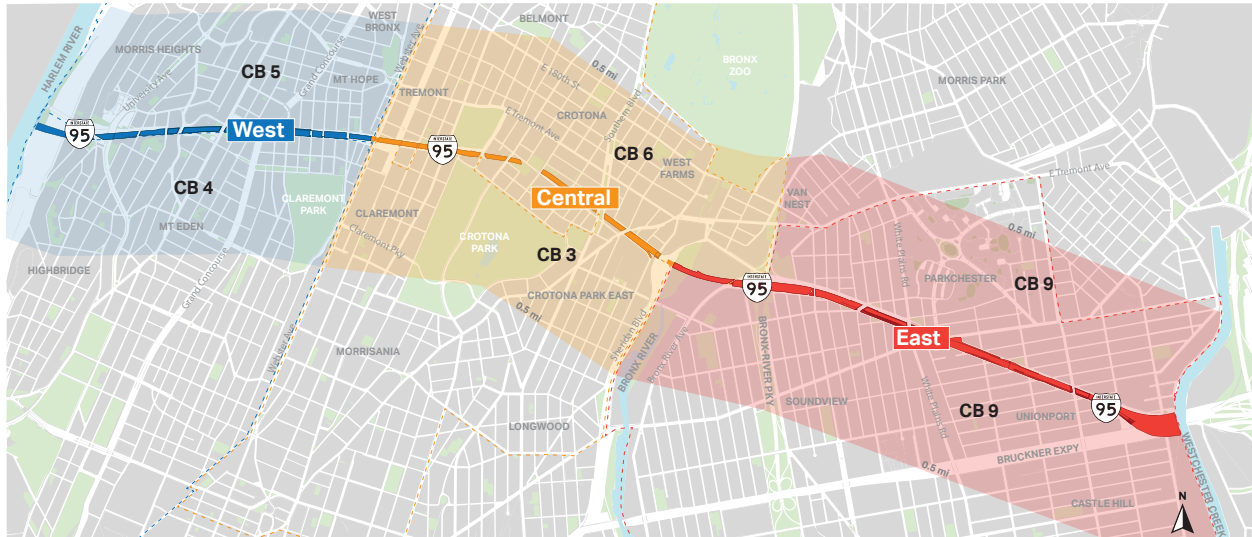
The Study Team has placed a high priority on engagement to advance a community driven approach to reconnecting neighborhoods and identifying strategies to increase more sustainable travel modes, improve access to open space, increase safety, and enhance freight management. This report summarizes the activities and findings resulting from outreach and engagement conducted during the first phase of the study, the Issue Identification Round, from June to November 2023.

Local communities are key to this study. People who live, work, and play throughout neighborhoods around the Cross Bronx are kept informed and engaged throughout the process. The Study Team will continue to look to the diverse communities around the corridor as the study moves into the Concept Development phase that will explore ideas responsive to what the study has heard so far.



Community Walkshops Examine Challenge Areas. In a series of Walkshops in the Cross Bronx corridor, the Study Team collected input from local residents.

1.1. Study Area Map



The Study Area of *Reimagine the Cross Bronx* stretches along the Cross Bronx Expressway corridor from the Harlem River to Westchester Creek. It includes communities located within half a mile of the expressway on both sides to fully capture the experiences of residents in the surrounding areas. To ensure outreach coverage, the Study Area is further split into East (Westchester Creek to Bronx River), Central (Bronx River to Webster Avenue), and West (Webster Avenue to Harlem River) sections.

1.2. Study Goals



Facilitate a community-driven vision for the future of the Cross Bronx



Create short, medium, and long-term concepts for improvements to the transportation network, public realm, and access to open space



Increase community leadership to support implementation of strategies and future planning efforts



Foster long-term collaboration between Cross Bronx stakeholders, Bronx residents, and City and State government

2. Maximizing Public Engagement



2.1. A Plan to Encourage Participation

Public engagement plays a vital role in shaping the Reimagine the Cross Bronx study, with many forms of input encouraged to identify issues, concerns, and priorities for stakeholders throughout the Study Area.

Reimagine the Cross Bronx Engagement Principles:

- Facilitating participation in the study, including local and citywide stakeholders.
- Memorialize the historical and contemporary legacy of the Cross Bronx, while thinking expansively about its future.
- Demonstrate transparency and accountability by making data about the Cross Bronx available and accessible to diverse audiences.
- Ensure what communities share about their lived experience is acknowledged and incorporated into the study and documented.

Public engagement for the study was initiated with an introductory round of open houses in March 2023 to kick off and introduce the study. This was followed by a robust schedule of activities to collect input and feedback in the Issue Identification Round from June to November 2023. The next round of activity, planned for spring and summer 2024, will collect feedback from the community on concepts to address concerns raised during the Issue Identification phase.

Workshops, activities, and materials have been offered in English, Spanish, French, Bengali, and American Sign Language to encourage broad participation, and activities have been included for children to facilitating family participation.



Pop-Ups Engage Residents *Tabling in parks and neighborhoods across the Study Area brought the study to local residents.*

Community Engagement by the Numbers



People Engaged



Comments Received



Public Workshops



Walkshops



Virtual Workshop



Online Survey Responses



Online Community Mapping Portal



Open Houses



Community Partners



Targeted Focus Groups



Community Working Group



Community Events

2.2. Issue Identification Round Purpose and Context within the Study

The Issue Identification Round was a five-month outreach and engagement phase which began on June 15, 2023, and ended on November 15, 2023, to collect public input that allows the Study Team to understand the most pressing issues and needs related to the Cross Bronx. During the Issue Identification Round, the Study Team engaged with more than 900 members of the community during workshops, walkshops, surveys and community events, collecting more than 1600 comments.

Three in-person public workshops in different locations around the Study Area ensured activities were accessible and provided multiple opportunities for participation. A virtual workshop, an online survey, and a mapping portal facilitating online and asynchronous participation. The Study Team also conducted eight walkshops, including an assisted tour designed for older adults and people with disabilities, a walk conducted in Spanish, and a bicycle tour.

Findings from the Engagement Summary Issue Identification Report will be integrated with those from the Existing Conditions Summary Report. Bringing together these experiential and quantitative assessments of the Study Area, the Study Team created the Identified Issues Synthesis. These key issues will provide the basis for project concepts that will be shared with the community in outreach and engagement activities in 2024, as shown in the timeline in the Next Steps and Upcoming Engagement section.

2.3. Collaborative Outreach Groups Guide the Process

Reimagine the Cross Bronx utilizes multiple means of engaging communities and stakeholders across the Study Area to share information and collect input.

2.3.1 Community Working Group

The Community Working Group (CWG) is a cooperative forum of organizations and community leaders who represent the voices of communities within the Study Area. The Community Working Group advises the Study Team and study consultants on the study's processes and engagement efforts. Members help spread the word about upcoming events, gather feedback, and share information between the communities and the Study Team.



Community Working Group examines the Study Area.

2.3.2 Targeted Outreach

Targeted Outreach engages key stakeholders and subject matter experts to collect input on issues related to the Cross Bronx Expressway. Targeted outreach began during Fall 2023 and will continue throughout the study through the formation of Technical Advisory Groups.

The Targeted Outreach groups were composed as follows:

Business and Commercial Organizations	AMBAZ, Belmont Business Improvement District (BID), Bronx Chamber of Commerce, Castle Hill BID, Fordham Road BID, Morris Park BID, Youth Ministries for Peace & Justice (YMPJ)
Freight	Trucking Association of New York, Port Authority of NY & NJ, Wegmans Food Markets, Greater Hunts Point Economic Development Corporation, NYC Small Business Services (SBS)
People with Disabilities	Mayor's Office of People with Disabilities (MOPD)
Transportation Advocates	Riders Alliance, StreetsPAC, Tri-State Transportation Campaign, Open Plans, Transportation Alternatives, Regional Plan Association
Community Boards	Community Boards 3, 4, 5, 6, and 9. Engagement with Community Boards and presentations will continue throughout the study.



Communities Consider Accessibility. Walkshop attendees shared feedback on structures and walkways.



Walkshops Inform Issue Identification. Participants explore areas of concern in the Study Area.

2.3.3 Community Partners

Reimagine the Cross Bronx supports a Community Partners initiative to expand community engagement and provide critical outreach to underserved communities in the Study Area. This initiative supplements overall engagement with direct connections to hard-to-reach populations, maximizing opportunities for everyone living and working in the Study Area to participate.

Community Partners conduct public engagement processes independent of events hosted by the Study Team. These partners, which were selected through an open application process, include groups that serve a range of underrepresented communities and specialize in multilingual engagement to ensure that communities historically left out of conversations about the future of the Cross Bronx can participate in this effort. To expand outreach even further, some of these organizations also partner with other groups in the area at the grassroots level.

Community Partners played a vital role in the Issue Identification Round, which concluded in November 2023, and will continue outreach through the remaining public engagement rounds.

Timeline for Community Partners

Kick-off	Deliverable #1 Outreach Summary Plan Submission	9/27/2023
	Community Partners Kick-Off Meeting	9/27/2023
Identifying the Issues	Issue ID Outreach Plan Technical Assistance	9/27/23-10/4/2023
	Invoice and Progress Report #1 Issue ID Planning	Week of 10/11/23
	Deliverable #2 Issue Identification Outreach Strategy	10/11/2023
	Issue Identification Round 2 Outreach and Tabling Activities	10/11/2023-11/15/23
	Community Partner + Project Team Check In Meeting #1 (Issue Identification)	Week of -10/25/2023
	Invoice and Progress Report #2 Issue ID Outreach Reporting	Week of 11/15/2023
	Solution ID Round 1 Outreach Plan Technical Assistance	1/29/2024-2/9/2024
	Deliverable #3 Solution ID Round 1 Outreach Strategy	2/14/2024
	Solution Identification Round 1 Outreach and Tabling Activities	2/14/24-4/17/24
	Invoice and Progress Report #3 Solution ID Round 1 Outreach Planning	Week of 2/28/2024
Proposal Evaluation	Community Partner + Project Team Check In Meeting #2 (Solution Identification, first meeting for Round 1)	3/13/2024
	Community Partner + Project Team Check In Meeting #3 (Solution Identification, second meeting for Round 1)	4/3/2024
	Invoice and Progress Report #2 Solution ID Round 1 Outreach Reporting	Week of 04/22/2024
	Solution ID Round 2 Outreach Plan Technical Assistance	5/29/24-6/12/24
	Deliverable #4 Solution ID Round 2 Outreach Strategy	6/19/2024
	Solution Identification Round 2 Outreach and Tabling Activities	6/19/24-8/21/24
	Invoice and Progress Report #4 Solution ID Round 2 Outreach Planning	Week of 7/3/2024
	Community Partner + Project Team Check In Meeting #4 (Solution Identification, first meeting for Round 2)	7/17/2024
	Community Partner + Project Team Check In Meeting #5 (Solution Identification, second meeting for Round 2)	8/7/2024
	Deliverable #5 Draft Final Report -- Individual CP Submissions (Photos, summaries, attendance list, etc.)	9/6/2024
Analyzing Shared the Vision	Invoice and Progress Report #5 Solution ID Round 2 Outreach Reporting	Week of 9/13/2024
	Deliverable #6 Final Report - Individual CP Submissions	9/27/2024
	Reimagine the Cross Bronx Draft Report Release Event	1st 2024
	Invoice and Progress Report #6 Draft Report Engagement Reporting	Week of 11/11/2024
	Reimagine the Cross Bronx Final Report Submission	Winter 2024

*Note: Dates are subject to adjustment

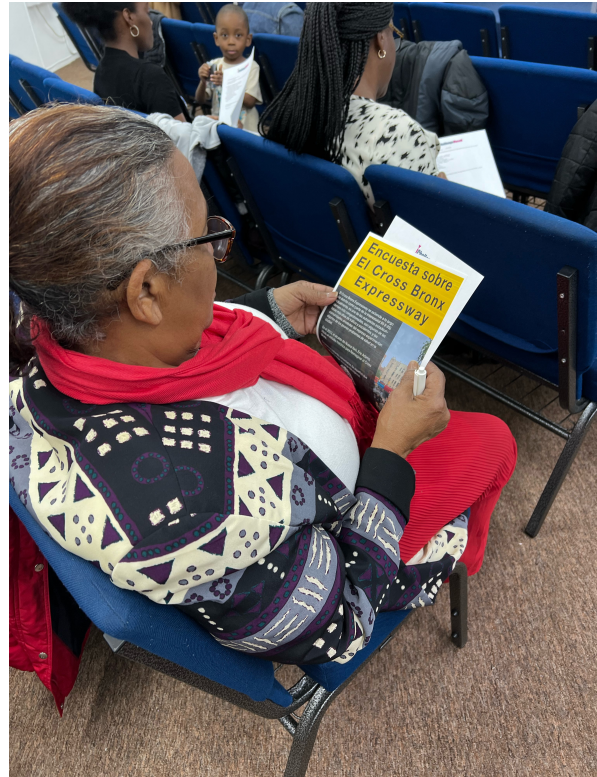
Reimagine the Cross Bronx

Community Partners Share Outreach Plans. The 10 Community Partners met to discuss strategies for collecting input to inform the study.

A detailed description of each Community Partner and input received during the Issue Identification Round is provided in Chapter 3 of this report.

The cohort of 11 Community Partners includes the following:

- Bridge Builders
- Bronx River Alliance
- BronxWorks
- Fordham in Community
- Health People
- I Challenge Myself
- The Mexican Coalition for the Empowerment of Youth and Families
- Morris Park BID and Loving the Bronx
- New Settlement
- Youth Ministries for Peace & Justice



Community Partners use surveys to collect input.

2.4. Comprehensive Engagement Methodologies and Strategies

Reimagine the Cross Bronx employs a diverse range of virtual and in-person engagement opportunities to ensure feedback is collected in a comprehensive and inclusive manner.

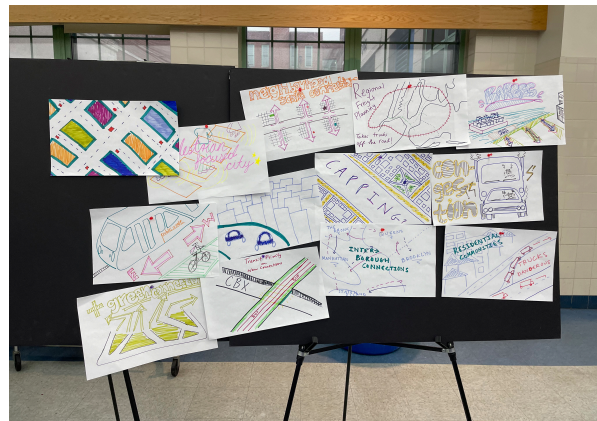
2.4.1 Issue Identification Workshops

Issue Identification Workshops took place throughout summer 2023 virtually and at different locations throughout the Study Area to engage a wide variety of participants and collect detailed feedback and input.

Workshop activities included the use of maps, drawings, and 3D models of the Cross Bronx where participants could share their feedback, as well as personal experiences and stories connected to the expressway, virtual whiteboards to support brainstorming, and exercises for visualizing what a future Cross Bronx Expressway could look like.



Participants added their perspectives to study maps.



Youth in the Study Area expressed ideas.



Attendees at Issue Identification Workshops discussed environmental issues around the Study Area.

2.4.2 Walkshops

There were eight walkshops, with a total of 104 participants, that took place summer through fall 2023 and engaged a diverse group of community members. Members of the Study Team led guided tours on routes that capture the varied and challenging conditions around the Cross Bronx. There were walks in all three sections of the Study Area, a supported tour for people with disabilities, a Spanish-language walk, and a guided bike ride. These activities provided an opportunity to experience the Study Area together and discuss issues and opportunities as they were encountered.

2.4.3 Community Events

During summer and fall 2023 the Study Team engaged community members at festivals, parades, and other local events throughout neighborhoods along the Cross Bronx, seeking opportunities to meet people where they are. Residents discussed issues related to the Cross Bronx and identified areas of concern.

Following are the community events the Study Team attended to collect input:

- Bronx Parks Speak UP!
- Highbridge Festival
- Fish Parade
- Bronx River Living Festival
- NYCHA Family Day – Sedgwick
- Bike the Block
- National Night Out
- Summer Streets
- Events with local elected officials including Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Council Member Pierina Sanchez



A bike tour collected input from cyclists.



First responders shared input at a pop-up.



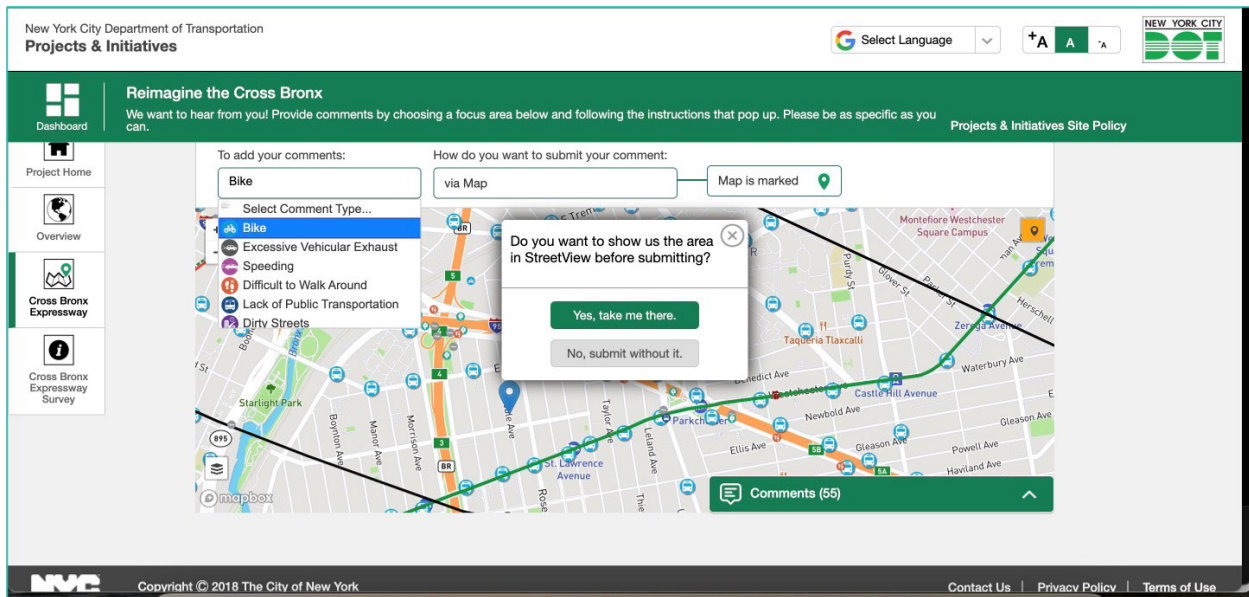
Study Team brings engagement to local events.

A complete list of the Issue Identification Workshops, Walkshops and Community Events is available in the appendix.

2.4.4 Issue Identification Online Survey and Portal

The Study Team conducted an online survey during the Issue Identification Round to provide an accessible opportunity for public input and to further understand participants' priorities. A total of 357 participants engaged in the survey.

Along with the online survey, the Study Team developed an online portal to host a community mapping activity where participants could add pins to the map to identify issues by category or provide other comments. A total of 55 comments were recorded from the portal.

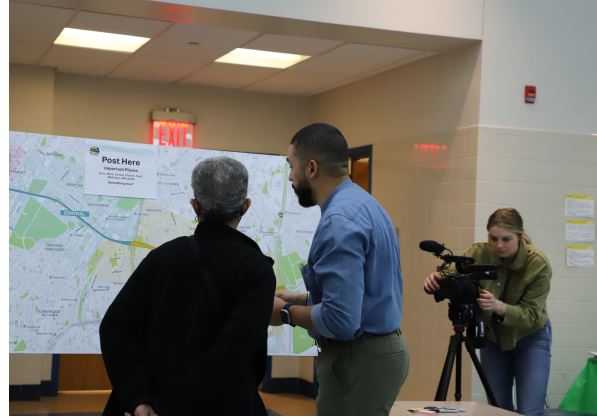


Online portal and community mapping activity to identify key areas of concern.

Residents Identify Concerns at Workshops and Community Events



Participants discussing key environmental issues along the corridor.



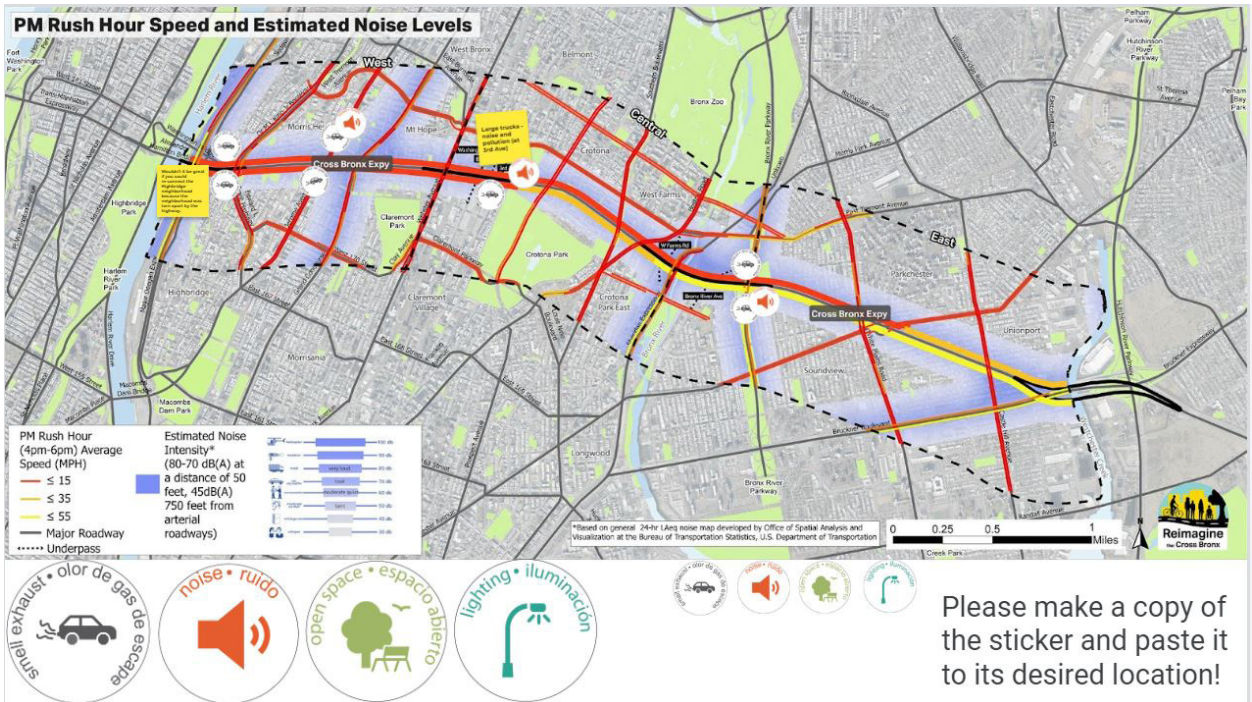
Attendees identifying key areas of concern at Open Houses.



Attendees sharing how they move around the Study Area and identify accessibility issues.



Participants discussing quality of life and health at Issue Identification workshops



Participants used interactive maps to share concerns about speed, noise, and safety.

Please make a copy of the sticker and paste it to its desired location!

Residents Identify Concerns at Workshops & Community Events



Participants discussing neighborhood air quality and impact on health during the workshops.



Interactive map used to collect input on environmental issues and concerns.

The image displays three sample activities used for data collection:

- Health Concerns Sticker:** A circular sticker titled "I'm worried about health problems caused by" with a grid of icons representing various environmental and health factors (e.g., air quality, noise, crime, safety, quality of life, etc.). The title is in both English and Spanish.
- Transportation Frequency Sticker:** A sticker titled "Getting Around/ Movindose por la ciudad" with a scale from "very rarely" to "very often" and icons for different modes of transport (bicycle, car, bus, train, wheelchair, etc.). It asks participants to place the sticker along the line to show their frequency of use.
- Map Activity:** A large aerial map of a city grid with colored lines (red, blue, green) overlaid, representing proposed or existing transportation routes. A "Sunrise" area is also marked.

Sample activities used to collect input on health, desired new connections, and preferred modes of transportation.

3. Expanding Outreach through Community Partners



The Community Partners initiative expands the reach of engagement for *Reimagine the Cross Bronx*. Collectively, the 11 Community Partners hosted and attended more than 30 community-centered events and engaged with hundreds of people to share information and gather feedback. In conjunction with these efforts, Community Partners conducted several hours of weekly tabling and canvassing sessions across the Study Area during the Issue Identification Round.

The following section is an overview of each Community Partner, a recap of outreach activities they conducted during the Issue Identification Round, and their key findings.

3.1. Community Partners Organization and Outreach Summaries

To learn more about our Community Partner organizations, read their bios on our website, www.crossbronx.info.

Bridge Builders



Bridge Builders
Community Partnership

- Bridge Builders Community Partnership (BBCP) was formed in 2003
- Focuses on enhancing the quality of life of Highbridge residents
- Partners with stakeholders to form community networks & secure services

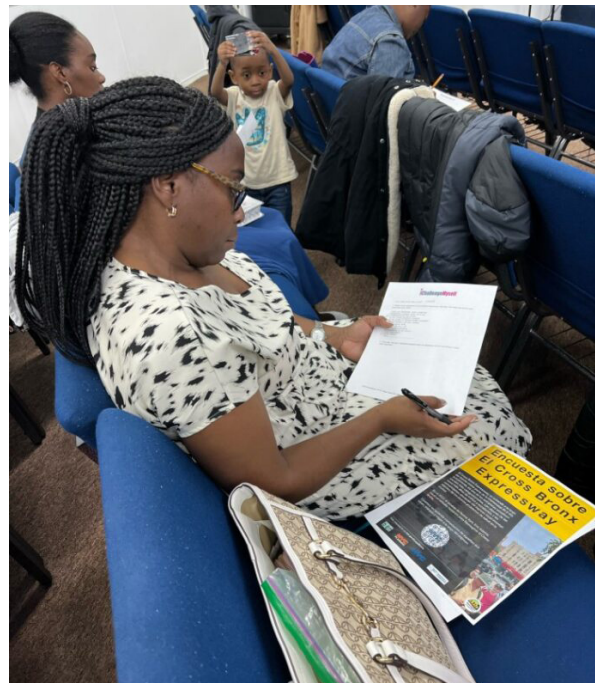
Outreach Activities	Key Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tabled at local schools and other locations to capture youth voices• Provided incentives for people to complete the Issue ID Survey• Hosted bi-weekly idea-generation circles at parenting workshops, etc.• Distributed flyers at train stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concerns around transportation, housing, and social services• Perception that the Cross Bronx contributes to isolation and increases racial inequities and division• The senior population highlighted safety issues and challenges with accessing public transit

Bronx River Alliance



- Bronx River Alliance works to protect the Bronx River and restore the adjacent corridor
- Their primary goal is to make the river a healthier ecological, recreational, educational, and economic resource

Outreach Activities	Key Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engaged community members at park events and canvassing sessions• Held small group discussions around health and safety• Collected feedback at the Bronx River Slow roll, an annual bicycling event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concerns around pollution, traffic, congestion, and safety• Congestion creates unpleasant living environments and atmosphere• Noted an increased reliance on rideshare for those who cannot afford a car or access transit• Noted that the expressway leads to the presence of many vehicle-related businesses like chop shops and gas stations



Community Partners use surveys to collect input.

BronxWorks



- BronxWorks was founded in 1972 as a citizens' advice bureau
- Helps 60,000 Bronx residents each year by feeding, sheltering, teaching, and supporting toddlers to seniors

Outreach Activities	Key Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displayed the study QR code at events and at Community Center monitors • Posted calls to action on social media and distributed surveys • Attended Wellness programming and the Fall Festival to distribute materials • Presented study information to the Murphy Houses in east Morrisania 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants were eager and grateful to give their feedback on the study • Highlighted concerns related to pedestrian safety, air quality, asthma, greenspace access, and lighting

Fordham In Community



- FIC is a collective of 30 organizations guided by the Center for Community Engaged Learning at Fordham University
- Goal is to bridge the gap between the University and neighboring communities through learning, research, and civic engagement

Outreach Activities	Key Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborated with local organizations and agencies • Conducted tabling, hosted workshops and walkshops • Attended community events such as Premios Barauda, and the Highbridge Farmers Market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns around lack of cleanliness and trees, safety, greenspace, and poor air quality • Participants wanted more in person and text communication with the city • Cars coming off the expressway into local streets were noted as an issue

Health People



- Health People is a community health agency founded in 1990 in the South Bronx
- Utilizes peer-to-peer education, workshops, and relationship with other health care providers to help patients lead healthier lives

Outreach Activities	Key Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of printed and digital information in English and Spanish at in person events and canvassing sessions • Posted feedback opportunities on Facebook, Instagram, and X 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bronx River House residents emphasized issues around lack of open space and recreation facilities • Spanish-speaking residents highlighted safety and community wellbeing issues, and unhealthy living conditions • Residents reported that traffic from the CBE negatively affects their lives daily

I Challenge Myself



- Founded in 2005, ICM provides fitness and cycling programs in NYC public schools
- Partners with NYCDOT to engage students in elevating their community

Outreach Activities	Key Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canvassed around University Heights High School, attended and hosted events • Promoted survey participation at the Connect Conference event and Trick or Streets in University Heights • Distributed printed flyers and posted events on social media to encourage faith-based networks to participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Called for an increase in pedestrian safety related to motorcycles and unsafe crossings • Residents want to enhance livability by adding greenspaces, reducing air pollution, and improving cleanliness and street sanitation • Youth empowerment and crime prevention are key issues, with a focus on rehabilitating individuals experiencing homelessness or battling substance abuse, and expanding employment and recreational programs for young people

The Mexican Coalition for the Empowerment of Youth and Families



- Mexican Coalition helps more than 18,000 Latino and Mexican American families each year, many of whom are immigrants and essential workers
- Provides services related to health, immigration, the legal system, and English language education

Outreach Activities	Key Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hosted 16 canvassing and outreach sessions• Tabled at food pantries, health fairs, cultural events like Día de Los Muertos, business locations, parks, and schools• Hosted community art event focused on health and air quality• Distributed study survey to hundreds of participants via WhatsApp	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concerns around lack of resources to address health, lighting, and transportation issues• Spanish speaking residents reported feeling unsafe around the expressway, due to lack of wayfinding and highway signage accessible to non-English speakers• Noted health concerns related to lack of affordable healthcare, problems dealing with asthma and healthcare



Mexican Coalition Día de los Muertos Event outreach tabling.

Morris Park BID and Loving the Bronx



#Loving
The
Bronx

- Morris Park BID is a nonprofit that works to enhance the commercial corridor with beautification, sanitation, and safety resources
- Loving the Bronx is a grassroots group that advocates for community building and organizing for social and environmental issues

Outreach Activities

- Gave presentations to Bronx Community Board 8 and 11, Montefiore residents, and to Bronx businesses
- Co-hosted walkshop with DCP and DOT from Parkchester to West Farms
- Tabled at events and promoted the study on social media and the Bronx Times

Key Findings

- Reported positive community feedback about the study
- Issues raised related to poor sanitation and access, lack of park space, and greenspace maintenance

Morris Park Business Improvement District
WORKING TOGETHER FOR A CLEAN, SAFE AND THRIVING MORRIS PARK AVENUE COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR!
 First ever Halloween and Dia De Los Muertos Festival – big success at Loreto Park

First of its kind "Halloween and Dia De Los Muertos Festival" at Loreto Park organized by the office of Council Member Marjorie Velazquez, brought together the diverse Morris Park community, with games, refreshments, face painting, pizza and a lot of fun on October 28, 2023. With activity tables from Assembly Member John Zaccaro Jr., Senator Gustavo Rivera, Senator Nathalia Fernandez, the Community Board 11 DEI Committee, Carpenter Contractor Alliance of Metropolitan New York, NYC District Council of Carpenters, Grubhub, Pepsi and the Morris Park BID, the event culminated with a costume parade and "Coco" movie night. A joyful event enjoyed by the entire Morris Park community! MPBID thanks all organizers, NYC Parks, NYPD 49th Precinct, all elected representatives participating and especially the community coming out to enjoy the celebration of these beloved fall occasions.

Reimagining the Cross Bronx Expressway Project
We want to hear from YOU!
 Your ideas can help shape the future of the Cross Bronx and your community!
 To learn more, visit [nyc.gov/CrossBronx](https://www.nyc.gov/CrossBronx) or email at CrossBronx@dot.nyc.gov

EVENT	DATE	TIME	RAIN DATE	LOCATION	MEETING POINT
Public Walkshop Central	Saturday, November 4	10am	Sunday, November 5	Crotana, Claremont	Prospect Playground
Public Walkshop East	Saturday, November 4	10am	Sunday, November 5	Parkchester, Unionport	Hugh J. Grant Circle
Spanish Walkshop	Saturday, November 4	10am	Sunday, November 5	Crotana, Claremont	Webster Ave
Bike Tour	Saturday, November 11	10am		All	Virginia Park
Community Gathering*	Saturday, November 11	12pm		Morris Heights	Half Nelson Playground

More information and registration for upcoming events at <https://www.crossbronx.info/>
 Follow us on social media Morris Park Business Improvement District @morrisparkbid

Community partners organized activities and shared information on engagement opportunities.

New Settlement



- New Settlement is a 30-year-old community-led settlement house
- Delivers programs for afterschool education, workforce development, college readiness, health and fitness, and safer housing and schools.

Outreach Activities	Key Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distributed over 400 flyers across the Study Area• Participated in a community tour, bike tour, and hosted community events at Roberto Clemente State Park to spread word about the study and provide community activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most concerned with accessibility and connectivity around the Study Area• Residents cited the Expressway as an isolating infrastructure, cutting communities in half• Identified the need for more east-west and north-south connections



New Settlement outreach tabling from Tour Del Bronx, a community biking event throughout the Bronx.

Youth Ministries for Peace & Justice



- Youth Ministries for Peace & Justice prepares community members to become voices for peace and justice
- Services include education, youth development, low income social and legal immigration services

Outreach Activities	Key Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoted walkshops and surveys on social media and in newsletters• Conducted walkshops with FIC and NYC DCP• Conducted resident meetings with Bronx River Houses Tenant Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Noted feelings of disconnection due to loud noises, low lighting, and poor sanitation• Residents called for community fixtures such as benches, trash cans, and bathrooms• Called for attention to unhoused residents who reside near and under the expressway



Walkshop participants raising issues about pedestrian safety across the Study Area.



Walkshop for people with disabilities ensures inclusive engagement across the Study Area.

4. Corridor-Wide Issue Identification Findings by Topic



The issues identified in this chapter are the result of an extensive community engagement effort throughout the Cross Bronx Study Area. The experiences compiled below are a synthesis of comments received from walkshops, workshops, community events, and the virtual portal and survey.

Participants identified connectivity and open space, health, and safety as top priority issues.

Outreach conducted during the Issue Identification Round collected input on the issues that residents and stakeholders feel should be prioritized in the study.

The word cloud infographic below highlights keywords identified from participants' comments. The larger the issue appears in the graphic, the more frequently the issue was referenced.

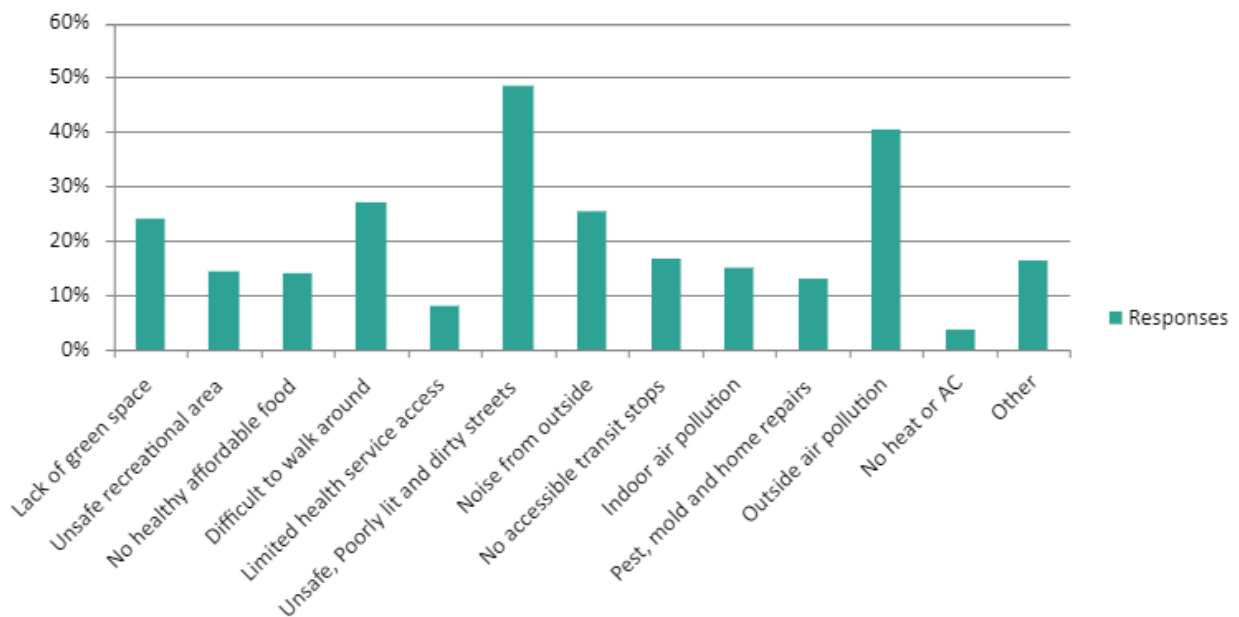
Word Cloud of Frequently Raised Participant Comments



Expanding Outreach with Surveys

To help gauge community priorities, the Study Team and Community Partners distributed an online survey. The most frequently identified issues were consistent throughout the engagement process, across locations and input methods. In questions asking survey participants to identify their top three issues, nearly 50 percent of the 350 respondents identified unsafe, poorly lit, and dirty streets, and 40 percent identified outside air pollution as the most significant issue. Other top-ranked issues included challenges for pedestrians, outside noise, and a lack of green space.

Based on your experience with the Cross Bronx Expressway, choose up to three topics that are most important to you:



Community feedback was grouped into four major themes:

Connected Communities refers to the challenges participants face in traveling to, from and within the Study Area across different modes of transportation. This section also includes comments about park access because open spaces came up as one of the main destinations that people struggle to reach.

Healthy Communities discusses the ways in which participants understand the CBE as negatively affecting individual health and community wellbeing.

Safe Communities includes comments on features of the Study Area that contribute to quality of life and public safety, such as poor lighting in underpasses or insufficient pedestrian infrastructure at complex intersections.

Strong Communities encompasses intangible but vitally important issues relating to community empowerment and stability, including subjects like Environmental Justice and economic development.

4.1. Connected Communities

Participants place a high value on open space improvements and connectivity, with over 600 comments from the Issue Identification outreach stage referencing this topic. Specifically, participants cited the lack of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure as barriers that impede connections to jobs, services, family, and neighbors. Connectivity was also cited as a challenge in accessing parks and open spaces throughout the Study Area. In addition to access, participants cited a need for more open space, street trees, and green infrastructure throughout the Study Area.

4.1.1 Park Access

Across the Study Area, there are 66 parks and playgrounds within a half-mile of the Cross Bronx Expressway. Despite this large number of open spaces, participants identified a lack of access to parks and playgrounds, maintenance issues, lack of lighting, and noise and air pollution as key issues facing parks and playgrounds. These outdoor areas range from regional landmark parks like Bronx Park and Crotona Park to small neighborhood playgrounds that serve as anchors for their communities. Parks and playgrounds are vital amenities that increase public health and wellbeing by creating opportunities for play and exercise, providing much-needed respite from urban heat, decreasing flooding risks, creating habitat for local wildlife, and more.

Currently, the distribution of parks and green space in the Study Area is concentrated in the central section of the Study Area, which hosts Claremont Park, Crotona Park, Walter Gladwin Park, Starlight Park and Bronx River Park. In addition, there are several small open space parcels adjacent to the Cross Bronx that were acquired to facilitate the expressway's development but are currently fenced and not used as public space.

The map on the following page identifies parks and playgrounds located within the Study Area.



Parks		
1. Miracle Garden	14. Jerome Playground South	27. Eae J Mitchell Park
2. Mosaic Success Garden	15. Crotona Park	28. Volky Garden & Flowers
3. Vidalia Park	16. Rock Garden Park	29. Jardin De La Familia
4. College Avenue Greenthumb	17. Virginia Park	30. Castle Hill Little League Field
5. Mapes Park	18. Captain William Harry Thompson Playground	31. Bronx Park
6. Watson Gleason Playground	19. LeAvenue it Better Kids' Garden	32. River Garden
7. Garden of Eden	20. P.O. Serrano Playground	33. Garden of Life
8. Quarry Ballfields	21. West Farms Rapids	34. Garden of Happiness
9. Walter Gladwin Park	22. Daly Avenue Garden	35. Angie Lee Gonzales Garden
10. Aqueduct Park	23. Highbridge Park	36. Bridge Park
11. 176th Street Community Garden	24. Townsend Garden	37. Starlight Park
12. Claremont Park	25. El Batey de Dona Provi Garden	
13. Richman (Echo) Park	26. Grant Park	

Playgrounds		
1. Seabury Playground	11. Caserta Playground	21. Half-Nelson Playground
2. Merriam Playground	12. Sedgwick Playground	22. Galileo Playground
3. Peace Park	13. Morris Mesa	23. Mount Hope Playground
4. Plimpton Playground	14. Noble Playground	24. Stop & Go Playground
5. Ogden Plimpton Playground	15. Jerome Playground South	25. Little Claremont Playground
6. Goble Playground	16. Havemeyer Playground	26. FDNY-EMT Yadira Arroyo Playground
7. Admiral Farragut Playground	17. Virginia Playground	27. Haviland Playground
8. Prospect Playground	18. Jennie Jerome Playground	28. Bridge Playground
9. Taylor Playground	19. Belmont Playground	29. Mapes Pool
10. Castle Hill Playground	20. Cleopatra Playground	

Park access issues and concerns:

- a. **Limited access to parks and unsafe pedestrian connections** were among the issues voiced most frequently by participants in the Study Area.
- b. **Several participants expressed support for new connections between open spaces**, including Crotona and Gladwin Park in the central section of the Study Area, and highway capping to reconnect communities through parks and playgrounds, or new open spaces.
- c. **Limited access to existing greenway and waterfront park infrastructure** for the Bronx River Greenway and Harlem River waterfront was identified as an issue.

Concerns were raised about open space maintenance, beautification, and trash management in parks throughout the Study Area.

4.1.2 East-West/North-South Connectivity

According to the survey results, participants use a variety of transportation modes to travel near the Cross Bronx. The most frequently used modes were the subway, buses, walking, and driving. Participants also used for-hire vehicles (taxi/rideshare), personal bikes or scooters, Citi Bike, and other modes.

Details and figures regarding the survey results can be found in the appendix.

- a. **Ramp placements disrupt flow.**
Throughout the Study Area, residents raised concerns about disruptions to connectivity and safety caused by highway entrance and exit ramps, which impact all roadway users.

”

“Virginia Park is split in half by the Cross Bronx, and if capped in that area, it would connect the park and increase green space for residents.” – East Workshop Participant

”

“The overpass crossing on Ellis Avenue is unsafe due to the on and off ramps that are on both sides of the overpass; there are four schools and a library in the immediate vicinity with students crossing the Expressway. If this area was capped, it would create a lifestyle improvement connecting residents and local educational institutions.”
– East Workshop Participant

”

“My daughter’s summer program is in this neighborhood -- but I may not allow her to go because transit is so poor. It is not safe for her to bike here.”
– Central Workshop Participant

b. Local street discontinuity.

Participants noted lack of local street connectivity which creates difficulty for individuals taking transit, walking, and biking in the area. Available infrastructure is impeded by gaps in protection and challenging entry and exit ramps, traffic, and noise. This was cited as a concern throughout the Study Area, and particularly when moving east-west along the Cross Bronx on 174th Street, East Tremont, and Service Roads North and South.

c. Bus transit offers limited reliability.

Community members expressed connectivity issues related both to frequent bus delays caused by congestion on the highway as well as the lack of priority bus lanes. Some community members suggested improvements for bus shelters and amenities for specific routes, as well as improvements to overall speed and reliability.

d. Limited transit reliability necessitates alternative travel choices.

Some community members identified preferences for alternative travel modes due to the unreliability of public transit in the Study Area. They reported using bicycles, scooters, rideshare, or automobiles due to the lack of transit options in their area or the unreliability of existing transit service. Rideshare (via paid services such as taxi, Uber or Lyft) was described as a financially burdensome option that is sometimes necessary to compensate for limited or unreliable transit options.

”

“I bike because east-west journeys in NYC are challenging. You have to use buses, which are often slower than walking, and biking is an obvious alternative.”

– Central Workshop Participant

”

“East-west travel on public transit in the Bronx is very difficult and takes a lot of time. This is not an issue in Manhattan – this is an equity issue for those in the Bronx.”

– Central Workshop Participant

”

“I take an Uber [because of transit barriers and the length of the commute] but monthly transportation costs over \$1,000—all because there are no other options.”

– Central Workshop Participant

e. **Challenges under elevated sections of the CBE.**

Participants identified underpasses as lacking lighting, having excess trash, and being poorly maintained. Industrial and unauthorized uses create additional barriers. These issues limit connectivity by creating safety concerns around these crossings.

f. **Challenges on overpasses across the CBE.**

Participants voiced concern that many elevated paths over the Cross Bronx feature unsafe spaces that should be addressed in terms of pedestrian safety, bike infrastructure and trash management. They also identified challenges related to the high levels of noise and air pollution. These issues were cited as creating barriers between communities.

g. **Local street conditions and management contribute to disconnection.**

Residents identified the limited connectivity of local north-south streets throughout the Study Area, both for vehicles and for active transportation users (bicyclists and pedestrians).

For example, connectivity on local streets such as Park Avenue is limited by poor sidewalk and bike lane quality. Participants also cited the presence of businesses such as car washing operations on several bridges as reducing the space available for pedestrian use.



Walkshop attendees identifying safety, lighting, and accessibility concerns related to underpass areas.



“The bike path from Bronx Zoo connects until Starlight Park, but there are a lot of intersections in between the two areas causing long waiting times and inconsistent travel paths for cyclists. The bike lane goes all the way to Soundview Park and is key for North-South connection for cyclists.”

– West Workshop Participant



Bike Tour attendees identifying issues related to safety and accessibility.

4.2. Healthy Communities

Community members named air quality and noise as top concerns throughout the Study Area, with over 500 comments mentioning these issues. Air pollution from Cross Bronx Expressway traffic congestion was often raised as an issue affecting the health of children, the elderly, and those at risk of health problems such as bronchitis and lung diseases.

4.2.1 Air Quality

Residents frequently raised concerns about air pollution in indoor as well as outdoor environments, with some residents avoiding opening windows due to emissions from the Cross Bronx. Air pollution from the CBE is broadly believed by the community to be a source of increased asthma rates. Community members reported that air pollution affects their ability to enjoy outdoor spaces and reduces quality of life.

”
***“There are too many fumes/
concentrated emissions due
to freight traffic, especially
when speeds are lower/
congestion is higher.”***
– Central Workshop Participant

4.2.2 Noise

Noise was raised as an ongoing concern along the Cross Bronx, impacting the quality of life of those living near the highway as well as travelers through the Study Area. Related issues include residents avoiding opening windows in their homes and not feeling comfortable participating in outdoor activities in the Study Area. Many residents also reported noise as a top concern in parks and playgrounds near the Cross Bronx.

4.2.3 Trash Management

Many participants made comments related to trash management along the Study Area, with over 50 mentions of the issue made during general outreach, and 173 individuals (50 percent of participants) noting it as their primary issue in the survey. Trash management along streets and underpasses adjacent to the Cross Bronx is a key concern. Littering and larger scale dumping is an issue in parks throughout the Study Area.

”

“I live right across from the CBE. It’s extremely loud. I don’t open my window because of the noise. Early morning rush hour is bad.”
– Central Workshop Participant

”

“Very loud traffic noise and trucks passing through at all times of day. Expressway vents next to playgrounds and schools.”
– Central Walkshop Participant

”

“The Bronx River Avenue underpass is dirty and very dark at night. Full of trash.”
– West Workshop Participant

4.3. Safe Communities

Community members identified safety within the Study Area as a top issue for pedestrians and cyclists, with over 450 comments mentioning this concern in the Issue Identification round. The identified issues relate to traffic congestion, reckless driving, unsafe crossings and intersections, poor lighting, and the presence of substance abuse and illegal activity in underpasses.

Specific safety and traffic issues raised by participants across the Study Area include:

4.3.1 Pedestrian Concerns

Participants cited pedestrian safety issues as particularly pronounced at transit hubs such as Hugh Grant Circle and at major intersections on streets like Southern Boulevard. They felt these issues are a result of:

- A lack of safe infrastructure at key intersections
- Illegally parked vehicles, which force pedestrians to walk in the street, particularly at underpasses
- The volume and speed of traffic
- Highway ramps, and the speed of entry by drivers on and off the highway

4.3.2 Bicycling Concerns

- a. Cyclist safety issues were referenced by participants across the Study Area, particularly in areas without separated bike lanes. They feel these roads leave cyclists exposed to speeding vehicles and unsafe driving. Several participants asked for improved safety and expanded pedestrian and bike connections between Bronx River Arts Center, Bronx Park, and Starlight Park.
- b. Participants who bike or scooter reported a lack of wayfinding signage and requested the expansion/improvement of the bike lane network in the area.
- c. Some participants who would like to use bikes or scooters reported not biking or scootering due to safety issues.



“Need an improved bike connection between West Farms Rapids Park and entrance to the Bronx River Greenway at Bronx Park.”
– Survey Respondent

4.3.3 Intersection Safety Concerns

Participants noted that intersections across the Study Area can feel chaotic and unsafe for residents. Intersections in proximity to schools and parks were highlighted as a particular concern.

4.3.4 Local Street Management and Parking Concerns

Residents described driving in the area as convenient but expensive and said that parking in dense areas is difficult. Frequent double parking in bus lanes, bike lanes, or vehicle lanes was reported as an issue causing delays for buses and cars and unsafe passage for bikes.

4.3.5 Lighting Concerns

Many participants made comments related to poor lighting in the Study Area. As a result of poor lighting in areas like the underpass at Third Avenue or Bronx River Avenue, community members voiced concerns for safety, saying that they avoid these areas, particularly at night.

”

“There’s no safe way for pedestrians or bikers to cross. There’s no crosswalk, lights, no stop sign.”

– Central Walkshop Participant

”

“The commuting cost increases when you have to pay for more gasoline and/or taxi for fear of walking because the streets are dark, and the recreation areas are dangerous.”

– Survey Respondent

4.4. Strong Communities

4.4.1 Housing, Social, and Economic Development

Community members expressed fear of displacement and concerns about the lack of economic development along the Study Area. Participants identified the expressway as a barrier to accessing essential resources and services related to food, jobs, and limiting connectivity to job opportunities.

4.4.2 Environmental Justice

Environmental justice is at the heart of many of the concerns participants raised across all categories, including air and noise pollution, connectivity and safety, and community health and food access. Many participants cited historical environmental injustices such as the harm caused by the construction of the Cross Bronx, which displaced residents, disconnected neighborhoods, and worsened noise and air pollution. Participants emphasized the importance of healing these harms by reconnecting communities, alleviating environmental burdens, and improving access to resources such as open space.

4.4.3 Governance, Communication, and Community Input

Comments relating to governance and community input highlighted a desire to expand the Study Area to cover adjacent neighborhoods such as Washington Heights in Manhattan and community assets such as the High Bridge Community Center. People also expressed an interest in seeing the Study Team coordinate with other cities about how they have handled similar issues and hoped for the study to avoid getting bogged down by bureaucratic delays.



Workshop attendees discussed issues related to safety, housing, and environmental justice

5. Location-Specific Findings by Corridor Sector












A large portion of the feedback received during the Issue Identification Round is tied to specific locations and intersections. Of the 1600+ comments received, more than a third are location-specific.

The most frequently mentioned areas were Hugh Grant Circle/Virginia Park, Crotona Park, and the Edward L Grant Highway/University Avenue areas.

The “Locations frequently mentioned by participants” map on the following page shows 23 community-identified areas that received 10 or more comments, color-coding locations by Study Area sections: West (blue), Central (orange), and East (red).

The “What We Heard about the Cross Bronx” maps provide more detail for the areas listed in the “Locations frequently mentioned by participants” map. Each section includes the most frequently raised issues and opportunities, which are organized into the following categories:

-  Traffic calming and street safety
-  Open space
-  Capping opportunities
-  Pedestrian connectivity
-  Bike infrastructure
-  Transit Connectivity and Reliability
-  Air pollution and noise reduction
-  Lighting
-  Trash management

For each section of the Study Area, several of the key locations are described in greater detail. These are the places that received the most thorough community feedback.

Locations frequently mentioned by participants



- Park/Open Space
- Subway station
- Metro North station
- Metro North station

Subway Lines

- 1/2
- 4/5/6
- B/D

Locations West Section

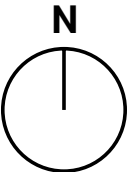
1. Harlem River / Major Deegan Expy
2. University Ave / Edward L Grant Hwy
3. Jesup Ave
4. Jerome Ave
5. Walton Ave
6. Grand Concourse
7. Morris Ave

Locations Central Section

8. Webster Ave
9. Park Ave
10. Third Ave
11. Crotona / W.Gladwin Parks
12. Admiral Farragut / Fairmount / Prospect Playgrounds
13. Southern Blvd
14. Boston Rd

Locations East Section

15. Bronx River Corridor
16. Bronx River Ave
17. Bronx River Pkwy
18. Noble Playground / Rosedale Ave
19. 174th Street/Wood Park/St. Lawrence Triangle
20. White Plains Rd
21. Hugh L. Grant Circle / Virginia Park
22. Ellis Avenue/Dennis L. Devlin Park
23. Castle Hill Ave



5.1. West (Morris Heights, Highbridge, Mount Hope, Mount Eden, Tremont, Claremont Village, Grand Concourse)

5.1.1 General Description

The western section of the Study Area stretches from the Harlem River to Webster Avenue and covers the jurisdictions of Bronx Community Boards 4 and 5. The far western section of the Cross Bronx connects with the Washington Bridge and Major Deegan Expressway, resulting in complex intersections and waterfront access discontinuity. This section is served by three subway lines, including the 4 line running parallel to Jerome Avenue and the B/D lines on Grand Concourse Blvd, which provide north-south connectivity. Several bus lines provide additional north-south and east-west connectivity. In addition, Featherbed Ln, W. Mount Eden Avenue, 174th Street, and Cross Bronx service routes provide partial east-west connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles due to discontinuity in various sections.

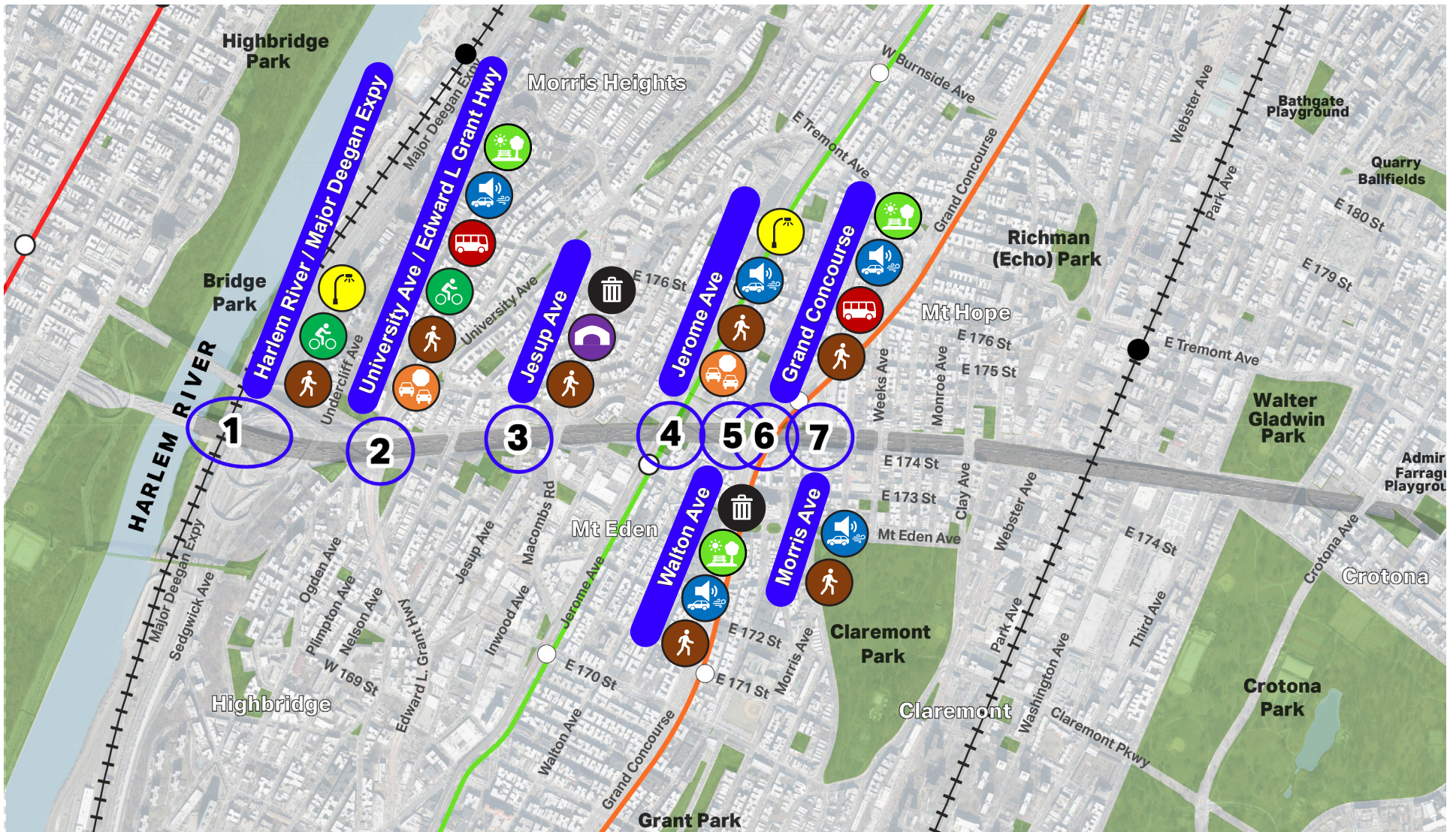
There are more than ten playgrounds and parks located in the west section of the Cross Bronx Study Area, including large parks like Claremont Park and Bridge Park with access to the Harlem River waterfront.

In the west section, participants highlighted pedestrian safety and connectivity, air and noise pollution, opportunities to improve green space, accessibility, trash management, and lighting. Below is a map identifying key topics for each location and more details on input received regarding the following frequently mentioned intersections: Harlem River, University Avenue, Jerome Avenue, and Grand Concourse.



Multiple guided walk tours to identifying issues were conducted along the Study Area.

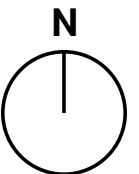
What We Heard in The Cross Bronx West Section



- Park/Open Space
- Subway station
- Metro North station
- Metro North station
- Most Commented Areas
- Subway Lines**
- 1/2
- 4/5/6
- B/D

- Issues and feedback themes**
- Traffic calming and street safety
- Green space
- Capping opportunities
- Pedestrian connectivity
- Bike infrastructure
- Transit connectivity and reliability

- Air pollution and noise reduction
- Lighting
- Trash management





Workshop attendees discussed open space, maintenance, and accessibility.

5.1.2 Harlem River Connection/Major Deegan Expressway (Location 1)

The Harlem River Waterfront area encompasses the connection between the Cross Bronx Expressway and the Major Deegan Expressway and includes Bridge Park, High Bridge, and Hamilton Bridge. This location has many underpasses due to expressway and bridge intersections. Key issues identified for this location include:

Lighting issues

- Participants cited a lack of lighting in the area around the Major Deegan Expressway
- Dark streets and steps near Bridge Park contribute to an unsafe perception of the area and discourage some residents from visiting the park

Air pollution and noise reduction issues

- There were comments about high noise levels, bad smells, and emissions and exhaust around the intersection of the Major Deegan and Cross Bronx
- High Bridge and Hamilton Bridge are key locations where emissions and smells are prominent, which participants believe creates an unhealthy environment for people with asthma and others with health vulnerabilities

Green space opportunities

- Need for greenery, open space, and improved connections to the waterfront near the Major Deegan Expressway
- Suggest adding trees, plants, and extending parks in the area neighboring the Harlem River, where participants feel an excess of small parcels of land are currently unused

5.1.3 University Avenue/Edward L Grant Highway (Location 2)

The intersection of University Avenue/Edward L Grant Highway and the Cross Bronx Expressway runs through Bridge, Plimpton and Sedgwick Playgrounds. In addition to the top community issues identified below, community members also identified this area as a priority for bicycle infrastructure and transit improvements. Key issues identified for this location include:

Traffic calming and street safety issues

- University Avenue and Edward L Grant Highway are considered unsafe and congested, especially for the population of seniors and young students in the area
- People noted instances of double parking in bus lanes and bike lanes
- Participants commented that cars and scooters seem to speed and not yield to traffic lights

Air Pollution and noise reduction issues

- University Avenue is cited as having intense noise and air pollution stemming from the Cross Bronx Expressway
- There are concerns with 18-wheeler vehicles, buses, and large sanitation trucks that are frequently parked near playgrounds and drive through the neighborhood

Green space opportunities

- The connection between the Edward L Grant Highway and the CBE is an opportunity to add and improve green spaces
- While Plimpton Playground is well maintained, peaceful, and clean, it could be improved to increase use by the community and to make the area more exciting

5.1.4 Jerome Avenue (Location 4)

The Cross Bronx Expressway runs below grade where it intersects Jerome Avenue, while subway line 4 runs above the Avenue as an elevated line. Jennie Jerome Playground sits at the intersection of Jerome Avenue and the expressway and is encircled by exit and entrance ramps. Key issues identified for this location include:

Traffic calming and street safety issues

- The intersection of Jerome Avenue and the Cross Bronx was highlighted as difficult to navigate, backed up, and uncomfortable for pedestrians
- Fewer businesses and pedestrians in the immediate vicinity of the intersection compared to other parts of Jerome Avenue, accompanied by heavy traffic, poor lighting, and a direct view of the Cross Bronx, make the intersection feel unsafe

Lighting issues

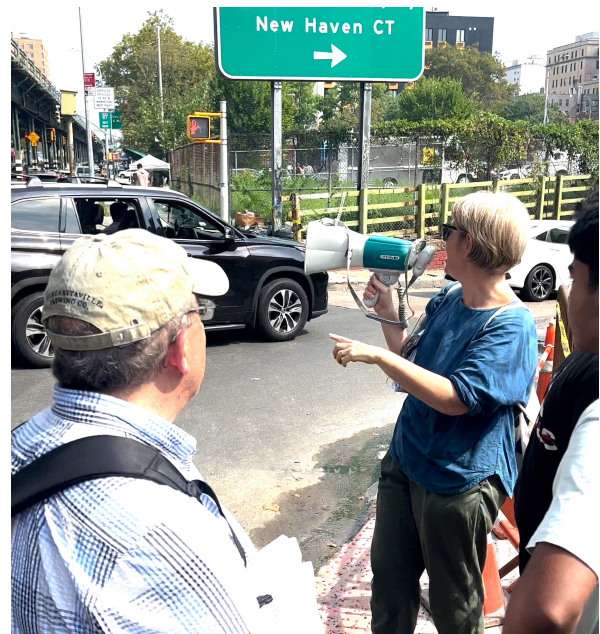
- Participants reported feeling uncomfortable crossing the street or accessing the 170th St subway station due to the limited lighting at the intersection

Pedestrian Connectivity

- Participants noted a feeling of neighborhood isolation and challenges accessing transit by foot
- Some feel unsafe walking along or crossing Jerome Avenue to access the 174th-175th St B/D train stations and the Mt. Eden 4 station
- The neighborhood between Jerome Avenue and the Grand Concourse is noted as lacking east-west connectivity due to discontinuities in the street grid which force pedestrians to use circular routes



Workshop participants mapped their commutes and identified challenges in accessibility and safety.



Local residents sharing concerns and issues regarding safety and connectivity.

5.1.5 Grand Concourse (Location 6)

The Cross Bronx Expressway traverses beneath the Grand Concourse, a key north-south connection between the Mt Hope and Mt Eden neighborhoods. The 174th-175th Street B/D subway station is nearby, and the underpass on 174th Street provides some local east-west connectivity. Key issues identified for this location include:

Air pollution and noise reduction issues

- Concerns of noise and air pollution along the Grand Concourse crossings
- Reports of soot, pollution, and noise coming through residents' windows
- Calls for attention to local street traffic mitigation and funding for filtration systems to improve indoor air quality
- Support for capping but concerns that it won't address air quality issues

Green space opportunities

- Participants suggest that the city look at integrating small green spaces in and around the Grand Concourse area

Transit issues

- Participants cited a lack of east-west bus and train options which contributes to the high rates of scooter and bike use in this area



Workshop participants provided input on their experience moving around and the issues and challenges they face.

5.1.6 Community Story

"I live in the South Bronx, so I live in the area of Webster Avenue going across to Jerome Avenue. That's the area that I did the first walk and I live within walking distance of that. I've always been very impressed about how desolate that area is, how ugly it is. And it really kind of is not a positive place for people to walk through, it's dirty, there's a lot of litter ... And, again, there's always the hidden concern about what happens with people being constantly exposed to the kind of pollutants surrounding them, which we are not really aware of. What is it doing to everybody? And what does this constant traffic, even the stress of really getting across streets, having to wait for lights, and the constant traffic coming in all directions, what does that really do? And how safe is it for kids and their being able to travel back and forth to go to school? So what is it like? What is the toll?"

– Marie McCullough (text has been edited for clarity)

5.2. Central (Tremont, Claremont, Crotona, Crotona Park East, West Farms)

5.2.1 General Description

The central section of the Study Area extends from Webster Avenue to the Bronx River and corresponds to Bronx Community Boards 3 and 6 jurisdictions. The central section of the Study Area is home to large parks like Crotona Park, Walter Gladwin Park, Starlight Park and Bronx River Park, in addition to smaller parks and playgrounds such as Admiral Farragut Playground, Fairmount Playground, and Prospect Playground, among others. Existing parks and playgrounds in the area face issues such as lack of connectivity to neighborhoods, lack of maintenance and lighting, and noise and air pollution.

Two subway lines serve this section, including lines 2 and 5 running parallel to Boston Rd. Buses provide additional north-south and east-west connectivity. Local roads 175th St, 176th St, and Cross Bronx service roads provide partial east-west connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles.

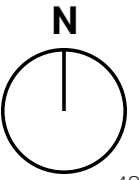
Participants in this section highlighted noise and air pollution, pedestrian safety and traffic calming measures, and accessibility to green and open space, suggesting capping initiatives to connect parks and playgrounds. Trash management and lighting improvements were mentioned in relation to underpass beautification and safety. Below is a map identifying key topics for each location and more details on input received regarding the following frequently mentioned intersections: Third Avenue, Crotona Park/ Walter Gladwin Park, Admiral Farragut Playground/ Fairmount Playground/Prospect Playground, and Southern Boulevard.

What We Heard in The Cross Bronx Central Section



- Park/Open Space
- Subway station
- Metro North station
- Metro North station
- Most Commented Areas
- Subway Lines**
- 1/2
- 4/5/6
- B/D

- Issues and feedback themes**
- Traffic calming and street safety
- Pedestrian connectivity
- Air pollution and noise reduction
- Green space
- Bike infrastructure
- Lighting
- Capping opportunities
- Transit connectivity and reliability
- Trash management



5.2.2 Third Avenue (Location 10)

Third Avenue crosses under the Cross Bronx Expressway through a pedestrian and vehicle underpass that connects Walter Gladwin Park and Crotona Park. Key issues identified for this location include:

Traffic calming and street safety issues

- The Third Avenue entrance and exit for the highway is described as a intersection safety concern for pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit users
- During hours of heavy congestion at Third Avenue, participants noted that it is difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to cross and access Crotona Park; there are also challenges during low periods of congestion when vehicles tend to speed

Pedestrian connectivity issues

- Third Avenue is a popular pedestrian and cyclist north/south connection; with lots of cars and trucks getting on and off the highway here, speeding and congestion make crossing the intersection difficult for those users

Trash management, lighting, and beautification

- Described as a busy and loud intersection with very few trash cans available, causing garbage and litter to be dumped under the bridge
- Calls for the addition of lighting, artwork and more open space amenities to improve this area, promote community, and beautify the underpass



Walkshop participants identifying and discussing issues related to the Study Area.

5.2.3 Crotona Park/Walter Gladwin Park (Location 11)

Crotona Park borders Fulton Avenue and Crotona Park East, covering 127 acres of land south of the expressway. Walter Gladwin Park is a 15-acre park north of the expressway bordering Third Avenue and Arthur Avenue. Key issues identified for this location include:

Traffic calming and street safety issues

- Participants requested crosswalk safety for pedestrians and bikers in the Crotona Park area, especially as it relates to north-south connections and crosswalk and road maintenance
- They noted a lack of marked crosswalks, pedestrian signals, and bike connectivity at crossings between Crotona and Gladwin parks
- Participants commented that narrow streets and a lack of sidewalk maintenance alongside the Murphy Houses and Crotona Park sidewalks foster an unfriendly or unsafe walking and biking environment

Air pollution and noise reduction issues

- Noise pollution is one of the most frequent concerns raised by community members in the Crotona Park area
- While participants enjoy the park and believe vegetation serves as a noise barrier, the noise from the Cross Bronx can still be heard throughout

Green space opportunities

- There are seemingly stark differences in maintenance, attention, and allocated green spaces between Crotona Park and Gladwin Park, partly a result of how the Cross Bronx cuts the parks in half
- Participants requested better green fields, cleaner and more well-lit open spaces, more picnic areas and event spaces, and more connection between the two parks
- Streets near the parks are described as having unused green spaces and an excess of "grey spaces" covered in impermeable pavement that could be improved with more functional elements such as rain gardens or pocket parks



Walkshop participants across the Study Area called for improvements in open space and parks to increase community connectivity.

5.2.4 Admiral Farragut Playground/Fairmount Playground/Prospect Playground (Location 12)

These three playgrounds are located along East 176th Street adjacent to the Cross Bronx Expressway vehicle and pedestrian overpasses. Prospect Playground and the northern section of Admiral Farragut Playground sit on top of an existing cap of the Cross Bronx Expressway between Clinton Avenue and Prospect Avenue. A significant area of Admiral Farragut Playground and the totality of Fairmount Playground are adjacent to the Cross Bronx Expressway. Key issues identified for this location include:

Air pollution and noise reduction issues

- Admiral Farragut, Fairmount, and Prospect Playgrounds are referred to as some of the noisiest playgrounds across the Study Area
- Noise coming from the Cross Bronx is a possible safety hazard for children and creates an uncomfortable recreational environment
- There are calls for green space and trees to mitigate noise pollution as in Crotona Park
- Air vents for the capped portion of the Cross Bronx are noted as a source of air pollution directly next to Admiral Farragut and Fairmount Playgrounds



Walkshops considered playground safety, maintenance, and air quality in the Study Area.

Capping opportunities

- Admiral Farragut Playground and Fairmount Playground recognized as a key opportunity for expanding existing covered portions of the expressway to expand green space over the Cross Bronx
- Suggestions that capping can be particularly effective here to combat the noise pollution stemming from the expressway, as was seen with Prospect Playground

Green space opportunities

- Participants felt that Admiral Farragut Playground lacks trees and greenspaces compared to Prospect Playground, making it noisier and less friendly for residents and children
- They commented that Admiral Farragut Playground is difficult to access and feels disconnected from the community

5.2.5 Southern Boulevard (Location 13)

Southern Boulevard crosses the Cross Bronx Expressway as a vehicle and pedestrian overpass and is aligned with Crotona Parkway Malls, connecting with Hylan Park and Crotona Park East. Key issues identified for this location include:

Air pollution and noise reduction issues

- Air pollution and noise reduction are concerns, and the lack of green spaces and trees is a potential contributor to both

Green space opportunities

- Suggestions for green infrastructure improvements to the Crotona Parkway Malls linear parks between Crotona Park and the Bronx Zoo
- Recommendations include: pollinator bushes, shrubs, fruiting plants, vines, and plants that may be able to capture CO₂ more quickly than young trees
- The linear parks and medians along Southern Boulevard could be more tightly packed with trees; participants proposed exploring capping for this location to expand the Southern Boulevard bridge into a cap.

Pedestrian connectivity issues

- Pedestrian and bicyclist enhancements are a high priority on the overpass in addition to adjacent streets such as the 2/5 subway line south of the Cross Bronx at 174th street, and along Boston Road

5.2.6 Community Story

"I am here for two reasons. One, for my personal reason, as a person who cares about people, the community, the world, myself, my family, I have a son who has asthma, I'm a person in the Bronx, I know highways and byways impact that in individuals. And then also I work with the community for [an] organization ... it's been around for 50 years-plus now. We definitely have a mission to build thriving communities. And as one of their credible messengers, this is what I'm out here doing, taking these type of opportunities to connect with different city agencies as well as other community members interested, invested into the same important work around this infrastructure, really understand the civics that we need to know for our communities when we hear that there are federal funds being provided to cities and states for infrastructure, what that looks like, how that should be utilized, and making sure that we now get our voice documented. As we know, historically, we have been taken out of the equation. Meaning as a black woman, people of color, black and brown communities have been isolated, just given crumbs, for lack of a better word. And learning just now about more of Robert Moses, understanding that historic impact of the Bronx and not really knowing it. From that perspective, today was such eye opening for me that I want to just share back with the community for them to do their own research, not to kind of just tell them things, but that kind of make them curious to want to go out and then continue to impact in positive ways."

– Nicole Carter (text has been edited for clarity)

5.3. East (Parkchester, Soundview, Unionport, Castle Hill, Westchester Square)

5.3.1 General Description

The east section of the Study Area extends from Bronx River to Westchester Creek and corresponds to Bronx Community Board 9 jurisdiction. Access to the Bronx River is feasible through the Starlight Park and West Farm Rapids Parks, but there is only partial connectivity between these parks. Smaller parks and playgrounds are located throughout this section, including Noble Playground, Virginia Park, and Chief Dennis L Devlin Park, among others. A section of Virginia Park close to Hugh L. Grant Circle represents one of the two capped areas in the Cross Bronx.

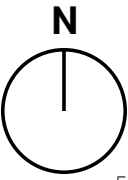
Three subway lines serve this section, including the 2 and 5 lines running parallel to Boston Rd and White Plains Rd, and the 6 line on Westchester Avenue with a connectivity node on Hugh Grant Circle station. Bus routes provide additional north-south and east-west connectivity. The pedestrian bridge at Ellis Avenue is the only north-south connection crossing the Cross Bronx between Hugh L. Grant Circle and Castle Hill Avenue. The Cross Bronx service roads, Westchester Avenue, and East Tremont Avenue serve as the principal east-west connectors for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles in this section.

Participants in this section highlighted pedestrian safety, noise, traffic, and accessibility to green and open space, suggesting capping initiatives to increase connections and improve access to parks and playgrounds. Below is a map identifying key topics for each location and more details on input received regarding the following frequently mentioned intersections: Bronx River Corridor, Noble Playground and Rosedale Avenue, and Hugh L. Grant Circle.

What We Heard in The Cross Bronx East Section



 Park/Open Space	Subway Lines	Issues and feedback themes	 Air pollution and noise reduction
 Subway station	 1/2	 Traffic calming and street safety	 Lighting
 Most Commented Areas	 4/5/6	 Green space	 Trash management
	 B/D	 Pedestrian connectivity	
		 Bike infrastructure	
		 Capping opportunities	
		 Transit connectivity and reliability	



5.3.2 Bronx River Corridor (Location 15)

Within the Study Area, the Bronx River corridor encompasses the stretch of the Bronx River from Starlight Park to the West Farm Rapids Parks and Bronx Zoo. The intersection of the Cross Bronx at Location 15 also includes Sheridan Blvd between East 177th and East 174th Streets, which passes under the CBE, E Tremont Avenue, and Devoe Avenue. In addition to the top community issues identified below, community members highlighted this area as a priority for pedestrian and bike infrastructure, and open green space with access to the Bronx River. Key issues identified for this location include:

Traffic calming and street safety issues

- Participants noted that vehicles speed, and raised concerns about pedestrian and bicycle safety at the intersections at Sheridan Blvd, and E 177th street
- All intersections could be improved to provide better connections, reduce speeding, and make them less chaotic
- A perceived excess of slip lanes and a lack of sidewalks, specifically along Sheridan Boulevard at Starlight Park, create challenges for pedestrian and cyclist navigation
- At E 177th Street, participants feel there is no safe way to cross the street to Bronx River Houses.



Starlight Park Access on 177th St.



West Rapids Farms Park Access on E Tremont Avenue.



Bike Tour Pauses in Starlight Park

Bike Infrastructure

- People traveling on bikes from Starlight Park to Bronx Park on the Bronx River Greenway reported that there is a gap in the Greenway between the two parks, which forces cyclists to cross highway ramps and ride in mixed traffic on busy streets. This creates a physical and psychological barrier to active mobility in the area, especially for people not comfortable riding in high-stress mixed traffic conditions, such as families. The intersections between these two segments of the Greenway were described as chaotic, confusing, and difficult to navigate, with low visibility and long wait times at crossings. The Cross Bronx Expressway also makes these sections of the Greenway noisy and less pleasant.

Green space opportunities

- Open space and green space are key issues along the Bronx River, where pollution and frequent DOT maintenance nearby make it difficult for community members to access and enjoy Starlight Park and the waterfront
- Some call for grassy spaces along highways to be transformed into passive greenspaces and integrated into surrounding parks
- There is also a general need for more trees, plants, and open space, and suggestions for the addition of a campground

5.3.3 Rosedale Avenue/Noble Playground (Location 18)

Rosedale Avenue runs above the Cross Bronx Expressway and is adjacent to Noble Avenue and Noble Playground. Noble Playground is located between entrances and exits belonging to the Cross Bronx Expressway and Bronx River Parkway. Key issues identified for this location include:

Pedestrian connectivity issues

- Between the Bronx River and Rosedale Avenue, participants felt that multiple barriers impede pedestrian connectivity to destinations such as Noble Playground. The Cross Bronx Expressway and the Bronx River Parkway, train tracks, the West Farms Bus Depot, and a concrete batching plant make it impossible to travel north to south or east to west. Noble Playground sits at the Northeast edge of this area, where it is only directly accessible via local streets to the east.
- Participants noted that Noble Playground has few entrances and is surrounded by many intersections, lanes and vehicles, making the park isolated and less used by the community

Traffic calming and street safety

- This area and its intersections feel particularly unsafe due to narrow sidewalks and the networking of intersecting streets alongside the multi-lane highway right next to Noble Playground
- There is a concern about Noble Playground lacking safe access points, with only one marked crosswalk to access the park at its southeast corner, and cars turning fast from the Cross Bronx Expressway off ramp across this crosswalk

Green space opportunities

- Participants said more green spaces are needed in Noble Playground – which is mostly concrete – and around Rosedale Avenue; multiple references have been made to the urban heat island effect at these locations
- The intersections at East 177th street and Rosedale Avenue could benefit from more native trees and plants to create a natural preserve

5.3.4 Hugh Grant Circle/Virginia Park (Location 21)

Hugh Grant Circle and Virginia Park are open spaces located on an existing covered portion of the expressway. Hugh Grant Circle is a busy junction for vehicle traffic from multiple intersecting arterials and a transit hub servicing several bus stops and the Parkchester 6 train station. The surrounding streets and overpasses at this location include Westchester Avenue, White Plains Road, and Metropolitan Avenue. Key issues identified for this location include:

Traffic calming and street safety issues

- Concerns of traffic and speeding from buses, cars, and trucks along Hugh Grant Circle make pedestrians and residents feel uncomfortable, anxious, and threatened
- Concerns over speeding have been mentioned by several community members with specific anecdotes of students being hit by cars and instances of illegal drag racing
- Participants noted that streetscape issues include potholes in the traffic circle, difficulty navigating Westchester Avenue as a pedestrian, and a lack of proper sidewalks with crossing signals on streets bordering Virginia Park



Virginia Park and Hugh L. Grant Circle.



Walkshop Participants Identifying Issues

Air pollution and noise reduction improvements

- This area is particularly noisy and polluted compared to other locations around the Study Area; the combination of emissions and noise originating from the Cross Bronx, service roads and subway make it difficult for the community to convene anywhere near Hugh Grant Circle or Virginia Park
- It is currently not pleasant to travel to Hugh Grant Circle because of the truck and car emissions, but people would like this area to be a more pedestrian-friendly hub

Green space opportunities

- Virginia Park could use more plants, trees, and active recreational space, especially along the side of the park that borders the highway
- Virginia Park feels comforting because of the existing tables, shade, and stone benches, and participants called for an expansion of this design throughout neighborhoods around the Cross Bronx
- Some also suggest new open space features be included such as water fountains, dog runs, amphitheaters, and bike storage lockers

Capping opportunities

- Hugh Grant Circle and Virginia Park were identified as key locations for expanding existing covered areas
- Participants noted that capping the section of the Cross Bronx between Virginia Park and Virginia Playground could create a large contiguous green space, creating opportunities for community amenities like farmers markets and dog runs and promoting pedestrian connectivity and transit access

5.3.5 Community Story

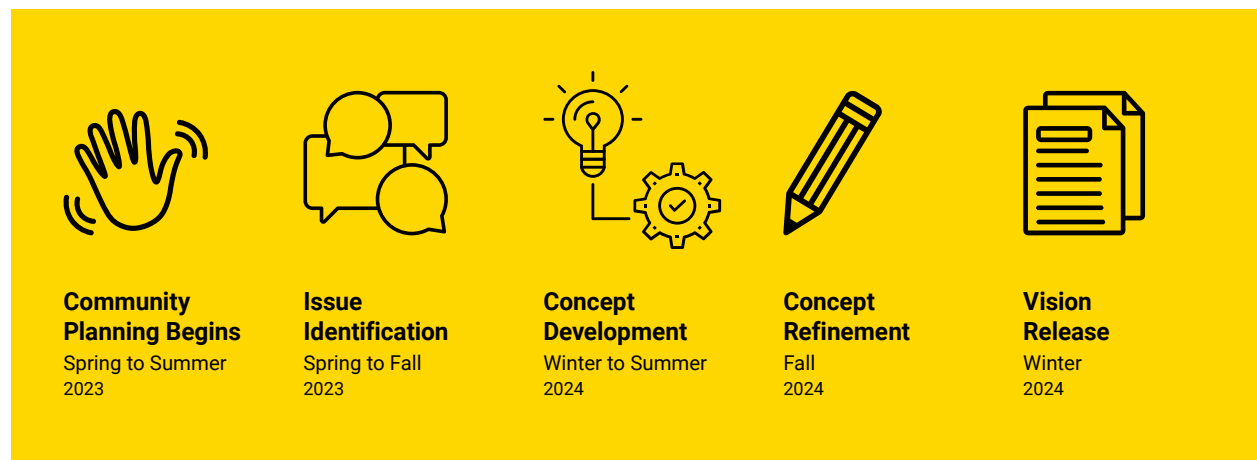
“There are very few access points to get across the Cross Bronx if you’re not going through the highway. So oftentimes, when I’m walking, the few bridges that can let you cross above the highway are very limited. And today, I came on my bike, and I walked under the six train. And I noticed that instantly, as soon as I got closer to the Cross Bronx Expressway area, the air felt heavier. And it was so loud to be in that space, not just because of the train, but because of all the traffic that’s around the area. And, again, the air smelled like combustion, and you could definitely feel the weight in your breathing after a while.”

– Leslie Vasquez (text has been edited for clarity)

6. Next Steps and Upcoming Engagement



Next steps include continued analysis of existing Study Area conditions and issues heard from the community by the Study Team and development of concepts that address community input received during the Issue Identification Round. The community will continue to guide this process through additional rounds of engagement in 2024.



The Study website nyc.gov/CrossBronx outlines upcoming meetings, opportunities for engagement and study materials.

Contact the study team by emailing CrossBronx@dot.nyc.gov



7. Appendix



7.1. Community Events and activities

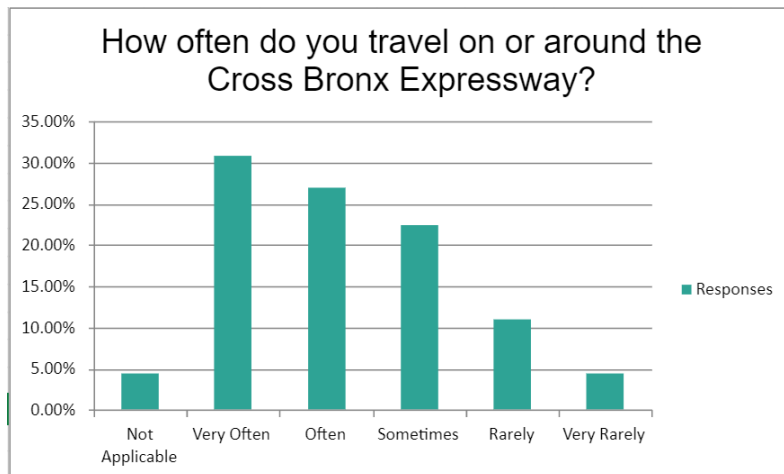
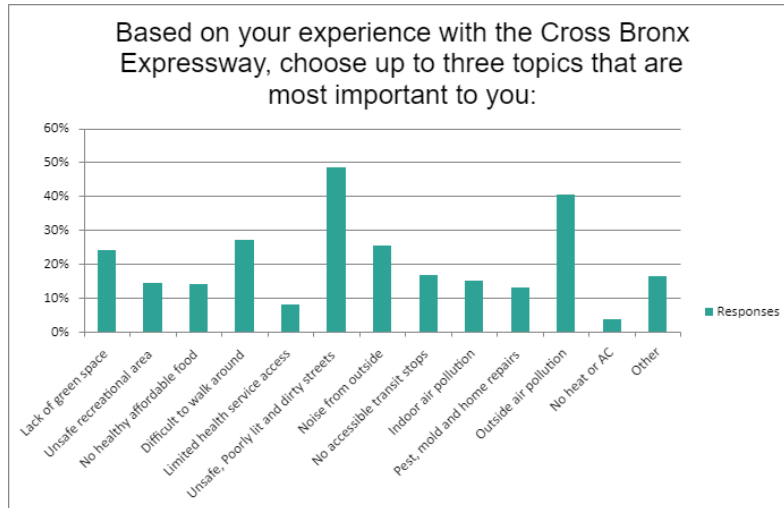
The table below shows a list of community events and engagement activities organized and/ or attended by the Study Team during the Issue Identification Round from June to November 2023.

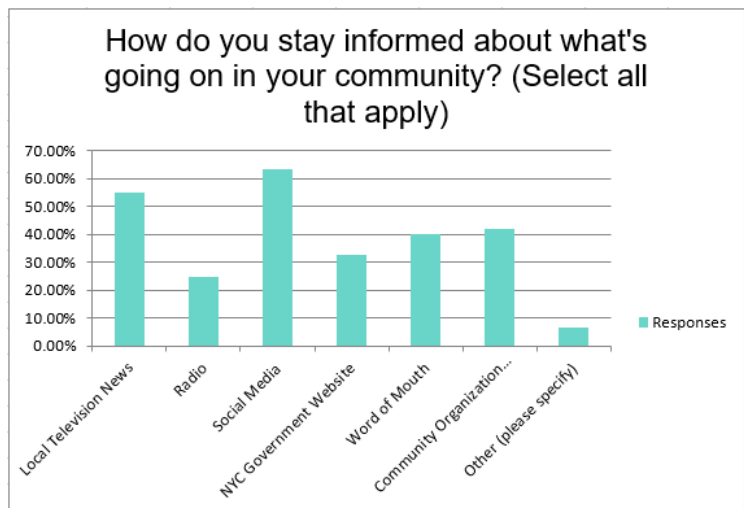
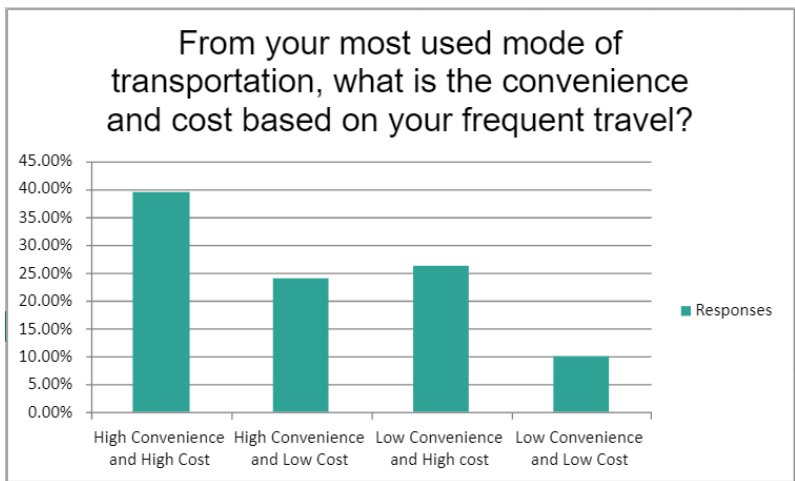
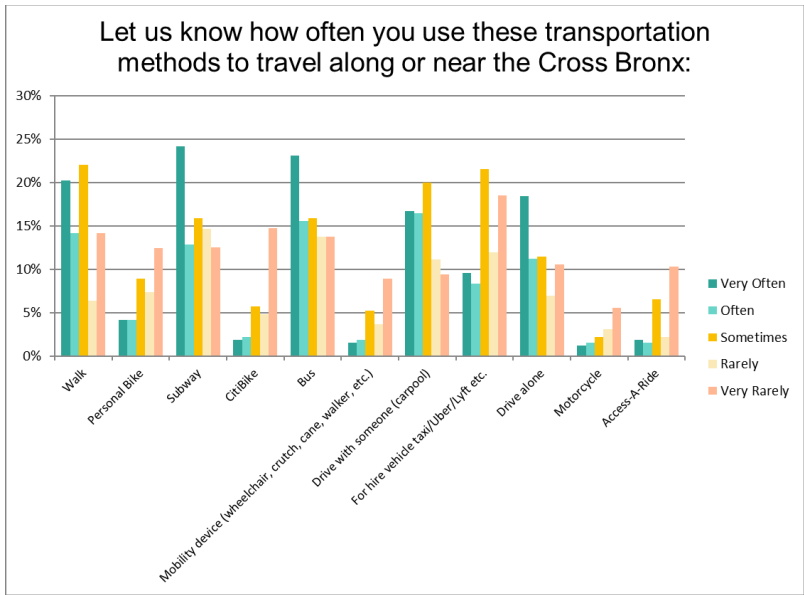
#	Date	Event Type	Event Name/Description
1	6/14/23	In-Person Workshop	West Study Team
2	6/20/23	In-Person Workshop	Central Study Team
3	6/26/23	In-Person Workshop	East Study Team
4	7/12/23	Virtual Workshop	Corridor-Wide Study Team
5	6/24/23	CWG Walkshop	Central Study Team
6	7/8/23	CWG Walkshop	West & Far West Study Team
7	7/15/23	CWG Walkshop	East Study Team
8	6/6/23	Community Events & Townhall	Highbridge Festival
9	6/17/23	Community Events & Townhall	Fish Parade
10	7/6/23	Community Events & Townhall	AOC Town Hall
11	7/15/23	Community Events & Townhall	Bronx River Living Festival
12	7/22/23	Community Events & Townhall	NYCHA Family Day - Sedgwick
13	7/29/23	Community Events & Townhall	Bike the Block
14	8/1/23	Community Events & Town hall	National Night Out

#	Date	Event Type	Event Name/Description
15	8/26/23	Community Events & Town hall	Summer Streets
16	9/9/23	Public Guided Tour	West Study Team
17	10/27/23	Community Events & Townhall	"Supported Event"
18	11/4/23	Public Guided Tour	East Study Team
19	11/4/23	Public Guided Tour	Central Study Team
20	11/4/23	Public Guided Tour - Spanish	Central Study Team
21	11/11/23	Public Bike Tour	Corridor-Wide Study Team
22	11/11/23	Community Events & Townhall	CM Sanchez Festival
23	9/15/2023 - 11/14/2023	Portal Mapping Activity	Study Team
24	9/15/2023 - 11/14/2023	Online Survey	Study Team

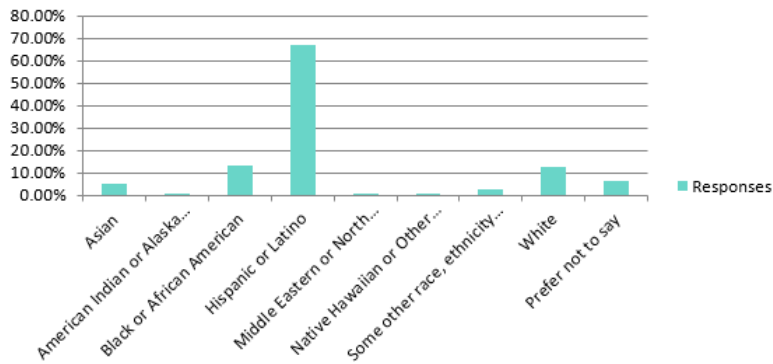
7.2. Survey Results

The Cross Bronx Issue Identification survey was developed by the Study Team and distributed in collaboration with Community Partners. The survey opened on September 15 and concluded on November 14, collecting 357 responses. The results are listed below:

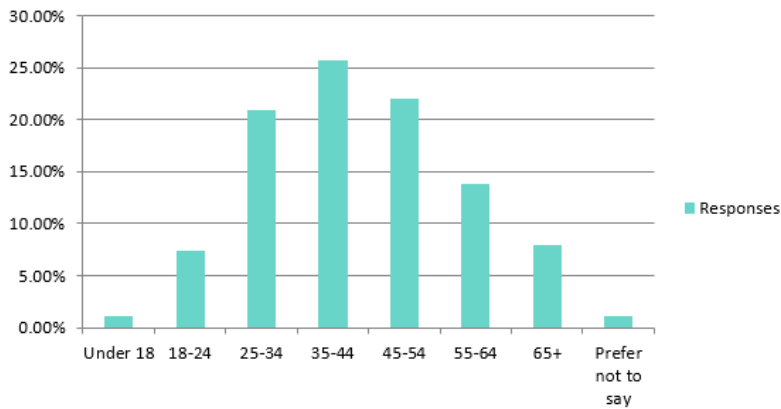




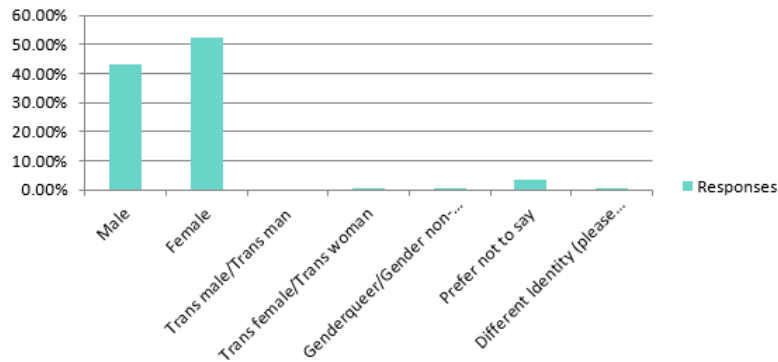
How do you identify in terms of race/ethnicity? (Select all that apply)



What is your age group?



How do you identify in terms of gender? (Select all that apply)



Word clouds by CBE Sections (East/Central/West)

CBE East - Key Words



CBE Central - Key Words



CBE West - Key Words





Engagement Summary Report: Issue Identification Round

June 2024



NEW YORK
STATE OF
OPPORTUNITY

Department of
Transportation