



Open Houses

Summary Report

Reimagine the Cross Bronx Expressway Study
Open Houses March-April 2023
Summary Report, June 2023



Reimagine the Cross Bronx

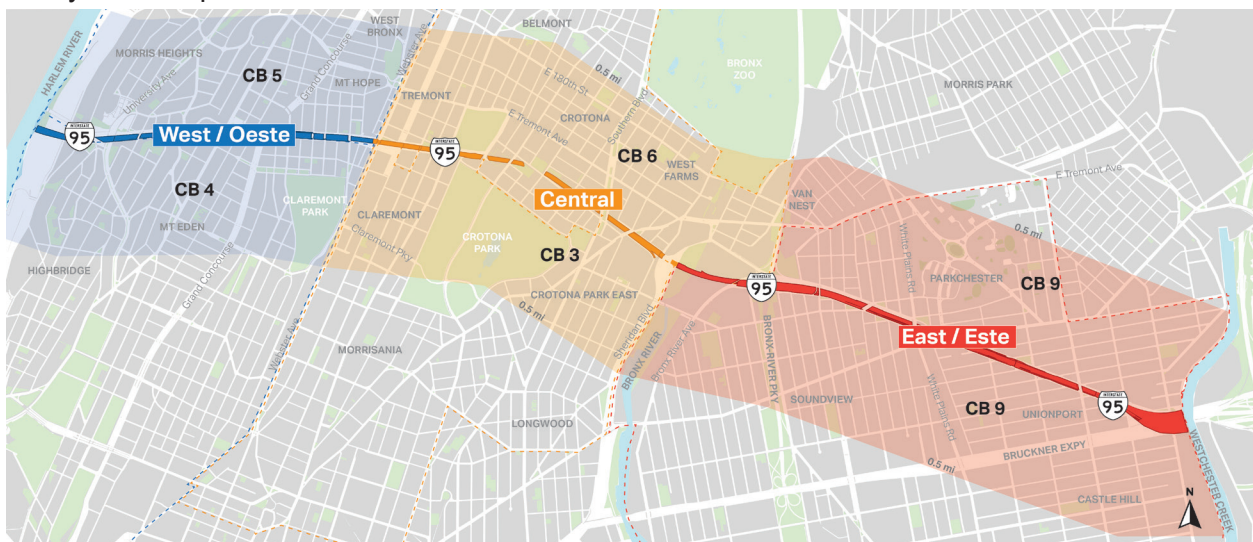


Project Overview

New York is developing a community-driven vision to Reimagine the Cross Bronx and reconnect neighborhoods along the Cross Bronx corridor from the Harlem River to the Hutchinson River Parkway, including the East, Central, and West sub areas.

This project is a partnership between the New York City Department of Transportation (NYC DOT), the NYC Department of City Planning (NYC DCP), the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT). Collectively the four partner agencies are referred to as the Project Team.

Study Area Map



Project Goals



Community-driven vision for the future of the Cross Bronx



Short, medium, and long-term proposals for improvements to the transportation network and public realm



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



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



Improvements to the public realm and access to open space

Engagement Goals

Local communities are key to this project. People that live, work, and play throughout the corridor will be informed, involved, and engaged throughout the process. We will continue to look to the diverse communities in the study area, to offer input and feedback, identify and prioritize issues, then develop and refine solutions and recommendations.

Reimagine the Cross Bronx



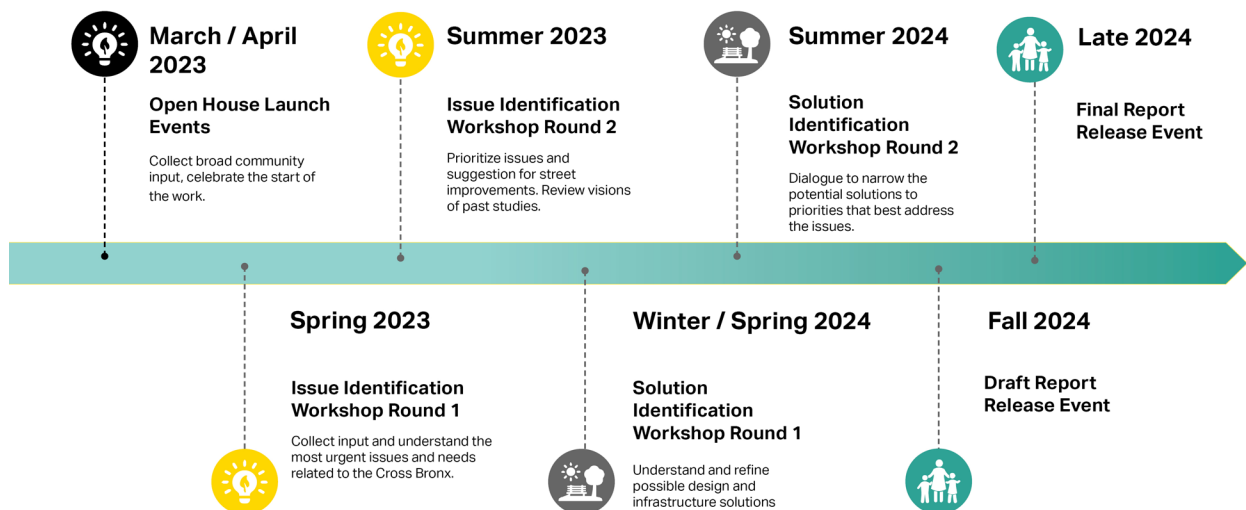
Public Involvement

The **Reimagine the Cross Bronx** study engages communities along the Cross Bronx corridor to identify issues and potential solutions in multiple touch points and activities. The first round of public engagement held between March 30th and April 4th, comprised a series of five open houses both virtual and in-person.

In addition, the Project Team holds periodic meetings with the Community Working Group (CWG), a set of community and civic stakeholders who advise on the study and serve as ambassadors to their Bronx communities. A Community Partner Program will be launched to fund local organizations to help the study reach diverse communities along the Cross Bronx.

Issue Identification Workshops are planned for Spring and Summer 2023, Solution Identification workshops in Winter, Spring and Summer of 2024, and events for the draft report release and final report release later in 2024.

Estimated Public Engagement Calendar



What we heard

Open Houses & Participants' Feedback

The virtual open house sessions were held on March 30 and April 10, from 6 pm to 8 pm, while the in-person open house sessions were held on Saturday, April 1, from 11 am to 2 pm at Bronx River Art Center (West Farms); Monday, April 3, from 6 pm to 9 pm at Davidson Community Center (Morris Heights); and Tuesday, April 4 from 5 pm to 8 pm at PS 106 Parkchester Elementary School (Parkchester).

These open houses launched the public involvement process and provided an opportunity for public input, questions, and comments. Approximately 250 members of the public attended the public open houses, and more than 500 comments were collected. Translation services were offered in Spanish, French, Bengali, and ASL interpretation.

The variety of activities offered at the open houses and community participation provided relevant feedback, which has been synthesized into several main categories.

The main comments were related to:

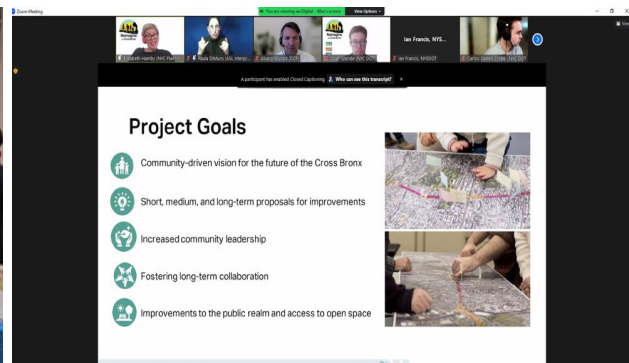
- **Community Assets Identification**
- **Open Space and Connections**
- **Air Quality, Noise, and Traffic Congestion**
- **Community Wellbeing**
- **Public Transit and Safety**

In addition, the public also raised comments related to:

- Housing, Social and Economic Development
- Environmental Justice
- Governance, Communication, and Community Input



In-Person Open Houses on April 1, 3, and 4, 2023



Virtual Open Houses on March 30, and April 10, 2023

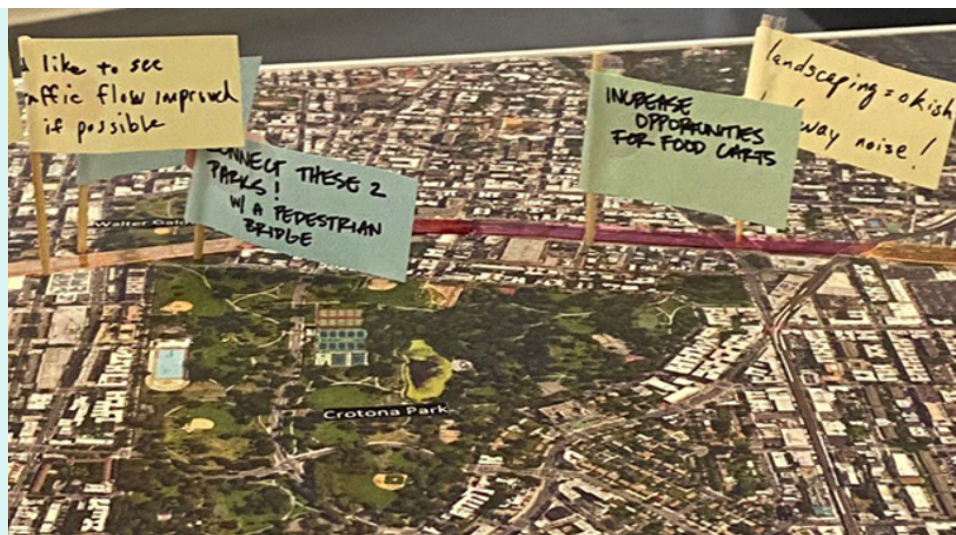
What we heard

Community Assets Identification

Using community mapping activities, participants were able to identify more than 25 community assets, landmarks, and programs around the Cross Bronx that are relevant to the community and should be considered when developing the study. Below is a summary of the locations identified during the open houses. Additional outreach opportunities will seek to continue gathering community-based landmarks and relevant location points throughout the corridor.

- **Educational facilities and programs** include P.S. X811 at Longfellow Ave, 180th St Day Care, Daily UPIC Program (University Professional Internships), Wings High School, Lebanon UPK Program (Universal Pre-K), MS 118 William Niles School, Bronx Community College, and Job Corps.
- **Cultural centers and community centers** include the Bronx River Art Center (BRAC), Davidson Community Center, Kips Bay boys and girls club, Police Athletic League (PAL) youth development not-for-profit)
- **Open Space and recreational facilities** include, Virginia Park and Train station, Hunts Point Market, Pedestrian Bridge Riverside Park, Starlight Park, Tennis courts, Handball courts, Drew Gardens educational recreation space, Richmond Echo Park, Yankee Stadium, Walter Gladwin Park, and Crotona Park
- **Health facilities** include Morris Heights Health Center and DOHMH Bureau of Bronx Neighborhood Health
- **Faith-based facilities** include Nazareth Pentecostal Church and Iglesia Mission Juan 3:16

Participants were encouraged to pinpoint issues and opportunities during the in-person open house using the Experience Collector Map.



What we heard

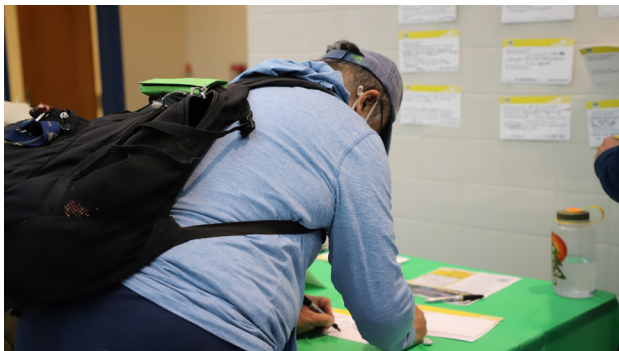
Open Space, Beautification, and Connections

Feedback organized into the Open Space, Beautification, and Connections category included requests for pedestrian connections, capping the Cross Bronx, better waterfront access, lighting, green space, and trash management. Key takeaways are:

- Explore the feasibility of capping trenched sections of the Cross Bronx. Consider capped sections to include parks and open spaces, pedestrian and bicycle connections across the highway, and community facilities.
- Connect neighborhoods and improve both North/South and East/West pedestrian connectivity, including waterfront access, and open space continuity. Participants highlighted access to Harlem River Greenway and Bronx River Parkway, and connecting Walter Gladwin Park and Crotona Park.
- Incorporate green spaces outside the Cross Bronx right-of-way. Participants mentioned opportunities for a terraced park on the steep terrain near the George Washington and Alexander Hamilton Bridges, upgrades to Jenny Jerome playground, a dog park near Parkchester, and urban farming or garden opportunities on Shakespeare Avenue.
- Invest in beautification efforts such as waste management, lighting upgrades, and tree planting.

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“Wouldn’t it be great if local communities can be empowered to create a modern vision of the Cross Bronx, focusing on health and green space ”



Comment Card Activity | April 4, 2023
In-person Open House



Experience Collector Map | April 4, 2023
In-person Open House

What we heard

Air Quality, Noise, and Traffic Congestion

Feedback organized into the Air Quality, Noise, and Traffic Congestion category included comments on the Cross Bronx environmental externalities, such as pollution and traffic, as well as broader policy goals. Key takeaways are:

- Analyze the effects of nearby truck routes on air quality
- Explore short-term solutions to improving air quality, such as distributing filters to communities near the Cross Bronx. Asthma is a significant concern among communities surrounding the Cross Bronx, and numerous commenters reported purchasing air filters and frequently replacing them to improve indoor air quality.
- Explore solutions to reduce traffic on the Cross Bronx Expressway, and discourage through-travellers from using local roads to avoid congestion
- Reduce traffic, congestion of local roads, noise, and pollution. Residents living around the Cross Bronx are not necessarily the main users of the expressway but are the most impacted.
- Consider tolling and other demand-management tools, such as congestion pricing, to reduce the overall traffic on the Cross Bronx.

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“Emergency services are not able to move through the neighborhood during certain times of the day due to traffic”

”

“Wouldn’t it be great if we could have more parks and green spaces with indoor structures for community and local organization to use for workshops, events, education, and recreation”

Community Wellbeing

Feedback organized into Community Wellbeing included comments on investment toward urban design solutions and building healthier environments. Key takeaways are:

- Increase tree planting and shaded areas to improve the air quality and recreation space of neighborhoods surrounding the Cross Bronx.
- Explore opportunities to ensure fresh food options, urban farming, and EV charging stations.

What we heard

Public Transit, and Safety

Feedback organized into Public Transit, and Safety category included requests for improved transit, bicycling and pedestrian connections, and safety improvements to roadway geometry and lighting. Participants highlighted the difficulty of travel across the Cross Bronx due to congestion and shared the following key takeaways:

- Consider tolling and other demand-management tools.
- Improve east-west transit and bike/ped transportation across the corridor.
- Explore additional bicycle and pedestrian connections, considering north-south and east-west connectivity.
- Explore alternative modes of freight transportation.
- Introduce other public transit options to redesign the Cross Bronx, such as light rail and Bus Rapid Transit, bicycle greenways and busways.

”

“Wouldn’t it be great if the air could be cleaner and more transit options, so that people can breathe and move around the Bronx”

Housing, Social and Economic Development

Feedback organized into the Housing, Social and Economic Development category focuses on creating opportunities for Cross Bronx communities through the corridor’s visioning, programming, and broader policy choices.

- Look for ways to incorporate spaces for businesses, especially those selling local and fresh goods, and food trucks, in the new corridor design.
- Focus on hiring locally when possible for the work, and protect businesses that hire Bronxites.
- Increase density around transit nodes in the surrounding region, including housing development and green spaces with indoor structures for community and local orgs, education, and recreation programming.

”

“Increase opportunities for food carts”

What we heard

- Housing affordability and displacement of residents and communities. Participants would like to see policies and strategies to prevent gentrification and displacement.
- Concerns regarding impacts to homes sitting on the service road of the Cross Bronx.

Environmental Justice

Feedback organized into the Environmental Justice category focuses on the lasting harm the Cross Bronx has left on nearby communities and ways to improve the health, access to opportunities, and built environment.

- Support investment in the community surrounding the Cross Bronx, affected by lack of connectivity, frayed social fabric, reduced opportunity, and hostile design.
- Ensure public meetings for visioning the future of the Cross Bronx are inclusive and planned through an equity framework.
- Focus on neighborhood security, clean air, and pedestrian safety to uplift a sense of pride and community.

”

We want to have less respiratory ailments, healthier people, longer lives, and opportunities for economic benefits.”

Governance, Communication, and Community Input

Feedback organized into the Governance, Communication and Community Input includes multiple requests for a transparent, community-based and straightforward public input process.

- Highlight cultural and community resources, parks, and open spaces on public involvement maps.
- Explore a 3D model, walking tours, and other activities for public involvement.
- Provide more information on public policies, as well as resources and points of contact, and information regarding the roles of different agencies.

Open House Activities



Participants shared their vision about the Cross Bronx using Comment Cards.



Children and families participated on interactive activities and coloring station.



Participants were encouraged to pinpoint issues using the Experience Collector Map.



Participants interacted with the Cross Bronx timeline and provided feedback.



Participants reviewed and identified destinations and landmark locations.

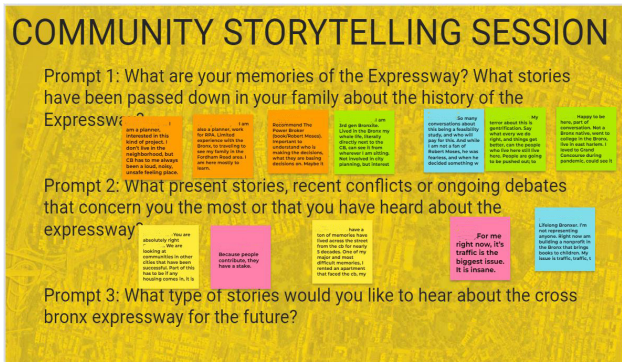


Participants shared their experiences at the storytelling comment station.

Open House Activities



Participants provided questions and comments during virtual open houses.



Participants were invited to share their stories and experiences in small breakout rooms.

During the virtual workshop, participants were invited to share their experience and encounters in a mapping exercise using Jamboards.

MAPPING A COLLECTION OF ENCOUNTERS

CBE West

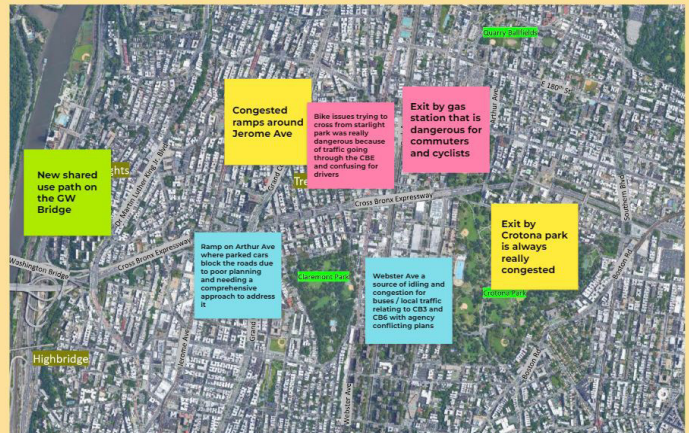
What is it like in this section of the Cross Bronx Expressway?

Are there specific places that are great, or places that are more challenging?

Are there any notable experiences you've had in this section?

Are there specific places where you have experienced challenges when walking/driving/moving along the CBE?

Are there places, or intersections that could be improved or rethought along the expressway? And how?



MAPPING A COLLECTION OF ENCOUNTERS

CBE Central

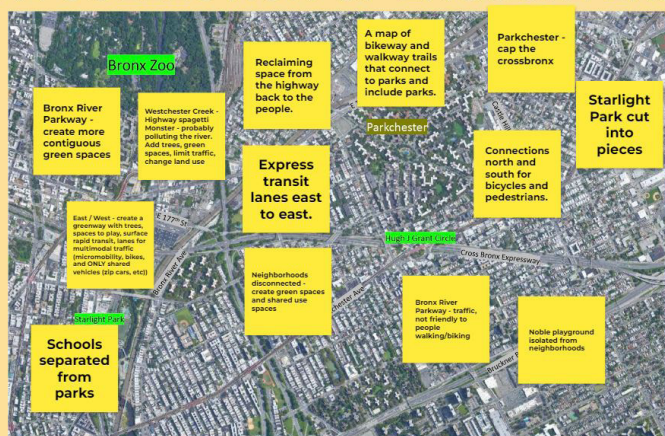
What is it like in this section of the Cross Bronx Expressway?

Are there specific places that are great, or places that are more challenging?

Are there any notable experiences you've had in this section?

Are there specific places where you have experienced challenges when walking/driving/moving along the CBE?

Are there places, or intersections that could be improved or rethought along the expressway? And how?



Participants provided feedback using Jamboards in all three, East, West and Central subareas defined for the corridor.

What's Next

In June 2023, the Cross Bronx Issue Identification workshops will begin. The City will also launch the Community Partner program application, and in Summer 2023 will host additional workshops including some in the field walk shops.

In Winter/Spring/Summer 2024, the Project Team will hold two solution identification workshops to share preliminary conceptual short-, medium- and long-term proposals for community feedback. Throughout this process, the Project Team will continue to engage the Community Working Group, Community Partners, and focus groups to expand engagement reach.

Upcoming Meetings

- **Wednesday, June 14th, 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM (Central)**
East Bronx Academy for the Future X271, 1716 Southern Blvd, Bronx, NY 10460
- **Tuesday, June 20th, 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM (West)**
Bronx School of Young Leaders MS331, 40 W Tremont Ave, Bronx, NY 10453
- **Monday, June 26th, 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM (East)**
P.S. 106, 1514 Olmstead Ave, Bronx, NY 10462
- **Wednesday, July 12th, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM (Virtual)**

Register here: <http://bit.ly/CrossBronxEvents>.

The Project website nyc.gov/CrossBronx outlines upcoming meetings, opportunities for engagement and project materials. Contact the project team by emailing CrossBronx@dot.nyc.gov





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