

EAST HARLEM COMMUNITY VISIONING SESSION

JUNE 21, 2025

DISCUSSION SUMMARIES

COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION

DISCOVERY

Participants highlighted East Harlem's beauty as rooted in its cultural diversity, vibrant parks, active street life, and strong community partnerships. Parks, street vendors, and local architecture were noted as everyday reminders of the neighborhood's value.

DREAMING

A vision of a more beautiful East Harlem included clean and well-lit streets, more trees and greenery, vibrant murals, and safe, welcoming storefronts. Ideas like 'yellow-door communities' symbolized inclusive spaces and hope for vulnerable populations.

DESIGN

To move toward this vision, participants suggested starting with block-level cleanup efforts, monthly 'El Barrio Clean-Up' events, volunteer-based tree care, and consistent engagement through posters and community meetings.

SMALL BUSINESSES

DISCOVERY

Residents shared love for local staples like bakeries, restaurants, and family-run shops that reflect cultural roots and provide quality service. These places are valued not just for goods but for the sense of belonging they offer.

DREAMING

A thriving East Harlem business district was described as clean, diverse, and united. Community members envisioned vibrant corridors of locally-owned shops, mutual promotion among businesses, and storefronts that reflect community identity.

DESIGN

Participants imagined collective business actions such as job training for youth, shared pop-up events, and cooperative marketing efforts. Some envisioned providing space for children, educational programs, and community-driven services.

SPREADING THE WORD

DISCOVERY

Residents are proud of East Harlem's culture, food, and sense of community. Favorite places included Central Park, community gardens, and restaurants. Many emphasized the rich history and resilience of local culture.

DREAMING

Participants want the broader public to know East Harlem is vibrant, artistic, and united—not defined by negative stereotypes. Events, especially street fairs and cultural performances, excite residents and reflect the spirit of the neighborhood.

DESIGN

Suggestions for immediate promotion included increasing cultural street fairs, training community ambassadors, using LinkNYC kiosks and health fairs for outreach, and working with schools and local organizations to spread awareness.