



PROSPECT HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD SURVEY

Summary Report

Prepared by the Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development (PICCED) for the Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council

INTRODUCTION

Prospect Heights, a neighborhood of some 20,000 people near downtown Brooklyn, has been the focus of significant media attention after the unveiling of the proposed redevelopment of the Brooklyn Atlantic Yards Project by Forest City Ratner Companies in the spring of 2004. The multi-billion dollar plan includes a 19,000-seat Arena and basketball sports complex, commercial space for office and retail and market-rate housing.

Partly in response to this announcement, a local community advocacy group, the Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council (PHNDC), in conjunction with the Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development (PICCED), conducted an extensive survey of people who live and work in Prospect Heights about existing conditions, as well as their concerns and vision for future development of the neighborhood.

Map of Location of Proposed Brooklyn Atlantic Yards Site

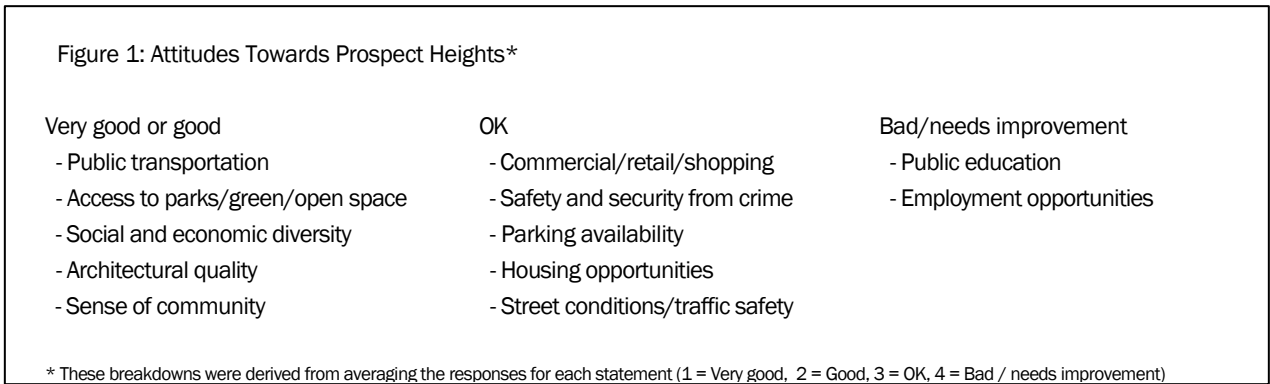


FINDINGS

Respondent Attitudes Towards Prospect Heights

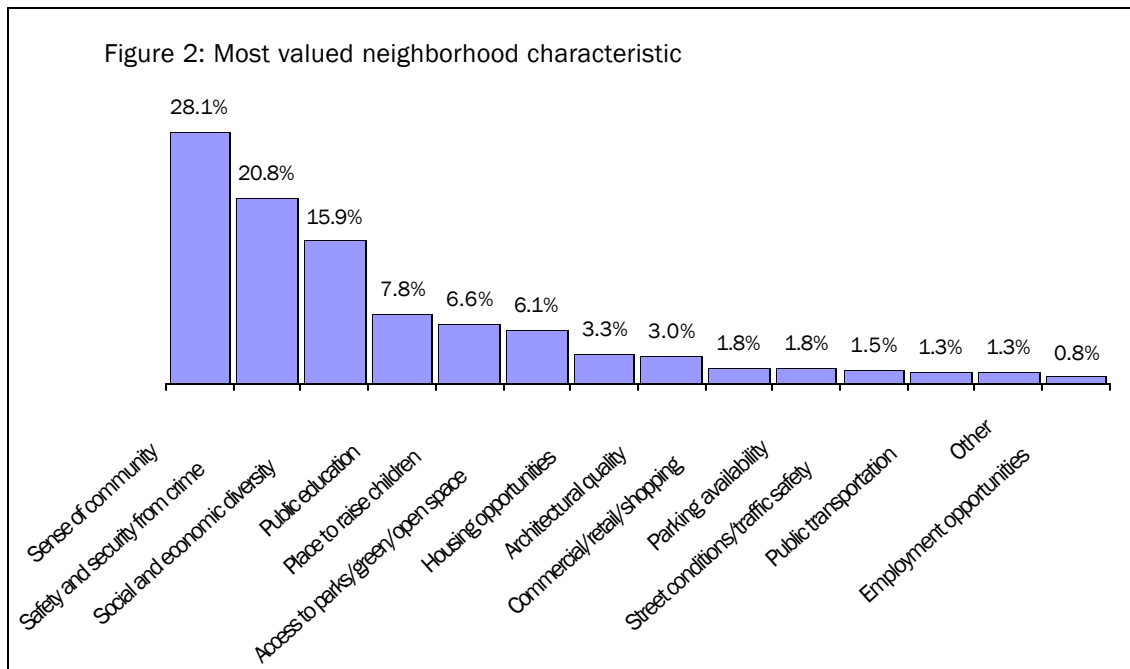
1. Overall, Prospect Heights residents reported favorably on their neighborhood. The key aspects that were singled out for particular praise include:

- Social and economic diversity
 - According to the 2000 U.S. census, 14% of Prospect Heights residents are Latino, while 86% are non-Latino. Of the non-Latino population, 28% are white, 51% are black, 4% are Asian and 3% are of two or more races.
- Good public transportation
- Excellent access to parks and green/open spaces
- Strong sense of community in the neighborhood



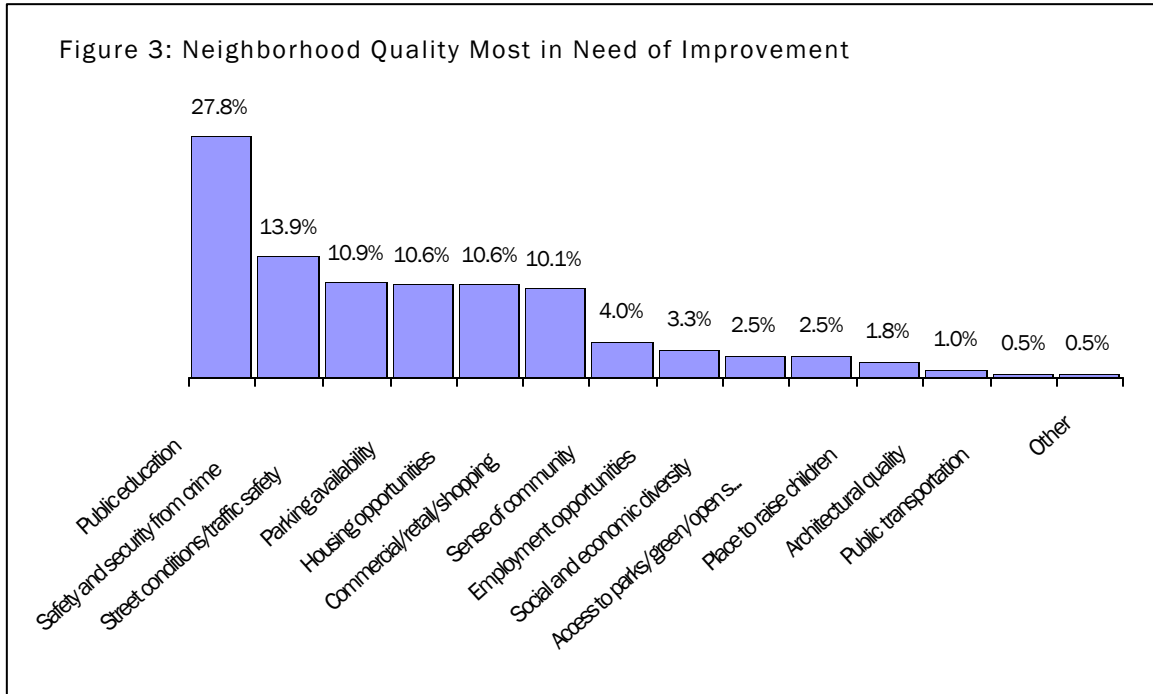
2. Neighborhood characteristics most valued by residents are:

- A strong sense of community (28%)
- Safety/security from crime (21%)
- Social and economic diversity (16%)



3. Key areas identified by survey respondents that require improvement are:

- Public education
- Public Safety
- Housing opportunities
- Street conditions, traffic safety and parking availability



Public Education - Responses to questions targeted specifically at parents with school-going children found that 62% of applicable respondents were either ‘dissatisfied’ or ‘very dissatisfied’ with public schools. Parents are most concerned about the quality of instruction in the schools as well as the small range of elementary school options in the area.

Crime and police service - The majority of respondents believe that the police were doing a satisfactory job in the area but that service could be improved by shortening response time and increasing police visibility.

Housing for low and moderate income households - Almost 60% of respondents thought that there is need for more housing for moderate- to low-income households.

Traffic safety, parking availability and street conditions - Approximately 11% of the respondents thought that street conditions, traffic safety and parking availability needed to be improved.

Respondent Opinions and Ideas about Future Development in Prospect Heights

Prospect Heights residents want development in their neighborhood and very few are opposed to future development or feel that the neighborhood should be kept as it is today. However, respondents have strong and clear opinions about the kind of development they envision for their community.

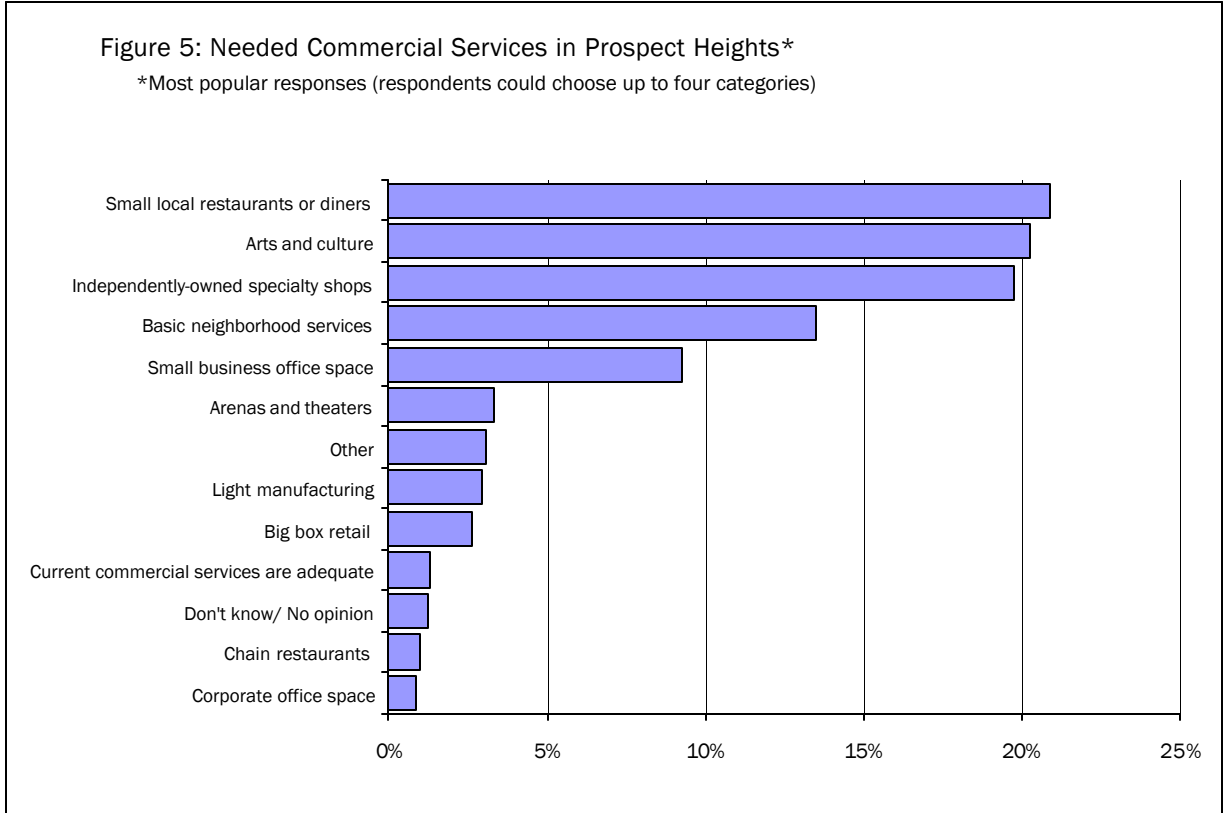
- **Architecture and Scale** - Residents believe that any future development should respect the neighborhood’s social and economic diversity and be compatible with its architectural and urban design qualities.
- **Affordable housing for diverse income groups** - Respondents feel strongly that development should include affordable housing for a wide range of income levels, reflecting the housing needs of the neighborhood’s diverse population.
- **Meaningful economic opportunities and permanent living wage jobs** - Respondents expressed support for new development projects that will provide permanent living wage jobs and meaningful economic opportunities for low-income populations in Brooklyn.

Figure 4: Opinion Statements about New Development in Prospect Heights	
Statement	General Opinions*
New development should fit in with existing buildings in size and style.	Strongly agree to agree
New development should include housing affordable to a wide range of income levels reflecting the diversity of the neighborhood.	
New development should include permanent living wage jobs and meaningful economic opportunities for low-income populations in Brooklyn.	
New development should include high-end market-rate housing, bringing in new residents and increasing available income for economic development.	
The neighborhood should be kept as it is today.	Neutral to disagree
I am opposed to any future development in Prospect Heights.	
New development should be architecturally bold.	
* These ranges were derived from taking the average response of each statement (1 = Strongly agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly disagree).	

Respondents also identified commercial services that are needed for the neighborhood. These include:

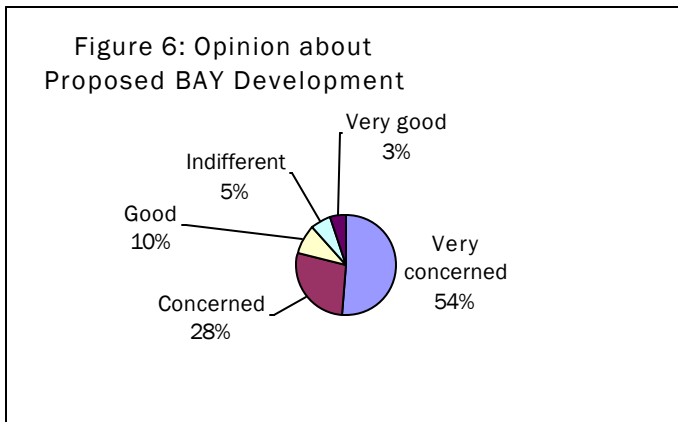
- Small local restaurants and diners (21%)
- Businesses related to arts and culture (20%)
- Specialty shops (20%)

Overall, most of the respondents are opposed to big-box retail and chain restaurants in the neighborhood.



Opinion about the Proposed Brooklyn Atlantic Yards Project

An overwhelming majority of the respondents (81.4%) said that they were either very concerned (53.6%) or concerned (27.8%) about the impact of the proposed project on Prospect Heights and surrounding neighborhoods.



This level of concern about the potential negative impacts of the proposed project is amplified when considering each category (ranked according to level of concern) separately.

Figure 6: Concerns about Proposed BAY Development

Issue	Level of concern*
Increased traffic	4.6
Cost to taxpayers	4.5
Impact of estimated 10 years of construction (noise, traffic and other nuisances)	4.4
Displacement of residents and businesses due to eminent domain	4.3
Development will be out of scale with neighborhood's physical context	4.2
Impact on public transportation system	4.1
Displacement of residents due to increased real estate prices	4.0
Development will threaten community character ("Manhattanization" of Brooklyn)	4.0
Displacement of businesses due to increased real estate prices	3.9
Development will make it harder to reach Park Slope, Fort Greene, and other neighborhoods	3.8
Too little affordable housing in new development	3.6
Too much affordable housing will be part of the new development	1.9

CONCLUSION

In summary, people who live and work in Prospect Heights not only want development, but also have very strong and clear opinions about the kind of future they envision for their neighborhood.

While residents favor development, they value and want to retain specific neighborhood characteristics, including its social and economic diversity and strong sense of community, its green parks, public spaces and interesting architecture, and its good public transportation.

Residents want future development to address the neighborhood's existing shortcomings. These include public education, public safety, housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income households, and street conditions, traffic safety and parking availability.

Residents also identified commercial services that are appropriate for the neighborhood. These include small/local restaurants and diners, businesses related to arts and culture and specialty shops.

Residents expressed deep concerns about the potential impact of Forest City Ratner Companies' proposed Brooklyn Atlantic Yards Project on the neighborhood. These include increased traffic, displacement of residents and businesses through the use of eminent domain, increased taxpayer costs, nuisances related to a ten-year long construction project and increased real estate prices, as well as the loss of attributes valued by current residents.