Project Focus

Working in collaboration with the Urban Design Lab and the Center for Research on Environmental Decisions, this research is looking at how the development of open space, especially involvement in community gardens, influences the neighborhood in East Harlem. To date, the project has focused on developing background research on East Harlem, a current conditions inventory, working to answer the question why studying greening efforts of open space in East Harlem, and an understanding of city greening policies and implementation of the policies and programs in the neighborhood. The next phase of the research will focus on an outreach effort to the community, non-profit organizations working in the community and city government officials implementing programs in East Harlem. The information presented on this poster includes pieces of the research done to date on conditions in East Harlem and community gardens.

East Harlem Current Conditions

Academic Literature on East Harlem

The academic research in East Harlem to date focuses on studying the issue of health, its presence, cause and prevention techniques. The health problems in East Harlem have been shown to be a result of the neighborhood's socio-economic status. East Harlem residents are at a 70% greater risk of asthma from higher income areas (Czarnik, Stigler et al. 2006). Studies looking at the relationship between neighborhood factors and asthma rates in East Harlem showed that the condition of the neighborhood had a strong effect on the high asthma rates (Ehricht, Ob-Version et al. 2004). While the community has serious health problems, the community's efforts towards creating green space are dedicated towards the health of the community. This research indicates that most residents understand their health condition, but do not have the money or insurance to adequately care for themselves or their family members. While they do (2003), in addition to asthma concerns in East Harlem, healthy food availability has been a major concern throughout all of Harlem. In the early 1990's the supermarket PathMark opened up in Harlem to help address the lack of fresh produce and vegetables. A study found that the square footage of space for fresh foods and vegetables is comparable to those in large grocery stores in the suburbs, concluding that the presence of large stores is necessary to support the needs for healthy food (Lavin 2005).

Eighth Street

Healthy food (Lavin 2005).

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East Harlem is a unique area of the city with a large residential population and within that a large number of public and subsidized housing. Because of the number of low-income residents and the need for support, East Harlem has a large number of non-profit organizations working on everything from housing and education to running farmers markets totaling 30 organizations working only in East Harlem. A recent report produced by the Community Board 11, representing East Harlem, concluded that there is not a need for additional NGO support in the neighborhood as the number of non-profits successfully meets the needs of the community. The gap falls within funding and access to space and resources to implement the mission and goals.

Community Gardens

- 36 community gardens
- More community gardens than surrounding neighborhoods
- 4 non-profit organizations within the neighborhood focusing only on community gardening
- Community gardens serve as both a source of food as well as a social gathering ground for community members

City Greening Efforts in East Harlem

Green Streets

- PhaNYCHA

PlaNYC initiatives

Green Thumb

Treasures for Public Health

Million Trees NYC

Urban Design Lab

The Earth Institute

Columbia University

EAST HARLEM

COMMUNITY GARDENS

1 2

NUMBER OF COMMUNITY GARDENS 1996-2012

EAST HARLEM CENTRAL HARLEM UPPER EAST SIDE

Types of Open Space

Spacial Analysis Legends

- Green - Community Gardens
- Blue - Parks
- Orange - Playgrounds
- Purple - Open Space
- Pink - Parking Lot
- Yellow - Public Space
- Red - Public Housing
- Green - City Owned

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NOAA Map Server: National Geophysical Data Center

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