



## MAJOR THEMES

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2011 / SÁBADO, 22 de OCTUBRE de 2011 · 10<sup>am</sup>-4<sup>pm</sup>

The Verde Summit collected a wealth of information about the concerns of community residents as well as thoughtful, creative ideas for potential solutions. In assessing the feedback received, several major themes appeared. The matrix below provides a summary of how many times, and in which sessions, issues were repeated. These themes provide Cypress Hills Verde with clear focus areas for future planning.

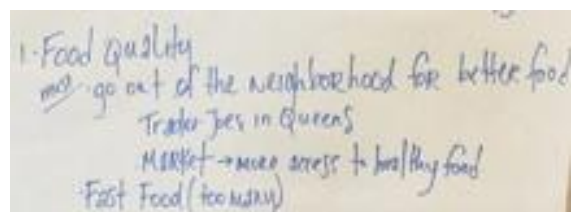
Themes	Sessions									
	Aff Housing	Cmnty Facilities	Econ Dev	Food	Health & Well	Open Space	Street-scape	Trans	Waste & Sanit.	Youth Forum
Education	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦				♦	♦
Security/Safety	♦	♦			♦	♦		♦		♦
Unity & Community Involvement					♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Lack or Access to Green/Open Space		♦		♦	♦	♦				♦
New Business & Local Entrepreneurship	♦		♦				♦		♦	♦
Sidewalk and Road Maintenance/ Litter/ Need for Better Monitoring					♦		♦	♦	♦	♦
Access to Fresh & Affordable Produce		♦		♦	♦					♦
Community Space	♦	♦							♦	♦
Youth Facilities & Programming		♦			♦	♦				♦
Affordable Supermarkets		♦		♦						♦
Atlantic Ave - Disruptive			♦			♦	♦			
Availability and Access to Playgrounds		♦				♦	♦			
Building Maintenance & Pest Control					♦		♦	♦		
Community Garden/Urban Agriculture		♦		♦		♦				
Economic Diversity/Business Diversity	♦						♦			♦
Farmers Market/CO OP/Greenhouses		♦		♦	♦					
Lack of Healthy Eating Out Options				♦	♦					♦
Lack of Housing Units	♦								♦	♦
Lighting & Signage		♦					♦	♦		
Need for Better Transportation /Cancelled Services/Long Trip			♦	♦				♦		
Reuse of Underoccupied or Vacant Buildings	♦	♦					♦			
Services & Entertainment	♦	♦	♦							
Sports & Recreation Areas		♦				♦				♦

*This matrix only includes themes that appeared in three or more sessions. For the full list, see the complete matrix document.*

### ACCESS TO FRESH & AFFORDABLE PRODUCE

The **Food** workshop spoke about the lack of grocery stores and supermarkets; healthy eating-out food options; overabundance of junk food and processed food and its central display in stores; the lack of green space; and lack of knowledge about healthy eating and food options. The theme was further discussed in the **Community Facilities**, **Health & Wellness**, and **Youth Forum** workshops .

Some of the solutions discussed across the workshops were a greater number of and more affordable supermarkets and to approach corner stores and bodegas to sell and centrally display fruits and vegetables . Another idea that came up across the board





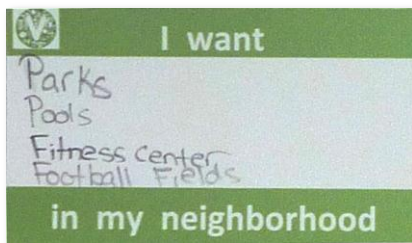
## MAJOR THEMES

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2011 / SÁBADO, 22 de OCTUBRE de 2011 · 10:00am-4pm

was to build community gardens and greenhouses in which residents could grow produce and keep bees, chicken, and cows. These gardens could work as community and recreation spaces. Other ideas were more farmers markets (with longer hours and that sell locally grown produce) and a neighborhood co-op staffed by local customers. The participants thought of the co-op holistically, not only should it provide healthy and affordable food, it should also be powered by sustainable energy (solar) and provide daycare for the staff. Nutritional and cooking workshops could address the lack of knowledge on healthy food in the community. Finally, healthier food should be served in schools.

### COMMUNITY SPACE

The **Community Facilities** workshop addressed the issue in depth citing the lack of and access to playgrounds and youth access to programming and facilities as major concerns. Possible solutions from the Cmnty Facilities workshop included community gardens, mediation gardens, and greenhouses that could capitalize on the agricultural expertise in the neighborhood and to be places for children to learn; farmers markets; indoor and outdoor facilities for youth; exercise studios and gyms; places for children to play sports in the neighborhood so they don't have to travel



outside the community; safe well-organized places for children to play and go outside where parents can keep an eye on their kids; health centers and community centers where you can stay busy; a writing room; a library with technology (it was mentioned that currently there is a lack of access to age appropriate books and technology for middle and high schoolers); and a holistic community space that fuses gardening with arts and education that could also serve as safe places for youth to be active and appreciate the neighborhood.

The **Affordable Housing** workshop talked about the need for spaces for community members to interact, to socialize, and to engage their neighbor. The **Waste & Sanitation** workshop cited vacant plots collecting waste and the lack of concern among community members and businesses as a major concerns. An obstacle addressed in the workshop was the lack of community unity. A possible solution is a community center where people can learn how to contribute and how to become citizens.

The **Youth Forum** wanted to see more schools, health centers, malls, a teen place, open space, and churches.

### EDUCATION

The need for education was discussed across the workshops both as a means to engage residents, to inform them about issues in the neighborhood, and as a form of economic development for the neighborhood. The **Affordable Housing** workshop addressed it as part of its top problems—there is a need for understanding the importance of protecting the community and to build awareness among the tenants about their rights pertaining to housing. The **Community Facilities** workshop talked about the need to modernize schools in the



neighborhood, for example, PS 171, they said, feels like a dungeon or a detention center. Better designed schools would be more productive learning environments. Community spaces such as gardens could serve as spaces to fuse education and art. A test kitchen and nutrition center could show residents what to do with food they're buying, teach them on the importance of health, eating right, and exercise and perhaps even serve as an incubator for fledgling businesses. This could serve to address the issue of nutrition education cited in the **Health & Wellness** workshop. The **Waste & Sanitation** cited as a top problem the lack of concern among residents and businesses about sanitation and



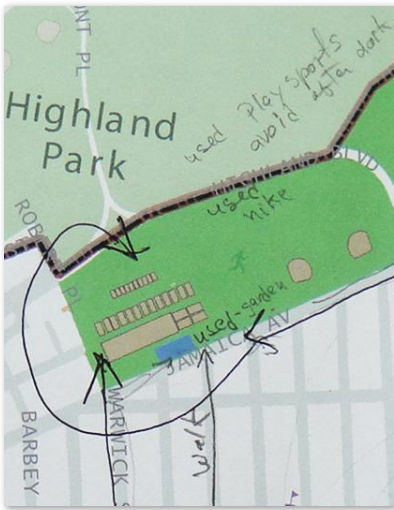
## MAJOR THEMES

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2011 / SÁBADO, 22 de OCTUBRE de 2011 · 10:00-4:00

as a possible solution education on recycling, building and sidewalk maintenance and composting. The **Transportation** workshop cited a need for bike education.

The **Economic Development** workshop and the **Youth Forum** approached the issue of education from a skills building view point. Eco Dev workshop cited a skill disparity as a top problem—a lot of residents do not speak English and/or do not have enough education or training. There is a need for short term and long term oriented training as well as English and computer skills development. A possible solution was a trade center for blue collar jobs; high school preparation for post-secondary training; training at different levels; an adult education center for GED, English, and computer training; interview preparation; and helping local recent college graduates attain real world experience. The Youth Forum cited the need for youth programming and leadership programs.

### LACK OF OR ACCESS TO GREEN/OPEN SPACE



The **Open Space** workshop addressed the need for safety especially after dark; accessibility (location, distance, number of open spaces, and number of hours open); diversity of open space amenities to accommodate different people and uses; and the beauty of space and amenities as the top problems. Solutions included political commitment, public art, community gardens, community involvement, and the reuse of vacant lots as possible solutions. Residents wanted open space that was well connected (Highland Park with Forest Park), had equipment rental for sports, playground with working and stable equipment, places with organized sports, and more space with access for the elderly and disabled.

The lack of green and open space was cited as a top problem across the board. The **Community Facilities** workshop cited the need for safe playgrounds and a better and healthier environment. Safe parks for children and community gardens, mediation gardens, and greenhouses were discussed as possible solutions. The **Food** workshop discussed possible short-term solutions—greenhouses for year round fresh food production and gardens in underused spaces like school backyards, in front of PS 171, and in partnership with PS 189 and CHLDC. The **Health & Wellness** workshop related the lack of parks to the need for kids to have more spaces to run around and play (obesity in the neighborhood is a big concern). The **Youth Forum** also addressed lack of viable and clean open space as a top problem and recreation areas for swimming, baseball, an arcade, and community garden as solutions.

### NEW BUSINESSES & LOCAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Affordable Housing, Economic Development, Streetscape, Waste & Sanitation, and Youth Forum all cited the need for a diversity of businesses to address service, entertainment, healthy eating-out options, and amenity needs in the neighborhood. The **Affordable Housing, Economic Development, Streetscape, Waste & Sanitation, and Youth Forum** cited that diverse shops would preserve business in the neighborhood, encourage interest and activity, and serve as “eyes on the street.” The **Economic Development** workshop discussed the need to capture, create, and attract new businesses that meet retail, health, and recreation needs—health food stores, bookshops, etc.—and to open up employment opportunities in the neighborhood. Possible solutions were attracting big retailers with “high end” employment practices (the emphasis is on quality jobs) such as Trader Joe’s and Wholefoods, supporting local entrepreneurship, and better transportation.



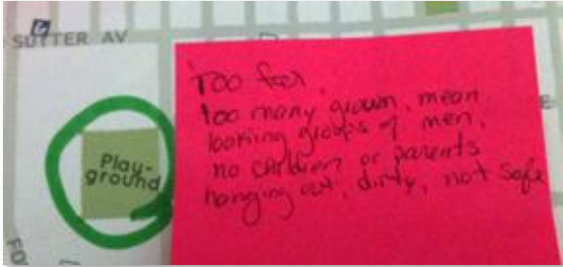


## MAJOR THEMES

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2011 / SÁBADO, 22 de OCTUBRE de 2011 · 10:00am-4:00pm

### SECURITY & SAFETY

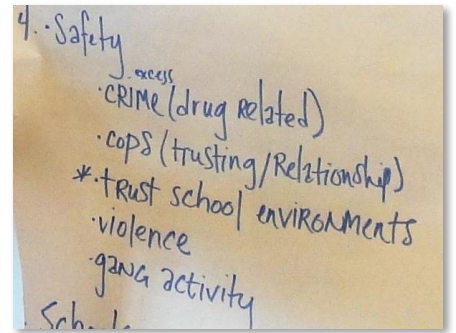
The issue of safety came up consistently. The **Affordable Housing** workshop cited illegal housing (tenants in unsafe and unhealthy basement apartments and rooms) and lack of security in the CH as top problems. To address the illegal housing a proposed solution was to legalize, regulate, and police basement apartments. The **Community Facilities**



workshop cited safety on playgrounds as a top problem, calling for safe parks for children. They also suggested more lighting in windows and around doors to better light the streets. The **Health and Wellness** workshop cited as a top problem the lack of safety due to gang and drug activity and the lack of trust in police who stereotype and alienate residents. Solutions included positive activities for youth, organizing between tenants, residents, building owners, school officials, and police to build trust, and community guardians to watch over the streets in problem areas. As guardians

local men can play a larger role in the safety of the community, to deter potential crime, and to build trust and pride in the neighborhood. Improving police education and training to be more culturally sensitive was also suggested. The **Open Space** workshop cited safety after dark as a top problem and gang and crime activity in parks as an obstacle to success.

Some solutions included a community recreation center and/or YMCA with nighttime activities for kids and full time security in the parks. The **Transportation** workshop cited aggressive drivers, dangerous intersections with too quick crosswalk lights, and safety around schools as top problems. Solutions included longer cross times; a crossing counter; design elements like speed bumps, bike lanes, curb cuts, narrowed roadways, signage; and advocacy as possible solutions. The **Youth Forum** also mentioned safety and security as a top problem.



### SIDEWALK & ROAD MAINTENANCE/LITTER/NEED FOR BETTER MONITORING

The **Health & Wellness** workshop called for better monitoring of sanitation for businesses and residents to improve sanitation. The **Streetscape** workshop cited sidewalk conditions and litter as a top problem. Streets need repairs, businesses (car repair shops for example) impose on the sidewalk, and there is a lack of trashcans. Some solutions were improve to walkability—create interest, soften neighborhood with greenery, repair potholes and areas that tend to accumulate puddles, and enforce limits on sidewalk use for businesses that infringe upon it. The **Transportation** workshop cited road maintenance as a top problem, specifically potholes. The **Waste & Sanitation** cited litter, vacant lots collecting garbage, lack of concern among community members, and lack of maintenance of facades, patios, and blocks as top problems. Solutions included education on recycling, upkeep, and composting, organization of block by block cleanup, reuse of vacant lots, and more housing and businesses. The **Youth Forum** wanted to see clean sidewalks.





## MAJOR THEMES

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2011 / SÁBADO, 22 de OCTUBRE de 2011 · 10<sup>am</sup>-4<sup>pm</sup>

### UNITY & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The **Health & Wellness** workshop cited lack of unity in the neighborhood and ethnic stereotyping as a top problem. Solutions included organizing tenants into rent associations; building trust between residents, owner, school officials, and police; youth programming; and community guardians (mentioned in the security and safety section). The **Open Space** workshop found the idea of co-existence a top problem—the need to accommodate different people and their needs—as well as the lack of connection between Cypress Hills and East New York. The solutions included political commitment to promote a constant conversation in the community; public art to engage people from all ages and backgrounds; and community gardens with local organization and coordination. The workshop called for block associations LDCs to get the community together. The **Streetscape** workshop cited lack of resident awareness, agency, and consensus and lack of relationship with law enforcement as an obstacle to success. A solution was to increase dialogue with the police to increase trust. The **Transportation** workshop called out several obstacles to improving transportation including the lack of senior citizen involvement, the lack of interest for change, and the lack of



Photo by Regine Romain

communication. Solutions were to hold meeting at senior centers, engage community orgs—senior centers, school safety boards, religious institutions, and local none-profits. It called for advocacy to involve diverse groups in the community. The **Waste & Sanitation** workshop cited lack of concern in the community as a top problem and proposed education on recycling, upkeep, and composting; organizing blocks in to groups for cleanup events; and community centers with sanitation workshops as possible solutions. The **Youth Forum** called for greater youth involvement in the community, more leadership programs, and community facilities in the community.

### YOUTH FACILITIES & PROGRAMMING

The lack of facilities and programming for the growing youth population was addressed across the workshops. The **Community Facilities** workshop wanted to see more sport and recreation areas and more middle and high school age appropriate books and technology in the libraries. Residents wanted indoor and outdoor community space for youth to be active and become involved, one example already mentioned is space that fuses gardening, art, and education. Recreational and sports facilities were also mentioned. The **Health & Wellness** workshop called for more positive activities for youth, especially for girls. Residents wanted to see more after school activities and engaging programming like a farmers market or community garden. The **Open Space** workshop addressed similar issues and offered public art; community gardens; places for organized sports;





## MAJOR THEMES

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2011 / SÁBADO, 22 de OCTUBRE de 2011 · 10<sup>AM</sup>-4<sup>PM</sup>

playgrounds; community recreation center and/or YMCA with nighttime activities for kids; and a skate park with equipment for rent (to encourage to skate in the park rather than the street) as possible solutions. The **Youth Forum** discussed a need for more employment and leadership opportunities like the Summer Youth Employment Program. There needs to be a way for youth to find out about existing leadership programs and to have recreational areas—pools, gyms, baseball fields, arcade, park, and community garden. The resident youth also mentioned the lack of respect for their ideas as an obstacle to success.

