THE NEW NEW LOTS LIBRARY
Engagement Report Back // June 16, 2022
Beginning in Summer 2019, BPL and Hester Street embarked on a process to gather ideas and inspiration for a reimagined New Lots library.

The following is a summary of what we heard from hundreds of stakeholders. This feedback serves as the foundation for our discussion today, as well as the initial design concepts.
Beginning in the 1650s, East New York was colonized by the Dutch who brought with them enslaved people from Africa. Dutch colonists were buried next to the New Lots Reformed Church while free and enslaved African residents were buried in an unacknowledged burial ground in the area underneath the current New Lots Library and the adjacent NYC City Park.

In 2010, community members discovered historical documents that demonstrated the existence of this African Burial Ground. The area is now officially recognized as African Burial Ground Square and the City park has been named Sankofa Park. The reimagined New Lots Library will incorporate recognition of the area’s unique history.
PROJECT TIMELINE

2019
Community Engagement

2019
Project Hold (Pandemic)

2021
Architect Selection

Community Workshops
Report Back & Community Celebration

2022

Workshop 1: June 16
Workshop 2: Sept. 2022

2023 - 2024
Design + Construction
New Lots Library Closed for Renovations

2025
LIBRARY GRAND OPENING

WE ARE HERE!
WHAT WE DID

150 SURVEYS
16 ONE ON ONE MEETINGS
4 FOCUS GROUPS
3 TABLING AT COMMUNITY EVENTS
2 PUBLIC WORKSHOPS
420+ PEOPLE ENGAGED

RESEARCH ABOUT SPACES OF CULTURAL MEMORY AND LEGACY IN NYC AND AROUND THE COUNTRY
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Create designated areas for different activities and users
- Strengthen library safety
- Expand sense of inclusion and community
- Improve and enhance technology features
- Celebrate local culture and honor area’s unique history
KEY TAKEAWAYS

SPACE

- Areas Designated for Age-Specific Activities
- Spaces Designated for Quiet Activities
- Improved Workspace for Staff
- Flexible Community Spaces
- Robust Computer and Technology Labs
- Improvements to the Adult Learning Center
- Improvements to Outdoor Spaces to host programs and events
KEY TAKEAWAYS

FEATURES

• Improved Bathroom Facilities
• Expand and Enhance Technology Features
• Enhance and Broaden ADA Accessibility
• Improve Basic Amenities
• Create a Safe and Welcoming Environment
KEY TAKEAWAYS

PROGRAMS

• Expand Educational Programming
• Increase Programming with City and Community Partners
• Broaden Opportunities for Career Development and Capacity Building
• Expand Programs Focused on Art, Health and Wellness
KEY TAKEAWAYS
CULTURE

• Include Spaces that Highlight East New York Specific Culture, History and Initiatives
• Showcase History and Culture of the African Diaspora throughout Library
• Make the Library a space that celebrates triumphs and resilience, and not one that just highlights the experience of suffering.
• Develop Celebratory Cultural Events and Programs
• Develop Educational Resources on the African Burial Ground
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**WE ARE HERE!**