Hello! Welcome to Walt Whitman Community Workshop

We are glad to have you here!
Agenda

5 min  Settling In
10 min Introductions + Community Agreements
10 min Overview and Workshop #1 Recap
35 min Breakout Groups
10 min Share Backs
10 min Q+A, Next Steps, Closing
Community Agreements

1. Respect everyone's opinions
   There are no right or wrong answers

2. 1, 2, 3, then me
   Let three other people speak before you jump back in

3. One Mic
   Please speak one at a time and do not interrupt anyone

4. Be a good listener
   We ask that you stay present for the conversation

5. Be mindful of the time
   Facilitators may jump in to keep the conversation moving
Introductions
Focus Groups

Community Engagement

1:1 Interviews

- **14 elders**
  Fort Greene Senior Citizen Council

- **25 second-grade students**
  P.S. 67
Focus Groups

Community Engagement

1:1 Interviews

Residents, locals, library membership holders

- All age groups – kids, teens, adults, seniors
- Approx. 75 people
- 4 hours, Fort Greene Park
Focus Groups

Community Engagement

1:1 Interviews

- **Cultural Institutions/ BIDS**
  Myrtle Ave BID

- **Electeds and Individuals**
  AM Phara Souffrant Forrest
  Victoria Amoo

- **Schools/ Incubators**
  P.S 287,
  P.S 67 Dorsey

- **Community Based Organizations**
  Fort Greene Senior Citizen Council
  Fort Greene Park Conservancy
  Ingersoll Community Center
  Whitman House

Click here to read all interviews
Color coding → Clustering → Pulling insights

Click here for a deeper dive into the synthesis boards
What are some pain points in the current experience?
What we heard

“It feels so sterile. Reminds me of old institutions. It’s dark. Doesn’t feel like a learning space.”

“The front is unwelcoming - there’s no greeting space. The vestibule is the first thing you experience.”

“I wasn’t even sure there is a library there.”

What this means

As a first impression, the library feels outdated, unexciting, and uninviting.
What we heard

“Feels overwhelming, like everything is too close together/on top of you.”

“Library feels crowded, even when no one is there.”

“The row of books in the aisles is too close for comfort.”

“People have to wait for long to use the computers.”

What this means

Interiors feel crowded, overwhelming, uncomfortable.
What we heard

“Currently feels like one big great space for everybody. No distinction.”

“Because of the two levels and how open it is, sound travels very very fast. Especially from the kids section!! They need their own space for sure.”

“Currently Walt Whitman doesn’t really have a presence in the community. Community will come with ideas but there has to be space, which is currently missing!”

What this means

The space fails to cater to different needs of people sharing the same space. It lacks intentionality. 🌟

🌟 On high demand by all user groups
What we heard

“The library feels lonely, like I'm the only one there.”

“Basement is scary, inaccessible, not wheelchair friendly. It has only one entry-exit and is unsafe.”

“That parking space area at the back is a waste of space. Can be used in so many other ways.”

“Only one workshop room leads to conflict over space and time. Oftentimes that too is being used as a storage place!! Need more storage elsewhere.”

“Lack of security.”

What this means

Spaces are inaccessible, unsafe, inefficiently used, and feel isolating.
What are some feelings that the community would like to experience in the library?
Comfortable and welcomed

“I would like to curl up in a corner and read for hours.”
Warm and inspired

“I would like the library to feel like fresh air.”
“Libraries are a safe haven for kids. Children should feel safe inside it.”
Connected and proud

“I want the library to be a bridge between my neighborhood, its history and my community.”
What types of spaces do people want in the library?
Different spaces for different needs

Spaces for specific uses

Community Spaces

Spaces for self

Individual / small group

Community / big groups

High interaction

Low interaction

WALT WHITMAN SYNTHESIS
Spaces for self

- Readings corners & individual work stations
- Open reading areas
- More charging stations
- More printing services, wifi, computers
- Being able to see other people and activities

On high demand by all user groups
Spaces for specific uses

Candid, short interactions

- Coffee spot and lounge
- Circular tables to hang around
- More chairs, more variety in seating
- More printing services, wifi, computers
Spaces for specific uses

Private meeting rooms

- A safe, secure and intimate space
- For counselling teens and young adults
- For mental health programs
- For private/small group tutoring and reading lessons
- Well ventilated, lit, air conditioned, comfortable seating

🌟 On high demand by all user groups
Spaces for specific uses

Workshop Rooms 🌟

- Makerspace, studio for arts, crafts, music, dance
- Board games, video games, card game tournaments
- Story-telling, book reading, author talks
- A robust set up for movie nights 🌟
- Schools can hold classes here at designated times 🌟

SPECIFIC USES • WALT WHITMAN SYNTHESIS

On high demand by all user groups
Spaces for specific uses

Computer Labs

- Enough computers, comfortable seating, tables with charging spots, white board, projector screen
- Use for individual work and group training
- Examples of desired trainings –
  1. Basic comp literacy
  2. Adobe software installed for teens and adults
  3. Basics of IT, coding, gaming

SPECIFIC USES • WALT WHITMAN SYNTHESIS
Spaces for specific uses

Kids Section 🌟🌟🌟

- Further distinction between toddlers, kids and preteens
- Furniture with round corners, rugs, cushions, bean bags, circular tables
- Interactive promethean board, computers, screens
- Clear sightlines from across the library but still enclosed in some way with soundproofing 🌟

SPECIFIC USES • WALT WHITMAN SYNTHESIS
Spaces for the community

Community Spaces

High interaction

Individual / small group

Low interaction

Community / big groups

Space for community events

Space to celebrate festivals

Community fairs and markets, local orgs making sales

Public events like poetry festival, movie screenings, author talks🌟🌟

🌟 On high demand by all user groups
Spaces for the community

Community Health & Fitness

- Cooking classes, demonstrations
- Space to exercise and dance

Some examples –
1. African music and dance program
2. Parent + kid yoga lessons
3. Community events with food
4. Nutrition classes
Spaces for the community

Community Gardening 🌟

“Seniors look forward to gardening so much - our community garden means everything to the senior folks. They are 80+ but from dawn to dusk they want to do gardening. It’s a very big thing that holds the community together.”

On high demand by all user groups
Spaces for the community

Outdoor Space

- Sheltered courtyard
- More open spaces to read
- Fan and heat lamps
- Benches and outdoor furniture suitable for events

COMMUNITY SPACES • WALT WHITMAN SYNTHESIS
Indoor First Floor Space

**Zones** - What are some ways to divide the space up into zones?

**Children's Area** - What should a children's area include?
Thank you!

For information + updates visit: https://www.bklynlibrary.org/locations/walt-whitman/renovation

See you in September!