

## Gentrifying a Superfund Site: Why Gowanus, Brooklyn is Becoming a Real Estate Hot Spot

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### Abstract

This feature length article tells the story of Gowanus, a Brooklyn neighborhood on the Gowanus Canal, haunted by the pollutants of its industrial past. The Environmental Protection Agency recognized the Gowanus Canal as a Superfund cleanup site in March 2010. Yet Gowanus is experiencing an economic and cultural revival. What was historically a booming manufacturing area with active warehouses spilling their waste into the Gowanus Canal is now an industrial site where middle to upper class families, seeking to purchase organic foods, are willing to relocate and settle down. As of December 2014, a two-bedroom condo boasting waterfront views and located just one block away from the Gowanus Canal on Carroll Street was priced at \$1,549,000. The average price per square foot for homes in Gowanus is 50 percent higher than the rest of Brooklyn. This story links issues of sustainable development and current urban housing needs in New York City. My research rested primarily on interviews with subjects who have expertise in the changes of the neighborhood. I was fortunate to speak with a real estate agent who specializes in Gowanus, a representative at an affordable housing advocacy group working on development in Gowanus, two separate families who moved to the area when they started began having children, and a life-long resident of 27 years. I also attended two community meetings relating to the sustainable development of Gowanus in addition to speaking with some old and new shop dwellers.

### Author's Note

I am passionate about telling the story of the gentrification of Gowanus because it brings to light two major challenges that New York City is facing: a lack of affordable housing and funding for sustainable and environmentally friendly areas. Having worked as a child-care provider in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Gowanus during the 2013-2014 academic year, I had a strong interest in understanding why an area that lies along the banks of one of America's most contaminated waters and appears so desolate is transforming into a hip, family-oriented neighborhood. As a graduate student at the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University, where I am a degree candidate in the master of international affairs, I am focusing my studies on environmental policy and management. I am specifically interested in policy issues surrounding urban planning and water management. I am also specializing in media and communications. My future goals are to continue writing about issues of sustainable development in urban areas to shed light on the ways urban areas can manage environmental issues.

**Keywords:** Superfund site, Gowanus Canal, gentrification, residential development, industrial displacement, super-gentrification, affordable housing, urban sustainable development.



Photo Credit: Rebecca Salima Krisel

## 1. Introduction

From the windows of the organic greenhouse on the roof deck at Whole Foods, the high-end supermarket of gourmet food in Brooklyn's Gowanus, visitors have a view of a pile of metallic debris beneath an abandoned yellow shovel truck. Across the street is an abandoned warehouse with graffiti along the roof that reads: "End stop and frisk. Hands off the kids."

What was historically a booming manufacturing area with active warehouses spilling their waste into the Gowanus Canal is now an industrial wasteland, or brownfield, where families are willing to purchase organic chickens at \$5 per pound. With more than a dozen contaminants and heavy metals found at high levels in the Canal's sediment and water, the Gowanus Canal poses a threat to people's health and the quality of their daily lives. When the wind blows, the rotten stench emanating from the Gowanus Canal can cause your stomach to turn. Yet, in a city of absorbent housing prices, New Yorkers are willing to relocate and gentrify Gowanus regardless of these high levels of toxic pollutants.

The following is a study of the challenges that arise at the nexus of housing affordability and sustainable development in New York City. The gentrification of Gowanus is a narrative for pressures of high-real estate prices in major cities displacing local communities. Through interviews with current residents of South Brooklyn, affordable housing advocates and real estate agents, I sought to uncover the story behind the recent spike in real estate prices in Gowanus and the subsequent "cool factor" that has accompanied its cultural and economic revival, in spite of its being a Superfund site. Although some industrial displacement has arisen as the result of the gentrification of Gowanus, potentially reducing employment opportunities for low-skilled or immigrant workers, the increase in residential units and the low impact on residential displacement make Gowanus an ideal neighborhood to gentrify.

## 2. Gentrification and the Brooklyn Housing Market

While one in five U.S. housing markets are now less affordable than their historic average due to price gains having outpaced income growth across the nation, the housing market in Brooklyn, also known as Kings County, was found to be the least-affordable market, followed by San Francisco and Manhattan. In a December 2014 report from [RealtyTrac](#), the nation’s leading source for comprehensive housing data, studied affordability across the U.S. by measuring the percentage of the locality’s median monthly household income that is required to make monthly payments on a median-priced home in the area. The study demonstrated that of the 475 counties analyzed, 21 percent of counties weren’t as affordable compared to the average level for the period starting in January 2000. As depicted in the charts below, a Brooklyn household would need to devote 98 percent of its median income to afford the payment on a median-priced home of \$615,000. In contrast, nation-wide payments on a median-priced home required 26 percent of the average household income. Brooklyn is now even less affordable than Manhattan and San Francisco, where half of all homes sell for \$1 million or more. It was also among the 12 percent of counties studied in which the median home price is higher now than at the peak of the 2005 to 2008 property bubble.<sup>1</sup>

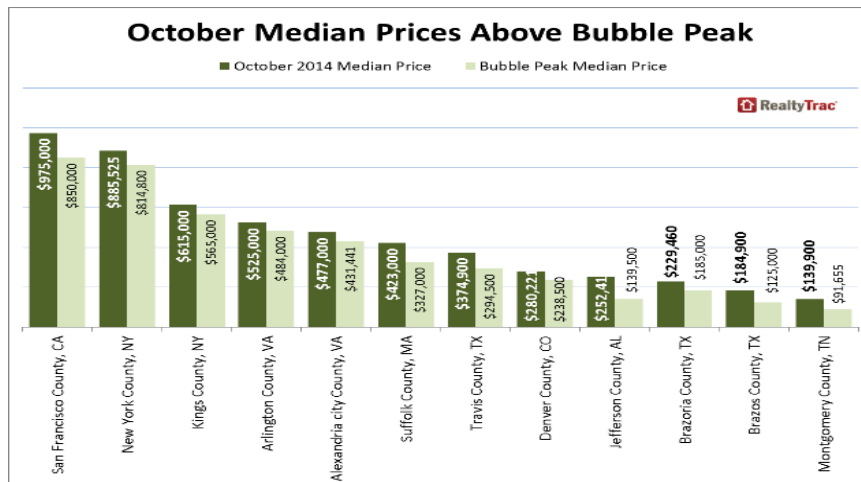


Figure 1: (Source: RealtyTrac)

<sup>1</sup> From the RealtyTrac report “21 Percent of U.S. Housing Markets Now Less Affordable Than Their Historical Averages” accessible at <http://www.realtytrac.com/news/home-prices-and-sales/21-percent-of-u-s-housing-markets-now-less-affordable-than-their-historical-averages/>

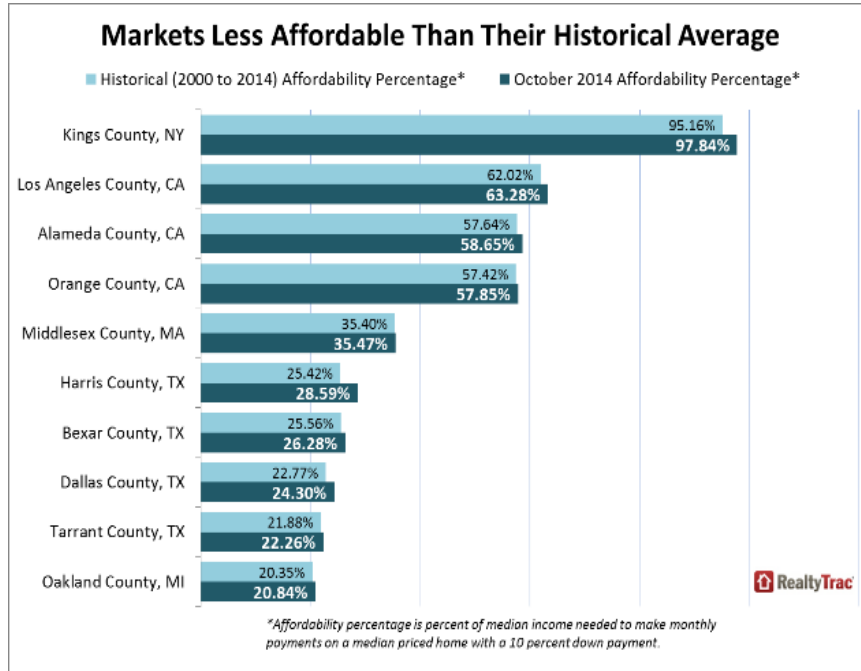


Figure 2: (Source: RealtyTrac)

Over the past two decades, Brooklyn has become associated with the hipster movement, presenting itself as a safe haven for artists and artisans of all trades from writers to chocolatiers. While relatively lower housing rental and sale prices in Kings County had initially attracted people holding these offbeat occupations to the borough, the popularization of this artisanal Brooklyn movement has led many artists and artisans to be priced out of Brooklyn, along with poorer long-time residents who are not involved in the arts. In fact, the rise of the “Brooklyn-hipster class” coincided with the gentrification of many deteriorating neighborhoods of Kings County. In this context, *gentrification* describes the urban planning process whereby developers purchase or renovate property in deteriorating neighborhoods, increasing property values and often displacing low-income families and small businesses.

### 3. The Super-Gentrification of South Brooklyn

Since the early 2000s, the ever-increasing real-estate sale-and-rental prices in Manhattan have pressured families to look for housing options in South Brooklyn. In fact, real-estate values in Brooklyn have been surging as wealthy New Yorkers priced out of Manhattan displace the poor. South Brooklyn – which includes Park Slope, Cobble Hill, Carroll Gardens, Boerum Hill, Gowanus and Red Hook – has experienced at once a cultural and economic revival linked to the advent of new residents as well as the displacement of past residents and communities due to a lack of remaining affordable housing. Gowanus itself is located along the Gowanus Canal with Park Slope to its East, Carroll Gardens to its West, and Boerum Hill to its North.

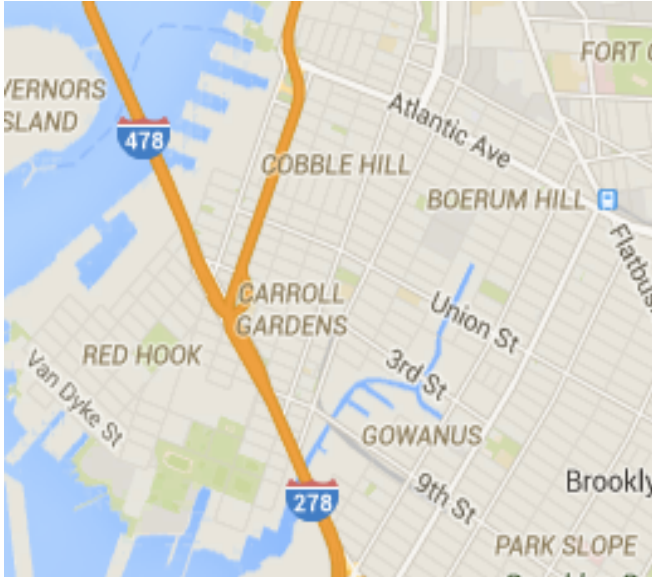


Figure 3: Map of Gowanus Canal (Source: Google Maps)

I met with Sabine Aronowsky, a 45 year-old community development consultant at the Fifth Avenue Committee, which is a community organizing and advocacy group for affordable housing in South Brooklyn, on December 1, 2014 at the Fifth Avenue Committee offices at 621 Degraw Street at Fourth Avenue. “Park Slope, Boerum Hill, and Carroll Gardens are neighborhoods that began gentrifying fifteen years ago, and now those are very expensive and wealthy neighborhoods. What we are seeing happening currently in Gowanus are the effects of a second and third wave of gentrification in South Brooklyn,” stated Ms. Aronowsky. The effects of second and third waves of gentrification can be described as a process of “super-gentrification.” Scholar Loretta Lees defines the latter as a process whereby the “transformation of already gentrified, prosperous and solidly upper-middle-class neighborhoods” can lead to much more exclusive and expensive enclaves.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, neighborhoods experiencing this issue of super-gentrification “have become the focus of intense investment and conspicuous consumption by a new generation of super-rich “financiers” fed by fortunes from the global finance and corporate service industries.”<sup>3</sup>

Though Gowanus itself is experiencing its first wave of gentrification, its geography makes it an ideal location for a spillover effect of the super-gentrification of neighboring Carroll Gardens, Park Slope and Boerum Hill. In fact, “it make sense for Gowanus to be the of-the-moment popular neighborhood since it’s in between Park Slope and Carroll Gardens” said Shari Cohen, 38, a real estate agent who specializes in South Brooklyn real estate. Ms. Cohen and I met on November 7, 2014 at The Roof, a café on the rooftop of the Whole Foods. Developers in South Brooklyn are looking to Gowanus as unchartered territory to invest in housing developments and are relying on the already gentrified surroundings to lure investors and secure capital for development. One reason it took Gowanus longer to gentrify than its adjacent neighborhoods was because of its industrial zoning laws and manufacturing past. Zoning laws limit commercial use of land in order to prevent oil, manufacturing, or other types of businesses from building in

<sup>2</sup> Lees, Loretta. “Super-Gentrification: the Case of Brooklyn Heights, New York City,” 2487.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

residential neighborhoods. “They changed the zoning laws on Fourth Avenue and parts of Third Avenue from commercial to residential about five years ago, so that’s why you see a lot of warehouses shutting down and renovated residential spaces opening up,” Cohen, explained. In an interview with *The Real Deal* in March 2013, a real estate publication, the senior Vice President of Ideals Property Group Justin Dower confirmed this information regarding the rezoning of parts of Gowanus: “the rezoning of Fourth Avenue and parts of Third Avenue four to five years ago started the transition [from manufacturing to residential] and the peak is coming.”<sup>4</sup>

A potential result of these updated zoning laws could be industrial displacement. Though the latter is a common side effect of gentrification since many neighborhoods targeted for gentrification are industrial areas, the industrial displacement “is the result of speculative real estate pressure that is tied directly to gentrification.”<sup>5</sup> Industrial displacement is not simply an unfortunate by-product of gentrification, but rather it is “an active process undertaken by real estate developers, city planners, policy-makers, landlords and even individual gentrifiers.”<sup>6</sup> However, the decline in the manufacturing industry in Gowanus occurred largely right after World War II, and thus, the current industrial displacement can be described as minimal.

#### 4. A Closer Look at Real Estate Values in Gowanus

Having zoning laws that are favorable to residential units is certainly a large factor for the recent residential growth of the neighborhood. Much of Gowanus is zoned M1-2, for light manufacturing, even though residential homes already exist in the zone. In fact, according to Trulia, a website that tracks real estate trends, sales prices have appreciated 31 percent over the last five years in Gowanus. Just in the last year, Gowanus rents have risen by 17 percent. Moreover, as of December 2014, a two-bedroom condo boasting waterfront views and located just one block away from the Gowanus Canal on Carroll Street in between Nevins Street and Third Avenue, was selling for \$1,549,000. It is important to note that the average price per square foot for homes in Gowanus is \$676 per ft<sup>2</sup>, which is 50 percent higher than the average price per square foot for homes in Brooklyn. Though still relatively more affordable than the rest of South Brooklyn where the average price per square foot for homes in Park Slope is \$1,052 per ft<sup>2</sup> and in Carroll Gardens is \$890 per ft<sup>2</sup>, the recent popularity of Gowanus remains somewhat of an enigma to current residents.

#### 5. The Gowanus “Cool Factor”

With inactive warehouse spaces being replaced by box stores, chain hotels, and new residential buildings, the current industrial landscape of Gowanus along with the rotten stench of the Gowanus Canal have left many wondering about its recent popularity.

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<sup>4</sup> See Real Deal interview with Justin Dower in “Gowanus Gets Ready,” [http://therealdeal.com/issues\\_articles/gowanus-gets-ready/](http://therealdeal.com/issues_articles/gowanus-gets-ready/)

<sup>5</sup> Curran, Winifred. “From the Frying Pan to the Oven?: Gentrification and the Experience of Industrial Displacement in Williamsburg, Brooklyn,” 1428.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 1428.

I met with Mr. Bloom, founder and CEO at Ordr.in, and his wife Naama, 41, founder and CEO at Hello Flo, in their home located on Carroll Street in between Hoyt Street and Bond Street, just a half block away from the Gowanus Canal, on November 4, 2014. The couple lives in Carroll Gardens with their children Orly and Micah, who are 5 and 3 years old, respectively. “Strangely, now, there’s a cool factor about Gowanus,” said David Bloom, 43, a resident of Carroll Gardens since 2007. “There’s an organic ice cream place with a roof deck [in Gowanus] that opened up literally across the street from a Verizon staging yard, and I guarantee you it sits on top of hundred years worth of toxic waste,” continued Mr. Bloom. Ample Hills Creamery is the ice cream shop Mr. Bloom is referring to and like many other new and artisanal businesses, the shop opened in Gowanus in July of 2014. Located at 305 Nevins Street at Union Street, just one block away from the Gowanus Canal, it charges costumers \$3.90 for a scoop of homemade organic ice cream.

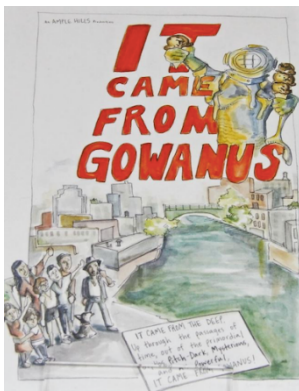


Figure 4: (Source: Ample Hills Creamery)

The ice cream shop displays its humor with its special ice cream flavor named “It came from the Gowanus” featuring salty dark chocolate ice cream with hazelnut crack cookies topped with white chocolate pearls and orange-scented brownies. “It’s meant to look like the Canal: dark brown with bits of color floating around!” said Han Greenwood, 31, who works at the ice cream shop. The flavor description card is illustrated with a drawing of a man wearing a full scuba diving suit fetching ice cream scoops from the depths of the Canal.

While the facetious humor with which the ice cream store addresses the toxic waste site that lies beneath it is sure to attract its customers, this image is emblematic of a general wonder about what exactly rests below the murky waters of the Canal. “When we were kids, my siblings and I heard so many stories about weird animals appearing in the Gowanus,” said Ana Gordon-Loebl, 27, a born-and-raised resident of South Brooklyn who has lived in Gowanus since 1999. “I remember hearing something about a sperm whale that ended up swimming into the Gowanus and my brother is still convinced there was an octopus found floating around,” she continued. I met with Ms. Gordon-Loebl at Lucey’s lounge, a bar located at 475 Third Avenue and 11<sup>th</sup> Street in Gowanus, on November 30, 2014.

The myths surrounding the questionable waters are not unfounded. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) deemed the Gowanus Canal a Superfund cleanup site in March 2010 because of its hazardous waste contamination, which poses a threat to the nearby residents who use the canal for fishing and recreation. The EPA

has determined that contaminants found in the waters of the Gowanus Canal include PCBs, coal tar wastes, heavy metals and volatile organics. Furthermore, as a consequence of “years of discharges, storm water runoff, sewer outflows and industrial pollutants, the Gowanus Canal has become one of the nation's most extensively contaminated water bodies.”<sup>7</sup> With a federal grant of \$500 million, New York City government will begin the clean up in 2015 and is projected to be done in 2025.

## 6. Gentrifying a Superfund Site and the Space and Cost Tradeoff

When it was an industrial hub, the Canal became the dumping site of raw sewage and an alleged Mafia dumping ground. As the shipping industry ended in the 1950s, Gowanus was left with abandoned warehouses and a heavily contaminated Canal. Artists and community activists gradually moved in, turning the warehouses into art spaces and bringing life to the once industrial area. After the EPA named the Gowanus Canal a Superfund site, many residents and local leaders initially worried about the continued economic and real estate growth of South Brooklyn. As stated in the Fifth Avenue Committee 2010 report, “Getting a Fair Exchange,” developers had halted assembling properties for development because “banks [were] unwilling or reluctant to lend in areas adjacent to Superfund sites.”<sup>8</sup> However, as discussed above, the real estate value trends have shown otherwise. “Ultimately [the Superfund site] will help our property values,” indicated Mr. Bloom. This sentiment was echoed in the New York Times article, “Gowanus is Counting on a Clean-Up,” where journalist Ronda Kaysen wrote, “concerns about pollution and the neighborhood’s tendency to flood have not deterred residents.”<sup>9</sup> In fact, the presence of the waste site does not appear to have much bearing on the popularity of the neighborhood. “I don’t think anyone cares about the Canal being a Superfund site. Not in this city. With the constraints of real estate, no one cares. People want space, and there is space to develop in Gowanus,” explained Ms. Bloom. “There is a never-ending search in this city for space and cost tradeoff,” interjected Mr. Bloom.

Capitalizing on this issue of the space and cost trade-off in New York, real estate developers have two major projects in planning that could reshape the landscape in Gowanus. The first being the Gowanus Green affordable housing development, which boasts a 774-unit apartment building with a two-acre park at Smith and Fifth Streets that is expected to open in 2017. However, the project is contingent upon the city’s approval. This is being stalled until “the site’s former owner, National Grid, completes a voluntary environmental cleanup.”<sup>10</sup> The second

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<sup>7</sup> As explained on the Environmental Protection Agency webpage:

<http://www.epa.gov/region2/superfund/npl/gowanus/>

<sup>8</sup> Fifth Avenue Committee, “Getting a Fair Exchange: Preserving and Creating Truly Affordable Housing in the Rezoning of Gowanus, Brooklyn,” 10.

<sup>9</sup> Kaysen, Ronda. “Gowanus is Counting on a Clean-up,” New York Times. October 3, 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/05/realestate/gowanus-is-counting-on-a-cleanup.html?ref=topics>

<sup>10</sup> Kaysen, Ronda. “Gowanus is Counting on a Clean-up,” New York Times. October 3, 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/05/realestate/gowanus-is-counting-on-a-cleanup.html?ref=topics>



major development is a 700-unit rental along a two-block stretch of Bond Street between Carroll and Second Streets at 363-365 Bond Street. The development will adhere to the 80-20 rules of affordable housing, reserving 20 percent of the units for the affordable housing lottery. The buildings are overlooking the canal and are currently scheduled to open in early 2016. With units rising to the 12<sup>th</sup> floor, these buildings will dwarf low-rise residences nearby.<sup>11</sup> It is precisely this space-cost tradeoff that leads many to leave Manhattan.

In particular, couples with children, or couples anticipating having children, are seeking real estate in South Brooklyn for greater convenience. I met with Ms. McGown, an education consultant, at the Margaret Palca Bakes coffee shop at 191 Columbia Street and Degraw Street in Cobble Hill on November 5, 2014. Her youngest daughter was in a ballet class next door. “We lived on a fourth floor walk-up in the East Village [of Manhattan], and we had to carry Ophelia up and down the stairs sometimes with the stroller,” said Carolyn McGown, 45. The family moved to Boerum Hill on Hoyt Street and Wyckoff Street four years ago, when the couple was expecting their second child, Lorelei, now 3 years old. “We needed more space and a more convenient location for younger children,” she continued. “I miss the convenience of living in Manhattan and having the ability to run most errands on foot,” Ms. McGown stated, “however, with two young kids, this area makes sense because there are two strong public schools and there’s more space available.”

## 7. Maintaining an Affordable Gowanus

In an effort to reach New Yorkers ranging from those at the bottom of the economic ladder to those in the middle class, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced his affordable housing plan in May 2014: “Housing New York: A Five-Borough, Ten-Year Plan.” In it, he pledges to preserve 120,000 existing affordable units and to build an additional 80,000 new units—all within ten years. In New York, the threshold used to define affordable housing is spending no more than 30 percent of your income on rent. Requiring an initial investment of \$41 billion, paid for with city, state, federal, and private funds, the program will become the most expansive affordable housing agenda of its kind in the nation’s history.

With Gowanus gaining popularity and the costs of real estate increasing rapidly, the demographics of the neighborhood are also changing very quickly. A contraction in the supply of affordable housing available in the area is leading some to be priced out of the neighborhood. Furthermore, with the changing zoning laws, Gowanus is also seeing some industrial displacement. “It’s very hard to track data and quantify the displacement occurring currently in Gowanus,” explained Ms. Aronowsky of the Fifth Avenue Committee. “Much of the displacement from Gowanus and the surrounding areas already happened ten to fifteen years ago,” she continued.

According to data in the Fifth Avenue Committee 2010 report, “Getting a Fair Exchange,” Gowanus remains a diverse and inclusive neighborhood with a median

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<sup>11</sup> Kaysen, Ronda. “Gowanus is Counting on a Clean-up,” *New York Times*. October 3, 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/05/realestate/gowanus-is-counting-on-a-cleanup.html?ref=topics>

income that is 15 percent lower than the rest of Brooklyn and 30 percent lower than New York City. African-American and Latino residents make up 50 percent of the population within the areas zoned for manufacturing.<sup>12</sup> While somewhat outdated, this data nonetheless underlines the demographic fabric of the community. “In Gowanus, you are seeing polar extremes in terms of income distribution with 22 percent of the population living in extremely low income households and 55 percent of the population living in moderate to middle income households,” explained Ms. Aronowsky of the Fifth Avenue Committee. These numbers were confirmed with the census data income chart for the Brooklyn Community Board 6, which covers Carroll Gardens Gowanus, Park Slope, and Red Hook, added to appendix A.

With housing affordability in New York City defined as spending less than 30 percent of a household’s income on rent, it is not surprising that tenants in Brooklyn are finding themselves rent-burdened. In fact, in Mayor De Blasio’s 10 Year Housing Plan, he addressed his constituency in his “Letter from the Mayor” by first acknowledging: “we have a crisis of affordability on our hands.”<sup>13</sup> The housing plan demonstrates that between 2005 and 2012, rents in New York rose by 11 percent while renter’s income stagnated, after adjusting for inflation. Furthermore, in 2012 almost 55 percent of all rental households were rent-burdened, and more than 30 percent of all rental household were considered “severally rent-burdened” because they spent more than 50 percent of their income on housing. Gowanus is no exception to rent-burdened tenants. In fact, “with rents rising in Gowanus faster than the rest of Brooklyn, we are seeing more and more tenants who are rent burdened,” Elena Conte, 35, stated at the Bridging Gowanus meeting held on November 24, 2014 at P.S. 32 in Carroll Gardens. Conte is the senior organizer for planning and policy at the Pratt Center for Community Development.

Bridging Gowanus is a community-planning framework for the infrastructure investments and land use regulations needed to insure a sustainable, vibrant, and inclusive future for the area around the Gowanus Canal. The constituents of Community Board Six, which covers the neighborhoods of South Brooklyn, were invited to voice their concerns about the framework at the November 24<sup>th</sup> Bridging Gowanus meeting. The Pratt Center for Community Development was facilitating the planning for the framework along with the New York City Council Member Brad Lander, Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez, New York State Senator Velmanette Montgomery, New York City Council Member Stephen Levin, New York City Council Member Carlos Menchaca, and New York State Assemblywoman-elect Jo Anne Simon. The subject of affordability was at the forefront of the Bridging Gowanus meeting and as Conte claimed: “You can’t have affordable housing without an affordable neighborhood.”

With businesses like Whole Foods and Ample Hills Creamery cropping up, the availability of mainstream and affordable businesses is diminishing. “You still see steadfast business like C-Town and Key Foods in the neighborhood,” said Ms. Gordon-Loebl, the lifelong South Brooklyn resident, referring to local supermarkets. “On my block though, developers bought four houses from families who had lived

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<sup>12</sup> Fifth Avenue Committee, “Getting a Fair Exchange: Preserving and Creating Truly Affordable Housing in the Rezoning of Gowanus, Brooklyn,” 12.

<sup>13</sup> New York City, “Housing New York: A Five Borough, 10 Year Plan,” Letter from the Mayor. [http://www.nyc.gov/html/housing/assets/downloads/pdf/housing\\_plan.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/housing/assets/downloads/pdf/housing_plan.pdf)

there since I remember moving in as a 12-year-old and the Laundromat on the corner recently shut down. One older lady held off for five years from selling her house even though they were pressuring her, and she finally gave in,” she continued. Ms. Gordon-Loebl lives with her parents, twin sister, and younger brother in the family home on 11<sup>th</sup> Street between Third Avenue and Fourth Avenue. “My parents frequently get letters from developers asking them to sell the house. Since we are a full house right now, they see no reason to do so,” explained Ms. Gordon-Loebl who, at the time, was a nursing student at Long Island University, and who has since graduated in May 2015.

## **8. Gowanus as a Token for Gentrification and Sustainable Development**

With the pressures of gentrification affecting a large portion of the borough of Brooklyn, Gowanus is no exception. However, taking into account the fact that Gowanus rests on top of a toxic waste site that used to be a primarily commercial use area that is now becoming residential, it can be considered an optimal neighborhood for gentrification. Specifically, the impact of the change in the community will cause less residential displacement than other gentrifying residential areas in Brooklyn. For urban planners, policy makers, and developers alike, Gowanus is perceived as a blank slate with the potential of being a pilot neighborhood with a sustainable outlook. The Superfund cleanup will bring new life to this toxic waste site and provide a safer environment for the residents. Furthermore, the opportunity to develop housing with an emphasis on affordability has the potential to establish a community that is socio-economically diverse.

It remains to be seen what the future of Gowanus will be. For the moment, the changes affecting the neighborhood appear to be welcomed: “Gowanus to me was a no man’s land growing up. I never used to say I lived here because no one knew what I was talking about,” expressed Ms. Gordon-Loebl. “Now, I appreciate the diversity in businesses that are opening up and the sheer presence of other human beings.”

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## Appendix A

Figure 1 below was given to me by Ms. Sabine Aronowsky when we met at the Fifth Avenue Committee on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014. It is based upon the census bureau data.

Neighborhood	Extremely Low Income Households Median Household Income Less than 24,999		Very Low Income Households Median Household Income \$25,000 to \$34,999		Low Income Households Median Household Income \$35,000 to \$49,999		Moderate Income Households Median Household Income \$50,000-\$99,999		Middle Income Households Median Household Income \$100,000 to \$199,999		High Income Households Median Household Income \$200,000 or more		Median Household Income
	Percent	Number of Households	Percent	Number of Households	Percent	Number of Households	Percent	Number of Households	Percent	Number of Households	Percent	Number of Households	
CB6													
Carroll Gardens	9.82%	832	5.43%	460	7.52%	637	27.77%	2352	32.36%	2741	17.10%	1449	\$93,327
Gowanus	21.36%	1825	5.23%	447	9.78%	836	29.20%	2495	23.11%	1976	11.34%	969	\$69,398
Park Slope	10.84%	3150	4.45%	1202	7.29%	2118	26.73%	7766	32.78%	9525	17.88%	5195	\$104,914
Red Hook	49.22%	2214	11.63%	523	9.20%	414	18.67%	840	8.24%	371	2.96%	133	\$59,676
<b>Neighborhoods Combined</b>	<b>15.86%</b>	<b>8021</b>	<b>5.36%</b>	<b>2723</b>	<b>7.92%</b>	<b>4004</b>	<b>26.60%</b>	<b>13453</b>	<b>28.90%</b>	<b>14613</b>	<b>15.32%</b>	<b>7746</b>	<b>\$81,829</b>

Figure 1: Community Board 6 Income Chart