

# 75 Morton Street

## Community Envisioning Process



# ***“Why are we here?”***

## **Goals of Envisioning Process**

- To excite and motivate parents
- To build new relationships by bringing together multiple school communities
- To stimulate conversation about education, consider innovation and best practices, and ultimately contribute to improving our children’s school experience
- To demonstrate to the DOE and mayoral candidates that good things happen when parents are encouraged and allowed to play an active role

# Stakeholders

- District 2 students
- District 2 parents
- Community Education Council District 2
- Community Board 2
- Elected Officials
- NYC DOE
- Others?

# History

- 6+ years ago, a group of passionate parents spoke out about the significant overcrowding in many District 2 (“D2”) elementary schools.
- 2008: parents identified 75 Morton as an ideal home for a new middle school and started gathering support from community and electeds.
- 2009: Department of Education (“DOE”) submits letter to the State to start negotiating for the acquisition. A rally was held at 75 Morton Street to urge the State to move forward. Signatures by parents, children, and elected officials on a large postcard hand delivered to the Governor.
- 2010: State writes a letter to DOE saying the State is willing to sell. Electeds send a letter to the Governor urging to negotiate with the city for the purchase. The finger pointing begins.
- 2011: Live & Learn Coalition holds a rally to pressure the Rudin development to give back to the community, including renovation of 75 Morton. Parents keep pressure on.
- 2012: City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn announced publicly that the City and the State agreed to negotiate the transfer of the building located at 75 Morton Street to the DOE, and that the building would indeed be converted into a school.
- 2013: 75 Morton Task Force formed by Community Board 2 (CB2) responsible for real estate zoning) and Community Education Council District 2 (“CECD2”) to facilitate community input and prepare to lay organizational groundwork for vision for the new school.
  - City is currently in process of buying the building from the State.
- If we keep up the pressure, school could be up and running in 3 years (current 3<sup>rd</sup> graders would be entering 6<sup>th</sup>).

# 75 Morton Task Force

- Formed by members of CB2 and CECD2 to ensure that 75 Morton will open in 2015.
- Members of the Task Force are participating in this community envisioning process.
- Task Force enlisted support of parents at each of the neighboring elementary schools (all parents and other interested community members are welcome in this process)
- Task Force will interact with DOE and School Construction Authority (“SCA”) and serve as community advocate.

# 75 Morton: the Building

- 7 stories, fully handicap accessible and has large auditorium, large kitchen, outdoor space and multiple entrances
- DOE has committed to gut renovation
- Expected to house 900 students
  - 90 will be set aside for District 75 (special needs)
  - 810 available for our consideration
- May contain interior space not suitable for classrooms but could be used in an innovative way (awaiting info from SCA on this)

# Envisioning Process Timeline

**Phase 1 March/April 2013:** bring community together to discuss grade configuration and initial design principles to guide the SCA as they begin the building design process

- 2 or 3 meetings to reach consensus on suggestion for grade configuration and design principles described in written document compiled by Tanya Odom (independent consultant/facilitator).
- Present envisioning process recommendation on grade configuration at CB2/CEC Public Hearing on April 22<sup>nd</sup>

**Phase 2 May/June 2013:** generate & recommend design ideas to inform renovation.

**Phase 3 Fall 2013:** bring community back together to envision educational approach and programming.

# Phase 1 Tasks

1. Build consensus around a favored grade configuration for 75 Morton.
2. Draft design principles to guide the DOE as they begin the design and renovation process
3. Clarify process for Phases 2 & 3
  1. Professional facilitation?
  2. Fund raising?

# Constraints

- Grade configurations MUST contain middle school.
- 75M Task Force needs our recommendation on grade configuration and design principles on or before their April 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting.
- This envisioning group's recommendation is one piece in a broader effort by the Task Force and CB2 to enlist public opinion. They plan to discuss and will likely draft a resolution to lend their political strength to community vision for the school.

# Current Middle School Process

- 5<sup>th</sup> graders who reside in District 2 (D2) or who attend elementary school in D2 are entitled to attend a middle school in D2.
- In Fall of 5<sup>th</sup> grade, parents and students attend tours of D2 schools and submit an application ranking their choices.
- DOE conducts a “matching process” and student is assigned a seat in a D2 school in May/June (for following September).
- School Choice: D2 has approximately 18 middle schools which predominantly deploy a “screened admissions process”. There are also two zoned schools so students who do not receive admission to a screened school will be eligible for the zoned schools.
  - Screened schools can create their own screening process which may consist of any or all of state test scores, their own tests, student interviews or observations, lottery
- Competitive process; state test scores play factor in screening
- Class sizes are large (30 – 33) and current schools at or beyond full capacity

DOE views D2 as a single community school district, even though it is geographically diverse and comprised of over 30 zones, which can be geographically clustered into 6 sub-districts.

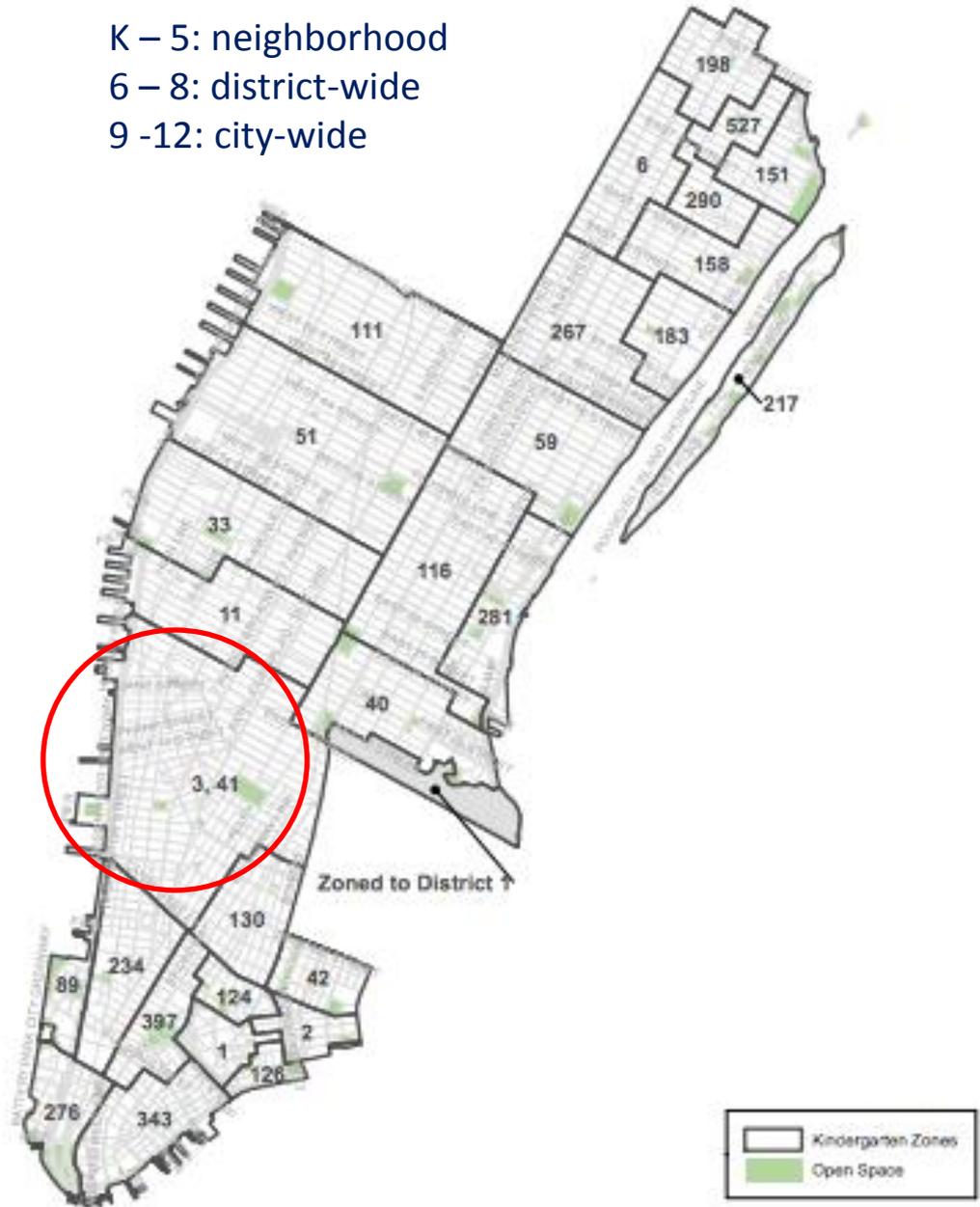
Large district + choice system = 6<sup>th</sup> graders are commuters

Parents district-wide want high quality schools in or adjacent to their sub-district

NO middle schools between Battery Park City and 14<sup>th</sup> Street from West Side Highway to 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

Need to create capacity for rising population and fair distribution throughout sub-districts

K – 5: neighborhood  
6 – 8: district-wide  
9 -12: city-wide



# Group Norms

- All ideas will be heard and considered
- Honor diversity and acknowledge the varied needs, values and hopes across the district.
- Seek clarification and elaboration from those whose view differ from our own
- Try to be brief and concise
- Listening is vital; no interrupting
- Share your wisdom; be open to changing your mind

# Tanya Odom, Ed.M

- Tanya Odom is a highly regarded consultant, coach, facilitator, teacher and thought leader. She works internationally and locally across private and public sectors to address diversity issues and create sustainable change in organizations. She received her Ed.M. from Harvard. She attended NYC public schools and is the first female president of the Board of Directors of Townsend Harris H. S. in Queens and has a successful track record working with the DOE. She has agreed to facilitate the envisioning process through Phase 1 as well as draft summary document.
- Tanya's bio can be found at:  
<http://www.shesource.org/experts/profile/tanya-m.-odom - full>