

# District 33

Council Member Stephen Levin

Queens

Manhattan

Brooklyn



East River State  
Park Dog Run



MS 8 Technology Funds



District-wide tree planting



PS 34 Playground  
Renovations



PS 31 Technology  
Request

# District 33

## Council Member Stephen Levin

Council Member Stephen Levin's district in Brooklyn includes the neighborhoods of Brooklyn Heights, Greenpoint and parts of Williamsburg, Park Slope and Boerum Hill. Almost three-fourths of the district identifies as White, 14% as Hispanic or Latino/a and 6% as Black or African American.<sup>81</sup> 65% of the district has a college education and 46% have household incomes over \$75,000. There is also a very large youth population in the district with 33% of residents under the age of 25.<sup>82</sup>

Despite most residents of District 33 being White, wealthy and well-educated, participation in PB among low-income people and people of color was fairly robust due to outreach by the Council Member's office and community groups to the seven large public housing developments in the district. 37% of neighborhood assembly participants identified as Black or African American, 20% as Hispanic or Latino/a and 36% have household incomes below \$25,000. The combination and interaction of these different populations led to a diverse set of project proposals at the neighborhood assemblies. There were many project proposals for school and park improvements, but also proposals for specific improvements to NYCHA developments in the district.

*"We are in a democracy and we are supposed to be engaging in our government as citizens. A lot of people wonder, 'What is my job as a citizen? To vote? What does that matter?' But to actually expand a much fuller expression of what it is to be citizen is amazing. Council Member Levin understands that and we are all really happy to be involved."*

— **Lisa Bloodgood**, Community Liaison & Environmental Advisor,  
Office of Stephen Levin, District 33

District 33 Overall  
Population:  
170,735<sup>83</sup>

Number of PB  
Participants:  
2,632

Neighborhoods:  
Brooklyn Heights  
Greenpoint  
Williamsburg  
Park Slope  
Boerum Hill

## Who Participated in District 33?

In District 33, PB engaged 2,632 people, including: 173 neighborhood assembly participants, 40 budget delegates, and 2,632 voters. Demographic information collected at key points during the process points towards several trends in participation, including the following:

2,632  
people

173  
neighborhood  
assembly  
participants

40  
Budget  
Delegates

2,632  
voters



### Race/Ethnicity

- A higher percentage of African Americans participated at the neighborhood assemblies (37%) compared to the overall population of the district (6%).
- Participation among people who identified as White increased as the PB process went along.
- The race/ethnicity of PB voters was consistent with the overall population of the district.



### Language and Country of Birth

- 25% of PB voters reported that they were born outside of the U.S. compared to 20% of the overall population of the district.



### Gender

- Women were more likely than men to participate in all phases of the PB process.
- A larger share of women voted in PB (62%) compared to the 2009 local elections (52%).<sup>84</sup>



### Income

- A higher percentage of people with low incomes (under \$35,000) participated at neighborhood assemblies (52%) compared to the overall population of the district (30%).

African Americans made up 37% of neighborhood assembly participants

(Compared to 6% of the overall district population)

- Participation among people with lower incomes (under \$35,000) decreased as the PB process moved forward.
- People with very high incomes voted at higher rates for PB than they did in the 2009 local elections.<sup>85</sup>



### Age

- Young people (ages 15 to 24) were more likely to participate at a neighborhood assembly (25%) than vote in PB (2%).
- A higher percentage of middle aged people (ages 35 to 54) voted in PB (52%) compared to the overall population of the district (26%).

**25%** of PB voters reported that they were born outside of the U.S.

(Compared to 20% of the overall district population)

**52%** of PB voters in Year 2 reported household incomes under \$35,000

(Compared to 30% of the overall district population)



Residents propose ideas about how to improve their neighborhoods at a neighborhood assembly.

**Public Housing Residents in the 33rd district**

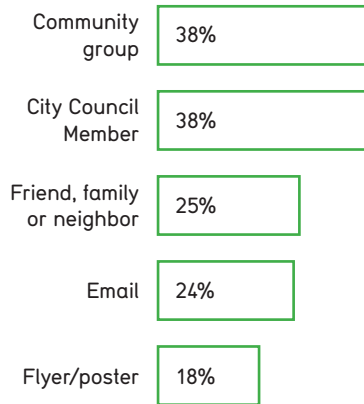
District 33 has seven public housing developments in the district and the Council Member's office has a longstanding relationship with the residents of the nearby Gowanus Houses. This relationship was strengthened by community organizations such as Families United for Racial and Economic Equality (FUREE), who helped keep the Council Member's staff and the participatory budgeting volunteers in close contact with the residents of public housing.

Most importantly, the residents of public housing themselves were one of the most active groups during the process. District 33 was one of only two districts with a Public Housing Committee during the Budget Delegate phase. These delegates ended up with six projects on the final ballot, making them the second most prolific committee in the city in that regard. Though none of these project received enough votes to win funding at the time of the vote, Council Member Levin used additional discretionary capital funds to allocate \$425,000 for upgrades to the Wyckoff Community Center and \$150,000 to initiate upgrades for the Gowanus Houses Community Center. The Gowanus Houses Community Center was the project that received the next most votes after the initial vote winners.

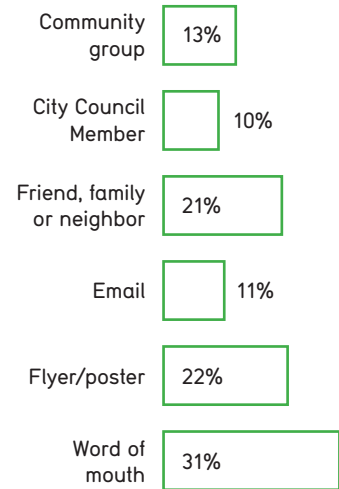
## How did people hear about participatory budgeting in District 33?

During the Neighborhood Assembly phase, most participants heard about PB from the Council Member or from a community group, whereas for the vote, most people heard about PB through word of mouth and from friends and family.

How People Learned About Neighborhood Assemblies in District 33



How People Learned About The PB Vote in District 33



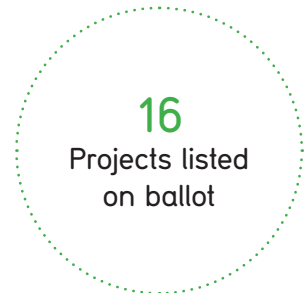
**Residents examine project posters in District 33.**



# What projects were proposed in District 33, what made it on to the ballot and what won the vote?

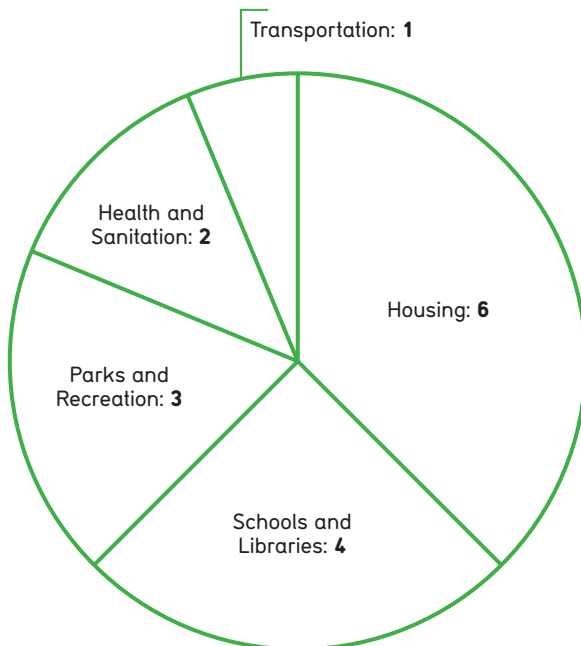
In September and October of 2012, District 33 held neighborhood assemblies that allowed community residents and stakeholders to propose projects to improve their neighborhoods. This process produced 339 project ideas, of which 179 were ultimately deemed eligible for PB. Ideas around improvements for parks, schools and libraries and transportation were the most common types of projects proposed.

Following the neighborhood assemblies, participants volunteered to be budget delegates and formed committees to develop specific projects from the ideas proposed at the neighborhood assemblies. During this process, which included months of research, consultation with government agencies and deliberation, the 339 ideas were whittled down to 16 projects that were put on the ballot. The graph below shows the categories of projects that ended up on the ballot in District 33.



## Projects on District 33 Ballot

Total Number: 16  
Total Cost: \$4,393,000  
Average Cost: \$274,563





### Winning Project

East River State Park Dog Run  
 \$450,000  
 729 out of 2,632 votes

The plan to turn a concrete lot in East River State Park into a state of the art dog run was proposed by Friends of East River State Park, and endorsed by a half-dozen politicians and community groups. Local newspapers wrote favorable articles about the dog run, members of the community leafleted their neighbors. A website was even created to promote the project.

State officials have decided to make an exception to their “No Dogs Allowed” rule in East River State Park, as long as the dogs stay in their enclosure. Separate enclosures will host small and large breeds, each equipped with artificial turf and water fountains.<sup>86</sup> One of the proposal’s main proponents, Mark Sallinger, touted the benefits to the community at large at District 33’s PB Expo: “This gives dog owners some place to go; but it also is beneficial to people that don’t own dogs because all the dogs have kind of destroyed a lot of the grassy areas and it disturbs the public from having a peaceful place to sit...in the public areas.”<sup>87</sup>

## Winning Projects

2,632 voters cast a ballot for their top five projects in District 33. Table 6 shows the projects that were selected.

Table 6  
5 Winning Projects: District 33

<u>Project</u>	<u># of Votes</u>	<u>% of Voters</u>	<u>Price</u>
District-wide tree planting	1,006	38%	\$100,000
MS 8 Technology Funds	851	32%	\$200,000
East River State Park Dog Run	729	28%	\$450,000
PS 31 Technology Request	723	27%	\$188,000
PS 34 Playground Renovations	670	25%	\$120,000
<u>Total</u>			\$1,058,000

## Additional Funded Projects

In addition, the following proposed projects either did not win the PB vote or could not be funded through PB because of a budgeting technicality. These projects will be funded by another pot of non-PB money and indicate the additional benefits that PB can bring to the district beyond those projects that win the vote.

<u>Project</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Gowanus Community Center Upgrades	\$150,000
Upgrades to Wyckoff Community Center	\$425,000
Tree Guards as Part of Neighborhood Reclamation	\$35,000



## Lessons Learned/ Summary from District 33

Council Member Stephen Levin's district jumped right in to Year 2 of PBNYC, with 2,632 people taking part in the district's first year of PB. This was the second highest level of participation of the eight districts. Along with the large number of participants, the district engaged a diverse group of residents even though the majority of the district's residents identify as White. People in District 33 who identified as Asian, Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino/a all made up an equal or larger share of PB participants compared to their overall population in the district and share of 2009 local election voters. Effective outreach to public housing residents by the Council Member's office and community groups were key factors in making the process representative of all groups within the district. While the process was racially and ethnically diverse, people with college or graduate degrees were overrepresented, as well as people whose primary language is English. In addition, while youth participated in the early phases of PB, their involvement declined as the process moved forward. Due to the large public housing population many proposed projects in District 33 were focused on public housing in addition to improvements to schools, libraries and parks. While no public housing projects won the vote, the Council Member allocated an additional \$150,000 of his capital discretionary funds to make improvements to the Gowanus Houses Community Center.



People find places to sit and mark their ballot at a voting location in District 33.



### 33rd District Demographics

		<u>Census</u> <u>Data</u>	<u>Neighborhood</u> <u>Assemblies</u> N=197	<u>Budget</u> <u>Delegates</u> N=56	<u>PB</u> <u>Voters</u> N=1945	<u>Voters in</u> <u>2009 Local</u> <u>Elections</u>	<u>Difference</u> <u>between</u> <u>PB &amp; 2009</u> <u>Voters</u>
<u>Gender</u> NA: N=175 BD: N=50 Voters: N=1908	Female	50%	71%	71%	62%	52%	+10%
	Male	50%	29%	29%	38%	48%	-10%
	Other	N/A	0%	0%	0%	N/A	N/A
<u>Race/Ethnicity</u> NA: N=172 BD: N=51 Voters: N=1783	Asian	5%	4%	4%	6%	3%	+3%
	Black	6%	37%	31%	12%	11%	+1%
	Latino/a	14%	20%	10%	12%	14%	-2%
	White	74%	41%	53%	69%	52%	+17%
	Other	2%	2%	4%	3%	0%	+3%
<u>Highest Level</u> <u>of Education</u> NA: N=95 BD: N=41 Voters: N=1471	Some High School or less	13%	6%	8%	4%	N/A	N/A
	H.S. Diploma or GED	16%	13%	15%	11%	N/A	N/A
	Associate/ Vocational Degree	5%	4%	2%	1%	N/A	N/A
	Some College	11%	14%	9%	10%	N/A	N/A
	Bachelor's Degree	29%	24%	26%	39%	N/A	N/A
	Graduate Degree	25%	39%	40%	36%	N/A	N/A
<u>Income</u> NA: N=147 BD: N=46 Voters: N=1676	Less than \$10,000	9%	16%	17%	6%	1%	+5%
	\$10,000-\$14,999	6%	10%	2%	5%	12%	-7%
	\$15,000-\$24,999	8%	10%	4%	4%	11%	-7%
	\$25,000-\$34,999	7%	16%	11%	6%	9%	-3%
	\$35,000-\$49,999	10%	9%	13%	8%	17%	-9%
	\$50,000-\$74,999	14%	10%	9%	12%	36%	-24%
	\$75,000-\$99,999	11%	11%	17%	11%	11%	+0%
	\$100,000-\$149,000	14%	14%	9%	17%	3%	+14%
\$150,000 or more	21%	5%	17%	32%	1%	+31%	
<u>Age</u> NA: N=126 BD: N=43 Voters: N=1551	14 years or under	21%	0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	15 to 19 years	5%	23%	0%	1%	N/A	N/A
	20 to 24 years	7%	2%	0%	1%	N/A	N/A
	25 to 34 years	23%	17%	7%	20%	20%	0%
	35 to 44 years	15%	15%	16%	33%	N/A	N/A
	45 to 54 years	11%	13%	12%	19%	N/A	N/A
	55 to 64 years	9%	15%	33%	13%	N/A	N/A
	65+ years	8%	16%	33%	14%	20%	-6%
<u>Language</u> NA: N=178 BD: N=55 Voters: N=1825	English	53%	94%	84%	87%	N/A	N/A
	Spanish	14%	10%	9%	4%	N/A	N/A
	Other	33%	3%	8%	4%	N/A	N/A