

PLANNING FOR PERMANENT COLLECTIVE POWER

MAPPING COMMUNITY LAND
TRUSTS IN BROOKLYN

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The cartographer acknowledges the ancestral and unceded territories of the Lenape People, including the land known as Brooklyn as well as Harlem and Morningside Heights where Columbia’s Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation sits today. Beyond easy words of acknowledgement, this project seeks to unsettle colonial logics of extraction, dispossession, and displacement by advancing models of collective land stewardship steeped in a rich and enduring legacy of Indigenous land practices.

The fight for collective land ownership in the United States is intimately tied to struggles for Black liberation, from Civil Rights leaders who pioneered the community land trust model in rural Georgia to ongoing grassroots efforts to resist displacement and build community control in historic Black neighborhoods like Harlem and East New York.

CONTENTS

- 03 INTRODUCTION
- 04 METHODOLOGY
- 05 SOCIOECONOMIC VULNERABILITY
- 06 HOUSING PRESSURES
- 07 DISPLACEMENT RISK INDEX
- 08 CITY OWNED SITES
- 09 POTENTIAL LAND DISPOSITIONS
- 10 CONCLUSION
- 11 REFERENCES

CLT LANDSCAPE IN NYC



INTRODUCTION

A community land trust, or CLT, is an increasingly popular model of collective land ownership by which land is taken off the speculative real estate market and stewarded democratically, often for the purpose of resisting displacement and building long-term affordable housing. Amidst a mounting crisis of affordable housing, New York City has seen CLTs emerge across all five boroughs as a grassroots, community-based effort to combat displacement and real estate speculation while expanding deep affordability and collective power.

First pioneered by Black sharecroppers and Civil Rights activists in Jim Crow era Georgia, the CLT model has found success in both rural and urban contexts across the globe. Founded in 1991, the Cooper Square CLT became New York City's first CLT, born from decades of fierce political struggle between Robert Moses's proposed 'slum clearance' and the working-class residents he threatened to displace.

In recent years, a growing movement has coalesced around promoting CLTs in New York with over 20 operating community land trusts across 16 neighborhoods and all five boroughs.

While New York City's CLT movement has achieved significant milestones, such as increased municipal support and the formation of the citywide coalition New York City Community Land Initiative (NYCCLI, pronounced "nicely"), there is still considerable work to be done to ensure sustained growth and scalability.

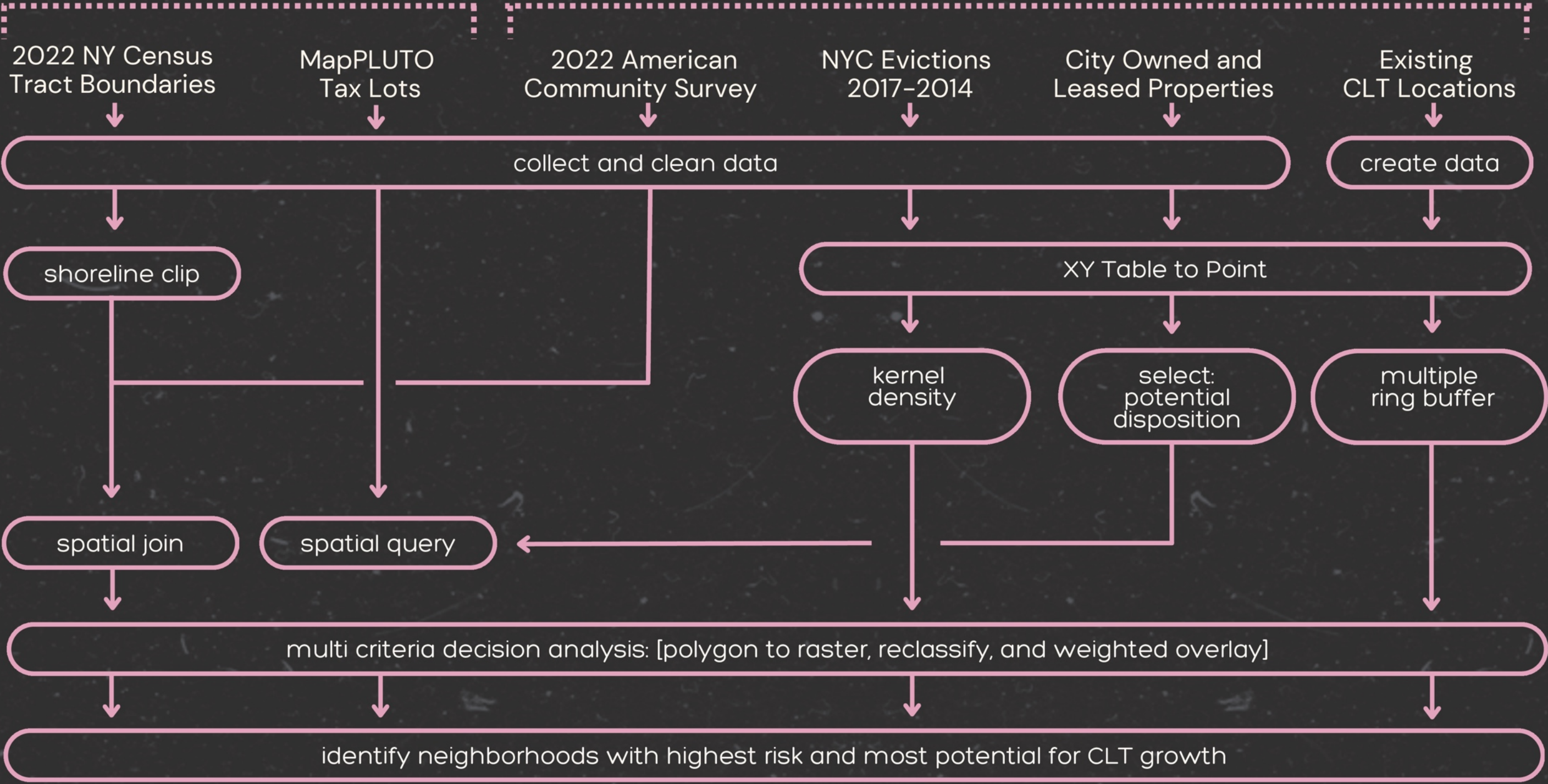
As NYCCLI advocates for supportive legislation such as the Community Land Act, CLTs seek to leverage key policies that would empower communities to take back local control of their neighborhoods and public lands. Intro 78, or 'Public Land for Public Good,' would ensure the City prioritizes CLTs rather than for-profit developers when disposing of city-owned property.

This project seeks to assess how city dispositions could benefit local CLTs. By mapping the vulnerability and risk of community displacement within the city's most populous and rent-burdened borough, the following report helps to visualize the opportunities and challenges of CLTs in Brooklyn.

METHODOLOGY

SPATIAL DATA

NON-SPATIAL DATA



SCOPE

The geographic scope of this study is Brooklyn, New York’s most populous and rent-burdened borough.

The primary spatial unit of analysis is Brooklyn’s 2022 census tracts.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

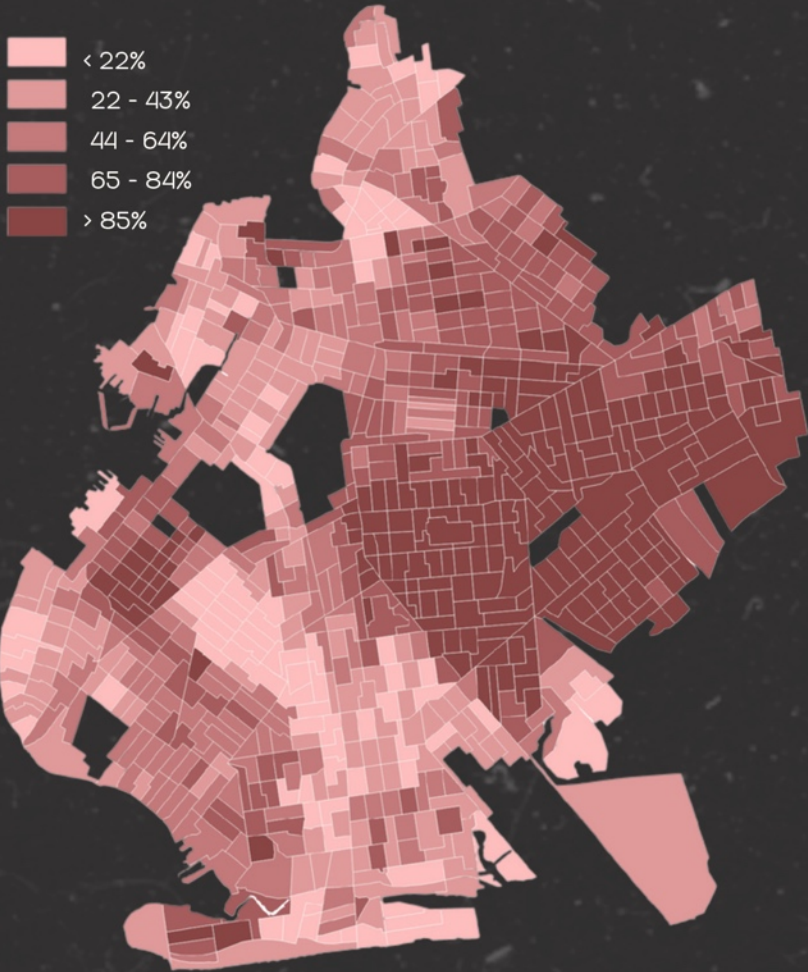
- 1 Are existing CLTs in Brooklyn serving communities most impacted by displacement risk?
 - displacement risk is characterized by social vulnerability and housing pressures
- 2 Where might future CLTs be most impactful as a strategy to combat displacement?

SOCIOECONOMIC VULNERABILITY

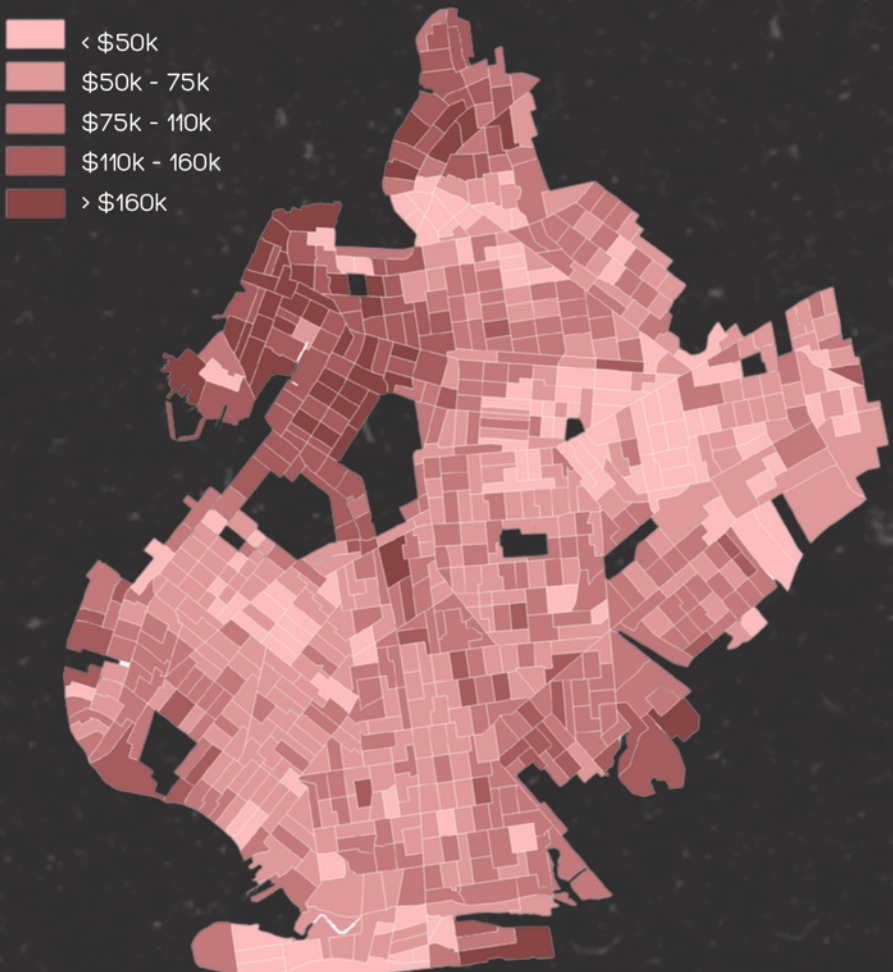
On a citywide basis, the share of New Yorkers who qualify as “rent burdened” has been steadily increasing, rising 11 percent since 2000 and reaching over 53 percent of all renter households in 2021. As wages stagnate and rents rise to historic highs, residents confront compounding crises of affordability that exacerbate historic inequalities.

This study accounts for the following socioeconomic components of displacement risk: (1) race, (2) income, (3) language, and (4) educational attainment

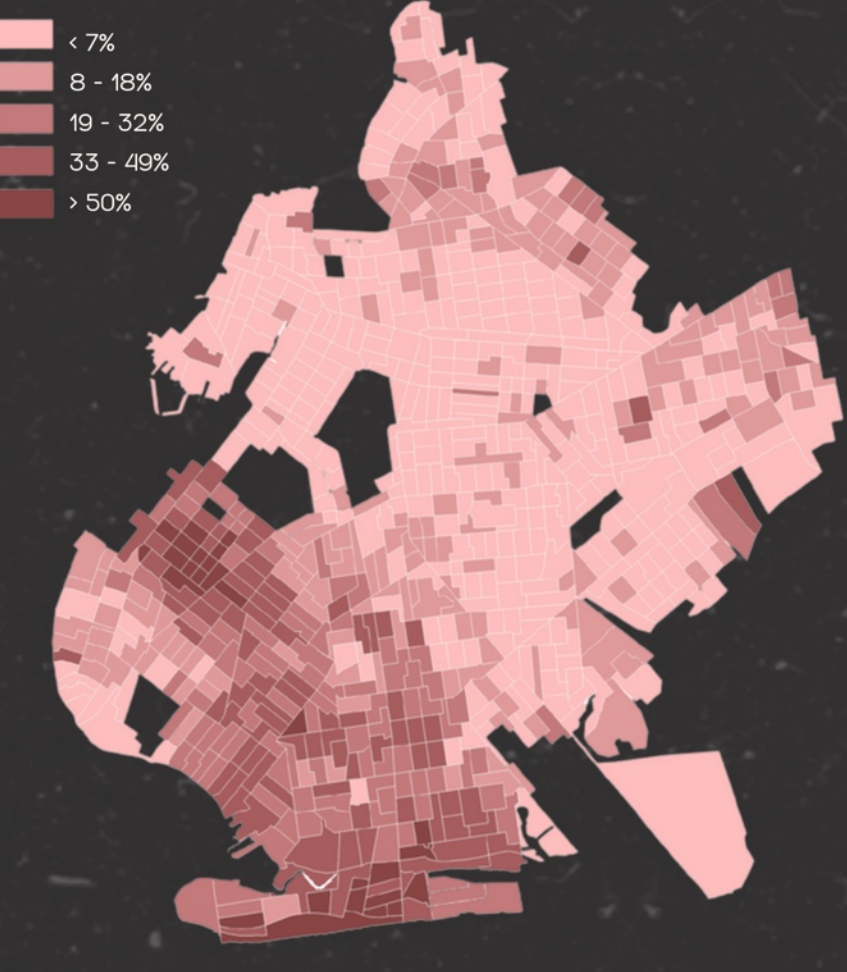
1 non-white residents



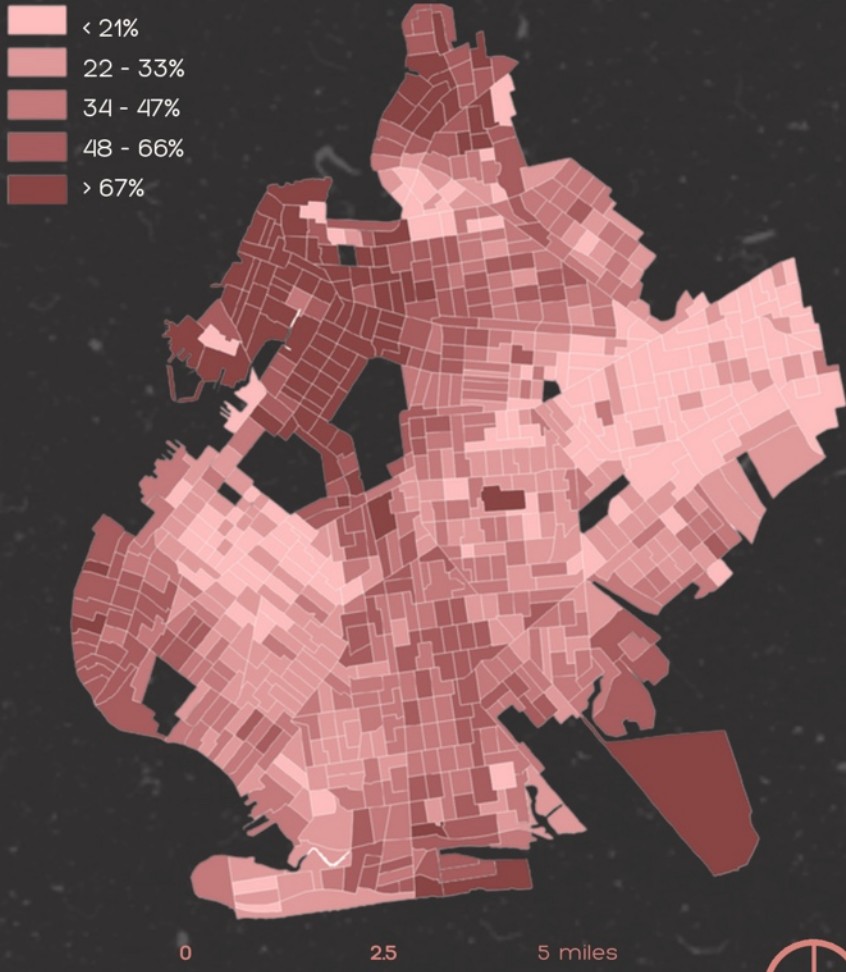
2 household median income



3 limited English-speaking households



4 resident >25 years with BA degree or higher

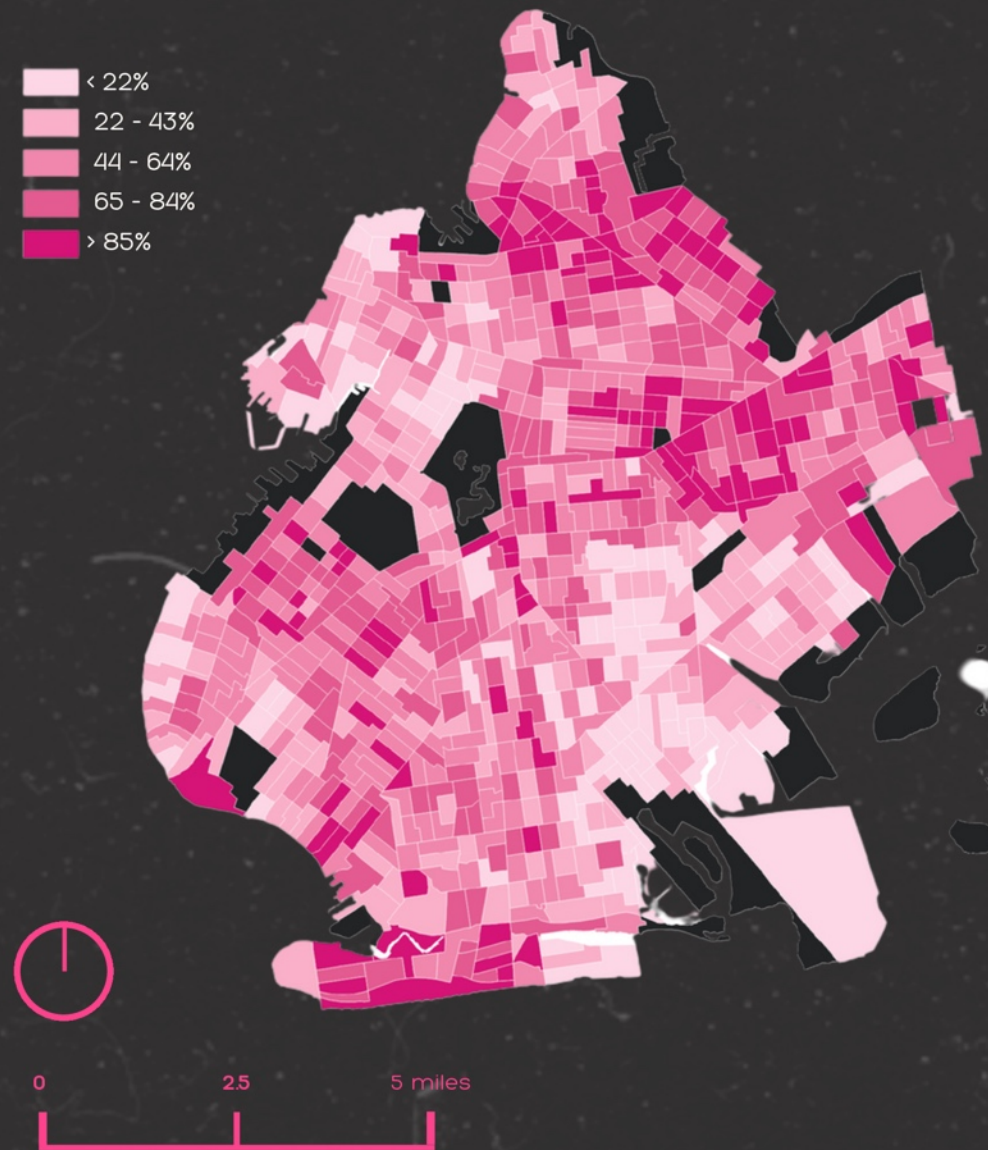


HOUSING PRESSURES

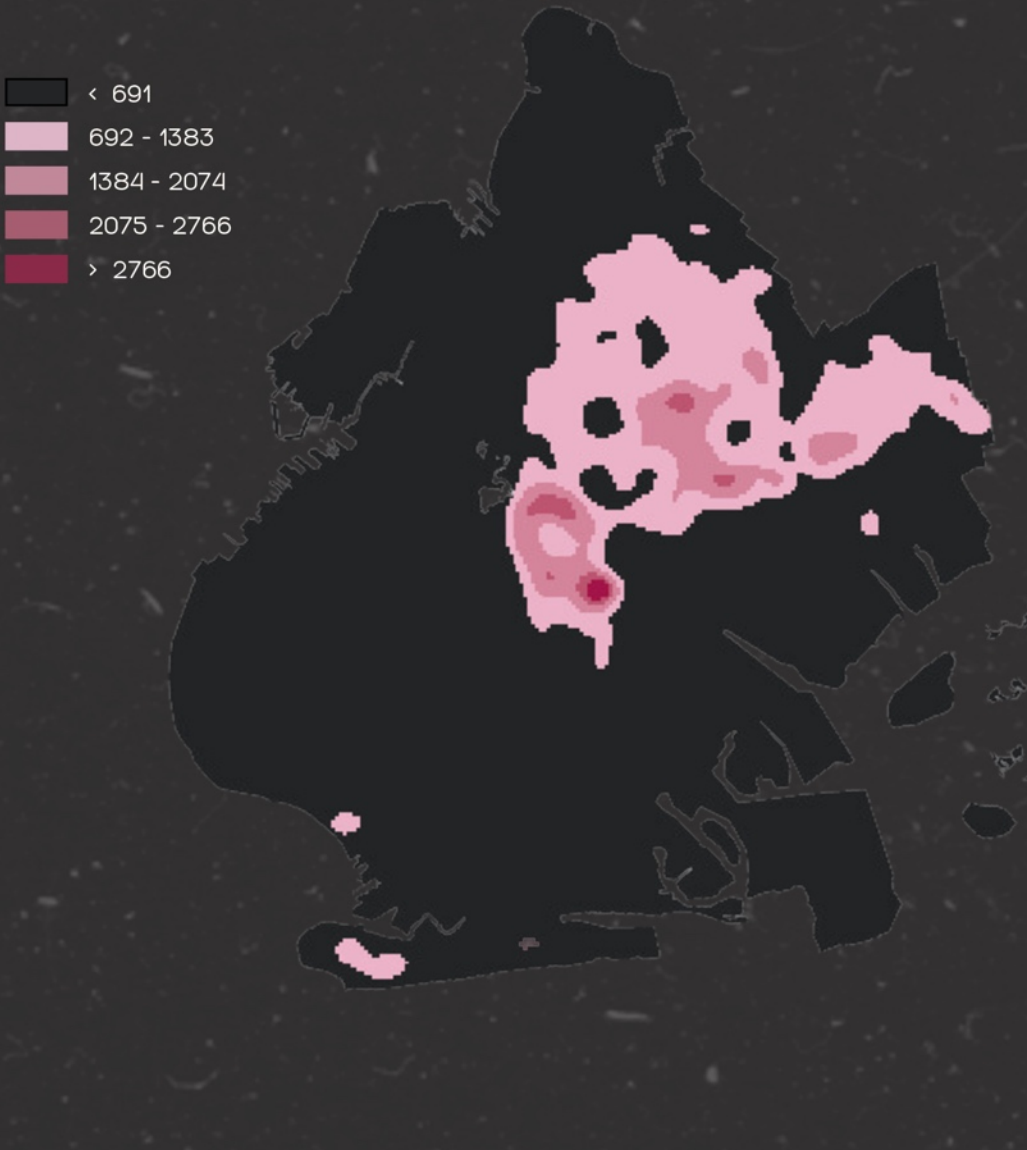
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This study accounts for the following socioeconomic components of displacement risk: (1) rent burden, (2) evictions, and (3) proximity to existing community land trusts

1 rent burden



2 density of evictions 2017 - 2024



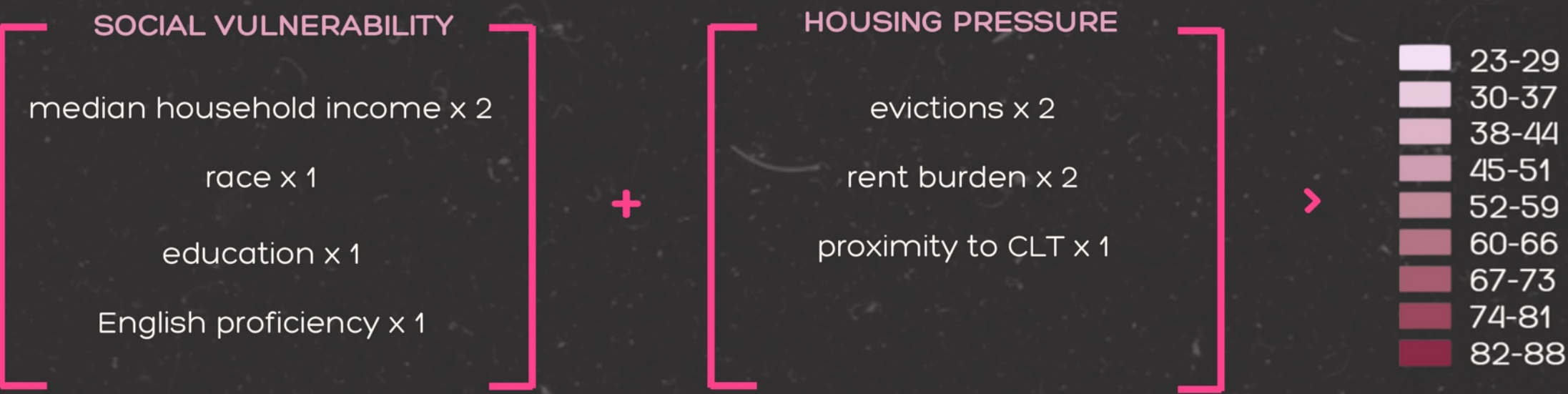
3 distance from existing CLT



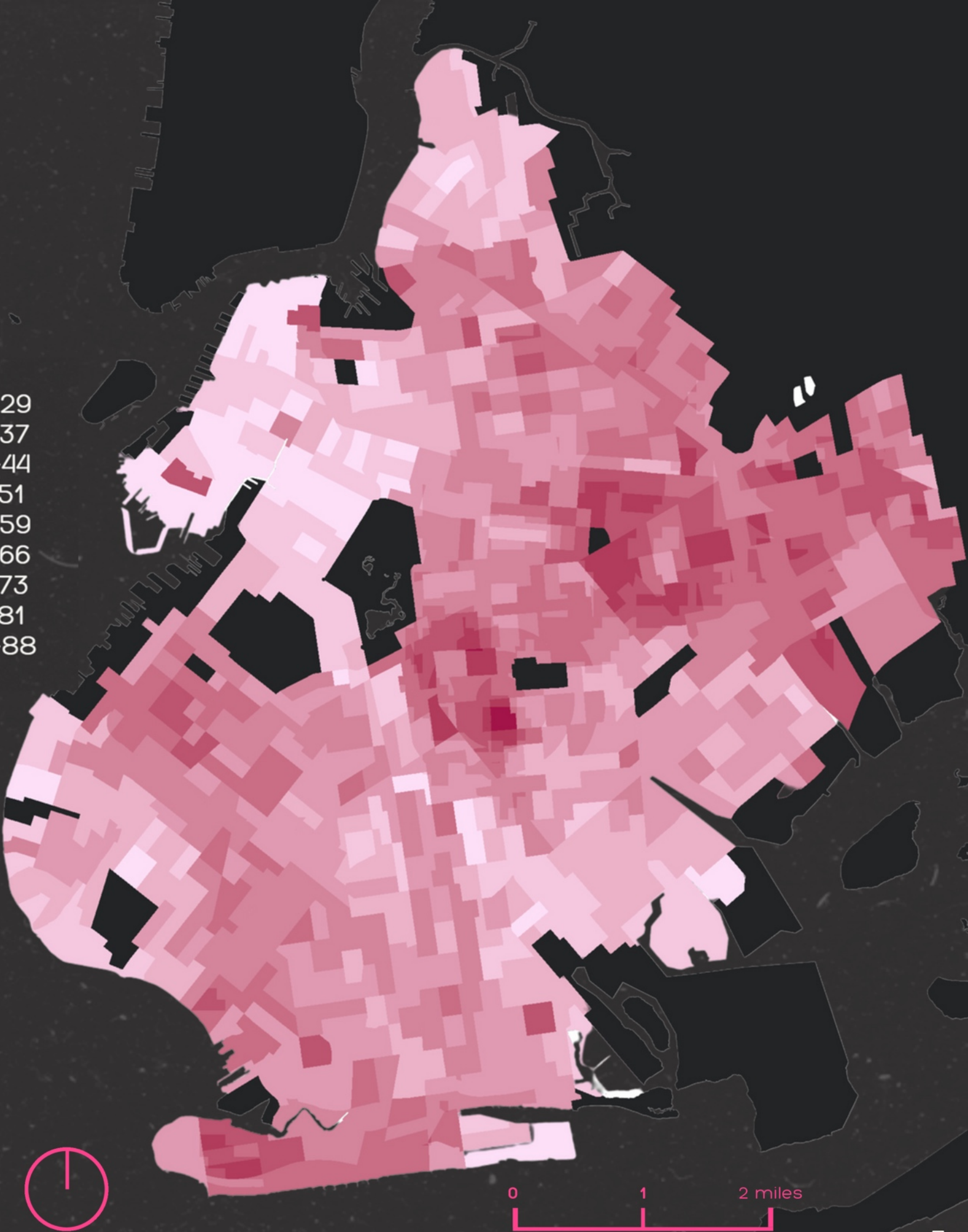
DISPLACEMENT RISK INDEX

MULTI CRITERIA DECISION ANALYSIS

Given the intersectional nature of urban inequality and displacement, this study deploys both socioeconomic indicators and housing pressures to measure risk of displacement in Brooklyn.



By utilizing multi criteria decision analysis, or MCDA, this study is able to analyze multiple factors simultaneously while weighing specific variables, such as income or rent burden, more heavily than others. The resulting weighted overlay helps to visualize a more comprehensive index of community displacement risk



CITY OWNED SITES

POTENTIAL DISPOSITIONS

New York City currently awards most of its public land to for-profit developers, despite non-profits consistently providing longer term and more deeply affordable housing. With 75% of public land projects going to for-profits between 2014 - 2018, the city's reliance on private developers has contributed to a worsening affordability crisis and low-income Black and brown New Yorkers.

By passing Intro 78, the proposed 'Public Land for Public Good' bill, NY City Council would give first priority to qualified non-profits and CLTs, instead of for-profit developers, allowing local residents to determine the best use for the community.

2334 Tilden Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11226



366 Rockaway Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11212



651 Mother Gaston Blvd, Brooklyn NY 11212



POTENTIAL LAND DISPOSITIONS

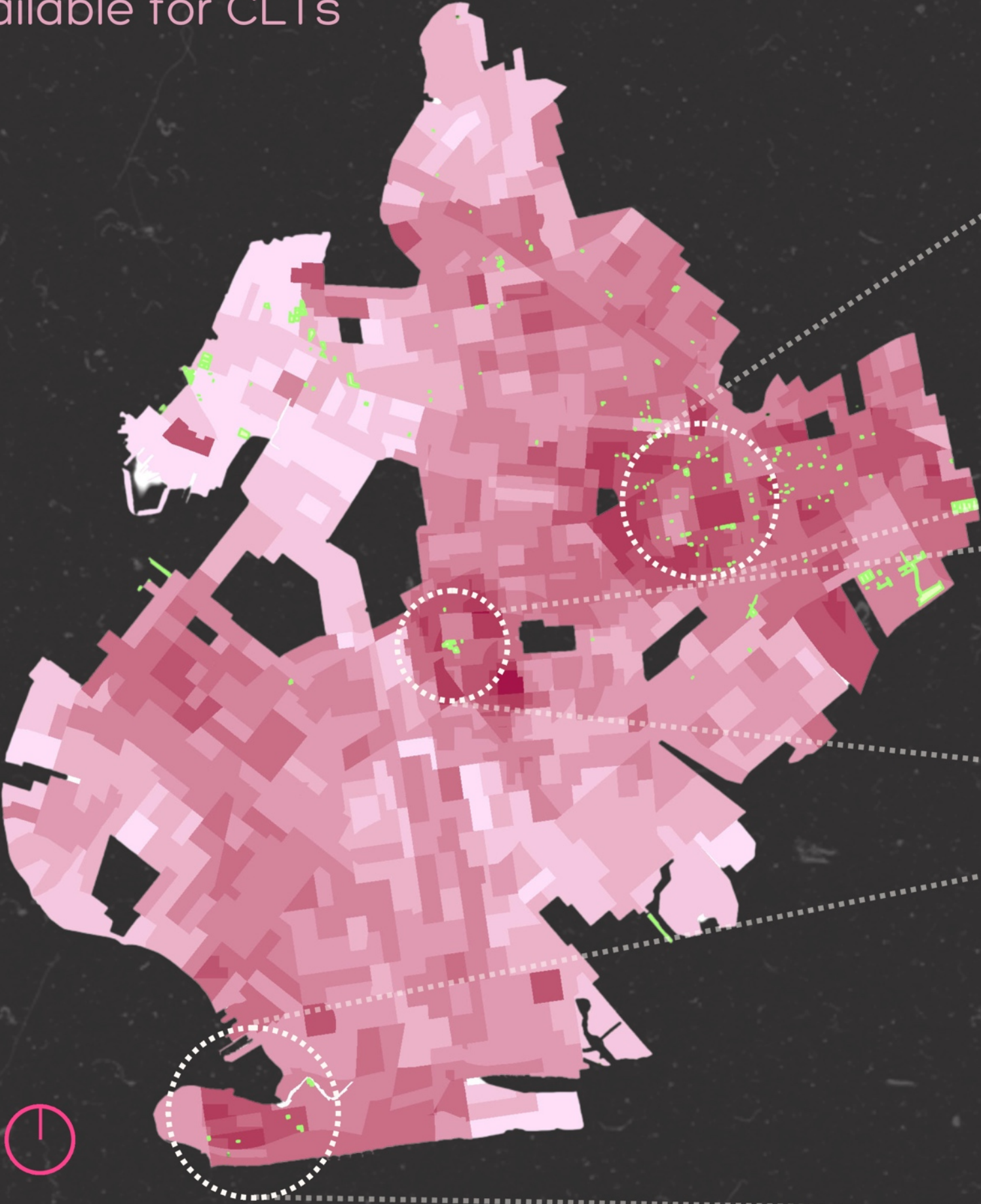
public lands available for CLTs

CITY OWNED
POTENTIAL
DISPOSITION

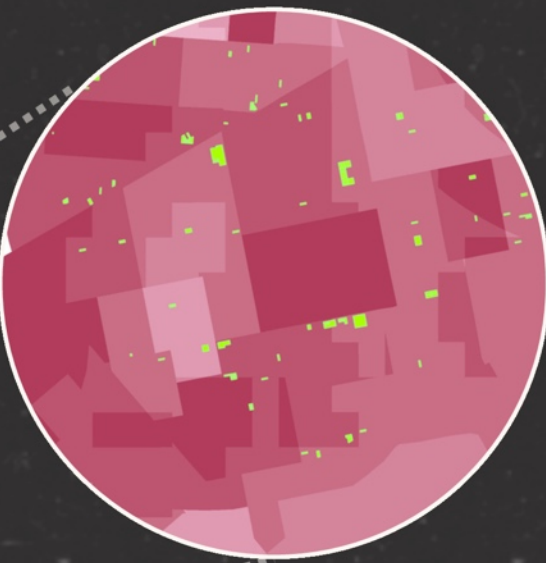


DISPLACEMENT
RISK INDEX

- 23-29
- 30-37
- 38-44
- 45-51
- 52-59
- 60-66
- 67-73
- 74-81
- 82-88

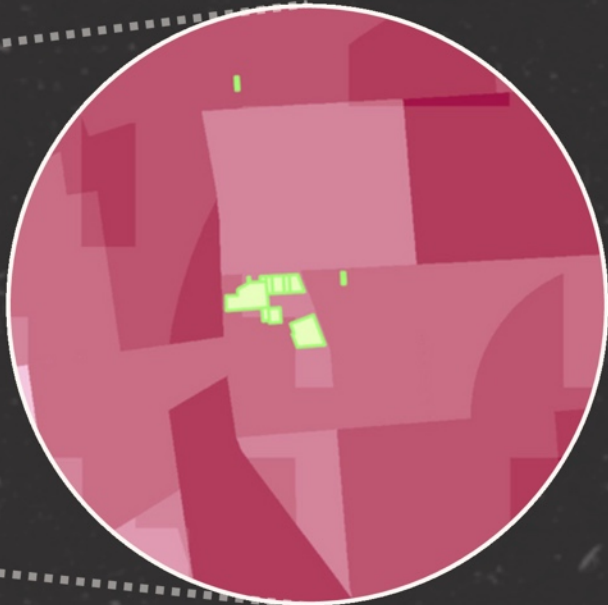


Brownsville and East NY

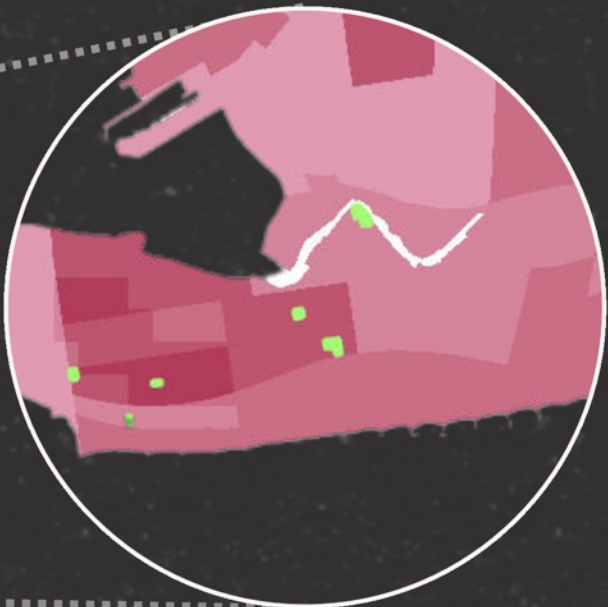


Representing the highest risk of displacement, Brownsville, East New York, and Flatbush also exhibit the greatest concentration of potential dispositions of city-owned lots. With existing CLTs actively seeking land in these neighborhoods, there is tremendous opportunity to move more land into community ownership and prevent future displacement.

Flatbush



Coney Island



With over 90% of residents facing rent burden, Coney Island displays a high risk of community displacement yet boasts numerous potential city dispositions. While there is no existing CLT here, future organizing might prove especially advantageous.

CONCLUSION

Through a spatial analysis of urban displacement in Brooklyn, this study explored the question of whether community land trusts are positioned to serve communities in most need.

By creating a community displacement risk index that accounts for both socioeconomic vulnerabilities and current housing pressures, the study found numerous city-owned sites available for potential disposition conveniently located in neighborhoods that could most benefit from community land trusts. The overlap of potential dispositions of public land within high-risk communities signals a unique opportunity to build deeply affordable housing, strengthen community power, and prevent future displacement through collective land stewardship.

More specifically, the study identified the neighborhoods of Flatbush, Brownsville, East New York, and Coney Island as uniquely positioned to benefit from further initiatives to support local CLTs.

In conclusion, this report reveals the incredible opportunity for the Community Land Act to address root causes of our city's affordability crisis, combat displacement of low-income New Yorkers, and build collective wealth in Black and brown communities.

As communities most impacted by real estate speculation and displacement mobilize around a future of collective land stewardship, New Yorkers arrive at critical juncture in the history of housing and urban space. The future in which residents and communities come before profit is not impossible, it is only a matter of political will.

DATASETS

2022 NY Census Tract Boundaries

United States Census Bureau. (2022). TIGER/Line Shapefile, 2022, State, New York, NY, Census Tract.
<https://catalog.data.gov/dataset/tiger-line-shapefile-2022-state-new-york-ny-census-tract>

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COLUMBIA
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