



**Hearing before the New York City Council  
Committee on Environmental Protection jointly with the Committee on Parks & Recreation  
Oversight: East Side Coastal Resiliency Project  
January 23, 2019**

**Testimony By: Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP, Commissioner**

Good afternoon, Chair Grodenchik and Chair Constantinides, members of the Council Environmental Protection and Parks Committees, and other Councilmembers. I am Mitchell Silver, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. Thank you for inviting us here today to provide an update on the East Side Coastal Resiliency project. Before I begin, I would also like to thank Commissioner Lorraine Grillo of the DDC for providing such helpful information and context for this massively important project. While many of you are aware that this large-scale resiliency investment is focused on protecting the lives and property of the people of the East Side of Manhattan, today I would also like to provide our agency's perspective on how this project will vastly improve East River Park and other nearby parks, for the betterment of both the local community and the city at large.

The East Side Coastal Resiliency project completely changes the future of East River Park by transforming it into a climate-resilient park that can withstand the risks and demands of the coming century. In its present state, the park is highly susceptible to climate risk - predominantly due to sea level rise, storm surge, and heavy rainfall. Storm surge from sporadic, severe events like hurricanes can overwhelm the park and the surrounding neighborhood, as happened in Sandy. Perhaps even more challenging is the threat from gradually accelerating sea level rise, which increases the risk of frequent flooding from everyday storms or high tides. If we don't take action, this will threaten the recreational capacity of our parks, as fields will be left vulnerable to storm surge, and plant life to salt water inundation in ways that are detrimental to the existing ecology.

When completed, the ESCR project will transform East River Park into the 21<sup>st</sup> century resilient park that New York City deserves. We have successfully identified a path forward that not only provides the same level of protection as the initial design approach, but does so faster, smarter, and with more benefit to the community.

This plan reflects years of community input; through the comprehensive community engagement that preceded the design process, we heard loud and clear that the users of East River Park loved the existing program and amenities that were in place, and this design reflects that consensus. The core recreational program and design elements for the park will remain in place and be enhanced. All that has changed is the engineering approach for how to incorporate flood protection functionality into the park, and the technical manner through which the project will be delivered. This revised plan will elevate the park by several feet, ensuring that all of the park investments will be out of the flood zone and able to sustain future climate challenges.

The new design strengthens the waterfront bulkhead, which supports the esplanade and is currently in poor condition. The state of the existing bulkhead had previously been a design constraint, limiting plantings and other features that could be sited near the water. By reconstructing the bulkhead now, we can avoid near-term closures of the Park to do this repair work separately. We will also be able to support a more dynamic waterfront esplanade, including redesigned and relocated embayments and



step-downs which will allow more New Yorkers to get closer to the water and really be able to engage with this incredible natural resource.

By elevating the property, we open up opportunities to improve access and incorporate more graceful and natural entryways into East River Park. We will now be able to initiate necessary repairs to Corlears Hook Bridge, a key entry point into the park that is in poor condition. This also allows us to integrate the foundations for the future flyover pedestrian bridge to address the “pinch point” near the Con Edison facility, strengthening neighborhood connections to the park and waterfront. Instead of delaying necessary repair work on the existing waterfront bulkhead and Corlears Hook Bridge, which would mean park impacts and closures at a later time, we are incorporating this work into the ESCR project to maximize efficiency and community benefit. Lastly, as we believe that many local residents will appreciate greatly, altering our approach to the design of the project allowed us to ensure that more New Yorkers living near East River Park will enjoy views of the park, instead of a floodwall.

Though much of the public dialogue has focused on East River Park, we are also pleased that the ESCR project will provide important storm protection for vital Parks assets such as the Asser Levy Recreation Center, and allow for the reconstruction of other nearby properties within the project limits, including Murphy Brothers Playground, Asser Levy Playground and Stuyvesant Cove, which, while not under the jurisdiction of the Parks Department, serves as an important amenity for the community. Similar to the improvements that will be made at East River Park, we look forward to seeing these properties updated and revived for our 21<sup>st</sup> Century open space needs.

As with any major capital project of this scale and complexity, there will be significant impacts and inconveniences for the public. Regardless of the design approach being considered, the City would have to rebuild the majority of East River Park, a massive undertaking. We have begun working with existing sports league permittees that use the ballfields, and will seek to redistribute their access to existing Parks facilities. We are coordinating with our sister City agencies to identify opportunities to make additional use of recreational space operated by other entities, and we are exploring all feasible improvements to nearby Parks property that will increase interim access to recreational space for the duration of the closure, either through short-term enhancements or capital work that is already underway. We welcome community suggestions on identifying interim recreation measures; we have already received a great list from Councilwoman Rivera and are open to other suggestions.

Through our public engagement, the enthusiasm for our urban forest and the trees within East River Park has become abundantly clear. The earlier design approach would have required removal or replacement of nearly all of the trees within East River Park, and that will continue to be necessary, given the need to elevate the park by several feet. We will attempt to transplant as many existing trees as possible and explore planting larger-caliper trees that will provide more significant benefits sooner, and we will endeavor to accelerate street tree planting in nearby neighborhoods to help with greening efforts. In any case, it is important to recognize that the current trees in East River Park are already at significant risk of flooding, and the updated design will ensure that those trees can survive the next century in an increasingly volatile climate. Subsequent to Sandy, we’ve seen a decline in health for many of the trees in the park; approximately 260 trees were removed in 2014 after die-off from salt inundation and we have continued to remove additional trees that have been unable to recover. I am pleased to note that when this project is complete, there will be approximately 1200 trees within the park, a net increase of several hundred trees, in a diverse palette of species that are resistant to salt spray exposure and more suitable to the park’s location. Realigning our planting strategy in accordance





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with current best practices for resiliency, in combination with the elevation of the new park, means that these trees and plantings will have the best chance of surviving future extreme weather, be it drastic storms or rising temperatures.

Though a project of this size will always present challenges and costs, we are pleased that the ESCR project will help deliver an improved park experience for visitors to East River Park and other nearby open spaces. As I hope we've demonstrated today, improving and protecting our park system for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is a guiding principle for this administration and this agency, and this spirit has infused and informed this effort. We look forward to achieving the shared community vision of bringing comprehensive flood protection, along with enhanced open space and waterfront access, to this densely populated area of New York City. Thank you for allowing us to testify before you today and for all your great advocacy for our city parks. I will now like to welcome Jamie Torres Springer, First Deputy Commissioner at DDC, who will give a short presentation. Thank you.



East Side  
Coast  
Resiliency  
Hearing

January 23,  
**2019**

Department of Design and Construction  
Lorraine Grillo, Commissioner

New York City  
Council  
Committee on  
Parks and  
Recreation

New York City  
Council  
Committee on  
Environmental  
Protection

Good afternoon Chairman Grodenchik, Chairman Constantinides, and members of the Committees. I also want to acknowledge Council Members Rivera and Powers, who have been tireless advocates for their constituents on this project.

I am Lorraine Grillo, and I am happy to appear today for the first time in my new role as Commissioner of the New York City Department of Design and Construction. I am joined today by Commissioner Mitchell Silver, DDC First Deputy Commissioner Jamie Torres Springer, as well as members of my senior staff and key members of our East Side Coastal Resiliency team.

### **EAST SIDE COASTAL RESILIENCY OVERVIEW**

We are building for a new world. When Superstorm Sandy struck in October 2012, the storm surge battered the City's coastline, leading to dozens of deaths, destruction of thousands of homes and other buildings. On the Lower East Side, water depths of up to four feet were recorded along Avenue C. Sandy battered the City's water and sewer facilities, transportation systems, and shut down electrical service to much of Manhattan below 34th Street for nearly four days after the storm.

Add to this image the inevitable pace of climate change, where more frequent and severe storms and sea level rise are expected to bring water even closer to our homes and neighborhoods.

This is the context we are building in. This is the storm we have to design and build for. And the sense of urgency to provide flood protection as quickly as possible is great.

This project comes after years of intensive community dialogue with thousands of community stakeholders and continues almost weekly with meetings with community boards, elected officials, and others to discuss this project and adapt it. This includes the Rebuild By Design process, a community-based effort, sponsored by HUD, that inspired much of the park design we see today.

### **Project Description**

The top priority for ESCR is to provide comprehensive flood protection that addresses the worst-case projections of storm flooding and tidal inundation in the 2050s. The protected area addresses the safety of over one hundred thousand New Yorkers residing in portions of the Lower East Side and East Village, the

extensive New York City Housing Authority developments that line East River Park, Stuyvesant Town, and Peter Cooper Village.

The City is proposing a flood protection system using a variety of approaches including floodwalls, floodgates, and raised landscapes, each tailored to the specific site in which they will be constructed. Drainage and other infrastructure within the protected areas will be significantly enhanced, and we will have an opportunity to rebuild and greatly improve access to park and waterfront areas.

Instead of a floodwall separating the community and the park, this approach raises all of East River Park to the 100-year flood level as projected in the 2050s. The flood barrier is moved all the way from the highway to the water's edge, where it will sit underneath a rebuilt park and will not separate the community from its waterfront.

### **Design Change**

As you are aware, last year a City team carefully reviewed the design program for ESCR, and came to the conclusion that there were significant challenges in the previous design that would have had major impacts on our ability to deliver this project. The decision was announced quickly after intensive internal deliberation

over the summer. The decision struck many stakeholders as sudden and unexpected. I regret that we did not share more information sooner, because the positive outcome is so significant.

My mandate when I joined the Department of Design and Construction last year was to scrutinize our project planning BEFORE we embark on a project of this size and scope, and that's EXACTLY what we did with ESCR. We must get this project right.

It became immediately clear to me and my team that there was incredible risk to building an extended flood wall along FDR Drive. The plan called for piles to be driven – AT NIGHT – immediately next to Manhattan's primary eastern roadway, and directly in front of several NYCHA developments, home to 15,000 New Yorkers. Each evening at the beginning of the workers' shift the outermost lane of the FDR Drive would need to be closed and construction equipment moved into place, a process that would take well over an hour to complete in a safe manner. And, each early morning before the end of the workers' shift, equipment would need to be removed and the orderly process of re-opening the full highway would have to take place. Access to the site would have been limited to one entrance at Montgomery Street.

Let me be clear: the change had nothing to do with protecting traffic, or keeping the FDR open. The change was about making sure we could build this project.

Quite simply, we were not convinced it could have been done.

As if that were not enough, the design called for full excavation of a major ConEd transmission line delivering power to much of lower Manhattan, and then construction of a massive protective tunnel around the transmission line, all while the line was still active. This effort may have presented the greatest risk to the project – the exact condition of the transmission line is unknown, and the exact cost of excavation, remediation, and the means to protect it were amazingly complicated. Our review this past summer helped us fully understand and steer clear of the unknowns of protecting the ConEdison transmission line.

We recognize that there is concern that parts or all of East River Park will be closed. We did not take this decision lightly but concluded that we could not keep the open and complete the project while keeping residents safe. It also became clear during our constructability review last year that even if we had retained the original wall-along-the-FDR design, we would have had to close the whole park, and potentially for a longer period. I am sorry this information was not made

completely clear before, but as our exact engineering became more refined, we learned more about the challenges of staging this project.

At the same time, the current design allows us to shorten the schedule by about a year and allows us to provide flood protection to the community by spring 2023, one full hurricane season sooner than under the previous design.

The new approach also allows the construction site to be accessed from the water by barge, significantly reducing truck traffic through the community.

Finally, the new design also allows us to build an access improvement long requested by the community along the river path, near 13<sup>th</sup> Street, known as the “pinch point.” Because of the raised park design the City will be able to construct a flyover bridge to accommodate the thousands of pedestrians and cyclists who now have to navigate a narrow lane between FDR Drive and a Con Edison facility.

### **East River Park**

As Commissioner Silver will describe in more detail, the actual layout for East River Park is exactly the same in this design, only better because the park will be fully rebuilt with all new facilities.



What's more, the park itself will now be raised and will not flood. In fact, moving the flood protection to the water's edge will allow us to rebuild the waterfront esplanade, which was not part of the original plan, in a way that will give users unprecedented access to the river.

Removing the wall from East River Park also addresses a concern voiced repeatedly by community leaders prior to this change, removing a barrier and reconnecting this open space to the community.

Finally, we have to remember that the project has to be visionary: raising the park will ensure this park remains a community resource for the next 50 years or more, even as climate change's impacts become more severe.

## **BUDGET**

The City is proposing a \$1.45 billion construction program. This estimate reflects an all-in cost to install flood protection, reconstruct several access points into the park, and construction of East River Park and the other parks in the project area up to 25<sup>th</sup> Street. This estimate includes \$338 million in HUD funding, which we will spend by 2022.

There has been discussion that the cost estimate for the preliminary design was approximately \$800 million. But let me be clear: by the time we moved to a different approach, our estimates for the earlier design were approaching \$1.2 billion, nearly the same as the existing design.

### **Schedule**

We are working hard to bring this project into construction by spring of next year. To do this we hope to certify the project into ULURP early this spring. We are planning robust, continual community engagement both before and after that milestone. Construction must start early next year in order to have the key flood protections in place by 2023.

I want to assure you that we are looking very intensely at the construction schedule and whether sections of the park can be reopened in phases, before the overall East Side Coastal Resiliency program is completed.

Thank you. Let me turn the presentation over to Parks Commissioner Mitchell Silver.





# Hearing on East Side Coastal Resiliency

New York City Council Committees on Parks and Recreation  
and Environmental Protection

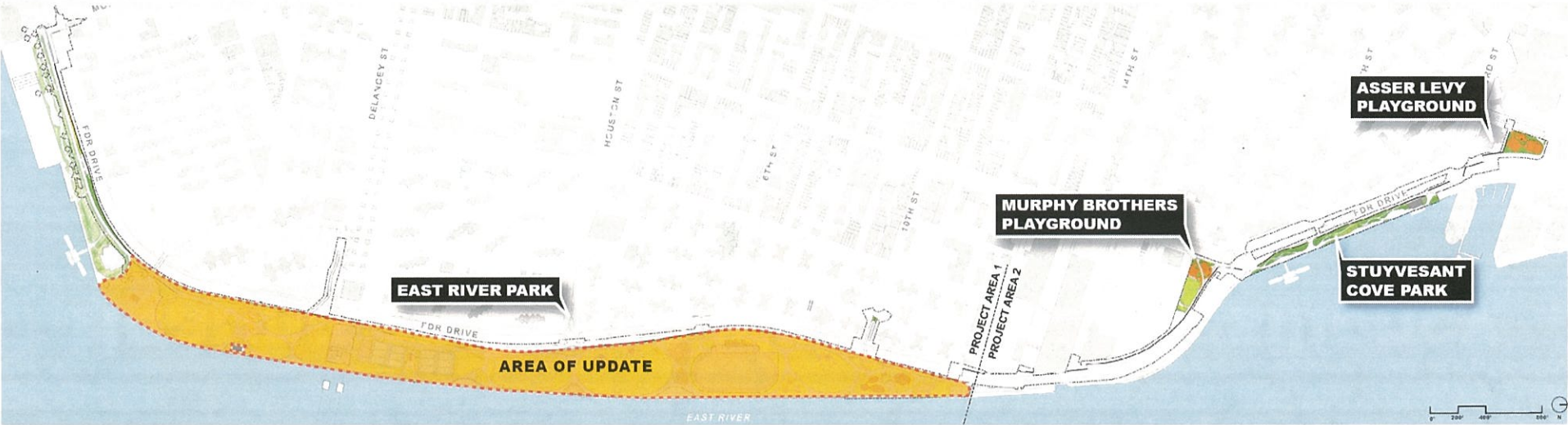
January 23, 2019





# PROJECT AREA

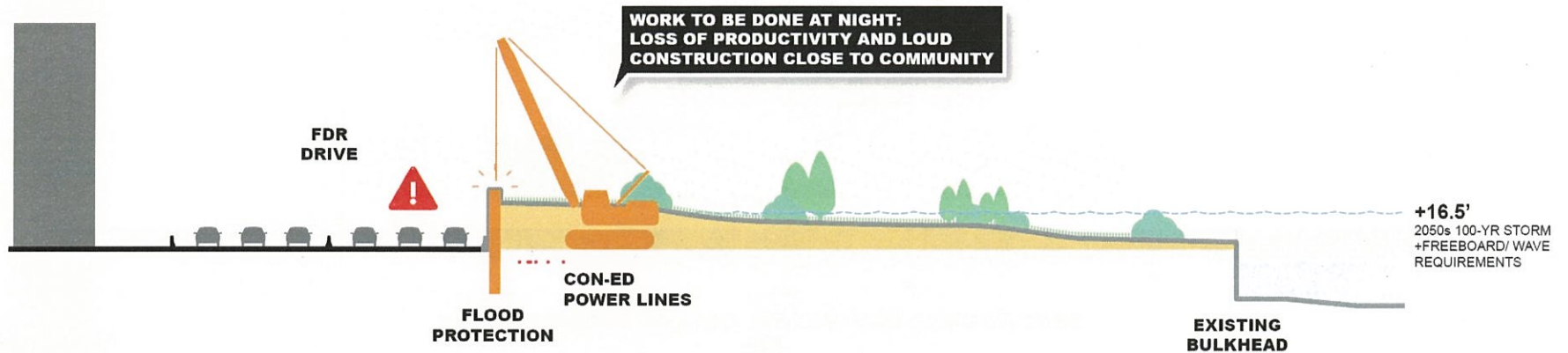
EAST SIDE COASTAL RESILIENCY PROJECT



# IMPROVED CONSTRUCTABILITY

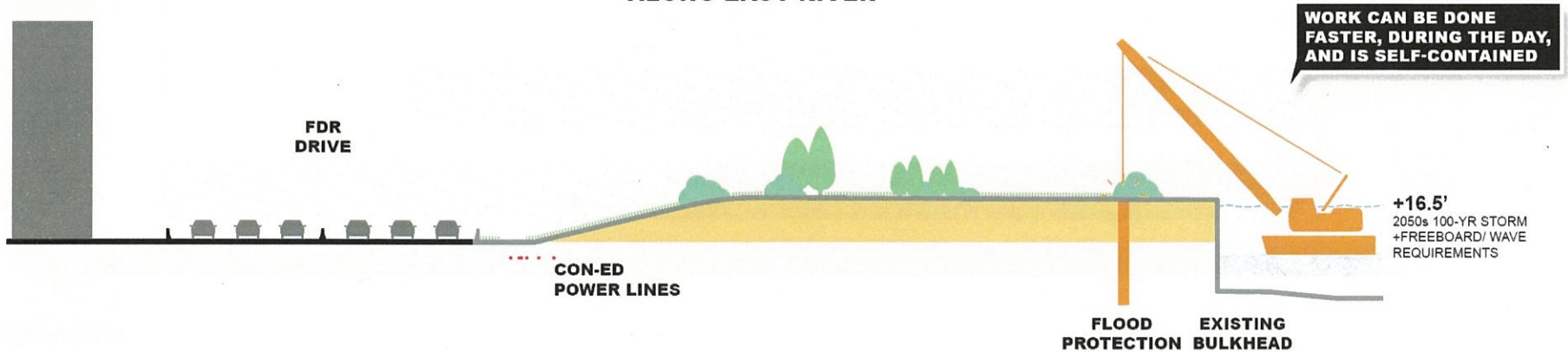
DELIVERY RISK REDUCED BY MINIMIZING FDR WORK

## PREVIOUS PLAN:



## CURRENT PLAN:

### FLOOD PROTECTION ALONG FDR VS. ALONG EAST RIVER



# IMPROVED SCHEDULE

OPERABLE SYSTEMS FOR 2023 HURRICANE SEASON

## PREVIOUS PLAN



## CURRENT PLAN

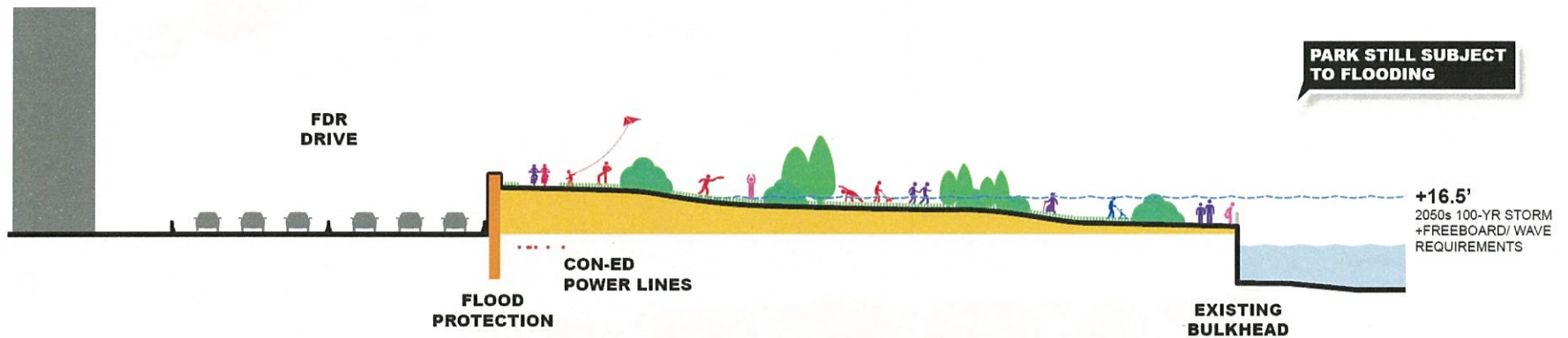
FLOOD PROTECTION BY HURRICANE SEASON 2024  
VS.  
FLOOD PROTECTION BY HURRICANE SEASON 2023



# IMPROVED PARK RESILIENCY

PARK IS ABOVE THE 2050s 100-YEAR FLOODPLAIN

## PREVIOUS PLAN



## CURRENT PLAN

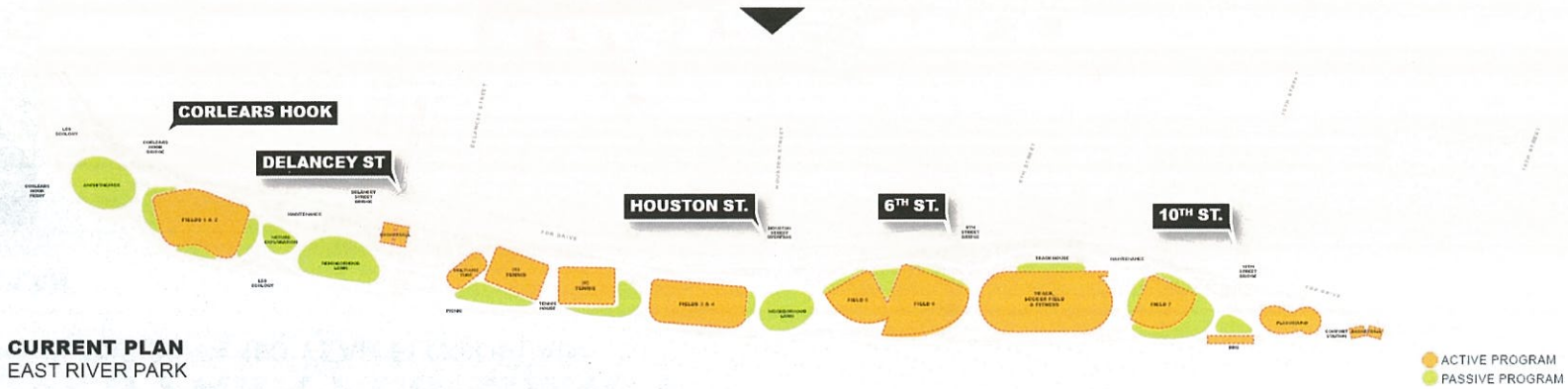
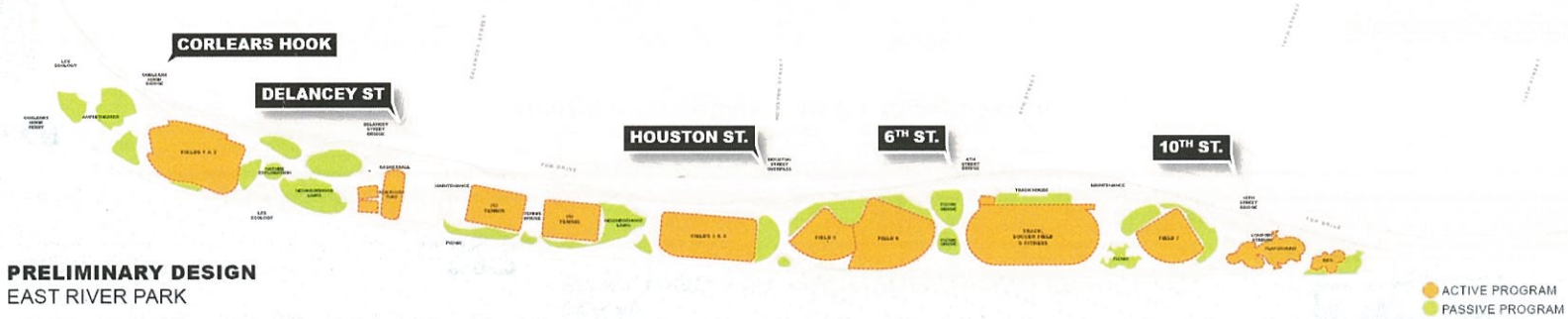
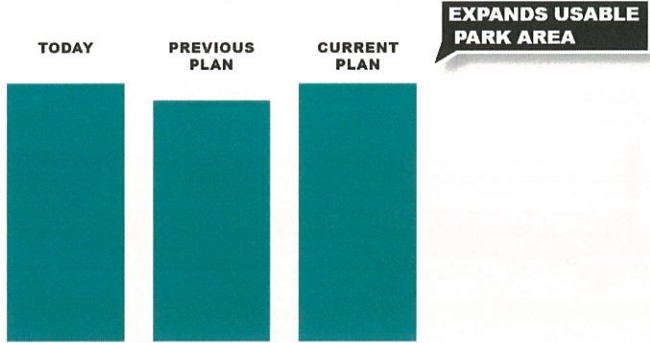
### FLOOD PROTECTION ALONG FDR VS. RAISED & REBUILT EAST RIVER PARK





# PARK PROGRAM

DESIGN APPROACH







**A GREAT WATERFRONT PARK**

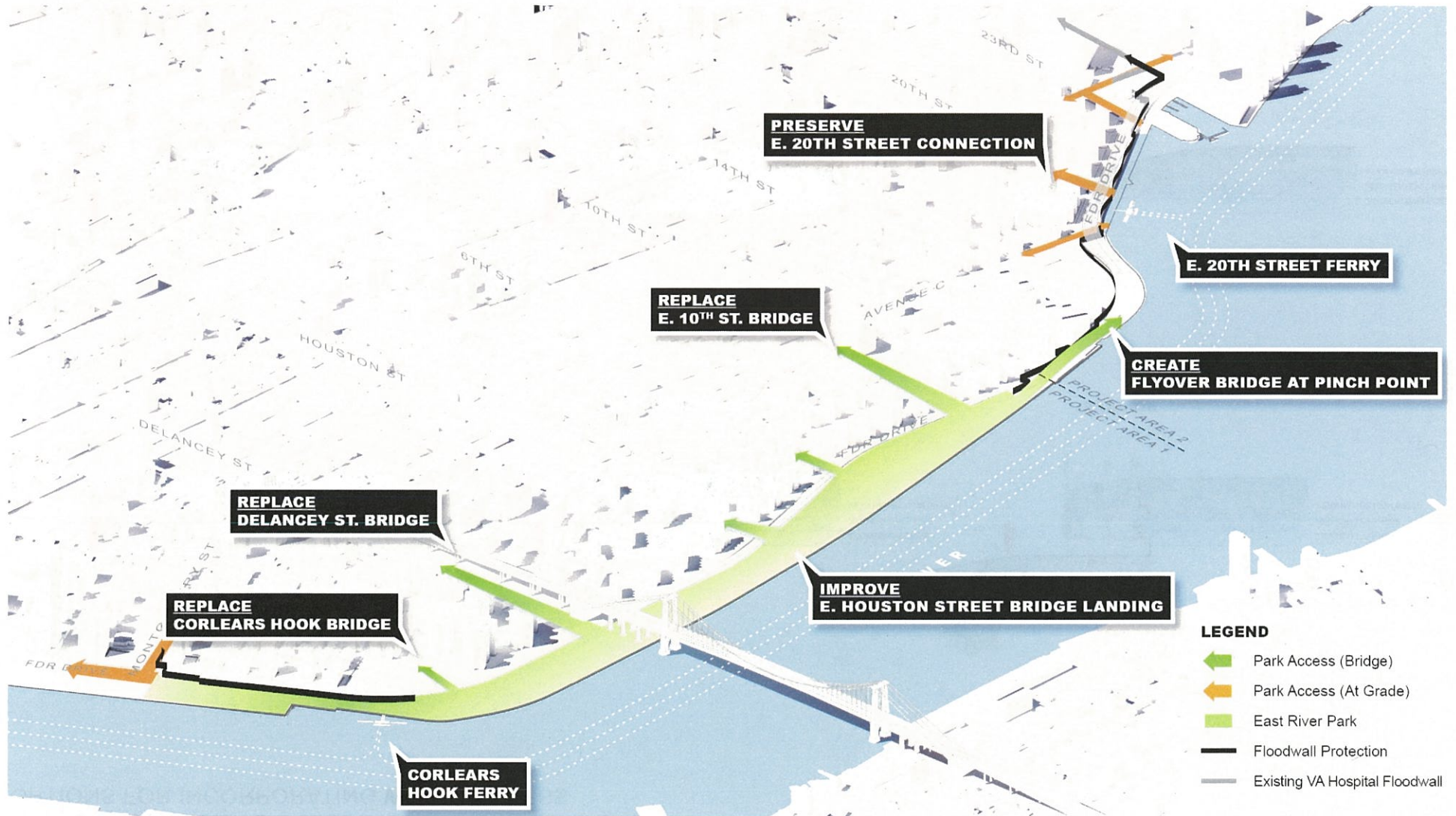






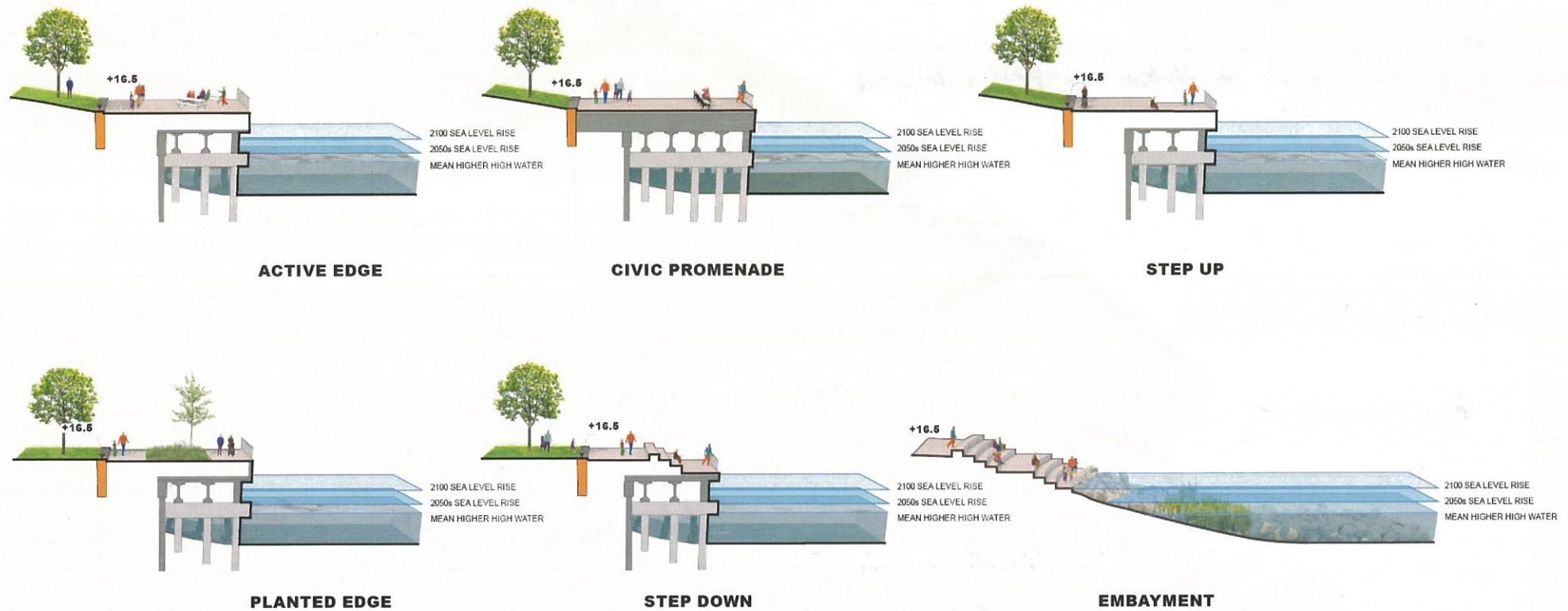
# WATERFRONT OPEN SPACES & ACCESS

IMPROVING PARK ACCESS



# IMPROVED PARK RESILIENCY

## OPTIONS FOR INCORPORATING WATER ACCESS



 FLOOD PROTECTION BELOW GROUND





RENDERING DEPICTS 2015 MEAN HIGHER HIGH WATER

**HOUSTON AREA**  
CURRENT PLAN





RENDERING DEPICTS 2050 MEAN HIGHER HIGH WATER

## HOUSTON AREA

CURRENT PLAN





**NYCHA HOUSING**  
ADJACENT TO EAST RIVER PARK





**TRACK & FIELD AREA**  
PREVIOUS DESIGN





**TRACK & FIELD AREA**  
PREVIOUS DESIGN - STORM CONDITIONS





**TRACK & FIELD AREA**  
CURRENT PLAN





**TRACK & FIELD AREA**  
CURRENT PLAN - STORM CONDITIONS





**DELANCEY OVERLOOK**  
EXISTING CONDITIONS





**DELANCEY OVERLOOK**  
PREVIOUS PRELIMINARY DESIGN





**DELANCEY OVERLOOK**  
PREVIOUS PRELIMINARY DESIGN - STORM CONDITIONS





**DELANCEY OVERLOOK**  
CURRENT PLAN





**DELANCEY OVERLOOK**  
CURRENT PLAN - STORM CONDITIONS



# PARK RESILIENCY

OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE ECOLOGICAL HEALTH & BIODIVERSITY



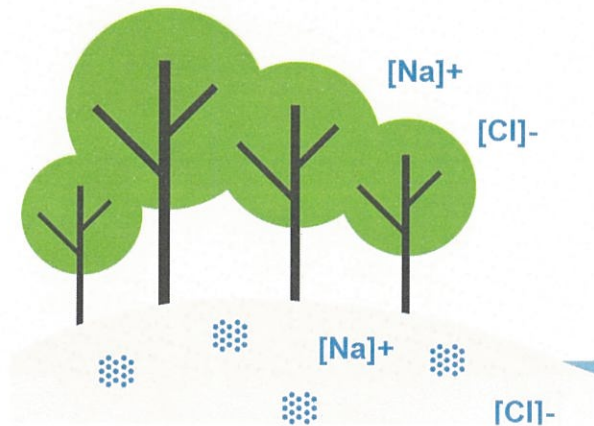
**SPECIES DIVERSITY**



**HABITAT**



**MAINTENANCE & CARE**

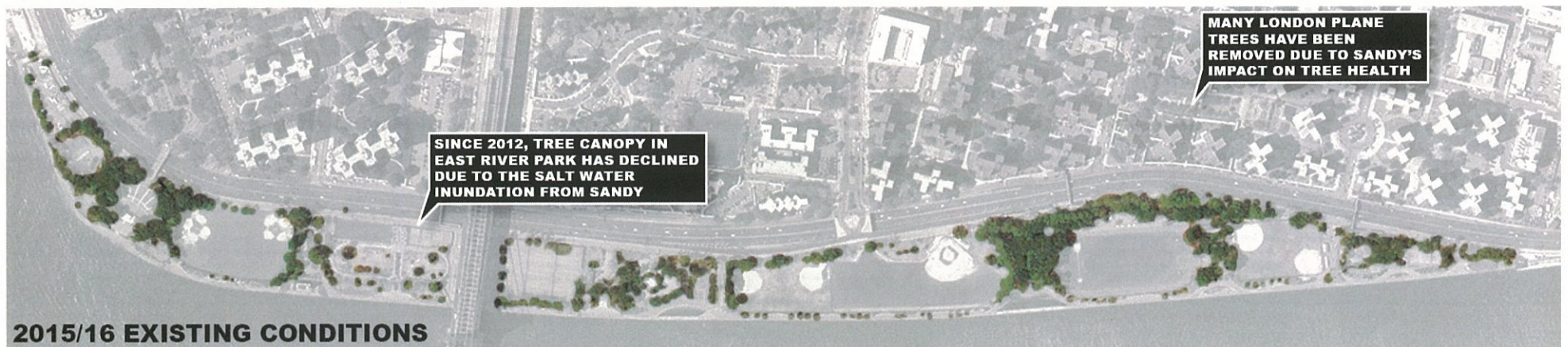


**SALT SPRAY**



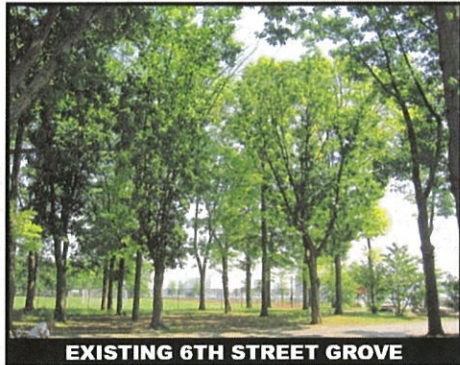
**WIND**

## POST-SANDY CANOPY CHANGE





# PRIOR PLANTING CONCEPT - MARCH 2018



In areas of flood protection existing trees will be removed, topography will be elevated, and park landscapes will be planted with resilient tree species at higher elevations. Project-wide approximately 700-750 trees will be removed in a phased construction approach, and approximately 1,200 new trees will be planted.

COMMUNITY BOARD 3 MEETING PRESENTATION: 3.15.2018



# PLANTING CONCEPT



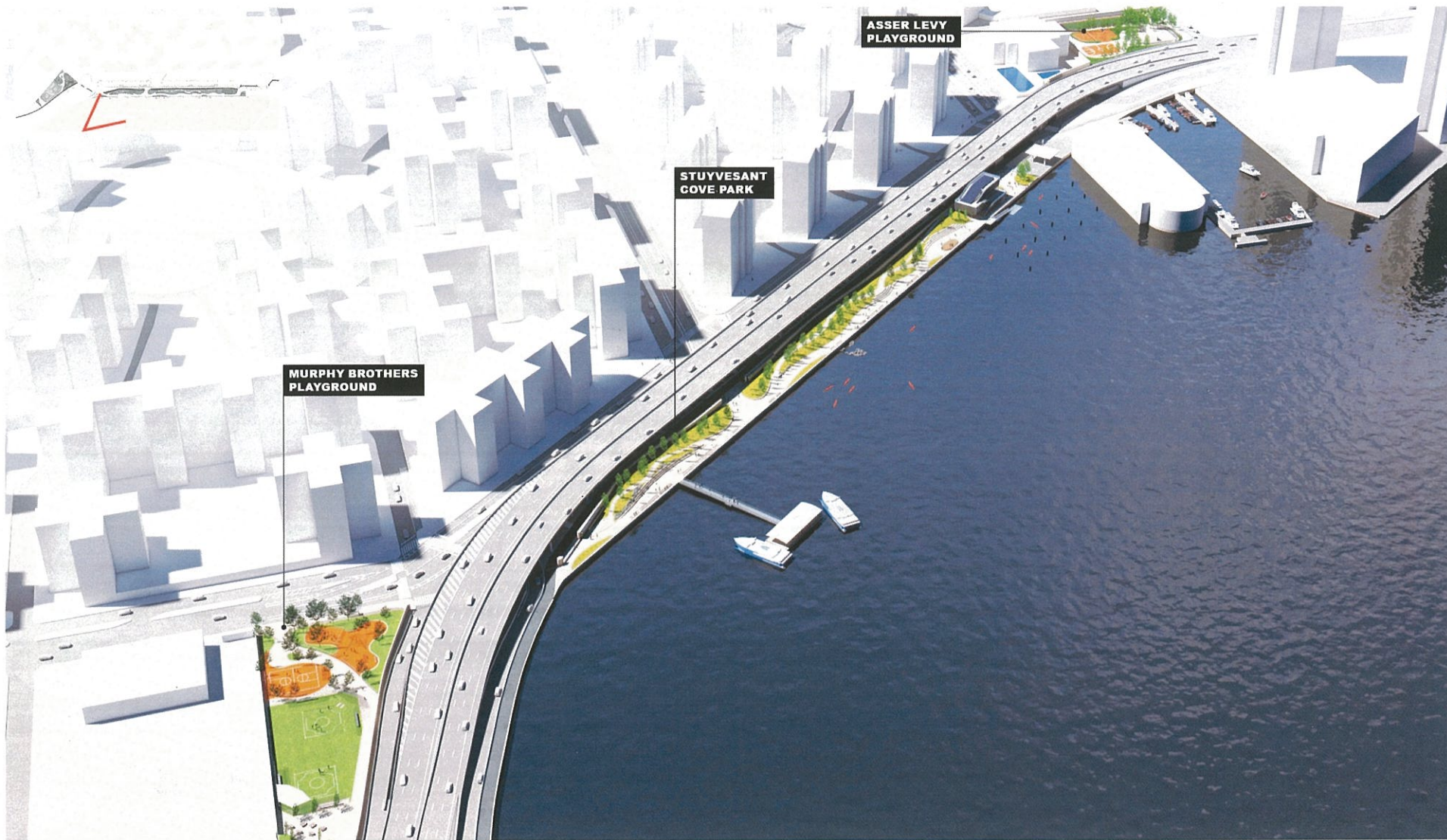
**HOUSTON AREA**  
CURRENT PLAN



An aerial photograph of a highway interchange, likely a cloverleaf or similar design, with multiple lanes and ramps. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal color. The text "PROJECT AREA 2" is centered in white, bold, sans-serif font.

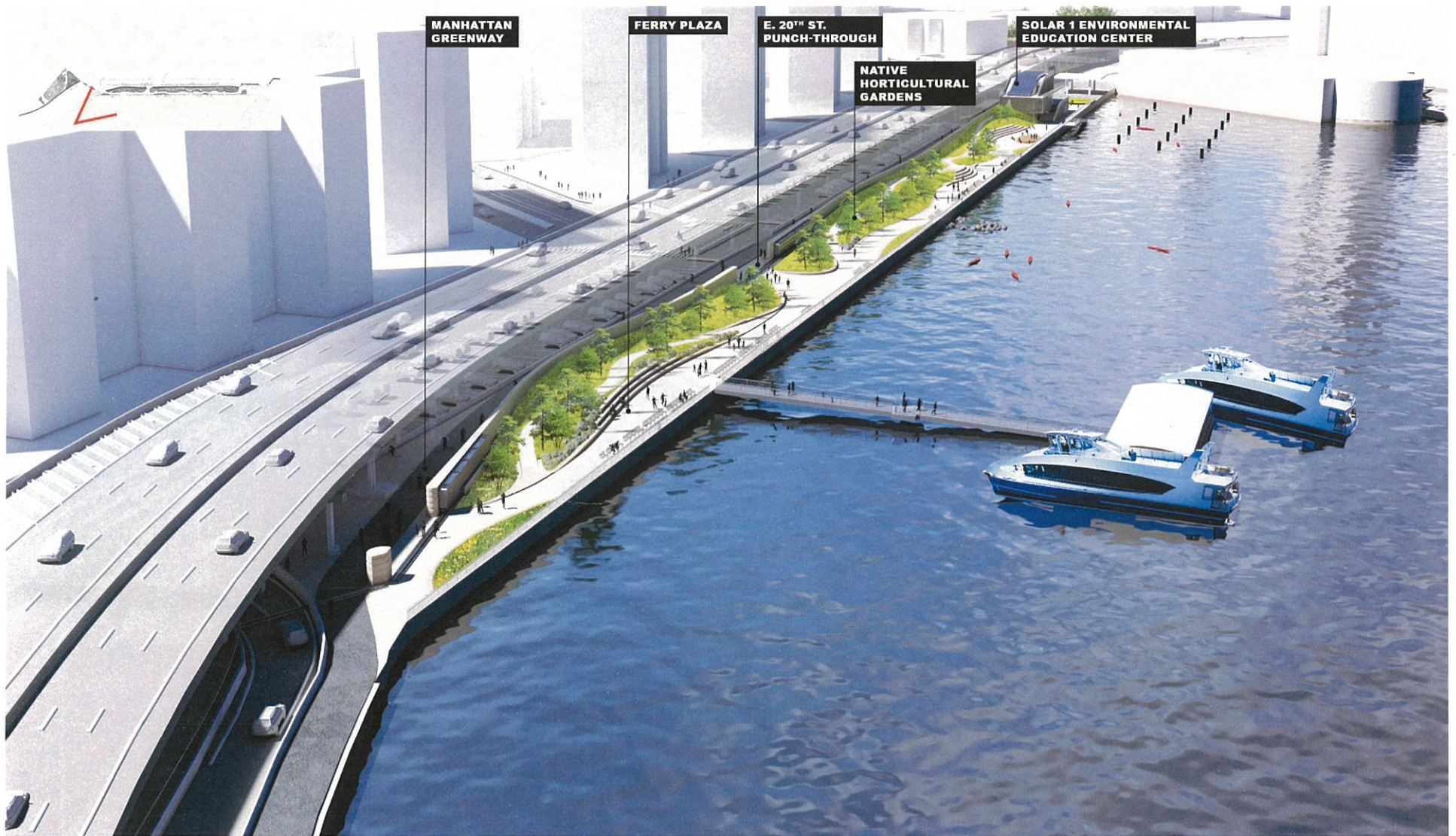
# **PROJECT AREA 2**





**PROJECT AREA 2 PARKS**  
PRELIMINARY DESIGN





**STUYVESANT COVE PARK**  
PRELIMINARY DESIGN

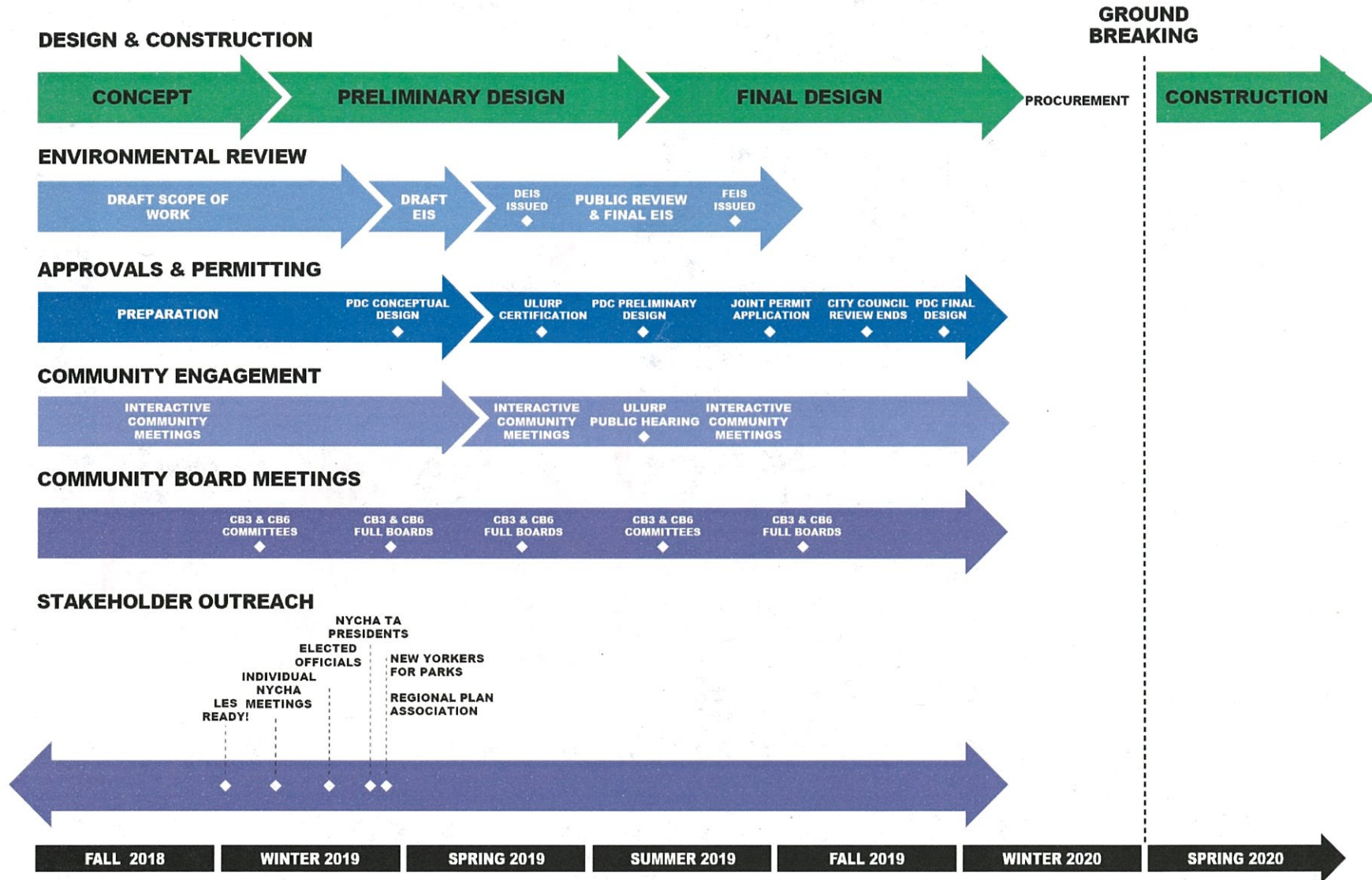




**STUYVESANT COVE PARK**  
PRELIMINARY DESIGN

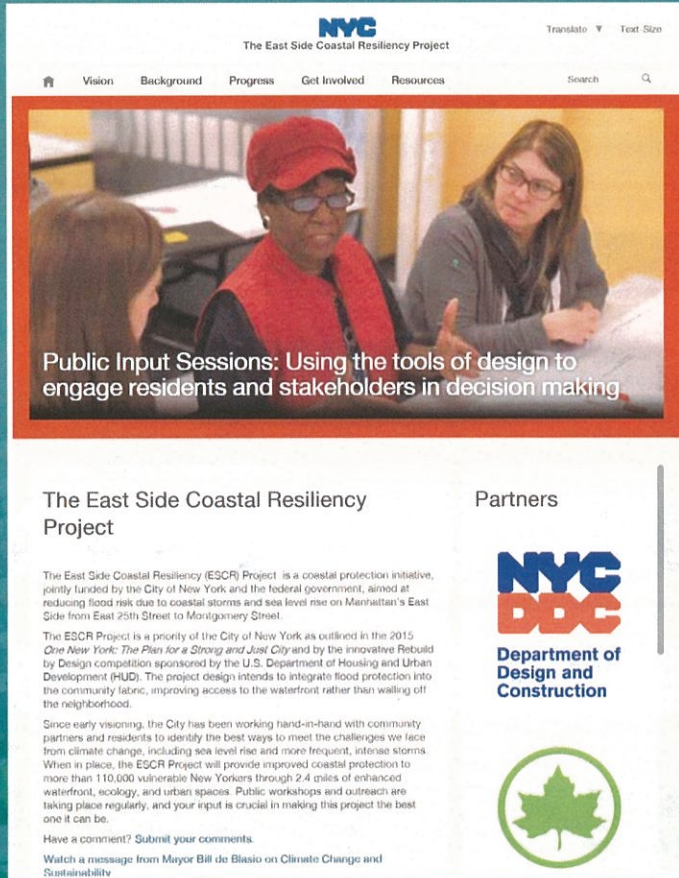


# SCHEDULE & NEXT STEPS





# Website



The screenshot shows the NYC ESCR Project website. At the top, the NYC logo is followed by "The East Side Coastal Resiliency Project". Navigation links include Vision, Background, Progress, Get Involved, and Resources. A search bar is also present. The main content area features a large image of two people at a public input session, with the text "Public Input Sessions: Using the tools of design to engage residents and stakeholders in decision making". Below this, the "The East Side Coastal Resiliency Project" section provides details about the project's goals and funding. To the right, the "Partners" section lists the NYC DDC and the Department of Design and Construction, accompanied by their logos. A green maple leaf logo is also visible at the bottom right of the partners section.

**NYC**  
The East Side Coastal Resiliency Project

Translate Text Size

Vision Background Progress Get Involved Resources Search

**Public Input Sessions: Using the tools of design to engage residents and stakeholders in decision making**

### The East Side Coastal Resiliency Project

The East Side Coastal Resiliency (ESCR) Project is a coastal protection initiative, jointly funded by the City of New York and the federal government, aimed at reducing flood risk due to coastal storms and sea level rise on Manhattan's East Side from East 25th Street to Montgomery Street.

The ESCR Project is a priority of the City of New York as outlined in the 2015 *One New York: The Plan for a Strong and Just City* and by the innovative *Rebuild by Design* competition sponsored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The project design intends to integrate flood protection into the community fabric, improving access to the waterfront rather than walling off the neighborhood.


Since early visioning, the City has been working hand-in-hand with community partners and residents to identify the best ways to meet the challenges we face from climate change, including sea level rise and more frequent, intense storms. When in place, the ESCR Project will provide improved coastal protection to more than 110,000 vulnerable New Yorkers through 2.4 miles of enhanced waterfront, ecology, and urban spaces. Public workshops and outreach are taking place regularly, and your input is crucial in making this project the best one it can be.

Have a comment? Submit your comments.

Watch a message from Mayor Bill de Blasio on Climate Change and Sustainability

**Partners**

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**JOINT TESTIMONY OF NEW YORK STATE SENATORS BRAD HOYLMAN AND  
BRIAN KAVANAGH, CONGRESSMEMBERS CAROLYN MALONEY AND NYDIA  
VELÁZQUEZ, AND ASSEMBLYMEMBERS HARVEY EPSTEIN AND  
YUH-LINE NIOU**

**BEFORE THE JOINT HEARING OF THE COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND  
RECREATION AND THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
OF THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL REGARDING THE STATUS OF THE EAST  
SIDE COASTAL RESILIENCY PROJECT**

**January 23, 2019**

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony during this New York City Council Oversight hearing on the status of the East Side Coastal Resiliency (ESCR) Project. We are State Senator Brad Hoylman, State Senator Brian Kavanagh, Congressmember Carolyn Maloney, Congressmember Nydia Velázquez, Assemblymember Harvey Epstein, and Assemblymember Yuh-Line Niou. Each of our respective districts includes a large portion of the area that would be affected by the City of New York's proposed East Side Coastal Resiliency (ESCR) project, the subject of today's oversight hearing.

We thank Parks and Recreation Committee Chair Barry Grodenchik and Environmental Conservation Committee Chair Costa Constantinides for holding this important hearing and for the opportunity to present this joint testimony, and Councilmembers Carlina Rivera, Margaret Chin, and Keith Powers, with whom we have worked closely on this issue, for your leadership.

While we applaud the City's desire to take decisive action in response to the urgent risks of extreme weather driven by global climate change, we have serious concerns about the sudden transformation of the ESCR proposal in September 2018 from a plan that incorporated over 4 years of community input to a new plan unilaterally put forth by the City. After years of working with the community on the previous plan, this unexpected change raises numerous questions about the process by which the City selected this new proposal and its process for gathering and incorporating public feedback.

Moreover, as we expressed in a December 6th letter to the City – which Councilmembers Rivera, Chin, and Powers, as well as Borough President Gale Brewer joined – based on the information the City has provided to date, we have substantial reservations about the

project as proposed (and how it was proposed). Nor are we persuaded, based upon the City's assertions to date, that it would be legal for the City to undertake this project, which involves demolishing East River Park for the primary purpose of providing coastal flood protection for the surrounding community, unless the State legislature adopts legislation authorizing the temporary alienation of this essential parkland.

### **The Need for Resiliency**

Rising sea levels have already had a negative impact on New York City, playing a major role in the storm surge and consequent flooding caused by Superstorm Sandy. Experts agree that rising sea levels will continue to exacerbate the consequences of extreme weather events, which are becoming increasingly likely as a result of climate change caused by pollution of the Earth's atmosphere. According to New York State's Department of Environmental Conservation, sea levels along the New York City coastline are expected to rise 2.5 feet by 2050 and as much as 6 feet by 2100.<sup>1</sup>

In light of these urgent threats, we strongly support the primary objectives of the ESCR project. In particular, we share the goal of developing resiliency infrastructure that also serves as social infrastructure – simultaneously protecting vulnerable communities in the event of a storm and improving quality of life.

### **Lack of Public Input and Community Engagement in Deciding Upon the New Plan**

That said, serious questions remain surrounding the new plan that the City rolled out in September 2018, leading to much confusion and concern within a community that had worked for years to ensure the design of its coastline would represent the needs of its residents. Plans and promises were made under the assumption that this project would continue to respect the community-driven process.

Understandably, our community feels blindsided by the abrupt change of plans. Many of our constituents feel that their time and efforts over the past few years have been overlooked, that the new plan lacks public input, and that we have not had enough transparency into what is happening. We share our constituents' confusion.

The City has stated on multiple occasions that the results of their 2018 value engineering and constructability review prompted them to change plans. Why, then, did the City wait to commission a value engineering and constructability review until after more than four years of community planning? If this is standard operating procedure, then the City should revisit this practice so as to better respect the time and energy of the community members who spend countless hours working on these projects.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/94702.html>



Engaging the community in this new phase is particularly challenging, when as of late November 2018, the ESCR Team informed Senator Hoylman during a meeting in his district office that the Project Area 1 design was just 20% complete and the Project Area 2 design was only 50% complete. How can the community comment in a meaningful way when there is no fully formed plan upon which to comment? Understandably, many constituents have expressed a desire for greater clarity on a number of specific issues with the new plan.

Trust between the community and the ESCR team has eroded, and that is not acceptable. We need to find a workable path moving forward.

### **Project Area 1 (Community Board 3)**

The most dramatic changes to the ESCR plan are in East River Park, which the City proposes to close, demolish, and reconstruct at an elevation eight feet higher than the current park. Our understanding is that the park would be closed for 3.5 years during construction. At 57 acres, this is the largest park in Manhattan south of Central Park and it is very heavily used by many of our constituents who otherwise have limited access to green spaces or outdoor recreation. Closure of the entire park will create an enormous hardship for our community, particularly for thousands of residents of New York City Housing Authority developments along the East River and participants in youth sports leagues.

After speaking with a number of our constituents, we urge the City to identify ways that the project could proceed with construction on this essential park in phases such that parts of the park remain open throughout the project. If this is not possible, we ask for a better explanation than the City has provided to date as to why.

Regardless of whether the park would be fully or partially closed, it is essential that the City immediately identify alternative local recreational spaces to mitigate the loss of open space. Low-income families with children and public housing residents who live along the waterfront have not yet received specific proposed alternatives to the programming they currently enjoy. In a recent letter to elected officials, DDC has committed to “look for opportunities to make additional use of fields operated by other agencies or entities” and they have committed to “identifying asphalt play spaces within existing parks with potential for conversion to turf.” We urge DDC to expedite these plans, seek the counsel of the relevant Community Boards, and present a plan to the youth sports leagues as part of their community engagement process.

Furthermore, under the current plan, the demolition of East River Park would include the full and irreversible destruction of an entire ecosystem that contains nearly 400 species and numerous trees. We respectfully request that alternatives be proposed so that an entire ecosystem is not obliterated.

## **Alienation**

In Spring 2018, the City announced that it would need New York State legislation to authorize alienation of portions of East River Park in order to proceed with the ESCR proposal as it stood at that time.

Although the City is now presenting a revised project that retains only 30% of the prior plan, it would still be executing a design that is for the purpose of resiliency and the protection of the Lower East Side. The new plan is essentially to transform the park itself into a flood barrier. Since it is clear that the City would not be demolishing or reconstructing the park otherwise, we believe that City is not undertaking the project for a park purpose, and it therefore requires alienation.

As you know, the requirement that alienation be authorized by the State legislature is based on the principle that the City holds parkland as a public trust for all New Yorkers. Alienation legislation would specify the duration of the period in which and part of the park could be taken out of service to build the storm surge barrier, thus holding the City accountable to complete construction on time. And it would also formalize promises the City makes to Lower East Siders and other New Yorkers who use the park, regarding alternative open spaces and recreational facilities that would replace those made unavailable while the park is closed. It would give those promises the force of law.

## **Project Area 2 (Community Board 6)**

The community is eager to learn when Stuyvesant Cove Park, Murphy Brothers' Playground, and Asser Levy Playground would be closed and for how long. The City has previously said that construction would not begin until after L train construction is completed. Given the uncertainty surrounding plans for the L train, how would the City schedule these park closures moving forward?

Under the new plan, Asser Levy Playground would be bifurcated from the Asser Levy Recreation Center. Although DDC has enumerated the benefits of the new plan, there is room for continued discussions between the City, Community Board 6 and Asser Levy Recreation Center to address how the new plan can best address the remaining concerns about this bifurcation. We are eager to learn how these stakeholders will work together on matters of concern to the community moving forward.

We strongly believe that Community Boards 3 and 6 should both be consulted if or when construction requires the relocation of ferry service from Stuyvesant Cove Park so that the Boards can advise DDC and New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) as to the most suitable site for relocation.



## **Cost**

Changes to the amount of funding the project will require have generated significant confusion and concern among our constituents. This confusion is yet another impediment to having a successful dialogue with the community on equal footing.

As noted above, we agree with the goals of developing greater resiliency and storm surge protections, and we are grateful for the large investment in our community. However, we question the addition of hundreds of millions of dollars to this project, without public discussion of how these funds, now totaling \$1.45 billion, would be best spent. We want to ensure that this is really the most sensible and cost effective way to provide resiliency for this community.

## **Community Engagement Going Forward**

The ESCR project was an opportunity for the community to work together with local government and plan ahead for the worst impacts of global warming. The City demonstrated a lack of consideration for the community when it unilaterally changed the plans, undoing years of work. As we move forward, we hope the City begins engaging more frequently and in depth with the community and local stakeholders.



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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

**New York City Council  
Committee on Environmental Protection  
Committee on Parks & Recreation  
Joint Oversight Hearing:  
The Status of the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project**

**Testimony of Manhattan Borough President, Gale A. Brewer  
January 23, 2019**

Good afternoon Chair Constantinides, Chair Grodenchik, members of the committees of this joint hearing and thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Gale Brewer and I am the Manhattan Borough President.

When Hurricane Sandy made landfall in 2012, it devastated New York City through the lives it took and all the damage it caused. It was only 14 months prior to Sandy that Hurricane Irene came through New York City with a storm surge that came only one foot shy flooding our subway system. The short of it is that climate change will continue to bring more frequent and intense storms, and will pose inversed risks. To prepare, we must work collaboratively and creatively, and without delay.

The East Side Coastal Resiliency Project (ESCR) represents an important part of the City's storm resiliency efforts, but many questions remain.

- 1) Community members invested years of time and effort to come up with the original plan and have been upset with the roll out of the significant changes, especially around East River Park. Why did it take so long to come up with this new plan and why wasn't the community given a chance to understand or comment on the plan before it was announced?
- 2) It is currently estimated that East River Park will be closed for three and a half years for demolition and complete reconstruction. Many have felt that this is too short a timeline and that it will take much longer to complete all the work. How is the City going to maintain this schedule? What plans have been made to inform the community about delays?



- 3) With the \$338 million in federal funding and initial capital funding allocations by the City, the estimated \$1.45 billion project is only half funded. When will the City allocate the roughly \$700 million needed to close the gap? If there are projects within the ESCR that do not start during this administration, what guarantees will be put in place to ensure the work moves forward?
- 4) The project will require the closure of the park and playing fields. Has the City identified temporary park/field usage for the sports leagues that now use East River Park? If nearby spaces are identified, but not adequate to meet all the needs, does the City have a plan to provide transportation to and from fields that are a longer distance away?
- 5) There needs to be regular, frequent outreach by the City throughout the project to ensure that the community is kept up to date. What is the outreach/communication plan for keeping the community informed?
- 6) The community was told that in the City's original plan, parkland alienation would need to be authorized through the New York State Legislature to account for the massive amount of demolition that would happen to East River Park. Now the entire park is being demolished, yet there is no alienation being pursued. This remains a concern for the community and my colleagues in the State Legislature and need to be clarified to their satisfaction.

Storm resiliency is not an option. It is required if we are to protect the Lower East Side and other impacted communities. However, as Christine Datz-Romero said to the New York Time, the timeline for building this park could be much longer, and the City is destroying important vegetation, bird migration habitat, and millions of dollars of City-funded playing fields. She wonders why the park itself cannot "be a floodplain... with juniper and sumac trees that... have been planted." I understand that the Department of Design & Construction will claim that the plan only addresses sea level rise and not storm surge, but this idea should be taken into serious consideration prior to the park's destruction.

No matter what, this process must be collaborative, ensuring that the community always feels heard and their concerns are addressed in a timely and substantive way. There is much to be done and the next steps are critical. I look forward to working with the City Council to advocate for the community on this issue, and all related resiliency work that will disrupt and reduce the quality of life for residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak and share these questions raised by community members.



**New York City Council Committees on Parks & Recreation & Environmental Protection  
Oversight Hearing: The Status of the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project**

**January 23, 2019**

**Lynn Kelly, Executive Director**

Good afternoon, my name is Lynn Kelly, and I am the Executive Director of New Yorkers for Parks (NY4P). I would like to thank the City Council Committees on Parks and Recreation and Environmental Protection for inviting us to speak about this important project today.

We want to begin by stating that we understand the challenge that faces the City as it seeks to balance the complex engineering needs of this project with the realities of the location itself. It is true that East River Park has but one point of entry for vehicles, that it is adjacent to thousands of units of middle-income and NYCHA housing, is adjacent to the 14<sup>th</sup> Street ConEdison facility, and that it is surrounded by a major highway on one side and a large river on the other. To that end, we can especially appreciate that the City has sought to find ways to mitigate the quality of life issues related to construction that will impact the thousands of New Yorkers who live alongside this stretch of the East River. We also understand that it is not a matter of “if” the next Sandy happens, but “when”. The need to revitalize East River Park as a public open space that can also offer flood protection for the neighborhood is urgent and essential to the protection of the residents of the East Village and Lower East Side.

However, as the City has sought to minimize the disruptions that a major capital project would cause, we also want to reiterate that the residents who would be impacted by said construction are also residents who have waited for over six years to see any meaningful changes to their cherished local park.

NY4P was supportive of the Rebuild By Design process when it began in 2013, and participated in some of the many community meetings that took place over the years that related to the reconstruction of East River Park. To engage in a years-long public process of soliciting meaningful feedback from residents is a tremendous exercise of trust-building, and we believe shows the best of what government and external partners can do to proactively engage the public around their local open spaces. We share the concern that the process by which the new redesign of the park was made public, even if well-intended, constituted a breach of trust for the thousands of residents and the many organizations that helped drive the conversation about what they wanted to see in their park.

While we can understand the City’s argument that the process of rebuilding the park in its entirety will result in a space that is more resilient in the long-term, we also feel that the design considerations and issues that the City seeks to address could have been identified and made public far earlier in the process. In a community that lost hundreds of trees post-Sandy, it is a sad irony that the mature trees that survived the storm will now be lost altogether for the reconstruction of the park. As the only major open space accessible



to many of the residents who live nearby, the complete loss of this decades-old canopy will be profound. Additionally, community stewards such as the Lower East Side Ecology Center, whose organization calls East River Park home, have worked for years to incorporate resilient, native plantings into the park – the forward-thinking work done by countless volunteers will be lost in the proposed redesign.

NY4P is also concerned about the fairly recent investments made by the City to improve the park. As mentioned in the Center for an Urban Future “A New Leaf” report, the Esplanade itself, which needed extensive repairs after over 60 years without, took almost a decade to be completed, many years beyond the estimates that had been provided to the community, and only re-opened in 2010. Additionally, the track and field located near the East 6<sup>th</sup> Street entrance to the park recently reopened after a nearly \$3 million investment. There are also two projects currently in the design and procurement stages of the capital process that fall within the park. It is unclear how those projects will now proceed in line with the City’s new plans for the park.

While the City estimates the park could be rebuilt and re-opened to the public in a three year span of time, we have serious concerns about the City’s ability to meet that timeframe. Due to factors that we believe are in large part out of the control of NYC Parks and other capital-intensive agencies, we know that the ability to complete large-scale capital improvements is often lengthy and subject to unforeseen delays. This is a community that has already waited for years to have a re-opened esplanade, has taken years to provide detailed input about what they want to see in their park, and is now being told they will not have access to their park at all while it is being rebuilt completely, and potentially that the plans they helped create will not be used. We believe trust has been broken, and the lack of clarity around the decision to not use the input provided by residents and park users, as well as the now vastly inflated cost of rebuilding the park, have done little to assuage the concerns of residents.

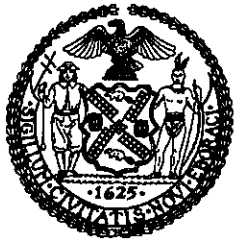
The City should do all it can to articulate how the community-driven design concepts are being incorporated into the new redesign plans that are being shared publicly. We also urge the City to truly expedite the capital process – three years is an incredibly long time for a community to go without its most significant open space, and we believe the City has a mandate to ensure meaningful alternatives in the interim during construction, to help offset the community’s temporary loss of parkland. We also believe the City should make a good faith effort to step up maintenance and programming in East River Park starting now. The park is still currently still open to the public, and should be maximized as a resource until construction begins. We also ask that the City reconsider plans that would entail the wholesale loss of all canopy and plant-life currently in the park, as well as the preservation of key landmarks in the park that have been identified by the community as ones they would like to see saved.

In sum, we hope the City views this as a “teachable moment” in community process and resiliency planning. That is, act earlier and be transparent, even when facing unforeseen challenges and recognize that communication is paramount. We hope the City now takes heed and proactively re-engages residents and advocates in how to ensure that whatever happens in East River Park reflects their priorities and vision.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak and I welcome any questions you may have.

###

For over 100 years, New Yorkers for Parks (NY4P) has built, protected, and promoted parks and open spaces in New York City. Today, NY4P is the citywide independent organization championing quality parks and open spaces for all New Yorkers in all neighborhoods. [www.ny4p.org](http://www.ny4p.org)



# THE CITY OF NEW YORK MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 3

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Alysha Lewis-Coleman, Board Chair

Susan Stetzer, District Manager

**Testimony on The Status of East Side Coastal Resiliency Project (ESCR)**  
**New York City Council Committee on Environmental Protection**  
**jointly with Committee on Parks and Recreation**  
**January 23, 2019**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony here today.

Community Board 3 does not yet have a position on the new resiliency plan as we have not yet had sufficient opportunity to understand and investigate all the elements. We have serious concerns about the City administration's decision to change so drastically and with such short notice the ESCR project. When CB 3 was first informed that the project was delayed, we were told that there were "technical difficulties." Better clear communication at that point may have prevented this process from being so difficult now.

The new ESCR project is raising the entire park eight to ten feet with a landfill. It basically creates a mega-levee topped with a park next to the East River. Concerns were voiced by CB 3 members regarding the increased project cost \$1.45 billion compared to the original \$760 million and the three year completion timeline. Questions were also asked about the landfill approach and the necessity to cover existing plantings. Other technical questions on drainage, flood protection and storm water flood prevention still need to be answered.

Committing such a substantial amount of resources to a rushed engineering project for a park that provides 54 acres of much needed open public space for our community is not something we take lightly. The park will be closed again for at least three years, and there are many potential problems that have not yet been investigated and answered.

In conclusion we'd like to thank Council Member Rivera for her leadership in requesting this hearing. We firmly believe that we need to plan for resiliency but we need to do it right. We hope in the future the City will be more transparent and we will have better communication going forward.



**Testimony of Catherine McVay Hughes before the  
The New York City Council Committee on Environmental Protection  
Jointly with the Committee on Parks and Recreation  
Oversight Hearing: The Status of the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project (ESCR)  
Wednesday, January 23, 2019 1:00 PM — City Hall, Committee Room**

Good afternoon, Chair Constantinides and Council Members. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Catherine McVay Hughes. I served 20 years on Manhattan Community Board One, half that time as Chair or Vice-Chair. After Superstorm Sandy, I was appointed Co-chair of the NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program for Southern Manhattan. Today I am representing the **Financial District Neighborhood Association**. The Financial District is home to roughly 50,000 residents and the fourth largest business district in the country -- one out of every 18 jobs citywide is located here.

After the sixth anniversary of Superstorm Sandy, we remember its devastating impact on NYC which has over 500 miles of shoreline. Sandy caused 48 deaths in New York. Sandy also did an estimated \$71 billion in economic damage in our region, with \$19 billion in losses to NYC. While Sandy's immediate impact lasted only weeks, major infrastructure systems, including mass transit, electrical and telecommunications systems, sustained lasting damage, some of which is still not fixed.

Resiliency in the face of sea level rise/global climate change can be achieved by a multilayered strategy which includes reducing sources of greenhouse gases emissions (GHGs) by increasing energy efficiency and transitioning to renewable fuels from fossil fuels and adapting to changing conditions at our waterfront edges in combination with Regional Storm Surge Sea Gates.

Following up on my April 4, 2017 testimony "East Side Coastal Resiliency Project Substantial Action Plan Amendment Public Hearing: CDBG-DR Action Plan Amendment 13" (attached) several issues still need to be addressed to make sure that a comprehensive resiliency plan is in place for all New Yorkers including:

- **Coordinated Project Timeline** – what will be the impact of constructing the ESCR and Two Bridges segments down river on FiDi and the historic South Street Seaport? This segmenting (see attached map) of the "Big U" could create a risk that, should a serious storm strike New York while one segment is complete and one isn't, the completed section could divert water and amplify damage to the neighborhoods where there is no protection, or protection is under construction.
- **Construct a layered defense of local sea walls and a Regional NY Harbor Storm Gate System to address future sea level rise and storm surges<sup>i</sup>** – A local perimeter of land-based seawalls will be necessary to provide protection from rising sea levels, however, huge storm surges are best addressed by a layered defense system built around a regional storm surge sea gates system<sup>ii</sup> that vastly shortens the coast line (here roughly 1,000 miles down to less than 10 miles) and provides comprehensive protection against the devastation caused by occasional, hard to predict, massive storm surges. See attached schematic.
- **Funding Shortfall for Manhattan Tip -- Financial District and South Street Seaport Waterfront continue to be exposed** as during Superstorm Sandy in 2012. The City's Lower Manhattan Coastal Resiliency (LMCR) Project is in the planning phase with a Budget Total = TBD and a Construction Date & Completion Date = TBD. At the last public meeting (04/17/18), only plans were provided for Interim Flood Protection Measures (IFPM) for the South Street Seaport (none for FiDi) which would not be implemented until after the 2019 hurricane season<sup>iii</sup>. A recent article reported that "Downtown Landlords and Business Leaders Worry About the Next Big Storm."<sup>iv</sup>
- **Design Flood Elevation<sup>v</sup> & Sea-level Rise Assumption** – are the City's assumptions, which are based on the 2015 NYC Panel on Climate Change (NPCC) report, still current after the recent release of

both **The Fourth National Climate Assessment (NCA4)** (November 2018) and **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) special report on Global Warming of 1.5°C** (October 2018)?

The ESCR project is a response to climate change/sea level rise, therefore, it is important to **minimize its GHGs footprint during construction** – and minimize both air and water pollution – clean barges and vehicles must be used.

In conclusion, Sandy taught us the importance of preparation and investment to prepare for the worst potential impacts of global warming. A few things to remember:

- **Future of National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) continues to be uncertain – and a temporary extension has passed through May 31, 2019<sup>vi</sup>.** The 2019 Atlantic hurricane season will begin on June 1. “If the NFIP expires, the residential housing market in at-risk areas could effectively grind to a halt, as potential buyers would no longer be able to obtain the insurance required by the banks responsible for issuing mortgages to these individuals....The NFIP is USD 20 billion in debt, even after Congress forgave USD 16 billion in November 2017. Additional claims this year from hurricanes Florence and Michael will only serve to deepen the hole the NFIP finds itself in”<sup>vii</sup>. We do not know if or how much the federal government will assist in rebuilding our communities after the next Sandy.
- **Moody’s, a major credit rating agency, added climate to credit risks and warns cities to address their climate exposure or face rating downgrades.** In addition, **S&P ratings incorporate Environmental Sustainable Governance Guidelines (ESG) and Climate to the extent that it affects an entity’s ability to pay its debt.** Cities that suffer downgrades will not be able to make the investments they need, including the investments required to adapt to climate change and to recover from future storms.
- **2018 Global Disasters Cost \$160 Billion – a third of that total (\$80 billion) came from just four events in the United States; Climate Change a Factor, says Insurance company Munich Re Report<sup>viii</sup>**
- **Climate is the biggest risk to business (and the world) – CNN reported, “.... Climate and environmental issues dominate a ranking of top global risks produced by the World Economic Forum ahead of its annual summit in Davos [which is being held this week].”<sup>ix</sup>**

Affiliations (for purposes of disclosure): Catherine McVay Hughes is a member of the Board of the Battery Park City Authority, Earth Institute at Columbia University Advisory Board, CERES Presidents Council, Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, The Trust for Governors Island, South Street Seaport Museum, WTC Scientific Technical Advisory Committee, Princeton Climate Analytics and Storm Surge Working Group. She holds an MBA from the Wharton School of Business and a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from Princeton University.

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<sup>i</sup> *The Social Justice Case for a Metropolitan New York-New Jersey Regional Storm Surge Barrier System*; by Malcolm J. Bowman, William B. Golden, Catherine McVay Hughes, Christopher Sellers, and Robert D. Yaro; Environmental Law In New York: Developments in Federal and State Law, Volume 29, No. 4; April 2019

<sup>ii</sup> The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is only at the beginning of a long process in its evaluation of a Regional Storm Surge Barrier. Its New York-New Jersey Harbor and Tributaries Coastal Storm Risk Management Feasibility Study includes Natural and Nature-Based Feature Examples such as Tidal Marsh, Vegetated Dune, Oyster Reef, and Freshwater Wetland. It is imperative to save the Metropolitan Region while maintaining a healthy Hudson and East River.

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/lmcr/downloads/pdf/LMCRCB1Briefing4.17.184PM.PDF>

<sup>iv</sup> Commercial Observer, 11/29/2018; [https://commercialobserver.com/2018/11/downtown-landlords-and-business-leaders-worry-about-the-next-big-storm/?fbclid=IwAR3Zlue\\_OxDGxumEXEwA9TgXSJSbhik5zVYqcxltQ5nG5Bf-SxzG3uBGH5I#XAFQW81pu8c.facebook](https://commercialobserver.com/2018/11/downtown-landlords-and-business-leaders-worry-about-the-next-big-storm/?fbclid=IwAR3Zlue_OxDGxumEXEwA9TgXSJSbhik5zVYqcxltQ5nG5Bf-SxzG3uBGH5I#XAFQW81pu8c.facebook)

<sup>v</sup> High tide + Sea Level Rise + 1% annual storm event + Associated wave action + Freeboard = DFE

[https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/lmcr/downloads/pdf/170518\\_Public%20Workshop\\_CB1.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/lmcr/downloads/pdf/170518_Public%20Workshop_CB1.pdf)

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.businessinsurance.com/article/20181223/NEWS06/912325832/NFIP-extended-amid-US-government-shutdown>

<sup>vii</sup> [https://www.air-worldwide.com/Blog/What-Happens-if-the-NFIP-Does-Not-Get-Another-Extension-/?utm\\_source=Eloqua&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=blog-notification](https://www.air-worldwide.com/Blog/What-Happens-if-the-NFIP-Does-Not-Get-Another-Extension-/?utm_source=Eloqua&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=blog-notification)

<sup>viii</sup> <https://weather.com/science/environment/news/2019-01-09-disasters-cost-damage-climate-change>

<sup>ix</sup> CNN, 01/17/19, [https://www.cnn.com/2019/01/16/business/climate-change-global-risk-wef-davos/index.html?utm\\_source=twCNN&utm\\_content=2019-01-16T19%3A30%3A13&utm\\_term=image&utm\\_medium=social](https://www.cnn.com/2019/01/16/business/climate-change-global-risk-wef-davos/index.html?utm_source=twCNN&utm_content=2019-01-16T19%3A30%3A13&utm_term=image&utm_medium=social)



**East Side Coastal Resiliency Project**  
**Substantial Action Plan Amendment Public Hearing: CDBG-DR Action Plan Amendment 13**  
**Testimony by**

**Catherine McVay Hughes**

Tuesday, April 4, 2017; 06:30PM - 08:30PM  
Manny Cantor Center, 197 East Broadway, New York, NY 10002

Good evening and thank you for this opportunity to testify. My name is Catherine McVay Hughes. I served 19 years on Manhattan Community Board One (CB1), more than half that time as Chair or Vice-Chair, and I chaired its World Trade Center Redevelopment Committee for seven years. After Superstorm Sandy, I was appointed Co-chair of NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program for Southern Manhattan and I am a founding member of the CB1's "Manhattan Tip" Resiliency Task Force and a member of the Regional Storm Surge Barrier Working Group. I have an MBA from Wharton Business School and a Civil Engineering degree from Princeton University. Tonight, I speak as a 30-year downtown resident, proud of what we have built and re-built, and deeply concerned that this investment made by our City, our State and our entire country is in danger from the threats of climate change, extreme weather events and rising sea levels.

There are several outstanding concerns that need to be addressed to make sure that a comprehensive plan is in place for all of Manhattan's East Side including:

- **Coordinated Project Timeline** – as proposed this project is broken into two segments, one north of Montgomery Street, and one south. Unless construction of both segments is closely coordinated, this division creates the risk that, should a serious storm strike New York while one segment is complete and one isn't, the completed section will divert the storm and amplify the damage to the neighborhood where the protection is under construction.
- **New York Harbor Regional Storm Surge Barrier** – as you know, rising sea levels create problems two ways. First, they raise the normal high-tide levels, and second, they make storm surges like Superstorm Sandy even more devastating. An all-Harbor Storm Surge Barrier is the best way to mitigate this risk at reasonable cost and planning for such a barrier should go ahead in conjunction with these plans for localized defenses of our waterfront. Even before Superstorm Sandy, storm surge barriers had strong community support:
  - CB1 unanimously passed a resolution<sup>x</sup> to *Request for the Army Corp. of Engineers to Expeditiously Conduct a Study about the Feasibility of Installing Storm Surge Barriers to Protect New York City* (January 24, 2012)
  - CB1's testimony<sup>xi</sup> reiterates its support before The New York City Committee on Environmental Protection Public Hearing on Climate Change calling "... upon members of the New York City Council to support our request that the Army Corp. of Engineers conduct a study about the feasibility of installing storm surge barriers, and that this study include consideration of the environmental and ecological impact of storm surge barriers. The City should not only rely on evacuation and remediation activities at the time of a weather-related disaster, but should seriously evaluate what could be done ahead of a disaster that might reduce or eliminate the effects of a weather calamity ..." (April 25, 2012)
  - 2012 Manhattan Borough Board Resolution in Support of Tidal Surge Preparedness (pre-Sandy) was passed unanimously
- **Sea-level Rise Assumption** – Do your sea-level rise assumptions incorporate any predicted climate-change mitigations that may be reversed with the cancellation of the Obama Clean Power Plan (which was aimed at helping the U.S. meet international commitments to cut greenhouse gas

emissions under the landmark Paris climate agreement) and the rollback of other Federal regulations, such as gas-mileage requirements, that might have slowed the pace of climate change? Your project is based on:

- “Provide a reliable coastal flood protection system for the 100-year flood event for the FEMA designated flood hazard area, taking into consideration sea level rise projected to the 2050s” (p3)
- “A value of 2.5 feet is used, which is the 90 percent sea level rise projection to the year 2050 based on USACE data at The Battery, New York” (p. 34)
- Compliance with NYS DEC New Sea-Level Rise Projection Regulation – “The adopted regulation includes high projections of approximately six feet of sea-level rise by 2100. Many scientists fear that the likelihood of this rate of sea-level rise-or even more-will increase dramatically if current plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power plants and vehicles are curtailed at the federal level.” (02/06/17)<sup>xii</sup>

In other words, is the problem worse because of Trump?

- **Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy: C40 & NYC** – What is NYC doing to keep its C40 commitment and meet the 2020 deadline to deliver the Paris Agreement objective of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees? According to a recent report,<sup>xiii</sup> NYC is assigned a typology for “Steep Decline” [Cities with GDP per capita over \$15,000 and emissions above-average for C40 (emissions need to be immediately and rapidly reduced and the city is sufficiently developed to do so)]. NYC’s compliance level will have serious implications and it is not clear what NYC plans to do specifically in the next 3 1/2 years. Resiliency is not just about building walls at the waterfront.
- **Funding Shortfall** – there is a funding gap in the Manhattan Tip portion of the East Side Coastal Resiliency project which has the highest benefit-cost ratio of all the projects proposed in the NDRC application, but it is still not fully funded.<sup>xiv</sup>

The Regional Plan Association (RPA) released a December 2016 study showing that parts of the New York, New Jersey and Connecticut metropolitan area are at risk of being permanently flooded by sea level rise. The study, Under Water: How Sea Level Rise Threatens the Tri-State Region, details the severe threats posed to the region’s bay areas, coastal urban centers, beach communities and airports and seaports by as little as one foot of sea level rise, a possibility as soon as the 2030s.

Therefore, local resilience approaches are important, but they are hopelessly mired down in controversy and enormous projected costs with neighborhoods desperately trying to figure out how to build 15-20' walls at the waterfront. Currently, waterfront communities are pitted against each other for the limited amount of funding that is available instead of working towards a comprehensive approach such as the Bifurcation Approach of the NY Harbor Storm Surge Barrier that would be more inclusive, more cost-efficient and more effective. Thank you for your time and I hope that we can continue to work together to keep our great City safe from extreme weather events.

---

<sup>x</sup><http://www.nyc.gov/html/mancb1/downloads/pdf/Resolutions/12-01-24.pdf>, pp. 12-13/47

<sup>xii</sup><http://www.nyc.gov/html/mancb1/downloads/pdf/Testimonies/Testimony%20on%20Storm%20Surge%20Barrier%204.25.12.pdf>

<sup>xiii</sup> <http://www.dec.ny.gov/press/109195.html>

<sup>xiii</sup> <http://www.c40.org/researches/deadline-2020>

<sup>xiv</sup> New York City Council Committee on Recovery and Resiliency Oversight Hearing: Financing of the City’s Recovery from Sandy, Catherine McVay Hughes, Chairperson, Council Chambers, City Hall, New York, NY; Friday, June 3



## Supporting Data for Testimony of Catherine McVay Hughes

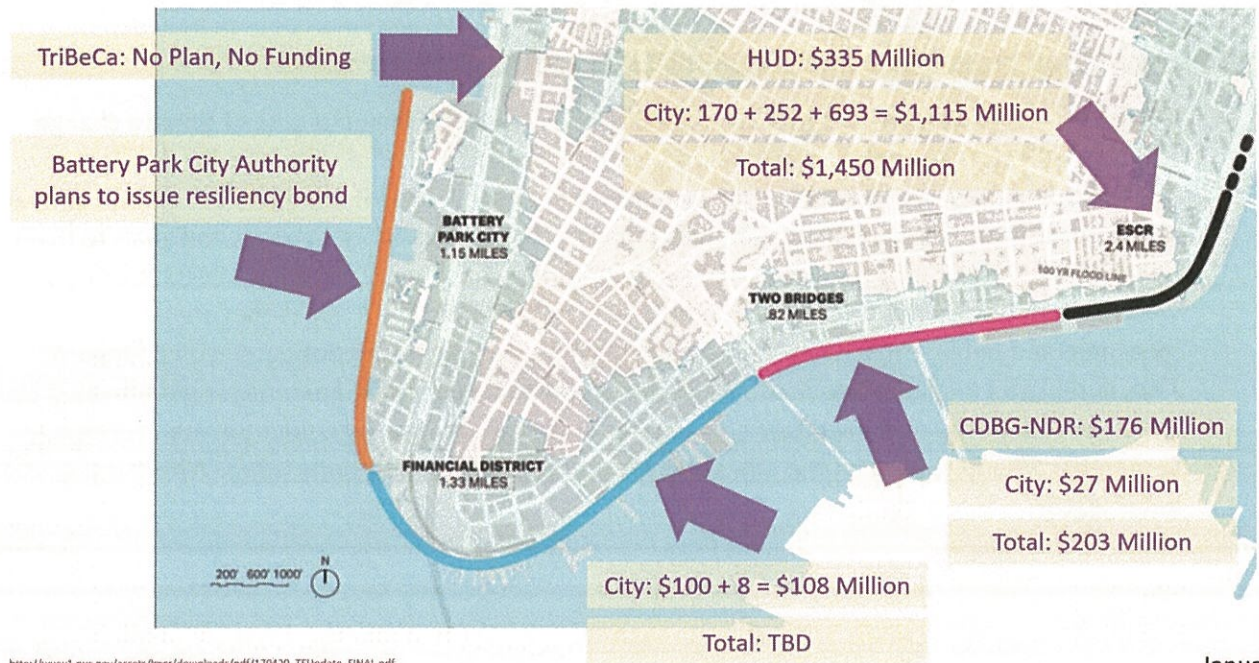
Following up on one item from my 12/4/18, 10/22/18 and 04/12/18 testimonies:

- **Mayor's Management Report (MMR)<sup>1</sup>– the City must track the financial cost of climate change and add indicators to capture sea level rise, energy use and greenhouse gas emissions.** The now 450-page September 2018 MMR which increased from its 372-page Preliminary 2018 MMR annual report released in February 2018 continues to fail to report on the City's targets and goals to meet its C40 Commitment by 2020 and its "80 by 2050" target. Since the MMR also reflects the City's values and priorities, this document needs to be updated to include indexes that are annually measured and publicly shared, so that progress can be monitored and evaluated going forward. Also, Local Law 22 of 2008 requires a 30 percent reduction in citywide greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and requires annual inventory and analysis of greenhouse gas emissions no later than every September 7<sup>th</sup> and to post on the City's website a report regarding actions taken. Where is that 2017 data? 2018?

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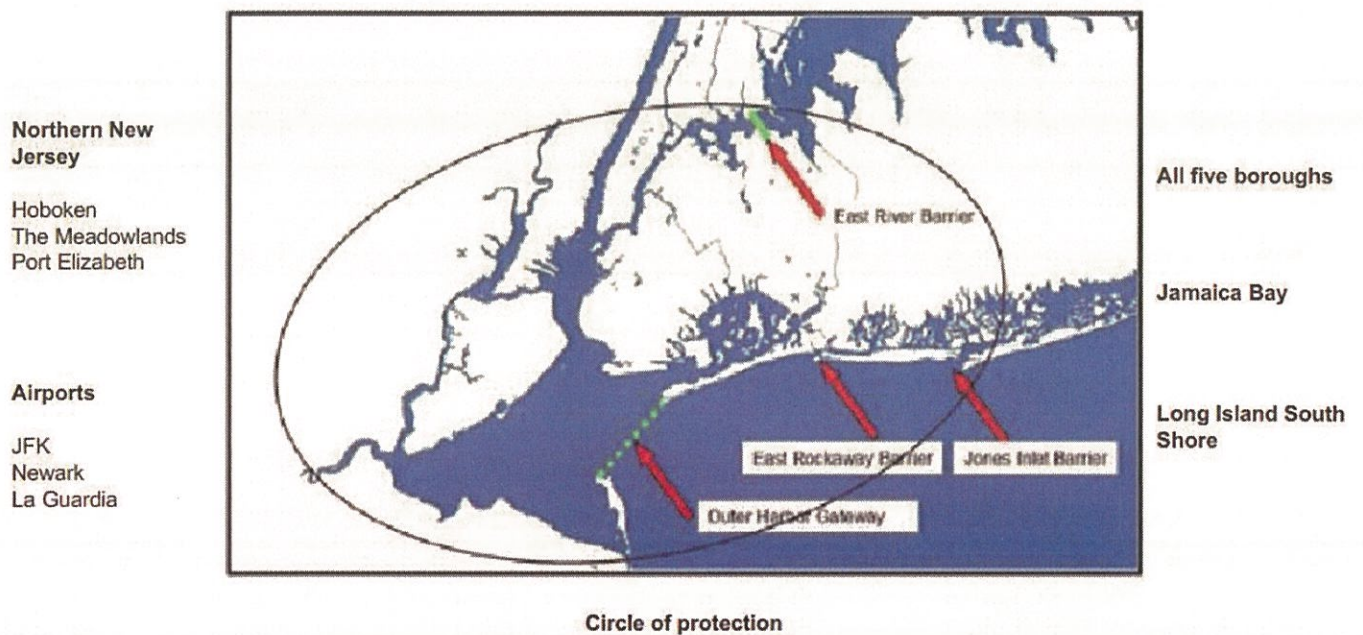
<sup>1</sup> MMR is mandated by the City Charter, serves as a public account of the performance of City agencies, measuring whether they are delivering services efficiently, effectively and expeditiously,  
[https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2018/2018\\_mmr.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2018/2018_mmr.pdf)

## Resiliency Projects and Funding – Lower Manhattan

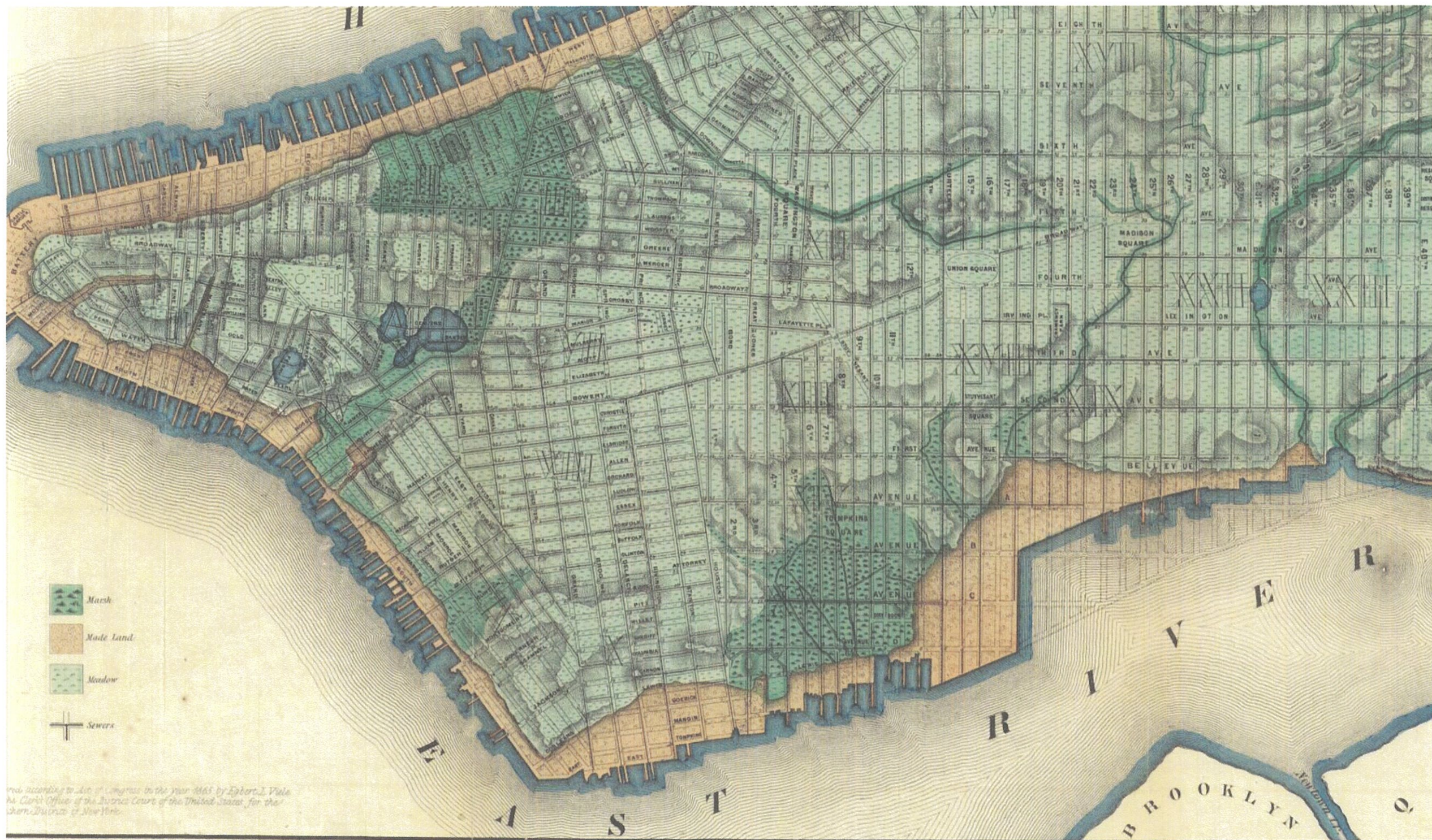


January 20, 2019

## Protecting the Region from Future Storm Surge Disasters







and according to Act of Congress in the year 1865 by Edward J. Pyle  
his Clerk Office of the District Court of the United States for the  
Southern District of New York



SANITARY & TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP

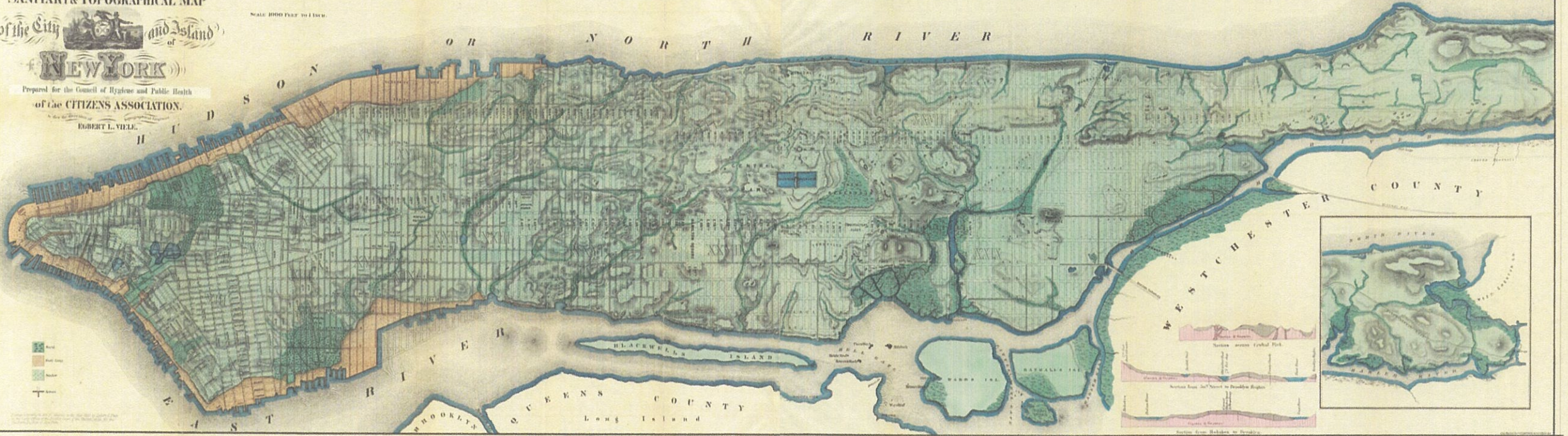
of the City and Island of

NEW YORK

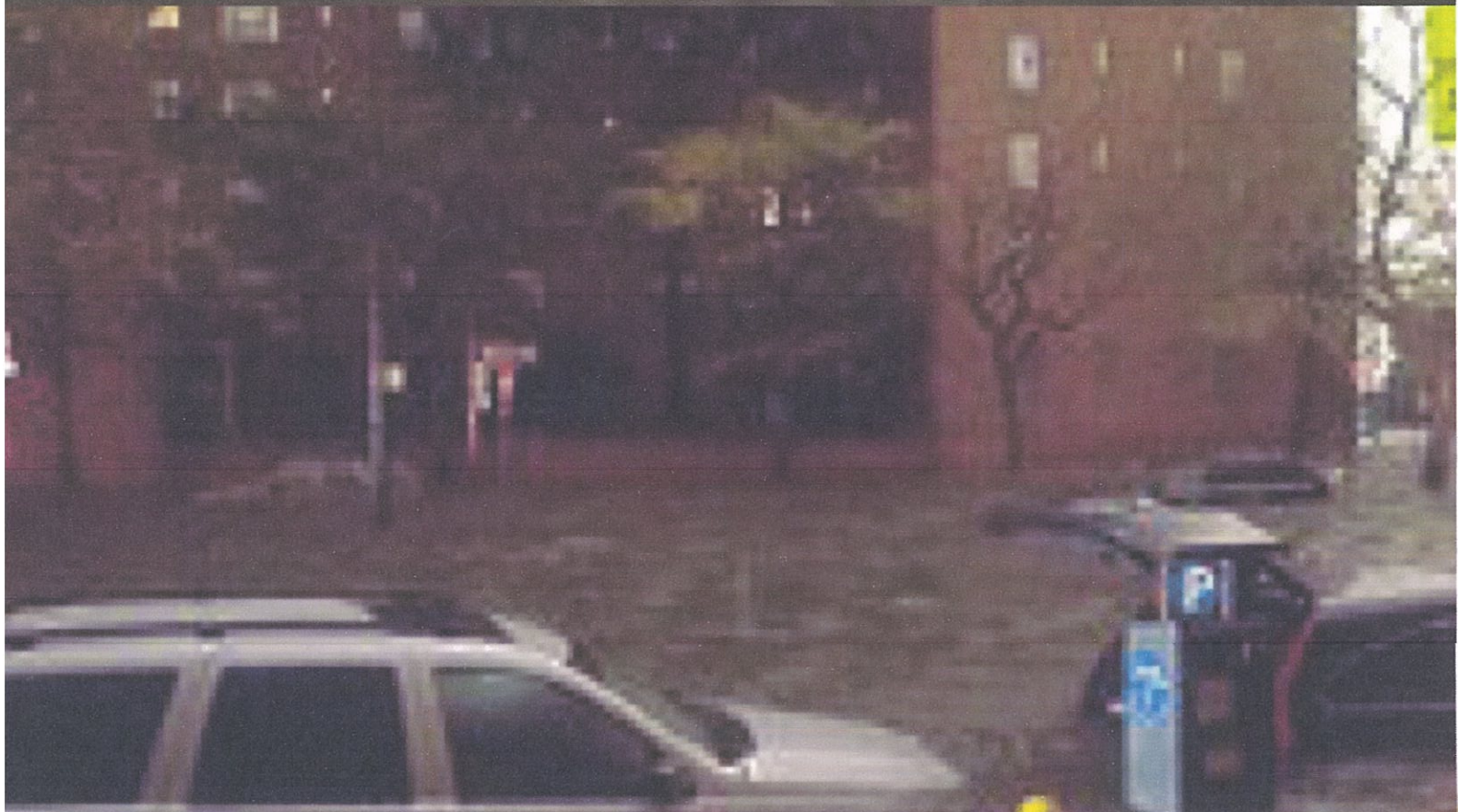
Prepared for the Council of Hygiene and Public Health  
of the CITIZENS ASSOCIATION.

ROBERT L. VIELE.

SCALE 1000 FEET TO 1 INCH.











DECEMBER 2018 | ISSUE NO. 5

# SURGE WATCH



## A Note From the Chairman

*The period of public input to the USACE New York and New Jersey Harbor and Tributaries Study (HATS) on the range of issues to be addressed in an Environmental Impact Statement has closed. Now it is up to the Corps to have the foresight and courage to seize the leadership to investigate how best to significantly reduce the risks*

*associated with future superstorms and rising sea levels to the Metropolitan region. They must determine the most cost effective and efficient methods for protecting the metro region and its infrastructure.*

*We stand at a pivotal point entering the Anthropocene – the first time in our planet's evolution that humans have fundamentally changed the earth on which we dwell. Climate change is rapidly accelerating and becoming more alarming with every passing year. The world's top climate scientists on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change tell us that we have perhaps fourteen years to change our ways, or the climate is likely to spin out of control.*

*So what to do? As we debate how best to strengthen the coastal defenses in the NY Region against the approaching twin threats—rising sea levels and more catastrophic storms—we are treating the symptoms and not the cause of the disease. Hooked on our powerful hydrocarbons, we have extracted fossil fuels from the earth and relentlessly propelled our civilization to an intense high. But if we are not careful our dependency will bring us all down. We have to preserve and protect our great coastal cities until we collectively manage our addiction to fossil fuels.*

*Bill Keller, former Executive Editor of the New York Times wrote following Superstorm Sandy<sup>1</sup>:*

*"The problem is not just that smart people differ wildly about what to do; it's that the problem crosses multiple jurisdictions that everything costs loads of money and that humans have short memories. The will to do anything ambitious tends to recede almost as fast as the tide surge... The number of local, state, regional and federal agencies that have a piece of the action in disasters is paralyzing. Everybody is in charge, so nobody is in charge. This problem needs a chairman of the board".*

*Currently, the US Army Corps of Engineers is the Chairman of the Board. They will soon have the resources and time to lead with determination and with courage. Our survival depends on it.*

**Malcolm Bowman,**  
**Chair, Metropolitan NY-NJ Storm Surge Working Group.**

*"It is hard to quantify the value of Fraunces Tavern, which includes not just the value of the buildings and the collections, but also the value of the experiences of thousands of school children and visitors who learn more of what our country is all about. It is very much in the public interest to preserve this legacy for centuries to come, and the proposed storm barriers may be essential to ensure that outcome."*

*– Ambrose Madison Richardson, President, Sons of the Revolution in the State of New York Fraunces Tavern Museum*

To Mark Superstorm Sandy's 6th Anniversary, B.P. Gale Brewer and downtown leaders highlight need for storm preparation and resiliency investments



Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Borough President of New York



October 25, 2018, photo courtesy of the B.P. Brewer's office

At the press conference, leaders called on the Mayor and city government leaders to support a regional storm surge barrier and to devote significant capital funding to the Lower Manhattan Coastal Resiliency Project.

"Storm surges and sea-level rise are clear and present dangers to the safety, security, and economic future of this city...we need to be working toward a regional storm surge barrier that can prevent the next Sandy...that can protect and preserve all our at-risk neighborhoods," said Manhattan BP Gale A. Brewer



<sup>1</sup> "A New Manhattan Project", by Bill Keller, NY Times Nov 11, 2012



## Climate Changed: Cities Threatened by Climate Risk Still Getting AAA Bond Ratings

Investors say ratings overlook risks of extreme weather as Moody's, S&P, or Fitch do not issue climate downgrades for cities. Last fall, after a trio of deadly hurricanes, ratings companies warned vulnerable coastal cities to get ready for climate change -- or face higher borrowing costs on the \$3.9 trillion municipal bond market. To learn more, [Continue Reading...](#)

## Climate Change Will Get Worse. These Investors Are Betting on It

A top investment strategist for JPMorgan Asset Management sent a note to clients with a dire forecast: despite global efforts to stop climate change, sea levels are likely to rise dramatically, threatening the 40% of Americans who live along the coast. However, there will probably be investment opportunities in sea walls since governments may struggle to pay costs for resiliency infrastructure and turn to bonds or privatization. To learn more, [Continue Reading...](#)

## As Storms Keep Coming, FEMA Spends Billions in 'Cycle' of Damage and Repair

FEMA has paid out billions for disaster recovery efforts. But many projects seem to be undertaken in defiance of climate change, leaving structures nearly as vulnerable as before. To learn more, [Continue Reading...](#)



Flooding in Sheepshead Bay during Hurricane Sandy

Image Credit: : FashionStock.com / Shutterstock.com

Thank you for keeping up with the SSWG. For more information, please visit our [website](#) or [www.nichiusa.org](http://www.nichiusa.org)

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**Graphics and Layout:** Hazen and Sawyer

## Coastal Property Was Once King. Fears of Climate Change Are Undermining Its Value

In a growing number of coastal communities, homes near the sea are appreciating more slowly than those inland. That's bad news for people on the beach, good news for those farther away. To learn more, [Continue Reading...](#)



Image Credit: Shutterstock.com

## 6 Years After Sandy, Brooklyn Still Vulnerable To Storms

For many residents of southern Brooklyn from Sheepshead Bay to Gowanus, the mild flooding observed in late October renewed serious worries about how vulnerable they may be to another storm. To learn more, [Continue Reading...](#)

## U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' NY District announces the approval of waiver to increase schedule and funding for NY&NJHAT study.

This decision allows the Corps to increase the previously approved funding ceiling of \$6M to \$19.4M and to extend the study schedule from 3 years to 6 years. This extension does not change the 2022 completion date previously published in expectation of receiving the waiver. It does move decision points including the tentatively selected plan (TSP), back by 15 months to allow for more comprehensive studies. [Continue Reading...](#)

## Other Flooding and Climate Change News

**\$31 Billion Texas Coastal Barrier Proposed.** [Continue Reading...](#)

*The WaterWays Weekly* | November 2, 2018

**BPC: Did You Know? | BPC Resiliency Projects.** [Continue Reading...](#)

*Battery Park City Authority* | October 29, 2018

**US Army Corps of Engineers: New York/New Jersey Harbor and Tributaries Focus Area Feasibility Study**

For the latest which includes addressing sea level rise, natural and nature-based feature examples and next steps for public involvement, [Continue Reading...](#)





SEPTEMBER 2018 | ISSUE NO. 4

# SURGE WATCH



## A Note From the Chairman

*The US Army Corps of Engineers has called for public comments on its Harbor and Tributaries Scoping Study (HATS). The Metro SSWG is preparing a deposition outlining a regional approach arguing that it is the only feasible way to protect the 1,000-mile coastlines of New*

*York Harbor, the Hudson River valley, northern New Jersey and southern Long Island for the next 100 years.*

*As the Dutch are fond of saying: we must shorten the coastline if we're going to have any hope at all of protecting our mighty Metropolis. But how do we do that?*

*We propose a porous system of sea gates that under normal weather conditions will allow the free flow of tides and river discharge to the sea with little impediment. Plus, we have some creative ideas that will greatly improve the water quality in New York Harbor and the lower Hudson River by harnessing the moon's energy to pump clean Long Island Sound water throughout the harbor complex. This will revolutionize pollution abatement in the City's affected waterways.*

*Our friends at Save the Sound list the following issues to be addressed by the Corps:*

- *How would the barriers affect migrating fish, oyster beds, boating, and shipping?*
- *How much will reduced tidal flow worsen sewage, nitrogen, and PCB pollution in our waterways?*
- *If storm surge is diverted from NYC, how will that affect the surrounding area? Will "outside" communities suffer increased flooding? How will the government decide which communities to protect and which to expose?*
- *Are there solutions that can address sea level rise as well?*

*We agree. We have a team of committed scientists, ecologists, engineers, social scientists and economists working on this. We understand. Stay tuned.*

**Malcolm Bowman,**  
Chair, Metropolitan NY-NJ Storm Surge Working Group.

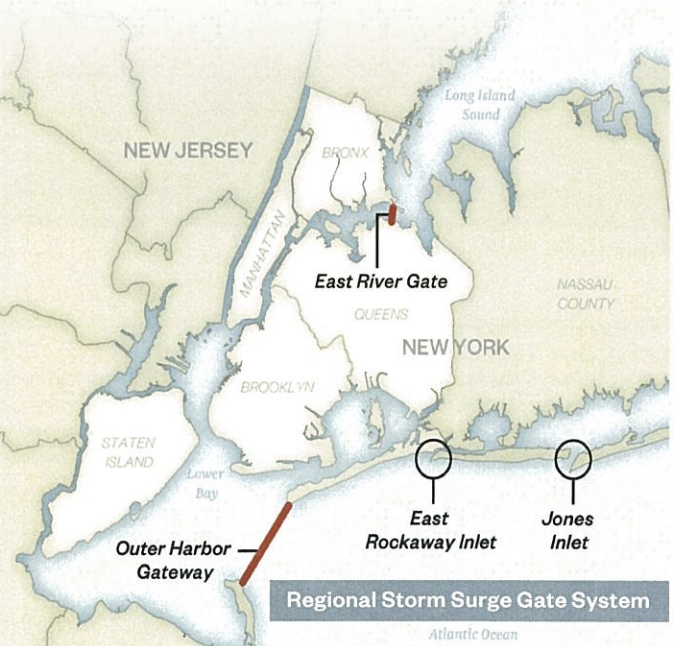
*"We need to determine whether harbor-wide protection – such as a storm surge barrier – is feasible. The Army Corps of Engineers should be encouraged to complete this complex study as quickly as possible."*

- NYS Senator Brian Kavanagh  
Chair of New York State Caucus of Environmental Legislators

## USACE Comment Period Extended for the Harbor and Tributaries Scoping Study (HATS)

Due to the interest shown by the public and to allow for meaningful comment on the NEPA scoping phase, the Corps is extending the comment period to **November 5, 2018**. An additional scoping meeting will also take place on Thursday, September 20, 2018 at 6 PM at the New York Aquarium, Surf Avenue and West 8th Street, Brooklyn, NY.

[Continue Reading...](#)





## Levee Wars: How Barriers May Exacerbate Flooding for Neighbors

A Vox+ProPublica collaboration dives into how a structure that's designed to protect us from floods may be making them worse. High levees come at a high cost, often pushing water into communities that can't afford the same protection. To learn more, [Continue Reading...](#)

## Extreme-weather Events as Part of the BPCA's Ongoing Efforts

The Battery Park City Authority (BPCA) has hired a consultant team to design resiliency measures intended to protect the ball fields and the Asphalt Green community center against future extreme-weather events. For more on the June 19 meeting of the BPCA board, [Continue Reading...](#)

## New Buildings Rising in Flood Zones

One in eight new residential units in New York is being built along the riskiest waterfront. The buildings may be resilient, but what about the neighborhoods? [Continue Reading...](#)

## Buried Internet Infrastructure at Risk as Sea Levels Rise

According to a new study, thousands of miles of buried fiber optic cable may be inundated by rising seas. Internet infrastructure in densely populated coastal regions, such as the Meadowlands, may need to be replaced with salt resistant cables. [Continue Reading...](#)

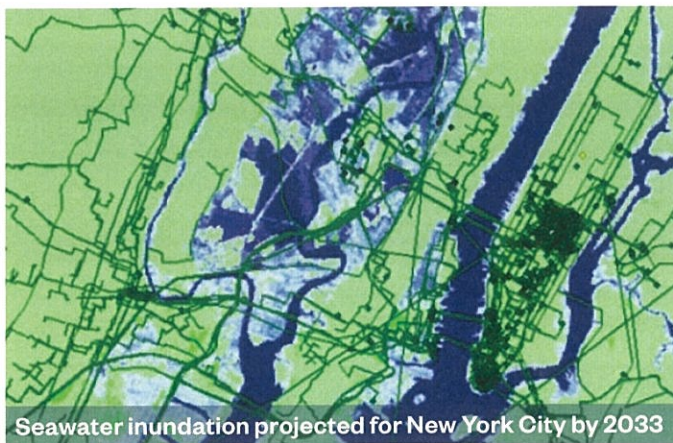


Image Credit: Paul Bartford

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**Graphics and Layout:** Hazen and Sawyer



Image Credit: Shutterstock.com, Marc Bruxelle



Image Credit: Robert Simko, The Broadsheet©

## Other Flooding and Climate Change News

*Flood insurance premiums are going up again and that's just the beginning.* [Continue Reading...](#)

*Miami Herald | July 24, 2018*

*Sea level rise is eroding home value and owners might not even know it.* [Continue Reading...](#)

*Washington Post | August 20, 2018*

*Flood insurance saved hours before it was to expire, but future unclear.* [Continue Reading...](#)

*NorthJersey.com | July 31, 2018*

## Conference

*Weathering the Storm: The Intersection of Finance and Resilience on October 18 at NYU*

Registration is officially open! This year's conference explores how architectural and engineering solutions to environmental resilience translate to financial resilience. Experts will prompt attendees to think differently, and with a sharper pencil, about the costs and benefits of resiliency on a large scale.

[For more information...](#)





JULY 2018 | ISSUE NO. 3

# SURGE WATCH



## A Note From the Chairman

*So what are the key issues surrounding human life & safety, infrastructure protection, oceanography, meteorology, climate change, environmental health, marine ecology and fisheries, social justice issues, engineering, permitting, design, construction, funding and economics of a regional storm surge barrier system? A*

*system designed to not just reduce the risk, but to actually protect the Metropolitan New York and New Jersey for at least the next 100 years?*

*That is the task the Metropolitan NY-NJ Storm Surge Working Group has set itself. We build on the experiences of the great European cities, the communities of Stamford CT, Providence RI, New Bedford MA and New Orleans LA. The SSWG brings together the expertise of estuarine and coastal marine scientists, engineers, marine ecologists, former and current elected officials and commissioners, government professionals, academics, media experts, research students, attorneys and community advocates.*

*We promote a responsible path forward investigating all possibilities, the pros and cons of effective and affordable regional solutions in order to save the region and nation from another catastrophic Sandy-scale flooding disaster.*

*We believe that only a thoroughly studied and designed regional approach will be effective. A patchwork quilt of attempting to increase resilience in those most vulnerable areas of the 1,000 miles coastline of the Lower and Upper Bays of New York Harbor, its tributaries, the East River and the lower Hudson River will never suffice to protect against the twin threats of extreme storm surges and rising sea levels in the decades and even centuries ahead.*

*Public information/scoping meetings for the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers NY-NJ Harbor & Tributaries Focus Area Feasibility Study \(NYNJ HATS Study\)](#) are scheduled for Monday, July 9 through Wednesday, July 11.*

*We urge you all to attend the upcoming public meetings being held by the US Army Corps of Engineers to address these issues, to speak up and to listen to our various community hopes, aspirations and concerns.*

**Malcolm Bowman,**  
Chair, Metropolitan NY-NJ Storm Surge Working Group.

[CLICK HERE for Study Summary & Initial Alternatives \(Oct 2017\)](#)

[CLICK HERE for July 2018 Meeting Information.](#)

These meetings will also have webinar capability for remote participation at  
<https://usace.webex.com/join/ArmyCorpsNYDistrict>

## Contrasting Voices!



**Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President**   
Borough President of New York

Storm surge barriers are sorely needed along the city's coastline to protect against major storms but they should be done right. Input from experts and the public is key to making this necessary project a success. Attend an upcoming hearing:

Hudson Riverkeeper: URGENT: Please attend a meeting July 9, 10 or 11 on NY storm surge barriers – Riverkeeper. Fast-tracked Army Corps proposals threaten the future life of the Hudson.

[U.S. Army Corps NYNJ HATS Study - Public Information Meetings](#)

**NYC Sessions.** (duplicate sessions)

**Mon, July 9, 3-5 pm and 6-8 pm**

Boro of Manhattan Community College.  
199 Chambers St, between Greenwich St and West Side Hwy. Conference Room-Richard Harris Terrace, Main Flr.

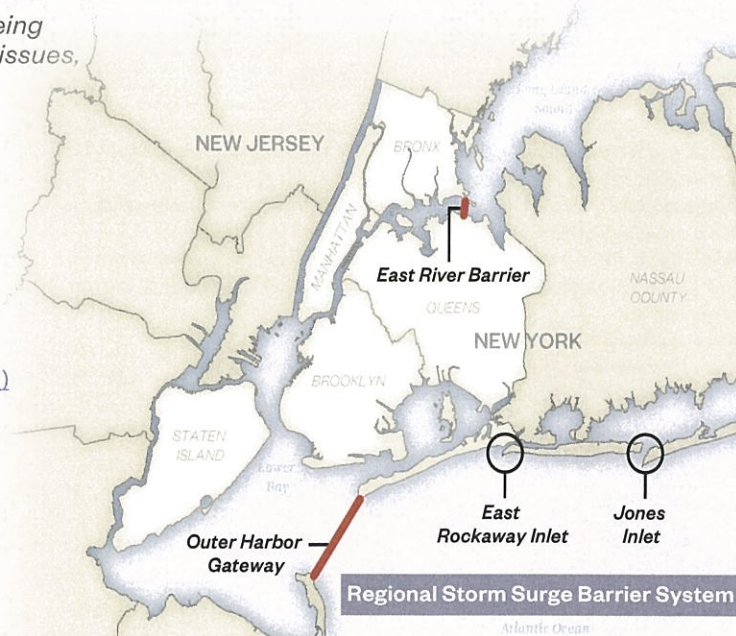
**Newark Sessions.** (duplicate sessions)

**Tue, July 10, 3-5 pm and 6-8 pm**

Rutgers-Newark Campus, Paul Robeson Campus Center. 350 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Essex Room, 2nd Flr.

**Poughkeepsie Session. Wed, July 11, 6-8 pm**

Hudson Valley Community Center, 110 Grand Ave, Poughkeepsie, NY. Auditorium.





## NYNJ HATS Feasibility Study

An official scoping comment period is currently scheduled to run for 30 days following the public meetings scheduled for July 9, 10 and 11.

[CLICK HERE for Project Fact Sheet](#)

[CLICK HERE for July 2018 Meeting Posters](#)

*Comments may be submitted to:*

Nancy J. Brighton, Chief, Watershed Section, Environmental Analysis Branch, Planning Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District, 26 Federal Plaza, New York, Room 2151, NY 10279-0090, or via email to:

[NYNJHarbor.TribStudy@usace.army.mil](mailto:NYNJHarbor.TribStudy@usace.army.mil).



Manhattan Waterfront

Image Credit: *Manhattan Cityscape New York, USA*

## WaterWire: NYC Takes First Step to Establish Office of the Waterfront

On June 7, 2018, New York City Council Member Rose (Staten Island) introduced a bill to establish a Mayor's Office of the Waterfront "which would be responsible for coordinating among the various city agencies that handle matters related to waterfront use, supporting the Waterfront Management Advisory Board [a forum of expert waterfront stakeholders to advise city agencies on harbor-related policies being reconstituted as per a bill passed by the Council and signed by Mayor de Blasio in 2016], and implementing the [New York City Comprehensive Waterfront Plan](#), issue permits, and disseminate information about the waterfront to the public. [Continue Reading...](#)

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## The Hurricanes Are Coming

June is the start of hurricane season in the Atlantic, and the only certainty for East Coast residents is the uncertainty 2018 will bring. In NYC alone, more than 726,000 homes are at risk of flooding damage from a storm surge, making it the second most at-risk city in the nation behind Miami, Florida. Forecasters are predicting 10 to 16 named storms this hurricane season, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), of which five to nine could become hurricanes with winds of 74 miles per hour or higher. [Continue Reading...](#)



Satellite Image of Hurricane Matthew Approaching Florida

Image Credit: *Elements of this image furnished by NASA*

## Sea Level Rise: Jersey Shore Town Flooding Predictions; \$10B at Risk

Some 25,000 New Jersey homes will be endangered within 20 years by regular tidal flooding powered by rising sea levels, according to a new analysis by the Union of Concerned Scientists. About 5,300 of those homes are in Ocean County, NJ as both the county's barrier islands are among the most imperiled locations in the US. The threat is global in scope: more than \$1 trillion in American real estate, including parts of Miami, Long Island, and the San Francisco Bay area will be in jeopardy by 2100. New Jersey is among the most vulnerable, data from the UCS "US Coastal Property at Risk from Rising Seas" report shows. [Continue Reading...](#)

## Other Flooding and Climate Change News

*FEMA National Flood Conference – Federally Supported, State Managed, Locally Executed.* [Continue Reading...](#)  
FEMA | June 2018

*Zurich Insurance Group found that every \$1 spent on 'disaster resilience' saves \$5.* [Continue Reading...](#)  
Zurich Insurance Group | June 2018

*Flood insurance program could lapse July 31, 2018 in midst of hurricane season.* [Continue Reading...](#)  
CNBC | June 11, 2018





APRIL 2018 | ISSUE NO. 2

# SURGE WATCH



## A Note from the Storm Surge Working Group (SSWG) Chair



*We are advocates for a "layered defense" system encompassing both an offshore regional barrier system and a network of on-shore perimeter defenses that would be developed together by New York City and all the coastal communities surrounding the 1,000 miles of shoreline of New York Harbor, its tributaries, and the lower Hudson River.*

*This specifically separates the function of the regional barriers, designed to hold back dangerous storm surges from future megastorms, but not the slow but insidious rise in sea level. Regional storm surge barriers must be held open 99.99% of the time for the purposes of navigation, fish migration, fisheries, tidal currents, river discharges and harbor flushing. There is no way they can hold back sea level rise.*

*This then shifts the responsibility of protecting the City and other perimeter Harbor and Tributary (HAT) communities in NY and NJ from sea level rise through the construction of modest seawalls, abutments, and barrier beach re-nourishment projects in a grand partnership. We don't oppose the City's proposal to build more than 100 perimeter barriers. We want to partner with them to protect the City and region from both damaging storm surges and sea level rise. We believe this system of layered defense can protect the whole metropolitan region for more than a century into the future.*

*Only in this way can the essential tasks of protection against both storm surges and sea level rise be accommodated in an advantageous cost/benefit scenario, plus gain the support of Metropolitan residents who will not accept 20' high walls built around their iconic shoreline views of the New York City, Hoboken, Port Elizabeth, Jersey City, and other coastal communities and infrastructure.*

**Malcolm Bowman,**  
Senior Editor

## In This Issue

- Can NYC Survive the Sea?
- Forum Series Session 1: Storm Surge Barrier: Traditional and Innovative Finance Options
- See What NYC's Famous Landmarks Look Like Submerged Under Water
- The Social Justice Case for a Metropolitan New York-New Jersey Regional Storm Surge Barrier
- Other Flooding and Climate Change News



**Image Credit:** Left—Flickr User Robwelds via Inhabitat, Right—NY Harbor Nature

## Can NYC Survive the Sea?

NYCH2O hosted a lecture focusing on New York City's response to rising sea levels and coastal flooding. Speakers included Catherine McVay Hughes, who presented the concept of a layered regional protection system (minute 9 of video), and Ted Steinberg, who presented on the City's history of development in the floodplain and the City's approach to management of coastal flood risk (minute 32 of video). [Continue Reading...](#)



## Forum Series Session 1 - Storm Surge Barrier: Traditional and Innovative Finance Options

On February 28, 2018, National Institute for Coastal and Harbor infrastructure (NICHI) and the NY-NJ SSWG held the first in its series of four Forum Sessions that are designed as "think tanks" to address important issues related to the proposed NY NJ Storm Surge Barrier System which is currently Alternative 2 in the USACE Harbor and Tributaries Study (HATS).

The First Forum, entitled "Traditional and Innovative Finance Options," was held on February 28th at 200 West Street in Lower Manhattan. Forum speakers included Moderator Bill Golden, President of NICHI; Professor Malcolm Bowman, Chair NY-NJ SSWG, Marvin Markus, Goldman Sachs Managing Director; Gwen Dawson, Battery Park City Authority (BPCA) VP Real Estate; Paul Josephson, Duane Morris, Senior Partner; Jack Kingston, Squire Patton Boggs Principal; and Martin Nicholson, CH2M Senior Partner. Professor Robert Yaro, Co-Chair of the NY-NJ SSWG and President Emeritus of the Regional Plan Association, led the "think tank" discussion and analysis that followed the panel presentation.

Marvin Marcus (Goldman Sachs) presented the innovative option of an insurance surcharge on property and casualty and auto insurance premiums. Gwen Dawson (BPCA) focused on how the BPCA authority intended to finance its sea level rise and interim storm surge system by reallocating real estate derived revenues. Jack Kingston (Squire Patton Boggs) discussed and analyzed the availability of federal funding through the President's infrastructure initiative. Paul Josephson (Duane Morris) cited his involvement in a Pennsylvania public private partnership to rebuild and maintain 600 bridges. Martin Nicholson (CH2M) discussed a new USACE program that utilizes a federal, state and local finance option.

The NICHI NY-NJ SSWG Forum Series is sponsored by: Battery Park City Authority, Cameron Engineering and Associates, Chelsea Piers, CH2M, Downtown Alliance, Hazen and Sawyer, Howard Hughes Corporation, JP Morgan Chase, Langan, NY General Contractors Association, Squire Patton Boggs, S&P Global Ratings, Skanska and Tetrattech.



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[www.nichiusa.org](http://www.nichiusa.org)

## See What NYC's Famous Landmarks Look Like Submerged Under Water

Climate Central, a nonprofit organization that focuses on climate science, has developed a powerful visualization of the impacts of sea level rise on famous landmarks throughout the US. This tool can be used with Google Earth's 3D maps to zoom in on waterfront communities to show conditions if global seas levels were to rise eight feet. [Continue reading...](#)



Image Credit: Climate Central

## The Social Justice Case for a Metropolitan New York-New Jersey Regional Storm Surge Barrier

NICHI and the NY-NJ SSWG issued a statement for Water Day setting forth the case as to why a New York-New Jersey Metropolitan Storm Surge Barrier System is the only "Social Justice" solution to protect poor and low-income communities from the devastation of storm surge. The press conference coincided with the release of the April issue of the LexisNexis Environmental Law in New York Review, which includes an article on this Social Justice topic co-authored by members of NICHI and SSWG. [Continue Reading...](#)

## Other Flooding and Climate Change News

*Hunts Point Lifelines on WNET's Peril and Promise.*

[Continue Reading...](#)

WNET | February 7, 2018

*Rockaway flood protection draft report to be released this summer; coastal Protections could include a sea wall, jetties, and groins.* [Continue Reading...](#)

AM New York | March 20, 2018

*Community Board 3 Parks Committee meets to discuss East Side Coastal Resiliency Project.* [Continue Reading...](#)

ESCR Project | March 15, 2018





FEBRUARY 2018 | ISSUE NO.1

# SURGE WATCH



## A Note from the SSWG Chair



*I am delighted that we have started a new publishing endeavor aimed at bringing to the public, their elected officials and staff the important issues surrounding protection measures for not only New York City itself and its magnificent Harbor, but also northern New Jersey with its dense industrial, seaport and airport facilities, the Hudson River Valley, the vulnerable southern coasts of the outer boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens and the exposed, flat southern coast of western Long Island. We seek*

*regional, robust and affordable solutions that transcend geographic and political boundaries, because storm surges and rising sea levels are surely regional issues that demand a regional solution.*

*Our mission is to advance the only long term solution by building a regional system of offshore storm surge barriers, plus modest local coastline protection to resist the slow but relentless rise in sea level over the decades ahead. Both interlocking systems are needed.*

*In our deliberations, we are not content to just limiting future damage through building a modest degree of resiliency, but to recommend defense technologies to completely stop all the storm surges from destroying our cities again for up to 100 years.*

*We hope to bring you breaking news of wide interest, not only of our ongoing efforts, but also those of courageous individuals and organizations, who all over the tri-state region are fighting with all their might to ensure that their children, their grandchildren and their communities will prosper, and will never have to undergo in their lifetimes the vast trauma and enduring loss of all those superstorm Sandy communities and victims.*

*We hope you enjoy reading this inaugural issue. We encourage you to send us your comments and look forward to hearing from you.*

**Malcolm Bowman,**  
Senior Editor

## A Regional Approach to Protecting the NY-NJ Metropolitan Area

The Metro NY-NJ SSWG promotes the development of a system of robust surge barriers to protect the core of the combined New York - New Jersey Metro Region from future devastating storm surges. Two movable barriers located across the outer harbor (Sandy Hook, NJ to Far Rockaway, NY), and upper East River will provide a ring of protection to most of the bi-state Metro Region, including the seaports of New York City and Port Elizabeth, NJ, ground level and underground transportation terminals, the three major international airports, subway and roadway tunnels, hospitals, communication centers, the industrial complex of northern NJ and the millions of residents at risk in the outer boroughs of NYC and coastal New Jersey north of Sandy Hook. These movable storm surge barriers will be coupled with modest sea level rise coastline seawalls for a layered approach to resiliency.

[www.nichiusa.org](http://www.nichiusa.org)

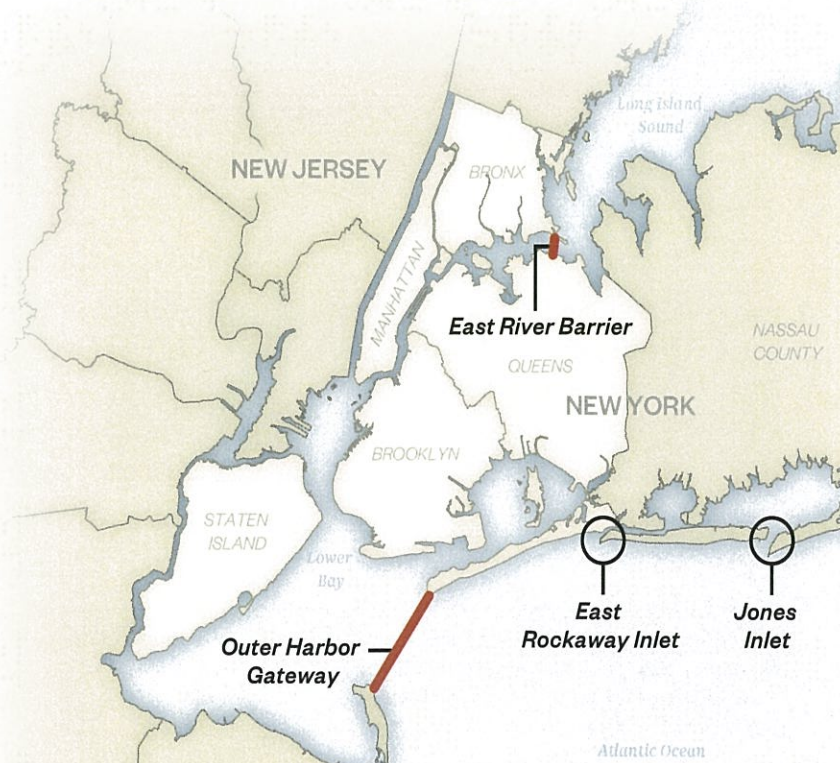
## In This Issue

- Resiliency FAQs: Common Questions Answered
- Draft Proposal to Update the Flood Zoning Text
- Amendment of Reference Standard for Flood Insurance Rate Maps – Public Hearing
- Other Flooding and Climate Change News

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**National Institute for Coastal & Harbor Infrastructure (NICHI) and Storm Surge Working Group (SSWG) hold forum on February 28, 2018 on traditional and innovative finance options for the storm surge barrier system**

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## Resiliency FAQs: Common Questions Answered

In the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, New York City Planning is working with communities throughout the floodplain to identify zoning and land use strategies to reduce flood risks and support the city's vitality and resiliency through long-term adaptive planning. The City is currently seeking input on a future update to the special zoning regulations that apply in the floodplain citywide and wants to hear from those affected on how to remove regulatory barriers to resiliency investments and make neighborhoods more resilient. [Continue reading...](#)



Image Credit: Shutterstock.com

## Draft Proposal to Update the Flood Zoning Text

As part of the City's ongoing climate resiliency initiatives, New York City Planning is working with coastal communities to update the special zoning regulations that apply in the flood plain. These regulations promote flood resistant building design so as to ensure that neighborhoods are more resilient to flooding and climate change. However, they were adopted on a temporary emergency basis following Sandy and need to be made permanent to ensure buildings do not lose the zoning flexibility that enables resilient design. [Continue reading...](#)



Image Credit: Shutterstock.com

## Amendment of Reference Standard for Flood Insurance Rate Maps – Public Hearing

The Department of Buildings held a public hearing on February 5, 2018 to review amendments to its flood insurance rate maps as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) works to substantially redraw the City's flood lines.

This rule amends the Reference Standard FEMA FIRM 360497, as identified in Section BC G402 of the building code. The FEMA FIRMs are the Flood Insurance Rate Maps published by FEMA and are referenced in the building code for the purpose of enforcement of the construction standards of the National Flood Insurance Program. This rule updates the FEMA FIRMs to incorporate a Letter of Map Amendment approved by FEMA for La Guardia Airport in Queens. This amendment ensures New York City's continued compliance with and eligibility to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. [Continue reading...](#)

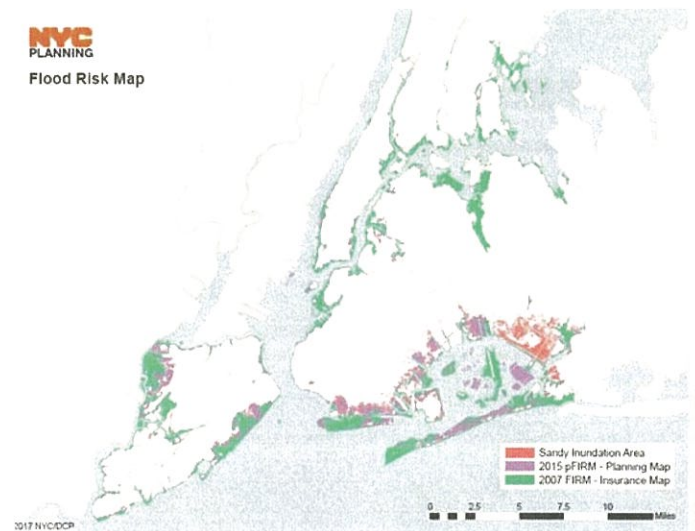


Image Credit: NYC Department of City Planning

## Other Flooding and Climate Change News

New US Flood Aid Rules Requiring Federally Funded Projects to Account for Increased Flood Risk. [Continue reading...](#)  
*Bloomberg* | Feb 7, 2018

Climate Change Could Swamp Your Muni-Bond Portfolio  
[Continue reading...](#)  
*Wall Street Journal* | February 2, 2017

Moody's Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Could Affect Cities' Bond Ratings [Continue reading...](#)  
*Urban Land Magazine* | January 17, 2018

World's Biggest Weather Threat Isn't Hurricanes [Continue reading...](#)  
*Bloomberg* | January 12, 2018

Thank you for keeping up with the SSWG. For more information, please visit our [website](#)

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**Public Testimony****January 23, 2019****New York City Council, Committee on Parks and Recreation and Committee on Environmental Protection****Re: Oversight - The Status of the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project****Submitted by Roland Lewis, President and CEO****Waterfront Alliance**

Six years after the devastation of Super Storm Sandy, our region is still vulnerable to the increasing risks brought by climate change. How we ensure the safety of millions of lives and billions of dollars of property and infrastructure, how we finance and administrate that protection and how we communicate the urgency of the need are questions that beg better answers.

While we are here today to specifically address the East Side Coastal Resiliency (ESCR) project, it is important to acknowledge that while this is one of a number of important funded measures to address resiliency in New York, the sum total of city, state, federal, and regional projects address but a small portion of our communities. Progress has been made, and while we recognize that building resilience is a generational federal, regional, state, local, and lot-scale public and private challenge, we emphasize that our current investments are grossly insufficient compared to the problem's magnitude. What we can do now is develop a proactive approach, clarity and connectivity in our decision-making, better financing solutions, and policies that ensure the equitable resilience, accessibility, and ecological integrity of our region. The application of smart, proactive solutions (or, conversely, lack thereof) will affect our communities for generations to come. We look forward to working with the City and our partners to identify a path forward in that direction.

The recent changes to the East Side Coastal Resiliency project raise three great concerns: 1) Lack of transparency about cost and cost-benefit, 2) What happened to the community led design, and 3) Fear of losing federal dollars due to delay:

- **Lack of transparency:** there has been a lack of clear and thorough explanation as to the justification and cost-benefit analysis for the change in design, other than reducing FDR closures and reducing park maintenance. We realize there are certain opportunities with this new design such as barge access, which is important and removes trucks from the road during construction, but an overall calculus of further costs and benefits are unclear. We question how benefits outweigh the costs to the community and the actual increased cost in budget from \$760 million to \$1.45 billion without clearer justification.
- **What happened to the community led design?** The ESCR project went through multiple iterations of design with high degrees of community engagement. It may be that, upon deep review, the design



and cost are the most realistic and feasible for the City to implement. But for the community members and those involved in the design process for the East River State Park area, a last-minute scrapping of their careful work, rather than identifying these challenges earlier in the process, the decision risks insult and injury to the public trust in the design process, setting a poor precedent for the future.

- **Use it or lose it** – The federal funding provided through the Sandy Supplemental must be spent by 2022. The substantial changes makes for a very tight timeline to expend these funds before they revert back to the federal government. This risk must be addressed by the City.

ESCR is a big project, but it won't be the last as we work to protect our city as the waters rise. Setting a solid precedent for transparency and community involvement are key to all successful large-scale resiliency projects that the city will undertake in the years to come.

As you may know, the Waterfront Alliance is a civic organization that brings together a diverse coalition of more than 1,000 stakeholders with ties to our regional waterways to inspire and enable resilient, revitalized and accessible coastlines for all communities. Waterfront Alliance has been a strong advocate for smart coastal policy since its inception, and is the developer of WEDG, or the Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines, a rating system and set of guidelines for catalyzing resilient, accessible, and ecologically-sound urban waterfront decision-making that is now required for consideration for waterfront projects in the Borough of Brooklyn and growing in other Community Districts.

Through WEDG, and through the convening of our partners, we continue to work to increase resiliency literacy at the grassroots and professional levels, and to advocate for a higher standard. We look forward to both working with and encouraging the City (as well as our state, federal, and landowner partners) to take part in a more proactive and regional plan and program to build our resilience to climate change and sea level rise.



**Testimony for City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation and  
Committee on Environmental Protection "The Status of the East Side Coastal  
Resiliency Project"**  
**January 23, 2019**

**Christine Datz Romero,  
Co-Founder and Executive Director  
917-405-0288**

I am testifying on behalf of the Lower East Side Ecology Center (Ecology Center) a community based environmental organization, who has offered composting, education and stewardship programs in East River Park since 1997.

The Ecology Center has a license agreement with Parks to operate its composting program as well as offer free public programming to educate about the ecology of the East River and its upland community, and to support the horticultural maintenance of East River Park through its stewardship program, which engages thousands of volunteers each year.

Like many stakeholders and community residents, we have participated in the Rebuild by Design process. This planning process, stretching over 4 years, was a transparent process allowing stakeholders and residents to shape the future of their park, with the goal to create a resilient park that provides flood protection for the Lower East Side.

Unfortunately, the trust that we have put into this public process has been broken when the City announced in the fall of 2018 a major departure from the original design concepts for ESCR without communicating or since then satisfactorily explaining to the public how these decisions were made. We have repeatedly asked to be able to review the 'value added engineering study' that representatives of DDC referred to in community board meetings, only to get vague answers, and have received no commitment from DDC to provide this information.

The current fast track process, which steamrolls any concerns raised, needs to be put on a pause. We need to get this plan right, and that can only happen through a transparent process where stakeholders and community members have a voice, which is not something we currently experiencing. We need an independent evaluation of the 'value added study' that has informed the City in their new design direction. before we can move forward with any designs. We think it is important that DDC shows a good faith effort to rebuild our trust by providing this study.





Additionally, I would like to raise the following concerns about the current plan:

**Wholesale Destruction of existing eco system**

By 'elevating' the park 8' the entire eco-system of East River Park is destroyed in one fell swoop. We have counted over 350 species – both plants and animals – that make their home in the Park. Stretching for 2 miles along the estuary, East River Park plays an important role in supporting biodiversity in our urban setting and beyond. There are over 700 trees in East River Park, some of them mature trees that were planted when the Park was created in the 1940ties that will be obliterated. Loosing the environmental and social benefits our tree canopy provides, from removing air pollution, providing shade for Park users and shelter and food to wild life, will be a blow to the community and the natural system that will have impacts for a generation.

Since Sandy, when trees and shrubs were lost, the Ecology Center restocked planting beds with thousands of native plants selected for salt water tolerance. We raise money from foundations and corporations and volunteers do the planting, instilling a sense of ownership in the park.

**Social & Environmental Impacts**

The current plan calls for the closure of East River Park for the entire duration of construction. Residents of Community Board 3 are underserved in terms of open space, with 1.2 acres of open space per 1,000 residents, half of the citywide average of 2.5 acres. Youth leagues in the community, from Little Leagues to Soccer Clubs, are even now hard pressed to secure permits for their members. The closure of the Park will eliminate 8 ball fields, 2 soccer fields, as well the recently renovated track and field facilities and the tennis courts and will deprive community residents, young and old, from recreational resources that can not be replaced easily for the duration of the construction.

Additionally, East River Park bordered by NYCHA developments, functions as the back yard for families to do picnics in the warmer month, and provides youth growing up in the urban setting with exposure to the natural environment. The Ecology Center uses the Park as an outdoor classroom, where interactions between species can be observed and documented by students, emphasizing a science based hands on approach to teaching and learning.

Loosing all these services the Park is currently providing for the entire duration of construction is unreasonable and a hard ship for the community. Will a whole generation of kids growing up on the Lower East Side be denied the experience of playing ball in their Park? No matter what design plan will be implemented in the end, a phased approach to construction, and the immediate reopening of completed sections is imperative for the social well being of our community.

## **Educators and Ecologists Say, East Side Coastal Resiliency—Back to the Drawing Board!**

Amy Berkov (Dept. Biology, City College of New York), Melinda Billings (Stewardship Coordinator, Lower East Side Ecology Center), Loyan Beausoleil (Director, University Plaza Nursery School), Christine Datz-Romero (Executive Director, Lower East Side Ecology Center).

Hurricane Sandy (October 2012) was followed by a multi-year, transparent planning process that aimed to redesign NYC coastal areas to protect residents from the negative impacts of floods (likely to increase in frequency, due to climate change and rising sea levels). Last fall, the City abruptly jettisoned their plans for Manhattan's Lower East Side and announced a new "fast-track" project. This "fast-track" plan proposes to use eight feet of infill to elevate the entire East River shoreline from Montgomery Street to 25<sup>th</sup> Street. This will separate almost 300,000 residents of CB3 and CB6 from their waterfront parks for a minimum of three years. It will also destroy every single living thing that makes a home there; over 350 species counted thus far, from spring ephemerals to shrubs and trees, pollinators including butterflies and bees, birds—and a turtle! Before blindly accepting this plan, we need to evaluate the costs, which include lost educational opportunities, lost ecosystem services, and lost health benefits—to people and to the environment.

Children growing up in rural or suburban locations make their first observations of nature in familiar surroundings; often their own backyards. They generate questions when they see things that they don't understand. Why do leaves fall off a tree? What are roots? Why is that bug buzzing on a plant, or eating another bug? Why are those eggs blue? For kids growing up in the Lower East Side, East River Park is their backyard, full of mystery and adventure, providing them opportunities to gather rocks and sticks and even change their attitude towards nature. One little girl in NYC was terrified of bugs but after ongoing exposure in a NYC park, told her teacher, "I used to be afraid of bugs but now I'm not anymore". With minimal guidance, kids can learn some basic principles about life in a community—where many diverse life-forms co-exist, engaging in beneficial and antagonistic interactions. Within a community, different species live in different places, and eat different things. Competitive interactions drive innovation. Some species trade favors with others, or find strength in numbers, and all have strategies to defend themselves against their natural enemies. Perhaps the most important life lessons concern *change and succession: living things die, thereby creating opportunities for new life.* Nutrients are recycled and different species thrive, setting the stage for those that follow—determined by their physiological tolerances and dispersal abilities.

Urban parks are not simply the stages on which all of this drama plays out (if often writ small, unobserved by the large). The plants in urban parks and gardens provide important ecosystem services, and play critical roles in sustaining global biodiversity. The ecosystem services provided by trees, including carbon sequestration, air and water purification, climate moderation, and flood control, are widely acknowledged. Cultural ecosystem services include the many physical and mental health benefits that humans



derive from access to nature. These undoubtedly contributed to NYC's recent initiative to plant a million trees, and to make sure that, within the next decade, even more NYC residents will be able to walk to a park.

The role of urban parks in enhancing biodiversity receives less attention, but is no less important. Perhaps we fail to recognize city parks as havens for biodiversity because many of us are irritated by the opportunistic species that thrive in the disturbed urban environments we create (pigeons, rats, roaches...). But, to those who make it their mission to look, our open spaces are actually teeming with life; for instance, a four-year survey of 19 NYC community gardens documented 54 bee species. Due to population declines, the Golden Northern Bumble Bee (*Bombus fervidus*) is classified Vulnerable on the IUCN red list and a high priority Species of Greatest Conservation Need in NYS. It has—along with Cooper's Hawk and an Eastern Box Turtle (NYS species of "special concern")—found a refuge in the East River Park. Our urban spaces can be refuges because those who plant in small spaces tend to plant for diversity and minimize pesticide use; the benefits reverberate through the food web. Over the past few decades, dramatic declines in both insects and their predators have been documented in both temperate and tropical environments. In our urban parks, we have a chance to help other species have a chance.

As educators, ecologists, and long-term residents of the East Village—who vividly remember Sandy and its aftermath—we believe that the costs associated with the "fast-track" plan for coastal resilience are unacceptably high. The costs, to both the human and *other* residents and users of the East River Park, could only be justified if the benefits are also exceptional.

And what are the benefits of the "fast-track" plan? The rationale for elevating the entire park with eight feet of fill, rather than creating a more natural wetlands habitat that would act as a sponge, is that it would elevate the athletic fields out of harm's way and minimize future maintenance costs. A more compelling argument is that it would protect people from dangerous flooding, because construction could be completed a year earlier. This means that, in principle, there would be one less year in which there is a one percent chance of a flood. This argument is a scare tactic; after all, Sandy caused tremendous economic damage, but there were only two fatalities in Manhattan; neither of them on the east side. (We respond to the much higher rate of traffic fatalities with incremental change, not by leveling the roads or banning cars). Furthermore, there would be the exact same probability of flooding each year of the construction process. Has the City considered how much worse a flood could be if it occurred while the East River shoreline, from Montgomery Street to 25<sup>th</sup> Street, was completely barren of the vegetation that creates a buffer?

In this time of rapid environmental change, our waterfront parks should be recognized as successional habitats. Why can't we have a park, including athletic fields and also harboring biodiversity, that is designed to withstand and absorb and protect us from occasional floods? Why can't we accept that floods (with the help of some talented park designers and ecologists) will select for resilient species... and design for incremental

change? The City has failed to present any evidence to support the claim that the “fast-track” plan is the only way to protect New Yorkers from rising waters. They are proposing to destroy the East River Park to save it. It just doesn’t make sense. If they were talking about Riverside Park, or a park in any other neighborhood, this plan would sink like a lead balloon. It’s time to go back to the drawing board!

#### **Annotations:**

##### **Floods are likely to increase in frequency:**

New York City Panel on Climate Change 2015 Report Chapter 3: Static Coastal Flood Mapping <https://nyaspubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/nyas.12590>

##### **“Fast-track” project:**

<https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/493-18/fact-sheet-de-blasio-administration-faster-updated-plan-east-side-coastal>

##### **Residents in CB3 and CB6:**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manhattan\\_Community\\_Board\\_3](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manhattan_Community_Board_3)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manhattan\\_Community\\_Board\\_6](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manhattan_Community_Board_6)

##### **Urban parks sustaining biodiversity:**

<https://e360.yale.edu/features/urban-refuge-how-cities-can-help-rebuild-declining-bee-populations>

*Conservation Biology*, Volume 31, No. 1, 24–29. 2016. DOI: 10.1111/cobi.12840

##### **Tree ecosystem services:**

Urban Ecosystem Services for Resilience Planning and Management in New York City, *AMBIO* 2014, 43:502–515 DOI 10.1007/s13280-014-0509-8

<https://tree-map.nycgovparks.org/learn/benefits>

##### **Human health benefits of exposure to nature:**

<https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/doi/10.1289/EHP1663>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/03/well/move/the-secret-to-good-health-may-be-a-walk-in-the-park.html>

##### **NYC’s recent initiatives:**

<https://www.milliontreesnyc.org/>

<https://www.nycgovparks.org/planning-and-building/planning/walk-to-a-park>

##### **Bees in NYC**

**gardens:**[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232664002\\_Bee\\_Richness\\_and\\_Abundance\\_in\\_New\\_York\\_City\\_Urban\\_Gardens](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232664002_Bee_Richness_and_Abundance_in_New_York_City_Urban_Gardens)

##### **Conservation status**

<https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/21215132/21215225>



<https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7494.html>

[https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/wildlife\\_pdf/rareanimal2017.pdf](https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/wildlife_pdf/rareanimal2017.pdf)

**Declines in insects and their predators:**

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0185809>

<https://www.boerenlandvogels.nl/sites/default/files/2017-03/Hallmann%20et%20al.%202014%20High%20neonics%20and%20decline%20in%20insectivorous%20birds.pdf>

<https://www.pnas.org/content/115/44/E10397>

**One percent chance of flood:**

doi: 10.1111/nyas.12590 Ann. N.Y. Acad. Sci. 1336 (2015) 45–55 2015 New York Academy of Sciences.

**NYC Sandy fatalities:**

<https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/11/17/nyregion/hurricane-sandy-map.html>

**NYC Traffic fatalities:**

<http://www.nycvzv.info/>

**Parks designed to withstand and absorb floods:**

<https://randallsisland.org/visit/waterfront-natural-areas/>



I am Diana Carulli and I speak for the East River Park Coalition. We wish to address the responsibility the city has to provide alternative spaces for recreational activities during the reconstruction of East River Park.

It is also imperative that the new plan for the park integrate artistic and cultural features that have been assets of East River Park since its creation in 1939. One such asset, can be found in the historic Dance Oval where, in the years after World War 2, people gathered to dance to live music. It still functions as a recreational, artistic, and social gathering place.

Located north of the tennis courts and south of the sports fields, the Dance Oval, has a colorful labyrinth pattern painted on the concrete and asphalt ground, in a circle delineated by trees that survived Sandy. The East River Reflections Labyrinth has been there since 2004 and has seen Choreographers set dances upon it, as children continue to play around it.

Visual artists are inspired by it as are soccer players who choose to practice their kicks upon it. Early morning exercisers are there and throughout the day; visitors use it for reasons that range from walking their dogs, to tracing its labyrinthine paths known to help us focus.

To our point of providing necessary recreational space during the resiliency construction, seriously consider placing labyrinths in other parks as they amplify the use of the areas they're set upon. One such location could be Tompkins Square Park which has an excellent area for a labyrinth around a sprinkler used by children for 2 months of the summer.

I am available to create this and other labyrinths with community participation, a creative process that I urge you to support for the benefit of all park users.

Thank you.



## ***Labyrinth Outlasted Sandy***

Dear Friends of Diana Carulli's Labyrinth Project earlier this month The Villager Newspaper's coverage of Hurricane Sandy's devastation included a mention by Lincoln Anderson, of my East River Reflections Labyrinth. The letter I wrote in reply to his article with it's dramatic photo (see below) was published with the above title. An excerpt of my letter is quoted here. I hope these words and images will encourage you as the city continues to rebuild.

"To be able to access the labyrinth without obstruction in a surrounding area that clearly suffered much from Sandy, is restorative. Thanks to your dramatic photo and words, I hope people will visit the East River Reflections Labyrinth."

Sincerely,  
Diana Carulli



## ***Waterfront parks got whacked***

By Lincoln Anderson for  
The Villager. November 2012



January 23, 2019: ESCR Hearing at NY City Hall

OLS Little League (OLSLL) : Tony Rivera, President  
Email: [olskidssparkle@yahoo.com](mailto:olskidssparkle@yahoo.com)  
Website: [olslittleleague.org](http://olslittleleague.org)

Hearing Testimony:

My name is Tony Rivera and I am the president of the OLS Little League in the Lower East Side. Our program is entering its 60<sup>th</sup> year, where we provide youth sports services to approximately 300 participants and their families.

- Our mission is to teach youth teamwork, discipline and physical activity to develop productive citizens and future community leaders. We have the honor of being the youth sports program that NY Yankees' All Star Dellin Betances developed his love for baseball.
- Last year, OLSLL collaborated with Major League Baseball to host a combined league opening day and the MLB Playball event on ERP fields 1 & 2. This event was opened to the entire community and was a huge success.
- We are the largest baseball and softball league in the Lower East Side of Manhattan and an important stakeholder/permit-holder in East River Park (ERP). Our league boundary includes south of Brooklyn Bridge to 14<sup>th</sup> Street and many of our participants live in NYCHA housing across the street and around the ERP.

OLSLL recognizes the important of protecting the East Side residents and the Park from future storm surge flooding and has an appreciation of the ESCR project and this primary initiative.

But OLSLL has two major concerns regarding the disruption to our program due to the ESCR Project:

- 1) The impact of youth sports program disruption during 3.5yr construction period; and**
  - a. OLSLL residents/participants live in close proximity to the park and don't have transportation options to far away field alternatives to run our program.
- 2) The elimination of field 8 from the existing ballfields in ERP today.**
  - a. Field 8 is the OLSLL primary field on Saturdays and runs many games there.
  - b. OLSLL wants to understand why the decision was taken to eliminate field 8 when the shortage of ball fields has been a consistent problem for many years.

**Some initial solutions include:**

- 1) Phasing the ESCR project instead of full park closure so some ballfields remain available during the construction period.
- 2) Making use of other recreational areas with ballfields like Baruch Playground field, Coleman Oval and Verizon/Murray Bergtraum Field.
- 3) Creation of turf fields in local school yards.
- 4) Need to explore the ways of maintaining field 8 in the new park design or be allocated a replacement ball field to make up for this lost field.

**We request that the NYC Parks Department and the ESCR Project Management team engage with OLSLL to address our concerns.**





January 23, 2019

Dear City Council,

As the Founder/Executive Director of Earth Celebrations, a non-profit environmental and arts organization on the Lower East Side since 1991, engaged with community garden preservation and river remediation and waterfront restoration efforts for 30 years, I am concerned about the abrupt changes on the ESCR waterfront re-development plan and the dismissal of a 4 year community engaged design process.

As community stakeholders worked collaboratively and engaged in the development of design plans, why would the city suddenly dismiss the plan that was generated? If there were engineering parameters then they should have been included within the guidelines of the community-engaged work. The plan stakeholders generated did not put forth the razing of the entire park with trees, plantings and all current architectural features and ball fields. The plan stakeholders generated did not present raising the entire park 8-10 feet with landfill and a hard edge sea wall. The Plan stakeholders generated was forward thinking climate resiliency design, incorporating a soft edge rolling hillside seawall berm and design elements to integrate flooding, as is being used in waterfront park models from Holland to Boston. The hard edge seawall seems to be an entirely different approach.

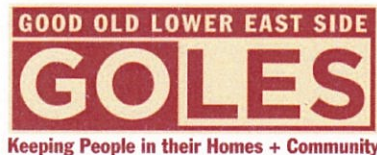
It is also of concern that the new plan the city has countered with, has not engaged community input and has many unanswered questions regarding the environmental impact of a hard edge sea wall on surrounding areas such as further north and Brooklyn. We are asking for a pause so that the community's concerns and input can be included in the plan.

The announcement of closing the entire East River Park for 3 1/2 years is unacceptable and would deprive an entire generation of children the essential access to the park, waterfront and ball fields. The Washington Square Park renovation was eventually done in section phases over similar concerns.

We are asking for a pause to address the community's concerns and essential input on the ESCR waterfront re-development plan.

Sincerely,

Felicia Young, Founder/ Executive Director - Earth Celebrations



*Keeping people in their homes and community, since 1977!*

FOR THE RECORD

Testimony to New York City Council  
Committee on Environmental Protection and Committee on Parks and Recreation  
On "The Status of the East Side Coastal Resiliency Process"  
Wednesday, January 23, 2019

by Damaris Reyes, Executive Director, Good Old Lower East Side, Inc.

Good afternoon. My name is Damaris Reyes, and I'm the Executive Director of GOLES, Good Old Lower East Side, a 40-year-old membership organization dedicated to tenant rights, economic equality, and community revitalization. As a pioneer and a leading voice in public housing issues both locally and nationally, we reach more than 10,000 people every year with our work. GOLES is an active coordinating member of the LES Ready, the Lower East Side's disaster-preparedness and resiliency network, working to create flood protections while ensuring that any infrastructural amenities created to mitigate climate change will also enhance residents' quality of life, create employment and economic opportunities for long-time residents, and not lead to displacement of long-time neighborhood residents.

GOLES has been involved in this process since the beginning. As a coordinating member of LES Ready, GOLES participated actively in the Rebuild by Design process, developing innovative solutions to better protect residents from future climate events. GOLES organized hundreds of Lower East Side residents to take part in community visioning and feedback sessions for Rebuild by Design, and the proposal for our community—"The Big U"—won in HUD's original regional competition, securing \$335 million towards its implementation. Throughout this process, GOLES helped the team to ensure extensive community engagement and to determine what the winning design from RxD would look like.

GOLES, as a coordinating member of LES Ready, then helped to lead outreach and community engagement for the East Side Coastal Resiliency project and the Lower Manhattan Coastal Resiliency project. Ensuring real community engagement is central to GOLES' mission. For the East Side Coastal Resiliency project, GOLES worked to garner participation through extensive, accessible, multi-lingual outreach throughout numerous public housing developments, using on-the-ground organizing to maximize our reach. GOLES also worked actively to encourage the incorporation of creative tools to facilitate people's engagement in the process. GOLES worked to attract and engage people—particularly youth—to become involved in this process, giving residents a sense of ownership over ensuring the safety of their community, helping to restore a sense of security in a neighborhood where they survived the trauma of disaster.

GOLES is deeply committed to continuing to engage community residents in designing flood protections, as too often these processes are organized by urban planners, architects, and policymakers without offering opportunities for communities to impact the outcome. This grassroots approach enables community residents to actively influence change by participating



in each step of the research process—from conducting the research, to analyzing and interpreting the results, to communicating the conclusions.

In addition to the lack of transparency and disregard for public process in the new proposal, Lower East Side residents depend on the East River Park as a critical source of open space and for recreational and cultural needs. Restricting access to the park for three years would cause significant hardship for the thousands of low- and moderate-income community residents who rely on the park as a vital, free public amenity.

This project appeared ready to move forward and go through ULURP when, without explanation, for approximately five months, there was no communication from the City with anybody about what was happening and about why this plan was being changed. The overall design and budget both changed significantly. Further, unlike the earlier public processes, there was no communication of technical rationale, no technical assistance, and no explanation about social, environmental, or ecological impacts, preventing the community from coming to an informed understanding of what's coming to our community, without the necessary time or expertise to evaluate it.

Not only were the new plans not communicated by the City, but there was no community input involved in their creation. Many of the residents who live on the waterfront are among the most vulnerable—low- and moderate-income people living in subsidized housing—and they're not being afforded a sufficient opportunity to weigh in about their future. What will this new process mean for waterfront-adjacent housing and the vulnerable populations who live there? Many of these residents were the ones who participated in the original public process, and the new process offers glaringly inadequate opportunities for their input to be taken into consideration and reflected in design.

GOLES is deeply committed to protecting our community from flooding and other climate impacts, but we've raised similar concerns all along about what this plan would mean for the adjacent housing. Even now, in light of an increased budget and extended timeline—presenting an opportunity to take additional factors into design consideration—where is the consideration for the adjacent land and for the potential displacement of people who live there? Increased infrastructural amenities will undoubtedly increase already boiling-point development pressure, and we need to make sure that any amenities created to mitigate climate change will not lead to displacement of long-time neighborhood residents. This plan will undoubtedly impact people who live in the adjacent housing developments, and it's absolutely imperative to ensure that residents are afforded the time and technical assistance to be fully informed and to weigh in on their own futures and on the potential for displacement.

I urge this Council to address this issue, to ensure maximum accountability to the residents of this community and to the city as a whole. The current plan would have far-reaching and long-term impacts on our community and this city as a whole, including the erosion of trust and loss of faith in respect for processes that engage community.



Testimony to New York City Council  
Committee on Environmental Protection and Committee on Parks and Recreation  
On "The Status of the East Side Coastal Resiliency Process"  
Wednesday, January 23, 2019

by Damaris Reyes, on behalf of LES Ready!

LES Ready is the Lower East Side's long-term recovery and resiliency group, which consists of approximately 25 formal members and participation from over fifty organizations and faith-based groups who were the direct responders to Superstorm Sandy. LES Ready is a coalition of groups, mostly local, working cooperatively to coordinate our response, resources, preparedness planning and training, to address extreme weather events and future disasters locally.

GOLES and LES Ready released our report *Getting LES Ready*, which was the culmination of nearly 700 surveys of Lower East Side residents and 8 focus groups and meetings with hundreds of people. The report explores the Lower East Side community's experience during and after Hurricane Sandy, as part of informing a community-based disaster relief plan, created by LES Ready. Genuine community engagement is central to our mission and is a critical best practice of community disaster preparedness and resiliency.

What's being proposed flies in the face of years of hard work and extensive community engagement to come up with a plan to protect the neighborhood from disaster. For community residents who participated in the previous public process, it feels as if the plan that emerged as a product of years of community input has gone out the window. Public meetings about the new plan have only allowed for 10 – 15 minute public comment and question periods, leaving many questions unanswered. It's critically necessary to conduct a new period of community engagement around the new plan, in order to ensure that residents are well-informed and have an opportunity to make their voices heard. This is especially essential for residents who live in the subsidized housing that lines the waterfront, since these residents will be the most impacted by the plan and have been the least represented at public meetings about what's going on.

Concerns about the development pressures on the adjacent subsidized housing, and potential displacement of low- and moderate- income residents must be addressed in greater detail. These concerns were raised all along, but took a back seat to budgetary and timeline constraints, factors that have clearly changed.





The City must work together with a diverse range of stakeholders with deep roots in the community in order to develop a process that facilitates maximum input from residents living in waterfront-adjacent subsidized housing, with the necessary technical resources to help people provide feedback on the plan from a thoroughly-informed position.

Further, residents of these developments and the surrounding neighborhood rely on the East River Park as a vital source of open space and recreation. For low- and moderate-income residents, seeking alternative sources of open space and recreational space is prohibitively costly. Closing it for three years will have a devastating effect on thousands of community residents, and no real mitigation has been planned. For example there haven't been any proposed solution for the community to even consider, like the provision of free shuttle buses, Metro Cards, and free ferry service to alternate parks such as Brooklyn Bridge Park and Governor's Island for residents impacted by this construction and park closure to access other parks that may provide potential alternatives that are farther away.

Finally, the new plan will result in significant, long-term environmental impacts that haven't been adequately explored. This plan includes killing all existing flora and fauna in the park. Presentations on the plan to-date have offered no sense of the long-term environmental impacts of this level of destruction of autochthonous biodiversity. Construction will also lead to concerns around air quality, in a neighborhood with notably high asthma rates. Additionally, the new plan calls for artificial turf and soil, which can include potentially carcinogenic chemicals. A thorough assessment of the long-term environmental and health impacts of the planned landscaping is absolutely imperative.

We understand, from firsthand experience, the enormity of climate impacts and their devastating effects on our community, and we dedicated ourselves to the earlier public processes precisely for that reason. Creating flood protections is at the core of LES Ready's mission, but the community's input and needs must be central to their development. This community knows best what it needs, and residents have a right to be a part of planning their future. The introduction of this new process and plan feels like a "bait and switch," with minimal little transparency, further exacerbating long-term lack of trust in government from our communities.

We urge the City Council to do everything possible to prevent any plan from moving forward that overrides years of community input from a broad range of stakeholders, that would restrict access to a vital source of recreation and open space for Lower East Side residents, and that leaves critical long-term environmental impacts inadequately addressed.

## Testimony for NYC Council Hearing on Revised East Side Coastal Resiliency Plan

January 23, 2019

Ayo Harrington, Member, East River Alliance

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347 213 2909

Good Afternoon. First, I would like to thank Chairs Grodenchik and Constantinides, Council members of the committees and our own Councilwoman Carlina Rivera for scheduling this hearing.

My name is Ayo Harrington. I'm a mother and grandmother who has lived in Alphabet City since the 60s where I raised my son and, starting in the mid 80s, helped reclaim several vacant buildings, through years of sweat equity and urban homesteading, and helped turn vacant lots into beautiful community gardens. I am still as involved in my community as I was then and the many East Village boards I serve on include LES Ready!, Loisaida United Neighborhood Gardens and the Rod Rodgers Dance Company.

I am speaking here today as a member of the East River Alliance, a new coalition formed to amplify the concerns of the community in light of the dramatic changes about to take place on our waterfront. Many of you know how much our community suffered in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. We saw homes, lives and gardens destroyed by storm surge. We worked hard for years in collaboration with the City to design a resilient park we could be proud of. Now the Mayor has proposed to alter the plan, and we find ourselves fighting again to be heard.

East River Park is our park, ESCR is our project, the money to build it is our money, and it must be built according to the vision articulated by our community. We demand that the City work with us acre by acre, bench by bench, tree by tree, to build a new park. We are ready to bring hundreds of community members to meetings to work with you to ensure the new park reflects the needs of each stakeholder - the naturalists, little leaguers, families barbequing, fishermen, cyclists, artists, dog walkers, birders.

During construction, we demand mitigation of the many needs of park users, many of whom have no other access to green space. We will need improvements to NYCHA's open spaces, and all other nearby greenspaces that will see a surge in use such as Gulick and Dry Dock and in our vibrant community gardens. We will need non-stop, free ferries to Governor's Island and Brooklyn Bridge Park. We will need tree planting campaigns to make our community the greenest, healthiest and most shaded in the city. And most importantly, we need the park reconstructed in phases so we are not completely cut off from our waterfront for over three years.

Finally, we demand that the ESCR project return to its mission and purpose – the new park must be a dynamic expression of our commitment to living in a sustainable city which includes features like dedicated foraging areas in the park, to solar-powered lighting to bioswales and rain water catchments to visionary thinking like covering over the FDR Drive.

As you know, our community is resilient, our community is just and our community is loud. Today, you will hear about our community's many concerns which we ask you to consider. To the City we say, please work with us to build our park according to our vision that is for our future. We want to make it very clear that we will not accept anything less!





institute for public knowledge  
new york university



**Submitted Testimony  
By**

**Amy Chester, Managing Director, Rebuild by Design  
Robert Freudenberg President, Energy & Environment, Regional Plan Association  
Thomas Devaney, Senior Director of Land Use, Municipal Art Society  
Eric Klinenberg, Director, Institute for Public Knowledge, New York University**

**To the New York City Council Parks & Recreation and Environmental Protection  
Committees**

**January 23, 2019**

Contact: Amy Chester 917.804.3470  
achester@rebuildbydesign.org

**BACKGROUND ON REBUILD BY DESIGN:**

After Hurricane Sandy impacted 13 states, costing more than \$65 billion in damages and economic loss, President Obama's Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force launched Rebuild by Design: The Hurricane Sandy Design Competition, a regional process that coupled innovation and global expertise with community insight to develop implementable solutions to the region's most complex needs. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) conducted the competition under the authority of the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010, and administered the competition in partnership with philanthropic, academic, and nonprofit organizations. Ten interdisciplinary teams were selected from 148 who applied to embark on the challenge.

The organizations before you today were among the leaders of that competition. Regional Plan Association, The Municipal Art Society of New York, the Van Alen Institute and the Institute for Public Knowledge were chosen to partner with HUD to lead the competition and provide local insight. We guided participants through in-depth research, cross-sector, cross-professional collaboration, and iterative design to develop regionally-scalable but locally-contextual solutions that increase resilience in our region. For us, the process to create the plans was as important

as the outcome of the plans. We worked to ensure all stakeholders were at the table from the beginning to ensure we were being inclusive with the people who would be most affected. We worked among the many other concurrent processes such as the Mayor's implementation of NYC's Special Initiative on Recovery and Resiliency (SIRR), New York Rising, the Environmental Justice Alliance, The NJ Office of Storm Recovery, and Occupy Sandy, to ensure that the proposals resulting from this challenge would not duplicate other efforts. Ours were to be regional, replicable and comprehensive developed with strong community collaboration.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF THE BIG U**

The Hurricane Sandy Design Competition was a two-stage process of collaborative research and collaborative design. After a three month research stage, The BIG Team, comprised of BIG (Bjarke Ingels Group), One Architecture, Starr Whitehouse, James Lima Planning + Development, and others were selected to develop a resiliency concept for the floodplain of Lower Manhattan. That concept is what we now know as the [BIG U](#). The Mayor's office directed this team to focus on the Lower East Side, due to its highly vulnerable population, to develop the concept of an "integrated flood protection system" that was laid out in Mayor Bloomberg's SIRR report. In response, the team developed a 10-mile protective berm that would string around lower Manhattan co-developed with the adjacent community and responsive to the physical constraints of the site.

The Rebuild process guided the team to work with Lower East Side community organizations, including LES Ready!, a coalition which came together after Hurricane Sandy. The BIG Team's transparent and inclusive community outreach process oscillated between the City and the community to ensure the comprehensive proposal they would develop would be one that was reflective of the needs of both. Throughout the development of the plan, the community expressed that they wanted to preserve their waterfront, they wanted more access points into the park, they wanted additional jobs, and they wanted to preserve affordable housing.

HUD recognized this deep collaboration and in June 2014 the project won the largest award from HUD, \$330 million--over a third of the available funds--to implement the first section, from 23rd Street to Montgomery Street. It is important to note that the *project proposal* was granted the funding, not the team that devised it. Therefore, the grantees, in this case NYC, became the stewards of the selected design proposal, and agreed to implement the project on behalf of the residents and design team who create the plan. That fall, HUD issued its [federal register notice](#) outlining the use of these funds, stating that the projects must be "consistent with the proposal selected through the RBD competition process, to the greatest extent practicable and appropriate, considering the technical, fiscal, environmental, legal, and other constraints or opportunities that may be encountered." The City responded with an [Action Plan](#) laying out their intention for those funds and ongoing citizen participation.

## **IMPLEMENTATION:**

For over four years, the City worked tirelessly to do the necessary engineering and design studies to reflect the community's feedback on the first stage of the original BIG U design



proposal, renamed East Side Coastal Resiliency (ESCR). A task force was created with Community Boards 3 and 6, and from January 2015 to March of 2018 twenty-five public meetings were held to focus on this section. An additional 14 meetings were held for the Lower Manhattan portion, which was renamed Lower Manhattan Coastal Resiliency.

These meetings were highly effective in bringing the City and the adjacent communities together to learn from one another and understand the desires of local residents and the physical limits identified through further engineering studies. The community understood when components of the plan were omitted due to escalating costs, and though the Community Boards requested necessary changes on specific issues, they generally supported the near-final proposal. This genuine process of consultation and engagement culminated last spring with the elimination of the Community Board task force, the filing of the City's submission to the NYC Design Commission, and plans for ULURP to begin in the summer.

### **THE NEW PLAN**

In fall 2018, after thousands of hours of work from the community, the City, and its contracted engineers and designers, the City announced a new plan at an additional cost of \$700 million, bringing the total to \$1.45 billion. While the City has promised that the new plan will have the same amenities currently in East River Park, in more or less the same location, we find that in keeping the existing layout, the community is deprived of the opportunity to design the entire park with a blank canvass. Instead, the community will have essentially a new version of the 1930s-designed park, nearly 100 years later.

The cost has more than tripled from initial estimates and the benefits to the community have decreased from the original winning competition proposal. Some of the design elements from the initial proposal, such as additional access bridges, decking over the FDR drive, new transportation options and the harbor bath, that made this project truly unique, were excluded almost immediately as being cost-prohibitive. Now the funding has doubled, and none of the desired community benefits have been reconsidered.

It was inevitable that the winning Rebuild projects would change design and budget from what was imagined at the end of the competition, and all seven have indeed changed to accommodate engineering and budget realities. We come before you today because we are armend by with the abrupt change in approach. The City worked with the community for nearly four years to design the first plan, and is now giving it only four months to comment on a design that will endure more than a generation. The exclusion of the public in the decision making process and the rationale the City has given for this action is counter to the principles of the Rebuild by Design competition.

We are not here to state that a park with a higher elevation is the wrong choice; perhaps the new design could have been an alternative considered from the beginning of the planning process. However, we are deeply disappointed with the City's last minute rationale to spend an additional \$700M without studying alternatives or fostering a public conversation on tradeoffs.

We have been aware of the costs involved in maintaining a flood-prone park for many years. This change should have been made when the challenge first arose over four years ago, not at this late juncture in the process.

As we understand it, the City has given the following reasons for this dramatic change: 1) To lift the entire park out of the 100-year floodplain to ensure that it will not flood, enabling the fields to be quickly returned to active use after a storm; 2) To minimize the disruption to FDR Drive traffic, as the previous plan would have limited traffic to one lane overnight for the duration of construction; and 3) To reduce construction-related disruptions for residents who live adjacent to the park by moving construction activity to the water's edge.

We would like to address these issues:

### **1. Active Recreational Parklands Can Flood by Design**

Cities around the world are making tough decisions about flood protection, with many utilizing parks as the first lines of defense against increased sea level rise and coastal flooding. This new plan ignored this approach by allocating millions of additional dollars to keep the park dry. With NYC Parks occupying approximately 160 linear miles of the 520 miles of the NYC shoreline, a precedent in which just over a mile of flood protection costs \$1.45B is not one we would like to see set. In doing so, we find this project will no longer be able to be replicated in our City or in others.

NYC Parks has stated at the public meetings that floodable parks are not active recreational parks such as East River Park. We do not need to look as far as [Enghaveparken](#) in Denmark or [Water Square](#) in Netherlands to find examples of active parks that flood; there are quite a few examples in the United States that use active playing fields as temporary water retention, and others that use underground detention tanks. These parks are able to be brought to full public use only a few days after a storm.

The Trust for Public Land's 2016 [City Parks Clean Water](#) report provides an example where catastrophic floods in 2006 pushed the City of El Paso, Texas to turn to parks for stormwater management. Using money from stormwater fees, the El Paso Water Utility (EPWU) worked with the City parks department to create several "park-ponds" — sports fields that double as detention basins. A concrete holding basin and pumping systems are maintained by EPWU while El Paso Parks and Recreation maintains the fields. The largest example is Saipan-Ledo Park, a low-lying tract where poorly planned residences were wiped out by a 2006 flood. The site now features three-stepped terraces; the lowest of which is a fenced-off detention basin maintained by the EPWU, and the upper two hold regulation-sized sports fields which hold rising water in extreme rainstorms.

EPA's 2017 guide to [Green Infrastructure in Parks: A Guide to Collaboration, Funding, and Community Engagement](#) recognized Gene Green Beltway 8 Park in Houston, Texas. Built in 1997 by Harris County Precinct Two and the Harris County Flood Control



District, the 230-acre park serves dual functions of flood control and recreation. Approximately two-thirds of the park is a detention basin that can withstand periodic flooding. Gene Green Beltway 8 Park, like East River Park, has active recreation including tennis and basketball courts; a popular BMX dirt track; soccer, football and softball fields, a two-mile looped trail for jogging/walking/biking, and an amphitheater.

NYC Parks has pointed to our city's use of synthetic turf as the determining factor for why parks cannot be allowed to flood. However, improving the drainage of turf fields can result in fewer field closures after rain storms and reduce the need for seasonal turf maintenance, re-tilling, and aeration. The City can choose to pair grass athletic fields with underwater tanks to hold stormwater in extreme events as other parks do. While grass fields may have a higher maintenance cost, that cost, over time would likely not come near the additional \$700 million.

It would be unfair to solely pin this decision on NYC Parks as we understand that they have a limited budget and resources to maintain a floodable park and there had been significant investment in park amenities prior to Hurricane Sandy. This is an issue that needs to be addressed at the highest levels of government. Our city needs to recognize that the old way of funding agencies will not work to address climate change. NYC Parks limited maintenance budget today can not maintain the flood infrastructure we need to ready us for tomorrow. It is easier for the City to spend \$700M on capital costs to raise the park out of the floodplain, than it is to increase the maintenance budget with expense dollars. Climate change has ushered in a new era of planning approaches that require that NYC Parks is sufficiently financed and robust to take on the challenges of an increasingly hotter and wetter city.

## **2. Choosing cars over pedestrians and ecology**

For years the City has been developing a plan with the community that would locate the berm adjacent to the FDR Drive and keep much of East River park as-is. We understand that this new plan is considered better by the City because it will move construction away from the FDR drive enabling the highway to stay open. This prioritization of cars overnight during construction over bike/pedestrians 24-hour use is concerning. The East Side is a transportation desert. For a community member who lives on Avenue D, the nearest subway access can be a 20 minute walk. Residents of the East Side depend on the East River Park to commute to work, and as an axis point to many other neighborhoods.

Bike and pedestrian experience is not the only change to this plan. The new plan calls for taking down almost all the existing mature trees and all of the plants that have been cultivated by community stewards of this park. Though the City has recently released its ecology plan for the new park, the loss of the ecology in the interim must be addressed. The City has yet to release the mitigation plan, which by the City's own tree replacement standards must include replacing tens of thousands of trees. The City should begin the

planting this planting season, working with the community to identify neighborhood benefits including empty tree pits, schoolyards that can be greened, NYCHA facilities that need upgrades, and locations where the City can close streets to cars to create pedestrian friendly, green spaces for children to play.

### **3. Disruption During Construction Remains**

Disruption during construction is a serious concern and we are pleased the City has focused on this issue. We too would be worried about overnight construction noise from driving piles adjacent to residential communities. However, we have yet to see a study that shows how construction noise will be mitigated by moving construction to the water's edge. Since there are no barriers to absorb the noise, even in the new location, we are concerned that noise is likely to remain a nuisance.

## **LONG TERM STEWARDSHIP**

The total redevelopment of East River Park poses a unique opportunity to fuse equitable long-term stewardship into the design. In this way, we can build a ground-up, new park that offers an opportunity to create spaces within that can become true local community assets. The City needs to consider these issues as part of the park design so a new equitable conservancy structure's longer term needs can be built into the construction plans. Items such as new storage facilities for equipment, community meeting spaces, and restaurant facilities for which the community can determine how the profits are spent within the park will be essential to a new organization. Now that the park will be virtually entirely new, discussions with the community should commence regarding the community-specific needs that should be included in the final plan.

New York City has a history of employing the "Conservancy" model, which typically takes the form of a non-profit institution that contracts with the NYC Parks to operate certain parks and open spaces. This formula has led to beloved new recreational spaces in Central Park, Bryant Park, the Battery, and the Bronx Zoo, through the capture of revenue and private and philanthropic donations to maintain the parks. While this approach can be effective in maintaining quality open space, these models often in practice and as perceived by local communities, have removed accountability and responsibilities from government, promoting exclusivity in uses, and featuring amenities that may not be affordable to adjacent communities.

When the City was nearing the completion of the previous design, it chose furniture and fixtures that were standard to NYC Parks, not those used in the City's prized parks such as Brooklyn Bridge Park or the Bronx Zoo. The City explained that the fixtures needed to be standard because East River Park will be maintained by NYC Parks while the others are maintained by private conservancies.

To address this issue, Rebuild convened a group of neighborhood leaders to select a partner to study alternative amenity models that could be applied in East River Park. With input from those neighborhood leaders, including representatives from Manhattan Community Board 3 and 6,



The Trust for Public Land and James Lima Planning + Development was selected to research different stewardship models and recommend a new model for East River Park.

The group of local leaders who advised Rebuild on choosing a consultant morphed into a “study group” and were engaged and consulted throughout the process to ensure that the recommendations we made would be in line with their desires, and build on the long-term stewardship that already exists in the park today.

To ensure that this crucial investment makes returns for an equitable and prosperous East River Park community, Rebuild’s report, *“Building Bridges: A Community Based Stewardship Study for and Equitable East River Park,”* recommends that the community pursue an “Alliance” structure, similar to the Bronx River Alliance. This would be coupled with setting equitable development goals enforced through actionable strategies and practices throughout park construction and operation. This approach has been successful with 11th Street Bridge Park in Washington, DC. We believe this will ensure that strong community leaders of the Lower East Side can make certain that the park continues to meet the needs of the adjacent community.

#### **NEAR TERM RECOMMENDATIONS:**

We believe that the City’s intentions with this project are well meaning, and with additional effort, the City could demonstrate to the community their renewed commitment to a transparent and inclusive process. Above all we want to ensure that the community is protected from coastal flooding now and into the future; that a world class park is developed that meets the community’s needs and respects surrounding ecology; and that the City is being transparent and fiscally responsible, including successfully securing federal funds allocated to this project. We respectfully offer the following suggestions to move this project back on track.

1. Immediately advance meaningful community outreach on specific topics. General meetings where community members do not feel they are having their questions answered is becoming unproductive. We recommend creating topic-specific task forces on ecology, access to the park, amphitheater design, long term stewardship etc. to collaborate with the community members who care most about those issues to come to a shared plan.
2. Respect the experts in the community. There are current and former NYC Parks workers, ecologists, academics, and community organizers who understand this neighborhood. Work with the individuals who are trusted by the community to gain the confidence needed in this proposal.
3. Give the community the resources to be educated. The new plan has unfortunately eroded some of the trust that was established between the City and the community. The City needs to ensure that the community fully comprehends why this plan is better for them. By investing in experts where the community can be the client, the City will provide the forum for the community to have their technical questions answered.
4. Work closely with community members and designers to identify additional community amenities that can be added to the design of the park that will help the the long term stewardship group thrive in the future. These include amenities that will ensure the

community has places to meet, can over time decide to include concessions, additional bathrooms, and storage spaces.

5. Collaborate with the community on a robust mitigation plan. Work together to identify the needs of this neighborhood, both now and during construction. Ensure the organizations who are currently inside have a feasible alternative, such as a storefront nearby. Identify where thousands of trees can be planted this planting season, so they are grown before the demolition of the park.
6. Extend park benefits into the neighborhood. Identify open spaces that can be transformed and repurposed into pedestrian plazas, new playgrounds, and active spaces for the many sports leagues who use this park.
7. Commit to the concept of developing floodable parks - if not this one than another - and determine where and how they would work best. We need to change our culture and learn to live with water, not stop it. New York City needs to harness the opportunity to become a leader in this realm, and not kick the decisions of how we will live with water down the road.

## **CONCLUSION**

The world is watching this project. New York City has a desire to be a leader in innovative and equitable climate resilience measures and this project is one of its greatest tangible realizations. This resilient park -- imagined as the first of its kind in NYC -- is planned to protect more than 130,000 vulnerable residents from future storm surge. This park can be built to protect communities from the future climate events, and do so in a way that is replicable, transparent and equitable, working with communities to develop a plan that everyone can celebrate. Hurricane Sandy devastated the Lower East Side. The City now has an opportunity to demonstrate what a 21st century truly resilient park can be. One that can protect vulnerable communities, enhance recreation, improve ecology, create job opportunities and foster stewardship for the next century.



**Naomi Schiller**

**Testimony for City Council Hearing on East Side Coastal Resiliency project  
January 23, 2019**

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My name is Naomi Schiller. I live on the corner of Grand Street and the FDR. I am also a cultural anthropologist and I have been studying the process of community engagement around the East Side Coastal Resiliency project.

The City and many of their consultants have expressed that they are honoring the engagement process. They say they plan to use almost the same park program with the same layout that the community has reviewed and discussed for over four years.

While I appreciate the spirit of the City's stated commitment to our work, it reflects a lack of understanding about the process through which we arrived at the previous 2018 design.

The 2018 design was a result of a series of compromises. The City told us that it was too expensive to explore more innovative designs, such as covering the FDR; it was even too expensive to create new access points into the park. The plan emerged in the way it did because there were several features the community was told we had to keep, such as the recently renovated \$3 million dollar running track and field off of East Sixth street. And all throughout this process, we were careful to consider the potential long term consequences of this new park, such as the possibility of resiliency gentrification.

If the City has \$1.45 billion to spend and is starting from a blank slate, the community must be included in a genuine engagement process. And it's true: we have complex demands. We want flood protection. We want access to the water. We want additional entry ways into the park. We want the park to educate users about climate change. We want innovative forward-thinking truly resilient parkland. We want to defend our community from displacement. Lower East Siders want to build a long-term ecologically sustainable and just city.

What we don't want is a brand-new version of a Robert Moses' park, developed in the 1930s, that kills all the biodiversity we have stewarded for decades.

While we all feel the urgency of preparing for future storms and don't want to lose the HUD money, the timeline that the DDC has set up to push this through is unacceptable. I hope we can work together to demand a fair and democratic process that honors community knowledge and values economic and racial justice.

Good afternoon

My name is Ted Pender & I'm the Vice President of Friends of Corlears Hook Park located on Manhattan's lower east side adjacent to East River Park.

With help, I discovered one of the design ideas by the architecture firm BIG for East River Park. The city immediately rejected this plan due to cost.

I'd like us to revisit this idea now that we have a budget of 1.45 billion.

This plan erects a green roof over the FDR with walled sides from the pinch point at Con Ed down to Montgomery St, ending when the FDR becomes elevated.

This plan would not only serve as flood protection but would also protect us from the sight, sounds, and the carbon pollution produced by vehicles on the FDR. In addition it would expand our park giving us acres of new land for public use, something desperately needed for the densely populated East Village & the Lower East Side. This same idea was accomplished in Boston's Big Dig. What it produced was a remarkable, new park surrounding parts of the city. That park is now enjoyed by thousands of Bostonians daily while eliminating the view, sounds, and obstruction of a major highway that formerly divided the city from the waterfront. Many major cities around the globe are coming up with the same idea of eliminating or decking over their inter city highways to reclaim those wastelands for public use.

I'd like to suggest that a comparative cost study be accomplished.

Could this radically alternate plan be the answer for the 21 century and beyond?

Theodore Pender

Friends of Corlears Hook Park

[Theop52@Hotmail.com](mailto:Theop52@Hotmail.com)

347 968 1648





East Side Coastal Resiliency Project  
City Council Committee on Environmental Protection  
Jointly with the Committee on Parks and Recreation  
Testimony by  
Vaylateena Jones, President, Lower East Side Power Partnership  
[LESPowerPartnership@gmail.com](mailto:LESPowerPartnership@gmail.com)-212 204-0668  
Wednesday January 23, 2019- 1Pm  
City Hall- Committee Room

My name is Vaylateena Jones. I have lived on the Lower East Side for more than 50 years. I am the President of the Lower East Side Power Partnership.

The Lower East Side Power Partnership has several central concerns regarding the City's new plan for the East River Coastal Resiliency project.

**Protection**

How was the height determined for the current plan? Was the 16.5 ft height based on the Climate change projections provided by the New York City Panel on Climate Change? Does the current plan improve protection from flooding of the residential developments near the East River Park?

**Community Engagement**

Meaningful engagement includes: clear and empowering presentations, opportunity for questions and answers at presentations, response to engagement session and respectful communication. There have been different presentations at various sites.

LESPP advocates that presentations include: Goals & Origin; What was heard from the community and how this input was and will be integrated into the design; comparison of previous and current plan.

**Safety**

Given that the City plans to close East River Park for several years and there will be increased use of Pier 42, there will be increased foot traffic to Montgomery Street.

The Lower East Side Power Partnership (LESPP) advocates for better lighting on Montgomery St under the FDR Drive.

**Health**

The Lower East Side Power Partnership advocates for low allergen & asthma friendly plants & trees throughout the East River Park.

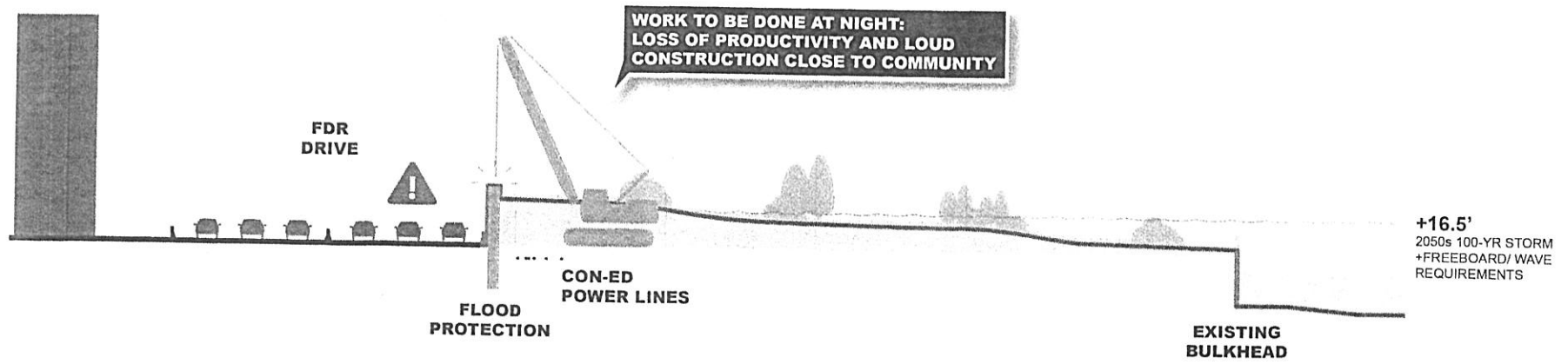
**Community Outreach**

LESPP advocates that the City contact the various youth leagues that use the fields, alternate sites should be identified, and the City should provide local residents assistance with access in the form of MetroCard, shuttle bus, or other form of transportation and financial support.

# IMPROVED CONSTRUCTABILITY

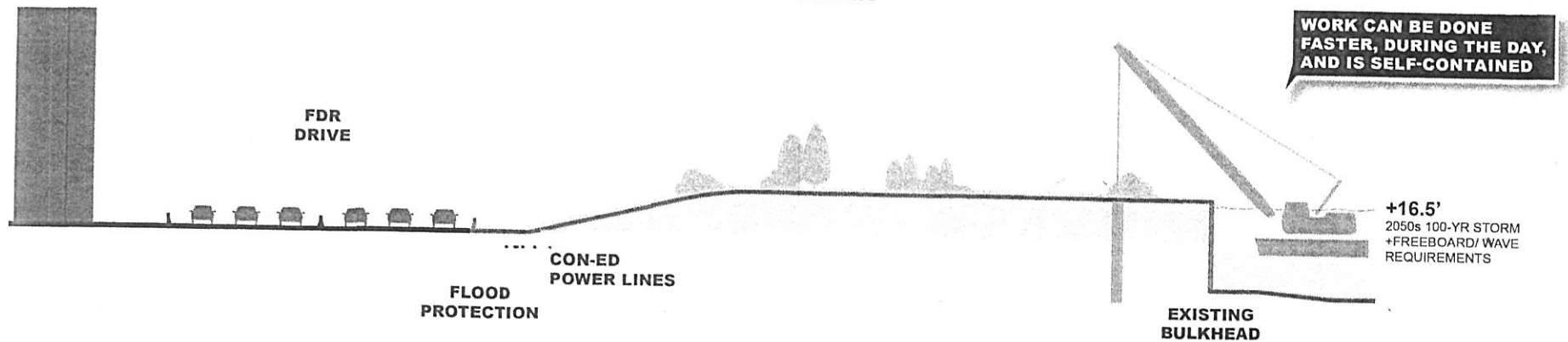
DELIVERY RISK REDUCED BY MINIMIZING FDR WORK

## PREVIOUS PLAN:

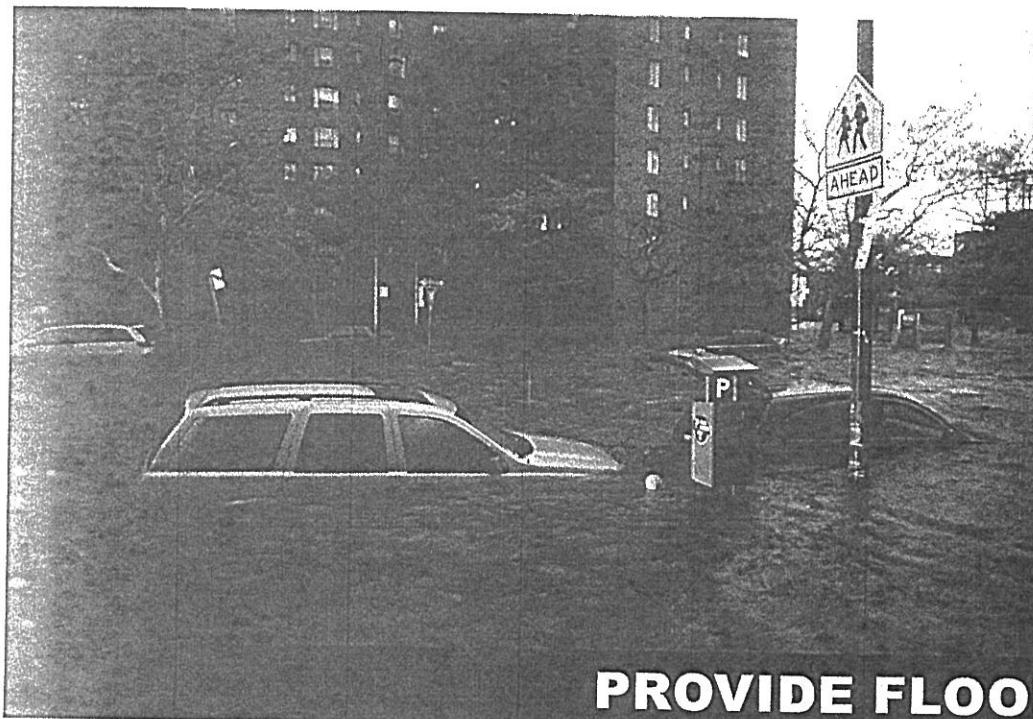


## CURRENT PLAN:

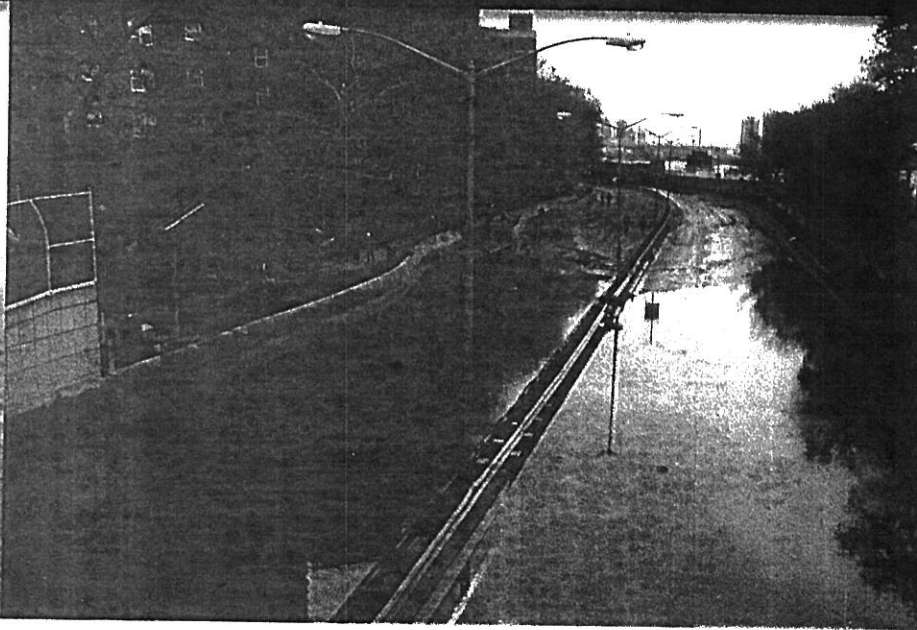
### FLOOD PROTECTION ALONG FDR VS. ALONG EAST RIVER







**PROVIDE FLOOD PROTECTION**



January 23, 2019

To the City Council,

I have been a resident of the East Village for almost thirty years. My children grew up there.

Of course, we need to protect NYC against rising seas. But there has to be a solution that acknowledges that the East River Park is lower Manhattan's green lung -- our only true shared public space.

Four years --- or more -- is a very long time for a child. A quarter of their childhood more or less. We are talking about having a generation of children miss the opportunity to play on the river, to celebrate birthdays with bbqs, to bike and play ball. From Avenue D or even further west it's an impossibly long trip to Central Park or even to the West side.

For years access to water on the east side was fenced off. Now we have a park enjoyed by people of all ages -- dancing, biking, jogging, fishing, or just relaxing. Please take a walk there to experience a green space in use.

There must be a way to make the city safe while keeping it great for its citizens. Please remember us.

Thank you.

Elisabeth Dyssegaard  
115 East 9th Street



Testimony of Charles Krezell (CK@Wingfix.com)  
1/23/19 at the City Council hearing on ESCR Project

2/3's of the Park at a time for 5 years. "We hear you. We care." Oh thank you sir for taking away what we already have.

Bitter? Not us. We grow vegetables, we like the seasons. Planting is faith in the future. We love this City, we work many volunteer hours to make it a better, more beautiful place. But in Gotham gardening is a revolutionary act, there is no calculations of profit and loss.

And we demand respect. The citizens of New York City have a right to have a say in City policy, in City plans in land use. The East River Park is ours, how dare you take it away.

If the City's strategy is to steamroll, ours must be to delay. We will delay this project unless we are brought to the table for a meaningful dialogue.

We request that the City Council look into this plan and get answers to our concerns. We need solutions to climate change not engineered troubles,

Hello my name is Daisy Paez I am a District Leader on the Lower East Side

I was born and raised in the Lower East Side in NYCHA's Baruch Houses. Baruch Houses is a short walk away from the park off the FDR Drive. As a youth I considered this park a Disney World, as my parents, 8 siblings and I could not afford a vacation. Growing up in these common circumstances, I was not alone in regarding the FDR drive a vacation from poverty.

To this day there continues to be a significant amount of people from Baruch Houses still in poverty that consider this park a vacation paradise as I once did.

Here is my issue: To shut down the park with absolutely no alternative where the good people of the surrounding NYCHA houses can enjoy activities such as birthday parties, barbeques, reunions and many other activities native to our people is a complete disregard for the low income families that utilize the park. This is 100% unacceptable.

I strongly urged the Parks Department to consider a free alternative. I have previously suggested free ferry transportation to Governors Island. I think this would be a fair temporary remedy.

Residents of these houses are already asked to cope with the influx of newer, wealthier people taking over the neighborhood, NYCHA housing repairs and the everyday worries of living in <sup>poor conditions</sup> poverty. It is only right that you offer some sort of comfort to them. Let's not take away these children's only Disney World.



## FOR THE RECORD

Hello my name is Hudson Athas and I have lived in the Lower East side my whole life. I have witnessed first hand the things that make this neighborhood a wonderful place to grow up, and I strongly believe we cannot lose the precious gem that is the East River Park.

The East River Park is home to many amazing activities and memories for so many people—there are the ballfields with sports activities, cookout areas and playgrounds. It is a connection we all have to the outdoors that is so very important.

We are here from the lower east side to have our say in our community. The people making this decision obviously do not know very much about our neighborhood, because if they did they would know just how vital this park is. Some people need to fish on the east river to earn a living, there are others who run or do their regular exercise along the river. Me, I love being out there to roller blade - For all of us it a place to connect with nature, to step away from the busy city streets.

These people are trying to come and take that away from us without giving us our say. It is just unacceptable. The park has something for everybody. How can you say we are just going take that away for 4 years - my childhood days will be over by then.

Today, we are asking to have a voice in this plan so that we can keep our access to these things that we love and appreciate. When it comes to our neighborhood and this park, we will fight for that voice.

Hello. My name is Dante Diez and I have lived in the the Lower East Side my entire life; 13 years. I have seen this neighborhood in storms and sunshine. I have seen and felt the sense of community we have in LES, and how much of that ~~much of that~~ community uses the East River Park. Whether it is for birthday barbecues or football or baseball or soccer or running or riding your bike, everybody uses the park. I use the park for soccer, riding my bike, going to the fishing clinics, running, hanging out with friends and many other things. And now we are going to lose that park for 4 years at least. This is going to be extremely detrimental to our community. I would prefer, if possible, to have the park closed for longer but some parts would be kept open. Our neighborhood has 51% of kids who don't get enough Physical Education in school. More than half of the kids in our district don't get enough PE, that is the highest rate in the city. Many kids make up for it by participating in after-school teams and activities that take place on the river. And now we are going to close the place where many kids get a lot of exercise.

I have attended many of the participatory design sessions about the design of the East River park and I don't feel that enough community outreach has been done about this new plan.

The basement of my building flooded during Sandy and our boiler is still being repaired. I know we need flood protection but we want to be involved.

Thank you.

Dante Diez, 414 E 10th St. #6DE, NY NY 10009



Hello. My name is Dianne and I have lived in the East Village for 32 years. My family and I were here for Sandy. So, I am for coastal resiliency that protects our homes, businesses, and ConEd.

I am in East River Park at least several times a week in winter and nearly every day in summer. So, I am for the ongoing preservation and restoration of this precious community resource.

But, I am strongly against the plan we are discussing today.

Closing the entire park for over three years – including four summers – is more than an inconvenience to our community. It is a tremendous blow. There are many, many people who will not have the financial means, the mobility, or the leisure time to “just go somewhere else.”

I would expect that if the city comes to us with such a drastic recommendation, they will have taken plenty of time, and done plenty of research, to demonstrate that there truly is no other alternative.

Instead, we’ve been presented with a hastily-assembled proposal that was done more or less in the dead of night, without any warning. There is little hard evidence. There are a few weak justifications: “We think it will be quicker.” “We need to replant the park anyway.” “It won’t disrupt traffic on the FDR.”

These are not reasons to destroy the park and deprive thousands of people of access to recreation for at least four summers. Or to spend a billion and a half dollars.

To quote the musical “Hamilton,” we are the greatest city in the world. We should be more than capable of engaging the best minds in engineering to help us solve our coastal problem with minimal harm to the community, the environment, and our budget. Let’s pause this extreme project, work together, and find the right solution, instead of the expedient one.

1/23/19

New York City Council Committee on Environmental Protection and Committee on  
Parks and Recreation

East Side Coastal Resiliency Project Oversight Hearing

Daniel Tainow, submitting testimony on behalf of the East River Alliance Environmental  
Committee:

The East River Alliance, an association of community members and groups advocating for East River Park, the other parks within the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project area, and the surrounding communities, is deeply concerned about the impacts of the new plans for the East Side Coastal Resiliency project. After five years of our dedicated participation in creating a world-class design for coastal flood protection and resilient park land, the City has announced a significantly altered design without re-engaging community members and stakeholders before releasing the new plan. This process is unacceptable.

We demand adequate time to evaluate the merits and drawbacks of the new proposal. We have not been satisfied by the Department of Design and Construction's vague answers to our questions about the environmental and social impacts of destroying the existing East River Park and elevating it in order to create a hard-edge sea wall. Our unanswered questions focus around: effects on upland hydrology and neighborhood impacts from installation of proposed grey and green infrastructure fixes; human environment, social, and economic impacts both during and after construction of new park; biodiversity impacts from destroying and rebuilding the ecology in the park; impacts on the ecology and the communities' connection to the East River; and the effectiveness of the new design on protecting our neighborhood and the surrounding neighborhoods outside of the proposed project from coastal flooding.

As community members who lived through the devastation of Hurricane Sandy, we are keenly aware of the urgent necessity for flood protection for the Lower East Side. While we support the City's efforts to provide this protection, we must have a clear independent review in order to answer our questions about the long and short-term consequences of the city's proposed new design. We demand that the City provide answers to all of our questions by February 28th to allow the community, aided by independent experts, to evaluate the new plan before proceeding any further with design approvals.

Daniel Tainow  
112 Rivington St. Apt. 5B  
New York, NY 10002  
dantainow@gmail.com  
908-531-1383





# NEW YORK CITY WATER TRAIL ASSOCIATION

January 23, 2019

To the City Council Committees on Parks and Recreation and Environmental Protection:

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The New York City Water Trail Association is an umbrella group that aims to represent the common interests of the harbor's human-powered boating community, which now includes more than two dozen organized kayaking and rowing groups as well as many independent paddlers. Our mission is to support the safe use of the New York City Water Trail, founded by the Department of Parks and Recreation in 2008, to expand access to the public waterways, and to promote the environmental stewardship of the harbor and the estuary.

In connection with that last point, we'd like to offer the following comments on the proposed revisions to the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project:

First, we object to the city's abrupt decision to abandon the community planning process that the city itself launched four years ago, and instead impose a top-down solution at variance with the community's expressed interest. Furthermore, the rationale that has been offered to the public--that the revised project will take one year less to complete, and will provide superior protection to adjacent neighborhoods--seems, at best, disingenuous. We urge the City Council to aggressively question the project's leaders to determine the real reasons for the course change, be it political pressure from waterfront developers, federal funding deadlines, or something else.

Second, while the revised plan may sound more 'resilient' in that it proposes to raise the elevation of the park and double the height of the existing bulkhead, we believe it is entirely inconsistent with the much more critical goal of building an environmentally sustainable and enduring urban edge that will accommodate the coming changes in climate and sea level. Historically, the edge of the East River going north from Corlears Hook was low and soft and dominated by occasionally inundated tidal wetlands, and the vision that emerged from the community planning process understood the fundamental environmental wisdom of letting the park return to something like that state, with the berms and flood barriers being located well inland along the edge of the FDR. At recent public meetings, the city has pointed to the possibility of traffic closures and slowdowns on the FDR as a reason to avoid such construction, but that seems to us a short-term inconvenience that forward-looking city leadership would understand and accept. In the long run, in fact, we think the city's best sustainability strategy might be to repurpose its perimeter highways as flood barriers, rather than raise and fortify its waterfront parks.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

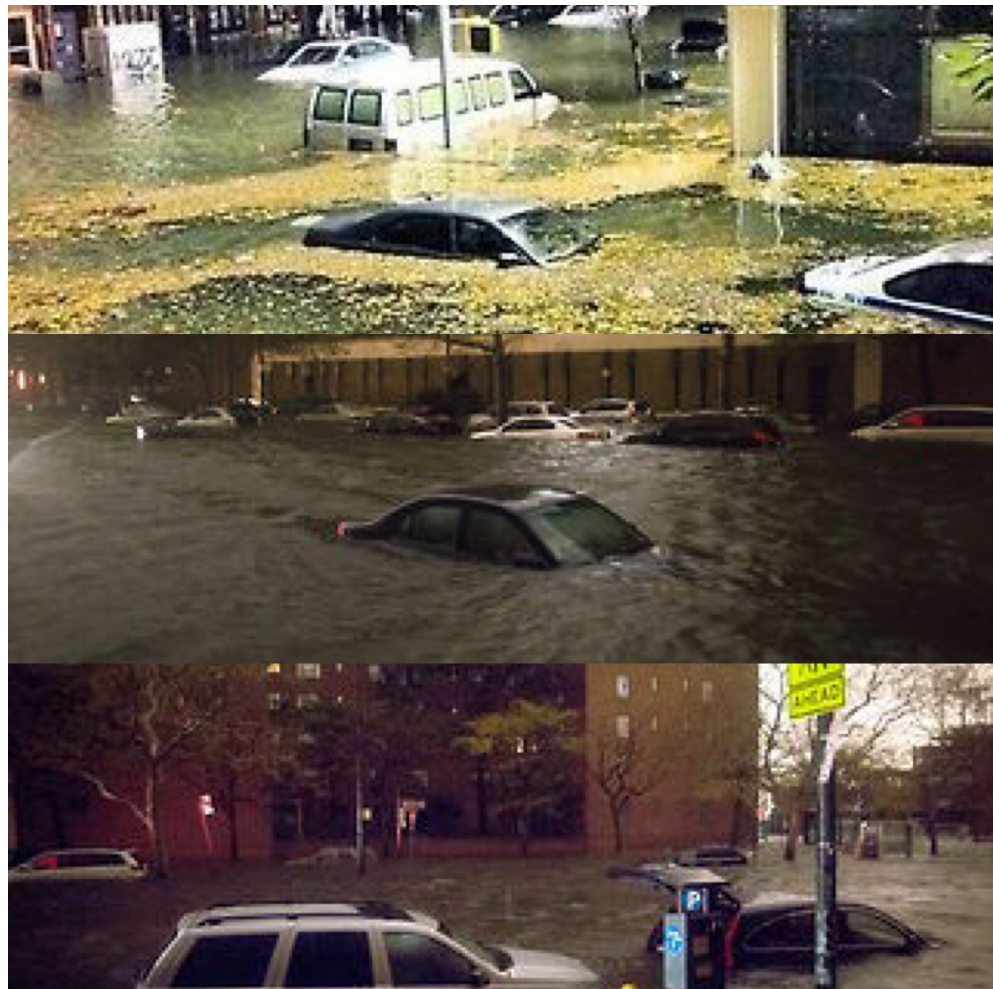
Rob Buchanan

Steering Committee, New York City Water Trail Association

01/23/2019 Testimony to City Council Parks Hearing on East River Park Resiliency proposal and East River Park closure

My name is Carolyn Ratcliffe and I have lived at 608 E 9 Th St. between Ave.s B & C since 1989. I am expressing my concern over the proposed East River Park Resiliency Plan as I think that it is not thoroughly thought out and represents a threat to the safety of our neighborhood in it's present form. Our neighborhood was a reclaimed wetlands and the bedrock is between 150-170 feet deep. It is undercut by numerous streams that were filled over as the City expanded. Our neighborhood has repeated issues with sink holes appearing where the water has removed the soil underneath Streets and sidewalks. The present proposal to raze the exiting park and raise its height 8'-10' will turn Ave. C & D into a soup bowl if the proposed drainage system fails underneath these streets.

During Sandy the storm surge swept across from Stuyvesant Cove and Ave.C running through the ground levels of Peter Cooper, Stuyvesant Town and Campos Plaza deluging our neighborhood in a mixture of salt, fuel oil and who knows what else reaching a height of 4-8' in areas. I am submitting a copy of the Viele Sanitation map of 1864 which is still currently used by construction companies in Manhattan to locate sources of ground water as well as images of what Ave C & E 8th St & E14th St between Ave A & Ave C. The bulk of this water was from







**VIELE SANITATION & TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP @ NYPL**

The East River. Other basements along Ave.s A & B between E 14th and E 6th St flooded with a mixture of storm water & sewage that had backed the existing underground streams and storm sewers.

The current proposal would create an 8-10' wall above the current bulwark in the river bed holding a new East River Park. Retractable gates would be installed from E 25th to E 14th St. at Ave C. And at Cherry to Montgomery St.s There would be an expanded underground drainage system with several large reservoirs located under the streets to be drained by the pumping station at Con Edison to then go to the Newtown Creek Sewage Treatment facility in Brooklyn/Queens. The proposed underground reservoirs will be sitting in soil that is basically composed of rubble, mud and peat sitting on top of a thin layer of shale at about 40' w/ bedrock at 150/170' deep. These tanks would be quite heavy particularly when filled to capacity and lay beneath City streets with trucks, buses and cars running on those streets over these reservoirs.

Not only does the current plan raise safety issues, it impacts negatively on the life of local residents by closing the park for 3.5 years as the current park would be leveled. This would leave 14,000 + NYCHA residents w/o a much loved and well used park space, as well as many other LES local residents. There has been little thought given as to how local residents would have access to green recreational space. Many of want the work on East River Park to be done in stages and allowing some access to the park to alleviate the stress to the local Residents as well as offer some protection to the biodiversity of the current park. I agree with Friends of Corlears Park's suggestion to explore the possibility of adopting something like Boston's Big Dig. The construction of the retractable flood gates as the first Priority and would surely use the Federal funds that must be expended by 2022 as that would hopefully block

future surges along the FDR from E 25th to 14th St. and Cherry to Montgomery St. which were the major points of entry for the surge.

Please respect the need for community to have input into this critical proposal that affects so many aspects of LES residents' lives.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns.

Carolyn Ratcliffe





80 Van Cortlandt Park South Ste. E1  
Bronx, NY 10463  
[www.bceq.org](http://www.bceq.org)  
Contact: [Karen@bceq.org](mailto:Karen@bceq.org), 646-529-1990

January 23, 2019

New York City Council  
Joint Committees on Parks and Environment  
Hearing on the East Coast Resilience Project

[Ksartori@council.nyc.gov](mailto:Ksartori@council.nyc.gov)

To the Honorable Members of the New York City Council - Our Friends of Parks and the Environment:

The Bronx Council for Environmental Quality (BCEQ) write in response to the East Side Coastal Resilience Project (East Side Coastal) in particular, the problems facing the New York City Council (Council) concerning stormwater runoff, surges, and pollution in the City of New York (City). We are concerned that the City has failed to put forward a standard for waterfront development projects that adequately measures their overall impact on our ecosystem. This lack of transparency and honesty about the overall environmental impact of such projects has facilitated the Council's rote approvals of large-scale development along our shorelines that deepen and compound our City's vulnerability to climate change.

While the City proposes and the Council approves development projects designed to capture one inch of rain in one day, there is no review as to whether this is a good standard for the City. What happens when we get 2 or 4 inches of rain in a day, or in one hour? What happens when we get 5 inches of rain in 2 hours? Can the system handle the extra water? If not, where does it go?

When the City proposes and the Council approves projects that go from large water soluble penetrable areas to 25-75% of water tight impenetrable developed surfaces, there is no review if this is a good cost effective clean water policy for the City. What is the existing condition compared to the final project? How much extra water does this 25 to 75% developed area create? Where does the extra stormwater go? Is there enough room in the pipe or the treatment plant? Remember adding more water to the pipe only goes to the rivers. Each new development you approve without considering the above water-soluble issues will severely impact the size of the storm surge, sea rise or the combined sewer overflow. Instead, the Council should hire a modern day nature based engineer who understands water as if s/he were a beaver, and not just pipes.

Please consider these comments in response to the East River Coast project, as well as other coastal projects like Two Bridges in Manhattan, Pier 5 in the Bronx, and any project along the 500 miles of waterfront in the City that will have hard edges rather than Living Shorelines if you don't act quickly and responsibly. The interaction of land, water and air is a simple lesson that begins with the basics of the water cycle -- the essence of all life on earth. Rain falls to the soil; vegetation captures it above ground and leads it to the base flow input of neighboring waterbodies. Excess water is transferred to the air, cooling it as it rises again to the clouds. As there is only so much water on earth -- our most precious resource, we need to learn how to live together in our watershed. These comments reflect the need to return to nature and natural systems, known to many as ecosystem services.

BCEQ is an all-volunteer membership 501c3 organization, founded in 1971 to protect the natural and historic environment. We worked on landfills, parks, watersheds and waterfronts -- including 25 years of Bronx Parks Speak Ups, one of which spearheaded work along the Bronx River and forming its Alliance. Lately, we are focused on developing connections to and along the Harlem River to create on-water access and activities in an effort to improve water quality; winning technical assistance from National Park Service RTCA Program, inclusion in the Urban Waters Federal Partnership (UWFP); completing New York State Department of State's Brownfield Opportunity Area Program; and, Wildlife Conservation Society/NOAA Grant to capture stormwater from the elevated highway onto a pop-up wetland in an unimproved park in the south Bronx waterfront.

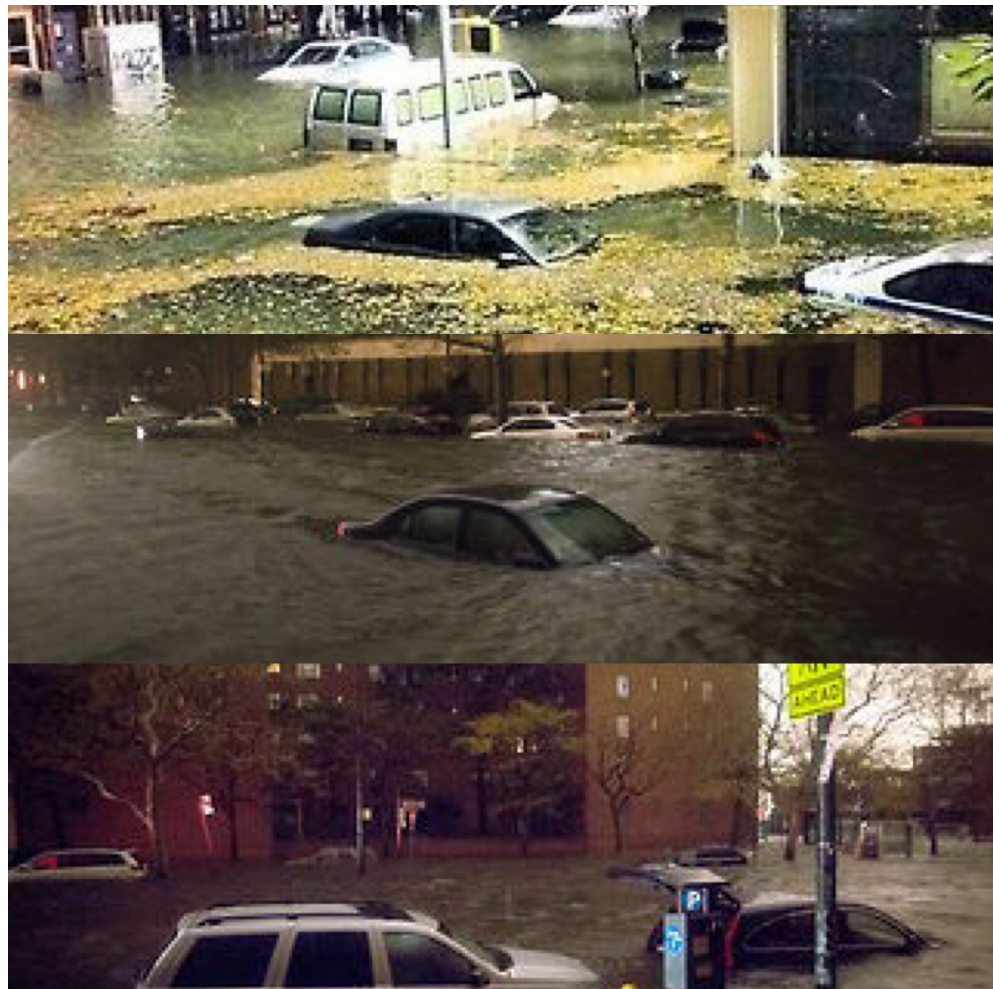
Thank you for this opportunity to comment. Be a NYC Clean Water Advocate. Be accountable!

Sincerely,  
*Karen Argenti*  
BCEQ Secretary

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Carolyn Ratcliffe





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January 23, 2019

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Thank you for your time and consideration.

Rob Buchanan

Steering Committee, New York City Water Trail Association

January 23, 2019

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For years access to water on the east side was fenced off. Now we have a park enjoyed by people of all ages -- dancing, biking, jogging, fishing, or just relaxing. Please take a walk there to experience a green space in constant use.

There must be a way to make the city safe while keeping it great for its citizens. Please remember us.

Thank you.

Elisabeth Dyssegaard

115 East 9th Street, Apt. 6L  
212-420-1884  
[edysssegaard@gmail.com](mailto:edysssegaard@gmail.com)

PS Two early proposals:

Close off streets in the East Village every day on a rotational basis for children's play. Make sure there is a protected bikeway -- in both directions -- on the far East side.



## **LANDS END 2 RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**

### **265 & 275 CHERRY STREET**

Good afternoon City Council Members, Council Woman Carolina Rivera thank you for your efforts, all elected officials and fellow community neighbors whom this may concern:

I Tanya Castro Negrón testify today 1/23 as a resident and the president of Lands End 2, on behalf of the Lands End 2 Residents 900+ who reside at 265 and 275 Cherry Street. I am also speaking on behalf and as one of those attendees who have participated in the first of many East River Coastal Resiliency planning meetings. We've committed many hours to our efforts of organizing and doing outreach to our neighbors, in an effort to present the best joint effort of planning for our community Park Land. We the members of the Lower East Side born and/or raised, stakeholders and community builders of the Lower East Side, engaged in many sports leagues, functions, events facilitated many many years along the (FDR) East River Drive park and planning regarding the coastal resiliency for the future of our park.

We ask that you honor the community's efforts, time and commitment working together to achieve winning the required funds to accommodate our joint plans. We ask that you continue to encourage our community to work together by acknowledging our unified efforts. To introduce another plan with the funds granted to accommodate our plans is a blatant disrespect to a united community effort and says a lot about how much community means to those who vote to a new plan.

I'd also like to take the time to acknowledge the hard work and efforts of the facilitators of the first resiliency meetings, Lilah Mejias, Damaris Reyes and all of the other staff of GOLES who managed to accommodate all of the community in their efforts to engage all in the united efforts that won the funds.. We ask that all new efforts follow their lead in engaging all of the community that will be impacted by the decisions and plans moving forward.

Thank you for your time, commitment, consideration and efforts.

With much respect

Tanya Castro-Negrón

Lands End 2 Resident Association

Testimony of Charles Krezell (CK@Wingflix.com)  
1/23/19 at the City Council hearing on ESCR Project

My name is Charles Krezell, I am president of Loisaida United Neighborhood Gardens (LUNGS.) LUNGS is a network of 53 community gardens on Lower East Side founded in September 2011.

The Lower East Side has always been first home of the immigrant. We still welcome the stranger, the marginalized and we are proud of our history, our diversity, our culture.

It has always been a poor neighborhood, neglected by the City. Tenement buildings were allowed to burn down in the 60's and 70's. That was City Planning back then.

But the demolished buildings became vacant lots that were converted into gardens by the people who remained. La Plaza Cultural, El Jardin del Paraiso, Parque de Tranquilidad, Los Amigos, these gardens are a testament to our community's spirit, resourcefulness and resilience. Because of the urban blight and abandonment, the Lower East Side has the greatest density of community gardens in NYC.

LUNGS would like to register our opposition to the newly proposed plan by for the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project for East River Park.

Specifically, we question the procedure by which this plan was adopted and the lack of community involvement in its development.

This might be a great engineering plan, pure engineering, Expedient, efficient. Kill the Park to save it. It's a great plan if you don't live here.

This is not good public policy. The East River Park is a pure City park really well used and well loved. Open space, green space is essential for the health and well-being of our neighborhood; any disruption must be justified.

We know the oceans are rising, we are well aware of global warming. We lived through Superstorm Sandy and are still suffering the consequences. We have suffered the FEMA nonsense and the insurance games.

But if the L train stupidity has shown us one thing; it's that, there's more than one way to skin a cat. We just might need to find the right engineers who can devise a plan that doesn't completely disrupt the lives of many thousands of people for many years.



The City has had 6 years to come up with a plan. Six years to develop a meaningful, inclusive solution to make use of the \$400 million from HUD, to protect our neighborhood, made available after Sandy.

Now the time to spend the money is running out and the City is in a panic. Why has the City been so derelict?

We are being steamrolled by a new plan devised in less than 60 days that is being fast-tracked.

The public process is a joke. Public meetings to present this complicated new plan were cursory affairs in which the community was given 20 minutes to ask City officials questions. No respect. It is a great plan if you don't live here. We will bury your park. We will kill your trees. We will harm your wildlife.

We will not accept a plan that harms us deeply.

Is the goal of this plan to save property? To save Con Ed? To save the FDR? What is the real goal?

This makes us feel vulnerable, not valued, threatened. We fight unscrupulous landlords everyday. We get paranoid when the City drops new policies on us. Who has our back?

We are relying on our elected officials to help us, to protect us. That is why we are here to ask for you to help us.

What are you going to do to make up for the loss of 57 acres of open space in Manhattan? The community gardens total 7 acres, we are open to all but we cannot accommodate everyone.

Where are we supposed to go to play baseball, soccer, to run, to bicycle, to walk to barbeque, look at the river, sit in the sun? For 3 or 4 years what is our community supposed to do?

What is the plan? Bus Little League teams to Randall's Island; an hour each way, in the heat of July, without their parents, and who will we be displacing?

We are prepared to being played by the City. Pressure will force the bureaucrats to agree to do this project in stages, They will offer to only close 2/3's of the Park at a time for 5 years. "We hear you. We care." Thank you Great City for taking away what we already have.

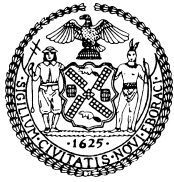
Bitter? Not us. We grow vegetables, we like the seasons. Planting is faith in the future. We love this City, we work many volunteer hours to make it a better, more beautiful place. But in Gotham gardening is a revolutionary act, there is no calculations of profit and loss.

And we demand respect. The citizens of New York City have a right to have a say in City policy, in City plans in land use. The East River Park is ours, how dare you take it away.

If the City's strategy is to steamroll, ours must be to delay. We will delay this project unless we are brought to the table for a meaningful dialogue.

We request that the City Council look into this plan and get answers to our concerns. We need solutions to climate change not engineered troubles,





**The City of New York**  
**Manhattan Community Board 1**

**Anthony Notaro, Jr. CHAIRPERSON | Lucian Reynolds DISTRICT MANAGER**

**New York City Council**  
**Committee on Environmental Protection jointly with the Committee on Parks and Recreation**  
**Oversight Hearing on the Status of the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project**  
**Council Chambers – City Hall**  
**Wednesday, January 23, 2019 – 1:00PM**

This past December, Manhattan Community Board 1 (CB1) voted unanimously in support of a resolution highlighting the critical need for a resiliency master plan for Lower Manhattan.

At a height of seven feet, Community District 1 (CD1) experienced one of the highest inundation levels in Manhattan during Superstorm Sandy in October 2012. Two people in our district drowned and the storm resulted in billions of dollars of damage to infrastructure, housing and commercial property and utilities.

As we approach the seventh anniversary of Superstorm Sandy, CB1 is concerned about both short-term and long-term time frames as Lower Manhattan remains largely unprotected. We face an increasing potential for suffering extreme weather events and subsequent damage to Lower Manhattan.

We thank the City for the funds it has already contributed towards resiliency and the results we have begun to see with the revised East Side Coastal Resiliency (ESCR) plan, but there is a substantial funding shortfall for resiliency infrastructure being considered as part of the Lower Manhattan Coastal Resiliency (LMCR) project for the highly vulnerable areas at the South Street Seaport, Financial District, the Battery and the entire lower West side of CD1 along the Hudson River Park between Canal and Chambers Streets.

There have been piecemeal efforts to improve resiliency in CD1 but most of the work has been done through various utility companies and entities such as the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and individual City agencies by upgrading their infrastructure, or by the Port Authority (PA) and Battery Park City Authority (BPCA) who have been implementing plans to make areas under their jurisdiction more resilient. While those efforts will help us to recover more quickly after another similar storm event, Lower Manhattan is lacking a single, unified plan for resiliency.

As the LMCR project continues with study, analysis and preliminary design stages, more is uncovered that adds challenge to an already monumental task. Not only is Lower Manhattan surrounded by water on three sides, but all of the edges have been built out on landfill presenting unique vulnerability and engineering challenges. The Office of Recovery and Resiliency (ORR) team is uncovering more complexity in protecting Lower Manhattan than was ever imagined and this will lead to greater challenges, cost and commitment.

CB1 acknowledges that the work done by the Mayor's Office of Sustainability (MOS) and the ORR to analyze the problem of resiliency and begin to formulate a plan, both for the long-term and more recently for intermediate measures, is a herculean task without precedent. However, despite one of the main objectives of LMCR being to "facilitate robust community engagement," there has been a breakdown in communication and chronic delays in scheduling and conducting Task Force and community engagement meetings.

The perception is that progress on the LMCR project has stalled and these types of delays are a regular occurrence. This exacerbates already existing doubt, anxiety and fear in our community. CB1 sent a letter to ORR<sup>1</sup> in August 2018 to document this particular issue and urge ORR to accomplish whatever is necessary in order to schedule the next round of Task Force and Community Engagement meetings.

Further aggravating the existing anxiety and doubt surrounding the LMCR project is the fact that, after years of analysis, planning and meetings with stakeholders, the City has made sudden and significant revisions to the original plans for ESCR. Considering that LMCR is following the path forged by ESCR, it is alarming to witness these extreme and unpredictable changes;

It is imperative that we continue this work and engage all stakeholders often through Task Force and community engagement meetings at regular intervals. We understand that this study is an ongoing process and we do not expect ORR to have all the information and solutions in time for each Task Force meeting, but CB1 does expect to be updated on a regular basis (at least quarterly) and kept informed about the progress of both the LMCR project and the interim flood protection measures project for the South Street Seaport area being implemented through the Office of Emergency Management (OEM).

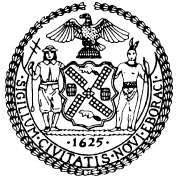
It is of the utmost importance that the LMCR project is fully funded and continues to progress so that it may be implemented as soon as possible.

In consideration of the various jurisdictional entities in Lower Manhattan, CB1 urges ORR to establish a master plan for resiliency that integrates not just LMCR and ESCR, but all resiliency projects including those by the BPCA, Port Authority, the Hudson River Park Trust and any others. This master plan should address the entire CD1 area, including the critically vulnerable North West corner of Tribeca where there are no plans for protection, and ORR should collaborate with OEM to include interim measures and emergency management plans; and CB1 calls upon our elected officials to assist in ensuring that progress is made on these critical resiliency initiatives.

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<sup>1</sup> See attached letter





The City of New York

## **Manhattan Community Board 1**

**Anthony Notaro, Jr. CHAIRPERSON | Lucian Reynolds DISTRICT MANAGER**

Jainey Bavishi, Director  
Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency  
253 Broadway, 14th Fl.  
New York, NY 10007

August 21, 2018

Dear Director Bavishi,

I'm writing to express Manhattan Community Board 1's collective concern and frustration over the chronic delays in scheduling and conducting Task Force and community engagement meetings as part of the Lower Manhattan Coastal Resiliency (LMCR) project.

We fully understand the complexity of the project and all the hard work applied so far. But the perception, right or wrong, is that things have stalled and delays are a regular occurrence. This creates doubt, anxiety and fear in our community. I need not recount the devastating effects of Super Storm Sandy, but almost six years have passed and there is still so much to be done.

The work of the LMCR project and Task Force are critical for the protection and vibrancy of this central business district and increasingly 24/7, mixed-use community whose residential share is rapidly expanding. Therefore, it is imperative that we continue this work and engage all stakeholders often through Task Force and Community Engagement meetings at regular intervals. We understand that this study is an ongoing process and we do not expect your office to have all the information and solutions in time for each Task Force meeting, but we do expect to be updated on a regular basis and kept informed about the progress of the LMCR project.

Let us discuss how we can accomplish this by enhancing the partnership that is important to us all. Please contact our office to work out details of the next round of Task Force and Community Engagement meetings.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Notaro, Jr." in a cursive style.

Anthony Notaro, Jr.  
Chairperson



*Sara Roosevelt Park Community Coalition*  
<http://sdrpc.mkgarden.org/>

To: Committee on Environmental Protection/Committee on Parks and Recreation:  
Re: Oversight - The Status of the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project

To NYC City Council Chairs:

We thank NYC City Council Parks/Recreation Committee Chair CM Gordenchik and Environmental Protection Committee Chair Costa Constantinides for their efforts on behalf of the East River Park on the East Side of Lower Manhattan. We learned many important facts because the Council Member expertise in knowing what to ask.

I am the current President of the Sara Roosevelt Park Community Coalition begun in the late 70's early 80's when the neighborhood join forces with local law enforcement to end drug dealing and pimping that was rampant in this park. We built many unique gardens that exist today. We have advocated for all NYC parks to become models of sustainable practice.

In solidarity with our sister park, Coalition members have participated in numerous "community engagement visionings" and fact-finding meetings during the creation of the original plan. We've also participated since September's newly announced version where we tried (and failed) to get factual information on which the NYC based their new plan. I am also the Vice-Chair of the CB3 Parks Committee (though not speaking in that capacity here).

At the hearing we learned of a previously undisclosed issue of a vital Con Ed electrical wire source that exists. As Chair CM Gordenchik noted, this would be crucial infrastructure in need of guarantees against any future impacts by flooding or storm. And as CM Levine discovered, there is no funding in this budget in place to assist in the promised fast turn-around for this huge undertaking. These bespeak a lack of planning. It does not encourage us (especially given the Parks Department's track record).

This new information, also illustrates the lack of transparent publicly accessible disclosures as to why this plan was upended.

We agree also with the need for NY State protections that would be provided by formally alienating this parkland during whatever process takes place (as was suggested by all four of our State representatives). It would make City promises enforceable.



We concur with CM Rivera's statement: "This is the largest resiliency effort to date for NYC that will set the tone for our cities future responses to climate change"

These neighborhoods have a keen sense of the costs of climate change effects. As the CM further noted, the response here to Superstorm Sandy was "started at the grassroots level, we did not wait to be saved".

Environmental mitigations are given 12 years (at best, some say 5 years) to begin in earnest to effect enough change to stop possible cascading disasters. If this park is denuded for 3.5 years (which we know will stretch into 4 or 5 years) that would give this park very few years of actual usage before it all becomes moot.

Taking out 57 acres of green parkland would already have devastating impacts that temporarily finding and using other parks, playgrounds, ball fields or green spaces will not fix.

Allowing the park to flood periodically may be the very best, most ecologically sound solution for long-term climate resilience. Salt tolerant trees must be planted here *now*, and trees planted everywhere to offset carbon excess.

This is a hands on moment for NYC and the world. Not a time to do politics or offer more amenities for later. We probably need the originally proposed barriers to prevent destruction and death but allow nature to flood as she tries to deal with our man-made disaster.

As the Council Member asked: Why is this a better plan? Why is it more expensive? What are the environmental impacts? How are you going to replace this huge park resource no matter which plan is decided upon? How will you restore trust following a period of radio silence?

We would add: How will you immediately create mitigations to offset carbon excess and the larger looming issue of building climate resiliency on behalf of all of NYC and beyond?

With thanks,

K Webster  
President  
Sara Roosevelt Park Coalition  
<http://sdrpc.mkgarden.org/>

# THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Edwin D. Rios

Address: 132 Ave D #5A

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

# THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 1/23/2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Peter Feld

Address: 319 E 9 St #9

I represent: neighbor

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

# THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Wendy Chapman

Address: 311 Greenwich St. 8F 10013

I represent: Board Member of Manhattan

Address: I want to remind all youth which flooded that there is no money and no plan

▶ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms for my neighborhood ◀



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**Appearance Card**

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 1/23/2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: K Webster

Address: 246 Bowery MC10012

I represent: Sara Roosevelt Park community

Address: 30 Delancey coalition

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**Appearance Card**

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1264/65 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/23/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Diego Berena

Address: 334 EAST 116ST

I represent: Delivery worker

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**Appearance Card**

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. ESCR Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kate Baicourt (Waterfront Alliance)

Address: 217 Water St.

I represent: Waterfront Alliance

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

ESCR ☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1-23-19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: WENDY BRAWER

Address: 175 Rivington 10002

I represent: NATURE CULTURE Green Map

Address: 292 E 3rd # 1A 10009

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

ESCR ☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1.23.19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lynn Kelly

Address: 55 Broad St.

I represent: New Yorkers for Parks

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

EAST RIVER ☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

PARK  
BIODIVERSITY

Date: JAN 23, 2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: AMY BERKOV, CITY COLLEGE

Address: 2088 E. 6TH STREET NY, NY

I represent: THE OTHER SPECIES @

Address: EAST RIVER PARK

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

ESCR

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: Jan 23.

Name: Elisabeth Dyrregaard (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 115 E 9th St

I represent: resident

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: ROB BUCHANAN (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NEW YORK CITY

Address: WATER TRAIL ASSOC

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/23/19

Name: Nancy Brous (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 357 West 12th Street

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/23/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sarah Blas

Address: Richmond Terrace

I represent: Therapeutic Gardens

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/23/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tamera Jacobs

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Rockaway Youth Task Force

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. ESCR Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 1/23/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Daniel Tainon

Address: 112 RIVINGTON ST. Apt. 5B 10002

I represent: EAST RIVER ALLIANCE

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 7-23-19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alexis Adler

Address: 527 E 12 St.

I represent: EL SOL BRILLANTE, E12ST BLOCK

Address: ASSN

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dan Tainow

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: East River Alliance

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Vaulteers Long

Address: 675 Water

I represent: LES Tower Portnashel

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/23/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Julian Morales

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: GOLES

Address: 169 Ave B

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 1/23/2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LYNN KIRBY

Address: New Yorkers for Parks

I represent: NYS Sen Brad Hoylman

Address: 55 Broad St

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/23/2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ASHER BAUMRIN

Address: 322 8th Avenue NY, NY, 10001

I represent: NYS Sen Brad Hoylman

Address: 322 8th Avenue NY, NY, 10001

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: THEODORE PENDER

Address: 568 GRAND ST

I represent: FRIENDS OF CORLENNES HOOK

Address: 575 GRAND ST #E901 10002

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/23/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver

Address: 830 5th Avenue, New York, NY

I represent: NYC Parks

Address: 830 5th Avenue, New York, NY

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/23/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jennifer Grange

Address: 530 Grand Street, D7B, NYC, NY

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/23/2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Deleena Huff

Address: 205 Ave C

I represent: LA. President Camps Area

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Daisy Perez

Address: 410 Grand St -

I represent: Community - District Leader

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/23/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dannaris Reyes

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Good Old Lower East Side, I-LS Ready

Address: 173 Ave B

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

1

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Ayo Harrington (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 336 E 4th St

I represent: East River Alliance

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Daniel McNeil (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 170 Ave C

I represent: Village East Towers Task Force

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/25/19

Name: Hudson Athas (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 310 East 12th Street

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DANIEL MEYERS

Address: 170 Ave C

I represent: Village East Towers TASK force

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: NAOMI SCHILLER

Address: 4157 EDR Drive

I represent: LESReady + East River Alliance

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/23/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Charles Krezell

Address: 336 E 4<sup>th</sup> ST SC NYC 10009

I represent: LOISAIDA United Neighborhood GARDENS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/23/19

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: DANTE DIEZ

Address: 44 E 10<sup>TH</sup> ST #6DE NY 10009

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: Diana Barillo

Address: 100 West 11th St NY 10011

I represent: Salt River Park Co NY

Address: 200 West 11th St NY 10011

*Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms*

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/23/2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dianne Lake

Address: 323 East 10th St. NY NY 10009

I represent: East River Alliance

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kim Sillen

Address: 530 Grand St.

I represent: Self (Lower East Side Heights)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 7215 Res. No. 3593

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1/

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tony Rivera - OLS Little League

Address: 473 EDR Drive NY 10002

I represent: OLS Little League

Address: 213 Stanton St NY 10002

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 1-23-19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Felicia Young

Address: 1638 E 6th St 100-9

I represent: Earth Celebrations

Address: 1638 E 6th 100-9

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: KEN BRAVO

Address: 819 FDR DRIVE

I represent: LOWER EAST SIDE

Address: SA

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: AMY CHALK - FILLING BRIDGE

Address: 1445 1st Ave 100-17

I represent: ALBANY COUNTY

Address: 800 1st Ave 100-17

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rob Hollander

Address: 622 E 11<sup>th</sup> St

I represent: Myself resident

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christine Diaz-Romero

Address: 299 E 8<sup>th</sup> St

I represent: LES Ecology Center

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: OLYMPIA KAZI

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: COMMUNITY BOARD 3

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 01/23/2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Carden, David

Address: 608 E 9th St. W/H

I represent: 9th Tompkins Sq. Bk. Long

Address: 428 E 10th St

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sorrell Rodack

Address: 310 East 6th St #15

I represent: GRC Garden

Address: 628 East 6th St

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. ESCR Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: Jan. 23, 2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Catherine, McVay Hughes

Address: FID

I represent: Financial District Neighborhood Association

Address: FID

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: TOMMY LOEB (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 473 FOR DR

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. ESCR Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: JAN 23, 2019

Name: Daniel Gutman (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Storm Surge Working Group

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Gale Brewer (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 2 Conlie St

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms