

Building Bridges

An aerial photograph of the East River Bridge in New York City, showing the bridge's steel truss structure and suspension towers. The bridge spans the East River, with a dense urban landscape of high-rise buildings and residential areas on the opposite shore. A large park area with green trees is visible on the lower left side of the image.

A Community-Based
Stewardship Study for an
Equitable East River Park

December 2018

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report was prepared for Rebuild by Design
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The logo for The Trust for Public Land, featuring the text "THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters, stacked vertically within a green-to-yellow gradient square.

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The study and recommendations were informed by the invaluable contributions and expertise of the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project Study Group, convened and hosted by Rebuild by Design.

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

In June 2013, The BIG U, a large-scale infrastructure project designed to protect Lower Manhattan from future storms and enhance East River Park, was awarded \$335 million by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. A result of the Rebuild by Design Hurricane Sandy Competition, the award recognized the strong stakeholder collaboration that created the plan. Since the award, New York City has added over a billion more dollars for reconstruction of a newly resilient East River Park and surrounding areas of the Lower East Side and East Village.

This enormous investment brings an opportunity to imagine a stewardship structure to ensure that the new waterfront park will provide the dual mission of protecting the adjacent upland community from flooding and remaining a place where nearby residents can continue to recreate.

The long-term maintenance of parks is a challenge in New York City, just as in many other cities around the world. To address shortages in funding and opportunities for enhancements, 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 Department to operate certain parks and open spaces. This formula has led to beloved new recreational spaces such as Brooklyn Bridge Park, Governors Island, Hudson River Park, and the Highline, and sustains older spaces such as Central Park, Bryant Park, the Battery, and the Bronx Zoo, through capture of revenue and through fundraising of private and philanthropic donations to maintain the parks. While 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 containing amenities that may lack affordability to adjacent communities.

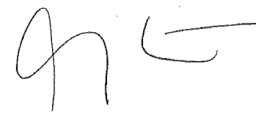
To respond to this challenge, Rebuild by Design and Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES) issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) in mid-July of 2018 to select a consultant team to write a report identifying precedent park stewardship structures that depart from the typical “conservancy” mode in New York City or the U.S., and

make recommendations that would address equity in the park and funding mechanisms for long-term maintenance and operations. It was requested that the recommended model be community-oriented and avoid or mitigate externalities that can arise from non-governmental stewardship models such as gentrification, privatization of park resources, and amenities that lack affordability.

With input from a group of neighborhood leaders, including representatives from community boards three and six, Rebuild by Design selected The Trust for Public Land and James Lima Planning + Development in September 2018 to prepare this parks stewardship study. The group of leaders who advised on the consultant selection morphed into a “study group” and were engaged and consulted throughout the process of researching and writing this report, setting the goals for the report, ensuring the research was comprehensive and ultimately will facilitate a larger community dialogue to determine whether the recommendations should be implemented.

Rebuild hopes that the community will find the recommendations in this report useful, and that East River Park will have a equitable stewardship structure that the community can celebrate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amy Chester'.

Amy Chester
Managing Director, Rebuild by Design

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INTRODUCTION

Climate change presents a new reality for cities around the world. While the effects of a warming world are indiscriminate, the impacts of rising seas, stronger storms and extreme heat will be felt first and worst by those who are disproportionately exposed to risk or lack the resources with which to withstand and recover from its impacts.

Waterfront parks have become cities' first line of defense against coastal threats. The role of these parks and those who operate and maintain them will continue to evolve in profound ways. The stewards and organizers of East River Park and its neighbors to the north, south, and west (the "Study Area") recognize this important responsibility.

Even before Hurricane Sandy hit the region on October 29, 2012, members of the Study Area's community, including the Lower East Side Ecology Center (of East River Park) and Solar One (of Stuyvesant Cove Park), were involved in strengthening public connections to the waterfront by providing ongoing maintenance, educational programs, and creative projects and events to local residents and seasonal visitors alike.

After Hurricane Sandy, the East Side Coastal Resiliency (ESCR) project was proposed to protect the Study Area from coastal risks and flooding. The ESCR project is the first section of the "Big U" project from the Rebuild by Design competition where community members came together to create a plan to protect themselves from future Sandy-like events. That vision won \$335 million for ESCR from HUD. The project has received years of community engagement input and design consideration, and is currently in its design phase. The community also organized under an initiative, LESReady!, a disaster preparedness coalition and plan of action for the neighborhood.

In addition, a "study group" is currently evaluating options for stewardship of East River Park after the ESCR project is built. The study group consists of community-based organizations, representatives of elected officials, and residents. The study group has made clear that in the context of the Lower East Side, it is important that stewardship of East River Park and the ESCR advance a more equitable allocation of the benefits and burdens of climate change adaptation strategies, particularly for marginalized communities, people of color and low-income communities. The study group has asked critical questions: How

can park governance ensure sustained and high quality maintenance of such high performance landscapes as the proposed ESCR project and park? Importantly, how can such a model better harness local community knowledge and technical capability to expand those capacities, retain local investment, and enhance community resilience beyond park borders?

As a result of a Request for Proposal process initiated by Rebuild by Design and Good Old Lower East Side, the Trust for Public Land and James Lima Planning + Development Team were selected to produce a study on the options for long-term stewardship and governance of this site. This study addresses the questions posed by the study group by providing a framework for the emergence of a strong and viable community-led stewardship model for East River Park and broader ESCR project area (the "Study Area").

Paired with the right stewardship structure and engagement, the ESCR project can serve as a model for addressing climate change adaptation and enhancing community resilience in the broadest sense, as well as serve as a model for other city parks and for cities around the world who are looking at this project as an example.

RESEARCH APPROACH

Our approach to this assessment is driven by the following principles:

- Current residents of the Study Area should shape the future of their community, and benefit from local public investments;
- Existing assets – both physical and programmatic – are the foundation from which a long-term stewardship model can be shaped for the Study Area and future resilience projects that follow;
- Access to park amenities can be enhanced;
- Resilience extends beyond the design of the natural landscape and into social infrastructure, including the creation and preservation of safe places that offer opportunities for social connection, education, and jobs.
- Equity for the community should be advanced

Our research process included studying current initiatives and organizations that are invested in East River Park and the broader Study Area; survey and analysis of national stewardship models; and stakeholder meetings to identify community concerns.

Our research approach has also been framed by the following questions related to the opportunity embedded in the City's investment in the ESCR project:

How will this significant investment be leveraged to generate equitable economic benefits, improve community health and wellness, and enhance the project's overall long-term success?

How can the City and local stakeholders work together to ensure adequate, long-term stewardship of this asset?

Sept. 2018

Kick-off Meeting with Study Group

Research:

Survey and assess current Study Area stewards and stakeholders, along with their needs and initiatives.

Survey & assess stewardship model precedents

Strategy:

Identify local opportunities & assets for stewardship.

Identify & assess potential partnerships & capacity for stewardship

Oct. 2018

Study Group check-in

Strategy:

Craft framework for stewardship approaches.

Craft recommendations for next steps in establishing near term goals.

Prepare final report documenting study findings to serve as guidance for parties interested in organizing around the present and future of East River Park and broader ESCR project area.

Nov. 2018

Final presentation





EAST RIVER PARK

- Opened in 1939
- Lower East Side and East Village's largest open space
- 57 acres
- 1.2 miles of waterfront
- Vital link on East River Esplanade
- Two ferry stops
- Home to the only active sports fields in Lower Manhattan: baseball fields, basketball courts, football fields, soccer fields, tennis courts

Source: NYC Parks, 2018

EAST SIDE COASTAL RESILIENCY PROJECT

- Intended to transform East River Park into a "first of its kind" resilient park that will protect:
 - 617 acres;
 - 30,000 affordable units; and
 - 130,000 residents, 62% low-income, elderly or disabled
- The first phase of the BIG U concept, which was planned and designed for the Rebuild by Design Hurricane Sandy Design Competition
- NYC Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency and NYC Department of Design and Construction announced a revised ESCR Capital Project Plan as of September 2018

Source: Rebuild by Design, 2018

EAST RIVER PARK SITE CONTEXT

East River Park is a citywide resource. It provides expansive views of the river and a green oasis in a predominantly hard-scaped area of the city. Used not only by its bordering neighbors who use the park for barbecuing, exercising, playing, gathering, and fishing among other uses, it is also by non-residents, citywide leagues and other visitors who come to use the sports fields, catch the ferry, or watch a performance at the park's amphitheater.

EAST RIVER PARK'S ADJACENT COMMUNITY

The Lower East Side and East Village neighborhoods border East River Park to the west, separated from the park by the FDR Drive. This Study Area in the flood zone is comprised of approximately 130,000 residents, 62% of whom are low-income, elderly or disabled. There are approximately 30,000 affordable units in the Study Area and over 15,000 NYC Housing Authority (NYCHA) residents living within a 10 minute walk to the park. East River Park's adjacent communities are particularly vulnerable to flooding and the impacts of increasingly severe coastal storms.

The area is rich in social, cultural and civic assets, rooted in its history as a once fertile landscape of natural resources including marshes and woods, and as a landing pad for numerous immigrant groups throughout New York City's development in the 18th and 19th centuries. Like every neighborhood, this area is continuously evolving, and is grappling with issues of displacement, gentrification, and community self-determination.

The area's numerous local assets serve as a grounding point for enhancing community resiliency. These assets include:

- Vibrant and diverse community with a history of advocacy and grassroots activism;
- Strong civic infrastructure, including an extensive network of community-based organizations active within and around the park, including local Resident Associations,

Lower East Side Ecology Center, Solar One, East River Park Coalition, and LESReady!; and

- Active public and social programs spanning educational, recreational, workforce development, and arts opportunities.

It is within this context of local heritage, identity, objectives, and concerns that this study takes shape. While the recommendations in this report draw on best practices and lessons learned from other groups around the city and country, ultimately the unified efforts of local stakeholders will drive sustained stewardship of the park for the benefit of the community.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCY PLANNING AND GOALS

In response to the destruction caused by Hurricane Sandy in 2012, the Rebuild by Design Hurricane Sandy Competition launched to develop implementable solutions to protect residents from future storm surge and sea level rise while enhancing recreational and ecological benefits. The BIG U was created to protect Manhattan, and the project's first phase - the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project - was set into motion, to be implemented by the City of New York.

Through this multi-year design process, numerous residents, business owners, and other local stakeholders provided input and recommendations for the future design of this site.

The community input on the ESCR project design highlighted the need for access to the park during construction, green jobs, enhancing connections to the park, and local partners for affordable and healthy concession stands throughout the park.

In September 2018, the City revised the plan for ESCR and increased the capital cost budget to \$1.45 billion. This significant investment in public infrastructure can be leveraged to expand economic opportunity related to jobs and business opportunities in addition to providing flood protection for the local area. An organized group of East River Park stakeholders is still best suited to ask critical questions of this project and its design: *Who benefits? Who pays? Who bears the impacts of construction? Who decides? How can the facilities and programming of a new resilient park address issues of equity for the local community?*



**COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON EXISTING CONDITIONS,
FROM COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOP ROUNDS I AND II OF THE EAST SIDE COASTAL RESILIENCY DESIGN PROCESS.**





CURRENT USES

EXERCISE + RECREATION

- Organized league play and school use of sports fields
- Informal sports field use
- Running and biking track
- Playgrounds and play areas
- Fishing
- Passive recreation

GATHERING

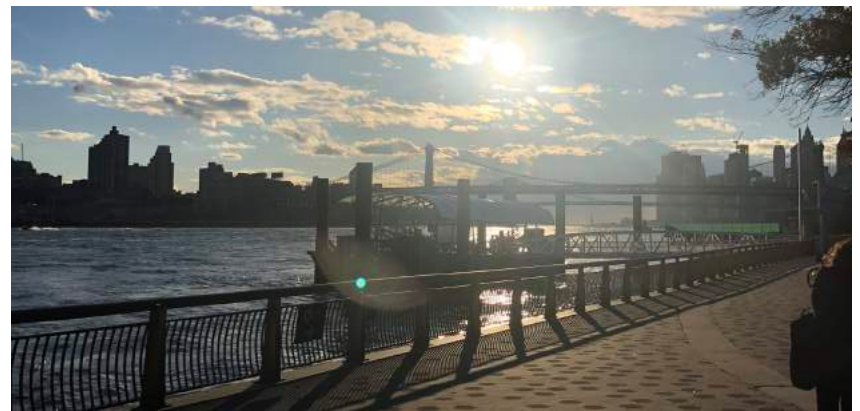
- Concerts, plays, performances
- Pageants, marches
- BBQ pits, picnics, parties

EDUCATION + EMPLOYMENT

- Workshops, tours with a focus on ecology and marine biology
- Park stewardship/ gardening/ maintenance
- Workforce training (green energy, maintenance)

COMMUTING

- Bike path
- Ferry stops



CURRENT INITIATIVES

EAST RIVER PARK STEWARDS AND STAKEHOLDERS

East River Park's current stewards and stakeholders provide the public with a wide range of educational, cultural, recreational and entertainment offerings. The following tenants provide programs to local communities and visitors alike that should be supported throughout the redesign and renovation of East River Park.

- LES Ecology Center: stewardship, education, public events
- Solar One: education, workforce training
- Green Map System: public events, education
- East River Park Coalition: public art initiatives
- LES Ready!: LES Ready! Disaster Response Plan
- Friends of Corlears Hook Park: public programming, stewardship
- Partnership for Parks: staffing, education, funding
- Community Boards 3 and 6: provide forums for receiving updates, asking questions, and voicing concerns related to East River Park and the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project
- Parks Department: operations and maintenance
- Organized sports leagues, including: Downtown Little League, New York Junior League, CityParks Sports, ZogSports, NYC Government Softball League, NYC Tennis League, Yorkville Sports Association, PlayNYC, NYC Social Sports Club, NYC Footy, The Urban Soccer League, NYC Soccer Collective, DiscNY
- New York Cares: volunteer opportunities for park stewardship



PROJECT LIFE CYCLE AND EVOLVING STEWARDSHIP NEEDS

Stewardship needs will change in accordance with East River Park's redevelopment project life cycle, as it travels through planning and construction preparations, to active construction, through park re-opening and long term use.

There are several ways in which local stakeholders can ensure equitable outcomes for the community throughout each phase of the ESCR project. In this context, we encourage the community to consider how to maximize a public return on investment of the ESCR project for the benefit of historically underserved groups, low income populations and people of color.

EQUITY AT EACH STEP IN THE PROJECT LIFE CYCLE

PLANNING & PRE-CONSTRUCTION

- Ensure that community voices are heard through public engagement by promoting the wide dissemination of meeting notices and project information through new and existing networks, working with the City to hold meetings at a diversity of times and locations, and creating and maintaining a distribution list and network to inform the community.
- Improve coordination and communications with the City.
- Use on-site programming to expand awareness and engagement.
- Advocate for construction impact mitigation, such as phased construction, truck and pollution controls, improved neighborhood parks and joint-use agreements for public access to schoolyards.
- Advocate for workforce development and local job opportunities in construction.
- Develop creative construction phasing solutions with the City that ensures access to park and recreational amenities.

CONSTRUCTION

- Monitor construction mitigation measures.
- Ensure coordination and communications with the City regarding construction updates and plans, in addition to community boards and other traditional means.
- Expand community awareness and engagement through programming in the community and on portions of the Study Area not under active construction.

PARK RE-OPENING & LONG TERM LIFE OF THE PARK

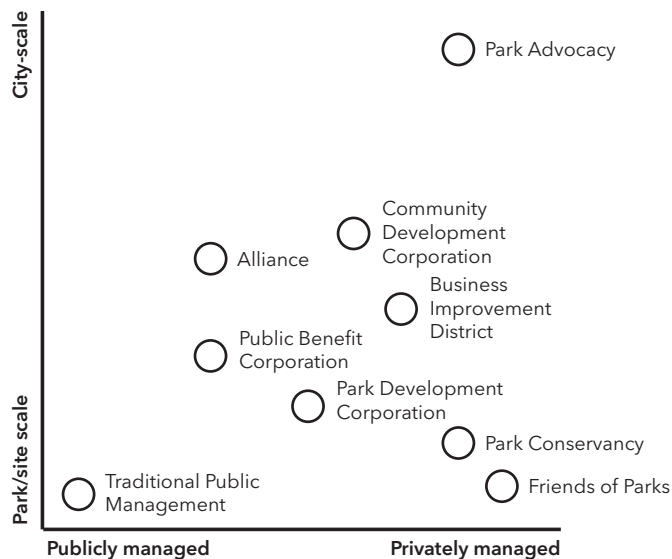
- Protect free community access to amenities through a programming and scheduling agreement with the City.
- Create opportunities for local businesses to participate in any future concessions and programming.
- Advocate for workforce development and local job opportunities in maintenance and operations.
- Strive to supplement the City's work in maintenance and operations for an exceptionally maintained public space.
- Enhance engagement in the park through programming.



PARK STEWARDSHIP MODELS

In order to understand the best stewardship model for East River Park, we undertook a national survey. There are a growing and evolving set of stewardship models and public-private partnerships for the adoption, improvement, programming and maintenance of parks in cities across the United States. These models include friends-of parks, park conservancies, and city-wide parks advocacy organizations, among others. These organizations can work in partnership with others, or can accommodate several non-profit partners. These models vary in the degree of public and private management, as well as the scale and complexity of public spaces they address. In the following section we lay out the different types of partnerships, provide a snapshot of national precedents for these and mixed models, then follow with key takeaways of the national assessment for East River Park stewardship opportunities.

STEWARDSHIP MODELS: SCALE & DEGREE OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE MANAGEMENT



Types of Stewardship Models

Friends of Parks groups

All-volunteer groups focused on hands-on cleanup and grassroots advocacy.

Park Conservancies

Private, nonprofit park-benefit organizations that raise money, independent of the city, and spend it under a plan of action mutually agreed upon with the government.

City-wide parks advocacy organizations

Advocacy organizations, can be working to build partnerships between friends groups and public agencies, raising funds for work overall or a combination of efforts, including programming and capital projects.

Community Development Corporations (CDCs)

Not-for-profit corporations that tackle economic development, education, community organizing and real estate development for a specific area in a city.

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)

Special taxing entities chartered through a combination of state and city legislation for a defined portion of a city, often a commercial business district.

Park Development Corporations

Special purpose entity created often through a combination state and local governments to tackle a large scale park project that includes commercial and public park development.

Public Benefit Corporations

Special purpose corporations set up through government, managed by developers for to develop or manage large scale commercial developments with extensive public facilities.

Traditional Public Management

City led and operated.

See Appendix A for detailed descriptions of each model.

NATIONAL PRECEDENTS

We focused on the following stewardship models because they are concerned with equity or are in disadvantaged areas, or both.



San Francisco, CA

San Francisco Park Alliance

Type: Parks advocacy org.

Scale: City

Los Angeles, CA

Los Angeles Neighborhood Trust

Type: Land Trust

Scale: City

Denver, CO

Westwood Unidos

Type: Alliance / Coalition

Scale: Neighborhood

St. Louis, MO

Arch River Park

Type: Park Development Corporation

Scale: Park / Site

Great Rivers Greenway

Type: Quasi-public

Scale: Regional / Multi-City

New Orleans, LA

Gentilly Resilience District

Type: Mixed - recovery

Scale: Neighborhood

Chicago, IL

NeighborSpace

Type: Land Trust, Programming partner

Scale: City

New York, NY

Bronx River Alliance

Type: Alliance / Coalition

Scale: Neighborhood

Prospect Park Alliance

Type: Alliance / Coalition

Scale: Park / Site

Washington Square Park Conservancy

Type: Conservancy

Scale: Park / Site

Philadelphia, PA

Fairmount Park Conservancy

Type: Programming partner

Scale: City

Pennsylvania Horticulture Society and Neighborhoods Gardens Trust

Type: Land Trust, Programming partner

Scale: City

Washington, DC

Building Bridges Across the River (11th Street Bridge Park)

Type: Mixed - Community Development Corporation

Scale: Park / Site

TYPES OF STEWARDSHIP MODELS & AGREEMENTS

SIMPLIFIED COMPARISON OF KEY STEWARDSHIP MODELS

| Model | Functions | Funding | Capacity & Requirements | Equity Considerations |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| Friends-of Parks <i>Scale: park</i> | Park clean-ups, grassroots advocacy | Volunteer | Volunteer-driven | The composition of the group and its functions are often limited to the capabilities and interests of those able to volunteer. |
| Park Conservancies <i>Scale: park</i> | Park operations, maintenance, programming | Fundraise (primarily donor solicitation) | Related to scope of activities, often starting with programming and then growing. Typically requires 501(c)3 status. | Funding often related to degree of affluence in locale, thereby creating disparities across city park system. |
| Parks Advocacy Organization <i>Scale: city</i> | Advocacy, research, lobby on broader park issues | Fundraise | Tends to serve at city level, but can lend additional capacity to local park stewardship groups for specific research, training or activities. | These groups are helpful partners for local park interests, but do not necessarily address specific park equity interests. |
| Alliance / coalition <i>Scale: park</i> | Park advocacy, programming and city coordination | Fundraise (donor solicitation, grants), lobby for public funds | Organizations contribute capacity through Alliance membership; requires coordinator and liaison with City. Related to scope of activities, often starting with advocacy and programming, then growing. | Flat and representative structure ensures comprehensive community voice involved in alliance activities. |
| Community Development Corporation (CDC) <i>Scale: neighborhood</i> | Housing and economic development | Fundraise (donor solicitation, grants) | Related to scope of activities, typically starting with housing assistance and then growing. Requires 501(c)3 status. | With a mission to support neighborhood revitalization, CDCs serve a community's most vulnerable. |
| Business Improvement District (BID) <i>Scale: neighborhood</i> | Economic development; public space beautification and activation | Special tax revenue from area property owners | Sizeable workforce to carry out services, programming and capital improvements. Requires 501(c)3 status. | BIDs' funding structure and ultimate responsibility to property owners and business can lead to the organization's bias to those interests. |

SPECTRUM OF PARK STEWARDSHIP

SPECTRUM OF COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PARK & RESILIENCE STEWARDSHIP

CITY MANAGEMENT WITH STRONG COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

City leads all management and decision-making, with coordinated community engagement. Can include special protections for community needs, such as priority permitting.

Gentilly Resilience District
New Orleans, LA



CITY & COMMUNITY DELEGATED ROLES

Partnership and/or division of labor between community groups and city on certain aspects of park stewardship, such as programming, maintenance or operations.

Building Bridges Across the River
Washington, DC



CITY & COMMUNITY CO-MANAGEMENT

Full partnership and shared decision-making authority on all aspects of park stewardship.

Bronx River Alliance
New York, NY



Typical agreements in public-private stewardship of parks

Each stewardship model includes at least one agreement between the public park agency and the non-profit partner. There are a set of basic elements in most agreements between NYC Parks & Recreation, including, but not limited to:

- Responsibilities ranging from daily activities to capital projects to programming.
- What work, improvements or programming can or cannot be done and by whom (this can be separately governed by one or more “park improvement agreements”).
- How any revenue generated from park activities is divided between the organizations, and what purposes those revenues can be used for.
- How permitting for public events in the park is done, what fees are collected and who controls the approvals for such events.
- Conflict resolution resulting from the agreement;
- The designation of a park administrator, who serves a dual role as both city employee and non-profit employee. Often, they are both administrator as well as Executive Director of the non-profit.
- “Terminate at will” clause - beginning with the original Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for Central Park, the NYC Parks & Recreation can terminate an agreement at any time without notice. This provides added insurance for dedicated partnership among entities.
- Revenue split - for concessions, the city usually collects their percentage of revenue up front or in segments and determines how the non-profit partner can use revenues.
- Permitting and fee collection is handled by NYC Parks and Recreation staff or by a hybrid department that includes city staff and non-profit staff.

KEY ASPECTS OF SUCCESSFUL MODELS

Across the spectrum of stewardship models evaluated in our research, there are several aspects that helped guide early stakeholder efforts. These are:

Equity

- Written equity strategies, such as the Equitable Development Plan developed for 11th Street Bridge Park, maintain community-driven goals for ongoing activities.

Fundraising

- Public investment in capital upgrades operations, and maintenance is critical to the public-private partnership and financial sustainability.
- Events and food/concession sales generate revenue that are used to support park programs and operations.

Capacity and resources

- Partnerships and coalitions strengthen local capabilities by leveraging an existing range of resources, assets, activities and expertise.
- Facilities shared with City or local partners will reduce overhead costs to the stewardship group and enhances collaboration.
- Staff sharing, where city park employees work together with the non-profit employees on collaborative or complementing tasks or projects. This is more common in bigger stewardship non-profits, like with The Central Park Conservancy or the Prospect Park Alliance.

See Appendix B for a full set of case studies.

Case Study in Proactive Equitable Development: 11th Street Bridge Park

Building Bridges Across the River, the organization that manages stewardship, engagement and programming for the forthcoming 11th Street Bridge Park in Washington, D.C., is proactively working to ensure robust community involvement, and equitable outcomes for the traditionally under-invested communities of Anacostia as part of this innovative park to be constructed over abandoned bridge infrastructure. This emphasis was established at the project's inception and is pursued throughout each phase of the unbuilt project.

EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Through an extensive community driven planning process five years before the slated park opening, Building Bridges Across the River crafted a set of strategies to ensure equitable outcomes. The strategies address workforce development, small business enterprises, housing, and arts and culture.

PROGRAMMING

Building Bridges Across the River engages stakeholders and local residents from the beginning of the project through programming, events, and place activation. They use these events as opportunities to increase awareness about the plans for the park, spur excitement in the project and test programming and activation ideas for the future.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Through an agreement with the District of Columbia, Anacostia residents and harder-to-employ District residents are prioritized in contracting process for construction and post-construction jobs.

PROGRAMMING PARTNERSHIPS

Building Bridges Across the River is responsible for operating and programming the park when it is complete. They will lease spaces in the park at a nominal fee to local non-profits for full programming.



Lantern Walk at 11Th Street Bridge vicinity



Urban agriculture plots at nearby youth foster housing



Wellness event and African dance class

Case Study in An Evolving Stewardship Structure: Bronx River Alliance

The Bronx River Alliance began in 1974 as an all-volunteer organization focused on efforts to revitalize the river. With technical assistance from Partnerships for Parks, the Bronx River Working Group was created in 1977 to bring together more than 60 community organizations, public agencies and businesses committed to restoring and improving access to the river. The Group organized around four key interests areas: Ecology, Greenway, Education, Outreach.

ALLIANCE EVOLUTION

In 2001, the Bronx River Working Group grew into the Bronx River Alliance, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization created to continue and expand the Working Group's effort into the long-term. Since 2001, the Alliance has been led by a jointly held NYC Parks-Bronx River Alliance position that serves as both the NYC Bronx River Administrator and the Executive Director of the Alliance. The Alliance has successfully sought public and private funds to clean up the river, improve existing parks, build new parks, and continue to improve nearby streets and neighborhoods working as a broad coalition. The BRA works with over 40 local schools, youth and community organizations to engage residents in the development of the Bronx River Greenway and in the river's restoration.

A NEW RIVER HUB FOR THE ESCR COMMUNITY

The Bronx River Alliance is ensuring its long-term roles through construction of a community-centric "River House." The BRA River House will be the greenest building in South Bronx once complete. The River House is designed to be the headquarters for the BRA, a community gathering space, an indoor-outdoor classroom, and a boathouse. The space serves as the "social glue" for the community and Alliance members, and will be widely available for use by local groups, students and educators, and citizen scientists throughout the year. It was made possible through a three-year, \$2 million capital campaign.



The Bronx River Alliance - River House



The Bronx River Alliance - River House

KEY TAKEAWAYS

AN ALLIANCE STRUCTURE IS FLEXIBLE

The Alliance organizational structure (modeled after the Bronx River Alliance in New York City), combined with the best practices in equitable development strategies throughout a construction project's cycle (as demonstrated by Building Bridges Across the River at 11th Street Bridge Park), will serve as the most flexible means for the ESCR stakeholders to organize around a collective framework, leverage existing assets, and maximize the return on investment of the ESCR project for community members who need it most. The Bronx River Alliance initially organized promptly and without formal establishment in order to get ahead of and help direct public expenditures toward equitable river restoration. The Alliance then grew from there.

FOUNDING PRINCIPLES MATTER

A set of founding principles, plans or strategies related to equitable development for the East River Alliance can help to ensure that these goals remain at the forefront of both the group's and the City's agenda. Similarly, the founding members of the Bronx River Alliance adopted an "Environmental Justice Implementation Strategy" along with the group's founding principles. This strategy (see Appendix C for link to full text) commits the Alliance and its members to standards of ensuring equity and justice through the day to day operations of the Alliance. Building Bridges Across the River created a detailed [Equitable Development Plan](#) (see Appendix C for link to full text), created with extensive community engagement. The plan outlines strategies that the organization will undertake, through partnership, to realize tangible benefits for historically underserved residents and neighborhoods.

CITY PARTNERSHIP IS CRITICAL

Establishing a stable working relationship with the City is of critical importance in each of the models studied. The role of liaison and ally with the City is critical, with an eye toward formalizing a working partnership with the City through an eventual joint Alliance Director / Park Administrator position.

ENGAGEMENT AND PARK ACTIVATION CAN HAPPEN BEFORE CONSTRUCTION

Stakeholders have a lot to gain from organizing and exercising their voice with decision-makers on matters of design and construction impact mitigation before the project re-enters processes of design review and environmental impact assessment.

Building Bridges Across the River did not wait for the construction of the park to engage residents; they have already begun with community outreach, programming and engagement on and near the park site, years before construction of the new park site. The 11th Street Bridge Park 'Equitable Development Plan' is an example of this: the plan was developed following a year-long, community-led effort prior to the project's groundbreaking to ensure nearby residents benefit from the construction of the new civic space planned for the area.



RECOMMENDATIONS

FORM AN EAST RIVER ALLIANCE

The ESCR project presents a generational opportunity for the diverse communities within the Study Area to make the most of this improved public space and investment. To ensure that this momentous investment makes returns for an equitable and prosperous East River Park community, we recommend the current study group pursue an **alliance** structure, similar to the Bronx River Alliance in New York City, with the concerted practices of engaging in equitable development, as demonstrated by the innovations of Building Bridges Across the River at the 11th Street Bridge Park in Washington, DC. The Bronx River Alliance demonstrates how an alliance structure can follow a path to growth into ultimately a more formalized city-non-profit partnership. Building Bridges Across the River is setting admirable equitable development goals, enforced through actionable strategies and practices throughout the life cycle of the park construction. Together

The alliance model helps to provide for wider representation among organized community interests, provides strength and capacity in numbers, and involves relatively modest start-up costs while remaining adaptable to shifting needs and activities over time. Importantly, an East River Alliance framework can meet community advocacy needs now, during construction, and after construction. The name “East River Alliance” (Alliance) is used in this study as a placeholder name for what local stakeholders may eventually call such an entity. In implementation, this Alliance could be a separate, new 501(c)(3) organization or could grow out of an existing organization involved in the mission and suited to foster its growth.

The momentum generated from the prior community engagement process for the design of the ESCR project and the current study group meetings demonstrate the community’s

interest in building a resilient waterfront park that truly meets the needs of nearby residents and businesses. Our recommendation builds on this body of work, and all of the strong organizations that exist in the Study Area.

The opportunity for the community coalition at this transitional moment is in the community having a greater and more sustained voice regarding:

- The new park plan for which \$1.45 billion of public money is being committed and the opportunity such a massive expenditure can have on the park being a true local community asset;
- The new park facilities, spaces and their programming to meet local community needs;
- The role that the local community can play in the maintenance, operation and overall stewardship of the rebuilt park.

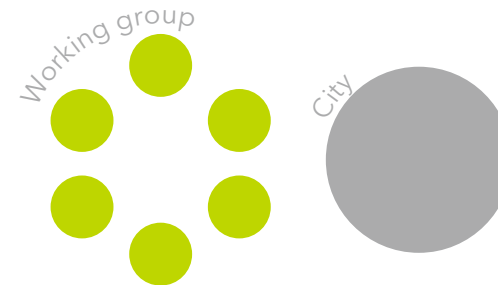
In the following section, we expand on this recommendation with guidance for navigating structural transitions, pursuing equitable outcomes throughout the life-cycle of the East Side Coastal Resiliency project, and for developing funding, programming, activation and partnerships.

The East River Alliance, unified by a common interest in seeing community benefit through the ESCR investments, can position itself as an ally to both the City and community. A key area of activity for this entity throughout its lifespan is to engage the broader community about the status of the project, along with implications for current and future uses. This can position the group as a key factor in the success of the project, liaising between the City and the community. Thus, the Alliance should focus on community outreach strategies and strengthening a working relationship with the City.

START NOW AND ALLOW THE STRUCTURE TO EVOLVE

The roles, functions and activities of the recommended East River Alliance are expected to evolve over time, driving the ultimate organizing structure, capacity requirements and fundraising needs. A capital project of this scale and complexity will be a multi-year and multi-faceted endeavor - the plans for which are likely to shift and change throughout the course of the design, construction and realization of the park. Likewise, community capacity and appetite for direct management of park activities will shift according to new priorities of equitable development and contexts over time.

For now, the group can capitalize on the power and ingenuity already contained within the current study group by growing capacity as an organized East River Park Stewardship working group, and then shifting into a more formalized alliance framework. The East River Alliance, unified by a common interest in seeing equitable development and community benefit through the ESCR investments, can position itself as an ally to both the City and community. A key area of activity for this entity throughout its lifespan is to engage the broader community about the status of the project, along with implications for current and future uses. This can position the group as a key factor in the success of the project, liaising between the City and the community. Thus, the Alliance should focus on community outreach strategies and strengthening a working relationship with the City.

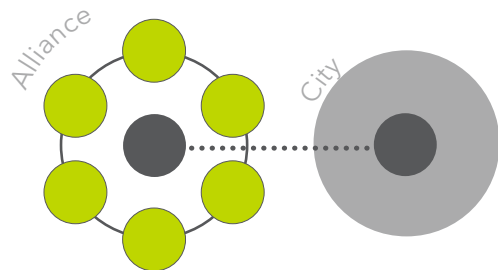


WORKING GROUP

Create a working group out of the existing study group and other interested stakeholders bound by mutual interest in the community benefit of the park and a shared history of community organizing. The City is working separately to accomplish a major capital improvement to the park and waterfront. The Working Group will gear its activities toward capacity building and relationship-building with the City and complementary organizations so as to establish a formalized Alliance.

STEPS TO ENACT THE WORKING GROUP:

- » Establish regular meeting times and locations for Working Group sessions, open to the public.
- » Appoint a chair or co-chairs to shepherd the group:
 - Conduct outreach to identify and recruit equitable representation; and
 - Establish key goals and objectives.
- » Engage the City in establishing a working relationship and communicating goals.
- » Establish relationships with peer groups like the Bronx River Alliance, local small businesses, and sports clubs, who may support goals and complement or enhance working group's capabilities.
- » Seek seed funding from foundations, corporations, and other stakeholders to form an alliance and hire a coordinator.

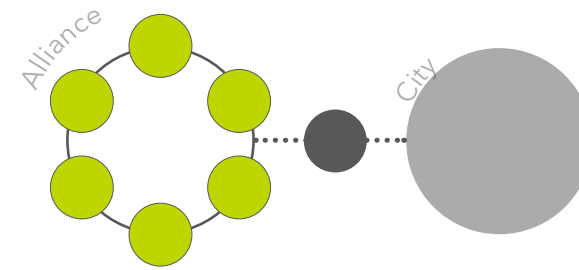


ALLIANCE WITH CITY COORDINATION

The Working Group should formalize into the East River Alliance, by adopting a set of agreements on the group's goals and organizing framework. The Alliance can be comprised of one representative from each local organization involved, each of whom can hold equal representation. The Alliance's coordinator will form a working relationship with a counterpart at the City.

STEPS TO ENACT THE ALLIANCE:

- » Hire and support a coordinator to shepherd the group and reach written agreement on:
 - Confirming equitable representation;
 - Confirming goals and founding principles; and
 - Crafting a framework for meeting and organizing regularly.
- » Identify and confirm a point of contact at the City.
- » Engage the broader community as to the status of the ESCR project, along with implications for current and future uses.
- » Continue engaging outside groups who may support goals and complement or enhance working group's capabilities.
- » Seek additional foundation, corporate and public support.



ALLIANCE WITH JOINT ALLIANCE DIRECTOR / PARK ADMINISTRATOR

A jointly held Alliance Director / Park Administrator serves as a key leadership and coordinating role among both the Alliance and the City. Over time and as interests and activities of the Alliance grow, the Alliance may form a committee structure to govern certain work areas, such as programming, operations, and outreach.

STEPS TO ENACT THE ALLIANCE-CITY PARTNERSHIP:

- » Work with the City to establish in-kind and financial support for coordination of and with the Alliance as to formalize working agreements governing roles and responsibilities.
 - Secure financial support (or the prospect of financial support) for an Alliance director (formerly coordinator).
 - Secure in-kind support for any operational needs, such as facilities and other office-related infrastructure.
- » Additional staff, volunteers and working committees can be hired for emergent areas of activity, as needed and as funding allows.
- » Pursue formalizing into a 501(c)(3) non-profit to secure grants and other sources of funding for expanded activities, including concessions and revenue-generating activities.

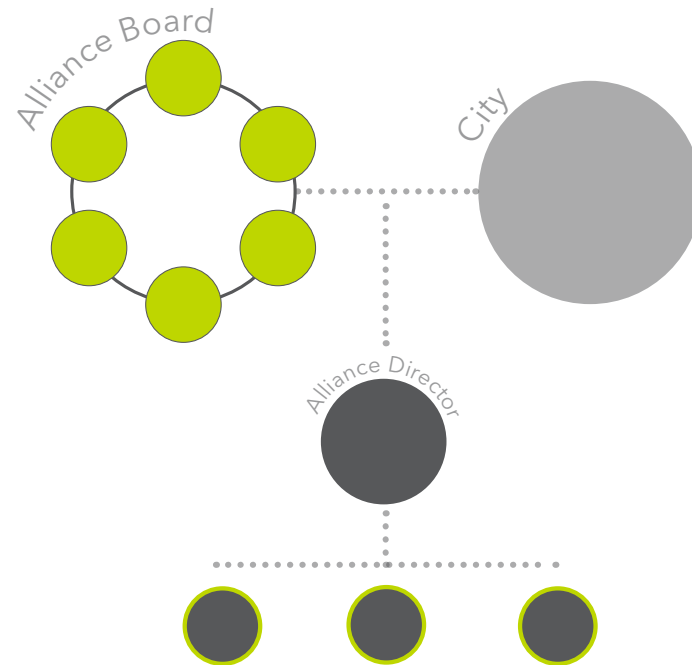
STRUCTURING AN ALLIANCE WITH FORMAL CITY PARTNERSHIP

We ultimately recommend that the Alliance seek a formalized relationship with the City in which the Alliance Director serves a dual role as City Park Administrator. As noted prior, this relationship is supportive of greater coordination and collaboration between the Alliance and City government, as well as efficiencies in operating on these mutual interests.





As illustrated at right in a *sample* organizational structure for such an arrangement, the Alliance Director would report up to both the Alliance Board of Directors (comprised of representatives from the Alliance member organizations) and the City governance bodies. This Director would directly oversee Alliance staff and Alliance activities, programs and initiatives.

The image on the adjacent page is a photo of the East River Stewardship Study Group at the study kick-off meeting in September.

Example Alliance structure
with joint Alliance Director / Park Administrator



Key

-  Alliance Member Organization
-  City Government
-  Joint Alliance Director & Park Administrator
-  Alliance Staff



Programming as a Means to Support COMMUNITY PRIORITIES BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER PARK CONSTRUCTION

TAKE THE REINS. Taking ownership of the activation of East River Park provides local communities with the opportunity to build coherency, enhance the park's identity, and host activities that are reflective of local values and interests.

REFLECT LOCAL CULTURE AND EQUITY GOALS THROUGH PROGRAMMING. Discussions around programming activation may include identification of revenue-generating activities, organization of free events, and specification of areas to be preserved as unprogrammed space.

WORK TOWARD GREATER SELF-RELIANCE. Aligning local stakeholder interests through the lens of programming can help the proposed East River Alliance work toward greater self-sufficiency, particularly as this piece of resilient infrastructure presents new maintenance demands as NYC's first resilient park. This new demand is met by funding and staffing shortages on both the City and local Community-Based Organization levels. This section works to provide guidance on how programming can serve as a means of maintaining East River Park's long-term functionality and resilience value.

ALIGN FORM + FUNCTION. Through taking the lead on the programming stakeholders wish to see in park, the Alliance can more aggressively pursue specific design asks of the city as they work their way through the finalizing of construction documents.

DEVELOP YEAR-ROUND PROGRAMMING + ACTIVATION

Many exciting public events already exist in East River Park, and there is an opportunity for the ESCR Project work to amplify and enhance what local community-based organizations are already doing.

The conceptual diagram at the right identifies when events are happening, and how many people they attract. The East River Alliance may consider programming and activation ideas centered on:

- Food and beverage concessions;
- Sale of local goods;
- Art installations;
- Entertainment;
- Celebrations, pageants, parades;
- Health and wellness workshops, walks, events; and
- Marches, political 'town square' gatherings.

Given that the park is heading into a long-term construction project, a next set of questions arise: What can be done between now and construction? How can a working group build credibility and coherency during time when the park renovation isn't yet complete? Expanding programming ideas today can influence what park structures become used for down the road and can influence how phasing will work during construction. For example, the East River Alliance may wish to work with city agencies on specifying which parts of the park remain open or activated with public art and programming throughout construction process. It is possible that during park closure, the Alliance may pursue options for creating a "Popup East River Park" using the 50 Kent Popup Park in Williamsburg as a precedent.

WINTER



Winter Jam NYC. East River Park, 2009.

SPRING



Ecological City - Earth Celebrations. East River Park, 2018.

FALL



Park Stewardship Volunteer Day. East River Park, 2018

SUMMER



PORCHES Concert. East River Park, 2018

DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS

The East River Alliance should explore a series of internal and external partnerships to maximize resources, strengthen organizational capacity, and bring and manage changes in East River Park, ultimately promoting local economic development in the community in an inclusive and effective way.

INTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS: Organizations represented by the East River Alliance should continue and expand collaboration to identify and carry out the programming and stewardship initiatives for the East River Park. Working together frequently can help the individual organizations form stronger bonds and learn to overcome potential obstacles in communication and management, which will enable the East River Alliance to act cohesively and manage its tasks efficiently.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH CITY AGENCIES AND PUBLIC ENTITIES: The East River Alliance should act as the collective voice in the collective voice for communicating and coordinating with the City and other public entities that have jurisdiction over the park area. With strong organizational capacity and internal cohesion, the East River Alliance can begin to propose and negotiate a series of partnerships with relevant agencies to improve the management, operation, and capital funding for the East River Park.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY: While the individual organizations continue to bring specific services to diverse local communities, the East River Alliance can act as a Resource Central that promotes the overall active use of the park. Working closely with the individual organizations and other public and private partners, the East River Alliance should lead the initiatives for larger-scale programming, social events, and workforce development for the community constituency.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY: The East River Alliance should work with local businesses in innovative and inclusive ways. From stores and concessionaires to street vendors, the East River Alliance should carefully design business partnerships that yield economic benefit to the community and preserve the community characteristics.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER PARKS: Building a strong organization takes time, and experiences from other park alliances can help the East River Alliance to learn and grow more quickly. Recognizing the lessons and resources existing in other parks, the Working Group should learn from and have exchange with peer organizations, that have faced similar challenges and share similar aspirations. For example, The Bronx River Alliance has matured from a working group to an enduring voice for restoration of the Bronx River, and recently advocated for an obtained a building dedicated to community meetings.

SET THE FOUNDATION FOR AN EQUITABLE FUNDING MODEL

NEW OPERATIONS + MAINTENANCE DEMANDS

The newly built East River Park and East Side Coastal Resiliency Project area will have significantly more programmable spaces as a result of years of community surveys and consultation. Resiliency features will require new stewardship as well. These programming and associated operations and maintenance costs can be supported by a sustainable funding model specific to the park, that serves to supplement traditional funds dedicated to NYC Parks.

ESTABLISH AN ACCOUNTABLE LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

A first important step for stakeholders is to demonstrate that the Working Group, and then the Alliance, has established rigorous and transparent operational and administrative procedures and protocols for City and other funders review.

DETERMINING PRIORITY NEEDS + PROJECTS

Funding priorities can be discussed and determined in early Working Group and Alliance meetings in order to create a holistic fundraising plan that works to achieve the key goals and objectives of the Working Group and Alliance, which may range from programming to projects to maintenance or infrastructure upgrades. The Working Group and Alliance should start out with fairly modest funding requests to public, insitutional and private sources, and ramp up over time, commensurate with capacity and responsibility.

RAISING FUNDS FOR FOUNDING + NEW MEMBERS ALIKE

As in the case of the Bronx River Alliance, any private or public grants awarded to the Working Group initially can be allocated to organizations, under an Alliance structure, already involved in the river. In later rounds, grants were awarded to organizations

POTENTIAL BUDGET AND NEEDS

| YEAR 1 | YEAR 2 | YEAR 3-5 | FIVE YEAR PLAN |
|--|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteer efforts ramp up• Working Group formed• Possible foundation grant support | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alliance Director appointed• Website and programming launch• Administrative support | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to build Alliance capabilities and expand responsibilities and impact | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify resources needed to fully achieve equity goals into the longer term |
| | FUNDING NEED: \$200,000 | FUNDING NEED: \$200,000-\$250,000/year | FUNDING NEED: \$800,000-\$1,000,000 |

that wished to include the river in their programming. After the first year, the Bronx River Working Group grew to 35 organizations and government offices.

With several nonprofit organizations already engaged and active in the Study Area the Working Group and the East River Alliance can work to identify overlapping funding needs - from long-overdue priorities to far out wish-list ideas. A public survey combined with a facilitated discussion or workshop may provide the best platform for finding common areas of interest and significance.

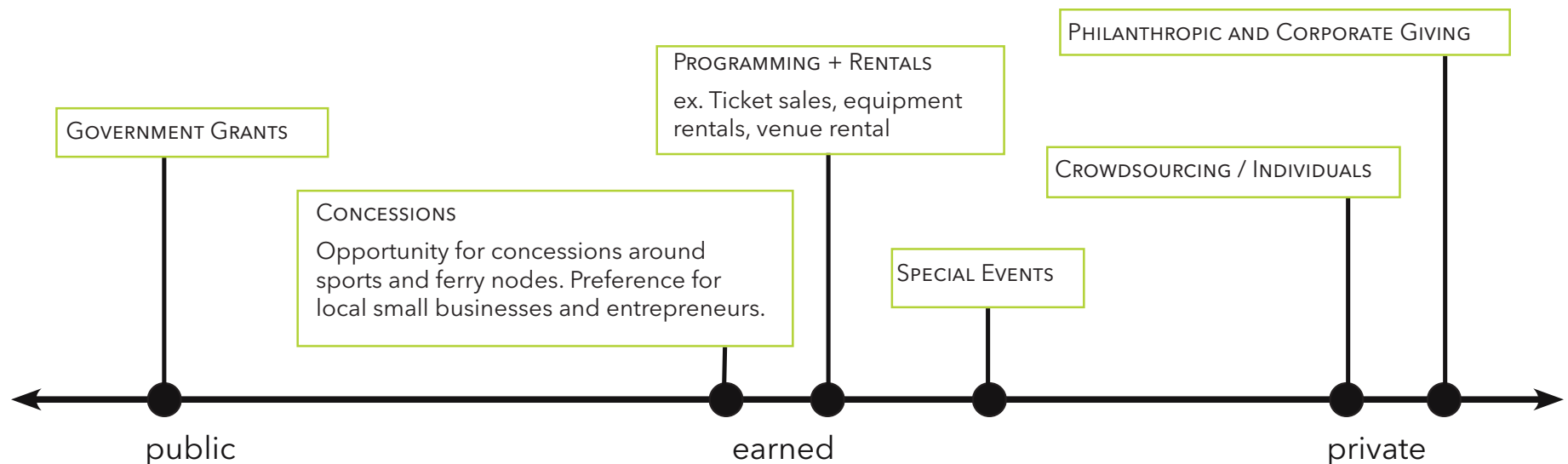
RANGE OF REVENUE-GENERATING STRATEGIES

Funding sources for revenue-generating strategies range across a spectrum of public funds to earned income to private contributions. These strategies range from broad grant-seeking efforts that may provide overall operations and maintenance

funding or may be targeted in nature to fund discrete projects, for example expanding concerts and performances at the underutilized amphitheater.

After evaluating the Study Area's current uses and gaps, food and beverage concessions, programming and rentals, and services and sales are where the East River Alliance and the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation collectively can focus efforts to create earned income for park stewardship consistent with the equity principle adopted by the group. This may also include identifying one or more potential concessionaires through a procurement process that has substantive community input and meets all City requirements. Additionally, the Working Group might also formulate a rentals and sales program to identify partnerships for providing programs, amenities, and services not previously available in the park or broader Study Area, but that the resilient park redesign allows for.

SPECTRUM OF POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



NEXT STEPS: 6 MONTHS

FORM WORKING GROUP

- Formalize a Working Group by publishing information on when and how to get involved and obtaining broad and diverse representation of local stakeholders.
- Establish key goals and founding principles;
 - Craft a written framework for meeting and organizing;
 - Set regular meeting dates (monthly);
 - Identify regular meeting location; and
 - Assess geographic scope of stewardship area.
- Appoint a coordinator to shepherd the group.
- Identify a point of contact or community liaison at the City and establish a seat at the table in decision-making surrounding redesign and reconstruction plans.

WHY

- Build credibility in order to operate as an effective, unified voice in making asks and establishing a channel of communication with city agencies and other relevant entities.
- Establish key goals for the working group seeks to achieve, based on consensus.
- Seek balanced representation from the adjacent neighborhoods including nonprofit organizations, the business community, sports leagues, parents, youth, and philanthropists.

CREATE WEBSITE

- Working Group website may include:
 - News / updates on construction;
 - Facilities reservation portal;
 - Calendar of Events;
 - Resources on NYC Parks, park ecology, and “Who to Contact” guides for ESCR questions; and
 - Contact page for people to get involved.

WHY

- Provide information and clarity on the status of ESCR construction plans and schedule.
- Provide a forum for ESCR related questions, concerns, and ideas.
- Build greater community awareness and ownership of park programming.
- Serve as resource for building Community Resilience where coastal resilience information (including LESReady! Community Disaster Response Plan), maps, and web-based tools may be added and updated over time.

NEXT STEPS: 12 MONTHS AND BEYOND

FORMALIZE ALLIANCE STRUCTURE WITH CITY

- Formalize agreement with City Parks Department:
 - Plans to hire and support joint Park Administrator / Alliance Director;
 - Specify roles and expectations on mitigation of construction impacts; and
 - Commitments for operations, maintenance and programming responsibilities; revenue share (if applicable); permitting and events.
- Craft and adopt a founding set of principles rooted in equitable development.
- Seek funding through public, private and earned opportunities.

WHY

- A formal agreement with the coordinating City agency ensures security in roles, responsibilities and any resources allocated to the cause. The agreements governing this relationship will evolve over time and any agreement should be revisited at each major phase of the project.
- The East River Alliance should also seek partnership(s) with complementary agencies and organizations to grow the Alliance's impact on key goals. Such partnerships could include:
 - NYCHA Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability (REES)
 - New York Restoration Project
 - Partnerships for Parks
 - ConEdison, hospitals and other affected corporations

CREATIVE PROGRAMMING: PLAN EVENTS

- Identify an event the East River Alliance takes the lead on organizing, marketing, and hosting that complements other programming around the year, such as an event that thematically unites Solar One's Family Day with East River Park Coalition's Visual Storytelling Workshop and a LES Ecology Center's stewardship day.
- If desired, the Alliance may wish to think of the event as a two-part series, and may be free or revenue-generating:
 - Part 1: In East River Park, prior to construction of ESCR.
 - Part 2: Located in a different location as a "Popup East River Park" for East River Park-goers who would otherwise be without full park access for the duration of park renovation construction.

WHY

- Provides the Alliance with a specific purpose to meet and share ideas - and can happen regardless of whether or not the park is open. For example, if an event cannot happen in the physical park, perhaps a panel discussion, conference, or performance may be hosted elsewhere under the 'East River Alliance' name.
- Event planning as a new entity can help to improve coordination across park tenants and stakeholders and strengthen existing relationships.
- A new event can generate a stronger sense of ownership of the ESCR project area.
- Promote programming that is reflective of the community's unique character.

APPENDIX A: TYPES OF STEWARDSHIP MODELS

FRIENDS OF PARKS GROUPS. These were generally first to arrive on the scene, generally a small group of volunteers working to improve a public space. We define them as “generally all-volunteer groups focused on hands-on cleanup and grassroots advocacy. Depending on the circumstance, a friends’ organization may lobby in favor of a park department or criticize it. Either way, the focus is on improved government services, not private philanthropy.”

PARK CONSERVANCIES are often called city park conservancies, are private, nonprofit park-benefit organizations that raise money, independent of the city, and spend it under a plan of action mutually agreed upon with the government. Most conservancies neither own nor hold easements on the parkland; the land remains the city’s, and the city retains ultimate authority over everything that happens there.” Park conservancies are numerous in New York City, and include Central Park Conservancy, Prospect Park Alliance, Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy and a host of others.

CITY-WIDE PARKS ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS can be pure advocacy organizations, can be working to build partnerships between friends groups and public agencies, raising funds for work overall or a combination of efforts, including programming and capital projects. Usually, they are independently funded and managed, such as New Yorkers for Parks, Park Pride (Atlanta), San Francisco Park Alliance, or the Austin Parks Foundation, but they can also be more of a hybrid (City Parks Foundation) they may have multiple agreements with public parks agencies or other public agencies.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS (CDCs) are not-for-profit corporations that emerged in the 1960s to tackle economic development, education, community organizing and real estate development for a specific area in a city. Over time, they have been well known as the developers and landlords of low and moderate income housing, providing a variety of services. The first CDC was Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation in Brooklyn. CDCs have grown to manage public parks and plazas in partnership with public parks agencies, much like parks conservancies. Increasingly, public spaces and parks are built as part of CDC housing projects in cities across the U. S.

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS (BIDs): Often called public improvement districts, BIDs are special taxing entities chartered through a combination of state and city legislation for a defined portion of a city, often a commercial business district. BIDs usually focus on specific programs to improve the overall level of maintenance of the streetscape and ground floor/first floor of buildings and property. Since the additional funding comes from an additional assessment or tax of property owners, the historic focus of BIDs has been “clean and safe.” In many cities, BIDs have signed agreements with public parks agencies to take on programming, maintenance, and improvements to public parks, much like park conservancies. In a number

of cities, and especially New York City, this has extended the City plaza program, where under-utilized portions of streets have been converted into temporary and permanent public plazas that are programmed and maintained by local BIDs or under contract to non-profit organizations like The Hort.

PARK DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS are a special purpose entity that created often through a combination state and local governments to tackle a large scale park project that includes commercial as well as public park development. Funds can include private equity as well as economic development, but development is geared to help either re-pay public investment in the parks themselves or to help pay for the ongoing cost of maintenance and operations. Park Development Corporations can be paired with Parks Conservancies or Friends group, like the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation paired with the Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy. Public Benefit Corporations. These special purpose entities are corporations set up through government officials and managed by development professionals for the purpose of developing or managing large scale commercial developments that have extensive public facilities. Battery Park City Authority is an example of a public benefit corporation, which are fewer in number, funded by the State of New York to allocate a portion (36 percent) of the developed Battery Park City to public parks and spaces. The Authority created and funds the Battery Park City Parks Conservancy to “manage, maintain, operate and program” the parks.

MIXED MODELS. There are a growing number of mixed models that have elements of park conservancies, friends’ groups, advocacy organizations and even community development. In New York City, the best examples are two alliances – the Prospect Park Alliance and the Bronx River Alliance. The Prospect Park Alliance was formed by a coalition of nearby residents concerned about the continuing decline in the park as well as a record low number of visitors – two million in 1979. The first administrator was appointed by the City of New York and the broader Alliance began raising funds in 1987 as well as managing city and alliance staff to improve the park. The historic carousel was restored and opened to the public in 1990. Beginning in the 1990s, the first of 75 capital restoration projects began and continue to this day. The park administrator serves as Executive Director of Alliance and works to manage the combined city-alliance staff, as well as seek both public and private funds for programming, maintenance and capital improvements.



Bronx River Alliance

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Location: | New York, NY |
| Model Type: | Alliance / Coalition |
| Scale: | District |
| Funding: | Fundraising, events, in-kind staff & facilities |
| Staffing: | 17 full time staff, 2 interns, 5 apprentices |
| Governance: | 13-member board of directors, comprised of public, non-profit and community representatives. |
| City partner: | One dedicated DPR staff person and shared office space on-site |

Bronx River Alliance is a coalition of groups that became a strong non-profit partner with the City of New York, focusing not only on the Bronx River, but nearby parks, vacant places and connections from the neighborhoods to those parks and public spaces. The coalition built slowly as a number of neighborhood groups organized individually and collectively and joined forces. They have created a true public/private partnership that programs, stewards and improves the Bronx River Watershed, from the river to new as well as refurbished parks well used and loved by neighbors.

Key takeaways:

- Coalition of diverse community groups provides strength and ensures inclusivity.
- Close partnership with DPR also covers needed staff and facility costs.
- Guided by Environmental Justice Strategy, developed at Bronx River Alliance's founding.

Building Bridges Across the River (11th Street Bridge Park initiative)

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Location: | Washington, DC |
| Model Type: | Community Development Corporation / Mixed |
| Scale: | Park / Site - District |
| Funding: | Fundraising, in-kind support from Building Bridges Across the River |
| Staffing: | 4 full time on 11th Street Bridge (35 Building Bridges Across the River) |
| Governance: | 16-member Board of Directors, with a 29-member Advisory Board; 11th Street Bridge advisory committee |
| City partner: | City (Dept. of Transportation) will manage construction and maintain the piers; BBAR leases, maintains and programs park |

11th Street Bridge Park will be Washington, DC's first elevated public park, an adaptive reuse of the out of use 11th Street Bridge that spans the Anacostia River. The park will be a venue for recreation, environmental education and the arts, and will serve to connect two neighborhoods historically disconnected. Slated to open in 2023, Building Bridges Across the River (BBAR), an established community-based organization, oversees 11th Street Bridge Park project by providing leadership, management, community engagement and fiscal oversight of the project, and ultimately operating and programming the space. Distinct park elements (boat dock, education center, concession stand, amphitheater, etc.) will be leased to local non-profits to program and maintain.

Key takeaways:

- Originated from established community development org.
- Role of org. evolves over time, but stewards from project inception, through construction and delivery and into the future to operate and program.
- Guided by Equitable Development Plan





Great Rivers Greenway (CityArchRiver)

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Location: | St. Louis, MO |
| Model Type: | Quasi-public |
| Scale: | Regional / Multi-City |
| Funding: | Regional sales tax |
| Staffing: | 25 full time staff; volunteers and fellows |
| Governance: | 12-member Board of Directors appointed by city executives |
| City partner: | Partners with each municipality in region |

Great Rivers Greenway is a quasi-public agency that works to develop, maintain and steward a network of greenways in the St. Louis region. Great Rivers Greenways collaborates with municipalities, public agencies, businesses and nonprofit organizations across the region to realize the community's vision and create a vibrant, connected region. In 2000, the people of the St. Louis region voted to create a sales tax that would create funds for investing in and connecting together the regions rivers & parks. This revenue directly funds the Great Rivers Greenway to collaborate with partners and communities to build and maintain the greenways network. Great Rivers Greenway is also one of six partners involved in the CityArchRiver Alliance team, in which they oversee public spending on the \$380M public-private project to overhaul the Gateway Arch National Park. This began in 2013, when constituents again voted to dedicate funds to support local parks departments, greenways and the transformation of the area surrounding the Gateway Arch, known as the CityArchRiver Project.

Key takeaways:

- Sales tax revenue provides sustainable funding source.
- Responsibility to taxpayers ensures transparency in use of funds.

Gentilly Resilience District (Mirabou Water Garden)

Location: New Orleans, LA
Model Type: Public, with community engagement
Scale: District

Funding: HUD Natural Disaster Recovery Grant
Staffing:
Governance: Mayor-council
City partner: City leads and manages

The Gentilly Resilience District is a combination of efforts across Gentilly to reduce flood risk, slow land subsidence, and encourage neighborhood revitalization. The District uses various approaches to water and land management that have been successfully piloted throughout New Orleans and, when implemented together, are intended to create even greater neighborhood benefits. New Orleans was awarded more than \$141 million through the HUD Natural Disaster Recovery Competition to implement elements of the Gentilly Resilience District proposal, building on existing investments in urban water management funded through the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP).

Key takeaways:

- Post-disaster context and leveraging of large federal grants for neighborhood benefits.
- Local partnerships with community-based organizations, coordinated engagement and outreach managed by City.



APPENDIX C: PRECEDENT ORGANIZATIONAL EQUITY AND JUSTICE PRINCIPLES

11TH STREET BRIDGE PARK'S EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

See link: [11th Street Bridge Park's Equitable Development Plan](#)

BRONX RIVER ALLIANCE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

See link: [Bronx River Alliance Environmental Justice](#)

