

September 2024

RE: ESCR CAG: Asks and requests for clarification re: new park

To Members of the ESCR CAG:

Thank you for your August 2024 inquiries related to East River Park design. Formal DDC responses are provided below. These responses are in collaboration with Parks and refer to previous responses as appropriate.

Start CAG letter:

This document is a collection of requests and questions from CAG members related to the new park. The questions center around requests for more information on items for which they cannot find answers in the preliminary or final PDC presentations.

Asks/requests:

1. Inquiry: The renderings show what shade might look like in 10+ years, not at opening. We would like to see the addition of larger/more mature trees in selected locations (see bullets below), to provide shade soon after the park re-opens.
 - Nature exploration area: It's not safe for small children to be exposed to so much direct sun; not usable during sunny daytime hours until trees grow. (page 27)
 - Community gathering lawn at Delancey Bridge area: At opening, no shade surrounding lawn or within lawn. The corresponding area in the old park had some shade trees within the lawn as well as around it. (page 41)
 - Water play area at Houston: See above, nature exploration area. (page 54)
 - Children's playground at 10th Street: See above, nature exploration area. (page 76)
 - Others?

DDC Response: *Please see our response from [January 2024 CAG Inquiries](#): The design team has worked with NYC Parks construction procurements team to source the trees at sizes that are commercially available based on the quantities specified, the species, and transplanting characteristics. The majority of the trees in the park are Type 1 shade trees according to ANSI Z60.1. The typical size specified for these trees is approximately 3" caliper. The American Standards for Nursery Stock indicates that a Type 1 Shade tree at 3"-3.5" caliper (measured 6" above adjacent grade) should have an average height of 14'-16' with the typical maximum of 18' height. Growth will vary by species, but in nursery settings a rule of thumb is that trees will often add ½" caliper per year with 1'-2' of growth in the canopy.*

While there may be the urge to plant much larger caliper trees, there are risks from transplant

shock, the trees are harder to handle during construction because the weight of the root ball on larger trees, and it becomes much more difficult to source and procure high-quality large caliper trees in the quantities that are proposed for East River Park. Replacement of larger caliper trees during the warranty period becomes difficult and requires repairs to the area around the trees. In addition, many trees do not transplant well as they grow in size. A planting approach that requires larger trees throughout would reduce species diversity and make the tree canopy composition more susceptible to climate change and less resilient. Studies highlight the importance of root structure in establishing trees and shows how the root structure of larger trees is impacted in the transplanting process. One study indicates that larger trees take longer to reestablish the root systems needed to support growth and as a result grow slower than small trees and suggests that small trees planted at the same time start to close the gap in size differential between the two at the time of planting.

For more information on planting palette, review ESCR EIS Chapter 5.6, "Natural Resources" (<https://www.nyc.gov/assets/escr/downloads/pdf/FEIS/ESCR-EIS-Chapter-5.6-Natural-Resources.pdf>) and the pages 147-166 of the Final PDC Presentation (<https://www.nyc.gov/assets/escr/downloads/pdf/DDC-f-ESCR-pres-rev-final-given-to-PDC-2020-01-30.pdf>).

2. Inquiry: Shade structures. More mature/fast-growing trees should be the first option, but if there are reasons why trees won't work at a particular location, can there be shade structures (see selected locations below)?
 - Near water play areas
 - On ballfields – will players and coached be expected to sit in full sun for the duration of each game?
 - Track/workout areas

DDC Response: *There are no shade structures planned at this time.*

Questions and requests for clarification:

1. From the PDC designs, it looks like the majority of the trees will circle around the fields, courts, and playgrounds, but there will be no more shaded esplanade seating or shaded spectator areas at the ballfields, and shade only around the edges of lawns and picnic areas.¹ If that's incorrect, it would be great for Parks/designers to clarify for us.

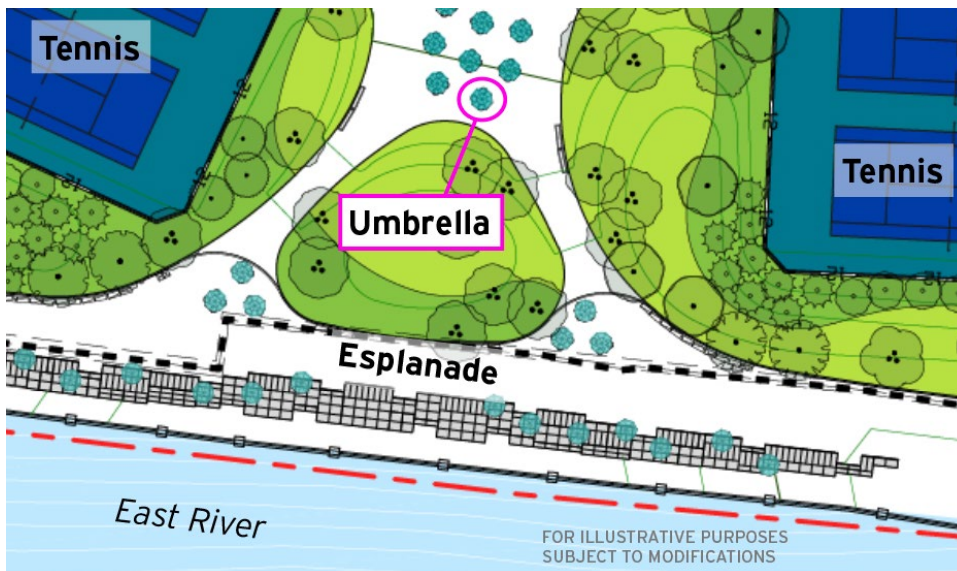
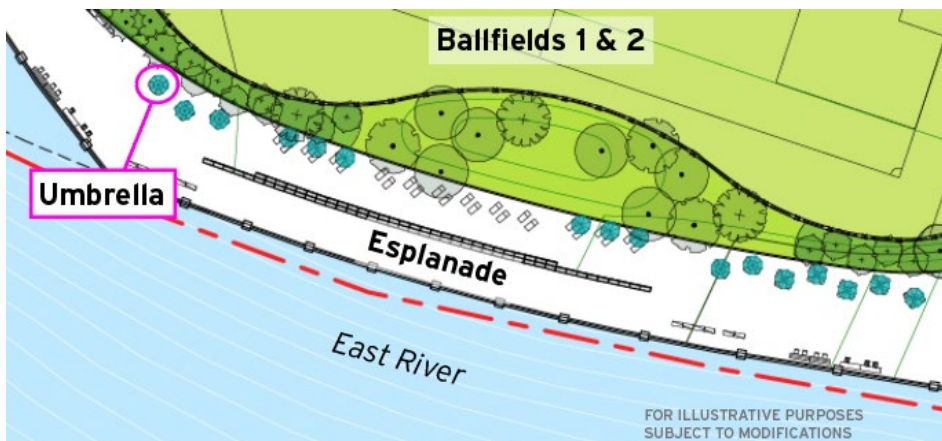
DDC Response: *There will be a variety of tree species outside the fencing at ballfields which will grow to offer shade. In the planting areas adjacent to spectator seating at Ballfields 1 & 2, shade tree species include Pin Oak, Willow Oak, Scarlet Oak, Common Hackberry, and Sweet Gum. Species at the western spectator areas of Ballfields 3 & 4 include Swamp White Oak, Sweet Gum, Willow Oak, and London Plane. Smaller lawn areas, like those between the Tennis Courts and Ballfield 3, will also feature shade trees, including Scarlet Oak and Kentucky Coffeetree species. Pin Oak and Willow Oak are among the species surrounding spectator areas at Ballfields 5 & 6. The Track & Field will be surrounded by a diverse array of species, including*

¹ East River Park Action measured the temperature at the track on a hot day in 2022, and it was 157 degrees.

Halka Honeylocust, Northern Catalpa, and Scarlet Oak. The spectator areas at Ballfield 7 are also adjacent to a number of tree plantings. We've highlighted a few key areas here, but there are more species and sizable planting areas throughout the park. As in the current park plantings, trees will line the esplanade in planting beds and grow to provide shade. See illustrations for question 2 below.

2. Is there shaded seating along the esplanade, as there is now, or is all seating in direct sunlight?

DDC Response: *Yes, there are seating areas along the esplanade that include umbrellas. For instance, in the esplanade area directly adjacent to Ballfields 1 & 2, the designs include plans for approximately ten shaded benches and several shaded chaise lounges (see illustration below). In the vicinity of the Tennis Courts, there are nearly thirty umbrellas (see illustration below). There are additional picnic tables with umbrellas near the Nature Exploration area, the BBQ area, immediately north of the Williamsburg Bridge, and near Ballfield 3. On the esplanade closest to the Track & Field, there are more than a dozen umbrellas at tables or chaise lounges. At the northern BBQ area, near E. 10th Street, there are several additional picnic tables with umbrellas.*



3. The PDC documents (preliminary and final) contain no information about seating at the ballfields. Can we get specifics about where spectators will be seated at Fields 1-7 and the track? The current park has/had bleacher seating at all fields.

DDC Response: *Ballfields 1-7 and the Track & Field will have spectator seating. The sizes and quantities are as follows:*

- *Ballfield 1: two team benches, two 25' spectator stands*
- *Ballfield 2: two team benches, two 25' spectator stands*
- *Ballfield 3: two team benches, two 15' spectator stands*
- *Ballfield 4: two team benches, two 15' spectator stands*
- *Ballfield 5: two team benches, two 15' spectator stands*
- *Ballfield 6: two team benches, two 25' spectator stands*
- *Ballfield 7: two team benches, two 15' spectator stands*
- *Track & Field: two 25' spectator stands, plus nearby tables & chairs*

This image is an example of spectator stands. Final product may differ.



4. The PDC document contains no information about how the new plantings will be watered after the contractor's responsibility ends. Can we get information about exactly how stewardship teams will access water? Where/what are water sources (Bruckner boxes)? What if any planting beds will have nearby water sources/irrigation/sprinklers? We assume that the new Compost Yard has water sources as well.

DDC Response: *The project's irrigation design plans include sprinklers in all planted areas of the park, including planting beds, natural turf fields and lawns. All trees are watered by individual bubbler systems or other root watering systems.*

While the Compost Yard is still under design, it will have a water source.

5. Where will police/emergency call boxes be located?

DDC Response: *There will be 48 FDNY call boxes throughout the park.*

6. Where will ash boxes be located?

DDC Response: *Coal boxes for grilling will be located at the BBQ area immediately south of the Williamsburg Bridge and at the BBQ area on the esplanade near E. 10th Street. Each area will have four coal boxes.*

7. Were colors that minimize heat absorption selected for the sports coating on the tennis courts?

Parks Response: *Parks uses standard manufacturers for color seal coats (at Tennis, Basketball courts) based on the durability and performance of the materials. This also includes several other factors, including official regulations, maintenance and operations, health and safety. Color choices from these manufacturers are limited to a predetermined palette of blues, greens, reds and maroons, and input is also collected during community input meetings. Design decisions also consider the colors and textures found in the park's surroundings.*

8. How are trees removed from the park being used in the future park, and where?

Parks Response: *The Nature Exploration area is the only location in East River Park where trees from the park are being reused.*

The goal of the wood reuse pilot is to capture carbon, avoid City wood waste transportation and disposal costs, support green jobs, and spur new markets for recycled wood products.

Approximately 30% of the trees in the ESCR project area are slated for salvage, rather than being chipped. Trees suitable for reuse have large diameters with straight stems, high branches, and minimal decay. Salvage tree species are mostly pin oak and London planetree, with some honeylocust, sweetgum, and elm as well. In some cases, more than one log (8-, 10-, or 12-foot in length) will be salvaged from a single tree.

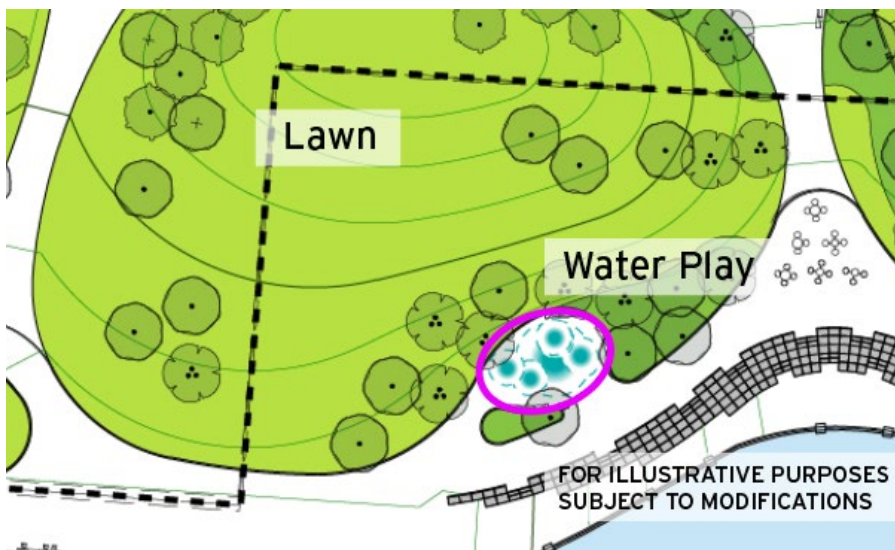
Milled lumber from the salvaged logs will be transformed into a variety of salvaged wood products, including: lumber for green building projects (exterior and interior products such as benches, furniture parts, stakes, flooring, siding, trim, decking) and rough milled products (such as landscape timbers, truck sideboards, barricades). Other types of outdoor products that could be used in NYC Parks or other public spaces include tree guards, benches, stakes, fences, and picnic tables.

9. What is the square footage of the water play area?

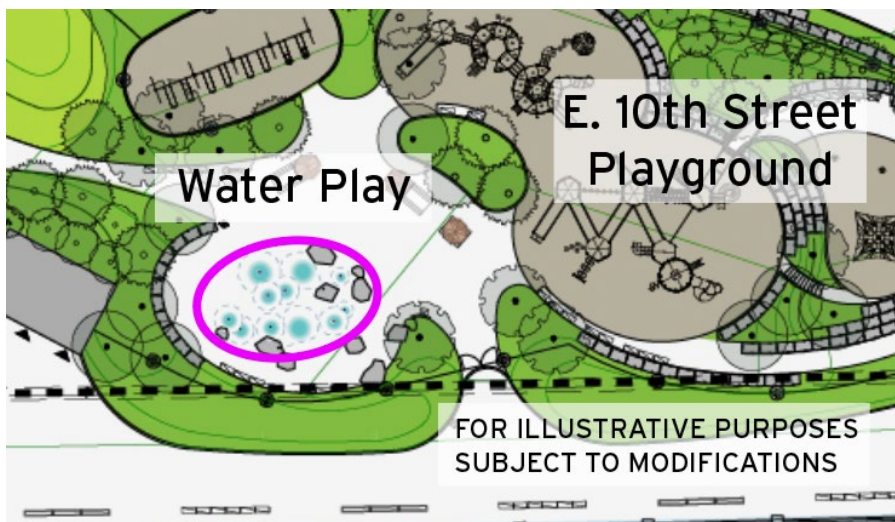
DDC Response: *Accounting only for the water spray features (i.e., not including dry areas like seating), the Delancey Street water play area is approximately 500 square feet, the Houston Street area is approximately 700 square feet, and the E. 10th Street area is approximately 900 square feet. See pink circles in illustrative maps below for the approximate areas measured.*



Delancey Street



Houston Street

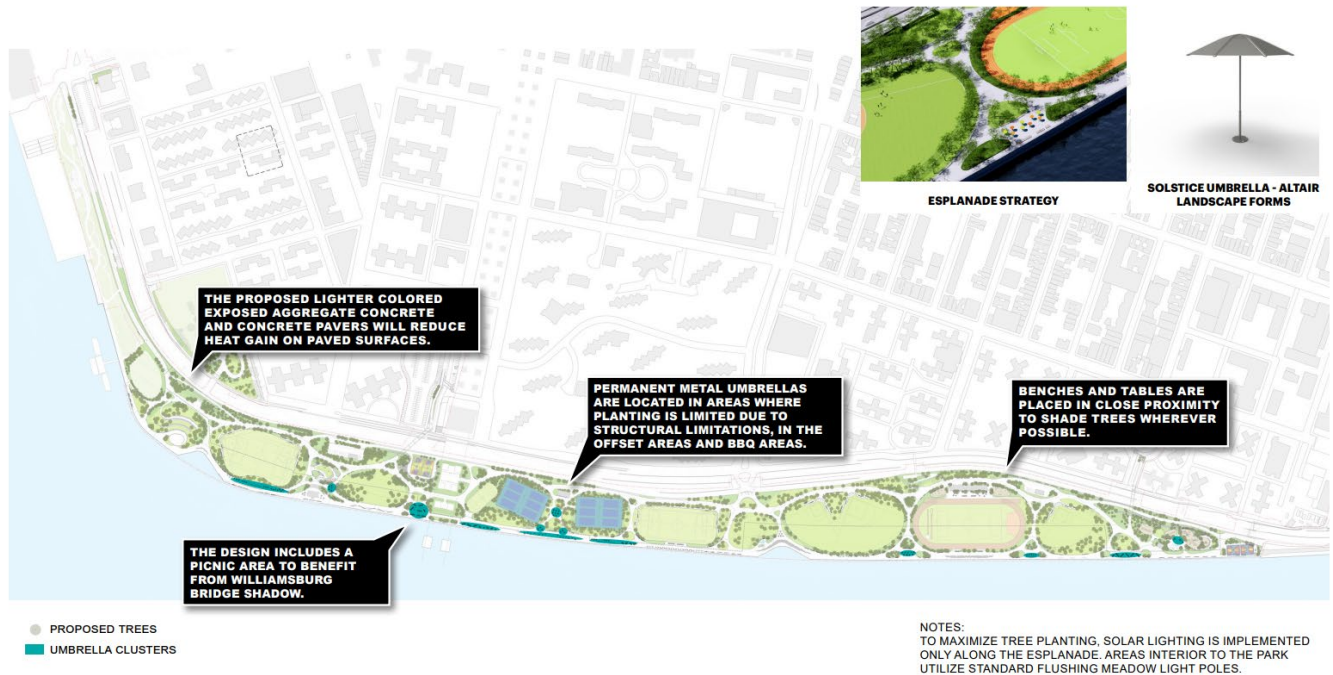


E. 10th Street

10. Clusters of umbrellas are indicated, but how many are in a cluster?

DDC Response: *These numbers vary, ranging from roughly five to nearly thirty depending on the specific area, as mentioned in Question 2.*

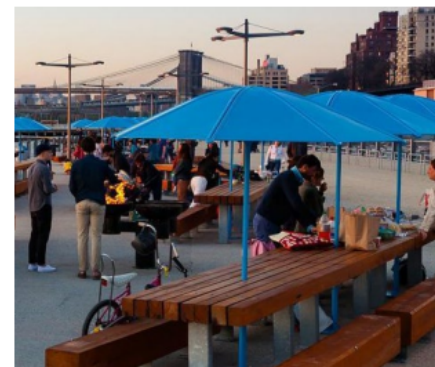
Photo references included in CAG letter:



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**STANDARD PICNIC TABLE &
ACCESSIBLE PICNIC TABLE**
8'-0" LENGTH
PERFORATED METAL
LOCATION: EAST RIVER PARK



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