

August 25, 2025

RE: ESCR CAG: LESEC Facilities and the Future of the Fireboat House site

To Members of the East Side Coastal Resiliency (ESCR) Community Advisory Group (CAG):

Thank you for your June 24, 2025, letter regarding the coordination with Lower East Side Ecology Center (LESEC) on new facilities and the future of the Fireboat House site. Formal NYC Department of Design and Construction (DDC) responses are provided below. We have numbered the questions within to provide organization in the responses.

A New Space for LESEC

1. **CAG:** What is the plan for community engagement into the design and planning process for a new building/location for LESEC's offices and programs?

DDC Response: *DDC and Parks are working closely on an expedited design process in order to incorporate this area into the ESCR project. The design work began in late April, followed by two productive meetings with LESEC in June and July when we discussed its programmatic needs and got feedback on initial design concepts. The team submitted the conceptual design to the Public Design Commission (PDC) in July. We plan to present the preliminary design to the CB3 Parks Committee meeting in October 2025 and subsequently submit it to PDC.*

2. **CAG:** Have there been assessments of other locations or structures nearby that are suitable alternatives that closely match the utilities, office space, and educational facilities of the Fireboat House in terms of size and number of stories?

DDC Response: *The City has committed to bringing LESEC back to East River Park to continue ecological education and stewardship within the Park. Other locations were not considered.*

The Future of the Fireboat House Site

1. **CAG:** What, if any, limitations exist on possible alternative uses for that site once the building is demolished? (i.e., Since that area was not raised, are there certain amenities that cannot be put there?)

DDC Response: *Because this area is not raised out of the floodplain, any structure that is installed there will need to comply with NYC Building Code, Appendix G (Flood-Resistant Construction).*

2. **CAG:** How can the CAG give input on what becomes of the vacant space when the Fireboat House is demolished?

DDC Response: *If the Fireboat House is removed, any construction in its place will fall outside of the ESCR scope and will be coordinated through NYC Parks' typical community engagement and design review process.*

3. **CAG:** Will the Fireboat House's bathrooms be replaced? If so, where?

DDC Response: *On behalf of NYC Parks, the DDC is constructing public restrooms at several city park locations, including the newly-completed East River Park and Murphy Brothers Playground. The East River Park location will be adjacent to the northern perimeter of Fields 1 & 2.*

This is a design-build project separate from ESCR, meaning the DDC will engage a design-builder team with the goal of completing all six restroom projects, including the two noted above, by the end of 2026.