

August 2024

RE: ESCR CAG questions related to the opening of Phase 1 amenities

To Members of the ESCR CAG:

Thank you for your inquiries related to the opening of amenities in Phase 1 of the park. Many of the questions submitted in the below request were answered at past CAG meetings and during the site walkthrough, however formal DDC responses are provided below.

Start CAG letter:

At the March 2024 CAG meeting, DDC informed the CAG that due to a lack of safe access, ballfields 1 and 2 would not be opening until September 1st. CAG members responded with concern about what this new development would mean for the opening of other amenities and features in the southern portion of the park, including the placement of the new bridges, the Phase 1 esplanade, the amphitheater, and the nature exploration area. In advance of an early April walkthrough for CAG members to understand the limitations of what's happening on the site now (i.e., why ballfields 1 and 2 cannot open until September), members submitted their questions to be shared with DDC.

Link to Public Design Commission presentation with details of the new park:

<https://www.nyc.gov/assets/escr/downloads/pdf/DDC-f-ESCR-pres-rev-final-given-to-PDC-2020-01-30.pdf>

- Amphitheater on page 27
- Nature Exploration on page 35 (replaces the seals)
- "Shade strategy" starts on page 147 - what kind of trees and where they'll be planted
- Delancey Bridge entrance on page 41
- Surfaces (synthetic turf, pavers, courts, etc.) on pages 122 and 123
- Flyover view of south end (page 20):



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Final Review 20

Questions related to the April 2024 CAG walkthrough

1. Question: Please have the Parks department confirm whether the corlears field is prioritized for neighborhood youth leagues. This was an ask, and, I believe, a promise of the conditions of this project. In a March 14, 2024 email Parks stated (highlight added) “ Youth leagues are prioritized over adult leagues. **There is not a prioritization for local or community leagues over other groups.**”

Parks Response: *Correct, Parks prioritizes youth leagues over adult leagues, however, does not prioritize local or community leagues over other groups. Should there be concerns with local leagues, we will work directly with them to resolve.*

2. Question: Composition of the soil - what other turf areas are planned?

DDC Response: *Soil composition has been approved, meeting ESCR specifications for horticultural soils. Please keep in mind there are different compositions of soils depending on the location. For instance, the sod lawn areas will have a different soil composition than tree and shrub areas. Park materials, including artificial turf, are shown on pages 122 and 123 of the Final PDC presentation. For information about sod used for natural turf areas, see question 17 below.*

3. Question: Graffiti should have been expected on walls that look like blank canvases, instead, they are draped in plastic. ESCR could have invited local artists to help to bridge these new barriers to the park and brighten the community’s view (especially when the new plantings are getting established). How can we avoid even a single arrest over painting on the ESCR walls? What is the plan?

DDC Response: *DDC is responsible for building the park as designed. Once completed, the Bureau of Coastal Resilience at the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will be*

responsible for maintenance and programming. It was originally determined that the flood walls could not be painted over because of inspection requirements. However, once DEP assumes responsibility, this may be reassessed. As for enforcement, the NYPD at the direction of the mayoral administration will be responsible for guiding enforcement.

4. Question: Design of the nature center, including its landscape, trees, and water feature

DDC Response: A rendering of the final design of the nature exploration and water play area can be seen on page 35 of the Final PDC Presentation—included below:



5. Question: Can we get an update on the project budget, timing and phases?

DDC Response: The project is on budget and on schedule to be completed by 2026. The timing of the completion and opening of amenities is still being determined and will be shared with the CAG when finalized. Phase 1, south of Williamsburg Bridge, is scheduled to open most amenities in early 2025. Additional information will be provided later this year.

6. Question: Roughly speaking the Delancey Street bridge access (slide 41) will deliver people into the park to a big planned lawn area to the south, and to the north there seems to be steps that lead down to basketball courts. What can we expect to have open on the south side? Lawn and access to the promenade, since DDC presentations seem to show progress in installing the esplanade? Or a construction fence that leads people to grand street plaza?

DDC Response: The timing of opening additional amenities is still being determined but will be shared with the CAG when finalized. For September 1 access to ballfields 1 & 2, [see CAG #46 presentation](#).

7. Question: How much of the esplanade will be finished? Is it realistic to have the esplanade open from Delancey Street all the way down to and along ballfields 1 & 2?

DDC Response: *The timing of the opening additional amenities, including the esplanade, is still being determined but will be shared with the CAG when finalized.*

8. Question: How is the area around the Fire Boat House going to be treated, all off limits?

DDC Response: *The area around the Fireboat House will be closed to the public until a decision about how to proceed is made by City Hall and the Office of Budget and Management following the Section 106 Alternatives Analysis.*

9. Question: The service road will still need to be used by construction vehicles; what is the plan for dust suppression?

DDC Response: *The contractor will continue to utilize dust suppression techniques as needed, including the use of water trucks. For more information see our [air quality monitoring fact sheet](#).*

10. Question: How much construction fence and materials blocking view will we see in the open area?

DDC Response: *This will depend on where work is still being conducted. When work progresses into Phase 2, the shared use path will continue to be used as the construction road. For the September 1 opening, there will be construction fencing along the path and in certain instances, along the ballfield fences as construction necessitates.*

11. Question: Will any of the new trees be planted by the time whatever section is opened? How is opening going to affect landscaping work, when will that be installed?

DDC Response: *The contractor plans to plant the area south of the Williamsburg Bridge during the planting season. The evergreen plants will be planted from September 1 to October 15. Other plants are expected to be planted from October 15 to December 15. These dates are approximate and could move later, depending on temperature.*

12. Question: Will there be access to water/drinking fountains?

DDC Response: *Not in 2024.*

13. Question: Will there be benches/seating installed?

DDC Response: *Not in 2024.*

14. Question: Any shade structures? Looks like this could get pretty hot even in September

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

15. Question: The PDC presentation shows a passive recreational lawn instead of the compost yard, has this change order in design been initiated and what are the steps and timeline for approval of the design for the compost yard?

DDC Response: *The compost yard is under design. A change order for construction has not been issued to date and will not be until the design is finalized.*

16. Question: When is the Maintenance Area scheduled to open and when will Parks vehicles be using it? Is this just for District 3 parks or will additional Parks staff be using it? Is it for Parks vehicles only?

DDC Response: *As Parks M&O facilities are completed and become available, we will continue working with our partners at Parks to turn them over.*

Parks Response: *There are two maintenance areas that Parks will have south of the Delancey St Bridge as a part of the ESCR project and Parks will utilize both of them as soon as they are ready. They are scheduled to be complete in conjunction with the surrounding park area (the dates have not been determined at this time). Parks is still working through the specifics of how we will maintain the park, but we are aware that there is a concern on the amount of vehicle traffic that could potentially be going in and out of the park. In order to mitigate this, Parks intends to primarily use the maintenance area that is immediately adjacent to the Delancey St pedestrian bridge for internal to East River Park purposes. The maintenance area that is closer to Pier 42 (and involves less driving in the park) will be used for any vehicles that are coming from outside of East River Park (with the majority coming from District 3). These maintenance areas are only for Parks vehicles.*

17. Question: There are a number of grassy areas south of the bridge (“Neighborhood Gathering Lawn,” amphitheater, edging around fields/paths, etc). Will these be covered with sod?

DDC Response: *Yes.*

Are there seasonal restrictions on sodding/seeding?

DDC Response: *There are no seasonal restrictions, only weather restrictions. However, the install will most likely follow the planting season.*

Will these areas need to be closed for weeks/months to let the grass get established?

DDC Response: *Yes, there is a four-week period for the sod to be established.*

Will there be curbs/rails (as in Stuyvesant Cove Park) to protect planting beds?

DDC Response: *There will be curbs, not rails.*